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***The role of youth and student wings in shaping  
Social Democratic Parliamentarians in Germany  
and Great Britain.***

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*“What you learn in Labour Students and what you learn in a trade union are different things.  
It’s the Denis Healey dictum: In academia you argue towards a conclusion;  
in politics you argue towards a decision.”*

Labour Party MP interviewed for this study

## ***Abstract***

This thesis, by undertaking a detailed, empirical analysis of the role youth and student wings play in the recruitment of national legislators of the German Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands and the British Labour Party, contributes to our understanding of how the social democratic party family has changed in the decades since the early 1980s. It does so by utilising three research questions. Firstly, it investigates the changing role of the youth and student wings in the recruitment of social democratic legislators. Second, it explores the dynamics of this process. Finally, the thesis unpacks the manner in which this shift has led to a ‘gentrification’ of centre-left Parliamentarians and thus changed the nature of social democratic parties. The study engenders new insights via the combined use of a large, new quantitative dataset and qualitative elite interviews.

The study demonstrates that the recruiting ground for Parliamentarians for these parties has shifted. The quantitative data shows that as the trade union movement declined in influence the parties faced a functional need to replace them as a source of qualified electoral standard bearers and the vacuum was filled by affiliated party youth and student organisations. The evidence presented here suggests this means that most individuals are now politicised into the parties at university, not in the workplace. This has coincided with a rise in a political ecosystem of party employees, representatives’ staffers, NGOs, journalists, charities and think-tanks and a wider sphere of politics-facilitating professions, both of which recruit out of these youth wings. Individuals working in those fields have an advantage in developing the political capital required to push for selection as a Parliamentary candidate. The qualitative data provides prima facie evidence that these two factors lead to a gentrification effect, resulting in a shift in the balance between the working class and middle class within social democratic parties in favour of the latter and that this changes the culture and the nature of these parties. This is ripe for further research.

The results of this study contribute in particular to the literature on political recruitment and the professionalisation of politics. Both of these fields have often dealt with the class nature of Parliamentarians but have hitherto lacked the empirical evidence to place the party’s youth and student wings as a factor driving this dynamic.

## ***Acknowledgements***

The idea of writing a thesis on the topic of how youth wings impacted on the recruitment of MPs originated in my time in the Young Fabians. The story that Ken Livingstone had said that if the Young Fabians' boat party were ever to sink the centre-left of the Labour Party would lose a generation of future MPs was often told, and it was commonplace for people to see the Young Fabians and Labour Students in particular as a route into Parliament. Also routine were conversations lamenting the distancing of social democratic parties from their working-class base. The basic premise of this research that these things were connected was finally crystallised during an argument with two colleagues about the result of the 2015 UK General Election. The original motivation for conducting this research was then a sense that social democracy was in some way losing its soul, and a desire to sound a warning bell. I have emerged with an even greater respect for those who serve in a national legislature – regardless of their background or the route they took to get there – but am just as uneasy about the future of the social democratic party family and the political representation of the least well off in our societies.

My first and most fulsome thanks have to go to my supervisor Dr Ed Turner and associate supervisor Dr Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik as well as to Dr Patrycja Rozbicka who brought her methodological expertise to the supervision team. They have provided unflinching support in both a professional and personal capacity and I owe them a debt not only for their academic guidance but also for their friendship, which I hold very dear.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction.

### **1.1: Introduction.**

The question of legislative recruitment, that is who becomes a parliamentarian and therefore makes decisions on government policy and the allocation of public resources, plays a key role in the lives of citizens in modern democracies. Accusations of a gentrified and/or professional class of legislators out of touch with ordinary citizens have formed a key component of much of the populist rhetoric seen in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> The distinction between gentrified and professionalised parties is crucial in this thesis, with the former being more affluent individuals crowding out their less well-off comrades in the halls of power<sup>2</sup> and the second being an increasing sophistication in the way in which politics and political campaigning are performed.<sup>3</sup> Both of these processes have been present in political parties in recent decades.<sup>4</sup> This has been particularly acute for the centre-left, the traditional bastion of working-class political representation and has formed part of both academic discussion<sup>5</sup> and the public debate.<sup>6</sup>

Strangely however despite this there has been comparatively little investigation into the actual mechanisms by which this has come about. We therefore do not have a fine-grained understanding of how more middle-class individuals are out-competing their less-affluent comrades. One of the processes by which this happens, and with which this study concerns itself, is the role youth and student organisations associated with social democratic parties play in recruiting activists, providing them with a political education and giving middle-class individuals advantages which carry on through their political career to the point of selection. What little research there has been has focused on their role in allowing for youth political participation and activism.<sup>7</sup> Literature focusing on the youth wings and the individuals within them as individual party units is comparatively rare.<sup>8</sup> Most individuals come to politics in their teens and twenties and as such party youth wings shape much of their early

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Muller J. 2017. *What is populism?* London, Penguin Books; Moffitt B. 2016. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style and Representation*. Stanford CA, Stanford University Press and Goodhart D. 2017. *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. London, Hurst & Co.

<sup>2</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'politics-facilitating' explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2, pp 212 – 233.

<sup>3</sup> Black G. S. 1970. A Theory of Professionalisation in Politics. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 64 No. 3. pp 865 – 878.

<sup>4</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> O'Grady T. 2019. Careerists versus Coal-Miners: Welfare Reforms and the Substantive Representation of Social Groups in the British Labour Party. *Comparative Political Studies*. Vol. 52 No. 4, pp 544-578.

<sup>6</sup> See for example 'Bagehot'. 2018. Labour is no longer the party of the traditional working class. *The Economist*. 16.07.2018. available at: <https://www.economist.com/bagehots-notebook/2018/07/06/labour-is-no-longer-the-party-of-the-traditional-working-class> accessed 26.06.2019 12:20 and Rutherford J. 2018. How the decline of the working class made Labour a party of the bourgeois left. *The New Statesman*. 19.09.2018. available at <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2018/09/how-decline-working-class-made-labour-party-bourgeois-left> accessed on 26.06.2019 12:22.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Rainsford, E. 2013. What makes young people politically active? Comparing activists in political parties youth factions, youth councils and at demonstrations. Research Working Paper presented at PSA General Conference, Cardiff, Centre for Citizenship Globalisation and Governance, University of Southampton.

<sup>8</sup> One notable exception is Rainford E. 2018. UK political parties youth factions: A glance at the future of political parties. *Parliamentary affairs*. Vol. 71, pp 783 – 803.

formation as activists. They often provide activists with their first key training in the skills required to achieve political outcomes and offer unparalleled opportunities to network with existing legislators and party elites. It would be strange indeed if those experiences did not have an impact on the journey an individual undertakes to be in contention to be selected as an election candidate.

But what role exactly do these youth wings play in that process and in what context? Social democratic politicians, at least in Western Europe, used to do their apprenticeships in the trade union movement.<sup>9</sup> It is beyond doubt that the trade unions have been in decline;<sup>10</sup> If youth wings bear some responsibility for an increase in 'career politicians' on the centre left, then did they do so by replacing the unions as training grounds and if so how did that process happen? How and why does this affect the individuals moving through the political parties to the point of becoming a Parliamentarian? Crucially, what does all this mean for our understanding of the nature of contemporary social democratic parties?

These are the key questions which this study seeks to answer. It will do so via a comparative investigation of the youth organisations associated with the German Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD) and the British Labour Party (Labour).

This introductory chapter will first introduce the topics definitions, concepts and the categorisation used in the research. Secondly it will detail the research questions and their linked hypotheses which will then be used to frame the research throughout this study. It will then detail the background to the study, in particular explaining the relevance of this research. Finally, the chapter will give a detailed outline of how the thesis will proceed.

## **1.2: Topic definition, concepts and categorisation.**

This study is an investigation of social democratic party youth wings, and their influence on their mother parties via the process of selection. It asserts that the youth wings engage in the politicisation of individuals – that is they inculcate a political culture into those individuals who undertook their political apprenticeship in those youth wings. This culture is then imported into the main party as those individuals become national legislators. These terms – youth wings, party culture and politicisation – therefore require defining. Since the thesis also asserts that the specific cultural differences between the cultures of the youth wings and the trade union movements are based on class it also requires a discussion of what is meant by working and middle class.

Further the thesis tests the assumption that this is a driver of the professionalisation and gentrification of the social democratic party family. It argues that these are two separate – if interlinked – conceptual categories despite being conflated in the existing literature. As such an explanation is needed of how

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<sup>9</sup> See for example Allern E.H., Aylott N. and Christiansen F.J. 2007. Social Democrats and trade unions in Scandinavia: The decline and persistence of institutional relationships. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 46 No. 5, pp 607-635; Howell C. 2001. The end of the relationship between social democratic parties and trade unions? *Studies in Political Economy*. Vol 65 No. 1, pp. 7 – 37; Taylor A. J. 1993. Trade unions and the politics of social democratic renewal. *West European Politics*. Vol. 16 No. 1, pp 133 – 155 and Minkin L. 1992. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Visser J. 2007. Trade Union decline and what next: is Germany a special case? *Industrielle Beziehungen : Zeitschrift für Arbeit, Organisation und Management*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp 97-117; Martin R., Sunley P. and Wills J. 1993. The Geography of Trade Union Decline: Spatial Dispersal or Regional Resilience? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp 36 – 62; Bell B. D. and Pitt M. K. 1998. Trade Union decline and the distribution of wages in the UK: Evidence from kernel density estimation. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*. Vol. 60 No. 4, pp 509 – 528 and Machin S. 2000. Union decline in Britain. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. Vol. 38 No. 4, pp 631 – 645.

this study will categorise professionalisation and gentrification, the differences between them and why they matter for this study and more broadly.

#### Youth wings.

This study is concerned above all with party youth wings, their role and their impact. In consequence perhaps the most important concepts to define is what precisely is meant by a youth wing. Although this might seem obvious it still requires categorisation.

This study will classify the term as relating to either those formally constituted subsidiaries of the party in question, or an independent organisation that has had a sustained affiliation - either formal or informal - with the party in question whose rules state that individuals must be below a specified age to be eligible for membership.

As well as the formal youth wings this definition covers those organisations outside of its structures but affiliated with them on a sustained basis. In order to wield influence within the parties these youth organisations need to build institutional links to them. This needs to be maintained for some time in order for members to be able to leverage service in the youth organisations into political capital that can impact on the selection process. This definition therefore includes organisation such as the Young Fabians, formally affiliated through their parent Fabian Society to the Labour Party since their founding in 1960,<sup>11</sup> and the Sozialistische Jugend Deutschlands – Die Falken (Socialist Youth of Germany – The Falcons, SJD – Die Falken) who are not formally linked to the SPD but have many informal links.<sup>12</sup> However the lack of a sustained link disqualifies organisations which were only affiliated briefly such as Compass Youth.<sup>13</sup>

In addition this study will treat student wings, that is party subsidiaries which require as a condition of membership enrolment in a course of education, usually but not exclusively at tertiary level, as within the typology of youth wings. Student wings do not specifically have an age requirement. However the majority of those enrolled in education and therefore eligible to be members are in the same age brackets as party youth wings and the two are often treated similarly, indeed in the case of the German SPD the youth and student wings are combined, with student organisations being treated as branches of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der JungsozialistInnen in der SPD (Working Group of the Young Socialists in the SPD, the JUSOS). As such this study will encompass student wings within its purview and references in the text to youth wings should be taken to include student wings unless specified otherwise.

A full explanation of which organisations formed part of this research can be found in the section on case study selection in chapter three.

#### Party Culture and Politicisation.

This study makes the argument that the youth wings inculcate in those who participate in them a concept of how to do politics, and that they bring this with them in the fulness of time to the ranks of the Party's legislators. Further this study contends that the political cultures of the youth wings are

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<sup>11</sup> For more details see chapter five.

<sup>12</sup> For more details see chapter four.

<sup>13</sup> Compass Youth is the youth wing of the think-tank Compass, founded in 2003 as an internal group within the Labour Party before disaffiliating in 2011 and becoming independent, since when it has declined greatly in influence within the party. See <https://www.compassonline.org.uk/about/our-story/> accessed 04.07.2019 at 13:39.



different to that of other routes into the party, in particular that of the trade union movement. This notion is referred to in this thesis as political culture.

The concept of culture is highly contested in the literature. This is in large part due to the fact that it is a difficult concept to pin down, being tangible yet difficult to measure. Culture is more commonly discussed by sociology than political science, although it has been utilised in political science, in particular by Bale,<sup>14</sup> which is discussed further below. Keesing<sup>15</sup> argued that culture is an ideational code of what an individual believes others in their society know, believe and mean about the rules of society's game. Elkins and Simeon<sup>16</sup> argued culture consists of assumptions about the political world which when shared will allow an individual to be identified as a group insider, the notion of culture as shibboleth. Shi<sup>17</sup> in his study of political trust argues for a limiting effect of political culture. First however he sets out how the Culturalist strand of sociology conceptualises political culture as "*values, norms, attitudes, and beliefs as a unified system of control*"<sup>18</sup> before taking issue with this definition and arguing that values and norms are different to attitudes and beliefs, as the former are internal to the individual and the latter are means by which the individual regards some external thing.<sup>19</sup> He therefore defined political culture as only the values and norms of a given society.

Duffield<sup>20</sup> also noted the many varied and differing definitions of culture but opined that there are common features. Firstly, they involve some pattern of thought or perception common to the group, but this is internal to the individual and thus distinct from behaviour.<sup>21</sup> It is also distinct from institutions (including political parties).<sup>22</sup> Culture belongs to the group not just its constituent individuals, and each culture is distinctive from other cultures and evolves only slowly.<sup>23</sup> Bale<sup>24</sup> touched upon these concepts within a political science framework, stating that "*each social unit will have its own common-sense, its own 'take' on reality, its own belief system about what is and what ought to be (both ethically and organisationally), its own inextricable blend of what are commonly thought of as conceptions of authority and conceptions of purpose*".<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See for example Bale T. 1997. Towards a 'cultural theory' of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 25 – 43; Bale T. 1999. *Broad churches, big theory and one small example: cultural theory and intra-party politics*. In Thompson M., Grendstad G. and Selle P. (eds) *Cultural Theory as Political Science*. London, Routledge and Bale T. 1999. *Sacred Cows and Common Sense: The symbolic statecraft and political culture of the British Labour Party*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

<sup>15</sup> Keesing R. M. 1974. Theories of Culture. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 3, pp 73 – 97.

<sup>16</sup> Elkins D. J. and Simeon R. E. B. 1979. A cause in search of its effect, or what does political culture explain? *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 11 No. 2, pp 127 – 145.

<sup>17</sup> Shi T. 2001. Cultural values and political trust: A comparison of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 33 No. 4, pp 401 – 419.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p402.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p402.

<sup>20</sup> Duffield J. S. 1999. Political culture and state behaviour: Why Germany confounds Neorealism. *International Organisation*. Vol. 53 No. 4, 00 765 – 803.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p769.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p769.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p770.

<sup>24</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a 'cultural theory' of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 25 – 43.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p29.

Bale<sup>26</sup> posited cultural theory as a possible method of understanding the factions within the Parliamentary Labour Party,<sup>27</sup> building upon the work of Rose<sup>28</sup> on factions, and that of Rayner,<sup>29</sup> Douglas and Wildavsky<sup>30</sup> and Gross and Rayner<sup>31</sup> on cultural theory. It is Bale's contention that "*ways of seeing and ways of organising are inextricably and reciprocally linked*"<sup>32</sup> and that individuals within a social unit hold a "*cultural bias (shared fundamental beliefs and values)*".<sup>33</sup> It is these shared fundamental beliefs and values which define a difference between groups, and which it is the argument of this thesis that differs those legislators who emerge from a youth wing background, and those who come from a background in the trade union movement.

However, we can also draw a distinction between 'ways of seeing' – the political perspective – and 'ways of organising' – the political practices that result. These are inextricably linked in a symbiotic relationship as Bale contends<sup>34</sup> but there is a difference as discussed by Shi<sup>35</sup>. The distinction is that ways of seeing are internal to the individual, whereas ways of organising are by definition external and communal; as Duffield<sup>36</sup> noted culture belongs to a collective, it is a social phenomenon. These communally held political practices are how those ways of seeing are spread and signalled to others to diffuse that way of seeing through the group, they signal what ways of seeing are considered appropriate within that group. They are therefore a key mechanism for signalling how to belong, which is as true for participants within a group as for academic observers. As such they must be performative. This demonstrates belonging and also informs potential new recruits of what patterns of thought and behaviour they must adopt to become a member of the in-group. Such performative actions will include internal markers of in/out status, how insiders think of and describe themselves, what they believe to be the group's objectives and how members of the group should and do behave around each other and with outsiders.

This is important, because in political science or any other field it is difficult to tell or measure what another individual truly thinks or feels. But the symbiotic nature of the political practices – the ways of organising – of a group tell us what the political perspectives – the ways of seeing – are. Consequently, by observing these performative political practices in action we can analyse the political perspectives they are signalling.

This also means that these two factors, whilst distinct, cannot exist without each other. Without performative political practices the culture's political perspectives cannot be signalled to new

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<sup>26</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a 'cultural theory' of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 25 – 43.

<sup>27</sup> For a full discussion of factions and their relationship to this study see chapter two.

<sup>28</sup> Rose R. 1964. Parties, factions and tendencies in Britain. *Political Studies*. Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 33 - 46.

<sup>29</sup> Rayner S. 1979. *The classification and dynamics of sectarian forms of organisation: Grid/Group perspectives on the far left in Britain*. Doctoral dissertation; University of London.

<sup>30</sup> Douglas M. and Wildavsky A. 1982. *Risk and blame: An essay on the selection of technological and environmental dangers*. Berkeley CA, University of California Press.

<sup>31</sup> Gross J. L. and Rayner S. 1985. *Measuring culture: A paradigm for the analysis of social organisation*. New York NY, Columbia University Press.

<sup>32</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a 'cultural theory' of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a 'cultural theory' of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, p. 27

<sup>35</sup> Shi T. 2001. Cultural values and political trust: A comparison of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 33 No. 4, pp 401 – 419.

<sup>36</sup> Duffield J. S. 1999. Political culture and state behaviour: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism. *International Organisation*. Vol. 53 No. 4, 00 765 – 803.

members of the group and the culture cannot be sustained. The distinction between internal and external aspects of culture then is valid, but in practical terms any meaningful definition of party culture must be defined in such a way as to take into account both political perspectives and political practices to be of value.

For the purposes of this study then political culture is defined as those assumptions, ideas, norms, customs and beliefs found within a certain group or sub-group which has political aims or effects, maintained and evidenced in group shibboleths, self-perceptions, espoused priorities and principles of right action and interaction which govern social behaviour both within the group and towards outsiders. The first part of the definition breaks down political perspectives, the second refers to the inextricably linked political practices which evidence and reinforce them.

An important point to note is that political culture, both political perspectives and political practices, are a series of learned behaviours. Individuals do not for the most part join a political party or their youth wings with fully formed understanding of that party's or group's culture, unless they are raised by highly involved parents and learn it through childhood. Either way, in childhood or adulthood, an individual undergoes a process of learning and absorbing these assumptions, ideas, norms, customs and beliefs and the corresponding shibboleths, self-perceptions and principles of right action and interaction. As these are performative and adopted from others around them this learning process is a form of socialisation into the group, whereby adopting more of the culture of the group is rewarded by further acceptance. This process of learning the relevant political culture and being socialised into the group to which it corresponds is referred to in this thesis as politicisation.

#### Class and class sensibilities.

Class is a concept that runs as the central thread through this thesis. It is something which every individual will have a conceptualisation of, but which people often struggle to put into exact words. That is, people might not be able to say exactly what class is, but they know it when they see it. Academics have also struggled to provide a concrete definition of class, nevertheless this thesis requires a definition of class in order to be able to understand the concept of class sensibilities. It is a contention of this thesis that the process of politicisation, the adoption of the political cultures of the youth wings and political parties, is easier for those from a more affluent, middle-class background. Further the perspectives and practices which are adopted during that process are those which characterise the dominant middle-class, meaning that in order to be accepted into the group working-class individuals have to adopt middle-class sensibilities.

For Karl Marx<sup>37</sup> an individual's class is entirely defined by their relationship to the ownership of the means of production. This thesis, along with many other theorists, rejects that narrow definition as far too blunt an assessment to be useful. Evans and Tilley<sup>38</sup> argue that there is no one definitive characterisation of class but use an adaptation of the Goldthorpe Schema, created by Erikson and Goldthorpe<sup>39</sup> and then further developed by Goldthorpe,<sup>40</sup> which groups occupations together and also takes into account levels of job security.

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<sup>37</sup> Marx K. 1867. (Trans. Fernbach D. and Fowkes B. 1990). *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*. London, Penguin Publishing.

<sup>38</sup> Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>39</sup> Erikson R. and Goldthorpe J. H. 1992. *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Society*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

<sup>40</sup> Goldthorpe J. H. 2004. *The Economic Basis of Social Class*. LSE STIC ERD Research Paper CASE080. London, London School of Economics and Political Science and Goldthorpe J. H. 2007. 'Social Class and the

This however does not take into account the cultural aspects of class. Even as far back as 1928 Stevenson<sup>41</sup> was referring to cultural divisions as more important than wealth divisions when discussing class. For Thompson<sup>42</sup> class is not an objective category, but rather an active cultural construct created by its participants. Ainsley<sup>43</sup> also argues that class is not a fixed concept but based on cultural context. Both Standing<sup>44</sup> and Goodhart<sup>45</sup> define class in the modern era as more cultural than linked to occupation. Savage<sup>46</sup> argues that class is based on levels of three forms of capital – economic, social and cultural. This builds on Bourdieu<sup>47</sup> who argues that class is acquired or inherited socio-cultural capital, passed down via behaviour and language – in particular via the education system – to reinforce social structures.

A definition of class then must take into account cultural aspects as well as income or occupation. This cultural aspect is important, and links to the concepts of political culture and politicisation discussed above, because cultures can shift or new ones can be learnt, whether they be political cultures or class ones. However, an additional level of complexity for this thesis is that the definition needs to apply across the entire time frame from the late 1970s, during which the working class had a common economic experience and linked cultural identity<sup>48</sup> and to the modern era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when that no longer holds true.<sup>49</sup>

This thesis will therefore define class as the cultural grouping to which an individual belongs based on their perceived socio-economic position within society. This acknowledges that those groupings can and have shifted, whether across society or within the life and experience of an individual, that they are based on beliefs and perceptions – of the individual and others – and that classes are relative to each other. Further, it recognises that class is as much a cultural grouping as an economic one, and that social and cultural capital are as relevant as economic capital when deciding on an individual's class association. It should also be born in mind that higher education often has a large impact on defining an individual's cultural grouping.

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Differentiation of Employment Contracts' in Goldthorpe J. H. *On Sociology*. Redwood City CA, Stanford University Press, p101-125.

<sup>41</sup> Stevenson T.H.C. 1928. The Vital Statistics of Wealth and Poverty. *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*. Vol. 91 No. 2, pp207-230.

<sup>42</sup> Thompson E. P. 1963. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London, Pelican Publishing, p9.

<sup>43</sup> Ainsley C. 2018. *The New Working Class: How to win hearts, minds and votes*. Bristol, Policy Press.

<sup>44</sup> Standing G. 2009. *Work after Globalisation: Building Occupational Citizenship*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing and Standing G. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London, Bloomsbury Academic Publishing.

<sup>45</sup> Goodhart D. 2017. *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. London, C. Hurst and Co Publishing.

<sup>46</sup> Savage M. 2015. *Social Class in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. London, Pelican Publishing.

<sup>47</sup> Bourdieu P. and Passeron J-C. 1990. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London, SAGE Publishing. Second Edition.

<sup>48</sup> Ainsley C. 2018. *The New Working Class: How to win hearts, minds and votes*. Bristol, Policy Press, p8.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. and Standing G. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London, Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, p8 – 19.

There are two other aspects of class which are agreed upon by many theorists, including Ainsley,<sup>50</sup> Evans and Tilley,<sup>51</sup> Goodhart,<sup>52</sup> Savage<sup>53</sup> and Standing<sup>54</sup> and which need to be born in mind. The first is that class structures are still vital to an accurate understanding of both society and politics, but that have shifted from the mid to late 1980s onwards and indeed are still in the process of shifting. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century binary of blue-collar working class and white-collar middle class no longer holds true.

This leads to a question as to the applicability of the terms 'working-class' and 'middle-class' in the contemporary era. Standing<sup>55</sup> discusses not the working-class but the Precariat, which he describes as a 'class-in-the-making'.<sup>56</sup> Evans and Tilley<sup>57</sup> divide occupations up into seven groups – old middle-class, new middle-class, junior middle-class, own account (the self-employed), personal service, foreman and working class. This thesis does not need to go into this level of detail, as it is interested not in specific occupations but with the cultural aspects of class and how they relate to politics. The old, new and junior middle-classes all have a middle-class culture, regardless of whether their occupation is barrister, law lecturer or legal assistant – three of the examples given for those respective classes.

Further the class structure at the beginning of the time period in this thesis was the traditional class division of manual workers – skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled – and management. The new forms of working- and middle-class, although differing in occupation greatly, still fall into the rough umbrella groups of those who are paid for their labour and those who are paid for their knowledge. Therefore, this thesis will continue to utilise the terms working-class and middle-class, to avoid confusion.

The second point of agreement is that although the new class structures in the industrialised West are more fluid in terms of their occupational typologies in social mobility terms they are more rigidly stratified – it is harder to move up the class ladder.<sup>58</sup> Those who do move up do so via tertiary education, and specifically university education.<sup>59</sup>

This point is important for this thesis. It has to be admitted that national representatives in any country are no longer members of the working class when it comes to their income and occupation. In the past social democratic parliamentarians who came up through the trade union movement kept their

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<sup>50</sup> Ainsley C. 2018. *The New Working Class: How to win hearts, minds and votes*. Bristol, Policy Press.

<sup>51</sup> Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>52</sup> Goodhart D. 2017. *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. London, C. Hurst and Co Publishing.

<sup>53</sup> Savage M. 2015. *Social Class in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. London, Pelican Publishing.

<sup>54</sup> Standing G. 2009. *Work after Globalisation: Building Occupational Citizenship*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing and Standing G. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London, Bloomsbury Academic Publishing.

<sup>55</sup> Standing G. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London, Bloomsbury Academic Publishing.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p8.

<sup>57</sup> Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p4.

<sup>58</sup> See in particular Goodhart D. 2017. *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. London, C. Hurst and Co Publishing and Standing G. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London, Bloomsbury Academic Publishing.

<sup>59</sup> Brynner J.M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The Wider Benefits of Higher Education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49.

working-class culture, embodied in the trade union movement – which evoked a strong sense of working-class identity.<sup>60</sup> The party youth wings however are dominated by graduates.<sup>61</sup>

Research by Brynner and Egerton<sup>62</sup> and Reay, Crozier and Clayton<sup>63</sup> demonstrated that attending university forces working-class individuals to adopt the positions, priorities and opinions of their middle-class peers to ‘blend in’ – they are thereby socialised into the middle-classes. Just as politicisation is adopting a political culture, defined as those assumptions, ideas, norms, customs and beliefs found within a certain group or sub-group, maintained and evidenced in group shibboleths, self-perceptions, espoused priorities and principles of right action and interaction which govern social behaviour both within the group and towards outsiders, so class socialisation is the adoption of their social and cultural equivalents, which also includes political aspects. Those positions, priorities and opinions which are learnt by middle-class individuals as children, and adopted by those working-class individuals who attend university, are referred to collectively by this thesis as ‘middle-class sensibilities.’ Hanley describes the process of how working-class individuals adapt, at least outwardly, to the middle-class milieu they find themselves in<sup>64</sup> at university or in the professions – including politics – by adopting those middle-class sensibilities via responding to the ‘silent signals’<sup>65</sup> of how to behave of their new, middle-class peers.

This means that the rise of the youth wings as the preeminent route into national legislatures on the left not only has less barriers for middle-class individuals, but also even those who grew up in straitened circumstances with a working-class culture, by taking this route, have adopted middle-class sensibilities by the time they are in a position to push for selection for national parliaments.

The situation however is more complex than this. Most individuals from a less affluent background retain some of their working-class culture, often large parts. Hanley<sup>66</sup> refers to this as the ‘wall in the mind’ – the same term used in Germany to describe the struggles of former East Germans to adapt following reunification. Some interviewees, in particular GB01, raised this as an issue, as being neither one class nor the other. This does go some way towards proving the point that adopting at least some middle-class sensibilities was required to push for selection, but it should be born in mind.

Further the social democratic parties, and even more the trade unions, have long been proponents of a strong working-class culture.<sup>67</sup> This is particularly the case in Great Britain, where the Conservative Party of the 1950s, 60s and 70s laid claim to the ‘respectable’ middle-class by contrasting it with the Labour supporting working-class.<sup>68</sup> This can lead to a social desirability bias amongst even middle-class members, who then look to appropriate what they perceive to be markers of working-class culture for selectoral advantage.<sup>69</sup> This activity can further muddy the waters around class and selection in social democratic parties. When reading the discussions around class and selection in this thesis then, it

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<sup>60</sup> Savage M. 2015. *Social Class in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. London, Pelican Publishing, p28.

<sup>61</sup> See chapter six.

<sup>62</sup> Brynner J.M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The Wider Benefits of Higher Education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49

<sup>63</sup> Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. ‘Fitting in’ or ‘standing out’: Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

<sup>64</sup> Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Hanley L. 2007. *Estates: An Intimate History*. London, Granta Books.

<sup>67</sup> Savage M. 2015. *Social Class in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. London, Pelican Publishing, p28.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p37.

<sup>69</sup> The effect of this social desirability bias on the interviews conducted for this thesis is discussed in chapter three.

must be considered that these divisions are messy and shade into each other, there are not clear-cut and simple binary divisions.

#### Professionalisation and gentrification.

The broader context for this study is the ongoing discussion around the professionalisation of politics and political parties. The idea that politics has become more professionalised and that this has meant that full time 'career politicians' are on the increase is commonplace as seen in the work of researchers such as Cairney,<sup>70</sup> Norris,<sup>71</sup> O'Grady<sup>72</sup> and Saalfeld.<sup>73</sup> The notion is also barely contested, with the occasional notable exception such as Beckman.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless there is some confusion because the concept of politics professionalising and the notion of an increase in career politicians are in fact two interlinked but separate concepts, both described in the literature under the name professionalisation. The distinction between these two is not acknowledged in the literature on the subject but forms an important framework for this study. This section will define both terms and indicate why it treats them as separate concepts.

The professionalisation of politics in this study is defined as the process of increasing levels of qualification, education, professional identity and professional cultural markers required by those working in the political field resulting from the increased sophistication in the manner in which politics and political campaigning are organised and performed.

Democratic politics is a continual arms race between the parties. This results in an increasing sophistication in how politics is done as one or other party gains an electoral advantage which the others then scramble to adopt, such as the Social Media strategies of the Conservative Party in the 2015 General Election being adopted by the Labour Party in the 2017 election.<sup>75</sup> This brings greater levels of specialisation in the techniques and methods required for political parties to successfully pursue their electoral aims, and consequently a functional need for specialists, marked as such by their qualifications, education and experience as full-time practitioners. This can be seen in increases in the numbers and qualifications of party staff,<sup>76</sup> an imposition of a professional code to those working in the political field<sup>77</sup> and the revolution in political communication techniques.<sup>78</sup> As with any other profession this brings with it a professional identity which then requires markers and characteristics which help define it as such to those both in and out of the identity group.<sup>79</sup> This is professionalisation

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<sup>70</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'politics-facilitating' explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2, pp 212 – 233.

<sup>71</sup> Norris P. 1997. 'Introduction: Theories of Recruitment' in Norris P. (ed.), *Passages to Power. Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Societies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> O'Grady T. 2019. Careerists versus Coal-Miners: Welfare Reforms and the Substantive Representation of Social Groups in the British Labour Party. *Comparative Political Studies*. Vol. 52 No. 4, pp 544-578.

<sup>73</sup> Saalfeld T. 1997. Professionalisation of parliamentary roles in Germany: An aggregate-level analysis 1949 – 94. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 1, pp 32-54.

<sup>74</sup> Beckman L. 2007. The Professionalisation of Politics Reconsidered: A Study of the Swedish Cabinet 1917-2004. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 1. pp 66 – 83.

<sup>75</sup> Margetts H. 2017. Why Social Media May Have Won the 2017 General Election. *The Political Quarterly*. Vol. 88 No. 3. pp 386 – 390.

<sup>76</sup> Karlsen R. and Saglie J. 2017. Party bureaucrats, independent professionals, or politicians? A study of party employees. *West European Politics*. Vol. 40, No. 6. pp 1331 – 1351.

<sup>77</sup> Black G. S. 1970. A Theory of Professionalisation in Politics. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 64 No. 3. pp 865 – 878.

<sup>78</sup> Holtz-Bacha C., Mancini P. and Papathanassopoulos S. (Eds). 2007. *The Professionalisation of Political Communication*. Chicago, Intellect Books.

<sup>79</sup> Black G. S. 1970. A Theory of Professionalisation in Politics. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 64 No. 3. pp 865 – 878.

in its true sense, the process of giving a certain activity professional status and qualities by requiring greater qualifications to achieve the required rising level of specialisation.

In the literature however researchers such as Norris,<sup>80</sup> Saalfield<sup>81</sup> and Best and Cotta<sup>82</sup> conceptualise professionalisation not as increasing specialisation but as a rise in middle-class 'career' politicians. These career politicians are defined as coming from certain professional backgrounds, termed by Cairney<sup>83</sup> 'politics-facilitating' and defined by Mellors<sup>84</sup> as 'communication professions' such as law, education and journalism.

There have always been professional politicians in national legislatures,<sup>85</sup> and the presence of less affluent individuals is a phenomenon only seen since the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Nevertheless, there is in the contemporary debate a sense that those from a more affluent background are now better able to navigate the professionalised world of politics to the point of becoming a legislator. These may not be individuals who have been born into the middle class, although many are, but that they need to be at least socialised into it before pursuing a political career. Brynner and Egerton<sup>86</sup> have shown that individuals who go through higher education undergo a process of adapting to and adopting middle class sensibilities. It is the contention of this study that the same is happening within the youth wings of the political party. In previous eras many on the centre-left gained the necessary skills for politics by undertaking an apprenticeship in the trade union movement, leading to figures entering Parliament such as the Labour MP Roy Mason who began working in a coal mine at 14<sup>87</sup> or the former postman Alan Johnson who left school at 16.<sup>88</sup> The assumption that less affluent individuals have been crowded out of Parliament is one of the questions which will be tested by this thesis,<sup>89</sup> and the research does support the claim that more affluent individuals are coming to dominate centre-left politics to a far greater extent, disrupting the previous balance.

There is a word that can be applied to more affluent individuals crowding out the less well off from a space which they previously occupied which can be borrowed from the field of urban studies: gentrification.<sup>90</sup> This concept describes how those with greater levels of capital – whether economic or social – have been moving into spaces – whether geographic or conceptual – which were previously

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<sup>80</sup> Norris P. 1997. *Passages to Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>81</sup> Saalfield T. 1997. Professionalisation of parliamentary roles in Germany: An aggregate-level analysis, 1949–94. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 1. pp 32 – 54.

<sup>82</sup> Best H. and Cotta M. (Eds). 2000. *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848 – 2000*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>83</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>84</sup> Mellors C. 1978. *The British MP: A Socioeconomic Study of the House of Commons*. Farnborough, Saxon House.

<sup>85</sup> Best H. and Cotta M. (Eds). 2000. *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848 – 2000*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>86</sup> Brynner J.M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The Wider Benefits of Higher Education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49.

<sup>87</sup> Yorkshire Post. 2015. Obituary: Roy Mason, a man forever linked with Barnsley and coal mining. *The Yorkshire Post*. 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015. Available at <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/obituaries/obituary-roy-mason-a-man-forever-linked-with-barnsley-and-coal-mining-1-7218965>.

<sup>88</sup> Johnson A. 2015. *Please, Mr Postman: A Memoir*. London, Corgi.

<sup>89</sup> See chapters four and five.

<sup>90</sup> See Lees L. Slater T and Wylie E. K. (eds). 2010. *The Gentrification Reader Volume 1*. London, Routledge for an in depth discussion of the term in urban studies.



at least in part the domain of those with less capital.<sup>91</sup> Therefore this study will import this concept into political science in order to differentiate the second conceptualisation of professionalisation found in the literature from the first. In the conceptualisation of this study then the gentrification of politics is the process by which more affluent individuals supplant and crowd out less affluent individuals from a political or legislative space by virtue of greater social or economic capital.

It is important to provide this distinction, because it is important for this research. It is the contention of this thesis that the greater influx of career politicians is not an inevitable effect of professionalisation. There are still some examples in national legislatures, such as Angela Rayner<sup>92</sup> in the UK, Ulrich Freese<sup>93</sup> in Germany and Stefan Löfven<sup>94</sup> in Sweden, who have come through the trade union route into politics and have reached high political status – the highest in Löfven’s case – from a less affluent background in very recent history. Consequently, it is still possible for individuals to become legislators without first undergoing this process of gentrification. Whilst the professionalisation process is likely to have had an impact on and increased the contextual likelihood of gentrification, and there will likely be some concomitant interlinking of the two, the need for additional specialisation is not the sole cause of the shift towards more middle-class legislators. It is the gentrification dynamic which is of primary interest in this research.

As the examples in this section demonstrate, the existing literature has conflated these two concepts as one, in part because increasing professionalisation and increasing gentrification have occurred at the same time. But correlation is not causality and these two processes may not be inextricably linked. As the remorseless logic of electoral politics is responsible for the professionalisation process it is the contention of this thesis that a shift in legislator’s apprenticeships is responsible for gentrification.

Selection as a zero-sum game.

This conception of gentrification however poses a question, which is to what extent is the selection process a zero-sum game? Is it a zero-sum between the institutional players in the form of the trade unions and the youth wings, and is it a zero-sum game between working- and middle-class individuals? The simple answer to these questions is yes, this is a zero-sum game, only one individual can be selected to be the candidate in each seat or list place. There are however some caveats to this.

There are some individuals who have both service in the senior ranks of a youth wing and employment by a trade union on their CV. These are however rare birds in both the UK Labour Party and the German SPD. Of the 929 individuals to have served as a UK Labour MP between the 1979 and 2019 General Elections only 45 had both been in a senior role in a youth wing and been employed by a trade union. In the SPD just 22 individuals had both served in a senior youth wing role and been employed by a trade union, out of a total of 848 individuals to have served in the Bundestag. Such individuals do exist however and further are on the rise, as trade unions become more intermediate stages than origin

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<sup>91</sup> See for example *ibid.*, Atkinson R. and Bridge G. 2004. *Gentrification in a Global Context*. London, Routledge, Lees L., Slater T. and Wylly E.K. 2013. *Gentrification*. London, Routledge and Smith N. 2005. *The new urban frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*. London, Routledge.

<sup>92</sup> See Dean S. 2016. ‘Labour MP Angela Rayner’s tribute to her inspirational mother’. *The I.* 24<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Available at <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/labour-mp-angela-rayners-tribute-inspirational-mother/> accessed 08.07.2019 12:53 and King M. 2012. ‘A working life: the union official’ *The Guardian*. 17<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2012/feb/17/working-life-union-official-unison> accessed 08.07.2019 12:54.

<sup>93</sup> Uli-freese.de. 2019. About Me. Online. Available at <http://uli-freese.de/neu/ulrich-freese-vita-lebenslauf-vorstellung/> accessed 08.07.2019 12:57.

<sup>94</sup> Government.se. 2019. CV Stefan Löfven. Online. Available at <https://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/prime-ministers-office/stefan-lofven/cv-stefan-lofven/> accessed 08.07.2019 12:59.

points.<sup>95</sup> These individuals are not ignored in this thesis but they are unusual enough at 4.74% and 2.59% respectively to be discussed as exceptions in their own section rather than included as part of the norms of selection.

Further, as discussed in the empirical chapters, the increase in individuals from both a youth wing and trade unionist background is in large part down to the union's increasing tendency to send graduates in the form of former industrial tribunal lawyers and political officers to the national legislatures rather than shop stewards and those who have come up from the factory floors.

As discussed above the concept of class is a complex, shifting dynamic and can even be so within an individual.<sup>96</sup> There are unlikely to be significant numbers of ideal types who could resolutely be said to be working-class in order to push them for selection<sup>97</sup> although there may well be greater numbers of ideal-type middle-class MPs. This is caused, at least in part, by the need to adopt at least some middle-class sensibilities to push for selection, and in part by other factors, such as political ambition.

Candidates for selection are, by definition, office-seeking and therefore act accordingly,<sup>98</sup> with the structural framework of political opportunities encouraging ambition in those who see a prospective path.<sup>99</sup> This can be influenced by factors such as gender, for example Hilde and Davidson-Schmich<sup>100</sup> found in their analysis of Germany and New Zealand that in mixed-member electoral systems women will focus on the party list side of the equation, and Schwindt-Bayer finding that women needed to display the same characteristics and play the same game as men to get selected, something which can be difficult due to gendered expectations around life circumstances.<sup>101</sup> Life circumstances around family and professional commitments also influences political ambition more broadly for both men and women.<sup>102</sup> In part this is because of the importance of individuals who want to push themselves forward for selection signalling this to gatekeepers,<sup>103</sup> as part of their talent-spotting role, and the manner in which gendered expectations lead to this happening less often amongst potential female candidates.<sup>104</sup>

For reasons discussed in more depth in chapter three however this thesis doesn't consider gender in detail, but it does have to be acknowledged here as a factor. With regards to issues of class Robbins<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> See chapters four and five.

<sup>96</sup> See Hanley L. 2007. *Estates: An Intimate History*. London, Granta Books and Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>97</sup> Davies L. J. 2020. 'Labour's next leader must consider the gentrification of our membership'. *LabourList*. Published on 13.02.2020. Available at <https://labourlist.org/2020/02/labours-next-leader-must-consider-the-gentrification-of-our-membership/> accessed 20.02.2020 13:58.

<sup>98</sup> Schlesinger J. A. 1966. *Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States*. Chicago IL, Rand McNally.

<sup>99</sup> Black G. S. 1972. A Theory of Political Ambition: Career Choices and the Role of Structural Incentives. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 144 – 159.

<sup>100</sup> Hilde C. and Davidson-Schmich L. K. 2020. The gendered political ambition cycle in mixed-member electoral systems. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*. Vol. 3 No. 5, pp. 79-99.

<sup>101</sup> Crowder-Meyer M. 2020. Baker, Bus Driver, Babysitter, Candidate? Revealing the Gendered Development of Political Ambition Among Ordinary Americans. *Political Behaviour*. Vol. 42 pp. 359 – 384.

<sup>102</sup> Fox R. L. and Lawless J. L. 2011. Gaining and Losing Interest in Running for Public Office: The Concept of Dynamic Political Ambition. *Journal of Politics*. Vol. 73 No. 2, pp. 443 – 462.

<sup>103</sup> Allen P. and Cutts D. 2018. An analysis of political ambition in Britain. *The Political Quarterly*. Vol. 89, No. 1, pp. 73-81.

<sup>104</sup> Fox R. L. and Lawless J. L. 2004. Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 48 No. 2, pp. 264 – 280.

<sup>105</sup> Robbins K. F. G. 2015. *Governing Bodies: How the Organization of Social Groups Shapes Political Ambition*. Doctoral dissertation; University of Michigan.

found that privilege plays a key role in determining levels of political ambition. Peterson and Palmer<sup>106</sup> in their study of personality traits and political ambition, found that political ambition is found across the class spectrum but is lower amongst the working class than average - 8% of working class individuals had considered standing for public office, compared to a national average of 10%. As Black<sup>107</sup> found, political ambition increases when individuals feel they have the opportunity to pursue it successfully. Since this has been demonstrated to be a barrier to women's political ambition<sup>108</sup> there is no reason to suppose it is different for those from a working-class background. Indeed other researchers, such as Norris and Lovenduski,<sup>109</sup> Borchert and Golsch<sup>110</sup> and Wigbers<sup>111</sup> have also shown the issue of working-class candidates is with the supply side of the equation not the demand side.

In other words, it is not that the gatekeepers in the SPD and Labour parties have changed their criteria for selection in a manner which excludes working-class individuals but that there are fewer and fewer working-class individuals who are able to accumulate enough political capital to push for selection. Working-class candidates are not turning up to selection contests and losing out, they're just not turning up at all. Most contemporary selection contests are not therefore a zero-sum game between working-class and middle-class alternatives but a zero-sum game between several middle-class individuals.

This thesis then explores the issue of gentrification of the social democratic parties by seeking to understand why potential working-class candidates are being squeezed out before they can even get to the starting line. The manner in which this question was unpacked and explored is detailed in the next section.

### **1.3: Research questions and hypotheses.**

In order to explore the role that youth wings play in the legislative recruitment processes of the SPD and the Labour Party this study employs three research questions. It will then propose for each an hypotheses, which then frame the research. It will proceed in a comparative manner, taking a mixed approach employing both quantitative and qualitative methods.<sup>112</sup> Prior to this it will examine the existing literature in the fields of elite theory, legislative recruitment, factionalism and the professionalisation of social democratic parties and politics more widely.<sup>113</sup> This section therefore will set out and explore the research questions and the hypotheses which guide the rest of the study, as set out in the table below.

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<sup>106</sup> Peterson R. D. and Palmer C. L. 2019. The Dark Triad and nascent political ambition. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*. DOI. 10.1080/17457289.2019.1660354.

<sup>107</sup> Black G. S. 1972. A Theory of Political Ambition: Career Choices and the Role of Structural Incentives. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 144 – 159.

<sup>108</sup> See Fox R. L. and Lawless J. L. 2004. Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 48 No. 2, pp. 264 – 280 and Crowder-Meyer M. 2020. Baker, Bus Driver, Babysitter, Candidate? Revealing the Gendered Development of Political Ambition Among Ordinary Americans. *Political Behaviour*. Vol. 42 pp. 359 – 384.

<sup>109</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>110</sup> Borchert J. and Golsch L. 1995. Die politische Klasse in westlichen Demokratien Rekrutierung, Karriereinteressen und institutioneller Wandel. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*. Vol. 36 No. 4 pp. 609 – 629.

<sup>111</sup> For a full discussion on this see Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge, pp 18-19 and chapter two of this thesis.

<sup>112</sup> For more details see chapter three.

<sup>113</sup> See chapter two.

Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ1: How have the youth wings of social democratic political parties impacted on the selection of national representatives since the elections of 1979/80?	H1: Youth organisations have grown in prominence as sources of social democratic parliamentary recruitment since the 1980s, filling a vacuum created by the decline of the trade unions.
RQ2: What are the dynamics of social democratic party youth wings in relation to the recruitment of national representatives?	H2: The youth organisations present significant practical barriers to entry which wealthier, middle class individuals are better able to negotiate.
RQ3: What is the impact of any change in the role of youth wings on social democratic parties' legislative recruitment upon the nature of those parties?	H3: The shift in recruitment patterns contributes to the gentrification of social democratic parties by creating a shift in the political culture of the party representatives and therefore a shift in the nature of the parties in question.

#### Research question 1 and hypothesis 1.

Before we can consider what the impact on the parties of a potential increase in the number of legislators who were socialised into politics in the youth wings we first need to measure whether in fact this is the case and if so to what extent. The first research question therefore explores the role that youth wings have played in recent decades when it comes to the selection process in terms of the numbers of national legislators who have come from a background in those organisations.

It is clear that this cannot be done by a snapshot in time and must be looked at over an extended period. It is widely acknowledged that up until the 1970s the trade union movement was the main – though by no means only – source of legislative recruitment but that in the decades since this has declined.<sup>114</sup> This question therefore takes as its starting point the general elections at the end of those decades, 1980 in the case of Germany and 1979 in the case of the United Kingdom. Both conclude with the 2017 general elections in both countries. This will give the study a view from a time when it is recognised that trade union legislators were significant until a time when it is believed that ‘career politicians’ have taken over.<sup>115</sup> If there has been a significant increase in the number of legislators being drawn from a youth wing background at the same time this will be suggestive. Correlation will not prove causality, but it is a necessary precondition to the rest of the research questions.

This gives the context within which youth wings were operating at the outset of the timeframe investigated by this study. If youth wings were to rise as sources of it can be theorised that it would be by supplementing or supplanting the trade union movement. The study will test this by looking at trade union backgrounds as well as youth wing ones. It will operate on an initial hypothesis that the

<sup>114</sup> See for example Allern E.H., Aylott N. and Christiansen F.J. 2007. Social Democrats and trade unions in Scandinavia: The decline and persistence of institutional relationships. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 46 No. 5, pp 607-635, Brauthal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A party in power and opposition*. Oxford, Westview Press. Second Edition. and Minkin L. 1991. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>115</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the ‘Politics-Facilitating’ Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

trade unions declined as a source of recruitment, as membership numbers and therefore financial and organisational influence declined and that the youth wings therefore filled a vacuum created by this decline. The thesis does not contend that this was a deliberate attempt to gain influence on the part of the youth wings but rather an unplanned drift to fulfil a functional need of the parties.

#### Research question 2 and hypothesis 2.

The second research question is an investigation into the dynamics surrounding youth wings and the selection process. It will look to explore what is it about service in a youth wing that puts an individual in the place to be considered for selection. One possibility is that being in the youth wings gives an individual the opportunity to develop the kind of skills required to achieve political objectives. A further potential possibility is that the youth wings give their members unparalleled access to network with party insiders. These are also not mutually exclusive, it may be that both are contributory factors. By developing these skills and networking opportunities individuals can gain entry to the political ecosystem and proceed from there to selection as a candidate.<sup>116</sup>

As well as a discussion of the process there is a deeper question as to what type of individual is best equipped to navigate the processes identified to the point of selection, and what factors might influence, limit or prevent that. Consequently, this research question will also investigate the barriers to entry which the youth wings present, examine who is best able to overcome those and by what mechanisms.

Largely for reasons of time and resource this thesis will analyse these barriers from a class basis and not investigate the specific impact of race or gender. Whilst those are important aspects they require dedicated research. This thesis is intended as a starting point for the exploration of the role of youth wings on legislative recruitment and the specific impact of race and gender are obvious examples of potential further research. This is discussed in more depth in chapter three and in the concluding chapter.

The research will take an initial hypothesis that the barriers to entry are predominantly practical, that is time and money, and conceptual rather than any attempt by the parties or the youth wings themselves to limit who can be an actively involved member. It follows from this that the individuals who are better able to overcome those practical issues are those with significant resources, financial, time and social, to expend on activity within the youth wings. This it is hypothesised is a key driver of gentrification, by excluding those without the initial capital to take advantage of the opportunities for a political apprenticeship offered by the youth wings.

#### Research question 3 and hypothesis 3.

The third research question explores how shifts in the recruiting grounds for legislators towards youth wings has changed the nature of the parties in question. Specifically, it is looking at what impact the youth wings have had, via the mechanism of selection, on the political culture of the parties. This in turn would indicate changes in the nature of the party.

By exploring how the youth wings have impacted on the parties the study will seek to understand the link between any identified changes in the recruitment patterns of the party and the gentrification process identified in the literature. By increasing the number of individuals who have been socialised into politics by the youth wings we would expect to see an importing of the culture of the youth wings into the parliamentary parties who provide a leading role in defining the nature of the parties.

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<sup>116</sup> The recruitment journey is discussed in chapter two.

The hypothesis in response to research question 3 is that this has indeed happened, and that this has been a self-reinforcing phenomenon leading to the gentrification of the parties. By shifting the party culture these individuals also shift not only the direction and therefore the public perception of the parties but also on which individuals are more likely to be attracted to the party and look to become active members of it, who then eventually become the legislators in the fullness of time.

If this is indeed the case and the traditional bastions of working class individuals getting into politics have gentrified then this contributes not only to the debate on the nature of social democratic parties but also about their alienation from less affluent members of the general public, leading to the electoral collapse of social democratic parties.<sup>117</sup> It also speaks to the discussion of the rise of populist parties on the back of the disenchantment and alienation from politics of less affluent members of Western European societies.

### **1.4: Thesis outline.**

This thesis will proceed by first outlining in chapter two the existing state of the literature in the fields of power elites and political parties, the recruitment and selection journeys of electoral candidates, the impact of factionalism both on the party culture but also on the selection process and look at the existing state of the literature on the professionalisation of political parties. In this last section it will go into more depth on the conceptual split between professionalisation and gentrification. Chapter two will draw conclusions from this literature which explain where this study sits in the existing canon.

Chapter three will detail the methodology that was used for the study. It will explain why a mixed methods approach was chosen and go into detail on both the quantitative and qualitative methods used to collect data for the empirical studies. It will give details on the chosen case studies and justify their selection. A discussion will follow on the issues that arose with the data collection, what the researcher did to circumvent the issues and how the research proceeded. Finally, it will outline the potential ethical issues which were involved with the research and detail what steps were taken to ensure that ethical guidelines were met, in particular as the researcher was previously involved in one of the youth wing organisations studied.

The thesis will then proceed over the next three chapters to discuss the empirical case studies of the SPD and the Labour Party. Chapters four and five will introduce the case studies of the SPD and the Labour Party respectively, detailing the party structures and their affiliated youth wings. Both chapters will then go on to discuss the selection processes within the parties including the roles of the relevant gatekeepers and the power dynamics of the contest. The two chapters will then present the empirical data answering research question 1, looking at the changing role of the youth wings in legislative recruitment for the parties before comparing that to shifts in the role of the trade union movement across the same time. Both chapters will then draw conclusions from that empirical data.

Chapter six will also be an empirical chapter, exploring and discussing research questions 2 and 3. This chapter will explore the dynamics of the youth wings and their relationship to the selection process in the two case studies. It will explore the barriers to entry and which individuals are best able to surmount them in the two respective parties. Further it will explore the culture of the parties. This will be done to determine whether this dynamic has been a driving factor in the gentrification of the two parties. The chapter will end by drawing related conclusions from the empirical data.

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<sup>117</sup> See for example Bickerton C. 2018. The collapse of Europe's mainstream centre left. *The New Statesman*. 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018. Available at <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/2018/05/collapse-europe-s-mainstream-centre-left> accessed 10.07.2019 14:14.

The final chapter, chapter seven, will discuss the conclusions that can then be reached from the empirical chapters and what they tell us about social democratic parties, their youth wings and the selection process. It will discuss what this means for our understanding of contemporary social democratic political parties and explore the broader implications of this study for academia as well as for politics and the social democratic parties. It will also discuss the limitations of this study and suggest what further research could be undertaken to further refine the conclusions that have been reached.

## Chapter 2: Legislative recruitment in the previous research agenda.

### **2.1: Introduction.**

In order to correctly place the following research within the existing canon of knowledge in the field there are several particularly relevant bodies of theory which need to be discussed. The first is the academic discussion on elite theory, the second is that literature which pertains to the manner in which political parties conduct legislative recruitment, the third that which looks at factional conflict within the parties and the fourth those studies concerned with the professionalisation of politics and political parties. This chapter will explore each in turn, proceeding from the broader brushstrokes of elite theory down to the nitty gritty of selection and factionalism and then to the ways in which this connects to professionalisation.

The academic study of how elites, including political elites, perpetuate control of power and resources has a long history. In the 1950s the topic was dominated first by the work of C. Wright Mills<sup>118</sup> and reactions to it before then moving into the debates between Pluralists<sup>119</sup> and Marxists<sup>120</sup> which still provide the backdrop to the state of the discipline now, though with more nuance and detail. This debate is largely focused on whether the different typologies of elites, predominantly political or economic – although media, military, administrative (civil service) and other elites have also been suggested – compete against each other (pluralism) or are dominated by the economic elite (Marxism). Broadly therefore these forms of elite theory argue that the political elite – that is, politicians – are drawn from these existing forms of elites<sup>121</sup> who socialise, intermarry and act in overlapping ‘higher circles’ and focus on the competition between forms of elites. In more recent years however the field has evolved and studies are emerging to highlight the importance of internal intra-elite competition between individual organisations of elites such as between major companies or political parties. This addresses the key weakness of elite theory’s tendency to describe ‘political elites’ as a homogenous whole interacting with other typologies of elite actors without going into the finer depth of ideological differences or electoral competition.

This matters for this study because it pertains to how to characterise the role of youth wings. Are they what they say on the tin, simply groups of young people of a similar ideological disposition looking to engage in political activity? Do they function as a kind of 21<sup>st</sup> Century country club, an exclusive arena for young members of the elites to network and socialise? Alternatively are they a ladder of social mobility, allowing individuals from lower social backgrounds to access the political elite? The truth is likely to be somewhere in between all three, a semi-exclusive organisation of engaged, ideologically similar young people with real but permeable barriers to entry based on logistical cost and geographic reasons rather than parentage. Elite theory can provide an overarching framework within which to explore these questions since it is one aspect of the elites – the political elites – and who gains admittance to it which is the primary concern of legislative recruitment studies.

Scholars in this field of legislative recruitment also investigate these key questions of who becomes a parliamentarian, from which routes and overcoming which obstacles. Often however these studies

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<sup>118</sup> Wright Mills C. 1954. *The Power Elite*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>119</sup> Dahl R. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. London, Yale University Press.

<sup>120</sup> See for example Miliband R. 1969. *The State in Capitalist Society; An analysis of the Western system of power*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson and Poulantzas N. Trans. O'Hagan T. 1978. *Political Power and Social Classes*. New York, Verso Books.

<sup>121</sup> Wright Mills C. 1954. *The Power Elite*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p11.



are framed around how the demography of political representatives impacts on legislation or on which issues are given prominence in the political arena. Researchers such as Ashe and Stewart,<sup>122</sup> Childs,<sup>123</sup> Chiva,<sup>124</sup> Eliassen and Pederson,<sup>125</sup> Kittilson,<sup>126</sup> Norris and Lovenduski<sup>127</sup> and Sanbonmatsu<sup>128</sup> for example approach the study of political recruitment from this angle. This approach is based on the concept that the sociocultural demographics of elected representatives defines the nature of the party, its policy focus and character.<sup>129</sup> Much of the literature regarding underrepresentation of certain demographic groups – such as women<sup>130</sup> or ethnic minorities<sup>131</sup> – is based on the linked notion that the inclusion of such groups in the legislature is vital for the promotion of policies beneficial to those groups.

This is an assumption but one which is widely held both within academia and in the general public, including members of political parties, which helps to explain why the selection of candidates – who if successful form the core of the party and potentially of the government – is not only the most important<sup>132</sup> but also the most contested<sup>133</sup> function of a political party. One subtle but key difference between the scholars quoted above and this study is that the current literature focuses on inherent characteristics often present at birth – sex/gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religious grouping or class background. Membership of a youth wing however is something proactively chosen by the individual rather than being an inherent characteristic. It is likely that the choice to exercise agency in the fashion of joining a youth wing is affected by these inherent characteristics – in particular class background –

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<sup>122</sup> Ashe J. and Stewart K. 2011. Legislative Recruitment: Using Diagnostic Testing to Explain Underrepresentation. *Party Politics*, Vol. 18 No. 5 pp. 687-707.

<sup>123</sup> Childs S. 2004. *New Labour's Women MPs: Women Representing Women*. London, Routledge.

<sup>124</sup> Chiva C. 2014. Gender, European Integration and Candidate Recruitment. *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 67, pp. 458-494.

<sup>125</sup> Eliassen K.A. and Pedersen M.N. 1978. Professionalization of Legislatures: Long-Term Change in Political Recruitment in Denmark and Norway. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 20 No.2, pp. 286–318

<sup>126</sup> Kittilson M. 2006. *Challenging Parties, Changing Parliaments: Women and Elected Office in Contemporary Western Europe*. Columbus, The Ohio State University Press.

<sup>127</sup> Norris P. & Lovenduski J. 1993. 'If only more candidates came forward': supply-side explanations of candidate selection in Britain. *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 373-408 and Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>128</sup> Sanbonmatsu K. 2006. The Legislative Party and Candidate Recruitment in the American States. *Party Politics*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 233-256.

<sup>129</sup> See for example Gallagher M. and Marsh M. (Ed.) 1988. *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*. New York, SAGE Publications; Hazan R. and Rahat G. 2006. 'Candidate Selection: Methods and Consequences', in Katz R. and Crotty W. (Ed), '*Handbook of Party Politics*'. New York, SAGE Publications. pp. 109-121 and Schattschneider E. E. 1942. *Party Government: American Government in Action*. Piscataway New Jersey, Transaction Publishers.

<sup>130</sup> See for example Ashe J. et al 2010. "Stand by Your Man": Women's Political Recruitment at the 2010 UK General Election. *British Politics*, Vol. 5 No. 4, Dec. pp. 455-480; Childs S. 2004. *New Labour's Women MPs: Women Representing Women*. London, Routledge; Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press and Studlar D. and McAllister I. 1998. Candidate Gender and Voting in the 1997 British General Election: Did Labour Quotas Matter? *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 72-91.

<sup>131</sup> See for example Geddes A. 1995. The 'logic' of positive action? Ethnic minority representation in Britain after the 1992 general election. *Party Politics*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp.275-285.

<sup>132</sup> Ranney A. 1981. 'Candidate Selection', in Butler D., Penniman H. and Ranney A. (Eds) *Democracy at the Polls*. Washington D.C., American Enterprise Institute.

<sup>133</sup> Gallagher M. and Marsh M. (Ed.) 1988. *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*. New York, SAGE Publications.

but there is still a qualitative difference between an inherent characteristic and an expression of agency which will be discussed throughout this study.

Further it follows from this point that youth wings provide not only a potential actor in the legislative recruitment of social democratic parties, but also an arena in which other actors participate and compete. Just as elites are not homogenous units nor are political parties<sup>134</sup> and no discussion of an arena of political competition can be valid without some consideration of the action and interaction of political factions, whether ideological, geographic, ethnic or personality-based. Simply put, 'factionalism is a fact of life within most political parties'<sup>135</sup> and must be accounted for. In some instances, such as the German JUSOS,<sup>136</sup> the youth wings of political parties are considered as factions themselves. Others, such as Labour Students,<sup>137</sup> are considered to be organisations dominated by a particular faction. In other instances, such as the 1958 conference of the Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Ungdomsförbund (the youth wing of the Swedish social democrats) factional conflicts split the youth wings as much as the main parties.<sup>138</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter one of the hypotheses of this study is that a shift towards legislative recruitment from youth wings will contribute towards a gentrification of the political parties and the professionalisation of politics. Therefore a discussion of the existing literature on this is necessary. As discussed in chapter one the existing literature conflates gentrification and professionalisation and this thesis treats these as different concepts. This must be borne in mind during this section of this chapter.

Following the discussion of these research fields this chapter will finish with a discussion of the relevance of these debates for the present study going forward.

## **2.2: Power elites and parties.**

This study is looking at the recruitment of Parliamentarians, which is to say it is looking at the recruitment of individuals into a political power elite. A political elite is a minority of a particular polity which exercises disproportionate power over political decision making in a significant, organised and sustained manner by virtue of either control of resources or a strategic position within powerful organisations of vested interests. This definition has several key aspects. An elite is a minority. This is generally accepted throughout the literature and is found in the early twentieth Century work of Michels<sup>139</sup> and his Iron Law of Oligarchy, building on Mosca's<sup>140</sup> assertion that in any polity 'two classes

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<sup>134</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a 'cultural theory' of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 25 – 43.

<sup>135</sup> Harmel R. Heo U. K. Tan A. and Janda K. 1995. Performance, leadership, factions and party change: An empirical analysis. *West European Politics*. Vol. 18, pp1-33.

<sup>136</sup> Koelble T. A. 1991. *The Left Unravelled: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.

<sup>137</sup> Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A Study in the Politics of Labour's Party Management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, pp236-237.

<sup>138</sup> Molin K. 1992. 'Party disputes and Party Responsibility: A Study of the Social Democratic Defence Debate' in Misgeld K., Molin K. and Amark K. *Creating Social Democracy: A Century of the Social Democratic Labour Party in Sweden*. Translated from Swedish by J. Teeland. University Park PA, Pennsylvania State University Press. pp398.

<sup>139</sup> Michels R. 1911. *Political Parties*. New York, Free Press Paperbacks.

<sup>140</sup> Mosca G. 1896. *The Ruling Class* cited in Heywood A. 2002. *Politics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. London, Palgrave Macmillan pp. 79.

of people appear – a class that rules and a class that is ruled'. An elite is distinguished from other minorities in that it wields power. That is to say the elite exerts a high degree of influence over political decision-making – defined as government policy outcomes and the distribution of public resources - and that influence is significant, organised and sustained. This means that an elite has sway over political decision-making that greatly shapes which decision is taken or the form it takes, that this is done with deliberate agency organised in advance with the intention of influencing those policy outcomes or resource distribution and that they are able to exert such influence over multiple decisions in multiple areas of policy and multiple decision makers, sustained across a significant time frame.

For late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century thinkers the formation of an elite governing class was seen as being both inevitable and beneficial.<sup>141</sup> Since the Second World War however this view has been largely supplanted by scholars who believe a political elite to be anti-democratic and dangerous.<sup>142</sup> C. Wright Mills<sup>143</sup> was a key thinker in the 1950s and much of the literature since has been in response to his work. Two key schools of thought emerged in the early days of the discussion – pluralism, espoused in the earlier works of Robert Dahl,<sup>144</sup> who saw elites as essentially competing groups of political actors, and Marxist thinkers such as Ralph Miliband<sup>145</sup> and Nicos Poulantzas<sup>146</sup> who saw elites as primarily economic in nature with politics and the state subordinate to economic imperatives. Over the course of the Twentieth century both Marxists and Pluralists revised their positions, with NeoMarxists such as Jessop<sup>147</sup> and NeoPluralists such as Linblom<sup>148</sup> becoming less simplistic and seeing some convergence towards each other's perspectives.

#### Historical debates in elite theory.

C. Wright Mills<sup>149</sup> seminal work, *The Power Elite*, published in 1954, has been recognised as a cornerstone of the thinking of Sociologists and Political Scientists since its publication.<sup>150</sup> Mills's central argument was that the belief in a balance of power was erroneous,<sup>151</sup> or at least less applicable than it had been prior to the war. He argued for the existence of a power elite who had come to dominate three interlinked fields – politics,<sup>152</sup> the economy<sup>153</sup> and the military.<sup>154</sup> Mills argued that the hierarchies of these three fields had become centralised and concentrated power into the hands of a smaller and smaller group. He concluded that this was down to a social structure which resulted in an elite drawn from the same upper strata of society,<sup>155</sup> attending the same schools, universities, social

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<sup>141</sup> Michels R. 1911. *Political Parties*. New York, Free Press Paperbacks.

<sup>142</sup> Wright Mills C. 1954. *The Power Elite*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Dahl R. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. London, Yale University Press.

<sup>145</sup> Miliband R. 1969. *The State in Capitalist Society; An analysis of the Western system of power*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

<sup>146</sup> Poulantzas N. Trans. O'Hagan T. 1978. *Political Power and Social Classes*. New York, Verso Books.

<sup>147</sup> Jessop, B. 1990. *State theory: Putting the capitalist state in its place*. College Township Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press.

<sup>148</sup> Lindblom C. 1978. *Politics and Markets: The world's political economic systems*. New York, Basic Books.

<sup>149</sup> Wright Mills C. 1954. *The Power Elite*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>150</sup> Gillam R. 1975. C. Wright Mills and the politics of truth: The Power Elite revisited. *American Quarterly*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 461-479.

<sup>151</sup> Wright Mills C. 1954. *The Power Elite*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 240.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid. p. 225

<sup>153</sup> Ibid p. 118 and p. 147

<sup>154</sup> Ibid p. 173 and p. 198

<sup>155</sup> Ibid. p. 30

events and often intermarrying and moving between the three different types of hierarchy<sup>156</sup> and that this resulted in a co-ordination of the elites and a structural tightening of the three hierarchies. He also argued that being drawn from such similar backgrounds was used by the elites as a source of unity.

Mills's work was not without criticism, within four years of its publication Bell<sup>157</sup> argued that the book had loose terminology, failed to define power other than as coercive violence and failed to offer a definition of interests or a discussion on the nature of policies produced. It has been argued<sup>158</sup> that in *The Power Elite* Mills is perhaps two-thirds social analyst and one-third social polemicist and for contemporary critics such as Bell Mills was a better critic than scientist.<sup>159</sup> That view has reversed over time, with Wolfe in his afterword<sup>160</sup> to the 2000 reprinting of *The Power Elite* and Domhoff<sup>161</sup> paying tribute to Mills as social scientist. With the benefit of twenty-first century hindsight however Domhoff<sup>162</sup> noted that although Mills was accurate in his interpretations of the upper echelons of the power elite he was wrong to ascribe the military as having an equal role with political and economic hierarchies and underestimated the middle strata, in particular congress and the political parties. This is part of a new turn towards the importance of political parties to Elite Theory to which the present study will also contribute.

Marxist thinkers also took issue with aspects of *The Power Elite*. Mills believed that the power elite was best understood as an alliance of the three sectors – political, economic and military. In one footnote<sup>163</sup> he argues that the term power elite is preferable to ruling class because 'ruling' is a political term and 'class' an economic one, and that therefore the phrase 'ruling class' implies that an economic group rules politically, which denies the autonomy of the political order.

Ralph Miliband, who dedicated his work *The State in Capitalist Society*<sup>164</sup> to Mills' memory, asserted that Mills is wrong to consider the corporate community to be one section of a trio of groups within the power elite, but rather considers the economic elite as the single dominant sector of society. Furthermore he concludes that the state system is dedicated to the maintenance of the status quo. Like Mills he emphasises the similar backgrounds of the individuals making up the power elites, and highlights the importance of networking, but Miliband draws a distinction between the government and the state,<sup>165</sup> arguing that the government is just one part of the state, alongside the judiciary, civil service bureaucracy and local councils. According to Miliband the conflict within these groups enables for a semblance of democratic debate but is kept within certain parameters to ensure it never threatens the primacy of economic domination,<sup>166</sup> somewhat similar to Mills's view of the U.S. Congress and the middle strata. Miliband's main focus for much of the book is on how the status quo is maintained and why the domination of the economic or business elite isn't challenged. He argues

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid. p. 274

<sup>157</sup> Bell D. 1958. *The Power Elite Reconsidered*. *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 64 No. 3 pp. 238-250

<sup>158</sup> Wolfe A., 2000. Afterword – in Wright Mills C. 1954. *The Power Elite*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. p377-378.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. p378

<sup>161</sup> Domhoff G. W. 2006. Review: Mills's *The Power Elite* fifty years later. *Contemporary Sociology*. Vol. 35 No. 6 pp. 547-550.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Wright Mills C. 1954. *The Power Elite*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p277.

<sup>164</sup> Miliband R. 1969. *The State in Capitalist Society; An analysis of the Western system of power*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. p. 49 – 54

<sup>166</sup> Ibid p. 68 – 118

that this is done by the business elite imposing its own interests as the basis for 'sensible' political debate and by conflating business interests with the 'national interest'.<sup>167</sup>

Miliband also places an emphasis on educational institutions and the media and their 'process of legitimisation' which he defines as a thinning or narrowing of sensible or acceptable political discourse.<sup>168</sup> In this way a culture of conservative or business-friendly thought is indoctrinated into the general public.

However Miliband was not the only Marxist thinker concerned with power elites. Nicos Poulantzas<sup>169</sup> in a review of Miliband's book took issue with his conclusions based on the social origins of state actors and their connections to each other and the two then held a debate<sup>170</sup> in the magazine *New Left Review*. Jessop<sup>171</sup> summarised this debate as being whether the domination of society by an economic elite is down to an instrumentalist origin - a shared elite background and upbringing within which individual members of the elite act (Miliband's position) - or a structuralist origin believing that the state is itself a capitalist construct in nature and is solely concerned with the perpetuation of capitalist control of society (Poulantzas' position).

Jessop<sup>172</sup> himself concluded that there needs to be drawn a distinction between a capitalist state and a state operating in a capitalist society which is not itself capitalist but is constrained by the nature of the society which surrounds it. Maclean et al<sup>173</sup> agreed based on their case study of British and French political elites.

The Marxist critique was not just a criticism of Mills but also that of another strand of thought that had emerged from his work, pluralism, most closely associated at the outset with the theorist Robert Dahl.<sup>174</sup> Dahl studied the city of New Haven as a model for democratic polities more broadly and concluded that power, especially at the local level, is not necessarily invested in a single elite class or in the three elite hierarchies of Mills. Rather he argues for a plurality of power<sup>175</sup> with some groups having more resources and therefore influence than others, but none able to dominate to the extent described by Mills or the Marxists. For Dahl political decision-making is primarily concerned with constructing a viable coalition of the multiple poles of power to enact specific decisions or policies.<sup>176</sup> This was because to Dahl no one group had sufficient resources – in the form of money, institutional position, legitimacy, public support etc – to dominate. Dahl also argued that breaking into the politically active level of society was comparatively simple and therefore politicians were forced to respond to the concerns of competing groups in order to maintain their position.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p. 76

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. p 179 – 264

<sup>169</sup> See for example Poulantzas N. 1976. *The Capitalist State: A reply to Miliband and Laclau*. *New Left Review*, Vol. 1 No. 95. p.63.

<sup>170</sup> See Ibid and Miliband R. 1973. Poulantzas and the Capitalist State. *New Left Review*. Vol. 1 No. 83, p. 83.

<sup>171</sup> Jessop B., 2007. 'Dialogue of the deaf: reflections on the Poulantzas-Miliband debate', in P. Wetherly, C.W. Barrow, and P. Burnham, (Eds.) *Class, Power and the State in Capitalist Society: Essays on Ralph Miliband*. London, Palgrave Macmillan. pp.132-157.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Maclean M., Harvey C. and Chia R. 2010. Dominant Corporate Agents and the Power Elite in Britain and France. *Organisation Studies*. Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 327-348.

<sup>174</sup> Dahl R. 1961, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. London, Yale University Press.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. p. 89

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. p.91 - 93

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. p.93

Domhoff<sup>178</sup> revisited Dahl's work forty years later, taking issue with Dahl's methodology and concluding that a better definition of class and of businessmen gives a larger dataset which challenges Dahl's conclusions. Domhoff states that this new data supports the theories of interconnected elites described by Mills.

Dahl himself modified his position over time.<sup>179</sup> Recognising that corporations as the prime economic actor in society exert more influence than other groups in society can compete with. Along with other NeoPluralists such as Lindblom<sup>180</sup> he also recognised that the state is an actor in its own right and pursues its own interests. Dahl and Lindblom coined the word Polyarchy to describe the NeoPluralist position of multiple but unequal loci of power, dominated by corporations. There have still been some criticisms, for example Krouse<sup>181</sup> argued that Dahl's argument logically implies that the solution to the control of corporate power is a system of Democratic Socialism, yet that Dahl shrinks from stating such.

With Jessop,<sup>182</sup> as above, advocating that a state can operate in a capitalist society without being a capitalist actor itself, and Dahl<sup>183</sup> and Lindblom<sup>184</sup> arguing for the primacy of economic actors as a locus of power in a Polyarchy it could be argued that there is a process of convergence happening between NeoMarxist and NeoPluralist positions. However Higley and Pakulski<sup>185</sup> in 2000 argued that the two fields have not become reconcilable. To Higley and Pakulski all Marxist theories place an emphasis on class to an extent that denies the agency of the individual actor, believing them to only be able to act in the manner determined by their social class. For Pluralists on the other hand individuals are primarily concerned with preserving or increasing their own political power and this overrides class backgrounds or structural concerns. Gilens and Page<sup>186</sup> also compared different theories with the case study of the United States legislature, which they defined as the Economic-Elite Domination of Mills, Majoritarian Pluralism as described by Dahl, Biased Pluralism as espoused by neopluralists and Majoritarian Electoral Democracy, the traditional view of democracy holding elites in check by the rule of the majority. Their analysis identifies that policy tends not to be an outcome of equally competing groups but rather tends to favour certain groups, in particular business groups, lending support to biased pluralism and the convergence of neoMarxist and neopluralist theories.

This study is focused on the mechanisms by which individuals become a part of the political elites and as such will provide an empirical test case for the above debate. As discussed previously it takes as a hypothesis that the barriers to entry in youth wings mean that there is an advantage to a middle class,

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<sup>178</sup> Domhoff G. W. 2005. Who really ruled in Dahl's New Haven?

[http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/local/new\\_haven.html](http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/local/new_haven.html) accessed 12.11.2016 14:54.

<sup>179</sup> Dahl R. 1983. *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy Vs Control*. London, Yale University Press.

<sup>180</sup> Lindblom C. 1978. *Politics and Markets: The world's political economic systems*. New York, Basic Books.

<sup>181</sup> Krouse K. 1983. Some (further) Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy. *Yale Law and Policy Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 pp. 167 – 178.

<sup>182</sup> Jessop B., 2007. 'Dialogue of the deaf: reflections on the Poulantzas-Miliband debate', in P. Wetherly, C.W. Barrow, and P. Burnham, (Eds.) *Class, Power and the State in Capitalist Society: Essays on Ralph Miliband*. London, Palgrave Macmillan. pp.132-157.

<sup>183</sup> Dahl R. 1983. *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy Vs Control*. London, Yale University Press.

<sup>184</sup> Lindblom C. 1978. *Politics and Markets: The world's political economic systems*. New York, Basic Books.

<sup>185</sup> See Higley J. and Pakulski J. 'Elite Theory Vs Marxism: The Twentieth Centuries Verdict' in Higley J. and Lengyel G. (Eds.) 2000. *Elites after State Socialism: Theories and analysis*. Lanham Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc and Higley J. and Pakulski J. 2016. Elites, Elitism and Elite Theory: Unending confusion? [Paper prepared for Research Committee on Political Elites (RC02) panel "Elite Dilemmas and Democracy's Future", World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Madrid, Tuesday 10 July 2016.

