

**The evolving relationship between civil society and
political parties: The British Labour Party's turn to
community organising**

James Scott

School of Geography

Queen Mary University of London

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the changing relationship between political parties and civil society, focusing on the turn to community organising by the British Labour Party in the aftermath of its 2010 General Election defeat. It documents the model of community organising developed by Movement for Change (M4C), the application of this model within the Labour Party, and the impact of this model on the Labour Party's relationship to civil society. This thesis finds its theoretical home in debates about the role of political parties in modern democracy, the ability of parties to represent the myriad interests of civil society, and the extent to which parties with strong linkages to place-based forms of civil society associations are capable of bridging the divide between society and the state. Additionally, this thesis contextualises the Labour Party's turn to community organising within a history of the party's relationship to civil society from the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century, focusing on the ideas of Eduard Bernstein, Anthony Crosland and those associated with Blue Labour.

Empirical material within the thesis was collected during a twelve-month period of participant observation within M4C between September 2012 and September 2013. This provided data on M4C's community organising projects in Southampton and Cardiff. Through the development of these cases the thesis considers the potential for creating a collaborative space beyond the institutional boundaries of the party in which actors from the party and civil society deliberate on issues of common concern, development campaign strategies together, and take action to affect change. The examination of this space allows this thesis to argue that the organisational capacity of a political party is enhanced when it forms strong links to civil society associations engaged in a tradition of place-based political organising, as well as offering a means by which political parties can evolve in response to external challenges they are likely to face in the future.

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1.0 The Labour Party and civil society

The birth of the modern European system of political parties was integral to the emergence of universal suffrage and representative government in the late 19th and early 20th century. Reflecting on the relationship between parties and democracy, Elmer Eric Schattschneider famously argued that ‘political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties’ (1942, p.1). In his view, parties were so integral to the functioning of popular and representative democracy that if they ceased to function effectively, society would be left with a diminished form of democracy that was neither popular nor representative. Over seventy years later, the prospect of the failure of the established system of political parties has become a reality. Peter Mair’s final book, *Ruling the Void*, begins with the warning that ‘the age of party democracy has passed’; an argument substantiated with data showing that since the 1990s all contemporary European democracies have experienced declining participation and increased disinterest in political parties. What we are witnessing now, according to Mair, is the emergence of a ‘notion of democracy that is being steadily stripped of its popular component – easing away from the demos’ (2013, p.2).

According to Schattschneider and Mair, parties enable modern democracy to function because their institutional design bridges the divide between the popular, sovereign will of the people (*the demos*), and the elite form of decision-making required of modern government. Such bridging ensures citizens are able to choose which elites they would like to make decisions on their behalf and then hold them to account for the choices they made, in turn giving elite decision-makers legitimacy to act on behalf of all citizens. As participation in parties has declined – indicated by lower levels of party membership, lower electoral turnout, increased electoral volatility, and decreased party loyalty across all contemporary democracies – the divide between popular sovereignty and elite decision-makers has widened. As Mair argues, parties and civil society are drifting apart, and parties are struggling to represent the interests of citizens to/in the state. Failing at this, parties now seek to represent the interests of the state alone, and seek legitimacy by conveying such interests to the broader citizenry.

This phenomenon should be of particular concern to the political parties that have their origin, identity and purpose in the emergence of popular sovereignty enabled by the universal suffrage won at the beginning of the twentieth century. Such European parties –

variously labelled as social democratic, socialist and labour– possess common historical and ideological understandings of themselves as being constituted by, and seeking to represent, the collective endeavour and interests of ‘the people’. In a democratic system where civil society has turned away from the established parties, those centre-left parties must either undergo fundamental transformation to win back the support of the people or they face gradual de-legitimisation and eventual demise.

A number of academics argue that this situation has been worsened by the onset of what they describe as ‘post-democracy’ whereby the state has been captured by corporate interests, ensuring yet greater distance between the elites running political parties and the interests of civil society (Crouch, 2004). Colin Crouch (2004, 4) argues that ‘while elections certainly exist and can change governments, public electoral debate is a tightly controlled spectacle, managed by rival teams of professional experts in the techniques of persuasion, and considering a small range of issues selected by those teams. The mass of citizens plays a passive, quiescent, even apathetic part, responding only to the signals given to them’. In post-democracy, centre-left parties are increasingly removed from civil society, and from the social movements from where they historically emerged. This draws into question the role of the party in the future of our democratic systems. Will democracy continue to function effectively in the way Schattschneider described when parties are distant from civil society? Will new types of democratic institutions emerge beyond the party that are able to represent the interests of civil society to the state? Will new parties emerge to replace the established parties of the twentieth century? Or will those parties that dominated throughout the last century respond to the challenge they face, reinventing themselves to rebuild a stronger connection to civil society?

The problematic that underpins my research is how one such political party – the British Labour Party – responds to the widening gap between the people and the political elite in its quest for renewal. As with many centre-left parties across Europe, the British Labour Party understands itself as representing organised civil society. This is manifest in the historic collaboration between the party and a diversity of movements including trade unions, cooperative societies, socialists, intellectuals and faith organisations. Even the name itself, Labour, infers a collective popular endeavour rather than an ideology, such as socialist, social democratic, conservative or liberal. The notion of representing and acting in the interests of labour whilst in government has been the consistent defining characteristic of the party throughout its history (Marquand 1999). I consider whether, rather than the pursuit of government as a means for implementing policies informed by a particular ideological

standpoint, the British Labour Party has tended towards practical and pragmatic approach to policy and governing, seeking to win elections by representing the majoritarian interests of civil society above all other agendas. Arthur Henderson, Labour's General Secretary who oversaw the creation of the party's first national constitution, said in 1918 that he intended to make Labour: 'the party of the producers – of the workers, in the widest sense of that noble word: of all the people, without distinction to class or sex, who labour to enrich the community'.

The Labour Party has more to lose from declining participation and the widening gap from civil society than any of its electoral opponents in the UK or its sister parties on the left across Europe. We might therefore expect its response to the problem of declining participation to be of greater urgency and impact, to come sooner than other parties, and the consequences of inaction or failure to have more severe implications for its survival. Due to this, the British Labour Party offers an exemplar case for understanding the response of political parties to the widening gap between the civil society and elite representation. Analysing how the party responds, and the challenges faced in developing such responses, presents an opportunity for understanding how the established political parties of the twentieth century might function in a democratic future characterised by declining levels of civic participation, fragmentation of their electoral support, and competition from new anti-establishment populist parties of both the left and right.

1.1 The Labour Party's turn to community organising

The Labour Party awoke to the severity of the problem of declining participation and distance from civil society in the aftermath of the 2010 UK General Election. The party had lost 60% of its membership during its time in government, from 1997 to 2010, declining from 405,000 to 167,000 members (Helm 2009). While parties are expected to lose members while in government, the scale of this decline led many to blame the centralising culture of the New Labour project, which had pursued a centrally coordinated public-relations inspired electoral strategy at the expense of developing local organisational capacity (Gould 2011). After the 2010 election defeat, leading party activists and thinkers began to consider more fundamental questions about how the party could continue to play a transformative role in the lives of those citizens and communities it sought to represent (Glasman *et al* 2011). The capacity of the party to provide meaning and representation to its traditional supporters was being called into question, and people started to explore how to rebuild its membership

base, and the party's 'movement', as a way of overcoming the challenge of an increasingly distant and disinterested civil society (and electorate).

Responding to this challenge led many party actors to the techniques and principles of community organising. This interest in community organising, rooted in the ideas of Saul Alinsky, came about for three reasons. First, it was a response to Barack Obama's much publicised and debated professional background as a community organiser, and his apparent application of organising techniques during his successful 2008 presidential campaign. Second, during the 2010 general election campaign a small number of local Labour Parties appeared to have won more votes by integrating community organising alongside the standard electoral organising practices of the Labour Party - most notably in the constituencies of Edgbaston, Copeland, and Bethnal Green and Bow. Third, the interest in community organising was also sparked by the rise to prominence of CitizensUK (CUK), a non-partisan civic alliance that used community organising to build a number of successful campaigns across England and Wales, including the Living Wage campaign. Those debating the Labour Party's renewal in the aftermath of the 2010 election defeat observed the ability of CUK's model of community organising to draw large crowds to public meetings, to develop new leaders from communities not often represented by political parties, to use storytelling to convey political messages, and to build an alliance with an unwavering focus on building power. Some Labour party activists began to feel that their party could use these techniques to rebuild its relationship to civil society and reinvigorate itself for the future.

This interest in community organising was bolstered by the emergence of 'Blue Labour', an intellectual agenda that emerged in the aftermath of the 2010 election defeat. Blue Labour advocates argued that to reinvent the party for the 21st century required learning from the organising practices and ideas associated with the Labour Party during its period of emergence in the late 19th and early 20th century. At that time the Labour Party represented the interests of a broad-based civil society movement, made up of trade unions, cooperatives, faith groups and migrant communities, and it was founded on the principles of mutualism, subsidiarity and reciprocity, striving to resist the domination by capital over land, labour and money (Glasman 2011). Blue Labour thinkers argued that the party's emergence could be understood as a Polanyian 'double movement', in which the commodifying forces of the market economy throughout the Victorian era were resisted by ever-greater degrees of political organisation, communal resistance and self-preservation within civil society. According to Blue Labour supporters, these forms of political resistance used organising

practices that were akin to the contemporary forms practised in community organising and they had generated the institutions from which the Labour party was built.

Over time, however, as the Labour Party grew in the first few decades of the 20th century, Glasman (2011) and others argue that it became dominated by the ideas of Fabian socialism, whose political leaders believed that capturing and administrating the state was the most effective means of liberating people from the consequences of capitalism. These Fabian ideas were realised in 1945, when Clement Atlee's government used the state to deliver a programme of widespread social and economic reform. Building on an interventionist Keynesian consensus in the aftermath of World War Two, the party developed a radical programme for mass employment and a welfare state with links to large national trade unions. This approach, argued to be based the core statist principles of Fabian socialism, remained dominant in the Labour Party for the next forty years.

For Blue Labour, it was the very successes of the 1945 government, and the creation of an interventionist welfare state, that began the break between the party and its movement within civil society. Furthermore, two subsequent bouts of 'modernisation', associated with Anthony Crosland in the 1950s and Tony Blair in the 1990s, had strengthened the party's belief in the role of the state, and for Blue Labour, this was to blame for the perilous situation the party found itself in after the 2010 election. They argued that the party had become a hollowed out organisation with little sense of purpose, identity and vision because it relied on the institutions of the state (via government) rather than social movements and independent civil society institutions, to effect political change. Thus to reinvent the party after 2010, and to rebuild the relationship to civil society, required a reinstatement of the traditions and practices more closely associated with the ideas of Eduard Bernstein who had focused on the principles of reciprocity, mutuality and subsidiarity and the building of a large movement within civil society as the means for achieving political change. In the current period, such principles were to be reinforced by the philosophy and practices of community organising.

The Labour Party's interest in the use of community organising to rebuild its relationship to civil society first manifest itself within the contest to select a new leader after the 2010 election. A handful of elite party actors within David Miliband's camp established Movement for Change (M4C) as a vehicle for using community organising to support his bid to become party leader. They hired a handful of organiser consultants from CitizensUK to train a tranche of their own community organisers, and they began seeking new leaders, finding local issues around which they could build campaigns, and holding events designed to be

engaging and participatory. Madlin Sadler, David Miliband's Head of Strategy throughout his leadership campaign, described the initial motivation for establishing M4C during his leadership campaign in the following way:

'It was very important for David to be seen as somebody who was chosen by the country membership... that was the strategy that instead of just playing to the same gallery of the five people that turn up to the ward meeting - who are great and incredibly important members of the Labour party because they're the ones who get out and do the machine politics which is essential in an election - but also to try and bring more troops in for them'

However, under the influence of the organisers seconded from CitizensUK, M4C also developed a broader purpose than simply turning out more Labour Party members to support David Miliband's leadership campaign. In this vein, M4C evolved rapidly into an organisation seeking democratic reform of the Labour Party, broadly along the lines adhered to by CitizensUK. Rather than just seeking to engage the 'country membership' in the leadership campaign, they started to organise community campaigns led by alliances of party members and civil society actors, thereby traversing the institutional boundaries of the party, and allowing ideas, people and organisational capacity to flow from civil society into the party.

Jonathan Cox, the Lead Organiser from CitizensUK who oversaw the training and development of M4C during the 2010 leadership campaign, reflected on this process during an interview:

'[M4C] is about helping the Labour Party to use community organising techniques to relate more effectively to the communities they're in, to become a movement, to move towards becoming a movement by being able to act on stuff... so what I think Movement for Change is most important for is reframing democracy within the Labour Party, and I don't mean by that its structures and who controls what, I mean the ability for ordinary members to participate and make change.'

Although David Miliband lost the leadership campaign, those involved in M4C decided to continue in their efforts to promote and implement community organising as a means of reforming the Labour Party. In January 2011, three months after the leadership contest, M4C was formally established as an independent organisation that sought to support the

Labour Party. As of May 2015, they operated across England, Scotland and Wales, had run a number of successful high profile campaigns, and received the backing of Ed Miliband, Labour leader from 2010 to 2015. They had also managed to identify, recruit and develop a cadre of civil society leaders within those campaigns. I now briefly introduce the community organising model that they have adopted before introducing my research aim and questions, as well as the rest of the thesis that follows.

1.2 The organising model developed by Movement for Change

Taken from M4C's 2013 Vision Statement, the organisation's purpose is to 'build a movement of people who use the power of Community Organising to make change happen'. The change to be produced by M4C's 'movement of people' using community organising is defined in four ways:

- Change that reflects the values upon which the Labour Movement was built.
- Change in people and their capacity to take action in public life.
- Change in people's communities on issues that matter to them.
- Change in the way we do politics, both within the Labour Movement and wider society.

These statements demonstrate that M4C's purpose and practices are aligned to the form of party reinvention advocated for by Blue Labour. Although unspecified here, the 'values' on which the 'Labour Movement was built' are assumed to be those pre-Fabian ideals of subsidiarity, reciprocity and mutualism, and of communal self-help and preservation in the face of ever greater commodification by the free market. Enhancing the capacity of people to take action in public life speaks to a desire to enhance the ability of individuals to solve problems in their own life rather than relying of the state to solve problems for them in a pre-Fabian vein. Achieving changes in peoples' communities on 'issues that matter to them' highlights an organisational commitment to communal deliberation and a suspicion of knowledge imposed on 'communities' by external experts. Lastly, the aspiration to 'change the way we do politics' in both the 'Labour Movement and wider society' is a recognition that the organising principles and techniques of the Labour Party need to change if the party is to function effectively in the future.

As such, M4C hopes to change the Labour Party so that it reaffirms the principles of the early Labour movement, facilitates the growth of new forms of communal leadership and authority beyond the state, and begins to respect localised, parochial forms of knowledge

over that of experts. In so doing, M4C seeks to use community organising techniques to realise this ambition and the vision statement goes on to say that M4C will use community organising to:

1. Develop leaders who can make change in public life.
2. Create a live political network
3. Advocate and enthuse cultural change at every level of politics
4. Bring policy development closer to the everyday lived experience of people in their communities.

M4C's model of community organising thus has four outputs focused on the development of new leaders, the creation of a 'network' of political activists, advocacy for cultural change across all levels of Labour Party activity, and bringing communal knowledge into the policy development processes of the party. There is to be change across four parameters of political life: people, activism, organisational culture and knowledge.

This model of community organising speaks to the relationship the Labour Party has with civil society, and how this relationship must change in accordance with the analysis and critique of Blue Labour if the party is to reinvent itself and survive into the 21st century in the face of declining levels of participation, fragmentation of its traditional electoral support, and an increasingly distant and disinterested civil society.

1.3 Research Aim and Questions

My research reflects this empirical focus and the broader questions about the future of the political party by exploring the way in which the British Labour Party is using community organising techniques to reinvent itself, and by considering the wider implications of this reinvention for theory and practice. To this end, the research has addressed four particular questions:

1. What is M4C's model of community organising?
2. How are they applying this model in the party?
3. How is M4C's model changing the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society?
4. What are the implications for the future of the Labour Party and political parties more generally?

1.4 Thesis Structure

Responding to these research aims and questions, the rest of this thesis is structured as follows.

In the next chapter I argue that the political party should be conceived as an organisation that is profoundly influenced by its ability to build and maintain relationships to civil society, and that a party is able to pro-actively redesign its links to civil society as a means of renewing participation. I substantiate these arguments by discussing both canonical and contemporary theories of the party, focusing on how these theories conceptualise the relationship between the party and civil society. In this regard, I review contemporary debates about the role of parties in modern democracy, focusing on Peter Mair's (2013) contention that the 'age of party democracy has passed' in relation to the Labour Party's current situation. As such, this chapter provides the theoretical framework for understanding the British Labour Party's contemporary crisis and its response after the 2010 election. The party has turned to community organising techniques as a way of rebuilding the party's relationship to civil society and I locate this shift in relation to wider debate.

The third chapter aims to further understand the Labour Party's current crisis and turn to community organising by contextualising these developments within a history of the party. To do this the chapter reviews literatures that analyse the party's historical emergence, and I focus on the example of the party's rise to electoral success in Preston (Savage 1987) in the first three decades of the 20th century to illuminate this period and its implications for practice today. Here I test the claim that the party emerged from, and subsequently sought to represent the interests of, a broad-based political movement within civil society. I discuss the organisational practices used at that time and the ways in which party organisers in Preston built close relationships with civil society institutions. These organisational developments are then related to the ideas of Eduard Bernstein, whose writings at the end of the 19th century theorised a movement of civil society associations as the means by which socialists could achieve their aims.

This chapter then turns to organisational developments of the Labour Party in the latter half of the 20th century, tracking the party's evolving relationship with civil society. In an effort to contextualise the contemporary turn to community organising, I focus on Anthony Crosland's arguments regarding Labour's approach to political economy in the 1950s, which began to unshackle the party from state-centred forms of social democracy, to the enactment of this

approach under the New Labour government, which sought to emphasise the role of citizenship, civil society and community whilst striving for social justice. I argue these moves laid the foundations for Blue Labour's emergence after the 2010 General Election defeat, and the corresponding interest in community organising techniques as a means of overcoming declining levels of participation experienced by the party over a thirty year period. This chapter finishes with a review of the literatures detailing the theory and practices of community organising, providing an explanation of the aspirations of those who sought to integrate such principles and practices within the Labour Party after the 2010 General Election.

The fourth chapter presents my methodology for this research. I set out my use of qualitative research, and how I undertook participant observation while I was embedded within M4C over a 12 month period, as well as conducting interviews with those involved. I interviewed thirty three Labour Party actors, M4C's community organisers and civic leaders working alongside M4C, and I completed case studies of M4C's community organising projects in Southampton and Cardiff. I outline this work before discussing my own positionality in regard to the Labour Party and M4C's model of community organising, and the ethical dimensions and dilemmas of my chosen methodology. Reflecting on my chosen approach, I finish the chapter by discussing the challenges I faced when collecting data, what I learnt from the process, and ways I could have improved the research that was done.

The fifth chapter presents the findings from my 12 months of participant observation within M4C, and from interviews with those involved in the establishment and running of M4C. The purpose of this chapter is to describe M4C's community organising model, to explore how M4C community organisers apply this model within the Labour Party, and outline the practices and outcomes of M4C's model in reference to wider debates. In particular, I discuss my empirical findings in relation to theoretical accounts of civil society, and explore how a political party wanting to engage further with civil society can create spaces beyond its institutional boundaries in which novel campaign ideas, leaders and capacity emerge, and which in turn, can enable the party to govern with greater legitimacy, authority and power. On this basis, I then introduce a conceptual framework that positions M4C's organising activities as spanning the intersection of the party and civil society.

The sixth and seventh chapters then turn to my two case studies – M4C's organising projects in Cardiff and Southampton. In both I assess how M4C's community organising model changed the relationship between the local Labour Parties and civil society. I do this

by matching the intended outcomes of M4C's model of organising to the observed impacts of their work in both cases. The research focuses on how M4C developed new leaders, created alliances of activists powerful enough to bring about change, and created the new forms of knowledge that challenged the dominant organisational culture of the Labour Party. Finally, I compare my two case studies, considering why M4C's model appeared more successful in Cardiff than in Southampton, and how the local parties differed in their ability to build stronger relationships with civil society.

In my final chapter, I conclude with arguments about the lessons that can be taken from my research in relation to wider debates about the future of the political party. The Blue Labour analysis argues that for the Labour Party to survive and thrive in the 21st century it must learn how to rebuild the social movement from which it originally emerged. Without such a movement it will, as a centre-left party, lack the legitimacy to govern, the organisational capacity to beat its competitors at elections, the necessary knowledge about those whose interests it seeks to represent, and the ideas and vision needed to inspire support the electorate. Assessing the findings from my research, I argue that the current trajectory of the British Labour Party is one of terminal decline, and that reversing this trajectory requires overcoming a series of internal and external challenges. The internal challenges include an entrenched organisational culture suspicious of those individuals and organisations beyond the party's institutional boundaries. While this type of aggressive partisanship was suitable for the party for much of the 20th century, when it could count on the support of a substantial section of the electorate, it now acts as a barrier to the party seeking to develop potential alliances with non-party aligned concentrations of organisational capacity within civil society. To change this organisational culture would require an immense amount of political will and resources, and this seems unlikely to happen in the very near future.

The external challenges facing the party as it tries to rebuild relationships with civil society and forge a new movement are also substantial. I argue these include the general cultural ambivalence towards political parties, and more specifically, partisanship, within civil society. This ambivalence is mirrored by the emergence of new forms of democratic action and representation not associated with a particular political party. Offering lower barriers to entry, issue-specific campaigns, digital engagement, decentred authority, flat hierarchies, and anti-establishment populist narratives, such new political organisations are becoming relatively more appealing to citizens than membership of a political party. By traversing the institutional boundaries of the party and civil society M4C has produced a number of successful campaigns and developed a number of new leaders and supporters. However,

its current impact is modest, and it is likely to remain insufficient in the face of the challenges described in this chapter and the opening parts of the thesis.

By the end of the thesis I am able to further explore whether this matters. If democracy is characterised by the effective functioning of political parties as the bridge between elite representation and the people, then it may be that other parties come to fill the space once filled by the Labour Party, and the SNP and UKIP are already making significant gains on this ground (Goodwin and Ford 2014). However, these new institutions and parties do not have the foundation provided by over 100 years of continuous organisational tradition, and they are unlikely to offer the same degree of stability and durability to a citizenry seeking representation and accountability over elites. In addition, however, as civil society continues to change, it may well be that the changing nature of local organisational life and culture has further implications for political practice. Citizens may seek to organise non-partisan political movements to represent their interests to government in the years ahead, rather in the vein originally advocated by supporters of community organising techniques more than 60 years ago (Alinsky 1946). Such potential changes in civil society as well as the political party provide the focus of speculation in the final part of this thesis. I suggest that it may well be that the Labour Party ceases to exist in the future. The established parties of the 20th century may be replaced by new institutions that are better able to organise and represent the interests of civil society. These may be non-party institutions as well as political parties.

2.0 Understanding the political party: civil society and the question of reversing decline

This chapter explores the key concepts related to the aim of my research; I look at debates about the political party, linkages between political parties and civil society, and participation in political parties. To do this, the chapter proceeds as follows. First, I present arguments regarding the conceptualisation of the political party. Second, I outline my understanding of the relationship between the political party and civil society. Third, I discuss canonical and contemporary scholarly literatures that position political parties as either narrowing or widening the gap between civil society and elite governance associated with representative democracy. Fourth, I examine the evidence related to levels of participation in political parties, with a focus on the Labour Party in particular, allowing engagement with the 'parties in crisis' debate associated with Peter Mair's (2013). These discussions provide my research with a sound theoretical basis with which to analyse the empirical data related to the Labour Party's turn to community organising since 2010 and set up the focus of the rest of the thesis.

2.1 Research Aim and Argument

The democratic landscape of the United Kingdom is undergoing a period of transformation. Those parties dominant throughout the first century of universal suffrage in the UK – the Conservative Party, Liberal Democrat and Labour Party – now face declining levels of participation. A briefing paper published by the House of Commons Library in August 2015 shows membership levels for these established parties to be at an historical low; 'in 2015 1.0% of the electorate was a member of these three parties and, in 2011, 0.8%. This compares to 3.8% in 1983' (2015, p.3). The paper also shows that in recent years citizens have rapidly shifted their loyalties to smaller emergent parties, whilst the proportion of the electorate who have strong ties to one particular party is shrinking. Demonstrating that these trends are common across all European democracies, Peter Mair (2013) argues we are now witnessing the passing of party democracy, and dissolution of the norms that characterised the party system throughout the twentieth century. It is within this context that certain actors within the Labour Party turned to the techniques and principles of community organising in the aftermath of their 2010 general election defeat, attempting to reinvent their party for the 21st century by redesigning the links between their party and civil society. It is

within this context that my research aims to consider the future of the political party and the potential impact of Labour's turn to community organising on the relationship between the party and civil society.

The purpose of this chapter is to make clear my conception of the political party, and to test this conception in relation to existing scholarly work. Throughout I argue that the political party should be conceptualised as an organisation whose electoral success and historical longevity depends upon its ability to build relationships to civil society associations located within particular places and locales. Building on Katz and Mair (1995), this argument rejects those theories that present a model of the party as tied to a particular ideal social structure, namely the 'mass party' and the 'catch-all party'. Instead I argue that the primary classification of a political party should be the extent to which it successfully builds and maintains relationships to place-based civil society associations. In other words, the geographical character of a party's relationship to civil society is the most pressing factor when analysing a party's organisational strength and electoral viability.

However while my conception of the party is aligned to Katz and Mair's (1995) critique of the 'mass party', associated with Maurice Duverger (1964), and the 'catch-all party' model, founded on the writing of Kirchheimer (1966), it is also critical of the alternative model proposed by Katz and Mair; the 'cartel party'. For Duverger, a political party was a manifestation of a distinct social group or groups, and competition between parties represented broader social conflict between these well-defined groupings. Reflecting a social cleavage between 'owners' and 'workers' (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), in the pre- and post-war setting, the British Labour Party represented the interests of the working class, and to be a member of that class was expected to mean automatic support for the Labour Party. The 'mass party' is effectively owned by a section of civil society, reflecting entirely its interests, cultural character, internal competitions and broader struggles for political power (Neumann 1956).

When Kirchheimer (1966) theorised the emergence of the 'catch-all party' in the 1950s and 60s, he queried the notion that a political party is intrinsically rooted to a distinct group or grouping within civil society (such as trade unions). As traditional social structures and collective identities broke down, as economic growth was felt throughout society and a larger welfare state encouraged policy programmes that were inclusive of all social groups, and as mass media allowed party leaders to appeal to the entire electorate, so parties began to delink themselves from any one social group within civil society. This new party type was

defined by the pursuit of votes rather than the presentation of a particular ideology, by centrist policy positions that aimed to appeal to ever-larger sections of the electorate, and by organisations that were elite driven rather than participatory (Williams 2009). Hugh Gaitskell's failed bid to remove Clause IV from the constitution of the Labour Party in 1959 due to trade union opposition can be seen as symbolic attempt to transform the party into a 'catch-all party' (Cole and Deighan 2012, Cross and Katz 2013), and this was only achieved much later by Tony Blair in 1995 (Evans 1999).

Katz and Mair (1995) dismiss these two ideal-type models by arguing that the primary consideration for analysing parties should be the relationship between the party and the state rather than the party and civil society. This analytical shift pivoted on the argument that the 'catch-all party' had evolved into the 'cartel party', becoming an 'agent of the state', reliant on state subsidies and resources rather than membership dues, and competing with other parties in a highly managed environment in which 'the limited incentive to compete had actually been replaced by a positive incentive not to compete' (1995, p.20). In this context, party membership is increasingly likely to be atomised rather than structured to reflect social groupings in civil society. Managed by central HQs rather than constituency parties, the party is likely to be led by an elite whose mandate is built upon a large but passive membership. Such observations led Katz and Mair to argue that 'the movement of parties from civil society towards the state could continue to such an extent that parties become part of the state apparatus itself' (1995, p.14).

In this thesis, I want to return to a conception of the party as an organisation able to proactively build relationships with civil society as a means of maintaining organisational capacity. This is a shift away from the argument about the 'cartel party' presented by Katz and Mair (1995). Rather than an outright acceptance of full interpenetration between the party and the state, my research focuses on the space used by party actors to proactively build new relationships to civil society as a way of overcoming the problem of declining participation. Here I build on Yishai's (2001) 'post-cartel party' which 'deviates from the cartel model in that it displays strong orientation to civil society. Orientation in this regard implies the establishment of both party-affiliated groups and or organizational links with existing associations' (2001, p.671). By 'incorporating society into politics' (*ibid*) the post-cartel party is attempting to overcome the problems that plague the cartel party – financial strain, competition from actors emerging from civil society, and an increasingly precarious hold on power. Post-cartel parties address these problems when they 'ally with voluntary associations, establish social groups, coalesce with groups sharing common interests and

foster partial identities' (2001, p.672), whilst all the time retaining the financial benefits associated with the cartel.

I build on Yishai's model of the 'post-cartel party' by arguing that geographical context is an important factor when considering a party's linkages to associations within civil society. Yishai states that such linkages manifest ideologically, socially and economically. Using the Israeli political scene as a case study, he finds that ideological linkages occur when 'parties became allied with associations promoting causes congruent with their advocacy' (2001, p.680). Social linkages occur when a party uses civil associations to perform social functions, such as the provision of education, welfare or health services, and economic linkages emerged when associations acted in a way that reduced the cost burden of the party, by for example disseminating communications, undertaking polling, or recommending a party's candidate to the electorate. However geography is absent from this framework; it is missing as a contextual factor influencing Yishai's three forms of linkage but it could also be considered as a type of linkage itself.

My research explores whether a party can proactively build new linkages to civil society as a way of overcoming declining levels of participation associated with the cartelisation of party systems, but analysis must account for geographical factors. This is because the power needed to take control of the state through elections is rooted in the party's linkages to civil society within particular places, and can only be understood by conceptualising the geographical contexts within which parties operate prior to forming a government. Indeed analysis of the party at the scale of the state or nation is ineffective for understanding the way in which parties are born in particular places, develop in ways that reflect the specific socio-economic contexts of those places, and the way that this shapes the subsequent activities of parties in government (Low, 2007; Johnston and Pattie, 2003, 2006). In addition, in relation to my research, a geographical perspective is important in understanding the way in which parties can respond to crises by focusing their attention on their organisational linkages to place-based civil society.

Based on this approach to understanding the party, the turn to community organising by sections of the Labour Party can be understood as reflecting a growing awareness within the party that it cannot rely for electoral support on either the 'traditional' social relations associated with economic class (as per the 'mass party' model) or the centralised, state-dependent and media-relations focused strategies associated with New Labour (which represents a combination of the 'catch-all' and 'cartel party' models). These party strategies

were not focused on the party's ability to build new linkages to associations within civil society. While the former assumes that the presentation of an ideological stance aligned to the interests of a homogeneous working class would automatically generate support for the party, the latter believes that the control and management of national media, and a close relationship to the state, is enough to influence voter preferences and maintain power. Those who have turned to community organising within the Labour Party are distancing themselves from both these models of party organisation.

Instead, those who have advocated a turn to community organising have made two alternative propositions. First, it is argued that electoral support for the party can be built by political organising within civil society. Political organising refers to the intentional building of linkages by party actors to civil society associations. It is argued that political support will increase as the party dedicates more resources towards its effort to organise linkages to civil society, and conversely, political support will not result from alternative forms of action beyond civil society, such as the presentation of ideologically informed policy offers to the electorate, or intervention in and attempted management of the national media. Second, it is argued that a party that relies too heavily on political action beyond civil society may maintain levels of support in the short run, but in the long run, this will lead to a decline in levels of political support as relationships to civil society begin to be neglected. In other words, advocates of organising suggest that without proactively building and maintaining relationships with civil society, the Labour Party will face a slow but inevitable decline in participation and support, and its eventual demise. This thesis seeks to interrogate these propositions, exploring the extent to which the political party should be conceptualised as an organisation whose success depends upon the strength of its linkages to civil society; whether political parties are able to pro-actively seek out new linkages to civil society associations when facing declining levels of participation; the extent to which geography (by which I mean the nature of place) is a critical factor in both the building and nature of party-civil society relationships; and whether the turn to community organising by Labour after the 2010 election defeat has successfully reinvigorated the party's relationship to civil society and enabled it to address the declining levels of participation it has experienced.

In this chapter I further elaborate the key concepts underpinning these arguments by looking at the party, civil society associations, linkages/relationships, and declining participation in reference to existing scholarly literatures. This lays down a conceptual foundation for beginning to address the overarching aim of my research which is *to consider the future of*

the political party by reflecting on the British Labour Party's turn to community organising as a response to declining levels of participation.

Reflecting on my arguments in reference to existing literatures also provides the conceptual clarity required when analysing my empirical data in order to answer a series of more detailed research questions:

1. What is M4C's model of community organising?
2. How are they applying this model in the Labour Party?
3. How is M4C's model changing the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society?
4. What are the implications for the future of the Labour Party and political parties more generally?

I now turn to the first section of this literature review and discuss the canonical theories of the political party from the 19th and 20th century, focusing in on the way in which parties relate to civil society.

2.2 Party – civil society relations

Political parties are the defining characteristic of modern Western democratic systems, having 'dominated' the politics of the twentieth century in most states, and 'occupying the interface between civil society and the state' (Johnston and Pattie 2003, p.337). Parties enable representative systems to overcome the tensions produced by the necessary separation of the 'sovereign' people and those elites who are temporarily selected to run the state (Ostrogorski 1902, Muller 2000). As such, observers of parties often repeat Schattschneider's (1942) claim that parties are indispensable to functioning of modern democratic governance. Without parties, it is argued, representative democracy would cease to function.

Parties are also understood to vary across a typology that reflects the particular contexts in which they operate, their unique historical paths of developments, and most prominently (according to Katz and Mair, 1995) their relationship to civil society and the state. There are great variations in the classification and typology of parties provided by academic literature from across the social sciences and these focus on various dimensions of party life (Diamond and Gunther 2001). Reflecting on the empirical focus of my research and my aim

to consider the future of the political party in the context of the Labour Party's turn to community organising, I am interested in the literature focused on the relationship between political parties and civil society. I am therefore excluding literatures focused on the behaviour of parties while in government, the relationship between parties and the state, and the dynamics of inter-party competition, as these do not speak to my research aim or questions. Moreover, even with such exclusions there remains a large body of relevant scholarly research. As Katz and Mair (1995) argue, a consideration of the relationship between parties and civil society has been the one common thread in the analysis and classification of parties since Ostrogorski's *Democracy and the organization of political parties* was published in 1902.

How though should we conceptualise the relationship between parties and civil society? I have already discussed Yishai's useful, although lacking, categorisation of party-civil society relations in Israel as ideological, economic and social. In comparison, Allern and Bale (2012) focus in particular on 'interest groups' within civil society, which allows them to theorise four types of relationship between political parties and civil society: as a form of organisational proximity, as being a transfer of resources, as a closeness of ideology, as a relationship with strategic benefits, and finally as a form of power balance. To frame this typology they use the concept of 'associational life' within civil society to define 'interest groups', which are those 'traditional' or 'sectional' economic groups (such as trade unions or associations of businesses), as well as 'non-traditional' groups, including non-profit voluntary organisations, advocacy groups without members, and social movement organisations with membership bases. This removes 'business firms, research-orientated think-tanks, media institutions and professional lobbyists' from their analysis.

Comparing associational life within civil society to political parties, they argue that 'both parties and interests groups aggregate individual interests and preferences into collective demands and seek to influence the form and content of public policy, and both terms exclude entities like latent social groups and totally unorganized groups of individuals. However, the foci of [parties] main activity differ significantly. Political parties are not only more often orientated towards a broader range of policy fields than interest groups, but they also seek public office by contesting elections. In contrast, whereas interest groups are organized attempts at influencing public policy by those who do not stand for office' (2012, p.9-10). Interest groups, understood as associational life within civil society, offer a distinct institutional entity useful for comparative research of party-civil society relations.

To develop the arguments laid out above, and the initial discussion about the party-civil society relations, I now turn to a categorisation of relevant literature that divides scholars between those who understand parties as narrowing the divide between popular sovereignty, or civil society, and elite decision-making, and those who argue parties broaden the divide between the people and elites. Scholars within the former category tend towards a positive view of political parties, arguing that they overcome the inherent tension of modern representative democracy by striving to mediate the multiple interests within society and then represent these within elite decision-making processes, and indeed, that their success depends on their ability to mediate and represent those interests within the state.

Those in the latter category, on the other hand, tend towards a negative portrayal of political parties. Parties overcome the tension within representative democracy by maintaining or further widening the divide between the sovereign people and elite decision-making. There are a number of different theories that present alternative means by which the divide is widening, but in general, they understand that parties tend towards the representation of sectional or elite interests. However, as this occurs, and the divide between civil society and elite decision-making widens, the political parties in question face inevitable institutional crises – declining participation, corrupt leadership, or simply electoral irrelevance. Within this literature, widening the divide is understood to work in the short-run but it leads in the long run to electoral decline for the particular party in question. Throughout I draw out the relevance of literatures to my own research focus – the Labour Party’s turn to community organising as a means of redesigning its relationship to civil society.

2.3 Narrowing the divide

Scholars who conceptualise political parties as narrowing the divide between the people and elite decision-making within the state would view declining levels of participation in the contemporary Labour Party as indicative of institutional failure – the Labour Party is no longer capable of mediating multiple interests within society and representing these to the state, and is therefore unable to function as a party in representative democracy. In this vein, the turn to community organising is motivated by a desire to address the current inability of the party to bridge the divide between elites and the people, born from an institutional failure to represent multiple interests collectively.

Such a view of parties, and the consequential analysis of Labour’s current dilemma, can be understood via four different theoretical frames; the idea of the functional party, the theory of

the responsible party, the theory of democratic elitism, and pluralism. While there is agreement amongst these models that linkages to civil society are required for a party to fulfil its purpose within representative democracy, each model presents competing explanations of the way in which such linkages actually work.

Theorists within the *functional* tradition, most notably Schattschneider (1942), argue that parties enable representative democracy to function by mobilising citizens to articulate their interests via voting, and that by doing so they hold to account the actions of the governing party and the state. Parties are 'organized attempts to get control of the government' and are organised into two groups, 'an organized group of insiders who have effective control of the party' and 'a mass of passive 'members' who seem to have very little to say about it' (Schattschneider 1942, p.58). When Schattschneider goes on to argue that parties are 'not organized associations of the voters who support the party candidates', he means that the associations within civil society representing interests are not organised on mass to support a particular party candidate. The primary relationship is between the political party and the individual voter, rather than with any form of organised association representing a common interest within civil society. Parties channel the multiple and highly diverse interests within civil society through a managed processes of partisanship and electoral competition. Without parties, government would be unable to effectively function, becoming subsumed within a 'cacophony' of particular interests.

Similarly, Clinton Rossiter (1960) argued that 'the primary function of a political party in a democracy ... is to control and direct the struggle for power'. Such struggle would go on without parties, but with much less purpose, effectiveness and openness. Parties function to bring the inevitable conflict within society under control, to 'institutionalize it within organization, to channel it through nominations and elections, to publicize it by means of platforms and appeals, above all else stabilize it in the form of that traditional quadrille in which the Ins and the Outs change places from time to time on a signal from the voters' (1960, p.39). For both Schattschneider and Rossiter the emphasis is on the party acting as a form of sorting machine, able to absorb the myriad contradictory interests within civil society and transform these from conflicts to coherent policies able to be acted on by the state.

The relationship between civil society and parties operates, in this tradition, primarily through partisan competition and voting, rather than an organisational proximity between parties and institutions or individuals within civil society. As long as individuals vote, the party is capable

of overcoming the tensions produced by the separation of elites from the people within representative democracy. The party itself thus has a narrow function, supported by the mechanisations of electoral competition. From this perspective, Labour's turn to community organising is not necessary as a means of enabling representative democracy to function, nor should the party be concerned about declining levels of membership. As long as individuals vote for Labour at election time in greater numbers than they do for opposing parties, the Labour Party's proximity to civil society is adequate for democracy to work.

The theory of the *responsible party* are similar to those of the *functional party*, arising from a shift in Schattschneider's thinking later on in his career. The pivot in his understanding of parties came when he chaired the Committee on Political Parties of the American Political Science Association, during which time he authored a report entitled 'Towards a More Responsible Two-Party System' (1950). In that report he argued that whilst parties are able to provide the societal benefits described in his earlier functionalist approach, this does not mean that they will definitely do so. Rather, he argued that parties have a responsibility for ensuring that social conflict does not reach unmanageable levels by providing a clear choice for the electorate, articulating the various social cleavages within society. Critically, parties are able to succeed or fail as context and circumstance allow. Thus scholars in this tradition place emphasis on, and encourage analysis of, the capacity of party leaders, the design of their organisation, the role of party members, policy-procedures and all other instruments needed to win elections. These facets of parties are complicit in ensuring that a degree of social cohesion, amiable to contemporary democracy, is achieved. Thus, Schattschneider broadened his analytical gaze, focusing in on the factors within the institutional design of parties that allow them to be responsible by functioning effectively. However both sets of argument have ignored the ability of parties to marry their institutions to the traditions of particular places. The party was seen primarily as a national institution, and the relationship to civil society was understood to flow through the ballot box rather than the everyday life and work of the party.

Similarly, the *democratic elitist* view of the party, associated primarily with Joseph Schumpeter's (1942) *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, views the party-civil society relationship as operating primarily through electoral competition and partisanship. However Schumpeter's emphasis differs slightly from the functional and responsible models of the party. For him, parties are important because their internal procedures select leaders who are then put forward before the electorate, to be accepted or rejected. By selecting leaders to be candidates parties enable the electoral system to channel and manage the conflictual

and contradictory array of interests within civil society into distinct groups of interests. These internal party processes are therefore central for understanding party democracy; 'the psycho-technics of party management and party advertising, slogans and marching tunes, are not accessories. They are the essence of politics. So is the political boss' (Schumpeter, 1942, p.282-3). Thus while the functional and responsible models of the party also conceive of the relationship to civil society (presented as a disorganised mass of individual interests) as operating primarily through the electoral system, and being managed by partisan competition, the democratic elitist model shifts its analytical gaze onto the role of the leader.