<sup>186</sup> Gilens, M. and Page, B. 2014. 'Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens', *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 564–581.

metropolitan background, however that this is not insurmountable. It would therefore contribute to the NeoPluralist side of the debate by looking at one of the competing loci of power and by being primarily focused on the actions of individuals seeking selection. However it is also focused on the Social Democratic family and thus highlights a key weakness in both sides of the debate – the assumption that a political elite acts in a homogenous manner regardless of ideology or party competition.

#### Intra-elite competition.

There have been other studies which have highlighted this issue.<sup>187</sup> Mills did posit two further strands of society below the elite level and locates political parties and the U.S. Congress as well as local and federal leaders and special interest groups such as trade unions at a middle level of power<sup>188</sup> with the masses at the bottom. Mills argues that although this middle layer makes some political decisions it is not allowed to threaten the hegemony of the elite strata. Marxists, with their central tenet that political elites are subordinates of the economic elite, have a similar standpoint.

But empirical case studies have not borne this out. Martin<sup>189</sup> in her analysis of the American tax system points out that individual businesses want contradictory policy outcomes, meaning the economic elite does not speak with one voice thus making it impossible for the political elite to act as its servant. Kritzer<sup>190</sup> looked at ideology amongst the US Republican and Democrat parties in 1958 and 1972 and found that the impact of ideology on the behaviour of elites was greater than believed by elite theorists. Scully and Patterson<sup>191</sup> also emphasise the role of ideology in decision making in their case study of the Ohio House of Representatives as does Putnam<sup>192</sup> in his study comparing Elites in the UK and Italy.

However other case studies have also shown a marked difference between democratic and undemocratic or semi-democratic states in this regard. Ilonszki and Edinger<sup>193</sup> looked at 9 ex-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe and found that the make-up of their elites is more homogeneous than in established democracies, a hangover from the elites of communism. Melvin<sup>194</sup> in his analysis of the elites of the Omsk region in Russia found that economic and political elites did combine and dominate positions of power within the Oblast, but that two other important but subordinate groups also emerged amongst the political elites who were able to influence some areas of policy. Melvin concludes that this situation is dependent in large part on a lack of genuine political competition. Cheng and White<sup>195</sup> in their case study comparing mainland China and Taiwan conclude that regardless of whether the regime is undemocratic or a semi-Democratic regime the elites take the form of technocrats. They also argue that technocracy has become a form of ideology itself and

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<sup>187</sup> See Bell D. 1958. 'The Power Elite Reconsidered.' *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 64 No. 3 pp. 238-250.

<sup>188</sup> Wright Mills C. 1954. *The Power Elite*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p4.

<sup>189</sup> Martin C. 1991. *Shifting the burden: The struggle over growth and corporate taxation*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

<sup>190</sup> Kritzer, H., 1978. Ideology and American political elites. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp.484-502.

<sup>191</sup> Scully R. and Patterson S. 2001. 'Ideology, partisanship and decision making in a contemporary American legislature'. *Party Politics*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 131-155.

<sup>192</sup> Putnam, R., 1971. Studying Elite Political Culture: The Case of "Ideology". *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp.651-681.

<sup>193</sup> Ilonszki G. and Edinger M., 2007. 'MPs in Post-Communist and Post-Soviet Nations: A Parliamentary Elite in the making'. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 13 No. 1 pp. 142-163.

<sup>194</sup> Melvin N. 1998. 'The consolidation of a new regional elite: The case of Omsk 1987-1995'. *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 619-650.

<sup>195</sup> Cheng, L. and White, L., 1990. Elite transformation and modern change in mainland China and Taiwan: empirical data and the theory of technocracy. *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 121, pp.1-35.

that this drives both countries, but demonstrate that the elites are homogenised between the political, economic and administrative spheres.

Others have focused on case studies which demonstrated the changeover between democratic and undemocratic regimes to bring this into focus. Bermeo<sup>196</sup> as well as O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead<sup>197</sup> followed Stepan and Linz<sup>198</sup> in looking at the elites in the changing regimes in Southern Europe and Latin America in the 1960's and 70's. They all, to a great or lesser degree, conclude that the behaviour of power elites was the primary factor both to the collapse of democratic regimes in South America and Greece in the 1960s, but also to their redemocratisation – alongside Spain and Portugal – in the 1970s. They come to similar conclusions to Dahl<sup>199</sup> by finding that existing elites in the form of authoritarian regimes can gradually move to accepting an elite formed of competing groups, although they also conclude that at the moment of transition it is not possible to predict which group will take what role within the emergent elites<sup>200</sup> rather than focus on the economic elites as inherently dominant.

Crowther and Matonyte<sup>201</sup> analyse political elites in transitioning, former Soviet states – Estonia, Lithuania and Moldova. They conclude that where individuals in the elites are able to maintain powerful positions in the legislature during a regime transition then such elites are likely to remain in place afterwards and for the pace of change to stagnate, as in Moldova. In Estonia there was a very high initial turnover rate of individuals in powerful positions in the legislature and swift change which then settled down. Lithuania fell somewhere in the middle. However with all three states the individuals which made up the legislature after the transition period had a relatively high turnover, and they conclude this is evidence of the pluralist position of competing elites.

This is supported by case studies of more stable democracies, particularly in Scandinavia. Edling et al<sup>202</sup> looked at four municipalities in Sweden and concluded that there are three separate spheres of power elites – political, economic and the state administrative sphere. They conclude that integration between the spheres is indirect, with the administrative elite acting as a form of bridge between the political and economic spheres. Ruostetsaari's<sup>203</sup> analysis of Finland in the 1990s also concluded that elites are more fragmented than has been traditionally considered, and that this fragmentation increases during times of economic upheaval.

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<sup>196</sup> Bermeo N. 1990. 'Rethinking Regime Change', *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 22 No. 3 pp. 359-377.

<sup>197</sup> See O'Donnell G, Schmitter P. and Whitehead L., (Eds.) 1986, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe*. The Johns Hopkins University Press., O'Donnell G, Schmitter P. and Whitehead L., (Eds.), 1986 *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Latin America*. Baltimore, JHU Press., O'Donnell G, Schmitter P. and Whitehead L., (Eds.), 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*. The Johns Hopkins University Press and O'Donnell G, Schmitter P. and Whitehead L., 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore, JHU Press.

<sup>198</sup> See Linz J. and Stepan A. (Eds), 1979. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*. John Hopkins. And Linz, J. and Stepan, A., 1996. *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe*. Baltimore, JHU Press.

<sup>199</sup> Dahl, R. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. London, Yale University Press.

<sup>200</sup> O'Donnell G. and Schmitter P. 'Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies,' in O'Donnell G, Schmitter P. and Whitehead L., (Eds.), 1986 *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*. The Johns Hopkins University. P4.

<sup>201</sup> Crowther W. and Matonyte I. 2007. 'Parliamentary Elites as a Democratic Thermometer: Estonia, Lithuania and Moldova compared'. *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, Vol. 40, pp. 281-299.

<sup>202</sup> Edling C., Farkas G. and Rydgren J., 2015. Integration of the Swedish local elite: The role of professional and private networks. *Scandinavian Political Studies*. Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 49-74.

<sup>203</sup> Ruostetsaari I. 2006. 'Social Upheaval and the Transformation of Elite Structures: The Case of Finland'. *Political Studies*, Vol. 54, pp. 23-42.



This study, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter three, will focus on stable democracies of Western Europe in part because of these findings. The context of the competition provided by the fragmented elites of mature democracies means genuine competition happens between individuals seeking office both between and within political parties. It is the outcomes of those competitions which interests both this study and the field of legislative recruitment.

### **2.3: Recruitment and selection.**

The field of legislative recruitment is a sub-discipline of Party Politics which looks at, essentially, who becomes a Parliamentarian and how. Its thinkers are interested in analysing both the biographical background of MPs and also in the mechanisms of political party recruitment. As such it is the primary field to which this study will contribute.

Key thinkers in Legislative Recruitment such as Norris,<sup>204</sup> Lovenduski,<sup>205</sup> Cotta,<sup>206</sup> and Marsh and Rhodes<sup>207</sup> recognise that the recruitment of a Parliamentarian is a process, or journey which has, broadly speaking, four distinct phases, the recruitment of an individual from being a general sympathiser and voter into being an active party member or volunteer,<sup>208</sup> followed by a period of political exposure and activity within the party. Bruter and Harrison<sup>209</sup> found that those young people who join political parties and become active members fall into three types, moral-minded members who join for idealistic reasons, social-minded members who join looking for a like-minded peer group and professional-minded members who join with some level of ambition, whether that is to become a politician or to work in the political ecosystem. In a follow-up study, Bruter and Harrison<sup>210</sup> find that this latter group in particular are likely to deliberately seek out exposure and active roles within the party and proceed to take on larger and larger roles within the party and politics more broadly. That is, they will begin to work within a political ecosystem, incorporating party employees, parliamentary staffers or advisers, NGOs, think-tanks, trade union employees and political commentators.<sup>211</sup> Legislative recruitment, we can see from this, is a subset of political recruitment – initiating individuals into political activity – that carries it to its ultimate conclusion, standing for national office.

At some point within that political exposure an individual may begin to seriously consider running for political office, either taking the decision themselves as a form of self-selection or at the instigation of another individual such as a more senior party activist or sitting representative. Following that decision the individual will continue with their party activities but with a renewed focus on how such activities

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<sup>204</sup> Norris, P. 1997. *Passages to power: Legislative recruitment in advanced democracies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press and Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. 1995. *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>205</sup> Lovenduski, J. 2010. The dynamics of gender and party in Krook M. L. and Childs S. (eds) *Women, Gender, and Politics: A reader*. Oxford, Oxford University Press and Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. 1995. *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>206</sup> Cotta, M. 2000. *Parliamentary representatives in Europe, 1848-2000: legislative recruitment and careers in eleven European countries*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>207</sup> Marsh, D., & Rhodes, R. A. W. 1992. *Policy networks in British government*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

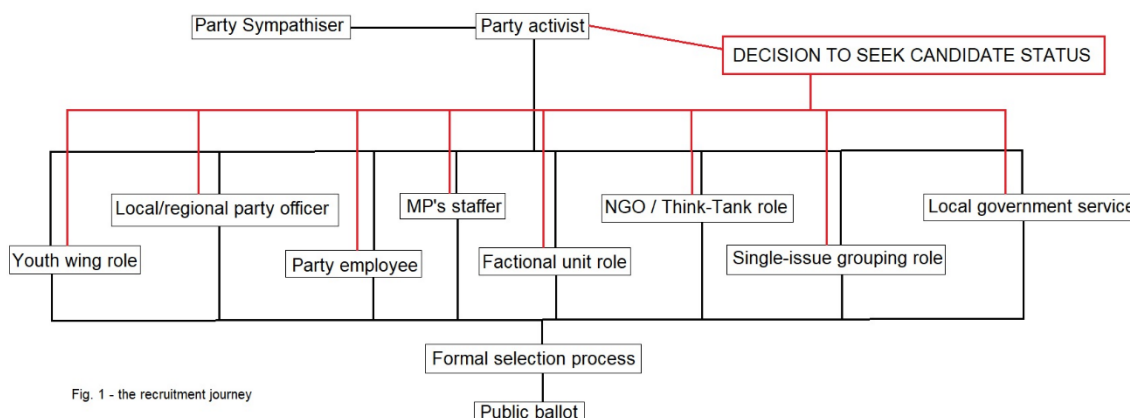
<sup>208</sup> See Seligman L. 1961. 'Political Recruitment and Party Structure: A Case Study' *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 77-86.

<sup>209</sup> Bruter M. and Harrison S. 2009. *The Future of our democracies: Young party members in Europe*. London, Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>210</sup> Bruter M. and Harrison S. 2009. Tomorrow's leaders? Understanding the involvement of young party members in six European democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*. Vol. 42 No. 10, pp. 1259 – 1291.

<sup>211</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'politics-facilitating' explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2, pp 212 – 233.

may benefit them in influencing a potential coalition of support internal to the party to succeed in the final stage, the actual formal selection process by which a specific individual is selected as the flagbearer of a political party for an election cycle. This journey as described by the literature can be collated together and summed up as in Fig. 1.<sup>212</sup>



One issue with studying this proposal is that motivation is private so the decision of an individual to seek candidate status may be known only to that person or a very small group of trusted confidants. Observers cannot tell whether an individual activist is actively looking to build an intra-party coalition of support for a selection bid, or whether they are simply engaged in campaign activity for its own merit not intending to take it further. An individual seeking selection, as well as the standard campaigning activity conducted by a party activist such as voter identification (finding out which voters will support you), door-knocking or phone-banking, programmatic work or service on internal party committees may also seek formal titles within internal units of the party to act as a shorthand for certain skills or evidence of party loyalty or dedication to an issue – examples of roles within internal units are also given in Fig. 1.

However, it is equally true that an individual may seek to perform such roles out of a genuine dedication rather than simply to advance themselves. Further they may do so initially but then whilst performing that role decide to put themselves forward to be a candidate. A candidate may also have experience at lower levels of government or have been a candidate in an unwinnable seat previously not as a means of personal advancement but as a way to advance causes or legislation they have a genuine commitment to.

Additionally, not all roles useful to a potential candidate in the selection will be internal to the Party. Examples of non-Party activities which could help an individual build a profile or evidence skills include prior experience as members of charitable organisations and local public bodies,<sup>213</sup> social network building through church membership or friendship groups or simply those who are rich and influential.<sup>214</sup> These activities are even more likely to be conducted for their own sake, with their benefit to an individual going for selection being incidental to their motivation to undertake them.

The process in these central phases is therefore non-linear, fluid and very difficult to measure. This can lead researchers to focus on the final stage – the formal selection process – and attempt to divine

<sup>212</sup> Fig. 1 created by the author.

<sup>213</sup> Rallings C. et al. 2010. 'Parties, Recruitment and Modernisation: Evidence from Local Election Candidates' *Local Government Studies* Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 361-379.

<sup>214</sup> Sokhey A. and Djupe P. 2011. 'Interpersonal Networks and Democratic Politics' *Political Science and Politics* Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 55-59.

backwards to ascertain what led individuals to be formally selected.<sup>215</sup> Frequently this is in the context of mapping sociodemographic trends – drawing maps of WHO is selected rather than being focused on HOW they put themselves in a position to be selected. Other studies<sup>216</sup> focus on the nature of gatekeepers and therefore straddle the formal selection stage and the preceding stage of building a coalition of support to influence them.

This study will look at this journey in several areas. Firstly it considers two institutions which seek to move an individual from being a party sympathiser to a party activist in the form of the youth wings and the trade union movement. These seek to politicise individuals in different contexts, Unions in the workplace and youth wings usually earlier, often at University, and this may have some bearing on the later political activities of the activist in question. Secondly it will look at whether these institutions also act as gateways to the political ecosystem of jobs and professions connected to the party, either formally or informally, and what role that plays in the formal selection process.

The first stage which any individual goes through on the path to becoming a candidate is the decision to become actively involved in the political campaign activity of the party. This may be marked by formally becoming a party member, or an inactive member may become an active one. Both youth wings and trade unions actively seek to recruit activists. Abramson and Claggett<sup>217</sup> analysed the attempts of political parties as a whole to recruit sympathisers into activists and concluded that they were exceedingly effective at doing so, and the youth wings and unions were one means by which this happens.

There is however some finer distinction on what being active means. Ware<sup>218</sup> differentiates between supporters – non-members who vote and may carry out small electoral tasks, such as displaying a poster – members, those who pay their membership dues but do not participate greatly in campaigning activity, and activists, who form the backbone of the party on the ground and undertake most of the tasks necessary for a successful electoral outcome. The word sympathiser is perhaps a better term for those favourably disposed towards the party than supporter, as entrenched party loyalties amongst the general public have been in decline<sup>219</sup> and voter support is much more fluid and malleable than previously.

Nevertheless, crossing the threshold between a non-member sympathiser or an inactive member to being an involved activist leads to the politicisation of the individual, in the sense of learning more about what it takes to be a successful political operator. Differences in how this process occurs depending on the context in which it takes place are central to this study's argument about the

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<sup>215</sup> For example see Caul M. 1999. Women's representation in Parliament: The role of political parties. *Party Politics*, Vol. 5 No. 1 pp. 79-98, Cutts D. Childs S. and Fieldhouse E. 2008, "This is what happens when you don't listen": All-women shortlists at the 2005 General Election. *Party Politics*, Vol. 14 No. 5, pp. 575-595 and Geddes A. 1995. 'The 'logic' of positive action? Ethnic minority representation in Britain after the 1992 general election', *Party Politics*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 275-285.

<sup>216</sup> For example see Bochel J. and Denver D. 1983. Candidate Selection in the Labour Party: What the Selectors Seek. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 45-69, Gherghina S. and Chiru M. 2010. Practice and Payment: Determinants of Candidate list position in European Parliament elections. *European Union Politics*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 533-552 and De Luca M. Jones M. and Tula M. I. 2002. Back Rooms or Ballot Boxes? Candidate nomination in Argentina. *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 413-436.

<sup>217</sup> Abramson P. and Claggett W. 2001. Recruitment and Political Participation. *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 54 No. 4 pp. 905-916.

<sup>218</sup> Ware A. 1996. *Political Parties and Party Systems*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p.65.

<sup>219</sup> See Carsey T. and Laymen G. 2006. Changing sides or changing minds? Party identification and policy preferences in the American electorate. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50 No. 2, pp. 464-477 and Dalton R. 2000. The decline of Party Identifications' in Dalton R. and Wattenberg M. (Ed.) *Parties without Partisans: Political change in advanced industrial economies*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

mechanism by which the nature of the parties change. For the purposes of outlining the journey here this is not important but should still be borne in mind. Once politicised activists will frequently get involved in voluntary party positions or positions within internal party units as a form of campaign activity. Further these activists are likely to be the main source of recruits for the political ecosystem of the party, its own employees, legislator's staffers, think-tank staff etc. and these can form another stage in the recruitment journey. Most individuals in this ecosystem do not choose to run for office, however some do.

The decision to run for political office may have multiple origins. An individual activist may, after political exposure, gain confidence in their ability to perform as a political representative and thus look for an opportunity or respond to a specific opportunity.<sup>220</sup> There can also be an element of talent-spotting whereby party gatekeepers encourage certain individuals to stand for office.<sup>221</sup>

Studying the motivation for an individual to run to be a candidate is exceedingly difficult<sup>222</sup> as it is a private decision. As such there is comparatively little literature on the subject.<sup>223</sup> Nevertheless it is a key variable in the process. It is also true that the majority of activists, never mind inactive members or sympathisers, choose not to run for political office.

However an individual decides once they have they are likely to seek out opportunities which would reflect favourably on them with gatekeepers or put them in a position to raise their profile. This may not be visibly dissimilar to their previous stage of getting more involved in the activities of the party, internal party units or the political ecosystem. The nature of these opportunities will be diverse and will also depend on the nature of the gatekeepers to which they are targeted. Where gatekeepers are a small group of party staffers activities may be more informal or social in nature or they may seek employment with the party or its legislators. Where gatekeepers are large groups of local activists, members or the general public activities may be more geared towards opportunities that come with a formal title, as a convenient shorthand to indicate involvement, loyalty or skills to people unfamiliar with the potential candidate on a personal level.

The nature of the party gatekeepers varies – in constitutional systems which formally have a high level of affiliation to a local district such as the Canadian,<sup>224</sup> or British<sup>225</sup> systems they will be formed of local activists. In the American<sup>226</sup> system there is also a high level of localism, but the primary system used in many states means the gatekeepers are more numerous and diverse, being composed of either registered party supporters (closed primaries) or even as broad as the general public (open primaries).

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<sup>220</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p.172.

<sup>221</sup> Brookman D. 2014. Mobilizing candidates: Political actors strategically shape the candidate pool with personal appeals. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 104-119 and Seligman L. 1961. Political Recruitment and Party Structure: A Case Study. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 77-86.

<sup>222</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p.167.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> See Gallagher M. and Marsh M. (Ed.) 1988. *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*. Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications.

<sup>225</sup> See Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. and Bochel J. and Denver D. 1983. Candidate Selection in the Labour Party: What the Selectors Seek. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 45-69.

<sup>226</sup> See Seligman L. 1961. Political Recruitment and Party Structure: A Case Study. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 77-86 and Sanbonmatsu K. 2006. The Legislative Party and Candidate Recruitment in the American States. *Party Politics*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 233-256.

In list systems the gatekeepers will be composed of those deciding whose name goes on the list and in what order. In some polities such as The Netherlands<sup>227</sup> and Israel<sup>228</sup> party lists, whilst nominally national, retain an element of local or regional influence on the list such as the 19 Dutch Kieskringen or the Israeli system of having reserved places based on geographical areas. Others such as Romania<sup>229</sup> are closer to the traditional proportional representation model of one national constituency.

However with a few exceptions (principally US States with an Open Primary system)<sup>230</sup> the process does not involve voters directly but those who are either party members or – as in a closed primary – formal sympathisers. Although the legal barriers to becoming a candidate are often very low, such as being above a lower age limit (frequently the voting age or legal age of maturity) and Party Membership, candidates for selection are drawn all but exclusively from the activist strata of party support<sup>231</sup> because there is no other way to influence the party gatekeepers.

The exception to this comes in seats deemed completely unwinnable by a Party when an individual who is not particularly active may allow their name to be put forward as a nominal ‘paper’ Candidate as a favour to the Party or an individual within the Party.<sup>232</sup>

Several studies<sup>233</sup> use a ‘Supply and Demand’ analysis, whereby party officials satisfy a demand for candidates from a supply of activists seeking to put themselves forward. In this model, as advocated by Norris and Lovenduski,<sup>234</sup> the over-representation of highly-educated, upper- and middle-class male candidates can be explained by innate prejudices (in the neutral sense of predetermined assumptions) of gatekeepers who use social standing, professions or education levels as a shorthand to rate a candidate on their perceived ability. This is dependent on an assumption, which they state implicitly, that “candidates are rarely well known to most selectors”.<sup>235</sup> Ashe<sup>236</sup> however, in a more recent study on the UK Labour Party, finds that the supply side issue can be secondary to the preferences of local members who act in a gatekeeper role and who often look for an ‘ideal type’

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<sup>227</sup> Katz R. 2001. The Problem of Candidate Selection and Models of Party Democracy. *Party Politics*, Vol. 7 No. 3, p279.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. also Hazan R. 1999. Constituency interests without Constituencies: the geographical impact of candidate selection on party organisation and legislative behaviour in the 14<sup>th</sup> Israeli Knesset, 1996-99. *Political Geography*, Vol. 18 pp. 791-811.

<sup>229</sup> Gherghina S. and Chiru M. 2010. Practice and Payment: Determinants of Candidate list position in European Parliament elections. *European Union Politics*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 533-552.

<sup>230</sup> See: Pennings P. and Hazan R. 2001. Democratising Candidate Selection: Causes and Consequences', *Party Politics*, Vol. 7 No. 3. pp. 267-275, Rahat G. and Hazan R. 2001. Candidate Selection Methods: An Analytical Framework. *Party Politics*, Vol. 7 No. 3. pp. 297-322 and Rahat G. 2009. Which Candidate Selection Method is the Most Democratic? *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 44 No. 7. pp. 68-90.

<sup>231</sup> Matthews D. 1984. Legislative Recruitment and Legislative Careers. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 9 No. 4 Nov. pp. 547-585.

<sup>232</sup> Seligman L. 1961. Political Recruitment and Party Structure: A Case Study. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 55, No. 1. pp. 77-86.

<sup>233</sup> See: Kazee T. and Thornberry M. 1991. Where's the Party? Congressional Candidate Recruitment and American Party Organisations. *The Western Political Quarterly*. Vol. 43 No. 1. pp. 61-80, Norris, P. and Lovenduski, J. 1993. "If Only More Candidates Came Forward": Supply-Side Explanations of Candidate Selection in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23 No. 3. pp. 373-408 and Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>234</sup> Norris, P. and Lovenduski, J. 1993. "If Only More Candidates Came Forward": Supply-Side Explanations of Candidate Selection in Britain. *British Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 23 No. 3. pp. 373-408.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ashe J. 2020. *Political Candidate Selection: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Under-Representation in the UK*. London, Routledge.

candidate, which is frequently white, male, middle aged, heterosexual and working in a professional capacity. Ashe did however find that being local, and/or serving on the local council can override this, and that 'being local' can override the preference for the 'ideal type' in contested selection contests.

This is contradicted by Seligman,<sup>237</sup> who found in his data that ambitious individuals sought out opportunities for contact with gatekeepers and that many of those individuals had previously been 'talent-spotted' by influential gatekeepers such as existing legislators or party veterans. Again the discrepancy is likely due to different case studies, the main UK political parties in Norris and Lovenduski and the US Democrats in the state of Oregon in Seligman. The degree of familiarity and therefore the type of support building activities is likely to vary based on the type of gatekeeper in an individual case study, an aspect of the formal selection process.

Formal selection in the vast majority of cases in Western political parties (though not all)<sup>238</sup> is governed by two overarching factors – it is formal and it is loose. Formal in the sense that there are universal rules, applied usually by the Party rather than the law, applicable openly and equally to all selections undertaken within the Party. Loose in the sense that within the framework of those rules party gatekeepers frequently have a great deal of leeway in the selection of candidates. As such many studies seek to not only map the trends of who is being selected but to look at what happens at the earlier stages, with a corresponding interest in those who are doing the selecting<sup>239</sup> and how individuals interact with the party gatekeepers.<sup>240</sup> This can be seen in Ashe and Stewart,<sup>241</sup> Childs,<sup>242</sup> Chiva,<sup>243</sup> Eliassen and Pederson,<sup>244</sup> Kittilson,<sup>245</sup> Norris and Lovenduski<sup>246</sup> and Sanbonmatsu.<sup>247</sup>

#### The context of the recruitment journey.

The nature of the journey from sympathiser to candidate is also heavily influenced by the environmental context of the process – the political system and culture of the polity, as well as the selection rules of the party itself and the context of competing relationships between individual actors and sub-units within the Party. As such with the difficulty of studying the process as it emerges many

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<sup>237</sup> Seligman L. 1961. Political Recruitment and Party Structure: A Case Study. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1. p80.

<sup>238</sup> See Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p4 for examples of the few exceptions.

<sup>239</sup> See for example Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press and Cheng C. and Tavits M. 2010. Informal Influences in Selecting Female Political Candidates. *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol. 20 No. 10. pp. 1-12.

<sup>240</sup> Bochel J. and Denver D. 1983. Candidate Selection in the Labour Party: What the Selectors Seek. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 45-69.

<sup>241</sup> Ashe J. and Stewart K. 2011. Legislative Recruitment: Using Diagnostic Testing to Explain Underrepresentation. *Party Politics*. Vol. 18 No. 5. pp. 687-707.

<sup>242</sup> Childs S. 2004. *New Labour's Women MPs: Women Representing Women*. London, Routledge.

<sup>243</sup> Chiva C. 2014. Gender, European Integration and Candidate Recruitment. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 67. pp. 458-494.

<sup>244</sup> Eliassen K.A. and Pedersen M.N. 1978. Professionalization of Legislatures: Long-Term Change in Political Recruitment in Denmark and Norway. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 20 No.2. pp. 286–318.

<sup>245</sup> Kittilson M. 2006. *Challenging Parties, Changing Parliaments: Women and Elected Office in Contemporary Western Europe*. Columbus Ohio, The Ohio State University Press.

<sup>246</sup> Norris, P. and Lovenduski, J. 1993. "If Only More Candidates Came Forward": Supply-Side Explanations of Candidate Selection in Britain. *British Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 373–408 and Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>247</sup> Sanbonmatsu K. 2006. The Legislative Party and Candidate Recruitment in the American States. *Party Politics*. Vol. 12 No. 2, pp 233-256.

studies – including this one – focus on the context of the journey, that is to say on mapping the potential paths rather than on an individual's intended footsteps.

An individual's journey from a generic supporter to being the candidate of a political party does not happen in a vacuum, there are well-worn paths constrained by varying factors. These factors happen across three levels – the external level, the party level, and the internal level.<sup>248</sup> It is important to recognise that although these three levels are different, they are interlinked and symbiotic to one another.

The external level are those factors which are outside of the party and form the environment in which it operates – including the political system of the territory within which the party is competing for election. There is also the external factor of those politics-facilitating jobs which form the political ecosystem such as those working for the party or existing legislators or for sympathetic NGOs, charities or think-tanks, an arena which is dominated by graduates – a further external contextual factor.

The Party Level are those factors which relate to the party as a whole. Principally this relates to the rules the party uses to formally select candidates but it may also relate to environmental factors which influence that party but not all parties in the political system, such as electoral defeats or party scandals. This can sometimes include youth wings if there is a scandal which specifically affects them. It also includes the attitudes of party gatekeepers and the individual rules around selection, such as all-women shortlists in the UK Labour Party.<sup>249</sup>

The internal level relates to intra-party factors, principally the relationships between different internal party units, be they power-struggles between factions based on ideology or personality or tensions between local or regional groups and the national party HQ. It is important to remember that just as parties do not act in a unified manner, internal units also will not necessarily operate as a single block when it comes to a specific vote.<sup>250</sup> This results in competing internal demands as to the level of control exerted over candidate selection by central party headquarters and internal units. It is at this level which Youth Wings predominantly sit, although they may be more fluid than other internally organised units and thus even less likely to act in a unitary manner, combining as they do both the characteristics of a factional actor and a factional arena. The levels of unity in the actions of the youth wings is likely therefore to vary in strength and direction depending on its internal debates and conflicts.

When considering these factors it is important to bear in mind that although in particular in matters of selection, political parties cannot be considered to be unitary actors<sup>251</sup> there are strong incentives for political representatives to present a united front in order to enhance the reputation of the party 'brand' and thus aid their own re-election chances<sup>252</sup> and even the most notorious rebels will vote with their party far more often than they go against the party line.<sup>253</sup> As such a certain level of conformity can be assumed, but that level will vary depending on the strength of the incentives to toe the party line.

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<sup>248</sup> Barnea S. and Rahat G. 2007. Reforming candidate selection methods: A three level approach. *Party Politics*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 375-394.

<sup>249</sup> Ashe J. 2020. *Political Candidate Selection: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Under-Representation in the UK*. London, Routledge.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Katz R. and Mair P. 1992. *Party Organisations: A Data Handbook*. Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications, p6.

<sup>252</sup> Shomer Y. 2016. The conditional effect of electoral systems and intra-party candidate selection processes on parties' behaviour. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Forthcoming.

<sup>253</sup> Cowley P. and Stuart M. 2004. When sheep bark: The Parliamentary Labour Party since 2001. *British elections and Party Review*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 211-229.

This is just one way in which the recruitment journey has to be contextualised, this section will now go on to discuss two other contextual factors – the rise of well-educated career politicians, and the impact that electoral systems has on the recruitment journey.

#### Career politicians and ‘Diploma Democracies’.

One of the key contextual factors is the impact of education, in particular tertiary education, on democracy. Bovens and Wille<sup>254</sup> analysed several Western European democracies for the impact of tertiary education inequalities and argue that they have become ‘diploma democracies.’ They found that educational elitism has come to dominate politics and that this is a key divide in society. This not only applies to elected office-holders but also to the political ecosystem of NGOs, think-tanks and party employees which form the steps of the recruitment journey.<sup>255</sup> Ainsley,<sup>256</sup> Allen,<sup>257</sup> Evans and Tilley,<sup>258</sup> Goodhart,<sup>259</sup> Savage<sup>260</sup> and Standing<sup>261</sup> have also found that this educational divide exists and that party members as well as those working in the political ecosystem are drawn in very large part from the university educated sections of society.

This ecosystem produces so-called ‘career politicians.’ Allen et al<sup>262</sup> define career politicians as those full-time politicians with little experience outside the world of politics, and who have strong levels of political commitment and ambition, but narrow life experience and occupational backgrounds. This matters, because as Henn<sup>263</sup> found the number of Parliamentarians with a background in this political ecosystem has increased in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, particularly amongst the ranks of cabinet ministers; although the numbers of ‘accelerated’ career politicians, who becomes a legislator in their 30s and quickly rises through the political ranks, has plateaued. Goplerud<sup>264</sup> did find that those who had served specifically as Special Advisors to existing ministers or shadow ministers do experience rapid career progression if/when they are elected to the legislature. Looking at cabinet ministers Atkins, Heppell and Theakston<sup>265</sup> confirmed this, finding that contemporary senior cabinet ministers were less experienced than previously, but that this did not seem to be the case at junior ministerial level and was less pronounced than is the case with the party leaderships. Cowley<sup>266</sup> noted that the political leadership of the UK parties post-2010 was the least experienced since the second world war, and

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<sup>254</sup> Bovens M. and Wille A. 2017. *Diploma Democracy: The Rise of Political Meritocracy*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid. and Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it matters who our politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>256</sup> Ainsley C. 2018. *The New Working Class: How to win hearts, minds and votes*. Bristol, Policy Press, p60-68.

<sup>257</sup> Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it matters who our politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p28-30.

<sup>258</sup> Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p26-28.

<sup>259</sup> Goodhart D. 2017. *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. London, C. Hurst and Co Publishing, p30-38.

<sup>260</sup> Savage M. 2015. *Social Class in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. London, Pelican Publishing, p219-258.

<sup>261</sup> Standing G. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London, Bloomsbury Academic Publishing.

<sup>262</sup> Allen N., Magni G., Searing D. and Warncke, P. 2020. What is a career politician? Theories, concepts, and measures. *European Political Science Review*. Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 199-217.

<sup>263</sup> Henn S. J. 2018. The further rise of the career politician. *British Politics*. Vol. 13, pp. 524–553.

<sup>264</sup> Goplerud M. 2015. The First Time is (Mostly) the Charm: Special Advisors as Parliamentary Candidates and Members of Parliament. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 68 No. 2, pp. 332–351.

<sup>265</sup> Atkins J., Heppell T. and Theakston, K. 2013. The Rise of the Novice Cabinet Minister? The Career Trajectories of Cabinet Ministers in British Government from Attlee to Cameron. *The Political Quarterly*. Vol. 84 No. 3, pp. 362-370.

<sup>266</sup> Cowley P. 2012. Arise, Novice Leader! The Continuing Rise of the Career Politician in Britain. *Politics*. Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 31-38.



attributed this to a change in the nature of experience, with leaders now gaining political experience in non-legislative political functions such as aides and special advisors, rather than through the legislature.

This rise of the career politician has real consequences for the citizens of Western European democracies. Ting<sup>267</sup> found that the pre-Parliamentary background of legislators does profoundly affect the manner in which they perform their duties as legislators, including their voting behaviour. In addition, the backgrounds of legislators shape the legislative bodies, influencing how representative democracy itself works.<sup>268</sup>

Previously, the trade unions provided a route for non-university educated individuals to move up into national legislatures,<sup>269</sup> the disappearance of that route and the domination of graduates in the political ecosystem has excluded the working-class from social democratic parties<sup>270</sup> and thus gentrified them. This means that this recruitment journey increasingly happens within a context which excludes large quantities of the population.

The impact of electoral systems on legislative recruitment.

A further contextual factor is the polity's electoral system. Some studies<sup>271</sup> have argued that electoral systems in fact influence the type of candidate selection criteria employed by political parties. In contrast Pennings and Hazan<sup>272</sup> argue that the way a party chooses its candidates comes not from the national election system but from the demands of grassroots activists to have a say in how their electoral standard bearers are chosen, which links to the nature of the activist base in particular their educational background as discussed above. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive, since activists will take account of external factors such as the electoral system when making such demands on the party authorities.

Shomer<sup>273</sup> states that the primary effect of a country's electoral system on candidate selection is to constrain or dictate the level of central control, arguing that parties aim for unity as much as possible in order to have a stable and reliable legislative which can drive the party's policy agenda forward. To

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<sup>267</sup> Ting W. L. 2016. *Does experience matter? The effect of pre-parliamentary careers on MPs' behaviour*. Doctoral Dissertation; The London School of Economics and Political Science.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid, Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it matters who our politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p28-30 and Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p26-28.

<sup>269</sup> See Minkin L. 1974. The British labour party and the trade unions: Crisis and compact. *ILR Review*. Vol. 28 No. 1, pp.7-37, Piazza J. 2001. De-linking labour. Labour unions and social democratic parties under globalisation. *Party Politics*. Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 413 – 435 and Minkin L. 1992. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>270</sup> Davies L. J. 2018. 'From flat caps to flat whites'. *Fabian Review*. Published on 18.05.2018. Available at <https://fabians.org.uk/from-flat-caps-to-flat-whites/> accessed 20.02.2020 13:57, Davies L. J. 2020. 'Labour's next leader must consider the gentrification of our membership'. *LabourList*. Published on 13.02.2020. Available at <https://labourlist.org/2020/02/labours-next-leader-must-consider-the-gentrification-of-our-membership/> accessed 20.02.2020 13:58 and Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p26-28.

<sup>271</sup> For example see Shomer Y. 2016. The conditional effect of electoral systems and intra-party candidate selection processes on parties' behaviour. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Forthcoming and Rule W. 1987. Electoral systems, contextual factors and women's opportunity for election to Parliament in twenty-three democracies. *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 477-498.

<sup>272</sup> Pennings P. and Hazan R. 2001. Democratizing Candidate Selection: Causes and Consequences, *Party Politics*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 267-275.

<sup>273</sup> Shomer Y. 2016. The conditional effect of electoral systems and intra-party candidate selection processes on parties' behaviour. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Forthcoming.

that end in electoral systems which incentivise representatives to seek a personal reputation differentiated from their colleagues parties will adopt strictly controlled selection procedures to mitigate against this by selecting loyalists and deselecting troublemakers. Conversely electoral systems where ballots are cast for a party rather than an individual or otherwise incentivise representatives to focus on improving their internal party reputation by building the 'brand' selection criteria will be looser as the party responds to pressure to democratise internally with little consequence for party unity in the voting chamber.

Another aspect of the electoral system which may impact on party candidate selection is the degree to which it encourages turnover of legislators. Rule<sup>274</sup> analysed twenty-three democratic systems with a focus on how likely they were to achieve gender parity. She found that PR systems such as those in Scandinavia were far more likely to return higher numbers of women representatives because of the increased turnover of legislators compared with first past the post systems with single member electoral districts such as the UK. Rule also found that the greater the number of representatives per district the higher the turnover of legislators and therefore the more likely they were to be more gender equal. The impact this has on candidate selection is likely to be to increase the stakes for those individuals and parties operating in a single member or first past the post system. With lower turnover of legislators there is likely to be more focus put on selections than in systems with higher turnover whereby an unsuccessful candidate can try again relatively easily and where opportunities to correct a 'bad' selection are more abundant for the party high command.

Finally the electoral system will influence candidate selection by changing the nature of the 'gatekeepers'. In systems such as the UK<sup>275</sup> and United States<sup>276</sup> which elect an individual for a specific area the gatekeepers which a potential candidate is seeking to influence will be local activists or local members of the public where open primaries are used. Bochel and Denver<sup>277</sup> found that these local activists favour local knowledge, ranking "being a local person" second in their preferred characteristics, behind only "being intelligent/articulate/able". In contrast in list systems the gatekeepers are the party authorities,<sup>278</sup> who frequently prioritise loyal service when looking to rank candidates.<sup>279</sup>

In contrast Lundell<sup>280</sup> argued that in fact electoral systems have no statistical impact on the manner in which parties carry out candidate selection, at least in terms of whether it was a centralised or decentralised one. Looking at established Western democracies he argued that a more relevant statistical indicator was the region of the world under discussion, finding that the Nordic countries were very decentralised and the Southern European countries very centralised and offering some comments on shared cultural experiences as possible reasons for this.

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<sup>274</sup> Rule W. 1987. Electoral systems, contextual factors and women's opportunity for election to Parliament in twenty-three democracies. *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 477-498.

<sup>275</sup> Bochel J. and Denver D. 1983. Candidate Selection in the Labour Party: What the Selectors Seek. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 45-69.

<sup>276</sup> Kazee T. and Thornberry M. 1991. Where's the Party? Congressional Candidate Recruitment and American Party Organisations. *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 61-80.

<sup>277</sup> Bochel J. and Denver D. 1983. Candidate Selection in the Labour Party: What the Selectors Seek. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 45-69.

<sup>278</sup> Czudnowski M. 1972. Sociocultural Variables and Legislative Recruitment: Some Theoretical Observations and a Case Study. *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 561-587.

<sup>279</sup> Gherghina S. and Chiru M. 2010. Practice and Payment: Determinants of Candidate list position in European Parliament elections. *European Union Politics*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 533-552.

<sup>280</sup> Lundell K. 1990. Determinants of Candidate Selection: The Degree of Centralisation in Comparative Perspective. *Party Politics*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 25-47.

The likelihood therefore having looked at competing claims in the literature is that there is a dynamic and fluctuating tension between the external factors of the electoral environment and the internal factors of grassroots pressure versus central leaderships attempting to maintain control. Both Hopkin<sup>281</sup> in the case of the UK and Heider and Saglie<sup>282</sup> in the case of Norway have concluded that the democratisation of candidate selection is more in form and symbol than a meaningful surrendering of control from party authorities. Similarly Rahat and Hazan<sup>283</sup> found that in the case of the Israeli political parties central headquarters found that they had lost control of candidate selection via excessive democratisation and during the 1990s sustained and successful efforts were made to claw back the ability to control selections.

Lundell<sup>284</sup> found that in the more mature democracies the situation is more stable. As such the paths to selection in the case studies used for this study are more easily mapped out, allowing the focus to be more on the journey an individual takes to become a candidate for the legislature than the contextual character of the polity.

## **2.4: Factionalism and power dynamics.**

As with politics more widely, the relations between individuals within a political party is characterised by both conflict and consensus building.<sup>285</sup> And as with politics more widely individuals form groups in order to increase their bargaining position.<sup>286</sup> All political parties contain factions in some form, but social democratic parties more so than their centre-right equivalents.<sup>287</sup> In order to understand the balance of power within contemporary parties and therefore their likely behaviour we need to study their internal factions, and understand the highly uncertain context in which they operate.<sup>288</sup> Factions – internal party groupings who organise and compete with each other to achieve policy or political objectives – may form around ideological, geographic or personality cleavages. One of, indeed potentially the, key political objectives for factions is selection for legislators.<sup>289</sup> Getting supporters into legislative positions enables greater influence over manifesto commitments and when the party is in power the legislative direction of the government.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Hopkin J. 2001. Bringing the Members Back In? Democratising Candidate Selection in Britain and Spain. *Party Politics*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 343-361.

<sup>282</sup> Heider K. and Saglie J. 2003. Predestined Parties? Organisational Change in Norwegian political parties. *Party Politics*, Vol. 9 No 2, pp. 219-239.

<sup>283</sup> Rahat G. and Hazan R. 2001. Candidate Selection Methods: An Analytical Framework. *Party Politics*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 297-322.

<sup>284</sup> Lundell K. 1990. Determinants of Candidate Selection: The Degree of Centralisation in Comparative Perspective. *Party Politics*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 25-47.

<sup>285</sup> Maor M. 1997. *Political Parties and Party Systems. Comparative Approaches and the British Experience*. London, Routledge, p147.

<sup>286</sup> Dewan T. and Squintani F. 2016. In Defence of Factions. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 60 No. 4, pp 860-881.

<sup>287</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a 'cultural theory' of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 25 – 43.

<sup>288</sup> Budge I., Ezrow L. and McDonald M. D. 2011. Ideology, Party Factionalism and Policy Change: An Integrated Dynamic Theory. *British Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 40 No. 4, pp 781 – 804.

<sup>289</sup> Gallagher M. and Marsh M. (Ed.) 1988. *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*. New York, SAGE Publications.

<sup>290</sup> Dewan T. and Squintani F. 2016. In Defence of Factions. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 60 No. 4, pp 860-881.

Factionalism is often underreported within contemporary political science and is often barely covered in core texts<sup>291</sup> with the focus instead being on formal power structures within the party.<sup>292</sup> However there have been scholars who have placed the requisite importance on the role of factions within political parties, such as Rose,<sup>293</sup> Bale,<sup>294</sup> Graham<sup>295</sup> and Moar.<sup>296</sup> As Sferza<sup>297</sup> noted factions can be sources of both strength, in allowing for bargaining and routes to resolve conflicts, and weakness when such bargaining becomes conflict. Scholars such as Rose<sup>298</sup> and Hine<sup>299</sup> have sought to differentiate organised factions of individuals acting over time from tendencies, loose coalitions of like-minded individuals who group together for a set purpose in an unsustained fashion, lacking a formal structure or organisation. It is important to note that in this study when discussing factions then we are discussing intra-party groups who are both organised and sustained over time.

These institutionalised factions require a level of ideological or principled coherence to allow individuals to identify with them and support their aims.<sup>300</sup> Whilst there have been occasions of division based on ideologically similar personalities, such as the “TeeBee-Gee-Bees” of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown,<sup>301</sup> these are nearer examples of tendencies than factions, as the grouping does not exist separate from the individual being supported. Therefore, the primary factional division within contemporary western European social democratic parties is often ideological<sup>302</sup> often termed as conflict between ‘the left’ and ‘the centre’<sup>303</sup> although this can be oversimplistic.

These factional conflicts are a key dynamic in discussions involved the selection process, and the role of youth wings and trade unions in them. Youth wings and indeed trade unions are both factional actors and arenas for factional conflicts. As one faction becomes dominant within the organisation then it becomes a factional actor as those individuals within a powerful position are able to act. When

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<sup>291</sup> See for example Cox G. W. and McCubbins M.D. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. Berkeley CA, University of California Press and Heywood A. 2013. *Politics*. London, Palgrave Macmillan, Fourth Edition.

<sup>292</sup> See for example Katz R. S. 2002. The Internal Life of Parties in Luther K.R. and Müller-Rommel F. (eds.) *Political Parties in the New Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 87-118 and Sartori G. 1976. *Parties and Party Systems*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>293</sup> Rose R. 1964. Parties, Factions and Tendencies in Britain. *Political Studies*. Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 33-46.

<sup>294</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a ‘cultural theory’ of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 25 – 43.

<sup>295</sup> Graham B. D. 1993. *Representation and Party Politics*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.

<sup>296</sup> Maor M. 1997. *Political Parties and Party Systems. Comparative Approaches and the British Experience*. London, Routledge.

<sup>297</sup> Sferza S. 2002. Party Organization and Party Performance: The Case of the French Socialist Party in Gunther R. Montero J.R. and Linz J.J. (eds.) *Political Parties*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 166-190.

<sup>298</sup> Rose R. 1964. Parties, Factions and Tendencies in Britain. *Political Studies*. Vol. 12, pp. 33-46

<sup>299</sup> Hine D. 1982. Factionalism in West European Parties: A Framework for Analysis. *West European Politics*. Vol. 5, pp. 36-53

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A Study in the Politics of Labour’s Party Management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, p395.

<sup>302</sup> See for example Kogan D. 2019. *Protest and Power: The Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing and Koelble T. A. 1991. *The Left Unraveled: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.

<sup>303</sup> See for example Kogan D. 2019. *Protest and Power: The Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing, Koelble T. A. 1991. *The Left Unraveled: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press and Hayter D. 2005. *Fightback! Labour’s Traditional Right in the 1970s and 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

factional conflicts are narrower or no one faction is dominant then the ability for the organisation to be used for factional purposes is lessened or removed.

This is true of the parties, as discussed by Ceron<sup>304</sup>, but it is equally true for individual party units, including the youth wings. It is important to keep in mind the dual nature – factional actor and factional arena – of the youth wings when considering how individuals navigate through them. As will be discussed in the empirical chapters, factional service in an internal party unit such as a youth wing is one method of bringing an individual to the attention of party gatekeepers. Indeed these ideological factional conflicts have been described as “the real school”<sup>305</sup> of the parties enabling the development of skills and their demonstration in a locale which party gatekeepers pay attention to. This dynamic of internal conflict and an individual’s performance within such factional battles are a key part of the process of socialisation within the party.

## **2.5: Professionalisation and gentrification in politics and social democratic parties.**

One of the issues with the academic study of professionalisation in politics is that the term professionalisation itself is ill-defined. For Holtz-Bacha, Mancini and Papathanassopolous<sup>306</sup> it means the influx of communication professionals, PR experts and consultants into politics. For Karlsen and Saglie<sup>307</sup> it means the growth in political staffers and party employees, turning some formerly voluntary activists into paid practitioners. For Black<sup>308</sup> it is the assimilation by practitioners of standards and values prevalent in the political environment and likely to lead to a positive judgement by peers and thus advancement. For Saalfeld<sup>309</sup> the concept refers to a rise in ‘career politicians’ – political actors whose professional life has been spent in jobs within the political ecosystem and for Mellors<sup>310</sup> it is a rise in Parliamentarians with a background in the ‘communication professions’ – law, education and journalism. For Cairney<sup>311</sup> too it relates to an increase in Parliamentarians from ‘politics-facilitating’ professions, and Allen (2013)<sup>312</sup> finds that those who come into Parliament from a career as a special advisor, in think-tanks or other jobs in the political ecosystem are promoted further and faster when in government. For Evans and Tilley<sup>313</sup> it is a shift in the focus of political parties from the concerns of the working-class to those of the middle-classes, and therefore the exclusion of the

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<sup>304</sup> Ceron A. 2012. Bounded Oligarchy: How and When Factions Constrain Leaders in Party Position-Taking. *Electoral Studies*. Vol. 31, pp. 689 – 701.

<sup>305</sup> Interview conducted for this study, see chapter four.

<sup>306</sup> Holtz-Bacha C., Mancini P. and Papathanassopolous S. (Eds). 2007. *The Professionalisation of Political Communication*. Chicago, Intellect Books.

<sup>307</sup> Karlsen R. and Saglie J. 2017. Party bureaucrats, independent professionals, or politicians? A study of party employees. *West European Politics*. Vol. 40, No. 6. pp 1331 – 1351.

<sup>308</sup> Black G. S. 1970. A Theory of Professionalisation in Politics. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 64 No. 3. pp 865 – 878.

<sup>309</sup> Saalfeld T. 1997. Professionalisation of parliamentary roles in Germany: An aggregate-level analysis, 1949–94. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 1. pp 32 – 54

<sup>310</sup> Mellors C. 1978. *The British MP: A Socioeconomic Study of the House of Commons*. Farnborough, Saxon House.

<sup>311</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the ‘Politics-Facilitating’ Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>312</sup> Allen P. 2013. Linking Pre-Parliamentary Political Experience and the Career Trajectories of the 1997 General Election Cohort. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 66 No. 4, pp 685 – 707.

<sup>313</sup> Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

working-class from the political process. Best and Cotta's<sup>314</sup> extensive historical study discussed professionalisation as the shift from legislators drawn from rural aristocracies to those drawn from the urban middle-classes. Norris<sup>315</sup> concurred with that adding that this process excluded not only the land-owning aristocracy but also the working class. Allen (2018)<sup>316</sup> argues that, through social change such as the fragmentation of class identities (rather than it being the fault of the parties themselves) the distance between the parties and the public has led to a lack of ordinary people with an interest in pursuing party politics, and that politics has shifted to being a debate on who has the most technocratic competence to govern, rather than a clash of ideologies.

Broadly however these can all be placed into two distinct typologies which this study as discussed in chapter one will term professionalisation and gentrification. The first is a process of increasing sophistication in the organisation and techniques required by political parties to succeed in the permanent arms race of electoral politics. This is evidenced by a requirement (or at least a perceived requirement) for increased levels of expertise and institutional capacity – the external experts of Holtz-Backa et al,<sup>317</sup> the increased numbers of party employees of Karlsen and Saglie<sup>318</sup> and the adoption and spread of professional practices discussed by Black,<sup>319</sup> as well as the rapid rise of political insiders found by Allen (2013).<sup>320</sup>

Various factors could be feeding into this process, from an increasingly educated and sophisticated electorate to the rise in the internet and social media. What is not in doubt is the Darwinian nature of electoral politics seeing a rise in adoption of any perceived advantage. Margaret Thatcher's hiring of the PR firm Saatchi and Saatchi in 1979,<sup>321</sup> seen as helping turn the election in the Conservatives favour, meant that communication had to be a part of Labour's "Party into Power" project.<sup>322</sup> The success of the Conservatives on social media in 2015<sup>323</sup> led to a response from Labour on social media campaigning in 2017<sup>324</sup> in both cases bringing perceived success to the respective parties.

The second typology found in the literature is what this study terms gentrification. It relates not to the process of increased political sophistication but to the nature of the individuals who are able to succeed within this changed environment, and further to the backgrounds and experiences which

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<sup>314</sup> Best H. and Cotta M. (Eds). 2000. *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848 – 2000*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>315</sup> Norris P. 1997. *Passages to Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>316</sup> Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it Matters who our Politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>317</sup> Holtz-Bacha C., Mancini P. and Papathanassopolous S. (Eds). 2007. *The Professionalisation of Political Communication*. Chicago, Intellect Books.

<sup>318</sup> Karlsen R. and Saglie J. 2017. Party bureaucrats, independent professionals, or politicians? A study of party employees. *West European Politics*. Vol. 40, No. 6. pp 1331 – 1351.

<sup>319</sup> Black G. S. 1970. A Theory of Professionalisation in Politics. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 64 No. 3. pp 865 – 878.

<sup>320</sup> Allen P. 2013. Linking Pre-Parliamentary Political Experience and the Career Trajectories of the 1997 General Election Cohort. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 66 No. 4, pp 685 – 707.

<sup>321</sup> Thatcher M. 1993. *The Downing Street Years*. London, HarperCollins Publishers.

<sup>322</sup> Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A Study in the Politics of Labour's Party Management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

<sup>323</sup> Byrne C. 2015. Getting Engaged? The Relationship between Traditional, New Media, and the Electorate during the 2015 UK General Election. Report to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism available at <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/The%2520Relationship%2520between%2520Traditional%2520C%2520New%2520Media%2520and%2520the%2520Electorate.pdf> accessed 18.06.2019 17:23

<sup>324</sup> Margetts H. 2017. Why Social Media May Have Won the 2017 General Election. *The Political Quarterly*. Vol. 88 No. 3. pp 386 – 390.

equip an individual so to succeed. It is in this typology that the works of Allen (2018),<sup>325</sup> Evans and Tilley,<sup>326</sup> Saalfeld,<sup>327</sup> Mellors,<sup>328</sup> Cairney,<sup>329</sup> Best and Cotta<sup>330</sup> and Norris<sup>331</sup> sit. It is also in this aspect that the concepts of gentrification of the party fade into the field of the studies on legislative recruitment already discussed above, since it is in many respects simply that aspect of the study of who is successful that relates to class origin.<sup>332</sup> Of further interest to note is Beckman's<sup>333</sup> study of Swedish government ministers which found that this process had plateaued in modern times.

What it is important to note however is that these are two qualitatively different if highly interlinked concepts, despite frequently being referred to by the same terminology. For reasons of greater clarity this study will use the term gentrification for the trend of more middle-class individuals emerging into the legislative sphere and professionalisation for the process of the parties adopting more sophisticated methods of campaigning requiring specialist expertise and additional capacity.

#### Professionalisation and gentrification in social democratic political parties.

This study concerns itself primarily with investigating the individuals who come through the social democratic political parties, who succeed in becoming selected as a potential legislator, and how socialisation in those party's youth wings forms a part of that process. Therefore, this study is primarily concerned with the concept of gentrification and hypothesises that more affluent individuals are best able to navigate that to a successful conclusion.

A further, important, note to make is that there has always been a process of socialisation that takes individuals and in some fashion forms them into a political individual prior to becoming a legislator, as discussed in chapter one. Historical examples of parliamentarians who come from manual trades such as factory work or coal mining underwent a process of professionalisation before becoming a legislator.<sup>334</sup> Historically this was done via the trade unions, which gave individuals experience of negotiation, balancing constituent priorities, organising and public speaking prior to their selection as a prospective parliamentary candidate.<sup>335</sup>

What has changed is the required skills. As mass communication technology – especially television and latterly social media – became more and more important for achieving political objectives there

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<sup>325</sup> Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it Matters who our Politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>326</sup> Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>327</sup> Saalfeld T. 1997. Professionalisation of parliamentary roles in Germany: An aggregate-level analysis, 1949–94. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 1. pp 32 – 54

<sup>328</sup> Mellors C. 1978. *The British MP: A Socioeconomic Study of the House of Commons*. Farnborough, Saxon House.

<sup>329</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>330</sup> Best H. and Cotta M. (Eds). 2000. *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848 – 2000*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>331</sup> Norris P. 1997. *Passages to Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>332</sup> See for example Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>333</sup> Beckman L. 2007. The Professionalisation of Politics Reconsidered: A Study of the Swedish Cabinet 1917-2004. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 1. pp 66 – 83.

<sup>334</sup> See for example Clynes J.R. 1937. *Memoirs 1869 – 1924*. London, Hutchinson and Co, Adelman P. 1996. *The Rise of the Labour Party 1880 – 1945*. London, Longman. Third Edition and Berger S. 2000. *Social Democracy and the Working Class in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany*. London, Longman.

<sup>335</sup> See for example Avril E. and Beliard Y. (Eds) 2018. *Labour United and Divided from the 1830s to the Present*. Manchester, Manchester University Press and Pelling H. 1976. *A History of British Trade Unionism*. London, Pelican. Third Edition.

was a pressure on the parties to find individuals with the requisite skills to take advantage.<sup>336</sup> This was a process of professionalisation. Individuals from the professions which also require communication skills such as law and education had an advantage.<sup>337</sup> Thus there may be a link between professionalisation and gentrification. However, this is only a slight advantage – the presence of lawyers in the legislature is hardly new – and these two processes may not inevitably follow one from the other. This is explored in the empirical chapters of this thesis, and this study therefore has an important contribution to make on the discussion of party professionalisation and gentrification.

## **2.6: Conclusions from the literature.**

These four fields of research are closely intertwined and the boundaries between them are shifting and impermeable. This study sits across those these different fields and will contribute to the debates in all of them by also commenting on that recruitment journey. All four relate to the journey an individual takes to go from being a general party sympathiser to assuming a position as an electoral standard bearer and the consequences which ensue from that.

Elite theory focuses on the outcomes of that selection journey, that is to say the movement of an individual into a political power elite. Elite Theory is starting to look more seriously at the processes by which Political Parties influence which individuals move up into a political elite as empirical case studies find that the elites in mature democracies are more fragmented than the theories predicted.<sup>338</sup> The additional findings that internal competition, in particular ideology, are more important than previously considered is also contributing to this shift in focus.<sup>339</sup> Shifts in training grounds which have a great influence on who moves into the political elites have an obvious impact on those elites. Changes in the nature of those training grounds then have much to say in the debates in elite theory.

This will also be relevant to the field of legislative recruitment. Recruitment studies focuses both on who makes that transition but also on the immediately preceding step, the formal selection process and its impact on an individual's ability to become a Parliamentarian. Whilst this recruitment journey has been well-described from the point of formal selection onwards<sup>340</sup> the role of youth wings specifically within that has yet to be subjected to in-depth academic scrutiny. Further whilst some attention has been paid to the preceding step, the political ecosystem from which individuals emerge to challenge for selection, this has often focused on inherent characteristics such as gender or ethnicity and the role those play.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Holtz-Bacha C., Mancini P. and Papathanassopoulos S. (Eds). 2007. *The Professionalisation of Political Communication*. Chicago, Intellect Books.

<sup>337</sup> See for example Mellors C. 1978. *The British MP: A Socioeconomic Study of the House of Commons*. Farnborough, Saxon House and Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>338</sup> Kritzer H. 1978. Ideology and American political elites. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp.484-502.

<sup>339</sup> See for example Martin C. 1991. *Shifting the burden: The struggle over growth and corporate taxation*. Chicago IL, University of Chicago Press, Putnam R. 1971. Studying Elite Political Culture: The Case of "Ideology". *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 No. 3, pp. 651–681 and Scully R. and Patterson S. 2001. 'Ideology, partisanship and decision making in a contemporary American legislature'. *Party Politics*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 131-155.

<sup>340</sup> See for example Cotta M. 2000. *Parliamentary representatives in Europe, 1848-2000: legislative recruitment and careers in eleven European countries*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, Matthews D. 1984. Legislative Recruitment and Legislative Careers. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 9 No. 4 Nov. pp. 547-585 and Norris P. 1997. *Passages to power: Legislative recruitment in advanced democracies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>341</sup> See for example Ashe J., Campbell R., Childs S. and Evans E. 2010. "Stand by Your Man": Women's Political Recruitment at the 2010 UK General Election. *British Politics*, Vol. 5 No. 4, Dec. pp. 455-480 and Norris P. and



This leaves several open questions. Firstly, what role do factors which are not inherent but rather chosen by the individual play in this process? Secondly, what benefits do they bring to breaking both into the political ecosystem, the world of party and union employees, think-tanks, political journalism, senior activists, staffers and political and communication consultants, and then breaking out of it again into elected national office? By what mechanisms do the parties and the other organisations in that space recruit into it?

Whilst there has been some investigation of initial politicisation of individuals<sup>342</sup> the field has yet to unpack how changes in the context and manner in which that politicisation occur can have a profound influence both on the individual and, in the mass, on the party as a whole. If the contention that characteristics such as gender or race<sup>343</sup> lead to changes in the nature of the parties and the manner in which they make policy is correct, then the initial politicisation – the way an individual learns how politics is done and the preconceptions this gifts them – must be equally important to this process. This thesis focuses on that aspect as well as on how the choice to be active in a political youth wing impacts upon the selection journey an individual undertakes.

In order to do this this thesis needs to understand the contextual factors surrounding this journey. No study of legislative recruitment can be comprehensive if it ignores the issue of factionalism. The ideological divides within social democratic parties are a key factor not only in the actual performance of party membership but is also a key component of selection.<sup>344</sup> Factions look to promote their supporters and suppress those of their intra-party opponents and must therefore form a part of the discussion of selection dynamics. This study will explore that dynamic and thus add to the relatively thin debate on party factionalism. These factions also form part of the political ecosystem. Not only do they provide ample opportunities for activists to develop and demonstrate skills in achieving political outcomes, but they can provide employment opportunities within the ecosystem. Momentum, Progress and Labour First are all examples of contemporary factional organisations within the Labour Party who employ staff.

This is, of course, also an example of the professionalisation of the parties, by which the increasing levels of sophistication required within the political realm requires increasing numbers of specialists and staff capacity.<sup>345</sup> This development of professionalisation comes with the linked but separate notion of gentrification, an increasing dominance of those with the high levels of sociocultural and

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Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>342</sup> See for example Abramson P. and Claggett W. 2001. Recruitment and Political Participation. *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 54 No. 4 pp. 905-916 and Hooghe M., Stolle D and Stouthuysen P. 2004. Head start in politics: The recruitment function of youth organisations of political parties in Belgium (Flanders). *Party Politics*. Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 193 – 212.

<sup>343</sup> See for example Ashe J., Campbell R., Childs S. and Evans E. 2010. "Stand by Your Man": Women's Political Recruitment at the 2010 UK General Election. *British Politics*, Vol. 5 No. 4, Dec. pp. 455-480, Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. 1995. *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press and Norris, P. 1997. *Passages to power: Legislative recruitment in advanced democracies*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

<sup>344</sup> See for example Boucek F. 2009. Rethinking factionalism: Typologies, intra-party dynamics and three faces of factionalism. *Party Politics*. Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 455 – 485, Dewan T. and Squintani F. 2016. In defence of factions. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 60 No. 4, pp 860 – 881 and Hine D. 1982. Factionalism in West European Parties: A Framework for Analysis. *West European Politics*. Vol. 5, pp. 36-53.

<sup>345</sup> See for example Gibson R. K. and Römmele A. 2009. Measuring the professionalisation of political campaigning. *Party Politics*. Vol. 15, No. 3, pp 265 – 293 and Holtz-Bacha C., Mancini P. and Papathanassopoulos S. (eds). 2007. *The professionalisation of political communication*. Chicago, Intellect Books.

economic capital required to become specialists.<sup>346</sup> The first is the notion that a political career is now possible, the second that career politicians have resulted. The main aim of this study therefore is to demonstrate a causal mechanism by which the gentrification of social democratic parties – as distinct from professionalisation – occurs. It will then, contribute to this field by demonstrating why more affluent individuals are better able to navigate the selection journey and provide empirical answers to how this change has occurred. It will focus on the increasing role of party youth organisations as origin points both for the political ecosystem and then the ranks of national legislators. The literature at present focuses on this political ecosystem without readily acknowledging that this is an intermediate phase, not an origin point. This study will go some way to correcting that.

The bodies of scholarly literature in which this study is anchored then fruitfully complement each other and this research offers a conceptual bridge between them. Therefore, this study contributes to the theoretical debate in all four fields and provides empirical evidence for discussion. Beyond this, the study aims to inform the wider, public debate on the nature of the contemporary centre-left and its parliamentarians, how this has changed in the last four decades, as well as contributing to the internal discussions of their future taking place within and between the various social democratic parties.

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<sup>346</sup> See for example Cairney P. 2007. The professionalisation of MPs: Refining the ‘politics-facilitating’ explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2, pp 212 – 233 and Saalfeld T. 1997. Professionalisation of parliamentary roles in Germany: An aggregate-level analysis 1949 – 94. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 1, pp 32-54.

## Chapter 3: Methodology.

### 3.1: Introduction.

Before moving to the empirical chapters, it is necessary for this study to set out a methodology for the research – that is a justification for the methods selected for finding the answers to the research questions posed. This chapter will explore the reasoning behind the chosen comparative mixed-methods approach, set out the details of the quantitative and qualitative methods selected and why and explain the case studies selected. It will then discuss the ethical considerations of the methods selected for the study. Finally, it will discuss the issues that arose with the data collection and the steps taken by the researcher to compensate.

The decisions taken for the methodology of this study stem from the selected research questions and hypotheses. It is therefore necessary to remind ourselves of these before proceeding any further.

Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ1: How have the youth wings of social democratic political parties impacted on the selection of national representatives since the elections of 1979/80?	H1: Youth organisations have grown in prominence as sources of social democratic parliamentary recruitment since the 1980s, filling a vacuum created by the decline of the trade unions.
RQ2: What are the dynamics of social democratic party youth wings in relation to the recruitment of national representatives?	H2: The youth organisations present significant practical barriers to entry which wealthier, middle class individuals are better able to negotiate.
RQ3: What is the impact of any change in the role of youth wings on social democratic parties' legislative recruitment upon the nature of those parties?	H3: The shift in recruitment patterns contributes to the gentrification of social democratic parties by creating a shift in the political culture of the party representatives and therefore a shift in the nature of the parties in question.

These hypotheses require different methods to test but are the starting point for the selection of which techniques are used to answer the research questions. Linked to that but broader is the notion of comparativeness, and how generalisable the answers to these questions can be. This also provides the reasoning behind the selection of the case studies. The case studies as discussed further below allow for a comparative study that is also at least somewhat generalisable.

The next section discusses the linked notions of why the use of mixed methods with a small number of case studies contributes to the ability both to answer the research questions by testing the hypotheses and ensures those answers have a generalisable applicability.

### **3.2: Theoretical framework.**

#### Ontology.

The methodology of a research project should be drawn out of and relevant to the ontological and epistemological positions which sustain it.<sup>347</sup> Ontology can best be described as the nature of being.<sup>348</sup> Epistemology in turn is the relationship between ontology and the research or researcher.<sup>349</sup> In other words, ontology is the nature of reality (is there a real world?) and epistemology is how we can understand that reality (how do we know?).

There are broadly two competing ontological theories<sup>350</sup> within the study of political science – positivism and post-positivism. Each ontological position then has corresponding epistemological positions and further following on from that different theories or approaches to the discipline. It should be noted that there is some debate regarding terminology<sup>351</sup> with positivism, realism, functionalism and objectivism being used for one side of the ontological debate and post-positivism, constructivism, anti-foundationalism, interpretivism and relativism for the other side. This thesis will use the terms positivism and post-positivism in order to avoid confusion as it helps keep clear in the reader's mind that the post-positivist position was a reaction to the positivist one. Regardless of the nomenclature essentially the debate between the two positions is whether or not there is an independent truth, separate from the individual – positivists argue that truth and facts are observable whereas post-positivists argue that facts are a product of social knowledge, rather than 'found'.<sup>352</sup>

Ontologically speaking the positivist tradition holds that truth is external to the individual, with objective facts that exist regardless of the opinions of the researcher but which the researcher can discover.<sup>353</sup> Epistemologically then, it holds that the duty of the researcher is to uncover these facts by the generation and testing of disprovable hypotheses.<sup>354</sup>

In contrast the ontological position of post-positivism is that there are no objective facts because there are multiple versions of the truth, each relative to the perceptions of the individual.<sup>355</sup> Thus epistemologically the duty of the researcher is not to discover objective facts, but to provide an

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<sup>347</sup> See Bryman A. 2001. *Social Research Methods*. Third edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p18-21.

<sup>348</sup> Hudson L. and Ozanne J. 1988. Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 508-521.

<sup>349</sup> See Carson D., Gilmore A., Perry C. and Gronhaug K. 2001. *Qualitative Marketing Research*. New York NY, Sage Publications.

<sup>350</sup> Furlong P. and Marsh D. 'A Skin not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science.' In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>351</sup> See for example Bryman A. 2001. *Social Research Methods*. Third edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press or Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>352</sup> Furlong P. and Marsh D. 'A Skin not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science.' In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>353</sup> Bryman A. 2001. *Social Research Methods*. Third edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 13-21.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> Hudson L. and Ozanne J. 1988. Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 508-521.

interpretative, context-driven and specific understanding of socially constructed 'perceived' knowledge.<sup>356</sup>

This is more than simply an academic debate, as it governs what researchers consider to be 'acceptable' knowledge to admit to the canon of their disciplines and simultaneously the debate governs the relationship between theories and empirical research.<sup>357</sup> Positivism is often deemed to be seeking to apply the rules of the natural sciences to the study of the social sciences<sup>358</sup> in order to establish and explain generalizable laws, whereas post-positivism argues that the agency and unpredictability of human beings disbars the techniques of the natural sciences from being applicable to the social sciences<sup>359</sup> and therefore seek to interpret and understand socially constructed knowledge.

In addition in almost (though not quite) all cases, research which includes quantitative methods falls into the positivist tradition (although many studies in the positivist tradition also utilise qualitative methods), whereas post-positivists utilise qualitative methods such as ethnography, or linguistic conceptualisation.<sup>360</sup> This is largely because of the differing objectives of the two schools of thought – either to discover, describe and explain and then form generalisations, or to interpret and understand a specific set of cases. As such the ontological and epistemological grounding of a piece of research has a large impact on the choice of methods used. These are however not iron-clad and it must not be assumed that the use of one or other method automatically aligns with a certain ontological or epistemological position.

#### Epistemology.

There is some debate between the exact nature of the relationship between ontology and epistemology<sup>361</sup> – or rather between how one can be distinguished from the other and which logically should follow the other – do we have an idea of the nature of the world and then know how to understand it,<sup>362</sup> or do we learn the nature of the world through the manner in which we understand it,<sup>363</sup> or are the two inextricably entwined and we are unable to say one comes before the other?<sup>364</sup> What is not however debated is that there is an intrinsic relationship between the two.

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<sup>356</sup> Carson D., Gilmore A., Perry C. and Gronhaug K. 2001. *Qualitative Marketing Research*. New York NY, Sage Publications, p6.

<sup>357</sup> Bryman A. 2001. *Social Research Methods*. Third edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press p13.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid. p14.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid. p15.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid. pp13-21

<sup>361</sup> Furlong P. and Marsh D. 'A Skin not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science.' In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 186-188.

<sup>362</sup> Spencer N. 2000, 'On the importance of distinguishing Ontology and Epistemology'. *Paper presented at the Hagel Summer School*, March 2000. Available at [www.ethicalpolitics.org/seminars/neville.htm](http://www.ethicalpolitics.org/seminars/neville.htm) accessed 06.02.2019 13:33.

<sup>363</sup> Dixon D.P. and Jones III J.P. 1998. My dinner with Derrida, or spatial analysis and poststructuralism do lunch. *Environment and Planning A*, Vol 30. No. 2, pp. 247-260.

<sup>364</sup> Smith S. 'Positivism and Beyond' in Smith S., Booth K. and Zalewski M. (eds.) 1996. *Positivism and Beyond*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

The post-positivist ontological position is inextricably linked to the constructivist epistemological position, however the positivist ontological position has two epistemological derivatives – positivism and realism.<sup>365</sup>

Constructivist epistemology is built upon post-positivist ontology, which holds that there is no world independent of the individual researcher. The role of the constructivist researcher is not therefore to discover, describe and explain, but to understand and interpret. The researcher therefore does not place any great advantage in being objective – since it holds that all knowledge is subjectively created the constructivist does not believe it is possible to be objective - rather constructivists look to experience what they are researching and to co-create knowledge in conversation with research participants as well as with their own prior understanding and to blur the boundaries between scientific data and personal experience.<sup>366</sup> As such constructivist research, focusing on motivation and meaning, is context-specific. Constructivists do not therefore seek to establish generalizable, abstract claims or theories.<sup>367</sup>

Positivism in the epistemological sense however places an emphasis on objectivity and seeking to draw generalizable and abstract conclusions from data – its aim is to make causal statements. Since facts are objective and provable, positivists concentrate their research on describing and explaining the facts generated by their data and in order to do this effectively seek to apply reasoned, rational and logical approaches to methods, to draw a distinction between their research and their personal experience and between facts and value judgements, and to do so by being a detached, dispassionate observer of reality.<sup>368</sup> Additionally positivists hold that there are broad analogies between the natural and social sciences, and also hold that empirical questions (questions of ‘what is’) can be separated from normative questions (questions of ‘what should be’).<sup>369</sup>

There is a second epistemological position which is based on a positivist ontological position – realism. The realist position holds that there is an independent world separate from the researcher, and that causal statements can be made. However, where it differs from positivism is in arguing that social phenomenon and the causal relationships which link them are not necessarily directly observable.<sup>370</sup> The methodological considerations this throws up are that research should be designed to provide inferences based on what is observable in society. This is not an enormous difference from the positivist position but is included here to demonstrate there can be internal nuances to the position.

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<sup>365</sup> Furlong P. and Marsh D. ‘A Skin not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science.’ In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 193-205.

<sup>366</sup> See Ibid. and Berger P. and Luckmann T. 1966. *The Social Constructions of Reality: A Treatise on Sociology of Knowledge*. New York NY, Anchor Books.

<sup>367</sup> Neuman L. 2000. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Fourth edition. Boston MA, Allyn and Bacon Publishing.

<sup>368</sup> See Bryman A. 2001. *Social Research Methods*. Third edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press and Carson D., Gilmore A., Perry C. and Gronhaug K. 2001. *Qualitative Marketing Research*. New York NY, Sage Publications, p6.

<sup>369</sup> Furlong P. and Marsh D. ‘A Skin not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science.’ In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 193-199.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid. p204.

## Approaches.

An approach, in political science, can be defined as different schools of thought on the focus or prism through which to define the principles of political studies going beyond that suggested by constructivism or positivism.<sup>371</sup> Some approaches take a normative standpoint (what should be)<sup>372</sup> but most approaches are more concerned with an empirical standpoint (what is). Equally some draw on the ontological and epistemological debates detailed above, others cross such boundaries. In those examples there are sometimes debates within political science as to whether an approach can be considered a coherent whole or should more accurately be referred to as a family of sub-disciplines with differing epistemological takes focused through a single prism. Some of these are discussed in detail below.

Classical Marxism is an example of an approach which takes a realist epistemological position.<sup>373</sup> Marxism as an approach attempts to infer the reality of the state, social and economic systems from the visible sections viewed through an analysis of capitalism<sup>374</sup> and as such could be argued to apply to a study on political elites. However classical Marxism struggles to explain the failure of Marxist predictions, as a result of which neo-Marxism has attempted to reimagine the analysis of ideology, state agency and state power.<sup>375</sup> Despite this Marxist approaches tend to underplay the fragmented nature of elites and as such do not pick up on the issues of internal competition discussed in this study.<sup>376</sup>

Behavioural analysis in contrast focuses on observable behaviour, with any conclusions that are reached subject to empirical testing<sup>377</sup> – a positivist standpoint. It seeks to explain the question of why, in a political setting, do people behave the way they do? This can be at either the individual level or the societal level, whichever is appropriate for the research in question.<sup>378</sup> However the difficulty of distinguishing between behaviour motivated by promoting causes and behaviour motivated by promoting themselves in individuals seeking selection means behavioural analysis is not a suitable approach for this study.

Rational choice theory takes a more extreme positivist position and is an importation of economic theory into political science.<sup>379</sup> Rational choice theory argues that people are both rational and self-interested and that therefore the role of political science is to uncover the system of incentives which governs that behaviour.<sup>380</sup> Rational choice theory however suffers from the same issues as behavioural analysis in understanding motivation for this case study.

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<sup>371</sup> Heywood A. 1997. *Politics*. Second Edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 12 – 17.

<sup>372</sup> For a discussion of Normative Theory see Buckler S. 'Normative Theory' In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 156-176.

<sup>373</sup> Furlong P. and Marsh D. 'A Skin not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science.' In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 204-205.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid. pp. 136-155

<sup>375</sup> Heywood A. 1997. *Politics*. Second Edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 92.

<sup>376</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>377</sup> Sanders D. 'Behavioural Analysis' in In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 23 – 41.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

<sup>379</sup> Hindmoor A. 'Rational Choice' In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 42-59.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

Political psychology also imports elements of another discipline into political science, specifically (unsurprisingly given the name) psychology.<sup>381</sup> This is based on several assumptions – firstly that the choices, preferences and decisions of certain individuals and groups has a significant influence on history and the political landscape.<sup>382</sup> The second is that an empirical study of the psychology of those individuals and groups can explain those decisions and choices, and therefore political outcomes.<sup>383</sup> Epistemologically the majority of the political psychology approach is positivist, but there are some exceptions which take a constructivist standpoint.<sup>384</sup>

The institutional approach to political science shifts the focus from people to the institutions which govern political life.<sup>385</sup> The ‘old’ institutionalism was the basis of much of political science prior to the 1950s, but in more recent years a ‘new institutionalism’ has become prominent, which expands the meaning of ‘institution’ beyond constitutional arrangements of organisations for policy construction and formal decision making and supplement this with considerations of power relationships, values systems and other relationships between the individual and institutions.<sup>386</sup> However institutionalism has come under fire for having little coherence as a school of thought other than that institutions are an important focus of study. Part of this is epistemological confusion – there are both constructivist institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism sub-disciplines which take diametrically opposed ontological and epistemological positions.<sup>387</sup>

Randall<sup>388</sup> argues that there are also differing ontological and epistemological approaches within the feminist approach. Feminist political science grew out of, but is not the same as, the feminist social movement, and is a form of political science with an insight into and focus on the power dynamics surrounding gender.<sup>389</sup> Randall argues there should be a debate as to whether feminism is more properly considered a family of sub-disciplines with a shared focus.<sup>390</sup> Overall the feminist approach is concerned with power, in particular with the everyday experiences of power, politics and the international system and how they relate to gender.

#### Applications to this study.

The research questions will be drawn from the existing literature on political recruitment and elite theory in order that the questions posed can provide theory-driven hypotheses.<sup>391</sup> As such it will take influence from both the institutionalist (new and old) approaches and the political psychology approaches, without adopting either as an organisational framework.

This study falls into the positivist school of thought at both the ontological and epistemological level. This is because the research question and research aims are to analyse the effect of youth wings on

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<sup>381</sup> Hart P. ‘Political Psychology’ In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 99-113.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid. p102

<sup>383</sup> Ibid p104

<sup>384</sup> Ibid p106.

<sup>385</sup> Lowndes V. ‘The Institutional Approach’ In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 60-79.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid. p65.

<sup>388</sup> Randall V. ‘Feminism’ In Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, p117.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid. p114.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid. p114 – 135.

<sup>391</sup> For a discussion on the importance of theory for driving both hypotheses and data-collection see King G., Keohane R. and Verba S. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press p28-29 and p55-63.



the recruitment of representatives to national legislatures and how that ought to colour our understanding of the nature of social democratic parties in Western Europe. Although the process of getting to that point is contested, complex and dependent on a number of things ultimately the recruitment of a member to the national legislature is a binary, provable phenomenon: either an individual is elected or not. Equally the key independent variables – membership of a youth wing, membership of a trade union, or senior service in either, are binary choices. It is seeking to establish generalizable statements pertaining to the impact of these independent variables on the dependent variable of the nature of centre-left parliamentarians by drawing lessons from the case studies which, when compared, can provide an insight into what common elements are present, and therefore which can be extrapolated to be proposed common elements in other cases as a basis for future research.

Although King, Keohane and Verba<sup>392</sup> in their work ‘Designing Social Inquiry’ have been criticised for an emphasis on hypothesis-testing rather than hypothesis-generation<sup>393</sup> at the epistemological level their framework does advocate deriving disprovable hypotheses and applying empirical tests using quantitative and qualitative data<sup>394</sup> by setting two tests for research questions – firstly that they “*should pose a question that is important in the real world*”<sup>395</sup> and secondly that the research project should “*make a specific contribution to an identifiable scholarly literature by increasing our collective ability to construct verified scientific explanations of some aspect of the world.*”<sup>396</sup> King, Keohane and Verba proceed to explain that this latter point does not just include studies which seek to contribute to explanations of phenomenon in the Social Sciences but also studies which are aimed at fact-finding, descriptive inferences, close observation of particular events or other studies which focus on the “*prerequisites for explanation.*”<sup>397</sup> From this we can see that though they claim that Designing Social Inquiry is not a work in the philosophy of social science<sup>398</sup> in its emphasis it does fall within the positivist tradition, as discussed by George and Bennett.<sup>399</sup>

This can also be seen in their prescription that data must be operationalised in order to be replicable,<sup>400</sup> and their emphasis on the importance of linking theoretical explanations and data<sup>401</sup> and examining causal mechanisms.<sup>402</sup> They do however sound a note of caution when it comes to drawing abstracts and generalizable conclusions from a research study around the rhetoric of causality and the attendant issue that correlation is not in and of itself sufficient proof of causality.<sup>403</sup> They do however argue that researchers can make bold statements of causality providing they acknowledge that the inferences such statements are built on are uncertain, which they termed the ‘variance of causal

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<sup>392</sup> King G., Keohane R. and Verba S. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press.

<sup>393</sup> George A. and Bennett A. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge MA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. p10 - 16

<sup>394</sup> King G., Keohane R. and Verba S. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, pp. 14 – 19.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid. p15.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid. p15.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid. p15.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid. p3.

<sup>399</sup> George A. and Bennett A. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge MA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, p11 and pp. 151-180.

<sup>400</sup> King G., Keohane R. and Verba S. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press pp. 26-27.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid. pp. 46 – 49.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid. pp. 75 – 114.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid. pp. 76 – 91.

effect'.<sup>404</sup> Consequently the study will acknowledge where it's generalised conclusions rest on uncertain ground.

This study is heuristic<sup>405</sup> in nature in that it identifies youth wing participation as a new variable and potential causal mechanism. Additionally, this study acts as a 'building block study'<sup>406</sup> in that it is confined to mature democracies of Western Europe (see the discussion on case studies below).

### **3.3: Why a comparative mixed methods approach?**

As set out above this study will make use of the comparative method to provide generalizable findings and will adopt a mixed method approach in order to provide a more rounded response to the research questions by using quantitative methods to discover and describe the predicted phenomenon, and qualitative methods in order to explain it.

The importance of being able to generate generalizable predictions is what Lees<sup>407</sup> refers to as 'resonance'—the factor which allows the Political Science discipline to build up a volume of knowledge and prevents it from being merely a form of very slow journalism.<sup>408</sup> To Lees it is abstraction which grants a sufficiently long half-life to theories that they are not rendered irrelevant by subsequent events or political discourse.<sup>409</sup> Thus without a certain level of abstraction any contribution to the canon is likely to remain ephemeral<sup>410</sup> as it is unable to make itself relevant to the wider discipline.<sup>411</sup>

It is possible to generate abstraction from a single case study<sup>412</sup> however these can be overly context-specific or assumptive of cultural exceptionalism.<sup>413</sup> In addition the comparative method can be seen to have greater rigor, as the comparison between case studies can and does shine a light on logical or empirical errors or weak-spots within the given concept.<sup>414</sup> This would seem to imply that the greater the number of case studies the better, in order to have more testable examples via a large-N study. Within the discipline however the term comparative method is also applied to small-N studies and the methodological issues which arise from it<sup>415</sup> and provides a framework for generating useful data with

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid pp. 8-9 and pp. 84-85.

<sup>405</sup> For a discussion of different forms of theory-building research see: Lijphart A. 1971. Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method. *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 65 No. 3, pp. 682-693; Eckstein H. 2000. Case study and theory in political science. *Case study method*. pp.119-164 and George A. and Bennett A. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge MA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

<sup>406</sup> George A. and Bennett A. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge MA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, p76.

<sup>407</sup> Lees C. 2006. We are all Comparativists now: Why and how Single-Country Scholarship must adapt and incorporate the Comparative Politics Approach. *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 39 No. 9, pp. 1084-1108.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid, p1099.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid, p1100.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid, p1098.

<sup>412</sup> See for example Dahl R. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven CT, Yale University Press.

<sup>413</sup> Domhoff G. W. 2005. Who really ruled in Dahl's New Haven? *Who Rules America Blog, University of California at Santa Cruz*. 30.09.2005. Available at: [http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/local/new\\_haven.html](http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/local/new_haven.html) accessed 12.11.2016 02:54.

<sup>414</sup> Lees C. 2006. We are all Comparativists now: Why and how Single-Country Scholarship must adapt and incorporate the Comparative Politics Approach. *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 39 No. 9, p1097.

<sup>415</sup> Collier D. 1993. The Comparative Method in Finifter A. (ed). *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington D.C., American Political Science Association.

few case studies, or (as is prevalent in political science) where direct experimental control is not plausible.<sup>416</sup> Small-N studies also allow for more detail and therefore richer, deeper conclusions.

There are good reasons for this study to adopt a small-N approach – focusing on those youth wings linked to a small number of political parties - for the analysis of the effect of youth wings on the character of social democratic parties. Lijphart argues that in some topic areas conducting an in-depth comparative analysis of a smaller number of cases can provide deeper and more nuanced conclusions than a more superficial overview of a larger number of test cases.<sup>417</sup> This is because for many phenomena in political science – including youth wings – there is a relative dearth of examples upon which to draw.<sup>418</sup> In addition the desirability of a relatively extensive time period in this study imposes a practical limit on the number of geographic case studies on which it can depend, an issue which also afflicts scholars in the comparative historical analysis school.<sup>419</sup>

There is however the issue Lijphart<sup>420</sup> refers to as ‘many variables, small-N’ and George and Bennett<sup>421</sup> called ‘equifinality’. This is the problem of having a high number of competing explanations for a phenomenon and a small number of case studies demonstrating that phenomenon, as it can make using statistical comparisons problematic in distinguishing between different causal explanations.<sup>422</sup> There are however techniques which can mitigate against this.

The first is to focus on comparable cases.<sup>423</sup> That is, case studies which are so far as is possible equivalent when it comes to variables which have little or no impact on the key variables being studied, to provide some measure of controlling for them. This has the added benefit of avoiding the pitfall of concept-stretching whereby a concept is forced to be so broad or be accompanied by so many caveats and addendums as to render it relatively meaningless in order to incorporate a sufficiently large number of case studies.<sup>424</sup> It is important to utilise case studies which have enough similarities to be comparable, whilst also being different enough to say that any findings are generalisable and that we can have confidence they are explained by the key variable under investigation.<sup>425</sup> Researchers can also cut down on the number of extraneous variables by the use of theoretical parsimony<sup>426</sup> – i.e. using a smaller number of explanatory variables.

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<sup>416</sup> Lijphart A. 1971. Comparative Politics and Comparative Methods. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 pp. 682-693.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid, p685.

<sup>418</sup> See Ibid. and Collier D. 1993. The Comparative Method in Finifter A. (ed). *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington D.C., American Political Science Association, p105.

<sup>419</sup> See Collier D. 1993. The Comparative Method in Finifter A. (ed). *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington D.C., American Political Science Association, p105.

<sup>420</sup> Lijphart A. 1971. Comparative Politics and Comparative Methods. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 p686.

<sup>421</sup> George A. L. & Bennett A. 2005. *Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge MA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

<sup>422</sup> See Collier D. 1993. The Comparative Method in Finifter A. (ed). *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington D.C., American Political Science Association, p105.

<sup>423</sup> See Ibid, p108 and Lijphart A. 1971. Comparative Politics and Comparative Methods. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 p686.

<sup>424</sup> Sartori G. 1984. *Social Science Concepts: A Systematic Analysis*. London, Sage Publishing.

<sup>425</sup> See Collier D. 1993. The Comparative Method in Finifter A. (ed). *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington D.C., American Political Science Association, p108 and Lijphart A. 1971. Comparative Politics and Comparative Methods. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 p686.

<sup>426</sup> Lijphart A. 1971. Comparative Politics and Comparative Methods. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 p686.

There is a tension between the need to have enough case-studies that the research can be generalizable and test the key variables and having a small enough number of case studies to allow the study to delve into the mechanisms of causation. Fewer case studies also allow the study to probe more deeply into the revealed phenomena, avoid concept-stretching and control for unimportant variables. It is thus a case of striking a balance. This minimises, as far as is possible, variations in the dependent variable - the nature of social democratic parliamentarians – in line with the principle of controlling for non-key variables as much as possible. This can then allow the key independent variable, the effect of youth wings role in recruitment, to be more clearly identified.

This then is the reasoning for this study to take a comparative approach with a small-N study based on the youth wings attached to the selected case studies, discussed below. When looking at the hypotheses it also becomes clear that a mixed method approach adopting both quantitative and qualitative methods is necessary to explore and test them. The following sections will detail the quantitative and qualitative methods used to test the hypotheses in more detail.

### ***3.4: Explanation of the quantitative research.***

The first research question and hypothesis, exploring whether MPs with a background in a youth wing have grown in prominence, requires a quantitative method to analyse to what extent that is the case, if at all. By mapping the numbers of MPs with such a background over time the study can plot the relative importance of the key independent variables – past participation in a youth wing and prior experience as a trade union activist. This is both to see their relative prominence over time and also to chart whether there is any correlation between the two independent variables to see whether there is a potential connection worth exploring – specifically whether the youth wings have supplanted the trade unions as training grounds. By so doing the statistical analysis can both test the extent of the hypothesis and indicate potential lines of enquiry into causal relationships that may not be immediately apparent before the beginning of the study.

This was done by classifying the backgrounds of parliamentarians into different categories. The quantitative analysis of the backgrounds of members of the legislature over time analysed the following criteria:

- Membership of a youth wing
- Senior role within a youth wing's governing structures
- Membership of a trade union
- Employed by a trade union or senior voluntary role (e.g. shop steward, lodge secretary)

These variables are then plotted over time, both as raw numbers and as percentages. This will demonstrate the increase or decrease over time of members with different backgrounds both in terms of pure numbers and as proportions of the whole. There is however likely to be a degree of overlap which will need to be taken into account.

A distinction is drawn between *membership* of both youth wings and trade unions and *active roles* within them – either as a member of a youth wing governing structure or by being employed by a trade union as an official or in a senior voluntary role. In the case studies of both Labour and the SPD all party members below a certain age automatically have membership of the youth wing. Differentiating between membership and active roles within the youth wing helps avoid the problem of nominal but inactive membership of a youth wing skewing the results. Additionally, many members of both parties are members of a trade union without being active within them. It is those who are active within either organisational background who have the opportunity to network and develop

skills needed to put themselves in contention for selection and therefore it is necessary for the research to distinguish them.

The initial method envisioned for the collection of this data was to explore biographical details recorded by the national legislatures themselves cross-referenced against other available resources such as parliamentarian's own websites, obituaries, political biographies and autobiographies and newspaper reports. In the event however this had to be modified slightly for one case study. This is discussed in detail in the issues with the data collection section below.

This data will be plotted as both raw numbers and percentages on graphs to indicate how it has changed over time. This will allow for an easy comparison and an ability to spot trends across time both in terms of the actual numbers, but also percentages which can give a better insight into levels of influence within the party. In this way the study will analyse whether youth wings have become more important over time as recruiting grounds. Similarly, by plotting the numbers and percentages of trade unionists this study will explore the dynamics surrounding the rise or otherwise of the youth wings as a source of recruitment.<sup>427</sup>

However as already discussed correlation is insufficient proof of causality. As such a statistical rise in the number of MPs with a background in youth wings at the same time as a drop in the number from a trade union background does not necessarily indicate a definitive relationship between the two. In order to compile the statistical data taxonomies have to be created based on similarity of outcomes – an MP with a certain variable in their background. However similar does not mean identical. For example, in the UK Labour Party there are three different youth wings in a state of semi-competition and with different focuses which would all come under the variable 'youth wing participation' but may well have differing effects on the careers, culture and choices of MPs. Similarly, a former shop steward of long-standing such as the Labour MP Alan Johnson is likely to have had a qualitatively different experience in the trade union movement to an Oxbridge educated lawyer who was hired by a union for a relatively brief time such as the Labour MP Richard Burgon, but both will be classified as having a trade union background. Consequently, the variables selected need to be subjected to further scrutiny than can be done using statistics alone. On top of this hypotheses 2 and 3 look at factors such as culture and perception which, lacking a basic unit of measurement, cannot be analysed numerically.

As such this study will merge the statistical findings and analysis detailed in chapters four and five with qualitative data to respond to the research questions and test the hypotheses, which will be detailed in chapter six. The next section will discuss the qualitative research.

### ***3.5: Explanation of the qualitative research.***

The qualitative data will both add context, nuance and explanation to hypothesis 1 as well as answering hypotheses 2 and 3. To explore fully the concept of political culture and how this might have altered due to changes in parliamentarian recruitment patterns the study will strike a balance—so far as is practically possible – between parliamentarian participants who have and do not have a background in youth wings and trade unions and also between past and present parliamentarians and current members of party youth wings. Elite interviews across multiple countries are a time-intensive form of research, due to travelling to the interview and then transcribing it. This also limited the number of interviews that it was possible to conduct. As such the research conducted a smaller number of in-depth interviews. The study aimed for 15 to 20 interviews and 16 were eventually carried

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<sup>427</sup> There are also additional potential backgrounds, for example long service at lower levels of governance, or in the German empirical case study those who are members of the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO). The reasons for focusing on youth wings and trade unions are discussed in the section on the selection of case studies below.

out. These were gender-balanced – 8 male and 8 female respondents – and included 4 individuals from an ethnic minority background.

The knowledge that is being sought is what contextual and causal factors have impacted on members of a youth wing reaching the level of a national representative and how that has impacted on the nature of the parliamentarians and the make-up of the parliamentary parties. This is ‘insider knowledge’ – that is to say it is knowledge which is predominantly known to the parliamentarians themselves, past and present. Current senior members of a youth wing will also have insights into the perceived benefits of belonging to a youth wing for a political career and the motivation behind joining. Both groups will have knowledge of the internal processes, both formal and informal, that lead to parliamentary recruitment. As such the research requires a method which can access that insider knowledge.

This renders many potential tools, such as ethnography, impractical. Surveys are unlikely to explore the issues in sufficient depth and extremely busy parliamentarians are unlikely to produce a sufficient return rate to make the insights valuable, further one of the case studies – the Labour Party – is notorious for not responding to survey requests.<sup>428</sup> As such the best method in order to access the knowledge is interviews and the nature of parliamentarians necessitates that these be elite interviews.

As the research questions are exploratory, in order to go into sufficient detail and to explore openings which come up during the interview a semi-structured elite interview will be best. This allows for the participant to expound upon ideas and to provide information which may not have been foreseen by the researcher (this is also another argument against the use of surveys). Information from these interviews can then be used in conjunction with the quantitative data to build up a causal narrative from which generalizable abstracts can be inferred.<sup>429</sup> This data is presented in the form of direct quotes with analysis. Quotes were edited for clarity and conciseness, and in the case of some of the German interviews were translated.

There is a potential issue for social desirability bias. That is to say some respondents may feel that presenting themselves or their backgrounds as more working class may give them a political advantage. However, the confidential nature of the responses and use of pseudonyms makes this unlikely, as the responses are not linked to a named individual and anyone with sufficient insider knowledge to recognise the individual from the data would also be aware of their background, there is therefore little incentive for interviewees to answer dishonestly.

### **3.6: Case study selection.**

The Case Studies method provides a detailed contextual analysis of a small number of examples and their relationships to each other and to theories, to use empirical examples to apply ideas and test methods and theories. It allows for an exploration of context as well as theory and is useful when the relationships and borders between events or examples are unclear.<sup>430</sup> It was originally envisioned that this study would examine the cases of three social democratic parties and the youth wings linked to them. Those three case studies were to have been the German Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), the UK Labour Party and the Swedish Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti

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<sup>428</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a ‘cultural theory’ of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, p37.

<sup>429</sup> Vromen A. ‘Debating Methods: Rediscovering Qualitative Approaches’ in Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds). 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third edition. London, Palgrave Macmillan, p258.

<sup>430</sup> Yin, R. K. 1984. *Case study research: Design and methods*. New York NY, Sage Publishing.

(SAP). However due to issues related to data availability the case study of the Swedish SAP had to be dropped. This is discussed in detail in the section on issues with the data collection below.

The first question in terms of the case selection to explain is why this study focuses only on social democratic parties, rather than investigating the impact of youth wings across the spectrum. The reason for this is quite simple; there is a widespread perception both within academia<sup>431</sup> and the general public<sup>432</sup> that the nature of social democratic parties has changed in recent decades, and this study is seeking to explore one potential driver of that change. In consequence the broader context of this study is the change in social democracy, an issue which in some locales such as Greece and France is an existential one. The decision to limit the case studies to social democratic parties is then one inherently built into the entire puzzle that this study seeks to answer. The shift in the nature of social democratic parties and the potential disappearance as a meaningful force of one of the key mainstream political ideologies in parts of Europe is relevant beyond the confines of this study.

The central issue which this study will investigate is the effect of youth wings on the recruitment patterns of the case study parties for representatives to national legislatures, together with how shifts in those patterns can change our understanding of the nature of Social Democratic parties more broadly. Therefore, the objective when selecting the case studies has been to minimise, so far as is possible, the variance in the dependent variable – the nature of parties. At the same time the study has sought to maximise the variance both in the key independent variable of the youth wings and in the external context of the political environment. This allows the study to best explore the dynamics of the relationships between the youth wings and the parties and test how generalizable the hypothesis is.

The selected case studies are all social democratic parties from mature democracies in Western Europe. As referred to in the discussion on the existing literature in chapter two this study focuses on mature democracies. This is for reasons both of being able to analyse an extended time frame as well as the theoretical parsimony point identified by Lijphart.<sup>433</sup> Countries with recent history of communist domination – Poland, Czech Republic, the Baltic states etc – or dictatorships – Spain, Portugal, Greece – were excluded. To include examples of young democracies would cloud the water as to the evolution of youth wings as a source of recruitment. There was a question surrounding Germany, in particular the effect of East Germany and reunification. However steps were taken to counteract this, detailed in chapter four, including running the data for a ‘continuity’ West Germany as well as for the unified country. The three case studies selected all had a stable and coherent democratic system and culture in which to operate for the entire period under investigation, 1979 – 2019.

Further the case study parties selected have an historical association with the trade unions and, though varying in depth and degree of that association, all were politically aligned with the trade union movement between the end of the Second World War and the late 1970s. This included significant parliamentary recruitment from the trade union movement by these parties. Importantly unlike in other potential case studies such as the French Parti Socialiste these parties all have or until recently

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<sup>431</sup> See for example Schattle H. and Nuttall J. (eds) 2018. *Making Social Democrats - Citizens, Mindsets, Realities: Essays for David Marquand*. Manchester, Manchester University Press; Kitschelt H. 1994. *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press and Gamble A. and Wright T. (eds). 1999. *The New Social Democracy*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.

<sup>432</sup> See for example Frank T. 2016. *Listen, Liberal or Whatever Happened to the Party of the People?* London, Abacus; Lilla M. 2017. *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics*. New York NY, HarperCollins Publishers and Gould P. 1998. *The Unfinished Revolution: How New Labour Changed British Politics For Ever*. London, Abacus.

<sup>433</sup> Lijphart A. 1971. ‘Comparative Politics and Comparative Methods’ *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 pp. 682-693.

had<sup>434</sup> an effective monopoly on political links to the trade union movement rather than competing with far-left parties. The parties had similar ideological journeys - seeing a decline in political support during the 1980s and early 1990s and adopting the 'Third Way'<sup>435</sup> as a result. They had periods in government in the late 90s and early 2000s and have seen periods in opposition and a decline in electoral support since then. They also now have internal disputes as to the nature of the parties following the third way and the 2008 global crash. As with most if not all social democratic parties they have also had a perceived rise in 'career politicians' and a distancing from both the working class<sup>436</sup> and the trade union movement.<sup>437</sup> These similarities mean that the nature, culture and perception of the parties – the dependent variable of this study – are aligned and easily comparable.

However, whilst the parties have gone on similar journeys, the external contexts of the case studies also provides a justification for their selection. The contexts are exceedingly different. The three originally selected case studies use different voting systems and have differing levels of federal, regional and local political structures, two are Parliamentary Monarchies whereas one has a Presidential system, two have a bicameral parliamentary system whereas one has a unicameral system, the UK is a two-and-a-half party system, whereas Germany can be classified as a five-party and Sweden a seven-party system etc.<sup>438</sup> This provides a balance between enough similarity to demonstrate and test potential causal mechanisms whilst also having enough differences external to the party to allow the findings to be generalizable. The loss of Sweden as a case study does impact on the generalisability of conclusions from this perspective and is discussed further below. Nevertheless, the remaining two case studies still provide very different contexts and political cultures.

Furthermore, and importantly there are large differences in the relationships between the youth wings and the selected parties. The relative strengths and prominences of the youth wings varies considerably, with those of the SPD (and also the SAP) enjoying considerably more prestige than that of the Labour Party. In the SPD the youth and student wings are combined (although they have not always been), whereas in Labour they are separate. In Germany an unaffiliated youth wing, SJD-die Falken, enjoyed some historical links to the SPD, and in the UK the Young Fabians enjoy a formal affiliation at one remove via their parent organisation the Fabian Society. These differences in the political and social contexts and in the relationships to the different youth wings mean that if the hypotheses are proven correct the study can be more confident that the findings are applicable more generally.

The criteria used to decide on which youth wings to study, as discussed in chapter one, were those organisations with an ideological or extended historical link to the party, formal or informal, and either an age qualification with an upper limit or a limitation to students (who are in large majority of a young

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<sup>434</sup> The SPD was the traditional party of the trade union movement in West Germany and into the 1990s, but Die Linke now has a significant presence, and Frank Bsirske – the President of Ver.di, Germany's second largest trade union, from 2001 to 2019 – was a member of Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen (the Greens), albeit a fairly inactive one.

<sup>435</sup> Allen C. 2009. Empty Nets: Social Democracy and the 'Catch-All Thesis' in Germany and Sweden. *Party Politics*, Vol. 15 No. 5, pp. 635 – 653 and Driver S. and Martell L. 2000. Left, right and the third way. *Policy & Politics*. Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 147-161.

<sup>436</sup> Merkel, W. 1991. After the golden age: is social democracy doomed to decline? in Institut de Ciències Politiques i Socials (Barcelona) (Ed.): *Socialist parties in Europe*. Barcelona, Institut d'Edicions de la Diputació de Barcelona. pp. 187-222.

<sup>437</sup> See Howell C. 2001. The end of the relationship between Social Democratic Parties and Trade Unions? *Studies in Political Economy*. Vol. 65 No. 1, pp. 7 – 37 and Taylor A. 1993. Trade Unions and the politics of Social Democratic Renewal. *Western European Politics*. Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 133 – 155.

<sup>438</sup> Allen C. (2009) "Empty Nets": Social Democracy and the 'Catch-All Thesis' in Germany and Sweden.' *Party Politics*, Vol. 15 No. 5, pp 635 – 653.



age) and who had alumni or current members serving as parliamentarians between the general elections of 1979 (in the UK) or 1980 (Germany) and 2019.

By this criteria the youth wings selected as case studies are:

German SPD:

- Arbeitsgemeinschaft der JungsozialistInnen in der SPD (the JUSOS, current formal youth and student wing).
- Sozialistische Arbeiter-Jugend (Socialist Workers Youth – historical youth wing pre-1933).
- Sozialdemokratische Hochschulbund (Social Democratic University Union, historical student wing 1960 - 1971).
- Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (Socialist German Student's Union – historical student wing pre-1960).
- Sozialistische Jugend Deutschlands –Die Falken (Socialist Youth of Germany–the Falcons, SJD-Die Falken, informally linked socialist youth organisation, founded in 1904).

British Labour Party:

- Young Labour (current formal youth wing).
- Young Socialists / Labour Party Young Socialists (historical youth wing 1960-1993).
- Labour League of Youth (historical youth wing pre-1954).
- Socialist Labour League (historical youth wing in Scotland 1954 – 1965).
- Labour Students (current formal student wing).<sup>439</sup>
- National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS, historical student wing 1971 - 1992).
- Students for a Labour Victory (historical student wing 1970 – 1971).
- National Association of Labour Student Organisations (NALSO, historical student wing 1946 – 1967).
- Young Fabians (youth wing of the Fabian Society, formally affiliated socialist society, founded in 1960).

This may appear to be a long list of examples. However, the historical organisations are counted as equivalent to the current ones. It should also be noted the dates above are the dates of their affiliations to the main parties, the organisations themselves sometimes continued as separate entities.

One further question for case studies is why the choice to focus on youth wings and trade unions rather than other potential routes to becoming a legislator – in particular employment by the party or a long career in local, regional or European office.

What this study does not include.

There are two certain areas which this thesis will not look at. Firstly, other potential routes into becoming a candidate for the legislature such as being a party employee or extended service at sub-national levels of government, and secondly personal characteristics which might affect success in becoming a legislator other than class – in particular race and gender. The reasons why are detailed in this section.

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<sup>439</sup> In September 2019 Labour's National Executive Committee, in a move widely seen as a factional powerplay, suspended Labour Students and announced the intention to abolish it. There was however no alternative put in place and the organisation has continued to function as before, pending legal proceedings. At the present time this situation has not been resolved. See Proctor K. 2019. Labour student wing to fight party's decision to abolish organisation. *The Guardian*. Published on 19.09.2019. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/sep/19/labour-student-wing-to-fight-partys-decision-to-abolish-organisation> accessed 15.03.2020.

The issue of party employees will be discussed further in the empirical chapters, however the reason for excluding it as a main variable was the issue of where party employees are recruited from. Political party employees are almost always (except in cases of high levels of expertise being required) recruited from amongst the ranks of voluntary activists.<sup>440</sup> In many cases, particularly at the lower level these activists are recruited from the party youth wings – in particular from the university student sections. Others are trade union employees seconded to the parties, in particular at election time, or who move between the party and the unions. However, many party employees do not seek public office. This would suggest that party employees are part of the picture, but as an intermediate stage forming part of the political ecosystem discussed in chapter two rather than as an origin point in their own right.

The second possible route to becoming a national legislator which is not the focus of this study is extended experience at sub-national legislative level, either local or regional government, or at the European level. This is a possible route into the national legislator. As with party employees candidates at non-national levels will also be predominantly recruited from party activists, including those with backgrounds in the youth wings and/or the trade union movement. The initial political training grounds were the same as at the national level. Service at a local or regional level still requires time, skills and energy which can be facilitated by the kind of jobs referred to as ‘politics-facilitating’ or communication focused jobs that are also found at the national level. However the higher stakes which accompany these contests and dynamics at the national legislative level means that they are more visible to researchers.

Therefore the reason to focus on youth wings and trade unions is that these are the initial training grounds in which individuals undertake an apprenticeship and become socialised into becoming a more and more senior activist before the point comes that they stand for selection to become a national legislator. For some individuals they are the only apprenticeship needed. For most their route to selection may pass through a period as a party employee or serving at a sub-national (or European) legislature. But the skills required to serve as a party employee or lower level legislature have been learned to some level prior to their employment or selection. Therefore this study will focus on those primary training grounds.

The central big picture question to which this research is contributing is the concept of the gentrification and professionalisation of social democratic parties. As such issues of class are central to this thesis. However, the impact of youth wings on recruitment in terms of both race and gender is also a significant possible area of research. The timeframe being looked at has seen an increase in the number of women and ethnic minority MPs in the case studies looked at, and there may possibly be a connection between this and the changing roles of the youth wings in legislative recruitment. There were female and ethnic minority individuals interviewed for this research and several of them raised gender and race as issues. There is therefore some passing references to these in the empirical chapters.

However, the impact of gender and race is an extensive topic and both require significant additional research in their own right. It would not be possible to do justice to these within the confines of this research project. In consequence this thesis will not attempt to do so, but instead will focus on demonstrating the role that youth wings have played in recruitment and the impact of this on the nature of the party. In the conclusion this thesis will then suggest further potential avenues for research which will include both the gender and race aspects of this change.

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<sup>440</sup> Karlsen R. and Saglie J. 2017. Party bureaucrats, independent professionals, or politicians? A study of party employees. *West European Politics*. Vol. 40, No. 6. pp. 1331 – 1351

By selecting the empirical case studies of the youth wings of the German SPD and UK Labour Party and contrasting them with the more traditional training ground of the trade union movement this study can make valid comparisons, which nevertheless cover a broad enough spectrum of political and social contexts to make the findings at least somewhat generalisable.

### **3.7: Issues with the data collection.**

During the data collection phase of the study two issues arose with the collection of the data in two different case studies. The case study of the German SPD proceeded in the manner described above, with the publicly available archive of the short biographies prepared for the Bundestag website and biographical handbooks of Members the German Bundestag (MdBs).<sup>441</sup> This information was then cross-referenced with other available sources including legislator's own websites, newspaper reports, obituaries and others.<sup>442</sup>

However no such archive could be found by the researcher for either the UK Labour Party or the Swedish SAP. In the case of the UK Labour Party MPs whom the researcher was aware from personal experience had a history of involvement with the youth wings did not include information on that in their online biographies, either on the Parliament website or their own personal websites. Exploring this question in the interviews it became apparent that British Parliamentarians perceive their roles within the youth wing as being either a neutral or in many cases a potentially negative thing for their perception amongst the public. They perceive that the British public dislikes the concept of student politicians or 'career' politicians and thus MPs do not make obvious their past involvement. This meant that it was not possible to find the data with the technique used in the case of German MdBs. However, a workaround was found.

The researcher has a history of activism within the youth wings and thus has developed knowledge of individuals who have had past involvement with them. As a consequence eight individuals were identified who had been involved with the various party youth wings at different times from the 1950s to the present day. These individuals were then approached by the researcher with a complete list of Labour MPs from the 1979 general election until the present and asked to identify those whom they knew had been involved alongside them in the youth wings under discussion. The lists returned by these individuals were then collated and compared. Each MP on the list was, as with the SPD MdBs, then researched separately and other data drawn from personal websites, obituaries and sources such as the Who's Who archive were added. This method, relying on the personal recollection of individuals, may be less reliable than matters of contemporaneous public record found in the archives of the Bundestag biographies. However by drawing the information from multiple individuals and adding in other available sources a full picture was able to be drawn. In addition more interviews were conducted for the Labour Party case study than the SPD in order to in some measure compensate.

Although academics often conduct polls of experts – such as for likely election outcomes – or conduct surveys this was reliant on the insider knowledge of the researcher to identify relevant experts. This limitation was evident when it came to the third case study that had originally been proposed, Sweden.

A similar problem was found with the case study of the Swedish SAP. Despite approaching the party, the party youth wing the SSU, the Riksdag library and several academics who worked on Swedish

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<sup>441</sup> Principally Vierhaud R. (Ed) 2002. *Biographisches Handbuch der Mitglieder des Deutschen Bundestages 1949-2002*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, with some information for MdBs from the GDR from Baumgartner G. and Hebig D. (Eds) 1996. *Biographisches Handbuch der SBZ/DDR*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter.

<sup>442</sup> A complete list of sources is included in the appendices.

politics the researcher was unable to identify an archive to find out which Riksdagsledamöter (RL, members of the Swedish Riksdag) had come from a background in a youth wing. Similarly, to the UK House of Commons, and despite the greater prestige in which the SSU is held within the Swedish SAP compared to their Labour equivalents, the biographies of the Riksdagsledamöter on the Riksdag website did not list any involvement in the youth wings. Nor was the data identifiable from websites of existing members. Even if it had been this would only have provided a contemporary snapshot and not allowed for the extended time-frame that is required for this study.

Unfortunately, neither the researcher nor the supervisory team had the necessary familiarity with the history of the Swedish youth wings to be able to identify the individuals who could provide first-hand knowledge in the same manner as that which was employed to gather the data for the Labour Party case study. Attempts to contact the SSU to try and identify potential individuals did not meet with a great deal of engagement from them.

Attention therefore switched to trying to complete the case study of the Swedish SAP as a qualitative only study. Unfortunately attempts to engage individuals, both Riksdagsledamöter and current members of the SSU, also did not meet with high levels of engagement. Being unable to gather quantitative data and only having secured one qualitative interview, coupled with logistical concerns as the researcher approached the end of their scholarship, the decision was taken by the researcher and the supervisory team to drop the case study of the Swedish SAP and proceed with a comparative study of the German SPD and the UK Labour Party.

Having two cases studies instead of three does mean that the study can be less confident in the generalisability of the conclusions from the study. Although Germany and the UK have sufficient similarities to be very easily comparable they are not the same. There are differences in terms of their political systems, political and social culture and the prestige, structure and dynamics around their respective youth wing organisations. As such the study can still make conclusions which are generalisable. There is however greater scope for further research to support and further test the conclusions which would be generated.

One potential positive effect of the reduction to two cases studies however is that this allowed the study the capacity to explore those two in greater depth. This means that the understanding of the causal mechanisms can be more nuanced and sophisticated than might otherwise have been the case.

### **3.8: Research ethics.**

The ethics of research in the Social Sciences, in particular of those involving human participants, is of paramount importance regardless of the methodology chosen. There is a duty imposed on researchers to be aware of, anticipate and resolve ethical concerns which could potentially arise during or due to their research.<sup>443</sup> This section will discuss the ethical implications of both the quantitative and qualitative research and the methods being employed. Further it will discuss what methods are used to minimise any potential for harm to come from the research.

Much of the quantitative data used for this study is sourced from publicly available sources, such as obituaries, legislator's websites, newspaper reports and biographies. The only data which is not from public sources is that which was generated for the Labour Party by asking relevant individuals. However, this, as with all the data in this thesis, is simply recording the number of individuals who fit

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<sup>443</sup> For a discussion see for example Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth, *Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice*. 2001. Available at <http://theasa.org/downloads/ASA%20ethics%20guidelines%202011.pdf> accessed 12/06/2017 18:06.

a certain typology. Therefore, the data presented is already anonymised – you cannot tell which individual is in which typology from the data itself. The original data is kept on secure university servers and is password protected. Given this the ethical concerns around the quantitative data are minimal.

The primary concern is the ethical imperative to record the data accurately, as misconceived conclusions drawn from inaccurate data have the potential to cause serious harm both in the academic world and the broader community. This is just as much the case when data has been recorded inaccurately in error as when it has been deliberately falsified.<sup>444</sup> To prevent this several steps were taken. The researcher undertook a course of research training provided by the university. An additional associate supervisor with expertise in quantitative techniques was brought into the supervision team and undertook additional training with the researcher to ensure their competence to accurately record data and utilise the results using relevant statistical software.

Finally, the researcher and the supervision team cooperated to ensure a meaningful level of self-care was taken. It can often be forgotten that high levels of stress associated with conducting a PhD engender concerns not only over the wellbeing of the researcher but also of their ability to maintain the necessary vigilance required for the competent and ethical carrying out of the research activities.

The qualitative data being collected presents larger ethical issues which the study will need to address. When conducting research involving human participants researchers need to ensure that the rights of those participants are ensured<sup>445</sup> including the right to privacy. It is best practice to guarantee participants anonymity where possible. Anonymity means that it is not possible for an individual to connect the data provided with the participant who provided it. This unfortunately is not possible in this research. There is a broad concern in research ethics over the ‘vulnerability of elites’<sup>446</sup> and as to whether any elite interview can ever guarantee anonymity. The issue is that as there are usually very few individuals in an elite such as national representatives it can be possible to extrapolate who the individual is from the data they provide.

This is exacerbated in this study in that the researcher is involved in one of the political parties used as a case study. An individual familiar with the researcher could infer which individuals had been interviewed with knowledge of the researchers pre-existing professional and social relationships within that case study, both with parliamentarians interviewed and with members of the youth wings in that individual case study. Further as this study is investigating the backgrounds of parliamentarians some of the data collected relates to the paths individuals took to become a parliamentarian or their reasons for becoming active in a youth wing. As such someone who is familiar with that interviewee may be able to recognise facts from their biography and from that deduce their identity. This is a concern across both case studies.

For these reasons it was not possible to guarantee anonymity to the participants of this study. There are however some steps which were taken to minimise the potential for harm to arise. Firstly all the participants were informed in advance that it was not possible to guarantee anonymity and that they should treat the interview as ‘on the record’. This explains the risk and leaves the choice as to whether or not to participate in the research to the interviewee. In order to ensure this is well understood the risk was explained to the potential interviewee in writing at the stage of initial contact. It was

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<sup>444</sup> Panter A.T. and Sterba S.K. (eds). 2001. *Handbook of ethics in quantitative methodology*. London, Taylor & Francis.

<sup>445</sup> Cresswell J. R. 2009. *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. New York NY, Sage Publications.

<sup>446</sup> See Neale S. & McLaughlin E. 2009. Researching Up? Interviews, emotionality and Policy-Making Elites. *Journal of Social Policy*. Vol. 38 pp. 689-707 and Smith K. 2006. Problematising power relations in “Elite” interviews. *Geopolitics*. Vol. 37, pp. 643-653.

reiterated on the interviewee information sheet and included as a separate point in the consent form.<sup>447</sup> In addition, as the data cannot be guaranteed to be anonymous it will be treated as confidential. Confidential means that the data will be treated as private and steps were taken to protect the data provided, but that anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

A number of steps were taken to ensure this. Firstly, the study protected the data provided via the use of pseudonyms for all participants. Secondly the research data was secured by only referring to the participants by pseudonyms and the list of the names of the participants and their pseudonym was not stored on the same computer system as the research data.<sup>448</sup> The data was password protected and kept on secure university systems. Further potential identifying markers including names of organisations or places in the data were anonymised individually. For example, if an interviewee refers to a location it was replaced with “the city” or “my region” or if they used the name of a union it was replaced with “the union” except when the specific organisation was relevant to the point being made.

Those details were explained to participating interviewees in full as part of the informed consent process. They were asked to sign a consent form to confirm they agreed to the above. Informed consent forms are standard practice<sup>449</sup> and the form was accompanied by a participant information sheet which identified the researcher to the participants, including their academic institution, and a description of the study, its purpose and its proposed future dissemination.

The information sheet also included contact details for the researcher, for the supervisory team and for the secretary of the university ethics committee in case the interviewee wished at any time to make a complaint. Also explained in the documentation was the participants right to withdraw<sup>450</sup> at any point prior to the submission of the Thesis and provided contact details for this purpose. Copies of the information sheet and consent forms in both English and German are included in the appendices.

There is also a potential issue of conflict of interest in that the researcher is a former but recent senior member of one of the organisations selected as a case study and sat on its national committee until recently. This has some benefits. For example, it means that a pre-existing level of trust is present and can allow for a greater sharing of information. It does have ethical implications however. The power structures of interviews within that case study may be less unidirectional than in the other case studies.

Potential conflicts of interest were minimised by the agreement of objective parameters between the researcher and the supervisors. These were the same regardless of the pre-existing professional and social relationships between the interviewee and the researcher as the steps taken to protect the data and interview subjects did not vary. In all cases confidentiality was enforced and data anonymised as far as possible. Contact was kept in writing from the university email system to keep a record of it and the interview process didn't vary. Interviews were kept professional and conducted in appropriate surroundings.

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<sup>447</sup> Copies of the participant information sheet and the consent form are included in the appendices. Both were given to interview subjects in both written and electronic form and in the appropriate language.

<sup>448</sup> Cresswell J. R. 2009. *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. New York NY, Sage Publications.

<sup>449</sup> Crisp R. J. & Turner R. N. 2007. *Essential Social Psychology*. New York NY, Sage Publications.

<sup>450</sup> Buttolph-Johnson J., Reynolds H.T. and Mycroft J.D. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Washington DC, CQ Press.

A further potential issue was that of the social desirability bias discussed briefly in chapter one. In short, in social democratic politics it can be a perceived advantage to play up the working-class credentials of middle-class individuals in order to take advantage of a positive perception of strong working-class identity found in the parties and the trade union movement. There was therefore a potential risk that interviewees might embellish that part of their narrative during the interviews to gain a perceived advantage. However, the interview data is presented anonymously. The researcher is also under an obligation not to confirm whether any particular individual took part in the research. This incentive is therefore removed, and therefore the interview data is reliable. A further reason to suppose that the interviewees responses were accurate is that many of them had a pre-existing relationship with the researcher and participated in the research as a personal favour to them.

### ***3.9: Declaration of the researcher's history in a youth wing.***

The researcher is a member of both the Labour Party and the SPD. Further the researcher was actively involved in the Young Fabians from 2013 until reaching the age limit in 2018. He was founder and first Chair of the Young Fabians International Network in 2014-15, before serving for two terms on the Young Fabians National Executive Committee. He has since served on the National Executive Committee of the Fabian Society from 2017 until the present. He had no active involvement in the main structures of either Young Labour or Labour Students but did serve as the Youth and Student's Officer on the Executive Committee of Birmingham Northfield CLP in 2010-11. Although technically a member of the JUSOS as a member of the SPD under the age of 35 the researcher has never attended a meeting and has no active involvement in the organisation. Nor has the researcher ever been a member of the SJD-Die Falken. He is too young to have been a member of any of the historical organisations studied. He has since September 2019 been an employee of a Labour Member of Parliament.

The idea for this study grew out of the experiences of the researcher in the Young Fabians, the youth wing of the Fabian Society which is formally affiliated to the Labour Party. He was the first person for many years elected to the Young Fabians NEC from outside London and his experiences serving as the regional officer and trying to get those outside of the capital involved sparked the initial interest in the topic of the gentrification of the youth wings. During his time in the Young Fabians it was seen internally as the breeding ground for future MPs. A frequent anecdote told within the organisation at the time was that Ken Livingstone, the left-wing former Mayor of London, had stated that if the Young Fabians annual boat party was sunk the centre-left of the party would lose a generation of MPs.

It was by a synthesis of these two experiences, the assumption that the Young Fabians was a breeding ground for future MPs coupled with the logistical difficulties for those unable to attend events held in central London late on weekday evenings that prompted the initial interest in the topic and the initial hypotheses.

The supervisory team were aware of this at all stages of the PhD, from the initial application onwards, and took steps to ensure the research was not affected by preconceived biases. Further the researcher and supervisory team between them ensured that the points made in this thesis are all supported by the evidence in the data. Further this background was highly beneficial in terms of building contacts, trust and rapport with the interviewees, who were also made aware from the outset of the interviewees background; indeed, many of them were already familiar with the researcher from previous interactions because of this.



### **3.10: Conclusion.**

Because of the research questions selected this thesis adopts a positivist position both ontologically and epistemologically. The key variables explored are binary, either an individual is or isn't elected to the national legislature, either they held a senior role in the youth wing or trade union or they did not. These research questions also drive the thesis to adopt a comparative mixed methods approach, utilising both quantitative analysis of numbers from each background and qualitative semi-structured elite interviews across two case studies, that of the UK Labour Party and that of the German SPD, along with their linked youth and student organisations across the timeframe from the 1979 UK and 1980 German general elections up until the 2017 parliaments of both. Data from by-elections and replacements until the end of June 2019 was included in the dataset, the 2019 UK general election was not included.

These case studies, along with the case study of the Swedish SAP which had to be dropped, were selected because they provide a most-similar sample with enough commonalities that they can be comparable. Equally there are differences which allow for generalisable conclusions to be drawn.

With two of the case studies the data for who had been in the youth wings simply did not exist as an archive or matter of record. In the Swedish case this proved impossible to surmount, however in the Labour case the researchers pre-existing insider knowledge allowed them to identify individuals who had been active in the various youth wings from the 1950s until the present day. They therefore created a list of all Labour MPs from 1979 until the end of the 2017 Parliament and sent this to these individuals, who marked those who had been active with them and in which youth wings. These were then collated together and cross-referenced with other publicly available sources such as Parliamentarian's websites, obituaries and newspaper articles to create a database of the relevant information.

The researcher also identified certain ethical issues, which were resolved in collaboration with the supervision team as detailed above.

## Chapter 4: The role of youth wings in the German SPD.

### **4.1: Introduction.**

The first empirical test case for this study is that of Mitglieder des Bundestages (Members of the German Bundestag, MdBs) of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD) in the Federal Republic of Germany. One of the oldest and most influential members of the Social Democratic party family the SPD has also been historically one of the most successful. This chapter will introduce the case study with a brief discussion of the SPD's history in order to provide context for the research. Further initial framing is provided by an explanation of the SPD's organisational structure in order to define the institutional context of the research.

From there the chapter will focus on the relevant youth wings which are at the heart of this study with an emphasis on the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der JungsozialistInnen in der SPD (working group of young socialists in the SPD, known as the JUSOS) which is the formally affiliated youth and student wing of the SPD and the most important for the study. There will also be a brief overview of a trio of now-defunct historical youth or student wings which appear in the research and the aligned but unaffiliated Sozialistische Jugend Deutschlands – Die Falken (Socialist Youth of Germany – the Falcons, SJD-Die Falken). It will then discuss candidate selection in the SPD beginning with a description of the formal process of selection, an analysis of the gatekeepers and a discussion of the power dynamics and internal factors involved in selection.

This chapter will then focus on research question and hypothesis 1, investigating the impact of the youth wings when it comes to the selection of candidates for the Bundestag. The study will discuss its findings that the number of SPD MdBs coming from a background in the JUSOS has risen sharply, and that the number coming from a trade union background has also dropped, but that the relationship between the two is more nuanced than simply former JUSOS replacing trade unionists as and when they retire from the Bundestag. It will discuss a 'ratchet effect' found in the quantitative data whereby the numbers coming from a youth wing background have shot up when the party has done well – in 1998 and 2013 – but have not then fallen back in line with their peers when the party loses seats. This has seen those coming from a JUSOS background increase more starkly as a percentage of the SPD MdBs than they have in pure number terms.

A final section of the chapter will consist of the concluding analysis and discussion of the role the youth wings play and have played in the selection of candidates for the Bundestag in the SPD. This section will discuss initial links to the broader theoretical discussions and establish a baseline for the discussion of research questions 2 and 3 in the following chapter.

### **4.2: SPD party history.**

Founded in Leipzig on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1863<sup>451</sup> the SPD adopted its current name in 1890.<sup>452</sup> Banned several times, in Imperial Germany from 1878 to 1890,<sup>453</sup> in the Nazi period from 1933 to 1945<sup>454</sup> and in the

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<sup>451</sup> Miller S. and Potthof H., 1983. *A History of German Social Democracy: From 1848 to the Present*. Translated from the German by J. A. Underwood. New York; Berg Publishing

<sup>452</sup> Ibid. p.13

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Weitz E. D. 2018. *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*. Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press. Second Edition, pp.353

GDR until 1989<sup>455</sup> the party has nevertheless been hugely influential throughout German history, forming the first government of the German Republic in 1919<sup>456</sup> and being the only party to vote against Hitler's enabling act in 1933.<sup>457</sup>

Abandoning Marxism with the Godesberger Programme<sup>458</sup> of 1959 the SPD became a Volkspartei, that is a party which is committed to the people as a whole rather than one specific class.<sup>459</sup> The SPD entered government for the first time since the Second World War in 1966 as part of a Grand Coalition with the CDU<sup>460</sup> before in 1969 becoming the dominant partner in governing coalitions with the Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party, FDP)<sup>461</sup> under Chancellors Willy Brandt (1969-74) and Helmut Schmidt (1974-1982). By the start of the period covered by this thesis, the 1980 Bundestag election, the SPD had therefore been in government for over a decade.

By 1982 the global economic crisis of the 1970s was badly impacting Germany, with over 2 million unemployed.<sup>462</sup> Splits developed both within the SPD and between the SPD and its coalition partners the FDP over the economic situation and the possibility of American medium range missiles being deployed on German soil via NATO.<sup>463</sup> Schmidt lost a vote of no confidence in the Bundestag<sup>464</sup> after the FDP switched their support to the CDU. He was replaced by the CDU's Helmut Kohl.

Internal conflicts between the left and centre-left ravaged the SPD during the 1980s, with the JUSOS at the forefront of a challenge from the 'New Left' to the existing SPD leadership.<sup>465</sup> The more centrist leadership of the SPD (with their trade union allies) broadly 'won' these internal battles<sup>466</sup> but it cost them a great deal in terms of energy and focus and was a contributing factor to the SPD being out of power between 1982 and 1998. The triumph of the centre-left wing of the party also led to the creation of a new political rival as the New Left found a home in the Green Party.<sup>467</sup> These conflicts are discussed in more detail below in the section looking at the power dynamics of selection.

At the end of the Cold War German politics was profoundly affected by reunification. Although West Germany was led by the CDU in East Germany a reconstituted Sozialdemokratische Partei in der DDR (Social Democratic Party in the GDR, SDP)<sup>468</sup> formed part of the grand coalition in East Germany that

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<sup>455</sup> The SPD was absorbed into the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party, SED) by a forced merger with the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany, KPD). See Roberts, G.K. 2016. *German Politics Today*. Manchester; Manchester University Press. Third Edition. p.16

<sup>456</sup> Weitz E. D. 2018. *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*. Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press. Second Edition, pp.85-85.

<sup>457</sup> Miller S. and Potthof H., 1983. *A History of German Social Democracy: From 1848 to the Present*. Translated from the German by J. A. Underwood. New York; Berg Publishing, pp. 120-121.

<sup>458</sup> Miller S. and Potthof H., 1983. *A History of German Social Democracy: From 1848 to the Present*. Translated from the German by J. A. Underwood. New York; Berg Publishing, p.172.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid. p182

<sup>461</sup> Ibid. pp196-207.

<sup>462</sup> Eisel J. 2012. 'Deutscher Bundestag - Das Misstrauensvotum gegen Helmut Schmidt', available at: [https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2012/40797914\\_kw40\\_misstrauensvotum\\_kalenderblatt/209576](https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2012/40797914_kw40_misstrauensvotum_kalenderblatt/209576) accessed 04.12.2018 15:08

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.

<sup>465</sup> Braunthal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition*. Boulder, Colorado, Westview Publishing Inc. Second Edition, p.95-120 and p.193-214.

<sup>466</sup> Koelble T. 1991. *The Left Unravelling: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid. p118.

<sup>468</sup> Roberts G. K. 2016. *German Politics Today*. Manchester, Manchester University Press. pp.23-35.

decided on reunification and in the West the SPD voted for it.<sup>469</sup> This was crucial to the pace of reunification, if not the actual outcome, but didn't necessarily capture the mood in Germany at the time and contributed to poor election results for the SPD in the early 1990s.<sup>470</sup> The SDP and the SPD unified slightly before Germany did.

By the 1990s the SPD, like the UK Labour Party, adopted 'the Third Way' shifting ideologically towards the centre under Gerhard Schröder, returning to government in 1998<sup>471</sup> in coalition with Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens, usually referred to as the Greens). Schröder remained as Chancellor until 2005 but his time in office, from the internal SPD perspective, led to rising tensions between the constituent parts of the party, in particular over the Agenda 2010 welfare and labour market reform, also known as the Hartz proposals.<sup>472</sup>

The first three Hartz proposals focused on an expansion of job opportunities and were relatively uncontroversial. The 'Hartz IV' reforms however focused on welfare cuts, and a sanctions regime for those who didn't find work, have proven to be deeply unpopular and divisive, both with the public and in particular within the SPD,<sup>473</sup> causing a deep rupture between the Schröder leadership and both the trade unions and the JUSOS, as well as large sections of the membership.<sup>474</sup>

In 2005 Schröder called Bundestag elections a year early due to the divisions both within the SPD and between the SPD and their coalition partners the Greens. The result of this election was inconclusive. Although the Red-Green coalition was no longer possible it could have been possible for the two parties to continue to govern with the addition to the coalition of the Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (Party of Democratic Socialism, PDS),<sup>475</sup> the successor party to the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany, SED), the communist ruling party of the GDR. Schröder and the SPD leadership wished to maintain a cordon sanitaire against the PDS, something they had also committed to prior to the election.<sup>476</sup> They therefore opted instead to enter into a Grand Coalition with the CDU/CSU with the CDU leader Angela Merkel as Chancellor.<sup>477</sup>

This began a period in which three of the four governments of Germany have been Grand Coalitions (Große Koalition, "GroKo") between the CDU/CSU and the SPD under Angela Merkel, from 2005-09, 2013-17 and from 2017 until the present. The 2017 Grand Coalition in particular was divisive within the SPD, with the JUSOS and their chair Kevin Kühnert particularly opposed and campaigning against the agreement with the slogan "NoGroKo".<sup>478</sup> Only 56.4% of SPD conference delegates voted for the party to enter formal negotiations with the CDU/CSU with 66% of all members then voting in favour

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<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Berger S. 2000. *Social Democracy and the working class in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany*. London, Longman, p216.

<sup>471</sup> Berger S. 2000. *Social Democracy and the Working Class in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany*. London, Pearson Longman.

<sup>472</sup> Roberts G. K. 2016. *German Politics Today*. Manchester, Manchester University Press. Third Edition. p163.

<sup>473</sup> Krebs T. and Scheffel M. 2013. *German labour reforms: Unpopular success*. London, Centre for Economic Policy Research Policy Portal, available at <https://voxeu.org/article/german-labour-reforms-unpopular-success> accessed on 21.01.2019 11:21

<sup>474</sup> This is discussed further in below and in chapter five, it was raised several times by interviewees.

<sup>475</sup> Proksch, S.O. and Slapin J.B., 2006. Institutions and coalition formation: The German election of 2005. *West European Politics*. Vol. 29 No. 3, pp.540-559.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

<sup>477</sup> Richter M. W. 2006. Elements of Surprise: The 2005 Election and the Formation of the Grand Coalition, *German Politics* Vol. 15 No. 4, pp.500-519.

<sup>478</sup> Shubert A. 2018. Merkel's future is in the hands of a 28-year old named Kevin. *CNN*. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/02/europe/kevin-kuehnert-germany-merkel-intl/index.html> accessed on 21.01.2019 13:09

of the coalition after the negotiations following intense campaigning for a yes vote from the SPD leadership.<sup>479</sup>

Divisions within the SPD over these coalitions have led to several attempts to bring the party together, including the 2007 “Hamburg Programme”<sup>480</sup> followed in 2011 by reforms which increased the powers of the party base and a ‘citizen’s dialogue.’<sup>481</sup> These reforms however did not prevent the acrimony within the SPD during the 2017 coalition talks, and divisions continue. The JUSOS take the position that Grand Coalitions should be an exception rather than the rule and risk the SPD losing its distinctive profile. Such concerns contributed to the election of left-wingers Saskia Esken and Norbert Walter-Borjans as joint leaders of the SPD on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019.<sup>482</sup>

### **4.3: The party structure of the SPD.**

The SPD operates a highly democratic form of internal organisation and procedures governed principally by Section 6 of the Party’s Rulebook<sup>483</sup> and the Federal Parties Law.<sup>484</sup> Members are grouped into 7,712 Ortsvereine, or local associations, which are present throughout the Federal Republic of Germany. These are further grouped into approximately 350 sub-district, district and municipal organisations and then further into Länder (state) organisations. Both the sub-district, district and municipal groupings and the Länder groupings send delegates to the Party Congress, which is convened every two years. In the alternate years there is a Party Conference with less decision-making powers than the Congress. The Party Congress determines policy and elects the SPD’s leader,<sup>485</sup> Executive Committee and two commissions, the Arbitration Commission and Control Commission, to ensure the smooth running of the party between conventions. The Executive Committee then further elects a 13-member Presidium which meets weekly to discuss the party’s response to events and issues and arrange party events. There is a gender quota for both the Executive Committee and the Presidium, a minimum of 40% (two-fifths) of the members must be women. Since 1998 there has also been the post of General Secretary, whose principle duty is the coordination of the party’s election campaigns. This structure is laid out in Fig. 4.1 below.<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> ‘Kaffeeeklatsch’ 2018. Merkel goes fourth: SPD members vote for a grand coalition. *The Economist*. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/kaffeeeklatsch/2018/03/04/spd-members-vote-for-a-grand-coalition> accessed on 21.01.2019 13:14.

<sup>480</sup> Pautz H. 2009. Germany’s Social Democrats in Search of a New Party Program. *Politics*. Vol. 29 No. 2, pp.121-129 and Nachtwey O. 2013. Market Social Democracy: The Transformation of the SPD up to 2007. *German Politics*. Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 235-252.

<sup>481</sup> Totz D. 2011. *Ready for Change? The Party Reforms Planned by the Social Democratic Party of Germany*. Berlin, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Available at <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/08704.pdf> accessed 27.07.2019 16:42.

<sup>482</sup> Hansen H. and Rinke A. 2019. SPD leadership choice threatens Germany’s ruling coalition. *Reuters Online*. Published on 01.12.2019. Available at <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-germany-politics-spd/spd-leadership-choice-threatens-germanys-ruling-coalition-idUKKBN1Y50ZI> accessed 15.03.2020 13:57.

<sup>483</sup> The SPD. 2018. Organisationsstatut. Available at: <https://www.spd.de/partei/organisation/gremien/> accessed on 05.12.2018 13:24

<sup>484</sup> Turner E. 2013. The CDU and Party Organisational Change. *German Politics*. Vol. 22 No. 1-2, p114-133.

<sup>485</sup> Currently the SPD is committed to a non-binding ‘OMOV’ (One Member One Vote) ballot on a new leader, having previously done something similar in the 1990s, but at present the Party Congress retains the power to elect the party head.

<sup>486</sup> Fig. 4.1 created by the author from information contained in the SPD party rulebook, available at <https://www.spd.de/partei/organisation/gremien/>. Information correct as of 21.01.2019.

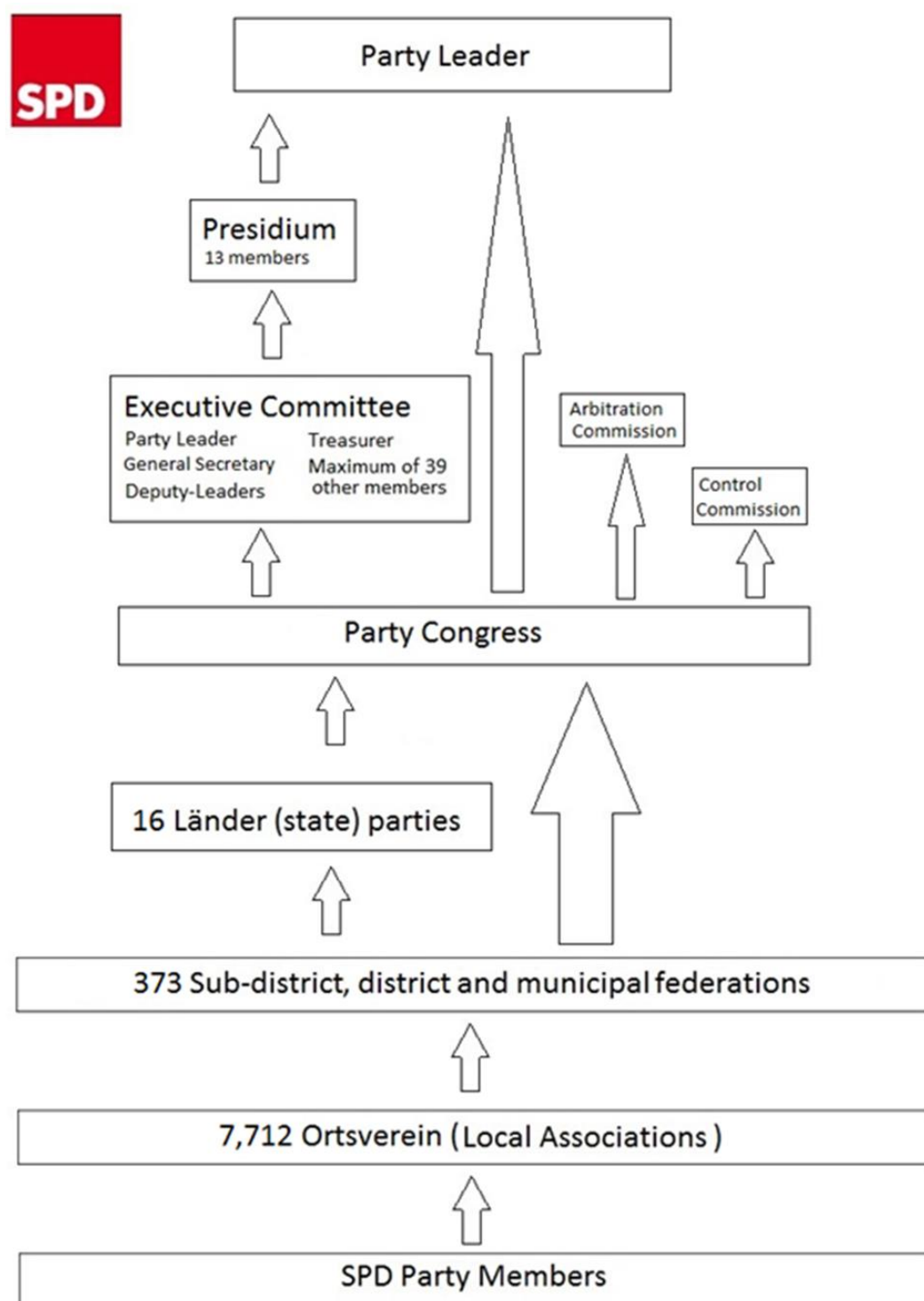


Fig. 4.1

The SPD contains several party sub-groupings which exist in parallel to the main structures. They are designed to act as bridges between the SPD and other groups in society. There are different forms of these sub-groupings; the “Arbeitsgemeinschaften” (formal working groups), “Arbeitskreise” (informal working groups) and “Foren” (forums) each of which have different levels of rights and recognition within the SPD structures.

The Arbeitsgemeinschaften are the most established and formal level of the sub-groupings. There are three Arbeitsgemeinschaft where SPD members who meet the criteria are automatically members; these are the JUSOS, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Sozialdemokratischer Frauen (Working Group of Social Democratic Women, ASF) and the Arbeitsgemeinschaft SPD 60 plus (Working Group of the SPD 60 Plus, AG 60 Plus) for older members. Membership of the other Arbeitsgemeinschaft is not automatic or mandatory. All working groups operate semi-autonomously and individuals can join them without being a member of the SPD, but they are not legally separate organisations and remain a part of the SPD. This research focuses in particular on the JUSOS. There are multiple other SPD working groups, such as those for Jewish members, lawyers, Christian members etc. However, these do not form part of the focus of this research.

#### **4.4: The youth wings of the SPD; the JUSOS, SAJ, SDS, SHB and SJD-die Falken.**

The SPD currently has only one formal youth and student wing, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der JungsozialistInnen in der SPD (the JUSOS) which covers ages from 14 to 35 and has over 70,000 members<sup>487</sup> as of 2018. All members of the SPD who are under the age of 36 are automatically a member of the JUSOS, and non-party members can also join if they are under 36, although non-party members do not have the right to vote or stand for office within the organisation.<sup>488</sup> The JUSOS is therefore the primary focus of this chapter when it comes to the youth wings.

The JUSOS structure is geographical, mirroring that of the SPD, and is extremely dense and complex. At the lower level a JUSOS group will be attached to each Ortsverein. There are then further groups at the Unterbezirk (sub-district) and bezirk (district) level as well as Land (state) level and Federal levels. As well as the main youth section the JUSOS operate Hochschulgruppen (University groups) as a student wing within Universities and some high schools. The JUSOS holds congresses and conferences meeting annually to make major policy decisions, and an elected executive committee which manages matters between the conferences.<sup>489</sup> Depending on the level of the conference (federal, state, regional) different levels of JUSOS groups send delegates. The Hochschulgruppen also have their own conferences each semester and an elected executive committee.<sup>490</sup> However the JUSOS are not the only youth wing with a relationship with the SPD.

Prior to the Nazi period the affiliated youth wing in the SPD was known as the Sozialistische Arbeiter-Jugend (Socialist Workers Youth, or SAJ),<sup>491</sup> the SAJ appears in the research due to Egon Franke, who was the Chair of the SAJ in Hannover until it was banned in 1933, but who was still a member of the

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<sup>487</sup> The JUSOS. 2018. Über uns. Available at: <https://www.jusos.de/wir-jusos/ueber-uns/> accessed 14.11.2018 16:49

<sup>488</sup> Brauntal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition*. Colorado; Westview Publishing Inc. Second Edition, p.122.

<sup>489</sup> <https://www.jusos.de/wir-jusos/verbandsaufbau/> 14.11.2018 13:36

<sup>490</sup> <https://www.jusos.de/wir-jusos/hochschulgruppen/> 14.11.2018 13:37

<sup>491</sup> Miller S. and Potthof H., 1983. *A History of German Social Democracy: From 1848 to the Present*. Translated from the German by J. A. Underwood. New York; Berg Publishing, p.114.



Bundestag in the early 1980s.<sup>492</sup> Given that this was an historical predecessor of the JUSOS and that it only impacts one individual in a small percentage of the timeframe under consideration the SAJ is treated as directly equivalent to the JUSOS in the data.

From 1946 the SPD also had a separate affiliated student wing, the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (Socialist German Student's Union, SDS) until in 1960 the SPD leadership deemed membership of the SDS to be incompatible with membership of the SPD following conflicts over the adoption of the Godesberger Programme.<sup>493</sup> It was replaced by the Sozialdemokratische Hochschulbund (Social Democratic University Union, SHB) formed from SDS branches which had supported the Godesberger Programme.<sup>494</sup> Following a leftward turn the SHB also came into conflict with the SPD leadership until in 1971 party support was stopped. Since 1971 therefore the JUSOS combines the functions of both a youth wing and, via its Hochschulgruppen (University Groups), the student wing of the SPD.<sup>495</sup> Nevertheless several former members of the SDS and SHB were members of the Bundestag in the 1980s and they are therefore included in this study.

In addition, there is one further organisation with strong links to the SPD but no formal affiliation, the Sozialistische Jugend Deutschlands – Die Falken (Socialist Youth of Germany – the Falcons, SJD-Die Falken). The SJD-Die Falken are a youth movement arranging camps, education activities and political seminars for young people with an avowedly Socialist political philosophy.<sup>496</sup> Although there is no formal affiliation the ideological alignment between the aims of the SJD-Die Falken and the SPD means there are links between them and individuals have often held membership in both the JUSOS and the SJD-Die Falken.

These youth wings play a major role in the selection of SPD candidates, operating within the party processes and competing for influence with other aspects of the party, as detailed in the next section.

#### ***4.5: Selection in the SPD; the process, gatekeepers and power dynamics.***

The selection process in the SPD, in terms of the selection journey any specific individual undergoes before considering putting themselves forward, proceeds as outlined in chapter two. However, once the individual gets to the stage of the formal selection process Germany's electoral system means there are unique features of the SPD's process, candidate selection being one area which is governed by Germany's Electoral Law.

For the Bundestag there are 299 local districts which elect a candidate by first past the post.<sup>497</sup> The remainder of the (theoretically) 598<sup>498</sup> seats are determined by a second vote, for a party rather than an individual. Every party that cleared the 5% threshold of this second vote is allocated a percentage

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<sup>492</sup> Childs D. 1995. Obituary: Egon Franke. Available at:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-egon-franke-1587529.html> accessed 22.05.2018 15:33

<sup>493</sup> Miller S. and Potthof H., 1983. *A History of German Social Democracy: From 1848 to the Present*. Translated from the German by J. A. Underwood. New York; Berg Publishing, p.184.

<sup>494</sup> Renaud, T.R., 2015. *Restarting Socialism: The New Beginning Group and the Problem of Renewal on the German Left, 1930-1970*. (Doctoral dissertation, UC Berkeley).

<sup>495</sup> <https://www.jusos.de/wir-jusos/hochschulgruppen/> 14.11.2018 16:50

<sup>496</sup> [https://www.wir-falken.de/ueber\\_uns/englisch.html](https://www.wir-falken.de/ueber_uns/englisch.html) 14.11.2018 17:44

<sup>497</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-election-system-explained-a-923243.html> accessed on 10.12.2018 14:15.

<sup>498</sup> The limits of seats in the Bundestag was set at 496 from the 1965 to 1987 elections (inclusive), 656 from the 1990 to 1998 elections (inclusive) before being reduced to 598 from the 2002 election until the system was declared unconstitutional in 2009, see next footnote.



of these list seats based on their percentage of the vote.<sup>499</sup> It is important to note that individuals can be a candidate for both a direct mandate and hold a place on the list for the party seats at the same time. In this instance the direct mandate, if successful, takes precedence and they are removed from the party list, meaning those below them move up a place.

The selection process for the geographical constituencies, known as direct mandates, involves a meeting of either the areas constituency election committee or of all the members of the local organisation(s) who democratically elect a prospective candidate from a shortlist presented to them.<sup>500</sup> The constituency places are decided first, before the party list is drawn up. Unlike the CDU the SPD recommends that its local branches elect delegates to decide on candidates rather than hold all-member meetings.<sup>501</sup>

Candidates for the party list places are selected by either the congress of the Land party or by a meeting of delegates from the party organisations in the Land. The Party Executive for the Land will make recommendations, usually based on balancing interests within the party. These may be regional, gender, generational or factional balances, with regional balance particularly important.<sup>502</sup> Changes can be made by delegates to the recommendations from the executive, but this can upset these balances and is therefore uncommon.<sup>503</sup>

This means that local members, or their delegates, in the constituencies and the local and regional party executive for the party list places are both acting as gatekeepers to selection. Gatekeepers are those who control access to the system, in this case those who exert a measure of control over the selection process. As discussed in chapter two, gatekeepers play a key role in the recruitment journey,<sup>504</sup> both in the phase of actively building intraparty coalitions of support and potentially earlier when nurturing individuals by opening up opportunities for advancement. They may also play a key role in convincing an individual to stand as a candidate.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> In 2009 this was declared unconstitutional by the Bundesverfassungsgericht (Federal Constitutional Court), due to the issue of "Überhangmandate" ("Overhang mandates") – in essence victory in the individual districts could skew the balance of the Bundestag so that a party received a higher number of MdBs than its percentage of the second vote accounted for, these extra seats being referred to as the Überhangmandate. For example in 2009 the CDU had 21 additional seats via Überhangmandate. As such other parties are now awarded additional seats – known as "Ausgleichmandate" ("Compensation Mandates") – to ensure the percentages match the percentage of the vote parties received. This means the concept of the Bundestag having 598 members has since 2009 been more or less theoretical. This can mean individuals lower on the party list can sometimes get into the Bundestag when they wouldn't previously have done so. It does not however significantly alter the selection dynamics candidates must face to get a place on the party list or as a candidate for a district's direct mandate, so is not of great importance to this study. Nevertheless, the fact should be noted.

<sup>500</sup> Roberts, G.K. (2016). *German Politics Today*. Manchester; Manchester University Press. Third Edition. Pp73-74.

<sup>501</sup> Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral Dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge, p47.

<sup>502</sup> Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral Dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid. p44-46 and also Roberts G.K. 2016. *German Politics Today*. Manchester; Manchester University Press. Third Edition. p63.

<sup>504</sup> Norris, P. 1997. *Passages to power: Legislative recruitment in advanced democracies*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press and Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. 1995. *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

<sup>505</sup> Brookman D. 2014, 'Mobilizing candidates: Political actors strategically shape the candidate pool with personal appeals.' *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 104-119 and Seligman L. 1961

## Gatekeepers to selection in the SPD.

Party gatekeepers have a significant impact on the likelihood of an individual being selected to stand for public office. When the interviews for this study were conducted several of the interviewees would raise the topic of gatekeepers and the power dynamics of selection unprompted.

The selection system and its practical functioning were described by DE03.

*“We have local branches of the party, they are within a borough, and within that borough the whole of these grassroots that are usually based on cities or villages. They decide who they are going to put forward as the direct candidate. From my experience if you had a borough where there is a local industry they still do the old thing, they still go for someone from the workers council. Then they will obviously see if they would be willing to do it. But quite often we have a fighting [contested] vote, where there are several candidates and then the entire grassroots within that borough would vote and the candidate who got the most votes within that borough would be nominated. In parliament, whether in the federal Länder or the whole of Germany, it is about half and half people who get voted in directly and people who get in via the party lists. The lists that the parties make are decided by the party within the federal state, they make the decisions do they want a lot of teachers, do they want a lot of lawyers, do they want a lot of people working in public services and the party then decides who is getting on the list and in what order. If you’re top of the list you’re going to get in.”*

*DE03, MdB from a Trade Union background.*

What is of interest in this account is the word “They”. In both methods of becoming a candidate – direct vote or party list – DE03 identifies gatekeepers as playing a vital role. In the case of a direct vote these gatekeepers approach an individual to stand who is then either adopted or faces a selection vote, during which the known support of these gatekeepers can be presumed to be valuable. In the party list case the gatekeepers decide which candidates are on the list and in what order.

DE03 doesn’t identify these gatekeepers beyond simply “the party”. Other respondents however did identify who they conceived to be the gatekeepers.

*“The decision of who gets which nomination or who gets which job or who is a candidate for which office is the task and the practice of the democracy in the party. The most important people are the chairs at each level of the party. The chair of our federal party is Andrea Nahles and she is the most important person for deciding on candidates at the federal level. In the 16 countries, federal countries, there we have 16 chairmen of the federal party and on the local level we have 373 local party units and they are the chairmen, or chairwomen, responsible on their level. And on the basic level we have 7,712 basic units and they’re responsible for their level. The Chair is the most important person, they are not alone, but they are the master of the process. They have to speak with the board, or speak with those who are in office, I think that is the next most important group: those who are in office. For example, if you are a Member of Parliament here in the Bundestag you*

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‘Political Recruitment and Party Structure: A Case Study’ *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 77-86.

*are yourself a very important person when it comes to whether you will get the nomination again or not.”*

*DE01, Senior SPD party employee.*

The party chairs of the varying levels within the SPD are therefore identified as having a great deal of power within the selection process. DE01 identifies a process of the balancing of interests, the chair must at least consult with members of their board and DE01 also identifies a benefit to incumbency. The chair must take soundings from others with influence over the process but ultimately they exert significant control over who is selected. DE01 does not differentiate between the importance of the chair in the two sections, in the party list when their level of influence over the list and placings being drawn up by the committees which they chair would be obvious, but also in the selection of candidates to compete for direct mandates. Wigbers<sup>506</sup> identifies that it is extremely unusual for a candidate recommended by the district chair to be overturned by the membership. Put together with the comments from DE03 it indicates that the sponsorship and support of the party chairs is considered an important factor in terms of the selection from the membership for a direct mandate candidate selection as well as the party list.