This argument was developed further in Maurice Duverger's (1964) *Political Parties*. However, compared to Schumpeter, Duverger made more explicit reference to the relationship between party and society, arguing that parties are essential for democracy because they are the institutions that identify, recruit and train new elites, or oligarchs, who rise up from civil society to become governing elites in the future. Thus he argued that, 'All government is by nature oligarchic but the origins and the training of the oligarchs [by parties] may be different and these determine their actions' (1964, p.435-6). As such, Duverger says that the phrase 'Government of the people by the people', the slogan of classic democratic theory, should be replaced by the more realist statement of 'Government of the people by an elite sprung from the people'. Parties are thus necessary because they diversify and replace the elites who get to govern, and indeed 'A regime without parties [would] ensure the permanence of ruling elites by birth, wealth, or position... A regime without parties is of necessity a conservative regime ... it is further removed from democracy than the party regime' (1964, p.425-6). As de Leon (2014) argues, for both authors, there is a tension around the relationship between party and civil society; parties operate and govern at great distance from civil society, but they also source their elites from within civil society, ensuring that all sectors of wider society may be represented in the state.

As such Duverger's arguments assume a degree of institutional proximity between parties and associations within civil society. Other than the flow of individuals as leaders from civil society into political parties, further research has found institutional proximity occurs when components of each institution, such as the membership base, become formally integrated (von Beyne 1985, Heaney 2010, Poguntke 2002) or when there is a flow of resources and finances (Kvavik 1976, Sundberg 2003, Wilson 1990) between the party and civil society associations. However it is Duverger's argument about the flow of leaders that resonates most strongly with the focus of my research. The existential crisis facing the party after 2010 was one of identity - those who turned to community organising felt their party's traditional

links to civil society had been severed, and that this would undermine its capacity to contest elections. One facet of this traditional link to civil society had been the development of new leaders who would go on to become electoral candidates; indeed M4C's primary objective in its vision statement is to 'develop leaders who can make change in public life'. The democratic elitist model of the party would encourage such an emphasis, and use a party's ability to source and develop new representative leaders and elites from civil society, via a strong degree of institutional proximity, as the primary indicator of the strength of that party's relationship to civil society.

Pluralist understandings of the party offer an alternative understanding of the relationship between parties and civil society. Rather than focusing on the way in which parties source political elites from civil society, and elevate them to positions of power, pluralism argues that the party system is effective at keeping in check the power of existing political elites by creating a competitive system amongst them (Dahl 1961). In *Who Governs* (1961) Robert Dahl argued that, contrary to the arguments of sociologist Wright C. Mills in *The Power Elite* (1951), while there were elites, these were not organised into a single coherent class, but rather were forced to compete to win power by the mechanics of the electoral system. The interests of the competing elites reflected the multiple interests of groups and associations within the economic, political and social spheres, and there was potential for cross infiltration by elites between these spheres of activity. Dahl argued that as the political sphere, and by extension parties, were easily infiltrated, they would come to represent the multiple interests of society; 'In an open pluralistic system where movement into the political stratum is easy, the stratum embodies many of the most widely shared values and goals of society' (1961, p.91). That parties may be controlled by elites from a small number of interest groups does not undermine the ability of parties to build relationships with civil society because parties had to present policies that reflect the interests of wider society if they were to win elections. Within this theoretical frame, electoral competition is enough to keep elite party actors in check as it forces them to build reciprocal relationships in which mutual interests with broad sections of civil society are articulated.

Each of the approaches to understanding political parties argues that democracy relies upon a degree of separation between party and civil society. A necessary consequence of this separation is the creation of a body of governing elites, who act in accordance with democratic principles either intrinsically (functional model) or intentionally (responsible model), and the role of the party is to either ensure such elites do not become embedded

oligarchs (democratic elitism) or to be the institutional vehicle in which the plurality of interests within society are managed, reflected and articulated within government (pluralism).

Each of the models discussed assumes that government by elites does not necessarily erode a party's relationship to civil society, but they each present different versions of the role that the party plays in ensuring popular sovereignty is not undermined by elite rule. Functionalism sees there to be an inherent bridging effect of inter-party competition for votes; society, mobilised as voters, is assumed to be able to hold to account party elites at election time. The responsible party model has a similar stance on party-society relations, but places greater agency in the hands of party leaders, who must be capable enough to effectively manage disagreements and conflict within society. If they are unable to do this, a party leader who is more able will replace them at election time. In contrast democratic elitists and pluralists focus their analyses on the way in which internal party mechanics influence party-society relations, rather than the nature of party competition. Scholars from the democratic elitist tradition place emphasis on the internal processes by which parties select leaders, because this either overcomes the public's inability to effectively articulate its interests (Schumpeter 1942) or because these processes lead to the democratisation of elite formation (Duverger 1964). Similarly, scholars from the pluralist tradition argue that as interest groups within civil society easily penetrate parties, they come to reflect the wider interests of society in their offer to voters. Hence, party-civil society relationships are framed as the on-going by-product of the institutional forms required of parties if they are to win power, rather than being a by-product of the competition between parties to win elections.

In other words, each theorist presents the political party as positively overcoming the divide within modern representative democracy - identified by the pragmatic theorist John Dewey (2004) – between elite representative rule and popular sovereignty based on individual participation. The paradox of representative democracy, according to Dewey, is that elite rule and popular sovereignty are required to exist simultaneously. For the scholars discussed above, the political party overcomes that paradox by narrowing the gap between the people and the elites. As such, when a party, such as the contemporary Labour Party, is facing declining levels of participation and an increasing distance from civil society, this is understood as an institutional failure of the party itself as it fails to narrow that gap. It is in a sense an optimistic analysis, suggesting that the party can overcome its problems by rebuilding its linkages with civil society. The failures of a party are understood to result from its own institutional design and intentional actions as an autonomous organisation, rather than as a result of broader social and political structures.

I now turn to work that presents an alternative conception of the party and its relationship to civil society, positioning the party as overcoming the paradox of modern representative democracy by widening the divide between the popular sovereignty of civil society and the representative rule by elites within the state.

2.4 Widening the divide

Three scholarly traditions understand political parties as responding to the paradox of representative democracy by widening the divide between elite rule and popular sovereignty; these are elite theory, power-elite theory, and patronage theory. These see political parties as responding to the tensions produced by the paradox theorised by John Dewey (1961) – that representative democracy simultaneously relies upon the elite decision making and popular participation – by seeking to represent sectional or elite interests rather than the collective interests of civil society. This creates a relationship between parties and civil society that is inevitably distant, corrupted, partial or non-existent.

The foremost of these approaches is known as the *elite theory of parties*. Also known as the Iron Law, this theoretical approach to parties holds that the conditions of universal suffrage mean parties will over time tend towards oligarchical leadership. This theoretical tradition has its origins in Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy. For Weber, bureaucracy was the distinctive organisational type of modernity, enabling large organisations in the economic, political and administrative spheres to plan and manage the allocation of resources across increasingly complex territories. Bureaucratic organisation also enabled modern states to become highly centralised, concentrating political power at the top of a hierarchy, and giving those with authority accurate calculability when making decisions. Accurately understanding the impact of a decision required that bureaucracies become depersonalised entities. For Weber, this meant authority and power within bureaucracies were exercised not through emotional actions and reactions, but due to the logic of rationality: ['The calculability of decision-making] and with it its appropriateness for capitalism ... [is] the more fully realized the more bureaucracy "depersonalizes" itself, i.e., the more completely it succeeds in achieving the exclusion of love, hatred, and every purely personal, especially irrational and incalculable, feeling from the execution of official tasks. In the place of the old-type ruler who is moved by sympathy, favour, grace, and gratitude, modern culture requires for its sustaining external apparatus the emotionally detached, and hence rigorously "professional" expert' (quoted in Bendix 1960, p.421-422). Such bureaucratisation creates a feedback loop

in which rationalisation of decision-making, and depersonalisation of organisation, reinforces and further advances bureaucratisation. Experts create the need for even more experts, even within the ostensibly mass working class parties that emerged with the advent of universal suffrage, referred to here by Weber: 'The more bureaucratization advances and the more substantial the interests in benefices and other opportunities become, the more surely does the party organization fall into the hands of experts' (quoted in Ray and Reed 2002, p.169)

The consequence of this move was that the leaders of working class parties would over time become distant from the social formations from which they originally emerged. The act of forming a mass party would result in the principles of the mass party being undermined. This theoretical model is thus the inverse of the functional model of parties discussed in the previous section. Both posit that the inherent dynamics of party formation and competition will have an inevitable outcome; for Schattschneider and Rossiter inter-party competition will inevitably lead to the effective management and articulation of social conflict, while for Weber, mass party formation will lead to the detachment of party leaders from the social formations they hope to represent. While for Schattschneider the locus of modern democracy is to be found in the competitive relationship between political parties, for Weber this competition would result in the distancing of popular sovereignty from elite government; 'The demos itself, in the sense of a shapeless mass, never 'governs' larger associations, but rather is governed' (quoted in Sharma and Gupta 2006, p.61)

Robert Michels, a protégée of Max Weber, further advanced the elite theory of parties. He used the case of the German Social Democratic Party (SDP) to argue that for the modern working class to win support of a majority of voters, they must organise themselves into large trade unions and party associations. Lacking the financial power of the ruling class, such organisation would be the source of the working class movement's political power. However, the technical requirements of running such large political associations, with hierarchal structures, delegated authority, committees and centralised staff, all characteristic of Weber's theory of bureaucratisation, would lead party leaders to become distant from the working class in whose interests the associations act. Thus, paradoxically, as the working classes of Europe strove to use modern democracy to win political power, so they created the conditions of undemocratic party representation. As such, Michels argued that 'The technical specialization that inevitably results from all extensive organization renders necessary which is called expert leadership ... thus, the leaders, who were at first no more than the executive organs of the collective will, soon emancipate themselves from the mass

and become independent of its control. Organization implies the tendency to oligarchy' ([1911] 1962, p.70).

It was this equation of organisation and oligarchy which led Michels to construct his Iron Law: 'Reduced to its most concise expression, the fundamental sociological law of political parties ... may be formulated in the following terms: "It is the organization which gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization, says oligarchy" ([1911] 1962, p.365). The larger the organisation, the more elaborate the bureaucracy, and ever greater the tendency towards oligarchy. Panebianco (1988) updated this hypothesis by showing that there were other, more influential factors than organisational size that affected the degree of bureaucratisation within a party, such as environmental factors. The more complex, the less stable and more hostile the environment in which parties operate, the more prone parties will become to elaborate and complex bureaucracies (Panebianco 1988, p.55-56).

If taken uncritically, Michels' theory encourages us to view the British Labour Party as inevitably tied to a future of oligarchy and a drift away from the civil society base from which it historically emerged. The turn to community organising and the organisational aims of M4C can be seen as an attempt to disrupt the feedback loop in which bureaucracy leads to rationalisation of decision-making within the party, leading to further bureaucratisation, and so on. However, if Michel's 'law' is applied, this attempted disruption will not succeed while the Labour Party exists as a mass organisation seeking electoral victory across the UK – such political ambition requires bureaucracy and therefore oligarchy, and attempts to rebuild the relationship to civil society will likely be seen as a distraction from the fundamental purpose of the Labour Party of winning elections.

The second theoretical tradition that posits parties as widening the divide between the demos and elite decision-making is *power-elite theory*. While the iron law of oligarchy suggests that party leaders emerge from civil society only to become detached due to the processes of bureaucratisation, power-elite theory argues that once parties have grown their political power, they are susceptible to capture by existing elites. In other words, for the former, the distancing of civil society from the party comes from within the organisational logic of mass parties, while for the latter, that further distance is a result of the logic of power embedded within the class system.

C. Wright Mills was an early advocate of power-elite theory; in *The Power Elite* (1956) he outlined the presence of two groups of elite actors in the military and economic spheres who have over time gone from 'political outsiders' to taking control of the institutions of government and state, including political parties. However this is not to say that the party becomes detached from society, as in Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy, but that a small group of powerful people from within society are able to take control of the party and distance it from the masses who it is designed to serve. Floyd Hunter's (1953) *Community Power Structure*, although published prior to Mills' *The Power Elite*, it a useful appendix, offering a theory of the nature of the power held by the elite class described by C Wright Mills. Hunter theorises 'community power' as that which operates through relationships between individuals, and that is 'structured into associational, clique, or institutional patterns to be effective' ([1953] 1963, p.6). Pre-dating Putnam's (1993) influential examination of social capital in Italy by forty years, Hunter's empirical research into city level governance found that 'director interlocks' (relationships between elite managers and directors) enabled different corporate sectors to act in unison and exert great influence on political decisions that affected their interests.

Domhoff (1978, 1998) and Mizruchi (1992) further developed the power elite theory of parties by examining the financial relationships between corporate elites and parties in the United States. Domhoff's work shows that the majority of contributions to political parties in the US come from corporate donors, at a ratio of 6.9 to 1 compared to donations from organised labour in 1994, and that leaders of both US parties have tended to be from the top 10% of the income and wealth levels. For Domhoff, this evidence points to a unified elite who have protected their private interests by infiltrating and controlling the modern system of partisan politics in the USA. In *The Structure of Corporate Political Action* (1992), Mark Mizruchi says that it is not sufficient to argue that elite corporate interests are intrinsically unified, as argued by Domhoff, but to show the structural conditions which prompt elite unification and influence on political parties. His research showed that when firms are competing against one another, they often collaborate and attempt to influence political decision making in the same way. He evidenced this by showing that competing firms tended to donate to one party or another, and to argue similarly in favour or against policy decisions (1992, p.123). As such, parties are susceptible to coercion from corporate elites within society when certain structural conditions are met.

The Labour Party's interest in community organising does not appear to adhere to the vision of a party in hock to the interests of elite formations in society presented by power-elite

theory. Those party actors wishing to build closer relations to civil society using community organising techniques, and rekindling the Labour Party's historic social movement foundation as a means of reversing declining levels of participation, seem to want to diversify the types of relationships the party has with civil society. While for power-elite theorists, the primary party-civil society relationship is focused on a party's relationship to existing elite groups within society, those advocating community organising aim for relationships with broad-based, grass roots forms of civil society. How this form of relationship building fits beside relationships to elite formations within the Labour Party requires further elaboration in reference to my empirical material, presented in the following chapters.

The final theoretical tradition I will discuss here is the theory of patronage. There are two lineages within this tradition - machine parties and clientelism. Machine politics asserts that parties maintain control of government by providing benefits in return for votes to either individual voters or community leaders who have influence over groups of voters. This system of patronage was documented in the classic text on local party formation, *City Politics* (1967) by Banfield and Wilson, in which they argue that parties operate like business organisations, using incentives to maintain control over their electoral base; 'Business organizations are machines in that they rely largely upon specific, material incentives (such as salaries) to secure dependable, close control over their employees. A political machine is a business organization in a particular field of business – getting votes and winning election' (1967, p.115). Such a view strips parties of motivations rooted to political principles of ideology, presenting instead a rationalist organisation that strives to maximise their self-interest, which is maintaining their hold on government power. The machine of the party is therefore an instrumental institution.

However, Banfield and Wilson also conceded that certain circumstances encourage parties to adopt the language and policies that reflect the 'ethos' of a particular locale or community. Controversially they argued that local communities of migrants are more susceptible to the instrumental tendencies of machine parties when compared to 'Anglo-Saxon Protestant middle-class' (1967, p.41). While the latter placed 'emphasis upon the obligation of the individual to participate in public affairs and to seek the good of the community 'as a whole' (which implies, among other things, the necessity of honesty, impartiality, and efficiency)', the former 'immigrant ethos' was held by those 'who identify with the ward or neighbourhood rather than the city 'as a whole'.... and who are far less interested in the efficiency, impartiality, and honesty of local government than in its readiness to confer material benefits of one sort or another upon them' (1967, p.46). Disregarding the typecasting of various

communities within this analysis, the underlining point is that political parties are not entirely divorced from the will of society, and focused only on the material self-interest of particular voters, but that they react to the public's understanding of the common good.

By making the argument that party-civil society relations are driven by the self-interest of politicians wanting to stay in office, patronage theory asks us to question the motivation that underpins the Labour Party's turn to community organising as the means for building closer relations with civil society. Does the motivation matter for this relationship? Would a close relationship between a party and civil society forged through such transactional interests be less significant than a party whose motivation was normatively understood as more moral? Those turning to community organising within the Labour Party, and advocating the ideas of Blue Labour, frame the relationship they seek with civil society to be based on moving from reciprocity to first trust and second solidarity between the party and civil society (Glasman et al 2011). While the first stage of reciprocity, which is a 'relationship of give and take' (Glasman 2011, p.14), could match the business like relationship with civil society described by Banfield and Wilson, this is framed as the foundation by which trust and solidarity between the party and civil society can emerge rather than the final state of the relationship.

The second strand of patronage theory is clientelism. This presents the party in much the same way as machine politics theory, but has been focused on emerging parties in countries that have recently transitioned to universal suffrage. James C. Scott's (1972) *Comparative Political Corruption* explores clientelism in such contexts, illustrating the relationship of dependency that exists between the client (the voter) and the patron (the party leader or official). He shows how parties in such contexts use clientelism to build political support once the threat of violence has been removed. In such situations, 'Few viable political bonds except those of material self-interest are available to build a large political party among poor, heterogeneous, transitional populations. Self-interest thus provides the necessary political cement' (1972, p.118). Parties can offer material rewards to potential voters, cementing their support through delivery of promises once in office, and then use their clients to undertake further base building and electoral campaigning. As in Banfield and Wilson's account, Scott clarifies that the client – patron relationship does take into account the cultural predispositions of the client communities. As Scott states, 'Given the pressure to gain support, a party will emphasize those inducements that are appropriate to the loyalty patterns among its clientele' (1972, p.110). As such, the favours offered to communities by parties looking to build a support base will reflect their understanding of leadership relationships and accepted transactions between patron and client.

In understandings of machine politics and clientelism, the party is deemed autonomous and success is determined by the degree to which party strategy reflects the place-based traditions of the civil society upon which the party relies for electoral victory. This conforms to my earlier argument about the party being able to act autonomously within the parameters of the traditions associated with the particular places in which they seek support. However, both machine politics and clientelism use narrow, often financial self-interest, to codify the relationships that parties build with civil society in local areas. This seems problematic in the context of Labour's turn to community organising given the emphasis on notions of reciprocity, trust, mutualism and solidarity as the values guiding the relationship between the party and civil society, as well as the emphasis on leadership development. Thus, while patronage theory provides an appreciation of why parties interact with the geographical particularities of civil society, it unfortunately undermines this analytical innovation by then narrowing the scope of the relationship between the party and civil society rather more than seems useful.

The theories I have just discussed suggest that, when faced with the paradox and resultant tension inherent within the system of representative democracy, political parties respond by broadening the divide between elite decision-making and civil society. The reasons provided vary from deterministic analyses of party institutions (elite theory and the Iron Law of Oligarchy) and power structures (power-elite theory), and attempts to build relationships to civil society are understood as being necessarily motivated by entrenched power (machine politics) or by ascendant power (clientelism). However, as I have said above, the patronage theory of the party does begin to analyse the way in which parties interact with the place-specific interests of civil society, which supports my argument about the importance of bringing a geographical perspective to these debates.

2.5 Marxist approaches

Attempts to conceptualise party–civil society relations are also present in the Marxist tradition. Such ideas do not fit neatly within the two broad theoretical categories outlined above as Marxist thinkers tend to consider parties as a component of socialist strategies, rather than as objects to be analysed so that democracy can be more fully understood. While the theorists above provide alternative ideas of how parties respond to the inherent paradox of representative democracy, categorised by their approach to party – civil society relations, all do so with the assumption that the party wishes to maintain that system of

governance. However, theorists within the Marxists tradition dispel with this assumption, and position the party into a vehicle by which the system of liberal representative democracy may be discontinued. However, this tradition has been important in scholarly debate and the development of Leninist and Gramscian approaches similarly emphasise the role of the party in representing the demos.

Marxist approaches to party-civil society relations can be split into two approaches - orthodox and Gramscian. Sharing similar assumptions to the functional approach above, orthodox Marxist theory saw parties as reflecting the natural structures of class and power within society, and party systems as being segmented along the social divisions determined by the means of production; proletariat and bourgeoisie. This approach to party-society relations was articulated within Marx and Engels' (1998 [1848]) *Communist Manifesto*, and later given theoretical clarity in Marx's (2015 [1859]) *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Parties are argued to exist within the superstructure as surface-level manifestations of foundational socio-economic relations within capitalism. As such, party policies are reflections of the class logic within society, rather than the result of internal strategies, abilities or the ideology of parties themselves. Such economic determinism, perpetuated by Karl Kautsky throughout the Second International, was challenged by Vladimir Lenin (1902) in *What is to be Done?* For Lenin, socialist parties were the tools of the coming socialist revolution, operating as the organisational vanguard of the proletariat by organising and agitating for the overthrow of the capitalist state. Within the Marxist tradition, Lenin was the first to conceptualise parties as independent of the underlying capitalist structure of society, able to autonomously influence socioeconomic development.

As with Lenin, Antonio Gramsci conceptualised parties as components of the socialist strategy against the capitalist state, but he shifted his attention from party organisation to coalition building. Socialist parties were to construct 'hegemonic blocks' founded upon a 'common sense' that saw society as divided into inimical social classes and understood the proletariat as the rightful rulers of society in place of the bourgeoisie (de Leon 2014). Socialist parties were in a battle of ideas against their bourgeoisie adversaries, and had to construct a vision of society, and a coalition affirming that vision, which supported their ideological goals. As such, Gramsci argued that 'Politically, the broad masses only exist insofar as they are organized within political parties' ([1921] 2000, p.121). This was because 'Ideas and opinions are not spontaneously born in each individual brain, they have a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, or persuasion – a group of men, or a single individual even, which has developed them and presented them in the political form of

current reality' (Gramsci, 1971, p.192). In a radical break from the orthodoxy of Kautsky, Gramsci argued that the success of socialist parties did not directly reflect underlying class conflict within society, but rather, that political struggle undertaken by parties would direct the content of class conflict.