#### Factionalism and selection in the SPD.

Party gatekeepers, and in particular party Chairs, are thus able to advance the interests of those who agree with them ideologically. This factionalism is identified with the sources of recruitment. The issue of factionalism will be explored in more depth in chapter six, however it is relevant to hold a brief discussion on how it relates to the selection process here.

When DE04 was asked to describe the recruitment process they raised the issue of factionalism and described the JUSOS and the Trade Unions as being on opposing factional and ideological sides.

*“If you want to have a career in the SPD you have two chances. First you can be a member of the unions and second you can be a member, if you are younger than 35, of the JUSOS. To have a career it is important to have the right connections to the leaders in the party in the region and in the sub-region. If the sub-region and the region is a little bit on the right you have a better chance coming from the unions, if it is on the left you have a better chance coming from the JUSOS.”*

*DE04, Former MdB from a JUSOS background.*

This part of the discussion is of interest for several reasons. The first is the impact of ideological conflicts on recruitment patterns when one or other training ground is predominantly a source of recruitment for one wing rather than being across the wings. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter six. There is also here an explicit discussion of the role of gatekeepers in selecting candidates with the same ideological or factional allegiance as them. This is linked to the geographical nature of the gatekeepers implying there may also be a geographical element to the factional conflicts depending on which faction is dominant within a given geographic area or party sub-unit. This includes

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<sup>506</sup> Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral Dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge, p44.

the JUSOS which is seen and often sees itself as a faction in its own right,<sup>507</sup> which is discussed in further detail in chapter six.<sup>508</sup>

Gatekeepers are however likely to favour those who produce political outcomes which favour the faction, ideological or otherwise, which they themselves support and to conversely seek to stymie the careers of those who they perceive to be able to achieve political outcomes which favour other factions or go against the interests of their faction. DE04 referenced this in the quote already discussed above when they referenced the factional contests for selection as *“the actual school of the SPD”*. DE01 also identified the more pernicious side of this equation when asked an unrelated question.

*“The SPD’s is dominated by people who have a lot of time and the culture of the SPD is also dominated by a fight with each other. I speak of the ‘mushrooms principle’ – if they are growing and come out of the earth they are cut. And that is good for mushrooms but not good for people. If you are coming out and you show your brilliance, that you are better than average, you have a problem. I think we are still a mass organisation, with 440,000 members, and in a mass organisation nowadays brilliant people have a lot of problems, too many problems.”*

*DE01, Senior SPD party employee.*

In other words, those who demonstrate to gatekeepers that they can effectively produce political outcomes which the gatekeepers view with disfavour will find that those gatekeepers take steps to remove them from contention within the party.

A point to clarify is that the mechanism by which individuals are changing is natural replacement. That is the contest is to replace retiring Members of the Bundestag or for seats which the SPD does not hold, rather than attempts to force out sitting Members. Wigbers<sup>509</sup> does identify one incident of a concerted campaign to deselect a sitting MdB in Hamburg Eimsbüttel in 2009 but states that this is *“a very rare example”*<sup>510</sup> and that the reselection of a sitting MP – lacking any form of public scandal – is *“the default case.”*<sup>511</sup> Even in times of high levels of factional tension it is very rare for a sitting MdB who seeks re-election not to be selected as the candidate again.<sup>512</sup> During conversations with the researcher none of the interviewees raised the concept of deselecting a sitting member, only on looking to replace those who were standing down or in seeking mandates in places where the SPD did not have a sitting Member.

This does however have the effect of increasing the stakes when trying to win the contest the first time around, as the winning faction is likely to see their candidate remain in office for some time. This also applies beyond factional considerations, with a reduced possibility to ‘correct’ a ‘bad’ selection gatekeepers face pressure to ensure they select the best candidate.

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<sup>507</sup> Brauntal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition*. Colorado; Westview Publishing Inc. Second Edition, p121-147.

<sup>508</sup> See chapter six, section 6.4.

<sup>509</sup> Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral Dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge, p50.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid p.50.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid. p46.

<sup>512</sup> Koelble T. A. 1991. *The Left Unravelled: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.

Skills or networking? What are gatekeepers looking for?

When DE04 is discussing “*leaders in the party in the region and sub-region*” it is highly likely they are referring to the same individuals as DE01, specifically the Party Chairs, incumbent representatives and the local Party Board, and the individuals referred to as “*they*” by DE03. These individuals are acting as talent scouts in some respects, such as when they approached DE03 to turn to politics from the trade union. Whilst they are looking for individuals who will share their political perspective, they are also looking for competent and capable legislators who have the ability to advance their political goals in office as well as within the party. The question then, when it comes to power dynamics, is what they are looking for when making a decision?

When DE01 was asked what the Chairs he had identified as being key gatekeepers were looking for in a candidate he placed an emphasis on skills.

*“They should get the best possible person. But what do we mean by best? Is it the most intellectual man or woman or is it the best communicators or is it the most intelligent? I don’t know. It’s a mix of attitudes. But I think that they have to be quick-thinking, they have to be moral, honest, and they have to be loving people. They need empathy. And communication skills.”*

*DE01, Senior SPD party employee.*

When the politician interviewees were also asked what benefits they perceived their experiences in their respective training grounds gave them that made them more likely to be selected the respondents also placed an emphasis on the skills they learnt over networking.

*“The skills are more important; I’m still profiting today from what I learnt in the JUSOS. That was way more important than the networks. Reading texts, writing proposals quickly, propaganda in the positive sense. The networking is not in the foreground”.*

*DE02, MdB from a JUSOS background.*

However, it wasn’t only those from a JUSOS background who identified skills as important. DE03 also identified skills as important, in particular communication skills, but they couched it more in terms of a factor driving a process of gentrification in the party.

*“It used to be that we used to look at the factories, and we would see there is a good guy on the workers council, he has already got votes for him because he was voted onto the workers council within the factory and these people were put forward for the Parliament. But these days the focus is more on people who can talk well, who can sell themselves. So, because of that the educational level of the Members of Parliament is much more important, meaning people like teachers, lawyers, people from higher education, people that studied politics. We have a professionalisation of the Parliamentarians”.*

*DE03, MdB from a Trade Union background.*

This allowed the opportunity for a follow up question regarding whether they had learnt those skills in the trade union movement and if so whether the skills had been a factor in their selection and useful for their career.

*“Yes, a lot. I was organising a lot of demonstrations, I managed to get 40 or 50,000 people onto the streets. My colleague made the comment that there is not much use protesting in front of the parliament, it is much much more use if you’re actually in the parliament... The experiences that I had previously helped me a lot in the committees [of the Bundestag]. Because I had a lot of Trade Union experience and because I was taken out of the Trade Unions to enter politics I basically packed a lot of punch, my voice carried a lot of weight because of that experience, within the Bundestag special committees and within the party. When it comes to topics such as social policy I am not just sitting and listening but I can actually contribute”.*

*DE03, MdB from a Trade Union background.*

Here it is important to note that DE03 specifies the skills they learned allowed them to pack a punch in the party as well as once they got to the Bundestag. The two are of course linked, as a candidate can use the skills they have learnt and their applicability in the legislature as a selling point in the selection process.

Interestingly however DE04, the former MdB with a JUSOS background but from an earlier timeframe than DE02, identified networking as a key factor, but also made reference to skills as being necessary. In the quote already mentioned above he identified both the JUSOS and the trade union movement as schools for the SPD and in a later question on the importance of the JUSOS as a recruiting ground they returned to this theme, commenting:

*“In the regions there are other criteria, it’s not just having a radical point of view - they are more complex personalities generally and they focus on deliberation, on discourse, on debating issues that are relevant to their everyday lives.”*

*DE04, Former MdB from a JUSOS background.*

Identifying a focus on deliberation, discourse and debate is identifying a focus on the communication skills necessary for the successful prosecution of that political conversation.

This is not just the assessment of the individuals who had gone through the process or witnessed it firsthand, it was also the opinion of those who were currently members of the JUSOS. Both DE05 and DE06 placed an emphasis on the skills they learnt, whilst also acknowledging the importance of networking. When asked about the benefits of being in the JUSOS DE05 commented:

*“I think there are a lot. I think it is one of the best decisions I have made in my life. Public speaking is one of them because you have to present your case. Organising skills is another thing because you organise a lot of events and you organise campaigns. You often manage a meeting as well, there’s timekeeping, seeing people don’t interrupt each other and these kind of things which can also be very useful later on in life. You make a lot of connections to important people which can help you in many ways for example I started organising big anti-racism events and it was at that point that it was really helpful that I knew a lot of politicians because politicians are always well-connected. They’re always well-connected with the civil society and so on and if you get them on board then this helps you bring other people on board because they, if they support you, they can use their network to support you and the goals you want to achieve. So this is also great. You learn a lot about politics, you think a lot about politics, you meet really nice people. Especially I think if you’re very active and you give a lot of your time it is really important that*

*it is not only work but also fun so you meet a lot of really nice people to hang around with and get long-lasting friendships from this. I think these are the main ones.”*

*DE05, Senior JUSOS activist.*

DE05 identifies the skills but here also makes another important point, which is that time in the JUSOS can yield networks which enable people to work in politics, in one of the jobs within the political ecosystem discussed in chapter two.

DE06 also placed a very heavy emphasis on the skills that an individual learns. In particular they focused on the political education, what DE02 termed learning the craft of politics, and on the communication skills which had also been mentioned by other interviewees:

*“For me personally the benefits, I think it was a very, very good political education I got there. Not by some guys who told me how to think but by struggling on my own, struggling with some comrades, struggling to find solutions for political problems in my daily life. On the other hand you gain some social qualifications, reading texts and speaking and so on. It’s about networking, it’s about learning to discuss and to fight for political issues, learning about oneself and your organisation, about political topics and the political needs you have to fight for and of course learning about a lot of, and this is an additional nice-to-have thing, but you learn a lot about designing postcards and about finance stuff and designing budgets and whatever. Because you have to do it and you have to educate yourself about how to organise your political work and how to speak in front of a lot of people. Where else do you have the opportunity to speak and learn to speak in front of a big crowd? This is quite useful. At university all the people who study with me are always afraid of giving a lecture and I am not afraid. So you learn a lot of these soft skills as well and it’s very nice. You can’t evaluate this highly enough because it will make you fluent in expressing yourself in a confident way. This is very useful, in job interviews as well of course! This is not the goal or the main aim of JUSOS but its additional value you get there as well by being active.”*

*DE06, Senior JUSOS activist.*

The two factors identified in this section however seem to provide slightly contradictory conclusions. The heavy emphasis placed by the respondents on the importance of gatekeepers would seem to imply that the most important element in selection is the good favour of the individuals in question, principally identified as the Party Chairs. This would in turn imply that the most important benefit provided by the training grounds, whether the youth wings or the trade union movement, was the opportunity to network and put an individual in good favour with those gatekeepers. When asked about the benefits provided by the training grounds however all the respondents either explicitly or implicitly identified the specific skillsets they had developed within their training ground, with a particularly heavy emphasis on communication skills.

This may be because the move from the JUSOS to the Bundestag is rarely direct, and that the skills are more useful because they are applicable to the intermediate stage of the process, that is to say working within the political ecosystem as identified by DE05. This is discussed in more detail in chapter six. Further it may be that the way for an individual to gain favour and a positive assessment from prominent gatekeepers may be via the exercising and the demonstration of the skills identified. That is to say that the primary advantage offered by the training grounds of the SPD is not just the ability to learn skills nor to establish personal relationships but rather the opportunity to demonstrate the

skills necessary to achieve a political outcome in an environment which can bring an individual to the attention of gatekeepers. Those gatekeepers may then open up further opportunities, in local government or as a member of party staff for example, all of which build into the political capital required for a selection bid.

In the following sections of this chapter the relevant levels of success of the youth wings and the trade unions in getting their favoured individuals into a position to be elected as MdBs are discussed. Whilst the below figures count only those successfully elected after selection nevertheless as factional conflicts are fiercest around finding candidates for winnable seats and for a high placing on the party list the two are linked. Conflicts will be particularly strong in contests to replace members who are retiring, as the seat is self-evidently a winnable seat if it is held by the SPD. Consequently, the lens of gatekeepers and power dynamics has to be born in mind when analysing the shifting patterns of recruiting grounds.

#### ***4.6: The youth wings and SPD legislative recruitment.***

The major contention being tested in this chapter is that the SPD's youth wings have increased in prominence as a source of recruitment for the social democratic party family of Western Europe, and that this has come at the expense of the trade union movement as outlined in hypothesis 1. It is therefore worth reminding ourselves of hypothesis 1:

*H1: Youth organisations have grown in prominence as sources of social democratic parliamentary recruitment since the 1980s, filling a vacuum created by the decline of the trade unions.*

In order to test this a quantitative analysis of the backgrounds of MdBs was carried out, as detailed in the chapter three. A database was created in which every SPD Member of the Bundestag was listed by election cycle and their backgrounds codified. The dataset coded firstly membership of any (and which) of the youth wings listed above, whether they had served in an elected role in a youth wing, membership and employment within any German trade union (and which). Further it coded whether or not they grew up in the German Democratic Republic (as the timeframe covers reunification). In all cases the data was self-declared being taken from the official mini-biographies submitted to the Bundestag.

The data from the 1994 election onwards originates from the biographies each MdB is required to prepare for inclusion on the Bundestag website, the archive of which is publicly available.<sup>513</sup> This data was then cross-referenced against other sources available online, principally the biographies included on the individuals own website, sources held in the archive of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and newspaper reports.<sup>514</sup> Data prior to 1994 was primarily sourced from the Biographical Handbook of the Members of the German Bundestag 1949-2002.<sup>515</sup> Again every entry was then cross-referenced against other available source, including newspaper reports, reports of long-service celebrations carried on local party websites and obituaries. This makes the data easily comparable. Once coded this data was then analysed.

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<sup>513</sup> Available at: <http://webarchiv.bundestag.de/archive/2007/0206/mdb/bio/index.html> (data from 1994 to 2007), at

<http://webarchiv.bundestag.de/archive/2013/1212/bundestag/abgeordnete17/biografien/index.html> (data from 2007 to 2013) and <https://www.bundestag.de/abgeordnete/biografien> (2013 to present).

<sup>514</sup> A complete list of sources used to cross-reference the data is included in Appendix 4.4.

<sup>515</sup> Vierhaud R. (Ed) 2002. *Biographisches Handbuch der Mitglieder des Deutschen Bundestages 1949-2002*. Berlin; Walter de Gruyter.



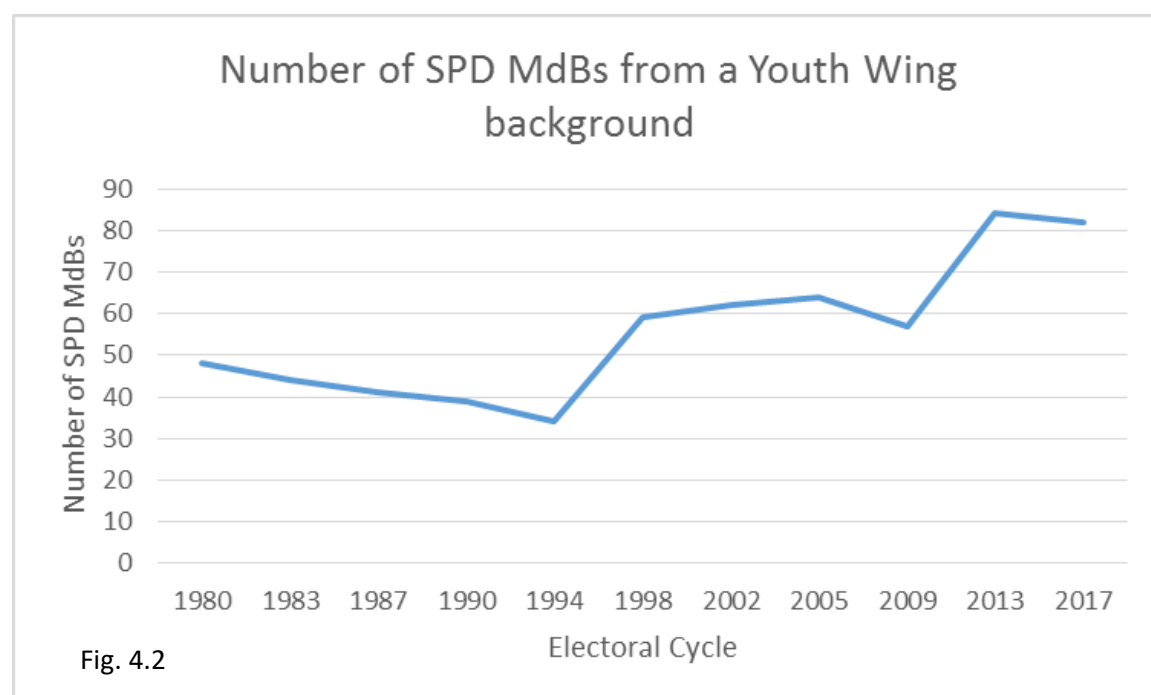
As the data is from self-declared Bundestag mini-biographies it is coding whether the individual MdB felt their service in the youth wing was worthy of inclusion. It is therefore reliant on the MdBs own collective assessments of whether their level of service was relevant to their political development.

It is also important to note that this data is looking at those who have undertaken a political apprenticeship in the youth wings, not those who have moved immediately from a senior position in the youth wings to the Bundestag. The data does not distinguish on the length of time between an individual's service in a youth wing and their election to the Bundestag.

Findings from the empirical data.

As discussed in chapter three the data tables below are comprised of individuals who served as an elected officer of the youth wings in question, not merely those who had membership. Any individual who joined the SPD before the age of 35 automatically has membership of the JUSOS, regardless of whether they have ever attended a meeting. Thus the data for membership would not indicate the individuals who had received any political benefit from youth wings. By coding for those who have held a role as an elected officer of a youth wing the data indicates individuals who can be shown to have had the opportunity to demonstrate political skill, at least enough to win an election within the relevant organisation.

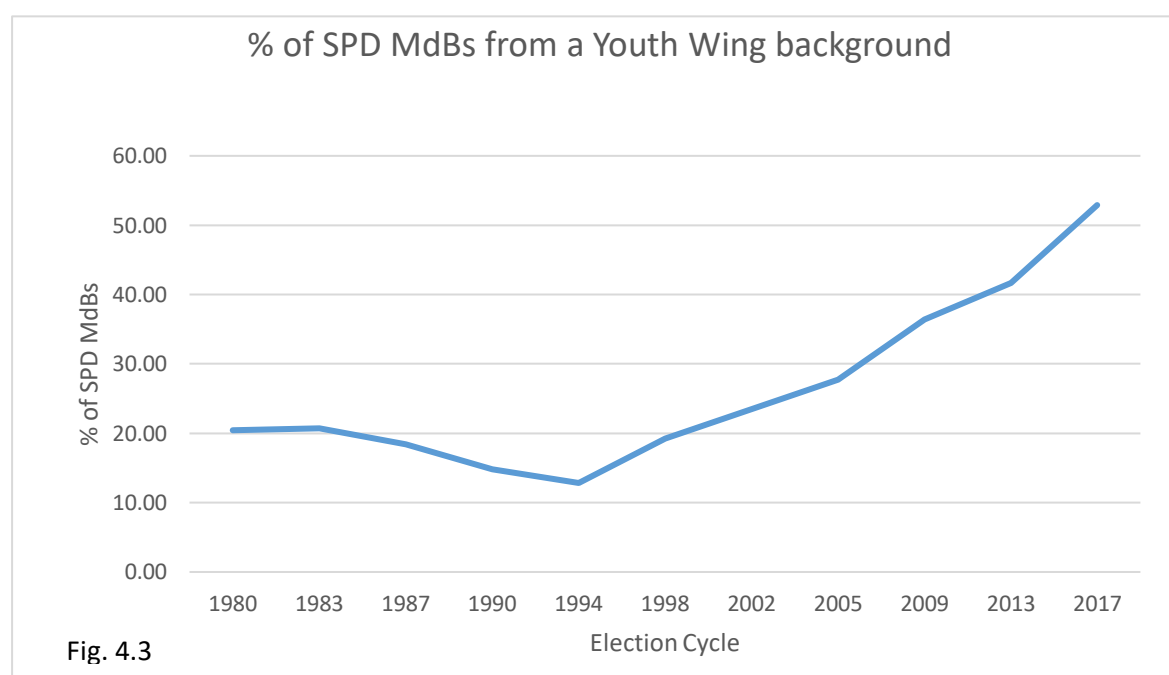
Several things immediately become clear from this data. The first is that there has been a rise in the number of SPD MdBs coming from a background in one of the youth wings, but that it has not been a steady increase. There was in fact a steady decline from 1980 to 1994 followed by two big jumps, one in the 1998 electoral cycle and one in the 2013. This can be seen by combining the different youth wings together and plotting a simple line graph of numbers of the SPD's MdBs who come from a background in one or other youth wing (Fig. 4.2).



What is of interest here is that these numbers do not track the electoral fortunes of the SPD. Although the big jump of MdBs from a youth wing in 1998 coincides with the electoral success of the SPD under

Gerhard Schröder the number of MdBs from a youth wing background does not then fall back significantly as the party suffered losses in the elections of 2002, 2005 and 2009. In the 1998 electoral cycle MdBs from a youth wing background accounted for 59 out of 307 MdBs.<sup>516</sup> In the 2002 and 2005 elections the number of youth wing MdBs went up, to 62 and then 64, despite the SPD as a whole suffering losses in those elections, and in the 2009 cycle the youth wings still accounted for 57 MdBs out of a total which had halved from its 1998 level to 155. Similarly the 2013 election did see the SPD increase its number of seats and 84 of the 199 individuals who served as SPD MdBs had a youth wing background. In the most recent election, 2017, youth wings still accounted for the background of 82 of the MdBs despite a drop in the total by almost a quarter to 155.

This has resulted in a 'ratchet effect' whereby the number of MdBs from a youth wing background leaps forward with the SPD's gains but then hold their numbers in losing election cycles. This 'ratchet effect' means that the number of MdBs from a youth wing background has increased as a percentage of the MdBs quite dramatically even as the actual numbers have plateaued across cycles. Plotting a line graph of the number of MdBs with a background in one of the youth wings in terms of the percentage of total SPD MdBs therefore shows a very different line (Figs. 4.3 and 4.4).



The steady decline between 1980 and 1994 is still discernible, though with perhaps a mini-ratchet effect between 1980 and 1983 as numbers dropped but the percentage increased slightly, suggesting SPD MdBs from a youth wing background marginally outperformed their peers in that election cycle. The big leaps in 1998 and 2013 are masked by the leaps forward for the SPD as a whole so do not

Electoral cycle	1980	1983	1987	1990	1994
Youth wing role	20.43%	20.75%	18.39%	14.77%	12.83%
	1998	2002	2005	2009	2013
	19.28%	23.46%	27.75%	36.36%	41.70%
					2017
					52.90%

<sup>516</sup> A reminder that this relates to the cycle – 1998 to 2002 – not just the election itself, and therefore includes MdBs who took up their role as replacements for MdBs who stepped down between elections. It is the number of individuals who have served as SPD MdBs during the cycle, not the number of seats won during the election and subsequently held for that cycle.

appear as dramatic but the overall increase in the prominence of the youth wings as a background is much starker, now accounting for more than half – 52.90% – of the SPD’s total.

The implication of this is that individuals from a youth wing background establish themselves in safe constituency seats or safe list positions, allowing them to survive as MdBs in election cycles when more marginal SPD seats are lost. There is also a benefit to incumbency, with existing members moving up the list places and newcomers entering the list lower down, suggesting those from a youth wing are outlasting their peers and thus moving up the lists with time. This provides added impetus to the ratchet effect, so once youth wing MdBs have a good election cycle as they did in 1998 and 2013 the effects have a lasting impact in the following cycles.

This could also be linked to the demonstration of skills as discussed previously, once the individuals win a seat they have the political skills to be effective, meaning they consolidate their positions and are less likely to drop down the lists or face an effort to replace them in their local party.

The JUSOS vs the other youth wings.

A second finding is that the JUSOS have crowded out the other affiliated youth wings. This can be seen by a comparison of the breakdown of which SPD affiliated<sup>517</sup> youth wings the MdBs coded as having a youth wing background belonged to in 1980 and 2017 (Fig. 4.5). Note that an individual can have served as an officer of more than one youth wing and therefore the percentages will add up to more than 100%.

Fig.4.5	1980	2017
<b>The JUSOS</b>	79.16%	98.78%
<b>SJD-Die Falken</b>	14.58%	2.45%
<b>SDS/SHA</b>	6.25%	0%
<b>SAJ</b>	2.08%	0%

In 1980 slightly more than one in five MdBs from a youth wing background had not come from the JUSOS, mostly those who had come from the SJD-Die Falken. Only one individual in 2017 had not served in the JUSOS (one more had served in both the SJD-Die Falken and the JUSOS). The SAJ in 1980 is one individual: Egon Franke, who had been SAJ Chair in Hannover until 1933. The length of time since the SAJ was dissolved by the Nazi’s and since the SDS and SHA were proscribed by the SPD explains why they disappear from the data by 1987 and 1990 respectively. SJD-Die Falken have however slowly decreased, with the exception of a brief revival in the 2005 election cycle from seven throughout the 1980s to two in 2017. This would suggest either that gatekeepers are now more focused on the JUSOS or that figures from JUSOS are now successfully ‘outcompeting’ comrades from SJD-Die Falken in selection terms.

<sup>517</sup> The data also includes Christoph Strässer, who was active in the JungdemokratInnen (Young Democrats), a youth wing which at the time was linked with the Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party, FDP) although they have since moved leftwards and became more closely linked to Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens). He is included as an MdB with a background in a youth wing in figs 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 but not accounted for in the breakdown in Fig 4.5.

### Controlling for the effect of German reunification.

A further question is what lies behind the steady decline prior to 1994. After a short drop between 1980 and 1983 the numbers from the JUSOS actually remain stable, with most of the decline coming from a combination of the retirement of those individuals from the historical youth wings and those from SJD-Die Falken. There is a linked question as to why those or other seats were not picked up by the JUSOS and why the 'ratchet effect' isn't apparent before 1994.

One possibility is the effect of German Reunification. Those Members of the East German Volkskammer who ascended to the Bundestag upon reunification in October 1990 but before the election of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1990 are classed in the 1987 election cycle figures. These plus the first reunified election in 1990 would be expected to show a drop in the percentage of MdBs from a youth wing background as those MdB who came from the GDR had no opportunity to be part of any SPD affiliated youth wing.<sup>518</sup> This could be masking what was happening in terms of selection of youth wing candidates, especially as the percentages of MdBs from the electoral cycles of 1980, 1983 and 1998, just before and just after the three elections most affected by reunification, are not dissimilar.

By removing the data-points for all of those SPD MdBs who come from the GDR<sup>519</sup> and rerunning the analysis we can remove this potential bias. Fig. 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 opposite show the same data as above with those from a GDR background removed. When plotted onto a line graph these figures are not dissimilar to those when the GDR is included with the same trends visible.

When looking at specific numbers of individuals the number of those with a youth wing background is a gently sloping decline through the 1980s with a more significant drop in the numbers in the two election cycles of the early 1990s. There then follows the two dramatic increases in 1998 and 2013 coupled with the ratchet effect discussed above.

When the percentage figures are plotted on a line graph the picture is subtly different. The percentage of SPD MdBs through the 1980s is extremely stable before dropping more sharply for the 1990 and 1994 electoral cycle. Reunification and the importing of MdBs from the Volkskammer before the 1990 election does therefore seem to explain the decline shown for the 1987 election cycle. When those individuals are removed from the equation the number of SPD MdBs from a youth wing background as a percentage is very similar to 1980 and 1983.

What is also clear however is that this does not explain the drops in the election cycles of 1990 and 1994. The decline is still there, albeit as you would expect less marked. This is discussed further below.

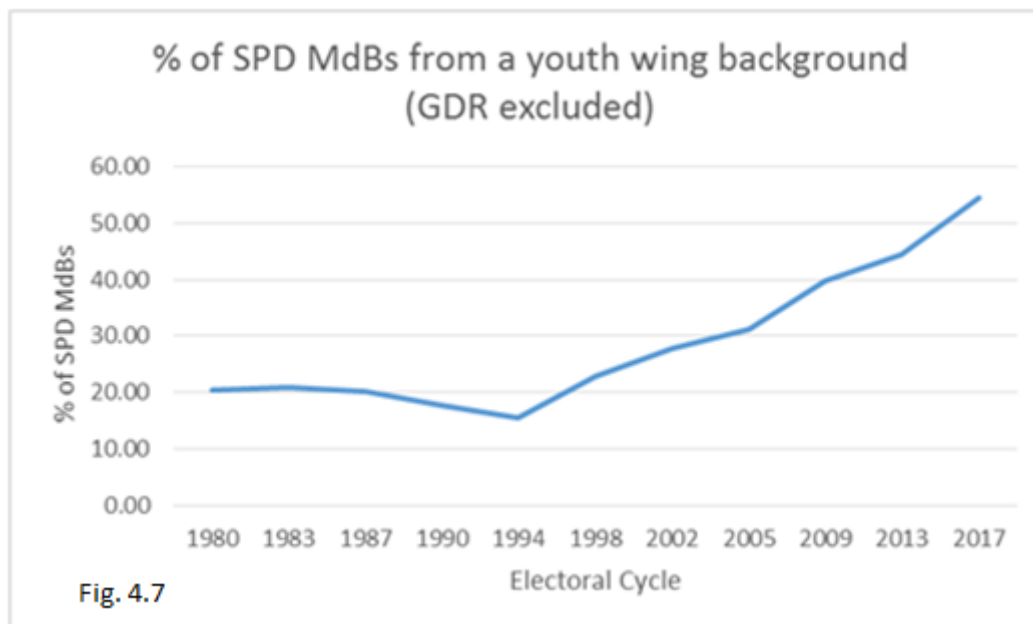
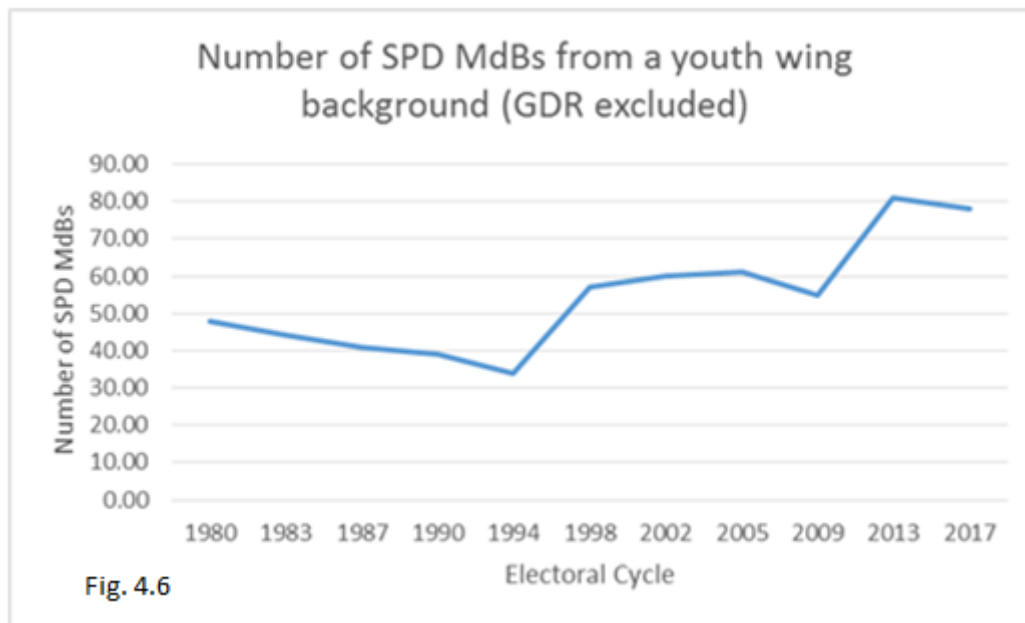
Moving closer to the present a further point of interest made clear in fig. 4.8 is that even by 2017, 27 years after reunification, the percentage of MdBs in this 'continuity West Germany' are still higher by a few percentage points than when including the new Land. This indicates that JUSOS are less effective at getting their members or former members selected in the new Land than they are in the former West Germany. This may simply be a hangover and this discrepancy may diminish and disappear with time.

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<sup>518</sup> To avoid clouding the results the Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth, FDJ) – the youth wing of the East German Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany, SED) is omitted from this study. Membership of the FDJ was near-compulsory for young people in East Germany and over 75% of the country's population aged between 14 and 25 were members, meaning most of those SPD MdBs who grew up in the GDR will have been members. Due to the authoritarian nature of the political system in the GDR however there is unlikely to have been any discernible benefit derived from membership that would lead to a political career in the democratic system of the Federal Republic of Germany.

<sup>519</sup> Note: this is those who were born in the GDR, not necessarily those elected in the five former GDR Land.

Overall, then when controlling for the impact of reunification on the number of SPD Members of the Bundestag coming from a youth wing we can say that it has not had a significant impact in either direction. The same patterns of youth wing selection are present when the new Land are included and when they are excluded. This does however leave an open question. If reunification was not the cause of the drop in numbers of those coming from a youth wing in the election cycles of 1990 and 1994, what was?

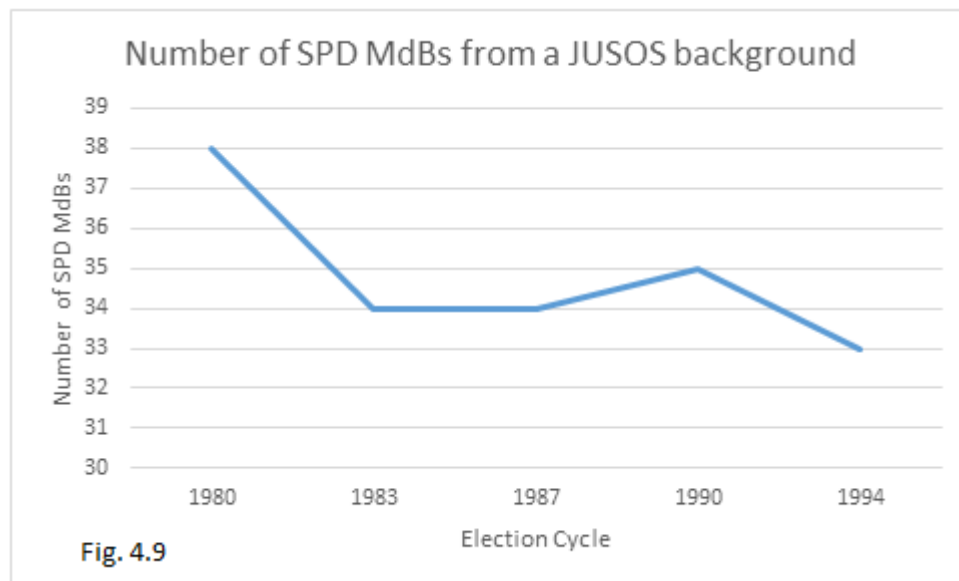


Electoral cycle		1980	1983	1987	1990	1994
Youth wing role		20.43%	20.75%	20.10%	17.65%	15.45%
	1998	2002	2005	2009	2013	2017
	22.71%	27.78%	31.28%	39.86%	44.51%	54.55%

Fig. 4.8

Explaining the drop in the 1990s.

It is worth looking into the data in more depth to look for an explanation for the drop in those coming from a youth wing background in both purely numerical and percentage terms between 1980 and 1994. The in-depth numbers show that in fact the number of individuals specifically from the JUSOS is actually comparatively stable, going from 38 in the 1980 cycle to 34 in the 1983 cycle, 34 again in the 1987 cycle, 35 in the 1990 cycle and 33 in the 1994 cycle (Fig. 4.9). This is despite the factional infighting that dominated the selection process in the SPD in the 1980s with the JUSOS at the forefront.<sup>520</sup> The explanation for the drop in youth wings overall then is mostly coming from a decline in the numbers from the other youth wings.



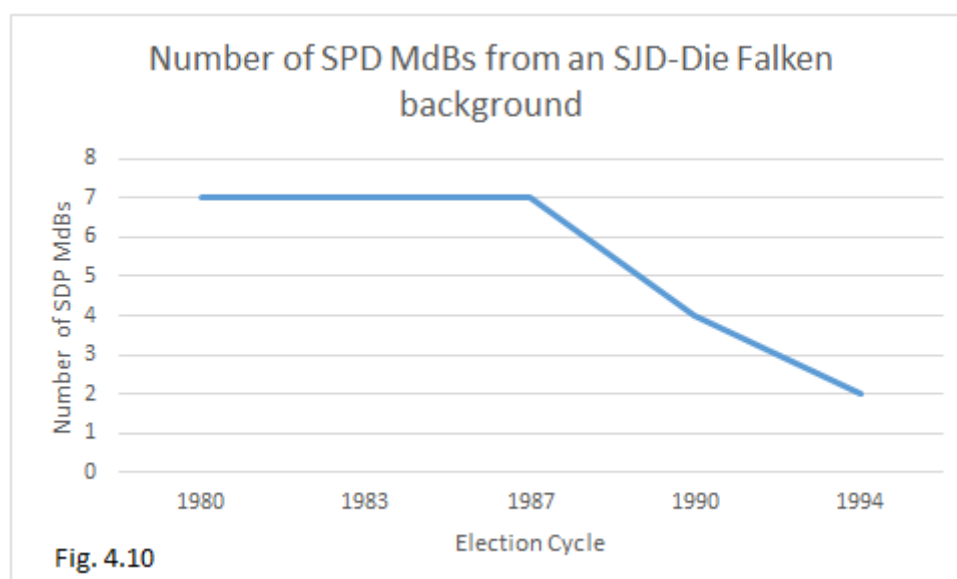
The disappearance of MdBs who have a background from one of the historical youth wings – the SAJ, SDS and SHA – is simply through the process of time. These drop through the 1980s and help to explain the marginal decline in numbers of those coming from the youth wings over those three election cycles, although it is notable they have not been replaced by those from a JUSOS background. They also did not account for a particularly large number. The big drop in the number of MdBs from a youth wing in the election cycles of 1990 and 1994 is predominantly linked to a substantial drop in those coming from the SJD-Die Falken.

This can be seen in Fig 4.10. The number of MdBs remains steady at 7 through the 1980s but then drops dramatically to 4 in 1990 and just 2 in 1994. Indeed, one of those who had held office in SJD-Die Falken in 1994, Uwe Hirsch, had also held an elected role in JUSOS which was more likely to be the reason behind his selection.

There are several possible reasons for this. Firstly the factional infighting in the SPD during the 1980s could have led to the SJD-Die Falken – which is not formally affiliated to the SPD – looking to distance itself from the party, leading to less influence and therefore less individuals moving through the system in the 1980s to be in a position to go for selection during the early 1990s. Additionally the factional fighting could lead to gatekeepers focusing on their own faction, especially as JUSOS and the

<sup>520</sup> Brauntal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition*. Colorado; Westview Publishing Inc. Second Edition, p121-147.

trade unions were identified as the key organisations within those factions,<sup>521</sup> meaning they were not looking for potential candidates in the SJD-Die Falken. These two possibilities are also not mutually exclusive and a combination of the two could be in place.



Therefore, the drop during the 1980s seems to be only slightly down to a drop in the numbers coming from the JUSOS, with the drop between 1980 and 1983 probably reflecting the overall election losses of the SPD and the number then remaining pretty stable. Rather the retirement of those from an historical youth wing and a large drop in those SPD MdBs coming from a background in SJD-Die Falken explains this drop. During the 1980s and early 1990s individuals from the JUSOS did not seem to take those seats being vacated or rather if they did they lost seats elsewhere leading to little overall change. This crowding out however seems to have set the stage for dramatic increases in the numbers coming from the youth wings, and in particular from the JUSOS, from the 1998 election cycle onwards.

#### Discussion.

The quantitative data demonstrates that there has been a clear and demonstrable rise in the number of individuals with a background in an affiliated youth wing serving as SPD Members of the Bundestag between 1980 and 2019. This rise is even more acute in percentage terms owing to the 'ratchet effect' meaning the prominence of the youth wings as a source of recruitment is even greater than the increase of the number of individuals might suggest.

Further the rise has been accounted for by the JUSOS, who have also crowded out the SJD-Die Falken as a source of recruitment for the SPD. As is to be expected the historical youth wings, via the process of time, have also disappeared from the equation. This crowding out process seems to have occurred during the 1980s leading to drops in the number of MdBs from SJD-Die Falken from 1990 onwards. From 1998 however the number of MdBs coming from a background in a youth wing, which is now almost synonymous with the JUSOS, has increased dramatically. This means that the youth wings, and specifically the JUSOS, now accounts for the political apprenticeship of more than half of the SPD Members of the Bundestag.

It can therefore be said with confidence that the first claim of hypothesis 1 – that the Youth organisations have grown in prominence as sources of social democratic parliamentary recruitment

<sup>521</sup> Ibid.

since the 1980s – is in the case of the SPD proven to be correct. This study must therefore move on to examine the second claim of hypothesis 1, that this increase has filled a vacuum created by a decline in the influence, and therefore the ability to get favoured candidates selected, of the German trade union movement.

#### **4.7: The trade unions and SPD legislative recruitment.**

Unlike many of their social democratic sister parties such as the UK Labour Party and Australian Labor Party, and indeed unlike the SPD during the Weimar Republic, there is no formal affiliation between the post-war SPD and either the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (German Trade Union Federation, DGB) or individual Trade Unions.<sup>522</sup> Nevertheless historically both the public's perception and the self-perception of the SPD has been that it is a party of and for workers, despite its Volkspartei nature, and historically there are major links between the SPD and the Trade Unions with many individuals holding posts in both. Since 1972 this has been organised through the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Arbeitnehmerfragen (Association of Workers, AfA) a working group for trade unionists within the SPD similar to the JUSOS but with lower numbers.<sup>523</sup> The trade union movement has long been a source of recruitment for the SPD when in need of electoral standard bearers and major union figures are often big players in the internal organisation of the SPD.<sup>524</sup>

One thing which needs to be clarified is that this thesis is looking at the influence of the German trade union movement on the selection of SPD candidates for the Bundestag, not other forms of influence such as policy implementation. Allern and Bale<sup>525</sup> found that the relationship between the German trade union movement and the SPD had changed since the early 2000s. Historically the trade unions and the SPD had a 'privileged partnership' whereby the unions exchanged electoral support for access to policymakers. Since the Schröder government that has changed, and the unions now operate a system of 'pluralised partnership' whereby they look to form issues-based coalitions of support with any political partner willing to work with them. This is likely to be both a cause and effect of their declining influence within the SPD more broadly. DE03 explained the historical relationship between the SPD and the trade union movement.

*"The SPD and the trade unions have very similar roots in the 19th century. We had a party council, in 1921 I think, in Mannheim, and we decided the general rule that trade unions work within the workplace and the party works in parliament and we try to get the issues that are coming up in the workplace into politics. Trade unions in Germany are not bound to the party. They are independent. But if there are issues in politics they work with the party. In contrast to many European countries the German trade union movement has stayed away from being political. That was different before 1933 and that was one of the reasons why the trade unions had very little power to resist the Nazis. But because quite a lot of the trade unions are close in their political outlook to the SPD quite frequently there were personnel within the trade unions who were also members of the SPD. From 1969 onwards a lot of trade union bigwigs were not only in the party but also sat in parliament and even in cabinet posts. There was an overlap. The head of the miners' union became*

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<sup>522</sup> Braunthal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition*. Colorado; Westview Publishing Inc. Second Edition.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid. p148.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid. p148 – 172.

<sup>525</sup> Allern E. H. and Bale T. 2017. *Left-of-Centre Parties and Trade Unions in the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford; Oxford University Press.



*Minister for Employment. The head of the builder's union became Minister for Transport and then Minister for Defence. A lot of people who were big in the trade unions became MPs."*

*DE03, MdB from a Trade Union background.*

This is reflected in the assumption of hypothesis 1, that there was a strong link between the trade union movement and the SPD which resulted in trade unionists coming into the Bundestag by being selected as candidates by the SPD. This assumption is also supported in the literature<sup>526</sup> and is a necessary precondition for the decline of trade unions to have precipitated the rise of the youth wings. The second assumption is that the trade union movement in Germany has declined since the 1970s. It is that assumption which the following section tests.

#### Trade union decline in Germany.

Trade union membership in Germany has declined. The decline of trade unions as a force in the workplace in Germany is no longer contested and has been manifest for some time. In 1987 Schnabel<sup>527</sup> was still able to discuss trade union strength in terms of cycles of growth and decline. Since then however multiple studies such as Frege and Kelly,<sup>528</sup> Schnabel and Wagner,<sup>529</sup> Visser,<sup>530</sup> Turner<sup>531</sup> and Addison et al<sup>532</sup> have all found a persistent and marked decline in trade union strength in Germany. The literature therefore shows that at the beginning of the timeframe under investigation in this study – the early 1980s – the trade union movement was still strong enough to be politically influential, but that it has dropped since.

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<sup>526</sup> See Brauntal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition*.

Colorado; Westview Publishing Inc. Second Edition; Berger S. 2000. *Social Democracy and the working class in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany*. London, Longman and Miller S. and Potthof H., 1983. *A History of German Social Democracy: From 1848 to the Present*. Translated from the German by J. A. Underwood. New York NY; Berg Publishing.

<sup>527</sup> Schnabel C. 1987. Trade union growth and decline in the Federal Republic of Germany. *Empirical Economics*. Vol. 12 No. 2, pp.107-127.

<sup>528</sup> Frege C. M. and Kelly J. 2003. Union revitalisation strategies in comparative perspective. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*. Vol. 9 No. 1, pp 7-24.

<sup>529</sup> Schnabel C. and Wagner J. 2006. The persistent decline in unionisation in Western and Eastern Germany, 1980 – 2004: What can we learn from a decomposition analysis? Working Paper Series in Economics, No. 31, Universität Lüneburg, Institut für Volkswirtschaftslehre, Lüneburg. Available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/28149>, accessed 15.07.2019 14:48.

<sup>530</sup> Visser J. 2007. Trade union decline and what next: Is Germany a special case? *Industrielle Beziehungen : Zeitschrift für Arbeit, Organisation und Management*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp 97-117.

<sup>531</sup> Turner L. 2009. Institutions and activism: Crisis and opportunity for a German labour movement in decline. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*. Vol. 62 No. 3, pp 294-312.

<sup>532</sup> Addison J. T., Bryson A., Teixeira P., and Pahnke A. 2011. Slip sliding away: Further union decline in Germany and Britain. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*. Vol. 58 No. 4, pp 490-518.

The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development records trade union density as a percentage of the workforce<sup>533</sup> for its member states, including Germany.<sup>534</sup> In 1980 34.9% of German workers were members of a trade union. A slow but steady decline set in during the 1980s before the influx of unionised East Germans saw a dramatic uptick at reunification, from 31.2% in 1990 to 36% in 1991. This increase was however short-lived and just two years later by 1993 it had fallen back to 31.8%. By 2016 (the most recent data) trade union workforce density had dropped to 17%, as shown on fig 4.11.

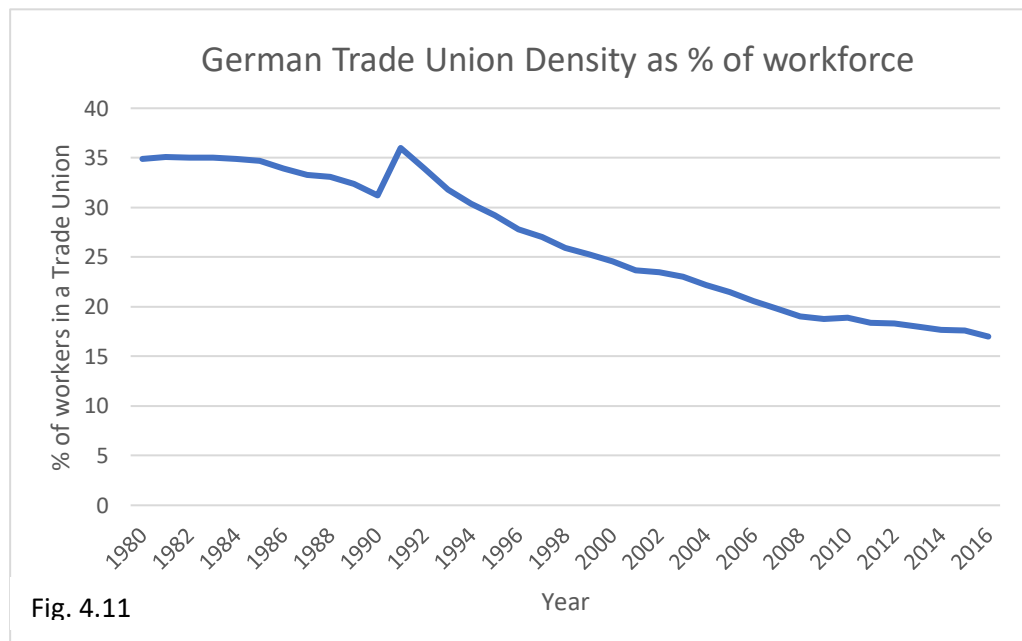


Fig. 4.11

As the size of the trade unions decrease so does their membership income and with that the amount they can spend promoting political outcomes. The numbers of voters amongst the general public they can influence and therefore their reach to promote the SPD, its candidates and policies also declines as does the number of individuals who are members in both a union and the SPD, creating downward pressure on the ability of the trade unions to support potential candidates for office in the SPD's selection process.

You would therefore expect to see the level of influence of the trade unions in the selection process to decrease, evidenced by a decline in the number and percentage of SPD MdBs who come from a background in the trade union movement. If the contention in hypothesis 1 is correct, the decline in trade unionist SPD Members of the Bundestag should be in an approximate inverse relationship with the increase in the number of MdBs coming from a youth wing background.

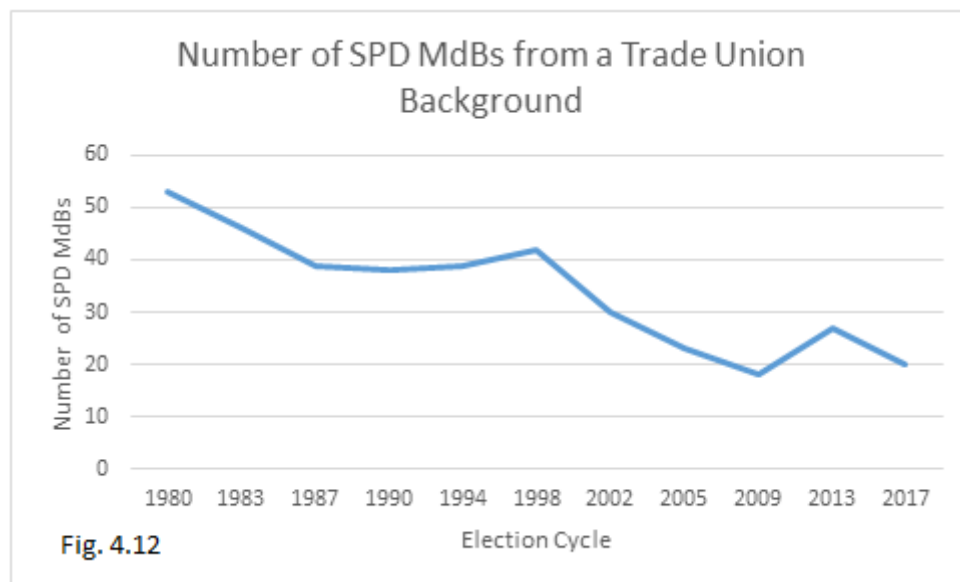
<sup>533</sup> This is not the same as the total Trade Union membership. The Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies at the University of Amsterdam's Database on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts in 51 countries between 1960 and 2014 (ICTWSS, data available from <http://uva-aias.net/en/ictwss>) estimates that as of 2011 approximately 20% of the 7.4 million trade union members in Germany were retired.

<sup>534</sup> All data from OECD figures, available at <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TUD#> accessed on 16.11.2018 11:29.

Findings from the empirical data.

The data for prior trade union employment is drawn from the same source as that for those who had a role in the youth wings, the formal Bundestag biographies from the online archive of the Bundestag<sup>535</sup> and the Biographical Handbook of the Members of the German Bundestag 1949-2002<sup>536</sup> again cross-checked with other available sources. As with those who were members of a youth wing it does not indicate those who were members of a trade union as mere membership again does not provide the necessary political capital to push for selection. It therefore records those who indicated in their biographies that they were employed by or in a senior elected voluntary office in one of the trade unions or in the DGB itself.

When looking at the data plotted out the immediately obvious fact is that there has been a large decline in the number of trade unionists becoming SPD Members of the Bundestag. There have been peaks in the graph during the electoral landslide of 1998 and the gains of the 2013 election but overall the trend has been sharply downwards (Fig. 4.12).



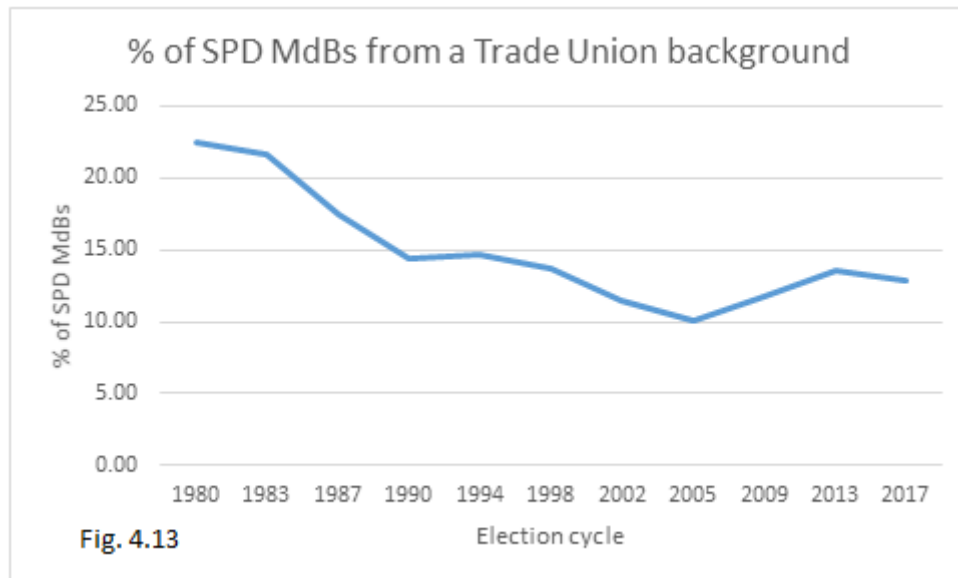
More specifically there is a sharp and steady decline between 1980 and 1987, a plateau between 1987 and 1994 before the increase during the breakthrough election cycle of 1998. During the Schröder era between 1998 and 2009 the numbers began to drop rapidly again. There was another upturn when the SPD gained seats in 2013 before dropping again in 2017. Superficially this would seem to track with SPD performance with peaks in 1998 and 2013, although not with the slight increase in seats the SPD achieved in 1987, but other than that a decline in seats.

However when plotted out as percentages we can see that the decrease is not related to overall SPD performance. The data indicates that individuals from the Trade Unions were doing worse than their peers at getting selected, with slight upticks in 1994, 2009 and 2013 but an overall decline: indeed even the spike in numbers in the 1998 landslide was still a drop in percentage terms (Fig. 4.13).

<sup>535</sup> Available at: <http://webarchiv.bundestag.de/archive/2007/0206/mdb/bio/index.html> (data from 1994 to 2007), at

<http://webarchiv.bundestag.de/archive/2013/1212/bundestag/abgeordnete17/biografien/index.html> (data from 2007 to 2013) and <https://www.bundestag.de/abgeordnete/biografien> (2013 to present).

<sup>536</sup> Vierhaud R. (Ed) 2002. *Biographisches Handbuch der Mitglieder des Deutschen Bundestages 1949-2002*. Berlin; Walter de Gruyter.



The declining influence of the trade union movement.

This data clearly shows that the trade union backed MdBs have declined but doesn't necessarily explain why. This topic was part of the conversations during the interviews that were conducted. Senior party employee DE01 commented:

*"The is also a decline of the unions, their importance in the party has decreased. They are going down. They're still important but they have not so much power as forty years ago. Because of Neoliberalism they have lost members. You see we have 43 million employed but they are not 20 million, nor 10 million, union members, But just 7 million. So 35 million of people employed are not members of a union, only 7 million are."*

DE01, Senior SPD party employee.

DE01 explicitly states that the trade unions are less influential than they used to be. They also state that the decline in influence of the trade union movement within the SPD was due to the decline in their membership figures.

The trade unionist DE03 also discussed the decline in the number of SPD Members of the Bundestag who come from a trade union background. When asked to expand they also referenced the Agenda 2010 (the Hartz IV reforms) as a specific reason to explain the decrease during Schröder's time as Chancellor:

*"The people who are selecting, recruiting out of the trade unions has gotten less over the years, distinctly less. I just read a book about the means of selection and there was an interview with Andrea Nahles and it showed the selection process has shifted a long way from the unions. In 2002 under the Chancellorship of Gerhard Schröder there was a change in social legislation that was called the Agenda 2010 and in that time there was a huge cut between the trade unions and the party. There was a rift. Lots of the trade union people thought that the employment policies and the social policies of the Schröder government were wrong and put the burden of the social questions very much the wrong side of the workers. A lot of them cancelled their party membership - it caused an alienation of the trade union*

*members. That is changing now, but it is unlikely that we will get back to the close ties that were there before 2002.”*

*DE03, MdB from a Trade Union background.*

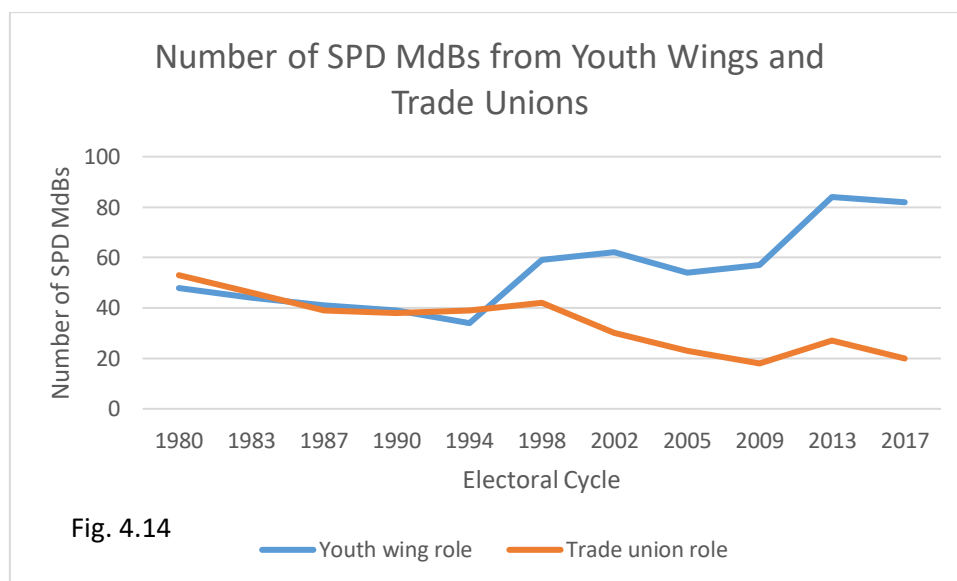
Although this may have been a contributing factor since 2002 it doesn't explain the large drop in trade unionist MdBs through the 1980s and 1990s. The decrease from 2002 matches the trend going back to 1980 so whilst it is likely that the Hartz IV reforms caused a rift and contributed to division between the unions and the SPD it cannot explain the overall decline. However, the assertion that the union influence is returning to a higher level is seen in the data, at least in percentage terms, for 2009 and 2013, albeit with a small drop again in 2017. Nevertheless, it is nowhere near the level of the 1980s.

With regards to hypothesis 1 then there is clear and consistent evidence that the number of SPD Members of the Bundestag who had a background of working for the Trade Unions has decreased, and that this is in line with and linked to the decline of Trade Union membership, and therefore influence within the party. However, this is not to say that the second claim of hypothesis 1 is proven. The decline in the number of SPD MdBs coming out of the trade union movement is not sufficient on its own to account for the dramatic increase in those coming from a background in the youth wings.

#### ***4.8: Controlling for other factors – local government, party staffers and the level of graduates in society.***

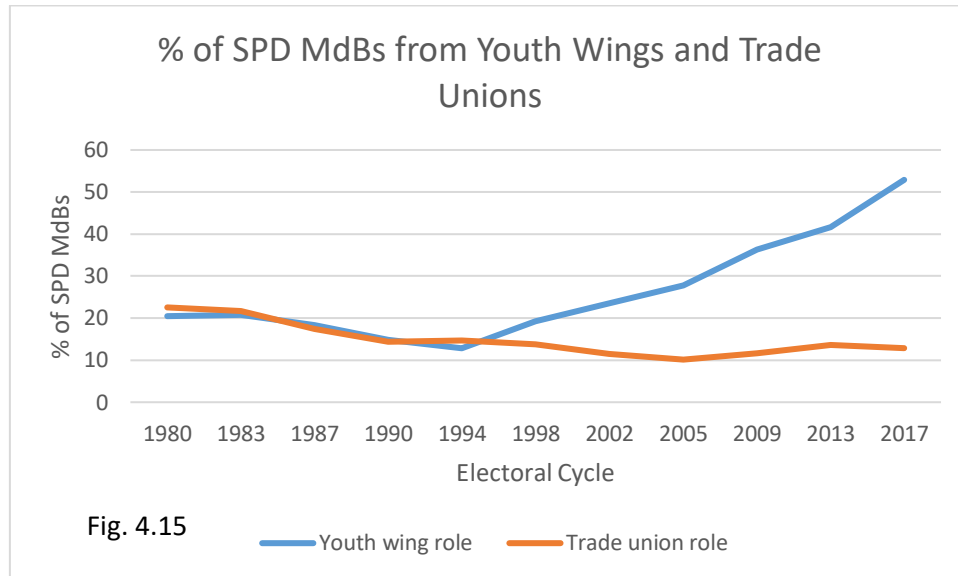
This section will look at other potential factors which may have a bearing on the rise of youth wings as origin points for SPD MdBs. First it will look at two other potential recruiting grounds – local and federal government and party staffers, it will consider a decline in 'amateur' politicians as an explanatory factor and then it will look at the rise in the number of graduates in society and consider what bearing that has.

Whilst the trade unions have indeed declined as a source of recruitment the youth wings have far surpassed the level they would have had by a simple supplanting of the trade unions. This much becomes obvious when the two are plotted on the same graph (Fig. 4.14).



A simple comparison of numbers in 1980 and 2017 may appear to support the simple replacement theory. In 1980 there were a total number of 101 MdBs from either a Trade Union or Youth Wing role, with 48 from a youth wing and 53 from a Trade Union. In 2017 there was a total of 102 MdBs from

either background, with 82 from the youth wings and 20 from the Trade Unions. This would seem to indicate that the decrease in the number of MdBs from the Trade Unions very closely matches those coming from a youth wing. However the picture in between varies wildly, with the combined total in 1994 much decreased for example. This becomes even more clear when we look at the percentages of the two backgrounds on the same graph (Fig. 4.15).



The two backgrounds between them accounted for 42.98% of MdBs in 1980. In 2017 it is 65.8%. This suggests that there is more than a simple process of replacement of one training ground with another. Rather it begs the question where else is serving as a recruiting ground and is there a decline there?

Local and federal government.

When looking at where else an individual may have undergone a political apprenticeship DE04 suggested one possibility.

*“After the second world war until, maybe, the reunification, it was normally the way with JUSOS or with a union to become a member of the parliament. A third way was a long time working in the local parliament, and successfully working in the local parliament.”*

*DE04, former MdB from a JUSOS background.*

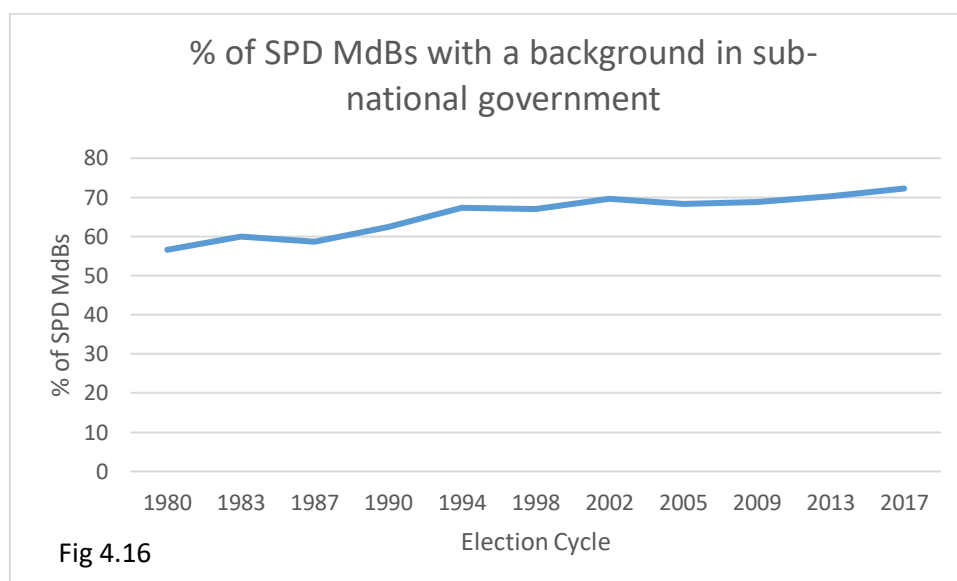
This study does not look at local government as the competition between the JUSOS and trade unions for selection is likely to play out with similar dynamics for selection at the local level as for the national level.<sup>537</sup> Further Borchert and Stolz<sup>538</sup> conducted a detailed study of the German state parliaments as a career option which included a specific question looking at their potential role as stepping stones for career advancement. Their findings were that despite a relatively easy potential route for individuals to move from Land parliaments to the Bundestag the high level of professionalisation in the state parliaments, coupled with the regionalisation of the parties, near equivalence in income and the social costs of service at the federal level had led to many of those who achieve long service or

<sup>537</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>538</sup> Borchert J. and Stolz K. 2011. German political careers: The state level as an arena in its own right. *Regional and Federal Studies*. Vol. 21 No. 2, pp 205-222.

high office in the state parliaments to want to remain at that level.<sup>539</sup> Borchert and Stolz find that only 18% of Bundestag members are former state legislators.<sup>540</sup>

It would perhaps be expected to see more movement from local councils than regional ones, Borchert and Stolz found 70% of state legislators had prior local council experience either in political office or with a staff appointment at the local level.<sup>541</sup> This tallies with the findings from the data for this study. This study recorded the length of time an individual had spent in sub-national legislatures before entering the Bundestag.<sup>542</sup> Although it did not differentiate between State parliaments and local councils the findings from Borchert and Stolz would imply the majority of experience at the sub-national level is at local rather than state level.



As can be seen here there is a steady increase, from 56.6% in 1980 to 72.26% in 2017. However with this many individuals serving in local government even in 1980 it would appear to be a common denominator, that is that both individuals with a JUSOS background and those who undertook their political apprenticeship in the trade union movement will be likely to have served at the local level prior to seeking selection, as well as it being a potential career option in its own right. More research is required before we can definitively state the role of local government service but it does seem to be that more politicians are gaining experience at the local level before moving to the state or federal parliaments.

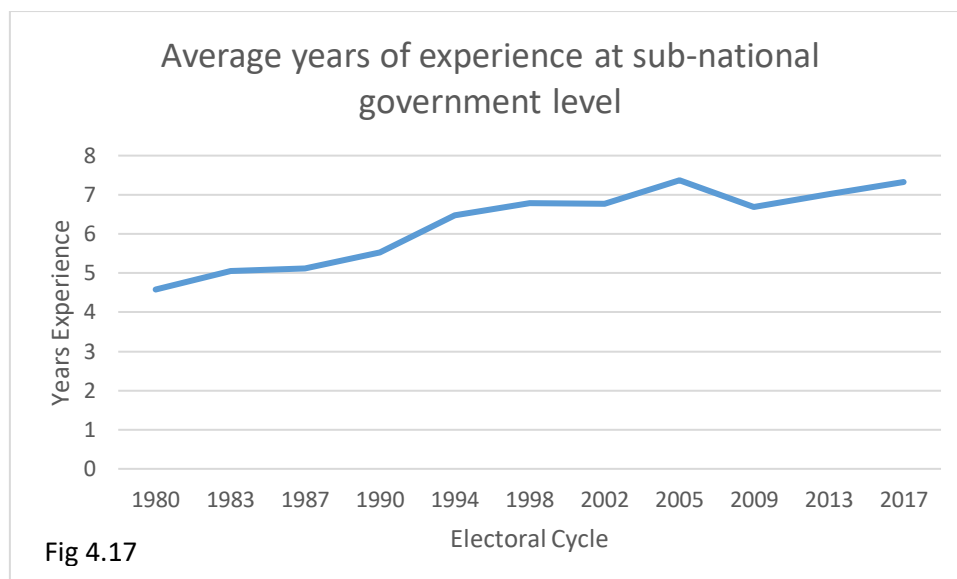
A further test of this is the average length of time that an MdB spent at a sub-national level – either in one of the Landtag of the federal states or at local council level – before entering the Bundestag. This has also increased:

<sup>539</sup> Ibid. p219.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid. p217.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid. p211.

<sup>542</sup> This data was only collected for Germany due to issues with data collection in the UK case, see chapter five.



Again this has increased markedly. In 1980 the average SPD Member of the Bundestag had served for 4.58 years in a sub-national level legislature. By 2017 this had increased to 7.32 years. This means that more MdBs have served at the sub-national level and for longer. The increases are likely to involve a lot of cross-over between both youth wing and trade union backgrounds and serving in local government, as well as it being its own possible career path, especially given that the youth wings have increased at the same time.

#### Party staffers.

DE01 and DE03 also identified another possible alternative route, employees of the party or politician's staffers.<sup>543</sup> This is certainly a recognised source of potential employment. However, the question is where do the party and its politicians recruit staffers from? Politicians aim to recruit young people for their office who are politically minded and who hold similar political viewpoints to them, in part specifically with mentorship towards a political career in mind. You would therefore expect them to select from politically active individuals and given the age at which a staffer is usually recruited this is likely to mean an individual who has been active in the JUSOS.

The data collected for this study bears out this assumption. Of the 155 SPD Members of the Bundestag who have served since the general election of 2017 a total of 27 have previously held a role as a staffer employed either by the party or one of its elected office holders. Of those 27 MdBs 23 had also previously served in an elected role in the JUSOS. In total there were 81 individuals who had held an elected role in the JUSOS (plus one who had in the SJD-Die Falken), which would suggest that service in the JUSOS is more effective at being turned into political capital for selection than employment as a staffer. Whilst again more research is needed to investigate this further the data as above would imply that employment as a party staffer is valuable but secondary to service in the JUSOS – although employment as a party staffer is likely to facilitate service in the JUSOS.

There is however a key factor which links both local government service and employment as a legislator's staffer – these are mid-level phenomenon. Political parties recruit from within the ranks of their own activists both for candidates for local office and for employment with a Bundestag or Landtag Parliamentarian. These factors then are a part of the political ecosystem identified in chapter two which allows an individual to expand their political capital. But they are not routes into the party initially in the way that the JUSOS and the unions are. Although they will form part of the learning

<sup>543</sup> See chapter six for further discussion of this.



process for the individuals who undertake them, they are a secondary stage not the initial primary apprenticeship undertaken.

These then are inadequate explanations for alternative recruiting grounds, the decline of which might have provided the space for the youth wings to move into. There is however a possible explanation provided by the discussion on professionalisation literature in chapter two.

#### A decline in 'amateur' politicians?

As discussed in chapter two the consensus of the academic literature is that gentrification - the number of career politicians - has increased. There is also a consensus that professionalisation has occurred, that is that parties have gotten more sophisticated in campaigning. These two concepts suggest that one answer to the rise in the combined total of MdBs is that some form of political apprenticeship is now more of a requirement than it was in the past.

As the process of campaigning has gotten more sophisticated and politics has professionalised there is a greater skill level required to achieve political outcomes. These skills have to be learned. DE02 commented that individuals need to learn the 'craft' of politics, which requires a political apprenticeship:

*"There is a misconception that, you know, that when you're clever you can also manage to do something in politics, and that is a misconception because you have to know the craft of politics, you know? To know the ways how you get things done, that's why many people fail when they don't learn how to do that"*

*DE02, MdB from a JUSOS background.*

DE02 is specifically stating that as a political apprenticeship is required an amateur cannot come into elected office and expect to be successful without one. This is particularly relevant in that DE02 was not only a Member of the Bundestag but also a party chair in a large geographical sub-unit of the party, meaning they have a significant role as identified by other interviewees in the selection of potential candidates. Their thinking on this plays a major role in the selection process, it is not a merely academic observation from them.

The literature's consensus that career politicians have increase further shows that this was not the case in 1980. It therefore follows that the JUSOS are not only filling a vacuum created by a decline in the trade union movement, they are also expanding into a space previously occupied by those without a prior political career of some kind. More research is required to investigate this further but the evidence of this thesis points to not just the decline of the trade unionist MdB, but the decline of the amateur politician at the federal level. In both cases what is supplanting them are those who emerge from the JUSOS.

#### Changes in the number of graduates in German society.

There is a question as to whether the increase in the number of SPD MdBs from a youth wing background could be linked to an increase in the number of graduates with a tertiary education. In other words, it is possible that more SPD MdBs are coming up from the youth wings simply because more Germans are getting involved in the youth wings as more remain in education for longer than previous generations did.

This is of more interest in the UK (see chapter five) than in Germany. According to OECD data<sup>544</sup> the level of university graduates in the German population is lower than other equivalent countries although it has risen, from 25% in 2005 to 28% in 2016.<sup>545</sup> This is largely down to the high levels of vocational training in Germany, as of 2014 55% of the German population had some form of vocational training, although the percentage was 48% amongst 25 to 34 year olds, suggesting it is decreasing slowly.<sup>546</sup> Completion of vocational secondary school allows individuals to work at entry-level in vocations such as nursing,<sup>547</sup> reducing the number of German high-school graduates who go on to University.

This, along with the fact that the youth and student wings are combined in the case of the JUSOS, and the fact that the rise in graduates as a percentage of the population has been relatively minor compared to the rise in the number of MdBs from a youth wing background, suggests that there is little to no connection these two facts.

## **4.9: Conclusion.**

This chapter began with an introduction to the historical and structural context of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands during the time frame under discussion before moving on to discuss the assertions made in Hypothesis 1, that the youth wings have increased in prominence as a source of recruitment and that this has been at the expense of the trade union movement.

The data gathered for this study clearly indicates that the youth wings have increased dramatically as a source of legislative recruitment for the SPD – more than half of the SPD Members of the Bundestag elected in 2017 had begun their political career in an elected role in the JUSOS. Further the data demonstrates that this is down to the formal youth and student wing the JUSOS, who have crowded out the other contemporary linked youth organisation the SJD-Die Falken, who had previously accounted for almost 15% of SPD MdBs backgrounds.

This increase has proceeded via a 'ratchet effect' whereby those from a JUSOS background increase with the SPD's total during good elections but then hold their ground significantly better than their peers so that the numbers do not significantly fall back during bad election cycles. There was a decrease in the late 1980s and early 1990s but an analysis of the data for a 'continuity West Germany' shows that this was not just connected to reunification, but rather to the disappearance of the historical youth wings through the process of time and of those MdBs from the SJD-Die Falken. The factional conflict identified in the discussion of the SPD's history is proposed as the most likely explanation for this.

With regards to the second assertion though the picture is more nuanced than a simple replacement of the trade union movement with the youth wings. Firstly, the trade unions have declined in strength and therefore in influence and this is reflected in the decrease in the number of trade unionists who have been elected to the Bundestag for the SPD. This will have opened up the space for some members of the JUSOS to replace them as and when trade unionists retired.

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<sup>544</sup> OECD. 2016. *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD indicators*. Paris, OECD Publishing. Available at: [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2016\\_eag-2016-en](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2016_eag-2016-en). Accessed 26.08.2020 17:07.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid.

<sup>546</sup> OECD. 2014. *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD indicators*. Paris, OECD Publishing. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/Germany-EAG2014-Country-Note.pdf>. Accessed 26.08.2020 17:12.

<sup>547</sup> Trines S. 2016. Education in Germany. *World Education News and Reviews*. Published on 08.11.2016. Available at: <https://wenr.wes.org/2016/11/education-in-germany>. Accessed 26.08.2020 17:17.

This however is an insufficient explanation for the rise of the youth wings as a source of recruitment. The existing literature on professionalisation, in both the professionalisation and gentrification senses used in this study, would suggest that there is an increasing need for a political apprenticeship before an individual can seek federal office. This then is a potential link mechanism between the concepts of professionalisation and gentrification identified in chapters one and two. The increasing sophistication of politics as an arena has led to a need for more trained, specialised political actors, making a purely political career possible due to the functional need for a larger pool of trained political specialists. These roles are stocked by existing political activists being paid to undertake work previously carried out on a voluntary basis. These individuals can then be called upon to provide electoral flagbearers.