Neo-Gramscian thinkers developed these ideas throughout the twentieth century, incorporating issues of identity formation, subjectivity and hegemony into political theory. Louis Althusser's (2006) *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* proposed a theory of 'ideological interpellation', in which individuals recognise themselves as particular kinds of 'subjects', assigned to them through the categorisation of society by 'ideological state apparatus', such as schools, churches, political parties, families etc. The effect of this interpellation is to maintain the conditions in which capitalist society is reproduced, and conversely, for socialist parties to successfully change society, they would have to propagate alternative ideological subjects based on antagonistic classes. Parties were therefore, according to Althusserian theory, a productive force in the on-going reproduction of society, rather than a manifestation of the class structure of society.

Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* advanced neo-Gramscian thought, going beyond class to focus on political struggle (hence often being categorised as post-Marxist) and argue that socialist parties had to build 'chains of equivalence' between multiple subjects - feminists, migrants, ethnicity, working class etc. – if they were to win the argument for social change against their bourgeoisie opponents. Parties, they argued, should not overemphasise class, positioning it as the axis on which social development is determined, but incorporate the diverse subjectivities of modern society into their political strategies, building a powerful hegemonic alternative to bourgeoisie rule.

Marxist approaches to party-civil society relations shifted from the economic determinism of early orthodoxy, through to the idea associated with Gramsci and Lenin as revolutionary instrumentalism, to the post-class analysis of multiple subjectivities developed by Laclau and Mouffe. The party was first understood as an afterthought, dependent upon class conflict within society, but it quickly became a vehicle for manipulating society towards socialism, before ending as an institution in which party actors can articulate the diversity of society as the means to building alternative hegemonic power. As this tradition developed throughout the twentieth century, the party was understood as the central institution for influencing the development of society.

2.6 Summary and relevance

Across the approaches to party-civil society relations outlined above, the party has been theorised as responding to the paradox of liberal democracy by seeking to either narrow or widen the gap between the sovereignty of the demos and the decision-making of the elite. However this schematic does not neatly map onto party-civil society relations - within the literature a narrowing of the gap between the people and the elite does not necessitate a closer institutional proximity between the party and civil society. The *functional* and *responsible* models of the party conceive the relationship between party and civil society to be mediated primarily, indeed almost exclusively, through the logic and institutions of elections. There is thus distance between the party and civil society even while the logic of inter-party competition enables a narrowing of the divide between the authority of the sovereign people and the elites temporarily preceding over the policy levers of the state.

On the other hand the *democratic elitist* model theorises that a narrowing of the divide by political parties rests upon parties creating proximity between themselves and associations within civil society. The narrowing occurs again due to the logic of electoral competition, but parties are understood to have to source new leaders from within civil society to compete elections successfully. In this sense, framed around the development of new leaders, institutional proximity to civil society is a requirement of parties as they narrow of the divide between elites and the people. Similarly, *pluralist* accounts of the party integrate the ability of the party to overcome the paradox of representative democracy with its ability to hold proximate relationships to civil society associations. However rather than leadership development, as in the democratic elitist model, pluralism frames this integration as the understanding and articulation by parties of the interests within certain social groups and associations. If parties cannot understand and articulate those interests, they will not succeed electorally.

Similarly, those theories that see the party as responding to the paradox of representative democracy by widening the divide between elites and the people do not map neatly onto a schematic of party-civil society relations. Both *elite theory* and *power-elite theory* see a widening divide between elite-decision making and popular sovereignty as rooted in a greater distance of the party from civil society – either due to bureaucratic necessity or elite capture. On the other hand, both strands of patronage theory – machine politics and clientelism – assert that parties remain distant from civil society while creating a proximity between elite rule and popular sovereignty through transactional relationships in which

resources are designated to certain social groupings in return for political support. To summarise these theoretical understandings of party-civil society relations and the degree to which elite decision-making and participation of sovereign demos are integrated, I have constructed the theoretical schematic below (Figure 1).

Omitted from the table below are the Marxist theories of the party discussed above. This is because they do not begin with the assumption that parties relate to civil society in order to maintain the system of liberal democracy. Rather parties, from the Marxist perspectives, are engaged with civil society as a means of achieving political and economic revolution or social transformation. Starting from such a premise means that whether Marxist approaches consider parties to have strong or weak relations with civil society, and whether they are conceived to widen or narrow the divide between the demos and elite governance, is an unnecessary consideration and irrelevant for answering my research questions. It is a strategic consideration for party actors rather than a question of how parties are conceptualised. An interpretation and application of Marxist theories of the party for my research would therefore be disingenuous – neither would they be applicable to my chosen empirical focus, nor would they be true to the Marxist theories in question.

In comparison, the bodies of theory I have included in my schematic are conducive to the underlying assumptions about the role of the party within liberal democracy present in my empirical focus. These theories relate to my argument - that a political party's success depends upon its ability to build and maintain relationships with place-based civil society associations – in different ways. *Elite theory* provides a useful critique of party bureaucracy that resonates with the situation in which the Labour Party found itself in 2010. However this criticism does not offer a framework for understanding how a party would respond to declining participation once it has become detached from civil society, and offers no guide for analysing the type and impact of M4C's community organising model, for example. The *functional* and *responsible party* theories do position parties as needed for integrating elite governance and popular sovereignty within representative democracy, but they institutionalise this through the ballot box and electoral competition only, rather the institutional proximity between the parties and civil society associations. *Machine politics* and *clientelism* are focused on the ways a party grows stable power relations when societies transition to democracy, but focus singularly on the instrumental relationships of financial self-interest between parties and civil society groups. *Clientelism* does bring a geographical lens, but undermines its applicability by focusing on a narrow form of party-civil society relationship.

The Marxist theories of party, discussed above, do not fit within the schematic below as they do now

Attempts to conceptualise party–civil society relations are also present in the Marxist tradition. Such ideas do not fit neatly within the two broad theoretical categories outlined above as Marxist thinkers tend to consider parties as a component of socialist strategies, rather than as objects to be analysed so that democracy can be more fully understood. While the theorists above provide alternative ideas of how parties respond to the inherent paradox of representative democracy, categorised by their approach to party – civil society relations, all do so with the assumption that the party wishes to maintain that system of governance. However, theorists within the Marxists tradition dispel with this assumption, and position the party into a vehicle by which the system of liberal representative democracy may be discontinued.

Figure 1: Theoretical table

Elite governance – popular sovereignty	Dis-integrating	<p>Machine Politics/Clientelism</p> <p>Banfield and Wilson (1967) / James C Scott (1972)</p>	<p>Elite / Power-elite theory</p> <p>Weber [1922] (1968), Michels [1911] (1962) / C. Wright Mills (1956), Domhoff (1978, 1998), Mizruchi (1992)</p>
	Integrating	<p>Pluralism / Democratic Elitist</p> <p>Dahl (1961) / Schumpeter (1942), Duverger (1964)</p>	<p>Functional / Responsible Party</p> <p>Schattschneider (1942), Rossiter (1960) / Schattschneider (1950)</p>
		Strong	Weak
Political party - civil society relations			

As such, it is *pluralism* and *democratic elitism* which offer the most compelling conceptual apparatus for my research. First, *pluralism* understands the party to be open to influence by multiple competing elites, whose individual interests reflect the myriad collective interests of groups and associations within civil society. The party is thus permeable to outside interests, and is open to adaptation based on the emergence of new relationships within civil society. This institutional flexibility frames the party with enough space for new relationships to civil society to be built, which reflects the objectives of the turn to community organising by the Labour party. Second, *democratic elitism*, as I said above, provides a mechanism – leadership development – by which permeation between party and civil society will actually proceed, and is sensitive to the significance of the model of community organising developed by M4C after 2010. It is thus a combination of these two theoretical approaches to the party that provides the conceptual apparatus needed for my research to build upon Yishai’s ‘post-cartel’ model by questioning:

- The extent to which the success of a political party depends upon the strength of its linkages to civil society
- Whether political parties are able to pro-actively seek out new linkages to civil society associations when facing declining levels of participation
- The degree to which geography, and specifically place, factor in the building and characteristic of party-civil society relations
- Whether Labour’s turn to community organising in 2010 successfully reinvigorated the party’s relationship to civil society and enabled it to address the declining levels of participation

I now turn from theories of the party to data focused on the Labour Party’s crisis of declining participation, and the rationale for the turn to community organising after the 2010 election defeat. I finish the chapter with a summary of my arguments up to that point.

2.7 The Labour Party’s crisis of declining participation

This thesis has so far advanced the claim often repeated in journalistic and academic writing that participation in the Labour Party has declined in recent decades, and that because of this, the party faced a crisis of organisational capacity after the 2010 election. Indeed it was this claim that drove certain elements of the Labour Party to the techniques of community organising at that time. But what is meant by participation? And how severe has the decline been? Responding to these questions allows my research to explore more fully motivation

behind the turn to community organising and, by extension, the aims of the individuals who developed and supported community organising in the Labour Party.

The traditional indicator of participation in political parties is membership, measured in actual figures and as a percentage of the electorate. On both counts, as of August 2015, participation in the three main parties of the twentieth century – the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democratic Party – was at a historic low (Keen 2015). This is in line with the broader European trend of declining participation over several decades (Scarrow et al 2000; Seyd and Whiteley 2004, p.356; and Webb 2002). Reflecting on data covering party membership from 1980 to 2000, Mair and van Biezen (2001, p.6) stated that ‘in each of the long-established European democracies, without exception, the absolute numbers of [party] members have now fallen, and sometimes quite considerably. What we see here, in other words, is concrete and consistent evidence of widespread disengagement from party politics’. A decade later Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012) made an even starker assessment, showing how trends from 1980 to 2000 had continued on till 2010, and that this meant that ‘while political parties continue to play a major role in the elections and institutions of modern European democracies, it seems that they have all but abandoned any pretensions to being mass organisations’ (2012, p.42).

In 1960 the European average for party membership as a percentage of the electorate stood at 15%, while in the UK the figure was 9% (Katz and Mair *et al* 1992). However, as of spring 2015, membership of Conservative, Lib Dem and Labour constituted approximately 1% of the electorate (Keen 2015, p.4). As would be expected, this decline in membership is mirrored by a fall in extent to which individuals identify with any one particular party over the same period. The British Social Attitudes Survey (2014) found that 37% of Britons identified very or fairly strongly with a political party, compared with 46% in 1987. Thus while Mair’s (1997) analysis seems accurate - that the organisation of parties in government and party bureaucracies continues to flourish while the party as a voluntary membership organisation has languished – it is also true that informal attachment to political parties, beyond the formal membership, has been in decline over several decades.

Individual membership of the Labour Party has followed a bell curve trajectory throughout the twentieth century, rising dramatically through the first half of the century but then falling at a similar gradient from the 1950s onwards. Between 1928 and 1937 the size of the Labour Party’s membership doubled, from 214,970 to 447,159 (Worley 2005), and reached a peak of 1 million individual members from 1945 to 1952 (Keen 2015, p.12). This slowly fell

to 305,189 in 1994 when Tony Blair was elected leader, before a bounce to 405,000 in 1997 prior New Labour's electoral victory. However, after ten years of New Labour government individual membership stood at 176,891 in 2007. Immediately prior to the Labour defeat in 2010, Toby Helm (2009) of the Guardian newspaper quoted a 'senior minister' as saying that 'in large parts of the country there is virtually nothing there'. Individual members of the Labour Party had become an increasingly rare type of political activist.

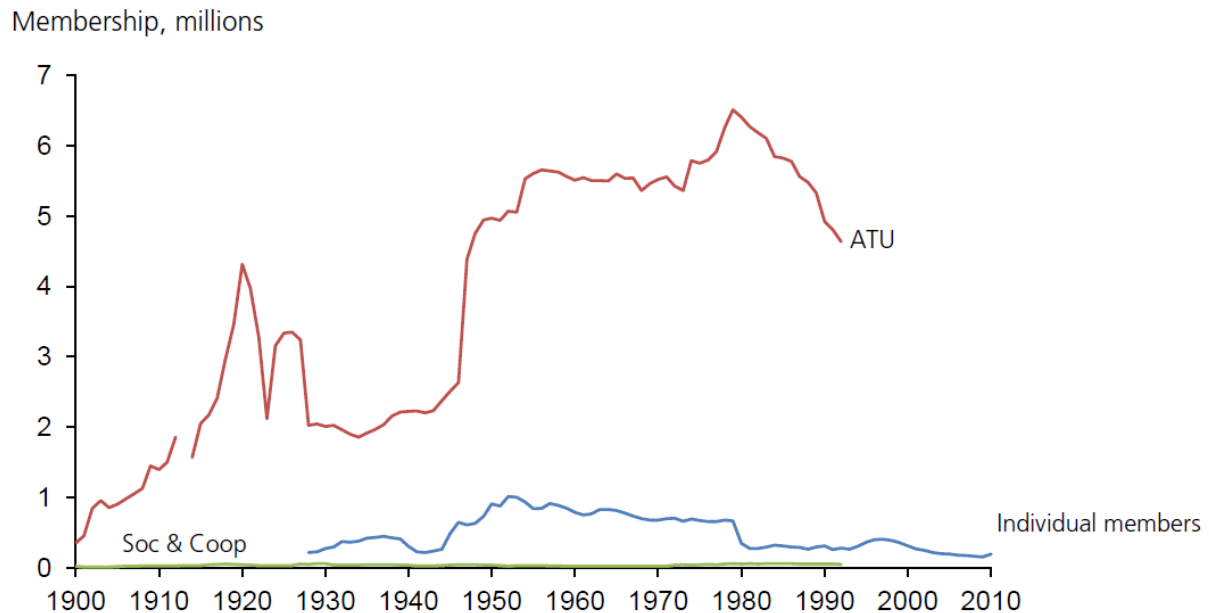
The category of individual member was first introduced into the Labour Party's constitution in 1918. Prior to this constitutional reform, membership of the party occurred by proxy through a federation of affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, each represented within a national committee structure. Established in 1900, the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) sought parliamentary representation independently of the Liberal and Conservative Party. The LRC was renamed the Labour Party in 1906. Membership of the Labour Party via organisations within the federal structure of the Labour Movement continues today, and provides a second meaningful measurement of the changing trends of participation in the Labour Party throughout the twentieth century.

The membership numbers of the affiliated trade unions and socialist societies was reported each year at Labour Party conference until 1992. Keen (2015) presents this data, and shows that membership of these organisations rose rapidly in the years immediately following the Second World War, from approximately 2 million in 1939 to approximately 5 million in 1950. Affiliated union membership peaked in 1979 at 6.5 million, before slowly declining throughout the 1980s and early 90s. If we assume the membership of those trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party followed a similar trajectory to the trade union movement generally (which we can because the UK's three largest unions are affiliated to the Labour Party), it is likely numbers of affiliated union members continued to decline at a similar rate beyond the end of conference reporting in 1992. Total trade union membership peaked at just over 13 million members in 1979, declined throughout the 1980s and 90s, and then stabilised around 7.5 million from 1995 onwards. However, due to consistent rises in the size of the labour market, the stabilisation of union numbers from the mid-90s onwards has meant a decline in union penetration within the labour market.

As such it is possible to say that the well-documented rise and fall of participation in the Labour Party throughout the twentieth century mirrors the wider trends within civil society and associational life. Robert Putnam's (2000) *Bowling Alone* is, of course, the 'go to'

reference on this phenomenon, detailing the decline in the USA throughout the latter half of the twentieth century of the institutions, including trade unions, which constitute civil society.

Figure 2: Membership of the Labour Party, Affiliated Trade Unions, and Cooperative and Socialist Societies



Source: Butler & Butler; *British Political Facts*; 2012

Seeking to represent an alliance of the largest civil society institutions in the UK, the declining levels of participation in the Labour Party outlined above might be seen as a component of this broader decline in levels of civic association. Marquand (2004) described this as a 'decline of the public' resulting from successive attacks by UK governments since the 1970s on the institutions and rituals of public life. However this phenomena was theorised even earlier. In the mid-70s Richard Sennett argued that public life has become a 'matter of formal obligation', and that 'most citizens approach their dealings with the state in a spirit of resigned acquiescence' (1974, p.3). As in the post-Augustan Roman period, Sennett observed that 'participation in in the *res publica* today is most often a matter of going along, and the forums for this public life, like the city, are in a state of decay' (ibid, p.5). The political party, as the pre-eminent public forum linking the state to civil society, was unlikely to maintain levels of participation when dealing with a decimated civil society whose institutions and associations were struggling to survive.

Theoretical accounts of the dissipation of civil society during the latter half of the twentieth century provide the context to the Labour Party's dilemmas over several decades as well as the eventual turn to community organising in the aftermath of the 2010 election defeat. However, the historical background to Labour's attempt to reformulate its relationship to civil society is longer and more specific than the general accounts offered by Putnam, Marquand or Sennett. To understand fully this background requires a historical analysis of the Labour's evolving relationship to civil society, previous attempts at 'modernisation' of that relationship, and the form and dynamic of that relationship at different points in Labour's history. These concerns form the focus of the next chapter of this thesis.

2.8 Conclusion

It is clear that the Labour Party has faced declining levels of participation over several decades, and that this trend is correlated to, and to some degree caused by, broader trends within civil society and the trade union movement. How this relationship between party and civil society is understood and the necessary responses to declining participation depends upon how the political party is conceptualised. As I argue in this chapter, the political party should be understood as an organisation whose success depends upon its ability to pro-actively build and maintain relationships to place-based civil society associations. In this vein, I am building on Yishai's (2001) 'post-cartel' party model and taking cues from the theories associated with *pluralism* and *democratic elitism*. Specifically, this means that a party is capable of redesigning its relationships to civil society, via the development of new leaders from within civil society and the creation of relationships of mutual interest with civil society associations, to counter the declining levels of participation associated with the cartelised system of party competition. As my review of the literature on parties has shown, a geographical lens to analysis of the party-civil society relationship, and attempts at redesign, is lacking.

This means a rejection of the mass party model component of Duverger's (1964) theory, the catch-all party model developed by Kirchheimer (1966), and an innovation of Katz and Mair's (1995) model of the 'cartel party', as well as those canonical theories of the party that conceive a weak relationship between party and civil society. None of these can help me understand the consequences for the Labour Party's turn to community organising on the relationship between parties and civil society, and none provide conceptual clarity on the tools a party may deploy to build the relationships to place-based civil society associations needed to contest elections. However, the data above shows that the way the party relates

to civil society has evolved throughout the twentieth century. Developing an account of this evolution provides my research with a conceptual framework for responding to my research aim - *to consider the future of the political party by reflecting on the British Labour Party's turn to community organising as a response to declining levels of participation*. As such, the historical background to Labour's current crisis of declining participation, and the subsequent turn to community organising, is where I turn next.

3.0 Labour's evolving relationship to civil society throughout the twentieth century

The previous chapter argued that the political party should be conceived as an organisation whose longevity and electoral success is heavily influenced by its ability to build and maintain relationships to place-based civil society associations. Within this argument I emphasise geography, and specifically place, as a critical dimension when analysing the relationship between political parties and civil society.

This chapter develops my argument in two ways. First, I test my conceptualisation of the political party by reviewing historical accounts of the Labour Party's emergence as a national party in the first three decades of the twentieth century, assessing the extent to which this rise was the result of political strategies that aimed to build relationships between the party and civil society associations. I discuss relevant literature and use Labour's ascendance in Preston as a historical case study.

Second, the chapter provides a more contextual understanding of the Labour Party's turn to community organising after their 2010 electoral defeat. It does this by exploring the ideas of Eduard Bernstein who, at the start of the 19th century, theorised ascendant social democratic political parties as holding strong relationships with civil society. I go on to discuss two further influential revisions of the party's relationship to civil society that emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century; the ideas of Anthony Crosland and those associated with New Labour. Whereas Crosland and New Labour imagined a party close to the state and tied to civil society through a large but passive party membership, Bernstein had argued that socialist political parties, such as the Labour Party, would be founded upon 'movements' of diverse civil society associations. I then turn to Blue Labour and the practices of community organising, and argue that these represent a partial return to the ideas of Eduard Bernstein.

Throughout the chapter I use the notion of tradition to help understand the interaction between the various conceptual strands that inform my research. I argue that the notion of tradition helps make clear the relationship between contemporary political ideas and historical political developments, the influence of context and place on political ideas and practices, and the way political competition often revolves around the presentation of alternative histories to justify actions in the present. These are important insights in relation to the empirical focus of my research, and prompt a series of questions. Which elements of

Labour's history justify the contemporary turn to community organising? To what extent does community organising represent consistency in the Labour Party's historic relationship to civil society? How have previous reform agendas within the Labour Party presented different traditions to justify their own objectives? Responding to these questions throughout this chapter enables my research to fully answer the research questions set out in the previous chapters.

3.1 The Labour tradition

When speaking of traditions we often invoke a sense of history, where the ideas, social norms or behaviours of the past are repeated in the present. However this understanding does not take account of the choices made by those who in their actions create the traditions of which we speak. Eric Hobsbawm (1983) focused on the dynamics governing these choices when he defined tradition as meaning 'a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past' (1983, p.1). This definition is useful as it allows us to perceive the ways in which actors make deliberate choices to create traditions that fit their needs, and how the construction of traditions begins to create order or control over the actions of others. Traditions are therefore less an accident of historical repetition, and more the outcome of a political process of antagonism, negotiation and ongoing decision-making (Tilly and Gerome 1992). Actors engaged in the invention of tradition do so in ways that ensure the content of a tradition is aligned with their interests in the present; negotiating, adapting or creating traditions to fit their current needs.

The invention of tradition is a political act. However it is also a geographic process, as it allows us to see how a person's agency is situated within a particular social and material context (Bevir 2011). The acts and behaviours identified as traditions are embedded in the tension between the agency of the individual subject and the order of the social context within which they act. As Bevir argues, 'so conceived, tradition is more than a tool of high intellectual history. It is an ontological concept that captures the social context of agency. Tradition is the background to all human activity. Tradition appears throughout social life, embedded in actions, practices, and social movements just as much as within texts' (2011, p.12). As with Hobsbawm's definition, Bevir also politicises tradition by introducing the notion of *dilemmas*, which arise when a person and organisation of people have to decide whether

to accommodate a new idea or action into their existing beliefs and practices. For both Hobsbawm and Bevir, an examination of tradition is required as it forces us to consider how the social and material context affects the individual subject, and how a person or group chooses to respond to their (often changing) context by re-inventing traditions that suit their needs.

This notion of context is present within those geographical literatures that focus on the relationship between place and party political development. However more often than not context and place are used to signify an empirical site or scale of enquiry rather than as a dynamic influence on the way in which parties operate and development. Electoral geographers' accounts of party development apply positivist analyses to constitutional landscape of constituencies to show the influence of place on electoral outcomes. Johnston and Pattie (2003, 2006) examine voting patterns and concurrent choice preferences to build explanative models which show the importance of place and context at election time. Gerber and Green (2000) make similar conclusions about place and campaign techniques, whilst Pattie, Dorling and Johnston (1997) demonstrate the relationship between electoral outcomes and the perceived efficiency of local and national economic management by parties. Pattie and Johnston (2000) go one step further and show that a 'neighbourhood effect', in which 'people who talk together vote together', illustrates the importance of place in understanding the reasons behind electoral results.

However, these accounts of political parties tend to rely upon quantitative analyses of electoral data to make arguments regarding the relative weight of place to the prospects of political parties. But by using electoral data narrows their analyses to the outcome of party development rather than the processes that lead to that outcome. In this sense, their understanding of place is compressed in time to the moment in which voters make a choice, rather than being an ongoing factor in a party's development. This is why the processes described by Bevir and Hobsbawm, of reinventing tradition, are useful for my analyses; they allow my research to see parties as in constant dynamic relationships with the contexts and places in which they operate, seeking to influence the traditions therein for their own electoral objectives.

In focusing on elections and voting behaviours they omit consideration of how the practices and behaviours of party actors open up or close spaces of collaboration with civil society between elections and the periods of intense election campaigning by parties, and how the characteristics of this collaboration may benefit the organisational capacity and legitimacy of the party. In others words, to date at least, the geographical literature on political parties has

been overly focused on the outcome of party-civil society relations as demonstrated in election results, rather than looking at the processes by which parties seek to engage with civil society in a particular place on an ongoing basis. Although Low (2007) makes reference to the need for more work in this field, highlighting the importance of geography in shaping political culture, this thesis represents an attempt to take on his challenge.

It is often attempts to invoke and invent one tradition over another that lie at the heart of debates within the British Labour Party. As party actors with differing ideological standpoints contest interpretations of the history of the labour movement, so they attempt to redraw the boundaries of acceptable beliefs and actions in the present, and then project a vision of the party's future that is aligned to their interpretation of the past and interests in the present. The 'labour tradition' is not therefore a singular set of actions and or beliefs, but the ongoing contest and compromise between multiple ideological interpretations of the party's history.

Throughout the Labour Party's history this contest has produced different understandings of the appropriate relationship between the Labour Party and civil society, depending upon the contexts, constraints and opportunities of each age, and the ability of competing strands within the Labour tradition to dominate others. In the early phase of the Labour Party's development, at the start of the twentieth century, the understanding of this relationship was constructed through the practices of the party's organisers, who sought close relationships of reciprocity, trust and accountability with civil society associations to improve their emerging party's electoral chances. Such practices informed the ideas of Eduard Bernstein, who argued that an organised and active political movement, formed through strong relationships to civil society, was the most effective agent of societal change, potentially powerful enough to realise the party's socialist vision.

However as the party grew into a national electoral force in the first three decades of the twentieth century, Labour actors reconfigured their understanding of the party's relationship to civil society to reflect the changing contexts, practices and opportunities they faced. As majoritarian government became a realistic aspiration for the party in the 1920s, so social democratic ideas shifted to emphasise the potential agency of the state, under Labour control, as the most effective vehicle for achieving socialist objectives. The powerful political alliance of civil society associations imagined by Bernstein – of trade unions, the party, cooperatives, and faith institutions – began to fade as the source of transformational change, and was replaced by the vision of a governing party effectively administering nationalised resources in the interests of the common good and the achievement of social and economic

justice and equality. This vision emerged concurrently with a shift in local Labour Party practices, from movement building within civil society located in particular places to electoral organising around strictly partisan objectives across the whole nation.

These ideas within the Labour tradition were realised in the 1945 Clement Atlee government who's electoral and policy successes reinforced the idea that the state, rather than civil society, was the most capable agent for delivering the desired social change. Buoyed by an interventionist Keynesian consensus, the social and cultural influence of World War Two, mass employment, a stable, positive trade surplus, and importantly, the establishment of large trade unions with corporatist links to government, this social democracy - centred on the capacity of the state - remained dominant within the Labour Party for the next forty years. The ideas of Bernstein, and the traditions of the labour movement built by party organisers at the start of the twentieth century, faded from memory, and with this alternative tradition went the party's appreciation of the potential organisational and emotional capacity of place and local civil society groups.

However in the 1990s New Labour began to challenge this statist consensus, developing rhetoric that valorised 'community' in relation to the concepts of renewal, cohesion and engagement. Party leaders spoke of the need for civil society to take a greater role in delivering social justice, but the party lacked the organisational means of achieving this, instead strengthening central control and implementing a top-down model of electoral organising. Imagination and practice were not aligned in this period, and New Labour can be seen as a transitional phase in party development, in which the practices of the Labour tradition did not match the rhetoric used by party leaders.

After Labour's electoral defeat in 2010, the debate about the appropriate balance and relationship between the state and civil society as agents of change intensified. Those arguing for a rekindling of the relationship between the party and civil society emerged under the Blue Labour banner, and linked their ideas to a concrete set of practices – community organising (Graf 2015). This alignment of beliefs and practices proved influential, and the leadership of the Labour Party began integrating community organising techniques into their organisational repertoire, hoping to lay the foundations for a renewed party with greater capacity to deliver transformational change within communities across the country.

This chapter substantiates these arguments about the evolving Labour tradition by, firstly, exploring how the early Labour Party grew as an organisation by building relationships of

reciprocity, trust and solidarity with place-based civil society associations. I base this discussion on existing research into Preston Labour Party's organising drive in the 1920s which successfully overcame Tory electoral dominance in the city, providing a useful case study of the Labour Party's relationship to civil society during its ascent to becoming a national party of government. Moving from practice to ideas, the second section analyses the revisionist arguments of Eduard Bernstein, detailing how he understood the role of civil society in the realisation of socialism. I then go on to discuss, in the third section, the influence on Bernstein's idea on the British Labour movement, before detailing interpretations of the party's shift to a statist form of social democracy in the post-war period and the subsequent emergence of a revisionist response in the ideas of Anthony Crosland. The transitional, and I argue nascent, ideas of New Labour are then explored, before discussing the arguments associated with Blue Labour. Finally, I discuss the historical background and theory of community organising, considering how this practice has been adopted by Blue Labour as the means for the party to rebuild relationship to civil society and radically alter the dominance of the state in the imagination and practice of the Labour tradition.

3.2 Labour as a form of reactionary radicalism

The Labour Party emerged at the start of the 20th century as a product of a two hundred year old counter-movement against the domination of capital over the individual, society and nature (Rutherford 2011), and sought to resist the further commodification of land, money and human labour (Polanyi 2001). The party's political fuel was the tension created by the distance between the will of the people and the social context in which they found themselves, and was a political expression of the desire for individual and collective control over common traditions. It was therefore both radical and conservative, seeking societal change as the route to communal self-preservation.

The notion of tradition, as discussed above, usefully underpins this argument about Labour's emergence. It serves to illuminate the political choices taken by communities (in this case to preserve existing social relations and rituals), the organisational capacity within communities that enable such decisions to be collectively agreed and resulting political action to be taken, as well as the way in which individual agency is embedded within, and in tension with, a social and material context. Craig Calhoun (1982, 1983) applies this notion of tradition to the early modern history of the English counter movement against ever greater commodification (which would eventually lead to the establishment of the Labour Party), presenting an

interpretation of working class rebellion that forged tradition with the notion of 'community'. His interpretation is founded upon a definition of 'community' as 'measuring the extent to which people are knit together as social actors'. For Calhoun this meant that 'to speak of a community is only shorthand for referring to a population characterized by a considerable extent of community'. The concept of community is variable, dependent upon the differences in the '(1) kinds of relationships among people, (2) characteristics of networks of those relationships, and (3) the extent of autonomous social control' (1983, p.897). 'Community' can therefore be used synonymously with 'civil society associations', which is a core concept within my research.

Using this definition of community, Calhoun argues that 'traditional communities' were often the driving force behind radical political action in England throughout the early nineteenth century. This radicalism was rooted in a desire to resist change to the status quo brought about by the industrial revolution, as per the counter movement described by Karl Polanyi (2001). As the collectively agreed status quo was threatened by the impact of the Industrial Revolution, communities became 'important bases for radical mobilisation', taking action to preserve their way of life. This response occurred because 'Community constitutes the pre-existing organization capable of securing the participation of individuals in collective action. Communities provide a social organization foundation for mobilization, as networks of kinship, friendship, shared crafts, or recreations offer lines of communication and allegiance. People who live in well-integrated communities do not need elaborate formal organization in order to mount a protest. They know, moreover, whom to trust and whom not to' (1983, p.897).

Calhoun presents his theory of 'reactionary radicalism' in opposition to Marx's arguments that popular appeals to tradition by early 'prepolitical' radicals were mere 'epiphenomena' that would be 'swept away before the truly great historical accomplishments of revolutions could occur' (1983, p.887). Marx wrote that 'Men make their own traditions, but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted. The tradition of the dead generations weighs like nightmare of the minds of the living'. In this he is articulating a core dichotomy of the Enlightenment – between rationality and tradition – and positioning tradition is an ever-present 'nightmare' that restrains the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, which must be cast adrift entirely if socialism is to be achieved. Revolutionary change would require 'completely new thoughts and acts in dialectical opposition to old' (1983, p.888), and

would be brought about once the working class has made a rational calculation that their collective interests are bettered by appropriation of the means of the production.

For Calhoun, Marx 'failed to recognize the paradoxical conservatism in revolution [and] the radicalism of tradition' and that actually 'traditional communities provide the social foundations for widespread popular mobilizations and that traditional values provide their radicalism' (ibid). This is because individuals who share traditions tend towards the same analysis of problematic situations, and when those individuals are embedded within the relationships that constitute community, they find that their interests become interdependent. Taking a stance reminiscent of Dewey's (2012) theory of an emergent public, traditional communities are understood to co-produce solutions to communal problems. As argued by Calhoun, these solutions were often defensive as well as radical, even revolutionary, attempting to protect engrained ways of life from the fissures created by the Industrial Revolution.

There are a number of potential understandings of the relationship between the localised dynamics of community-based radical action presented by Calhoun and Labour's emergence as a national party during the first decades of the twentieth century. The emerging party could be seen a trans-local articulation of local radical action, joined through formal organisation in 1900 into a national organisation but still reliant for its organisational capacity on embedded links in the social relations characterising local communities. Or the party at that time could be understood as a 'formal organisation' (in Calhoun's words) which supplanted the energy and radicalism of local communities, co-opting localised interests embedded within local social relations into a national party able to win elections and capture the state. Calhoun presents a distinction between the radical activities of early 'traditional communities', whose defensive actions attacked the very foundations of the emerging modern capitalist system, with the reformist, class based organisations of the late 19th and 20th century that had emerged very much as part of the industrial revolution and did not (often) strive for fundamental systemic change. Within this schematic, being born from an organisation that represented the interests of the modern trade unions, the Labour Party of the early twentieth century sits firmly in the latter camp. And yet, even while representing the reformist ambitions of the Labour movement, the party still had to organise itself in relation to local communities to achieve its objectives and to become an organisation of national significance. To consider this tension within the Labour Party – between the local and the national, between conservatism and reformism, and between communitarian and liberal world-views - I apply Calhoun's theory of 'reactionary radicalism' to Mike Savage's

detailed empirical case study of Labour's emergence as a dominant force within Preston in the period 1900 to 1929.

3.3 Labours emergence in Preston

Mike Savage's examination of the rise of Labour in Preston hinges upon a distinction between 'practical politics' and 'formal politics'. While the former is based on the protection of working-class interests, and leads to a type of politics that is mediated by individual capacities anchored within local social structures, the latter is a type of politics characterised by 'the nature of the state and existing party structures' (1987, p.19). Building on this distinction, Savage (1987) uses the Preston case to argue that the 'relations of independent working-class political parties to their social base relies on the mediation of practical politics', and that when analysing party development the 'relationships between locality and practical politics' must be considered, as 'formal political parties draw upon these forms of practical politics to develop their own constituencies of support' (1987, p.62).

This is a revisionist account that challenges many other arguments regarding the emergence of the Labour Party. Most obviously, it queries the notion that the party emerged as a response to an economic logic, and was thus the political expression of a uniform economic class (Pelling 1954), or an element of the growing workplace conflict between organised labour and capital (Clark 1971). Moreover, however, it also disputes more culturally-inflected arguments about the party providing a 'vision of society' that chimed with working class life. In their efforts to critique economistic interpretations of class during the 1950s and 1960s, some leading theorists argued that the Labour Party emerged and grew in strength as it was able to offer a 'vision of society' that reflected a coherent working class culture or consciousness (McKibbin 1974, Lockwood 1975, Williams 1961, Thompson 1963). Savage (1987, p.62) rejects any explanation that hinges upon a determination by class, culture or consciousness and argues instead that the Labour Party's emergence, in places like Preston, was based 'to a greater extent on the changing character of skill-, gender- and neighbourhood-based capacities'. In other words, the party did not rely on 'simplistic class loyalty, but on the conditional allegiances of different working-class groups allied together' (ibid, p.62).

What brought such groups together was a shared *interest* in reducing 'the material insecurity inherent within capitalist society' (ibid, p.19). For Savage this common interest glued working class political organisation together, and was the objective that working class

capacities were put to use to achieve. Savage (1987) categorises capacities into three groups; skill-based, gender-based and neighbourhood-based. Skill-based capacities refer to the extent to which the structure of the local labour market is conducive with working-class organisation. Between 1900 and 1929 Preston's local labour market restructured, with a portion of the workforce (cotton spinning and engineering) sliding towards long-term unemployment, but with an even greater portion of the workforce gaining some degree of labour market protection, either from the state (e.g. transport and utilities) or from successful transition to emerging industries (craft workers moving into new engineering). While security in the workplace provided the organisational capacities for a large section of the working class to protect their interests, 'the disorganised state of the long-term unemployed deprived them of capacities to organise effectively' (ibid, p.100). Gender-based capacities steadily increased from 1900 as women's role in the labour market diversified and specialised, only to be latterly undermined by mass unemployment in the 1930s. Savage argues that across both gender- and skill-capacities, those groups in the labour market whose security was threatened fought back within the political process, while those who achieved economic security owed this to their ability to mobilise around political campaigns and local government interventions.

Neighbourhood-based working class capacities (those derived from associational life beyond the workplace in close proximity to the home) also underwent transformation during this period. Prior to the 1880s this form of working class capacity was undermined by two factors; the presence of a residential urban elite and middle class in the centre of Preston who took measures to protect their interests, specifically the use of public space, and the initiatives of middle-class churches to undermine working class mobilisation. Savage argues that two processes during the 1900 – 1929 period allowed neighbourhood-based capacities to improve. First suburbanisation of the elite and middle classes away from the centre of Preston, with the concurrent establishment of housing estates with concentrations of working class residents, and the increased participation of the working class in neighbourhood institutions from where they had previously been excluded, namely church groups, and within new neighbourhood institutions, such as a trade union and cooperative clubs.

This transformation of the social and economic geography of Preston forms the context within which the local Labour Party overcame Tory hegemony in the city throughout the 1920s. By the end of the decade Labour for the first time held both seats in the constituency, which returned two MPs to Westminster. In the 1929 General Election Thomas Shaw MP received 29.5% of the franchise (equating to over 55% of the vote due to

the constituency returning two MPs), and two months later the Liberal MP Sir William Jowitt resigned and stood again as a Labour candidate, being elected with 55% of the vote. Similarly, in 1929 local ward elections the Labour Party received more votes than ever before, overcoming entrenched Tory support in certain working class areas, such as Fishwick ward. These electoral victories came about because the local party was highly effective at making use of the heightened capacity of working people across neighbourhood-, gender- and skill-based capacity described above. Such was the energy of the local Labour Party at that time that 10,000 people came to hear the results of Jowitt's successful by-election. Savage quotes the Lancashire Daily Post:

*'When the result was announced by Councillor Ellison there was a burst of cheering which continued for so long it was almost deafening. Men and women cheered themselves hoarse. They sang, they laughed and some of them cried. There has never been such a display of political enthusiasm in Preston, not even when Mr Tow Shaw had been returned' (LDP 1929, quoted in Savage *ibid*).*

The party was organised so that it benefited from the upsurge of working-class capacity, reflected in the emotional response to Jowitt's election in 1929. As the Labour Party was not, as is commonly assumed, the 'natural' home for working class voters in Preston (which had traditionally voted Conservative) nor was the party the straight-forward extension and expression of the local trade union movement (whose relationship with the party in Preston was in flux throughout the 1920s). Rather, party actors responded to the socio-economic changes ongoing within their locality, developing and implementing an organising strategy that successfully built relationships with, and benefitted from, those groups of working people whose capacities had developed throughout the 1920s. In other words, the local party built relationships that positioned their organisation in a way that ensured the heightened working-class capacity to protect their interests was aligned to the party's own electoral interests. In the case of Preston this meant shifting from relying upon skills-based capacities, with a concurrent policy focus on trade union issues, to relying upon neighbourhood- and gender-based capacities, with a policy focus on the role the municipal state could play in improving the conditions of the working-class. Thus the arguments being made by the party shifted to reflect new concentrations of working-class capacity that emerged due to the changing social and economic geography of Preston over the previous decade.

This was a major achievement in just a few years, and can be attributed to their reaction to a sudden loss of support in 1920. The party executive responded by establishing an 'Organising Subcommittee' to develop and implement a strategy for improving the party's neighbourhood base and support amongst female voters. As a result the party established ward committees and Labour Clubs across the city, organised social facilities and events, and set up a Women's Section across the city that was closely associated to the ward clubs. To give a sense of scale, 7,000 people attended the Preston Labour Party's social gala in 1924 and 12,000 in 1925, the Women's Section had 635 members in 1928, and by 1928 there were 1,357 Individual Members (who joined independently of trade union affiliation). The morning after the 1929 by-election, between 4,000 and 5,000 people crowded the train station as Jowitt departed for London. Of course such efforts to organise the party so that it benefitted from the spatially variegated working-class capacities had to 'work within the constraints of the possible' (ibid, p.189) and as such the Labour Party in Preston was pragmatic; it implemented a successful organisation strategy that forged a relationships with those elements of civil society that were capable of continuous mobilisation (beyond the limited period of the electoral campaign). In policy terms, this required shifting away from focusing on the economic demands of the trade unions, which dominated the party before the 1920s, to neighbourhood based capacities and a resultant focus on statist interventions in social life, such as education, gender equality or health.

Savage, and indeed Calhoun, show how the relationship between party and civil society (manifest as 'communities' by Calhoun and as 'capacities' by Savage) is under-determined by changes in social structures, such as class, and over-determined by the conscious activities of party actors. However neither go into detail about the tools and techniques, and actual practices employed by the party to build relationships with the 'traditional communities' or to tap into working class capacities. Efforts to align party programmes to particular interests are only one half of the story. Without the organising skills and methods to build the necessary relationships, the various groups of working people would simply not register that a party programme had been developed to reflect their interests. Alignment would not occur in social isolation. As Savage suggests: 'Parties are not simply the idle products of social change. In the battle to gain electoral support *they are forced to latch on* to various capacities in order to generate support. They may be more or less conscious in this process' (1987, p.190, emphasis added). How exactly did the party latch on to various capacities? Further than formally establishing a Women's Section, how did the party grow its membership to over six hundred? How did party actors manage to turn out 7,000 and 12,000 people to their social galas? Who arranged for 10,000 people to observe the by-

election announcement, and how did they do this? Considering these questions can expose the internal mechanics of the way in which the semi-autonomous party relates dialogically to the socio-economic geography that characterises civil society in particular places.