This is borne out by both the comments of the interviewees and the data for previous service in local or regional government or as a member of staff for an existing legislator. These factors have risen but form a middle layer as part of a wider political ecosystem which also includes NGOs, think-tanks, lobbyists and commentators. This allows for the possibility of a political career and therefore for career politicians. Both local government and MdB's staffers are recruited from existing activists however and are not therefore the origin points of an individual's politicisation or their primary apprenticeship in politics.

The answer to research question 1 then is that whilst youth wings have increased greatly in prominence as a source of legislative recruitment for the SPD then this has been at the expense of both the trade union movement and what might be termed 'amateur politicians' – those who have not undertaken any significant political apprenticeship.

## Chapter 5: The role of youth wings in the British Labour Party.

### **5.1: Introduction.**

The second empirical case study is that of Members of Parliament in the UK House of Commons (MPs) belonging to the Labour Party.<sup>548</sup> Founded in 1900 the Labour Party has like the SPD formed the national government on multiple occasions in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This chapter will proceed with a short history of the Labour Party, focusing on the period since the UK General Election of 1979, to provide contextual grounding and underpin the discussion which proceeds in particular on how the national fortunes of the party impacted on selection. Additionally, the chapter will discuss the structure of the Labour Party, including the place of the youth movement and the formal links to the trade union movement, to demonstrate the formal context. The chapter will then set out the youth wings which form the principle focus of this study. These are the formal Labour Party youth wing, currently known as Young Labour, the student wing, Labour Students and their forbears, and the formally affiliated youth organisation the Young Fabians.

This chapter, like chapter four, focuses on research question and hypothesis 1, investigating the role of the youth wings when it comes to the selection of candidates for the House of Commons. The chapter will discuss the findings from the Labour case study with regards to hypothesis 1, which mirrors the trend seen in Germany identified in chapter four. Like the SPD the Labour Party has also seen a rise in the number of MPs coming from a youth wing background and a decrease in those coming from a trade union background. Whilst the trends are the same, the numbers are different, reflecting both the Labour Party's historically closer links to the trade union movement and the slower rate of Parliamentary turnover in the UK. Also discussed will be the dramatic rise in the number of Parliamentarians who had previously worked as either a Party employee or as a staffer for an existing Labour MP and the links between that and the rise of the youth wing.

Next this chapter investigates the selection process, both the formal vote amongst the members and the earlier process of shortlisting during which the party institutions, in particular the regional parties, act as gatekeepers. There are also 'special selections' when the party institutions alone make the decision on a candidate, usually for by-elections or vacancies at short notice. These scenarios and the roles of the gatekeepers within them will be unpacked.

A final section of the chapter will consist of the concluding analysis and discussion of the role the youth wings play and have played in the selection of candidates to become Labour MPs in the House of Commons and how this relates to the broader theoretical discussions.

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<sup>548</sup> The Labour Party is usually referred to as the British Labour Party or the Labour Party of Great Britain rather than the United Kingdom Labour Party. There is some debate within the party as to whether 'United Kingdom' or 'British' is more accurate, as the party does not stand candidates for office in Northern Ireland. However, individuals in the principality can join the party, stand for party office and some Northern Irish individuals, such as Kate Hoey and Conor McGinn, have been elected as Labour Parliamentarians in seats on the British mainland. In common parlance the two terms are synonymous, interviewees used them interchangeably, and therefore in order to avoid excessive editing this thesis will also use the terms interchangeably.

## 5.2: Labour Party history.

The Labour Party was founded in February 1900 by a group of 129 delegates from trade unions and socialist societies such as the Fabian Society.<sup>549</sup> The party grew through the ensuing decades and formed a minority government twice in the 1920s.<sup>550</sup> In 1945 the party formed its first majority government following a landslide victory under Clement Attlee, introducing a series of reforms including the National Health Service.<sup>551</sup> Through the 1950s and early 1960s the party was characterised by internal conflict between the left and the centre-left.<sup>552</sup> Labour returned to government in two periods under first Harold Wilson (1964-70 and 1974-76)<sup>553</sup> and then James Callaghan (1976-79).<sup>554</sup>

At the point this study begins in 1979 the Labour Party was again riven with infighting between its left wing – then organised in the ‘Militant Tendency’ – and the centre-left.<sup>555</sup> This conflict defined the next ten years within the party and led to a split in 1981.<sup>556</sup> The leader who followed Callaghan in 1979 was left wing intellectual Michael Foot, who led the party to a disastrous showing in the 1983 election<sup>557</sup> leading to Neil Kinnock’s election as leader.<sup>558</sup> Much of this conflict played out through selection battles,<sup>559</sup> and also with the party’s relationship to the youth wings,<sup>560</sup> as Militant grew out of the youth wing.<sup>561</sup>

The conflict between the left and the centre of the party continued throughout the 1980s<sup>562</sup> with the party in opposition but gaining seats in the 1987 election. Labour unexpectedly lost the 1992

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<sup>549</sup> Adelman P. 1996. *The Rise of the Labour Party 1880 - 1945*. New York, Longman. Third Edition, p29.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.

<sup>551</sup> Garnett M. and Lynch P. 2009. *Exploring British Politics*. London, Pearson Longman. Second edition, p43-54.

<sup>552</sup> Brivati B. 2015. ‘Hugh Gaitskill’ in Clarke C. and James T. S. *British Labour Leaders*. London, Biteback Publishing. p185-200.

<sup>553</sup> Hennessey T. 2015. ‘Harold Wilson’ in Clarke C. and James T. S. *British Labour Leaders*. London, Biteback Publishing p201-216.

<sup>554</sup> Kellner P. 2015. ‘James Callaghan’ in Clarke C. and James T. S. *British Labour Leaders*. London, Biteback Publishing. p217-230.

<sup>555</sup> See for example Davis J. and McWilliam R. (Eds) 2018. *Labour and the Left in the 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press; Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico’s Publishing; Hayter D. 2005. *Fightback! Labour’s Traditional Right in the 1970s and 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

<sup>556</sup> Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico’s Publishing. p163-164.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid. p289-296.

<sup>558</sup> Westlake M. 2015. ‘Neil Kinnock’ in Clarke C. and James T. S. *British Labour Leaders*. London, Biteback Publishing. p247-268.

<sup>559</sup> Young A. 1983. *The Reselection of MPs*. London, Heinemann, p68-83.

<sup>560</sup> For example Andy Bevan’s appointment as National Youth Officer on the NEC, see Hayter D. 2005. *Fightback! Labour’s Traditional Right in the 1970s and 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, p28-29.

<sup>561</sup> Detailed below in section 5.4.

<sup>562</sup> Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico’s Publishing.

election<sup>563</sup> leading to Kinnock's replacement as leader, initially by John Smith before his sudden death from a heart attack in 1994<sup>564</sup> lead to the election of Tony Blair.<sup>565</sup>

Blair was one of the key architects of the 'third way'<sup>566</sup> alongside Bill Clinton of the US Democrats and Gerhard Schröder of the SPD and campaigned with the brand 'New Labour'. The third way sought to balance the dominant neoliberal economic paradigm with a liberal agenda of social justice and transfers of wealth from the richest to poorest of society and was seen as moving the Labour Party towards the centre-ground.<sup>567</sup> This led to three consecutive election victories in 1997, 2001 and 2005, the first two by landslides.<sup>568</sup> Blair resigned in 2007 and was replaced as leader and Prime Minister by Gordon Brown.<sup>569</sup> There was also conflict in this era between supporters of Blair and supporters of Brown, the so-called 'Tee-Bee-Gee-Bees', and this also played out in some selection contests.<sup>570</sup>

The New Labour government introduced many reforms such as the National Minimum Wage, however it also sent British armed forces into Iraq alongside American troops which proved highly divisive within the Labour Party and the general public, provoking an ideological split which, whilst more mixed, resulted in big divisions in a similar way to the Hartz IV reforms in the SPD discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>571</sup>

The 2010 UK general election resulted in a hung parliament, only the second such outcome since the Second World War, leading to a coalition between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats.<sup>572</sup> Within the Labour Party the result led to the resignation of Gordon Brown and the election of Ed Miliband as leader.<sup>573</sup>

Miliband sought to distance the party from the Blair and Brown era but his performance as leader was characterised by uncertainty and vacillation.<sup>574</sup> In 2013 following a scandal in which the Unite trade union attempted to unfairly ensure their preferred choice became the Labour candidate for a by-

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<sup>563</sup> Westlake M. 2015. 'Neil Kinnock' in Clarke C. and James T. S. *British Labour Leaders*. London, Biteback Publishing. p247-268.

<sup>564</sup> McSmith A. 1994. 'John Smith Obituary' *The Guardian*. Published on 13.05.1994. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/1994/may/13/obituaries.past> accessed 10.01.2020 16:04.

<sup>565</sup> Wheatcroft G. 1996. 'The Paradoxical Case of Tony Blair' *The Atlantic*. Published on 01.06.1996. Available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1996/06/the-paradoxical-case-of-tony-blair/376602/> accessed 10.01.2020 16:40.

<sup>566</sup> Blair T. and Schröder G. 1998. *Europe: The Third Way/Die Neue Mitte*. Berlin and London, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Available at: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/suedafrika/02828.pdf>.

<sup>567</sup> Gould P. 2011. *The Unfinished Revolution: How New Labour Changed British Politics Forever*. London, Abacus Publishing. Second Edition.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Richards S. 2015. 'Gordon Brown' in Clarke C. and James T. S. *British Labour Leaders*. London, Biteback Publishing. p299-314.

<sup>570</sup> Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A study in the politics of Labour's party management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, p369-400.

<sup>571</sup> Blair T. 2010. *A Journey*. London, Hutchinson. P428-429.

<sup>572</sup> BBC News. 2010. 'Election 2010; National Results' *BBC News*. Published on 07.05.2010. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/> accessed 10.01.2020 17:02.

<sup>573</sup> Bale T. 2015. 'Ed Miliband' in Clarke C. and James T. S. *British Labour Leaders*. London, Biteback Publishing. p315-334.

<sup>574</sup> Gaffney J. 2016. *Leadership and the Labour Party*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

election in the Falkirk constituency<sup>575</sup> Miliband launched a review into the party's structure.<sup>576</sup> This resulted in a change from the electoral college previously used to elect a leader and brought in a new system whereby members of the public could pay £3 for a vote in the party's leadership elections.<sup>577</sup> This new system was instrumental in the election of the hard-left backbencher Jeremy Corbyn as leader<sup>578</sup> following Labour's election loss and Miliband's resignation in the summer of 2015.<sup>579</sup>

The time under Jeremy Corby has seen the Labour Party once again beset by infighting<sup>580</sup> and multiple scandals around antisemitism within its ranks,<sup>581</sup> which has also seen a split with some MPs leaving in a similar but smaller way to 1981.<sup>582</sup> Again this conflict has played out in the form of selection battles, and most of the interviewees referenced this.<sup>583</sup> It has also seen the party seeing further conflict over its response to the Brexit vote.<sup>584</sup> At the end of this period the Labour Party in December 2019 suffered its worst election result since 1935.<sup>585</sup>

### **5.3: The structure of the Labour Party.**

The Labour Party has a geographical structure which loosely mirrors electoral units, and this is extremely important for the selection process as it defines who acts as gatekeepers. The primary units of the party are the Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs), those units of the party based on the geographical boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies, and the party has input at all levels from affiliated trade unions and socialist societies. The structure is set out below in fig.6.1.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> Archibald L. 2014. 'Falkirk vote-rigging scandal: Leaked report suggests Unite union 'manipulated' Labour's selection of parliamentary candidate' *The Daily Record*. Published on 04.02.2014. Available at: <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/falkirk-vote-rigging-scandal-leaked-report-3110446> accessed 10.01.2020 17:04.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.

<sup>577</sup> Bale T. 2015. 'Ed Miliband' in Clarke C. and James T. S. *British Labour Leaders*. London, Biteback Publishing. p315-334.

<sup>578</sup> Pope C. 2016. 'Contest by conference – timetable and rules for leadership election revealed' *LabourList*. Published on 13.07.2016. Available at: <https://labourlist.org/2016/07/contest-by-conference-timetable-and-rules-for-leadership-election-revealed/> accessed 10.01.2020 17:12.

<sup>579</sup> Wintour P. and Mason R. 2015. 'Ed Miliband resigns as Labour leader' *The Guardian*. Published on 08.05.2015. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/may/08/ed-miliband-to-resign-as-labour-leader> accessed 10.01.2020 17:14.

<sup>580</sup> Helm T. 2019. 'Labour: anger, recrimination and bitterness mark fresh battle for party's soul' *The Guardian*. Published on 22.12.2019. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/dec/22/insults-infighting-battle-lines-drawn-future-labour-party> accessed 10.01.2020 17:17.

<sup>581</sup> See for example Rich D. 2016. *The Left's Jewish Problem: Jeremy Corbyn, Israel and anti-Semitism*. London, Biteback Publishing and Johnston J. and Mears N. 2019. 'Timeline: How Labour's anti-Semitism crisis unfolded' *PoliticsHome*. Published on 10.07.2019. Available at: <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/105133/timeline-how-labours-anti-semitism-crisis> accessed 10.01.2020 17:21.

<sup>582</sup> Watts J. and Buchan L. 2019. 'Labour MPs quit party in disgust at antisemitism, Jeremy Corbyn's leadership and Brexit stance' *The Independent*. Published on 18.02.2019. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-mp-resign-leave-party-corbyn-luciana-berger-brexit-chuka-umunna-a8784186.html> accessed 10.01.2020 17:26.

<sup>583</sup> See below and chapter six.

<sup>584</sup> Kogan D. 2019. *Protest and power: The battle for the Labour Party*. London. Bloomsbury Reader.

<sup>585</sup> BBC News. 2019. 'Election 2019; National Results' *BBC News*. Published on 12.12.2019. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2019/results> accessed 10.01.2020 17:28.

<sup>586</sup> Fig. 6.1 created by the author from information contained in the Labour Party rulebook, available at: <http://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Rule-Book-2019.pdf> - information correct as of 10/09/2019.

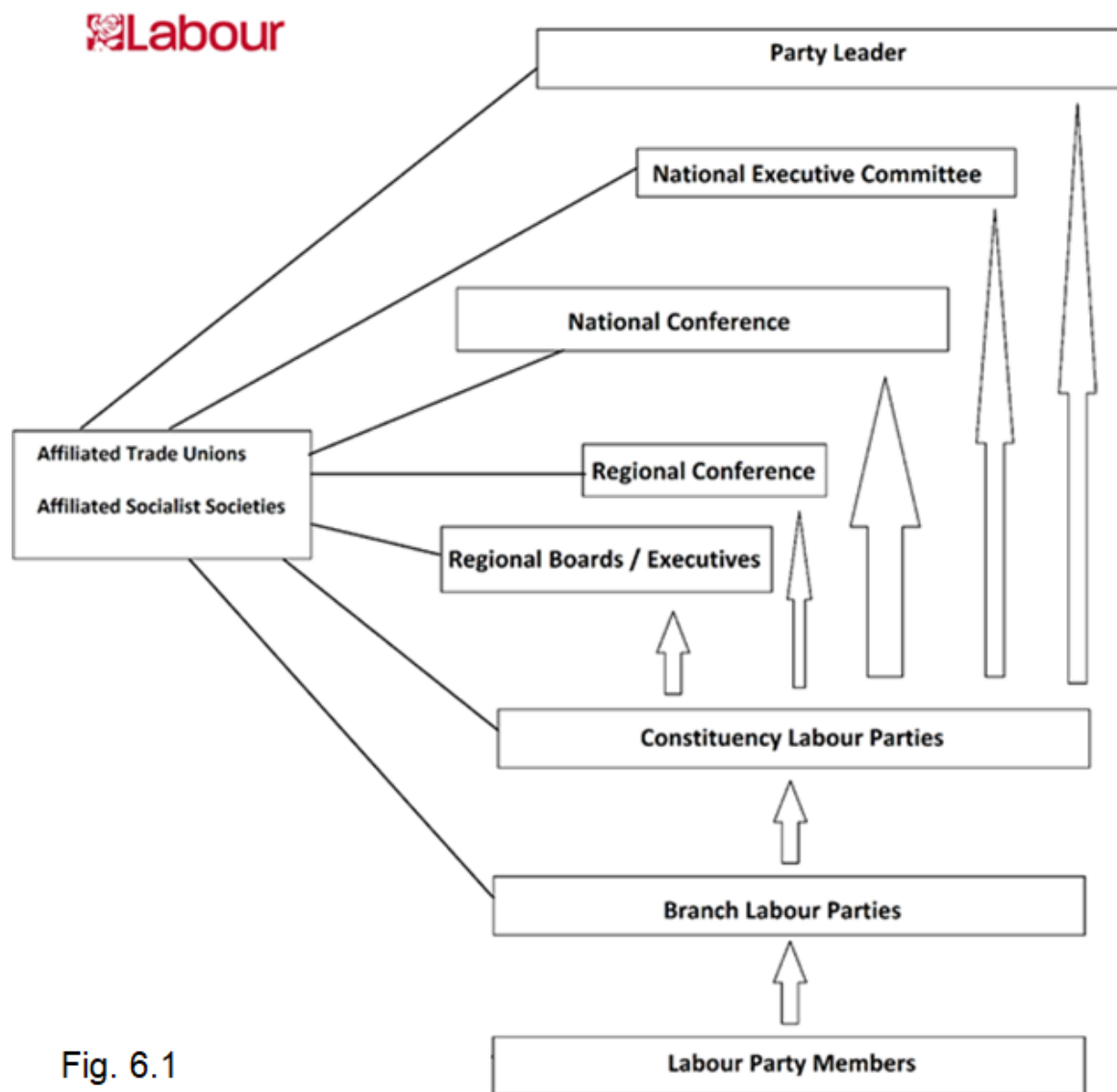


Fig. 6.1

The lowest level is a local Branch Party. These are often, but not always, modelled on local Council Wards, though in some cases wards are combined into larger Branches. In rare occasions branches may be larger and cross over two or more parliamentary constituencies. Branches are usually the level of the party who select candidates to stand in local elections for the ward/s covered by the branch. Branch parties can send motions and representatives to the CLP which is the primary internal organising unit of the Party.

As the name implies Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) are predominantly based on the same boundaries as parliamentary constituencies, although again there is some variation in certain instances. The CLPs key officers are usually elected to form an executive committee, which must be gender balanced, but since 2018 CLPs may be organised purely on a model of all member meetings. The committee may also have representatives from the branches (with or without voting rights) and from formally affiliated groups. These groups may be trade unions who are active in the area or the affiliated socialist societies such as the Fabian Society or Socialist Health Association. CLPs can be organised in one of two ways. Some operate a structure of all-member meetings (AMM) where any Labour Party member can attend and vote. Others have some all-member meetings and at other times operate on a general committee (GC) structure where the officers make decisions. In CLPs which run



a general committee members can attend without voting rights. Service as a branch or CLP officer is often an indication of a senior activist, and these individuals are often influential supporters for a potential candidate.

CLPs also send delegates and motions to both regional and national Labour Conferences and Women's Conferences and organise hustings and selection meetings to select candidates to stand as Parliamentarians, MEPs and where applicable regional assembly candidates. CLPs also send delegates to Labour Campaign Forums (LCFs) which cover a local authority or council and coordinate campaign activities for that local authority. Regionally Scotland and Wales have their own executives and England is divided into regional boards. These have a role in policy development and also organise regional Labour Party conferences.

The national Labour Party conference is held annually, all CLPs and affiliated unions are entitled to send delegates. CLPs and trade unions may submit motions to the conference which are debated and used to set the policy framework.

When conference is not in session the governing body of the party is the National Executive Committee which oversees the work of the party and the policy development process. The composition has changed over time as has the role of the NEC; it currently has 38 members. The Labour Party Leader and Deputy-Leader, together with the party Treasurer are ex officio members.<sup>587</sup> The Leader appoints 3 representatives from the front bench and the backbench Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) also elects 3 representatives to the NEC. The trade unions have 13 delegates and 9 delegates are elected by ordinary members in the CLPs section. Scottish Labour and Welsh Labour send one delegate each. The socialist societies and BAME Labour (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities) elect 2 representatives between them, as do local Labour councillors, and there is a youth delegate.<sup>588</sup> In addition, the General Secretary of the Labour Party, the Chief Whip and the Chair of the PLP attend with no voting rights, the General Secretary acting as the NEC Secretary. There are occasions when the NEC has particular power over selection matters, as will be discussed below, so its composition is important for this study, in particular the large trade union section.

Labour's leadership election process has also changed over time. Currently a One Member One Vote (OMOV) election is held with party members, trade union and affiliated society members and 'registered supporters' – non-members who have purchased a vote for a small sum – having one vote each. Previously the party leader was elected via an electoral college with varying percentages between members, trade unions and MPs.<sup>589</sup> Before 1983 the leader was elected by a ballot of the MPs only. This suggests the party establishment, including the unions, has been ceding democratic control towards the membership, which may also be relevant to selection. Further it links to the factional conflict and history, with the unions and party establishment being traditionally perceived to

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<sup>587</sup> The leader of European Parliamentary Labour Party (EPLP) was an ex-officio member until the UK's exit from the European Union on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. Similarly, Labour MEPs could also stand and vote for the Parliamentary section up until Brexit.

<sup>588</sup> Up until 2016 the youth delegate was elected on an electoral college that essentially gave Labour Students the ability to appoint the delegate. In a factional move in 2016 this was changed to give 50% of the votes in the youth section to the trade unions, who have no obligation to consult their members – young or otherwise. The incumbent since that date, Lara McNeill, has essentially been selected for the position by the big trade unions, especially Unite who were close to the Corbyn leadership. This has been seen as severely undermining the credibility of the youth delegate.

<sup>589</sup> From 1983 to 1993 the electoral college was 40% of the vote held by Trade Union and Affiliated Socialist Societies, 30% held by members and 30% by Parliamentarians. From 1993 until the Miliband years the electoral college was split into even thirds.

be more pragmatic and the membership more to the left.<sup>590</sup> This has changed in recent years as some unions – notably Unite, the CWU, TSSA and FBU – being perceived to be also on the left.

It may not be that the trade unions have ceded as much control over party process as this would indicate however. In 2018 alterations to the leadership process were passed following which a candidate needs nominations from either 5% of CLPs or 3 affiliates including 2 trade unions totalling over 5% of the affiliate membership to be on the ballot. There are five trade unions with over 5% of the affiliate membership – Unite, Unison, GMB,<sup>591</sup> USDAW<sup>592</sup> and the CWU.<sup>593</sup> This gives them influence over the leadership and potentially therefore in future more influence over selections. This is a very different context to that of the SPD, with the union influence in the Labour Party being formally constituted.

#### **5.4: The youth wings of the Labour Party; Young Labour, Labour Students, their previous iterations and the Young Fabians.**

This case study investigates the impact on Labour's parliamentary recruitment of three youth organisations, two of which have gone through several incarnations; the party's formal youth wing, currently Young Labour and the party's student organisation, currently known as Labour Students. The final organisation investigated is the Young Fabians, the youth wing of the Fabian Society, one of the Labour Party's formally affiliated socialist societies.

The Labour Party has had a youth wing since 1926, with a hiatus during the late 1950s. The original youth section was the Labour League of Youth (LLY) which was open to Labour Party members from the age of 16 to 25.<sup>594</sup> After World War Two the party leadership exerted more control over the LLY due to perceived infiltration by hard-left elements, before the party dissolved the organisation completely in 1954<sup>595</sup> with the exception of Scotland, where the openly Trotskyist Socialist Labour League (SLL) continued until being proscribed<sup>596</sup> by the Labour Party in 1965. The Labour League of Youth was not immediately replaced, although some constituencies continued to operate informal youth sections. In 1960 the youth wing was refounded as the Young Socialists, renamed the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) in 1965. The LPYS was deemed to be strongly on the left of the party during factional conflicts. It was a Trotskyist group within the Young Socialists, the Revolutionary Socialist League, renamed Militant Tendency (aka Militant)<sup>597</sup> in 1964 which attempted an organised infiltration of the Labour Party in the 1970s and 80s. Because of this in 1987 the party closed down LPYS's national structures and dramatically reduced its upper age limit to remove the then leadership from eligibility. The LPYS continued in a much-diminished form until being reorganised in 1993 into the current iteration of the youth wing, Young Labour.

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<sup>590</sup> See for example Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico's and Minkin L. 1992. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>591</sup> Formerly the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union, now simply GMB.

<sup>592</sup> The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

<sup>593</sup> Communication Workers Union.

<sup>594</sup> Barberis P., McHugh J. and Tyldesley M. 2000. *Encyclopaedia of British and Irish Political Organisations: Parties, Groups and Movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. London; A&C Black. p.284

<sup>595</sup> Ibid and Webb M. 2007. *The Rise and Fall of the Labour League of Youth*. Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield.

<sup>596</sup> Proscribing an organisation refers to the party declaring membership of that organisation is incompatible with membership of the Labour Party, and thereby expelling members of that organisation from the Party.

<sup>597</sup> Taaffe P. 1995. *The Rise of Militant: Thirty Years of Militant*. London; Militant Publishing.

Currently all Labour Party members aged from 14 to 26 are automatically members of Young Labour and the organisation also has regional groupings such as London Young Labour and Scottish Young Labour. These regional groups have elected committees and regional conferences, and there is a national committee and a national conference. There is also a youth delegate to the main Labour Party NEC, which since 2016 has been controlled by Young Labour (including trade union delegates to Young Labour). Previously the electoral system meant the NEC Youth Rep was decided more by the student wing than the youth wing.<sup>598</sup>

For the purposes of this study MPs are listed as being from a Young Labour background if they held an elected role on either the national committee or one of the regional committees of Young Labour or its predecessors the Labour Party Young Socialists or the Labour League of Youth. These youth wings are treated as a continuous organisation by those in the party and by the respondents from whom the data was drawn. As such the dataset does not distinguish between the historical and current iterations of Young Labour.

The second organisation of interest to this study is the student wing, currently Labour Students. All Labour members who are enrolled on a course of tertiary education are eligible to be members of a Labour Club at their institution if there is one, or to the national Labour Students if it does not. The student wing in Labour has always been a federal structure, with individual student Labour clubs at different universities which then affiliate to a national organisation. The first national body was founded in 1946 as the National Association of Labour Student Organisations (NALSO). In 1967 the party withdrew its recognition of NALSO after its takeover by far-left groups, although it continued to function in Scotland. Some university Labour clubs formed Students for a Labour Victory in 1970, which evolved a year later into the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS). Although renamed Labour Students in 1992 the organisation is still frequently referred to as NOLS. Labour Students is run by an elected executive committee, three of whom including the Chair are sabbatical officers paid as employees and based at the Labour Party HQ. Currently Labour Students is seen as being run by the centre-left 'Moderate' factions,<sup>599</sup> and factional fighting has led to some university Labour clubs leaving the federal structure, including those of Oxford and Cambridge universities.<sup>600</sup>

For the purposes of this study MPs are categorised as being from a Labour Students background if they held an elected role in the national Labour Students structures or at the National Union of Students as the endorsed candidate of Labour Students, or were an elected sabbatical officer of their student union as the endorsed candidate of Labour Students, or held any of the above roles with one of Labour Student's predecessors, the National Organisation of Labour Students or National Association of Labour Student Organisations. As with Young Labour the respondents for this study treat these as a continuous organisation and as such they are not differentiated in the dataset.

The final organisation of interest is the Young Fabians (YF), the youth wing of the Fabian Society founded in 1960. The Fabian Society is a formally affiliated socialist society and one of Labour's founding organisations. The Young Fabians are therefore affiliated to the Labour Party structures via the Fabian Society. Any member of the Fabian Society who is 31 or under is automatically a member of the Young Fabians. The Young Fabians operate as a youth orientated think-tank within the Labour

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<sup>598</sup> Interviewee GB03 interviewed by the author, see chapter six.

<sup>599</sup> Rodgers S. 2019. 'Rania Ramli elected Labour Students chair as Corbynsceptics sweep to victory', *LabourList*. Published 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019, available at: <https://labourlist.org/2019/03/rania-ramli-elected-labour-students-chair-as-corbynsceptics-sweep-to-victory/>. Accessed 27.08.2019 16:04.

<sup>600</sup> Van der Merwe B. 2019. 'Cambridge Labour to follow OULC in disaffiliating from Labour Students', *Cherwell*. Published 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019, available at <https://cherwell.org/2019/03/20/cambridge-labour-to-follow-oulc-in-disaffiliating-from-labour-students/>. Accessed 27.08.2019 16:06.

movement and although affiliated is separate from the Labour Party. Nevertheless, the relationship is much closer than that of the SJD-die Falken to the SPD, for example the Young Fabians have a formal right to appoint a representative on the Young Labour National Committee.

The Young Fabians do not operate a federal structure and are governed by an executive committee elected annually. Therefore, for the purposes of this study an MP will be recorded as having a background in the Young Fabians if they have served as an elected officer on the Young Fabians National Executive Committee.

### ***5.5: Selection in the Labour Party; the process, gatekeepers and power dynamics.***

The selection journey outlined in chapter two applies to the process by which an individual becomes a prospective parliamentary candidate (PPC) in the Labour Party. There are however some additional nuances related to the logistics of candidate selection which are unique to the Labour Party.

There are 650 Parliamentary constituencies which each send a representative to the House of Commons. The Labour Party however does not stand candidates in the 18 constituencies of Northern Ireland. There is also a convention that the major parties do not stand against the Speaker of the House,<sup>601</sup> meaning in General Elections the Labour Party stands 631 candidates.

The standard selection process<sup>602</sup> for the Labour Party is predominantly based around the local membership in the constituency to be represented.<sup>603</sup> Sitting MPs who wish to re-stand for election notify the party and seek approval from the local membership through a 'trigger ballot'. Through the time period under investigation the threshold for deselection has changed, often depending on factional conflict within the party, however the procedure that ensues is the same. If the relevant threshold at the time is met in a vote of the members then the MP is automatically reselected as the candidate for the upcoming election. It should be noted that deselection is rare in the Labour Party.<sup>604</sup>

If a constituency has a full selection process due to no sitting MP – whether because it is not a seat Labour holds or the sitting MP steps down or is not reselected – the local regional party will make a call for interested applicants, interview potential candidates and draw up a shortlist. There may be additional restrictions on who can apply such as all-women shortlists or recently a handful of all-BAME shortlists, which will be announced in the call for applicants. In this way the Party also acts to set 'the rules of the game' for selections. Once a shortlist is drawn up a date is set for a selection meeting, in which the CLP members are invited to listen to potential candidates speak and then vote on who to select.

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<sup>601</sup> Labour did breach this convention and stand against a formerly Conservative Speaker in both elections in 1974 and again in 1987.

<sup>602</sup> It is important to note there are 'special' selections usually for by-elections and sudden vacancies, which are discussed further later in this section.

<sup>603</sup> See Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral Dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge and Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. 1995. *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

<sup>604</sup> Despite a concerted effort to deselect sitting MPs enjoying the backing of the leadership in the summer and autumn of 2019 only 5 MPs failed to get the two-thirds majority of branches to be automatically reselected, and two of them – Margaret Hodge and Diana Johnson - won the full selection. The snap general election of December 2019 stopped this process before the other three faced a ballot of members, the leadership took control and reselected two of the remaining three MPs – Kate Osamor and Emma Lewell-Buck – whilst unilaterally deselecting only one, Roger Godsiff the sitting MP for Birmingham Hall Green constituency.

In this process then there are two sets of gatekeepers – the regional party who draw up the initial shortlist, and the local members who make the final decision from the shortlist presented. As previously discussed in chapters two and four gatekeepers are those who can provide access to the selection process,<sup>605</sup> and may play a further role in building coalitions of support for an individual prior to the formal vote, or ‘talent-spotting’ – encouraging individuals they judge to be a good potential candidate to stand for selection.<sup>606</sup>

In situations where there is not enough time for a full selection process a special selection process is used. These usually occur for Parliamentary by-elections, when a snap general election is called unexpectedly or when an MP resigns very close to the deadline for registering candidates with the Election Commission. In these instances, the regional party will make the selection directly from those who apply and impose the candidate on the CLP. For obvious reasons it is these elections in which the leadership has most control as the party itself is the only gatekeeper.

Formally the final stage is that the party’s NEC has to finally ‘sign off’ the candidate selected by members. It is exceedingly rare that the NEC overturns the decision of the members.<sup>607</sup>

#### Gatekeepers in the Labour Party.

An overall view of the role of these gatekeepers in the process was provided by GB03, a former senior party employee who was frequently involved in the initial shortlisting process. What is important to consider is the description of the tension between the two sets of gatekeepers, the leadership alongside the party establishment, and the membership. A second important point being made by GB03 concerns the dual role played by the party institutions in the selection process. A third point to note is the impact of a changed context during ‘exceptional’ selections.

*“The way that candidates tend to get selected is a sort of chemistry between the membership and the leadership at different times, and generally speaking the role of the institutions is largely to act as the will of the leadership as well as the secretariat to the process. So those two things run side by side. Now most selections obviously proceed in line with the process that’s set out [in the rule book]. The main exceptions would be either parliamentary by-elections or short-term selections if somebody stands down immediately before a general election or like in the last general election when it happened with short notice. What we tend to see is it’s the exceptional selections which are the ones which tend to give the strongest reflection of what the leadership wants, and the ordinary selections are a little bit more of a bargain between where the membership are and where the leadership*

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<sup>605</sup> Norris, P. 1997. *Passages to power: Legislative recruitment in advanced democracies*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press and Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. 1995. *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

<sup>606</sup> Brookman D. 2014, ‘Mobilizing candidates: Political actors strategically shape the candidate pool with personal appeals.’ *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 104-119 and Seligman L. 1961 ‘Political Recruitment and Party Structure: A Case Study’ *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 77-86.

<sup>607</sup> One rare example was the selection for the candidate in Bassetlaw in 2019. The local membership selected Sally Gimson as the candidate. She was perceived by the NEC to be opposed to the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn and was therefore deselected, with no reason being given, causing outrage within the party. The NEC imposed candidate then lost the seat to the Conservatives. See: Anon. 2019. *Sally Gimson: Bassetlaw Labour candidate deselected by ‘kangaroo court’*. 06.11.2019. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-50322652>. Accessed 30.12.2019 16:02.

*are at any given time. Sometimes the membership wants to select people who are in tune with the leadership and sometimes they don't."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

This balance between the membership wishes and those of the party leadership plays out via the two-stage selection process. Whilst the formal rules seem to give power to the membership the shortlisting process means that the regional party, acting as the will of the leadership, has greater gatekeeping power. Another interviewee, GB09, described how this power can be exercised:

*"It's greater now but it has always been the case, there will be intervention from the centre. They will try and get people selected, they will fiddle these days who has all-women shortlists or not. I mean the archetype was Wolverhampton, which was going to be an all-women shortlist and then wasn't when Jack Dromey was interested and moved backwards and forwards and ultimately it had an open list and a woman won it.<sup>608</sup> So there's that sort of degree of manipulation."*

*GB09, MP from both a trade union and youth wing background.*

This is an example of how the party institutions enact the will of the leadership by the way in which they perform the practical functions of their role as secretariat. Another way in which the process can be manipulated is by producing a shortlist for selection in which the leadership's preferred candidate is the only 'qualified' option, with potential threats to their selection kept off the ballot that goes to the members.<sup>609</sup>

The word 'members' here however needs to be unpacked, because unlike with the SPD it has not always been the case that the membership of the party alone has a vote. Currently the selection of Parliamentary candidates is made by a vote of individual members of the Constituency Labour Party who have been a member for a minimum of six months.<sup>610</sup> Previously however affiliated organisations also had a role in electing a prospective parliamentary candidate. These affiliates are in two forms, one is the affiliated trade unions<sup>611</sup> and the other are the socialist societies. In selection terms however the unions hold far greater sway than the socialist societies.

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<sup>608</sup> The exact seat was Wolverhampton North-East in the selection contest for the 2010 General Election. The eventual candidate was Emma Reynolds. Jack Dromey, a senior trade union figure, was selected for the safer seat of Birmingham Erdington in the same election.

<sup>609</sup> This can backfire. In the 2019 selection in Coventry North-West members selected the 'unqualified' candidate, Taiwo Owatemi, in a backlash against the perceived 'stitching-up' of the selection shortlist. See: Reid L. 2019. Breaking: London Pharmacist, 27, selected to be Labours' Coventry North West candidate for MP. *The Coventry Observer*. Published on 02.11.2019. Available at: <https://coventryobserver.co.uk/news/breaking-london-pharmacist-27-selected-to-be-labours-coventry-north-west-candidate-for-mp/>. Accessed 30.12.2019 16:35.

<sup>610</sup> Chapter 5, Clause I.1.A.i of the 2019 Labour Party Rule Book.

<sup>611</sup> In the past there were a large number of affiliated trade unions. However, many of the smaller unions have disappeared as there have been mergers and there are currently 12 affiliated unions. The most important are the 'big 4' of Unite, Unison, GMB (named for its previous initials, the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union) and USDAW (the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers). The 8 smaller unions are ASLEF (the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen), BFAWU usually known as the Bakers Union (Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union), Community (a general union formed originally by a merger of the steelworkers and clothing workers unions), CWU (Communication Workers Union), the FBU (Fire Brigades Union), the Musicians Union, the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) and the TSSA, often known as 'Tessa' (Transport and Salaried Staffs Association).

These rules are not static and shifting power balances within the party lead to shifts in the rules in favour of different factions or institutional players. This was particularly the case when the party leadership is not strong, such as in the Ed Miliband era.

*“The actual mechanism of a selection process, there’s the actual written rules which themselves have been quite contested over their history and at different points the rules have been seen to favour whichever political faction is in the ascendancy - from the introduction of one member one vote into selections through to the argument about the different roles of affiliates and members in them and so on. I think certainly in the 2010 – 2015 parliament I think the rules changed three times in that one cycle just because they kept being heavily contested. So there’s that. The rules themselves are partly the product of institutional pressures.”*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

The institutional powers within the party, principally the trade unions, and the influence they exert on the membership in the selection process, are discussed further below.

The institutional players within the Labour selection process.

The main institutional players in the selection process are the trade unions. Historically any nationally affiliated union with members who lived in the area covered by a branch of the Labour Party could affiliate a branch of the union to that local party, often multiple branches if they had multiple workplaces represented in the constituency. When a selection meeting happened each union branch would then send a delegate to the selection meeting to vote with a ‘block vote’ representing all the members of that union.

This union vote has historically been significant in deciding on the selection of candidates as described by GB09.

*“There will be union interests involved. In the old days you would have quite dominant branch affiliations, so up in the North-East in the 1960s and 70s, Alderman Andrew Cunningham had made the GMB the biggest union in the North-East, the only place where it was, and he absolutely dominated the scene. So, the Whitehaven constituency, which is now, Copeland it’s called now, Alderman Andrew Cunningham affiliated all these branches, got all these delegates, assembled them in the local hotel, marched them down to the selection meeting, threw open the doors, his army marched in. Elected one Jack Cunningham as their candidate and then marched out again.<sup>612</sup> There was a lot of that. And the miners, in many areas the secretary of the biggest miner’s lodge there became the Member of Parliament, probably in his 50s, probably did ten years, they would retire to be much thought of and well-regarded in the village, and the next secretary of the miner’s lodge took it over. Scargill<sup>613</sup> started to undermine that by trying to politicise that more but got quite a bit of pushback, then the NUM went into such decline that they didn’t have that power anymore. Now there’s quite a bit of horse-trading that goes on between unions. Again, this is not unprecedented. But it is*

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<sup>612</sup> Jack Cunningham was selected for the 1970 general election. He remained MP for Whitehaven, and then the renamed Copeland constituency, until 2005.

<sup>613</sup> Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers from 1982 to 2002.

*very much you know we'll give you this constituency and you give us that one sort of thing. Those were also the patterns. That's still going on."*

*GB09, MP from a trade union and youth wing background.*

Although the unions no longer have the power of the block vote, they still maintain a high level of influence within the party. This horse-trading of constituencies also allows them to focus that influence by combining it with the influence of other unions in specific selection contests. This now however frequently plays out at the shortlisting stage rather than the election amongst members.

The institutional players often don't take the views of the local membership particularly into account when it comes to this horse trading of seats. However, as with the 2019 selection of Taiwo Owatemi in Coventry North West, the membership doesn't always take kindly to these kinds of powerplays.<sup>614</sup>

*"If it's a safe Labour seat where the selection is really deciding who the MP is going to be very few of the institutional players in the Labour Party if anyone really cares about whether the candidate is local or not when they have somebody who they want to get into the place. When it comes to whether or not the local members will wear it, sometimes yes sometimes no."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

As well as the trade unions there can also be other local power-brokers in specific areas which have their own dynamics.

*"In the past some parts of the country or constituencies got reputations as the sorts of places that liked MPs who were Westminster big hitters. For example it was always said that Sheffield was a city that liked Westminster big hitters that didn't bother them too much and frankly the local association ran the council and the MPs went to Westminster and made speeches, so you had a succession of people like Hattersley, like Denis Healey, who were the sort of people who were going to be found a seat somewhere and that was an ideal place to palm them off on. Whereas other seats, even in Yorkshire, you get seats like Pontefract, where Yvette<sup>615</sup> was the first person to be the representative of that seat for a century who wasn't an NUM<sup>616</sup> official and it's quite a different dynamic. If you look at somewhere like South Shields, where Dave Miliband was the MP, the local boss up there, it's a family, is the Malcolms who run the council. Very happy with David Miliband taking no interest in the constituency at all because they run essentially an old school Northern fiefdom. Since then they've had an odd selection where Emma Lewell-Buck got selected, has tried to be involved in the CLP and they've been at war ever since."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

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<sup>614</sup> Reid L. 2019. Breaking: London Pharmacist, 27, selected to be Labour's Coventry North West candidate for MP. *The Coventry Observer*. Published on 02.11.2019. Available at: <https://coventryobserver.co.uk/news/breaking-london-pharmacist-27-selected-to-be-labours-coventry-north-west-candidate-for-mp/>. Accessed 30.12.2019 16:35.

<sup>615</sup> Yvette Cooper, MP for Pontefract and Castleford from 1997 and then for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford following boundary changes in 2010.

<sup>616</sup> National Union of Mineworkers



These local party barons can also impart influence, to the benefit of an individual who wants to be selected in the areas where they have a powerbase or conversely to their detriment. Both trade unions and local barons will endorse individuals and look to get their favoured candidate selected at the meeting of the members. This may be in the form of a formal endorsement, in particular from the unions, or informal influence. This influence can also be seen at the earlier stage, where support from these institutional players can be decisive in getting individuals onto the selection shortlist. Some of these institutional players are also involved in the factional conflicts within the party, however the factions also act as an institutional player in their own right.

#### Factions and selection in the Labour Party.

Within the Labour Party there are ideological factions, in a similar fashion to the SPD. The full depth of the factionalism in the Labour Party is more thoroughly unpacked in chapter six, but it is relevant here to discuss how the different factions relate to the selection process.

The first past the post system means that the Labour Party involves a broader array of ideological positions than the German system, covering individuals who in Germany might be involved in Die Linke rather than the SPD. The Labour factions also have more formal institutionalised organisations. There are four main broad factions within the party, though with some internal divisions. These were described by GB10:

*“So, starting from, or going from right to left, first of all there’s the New Labour right. The main organ for that is obviously Progress. You then have the old Labour right, the main organisation there is Labour First. There is a strong connection with the trade unions, or the old trade union right. I should point out by Old Labour right I mean pre-New Labour, that part of the party. They’re the main traditional centre-left of the party, they’re more communitarian in outlook. Then you have the soft left, and the main organisation there at the moment would be a group called Open Labour. They have been since 2017 more or less supportive of the Corbyn project on most issues. They have some fairly good connections with the trade union left. It’s not necessarily the avowedly Corbynite trade union left, Unite, FBU and so on, but what’s left of what was called the Broad Left. Then you have Momentum which was formed out of the Corbyn project. Has very strong links with certain of the current trade union leaderships, especially Unite. They are supportive of the Corbyn project, they’re broadly speaking left on economics, but it’s complicated by the fact of wanting to support the current leadership and the current project that is in place in the party regardless.”*

*GB10, senior activist in Young Labour and the Young Fabians.*

The organisations change over time, and there are other organisations which sub-divide these categories, such as the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Labour Representation Committee and the Alliance for Workers Liberty on the hard-left, Labour Together and the Tribune Group on the soft left, and Blue Labour very loosely within the old Labour right. There have been other divisions not necessarily based on ideology such as those within New Labour between ‘Blairites’ and ‘Brownites’<sup>617</sup> and also temporary policy divisions such that provoked by Brexit. Nevertheless, the broad, rough groupings of New Labour right, old Labour right, soft left and hard left (referred to by GB10 as Momentum) remain somewhat similar across time. Those broad divisions have been the same

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<sup>617</sup> Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A study in the politics of Labour’s party management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

for the duration of this study, with the exception of the 'third way' groupings on the New Labour right which came about in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The relative strength and influence of these factions varies across time and place, for example the hard left was powerful in Liverpool in the 1980s, the Old Right has its heartland in the West Midlands etc.

It is also worth noting in the context of the youth wings that Labour Students are seen as ideologically moderate and centre-left, whereas Young Labour is seen as being on the left. Labour Students are taken more seriously within the party than Young Labour, which is often perceived as unprofessional. GB03 commented on this, and noted the similarity to the Tories, the UK Conservative Party.

*"I distinguish between the youth and student element is, partly because a lot of people who are involved do distinguish between the two of them, partly because it's actually more like the Tories in this country in that the youth wing is the provisional nutters sort of thing and the student wing is seen as a bit more serious and organised. And I suppose partly the fact that Labour Clubs exist in Universities which have got quite strong safeguarding policies and all the rest of it so you don't get the same sorts of mad shit that you get in the youth wings."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

The Young Fabians, like their parent society, are committed by their constitution to being neutral in terms of their factional leanings but tend to be perceived as technocratic and on the moderate side.

The influence of factionalism, both in the party and in the youth wings, does however vary over time. It was strong in the 1980s during the conflict between the previous hard-left organisation, Militant, and in particular the old right of the party.<sup>618</sup> In the years since the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader in 2015 the factional conflict has increased again. This more recent development was set out by GB03.

*"I'd have said in terms of factionalism - organised groups of members as distinct from the institutional players - until the Corbyn years I'd have said their impact was not massive. The hard left never got its candidates selected, or did so very rarely, and so in most selections having a factional backing was not a big deal. The factional barriers on the centre-right of the party were a lot more fungible. It didn't used to be hugely significant. Now it is key. Although actually in a sense it's started to eat itself in that there's always a big fight as to who is the Momentum candidate, and the Momentum candidate doesn't always win by any means but it's introduced a pre-selection element to the selection process that is not as rigid as in say, Australia, but is a much bigger element of the competition than it was. It's a bigger factor now but it's still not as defined as people would expect. In a Parliamentary selection where most candidates who've got any sense will be trying to appeal beyond their immediate cohort, it's a situation where people are more likely to vote outside of the way you might expect them to."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

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<sup>618</sup> See Hayter D. 2005. *Fightback! Labour's Traditional Right in the 1970s and 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico's Publishing, Davis J. and McWilliam R. (eds). 2018. *Labour and the Left in the 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press and Koelble T. A. 1991. *The Left Unravelled: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.

This was also the perspective of GB05, an MP with a background in the youth movement. They referenced the influence of Momentum, the hard left factional grouping dominant in the era of Jeremy Corbyn. To them this new factionalism has made it harder for individuals not involved in that to be selected.

*“Now that we have different groups within the Labour Party that are stronger in terms of determining the process it would be quite a lot harder I think, and I suppose for somebody like me who has always traditionally been on the left of the party but who’s not involved explicitly with Momentum, I think it might be harder for someone like me to end up being supported by large numbers of members in the way that I was because I think those groups, a lot of the more recent selections have indicated that if you’re in one of those groups you’re much more likely to be successful. Before that period it was possible for graft to have quite an impact.”*

*GB05, MP with a youth wing background.*

These factions, like the institutional players within the party and the unions, exert influence on the membership in a continually shifting dynamic that varies significantly between different times and places. When factional conflict is high within the party, as during the 1980s and again since 2015, the factions exert great influence over both sets of gatekeepers. When factionalism is low, as during the 1990s and 2000s, it does not.

GB03 characterises a situation where there are multiple competing gatekeepers with different levels of influence in the process in different contexts.

*“In terms of gatekeepers, the honest thing is that selections vary so much in terms of who the key players in a selection are, it’s difficult to sort of say that one particular group or groups is critical. Certainly, in the past party officials and trade union machines would have been very significant in that process, these days it tends to vary a little bit in that different selections have their own dynamics. Often seats with larger memberships tend to have a bit of a dynamic of their own and it’s more likely to be a candidate whose got a bit of a profile within that constituency. In seats with smaller memberships or there’s a bit more influence by some of the big power players you might get an individual who has more influence through that. But it would be difficult to say there’s a single answer to that question really. It depends on different points in the cycle as well.”*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

It can therefore be difficult to describe which group is the most important in any one particular selection contest. It will depend on the varying balance between membership numbers, trade union influence, the leadership and the effectiveness and factional make-up of the regional party officials and members, whether the selection is a normal one or a by-election at short notice and whether the seat is safe, marginal or unwinnable at the particular moment of the selection taking place. Nevertheless, the key gatekeepers are the party officials who draw up the shortlist, and the local members, as these are the groups whom the other players are attempting to influence.

What are Labour’s gatekeepers looking for?

What factors are these gatekeepers looking for in a potential electoral standard bearer? The institutional players will be looking to promote a candidate who will advance their institutional

interests. In the second stage they will attempt to influence the members to support their own candidate, but this influence is unlikely to be the only factor that is relevant to members when they act as gatekeepers by voting at the selection meeting. GB03 stated what they felt members were looking for:

*"I would say that when the members are looking at someone who could be a Parliamentary candidate, they are looking probably for three things. They are looking for somebody who, they agree with their politics, who they can see in Parliament and who they believe is up to the job. So, there's a combination of politics, ability and almost a sense of what they're due."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

The institutional players, particularly the factional groups, will advocate for their own candidates. But several of those interviewed highlighted the work a candidate was prepared to put in to meet members and campaign for the selection:

*"In terms of what gatekeepers are looking for, I think in terms of organised groups it would be what their organised group is suggesting, although often I'm sure people are making their own decisions as well. We've seen recent selections where it's been people's position on Europe that's been key. Whether someone's got a local connection. Whether they've met them. A few years ago a guy was selected for Reading West where they had eight different candidates on the shortlist which is not a way to organise a selection at all, he came up through middle and it was because he'd worked really really hard to meet as many people as he could. Someone did say to me after the selection process, one of the other potential candidates, can you teach me how to be good at networking because you seem to be really good at it. And I said to this person that's really nice of you but what underlay me getting to the top of that ballot isn't me being good at schmoozing, it's the fact that for fifteen years before then I'd spent quite a lot of time – not with the anticipation of being a candidate, – but just being quite interested in helping people out [which] meant that I got to know quite a few people. And if you do turn up then people do tend to remember that you've done that. I think that is what made the difference actually because it meant that there were people I could ring up and say I'm sorry to bother you but do you remember when I came to help and that's really what paid off."*

*GB05, MP from a youth wing background.*

*"The biggest factor in getting selected, so why was I successful, what are the members looking for? That's a really interesting question. Likeability. Some sense that you know what you're after, that they are convinced by your reasons for wanting to become a Member of Parliament. An understanding of the constituency. Hard graft. Willingness to go and knock on the door of every single member and drink vast quantities of tea."*

*GB08, MP from a trade union background.*

Both GB05 and GB08, MPs from different types of backgrounds, emphasise meeting the members and convincing them that they would make a good MP, whether that is over a long period of time involved or during the campaigning aspect of the selection. This would suggest that the factional and

institutional interests are more applicable when a selection is taking place between candidates who are not well known to the members in the constituency, or when the members are side-lined. GB03 concurred with this view:

*“In CLP AGMs where most people don’t know most of the candidates and there’s so many people you’re more likely to vote down the line, of whichever side you’re on, and you’re more likely to have turned up because you’ve got turned out by a group. Whereas in a Parliamentary selection where most candidates who’ve got any sense will be trying to appeal beyond their immediate cohort, it’s a situation where people are more likely to vote outside of the way you might expect them to.”*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

We can therefore see that campaigning skills and a sense of being known to the local members, though not necessarily being local, is vital in the second stage of the ordinary selections. These are also interlinked in that the factions and institutional organisations can provide a forum in which to meet members.

A further point is that GB05 mentioned meeting people whilst ‘turning up’ to campaigning – during which an individual has to demonstrate campaigning abilities, and GB03 mentioned being ‘up to the job’. These are references to skills. As with the SPD then skills demonstration, showing members as well as to those who construct the shortlist that an individual has the skills to do the job, is important in the selection process. Other interviewees highlighted in particular communication and public speaking skills:

*“One of the things that drives me crazy is the level of oratory that we don’t have in our movement. I was at a TUC conference in the 90s and I got to hear Scargill speak. Now I disagreed with every word he said but it was a beautiful speech. He got a standing ovation and then we unanimously voted him down. But it was a beautiful speech because it was genuine oratory. Now you only learn oratory, unless you’re naturally blessed like Hillary Benn is naturally blessed, if you’ve had to earn your right to be heard on the shop floor. Because it’s a really tough thing to earn your right to be heard in a factory or in a hospital or in a big workplace. And yes you’ve got not dissimilar in terms of universities and trying to get people to listen, but actually the people that turn up at your hustings and that vote for you, they’re already engaged. Whereas on the shop floor you’re talking to people who are trying to get on with their lives and want to crack on. So the skill set that you earn in terms of public speaking, in terms of negotiating - the skillset that you get is extraordinarily important.”*

*GB01, MP from a trade union background.*

*“I think it was the skills, you know having to stand up and speak to a room of a hundred, two hundred students when you’re 21 or whatever. Those sorts of skills, I’m not sure where else I would have got that from. I can remember Labour Student public speaking training for example. We used to get people to come in and train us, you know we’d have Labour Student’s national committee weekend and we’d get someone to do sessions on public speaking and I mean I still get quite nervous speaking in the chamber and so on, I wouldn’t naturally consider myself to be a kind of front of house person in terms of speaking to the media and stuff like that,*

*but I do think that the confidence that those experiences gave me really have helped shape my ability to then put myself forward for things further down the line, for Parliament later on."*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

Both interviewees indicate how public speaking skills were learned in the different routes they took to their selection. GB03 made the point that the actual fact of having been involved in a youth wing, even in a senior role, was not something which was highlighted by potential candidates in the selection process, unlike in the case of the JUSOS.

*"I can't think that I've ever had a selection where somebody has made a big deal of their role as a young person, because quite a lot of predominantly older members see it as a little bit cliquey or elitist, as not necessarily being a recommendation. I think its seen as sort of fine but it's not anything I've ever seen anyone make a big play of in a selection contest, although it's helpful background for them to get to that place."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

GB03 also elaborated on the youth wings being helpful background for an individual to get to the point of being considered by the membership to stand for office, placing an emphasis on the networking opportunities.

*"It's the networks that stand out to me a little bit more. With Labour students a lot of people come out of that with very strong networks which are not unhelpful when it comes to seeking selection. Having a Labour Students background on your CV is probably either neutral or unhelpful when it comes to most selections. Whereas you get a lot of people leaving those organisations who are very well-networked, who have had more contact with senior people earlier in their careers than they would otherwise have done. So, you get a lot of them going into staff and official roles, of whom some will become MPs. I think it's more the networks that come out of it are the key thing really. It varies a lot with levels of involvement. Something like being the Youth Rep on the Labour NEC<sup>619</sup> which is a two-year role and you are actually a member of the NEC, serious people care about it, so it's contested. Jonny Reynolds,<sup>620</sup> Ellie Reeves,<sup>621</sup> Steph Peacock<sup>622</sup> all just in the last few years and I think that's partly because at that very early stage you are doing things at that very high level, so it's not a surprise that those people do disproportionately well."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

GB03 here indicates that the networking gained from the senior levels of the youth and student wing are a factor. This is likely to be both by leading to opportunities to get a job in the political ecosystem and by enabling them to build links with party elites who perform the shortlisting stage. As with the

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<sup>619</sup> National Executive Committee, the party's main governing body.

<sup>620</sup> NEC youth rep 2003-05, MP for Stalybridge and Hyde since 2010.

<sup>621</sup> Ellie Reeves was not actually the Youth Rep on the Labour NEC, she was elected as one of the Constituency Representatives but at a young age. When she was elected to the NEC she was young enough that she would have been eligible to stand as the Youth Rep and was therefore often mistakenly believed to be the Youth Rep even by party insiders. She has been MP for Lewisham West and Penge since 2017.

<sup>622</sup> NEC youth rep 2007-11, MP for Barnsley East since 2017.

SPD however the importance of an individual's past roles amongst the members in the second stage is the development of the skills needed to win selection, in particular communication skills, and then the networking skills required to be able to demonstrate those skills to them.

Current youth wing activists GB06, GB07 and GB10 all placed a heavy emphasis on networking. GB06 described the networking process, using the Young Fabians as an example:

*"If you want to work in Westminster or in public affairs, or a think tank, a lot of it is about your personal networks and the people you know. A lot of the people who got involved in the Young Fabians had the skills, they were very academically bright, great communicators, very smart, but often they knew they lacked the networks. So you go along to a Young Fabians event, you'd be speaking to a Young Fabians member, you'd find out that they're working for a Shadow Secretary of State or a Labour Member of Parliament. So, you formulate a relationship with that person, you learn from them skills and tools, they tell you how they got there and that's something, that sort of networking. You know how to go about making an application for a particular job in that particular sector because you met someone through a Young Fabians event. Or you organise an event, and as part of organising the event you come into contact with people and organisations who then you form a relationship with that then helps you down the line. The networking is super crucial. If I think about friends they got their first job in Parliament or working for a think-tank because of the work they did in the Young Fabians. It gave them that kudos, or that vetting power. So networking is a crucial part of it."*

*GB06, senior activist in Labour Students and the Young Fabians*

*"If you look at Labour students you see Tom Watson,<sup>623</sup> Gloria de Piero,<sup>624</sup> they were Labour Students. Looking at the Young Fabians you have John Mann,<sup>625</sup> Seema Malhotra,<sup>626</sup> these people used to be members of the executive and really involved in youth politics. Joining the youth wing can provide you with opportunities. Some people are not blessed with having connections, having family connections, so certainly for them the youth organisations would be a way to get those networks. Certainly, you need some connections to go into politics so joining a youth organisation can give you a way to get that."*

*GB07, senior activist in Young Labour, Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

*"For a lot of people this is their gateway into being involved in party politics more generally. There are obviously many opportunities to network, particularly if you're in an area that has a high concentration of members of the youth wing. I can't say*

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<sup>623</sup> President of the University of Hull Student's Union 1991-92, Chair of the National Organisation of Labour Students 1992-93, Labour Party National Development Officer for Youth 1993-97, MP for West Bromwich East 2001-2019 and Deputy-Leader of the Labour Party 2015-2019.

<sup>624</sup> Labour Student's national officer 1996-97, MP for Ashfield 2010-2019.

<sup>625</sup> Chair of the National Organisation of Labour Students 1983-84, as a member of the Young Fabians co-authored a pamphlet (with fellow future MP Phil Woolas) titled 'Labour and the Youth Vote: The Missing Generation' the proposals in which were the basis for the reorganisation of Young Labour in 1993. He was MP for Bassetlaw from 2001 to 2019.

<sup>626</sup> Chair of the Young Fabians 1999-2000. MP for Feltham and Heston since 2011.

*personally in terms of what it's like at constituency level but with city wide areas or university wide areas, there is actually the ability to network."*

*GB10, senior activist with Young Labour and the Young Fabians*

The different focuses of these interviewees highlight both a key similarity and a key difference with the SPD. In the SPD the route to the Bundestag can be EITHER via being placed on the party list by party elites, OR via selection by a local party in a winnable district. Networking is more important for the former, skills development for the latter and whilst both are important an individual can be more focused on one than the other. In the Labour Party however the system requires BOTH being placed on the shortlist by party elites AND then selection by a local Party. This means an individual needs both networks and skills development. As the skills development often comes from the political ecosystem however, rather than the youth wings directly, the networking is the crucial first stage. This may explain why the MPs who have been through the whole process emphasise the skills that they could use to get final selection from the members, whereas the current youth wing members highlight the networks required to get into the political ecosystem.

### ***5.6: The youth wings and Labour's legislative recruitment.***

As with chapter four this chapter is primarily concerned with whether the case study demonstrates that the youth wings have increased as a source of recruitment for social democratic parliamentarians as laid out in chapter one. It also explores whether this has been at the expense of the trade union movement. This is detailed in Hypothesis 1, which states:

*H1: Youth organisations have grown in prominence as sources of social democratic parliamentary recruitment since the 1980s, filling a vacuum created by the decline of the trade unions.*

This hypothesis was tested via a quantitative analysis of the backgrounds of Parliamentarians. A database was created in which Labour members of the House of Commons were listed by election cycle with their backgrounds in relation to youth wings and trade unions codified. The database coded whether they had held elected office in the Labour youth wing, the Labour student wing – at the national or the university club level - or the Young Fabians. It also coded whether they had been a trade union employee or elected union representative and whether they had worked as a Labour staffer, that is to say been employed either by the party or by an elected representative.

As discussed in chapter three there was an issue with the data collection. There was no available archive which recorded the memberships of the youth wing's committees. Therefore, eight individuals who were active in the youth wings from the 1950s until the present day were given a list of all Labour MPs from the 1979 General Election until the Peterborough by-election of 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019.<sup>627</sup> These individuals had all been involved either by serving in elected office or in some cases acting as the 'fixers' – those who would balance interests and be involved in factional conflict within the youth organisation. They were asked to record which of the MPs from the lists prepared had been involved in which youth wings alongside them. This was the main origin of the data encoded in the database.

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<sup>627</sup> This by-election, which returned Lisa Forbes of the Labour Party, was the last datapoint. There was one further by-election in this Parliament, in the Brecon and Radnorshire constituency on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019, which was won by the Liberal Democrat Jane Dodds. This would not have been counted for this study as it did not return a Labour MP to Parliament and therefore this study does include the data for all Labour MPs for the 2017 to 2019 Parliament. This study does NOT include data for the General Election of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019, in which both Lisa Forbes and Jane Dodds lost their seats to Conservative Party opponents.



To this was added the data on trade union employment or elected union representative or employment by the Party or one of their elected representatives taken from the Who's Who and Who Was Who archive.<sup>628</sup> All of this data was then cross-referenced with other available sources, including candidates own websites, published obituaries and newspaper articles.<sup>629</sup>

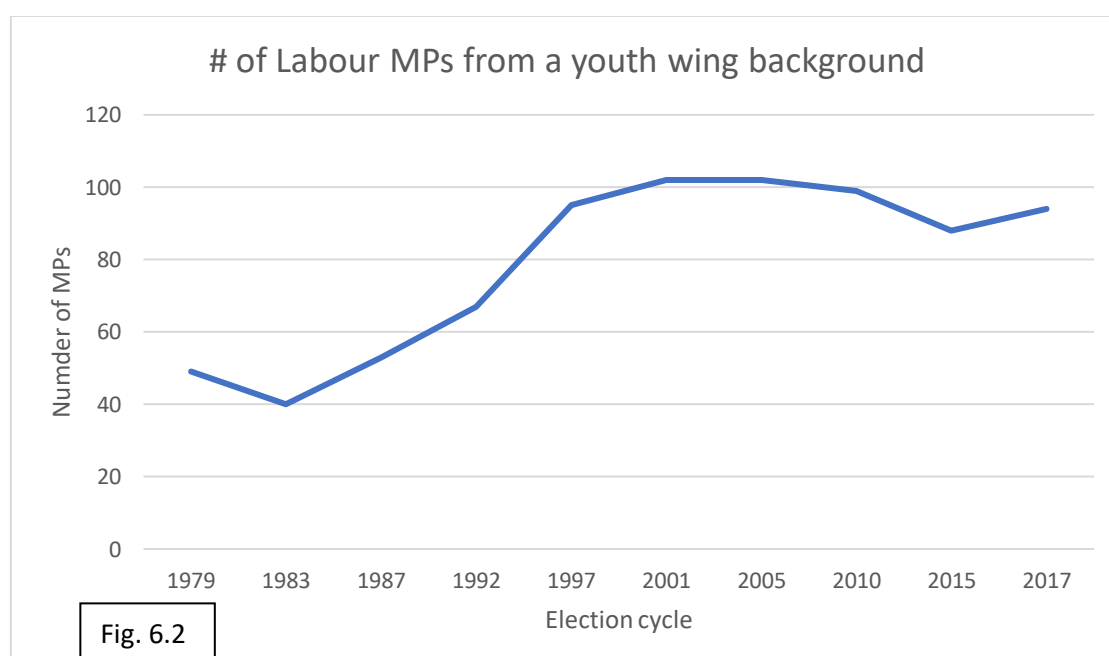
The data collected for MPs active in a youth wing in a formal elected role may therefore be less reliable than the data utilised for the SPD case study in chapter four, although by using multiple sources and comparing them the data was made as reliable as possible. The data for the trade union and Labour staff positions is reliable, coming predominantly from one source – the Who's Who archive – and therefore being easily comparable across the timeframe.

Again, as with the SPD the data was looking at those who were active in the youth wings or trade union movement at any stage and does not take into account the length of time between service in a youth wing and election to Parliament.

Further, as with the SPD, the number of deselections taking place is small, and the majority of the changes are via replacement of retiring MPs or via electoral churn – winning or losing seats to other parties – rather than via deselection of sitting MPs and their replacement.

Findings from the empirical data.

The first finding from the data is that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of MPs who come from a youth wing background with some fluctuation but a steadily upward trend. There was a big drop between 1979 and 1983, in line with the drop in total Labour MPs between those two elections, before a steady increase up until 1997 where it maintains a stable level until the 2010 election, despite a drop in the number of Labour MPs between 1997 and 2010. There is a drop in 2015, in line with a further decrease in the total number of Labour MPs elected, and then an uptick in 2017 when Labour increased it's numbers. This is shown in fig. 6.2.<sup>630</sup>

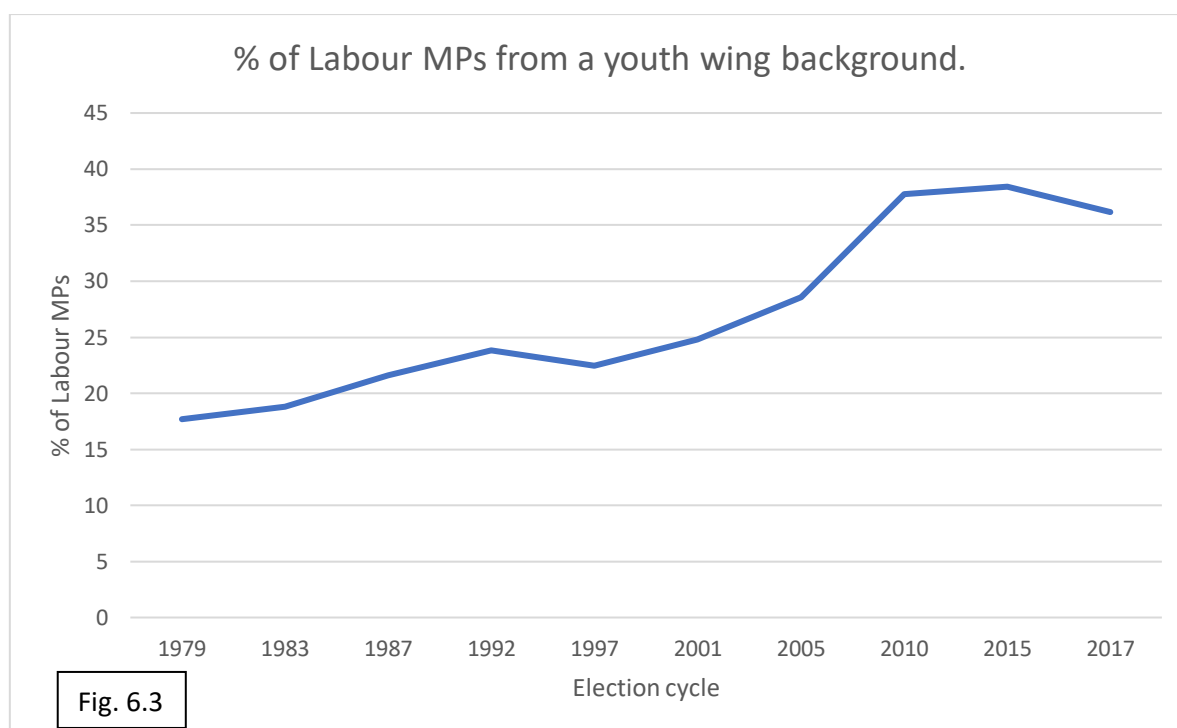


<sup>628</sup> Available at <https://www.ukwhoswho.com/>

<sup>629</sup> A complete list of sources is available in the appendices.

<sup>630</sup> Figs. 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 show total number of individuals who served in at least one youth wing, those who served in more than one youth wing were only counted once.

These figures, like the SPD, do not track the electoral fortunes of the Labour Party exactly but they are closer than the SPD. Further, although the ratchet effect seen in the SPD is less obvious in the Labour Party numbers, it does still exist. Following the elections when the Labour Party lost members in 1983, 2005, 2010 and 2015 the number of MPs from a youth wing background did not decline in proportion to the losses suffered by the party. Although the number from a youth wing background did decline in 1983 and 2015 in particular, the youth wing MPs did still outperform their peers. This becomes more obvious when the figures are plotted as a percentage of the total number of Labour MPs elected across the election cycle<sup>631</sup> as demonstrated in fig. 6.3.



Here we can see that despite the drop in pure numbers seen in 1983 and 2015 the percentage of MPs from a youth wing in the Parliamentary Labour Party actually slightly increased in those election cycles. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of Labour MPs who had previously served in a youth wing in every election cycle except two, in 1997 and 2017.

One possible explanation for the drop in 1997 could be simply the sheer number of seats which the party won. Labour did not expect to win by such a large landslide. The number of individuals who emerge from the youth wings and become viable candidates is finite and will focus their efforts on seats perceived to be winnable. When the party then wins seats it did not expect to the percentage of its MPs with a youth wing background drops as people who did not expect to become MPs join the ranks in the Commons. Supporting evidence for this possibility is in the way the percentage increases sharply in 2005 and 2010 when the party lost seats. The seats lost in those two election cycles were the more vulnerable ones, the ones the party had not expected to win in 1997 but managed to hold in 2001. There is of course a level of churn beneath the headline figures as MPs retire and are replaced, as well as the party losing and gaining seats, so this is unlikely to be a complete explanation and more

<sup>631</sup> A reminder that this relates to the cycle – for example the day of the 1987 general election to the day before the election of 1992 – not just the election itself, and therefore includes MPs who took up their role as a result of by-elections between the general elections that bookend each cycle. It is the number of individuals who have served as Labour MPs during the cycle, not the number of seats won during the general election.

research would be required to confirm it, nevertheless it is the most likely explanation based on the available data.

The situation was similar in 2017, in that Labour expected to do poorly in that election but did better than expected and won a number of seats, such as Sheffield Hallam, Kensington and Canterbury, that it had no expectation of winning. It was a snap election in which those who had previously stood in vacant seats in 2015 were given first refusal on being the candidate again. The expectation that Labour would lose, combined with the factional conflict within the party, led a number of those who had come from the ‘usual’ routes to decline to stand again. One of the interviewees, GB09, specifically addressed this in comments made during their interview:

*“I’m not sure if there’s been an increase in the numbers coming from the youth wings recently. If you look at the new intake, you’d have to look at the new intake that came in in 2017. I think that’s quite mixed. I think if anything there was a real surge before then, and I’d have thought it’s tailed off slightly. Partly because people got selected for seats nobody thought they’d win! Had anybody thought that the Tories were going to do so badly, which was the key question the woman who stood in Lincoln in 2015 would have run, the fellow who stood in Sheffield Hallam would have run. Karen Lee<sup>632</sup> and Jared O’Mara<sup>633</sup> would never have troubled the public consciousness, so you had a number like that.”*

*GB09, MP with a youth wing and trade union background.*

The specific circumstances around those two elections – with Labour winning seats it did not expect to in both<sup>634</sup> – may explain why in those two election cycles there were drops in the percentage of MPs coming from a youth wing background compared to other election cycles. With those two exceptions there has been a steady increase in the numbers coming from a background in one of the youth wings. Fig. 6.4 shows the exact numbers of Labour MPs from a youth wing background and Fig. 6.5 shows the exact percentages of the total elected Labour MPs from that background.

Election cycle	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997
Youth wing role	49	40	53	67	95
Fig.6.4	2001	2005	2010	2015	2017
	102	102	99	88	94

Election cycle	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997
Youth wing role	17.69%	18.78%	21.63%	23.84%	22.46%
Fig.6.5	2001	2005	2010	2015	2017
	24.82%	28.57%	37.79%	38.43%	36.19%

<sup>632</sup> Labour MP for Lincoln, elected in 2017, lost the seat to the Conservatives in 2019.

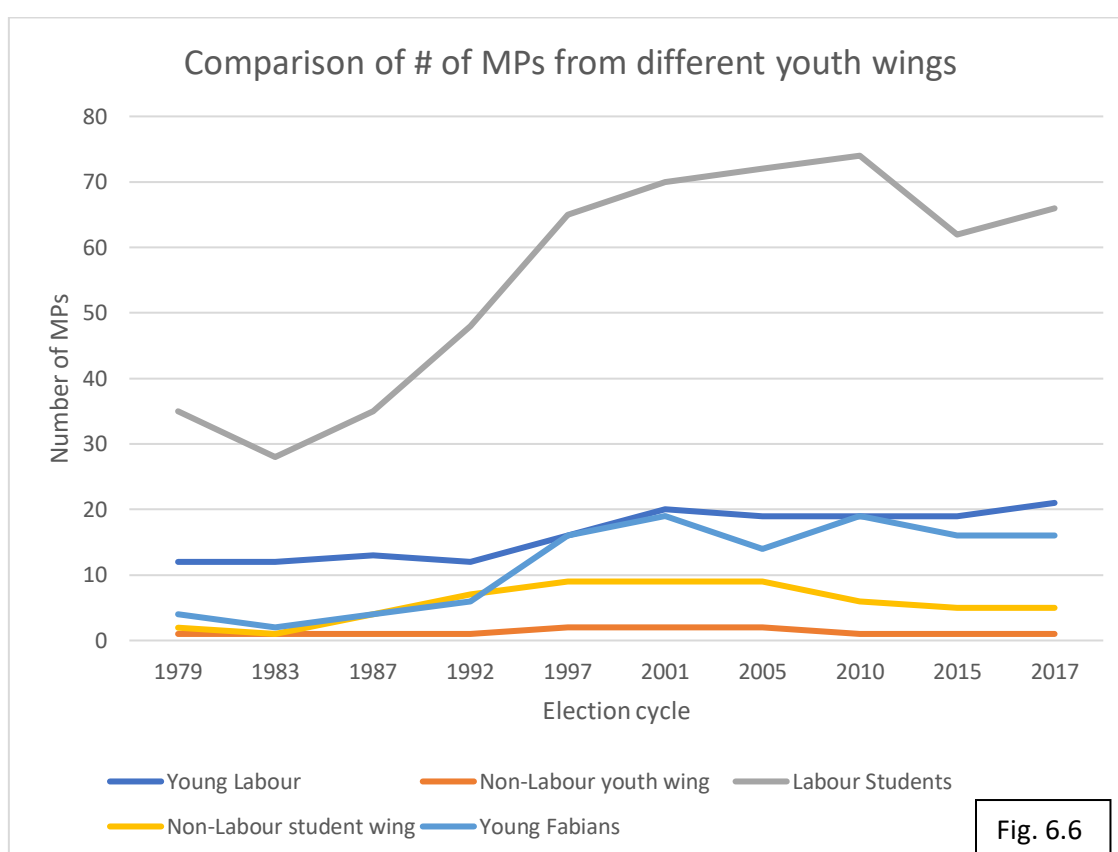
<sup>633</sup> MP for Sheffield Hallam. Elected as a Labour MP in 2017, had the whip removed for disciplinary reasons, then restored, then resigned the Labour whip 9 days later to sit as an independent, stood down in 2019.

<sup>634</sup> Those who become highly active in the party, whether via the youth wings or the trade unions, target seats which they expect to win. The competition for seats perceived to be unwinnable is much less intense and figures with less institutional influence or political capital can be selected in those seats. Those who therefore come into Parliament unexpectedly from those seats are less likely to have a background in either a youth wing or a trade union.

Consequently, what becomes clear from this data is that the first part of Hypothesis 1 is indeed proved correct by the case study of the UK Labour Party. The number of MPs from a youth wing background has indeed increased, both in real numbers and in percentage terms. One further point to explore before looking at the second part of the hypothesis – the number of MPs from a trade union background – is to compare the different organisations involved in the Labour youth movements and to see whether the rise has come from any of them in particular.

Comparing the impact of Labour's different youth organisations.

Whilst this tells us that the number of MPs coming from a youth wing background has increased it does not unpack the details of which of the three relevant youth wings are responsible for the rise or whether it is across the board. In addition to the three Labour youth wings discussed (counting the historical predecessors of Young Labour and Labour Students in the same typology as those contemporary organisation) there were also a handful of individuals who served in similar organisations for other political parties – either for the Conservatives or Liberals / Liberal Democrats or more commonly, perhaps due to the factional conflicts of the 1970s and 80s, in far-left youth or student movements. Fig. 6.6 shows the numbers of these five possible youth wing origin points across the time period under investigation.