However Savage does not consider these questions, preferring to construct a separation between formal politics (which includes party structures) from practical politics (the self-organisation of the working class) within his explanation. The Labour Party's alignment of policies to reflect the interests of capable groups of working people (who constitute practical politics), or the 'latching on', is his explanation of how the modifications in the formal politics of Preston Labour Party were successful at building electoral support. In other words, while his analysis foregrounds the changing organisational structures of the Labour Party in Preston at that time, he does not consider the alteration in practices that must have been used concurrently to bring new people into the new organisational structures.

As such, while both Calhoun and Savage offer two insightful accounts of communal working class politics, and both present accounts of that do not assume an automatic connection between the Labour Party and working class life and culture, neither advance explanations for how party – civil society relations are mediated by the particular organisational techniques developed by party activists. They can do this because, in their own way, they also fall back on pre-iterative explanatory concepts, except they replace class and culture with the notions of 'interests' and 'capacities'. By doing this they hold back from considering the social practices that actually make the world they study, those practices needed for people to be political with one another, to deliberate over decisions, to communicate their passions, anger and visions of a better world; the practices that build political movements. Simply aligning policy with the interests of sections of society would not have brought 10,000 people to a vote count in Preston, or 5,000 to a train station to see off a newly elected MP as he travels to Westminster for the first time. These were moments of hope, and they were created by the *organising practices* of the Labour Party in Preston after 1920 that built relationships with civil society in such a way as to represent the interests of local civil society and propel the party into national government.

This chapter now examines how these organising practices were theorised thirty years prior to Labour's transition into a party of national government by Eduard Bernstein. Preston offers an exemplar case of the theoretical arguments made by Eduard Bernstein, who was perhaps the first person to present a coherent view of the way in which a socialist party could overcome the tension described earlier in the chapter – between the local and the

national, between the inherently conservative and reformist sides to its character, and between the challenges of being a movement of civil society as well as a party of government. His theoretical response to these dilemmas, commonly understood as central to the tradition of social democratic politics, provided a foundational element of the Labour tradition and have been influential in the party's evolving relationship to civil society throughout the twentieth century as well as its subsequent turn to community organising after the 2010 general election defeat.

3.3 Eduard Bernstein and the Labour Tradition

In his *The Preconditions of Socialism* (1993 [1899]), Bernstein rallied against the grip of the revolutionary Marxist tradition within the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD). Marx's orthodox followers (Frederick Engels, Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg and Georgi Plekhanov) believed that when the internal contradictions of capitalism became too great, the proletariat would lead a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, becoming the social force that implemented socialism. As capitalism's demise was inevitable, the strategy of the SPD in the 1890s was focused on improving the readiness of the proletariat to seize power at the moment of systemic collapse. Readiness equated to the capacity of a national political party that represented the interests of the proletariat. As history dictated that the proletariat were to be the revolutionary class, any attempt to represent the interests of non-proletarian classes was deemed to be counter-revolutionary. As the party of the proletariat grew, it would support reformist policies, such as trade union recognition or labour market reform, only if they enhanced the proletariat's revolutionary readiness. Indeed, if competing electorally or adhering to state law to avoid an authoritarian crackdown enhanced readiness of the proletariat, then the SPD would do this (Berman 2006). In this framework, the political party was a vehicle to enhance the revolutionary capacity of a single economic class, whose historical role was valorised above other sections of civil society.

Bernstein distanced himself from this conception of the party – civil society relationship, and the route to transformative social change. He challenged the notion that the proletariat were the social class that would, in isolation from other classes, bring about socialism. As Tudor (1993, p.xxx) argues, 'Marx always insisted that, under capitalism, politics were ultimately and inevitably governed by class conflict', but for Bernstein, while he accepted that 'conflicting class politics were a factor in the politics of modern industrial societies, he maintained that all classes also had a common interest in the maintenance and furtherance of civilised values, and it was this common interest which was, or ought to be, the objective

of political activity' (1993, p.xxx). Such 'civilised values' could be achieved through the creation of a democratic system that gave all classes the same civil and political rights. Indeed Bernstein defined democracy 'as the absence of class government', and saw such a democratic system as creating a society 'in which no class has a political privilege which is opposed to the community as a whole' (2004, p.140).

However, while democracy based on universal suffrage was the absence of class government, this would not yet lead to 'the actual abolition of classes' (2004, p.143) within society. Multiple classes would continue to exist, but their separate interests would be fought for within a democratic system that acted as a mechanism for finding compromise, and promoting general societal interests over the sectional interests of one particular class. From this perspective, the task for social democrats was clear; 'what Social Democracy should be doing, and doing for a long time to come, is organise the working class politically, train it for democracy, and fight for any and all reforms in the state which are designed to raise the working class and make the state more democratic' (Bernstein in Tudor and Tudor, 1988, p.169).

This meant that for Bernstein the end of socialism could not be separated from the means by which it would be achieved. The end and the means were 'implicated in one another such that the ends pursued could be inferred from the means adopted, for the end of a political act was nothing other than the principle manifest in it' (Tudor 2004, p.xxix). Bernstein's widely-quoted polemic statement epitomises this stance; 'I frankly admit that I have extraordinary little feeling, or interest in, what is usually termed 'the final goal of socialism'. This goal, whatever it may be, is nothing to me, the movement is everything. And by movement I mean both the general movement of society, i.e. social progress, and the political and economic agitation and organisation to bring about this progress' (quoted in Tudor and Tudor, 1988, p.168).

3.3.1 Political Vision and the Common Good

Bernstein's 'movement' was to transcend the sectional interests of any particular class, and instead be orientated towards the development of a 'civil society' through the extension of democratic and civic rights to all within society. This would achieve socialism without the need for a revolution because 'Democracy is both means and end. It is a weapon in the struggle for socialism, and it is the form in which socialism will be realised' (2004, p.142). The organising tactics used by social democrats should thus aim to construct a strong civil

society, in which all people were granted the status of citizens and given the right to vote. Through the mechanisms of negotiation and compromise (inherent within democratic systems built on universal suffrage) and via the organisation of associations of democratic self-government (such as buyers and sellers cooperatives, community alliances, and trade unions) social democracy could build a society that protected individual interests while promoting the common good. For Bernstein the common good was not an abstract notion, but simply a parcel of goods that benefited all people, from street lights to freedom of speech (Tudor 2004).

Expanding his argument by discussing the role of trade unions, Bernstein argued that: 'Regardless of whether the employers are the state, the community, or the capitalists, the trade union as an organisation of everyone employed in a particular trade, can protect the interests of its members and simultaneously foster the common good so long as it is content to remain a partner. Above and beyond this, it always runs the risk of degenerating into a closed corporation with all the characteristics of a monopoly' (2004, p.140). Bernstein's political vision was therefore pluralistic, believing that a developed civil society would simultaneously recognise while also transcending sectional interests.

For many of his critics in the 1890s, and for many contemporary Marxist critics of social democracy today, Bernstein's revision of Marxism was no more than a re-statement of liberal thought; to ensure an equal distribution of power through universal suffrage and rights, and from that, economic justice would follow. Indeed, Bernstein addressed this criticism directly by saying 'there is no liberal thought that is not also part of the intellectual equipment of socialism. Even the principles of the economic responsibility of the individual for himself, which appears to be completely Manchesterish, cannot, in my judgement, be denied in theory by socialism, nor are there any conceivable circumstances in which it could be suspended. There is no freedom without responsibility' (2004, p.149). Hence Bernstein agreed with his critics that the foundation of social democracy is to be found in the liberal thought of the 19th century, but he argued that social democracy would advance society beyond the rampant individualism and greed produced by that form of laissez-faire liberalism. As such, the preconditions of socialism - democratic rights within society, the economy and constitution – were built upon the notion of individual freedom provided by liberalism. Over a hundred years later, Colin Crouch (2012) makes a similar argument, stating that 'social democracy is the highest form of liberalism'.

For Bernstein (ibid) socialism would supplant liberalism when the associations characterised by 'democratic self-government' encouraged people to take decisions that were conducive with both the principle of individual interests as well as responsibility to the common good. By bringing individuals into closer association with one another around issues of common concern, such associations would mitigate the worst impacts of the stark individualism that had come about as liberalism originally broke society free from the 'restrictive medieval economy'. However such associational life would not undermine the notion of individual responsibility at the heart of liberalism, which Bernstein understood as key to maintaining economic growth and fermenting civilised values. This is because in socialism 'the individual will be free, not in the metaphysical sense dreamed up by the anarchists – this is, free from all duties towards the community – but free from any economic compulsion in his actions and choice of vocation' (2004, p.150). To reach this degree of freedom required a degree of individual responsibility in the organisation of democratic institutions beyond the state.

Hence to critique Bernstein's social democracy by questioning the distinction between it and liberalism is to ask the wrong question. Social democracy emerged as a political movement operating within the intellectual framework of liberalism, but its objective was to reform liberalism so that a greater ideal of freedom, based on civilised values of responsibility to others in society, is realised. Bernstein's political vision of social democracy is therefore ideologically distinct whilst being pragmatic to the realities of world in which it operated. This balance of idealism and pragmatism is why both critics and supporters often misplace social democracy. As outlined above, critics see it as either an imperfect liberalism or compromised Marxism, while supporters have positioned it as a state-led policy programme for achieving greater degrees of equality. However, examining the work of Eduard Bernstein gives us a perspective of social democracy that matches neither of these accounts, presenting a political vision in which individuals can bring about socialism by building democratic associations with other individuals within society, and using these organisations to agree together how to respond to common problems. Social democracy, as it was initially conceived by Bernstein in 1899, was therefore much more about the strength of 'the movement' within civil society than it is about the state and the use of public policy to improve equality.

I will now discuss how these ideas can be seen to have influenced the emergence and development of the British Labour Party, before turning to two further developments in the Labour Party's understanding of its relationship to civil society – in the work of Anthony Crosland and New Labour, and considering their relevance and influence on the turn to

community organising by the Labour Party in the aftermath of their 2010 general election defeat.

3.3.2 Bernstein and the British Labour Movement

When Bismarck passed the Socialist Law in 1878, a warrant was issued for Bernstein's arrest. He went into exile, moving to Zurich in 1878 and then to London the following year. In London he came into contact with the Fabian Society, delivering lectures to members of the society and becoming close to Beatrice and Sidney Webb, and working with Frederick Engels on the fourth draft of Marx's posthumous *Capital*. It is often remarked that Bernstein was greatly influenced by this contact with the Fabian society, formulating his revisionist critique of the SDP's orthodoxy while living in London between 1888 and 1901 (Billington 1980, Sassoon 2002). The true extent of this influence is unknown, but what can be said is that his own ideas, outlined above, and those of Fabian society members, shared many of the same underlining assumptions about how to bring about social and economic justice as well as developing a similar critique of Marxist orthodoxy.

The Fabian Society had been established in 1884 by a group of middle-class intellectuals. They drew inspiration from the British 'radical utilitarian tradition', distanced themselves entirely from Marxism, and even initially opposed the formation of an independent socialist party (Sassoon 2002, p.15). George Bernard Shaw reflected the symmetry between their ideas and those of Bernstein when, as representative of the society at the International Congress of the Second International in 1896, he declared that the Fabians cared 'nothing by what name any party calls itself, or what principles, Socialist or other, it professes, but [has] regard solely to the tendency of its actions, supporting those which make for Socialism and Democracy, and opposing those which are reactionary' (quoted in Hobsbawm 1974, p.57-58). As with Bernstein's ideas, the Fabian philosophy celebrated practical application and outcome, and considered the appropriateness of tactics. In particular, they believed socialism could be achieved gradually through the use of a redistributive tax and welfare system, the universal provision of health and education, a national minimum wage, and the control of key sections of the economy by state, whose civil servants could more efficiently distribute resources than the free market. Rather than seeing the state as a vehicle forwarding the interests of the bourgeoisie and capitalist classes, as Karl Kautsky and the German SDP did at that time (King 1996), the Fabians believed in the ability of state intervention to deliver social justice in the name of the common good and as such, they

thought it was possible to use a democratic state to overcome the sectional interests of any one group within civil society.

During the period of the Second International the trajectory of Bernstein's and the Fabian's ideas seemed to converge around the goal of reformist capture of the state and the use of public policy to gradually deliver socialism. As such, in 1909, Bernstein presented a replacement for the *Erfurt Programme* that called for the transfer of monopolies to social ownership with state control over all fields of production (Gay 1979), whilst in Britain the Fabian statist philosophy was articulated in the Labour Party's 1918 Constitution. Indeed Sidney Webb, as a member of Labour's National Executive Committee, drafted the infamous Clause IV within that constitution, calling for 'the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control each industry or service'. Social democracy in Western Europe had begun to equate the common good with nationalisation of the economy and the role of the state.

However, although sharing enough philosophical assumptions to enable this later pan-European convergence, the German and British variants of social democracy had originated from, and been prompted by, different contexts. On the one hand, as has been discussed above, Bernstein's polemic arguments sprung from an internal SDP dispute about the application of theory and its relationship to necessary action in the short term. The usefulness of class conflict, capitalist crisis and proletarianisation for guiding political activities was disputed in what was in the main a theoretical argument about motivations (emphasised by the fact that both sides agreed that the tactic of engaging in the emerging German democracy was the right path, albeit for different reasons). And yet, from this theoretical dispute came the highly practical recommendation, outlined in *Preconditions*, that the means for achieving socialism was the on-going struggle to build 'a movement' constituted by civil society associations and organisations of free citizens able to bring about a convergence between individual interests and the interests of the common good. This initial vision of the movement was more expansive than the programme he agreed to in 1909, as a replacement to the SDP's Erfurt Program from 1891, encompassing associational activities within civil society as well as democratic control of the state via universal suffrage.

On the other hand, whilst the British variant of social democracy emerged in part from the Fabian Society's intellectual arguments regarding public policy and poverty alleviation, it also reflected the traditions and economic interests of the trade union movement, the spiritual

interests of the non-conformist churches, and indeed even the republican tradition that had been strong during the 18th and 19th centuries. As Moore (1978, p.1) argued, the founding of the Labour Representative Committee in 1900 ‘embodied and derived inspiration from a number of different sources and traditions dating back to the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’. In this regard he identified key influences such as early secular republicanism and the ideas of Thomas Paine, the resonance of non-conformist Christianity in the organisational techniques and cultural characteristics of the Independent Labour Party in the latter half of the 19th century, as well as the trade union tradition. These various strands can be seen to represent a radical movement of civil society associations – embracing faith, intellectual, secular, republican and trade union traditions – which fits with Bernstein’s description of the ‘means’ required to deliver socialism in *The Preconditions of Socialism*. Thus while Bernstein provided a theoretical account of the role of the party and its relationship to civil society in the creation of socialism, it was in the forces that led to the establishment of the Labour Party in 1900 that Bernstein’s arguments were historically evident, and which perhaps can be seen, in Bernstein’s closeness to the Fabian society, to have influenced his theoretical account of social democracy and ‘*the movement*’.

It was the leaders of the Fabian Society who put ideas, words and a constitution to the transformation of the Labour Party in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Over this time the party moved from being a broad-based social movement harnessing the associational power of civil society to achieve their aims, to becoming a political movement focused on capturing and utilising the apparatus of the state. After World War Two the Labour Party was primarily concerned with using the apparatus of the state and government to realise a form of socialism in which social and economic justice was *delivered* to the population, rather than a socialism *built* by those who struggled to form democratic civic associations in their social and economic lives. Buoyed by the capacity of the state constructed during World War Two, and an interventionist Keynesian consensus, the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society began to change, and this form of political organisation was to be replaced by the party’s fixation and close proximity to the state, in ideas as well as action.

Donald Sassoon (2010) argues that social democrats have always been revisionists, constantly adapting their doctrine and programme to fit with the changing economic landscape of the capitalist system. Based on this perspective the state-orientated ‘golden age’ of social democratic governance in the 1950s and 1960s should not be seen as an ideal type, operating alongside a set of coherent set of democratic and legal rights. Rather,

particular national trajectories, the social and cultural influence of the World War Two, the advent of Fordist production techniques, mass employment and a stable, positive trade surplus, and, perhaps most importantly, the establishment of large trade unions with strong corporatist links to government, meant that Western European social democratic parties felt that the most effective means for achieving their objectives was using the power of the state to intervene, and in certain circumstances, take ownership over, sections of the economy.

David Marquand (1999) has tracked the revisions in the means chosen by the British Labour Party to realise its goals showing how the dominance of the state-corporatist model of the 1950s and 1960s would eventually result in an inability of the labour movement and social democracy to adapt as the Keynesian political economy was rocked by inflation and industrial disputes in the 1970s. However, it was during this post-war 'golden age' of social democracy that Anthony Crosland emerged as a prominent social democratic thinker in the UK. His reinterpretation of social democracy, and therefore the Labour tradition, away from statist, Keynesian approaches created the intellectual foundation on which New Labour was built thirty years later, and as such, it is important to understanding subsequent efforts to redesign the relationships between the party and civil society.

3.4 Anthony Crosland and the Labour Party

Anthony Crosland's ideas were a pivotal resource in the development of the Labour Party in the second half of the twentieth century (Radice 2010). In *The Future of Socialism* (1956) he critiqued the ideas that had guided the Labour Party before and immediately after World War Two; firstly that greater degrees of nationalisation and public ownership should be central policies of the Labour Party, and secondly, that the logic of the capitalist system dominated and subjugated the lives of the British people. In an analytical approach typical of revisionism, Crosland surveyed the economic landscape of the 1950s and found the arguments for public ownership to be lacking - 'the most characteristic features of [pre-war] capitalism have all disappeared – the absolute rule of private property, the subjection of all life to market influences, the domination of the profit motive, the neutrality of government, typical laissez-faire division of income and the ideology of individual rights' (1956, p.126). He argued that this had come about because the policies of the 1945-51 Labour governments had radically transformed the British economy, and as a result, it was now the task of social democrats, within the Labour Party, to revise their strategy for achieving their political objectives. This analysis altered how the Labour Party understood its relationship to

broader civil society as well as the non-parliamentary organisations within the broader Labour Movement.

Crosland's (1956) analytical framework was based on a distinction between *means* and *ends*, and the assertion that the intellectual effort of Labour's social democrats should focus on critiquing the *means* above efforts to remake the *ends*. The *ends* for the British Labour Party can and should remain constant; fairness, justice and the equalisation of opportunity; while the *means* should be open to total reinterpretation and adaptation. His programmatic suggestions in the 1950's were to renounce nationalisation as the means for achieving socialism, proposing instead that the Labour Party aim to build a stronger mixed economy able to pay for an enlarged welfare system delivering fairness and opportunity for all. This was a radical political departure for the party, accepting capitalism as the driver of social progress based on the assumption that the state now had the managerial and scientific capacity to intervene in and harness market growth for the benefit of the whole of society.

Applying the ideas of Karl Polanyi (2001), Maurice Glasman (2011) offers an interpretation of this revisionist moment in Labour's history by arguing that *The Future of Socialism* questioned three assumptions that had been central to the 'Labour tradition'. The first assumption was that capitalism was an exploitative system, prone to booms and busts, and was therefore an inefficient form of social organisation. The second assumption was based on the belief that unregulated capitalism was unethical as it turned human beings and their natural environment into commodities. It had therefore been assumed by the labour movement that human beings should organise themselves through democratic association to counter commodification by the market and the dominance of money. The third assumption was that the worst excesses of capitalism could be tamed through the application of scientific, technical and managerial knowledge.

In making his critique, Crosland had surveyed contemporary society and observed an improvement of living standards across the board, thus concluding that the economic development of the 1950s had in most part been delivering for all. He also noted that economic growth was not leading to the commodification of people and land and to greater degrees of social dislocation and misery, as had been theorised Karl Polanyi's (2001) in *The Great Transformation*. Rather, the price mechanism of the free labour market in the 1950s was enabling, with the assistance of trade union collective bargaining, British workers to achieve higher wages and greater standards of living. Thus as the first two assumptions were dispatched by Crosland, Glasman (2011) argues that the Labour Party's *raison d'être*

would come to rest on half of the third assumption; the Party sought to oversee the fulfilment of democratic rights, fairness and equality by controlling the levers of the state, enacting redistributive policies and ensuring welfare was such that it would create opportunities for all. This meant a concern with ownership was replaced with a focus on control and managerialism. In effect, Crosland asked why public ownership of industry mattered when a Labour government would be able to exert control through regulation and taxation.

Although labelling himself as the British revisionist heir to Bernstein, Crosland's arguments represented a radical adaptation of Bernstein's earlier revisionist critique. Indeed, whereas Bernstein had argued that socialism would be constructed in the dynamism and associational politics of '*the movement*', where the means and the end were integrated as one, for Crosland, the *end* remained constant as the fulfilment of a set of democratic rights and freedoms, while the *means* for achieving this was the state machine. Thus for Crosland the *means* was simply the adaptation of state policy in response to the political economic landscape the Labour Party happened to find itself in at any one time, and it was the end that mattered rather than the means. As such, the party shifted further from civil society and moved closer towards the state.