The first point to note is that Labour Students is and has always been the predominant source of MPs from a youth wing background. It is also the source of most of the increase in the number of MPs, albeit with big drops in the two most recent elections of 2015 and 2017. Young Labour has increased gradually. The Young Fabians, having been barely relevant through the 1980s dramatically increased in 1997 to being on a par with Young Labour and have been either level or only slightly behind Young Labour as a source of recruitment since.

Meanwhile the number of Labour MPs who were active in a non-Labour youth wing is negligible, tracking at one individual for the whole timeframe with the exception of 1997 – 2005 when there are two. Those who came from a non-Labour student wing did increase in the late 1980s – to a high point of nine MPs - and have fallen back since 2005. This would fit with the concept of them coming into the Labour Party during the factional battles of the 1970s and 1980s, getting to the point of assuming office in the 1987 election, increasing until 1997 and then falling back as the defeat of Militant meant that those routes into the party were no longer there and the incumbents retired.

The story is not much changed when we look at these numbers as a percentage of total Labour MPs elected, as in Fig. 6.7. Labour Students are still both the biggest group and the biggest increase, still with drops in 2015 and 2017, alongside a percentage drop similar to that for all youth wings in 1997 as already discussed above. Young Labour actually has a slight dip during the 1990s but has increased overall, roughly doubling as a percentage since 1979. The Young Fabians were not relevant until 1997 when they tracked upwards and have increased overall since then, albeit with dips in 2005, 2015 and 2017. The non-Labour youth wing origins and non-Labour student wing origins are a small percentage, with the latter slightly higher.

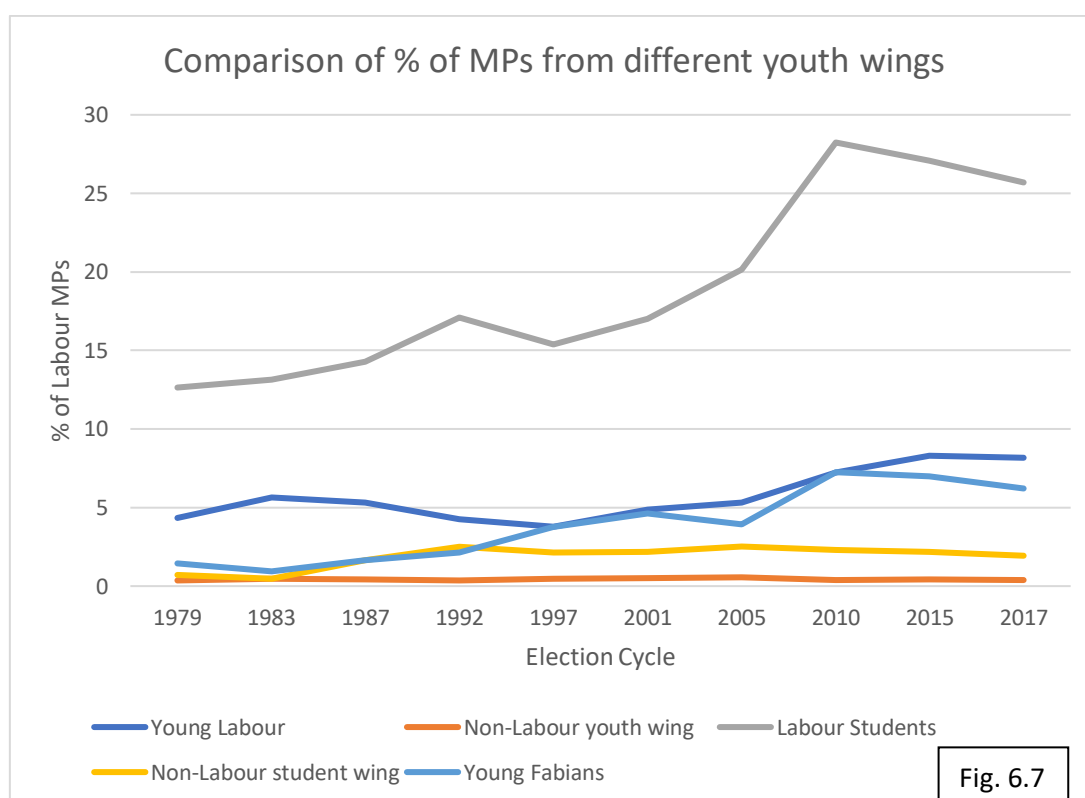


Fig. 6.7

The exact numbers and percentages are laid out below in Fig. 6.8 and Fig. 6.9 respectively. It is important to note that some individuals are members of more than one youth wing, in particular in the three Labour affiliated youth wings, and as such the total number of individuals who have a youth wing background is less than the sum of those who have served in the different organisations.

<b>Election period</b>	<b>Youth Wing (total)</b>	<b>Young Labour</b>	<b>N/L YW</b>	<b>Labour Students</b>	<b>N/L SW</b>	<b>Young Fabians</b>
<b>1979</b>	49	12	1	35	2	4
<b>1983</b>	40	12	1	28	1	2
<b>1987</b>	53	13	1	35	4	4
<b>1992</b>	67	12	1	48	7	6
<b>1997</b>	95	16	2	65	9	16
<b>2001</b>	102	20	2	70	9	19
<b>2005</b>	102	19	2	72	9	14
<b>2010</b>	99	19	1	74	6	19
<b>2015</b>	88	19	1	62	5	16
<b>2017</b>	94	21	1	66	5	16

Fig. 6.8

<b>Election period</b>	<b>% Youth Wing (total)</b>	<b>% Young Labour</b>	<b>% N/L YW</b>	<b>% Labour Students</b>	<b>% N/L SW</b>	<b>% Young Fabians</b>
<b>1979</b>	17.69%	4.33%	0.36%	12.64%	0.72%	1.44%
<b>1983</b>	18.78%	5.63%	0.47%	13.15%	0.47%	0.94%
<b>1987</b>	21.63%	5.31%	0.41%	14.29%	1.63%	1.63%
<b>1992</b>	23.84%	4.27%	0.36%	17.08%	2.49%	2.14%
<b>1997</b>	22.46%	3.78%	0.47%	15.37%	2.13%	3.78%
<b>2001</b>	24.82%	4.87%	0.49%	17.03%	2.19%	4.62%
<b>2005</b>	28.57%	5.32%	0.56%	20.17%	2.52%	3.92%
<b>2010</b>	37.79%	7.25%	0.38%	28.24%	2.29%	7.25%
<b>2015</b>	38.43%	8.3%	0.44%	27.07%	2.18%	6.99%
<b>2017</b>	36.19%	8.17%	0.39%	25.68%	1.95%	6.23%

Fig. 6.9

From this we can see that the youth wings added together have accounted for over a third of Labour's MPs since 2010. This is not as high as the percentage of SPD MdBs seen in chapter four but is still a significant block. As UK MPs have a lower turnover rate than Members of the Bundestag there may simply be a delay in how quickly individuals move through.

The Labour Party youth wings have less prestige and fewer resources than the JUSOS, which may also have an effect. This is an important distinction. The biggest source, Labour Students, is largely from ages 18 to 22. Young Labour has a cut off of 26 and the Young Fabians, which has a generally older profile than both the others, of 31. The JUSOS however is 35. This allows individuals in the JUSOS to live and breath the organisation for over a decade, sometimes for twenty years. The JUSOS also has much greater resources and political clout and is generally a deeper organisation than any of the Labour Party youth wings. All of this is relevant when it comes to understanding why the Labour youth wings, although still highly significant, are behind their German counterparts when it comes to the numbers of MPs they account for.

Additionally, the Labour Party is historically closer to the trade union movement than the SPD, including having formally affiliated unions, who are therefore better able to maintain their influence

than their German counterparts. We also therefore need to understand what is happening in the trade unions to get a complete picture of Labour's legislative recruitment.

### **5.7: The trade unions and Labour's legislative recruitment.**

The Labour Party was conceived and organised as the political arm of the trade union movement.<sup>635</sup> In its early form membership of the Labour Party could only be held by joining an affiliated union or socialist society. Consequently, the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party has been and is considerably closer than is the case with the post-war SPD and the German trade unions.

It is not surprising therefore that trade unionists have traditionally formed a large percentage of Labour Party Members of Parliament.<sup>636</sup> Rush<sup>637</sup> found that between 1950 and 1966 three quarters of Labour Party candidates came from the trade union movement. At the 1966 election 132 of Labour's 364 MP's (36.26%)<sup>638</sup> were former Trade Union employees, 112 out of 288 (38.89%) in 1970<sup>639</sup> and 134 of the 301 (44.52%) MPs elected in the February 1974<sup>640</sup> election. The trade unionists were also almost always in winnable seats. In the 1966 election the trade unions put forward 138 candidates for the Labour Party, 132 of them were elected.<sup>641</sup> In 1970 they sponsored 137, and 112 were elected.<sup>642</sup> Further as of 1974 80% of Labour MPs at least belonged to a trade union<sup>643</sup> even if they weren't former employees.

This reflected the strength of the trade union movement not just in the Labour Party but more broadly in society. However just as in Germany trade unions in the United Kingdom have been in decline. Fig. 6.10 shows trade union density as a percentage of the UK workforce from 1979 until the most recent available data in 2016.<sup>644</sup> As with Germany this decline is not in doubt.<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> For a detailed history of the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party see Minkin L. 1991. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid.

<sup>637</sup> Rush M. 1969. *The Selection of Parliamentary Candidates*. Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson.

<sup>638</sup> Ellis J. and Johnson R. W. 1974. *Fabian Tract 316, Members from the Unions*. London, The Fabian Society, p1.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid.

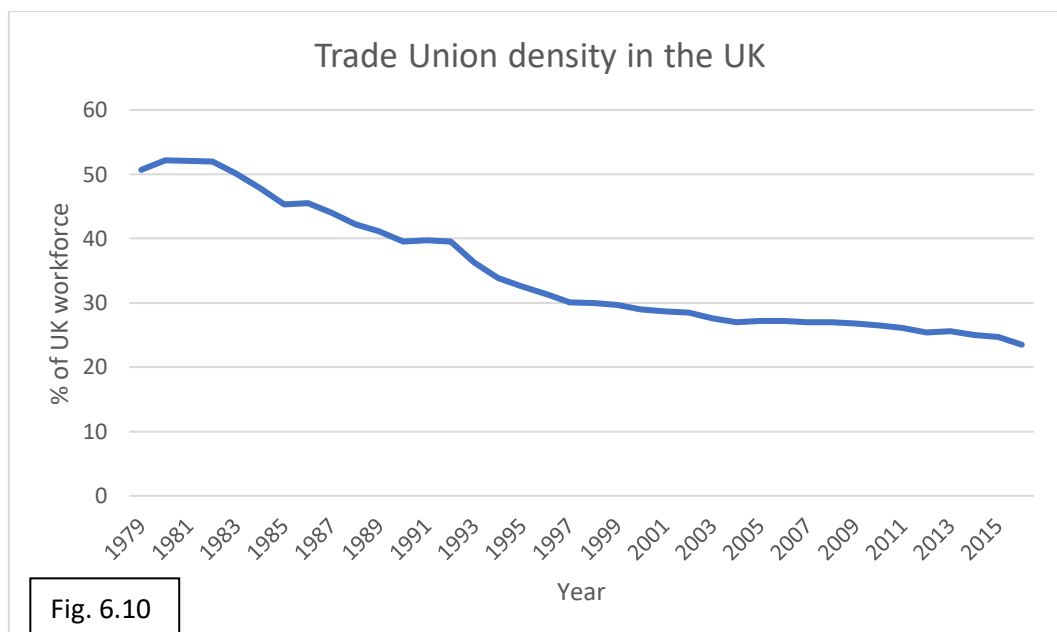
<sup>641</sup> Butler D. and Pinto-Duschinsky M. 1971. *The General Election of 1970*. London, Macmillan.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid., with some additional data from Roth A. 1972. *The Business Background of MPs*. London, Parliamentary Profile Services.

<sup>643</sup> Ellis J. and Johnson R. W. 1974. *Fabian Tract 316, Members from the Unions*. London, The Fabian Society, p1.

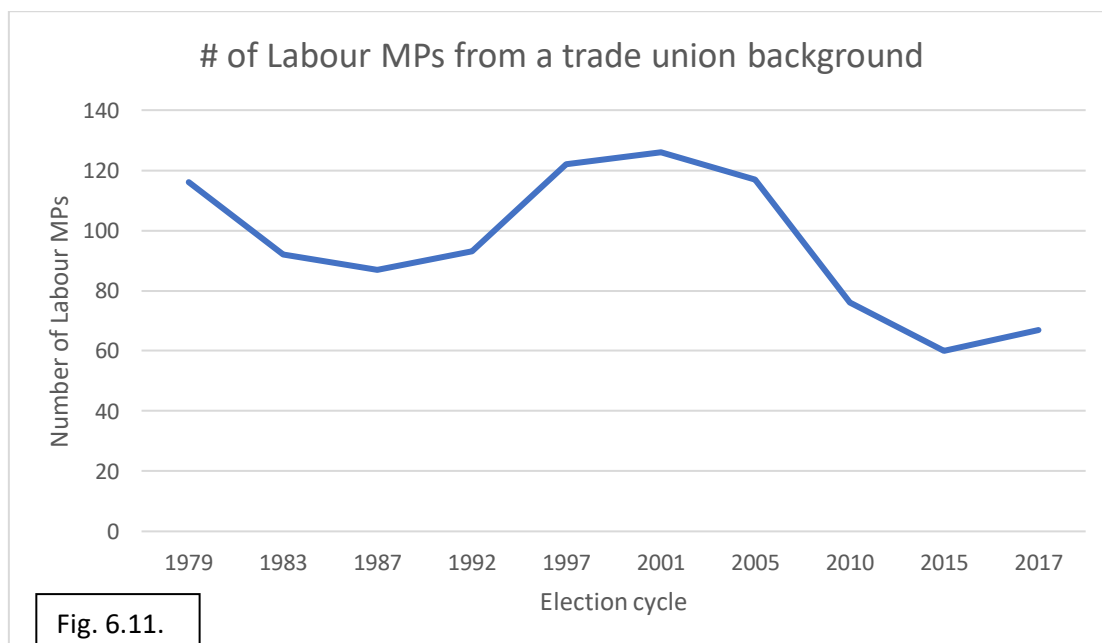
<sup>644</sup> All data from OECD figures, available at <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TUD#> accessed on 29.08.2019 16:41.

<sup>645</sup> See for example Daniels G. and McIlroy J. (eds). 2009. *Trade Unions in a Neoliberal World: British Trade Unions Under New Labour*. New York, Routledge and McIlroy J. 1995. *Trade Unions in Britain Today*. Manchester, Manchester University Press. Second Edition.



The decline in membership means a decline in membership fees, and therefore political contributions. It also means a smaller pool of potential voters unions can influence both in elections and in internal Labour selection ballots. This would be expected to translate into a decline in influence within the Labour Party, manifested over time in a decrease in the number of Labour MPs from a trade union background, in line with the second part of Hypothesis 1.

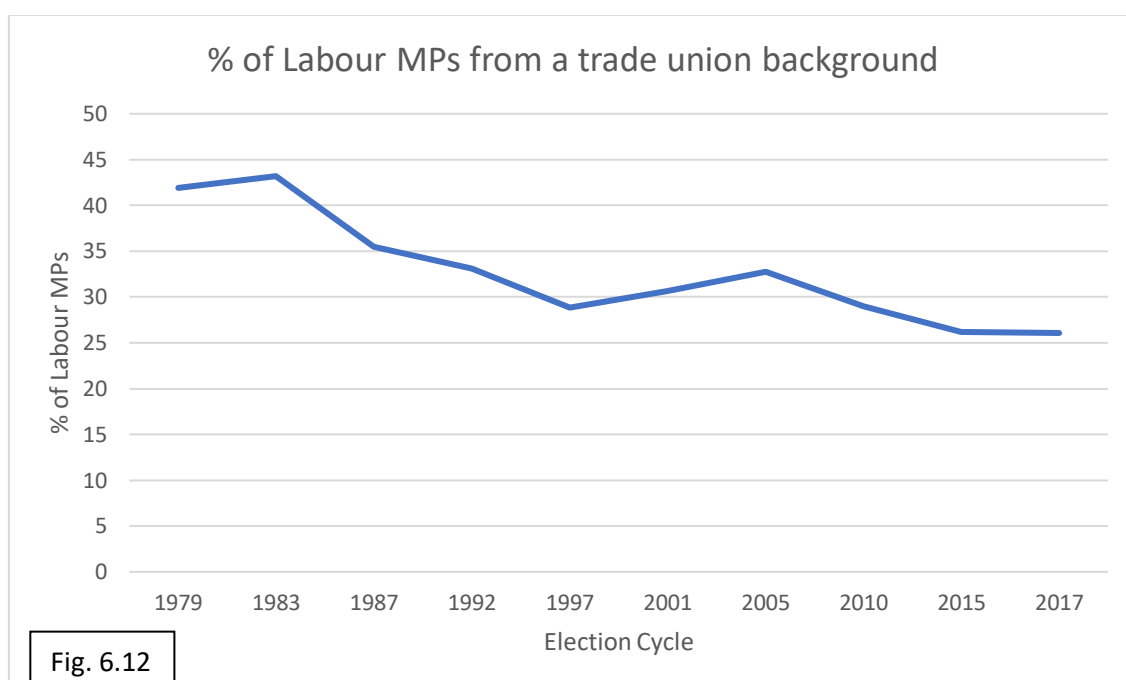
The number of Labour MPs who had a background as either an employee of a trade union or an elected union representative (shop steward) across the timeframe is shown in Fig. 6.11.



To some extent these track Labour's electoral fortunes. There are declines in 1983, 2005, 2010 and 2015, with increases in 1992, 1997, and 2017. The outliers are 2001 – when the drop in Labour MPs was very minor, and therefore the slight increase in trade union MPs is not largely out of sync – and 1987 where the number of trade union MPs dropped when the number of Labour MPs increased. What is unclear from this however is whether there has been a relative decline in comparison to the



overall number of Labour MPs. The percentages of Labour MPs who come from a trade union background is shown in Fig. 6.12.



This shows that the numbers have indeed dropped across the timeframe under discussion. It increased in 1983, and then declined until 1997, when it increased again slightly in 2001 and 2005, before again dropping in 2010 and 2015, and slightly in 2017. Overall it has declined from over 40% to only slightly over a quarter. The exact numbers and percentages are laid out in Fig. 6.13 and Fig. 6.14 respectively.

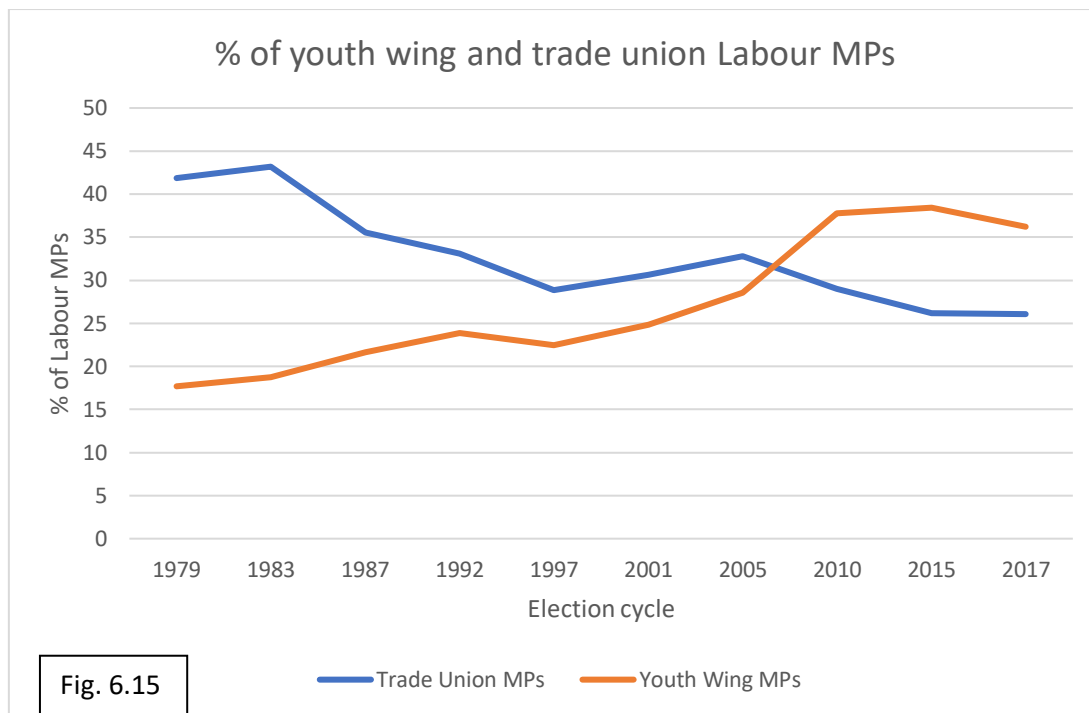
Election cycle	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997
Trade union role	116	92	87	93	122
	2001	2005	2010	2015	2017
	126	117	76	60	67

Fig. 6.13

Election cycle	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997
Trade union role	41.88%	43.19%	35.51%	33.1%	28.84%
	2001	2005	2010	2015	2017
	30.66%	32.77%	29.01%	26.2%	26.07%

Fig. 6.14

When doing a comparison of the percentages of Labour MPs who have come from a trade union and youth wing background, as in Fig. 6.15, we can see that the rise of the youth wings does seem to have come at the expense of the trade unions.



The crossover point was the 2010 election, when there was a large increase in the number of MPs from a youth wing, which then took on a larger percentage than the trade unions have accounted for since 1983. The trends are remarkably clear, with the MPs from a trade union on the decline and those from the youth wings on the rise. We can therefore conclude that the first part of Hypothesis 1 is definitively proven – that youth wings have increased as a source of Parliamentary recruitment. Further there is a rough correlation between the trends of an increase in the youth wings and a decrease in the trade unionist MPs. The question is whether this correlation is causality or coincidence.

Is trade union influence in the Labour Party declining?

One way to understand whether there is a causal relationship is to look at whether trade unionists perceive themselves to have lost influence. When asked GB08 commented that they did indeed believe there had been a decline in the influence of the trade union movement within the Labour Party:

*“The power of the trade unions is changing within the Labour Party, perhaps lessening. There’s more tension perhaps between constituency parties and the trade unions, and perhaps the trade unions are less powerful than they once were because of the changes to one member one vote and things like that.”*

*GB08, MP from a trade union background.*

This perspective was also shared by GB01, who gave particular examples of a tension that now exists between the unions and the membership in the era under Jeremy Corbyn.

*“In my lifetime it’s changed. The perception if not the reality changes under every leadership and this is when it comes down to what is the trade union movement? Because you’ve got the extremes from the FBU and CWU and RMT<sup>646</sup> within the*

<sup>646</sup> The Fire Brigades Union, Communication Workers Union and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers – perceived as being on the far left of the Labour Party. RMT is not formally affiliated but has close links to the Labour Party.

*Labour context, to Community,<sup>647</sup> and everything in between. And that's not to insult any of them because there's a reason behind their individual politics. I am really worried that certain parts of the Labour Party don't understand the value or history of the trade union movement. So as much as we've got a leader of the party who is from the trade union movement or worked briefly for the trade union movement<sup>648</sup> you've got a group of his supporters who publicly attack the trade unions and we saw that on the floor of conference. That was very disheartening because that was about who we are as a party and they don't understand that. "Who are you?" Chanting that at the trade unions? Well they're the ones who founded us, what are you talking about? So I found that really really difficult. It's very difficult, you never know what's happening in someone else's relationship unless you're in it. It's the same with Labour and the unions. You really don't know what's going on between any of them unless you're part of that conversation. So right now on the periphery, the shallow perception is that of course it's a brilliant relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party, but I think it's actually quite unsettled. The efforts to remove the unions from the trigger ballot process, the chanting at conference, all of those things. From a personal, political perception, given that I am the political voice of the trade union movement, I find that very unsettling."*

*GB01, MP from a trade union background.*

It is unlikely that the attacks described by GB01 on the institutional roles of the trade unions within the Labour Party would happen if their influence was at the heights it was in the 1970s. This coupled with GB08's outright statement that the influence of the trade unions within the Labour Party is lessening demonstrates that the influence, and therefore their ability to get their own people selected as candidates has declined in tandem with their declining numbers.

The examples used by GB01 also suggest that the trade union influence within the party is declining in ways other than just the selection of candidates. This would fit with the findings from Allern and Bale<sup>649</sup> which indicate that the relationship between the unions and the Labour Party has become less a case of shared values and more transactional since the New Labour era of Tony Blair. This also fits with the research of other scholars such as Hill.<sup>650</sup> GB08 also referenced a sense of "mutual frustration" in the New Labour era between the party and the unions.

*"The relationship between Labour and the unions is one of mutual frustration probably! So probably during the Labour government of 97 – 2010 it felt like it was a relationship of frustration and disappointment on the part of the unions. The things that were achieved were incredible and delivered a huge amount for union*

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<sup>647</sup> The smallest of the 'general unions' formed by a merger of the Iron and Steel Trade Federation and the National Union of Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trades in 2004. Community is often perceived as being the most Centrist of the contemporary Labour affiliated trade unions and was often the union of choice for political advisors, Community is sometimes known in the movement as the "SPADs and steelworkers" union.

<sup>648</sup> During the 1970's Jeremy Corbyn worked as a researcher for the National Union of Tailors and Garment Makers, then did the same job for the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU) and then became an area officer for the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE).

<sup>649</sup> Allern E. H. and Bale T. 2017. *Left-of-Centre Parties and Trade Unions in the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford; Oxford University Press.

<sup>650</sup> Hill E. R. 2018. *It's not what you know, it's who you know: What are the implications of networks in U.K. politics for electoral choice?* Doctoral dissertation; University of Manchester.

*members, but there was always frustration that it wasn't everything that we wanted. Now I think it's a bit different."*

*GB08, MP from a trade union background.*

Despite this however, it should be noted that the unions retain a high level of institutional influence within the Labour Party.<sup>651</sup> They collectively hold 50% of votes at the Party Conference and have the largest block of delegates on the Party's National Executive Committee. They are also the largest funders of the party and they control who can be nominated to stand for leader and deputy leader of the party. This gives them far greater sway than their German equivalents. Nevertheless, the data presented here shows that their influence has declined, at least in so far as it pertains to their ability to get their preferred choices selected as prospective parliamentary candidates in winnable seats.

This would be expected to create a vacuum as the party still has a functional need for a flow of qualified potential candidates. This vacuum, the numbers suggest, has been filled in part by the affiliated youth wings, in particular by Labour Students. In consequence it is likely that Hypothesis 1 is correct in the case study for the Labour Party.

### ***5.8: Controlling for other factors – local government, party staffers and the rise in graduates in society.***

This section will look at other potential factors which may have a bearing on the rise of youth wings as origin points for Labour MPs. First it will look at two other potential recruiting grounds – local government and party staffers – and then it will look at the rise in the number of graduates in society and consider what bearing that has on the above data.

When considering the two other possible legislative recruitment grounds – local government and those employed by the party or elected politicians – there were difficulties in getting data for local government service of the MPs as this was also not recorded in any central database. Some figures included this in their entries in Who's Who,<sup>652</sup> but others did not, and this was therefore an unreliable source for this purpose. As such this thesis was unable to perform a quantitative analysis. However, one interviewee did comment on the topic.

*"You've had parties parachuting candidates – again left and right, and the Tories as well – people who they know, into seats over and above people who are local worthies, and I don't say worthies in a disparaging sense. For example, how many council leaders are there now in Parliament? Certainly, of sizeable authorities? It's a limited number and they're mainly in the older part of the spectrum. It used to almost be de rigueur that even if you were doing other things you spent some time in local government."*

*GB09, MP from a trade union and youth wing background.*

This would seem to indicate that those with experience of local government have declined as a source of recruitment for Labour MPs: but is only one comment from one perspective. Therefore, this thesis

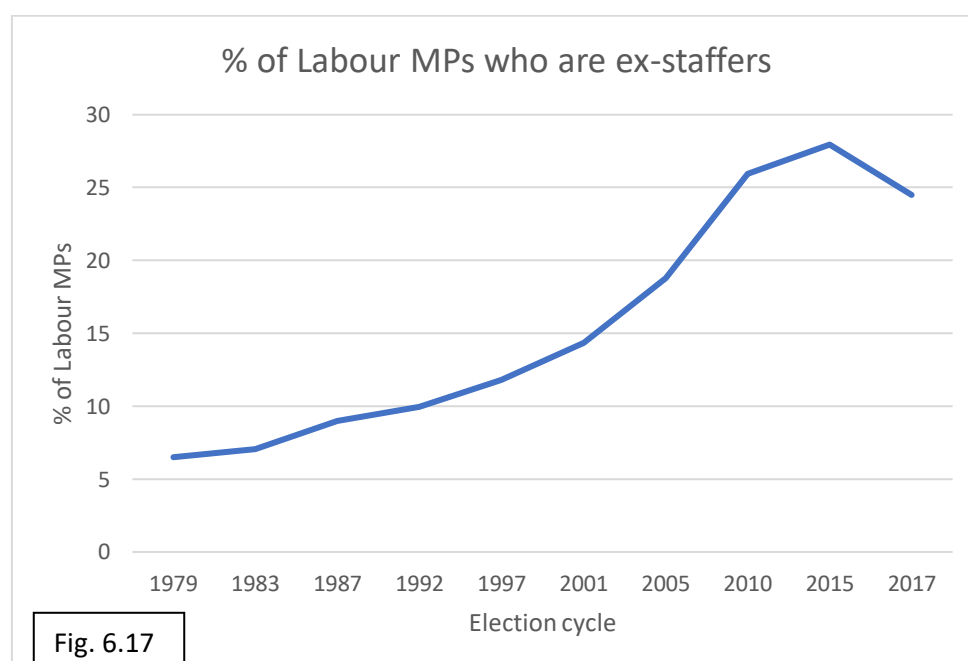
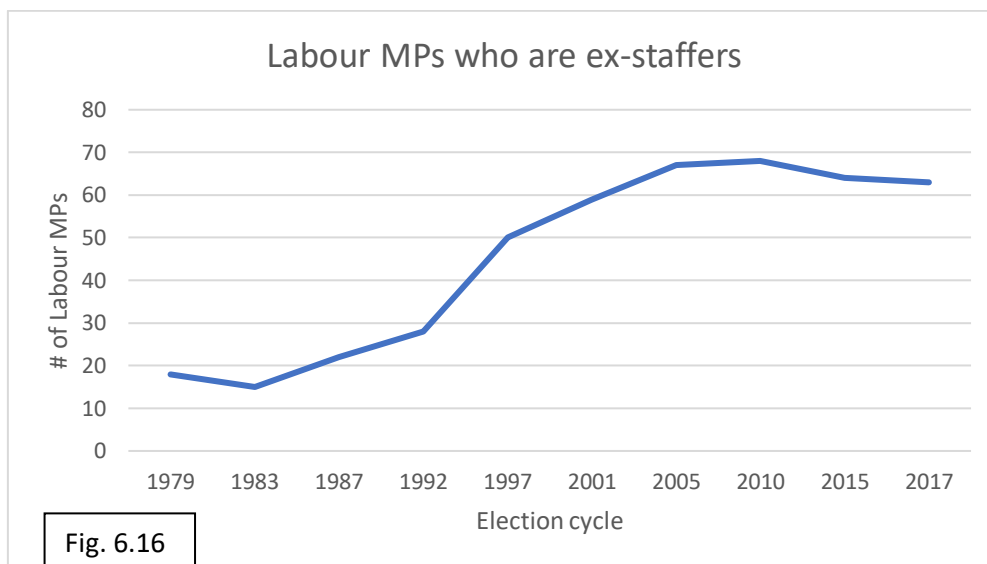
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<sup>651</sup> See Allern E. H. and Bale T. 2017. *Left-of-Centre Parties and Trade Unions in the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford; Oxford University Press and Minkin L. 1992. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>652</sup> Who's Who invites subjects to fill out their own entries, it is therefore up to them what information they include.

simply does not have the data to make any definitive statement with regards to whether local government has changed as a source of recruitment.

With regards to those who have been employed either by the Labour Party directly or by elected representatives of the party however this data is recorded by Who's Who and can therefore be analysed. The results are laid out in Fig. 6.16, with the percentage figures in Fig. 6.17.



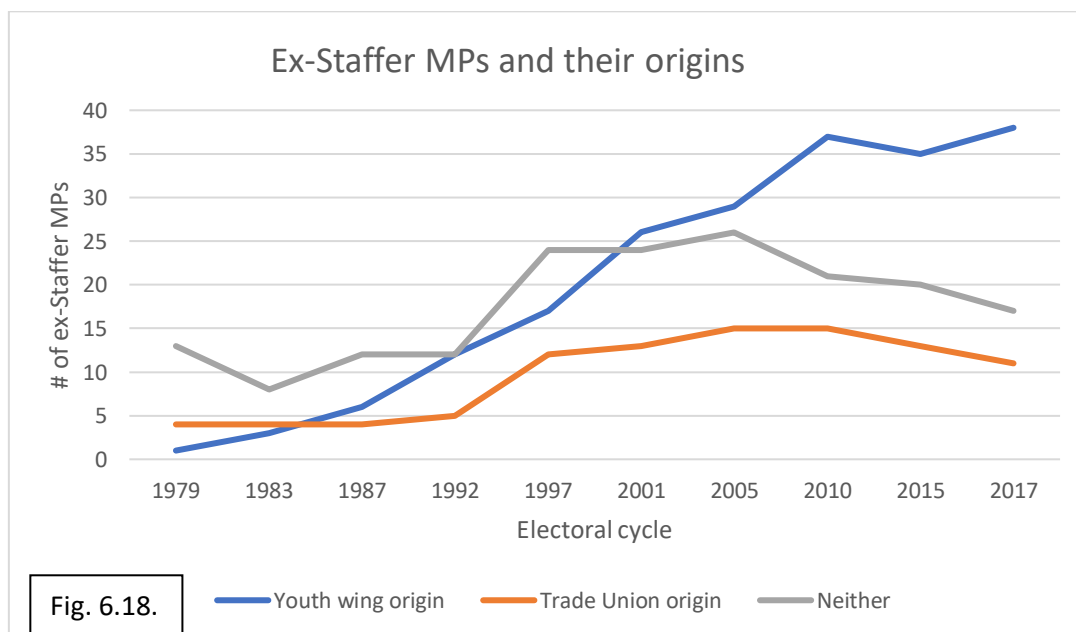
We can see from this that there has been a dramatic rise in the number of Labour MPs who have previously worked as either an employee of the Labour Party or as a staffer for an elected Labour Party representative. This can range from being a secretary or caseworker in the office of a local MP up to being a special advisor (SPAD) in the leaders office or even Number 10 Downing Street during the time when Labour was in government. In some cases these are individuals who worked for trade unions who were seconded to the Labour Party for specific purposes and timeframes, usually in relation to increasing the party's capacity during an election period. Others came from the youth movement to work for the party or its representatives:

*“There seem to be as many people who’ve say, worked for members of Parliament who end up in those roles [Parliamentarians]. I wouldn’t criticise them for doing that because I think a lot of the time people end up doing those jobs because they’re interested in being involved with the party so it’s sometimes a bit unfair on them to say they’re career politicians because I mean they’ve done that and worked on quite a low wage actually for quite a long time as a caseworker or something because actually they want to improve people’s lives really.”*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

The interesting phrase here is ‘they’re interested in being involved with the party’. There has been an expansion in the numbers of staff employed by both the party and its elected representatives as politics has professionalised. Therefore, people who would have been involved with the party on a voluntary basis previously are now being employed in a paid role by the party or an elected representative. This is a large part of the political ecosystem in which individuals earn a living from politics. This suggests that the increase in the number of MPs who had previously worked as a member of staff is down to the increased professionalisation within politics.

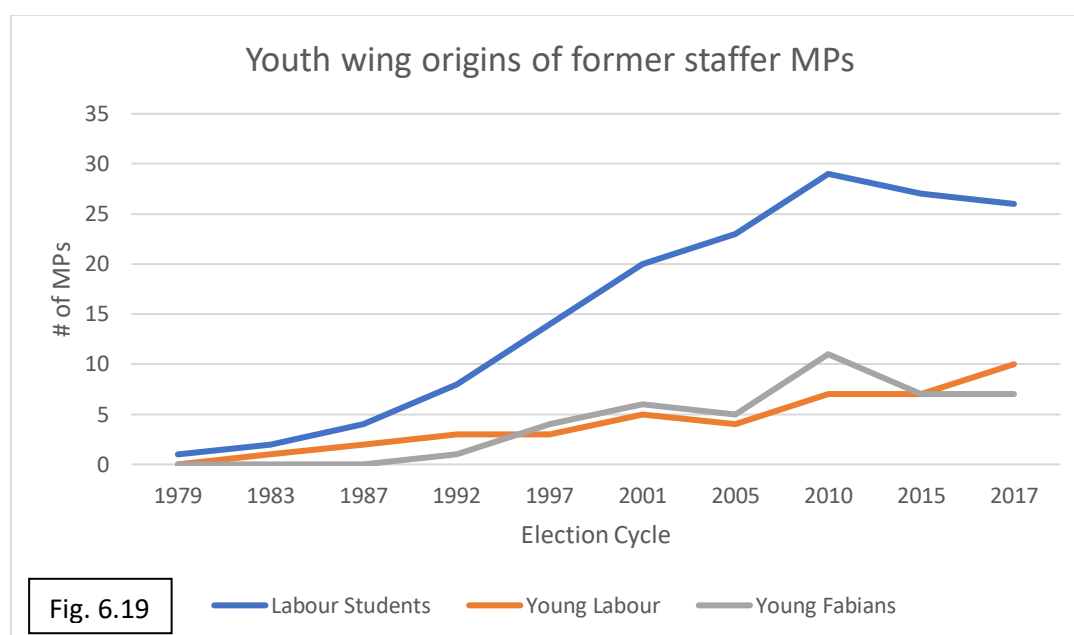
This concept asserted by this thesis that individuals are coming from university into these political jobs from University and then on to electoral politics fits with the data here and is explored further in chapter six. Fig. 6.18 shows the number of ex-Staffer MPs and their origin point, either in one of the youth wings, in the trade unions, or neither.



From this we can see that since 2001 the majority of MPs who had previously worked either for the party or for an elected representative had come from the youth wings originally. Although the numbers have increased for all three origin points it is far more marked for those from the youth wing, in particular since 2010. This supports the hypothesis that service as a staffer or party employee is more frequently an intermediate step on the career paths of contemporary MPs than an origin point in its own right, with the role forming part of the political ecosystem which recruits out of the youth wings as well as the trade unions.<sup>653</sup> When broken down into the individual youth wings in Fig. 6.19

<sup>653</sup> There was also some crossover. Prior to 1997 no former staffer had both a youth wing and trade union role in their background. In 1997 there were 3 who had both, in 2001 there were 4, in 2005 there were 3, in 2010

the picture is similar to the overall one, with Labour Students dominating the scene ahead of both Young Labour and the Young Fabians.



This is further evidence that Labour Student's is the dominant youth wing in terms of the origin point for those who move first into the political ecosystem and then become Parliamentarians and provides quantitative data to support the statement that individuals who are 'career politicians' – that is those who move into elected office having worked in a political role – often become politicised and start out on that journey at university.

Controlling for the increase in tertiary education.

Since the greatest increase is amongst those with a background in Labour Students it is possible that the increase in youth wing MPs is related to the increase in UK tertiary education. In other words, the increase in former Labour Students in the party's Parliamentary ranks could simply be because there are now more graduates in UK society.<sup>654</sup>

In 1960 the UK had just 24 Universities.<sup>655</sup> A further 13 were already in the process of being granted their charter,<sup>656</sup> before the Commission of Lord Lionel Robbins report<sup>657</sup> recommended that the UK's

there were 5, in 2015 there were 4 and in 2017 there were 3. This shows that unions are becoming more a part of that ecosystem rather than just an origin point, something discussed further in chapter six.

<sup>654</sup> Jobbins D. 2013. UK higher education since Robbins – A timeline. *University World News*. Published on 01.11.2013. Available at: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20131028123008296> accessed 21.03.2020 13:33.

<sup>655</sup> Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, London, Durham, Newcastle, the colleges of the University of Wales, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bristol, Dundee, Exeter, Hull, Leicester, Nottingham, Reading, Queen's Belfast and Southampton. Taken from Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> Sussex (1961), Keele (1962), East Anglia (1963), York (1963), Lancaster (1964), Essex (1964-65), Strathclyde (1964), Kent (1965), Warwick (1965), Heriot-Watt (1966), Salford (1967), Stirling (1967) and Ulster (1968). Taken from Ibid.

<sup>657</sup> Robbins L. 1963. *Higher Education: Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins*. London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/robbins/robbins1963.html>

10 Colleges of Advanced Technology also become Universities.<sup>658</sup> At the same time more than 30 degree-awarding non-University institutions – the Polytechnics – were created.<sup>659</sup> A second and much greater expansion happened following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992<sup>660</sup> when 34 Polytechnics<sup>661</sup> and 38 other institutions<sup>662</sup> were converted into Universities, although this was more the unification of a binary system rather than a particular increase in graduate numbers.<sup>663</sup> The implementation of the recommendations in the Dearing Report,<sup>664</sup> whilst not founding new institutions, expanded the numbers at the existing Universities.

The Office of National Statistics records<sup>665</sup> that between 1992 and 2016 the student population roughly doubled, from 984,000 to 1.87 million,<sup>666</sup> the latter figure being equivalent to a third of the 18-24 year old population.<sup>667</sup> This has been down to a steady increase, with one big jump in 2010, as can be seen in fig 6.20<sup>668</sup> below. The percentage of the UK population which has graduated from tertiary education has also been increasing, according to the Office of National Statistics, from 24% on 2002 to 42% in 2017.<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> Aston, Loughborough, City University London, Chelsea College of Science and Technology (originally part of the University of London then later subsumed into King's College), Surrey, Brunel, Bath, Cardiff (initially part of the University of Wales), Salford and Bradford. Taken from Jobbins D. 2013. UK higher education since Robbins – A timeline. *University World News*. Published on 01.11.2013. Available at: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20131028123008296> accessed 21.03.2020 13:33.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.

<sup>660</sup> Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Available at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/contents>. Accessed 21.03.2020 13:43.

<sup>661</sup> Anglia Ruskin, Birmingham City, Brighton, Bournemouth, Central Lancashire, Coventry, De Montfort, East London, Edinburgh Napier, Glamorgan, Glasgow Caledonian, Greenwich, Hertfordshire, Huddersfield, Kingston, Leeds Metropolitan, Lincoln, Liverpool John Moores, London Metropolitan, London South Bank, Manchester Metropolitan, Middlesex, Northumbria, Nottingham Trent, Oxford Brookes, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Sheffield Hallam, Staffordshire, Sunderland, Teesside, West of England, Westminster and Wolverhampton.

<sup>662</sup> Abertay Dundee, University of the Arts London, The Arts University Bournemouth, Bath Spa, Bedfordshire, Bishop Grosseteste, Bolton, BPP, Buckinghamshire New, Canterbury Christ Church, Chester, Chichester, Cranfield, Cumbria, Edge Hill, Falmouth, Gloucestershire, Glyndwr, Harper Adams, Highlands and Islands, Leeds Trinity, Liverpool Hope, Newman, Newport, Northampton, Norwich University of the Arts, Queen Margaret, Robert Gordon, Roehampton, Royal Agricultural, Southampton Solent, Swansea Metropolitan, University of Wales Institute Cardiff, West of Scotland, West London, Winchester, Worcester and York St John.

<sup>663</sup> Bathmaker A.M. 2003. The Expansion of Higher Education: A Consideration of Control, Funding and Quality IN Bartlett, S. and Burton, D. (eds) *Education Studies. Essential Issues*, London: Sage, pp.169-189.

<sup>664</sup> Dearing R. 1997. *Higher Education in the learning society: The Main Report of The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education*. London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/dearing1997/dearing1997.html>.

<sup>665</sup> ONS. 2016. How has the student population changed? *ONS.gov.uk*. Published on 20.09.2016. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/articles/howhasthestudentpopulationchanged/2016-09-20>. Accessed on 26.08.2020 12:14.

<sup>666</sup> Ibid.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid.

<sup>668</sup> Fig. 6.20 reproduced from Ibid.

<sup>669</sup> ONS. 2017. Graduates in the UK labour market: 2017. *ONS.gov.uk*. Published 24.11.2017. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/graduatesintheuklabourmarket/2017>. Accessed on 26.08.2020 12:28.





**Fig. 6.20.**

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

With such a large expansion of Universities and student numbers then you would expect a great increase in the number of graduates coming into the Labour Party. This increase in the graduate population however doesn't match up with the increase in the percentages and numbers of Labour MPs from a youth wing background, which has been steadily increasing since the 1980s, including with a jump in 1992. It is certain that the increase in graduates in society has and will increase the number of graduates in Parliament, but Parliament was not short of graduates before the big increases in higher education in the 1960s, mid-1990s and early 2000s. There have always been considerably more graduates in the House of Commons than amongst the general population, including in the Labour Party.<sup>670</sup> Fig. 6.21<sup>671</sup> shows the number of total University graduates in the PLP compared to youth wing and trade union backgrounds.

<sup>670</sup> Audickas L. and Cracknell R. 2020. Briefing Paper CBP 7483 – Social Backgrounds of MPs 1979 – 2019. *House of Commons Library*. Published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Available at <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7483/CBP-7483.pdf>. Accessed on 26.08.2020 15:32.

<sup>671</sup> Graduate percentage data taken from Ibid.

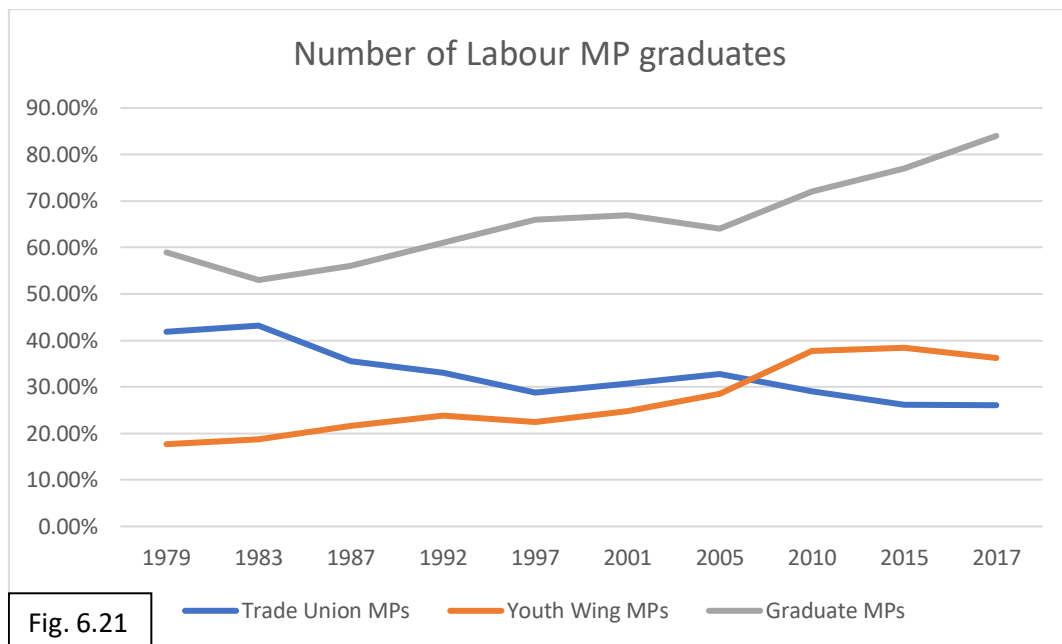


Fig. 6.21

As can be seen in Fig. 6.21 the number of graduate MPs has always been well above the population and despite some variation do slowly tick up, although a comparison between 1979, when 59% of Labour MPs were graduates, and 2005 when 64% were shows it wasn't particularly dramatic across those 26 years. The dramatic increase came in 2010, up to 72%, when the dramatic increase in those from a youth wing background also happened, although it has then continued to rise as the number of MPs from a youth wing background plateaued up to 84% in the 2017 Parliament.<sup>672</sup>

Studies by Holmes,<sup>673</sup> Roberts<sup>674</sup> and Blanden and Machin<sup>675</sup> confirm that even with the expansion of higher education those who attend university are still overwhelmingly middle-class when they arrive. Further, as Mayhew, Deer and Dua<sup>676</sup> found although the raw numbers of less affluent students has increased, they form the same proportion of university attendees as they did in the early 1960s. Further, as discussed above, studies by Brynner and Egerton<sup>677</sup> and Reay, Crozier and Clayton<sup>678</sup> both found that those from a working-class background who attend university tend to adopt middle-class sensibilities in order to 'blend in'. There is also some anecdotal evidence that Labour Students may be more active in the top universities who have a lower-still proportion of less-affluent students – all of the interviewees with a youth wing background had attended one of the 24 elite Russell Group universities. But this has not yet been explored by researchers so cannot be stated categorically.

This means that Labour Students is likely to be a highly middle-class organisation, and that those who are from a less affluent background who join are likely to adopt those middle-class norms as part of

<sup>672</sup> Ibid.

<sup>673</sup> Holmes C. 2013. Has the expansion of higher education lead to greater economic growth? *National Institute Economic Review*. Vol. 224 No. 1, pp. 29 – 47.

<sup>674</sup> Roberts K. 2010. Expansion of higher education and the implications for demographic class formation in Britain. *Twenty-First Century Society*. Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 215 – 228.

<sup>675</sup> Blanden J. and Machin S. 2004. Educational inequality and the expansion of UK higher education. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*. Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 230-249.

<sup>676</sup> Mayhew K., Deer C. and Dua M. 2004. The move to mass higher education in the UK: Many questions and some answers. *Oxford Review of Education*. Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 65 – 82.

<sup>677</sup> Brynner J.M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The Wider Benefits of Higher Education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49.

<sup>678</sup> Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

the culture. Further given that the proportions of middle- and working-class students have not changed it is unlikely that the class make-up of Labour Students has shifted unduly. The main shift then evidenced by the above is an increase in the numbers for Labour Students.

It is not surprising that as the number of graduates has risen in society, so it has risen in the House of Commons, nor is it surprising that the percentage of MPs with degrees is considerably higher than it is in the general public. As we have seen<sup>679</sup> the dominant youth wing in terms of those who become MPs is Labour Students, so again it is not surprising that when the number of Labour Students increases so does the number of graduates, in particular because as discussed above the trade unions are now also increasingly selecting graduates rather than manual workers to stand for office. However, the number of youth wing MPs has been steadily increasing, including in years when the number of graduates dropped as a percentage such as 2005 and during the period from 1979 to 2005 when the number of graduates varied but broadly plateaued. That suggests that belonging to a youth movement gives an aspirant politician an advantage above and beyond that which they gain by being a graduate.

In addition, the key point here is the politicisation process. That is to say it is not so important whether an individual holds a degree or not but that the manner in which they got involved led through the youth and student wing. It is an increase in those with the political culture of the youth wings which is important, not the number of those with a degree. And whereas the rise in the number of graduates would have occurred regardless of the youth wings as the number of graduates rose in society the specifics of how those individuals think about and perform politics is shaped by the culture inculcated by the youth wings.

## **5.9: Conclusion.**

The objective of this chapter was to investigate research question and hypothesis 1 in relation to the case study of the British Labour Party. Hypothesis 1 states that youth wings have risen as a source of Parliamentary recruitment and that this has been at the expense of the trade union movement. The data presented in this chapter shows that this contention is correct.

There has been a large rise in the number of MPs who come from a youth wing background, and that origin point is now more common than that of trade unions. When this rise is unpacked it becomes clear that the predominant origin point has in fact been Labour Students, which accounts for by far the largest number of MPs. Young Labour has increased as an origin point, but not to the same scale. Meanwhile the Young Fabians, who were irrelevant in the 1980s, have since the 1997 election emerged as a useful route into the party, and are now almost on a par with Young Labour as a route into elected politics.

At the same time there has been a drop in the number of Labour MPs who come from a trade union background. The Labour Party's historically closer relationship to the trade unions<sup>680</sup> and the slower turnover of Parliamentarians in the British system means that trade unionist MPs were dominant for longer than their German counterparts and remain a significant block within the PLP. However, the trend has been for MPs from a youth wing background to increase and trade unionist MPs to decrease, with the former overtaking the latter in 2010. Correlation is not causality, however the interview data shows that the trade unions have become less influential within the Labour Party and it is highly likely that the decline in influence leads to a decline in their ability to get their own candidates adopted in

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<sup>679</sup> See chapter five.

<sup>680</sup> Minkin L. 1991. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

winnable seats, this being one of the main objectives for trade unions when wielding influence within the party.

There has also been a rise in the number of MPs who came from a background as either a party employee or a staffer for one of its elected representatives. Some of these are trade union staff who are seconded to the party for the duration of election campaigns to increase capacity. However there has been a large increase in the number of staffers who were previously active in a youth wing. This supports the theory, also proposed by interviewees, that these roles are an *intermediate* stage in the process, a part of the political ecosystem which provides politicised individuals with a means of support and a base from which to push for selection. There are still some staffers who do not come from either background, suggesting this can also be a route into elected politics in its own right, but this has declined over recent election cycles whereas those from a youth wing have continued to increase. When broken down we see a similar pattern with those from a youth wing, with Labour Students being most important followed by the Young Fabians and Young Labour.

This links to the notions of professionalisation and an increase in the number of staffer and party employee roles as political activity became more sophisticated. This provided a career structure, with those who were active in youth or particularly student politics being able to access these roles more readily and therefore remaining within the political ecosystem. This provides benefits for selection in that party activity can be undertaken during work hours and also provides a sympathetic employer who can act as a mentor and supporter. Nevertheless, it is for most individuals not the entry point into politics, and it is those which this thesis is primarily concerned with. We can therefore conclude that hypothesis 1 is proven, and that youth wings have now overtaken trade unions as the main origin point for British Labour Party MPs.

## Chapter 6: The impact of youth wings on the legislative recruitment of the SPD and Labour Party.

### 6.1 Introduction.

Chapter four demonstrated that the youth wings of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands – and specifically the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Jungsozialistinnen und Jungsozialisten in der SPD, the JUSOS – have indeed increased as the origin point for members of the SPD Bundestagsfraktion. In the same vein chapter five show that in the case study of the UK Labour Party there has been a rise in the number of MPs from a youth wing – in particular Labour Students – and a decrease in trade unionist MPs. The question then follows, why does this matter? In other words, how has this impacted on the parties in question? In order to explore that this chapter will investigate hypotheses 2 and 3. These are:

*Hypothesis 2: The youth organisations present significant practical barriers to entry which wealthier, middle class individuals are better able to negotiate.*

*Hypothesis 3: The shift in recruitment patterns contributes to the gentrification of social democratic parties by creating a shift in the political culture of the party representatives and therefore a shift in the nature of the parties in question.*

Whilst exploring Hypothesis 2 this chapter will examine the role of the youth wings as the gateway to the political sphere. This consists of the political ecosystem of party employees, existing representative's staffers, NGOs, think-tanks, trade union staff and lobbyists and the broader politics-facilitating roles in fields such as the law, teaching, academia and in the German case the civil service.<sup>681</sup> This intermediate phase provides an advantage in selection by giving individuals access to institutional resources and networking opportunities. In the case of the SPD it also helps to explain a curious phenomenon, that some of the interviewees were surprised at the increase in numbers coming from the JUSOS into the Bundestagsfraktion, although they could not agree on whether it was because they thought that the JUSOS had always provided numbers as high as in the contemporary party or because they didn't think the numbers had got as high as the quantitative data shows.

This chapter will first set out how that gateway phenomenon functions, and will then investigate the barriers to entry imposed by the youth wings in the case studies, first the practical barriers as referenced in Hypothesis 2 such as time and money, and then other, non-logistical barriers which were raised by the interviewees, in particular around the concept of class. Also explored is the concept of the motivation for individuals to join and persevere within youth wings to the point of being in a position to push for selection. The data shows that this is largely down to a socialisation process, rather than directly due to ambition – although that is important for some individuals – or to ideological commitment.

The chapter will then ask how those barriers which have been identified continue to operate through an individual's selection journey, expanding on the existing data which suggests that work in a politics-facilitating job<sup>682</sup> in the political ecosystem does provide an advantage in overcoming barriers to entry in the formal stage of selection. The data presented here suggests that by acting as the primary

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<sup>681</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>682</sup> See for example *ibid*, Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it matters who our politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press and Ashe J. 2020. *Political Candidate Selection: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Under-Representation in the UK*. London, Routledge.

gateway to this ecosystem the youth wings can play a role in reducing barriers to entry at that selection stage if an individual overcomes the initial barriers to become active in the youth wings. From this we can conclude that the limited evidence so far presented does indicate *prima facie* that Hypothesis 2 has some merit, which would benefit from further exploration.

Having established this the chapter proceeds to explore Hypothesis 3, something perhaps more difficult to prove than hypotheses 1 and 2, as the concept of political culture is more subjective. It does this by first unpacking two assumptions within the Hypothesis. One, that the parties have seen a shift in political culture and two, that this is linked to the rise in legislators socialised into the parties by youth wings. In both case studies there is initial evidence presented here that indicates that there has been a shift in the political culture of the SPD and the Labour Party, and that these are indeed linked to the rise of the youth wings as the origin point of many MPs.

The chapter utilises the concept of ideological factionalism as a framing device to explore the political cultures of the parties and finds that in neither case is this the key divide. Rather the primary cleavage is a tension between an 'older social democratic'<sup>683</sup> and 'trade unionist'<sup>684</sup> part of the parties and a newer 'citizen-led'<sup>685</sup> and 'more academic, middle-class'<sup>686</sup> group of members. The data indicates that this latter group is often politicised at University and as such is likely to be active in the youth wings. Universities tend to be dominated by middle-class individuals<sup>687</sup> and those working-class individuals who attend tend to adopt middle-class sensibilities to fit in.<sup>688</sup>

The evidence suggests that this phenomenon also applies to the youth wings. In the case of Labour, which has three competing youth wings rather than a single body such as the JUSOS, it is found that similar experiences lead to the different youth wings having a similar political culture to each other. Further, the data shows that this political culture has started to merge into trade unionist MPs as the Unions begin to send university educated individuals to Parliament, such as trade union political officers and industrial tribunal solicitors.

Therefore, again the evidence suggests that the political culture of the youth wings has been imported to the parties' legislators and there are some tentative clues towards this being causal. This would again imply that Hypothesis 3 contains a kernel of truth to it, which is worthy of more research.

The objective of this chapter when unpacking these hypotheses is to seek to add depth to the case studies presented here and offer an interpretive first glance at the questions so raised. The findings are *prima facie* impressions based on a limited number of interviews and should be interpreted accordingly. Both hypotheses however are shown here to be valuable areas of potential future research.

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<sup>683</sup> GB03 interview with the author.

<sup>684</sup> GB01 interview with the author.

<sup>685</sup> GB03 interview with the author.

<sup>686</sup> GB01 interview with the author.

<sup>687</sup> Brynner J.M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The Wider Benefits of Higher Education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49.

<sup>688</sup> Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

## 6.2: Youth wings as political gateways.

Prior to investigating the youth wings' barriers to entry, we must ascertain where the youth wings fit into the legislative recruitment story. Wigbers<sup>689</sup> identified three routes into politics for those who eventually became candidates – an interest in specific issues leading to them joining the party, an involvement in a grass roots organisation which evolved into party political involvement and a general interest in politics, often sparked by family socialisation. All three routes can potentially lead through a party-political youth organisation, and the youth wings are often the first section of the party that an individual encounters. GB08 specifically stated that the youth wings were the starting point for some Labour MPs.

*"I'm sure the youth wings are important as a source of MP recruitment for the party, they're people's way into the Labour Party. Lots of people have done other things as well, but lots of my colleagues tell me that they joined the party through Young Labour or Labour Students."*

*GB08, MP from a trade union background.*

The SPD's youth wings are better organised than those of the Labour Party and have greater institutional strength.<sup>690</sup> This allows, in rare cases, for an individual's service in the youth wings to translate directly into a legislative career. They are however very uncommon. This was confirmed by DE01:

*"Some MdBs are coming into the Bundestag directly from the university groups. But that is a very small number of cases."*

*DE01, senior SPD Party Employee*

DE06 specified that they felt the notion of Senioritätsprinzip – the seniority principle – was the reason why it is rare for individuals to go straight from the JUSOS into the Bundestag:

*"When talking about the role of JUSOS as a recruitment base it's a political struggle for JUSOS to get their candidates into mandates. They are pushed out by the party. You have Johanna Uekermann, who tried to be a candidate at the [2017] general election. She became a candidate, but she landed on a list place where it was clear she wouldn't get into the parliament because of Senioritätsprinzip - the seniority principle. If you are already in the Bundestag you will always be reselected at the party level because you already won, and they don't want to lose an active Parliamentarian. There is also a regional quota or regional representation. So, it's hard to overcome these principles about seniority and about regional representation."*

*DE05, senior JUSOS activist.*

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<sup>689</sup> Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral Dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge, p69.

<sup>690</sup> See Braunthal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A party in power and opposition*. Second Edition. Oxford, Westview Press, p121-146.

The Labour youth wings have less influence, resources and formal powers. They do not pre-select candidates to endorse or campaign for individuals in selections in the same way, as discussed by GB10.

*“Young Labour is just seen as the youth adjunct to the main party, it’s not really seen as a big, separate organisation. You don’t have that same culture of treating it as a professional body, it doesn’t have the same stature as say a trade union which in Sweden is exactly what you have, and indeed in other social democratic parties across Europe and elsewhere, Germany for example. It’s just not got the same level of prestige.”*

*GB10, senior activist in Young Labour and the Young Fabians.*

It is therefore clear that for those legislators from the Labour youth wings and the large majority of the individuals from the JUSOS the youth wings are not a direct route into the legislature. Rather they act as a gateway, politicising individuals and bringing them into the political sphere. From there some will move through to work in the political ecosystem,<sup>691</sup> stand for local government or undertake other roles which then place them into a position to stand for national office.<sup>692</sup>

Youth wings as a political gateway.

The concept of the youth wings as gateway simply means that they act as an entry point providing individuals who are active within them access to careers which provide political benefits, allowing an individual to build the political capital necessary to push for selection. This gateway takes two forms.

Firstly, the political ecosystem itself – those working for the party, for elected representatives, in think-tanks, NGOs, charities, lobbying organisations and the political media. These roles recruit politically engaged and motivated young people. Many of these will have demonstrated their political engagement via service in the youth wings, meaning it acts in a very direct way as a gateway to jobs in this ecosystem. This route into the political ecosystem was discussed by many of the interviewees, including DE05, GB02, GB03 and GB04.

*“I think the connections you get in JUSOS, if you want to stay in politics it will help you get a job. If you want to go into a different area, let’s say physics, the connections in that sense will not help you. So, if you want to stay in politics the networking, the connections will help you.”*

*DE05, senior JUSOS activist.*

*“We’ve seen it, I mean we both know people who have been very involved, you know people would say oh that person used to be Young Labour Chair or that person used to be in Young Fabians. Obviously, the youth movement gives you profile, it gives you an opportunity if you wish to take it to do stuff. I think it does give an opportunity because it also upskills you in terms of understanding how politics works, you tend to make networks and connections with people who might be able to support you. It gives you kind of, I suppose an insight into a world that seems to be sort of bizarre to other people.”*

*GB02 – Senior activist in Young Labour, Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

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<sup>691</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the ‘Politics-Facilitating’ Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>692</sup> Norris P. 1997. *Passages to Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.



*"You get a lot of people leaving those [youth] organisations who are very well-networked, who have had more contact with senior people earlier in their careers than they would otherwise have done. So, you get a lot of them going into staff and official roles, of whom some will become MPs. But I think it's more the networks that come out of it are the key thing really. They're exposed to politicians and senior politicians earlier on in their careers and it opens doors, and some people will take those opportunities and some people won't."*

*GB03, former senior party employee*

*"I think anyone that came into student politics thinking that they're going to be an MP or thinking that it's going to make them an MP is likely to be disappointed. What I think it does though is provide opportunities, I think in terms of opportunities yeah it does, of course it does open opportunities to you."*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

Secondly those working in the broader sphere, the politics-facilitating careers such as law, education, academia and the German civil service, use the youth wings as their point of contact to the political parties. As both Cairney<sup>693</sup> and Mellors<sup>694</sup> found working either in the political ecosystem or in the broader politics-facilitating sphere enables an individual to combine making a living with generating political capital. Again, this was a common factor brought up by interviewees from both the case studies. DE01 and DE03 laid out how the process works in the case of the SPD:

*"There are a lot of new candidates who were working in the political field. They were employees of politicians. And having worked for a mayor and they become the mayor, having worked for a Member of Parliament they become the Member of Parliament when the old Member retires. That is a new phenomenon. It is really logical because the political field as a career path is very much bigger than forty years ago. In 1970 the Bundestagfaktion had 30 employees. Nowadays they have 350. In 1970 one Member of Parliament has one woman as a secretary and one man as a personal employee, and it was that way round back then. Nowadays a Member of Parliament has 10 or 12 people working for them. So, the number of people who are working for politicians has increased and its only normal I think that from this increased personnel group a lot of them stand for office themselves. That is not new, but it has increased."*

*DE01, Senior SPD party employee.*

*"Every Member of Parliament has an office and what happens quite frequently is that the head of the MPs office when the MP they work for stands down then the staffer steps in. That happened for the guy who worked for Gerhard Schröder, Lars Klingbeil who is now the general secretary of the party. That was his way of getting in and this seems to be quite common these days. This is not specifically for the SPD, you see this in all parties, the former staffers of the Members of Parliament*

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<sup>693</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>694</sup> Mellors C. 1978. *The British MP: A Socioeconomic Study of the House of Commons*. Farnborough, Saxon House.

*becoming MPs. This book I just read had the CVs of these people and that seemed to be a very common way."*

*DE03, MdB from a trade union background.*

The key point here is the route through this political ecosystem has grown larger across the timeframe. In this instance both interviewees mention specifically working for existing legislators as the route. GB09 when discussing the Labour Party concurred and also mentions working in the NGO / Charity sector:

*"It's an interesting topic, the shift in where MPs are coming from with the youth and student movements in particular. It's part of the tertiarization of politics, the notion that you need to have done some form of tertiary education, attended university, to be in politics. You have people who just know each other through student politics and student politics became stronger. I think it's happened like this. Expansion of tertiary education and progressively therefore greater opportunity. Also, the expansion of Parliamentary staffs. That created more opportunities for people to be assistants, and that created a career structure for people to maintain themselves. Now there is a career path through that and then to go and work for say the leader's office. Short money provides funding then for people to move up and work in the Leader of the Opposition's office. And then electoral politics. The people from the youth wings, a lot of them go and work in the NGO sector. Again, a lot of them and their big offices, and all their career structures are based in London. They come down, they work in the charity or NGO sector. This is very big business, it means they've got facilities, offices and all the rest of it from which they can conduct their activities. Again, not new. That was true in the 70s, but it was emerging at that stage. Now it's just rampant."*

*GB09, MP from a youth wing and trade union background.*

This maps out that the Labour youth wings, in particular the student wing<sup>695</sup> act as a gateway to a job in a political ecosystem formed of Party staff, NGOs and charities.

With remarkable consistency then interviewees in both case studies viewed the youth wings as a gateway to further opportunities within that political ecosystem. The relevant point here is that these roles are intermediate stages, not origin points in and of themselves, with the youth wings acting as gatekeepers to bring individuals into the political ecosystem from which candidates are drawn.<sup>696</sup>

This intermediate stage may also help to explain a curious phenomenon. Whereas the interviewees from the Labour Party case study recognised that the youth wings were an origin point for legislators, those from the SPD held very different perceptions as to the scale of how many MdBs came from a background in the JUSOS.

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<sup>695</sup> This also concurs with the data showing Labour Students as the dominant youth wing, see chapter five.

<sup>696</sup> See Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233, Mellors C. 1978. *The British MP: A Socioeconomic Study of the House of Commons*. Farnborough, Saxon House and Norris P. 1997. *Passages to power: Legislative recruitment in advanced democracies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

## The rise of youth wing origin SPD MdBs: a hidden surge?

Interviewees from the SPD case study had different perspectives of how important the youth wings had been as a source of recruitment, with all of them agreeing that it was a route into politics and an important one but different perceptions as to the scale. DE01 believed that the JUSOS was the main source of MdBs but felt that this had always been the case:

*“Of course, the JUSOS is a huge source of parliamentarians. But that’s also not new. Helmut Schmidt was the first chairman of Social Democratic Students after the Second World War. And Gerhard Schröder was chairman of the JUSOS in 1978, 79 or something like that, and so on. It’s not new. Not new at all. I think we forget that most of the politicians we know from TV were active in the JUSOS when they were young, it’s normal. JUSOS were always a big source, in the 60s, the 70s. In the 60s it was the same, in the 70s it was a little bit less because of 1968 and the revolts. Andrea Nahles was Chairperson. Lars Klingbeil, our general secretary, was on the board, at the federal level. Our Minister for the Environment, Svenja Schulze, has been Chairperson of JUSOS in Northern Westphalia. And so I am sure you will find a lot of JUSOS functions in the biographies of our leading politicians.”*

*DE01, senior SPD party employee.*

DE01’s view was however contradicted by other interviewees. DE02 felt the JUSOS was an important source but estimated it accounted for background of around 30% of the MdBs in their Land group, and that this was similar to the numbers coming from the Trade Unions:

*“The JUSOS is important as a source of Parliamentarians but it’s not the only way. There is a need for some different ways of socialisation of people who come into the Parliament. But you need these people who have the political skills they learn in the JUSOS. I think the numbers have stayed the same since the 90’s. In my Land party group, it’s a small number out of the overall total<sup>697</sup> who have a JUSOS socialisation and we have a lot who come from trade unions. I don’t know how it is in the groups of the other Länder. Maybe you’ll get the impression from other interviewees that something has changed. A lot of young women come from the JUSOS because we want to be more female and more youth oriented. We have some young women in the group here in Berlin coming from the JUSOS but it’s not representative. My impression is that about thirty percent of our group have a trade union background and the same for the youth wing.”*

*DE02, MdB from a JUSOS background.*

The most likely explanation for this however is simply that the numbers coming from the youth wings are unevenly distributed across the different Länder. DE02 may well be correct for their own Land group (the data was not separated by Land) but that other Länder groupings have much higher numbers of former JUSOS representatives, so this is not necessarily contradictory to the quantitative findings.

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<sup>697</sup> DE02 gave exact figures for the numbers in their Land grouping, however for reasons of maintaining confidentiality they have been replaced with the formulation used here “a small number out of the overall total”.

Alternatively, it may also be that the intermediate stages are more obvious than the origin point. In other words, individual MdBs may be known as someone who came through as a party staffer, even though they did become socialised into the party through the youth wings. DE03 asked to see the quantitative data and commented that they believed it was correct, but that many didn't come directly from the JUSOS:

*"I think your figures are roughly right, but there is some overlap between JUSOS and the trade unions. So, the gap might be slightly smaller. I don't think that many came directly from JUSOS because not that many Members of Parliament are under 35. But the people who are selecting recruit less out of the trade unions, that has got less over the years, distinctly less. The selection process has shifted a long way from the unions and its more from the people who are in the youth organisations."*

*DE03, MdB from a Trade Union background.*

There is disagreement then amongst interviewees as to whether the numbers had changed, but DE01 and DE03 agreed that the contemporary picture was correct. DE02 disagreed but only for their Land group, and it is to be expected that the quantitative picture would differ from region to region. The debate then was whether the JUSOS had always been as big a part of the picture as now. The suggestion then is that the rise of the JUSOS seems to be in some respects a 'hidden' surge, perhaps masked by the intermediate stages which individuals go through. More research would be required to explore this further, but it is an interesting nuance to the data we have here.

#### Ambition or socialisation?

The motivation of an individual to seek public office plays a decisive role in the selection process,<sup>698</sup> even if it is a difficult one for academics to study.<sup>699</sup> Wigbers<sup>700</sup> identified three routes into politics for those who eventually became candidates and it has already been noted that these routes can all lead through the youth wings. But what motivates an individual to take up one of these routes?

There are many possible reasons why someone might want to join a politically affiliated youth wing, but there is a key distinction for this study which is do they join with the aim of becoming an elected representative or not? In other words, is it a case of ambitious individuals joining youth wings to gain an advantage, or do they join for other reasons and become socialised into the political ecosystem and then electoral politics?

Existing research suggests that political ambition is not the most common motivating factor. Norris and Lovenduski's<sup>701</sup> found that only 13% of Labour members would even be willing to stand for public office, never mind actively seek it. Rather, Bale, Webb and Poletti<sup>702</sup> identified multiple motivating factors, such as support for specific policies or looking to oppose another parties policies, attachment to the parties principles or leadership, for altruistic reasons of supporting the democratic process,

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<sup>698</sup> Fowler L. L. 1993. *Candidates, Congress and the American Democracy*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.

<sup>699</sup> See Czudnowski M. 1975. Political Recruitment, in Greenstein F. I. and Polsby N. W. (eds) *Handbook of Political Science*. Reading, Addison-Wesley and Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>700</sup> Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral Dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge, p69.

<sup>701</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 171.

<sup>702</sup> Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. *Footsoldiers: Political Party Membership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Abingdon, Routledge.

because of the influence of friends or family, to socialise with like-minded individuals. They did however find that for some the primary motivation was to benefit their career or to seek to become an elected politician, but this group is a small percentage of those who join political parties. In the specific case of the Labour Party Bale et al<sup>703</sup> found that only 2.13% joined to further their career, and only 2.52% joined seeking to become an elected politician.

The evidence from the interviews with the current members of the youth wings concurs with this finding. The interviewees, both in the case of the Labour Party and the SPD, identified many of the same factors, particularly social groups and looking for a politicised peer group.

*“Some of it is just that they’re politically very interested, and they want to go to events where they can talk about politics with people who know about politics. Some people do it because they want a career in politics, and they think that that’s the way forward. Some people do it because they want a friendship circle that is political. But mainly I think it’s the common interest, there’s just this feeling sometimes in society more broadly that people aren’t engaging politically so they want a hub of like-minded individuals they can get involved with. And some people just like debating.”*

*GB02, senior activist in Young Labour, Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

*“I think people get involved in the Young Fabians for three reasons. First, they have a genuine interest in the Fabian ideology, Labour history and the policy-making process, so they want to learn more. You have a second group who, it’s a very helpful platform professionally because it gives you very unique networks. You get to rub shoulders and talk to and network with very high-profile speakers and young people who tend to work in professions that are hard to break into such as public relations, working in Westminster or governmental organisations. It’s very good for other professions such as if you want to work in the law, work as a barrister, so it’s very attractive for those people who are thinking about their careers and forwarding their careers. Then you have a third type of people who go into it because in fact they see it as a pathway to get more involved in politics, to potentially develop a platform where they could move further, stand for Parliament, stand as a councillor.”*

*GB06, senior activist in Labour Students and the Young Fabians*

*“The reason why I joined basically was because I think I became political very young but didn’t find a way to express that at school because people of my age weren’t that interested in talking about politics. I wanted to get involved in anti-racism work but I didn’t see any opportunity to do this at my school. And then I met some JUSOS actually at an event for politically interested people and they said I could do anti-racism work with them, so I was just yes sounds great and I went to a couple of their events and I liked it and I joined, and I have been a member of the SPD and the JUSOS ever since.”*

*DE05, senior JUSOS activist.*

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<sup>703</sup> Ibid. p79.

*"I was quite young when I became a member of the party and the JUSOS. It was a choice to do this, but on the other hand it was also because my parents are members of the SPD since the early 1970s, since Willy Brandt. So I was raised in an environment where social democratic topics and politics were discussed. I experimented with different organisations without joining but going to meetings sometimes, more specialised organisations. But then some friends of mine got into community work at JUSOS and I joined too."*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

Both Bruter and Harrison<sup>704</sup> and Bale, Webb and Poletti<sup>705</sup> found however that those who engage in high-intensity activity and get very involved in the parties are largely motivated either by personal ambition or, more commonly, by becoming integrated into a local social network. The evidence from the interviews however is that the individuals motivated from a sense of personal ambition, who join with the specific intention of becoming an elected representative, do often not achieve that aim.

*"I didn't go into student politics thinking 'Oh I want to be an MP so I'll get involved in student politics because that will be a way to become an MP' to me that's not how it works. It's certainly not why I got involved in student politics, I can't think of anyone who went into it thinking I'm going to become an MP, and I think the ones who think that are the ones who won't become an MP, to be perfectly honest."*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

*"I think there are a small number of people who might try and do youth politics to get a political career, but I don't think they have a lot of lasting power. Because there's so much that you have to do where if you're into that kind of gratification for want of a better word, there isn't really a lot of it around. A lot of the activity of politics is talking to people on the doorsteps day after day, taking up their issues, sometimes having to deal with quite upset people and a lot of people who aren't really in it to change the world get ground down by that pretty quickly and don't last for very long. I think unless you have a passion for it you're not going to last."*

*GB05, MP from a youth wing background.*

This, alongside the findings of Bruter and Harrison<sup>706</sup> and Bale et al,<sup>707</sup> would imply that what is driving an individual to get further involved in the political sphere and to keep working within the party is not ambition but rather a sense of being socialised into the party and then becoming more active.

*"There's a socialisation process. People tend to be involved in the movement for years before becoming Members of Parliament. Most people I know have been involved for a very long time in one way or another before entering Parliament."*

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<sup>704</sup> Bruter M. and Harrison S. 2009. *The Future of our democracies: Young party members in Europe*. London, Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>705</sup> Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. Social Networkers and Careerists: Explaining High-Intensity Activism Among British Party Members. *International Political Science Review*. Vol. 41 No. 2, pp255 – 270.

<sup>706</sup> Bruter M. and Harrison S. 2009. *The Future of our democracies: Young party members in Europe*. London, Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>707</sup> Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. Social Networkers and Careerists: Explaining High-Intensity Activism Among British Party Members. *International Political Science Review*. Vol. 41 No. 2, pp255 – 270.

*Student politics is a way of getting involved in the first instance, and a way of getting younger people involved."*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

*"I think what happens is when you're active in politics, often it becomes a big part of your life, it takes up many hours of your time and then you see an opportunity to go to the next level by becoming a parish councillor for example or a city councillor. I think that most people who become MPs or councillors didn't join to become MPs. Some of them might have, to be honest, but I think that most people join and then they enjoy it and they get interested in maybe housing policy and then they think oh wow as a city councillor I can do a lot on housing policy so that's what I'm going to do next. And then elections come up and people are looking to fill the list and then you get asked or you decide yourself to go for it. I think it is often feeling like a kind of natural progression from being active and just wanting to change something to then making the next step to becoming a politician. Ambitious people come in and feel it's hard and they go."*

*DE05, senior JUSOS activist.*

Both the findings from this thesis and from the findings of researchers such as Bruter and Harrison,<sup>708</sup> Norris and Lovenduski<sup>709</sup> and Bale, Webb and Poletti<sup>710</sup> suggest that the main driver of an individual getting more involved having joined a political party is to be integrated into a social network. These motivational factors may of course also overlap and intertwine. An individual who wants to be well-thought of by their peers in the party may also have some elements of ambition and have some ideological motivations as well.

This section has identified the motivation for why an individual may want to get further involved to the point of standing for election but being motivated is a necessary but insufficient condition to generating the political capital necessary. The other condition is the logistical and practical wherewithal to perform those activities. The first section already discussed the concept of the youth wings acting as a gateway to a political sphere, and that this was of benefit to selection because it gave them access to resources and networks which aided them in overcoming the barriers to selection they faced. The next section will therefore take as its focus those barriers and the context in which they exist.

### **6.3: Barriers to entry.**

The barriers to entry to the youth wings fall into two categories, practical ones, in particular time, money and (as with the JUSOS) the timing and at times the location of meetings. There are also non-practical, or conceptual, barriers, such as the internal motivation to undertake the hard graft needed to gain the necessary political capital – the 'grind' alluded to in the previous subsection on ambition

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<sup>708</sup> Bruter M. and Harrison S. 2009. *The Future of our democracies: Young party members in Europe*. London, Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>709</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>710</sup> Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. *Footsoldiers: Political Party Membership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Abingdon, Routledge and Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. Social Networkers and Careerists: Explaining High-Intensity Activism Among British Party Members. *International Political Science Review*. Vol. 41 No. 2, pp255 – 270.

or socialisation. Another one raised by the Labour Party interviewees, but not those of the SPD, was class, or perceptions of class. Some individuals raised this as a potential barrier to the youth wings, but other interviewees saw it as a barrier to selection which the youth wings help to overcome.

All of these barriers, practical and conceptual, are not however something which an individual gets over once. They persist throughout the selection journey, as an individual moves through the political ecosystem and also in the formal selection process as found by Wigbers,<sup>711</sup> Norris,<sup>712</sup> and Norris and Lovenduski<sup>713</sup> as well as being identified in the data for this study.

This section will therefore explore practical and conceptual barriers to entry in the youth wings, and then analyse how those barriers persist through the recruitment journey including the selection process. Many of the practical barriers remain an issue at the formal selection stage, but there is some evidence from the interviews that the youth wings can help individuals overcome some of the conceptual barriers of the formal stage.

Practical barriers to entry in the youth wings.

The primary practical barrier to entry that was raised by those in the youth wings both in the case of the SPD and the Labour Party was time. Political activity requires a significant investment of time, in the form of campaigning, holding meetings, discussing policy, the production and dissemination of literature, the organisation of events etc, all of which takes up time. This issue was raised by interviewees across both case studies.

*"You need a lot of time to be politically active, if you want to have a career in the private sector you have to concentrate on it, you have to work 60 to 80 hours a week during your 20s and 30s, and if you want to have a family, you won't have the time to be active in a way that leads to a political career."*

*DE02, MdB from a JUSOS background.*

*"Time and money is a huge thing. If you're working a job and not at university, or even if you're at university and working a job, you do need an excessive amount of time to be involved in politics at a youth level. Often I find those that are most successful at youth level, I mean elected to certain positions or getting to very senior positions, are those who either did a job in politics or a think-tank or for an MP or are working for a trade union, so that if you do live outside London you can take half a day off to get to your meeting or you can go to a meeting and turn up to work a bit later the next morning. Whereas if you have a very demanding job or you have a job without enough money to pay for transport – there's a huge amount of practical barriers. Huge amount."*

*GB06, senior activist in Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

The issue here identified by both DE02 and GB06 is essentially the 'opportunity cost' of political activity. That is to say that the time spent on such activity detracts from work or family time. In this respect the ability of the youth wings to act as a gateway to the political sphere is both a positive and

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<sup>711</sup> Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge.

<sup>712</sup> Norris, P. 1997. *Passages to power: Legislative recruitment in advanced democracies*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

<sup>713</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press



negative for working-class individuals. If they can get sufficiently involved to use the youth wings as a stepping-stone to a politically involved career, where youth wing political activity is seen as an aspect or extension of their work, then they can in essence combine work hours and political hours.

However, for those not working in the political ecosystem it wasn't just about the number of hours that had to be spent undertaking political work. Interviewees also mentioned the times of the week when those hours fell. Most political activity takes place in the evenings or at weekends, which can exclude those who don't have a 9 to 5 work pattern or who have caring responsibilities in the evenings or at weekends. Others may have studies during the week and be working in the evenings and/or at the weekend to earn enough to support themselves.

*"When you work in the public sector you begin work at 9 o'clock and end at 5 o'clock and then you can go home and at 7pm you can go to a party evening. Those with shift patterns or caring responsibilities are excluded. It's a giant problem, giant problem."*

*DE02, MdB from a JUSOS background.*

*"The time we hold events has come up before. It's come up when we have kind of big open days or conferences on the Saturdays and some people have said I work on a Saturday, it might be that they're funding it as a postgraduate or they have shift work and they can't make it. We try to make it accessible by doing our events late in the evenings, that's why our events are at 7 but then again you've got issues around people being able to get home, if you're from a working class background you might be reliant more on for example buses which take longer to get home, so yeah I think there are definitely still barriers."*

*GB02, senior activist in Young Labour, Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

Therefore, in order to be involved in youth wing activity – or indeed party activity more broadly – a professional work pattern of 9 to 5 and a lack of caring responsibilities, or the ability to share caring responsibilities, are vital. It also means those who have to work over-time or multiple jobs will suffer. There is therefore a class element to this, in that those who can earn enough in a 9 to 5 workday to support themselves have a distinct advantage. However, money in and of itself was only mentioned as a barrier by the interviewees from the Labour case study.

As with the JUSOS none of Young Labour, Labour Students or the Young Fabians require any additional joining fee in addition to the membership fee of the parent organisation, the Labour Party or the Fabian Society. Additionally, both organisations offer concessionary rates for young and student members. However, there are other financial costs involved with playing an active role in a youth wing.

*"There are barriers, if we consider trips or we consider conferences, and how accessible they are to people. There are bursaries and things but they are quite limited still. It's something I've come up against, I've worked really hard to try and make things accessible but we do have some events where we ask for payment because they're fundraisers etc and I know we've had lots of discussions about kind of, European delegations. And it is something I've found very difficult because there are events that we put on as a consequence of being affiliated to other organisations which I do think are exclusive. They exclude people who don't have the income, we had one the other day and it was £100 to go on some seminar somewhere, but you had to be fully funded, you had to have a job that would give*

*you that flexibility to have the time off, you'd have to not have other commitments. That would be a barrier."*

*GB02, senior activist in Young Labour, Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

*"With Labour Students if you want to go to the conference, I mean some money is provided to people, lots of people obviously don't live in the area where the conference is so they provide some money, and the student's union would provide some, but not always. So, I would say money could be an issue."*

*GB07, senior activist in Young Labour, Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

Both GB02 and GB07 identified that the financial issue is not around involvement in local structures but rather it is with the big set-piece events such as youth or student conference or delegations abroad to other organisations - both Young Labour and the Young Fabians are members of the Young European Socialists and send delegations to YES events, for example. Given the importance placed on networking by interviewees in the sections above it is likely that these big set-piece events which attract existing MPs are one of the prime times and locations where this networking takes place, and therefore this barrier impacts on an individual's ability to network with those gatekeepers.

Given that the money cost is identified as being at big set piece events rather than locally by the UK interviewees one potential reason why money may be more of a barrier for those in the Labour Party youth wings and not for those in the JUSOS may be the more devolved nature of German politics. In Germany there are opportunities for young activists to engage at the Land level. In the UK, in contrast, politics is very centralised in London – an extremely expensive city to. Therefore, transport and accommodation costs may be much higher in the UK. This is however speculation and would require some additional research to explore.

These barriers may also not be equal across time and in the UK case across the three youth wings, however. Those in the JUSOS Hochschulgruppen or Labour Students, being at university, will have more time and more flexibility with that time. However, they may have lower incomes or need to spend additional time working in shifts to earn money. On the other hand, those active later in the JUSOS, which goes up to 35, or in the Young Fabians with an older demographic up to 31, are more likely to be in full-time work and therefore have more income but less time. Further JUSOS, Labour Students and to some extent Young Labour are active in all areas of Germany and Britain respectively, whereas the Young Fabians are highly focused in London, placing geographical restrictions in terms of the time and cost of travel for their members who do not live in the capital. We can therefore see that the strength or relevance of each barrier can vary at different times in an individual's journey, depending on their prevailing life circumstances.

These barriers – time, timing and money – are all ones which more affluent individuals are better able to navigate by their practical or logistical nature. However, interviewees also raised other barriers to entry which are not based on logistics.

Other barriers to entry to the youth wings.

Interestingly, when it came to non-practical barriers to the youth wings there was a divergence between the two case studies. In the case of the JUSOS one interviewee mentioned the difficulty of sustaining internal motivation. The case of the Labour Party youth wings class and to some extent race and gender were raised. In both cases there was only a small amount of data presented – with the exception of class all the issues were raised only by one interviewee each – and therefore this must be considered pieces of evidence which identify potential barriers which should be further studied.

The barrier not to entry to the JUSOS but to a long and active career that generates political capital towards a selection bid is internal motivation. This also links somewhat to the conversation around ambition vs socialisation above, in that the interviewees identified that those who lack internal motivation leave because of the difficulties involved. DE06 described a career within the JUSOS as 'hard work' and identified this as a reason why some individuals don't stay involved.

*"You feel a little bit like Sisyphus rolling his stone up the hill and it's all very, very small steps and you're fighting for some policies, you're fighting for these for ten years or something and sometimes you ask yourself 'is it worth it?' but yeah it is. It's not an easy thing. It's not always fun and you won't always win. This is a euphemism, you mostly lose. But sometimes you change something. Over the years you change a lot. But it's not like you are going to the JUSOS and you are being the hero and you change everything, no. I have to disappoint you because it's hard work sometimes."*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

The kind of hard work identified here can be difficult to sustain over the length of time required to produce enough political capital to go on into the political ecosystem or to elected positions without a high level of internal motivation. It was also hinted at by GB04 and GB05 in quotes already discussed above and Bale et al<sup>714</sup> have found that those who engage in high-intensity activity require a high level of internal motivation from either personal ambition or a social network. All of this means that it is likely that there is something here which requires further investigation.

In contrast, during interviews with those from the Labour Party youth wings several respondents raised other barriers which could be termed cultural barriers. That is to say they are barriers which relate to the culture of the youth wings and whether an individual feels comfortable in that environment – race, gender and in particular class. GB02 and GB10 both raised class as a barrier to entry, emphasising the middle-class nature of the youth wings:

*"I have a middle-class upbringing, so I suppose that class has always been something that I've always known was a barrier because my family were all very much working classes who got out of it to some extent, is it a barrier in the youth movement? Yeah I suppose it is."*

*GB02, senior activist in Young Labour, Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

*"It is seen as something of a middle-class pursuit. In the sense that fundamentally party politics as a whole tends to be seen as a middle-class pursuit because it's people who actually have the time or the inclination or a sense of where they want to be in the future, and the time and space to think about that and consider that. I would say that one of the barriers would be that particular kind of mentality and structure, kind of the conceptualisation of it."*

*GB10, senior activist in Young Labour and the Young Fabians.*

GB06 also discussed class as a major barrier to entry for the youth wings and went into detail as to why those from a more working-class background don't feel comfortable within the more middle-class

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<sup>714</sup> Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. Social Networkers and Careerists: Explaining High-Intensity Activism Among British Party Members. *International Political Science Review*. Vol. 41 No. 2, pp255 – 270.

environment of the youth wings. They make particular reference to the ‘language’ of politics which middle-class individuals learn at home but which is off-putting for those who don’t:

*“One barrier that is not spoken about, but people are aware of, is class. Class is a huge barrier to entry. When I got involved in the youth wings it was very clear to me that a lot of those that were involved were very middle-class. Upper middle-class. Or they were working-class, but they were putting on a very, kind of, posh middle-class accent and trying to blend in. And often if you’re working-class, you come from a background where politics wasn’t spoken at the breakfast table daily, you didn’t have Radio 4 on in the morning, you may not be comfortable with certain things. When you come to an environment where everyone seems to know an MP, everyone seems to have an uncle or someone who is an MP or someone who is a councillor or significantly involved, it makes you feel out of place. It’s definitely a recurring factor. I think another barrier is the language of politics. In the Labour Party we often speak in another world, we have Labour-speak. So many acronyms, so many words that mean other things. I remember hearing the word faction for the first time and wondering what the heck that meant. Why are we talking about factions? That’s something you get in a video game. So, the language of politics is off-putting. And people never really adapt their language or think about if someone is new to politics. So that can be off-putting for someone who is involved for the first time. If you’re young, you’re working-class, you don’t understand that language, and then you go to an event and no-one is helping you get involved – there’s attrition, you just leave.”*

*GB06, senior activist in Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

This indicates that working-class individuals have to go through a socialisation process – described by GB06 as mimicking their middle-class peers – in order to access the opportunities presented by the youth wings. Reay, Crozier and Clayton<sup>715</sup> found that working class students were underrepresented at Universities, even more underrepresented at elite universities, and that they often faced a pressure to conform to middle class norms and identities. They found that this means that even those who are coming from a childhood spent in the lower levels of social affluence are absorbing middle class sensibilities at University. Similarly, Brynner and Egerton<sup>716</sup> and Hanley<sup>717</sup> found that this mimicking takes place in working-class individuals who attend University, a similarly middle-class environment, and this would have obvious crossover with Labour Students, but GB06 doesn’t differentiate and is specifically referring to ‘the youth wings’ - plural. This is also relevant to why the shift to Parliamentary recruitment from those who are first socialised into politics at university produces a gentrification effect.

As discussed in chapter one this thesis will not discuss in great detail issues around gender or ethnicity. These did not directly form part of the research questions and the thesis does not have the framework or research design to analyse the topic of race or gender in depth. In consequence neither the research questions nor the questions in the interviews were geared towards those issues. However, GB06 raised ethnicity and gender as potential barriers organically:

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<sup>715</sup> Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. ‘Fitting in’ or ‘standing out’: Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

<sup>716</sup> Brynner J.M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The Wider Benefits of Higher Education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49.

<sup>717</sup> Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

*"I think the last barrier, which isn't so much of a barrier as it was, I think the massive racial disparity is a massive problem. In the youth movement, it has got a lot better, at the moment we have women who are often dominating leadership positions which is good, but in terms of the membership it is still very male. It's still very much white, Caucasian, and middle-class. And if you're an ethnic minority, or a woman or a religious minority, it can feel very difficult if there's no-one like you there. If you don't think the space belongs to you. As a result you may not be inclined to come to an event again."*

*GB06, senior activist in Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

More data is needed before the role of ethnicity and gender in the youth wings can be understood,<sup>718</sup> however they are characterised by GB06 as being a similar barrier to class in that a lack of diversity can make an individual feel they don't belong. GB06 does state that this is improving within the youth wings. This does however indicate that these are barriers to entry.

The evidence then shows *prima facie* that these barriers can prevent an individual from a less affluent background from being actively involved in the youth wings. Some of these barriers are practical, in terms of time and the times of the week in which that time demand falls, and in the UK case money. Others are related to the internal motivation of the individual, and in the case of the Labour Party youth wings class and 'fitting in'. There is also a suggestion of race and gender as a potential issue in the Labour Party case, but all of these contentions require more digging to say with absolute confidence that they are proven.

We can therefore say that the data presented here is contributing evidence towards the contention that Hypotheses 2 is correct. It is therefore supporting the idea that the youth wings do present barriers to entry which more affluent individuals are better able to navigate, albeit with the caveat that the evidence is limited and requires more research to confirm. This chapter will therefore move the discussion forward and investigate how these barriers sustain or diminish through time and what other, potentially interlinked, barriers are present at the moment of an individual actually pushing for selection.

#### Practical barriers to entry for selection.

Finding a job in a politics-facilitating career allows an individual to build political capital as part of their paid work, reducing the cost both in time and money for generating support that can later turn into a selection bid.<sup>719</sup> Some of those roles can also provide institutional support such as printing leaflets, graphic design or those in the party or unions can even provide contact lists. Therefore, if service in the youth wing leads to one of those roles then they may reduce the existing barriers to selection.

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<sup>718</sup> For a discussion on the impact of race and gender on the formal selection stage see for example Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Davidson-Schmich L. K. 2006. Implementation of Political Party Gender Quotas: Evidence from the German Länder 1990-2000. *Party Politics*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 211-232; Mackay F. 2004. Gender and Political Representation in the UK: The state of the Discipline. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 6, pp. 99-120; Audickas L. 2016. 'Briefing Paper SN01156 – Ethnic Minorities in Politics and Public Life' *The House of Commons Library*. Published on 15.06.2016 Available at <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01156> accessed 08.12.16 11:14 and Geddes A. 1995. The 'logic' of positive action? Ethnic minority representation in Britain after the 1992 general election. *Party Politics*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp.275-285.

<sup>719</sup> See for example Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233 and Mellors C. 1978. *The British MP: A Socioeconomic Study of the House of Commons*. Farnborough, Saxon House.

Equally however, they may introduce new barriers into the system in that the barriers to involvement in the youth wing then become barriers to selection. This subsection will explore this dichotomy from a practical perspective; the following subsection will discuss the same issue from the perspective of other barriers.

In both case studies the main barrier to entry, just as with the youth wings, was the time it takes to be politically active, as well as the times of the week in which those fall. In particular, in the SPD case, the fact that being active in the party to the point of being able to push for selection require time to be spent on that rather than on work, or requires a career which accommodates those time demands.

*“Since there are only a few lines of work from which you can be constantly active in the party our perspective is very narrow. We are talking about the life of workers, of those with little income, single parents – but we don’t know them very well. It’s a milieu we don’t know very well but we want to make policies for these people and that’s a gap.”*

*DE02, MdB from a JUSOS background.*

*“We discussed it some days ago, and all of us agreed that to serve on the city council or to try to be a candidate – it feels like a sacrifice. Because we all have our studies, our work, and we’d have to leave that. It’s really hard for many people. Maybe it’s one reason why the only people going into these mandates are those who are not that established in their career or in their workplace.”*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

The same issue came up in the Labour Party case study, in particular time and the benefits of having a career and life circumstances which accommodate the time demands of political activity. In addition to this in the UK case money was also raised as a problem, and information on which winnable seats were likely to come up as available. GB03 summarised the key barriers from their perspective.

*“Time and money are probably the biggest barriers for selection. Doing a full Parliamentary selection process could run over a period of several months. If you’ve got your ear to the ground, you know what’s coming up you might have been involved for a long time before that. Now that’s one thing if it’s your constituency or one relatively close to you, but if you are going for a selection elsewhere in the country, that can be hard. People will be limited in how much time they can take, and it will be reasonably expensive, so really most people can only really go for one or two selections, if that. That’s the maximum. The other thing it’s linked to, one of the other barriers, is probably knowledge about when it’s going to be. Generally, the best chance of selection has been to know it was coming and to start cultivating the seat in advance. So prior knowledge, money and time are probably the main barriers to entry for selection.”*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

GB05 agreed with these three issues of time, money and local knowledge as posing barriers to entry for selection to stand as an electoral candidate and emphasised the addition of caring and family commitments as being things which reduce the amount of time an individual has to spend on activities which generate political capital:

*“In terms of the practical barriers, it is a big time commitment. I think caring responsibilities, I know of one person who was pregnant during a selection process and had their first child, and I think maternity leave helped them fight their election but not their selection. Traditionally funding has been an issue, there are quite a few different mechanisms to help people though with that, so Labour Women’s Network for example will give grants to women candidates. But if you’re able to go around and talk to people that can compensate for glossy leaflets. As a candidate I spent quite a lot less than some of the other candidates, I think because my stuff was targeted and reflected some local knowledge it was fine. One thing realistically that is a barrier is just if people haven’t had any engagement or been an officer, things like that, I think that does help you during a selection because you understand the system more, you know people better.”*

*GB05, MP from a youth wing background.*

GB05 does however state that local knowledge can reduce cost by allowing targeting of material, the same issue of information that was identified by GB03. GB05 also gives examples of engagement or being a local party officer, which roles also require an extensive time commitment over an extended time frame. If this engagement can be done in ways which are part of paid employment this would allow an individual to overcome some of this issue. GB08 confirmed this, arguing that resources, including time, are a key barrier but that working for a sympathetic organisation – in their case a trade union – do allow an individual to overcome those:

*“Resources is definitely one of the barriers. Much more so now: at the time that I was selected I’m trying to remember how many members there were who had a vote, probably 400, maybe less, about 300. If you were seeking selection now there’d be 1200 members or so, if you were seeking selection in some local parties it would be many more than that. I’m sure we did have email back then, but it wasn’t the thing, paper communication was still really important. I was seeking selection nearby to where I lived so that cost wasn’t there. Time was though. Having time to do it was a big benefit from working for a sympathetic organisation that provided a bit of flexibility. When you’re seeking selection being part of an established trade union does help you have those connections. Its access to connections and its access to resources. And there’s also something about authenticity, it gives you a story or an authenticity. The Labour Party is founded on the trade union movement so it’s a natural thing to call on that when making your pitch to members. But access to resources was hugely important at the time. Say you want to do a leaflet that you’re going to send out to all members, well if you’re in a union regional office and there’s someone who can design a leaflet for you and print it for you and it not cost you anything, things like that are hugely important. And being able to get time off, and get union nominations, all those things are hugely important.”*

*GB08, MP from a trade union background.*

Trade unions are one example of an organisation which can provide ‘access to connections and access to resources’ as GB08 identifies, but working for the party, an existing elected representative or a politically-concerned think-tank, NGO or charity can also provide those benefits.

This data then suggests that the barriers to entry which could prevent people from being involved at the youth wing stage continue throughout the selection journey. Specifically, the time commitment to being involved, and the times of the week in which that falls, continue to be a major impediment, discouraging if not outright preventing those with caring responsibilities or shift work from being involved. This means that those working in the political ecosystem have access to support in terms of time and resources which puts them in a privileged position for selection.

In terms of the youth wings then what is shown here is that when they act as a gateway to a career in the political ecosystem, they can allow an individual to overcome some of the barriers of time and cost. It is work in that ecosystem which provides the resources, including time, to make a difference.

Other barriers to entry for selection.

There are further barriers to entry for the selection of candidates which are not based on the logistical practicalities of political activity, the main one being a conceptual barrier, a notion that politics is not for working-class individuals. This was stated outright in the case of the Labour Party interviewees.

*"It's thinking that politics is something that I can get involved in, not just something for a particular elite or anything like that. Youth and student politics is an accessible way of getting involved as opposed to going to these meetings that aren't always that accessible for newish members and there's a lot of discussion of the minutes, that sort of thing. Things tend to be a bit different in student politics, they do things in a more accessible way for people to get involved."*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

*"I would say that it is seen as something of a middle-class pursuit, to an extent. Fundamentally these things, party politics, tend to be seen as a middle-class pursuit because it's people who actually have the time or the inclination or the perception, that's not necessarily the right word, but a sense of where they want to be in the future, and the time and space to think about that and consider that. I would say that one of the barriers would be that particular kind of mentality and structure, kind of the conceptualisation of it."*

*GB10, senior activist in Young Labour and the Young Fabians.*

Both of these individuals raised this issue of a conceptualisation of politics, of politics being 'something that I can get involved in' as a barrier. GB04 further argued that youth and student politics is more accessible and therefore a way of overcoming this barrier to selection.

In the case of the SPD interviewees the evidence is less clear. Some interviewees referenced that the perception had changed towards the party being for public sector individuals or professionals, which had changed who could become an MdB. This may be evidence of the same issue of perception, of those not in those careers not considering a career in politics, or even political activity in general, as a possible option for them to pursue. This is however, largely conjecture and would require some further additional research to confirm. Nevertheless, it is included here to potentially spark interest in such a study.

*"We are exclusively now a group with a higher-level education. We have some who came from the working class, but very few. Very few come from the working class with only a basic level of education. Most of us have academic backgrounds. A lot*



*of us have been working in the public sector. The SPD is known as the party of public services, teachers, professors, scientific staff, lawyers, judges.”*

*DE02, MdB with a JUSOS background.*

*“It used to be that we would look at the factories, and we would see there is a good guy on the workers council. But these days the focus is more on people who can talk well, who can sell themselves, meaning people like teachers, lawyers, people that studied politics. A long time ago August Bebel said that we have to get teachers to come into the SPD. The Party has never recovered from that success. We have a joke amongst the heretics, sometimes the Parliament is full, sometimes the Parliament is empty, but it is always full of teachers!”<sup>720</sup>*

*DE03, MdB from a trade union background.*

A further point highlighted here is that of higher education. DE02 states outright that those getting through the barriers have been through higher education, and all of the careers mentioned by DE03 also require a degree. The evidence presented in chapter five that Labour Students is by far the most common youth wing origin for Labour MPs is suggestive of this too. This is an important indicator towards the concept that those who are more affluent – with a career requiring degree-level entry – are at an advantage when it comes to being able to undertake the levels of political activity required to push for selection.

One factor which presents a potential barrier to selection which is present in the case of the JUSOS but not the Labour Party youth wings is an element of pre-selection. That is to say, since the JUSOS push their own candidates within the SPD there is a competition within the JUSOS to feature on the lists of people that they will push for selection. The next subsection will explore this pre-selection element.

The JUSOS internal selection process.

The JUSOS have the institutional strength to push for their own policies and goals – including the selection of candidates – within the structures of the main SPD as DE06 stated.

*“I have some insight into this because for several years I have been a member of the SPD’s board in my city. That’s the playground we all play on, the JUSOS have to go there and we have to fight there for our goals.”*

*DE06, Senior JUSOS activist.*

What this means is that the JUSOS has to decide which individuals to put up or to support for selection within those structures, which introduces an element of pre-selection into the equation. The individual who can pass through the pre-selection processes of the JUSOS will have the advantage of their institutionalised support for the formal selection at the party itself. DE05 explained this process:

*“The JUSOS at the local level every time elections come up will push for their JUSOS slate to be accepted. They have a listing of who is their candidate number one, number two and so on, it’s always woman, man, woman, man or man, woman, and so on. There are internal discussions within the JUSOS, people present*

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<sup>720</sup>N.B. this a pun in German - "Manchmal ist der Bundestag voll, manchmal ist der Bundestag leer, aber der Bundestag ist immer voller Lehrer."

*themselves who want to be listed and then there is a conference when we decide on our listing. Then we push within the SPD for our set of candidates. There is a democratic process. There's a conference of delegates, the same delegates who will decide on policy positions, elect the board and so on, and they are the ones who are doing the listing. There are obviously talks beforehand. There are certain discussions who will be number one, number two, number three, number four."*

*DE05, senior JUSOS activist.*

It would be expected that those who are well-known and active within the JUSOS would be those who can gather most support from delegates to the conference. DE06 confirmed this supposition:

*"When you look at the internal organisation of the JUSOS the same seniority principles are sometimes at work as the main party. We are fighting about those principles when preparing the lists and sometimes we act similarly to the Party. But I think it's normal."*

*DE06, Senior JUSOS activist.*

Those who are most senior are, as discussed above, are those who have the time to devote to being active in the organisation. There is a further factor which is a barrier at this stage of the pre-selection of candidates by the JUSOS which is the factional conflict within the organisation. This will be discussed in more depth in the next section. What is important to note here is that there is an element of pre-selection which is formalised in the case of the JUSOS when it comes to determining whom they will support for selection in the main party. This pre-selection process is then a barrier to entry, something which an individual who wants the backing of the JUSOS needs to get past in order to secure entry to the formal selection stage of the process for the mother party.

#### Discussion.

Hypothesis 2 contends that youth organisations present significant practical barriers to entry which wealthier, middle class individuals are better able to negotiate. There is nothing in the interview data which disproves that assertion, and the evidence presented supports it in so far as it goes. This data shows that the topic is worthy of further study and provides depth to the quantitative data presented in the previous two chapters.

The data explores the journey individuals who come up through the youth wings often take to be in a position to put themselves in contention to be selected as a candidate, either in a winnable seat or in the case of the SPD sufficiently high up the party lists. Whilst for many legislators the origin point is the youth wings in Germany very few individuals can move straight from service in the JUSOS to a winnable candidacy at the national level and in the UK, there were no examples of individuals doing so. Rather for the vast majority of people there is an intermediate stage, which often leads through either the political ecosystem of party employees, legislator's staffers, NGOs or other such roles, or through politics-facilitating careers such as teaching, academia, law, journalism or in Germany the civil service.

Local structures of the youth wings are open and do not require a great deal of resources to participate in, especially in Germany with its federal system. This is to some extent true in the UK, however the larger set-piece events, which provide the best networking opportunities do involve costs. Whilst there is some support available it is not universal or necessarily adequate.

However, the key barrier to entry for the youth wings in both case studies is time. Many interviewees mentioned that being politically active within the youth wings takes up a lot of time and that this is something that prevents individuals from being involved. This means that an individual has to sacrifice time spent on professional advancement or family time. Further it is not simply the number of hours that have to be put in, but also the timing of the meetings during the week. In particular individuals who have shift work, are single parents or have other carer roles are referenced as being excluded. These are often individuals who are less affluent. In addition, the roles which are referenced as facilitating work in the youth wings are all ones which require a university education to enter.

There are also barriers that are not practical, around the level of 'grind' that high-intensity youth activists have to go through to achieve things. In the Labour Party there is also identified a middle-class culture in the youth wings, which working-class individuals need to adapt to in order to succeed, which fits with the findings of Brynner and Egerton,<sup>721</sup> Hanley<sup>722</sup> and Reay, Crozier and Clayton.<sup>723</sup> These barriers to the youth wings can prevent a less affluent individual from accessing the opportunities in the political ecosystem<sup>724</sup> that several interviewees identified as highly advantageous when pushing for selection.

Therefore, if an individual can access the resources to be highly involved in the youth wings to open those opportunities of working in the political ecosystem it can lower the barriers to entry for selection later in the recruitment journey. It does so by providing opportunities to network as part of paid employment, as well as access to advance knowledge of open seats, and providing resources during the formal selection process, in particular time and flexibility as well as money. Additionally, there is a small amount of evidence, in particular from GB04, that serving in the youth wings can also help an individual overcome conceptual barriers by making them feel that politics is 'for them'.

Further, the evidence from the data implies that these barriers largely persist through the journey to candidacy. The issue of time and timing in particular continues, means that an individual will struggle to build the necessary political capital for selection if they do not have evenings and weekends free to spend on political activity. The issue of motivation is also present, and the interviewers all confirmed the findings of Bale et al<sup>725</sup> that for the majority of high-intensity activists the move through the journey is a socialisation process, with relatively few moving through out of ambition.

The issue of time and resources is much easier to overcome for those who go through an intermediate stage whereby they are working within the political ecosystem and thus combining political activity with sufficient income to live on. These intermediates stage also masks to some within the SPD the extent to which the JUSOS has become the main mechanism for politicisation and apprenticeship-serving within the party, although this dynamic was not mentioned by interviewees from the Labour Party case study.

This helps to explain why the youth wings have increased as a source of recruitment.<sup>726</sup> The initial barriers to the youth wings can exclude an individual but they may also lower the barriers later on by

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<sup>721</sup> Brynner J.M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The Wider Benefits of Higher Education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49.

<sup>722</sup> Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>723</sup> Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

<sup>724</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>725</sup> Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. Social Networkers and Careerists: Explaining High-Intensity Activism Among British Party Members. *International Political Science Review*. Vol. 41 No. 2, pp255 – 270.

<sup>726</sup> See chapters 4 and 5.

providing access to the political ecosystem. This means that an individual who doesn't have a high level of engagement is at a disadvantage when trying to break into that ecosystem, and without doing that they are then at an even greater disadvantage in the formal selection process.

Therefore, if an individual can get past the barriers to the youth wing, that can act as a bridge to eventually get past the barriers to selection. These barriers, time and money and timing based on a 9 to 5 work pattern, privilege those who come from a more affluent background and/or work in the professions.

When also coupled with the evidence that individuals involved in the youth wings are either middle-class or have to adopt middle-class sensibilities and practices to 'blend in' as GB06 suggested and Brynner and Egerton,<sup>727</sup> Henley<sup>728</sup> and Reay, Crozier and Clayton<sup>729</sup> found this also offers some evidence towards Hypothesis 3. The next section will explore that question.

## ***6.4: Shifts in the political culture of social democratic parties.***

Having explored hypothesis 1 in chapters four and five and hypothesis 2 above the thesis will now turn to hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 2 stated that the youth wings present barriers to entry which more affluent individuals can more easily overcome. The question therefore is what effect this has on the nature of contemporary social democratic parties. This is the subject of hypothesis 3:

*Hypothesis 3: The shift in recruitment patterns contributes to the gentrification of social democratic parties by creating a shift in the political culture of the party representatives and therefore a shift in the nature of the parties in question.*

This section will unpack this question. Before this hypothesis can be tested however there are two basic assumptions which need to be interrogated. First, that the political culture of the SPD and the Labour Party has changed since the 1970s and second, that the youth wings have their own political cultures distinct from the traditional political culture of the mother parties as a whole. Therefore, this section will explore whether the political culture of the party has changed. It will investigate whether this is linked to ideological factionalism within the parties, or whether there is a starker divide between the trade unionist parts of the party and the newer members who have come into the party via the youth wings.

The data in this section finds that indeed the political culture of the parties has changed across the timeframe under discussion, and that there are different cultures within the youth wings. Further, it presents evidence that this culture is not linked to ideological factionalism but rather to a divide in what could be termed the rules of engagement of political activity, in perceptions of how politics is performed, between those from trade unionist and youth wing backgrounds. It is therefore worth recalling that this study defines political culture as those assumptions, ideas, norms, customs and beliefs found within a certain group or sub-group which has political aims or effects, maintained and evidenced in group shibboleths, self-perceptions, espoused priorities and principles of right action and interaction which govern social behaviour both within the group and towards outsiders.

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<sup>727</sup> Brynner J.M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The Wider Benefits of Higher Education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49

<sup>728</sup> Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>729</sup> Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

Shifts in the political culture of the SPD and Labour Party.

When exploring the concept of whether shifts in the political cultures of the two case study parties are linked to the rise of their youth wings as a source of legislative recruitment the first question to ask is whether in point of fact there has been a shift in their political cultures.

The evidence presented by the SPD interviewees was that there had indeed been a shift, and they highlighted different ways in which it has changed. DE01 linked it to shifts in the broader social context:

*“In the last 15 years I do not see much change but if you say between 1980 and 2018, then really the party and society has changed a lot. Because of digitalisation, globalisation, individualisation. Everything which Richard Sennett says in The Flexible Human Being, you know? In German his book is called The Flexible Human Being,<sup>730</sup> everything he says.”*

*DE01, senior SPD party employee.*

The argument of Sennett’s book is that capitalism has changed to be focused on white collar work and professions, on individuals, flexibility, risk and short-termism<sup>731</sup> and that this has had profound and negative cultural changes for modern Western societies. DE01 is then referring to a shift in the nature of individuals in German society which has the knock-on effect of changing the SPD.

Both DE03 and DE04 made similar references, but stated that it was a shift in the nature of the individuals but rather argued that it was a shift in the party membership and therefore a shift in the priorities that the SPD focused on and the nature of the party’s internal conversation that had caused this. They both identified a shift in the SPDs political culture away from the traditional focus of economic politics towards identity politics issues:

*“The thing that’s changed between 1970 and now, in that period a lot of people who were usually members, like people who were on workers councils, people who were employees not employers, lots of these people stopped being party members. That has changed the culture of the party itself. Members came from all walks of life, all industries, even pensioners and that has changed a lot. Due to the huge loss of membership the social mix within the party, and because of that the Members of Parliament, has changed a lot. People who worked in public services became dominant within the party and then dominant within the Bundestagsfraktion itself. Because of the change of the membership within the party and within the Parliament the topics of our discussions changed from sheer politics more to topical things and that changed the political culture of exchange within the members.”*

*DE03, MdB from a trade union background.*

*“The culture has changed completely. When I entered parliament, the SPD was the party of the future, of progress. It was the party of equality of life chances. Previously it was your parent’s income and status that decided what career and*

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<sup>730</sup> Sennett R. 2000. *Der Flexible Mensch: Die kultur des neuen Kapitalismus*. Berlin, Btb. This is a translation of Sennett R. 1998. *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. New York, W.W. Norton & Co.

<sup>731</sup> Sennett R. 1998. *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. New York, W.W. Norton & Co.

*what sort of life you would live. Then it was about state interference to improve life chances, with education and so on. Later on, after reunification it was about the nation-state organising the equality of life chances between East and West. Now the SPD puts a focus on social and environmental politics but if you ask people in Germany they'll say the SPD don't have an answer to the really important questions: What is my pension worth? What about healthcare and welfare? What are the chances for my children, the education of the younger generation?"*

*DE04, former MdB from a JUSOS background.*

Both DE03 and DE04 then identify a shift in the culture away from “*sheer politics*” – the bread and butter political issues of economics, life chances, pensions, healthcare and education and towards “*topical issues*” of “*social and environmental politics*.” DE03 expressly links this to a shift in the class make-up of the SPD, both in terms of its membership and of the MdBs. This shift in the focuses of the party, what DE03 termed “*the political culture of exchange*” is a shift in the cultural bias and shared fundamental beliefs of the SPD membership<sup>732</sup> - it is in short, a gentrification process. In terms of Hypothesis 3 then, the data supports the view that there has been a shift in the political culture of the SPD and that this is linked to the issue of gentrification of the party.

When it comes to the Labour Party the evidence from the interviews also supports the notion that there had been a shift, and further that this had a class basis. GB01 described the development of a ‘professional class’ of politicians and contrasted this with the working-class, which provides specific evidence of a gentrification effect.

*“Yes, there has been a shift. We’re a professional class. We went through a generation of identikit politicians. If you ticked the right boxes, if you looked or if you dressed like this, and you talked like that, then you’re going to get elected. Selected and then elected. We developed a professional class of politicians. We’ve got some working-class individuals and some constituencies know they’ve got working-class MPs but increasingly, and it’s not just in the last few years, this has been a twenty-year experiment, we’ve been seen as paternalistic at best, which made us not working class. We’re the elite trying to look after everybody. The party has always been a coalition, we’ve talked about the Fabians and the trade union movement and student politics, we’re very squarely a coalition, it’s at various times in our history which bit of that coalition has been in the ascendancy. Right now it is the elite, urban, Guardian reading liberal part.”*

*GB01, MP from a trade union background.*

GB01 in this discusses a shift to being ‘paternalistic’ taking place over the last twenty years, and talks about the ascendancy of the ‘elite, urban, Guardian reading liberal part’ of Labour’s internal coalition within the elected representatives. This shows a perceived cultural shift within Labour MPs towards that more middle-class part of the party, with a different ‘paternalistic’ political culture associated with that.

Although GB01 referred to the Parliamentary Labour Party, other respondents referred to the party as a whole. GB08 described a gentrification of the Parliamentarians, but in particular of the party membership:

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<sup>732</sup> Bale T. 1997. Towards a ‘cultural theory’ of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, p. 27.

*"The party is increasingly middle-class. If you're a Member of Parliament you're by definition middle-class are you not? Even people who have a working-class background would probably say that they've transitioned into the middle-class. The party is undoubtedly becoming more middle-class, it has become more middle-class. If I think about our membership in my constituency, we've gone from roughly 500 members to roughly 1200, probably up to roughly 1500 a couple of years back, and when you look at where the growth came it didn't come in our working-class areas. It's grown everywhere, but it's grown disproportionately in the middle-class, well-educated, higher average educational attainment wards. Undoubtedly the ward close by the university, not the university student area but the university staff one, senior public sector workers that's the one that's grown the biggest. The places that have grown the least are white working-class estates."*

*GB08, MP with a trade union background.*

GB10 also concurred, highlighting that this is the opinion both of academics such as Prof. John Curtice but also of those within the youth movement:

*"We had an event recently with John Curtice and he had a wonderful aside where he said demographically where Labour is now, it's shifting from being the party of the working man to being the party of the working academic and the only thing we could say was, as members of the Young Fabians, yeah we agree!"*

*GB10, senior activist in Young Labour and the Young Fabians.*

GB09 gave a slightly different answer, confirming that the culture had changed but with a geographical split, specifically between London and the rest of the country:

*"Yeah I would say the culture has changed. I would say you've got great regional variations though. You do have a level of political activity in London where you've got a large critical mass of these people who do seem to get out on doorsteps and all the rest of it. I think the organisational structure of the party elsewhere has eroded. The party is not as well organised now out in the country."*

*GB09, MP with both a youth wing and trade union background.*

GB04 also raised the issue of being a 'London party' but queried whether or not this was linked to the rise of student politics:

*"I do worry that sometimes we're seen as a bit too much of a 'London party', that is something we need to be quite careful of, in terms of being a bit London-centric. It would be interesting to look at of those in Parliament who have been involved in student politics where they're actually from and where they represent. Whether that contributes to being London centric or not. Vicky Foxcroft is a London MP but she's originally from the north, Gloria is a Nottinghamshire MP, Steph Peacock she's Barnsley MP, she's from the West Midlands. Jon Ashworth he's from Manchester, he's a Leicester MP. So I'm not sure that the whole student politics thing makes it a London party, you know other people who were in Parliament like Michael Dugher, he was Barnsley as well. That would be interesting to see, whether the people who've got into Parliament who were involved in student politics,*

*whether you've got a bit of a range of people or not. I don't know the answer to that. John Mann and Phil Woolas from a previous era, they're not London."*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

A point of interest here is that although the examples GB04 gives are not necessarily from, or once in Parliament don't necessarily represent, London the intermediate phases they went through were all London-based. Vicky Foxcroft was employed in the London HQ of the AEEU Union, which merged with other unions to form Amicus and then Unite. She was also a local councillor in Lewisham. Gloria de Piero was a journalist first at the BBC and then with ITV's GMTV programme based from their London Studios on the South Bank. Stephanie Peacock was the Political Officer for the GMB Trade Union, based at their national headquarters Mary Turner House in London. Jon Ashworth was a party employee based in the head office in London and an advisor to Gordon Brown in the Treasury and at Number 10 Downing Street. Michael Dugher worked as a special advisor to several Ministers during Labour's time in government, including Gordon Brown in Number 10, before becoming an MP. John Mann also worked at the AEEU Union HQ in London and at the TUC's National Education Centre, also in London. Phil Woolas also worked for the BBC and ITV, before working for the GMB, again all London-based roles.

It is an important point that the vast majority of the politics-facilitating roles which form the career path between serving in a youth wing and selection and then election are based in London, unlike historical trade union roles which would be based around the country wherever their industry was, such as mining areas or the West Midlands manufacturing areas. This would suggest that GB04's reference to Labour being seen as a London party is linked to notions of the gentrification of the party and the rise of politicians from a youth wing background, as the journey of those individuals usually leads through the capital. GB09 made this link explicit:

*"The people from the youth wings, a lot of them, go and work in the NGO sector. Again, a lot of them and their big offices, and all their career structures are based in London. They come down, they work in the charity or NGO sector. This is very big business, it also means they've got facilities, offices and all the rest of it from which they can conduct their activities. That was true in the 70s, but it was emerging at that stage. Now it's just rampant."*

*GB09, MP from both a youth wing and trade union background.*

The data from the interviews then does show that there is likely to be a gentrification process happening in both case studies. This, the evidence suggests, is happening both amongst Parliamentarians and within the party membership, and the evidence supports the view that this is changing the political culture of the party. Further in the UK, though this was not brought up in the German case study, there is evidence that this is geographically varied, and that the concept of gentrification is also linked to being a 'London Party.'

The qualitative data when put together with the quantitative data from chapters four and five suggests that this has been happening at the same time as the rise in Parliamentarians from a youth wing background and a decrease in those from a trade union background. Correlation is not however proof of causality, and the question therefore needs to be unpacked further.

One of the potential reasons for different cultures could be ideological factionalism. The following subsection will therefore discuss this possibility. Factions are organised sub-groupings within the



party. In most instances 'factionalism' refers to ideological conflict<sup>733</sup> although there can be other divisions, such as personality-based factions. The different factions within the parties could have different political cultures to each other,<sup>734</sup> and a change in the dominant faction could be one potential explanation of the shift in the party's political culture as a whole. These factions are often seen as having different political cultures to each other.

Factional conflict exists in both case study parties during the 1980s.<sup>735</sup> In the contemporary SPD, as discussed below, the JUSOS itself acts as a faction. However, in the Labour Party there has been intense conflict between different factions,<sup>736</sup> or wings, of the party in recent years. This subsection will therefore explore the Labour case study first, as the higher intensity can shed more light on the situation than might be seen in the less intense debates in the SPD.

#### Factionalism in the Labour Party.

It is important to note from the outset that the British first-past-the-post electoral system means that the Labour Party has a potentially broader ideological base than the SPD. Activists who in Germany would find their ideological home in Die Linke or the Greens are in the UK within the Labour Party. This greater scope of ideologies means that the factions within Labour are more disparate than in the SPD. GB01 and GB03 both raised the issue of the different factional groupings in the Labour Party having their own political culture:

*"Every different wing of the Labour Party has its own culture. And that isn't a bad thing because we're a broad church and we've always been a broad church. Each section is culturally very very different."*

*GB01, MP from a trade union background.*

*"I think that the culture of Labour is pretty varied really. You've essentially got a number of sub-groups within the Labour Party that have their own cultural norms that come into conflict. Some of that is political and some of it isn't."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

GB01 references 'every different wing' and GB03 mentions 'a number of sub-groups', both being a reference to factions within the party. We therefore need to understand the nature of the factions within the party and whether the differences in political culture mentioned here are relevant to the shifts in the political culture of the party. Some of this was done previously in this thesis, in chapter

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<sup>733</sup> Harmel R. and Tan A. C. 2003. Party actors and party change: Does factional dominance matter? *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 42, pp 409 – 424.

<sup>734</sup> Koelble T. 1991. *The Left Unravelling: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham NC, Duke University Press.

<sup>735</sup> See Berger S. 2000. *Social Democracy and the Working Class in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany*. London, Longman; Koelble T. 1991. *The Left Unravelling: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham NC, Duke University Press and Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico's.

<sup>736</sup> Chakelian A. 2015. Labour's warring factions: who do they include and what are they fighting over? *The New Statesman*. Published 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015, available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2015/10/labour-s-warring-factions-who-do-they-include-and-what-are-they-fighting>, accessed 09.09.2019 22:07; Pogruind G. and Maguire P. 2020. *Left Out: The Inside Story of Labour Under Corbyn*. London, The Bodley Head and Forde M. 2020. *Politically Homeless*. London, Quercus Editions Ltd.

five,<sup>737</sup> and therefore this section will not attempt to repeat the data presented there, but rather explore whether the shifting factional landscape connects to the shift in political culture.

The intensity of factionalism within the Labour Party varies. In the late 1970s, through the 1980s ideological factionalism was very strong<sup>738</sup> before being replaced by personality driven factionalism during the New Labour era with the 'Tee-Bee Gee-Bees' conflict between supporters of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.<sup>739</sup> Ideological factionalism re-emerged strongly in 2015.<sup>740</sup>

Up until the early 1990s the Labour Party had three main factional groupings – the hard-left (also called the new left),<sup>741</sup> the soft left<sup>742</sup> and what was then known as the Labour right.<sup>743</sup> In the 1990s another faction emerged, linked to New Labour.<sup>744</sup> Because of this the Labour right began to be referred to as the 'old right' or the 'traditional right'.<sup>745</sup> These four factions remain, broadly, the same in the contemporary Labour Party,<sup>746</sup> although there are other organisations and sub-divisions.

The old right and the New Labour right have in recent years worked together and have come to be collectively known as Labour's 'moderates', also referred to as the 'right' or 'centre-right' of the party.<sup>747</sup> However the organisations which represent each faction do change over time, during the 1980s the soft left was organised via the Tribune Group and prior to Jeremy Corbyn's election the main hard-left group was the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.<sup>748</sup> The strength of each faction also varies over time.

This brings us to a particular point, which is the impact on this study of the rise of Corbynism. In 2015 the hard-left figure Jeremy Corbyn was elected as leader of the Labour Party on the back of a flood of

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<sup>737</sup> See chapter five, section 5.5.

<sup>738</sup> Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico's

<sup>739</sup> Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A Study in the Politics of Labour's Party Management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press p394-5.

<sup>740</sup> Chakelian A. 2015. Labour's warring factions: who do they include and what are they fighting over? *The New Statesman*. Published 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015, available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2015/10/labour-s-warring-factions-who-do-they-include-and-what-are-they-fighting>, accessed 09.09.2019 22:07.

<sup>741</sup> See Davis J. and McWilliam R. (eds). 2018. *Labour and the Left in the 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press and Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico's

<sup>742</sup> Koelble T. 1991. *The Left Unravelling: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.

<sup>743</sup> Hayter D. 2005. *Fightback! Labour's Traditional Right in the 1970s and 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

<sup>744</sup> See Gould P. 2011. *The Unfinished Revolution: How New Labour Changed British Politics For Ever*. London, Abacus. Second edition and Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A Study in the Politics of Labour's Party Management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

<sup>745</sup> Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A Study in the Politics of Labour's Party Management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, p161.

<sup>746</sup> Chakelian A. 2015. Labour's warring factions: who do they include and what are they fighting over? *The New Statesman*. Published 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015, available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2015/10/labour-s-warring-factions-who-do-they-include-and-what-are-they-fighting>, accessed 09.09.2019 22:07.

<sup>747</sup> Ibid.

<sup>748</sup> For a discussion of the different factional organisations during the 1970s and 80s see in particular Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico's and Hayter D. 2005. *Fightback! Labour's Traditional Right in the 1970s and 1980s*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

new members coming into the party.<sup>749</sup> In 2016, 47 of his frontbench shadow cabinet members resigned in protest at his handling of the Brexit referendum, and the MPs Margaret Hodge and Ann Coffey moved a motion of no confidence in him, which passed by 172 votes to 40.<sup>750</sup> Even before this Corbyn's office had drawn up a grid of MPs ranking them on their loyalty to him which was leaked to the press.<sup>751</sup> The situation in the Labour Party from 2016 up until the end of the period discussed here has been characterised as 'factional war' driven by the Left in the Party.<sup>752</sup>

This then was the context in the Labour Party during the time the interviews for this research were conducted in 2017 and 2018. As discussed in chapter five<sup>753</sup> however the interviewees judgements of the impact of factionalism was minimal between the end of the 1980s and the election of Jeremy Corbyn in 2015. In the previous section GB01 referred to the cultural shift as a 'twenty-year experiment' and GB09 stated it was 'emergent' in the 1970s before becoming 'rampant' in recent years.

Therefore, the Labour cultural shift is not linked to factional dominance, as it has happened both under the 'new Labour right' Tony Blair and under the 'hard left' Jeremy Corbyn as well as other leaders who fall between them ideologically: Michael Foot, Neil Kinnock, John Smith, Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband. These leaders represent the entire spectrum of ideological groupings and therefore if the political culture shifted alongside the factionalism of the leadership you would have expected far more volatility. This would suggest that factionalism was not a particular driver of the gentrification dynamic referred to in Hypothesis 3 when it comes to the Labour Party.

#### Factionalism in the SPD.

The evidence from the interviews is that factionalism is also not a satisfactory explanation for the cultural shift in the SPD either. Since the retirement of Gerhard Schröder as Chancellor the SPD has had a volatile series of leaders.<sup>754</sup> This suggest that there has not been ideological hegemony for any one faction, during this time. This was confirmed by DE04:

*"The SPD has no really strong leaders at the moment, like Helmut Schmidt or Willy Brandt. At the regional level we have some, but not national. And this is not only the view of the public, it's also the view inside the party as well. This means that discussions are continued extensively, and they aren't resolved. Even if there's a ballot on an issue the debate is still ongoing. You never come to a resolution which everybody is content with. This gives the public the impression that the SPD has internal infighting, that there are differences within the party."*

*DE04, former MdB from a JUSOS background.*

<sup>749</sup> Kogan D. 2019. *Protest and Power: The Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing, p213-248.

<sup>750</sup> Ibid. p280.

<sup>751</sup> Asthana A. and Stewart H. 2016. Labour MPs hostile to Corbyn named in leaked party document. *The Guardian*. Published on 23.03.2016. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/mar/23/labour-mps-hostile-corbyn-leaked-party-document> accessed 19.03.2020 12:34.

<sup>752</sup> Gye H. 2020. Labour leadership election: Lisa Nandy claims Jeremy Corbyn allowed 'factional war' within the party. *The I*. Published on 06.03.2020. Available at: <https://inews.co.uk/news/labour-leadership-election-lisa-nandy-jeremy-corbyn-factional-war-2283196> accessed 19.03.2020 12:40.

<sup>753</sup> See chapter five, section 5.5.

<sup>754</sup> Roberts G.K. 2016. *German Politics Today*. Third edition. Manchester, Manchester University Press, p.85.

DE02 also referenced this, referring to the factional infighting as a “very diffuse situation” and DE06 who simply stated that the factions in the SPD are “very weak”:

*“Actually, I couldn’t really characterise the SPD. It’s a very diffuse situation. We are left and middle, sometimes more left and sometimes more middle but we don’t have a clear profile. The SPD never decided which way to go and we are characterised as a neither / nor party. We have two, at least two, wings, I guess we’ve more wings and sometimes the one wing is winning and sometimes the other is winning. So we have a permanent swing in one or the other direction.”*

*DE02, MdB from a JUSOS background.*

*“You have very weak factions within the party in general, within the SPD.”*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

This also suggests that the shift in the political culture of the SPD, as with the Labour Party, doesn’t map onto the shift in ideological factionalism. Therefore, again, factionalism is not a satisfactory explanation for the cultural shift suggested by the evidence described above.

What was of most interest however during the interviews that when asked about factionalism within the SPD the respondents didn’t mention ideological groupings such as the Seeheimers<sup>755</sup> or the Parlamentarische Linke<sup>756</sup> but rather they spoke about the JUSOS and the trade unions as factions themselves. Both Koelble<sup>757</sup> and Braunthal<sup>758</sup> also described the JUSOS as a faction, specifically the left-wing faction of the SPD, in their studies of the SPD in the 1980s. If the JUSOS are a faction themselves then the factionalism there may shape the different culture that is then imported to the main parties. The next sub-section will explore that, before the following sub-section examines the situation with the Labour youth wings.

The JUSOS as a faction.

The concept of the JUSOS as being their own faction was articulated most clearly by DE06, who stated unequivocally that that is how the JUSOS function within the SPD.

*“Are the JUSOS linked to any one particular faction in the party? No, no not at all. We are on our own, we are our own faction. The JUSOS has 70,000 members, most of whom are members of the party as well. So, we can proudly say we can be on our own, and this is a good thing and we can change things. Kevin<sup>759</sup> showed this.”*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

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<sup>755</sup> Kahrs J. and Viehbeck S. 2005. *In der Mitte der Partei: Gründung, Geschichte und Wirken des Seeheimer Kreises*. Berlin, Die Seeheimer e.V.

<sup>756</sup> Miersch M. 2016. ‘Über uns.’ *Parlamentarische Linke Website*. Published on 19.01.2016. Available at: <https://www.parlamentarische-linke.de/ueber-uns/> accessed 16.02.2020 17:23.

<sup>757</sup> Koelble T. 1991. *The Left Unravelling: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham NC, Duke University Press, p81 – 84.

<sup>758</sup> Braunthal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A party in power and opposition*. Second Edition. Oxford, Westview Press, p121-146.

<sup>759</sup> Kevin Kühnert, the current federal Chair of the JUSOS, who was highly prominent in the #NoGroKo campaign within the SPD against the 2018 vote to go into another grand coalition with the CDU/CSU.

However, this was also some discussion from several interviewees that the JUSOS isn't a solid block and has its own internal factions, which have changed and evolved over time. DE04 described the situation in the 1970s:

*"There were three groups within JUSOS when I joined in the 1970s, Reformers, Revisionists and Stamokaps. There was a deep conflict between the Stamokaps and the Reformers. I was a member of the Reformers. The majority in the region were members of Stamokaps."*

*DE04, former MdB from a JUSOS background.*

The reformers were the comparatively undogmatic centre-left of the JUSOS,<sup>760</sup> in contrast the left wing Stamokaps placed an emphasis on the Marxist-Leninist theory of state monopoly capitalism<sup>761</sup> and the Revisionists were also on the left of the JUSOS.<sup>762</sup> The labels have changed but these rough groupings can also be seen in DE06's description of contemporary factions within the JUSOS:

*"You have three main factions. There are the traditionalists, 'Traddies', who as the name suggests have a traditional left-wing viewpoint. They are strong in the Eastern Länder and also Bavaria, they're a loose collection of organisations working together. On a more formalised level on the left within JUSOS you have NWLZ – Network Left Centre, Netzwerk Linkes Zentrum – which is dominated by JUSOS Nordrhein-Westfalen. Quite left wing as well, slightly more centrist. These two organisations work together within the Gesamtlinke the 'total-left'. Then there is the more centrist group, they are called PL, Pragmatic Left, which is mainly dominated by JUSOS Hamburg and JUSOS Baden-Württemberg. These are the main factions. The Gesamtlinke factions are about two-thirds of the JUSOS."*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

This situation of two more left-wing groups co-operating and a more centrist JUSOS grouping being in the minority is a repeat of the factions identified by DE04 above and by Braunthal.<sup>763</sup> DE05 also confirmed this pattern:

*"The JUSOS have factions, absolutely. We have our own factions. The main divide between the JUSOS I would say is between the JUSOS left and the ones who call themselves the pragmatic JUSOS. Pragmatic JUSOS are mainly in Hamburg and Baden-Württemberg. And the rest are different forms of the left basically, there are differences but for me it was always more this divide."*

*DE05, senior JUSOS activist.*

We can see therefore that although the JUSOS does indeed have factions the left, in the two different forms of the Traddies and NWLZ are dominant within the organisation. This means that they can control the federal structures, as well as many of the Land structures outside of those identified by DE05 and DE06 as being the strongholds of the 'Pragmatic' JUSOS – Hamburg and Baden-Württemberg.

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<sup>760</sup> Braunthal G. 1994. *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition*. Boulder CO, Westview Publishing Inc. Second Edition p108-110 and p121-146.

<sup>761</sup> Ibid.

<sup>762</sup> Ibid.

<sup>763</sup> Ibid.

Overall then the position of the JUSOS and its graduates as being the left-wing of the SPD has been remarkably stable across the timeframe of this study.<sup>764</sup> Further it is very clear that this is still the position the JUSOS see themselves in.

*“Overall, the majority of the JUSOS are left wing, we have defined ourselves within our statutes as a left-wing organisation within the SPD so we clearly are defined as left wing within the SPD. We are not neutral, on the right of the party, or the middle of the SPD, we are the left wing within the SPD.”*

*DE05, senior JUSOS activist.*

With regards to hypothesis 3 and whether the youth wing culture is imported to the main party the question then is whether these internal sub-factions of the JUSOS share a common political culture with each other, or whether they are different enough that their culture is different. In other words is the culture of the more centrist Pragmatic Left JUSOS closer to the centrist groupings of the SPD as a whole, or to their young comrades in the more left-wing elements of the JUSOS. That question will be addressed further below, but first this section will explore whether the Labour youth wings also act as a faction in and of themselves.

#### Factionalism in the Labour youth movement.

The data suggests that, unlike the JUSOS, the youth wings in the Labour Party do not have the institutionalised prestige, resources and organisation to act as a faction in their own right. Rather the different youth wings are associated with different factions. Young Labour is currently seen to be associated with the left of the party, whereas Labour Students and the Young Fabians are more associated with the ‘moderates’. This was described by GB06 and GB10:

*“The youth wings are linked to factions. For example, the Young Fabians tends to be associated with the centre-left part of the party. A lot of that is historical, back in the 1990s the people involved in the Young Fabians played a role in the foundation of New Labour. Peter Mandelson,<sup>765</sup> Liam Byrne,<sup>766</sup> Tom Watson,<sup>767</sup> Jack Straw,<sup>768</sup> Ed Balls,<sup>769</sup> those kinds of figures. A lot of those involved in the Young Fabians went on to work for New Labour, or work for the Labour Party in government. A lot of them went on to become MPs who were involved in government. Labour Students historically is linked to the centre-left again. That’s because if you look at the fact that it worked traditionally within the Labour Party, it’s based at Labour Party HQ, and traditionally if you look at their ex-Chairs they’ve come from that centre-right faction. Whereas Young Labour has attracted people who are more left-wing. Even though today it’s chaired by what you’d describe as*

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<sup>764</sup> Ibid. and Koelble T. 1991. *The Left Unravelled: Social Democracy and the New Left Challenge in Britain and West Germany*. Durham NC, Duke University Press, p81 – 84.

<sup>765</sup> Young Fabians committee member, Labour’s Director of Communications 1985-92, MP for Hartlepool 1992-2004.

<sup>766</sup> Founding editor of the Young Fabians magazine *Anticipations*, MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill since 2004.

<sup>767</sup> Young Fabians committee member, President of the University of Hull Student’s Union 1991-92, Chair of the National Organisation of Labour Students 1992-93, Labour Party National Development Officer for Youth 1993-97, MP for West Bromwich East 2001-2019 and Deputy-Leader of the Labour Party 2015-2019.

<sup>768</sup> Young Fabians committee member, President of Leeds University Student’s Union 1966-67, President of the National Union of Students 1969-71, MP for Blackburn 1979-2015.

<sup>769</sup> Young Fabians committee member, Special Advisor to Gordon Brown, 1994 – 2005, MP for Normanton 2005-2010, then Morley and Outwood 2010-2015.

*a centre-left Chair<sup>770</sup> the actual institution itself is very left-wing, because they're a campaigning organisation, because they're thinking about issues more than what's happening on the ground. So, the youth wings are linked to factions definitely."*

*GB06, senior activist in Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

*"The youth wings have become more avowedly linked to different factions. Labour Students now is seen through a factional lens, it's whether or not you're sceptical of the moderate cause within Labour really. Young Labour recently have a funny position in terms of their factionalism because every member of Young Labour exec is a member of the Momentum slate, the Left slate, except the Chair. Which is a very curious position to be in. Overall, obviously at the moment the factionalism is a lot more pronounced. The Young Fabians historically have a position of non-alignment but broadly speaking the membership of the Young Fabians tends to hew towards the moderate edge of the party. It was always more of an historically moderate place. Now the Young Fabians are still more or less seen as on the right but they're not necessarily avowedly so. You still get people in the membership who are from all hues of opinion within the party but the people who actively go to events, get elected to the main roles and run the organisation all hew more or less to the moderate edge of the party."*

*GB10, senior activist in Young Labour and the Young Fabians.*

The final point made by GB10 is important, each organisation still includes individuals from different ideological groupings, but each has a dominant faction which sets the tone and controls the organisation and its resources.<sup>771</sup> It is also important again to note that the level of factionalism in the youth wings is currently very high, whereas in the recent past it was not such an important dynamic. GB04 explained:

*"Labour Students wasn't particularly factional when I was involved. We even had uncontested elections for Chair. I mean there had been factions in the past, in the very recent past to when I was involved, but my understanding was they were more personality based rather than policy based. It wasn't a left-right thing it was people had fallen out over a choice of candidate or something like that, there had been a falling out rather than a big policy debate or policy fallout. It wasn't a time when there were particular factions on things."*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

Given then that the level of factionalism has fluctuated widely across the time frame, and that which faction is in the ascendancy has also shifted,<sup>772</sup> this would suggest that factionalism is not closely related to the political culture of the Labour youth wings.

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<sup>770</sup> The current Chair of Young Labour is Miriam Mirwitch, who has also been a long-standing member of the Young Fabians national executive committee.

<sup>771</sup> See for example Cassalichio E. 2019. Revealed: How the ruling body of Labour's youth wing is tearing itself apart. *PoliticsHome*. Published 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Available at <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/jeremy-corbyn/analysis/102324/revealed-how-ruling-body>, accessed 12.09.2019 10:54

<sup>772</sup> See Golding J. 2003. *Hammer of the Left: Defeating Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Militant in the Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Politico's, Minkin L. 2014. *The Blair Supremacy: A Study in the Politics of Labour's Party Management*. Manchester, Manchester University Press and Gould P. 2011. *The Unfinished Revolution: How New Labour Changed British Politics For Ever*. London, Abacus. Second edition.

With that being so, and with the JUSOS being seen as a faction in and of itself, on the left of the SPD, this thesis needs to explore whether the political culture of the youth wings in both case studies is different to their mother parties, and therefore whether the 'importing' of that culture into the main party by parliamentarians with a youth wing background is happening and linked to the shift in the party's political cultures already identified.

### **6.5: The youth wings, political culture and gentrification.**

If it is not factionalism driving the dynamic of a shifting political culture within Labour, then is there a more direct link to the rise of the youth wings and the decline of the trade unions? When looking at the political culture of the JUSOS we have to keep in the mind the definition of political culture used for this research. As discussed in chapter one political culture is defined as those assumptions, ideas, norms, customs and beliefs found within a certain group or sub-group which has political aims or effects, maintained and evidenced in group shibboleths, self-perceptions, espoused priorities and principles of right action and interaction which govern social behaviour both within the group and towards outsiders. In essence it is the 'rules of the game' that individuals adopt.

This section will explore the question of the youth wings political culture and whether the evidence suggests that this is a concept shared across the individuals within the youth wings, in particular in the Labour Party case study where there are three separate youth organisations. The section finds that there is indeed a shared culture. Next it will explore whether the key divide in the SPD and Labour is between youth wingers and trade unionists and finds that there is suggested a significant cleavage there, but that more research is needed.

The following subsection will then explore the notion of individuals socialised into the political culture of the youth wings importing that culture to the senior sections of the mother parties. Finally the last subsection will explore a nuance within the Labour case study, with evidence presented that the trade unions are increasingly sending individuals socialised in the youth wings to Parliament, rather than shop-stewards or those socialised from the workplace, contributing to the gentrification dynamic within the Labour Party.

The political culture of social democratic youth wings.

The first question to ask then is do youth wingers share a political culture, across the factional and organisational divides within the youth movement, before exploring whether that culture is separate to the political cultures of the mother parties.

With regards to the SPD DE06 confirmed that the JUSOS do indeed have a political culture which is shared across the sub-factions within the organisation:

*"You have a very specific culture you can say which you can almost smell with these people, you can tell these people have been socialised with the JUSOS, you feel it, it's very different. Even if you are not of the same opinion, we have a common battleground for discussion."*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

However, if the political culture is the same across the JUSOS the second question is whether they are different to the SPD as a whole or whether they share their political culture with the mother party. Both DE05 and DE06 confirmed that the culture of the JUSOS is different to that of the main SPD, and expanded on some of the differences:



*"The JUSOS are much younger and I think you can see this in the way they campaign, but also we define ourselves as the left wing within the SPD so this clearly plays a role as well. We have more of a culture of questioning our leadership, the SPD leadership. SPD Chairs who come to JUSOS conferences don't always have an easy ride, they get a difficult one. It's in the JUSOS's DNA to do this. I think the JUSOS are a bit more outspoken on issues they care about. The JUSOS have been very instrumental in the anti-Hartz IV campaign, to both of the anti-Grand Coalition campaigns. The JUSOS were THE force, at least as I see it, behind those campaigns."*

*DE05, senior JUSOS activist.*

*"In my city actually we are very interconnected, we have a very good network of graduates from the JUSOS, who are still very connected to us. Even when the necessities of political work make us adversaries, we stay connected. You always feel with these people the special education that we had with the JUSOS, and the special political viewpoint, and you feel when people from outside the JUSOS are talking to you, someone who joined the party at the age of forty or came from other organisations or something, you always feel they have a different political education, or political viewpoint. We are not on shared ground sometimes. There is a different culture. The JUSOS will always see themselves as the avant garde of the SPD. They will always feel that they are young, idealistic people who are fighting for the right political decisions. They will always perceive themselves to be rebellious against the old people in the SPD who they think are not pursuing the right political goals. This is normal, I think. This is the normal way of political self-perception of any youth organisation."*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

Both DE05 and DE06 identify that the JUSOS is different to the SPD and state that they do not have 'shared ground' on which to debate political issues with those from other backgrounds in the SPD. This is evidence that the political culture of the JUSOS is different to the main SPD, and indeed DE06 states outright that 'there is a different culture.' Therefore, the evidence seen here shows that the JUSOS are not only operating as a faction, but as a faction with a different political culture to the mainstream of the SPD. Further, it suggests that despite the internal divisions of sub-factions the JUSOS have a coherent culture which crosses those factional divides – the 'common ground to fight on' that DE06 references.

When it comes to the Labour Party's three youth wings – Labour Students, Young Labour and the Young Fabians – is there also a common ground for them to fight on? The evidence from the data below suggests that they all have very similar political cultures to each other. Many of those involved in Young Labour and the Young Fabians were also students when they first got involved in the Labour Party and its youth wings – indeed many got involved in the Party through Labour Students – and many individuals are active in several of the youth wings. All of those interviewed for this study had been active in at least two and it is unusual to find an individual who has only been active in one (though the present author is one such).

This is in large part because of the membership age ranges. Labour Students are typically aged between 18 and 21 or 22, the ages most people attend university.<sup>773</sup> For Young Labour the upper age

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<sup>773</sup> Labour Students. 2018. What we do. *Labour Students Website*. Published 24.01.2018. Available at: <https://labourstudents.org.uk/what-we-do-2/> accessed 18.03.2020 20:38.

limit is 27<sup>774</sup> and for the Young Fabians it is 31.<sup>775</sup> As with most organisations the ones who are on the organisations top committee are those who tend to have been involved for some time. This means that they skew towards the upper age limits, meaning Young Labour and the Young Fabians have a large number of members who were politicised at University or via Labour Students and then moved into the other youth wings when their studies came to an end to continue their involvement in youth politics. This was confirmed by GB06:

*"We've got three components of the youth wings. You've got Labour Students which is mainly focused on student issues, which as a result they mainly focus on the NUS. You've got Young Labour, which are seen more as the campaigning component. It tends to attract those who are more issues based. Then you've got the Young Fabians which sits in an interesting place. One thing to mention is Labour Students, well you can only be a member if you're a student, so the age tends to be very low there, up to 21 plus postgraduates, and then you have Young Labour in which their cut-off is 27, whereas the Young Fabians cut-off is 31. So, the Young Fabians fills this gap between those who have gone to university and got involved in Labour stuff, then they have graduated and gone into the workplace but still want to be politically engaged and active."*

*GB06, senior activist in Labour Students and the Young Fabians*

You can also see this activity across youth wings in that the current NEC youth representative, which is a position now controlled by Young Labour, is Lara McNeill, a former Vice-Chair of Labour Students.<sup>776</sup> The current Chair of Young Labour is Miriam Mirwitch, who got involved in politics at the London School of Economics and who also sat for several years on the Young Fabians executive committee.<sup>777</sup> As a result many of the activists in Young Labour and the Young Fabians became politicised at University, and/or became active originally in Labour Students.

This similarity of experience leads to similarity of political culture. GB07, who was active in senior roles in all three youth wings, specifically confirmed they have similar political cultures:

*"The first organisation that I joined was Labour Students, before that I was involved in the Labour Students club at my university, so I actually started there, involved in student politics in my university Labour club, which is affiliated to Labour Students nationally, so I was involved in those organisations at the same time. After that I joined Young Labour, I was involved there for a while, and after that I joined the Young Fabians. So, I joined Labour Students, I joined Young Labour, I joined Young Fabians, the culture is often the same."*

*GB07, senior activist in Young Labour, Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

This suggests that the political cultures of the youth wings are indeed similar to each other, even though they link to different factions. The data suggests that this is via Labour Students or at least that

<sup>774</sup> Labour Party Rulebook 2019, Chapter 11: Rules for Young Labour, Clause III: Membership. London, The Labour Party. Available at: <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Rule-Book-2019.pdf> accessed 18.03.2020 20:44.

<sup>775</sup> Young Fabians Constitution, Clause 2: Membership. London, The Fabian Society. Available at: <http://www.youngfabians.org.uk/constitution>

<sup>776</sup> Forrester K. 2018. Lara McNeill, Labour's New NEC Youth Rep: I Don't Want To Be An MP. *Huffington Post*. Published 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. Available at [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/lara-mcneill-labours-new-nec-youth-rep-i-dont-want-to-be-an-mp\\_uk\\_5abce2d6e4b04a59a3150dc8](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/lara-mcneill-labours-new-nec-youth-rep-i-dont-want-to-be-an-mp_uk_5abce2d6e4b04a59a3150dc8), accessed 12.09.2019 11:03.

<sup>777</sup> <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/miriam-mirwitch-3a836083> Accessed 12.09.2019 11:10.

most individuals are now being politicised at University. This means that it is happening in a predominantly middle-class environment<sup>778</sup> and in which those individuals from working-class backgrounds face pressure to conform to middle-class sensibilities<sup>779</sup> and is supporting evidence that the rise in the number of youth wing origin MPs is a driving force behind the gentrification dynamic seen in the Labour Party.

#### Trade unionists Vs youth wingers – the key divide?

If the youth wings have a different culture to the main mother parties, and which is the same across factional divides within the youth wings – and in Labour’s case across the different youth wings – is the key divide once between those socialised in the youth wings and those socialised in the trade unions? The evidence from the interviews suggests this is indeed the case, in both case studies.

*“The JUSOS is the school of the SPD for young members, this was my school. So are the unions, especially the IG Metall, the metalworker’s union. That’s the biggest union, and really strong in the DGB. Sometimes we have had conflicts between the unions and JUSOS, JUSOS are on the left and the unions are a little bit more pragmatic. But whenever a JUSOS is a candidate for selection there was a second candidate from the unions. So, we have a real competition. This competition is the actual school of the SPD!”*

*DE04, former MdB with a JUSOS background.*

*“The JUSOS say we should be critical and act in solidarity with the party and this is true. I feel this myself. The SPD is the place we have to fight, it’s not our political home. We are factional against the Trade Unions, sometimes. Sometimes we are more consequential than the trade unionist guys who are on the board now. Because they are quite problematic as well. Sometimes we have a difficult development there, because you have IG Metall the big trade union for metal and electro industries, which is dominating the political questions within the German union family. We have a quite weak ver.di, the services union, which is not acting very cool sometimes as well. We always try to push them. Sometimes these unions act quite conservative.”*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

Here both DE04 and DE06 identify conflicts between those from the youth wings and those from the main SPD, directly saying it is a conflict between those from the JUSOS and those socialised via the trade union movement, in particular the IG Metall. The data from the Labour Party interviews also found a conflict between these two groups.

*“My bit of the party was the white working-class industrial trade union bit. We were probably curry and a pint. That would be what we would do. I mean I can drink other things with the best of them but going for a curry and a pint was absolutely fine. The more intellectual Fabian part of the movement they would be Prosecco. You’ve got those different parts of our movement and if we’re doing*

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<sup>778</sup> Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>779</sup> See Brynner J. M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The wider benefits of higher education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49 and Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. ‘Fitting in’ or ‘standing out’: Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

*them all as drinks they would all be different. Our definition of class is so skewed. It's why I dislike being patronised by people who are academic. You might know the thing, are you Daily Mirror or are you The Guardian? Now I'm Daily Mirror. The Fabians are the Guardian. I think that's also the different bits of the movement. The trade union movement – there is a problem, fix it. Negotiate your way, find a fix, job done. We're not going to sit in a room and have a chat about it and a policy paper where we'll research it. It's why I was crap at academic stuff. There is a place in our movement for it but not me, I was crap at it."*

*GB01, MP from a trade union background.*

GB01 here draws a class distinction between the working class 'curry and a pint / Daily Mirror' part of the party which they associated with the trade unions, and the middle class 'prosecco / Guardian' part of the party which they associated with the Fabians and 'people who are academic'. Given that Labour Students is the predominant source of youth wing origin MPs, with the Young Fabians also an origin point, and that Trade Unionist MPs are declining, this suggests a shift in those origin points will also lead to a shift in the political culture of the party. This supports Hypothesis 3, that there is a different culture in the youth organisations which is resulting in a gentrification of the party as they come to dominate the Parliamentary Labour Party.