In more recent years, Crosland's pragmatic form of revisionism has been understood as providing a key influence on the development and emergence of New Labour during the 1990s. Crosland and Blair shared common ground in removing the emphasis on public (state) ownership as a means for achieving social progress – symbolised by New Labour's removal of Clause IV from the party's constitution in 1995 – as well as their shared interest in questions of community, citizenship, and the pursuit of social justice (Kenny and Smith 1997; Leonard 1999). Crosland may rightly be seen as providing the intellectual foundation for Labour's conversion four decades later into a 'catch-all party' (Kirchheimer 1966) operating in a 'cartel party system' (Katz and Mair 1995), with all the necessary adaptations in the party's relationship to civil society. However, New Labour only travelled across part of this ground. While the New Labour period laid the groundwork for an interest in community organising that became more prominent during the early years of the twentieth century, much of the argument was theoretical rather than practical. Party theoreticians adopted the language of communitarianism but they also remained wedded to the power of the state to enact social and economic reform, as is outlined in more detail below.

3.5 New Labour

New Labour emerged in the 1990s as a political project to 'modernise' the Labour Party after four election defeats. It was dominant within Labour in the period immediately prior to the turn to community organising and the emergence of Blue Labour, creating the conditions in which a re-evaluation of the relationship between the party and civil society was felt necessary. I explore understandings of these conditions here, and discuss how they encouraged an interest in community organising in the aftermath of the 2010 general election.

As with all scholarly work on the Labour Party, interpretations of New Labour reflect the 'strong normative underpinnings' held by the writer and the resulting Labour tradition they wish to assert (Callaghan, Fielding and Ludlum 2002, p.2). Radical left critiques position New Labour as an political 'aberration', fundamentally pulling the party away from its socialist, and even Marxist, roots and instead continuing, albeit with minor adaptations, Thatcherism and neo-liberalism (Panitch and Leys 1998, Peck and Tickell, 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). From within the party itself, Roy Hattersley (2001) argued in *The Guardian* that 'Now my party not only pursues policies with which I disagree; its whole programme is based on a principle that I reject'. Similarly, David Marquand made the case for not knowing what the 'Blair Project' entailed; 'it is not socialist. It is not even social democratic or social liberal. It has abandoned the tradition once exemplified by such paladins of social democracy as Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, Ernest Bevin and Hugh Gaitskell. It has also turned its back in Keynes and Beveridge' (1998, p.1). New Labour has always faced the risk of being interpreted as abandoning, rather than revising, the Labour tradition.

To counter this perception, those sympathetic to New Labour have presented it as 'part of the revisionist thread of British social democratic politics' (Driver and Martell 2006, p.23), in which the socialist ethics of community and civil society, citizenship, and rights and responsibilities were used to create a form of progressive communitarianism (Driver and Martell 1997; Hale 2006). Wright and Gamble (1999) argued that New Labour's civic renewal agenda, in which community cohesion resulted from government intervention to foster stronger social ties across communities, represented a renewal of ethical socialism. Blair laid out this philosophy soon after being elected. In *The Third Way: Politics for the New Century* he said 'we all depend on collective goods for our independence; and all our lives are enriched - or impoverished - by the communities to which we belong', and that 'a key

challenge of progressive politics is to use the state as an enabling force, protecting effective communities and voluntary organisations and encouraging their growth to tackle new needs, in partnership as appropriate' (1998, p. 4). Those who had taken control of the party in the 1990s saw the Labour tradition as pointing towards an enduring set of moral values rather than any particular set of socio-economic policies, such as nationalisation. Blair clarified this when, channelling the influence of Bernstein and Crosland, he said that 'the ethical basis of socialism is the only one that has stood the test of time' (Blair quoted in Bevir 2005, p.54).

Patrick Diamond (2004) reinforces this argument by presenting New Labour as the latest in four historical phases of revisionist thought. The first phase throughout the 1930s synthesized Keynesian economic theory and theories of planning, producing a programme of nationalisation and public ownership which greatly influenced the wartime coalition government. The second during the late 1940s saw Atlee's government turn the first phase's ideas into legislative action, but also saw the emergence of ideological fissures that would dominate debates throughout the 1950s, focused on the next stage of reform and the correct extent of nationalisation. In the third phase, throughout the 1970s, revisionism was attacked as the new orthodoxy by an ascendant left within the party, and blamed for the perceived failings of Callaghan and Wilson, eventually leading in 1981 to a split within Labour and the establishment of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Diamond then positions New Labour as the fourth phase, incorporating three tenets that characterise the tradition of revisionist social democracy; an 'appeal to ethical values, the importance of rigorous analysis of a changing society, and the development of a credible strategy for winning and retaining power in the British state (2004, p.10). As Diamond (*ibid*) himself admits, his historical interpretation is highly politicised, seeking to justify the New Labour project by showing an intellectual continuity with Labour's history.

The 'ethical values' to which New Labour appealed were presented as a middle ground between the 'old' Keynesian social democracy of the 1950s and 60s and New Right of Thatcher and Reagan. Individual entrepreneurialism was celebrated alongside equality of opportunity, and community (rather than the state) was identified as the functional space able to protect social life from disruption by the market and, indeed, the intrusive state. Along with other 'new thinkers' in the 1990s, Anthony Giddens (1994, 1998) contributed to the development of these ideas, celebrating 'the radical centre' that was occupied by the British 'progressive centre-left', internalising elements of both the 'old' left and new right. This vision of newness and modernity were encouraged by New Labour politicians, who saw political elected expediency in distancing themselves from Labour's past.

Alternative interpretations of New Labour see stronger continuities with the past. Mark Bevir (2000) argues New Labour simply applied the principles of social justice, citizenship and community - which were central to pre-war ethical socialists as well as the Keynesian and Fabian socialists of the 1950s, 60s and 70s – to the social and economic context of the 1990s. These contextual factors were a heightened concern over inflation, the emergence of an underclass, and changing structures of the working class. Throughout Labour's history *social justice* has referred to a moral equality achieved by moving to a state of greater economic equality, which results when wealth is distributed to reflect need rather than market forces. Indeed the free market was identified as immoral as it favours material prosperity over the moral equality of human beings, and a moral economy has therefore been preferred. *Citizenship* has been conceived as inclusive of social and economic, as well as political, rights. These are all ensured by the state, through welfare, but assume a degree individual responsibility and contribution. Finally, according to Bevir (2000), *community* within the Labour tradition signifies both cooperation and social, or sometimes class, solidarity. Community is the antipathy of competitive individualism, referring to a unity in which individuals cooperate together for a common good rather than seeking to maximise their own self-interest. Social justice and citizenship were expressions of a cooperative community.

Bevir argues New Labour reapplied these enduring socialist principles to the socio-economic context of the 1990s. Monetarism and privatisation in the 1980s forced Labour to alter its conception of social justice, reducing the redistributive role of the state, whilst the emergence of an underclass identified as morally redundant by the New Right prompted Labour to strongly emphasise the responsibilities they attached to citizenship. In line with these changes, community was reframed as the realm in which individual stakeholders shared roles in a joint enterprise, be that their workplace, their locality, city or nation. Excluded individuals were encouraged to take a stake in their community by investing in that joint enterprise. Conditionality within welfare was therefore justified by a form of transactional reciprocity between the individual and their community. As Driver and Martell (1997) argued, these alternations produced a communitarianism within Labour that was conditional (as opposed to redistributive), morally instead of socio-economically prescriptive, conservative and focused on the individual (rather than the collective), alongside a positive celebration, rather than a pragmatic acceptance, of the free market as distributor.

These debates demonstrate how New Labour's re-interpretation of the Labour tradition helped produce a context after the 2010 election in which some hoped to redesign their party's relationship to civil society by using the techniques and principles of community organising. New Labour comprehensively disrupted the consensus that the Labour tradition equated to statist interventions within the economy broadly in line with the post-war social democracy. By emphasising continuity with pre-war ethical socialism, New Labour created an intellectual and discursive space in which the party encouraged greater cooperation within civil society as the route to social justice. Those who turned to community organising occupied and sought to expand this space. However while New Labour forged this new communitarianism, it concurrently internalised the New Right's celebration of the market, and advanced a moral conservatism regarding the socially excluded. The power of the state was retained to promote marketization throughout society, and those excluded were deemed to be inadequate of sufficient contribution to warrant a return by the market. These were at extreme odds with the notions of social justice and citizenship advanced throughout and across the Labour tradition historically. New Labour was therefore contradictory, recognising certain tenets of the Labour tradition whilst disregarding other core values. When faced with electoral rejection in 2010, and the need for a renewal of ideas, the arguments of Blue Labour and the principles of community organising seized upon this contradiction. They provided New Labour's disciples with the means by which they could recognise the communitarian component of their ideas whilst rejecting its outright acceptance of the market and social conservatism. In other words, it was the reassertion of a Labour tradition that did not disregard everything about New Labour.

3.6 Blue Labour

In the 2010 General Election, the Labour Party received just 29.1% of the vote. This was the party's second lowest vote share since it first entered government in 1923 (the first being at the 1983 election where it received just 27.6% - in the 2015 election the party secured a modest increase with 30.5%). After thirteen years in government the Labour Party faced criticism from those on the left; of having started unnecessary wars, supporting greater financialisation of the economy, not tackling wealth and income inequality, and of a general disregard for the party's own 'social democratic traditions' (Finlayson 2009). From the right came accusations of fiscal mismanagement, ambivalence towards uncontrolled migration, and of creating an intrusive state that did not trust people to take decisions on their own terms.

It was in this context that Blue Labour came to the fore within debates about Labour's future. Between October 2010 and April 2011 a number of academics and Labour politicians developed an intellectual agenda they felt could counter the accusations levelled at the party and renew social democratic thought within the Labour tradition after the party's election defeat. The group included those from the Blairite wing of the party, such as former MP James Purnell and David Miliband, those seen as being from the left of the party, such as Jon Cruddas MP, and the academics Marc Stears, Maurice Glasman, Jonathan Rutherford and Stuart White. In a series of essays (Glasman et al., 2011) these figures argued for a reassertion of the party's ethical socialism and suggested that New Labour had failed to stand up to powerful financial interests and the dynamics of globalisation. To respond, they advocated a renewal of the party organisation in line with the principles and techniques of community organising (Davis 2011).

Along with the 'Red Tory' arguments of Philip Blond (2010), Blue Labour was part of a broader 'post-liberalism' that swept through British politics after the 2007 financial crash, critiquing the adherence to economic and social liberalism by both the left and right (Goodhart, 2014, Geary and Pabst 2015). Blue Labour sought to assert the communitarian values of reciprocity, mutuality and solidarity within the party's organisation and history (Sage 2015). According to Glasman et al. (2011), such values were the organic foundation of the Labour Party, forged by the multitude of associations that constituted the early Labour movement and including cooperatives, community-based trade unions, building societies and mutualised workplaces. Such institutions were community-based forms of resistance to commodification by the market in land, labour and money, and were 'built by the working class out of the material available to hand', using 'language [that] was exclusive and associational' (Glasman 2011, p.21). Whether the 'community' revolves around place, faith, family or common institutions does not seem to matter to Glasman; what is important is that the relationships that constitute such communities are protected, respected and enlarged. Of course, this picture of a pre-twentieth century Labour movement chimes with Craig Calhoun's radical conservatism, and is also characteristic of 'the movement' theorised by Eduard Bernstein.

Blue Labour's thinkers assert that the ascendancy and eventual dominance of Fabian socialism within the party throughout the 20s, 30s and 40s, followed by the revisionist political economy of Anthony Crosland in the 1950s and Tony Blair in the 1990s (as outlined above), left the party devoid of its organisational foundation within civil society. The party became dominated by middle class, technocratic liberals, more able to deal with the complex

problems of government in the modern world, whereas the conservative-minded trade unions were locked out of power by the lack of corporate democracy in Britain, only able to disrupt from beyond the gates of power. Glasman explains this dichotomy within Labour's history by saying that 'while growing in status to be a full partner in the political governance of the nation, in the economy Labour remained excluded and subordinate' (2011, p.22). Due to this, social ownership within the economy became equated to state action and nationalisation, rather than with the use of cooperatives and/or models of ownership in which workers, residents or customers controlled a firm in some way. Detached from the ethical values of reciprocity, mutuality or solidarity, the emerging welfare state hinged upon the abstract principles of equality, individual rights and justice. Association was superseded by abstraction.

The title of the first substantial collection of Blue Labour essays, edited by Glasman et al. (2011) was *The politics of paradox*. The paradox they speak of is that Labour is both 'national and international, conservative and reforming, Christian and secular, republican and monarchical, democratic and elitist, radical and traditional, and it is most transformative and effective when it defies the status quo in the name of ancient as well as modern values' (2011, p.14). This captures the extent to which the Labour Party contains remnants of the working class movement described by Calhoun as both radical and conservative, as well as the liberal and progressive politics of Fabian socialism and Tony Blair. These contradictions matter because the relative balance between the various poles informs the party's organisational philosophy and ultimately the type of relationship it seeks to build with civil society.

It is assumed that Blue Labour's purpose was a renewal of the Labour Party so that it may be in a better position to win future elections. However when reading Maurice Glasman, Jonathan Rutherford, Stuart White and Marc Stears it is often unclear whether they seek a renewal of the Labour Party by emphasising its radical conservative heritage, or whether they have chosen the Labour Party as the vehicle through which they can deliver a form of wider democratic renewal that is local, civic and participatory. Indeed it is even unclear whether Blue Labour supports representative democracy, and whether, by extension, it matters if the Labour Party wins future elections. David Runciman (2011) sees this ambivalence as a weakness; 'In trying to rescue democracy from liberalism, Blue Labour is effectively giving up on macro-democracy, preferring to organise against the power of the liberal democratic state rather than trying to co-opt it' (2011, p.13). In critiquing liberal democracy, the state, and the progressive liberal strand of the Labour Party, and instead

asserting a democracy founded upon localised institutional interests, decentred governance structures, and calling, bizarrely, for a form of 'Tudor Commonwealth statecraft', Blue Labour sought a debate about the degree to which partisan political struggle undertaken at the macro national scale should, above all else, define the Labour tradition.

Related to my research aim, the question then is whether Blue Labour's preferred form of communitarian, decentralised, civic-orientated democracy seeks to redesign the relationship between the party and civil society, or replace the party with civil society. What role do political parties, which are the defining institutions of representative democracy, play in Blue Labour's politics? Attempting to respond to this dilemma, Marc Stears (2011) argues that that Labour Party 'must get back into position so that it can fight effectively at the next election *and* it must be a force for immediate good in Britain today, fighting the Coalition across the country and building new possibilities where it can' (2011, p.70); it must be both a party of electoral representation and movement of civic participation. To do this Stears presents an organisational reform agenda that reflects the influence of Barack Obama's use of community organising techniques during his 2008 presidential campaign.

Stears argues that the Labour Party 'needs organizational structures that enable otherwise disconnected people to find combination with each other' (*ibid.*, p.64); he then suggests that the leadership of the party 'must communicate in a way that practically demonstrates the difference between the individuated, transactional quasi-relationships that dominate capitalist culture and the fuller, reciprocal relationships required to face up to capitalist power' (*ibid.*, p.66); and through this approach, trust must be embedded within the party's organisational culture, requiring that leaders recognise their own responsibility and 'acknowledge their errors and accept that the consequences of any mistakes fall on their own heads' (*ibid.*, p.67). In order to sustain itself, Stears also argues that Labour needs to develop 'leaders throughout the organization and across the country' who are able to 'bring people together, help them identify shared concerns, provide strategic guidance, exhibit courage in the face of difficulty, inspire others to step out of the protected privacy of their domestic lives and engage in acts of solidarity' (*ibid.*, p.68). The language of relationships, reciprocity, accountability and leadership development is testament to the influence of community organising in the Blue Labour agenda. By exploring community organising in further detail in the following section, I go back to the primary sources of these ideas (rather than their refracted reinterpretation by Labour politicians) in order to better understand how the use of community organising by the Labour Party could change its relationship to civil society.

3.7 Community Organising

It is not an entire coincidence that just when the Labour Party completed its ascent into government in the late 1920s in Britain, in the United States a new form of urban, neighbourhood-based democratic political action was being developed. Taking cues from workplace-based union organising, community organising strove to build networks of civic leaders independent of formal pre-existing political institutions. The central figure in the emergence of community organising was Saul Alinsky, who as a graduate student worked under Ernest Burgess on a juvenile delinquency programme in the Meatpacking district of Chicago. Alinsky's activities soon went beyond his initial brief as he built an alliance of local community leaders, including those from the Catholic Church and the local Meatpacking Union. These leaders formed a neighbourhood committee called the Back of the Yards Neighbourhood Council (BYNC), and went on to win a number of high profile campaign victories, including improved union recognition in the meatpacking industries and additional service provision for the community. The success of the BYNC was soon replicated in other areas of Chicago, and then in other cities across the United States, specifically Rochester, San Francisco and New York. These local alliances became affiliated within the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF); a national organisation established by Alinsky, and which today continues to build community organisations across the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia.

Alinsky documented his model of community organising in two books: *Reveille for Radicals* (1946) and *Rules for Radicals* (1971). In these he outlined the principles and tactics for successful community organising, many of which he used in his first organising project in the Back of Yards community in Chicago. His work at that time was influenced by the research and activism of Ernest Burgess and Clifford Shaw, who had employed him to work on their Chicago Area Project. The two Chicago Sociologists were interested in how communities were socially organised, and the local incentive structures that enabled or disabled social change to occur. Burgess (1916) also developed a methodological approach that sought to combine knowledge creation with social change, emphasising the researcher as someone who identifies and trains new community leaders, embeds the interests of the community within the research design, and then takes steps to build support for the research findings amongst the community. Alinsky fused these ideas – a focus on social networks and local leadership - with an appreciation of the power of collective action, learnt from contact with trade unions during his work in the Back of the Yards neighbourhood (Wills 2012, Von

Hoffman 2010). These ideas have been modified over the twentieth century, notably shifting from the neighbourhood focused model of community organising to broad-based organising at the metropolitan scale (Stout 2010), but today, many of the core principles that enabled this type of politics are still practised in 'citizens movements' active across the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia.

Community organising is a contested term referring as it does to a field of political activity that has diverged in a number of ways since it was originally developed by Saul Alinsky. Peter Levine (2013) argues that two distinct forms of organising emerged throughout the twentieth century - broad-based organising and strategic organising. Strategic organising begins with a policy agenda before going on to 'recruit and motivate strong supporter, find non-supporters who might be persuadable, and mobilize people who have special assets to contribute to the cause (e.g. money, skills, serious commitment, network ties, or fame)' (ibid, p.124). This form of organising tends towards the ideological and confrontational, and is closer to Alinsky's later organising within the IAF during the 1960s. Today there are a plethora of organisations that fit this characterisation, most notably ACORN, the community US-centred organising group that is notable for going bankrupt in 2010 after sustained attack by right-wing media commentators in the United States.

Broad-based organising, or 'relational organising', on the other hand, does not begin with an issue or cause but with a set of people. These may be defined geographically, within a neighbourhood for example, or within an institution, such as a church congregation. As 'their commitment is to relationships, not to predetermined outcomes' (ibid, p.125), professional organisers do not select individuals to join them because of what they can contribute to a cause, but rather because of the worth of the relationships they have with the organiser, and the depth and breadth of the relationships that the person has with others in their community (geographically or institutionally). Community organisers recruit individuals via their institutions or residence by telling stories about how relational organising can be used to address the concerns of any individual.

Once a tranche of individuals are recruited from within an area or institution, the organiser facilitates open-ended deliberation amongst the group about both the means and end of the organising journey. This leads to an agreement about what the group will try to achieve, and how they will go about achieving it. Two traditional techniques used by relational organisers are the '1-2-1' and 'House Meeting'. 1-2-1s are reciprocal meetings between the organiser and members of the community, and separately between two community members. They

are short face-to-face meetings designed to enable the sharing of values, experiences, political preferences, and immediate goals between the two participants. A house meeting typically occurs after an initial set of organiser-led 1-2-1s, and it is a discussion amongst small numbers of community members in which attendees introduce themselves, discuss the issues facing their community, and agree on shared visions for the future of their community. They are also intentionally social, designed to foster stronger relationships of reciprocity and trust amongst the individuals involved in the organising work.

Alinsky's early work in Chicago and elsewhere was highly relational and he emphasised respect for the relationships that already existed within a neighbourhood. While this approach to organising was highly effective in the short run, winning concessions around public infrastructure and services, employment rights and wages, education and housing, after a few years many of his alliances disbanded. The professional organisers he trained often burnt out, sometimes the alliances 'developed in directions that defied the democratic and inclusive spirit of their emergence' (Coles 2006, p.550), and in later years, Alinsky's organising became narrowly pragmatic to such an extent that his methods appeared ideological (Levine 2013). After Alinsky's death in 1972 an emerging tranche of IAF organisers and leaders took stock, reflecting on his methods and principles, and over the course of the following decades successfully built a nation-wide alliance of community organisation that re-emphasised Alinsky's earlier attentiveness to local traditions, bolstered with innovations in leadership training techniques, long term relationships between the IAF and community associations, and an appreciation that work-life balance was important for retaining their best organisers.