GB03 emphasised the same split, between those from a trade unionist background which they characterised as 'old traditional social democratic members' and a new group of members with a 'citizen lead' political culture:

*"Pretty much you'd distinguish between people from a trade unionist background, the old traditional social democratic members and then the newer intake of the slightly more, sort of anarchists, that's not quite right, but shall we say citizen lead politics. Those are two quite different cultural groups that don't actually have very much in common. But you know the Labour Party has always been a bit of a coalition and that's broadly what the coalition is at the moment."*

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

This again speaks to a binary divide between trade unionists and the newer intake of members. Coupled with the comments of GB08 and others above that the party is becoming 'increasingly middle-class' then and with the concept that those who attend University adopt more middle-class sensibilities<sup>780</sup> we can say there is a likelihood that these new members are more highly-educated and underwent a politicisation process at University rather than in the workplace. GB03 confirmed that this is correct:

*"A larger proportion of young people's first exposure to organised politics is going to be in a student or youth organisation, or a student environment, than it once was. So, a proportion of people who would have been more likely to have been institutionally politicised at work are now having their first institutional political experience at university. You'll get a large number of people who had an*

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<sup>780</sup> See Brynner J. M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The wider benefits of higher education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49 and Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

experience of student politics at some level even if they don't get that involved in it."

*GB03, former senior party employee.*

This would suggest then that the divide which matters in terms of hypothesis 3 is not between different factions but this divide between trade unionists politicised in the workplace, and those members who are politicised at university or in youth politics. Given the earlier comments, discussed above, that the youth wings are a 'middle-class' environment and that this presents a barrier to entry to working-class individuals the data hints at the possibility of a gentrification of the Labour Party via the importation of a 'middle-class' political culture from the youth wings to the national representatives. The next section will explore this.

Importing youth wing political culture to the main party.

The final question then is one of establishing causality, rather than merely correlation. In other words, are those socialised in the youth wings bringing the political culture they learned in the youth wings into the senior parties when they graduate into them? The evidence is that yes, they are, and this holds true across both the case studies.

In the previous subsection we have already seen that DE04 described the JUSOS as their school. The other MdB from a JUSOS background, DE02, also stated that the experiences they had in the JUSOS shaped them and their view of politics, saying that they learnt 'the craft of politics' in the JUSOS and that they still use that in their current work in the Bundestag:

*"For me being in JUSOS was the definite thing for a career in the SPD, it was really a determining factor. It was there that I learnt all about politics. Not only about the subjects but also about the techniques and the way to impose your ideas. I learnt the craft of politics. I'm still profiting today from what I learnt at the JUSOS."*

*DE02, MdB with a JUSOS background.*

They specifically state that they use the way they learnt how to do politics – their political culture – from the JUSOS in the way in which they perform politics in the Bundestag. Similarly, DE06 described how they try to directly import their political culture – that of the JUSOS – into the main party within their city.

*"I got some insight into this because for some years I am a member of the board of SPD in my city as well so I am there for campaigning and for education of the members and so on. I am doing a lot of work there and it's different, it has its weaknesses, but I like it too as well. It's the playground we all play on, the JUSOS have to go there as well and have to fight there for their policy and I will fight there, also when I am no longer in the JUSOS any more I will fight there still. And I will have the label on me, well they are a left-wing JUSO. It's ok. There is a difference in the cultures as well, in JUSOS in my city our culture is about empowering yourself, your comrades, to change politics and within the SPD you don't have this culture. We try to bring it sometimes; we try to implement our culture. I do within the board of the SPD in my city, I try to establish some sort of political seminars and so on to try to educate new people who are too old for JUSOS as well but it's not the culture of the SPD. The culture of the SPD is more like controlling the political notions or the political impulses you have there. I didn't join the SPD because it was a socialist organisation, I went into the SPD to change it towards being one. Towards being*

*an organisation where you can fight for a better society, for a better future, for progressive politics and so on.”*

*DE06, senior JUSOS activist.*

This passage is particularly instructive. First, DE06 states that they ‘try to implement [their] culture’ within the main SPD, they also give some examples of how they do so, with seminars and political education. Second, they specifically state that this will continue after they are no longer in the JUSOS, having grown too old, and that they will still be known as being someone from the JUSOS when they are doing so. This is direct evidence that the culture of the JUSOS is being imported to the main SPD by graduates of the youth wing, and intentionally so as well as organically.

The data from the Labour Party interviews told a similar story, but perhaps not as clearly. GB04 and GB09 discussed the way in which those who were socialised in the youth wings move up through the party and how their youth wing experiences shape the way in which they perform politics at the senior level, albeit in different ways.

*“Your local party isn’t the same, Labour Students and your local party are two very different bodies of people. They’re just completely different entities, and so it isn’t like if I did a good job in Labour Students someone should spot me and think oh you should be an MP, it doesn’t work like that. It goes back to that point where it’s the experiences that you get, to become an MP you need to be able to stand in front of a room of people at a hustings event and answer questions and make a speech, you’ve got to do that. So a lot of the stuff that we did in Labour Students was political education, we’d run political education weekends where politicians would come along and speak or non-profits would come along and do workshops, so you have all of those sorts of things which gives you skills. You don’t have a lot of political education a lot of the time and those were useful events. So, it’s a bit of training, a bit of confidence building, a bit of networking involved as well for sure. If you look at Vicky Foxcroft for example, who was Chair of Labour Students, being chair of that per se didn’t enable her to become the candidate in Lewisham Deptford, no-one thought oh you did a good job in Labour Students twenty years ago or whatever, fifteen years ago, so you can be the candidate in Lewisham Deptford, no. She had to speak to the several thousand members in Lewisham Deptford and convince them why she should be the next Labour candidate there. I suspect some of the training, the politicisation that she got in Labour Students would have helped in that process, I can’t speak for her, but I think that’s probably right.”*

*GB04, MP from a youth wing background.*

GB04 here identifies the politicisation from Labour Students and the political education and skills learnt there as a factor in how they and another MP, Vicky Foxcroft, perform politics at the senior level. GB09 also referenced a continuation of behaviour, but in the form of political feuds.

*“You have a lot of politicians now who know each other through student politics. And of course, their feuds carry on from when they were at university. So that becomes the professionalisation of politics. People who come into politics earlier and for whom it is a career.”*

*GB09, MP from a youth wing and trade union background.*

Again, this is a continuation of the political culture of the youth wings. This has now advance to a point that GB06 described the cultures of the youth wings and main party as a mirror of each other and described how this has caused a gentrification effect.

*"I think the culture in the youth wings is a mirror of the wider Labour movement. It is an exaggeration of what is happening elsewhere. When you look at the main Labour Party you see what was happening in the youth wings now happening in the main Labour Party. Right now, they've become very much a mirror of each other. The youth movement is a reflection of the features of the political party. And I think in the UK there was a big bruhaha about professional politicians, especially at the time of the 2015 General Election because we had a whole class of politicians who came up through the youth wings, through the Young Fabians or Labour Students, who then became MPs and who then when they became more prominent it became clear that they were all very much identical. They all did PPE, they all spent time in London, worked in politics. I think it narrows the spectrum of political thought, or the spectrum of thinking. What I mean by that is that right now even those of my friends who are left-wing, we all went to the same universities, we all still know each other even though we have different views on policy areas we all still think the same, but we don't have any different perspectives, because we're people who all went to the same universities, who went to the same events, who were involved in the same youth movements, who battled each other in the youth movements."*

*GB06, senior activist in Labour Students and the Young Fabians.*

This narrowing of political thought that GB06 references is another way of saying that the political culture of the youth wings is now crowding out other cultures, and they also state that this happened at the main party level as individuals moved up from the youth wings to the Parliamentary Labour Party.

It is the contention of this thesis that the political culture being crowded out is that of the trade union movement. Evidence for this was offered by GB09 who felt it was linked to the notion of decision-making within the trade union movement, which was different to the culture in the youth wings:

*"What you learn in Labour Students and what you learn in a trade union are different things, hugely. And a different thing from what you learn in local government as well. Because in a youth wing like Labour students, it's the Denis Healey dictum: In academia you argue towards a conclusion, in politics you argue towards a decision. And you see a big difference with those people who go on to be ministers who've actually been involved in decision-making, which is very very different from policy-making."*

*GB09, MP from a youth wing and trade union background.*

GB09 here identifies that the culture of decision-making in the trade unions (and local government) is different to the culture of policy-making in the youth wings. This is more evidence that the political culture of those socialised in the youth wings is different to that of those socialised in the trade unions and that this continues at the Parliamentary level.

However, during the course of the interviews for the Labour Party case study evidence emerged that trade unionist MPs are beginning to adopt the culture of the youth wing, because there has been a shift in the types of individuals the unions are promoting for selection.

A shift in Labour's trade unionist MPs.

One of the issues which arose from the interview process was a shift in what type of individual the trade unions were putting forward for public office, away from shop stewards and activists and towards lawyers, staff and other individuals who had been through university. This results in the trade unions recruiting people out of the Labour youth wings as well, who then go onto public office. This was identified by all three interviewees who had come up via the trade union route. GB09 discussed this shift, and compared it to the situation previously whereby workplace organisers would be selected as candidates:

*"The problem with that is the old joke that what we need is more working-class solicitors. Because what the Unions are tending to do, what too many of them are tending to do, is to send their local solicitor who does their industrial tribunal cases, and they're appointing them rather than saying 'who's the convener of the local factory' who may be suitable. To try and run a factor you have to have some skill, but now they send people like Richard Burgon and a number of others, their lawyers."*

*GB09, MP from a youth wing and trade union background.*

GB01 agreed, although they linked the change to those who were political officers for the union's before becoming an MP rather than necessarily a trade union lawyer:

*"The unions don't push working class candidates for selection anymore. I think that we say we do, but actually I'm not sure what working class is any more. I consider myself a working-class trade union MP. Everything I've got was because of graft. From my family and from me. But if you think about people like Angela Rayner,<sup>781</sup> she's genuinely worked her way up through the movement and come in, in the same way that Ernie Bevin did. So, there are some who are working their way through. But there are others who call themselves trade unionist MPs – in the nicest possible way they were a political officer for a bit. That is not the same."*

*GB01, MP from a trade union background.*

GB08 also concurred, describing a gentrification process within the union movement as the unions merged together, and then drew a distinction, like GB09 and GB01, between union activists and union employees:

*"One of the things I'm worried about in my union, it was a blue-collar union, it represented the manual grades, literally, they were called the manual grades, within the places we were active. When the union merged a lot of them got pushed out by people in the officer grades who thought they were more senior, or who couldn't imagine having someone who was a low-status worker running their branch because they were a senior worker or whatever. I wonder to what extent that's happened. I don't know whether that's happened in the Labour Party, but I think there's a perception that's happened. People have an expectation that*

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<sup>781</sup> A former careworker and trade union rep for Unison, MP for Ashton-under-Lyne since 2015.

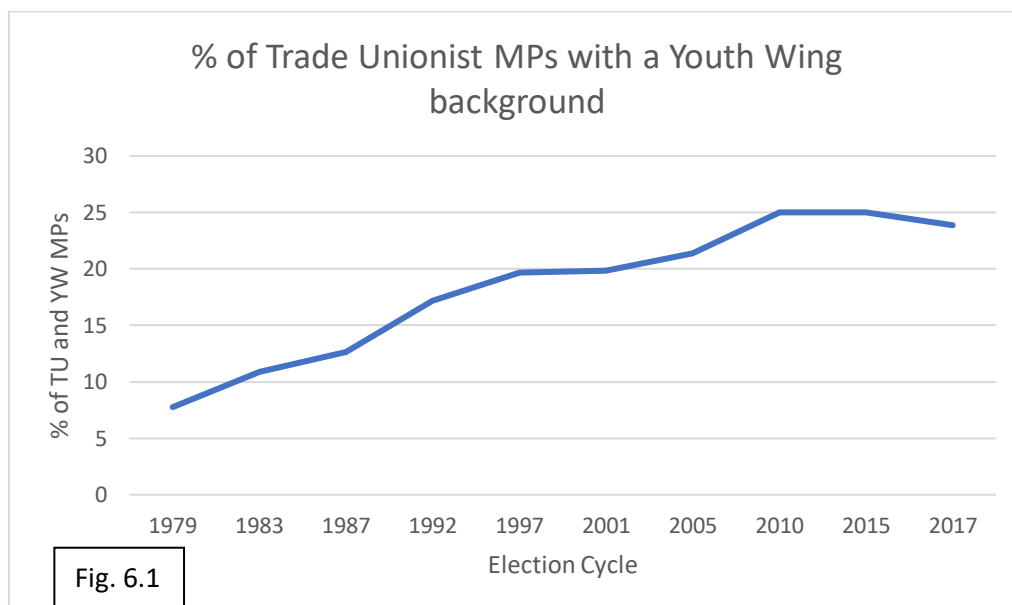


*someone who's going to be their representative has been to university or is able to write in a kind of academic, to be more professionally qualified. I mean who are the obvious people who've come from a trade union background? There are people like Angela Rayner and Eleanor Smith<sup>782</sup> who quite definitely came through as union activists. But I think a lot of my colleagues were union employees rather than union activists."*

*GB08, MP from a trade union background.*

This then was the unanimous opinion of the three trade unionist MPs interviewed. However, it is not necessarily new that a trade union's political officer would be a likely candidate for selection. The opinion of the interviewees is that this has increased, not that it is a new phenomenon.

The quantitative data can also be used to verify this. By charting the number of trade unionist MPs – those who had been employed by or held a senior voluntary position in a trade union – who had previously served as an elected officer in a youth wing. This data supports the opinions presented by the interviewees, with the percentage of trade unionist MPs who had previously served in the youth wings rising from 7.76% in 1979 to 25% in both 2010 and 2015, dropping slightly to 23.89% in 2017, as shown in Fig. 6.1.<sup>783</sup> The drop in 2017 is in fact the first time the percentage has dropped between election cycles since 1979, although the rise between 1992 (19.67%) and 1997 (19.84%) is tiny and there was no change between 2010 and 2015 (25% in both cycles).



There has then been a shift in the type of individuals that the trade union movement are pushing for selection away from former shop stewards and grassroots activists – individuals such as Angela Rayner – and instead towards their political officers and the lawyers who take on their industrial tribunal cases such as Richard Burgon<sup>784</sup> or Jo Stevens.<sup>785</sup> This also contributes to the gentrification of the Parliamentary Labour Party, by crowding out one route for non-graduate individuals to push for

<sup>782</sup> A former nurse who became the first black president of Unison, MP for Wolverhampton South-West from 2017 to 2019.

<sup>783</sup> Compiled by the author from research data.

<sup>784</sup> The former chair of Cambridge University Labour Club and an employment law solicitor with Thompson's Solicitors, a firm with long-standing links to the British trade union movement. MP for Leeds East since 2015.

<sup>785</sup> Also a lawyer with Thompson's Solicitors, MP for Cardiff Central since 2015.

selection. It means the trade union movement is becoming one of the intermediate organisations in the political ecosystem between the youth organisations and elected political office, rather than its traditional role of politicising individuals in the workplace and promoting them into Parliament. The examples given of Angela Rayner and Eleanor Smith do show that this process is a squeezing of this route by graduate professionals, rather than a complete takeover, however.

## Discussion.

In both case studies the decline in trade unions, in the UK's case coupled with the external context of a dramatic rise in the number of students attending university,<sup>786</sup> has seen many more individuals becoming politicised whilst a student rather than in the workplace. Even in the UK however the concomitant evidence is that the increase in the number of students hasn't changed the class make-up of those who become students<sup>787</sup> and in Germany the increase is only slight. In both case studies the barriers to entry mean that graduate professionals make up the majority of people who are highly active within the parties. This is one of the factors driving up the numbers of middle-class individuals involved in the SPD and the Labour Party, combined with the drop in the numbers of trade union membership. The fact these individuals are going through their apprenticeship in the youth wings – especially JUSOS and Labour Students – is more important for the gentrification process than simply the fact they hold a degree.

This is linked to an individual's moment of politicisation, when they become active in a political party.<sup>788</sup> More often than not when an individual becomes active with the institutional structures of the contemporary SPD and Labour Party it is via a youth wing rather than a trade union. Despite factional and, in Labour's case organisational, differences the youth wings have a distinct political culture which they share. The adoption of these cultures forms a large part of an individual's initial political apprenticeship, which also links to the gentrification effect of higher education.<sup>789</sup>

This in turn leads the graduates of the youth wings take this culture with them into both the ecosystem of politics-facilitating jobs<sup>790</sup> and the senior parties. In Labour's case this is also feeding back into the trade union movement, which has begun to send more university-educated professionals than non-graduates into Parliament, exacerbating the gentrification process of the nationally elected representatives of the Labour Party.

In other words, the evidence from the interviews presented here imply that hypothesis 3 is correct. The shift in recruitment patterns, from the data shown here, does contribute to the gentrification of social democratic parties by creating a shift in the political culture of national legislators and therefore a shift in the nature of the political culture of the parties as a whole.

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<sup>786</sup> Roberts K. 2010. Expansion of higher education and the implications for demographic class formation in Britain. *Twenty-First Century Society*. Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 215 – 228.

<sup>787</sup> Mayhew K., Deer C. and Dua M. 2004. The move to mass higher education in the UK: Many questions and some answers. *Oxford Review of Education*. Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 65 – 82.

<sup>788</sup> Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral Dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge, p69.

<sup>789</sup> See Brynner J. M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The wider benefits of higher education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49 and Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124 and Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>790</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

## 6.6: Conclusion.

This evidence presented in this chapter sought to demonstrate the impact the rise of the youth wings as political training grounds has had on the SPD and the Labour Party. It did this by unpacking, exploring and demonstrating two hypotheses, these being:

*Hypothesis 2: The youth organisations present significant practical barriers to entry which wealthier, middle class individuals are better able to negotiate.*

*Hypothesis 3: The shift in recruitment patterns contributes to the gentrification of social democratic parties by creating a shift in the political culture of the party representatives and therefore a shift in the nature of the parties in question.*

The evidence of the data set out in this chapter supports the contention of Hypothesis 2. The youth wings, from the evidence presented here, do present barriers to entry, both practical and cultural, which people from a more affluent background are better able to overcome.

The chapter set out the manner in which the youth wings act as the gateway to the political sphere. Firstly by providing a source of politically engaged people to be recruited to the political ecosystem of party employees, existing representatives staffers, NGO's, think-tanks and lobbyists and secondly by acting as a contact point between the parties and the broader politics-facilitating roles in fields such as, law, teaching and academia.<sup>791</sup> Further, the chapter speculated that in the SPD's case this role as an origin point that still requires an intermediate phase helps to explain why the rise of the JUSOS is not as obvious to some insiders as the quantitative data demonstrated.

The chapter then discussed the barriers to entry of the youth wings. It found that the youth wings are relatively cheap on a local level but the big, networking events such as conferences and trips abroad are more available to those with private resources and do provide a key advantage when pushing to move up through the youth wing's structures to senior levels, both in the JUSOS and in the three Labour Party youth wings.

The data showed that these barriers are therefore found in the practicalities of time and resources, and in particular on the times during the week when political activity takes place. This timing of political activity is based on an assumption of a 9 to 5 work professional work pattern. This excludes those with shift work, those who work longer hours – especially those in the private sector – and those who are single parents or who have other caring commitments. The sacrifice of both work and family time is a reason why the internal motivation of an individual to be involved is also a potential barrier. This issue of time and the fact that only those with a professional 9 to 5 work pattern can surmount it is a potentially key driver behind the gentrification dynamic in the two parties.

In Labour's case, there is an additional focus on concepts of class and fitting in, matching the findings of Brynner and Egerton,<sup>792</sup> Hanley<sup>793</sup> and Reay, Crozier and Clayton<sup>794</sup> that working-class individuals who go into higher education environments face strong pressures to adopt middle-class sensibilities. The findings of this study are that these pressures are also present in the Labour youth wings, feeding

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<sup>791</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'Politics-Facilitating' Explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2. pp 212-233.

<sup>792</sup> Brynner J. M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The wider benefits of higher education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49.

<sup>793</sup> Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>794</sup> Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

into the gentrification dynamic not only by presenting lower barriers to middle-class individuals but also by pushing working-class individuals to adopt middle-class attitudes.

These barriers of time and resources are also the most significant barriers at the formal selection stage, however the evidence shows that serving in a politics-facilitating role<sup>795</sup> provides significant advantages when pushing for selection. As the youth wings often act as the gatekeeper to this political ecosystem if an individual can overcome the barriers in the youth wings, they then have an advantage in looking to break into this ecosystem. In the SPD case the support of the JUSOS, having gone through an internal selection process, can be valuable when looking for selection or a place high on the SPD's party lists, but it is rarely decisive.

The evidence from the interview data also supports hypothesis 3. Respondents confirmed that there had been a change in the political culture of both the SPD and the Labour Party and that it had involved a gentrification process. They also confirmed that many more individuals now come both into the party and into national legislatures having started in a youth wing than previously.

The chapter explored two assumptions which are necessary preconditions for Hypothesis 3 to be correct. The data indicated that the political culture of the two parties has changed in the timeframe under investigation in this thesis at the same time as the rise of legislators from a youth wing background identified in chapters four and five. Correlation is not proof of causality, but this is nevertheless at least suggestive. The evidence also shows this is not linked to ideological factionalism within the parties.

The second assumption is that the youth wings have their own political culture which is distinct from that of the mother parties as a whole. Further, that this political culture is shared, in the SPD's case across the ideological sub-factions within the JUSOS and in Labour's case across the three youth organisations. Note that this does not mean that the JUSOS and the Labour youth wings have similar cultures, merely that the political culture of each party's youth wing is shared across the youth movement of that party. Again, the evidence here – though limited – does support that assertion.

There is also evidence here that those socialised into politics via the youth wings maintain that political culture throughout their career and do import that political culture to the main party as they move through the ranks. There is even some evidence, in the evidence offered by DE06, that this is intentional. The evidence here is only from a small sample of interviews and must be considered accordingly, but it does all point in the same direction.

The chapter then discussed the notion that there is a cleavage within the two case study parties between an older, more pragmatic and more working class section of the parties – in which the trade unions are key players – and a group identified as 'academic', 'citizen lead' and middle-class of which the youth wings are emblematic. There is a nuance, in Labour's case, in that the trade unions now seem to be sending more individuals who began in the youth wing movement into Parliament and thus are shifting towards being as much an intermediate stage as a recruitment pathway.

Both hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 then find supporting evidence in the interview data from both case studies. Whilst there is not enough evidence in the data available here to state that these findings are anything more than a suggestion of this thesis, there is enough to make this a tantalising possible ground for new research.

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<sup>795</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The professionalisation of MPs: Refining the 'politics-facilitating' explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2, pp 212 – 233

## Chapter 7: Conclusion.

### 7.1: Introduction.

This thesis has investigated the role of affiliated youth organisations in West European social democratic parties when it comes to the selection of candidates to hold legislative office at the national level. In doing so it has examined two of the most important social democratic parties as case studies – the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands of Germany and the Labour Party of the United Kingdom. This concluding chapter will draw together the threads of this thesis to discuss the lessons that can be learned.

The youth wings of political parties, with the exception of Rainsford<sup>796</sup> are somewhat understudied<sup>797</sup> as objects of academic interest. This study is the first to explore what role party youth wings play in the recruitment process of legislators, and the first to explore how their role in politicising individuals into a party affects the culture of that party.

Further the study has made some major findings. Firstly, party youth wings are now the most common origin point for social democratic legislators. In the case of the SPD more than half of the Bundestagsfraktion are now graduates of the JUSOS. The decline of the trade unions as a power in social democratic parties has been noted by scholars like Addison et al<sup>798</sup> and Koelble<sup>799</sup> in Britain and Germany, Allern et al<sup>800</sup> and Aylott<sup>801</sup> in Scandinavia and Alderman and Carter,<sup>802</sup> Howell,<sup>803</sup> and

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<sup>796</sup> Rainsford E. 2013. What makes young people politically active? Comparing activists in political parties youth factions, youth councils and at demonstrations. *Research paper presented at PSA General Conference, Cardiff*. Centre for Citizenship, Globalisation and Governance, University of Southampton and Rainsford E. 2018. UK political parties youth factions: A glance at the future of political parties. *Parliamentary affairs*. Vol. 71, pp 783 – 803.

<sup>797</sup> A few other notable exceptions are Brewis G. 2011. The Labour League of Youth: An account of the failure of the Labour Party to sustain a successful youth organisation. *Contemporary British History*. Vol. 25 No. 4, pp 611 – 613; Hooghe M., Stolle D and Stouthuysen P. 2004. Head start in politics: The recruitment function of youth organisations of political parties in Belgium (Flanders). *Party Politics*. Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 193 – 212 and Malafaia C., Menezes I. and Neves T. 2018. Living, doing, and learning from politics in a youth wing of a political party. *The Qualitative Report*. Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 49-79.

<sup>798</sup> Addison J. T., Bryson A., Teixeira P., and Pahnke A. 2011. Slip sliding away: Further union decline in Germany and Britain. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*. Vol. 58 No. 4, pp 490-518.

<sup>799</sup> Koelble T. 1987. Trade Unionists, Party Activists, and Politicians: The Struggle for Power over Party Rules in the British Labour Party and the West German Social Democratic Party. *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 19 pp. 253-266.

<sup>800</sup> Allern E.H., Aylott N. and Christiansen F.J. 2007. Social Democrats and trade unions in Scandinavia: The decline and persistence of institutional relationships. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 46 No. 5, pp 607-635.

<sup>801</sup> Aylott N. 2003. After the divorce: Social democrats and trade unions in Sweden. *Party Politics*. Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 369 – 390.

<sup>802</sup> Alderman K. and Carter N. 1994. The Labour Party and the Trade Unions: Loosening of Ties. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 47 pp. 321-337.

<sup>803</sup> Howell C. 1993. Family or Just Good Friends? The Changing Labour Party-Trade Union Relationship in Britain since 1979. *International Journal of Political Economy*. Vol. 22 pp. 17-35 and Howell C. 2001. The end of the relationship between Social Democratic Parties and Trade Unions? *Studies in Political Economy*, Vol. 65 No. 1, pp 7 – 37.

Minkin<sup>804</sup> focused on the Labour Party. Until now however their replacement by youth wings as the social democratic recruiting ground has gone largely unnoticed.

Secondly this study finds *prima facie* evidence that this could be a major driving factor behind the gentrification of the social democratic party family. The shifting of the entry point for the majority of those activists who go on to become legislators to the youth wings means that they are being politicised by ideology at university, not by incidents in the workplace. The evidence from the interviews conducted for this thesis indicate that barriers to entry have therefore changed and have done so in a way that means that the balance between working- and middle-class social democratic activists has been disrupted in favour of the latter.

The data here, though limited, agrees that the youth wings act as an entry point to a political ecosystem of specifically politics-focused careers which has grown exponentially over recent decades. Further, it also suggests the youth wings can act as a contact point between the parties and those in a broader sphere of politics-facilitating professional careers.<sup>805</sup> Work in those fields gives an individual a great advantage in accruing the political capital to push for selection. Therefore, the data suggests that those more affluent individuals who can overcome the barriers to entry in the youth wings have a distinct advantage when seeking to become a Parliamentarian and thus they are crowding out the less affluent from the corridors of power. The data that supports this is from a limited series of interviews, but indicates some interesting potential for future research.

Thirdly the study finds some supporting evidence that this has changed the nature of the social democratic parties themselves. The implication of the data is that the SPD and Labour are moving further and further away from being the parties of the less well off in society and moving towards being a party of precisely those professions – often either in the public or legal sectors – which now make up the bulk of their legislators. The findings of the data here are that the university-developed culture of the youth wings has been imported into the mother parties by the rise in youth wing graduates at the very top level of party figures, disrupting that balance and changing the parties as political objects. It is speculation to link this to the oft-mentioned<sup>806</sup> distancing between social democratic parties and their previous core of working-class voters. Both that speculation and the findings that this shift is causing a gentrification process require further academic scrutiny to explore, but the evidence here, though limited, is tantalising.

This concluding chapter will therefore explore these findings in more detail in the next section, going into depth on the empirical data from the case studies of the German SPD and the British Labour Party through the lens of the research questions and hypotheses of this study.

However, these findings are not the only important contribution from this research to the canon of political science. To carry out this study a major new dataset was created for the SPD which has not

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<sup>804</sup> Minkin L. 1992. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>805</sup> Cairney P. 2007. The professionalisation of MPs: Refining the ‘politics-facilitating’ explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 60 No. 2, pp 212 – 233.

<sup>806</sup> See for example Berger S. 2000. *Social Democracy and the Working Class in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany*. London, Longman; Editorial. 2016. ‘Rose thou art sick: The centre-left is in sharp decline across Europe’ *The Economist*. Published on 02.04.2016. Available at <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21695887-centre-left-sharp-decline-across-europe-rose-thou-art-sick> accessed 30.03.2017 10:09 and Rutherford J. 2018. ‘How the decline of the working class made Labour a party of the bourgeois left’ *The New Statesman*. Published on 19.09.2018. Available at <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2018/09/how-decline-working-class-made-labour-party-bourgeois-left> accessed on 26.06.2019 12:22 accessed 08.08.2019 14:25.

been done before. For the Labour Party some detective work was required to gather the information needed. These datasets are an important resource for future research and are discussed here.

Next this chapter will look to place the findings from this study in the existing canon of political science literature. It will look at what contribution this thesis makes in particular to the fields of legislative recruitment, factionalism, discussions on the professionalisation of politics and the broader realm of elite theory.

The third section will discuss the broader implications of this study outside academia. It will look at the place that professionalisation and gentrification has both on the public debate on the SPD and Labour Party, and on their internal debates, especially given the sharp leftward turn taken by Labour in 2015 and the SPD in 2019, and the struggle of both to find a solution both to their electoral problems and to their sense of who and what they are as a political entity.

This chapter will then finish with some suggestions for future research to expand upon the findings of this study, in terms of looking in more depth at the initial findings here, at further case studies to explore more widely the dynamics of youth wings and their role in the parties and by adding research exploring the impact of these changed internal contexts on women and ethnic minorities.

## ***7.2: Summary of the findings.***

This thesis has been built around three research questions with their linked hypotheses which have then been applied to the two case studies. All three were explored, with the first demonstrated to be correct, and some promising initial confirmations for the second and third found. In this section the chapter will discuss these three hypotheses and the empirical findings related to them from both case studies.

### Research question and hypothesis 1.

The first research question explored the impact of the youth wings on the legislative recruitment patterns of the social democratic parties utilised as case studies, with a hypothesis that they had become more relevant and that this had come at the expense of the trade union movement. Specifically, it stated:

*Research question 1: How have the youth wings of social democratic political parties impacted on the selection of national representatives since the elections of 1979/80?*

*Hypothesis 1: Youth organisations have grown in prominence as sources of social democratic parliamentary recruitment since the 1980s, filling a vacuum created by the decline of the trade unions.*

Chapter four looked at this question from the perspective of the SPD, and chapter five looked at it from the perspective of the Labour party. Both chapters found that hypothesis 1 is correct. In both the SPD since 1980 and the Labour Party since 1979 there has been a marked increase in the number of national legislators elected who came into the parties via their youth or student wing and who held a senior elected role within at least one of the youth wings looked at.

In the SPD this was predominantly accounted for by the JUSOS, the official youth and student wing of the party. As of the 2017 election more than half – 52.90% - of the SPD Members in the Bundestag listed serving in an elected role in the JUSOS in their official biography. This figure had more than

doubled from the 1980 total of 20.43%, although in the SPD case the numbers dropped as low as 12.83% in 1994 before taking off dramatically from 1998 onwards.

In the case of the SPD it is the official youth wing the JUSOS which accounts for these numbers. Historical predecessors were present at the beginning of the period being studied but disappeared from the ranks of MdBs through the simple process of time. The other relevant youth wing, the SJD-Die Falken, has drifted away from being a source of recruitment, accounting for 14.58% of MdBs in 1980 but a mere 2.45% in 2017.

In the Labour Party the situation was more fractured, with three youth wings having some relevance. However, as a combined block those MPs who came from a background in a youth wing have risen from being 17.69% of the total in 1979 to 36.19% in 2017, slightly down from the 2015 peak of 38.43%. In Labour's case the trend has been a steady rise, with just slight dips in 1997 and 2017, both elections when Labour won seats which it had considered unwinnable and where selections would have been consequently much less competitive.

The official youth wing Young Labour was not the preeminent source of Parliamentary recruitment however, that was Labour Students, the official student wing, who rose from 12.64% in 1980 to 25.68% in 2017, with a 2015 peak of 28.24% of Labour MPs. Young Labour in contrast accounted for just 4.33% of Labour MPs in 1980, rising to 8.17% in 2017, with a peak of 8.3% in 2015. The Young Fabians went from being nearly irrelevant, just 1.44% of Labour MPs in 1980 to being nearly equivalent to Young Labour in terms of the numbers of MPs from that background with 6.23% in 2017. In both 1997 and 2010 the Young Fabians had identical numbers of MPs as Young Labour, with the 7.25% of MPs in 2010 also being their peak.

From these figures we can see that the first part of hypothesis 1 is proven. The youth wings have in both cases risen dramatically across the time period. This has been a steady process in the case of the Labour Party but a more dramatic one in the SPD. The different dynamics of the process can be explained by the different electoral systems producing a much higher turnover of parliamentarians in Germany than in the UK. Nevertheless, the trend is clear in both case studies, with MPs from a youth wing background more than doubling between 1979/1980 and 2017 in both the SPD and Labour.

In both cases there was also a marked decline in the number of MPs who had worked for or been a shop steward of a trade union. In the SPD they have declined from accounting for almost a quarter – 22.55% - of the SPD MdBs in 1980 to 12.9% in 2017, with a low point of 10.13% in 2005. In the Labour Party the number of trade unionist MPs was much higher, 41.88% in 1980 and a high point of 43.19% in 1983, reflecting the closer links between the Labour Party and the British trade union movement. From 1983 however the pattern in the Labour Party has been a steady decline dropping to its low point of 26.07% in 2017. Apart from slight rises in 2001 and 2005 this decline has been in evidence at every election cycle.

As with the rise of the youth wings the general trend is a clear in both case studies, but with more volatility in Germany. We can therefore say that hypothesis 1 is proven to be correct by the quantitative data. The youth wings have risen as a source of recruitment for parliamentarians in the two social democratic parties analysed.

A further finding in this section was a stark increase in the number of parliamentarians in both parties who had previously worked as either a party employee or a staffer for one of the party's existing elected representatives. This is linked to both the professionalisation of politics, in that the number of staff an elected representative and the parties have has increased to cope with the increased level of sophistication and therefore specialisation and expertise required in contemporary politics.



## Research question and hypothesis 2.

Research question and hypothesis 2 looked at the dynamics of the selection process and how the youth wings were involved in that. It was specifically interested in the barriers to entry that are presented and how they are overcome by individuals, and whether a higher level of affluence made that process easier to navigate. They stated:

*Research question 2: What are the dynamics of social democratic party youth wings in relation to the recruitment of national representatives?*

*Hypothesis 2: The youth organisations present significant practical barriers to entry which wealthier, middle class individuals are better able to negotiate.*

In both case studies hypothesis 2 found evidence to support it, but as only a limited number of interviews were conducted this has to be seen as initial support to warrant additional investigation, rather than conclusive proof. The data drawn from the interviews shows that there is a dynamic of individuals getting politicised and socialised into the party structures at University via youth and student wings rather than in the workplace via the trade unions as previously, at the first stage of the recruitment journey discussed in chapter two. From there a proportion of them then move into a political ecosystem or the broader politics-facilitating sphere which gives significant advantages in terms of time, flexibility, resources, networking and access to information which provides a major advantage for those who wish to push for selection as a Parliamentarian. The data that is present indicates that this process allows these individuals to accumulate the necessary political capital by combining this with their source of income.

The interviews further indicate that there are practical barriers to entry not so much to the youth wings but to the kind of effective participation within them required to succeed at gaining entry to the political ecosystem. In both case studies the barriers identified are focused around time commitments and the time of the week when youth wing activities occur, with money also identified as a factor in the case of the Labour Party. In both cases the youth wings do their best to reduce the financial commitments required with low membership fees and in some cases support funds for events – the evidence is that this is more successful in the SPD, possibly due to the federal system in contrast to the heavily London-centric nature of British politics. Time commitments and in particular the assumption of a 9 to 5 work pattern allowing evenings and weekends free for political activity is a barrier for those with shift patterns or caring responsibilities. Although student politics does provide greater time and flexibility it is often the case that students from a less affluent background work more during their studies, meaning this is not a barrier that is completely absent for working class individuals active in student politics.

Further, the data suggests that the value of the youth wings is in the main their ability to network and demonstrate the required skills to move into the political ecosystem. Although the JUSOS has sufficient prestige, visibility and organisational capacity that serving in an elected role at the very top, Federal level can be enough to push for selection this is uncommon and most JUSOS origin MdBs went through an intermediate stage. The Labour youth wings, lacking the same stature within the party structures and a requirement always to be selected via local parties rather than party lists, are in all cases acting as the origin point of a pipeline that extends through an intermediate stage – the political ecosystem of employment with the party or an existing elected representative, an NGO or a trade union. The greatest networking opportunities such as youth or student conferences, summer schools etc are those which have the biggest financial cost for the individual.

There are also non-practical barriers to entry, in the form of internal motivation and the conceptualisation that party politics, including the youth wings is often perceived as a middle-class pursuit. Existing research such as Hanley,<sup>807</sup> Brynner and Egerton<sup>808</sup> and Reay, Crozier and Clayton<sup>809</sup> also backs up that individuals who attend university adopt middle-class sensibilities to blend in, so even those from working-class background who get involved get socialised into the middle-class at the same time as they get socialised into the political sphere. One of the reasons that this is important is that, as Bruter and Harrison<sup>810</sup> and Bale et al<sup>811</sup> found, socialisation is the main driver of an individual getting more involved in party politics, with personal ambition also being a driver for some.<sup>812</sup>

Overall, the data that is present is supportive of the notion that hypothesis 2 is correct. It suggests that there are practical barriers to entry which are present in the youth wings, not to join them but to be sufficiently effectively involved to move into the political ecosystem afterwards, which provides a great advantage when an individual later wishes to be selected as a candidate for national office. This also fits with the existing literature and demonstrates that this is likely to be a fruitful area for future research to explore in more depth.

### Research question and hypothesis 3.

Research question and hypothesis 3 are concerned with the concept of political culture and whether the political culture of the youth wings has been imported to the main parties, resulting in a gentrification effect. Specifically, they state:

*Research question 3: What is the impact of any shift in the recruitment of national representatives found on our understanding of modern western European social democratic parties?*

*Hypothesis 3: The shift in recruitment patterns contributes to the gentrification of social democratic parties by creating a shift in the political culture of the party representatives and therefore a shift in the nature of the parties in question.*

This question was interested in exploring the concept of gentrification, as the supplanting of those with low levels of capital – financial or social – by their more affluent compatriots. The thesis drew an important distinction between this gentrification process – seen in the rise of so-called ‘career politicians’<sup>813</sup> – and the process of professionalisation of politics, that is the importing of professional standards and markers into the world of politics, seen in the increasing number and specialisations of

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<sup>807</sup> Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>808</sup> Brynner J. M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The wider benefits of higher education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49

<sup>809</sup> Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. ‘Fitting in’ or ‘standing out’: Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

<sup>810</sup> Bruter M. and Harrison S. 2009. *The Future of our democracies: Young party members in Europe*. London, Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>811</sup> Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. *Footsoldiers: Political Party Membership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Abingdon, Routledge.

<sup>812</sup> Bale T., Webb P. and Poletti M. 2020. Social Networkers and Careerists: Explaining High-Intensity Activism Among British Party Members. *International Political Science Review*. Vol. 41 No. 2, pp255 – 270.

<sup>813</sup> See for example Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it matters who our politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press; Ashe J. 2020. *Political Candidate Selection: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Under-Representation in the UK*. London, Routledge and Henn S. J. 2018. The further rise of the career politician. *British Politics*. Vol. 13, pp. 524–553.

party staff and legislators employees.<sup>814</sup> This, the thesis argues, contributes to the exclusion of the working class from the political field, something explored by scholars such as Ainsley,<sup>815</sup> Allen,<sup>816</sup> Evans and Tilley,<sup>817</sup> Goodhart<sup>818</sup> and Norris and Lovenduski.<sup>819</sup>

Political culture is a subjective concept, and this thesis explored the existing research from figures such as Bale,<sup>820</sup> Duffield,<sup>821</sup> Elkins and Simeon,<sup>822</sup> Keesing<sup>823</sup> and Shi<sup>824</sup> before setting out the definition used in this research. This subjectivity made it more difficult to operationalise the research question. Unlike research question 1, which could be answered with numerical data, or research question 2 which involved clearly defined concepts such as time and money, research question 3 inevitably left more room for interpretation on the part of the interviewees. Nevertheless, the findings from this were interesting, suggesting that the culture of both parties has changed, and this is linked to the rise of the youth wings as origin points for legislators. Again, the basis for this was a limited series of interviews and more work is done to reach definitive conclusions, but the prima facie evidence shows that this hypothesis is worthy of further academic scrutiny.

The interview data did reveal indications that there is a different political culture found in those parliamentarians who came from a youth wing background compared to those who came from a trade unionist background. There was also a sense particularly in the Labour Party, that these had a strong class element, with the political culture associated with the youth wings and their alumni displaying a more distinctly middle-class sensibility than those of the trade unionist Parliamentarians. This was held to be distinct from their ideological factional positions and so related more to the manner in which those individuals conceptualise and perform politics.

In the SPD this was described as those who had been socialised into the party via the JUSOS having “common battlegrounds”<sup>825</sup> or a recognised set of rules of engagement in which to play out political differences, including ideological ones. As discussed in chapter one the concept of political culture

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<sup>814</sup> See for example Black G. S. 1970. A Theory of Professionalisation in Politics. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 64 No. 3. pp 865 – 878; Holtz-Bacha C., Mancini P. and Papathanassopoulos S. (Eds). 2007. *The Professionalisation of Political Communication*. Chicago, Intellect Books and Karlsen R. and Saglie J. 2017. Party bureaucrats, independent professionals, or politicians? A study of party employees. *West European Politics*. Vol. 40, No. 6. pp 1331 – 1351.

<sup>815</sup> Ainsley C. 2018. *The New Working Class: How to win hearts, minds and votes*. Bristol, Policy Press.

<sup>816</sup> Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it matters who our politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>817</sup> Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>818</sup> Goodhart D. 2017. *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. London, C. Hurst and Co Publishing.

<sup>819</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>820</sup> See Bale T. 1997. Towards a ‘cultural theory’ of parliamentary party groups. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 25 – 43; Bale T. 1999. *Broad churches, big theory and one small example: cultural theory and intra-party politics*. In Thompson M., Grendstad G. and Selle P. (eds) *Cultural Theory as Political Science*. London, Routledge and Bale T. 1999. *Sacred Cows and Common Sense: The symbolic statecraft and political culture of the British Labour Party*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

<sup>821</sup> Duffield J. S. 1999. Political culture and state behaviour: Why Germany confounds Neorealism. *International Organisation*. Vol. 53 No. 4, 00 765 – 803.

<sup>822</sup> Elkins D. J. and Simeon R. E. B. 1979. A cause in search of its effect, or what does political culture explain? *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 11 No. 2, pp 127 – 145.

<sup>823</sup> Keesing R. M. 1974. Theories of Culture. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 3, pp 73 – 97.

<sup>824</sup> Shi T. 2001. Cultural values and political trust: A comparison of the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan. *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 33 No. 4, pp 401 – 419.

<sup>825</sup> Interview with DE06.

refers to the rules of the game and the norms and assumptions which govern the actions and interactions of those individuals. Those interviewees who had been active within the SPD since the 1970s argued that there had been a shift in the political culture during their time involved with a change in the way those within the party interacted with each other. Those who had been active since the 1990s however, when the JUSOS background MdBs began to increase in number, dwelt on the concept of an ideological conflict within the party utilising common rules of engagement. This is a strong indication that indeed the political culture did shift when the JUSOS began to become more dominant as an origin point for SPD parliamentarians.

Within the Labour Party the interviewees discussed the fact that the party has always been a broader coalition of groups than its European sister parties because of the nature of the first past the post political system. This has meant a slightly different dynamic in that the youth wings operate not as their own faction but as subsidiaries of the broader ideological factions. Nevertheless, the data suggests that the Labour-affiliated youth organisations do have a common culture which differs from that of the trade unions.

Some of the evidence for this is the simple fact that all of the youth wing activists interviewed had been involved in at least two of the three youth wings, and all had been first socialised into the party at University. Of the MPs from a youth wing background who were interviewed all had joined the party prior to attending university but it was their experiences as a student which politicised them and socialised them into the party more broadly. Further the quantitative data indicates that Labour Students was by a long way the most common of the three Labour youth organisations in terms of the backgrounds of Labour MPs. As most individuals attend university between the ages of 18 and 21 or 22 Labour Students has the lowest cut-off point, leading to those who were active in it to move into Young Labour, which cuts off at 27, or the Young Fabians which cut off at 31. From this it seems likely that the political culture of Labour Students and the University Labour Clubs which make up that body are then transmitted to the other youth wings.

This in turn means that as individuals from the youth wings become more dominant within the Parliamentary Labour Party their political culture is likely to be imported into it. Interviewees confirmed their own perceptions that this was the case and that this was leading to a gentrification process, again providing supporting evidence that hypothesis 3 is correct.

The expansion of higher education means that the rise of graduates in the Labour Party would likely have happened regardless of the youth wings. However, research shows that although the absolute numbers of students have increased in the UK the class proportions have barely shifted.<sup>826</sup> In Germany the rise in the numbers attending university is much more modest<sup>827</sup> and is insufficient to explain the shift in Parliamentarians seen in the quantitative data.

Further, they set the specifics of the culture that is being imported. That is, a more middle-class culture would have happened in the Labour Party, and possibly the SPD to a lesser extent, because of the rise

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<sup>826</sup> See Blanden J. and Machin S. 2004. Educational inequality and the expansion of UK higher education. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*. Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 230-249; Holmes C. 2013. Has the expansion of higher education lead to greater economic growth? *National Institute Economic Review*. Vol. 224 No. 1, pp. 29 – 47; Mayhew K., Deer C. and Dua M. 2004. The move to mass higher education in the UK: Many questions and some answers. *Oxford Review of Education*. Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 65 – 82 and Roberts K. 2010. Expansion of higher education and the implications for demographic class formation in Britain. *Twenty-First Century Society*. Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 215 – 228.

<sup>827</sup> Trines S. 2016. Education in Germany. *World Education News and Reviews*. Published on 08.11.2016. Available at: <https://wenr.wes.org/2016/11/education-in-germany>. Accessed 26.08.2020 17:17.

of graduates within society regardless, but the specific form it has taken is because of the youth wings, and in particular the JUSOS Hochschulgruppen and Labour Students.

The interview data for both case studies supports the notion that there is indeed a different culture in the youth wings, which is being imported into the main parties. Further, it implies these youth wing political cultures are framed around more middle-class sensibilities than those of the trade unions or the historic culture of the mother parties.

#### Discussion.

Overall, there has been a narrative that has emerged from the data for this study regarding the role of the youth wings in the selection process of social democratic parties. Historically the trade union movement, to a greater or lesser degree depending on national context, politicised individuals in the workplace. This was particularly the case in the UK with the close relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party but also occurred in Germany to a smaller but still significant extent. Other individuals may have been politicised in other ways but the youth and in particular the student wings politicised a smaller percentage of the overall parties.

As trade unions declined in influence through the 1980s and early 1990s their ability to act as the origin points which politicised individuals and socialised them into social democratic party politics decreased. This led to a vacuum with the parties facing a functional need to find electoral standard bearers. At the same time student politics began to strengthen, in particular as more individuals began to attend tertiary education in both case studies but particularly in the UK. This meant an increasing number of individuals from the late 1990s until the present who came into the party did so having first been politicised or socialised into the parties at University rather than in the workplace.

The data here, though from a small number of interviews, indicates that the youth and student wings of the parties have a different political culture to the trade unions or the historical culture of the main parties. The youth wing culture is framed around more middle-class sensibilities, in particular as University attendance is still overwhelmingly a middle-class phenomenon.<sup>828</sup> Those who attend who are from less affluent backgrounds, both other studies and the evidence from this study suggest, tend to be socialised into a middle-class perspective during their studies.<sup>829</sup>

At the same time as this has happened the professionalisation of politics, in the form of the increased specialisation required for a more sophisticated political world, has created a political ecosystem.<sup>830</sup> This is made up of greatly enlarged staffs both at the parties and in the offices of elected representatives, and also a large increase in the NGOs and think-tanks providing specialised lobbying or services around politics. This ecosystem has allowed for the creation of a career path and often recruits from those who were politically active at university in the youth and student wings, in particular the party employees and representative's staffers come from this route. There is a broader sphere of politics-facilitating careers such as law, journalism and the public sector, and the youth wings

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<sup>828</sup> Hanley L. 2017. *Respectable: Crossing the Class Divide*. London, Penguin.

<sup>829</sup> See Brynner J. M. and Egerton M. 2001. *The wider benefits of higher education*. London, Institute of Education. Available at <https://dera.ioe.uk/5993/> accessed 26.06.2019 11:49 and Reay D., Crozier G. and Clayton J. 2010. 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 36 No. 1, pp.107-124.

<sup>830</sup> See for example Black G. S. 1970. A Theory of Professionalisation in Politics. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 64 No. 3. pp 865 – 878; Holtz-Bacha C., Mancini P. and Papathanassopolous S. (Eds). 2007. *The Professionalisation of Political Communication*. Chicago, Intellect Books and Karlsen R. and Saglie J. 2017. Party bureaucrats, independent professionals, or politicians? A study of party employees. *West European Politics*. Vol. 40, No. 6. pp 1331 – 1351.

provide a contact point between individuals in these jobs and the parties. Employment in either this political ecosystem or the broader politics-facilitating professions gives individuals more time and especially more time at the relevant moments in the week when political activity occurs, as well as access to the resources required to push for selection.

The thesis contends, with support from the limited number of interviews conducted, that once individuals from this background become Parliamentarians they import the political culture, the way they conceptualise, perform and enact political activity, that they learned when first being socialised in the youth wings into the Parliamentary body. As their numbers increase, the data suggests, this political culture becomes more dominant, leading to a gentrification of social democratic legislators.

The quantitative data demonstrates that hypothesis 1 is correct. Further, although there is insufficient qualitative data here to state that hypotheses 2 and 3 are proven, there is enough *prima facie* evidence to suggest that they are potentially true and certainly that they are worthy of further academic exploration.

### ***7.3: The methodology of this thesis.***

This thesis utilised both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The usefulness of a mixed method approach in this instance was manifest. As an exploratory study the thesis first needed to establish whether in fact the youth wings had risen as a source of recruitment for the parties selected as case studies. This was best done quantitatively by an analysis of the biographies of the national representatives of the two parties. The validity of this approach was proven in the case study of the German SPD, which was the first database compiled. This produced a hugely valuable dataset which can be used for further study discussed more below. However, the issue that emerged was not the usefulness of the approach but rather the availability of the relevant data. In the case of the Swedish SAP this simply precluded the possibility of producing a dataset. In the UK however some detective work meant that a workaround was found.

The researcher contacted party insiders who had been active in the youth wings from several decades and asking them to identify from a list of MPs which had been active with them. The responses were then combined and matched with any other available source, including obituaries, MPs own websites, newspaper reports and any other source that could be located to produce the dataset. This was somewhat dependent on the researchers own insider status. Firstly, because they were able to identify relevant individuals stretching back to the 1950s and secondly because they had already established relationships of trust with those individuals before undertaking the PhD. Unfortunately, the researcher lacked the relevant knowledge and relationships to pursue the same course in the case of the Swedish SAP.

The importance of gathering this quantitative data, rather than only relying on qualitative techniques, was demonstrated by the finding, discussed in chapter six, that some of the SPD interviewees were surprised at the quantitative data results. The nature of the youth wings as being an origin point which then far more often than not led to an intermediate phase in the recruitment journey meant that it is not immediately obvious that the JUSOS has come to dominate in the manner it has. Interestingly none of the interviewees for the UK Labour Party was surprised by the quantitative data results, but rather felt it confirmed suspicions they already held.

There is however no satisfactory method to quantify the impact of this change on the nature of the parties. For this the only useful method was semi-structured elite interviews. These allowed those on the inside of the SPD and Labour to discuss the topics presented and to raise new points, expand upon the existing information and offer their own thoughts. The subjective nature of concepts such as

political culture, having no standardised unit of measurement, cannot be subjected to quantitative analysis. This produced some excellent and insightful responses and some highly valuable data both for this thesis and for future research.

This quantitative dataset is important. Not only does it provide vital evidence for this thesis, but it is also rich on seams which have not been mined here. For example the data on the SPD coded the professional backgrounds of MdBs from 1980 to the present day, coded the ages of MdBs when first elected and even the – as it transpired, negligible – impact of the AWO (Arbeiterwohlfahrt, the Workers Welfare organisation connected to the SPD) on recruitment as well as their gender and whether they declared themselves to be from a BAME<sup>831</sup> background. To the researcher's knowledge it is the most extensive single database on the backgrounds and biographies of the SPD's Parliamentarians currently in existence. Regrettably the Labour database, because of how the data had to be collected, is less richly varied, but it is still an important resource for future research.

The interview data is also rich with themes not covered in this thesis. Interviewees were asked their views on the public's perceptions of the parties, data not used here. Several also raised issues connected both to gender and race, of the 16 interviewees 8 were women, and 4 came from a BAME background. All of this data can be used in future to investigate further the themes identified here, which will be discussed further later in this chapter.

#### ***7.4: What this study means for the study of parties and elites.***

There are four fields in the literature to which this study can provide a contribution, as discussed in chapter two. The primary areas to which this thesis will provide a contribution are legislative recruitment studies and the field of the professionalisation of politics, as these are topics which this thesis directly relates to. It also however has implications for the broader topic of elite theory, and for the literature on factionalism within the parties.

The field of legislative recruitment primarily looks at factors which are to do with an individual's identity, in particular gender,<sup>832</sup> ethnicity<sup>833</sup> and to some extent class<sup>834</sup> and have primarily focused on the end stage of the recruitment journey, the formal rules and campaigning that govern the actual selection process.<sup>835</sup> This study also looks at class as a dynamic but focuses on changes that take place within the early stages of an individual's political career. Specifically, it looks at the moment of politicisation for those who eventually become candidates, when an individual moves from being a

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<sup>831</sup> Black, Asian or Minority Ethnicities.

<sup>832</sup> See Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Davidson-Schmich L. K. 2006. Implementation of Political Party Gender Quotas: Evidence from the German Länder 1990-2000. *Party Politics*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 211-232 and Lovenduski J. 2010. 'The dynamics of gender and party' in Krook M. L. and Childs S. (eds) *Women, Gender and Politics: A reader*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>833</sup> See Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press and Geddes A. 1995. The 'logic' of positive action? Ethnic minority representation in Britain after the 1992 general election. *Party Politics*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 275-285.

<sup>834</sup> See Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Domhoff G. W. 2006. *Who rules America? Power and politics and social change*. Fifth edition. New York NY, McGraw-Hill Higher Education and Merkel, W. 1992. Between class and catch-all: Is there an electoral dilemma for social democratic parties in Western Europe? In *Social parties in Europe II: of class, populars, catch-all?* Barcelona, Institut d'Edicions de la Diputació de Barcelona pp. 11-32.

<sup>835</sup> See Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press and Wigbers D. 2012. *Pathways to Parliament: Legislative recruitment in Germany and Great Britain*. Doctoral dissertation; Darwin College, University of Cambridge.

general sympathiser, supporter or inactive members towards being an activist. In times past this was often taking place in the workplace,<sup>836</sup> this study has shown that in the contemporary era it often takes place on the university campus. This shift has some profound implications for the nature of the parties and is a significant contribution to the literature on the recruitment of legislators. By exploring the manner in which these youth wings also act as a gateway for the political ecosystem and an intersection with the broader sphere of politics facilitating jobs this study also provides an insight into the intermediate stages of the recruitment journey.

This means that this study also makes a contribution to the literature on the professionalisation of politics. Firstly it identifies two distinct ideas which are both labelled professionalisation – the concept of an increasing sophistication in politics<sup>837</sup> requiring more skills, qualifications and specialisations and the manner in which more affluent, middle-class individuals are better able to navigate this changed context leading to their increased representation amongst the ranks of national legislators<sup>838</sup> – and re-terms the latter as gentrification, a term borrowed from Urban Studies.<sup>839</sup> The thesis then provides an explanation of how these two factors intertwine in the form of the political ecosystem and the manner in which the youth wings feed into that. It also by so doing maps out how one of the key drivers of gentrification. By identifying the mechanism by which more middle-class individuals are crowding out their less affluent rivals across the selection journey this study can hopefully provide a stepping off point for further research into this process. As such, this thesis also builds on the work of scholars looking at the class make-up of parliamentarians, such as Ainsley,<sup>840</sup> Allen,<sup>841</sup> Evans and Tilley,<sup>842</sup> Goodhart,<sup>843</sup> Norris and Lovenduski<sup>844</sup> and Ting.<sup>845</sup>

This study also provides a contribution to the literature on factions within political parties. Parties are not unitary actors<sup>846</sup> and in the selection process is perhaps the most contested moment within a party.<sup>847</sup> The factions are therefore vital to this. By exploring how youth wings act as or interact with

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<sup>836</sup> See Minkin L. 1992. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press and Berger S. 2000. *Social Democracy and the Working Class in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany*. London, Longman.

<sup>837</sup> See Karlsen R. and Saglie J. 2017. Party bureaucrats, independent professionals, or politicians? A study of party employees. *West European Politics*. Vol. 40, No. 6. pp 1331 – 1351, Black G. S. 1970. A Theory of Professionalisation in Politics. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 64 No. 3. pp 865 – 878 and Holtz-Bacha C., Mancini P. and Papathanassopoulos S. (Eds). 2007. *The Professionalisation of Political Communication*. Chicago, Intellect Books.

<sup>838</sup> See Norris P. 1997. *Passages to Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Saalfeld T. 1997. Professionalisation of parliamentary roles in Germany: An aggregate-level analysis, 1949–94. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*. Vol. 3 No. 1. pp 32 – 54 and Best H. and Cotta M. (Eds). 2000. *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848 – 2000*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>839</sup> See Lees L. Slater T and Wylly E. K. (eds). 2010. *The Gentrification Reader Volume 1*. London, Routledge for an in-depth discussion of the term in urban studies.

<sup>840</sup> Ainsley C. 2018. *The New Working Class: How to win hearts, minds and votes*. Bristol, Policy Press.

<sup>841</sup> Allen P. 2018. *The Political Class: Why it matters who our politicians are*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>842</sup> Evans G. and Tilley J. 2017. *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>843</sup> Goodhart D. 2017. *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. London, C. Hurst and Co Publishing.

<sup>844</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>845</sup> Ting W. L. 2016. *Does experience matter? The effect of pre-parliamentary careers on MPs' behaviour*. Doctoral Dissertation; The London School of Economics and Political Science.

<sup>846</sup> Rose R. 1964. Parties, Factions and Tendencies in Britain. *Political Studies*. Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 33-46.

<sup>847</sup> Norris P. and Lovenduski J. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.



factions this study adds nuance to this discussion as well as providing an example of the arena in which factions play out.

Finally, this thesis provides an example of how more affluent individuals have, unintentionally, captured a political space for themselves. The mechanisms by which this has happened were not designed to produce a gentrification effect, but the overall impact has been to crowd out less affluent individuals from the political elite. This thesis therefore provides a nuanced addition to the field of elite theory by exploring a mechanism by which this has happened.

## **7.5: What this study means for the parties' themselves.**

The findings from this study can also help inform the debates within social democratic parties about their role and identity. The decline of their traditional anchors the trade union movement<sup>848</sup> and class-based politics more broadly has precipitated an identity crisis in social democratic parties.<sup>849</sup> This was one factor which led to the Labour Party taking a sharply left-wing turn in 2015.<sup>850</sup> The SPD, struggling with being “a *neither-nor party*”<sup>851</sup> has followed suit, electing the left-wingers Norbert Walter-Borjans and Saskia Esken to the party leadership at the end of 2019. The Labour Party’s leftward turn resulted in its worst electoral performance in 85 years in 2019, and it is now again in the midst of deciding what it is and should be under new leader Sir Keir Starmer.<sup>852</sup>

The gentrification of the party identified in this thesis may be one of the reasons why social democratic parties are facing a real decline in electoral support amongst their traditional working-class base.<sup>853</sup> It is possible to speculate that those communities no longer see themselves reflected in the political parties they once supported.<sup>854</sup> The recent rise of far-right parties in Germany and elsewhere, and of Brexit in the UK, have both been linked to this disaffection.<sup>855</sup> As tendentious as this may be it is a real possibility that there is a link between the shifts in the parties culture and their public perception and therefore their electoral performance. There are debates going on within the parties as to whether they should continue to try and function as Volkspartei or whether they should move to positions which more reflect their new core coalition of public sector workers and metropolitan professionals. This thesis can help with that debate by noting how the parties have changed internally.

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<sup>848</sup> See for example Minkin L. 1992. *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press and Berger S. 2000. *Social Democracy and the Working Class in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany*. London, Longman.

<sup>849</sup> Upchurch M., Taylor G. and Mathers A. 2009. *The Crisis of Social Democratic Trade Unionism in Western Europe: The Search for Alternatives*. London, Routledge.

<sup>850</sup> Kogan D. 2019. *Protest and Power: The Battle for the Labour Party*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing.

<sup>851</sup> Interview with DE02

<sup>852</sup> Mason R. 2020. Keir Starmer wins Labour leadership election. *The Guardian*. Published on 04.04.2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/apr/04/keir-starmer-wins-labour-leadership-election>. Accessed 18.10.2020 17:27.

<sup>853</sup> See for example Paterson W. E. and Sloam J. 2010. The SPD and the Debacle of the 2009 German Federal Election: An Opportunity for Renewal. *German Politics and Society*. Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 65-81 and Berman S. and Sengovaya M. 2019. Populism and the Decline of Social Democracy. *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 30 No. 3 pp. 5 – 19.

<sup>854</sup> Davies L. J. 2018. ‘From flat caps to flat whites’. *Fabian Review*. Published on 18.05.2018. Available at <https://fabians.org.uk/from-flat-caps-to-flat-whites/> accessed 20.02.2020 13:57.

<sup>855</sup> Bale T., Green-Pederson C., Krouwel A., Luther K. R., and Sitter N. 2009. If you can't Beat them, Join them? Explaining Social Democratic Responses to the Challenge from the Populist Radical Right in Western Europe. *Political Studies*. Vol. 58 No. 3, pp 410-426.

If the parties decide to remain the political representation of the least well off in society then this thesis, by mapping the barriers to entry that many face, can help to facilitate reform to those structures that allow working-class people to surmount those challenges.

These debates are important. Social democracy, one of the great strands of political thought in the last century, is struggling towards its next incarnation. Those debates require the parties to look clearly at themselves. It is to be hoped that this research can form a part of that.

## ***7.6: Future research.***

This study was designed as an initial exploration of the role which youth and student wings have and do play in the recruitment of social democratic parliamentarians. It has therefore looked to establish the central premise of the argument as its main contribution. By necessity this has left many avenues unexplored which could fruitfully form the basis of further research which could expand both the breadth and depth of this work.

The first example of future research to be born from this thesis would be a more in-depth exploration of hypotheses 2 and 3. The data explored here is rich in promise, and suggests that these two hypotheses have at least a grain of truth to them, but were drawn from a limited number of interviews. More data would doubtless yield more nuances, and it is to be hoped that this thesis can serve to spark this exploration.

There is also ample space to broaden the scope of this research by applying the methodology utilised here to look at the youth wings of other social democratic parties. Indeed, the interviewees themselves have suggested possible alternative case studies in the form of the Swedish Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti (SAP, Social Democratic Workers Party of Sweden) or the Australian Labor Party. Further possible examples could be the Norwegian Arbeiderpartiet (Labour Party) who also have a strong youth wing, or the Italian Partito Democratico (Democratic Party), delegates from whom often form the backbone of elected positions in international youth wings such as the Young European Socialists (YES) or IUSY (International Union of Socialist Youth). By expanding to other case studies further research can enhance the generalisability of the findings of this research by taking into account other contexts and scenarios.

There is further scope to expand this research in terms of its impact on other characteristics of legislators that have shifted in recent decades as well. As discussed in chapter one this thesis focused on the implications of the shift in recruiting grounds in terms of class. A question well worth exploring would be the effect of this change for women and ethnic minorities. In the same timeframe as the youth wings have come to the fore in terms of the recruiting grounds there has been an increase in the number of female and ethnic minority Parliamentarians in both the SPD and the Labour Party. An exploration of whether there is any link or interplay between these two phenomena would be potentially highly fruitful. A further insight could be to look into the notion of an urban vs rural dynamic with regards to selection. Many mining communities for example were in comparatively rural areas, leading to rural social democratic MPs coming up through mining unions. As legislative recruitment journeys have begun to lead largely through Universities – overwhelmingly metropolitan in location – there may have been an impact on how many rural social democratic MPs get elected.

This thesis has produced a strong suggestion that the moment of initial politicisation of social democratic party members has moved from the workplace to university, and/or from the trade union movement to the youth and student wings of the parties. Whilst this is strongly implied further research to investigate this phenomenon would be a fruitful area of investigation.

Whilst this thesis has not sought to provide all of the answers around the gentrification of social democratic political parties it has sought to provide a basis for understanding one of if not the key mechanism by which this process has happened within the German SPD and the UK Labour Party. It is to be hoped that by so doing this thesis can be the basis not only of a greater understanding of the contemporary social democratic party family, but also provide a firm foundation from which reforms to the process can be undertaken by the parties themselves.

*“A long time ago August Bebel said that we have to get teachers to come into the SPD.  
The Party has never recovered from that success.”*

SPD MdB interviewed for this study.

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## Appendix 3 – List of interviewees.

The individuals interviewed for the study are listed below. Their names are withheld to preserve confidentiality and they appear here as the pseudonym utilised throughout the thesis with a description of their background.

### *Interviewees from the SPD case study.*

DE01: Senior member of SPD party staff.

DE02: Member of the Bundestag from a background in the JUSOS and sub-national level party chair.

DE03: Member of the Bundestag from a background in the Trade Union movement.

DE04: Former Member of the Bundestag from a background in the JUSOS.

DE05: Current senior activist in the JUSOS and employee of an existing elected SPD legislator.

DE06: Current senior activist in the JUSOS.

### *Interviewees from the Labour Party case study.*

GB01: Member of Parliament from a background in the Trade Union movement.

GB02: Current senior activist in Labour Students, Young Labour and the Young Fabians.

GB03: Former senior member of Labour Party staff.

GB04: Member of Parliament from a background in Labour Students.

GB05: Member of Parliament from a background in Labour Students.

GB06: Current senior activist in Young Labour and the Young Fabians.

GB07: Current senior activist in Labour Students, Young Labour and the Young Fabians.

GB08: Member of Parliament from a background in the Trade Union movement.

GB09: Member of Parliament from a background in both Labour Students and the Trade Union Movement.

GB10: Current senior activist in Young Labour and the Young Fabians.

There were 8 male and 8 female respondents, and four respondents came from an ethnic minority background. These have been separated to maintain confidentiality.

An additional 8 individuals were not interviewed but submitted data for the creation of the Labour Party database.

## Appendix 4 – Ethics documents.

Below on the following pages are the consent form and participant information sheet given to the participants in the interviews, in both English and German.



### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Title of research project:** The impact of party youth wings on social democratic parliamentary recruitment.

**Researchers:** Mr Luke John Davies (Aston University)

**Supervision team:** Dr Ed Turner (Principal supervisor, Aston University), Dr Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik (Associate supervisor, Aston University), Dr Patrycja Rozbicka (Associate supervisor, Aston University)

	<i><b>Please initial</b></i>
a) I confirm that I have been given and have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have asked and received answers to any questions raised.	
b) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my rights being affected in any way. I am aware of how to withdraw if I so choose.	
c) I understand that the researcher will hold all information and data collected securely and in confidence and I give permission for the researchers to hold all relevant personal data.	
d) I was given an explanation on how the information will be used in any resulting publications and have asked and received answers to my questions in this respect.	
e) I am aware that whilst all data will be confidential the nature of the biographical data that is being collected means it is not possible to guarantee anonymity.	
f) I am happy for the interview to be recorded in audio form and a transcript to be produced. I am aware of how to request access to the audio recording and to the transcript.	
g) I agree to be quoted directly with the use of a pseudonym.	
h) I agree to take part in the above study.	

**Name of the Participant**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Name of the Researcher**

**Signature**

**Date**

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Titel des Forschungsprojekts:** Der Einfluss von Jugendverbänden auf die Anwerbung von Nachwuchs für sozialdemokratische Parlamentarier.

**Forscher:** Herr Luke John Davies (Aston University)

**Aufsicht:** Dr Ed Turner (Hauptüberprüfung, Aston University), Dr Jelena Obradovic- Wochnik (Teilaufsicht, Aston University), Dr Patrycja Rozbicka (Teilaufsicht, Aston University)

	<b>Bitte abzeichnen</b>
a) Ich bestätige, dass mir das Informationsblatt für die oben genannte Forschung ausgehändigt worden ist, ich dieses gelesen und verstanden habe, alle diesbezüglich entstandenen Fragen gestellt und Antworten darauf gegeben worden sind.	
b) Ich verstehe, dass meine Teilnahme freiwillig ist und ich ohne jegliche Beeinträchtigung meiner Rechte und ohne Angabe von Gründen jederzeit davon zurücktreten kann. Mir ist bekannt, wie ich meine Teilnahme ggf. widerrufen kann.	
c) Ich verstehe, dass der Forscher alle Informationen und gesammelten Daten sicher speichern und vertraulich behandeln wird und gebe mein Einverständnis, alle relevanten persönlichen Daten aufzunehmen und zu behalten.	
d) Ich habe eine Erklärung zur Nutzung und Verwendung der Informationen in resultierenden Veröffentlichungen erhalten, habe alle darauf bezüglich entstandenen Fragen gestellt und Antworten darauf erhalten.	
e) Mir ist bewusst, dass selbst die vertrauliche Behandlung der gesammelten Daten ihrer biographischen Eigenschaft nach keine Anonymität garantieren kann.	
f) Ich stimme der Audio-Aufnahme des Interviews und der Fertigung einer Transkription zu. Mir ist bekannt, wie ich Zugang zur Aufnahme und Transkription erfragen kann.	
g) Ich stimme zu, dass ich unter Nutzung eines Pseudonyms zitiert werde.	
h) Ich stimme zu, an der oben genannten Forschung teilzunehmen.	

**Name des Teilnehmers**

**Unterschrift**

**Datum**

**Name des Forschers**

**Unterschrift**

**Datum**

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## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

**Title of research project:** The impact of party youth wings on social democratic parliamentary recruitment.

**Researchers:** Mr Luke John Davies (Aston University)

**Supervision team:** Dr Ed Turner (Principal supervisor, Aston University), Dr Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik (Associate supervisor, Aston University), Dr Patrycja Rozbicka (Associate supervisor, Aston University)

### What is the purpose of this project?

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. The research asks whether participation in party youth wings has risen as a factor in an individual successfully pursuing a political career to the point of becoming a national representative since the late 1970s. Further it seeks to understand how this potential shift in recruiting grounds for parliamentarians can impact on the nature, character and perception of social democratic political parties. "Social democratic" is used as a broad term to encompass the main centre-left party in each country, whether or not they or individuals within them self-define as such.

### Why is this project important?

This project presents an attempt to understand how social democratic parties have changed in recent decades and one potential driver of that process.

### Why have I been chosen to participate?

Because you have useful first-hand insights into the effect of party youth wings on social democratic parliamentary recruitment, either through being part of a youth wing or a national representative of a social democratic party.

### Is my participation voluntary?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw your data from the project at any time by writing to the email addresses below.

### What will happen if I take part?

Your responses will be stored securely, both hand written notes and electronic and audio files. The data you give will be used in my PhD thesis and may be used in other academic publications, policy briefing papers, presentations or other publications. Data will be anonymised as far as possible but you must be aware that owing to the biographical nature of the data it is **NOT** possible to guarantee you will remain anonymous. If you are happy for the interview to be audio recorded, for quotes with pseudonyms to be used and/or for your name to appear in the acknowledgements of any publications please make this clear on the consent form.

### Who is organising and funding the study?

The study forms part of my PhD research which is funded by the School of Languages and Social Sciences, Aston University, Birmingham, UK and conducted under the auspices of the Aston Centre for Europe, a research group within the School.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Aston University.

**Who do I contact if I need further information?**

For further information on the study or any other details you can contact either the researcher, Mr Luke John Davies, or a member of the supervisory team. Their contact information is listed below.

**Who do I contact if I wish to make a complaint about the way in which the research is conducted?**

In the first instance you can contact a member of the supervisory team on the details below. If you do not feel you have a satisfactory response you can contact the Secretary of the Aston University Ethics Committee, John Walter, on [j.g.walter@aston.ac.uk](mailto:j.g.walter@aston.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to be involved in this research. If you have any further questions or wish to withdraw from the research at a later date please contact the researcher or any of the supervisory team on the below email addresses.

Mr Luke John Davies – [daviesl3@aston.ac.uk](mailto:daviesl3@aston.ac.uk)

Dr Ed Turner- [e.turner@aston.ac.uk](mailto:e.turner@aston.ac.uk)

Dr Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik- [j.obradovic-wochnik@aston.ac.uk](mailto:j.obradovic-wochnik@aston.ac.uk)

Dr Patrycja Rozbicka- [p.rozbicka@aston.ac.uk](mailto:p.rozbicka@aston.ac.uk)

### Informationsblatt für Teilnehmer

**Titel des Forschungsprojekts:** Der Einfluss von Jugendverbänden auf die Anwerbung von Nachwuchs für sozialdemokratische Parlamentarier.

**Forscher:** Herr Luke John Davies (Aston University)

**Aufsichtsteam:** Dr Ed Turner (Leiter der Aufsicht, Aston University), Dr Jelena Obradovic- Wochnik (beigeordnete Aufsicht, Aston University), Dr Patrycja Rozbicka (beigeordnete Aufsicht, Aston University)

#### Was ist der Zweck dieses Projekts?

Danke für Ihr Interesse an der Teilnahme an dieser Studie. Sie beschäftigt sich damit, ob die Teilnahme in einem Jugendverband oder –organisation als Faktor für die individuell erfolgreiche Verfolgung einer politischen Karriere bis hin zur Ebene eines nationalen Repräsentanten seit den späten 1970er Jahren gesehen werden kann. Außerdem wird um Verständnis ersucht, ob und wie dieser potentielle Wechsel der Nachwuchssuche für Parlamentarier einen Einfluss auf die Natur, den Charakter und die Wahrnehmung sozialdemokratischer Parteien hat.

#### Weshalb ist dieses Projekt wichtig?

Dieses Projekt stellt einen Versuch dar zu verstehen, wie sich sozialdemokratische Parteien in den letzten Jahrzehnten verändert haben und untersucht einen potentiell beitragenden Faktor dieses Prozesses.

#### Weshalb wurde ich zur Teilnahme ausgewählt?

Weil Sie nützliche Einsichten aus erster Hand haben, die sich auf den Effekt von Jugendverbänden auf die Nachwuchsgewinnung sozialdemokratischer Parteien haben. Dies entweder, weil Sie selbst Mitglied eines Jugendverbandes waren oder Repräsentant einer sozialdemokratischen Partei sind.

#### Ist meine Teilnahme freiwillig?

Ihre Teilnahme ist komplett freiwillig und alle Ihre gesammelten Daten können Sie jederzeit durch eine E-Mail an eine der unten genannten Mailadressen zurückrufen.

#### Was geschieht, wenn ich teilnehme?

Ihre Antworten werden sicher aufbewahrt, egal ob handschriftliche Notizen oder elektronische Audioaufnahme. Die Daten, die Sie geben, werden in meiner Doktorarbeit verwendet und eventuell in weiteren akademischen Veröffentlichungen, politischen Informationsunterlagen, Präsentationen oder anderen Veröffentlichungen genutzt. Die Daten werden so weit wie möglich anonymisiert, jedoch muss Ihnen bewusst sein, dass aufgrund der biographischen Eigenschaft der Daten eine Anonymität Ihrer Person nicht garantiert werden kann. Wenn Sie mit der Tonaufzeichnung des Interviews, Verwendung von Zitaten unter Pseudonym und/ oder der Auflistung Ihres Namens in der Liste der Danksagungen einverstanden sind, machen Sie dies bitte in der Einverständniserklärung kenntlich.

Vielen Dank, dass Sie sich die Zeit nehmen, diese Forschung zu unterstützen. Falls Sie weitere Fragen haben oder zu späterem Zeitpunkt Ihre Teilnahme widerrufen wollen, kontaktieren Sie bitte den Forscher oder eines der Mitglieder vom Aufsichtsteam unter den unten angegebenen Mailadressen.

Herr Luke John Davies – [daviesl3@aston.ac.uk](mailto:daviesl3@aston.ac.uk)

Dr Ed Turner- [e.turner@aston.ac.uk](mailto:e.turner@aston.ac.uk)

Dr Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik- [j.obradovic-wochnik@aston.ac.uk](mailto:j.obradovic-wochnik@aston.ac.uk)

Dr Patrycja Rozbicka- [p.rozbicka@aston.ac.uk](mailto:p.rozbicka@aston.ac.uk)