According to Coles (2006) these new IAF leaders and senior organisers re-emphasised Alinsky's respect for local traditions in two different ways. First, IAF's own democratic philosophy became increasingly entwined with the religious traditions and teachings embedded and practiced within the communities they sought to organise. The traditional teachings of Christianity, Judaism, and latterly, Buddhism and Islam, were incorporated within the IAF philosophy, emphasising 'political perseverance, liberation, solidarity with the least well off, welcoming the stranger, community building across differences, and so on' (2006, p.550). Secondly, the IAF placed greater emphasis on building the institutional capacity and strength of the member associations within its alliances. Employing a range of techniques, many documented in Michael Gecan's (2008) *Effective Organising for Congregational Renewal*, this approach focuses on diversifying and strengthening institutional leadership, broadening participation, reorganising institutional practices to

encourage growth, and seeking out and demonstrating practical embodiments of the institutional vision. Thus, according to Coles, while the 'modern IAF' that developed since the 1970s is 'inflected by the visions and practices of the traditions with which it engages', it also 'inflects these traditions in light of a radical democratic ethos that accents inclusion, dialogue, receptivity, equality, difference, a taste for ambiguity, patient discernment, and an affirmation that political relationships centrally involve on-going tension, some compromise, and humility in the face of disagreement (including a hesitancy to push for organizational action on issues where widespread agreement has yet to be forged)' (2006, p.550).

Ed Chambers' (1978) *Organizing for Family and Congregation* was the first re-statement of the principles and philosophy of the IAF's relational organising in the years after Saul Alinsky's death. Underpinning this philosophical re-statement is his interpretation of the word 'radical' as the 'root' tension that lies at the heart of political and democratic community; the question of the distinction between the 'the world as it is' and 'the world as it should be'. Asking and responding to this question, spiritually, organisationally and strategically, is an individual's capacity to be political. Here he builds upon Wolin's (1989) notion of 'politicalness' as being that which constitutes citizenship within radical democracy, and which is separate from the legalistic definitions of citizenship and political rights associated with the state. Relational organising is the act of drawing out the politicalness of ever-larger numbers of individuals by enabling them to reflect on their interpretation of their community and world as it is, and then bringing them together with fellow citizens so that they may forge a new vision of the world as it should be. Chambers states that 'the world as it is and the world as it should be are not raw facts or simple objective realities. We don't have objective uninterpreted access to either world. People from different histories see the two worlds differently [...] What you and I can create for our respective groups [...] and the larger community depends on bringing our respective interpretations together in a better reading of our common situation and obligations than we could do alone, one that enables us to act together with power' (1978, p.24). With this pronouncement we see reflections of Bernstein's movement, and of Calhoun's radical conservative Labour history, founded on an alliance of democratically self-governed civil society associations, growing to represent the ever greater circles of concern and interests of different sections of society. The history of the Labour movement, the eventual emergence of the Labour Party, and the theory and practice of community organising are strikingly similar.

3.8 Conclusion

My aim in this chapter has been to use the notion of tradition to unpack how the Labour Party has related to civil society at various points of its history, showing how the 'Labour tradition' has evolved through periodic bouts of renewal and reform, each representing alterations in the party's relationship to civil society. Understanding these previous moments of renewal provides insights into the constraints and opportunities faced by those advocating for a reform of the Labour Party's in line with practices and techniques of community organising today.

In summary, the early articulation of party-civil society relationships by Eduard Bernstein focused on the creation of a movement of civil society associations that were broadly supportive of the social democratic aims of the Labour Party. I interpret this as being aligned to the historical interpretations of the Labour Party's emergence throughout the 1920s, during which time party actors grew their local organisational capacity by seeking out and building relationships with associational groups within civil society. The party's organisational capacity grew from these relationships rather than from its presentation or enactment of a particular ideology or -ism.

I emphasise the idea of tradition as a tool for justifying decisions in the present by emphasising a continuity with actions of the past. The relationship to civil society embedded within the Labour tradition has shifted throughout the party's history, from Bernstein's early emphasis on the movement of civil society associations, to the Fabian focus on the state as owner in relationship with large corporatist trade unions, and to Crosland's reinterpretation of the state as regulator based on an acceptance of market efficiency and liberalisation (which in turn laid the foundation for New Labour's integration of many of the ideas associated with the New Right in the 1980s). Reflecting on the historical trajectory of Labour's organisation and intellectual currents, I argue that those who under the umbrella of Blue Labour have turned to community organising after 2010 conceptualise party-civil society relations in much the same way as Eduard Bernstein, albeit applied within different contexts.

To substantiate this claim I have presented and discussed literature on community organising, showing that the ambitions of community organisers share much with those of Eduard Bernstein's vision. A movement of associational life, built on the principle of self-organisation and political power, underpins both Bernstein's vision of a reformist Marxism and the ideas and actions of Saul Alinsky, Michael Gecan and Edward Chambers. For both

groups of people, social change is rooted in the ability of actors to build political power that is specific to particular places and reflective of the particular contexts in which individuals act within civil society. These arguments were adopted by Blue Labour, whose supporters believe that the practices of community organising are the means by which the Labour Party can build both the capacity and the imagination to challenge the encroaching commodification of human relations by the market and further bureaucratisation of civil society by the state. In practice, this means a different sort of Labour Party in the future, with closer relationships of reciprocity, trust and mutualism with civil society associations. As yet however, it is not clear that this vision can become a reality via reform of the party and its political agenda.

Within this interpretation of Labour's history and current turn to community organising there are two arguments, which I have made repeatedly throughout this chapter. First, that political ideas are born out of practices embedded within place and context, and second, that being political is the art of action rather than abstraction. Bernstein meant this when he said 'the movement is everything', Polanyi's counter-movement is an account of everyday practices resisting social dislocation, and community organisers believe this when they say that 'relationships proceed action'. These principles are coherent with the epistemological assumption that has guided this chapter - that ideologies and traditions are contingent on the actions of individuals acting together (Bevir 2000). As such, to follow this philosophical path while responding to my research questions requires an account of the practices used by community organisers within Labour to redesign their party's relationship to civil society, and the way in which these practices have influenced the actions that constitute the relationships between individuals within civil society and the Labour Party.

By considering these points my research is able to answer the first two of my research questions – what is M4C's model of community organising and how is this applied within the party? This empirical basis then allows my research to answer the third and fourth research questions – how is M4C's model changing the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society, and what are the implications of this for the future of the Labour Party and political parties more generally? The next chapter outlines the methodological approach I have taken to answer these questions.

4.0 Researching the turn to community organising in the Labour Party

This chapter outlines the methodology I have used to answer my research questions. It begins with an explanation of the qualitative methods I used during my research, before explaining the practical steps I took to collect the data needed for my research, including setting up the access to M4C and the Labour Party, and the use and selection of case studies in Southampton and Cardiff. I then provide a rationale for my chosen data collection techniques – participant observation and semi-structured interviews – and outline the research process once having returned from the field, specifically the data analysis techniques I used. Next I examine my positionality, discussing my own political stance prior to and throughout my research, and how this informed my research design and data analysis, and the challenges of conducting research into a political party. Finally I explore the ethical dimensions of my research, before concluding with a reflection on alternative approaches my research could have taken. The overarching purpose of this chapter is to justify why I choose to approach the methodology as I did, and to reflect on the methodological implications of conducting research in political parties. Reiterating my questions, they are:

1. What is M4C's model of community organising?
2. How are they applying this model in the party?
3. How is M4C's model changing the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society?
4. What are the implications for the future of the Labour Party and political parties more generally?

By answering these questions, and exploring the way in which the British Labour Party is using community organising techniques to reinvent itself, I am able to consider the broader issue of the future of the political party and the wider implications of this for this reinvention for theory and practice. This the overarching aim of my research.

4.1 Research Design

I choose to address my research aim and questions with a qualitative methodology that utilised semi-structured interviews and participant observation as data collection techniques.

I used these techniques over a twelve month period, from September 2012 to September 2013, within three sites: the national Labour Party, Movement for Change central office, and in the local areas in which M4C was organising, specifically in Southampton and Cardiff.

In doing so I followed the three phases of ethnographic research described by Cook (2005, p.168), in which you first 'gain access to a particular community', second, live and/or work 'among the people you study in order to take in their world-views and ways of life' and third, travel 'back to the academy to make sense of this through writing up an account of that community's culture'. My plan was to access M4C through political connections I had made prior to beginning my research, spend an extended period studying the 'world-views and ways of life' of M4C community organisers, and then return to the School of Geography at Queen Mary University after this period to make sense of what I had witnessed and consider the relevance for thinking through the future of the political party.

4.1.1 Access

My ability to fulfil the objectives of my research depended upon gaining access to the highly political internal world of the Labour Party. I realised early within the research process that access would not come easily, and would be gained through a long process of relationship building throughout my first year to enable productive data collection during my second year. I therefore began building relationships with those individuals in Labour Party who had publicly taken an interest in community organising. This involved attending events where they were speaking, and getting in touch with those I had met through Labour Party activism during my time in London.

Two of these people were Karin Christiansen and Marcus Roberts, who had been organisers in the Bethnal Green and Bow constituency during the 2010 election campaign, where I was a party activist before beginning my PhD. Having spent time in the United States during Obama's first presidential election in 2008, they had decided to implement a local electoral strategy that used some techniques from community organising. They were also becoming public advocates of a shift towards community organising in the party. Through these contacts I was able to become involved in an informal pressure group called 'Labour Values' who were lobbying the national Labour Party. The group argued that 'Labour activism and well-run local campaigns can connect with people and buck national trends', and that 'Labour has to change. We need a fundamental debate on how to put our *values* back at the heart of our politics. And we need a fundamental debate about the future of the party to

ensure that our activists and supporters are *valued*, for their views as well as their effort' (Labour Values, 2010). Although gaining initial access to this group was relatively easy, gaining the trust of those involved rested upon the presentation of my positionality regarding the perceived value of community organising to the Labour Party. As a 'supporter' of their position, I was also able to use my PhD student status as leverage to further engagement. I argued that the completion of my PhD would help to better understand how community organising could assist the party build stronger relationships with civil society.

However, as Labour Values was a lobbying group, they did not offer a direct route to potential cases for my research and for that, I needed a link to those that did, such as M4C. It was at a Labour Values meeting that I first met Kathryn Perera, the Chief Executive of M4C. Over an individual follow-up meeting with Kathryn, I asked if I could join M4C on a three-month internship, funded by the ESRC. We agreed the purpose of the internship was to support their organising activities as well as providing me with research access to local campaigns. My slow gradual approach to gaining trust and then access was particularly important due to the degree of suspicion towards outsiders held by Labour Party activists; a suspicion heightened in the circles advocating and practising community organising due to a series of sceptical and negative journalistic pieces (c.f. Marchant 2011, Hodges 2011). I overcame these barriers, and through Kathryn was allowed to enter M4C as a novice intern organiser. In September 2012 I was able to begin data collection using participant observation and semi-structured interviews and I now discuss these techniques further below.

4.1.2 Participant Observation

Once access had been achieved, my participant observation progressed through two phases. In the first, running from September 2012 to January 2013, I completed a full-time internship with M4C, arranged as part of the Economic and Social Council Research work placement programme. This gave me the opportunity to submerge myself fully in the daily work of M4C, operating mostly from their offices in Brixton, London. It was in this three month period that I was able to learn about and use the techniques of organising practiced by M4C. I began to get a feel for the way in which these were being applied within the Labour Party, and I could observe some of the challenges M4C faced when doing this work. I immersed myself fully during this period, allowing me to achieve the aims of participant observation by 'understanding the world-views and ways of life of actual people from the 'inside', in the contexts of their everyday, lived experiences' (Cook 2005, p.167).

The second phase began once my full time internship had come to an end, and ran from January 2013 to September 2013. In this phase I worked three-days per week as a M4C Community Organiser, and focused on developing a M4C project in Southampton, delivering M4C's residential training programme, and assisting on the national Sharkstoppers campaign that had developed to try and regulate the payday lending industry. This campaign had emerged as a national campaign from a number of local area campaigns undertaken by M4C. In this extended phase over nine months I was able to combine observation of M4C's work, including projects by other organisers, with the experience of participating fully as an organiser building a project of my own in Southampton.

During these two phases I kept a field diary that documented my day-to-day work and activities, commentary on the work of other organisers, and I used these observations to begin building a picture of the M4C model of community organising.

4.1.3 Interviews

To supplement my participant observation I also conducted thirty three interviews during the period of my research. I aimed to conduct four categories of interview; with those working for M4C, those working on community organising in the Labour Party and the wider movement, and those involved in M4C projects in Southampton and Cardiff. A full list of those I interviewed, the date of the interview, their category, position or status, the interview length and location is provided in Figure 3.

While I did develop an initial interview schedule at the beginning of my research year (see Appendix 1), this soon became redundant. Rather than stick to the schedule, after the initial tranche my interview questions began to reflect the issues particular to the person being interviewed, and the relative development of, and their role within, the community organising projects we were discussing. My approach was to write down a list of topics I wished to discuss immediately prior to each interview. This way I was able to internalise my reflections on data collected up to that point within the interview, building upon and deepening my understanding on the topics of research.

During the year I conducted two tranches of interviews with M4C organisers. The first was soon after I had begun the three month internship with M4C in November 2012. These were intended to provide me with an in-depth understanding of the M4C model of organising, and

were particularly descriptive. The organisers shared experiences of current and previous organising projects, explaining the techniques they used and the relationship they had to the local Labour Parties in the areas they organised. My role as a newcomer at that point influenced the content of these interviews, with the organisers clearly wishing to teach me about their projects so that I would be able to do organising myself in future. As Laurier (2010) notes, this early categorisation of me as a ‘newcomer’ was useful as it meant there was an expectation that I would observe in the early phase of my time with M4C before becoming a fully-fledged organiser.

Figure 3: Interview Register

Date	Research Category	Name	Position	Length	Location
07/12/2011	M4C	Verity Taylor	Director of Operations M4C	41 mins	Hackney Café
17/10/2012	Sharkstoppers	Andy Hull	Sharkstoppers National Strategy Member	90 mins	Islington Town Hall
24/10/2012	M4C	Stewart Owadally	Community Organiser	58 mins	Brixton
08/11/2012	M4C	Verity Taylor	Community Organiser	37 mins	Brixton
11/11/2012	M4C	Kate Talbot	Community Organiser	40 mins	Brixton
04/12/2012	M4C	Mike Buckley	Community Organiser	20 mins	Brixton
03/02/2013	Cardiff	Stephen Doughty MP	MP for Cardiff South and Penarth	tbc	Westminster Lobby
13/03/2013	Labour Party	Marcus Roberts	Deputy General Secretary of Fabian	38 mins	Fabian offices
04/04/2013	Labour Party	Karen Christiansen	General Secretary of the Cooperative Party	57 mins	Cooperative Party offices
13/04/2013	Labour Party	Arnie Graf	Lead Labour Party Organiser	74 mins	Euston Station
17/05/2013	Southampton	Cllr Andrew Pope	Southampton Councillor	66 mins	Southampton Town Hall
18/05/2013	Cardiff	Alex Bevan	M4C National Committee	37 mins	Cardiff
18/05/2013	Cardiff	Ewan Moor	Cardiff Leader (pre- appointment)	33 mins	Cardiff
18/05/2013	Cardiff	Tara McInvey	Cardiff Leader	41 mins	Cardiff
12/06/2013	M4C	Stewart Owadally	Community Organiser	88 mins	Lewisham Café
14/06/2013	M4C	Jack Madden	Community Organiser	52 mins	Brixton
21/06/2013	M4C	Jonathan Cox	CitizensUK Lead Organiser	155 mins	Home

12/07/2013	M4C	Kathryn Perera	Chief Executive of M4C	90 mins	Brixton
17/07/2013	M4C	Madlin Sadler	Head of Trustee/Founder of M4C	51 mins	Place of work
17/07/2013	Southampton	Becca Ridley	Southampton Leader	24 mins	Southampton Uni
23/07/2013	M4C	Mike Kane	Interim Chief Executive of M4C	61 mins	Brixton
31/07/2013	Southampton	Emily Rainsford	Southampton Leader	46 mins	Southampton Uni
07/08/2013	Southampton	Cllr Paul Lewzey	Southampton Councillor	43 mins	Southampton Café
21/08/2013	Southampton	Rowenna Davis	Southampton Parliamentary Candidate	54 mins	Southampton Café
11/09/2013	Southampton	John Denham MP	Southampton Itchen MP	51 mins	Portcullis House
09/10/2013	Labour Party	Tom Stoppard	Head of Community Organising and Campaigns	57 mins	Labour Party HQ
30/10/2013	M4C	Ben Maloney	Community Organiser	56 mins	Victoria Station
19/11/2013	M4C	Kathryn Perera	Chief Executive of M4C	67 mins	Home
21/01/2014	Sharkstoppers	Matt Lawrence	IPPR Researcher/Sharkstoppers Member	58 mins	Soho Café
27/01/2014	Sharkstoppers	Steve Doran	Sharkstoppers National Strategy Member	48 mins	Dartford Café
26/03/2014	Cardiff	Mitchell Theaker	Cardiff Cabinet Member/Sharkstoppers	56 mins	Cardiff Civic Centre
04/04/2014	Cardiff	Rev. Chris Lewis	Sharkstoppers Member	109 mins	Skype interview
26/03/2015	Cardiff	Serai Hann	Sharkstoppers Member	58 mins	Cardiff Café

The second tranche of interviews I conducted with M4C organisers was in June 2013, and these were more specific to each of their organising projects and the issues they were facing in their work with M4C and its model of organising. In particular, we discussed the nature of the relationship between their organising projects and the various institutions of the Labour Party, the role civil society actors and associations within the projects, and any challenges they faced in their day to day work. By this point I had known the organisers for nine months, and had been working as an organiser for six months. This meant I was viewed as a participant in M4C, not only as an observer, and the respondents assumed that I already understood the finer details of the projects and challenges they faced. Importantly, I was also trusted as being supportive of the aims of M4C, having demonstrated my commitment to the organisation and my willingness to contribute to their growth as well as collecting data for my own research.

As I entered my second phase of participant observation I also arranged a set of interviews with those from with the Labour movement who had an interest in the party's turn to community organising, and these meetings were with Karin Christiansen, Marcus Roberts, Arnie Graf, and later in the year, Tom Stoppard (from Labour Party Headquarters). These people were able to provide background information explaining the motivation for some in the party turning to community organising, and give a national, or non-place specific, perspective on how community organising could be used to alter the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society.

The final two categories of interviewee were those involved in the two cases I selected – Southampton and Cardiff. These individuals were selected as they were participating in community organising projects that I was involved in during the second phase of my participant observation. The topics of discussion within these interviews related to moments I had observed through my participant observation, and I asked them to reflect on their involvement in M4C. The data from these interviews gave me a rich understanding of the experience of becoming involved in a M4C project, the role of civil society activists and their relationships with M4C, and the experience of being developed by a M4C community organiser as a campaign 'leader'. I now justify the selection of these two cases in the section below.

4.1.4 Case Selection

Case study analyses are the paradigmatic method for post-positivist research (Flyvbjerg 2001), reflecting an acceptance that social scientific knowledge production is always context dependent. That the history of the Labour Party's relationship to civil society (as covered in Chapter Two and Three) highlights the particular importance of place and context in the formation of political identities and the emergence of political movements (see also Massey 1994, Tomaney 2013), the use of case studies to examine the impact of Labour's contemporary turn to community organising is appropriate. The case study becomes the method of choice for exploring social processes within a bounded contextual-specific social setting but having said this, it is also clear that the cases have to be chosen with care.

Case studies exist in a 'curious methodological limbo' and many researchers across the academy assume that it is not possible to generalise on the basis of an individual case study project (Gerring 2004, p.341). According to Flyvbjerg (2001), this is a misconception while

also missing the point. It is a misconception as the ability to generalise from a particular case is possible if the case that has selection of cases that resonates with the theory or propositions under investigations. However it also misses the point. Many researchers believe that the falsification of general propositions due to the observation of one 'deviant' case is not as valid as the generation of rules and laws using statistical and quantitative methods. But generalisation from a single case is possible, according to Flyvbjerg, is possible if there is synergy between the observations made possible within the case, the theoretical propositions being tested, and the research aims and questions of the study.

Key then to enabling generalisation from single cases is the choice of the case. In this vein, I selected Cardiff as a case as it was the most developed of M4C's organising projects, and as such, it represented an empirical exemplar in relation to the chosen research questions and the body of theory from which my research questions emerge; the theories relating to the relationship between the political party and civil society, and the changing nature of the political party, as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. The second case, Southampton, was chosen as I was provided the opportunity to witness and participate directly in the development of a M4C community organising project from scratch. It was therefore an exemplar case in terms of my research questions in relation to the application of the M4C model, and the impact of this model on the relationship between civil society and the Labour Party, as I witnessed these first hand. This is a method of case rationale which, according to Mitchell (2006), is based upon a judgement of whether a potential case is theoretically salient, rather than demanding a statistical approach to establishing whether a case is typical or representative of a wider population or trend.

This rationale chimes with the arguments of Flyvbjerg (2001), who argues that through the choice of case studies, particular observations can be used inform the development of existing or new theory. Flyvbjerg identifies *critical* cases, which contain empirical evidence able to refute general theoretical propositions, *paradigmatic* cases, which represent outliers of emerging trends, *maximum variation cases*, which enable a comparative approach to social processes and outcomes, and finally, *extreme/deviant cases* that can be used to make a forceful argument in a closely defined way. In this regard, I selected two cases which were paradigmatic of the emerging community organising reform agenda. Cardiff as a front-runner in M4Cs work in this field and Southampton as a complementary case that allowed me to explore this model of working in much greater depth. Flyvbjerg notes that there is no universal methodological principle guiding such choices, and that researchers will often fall back on intuition in the first instance, before retrospectively justifying their choice

once some initial analysis has been undertaken. This is inevitable as '*no standards exist for the paradigmatic case because it sets the standard*' (2001, p.80). In my research this meant identifying cases which seem to be the most developed in terms of the application of the techniques of community organising by Labour Party activists, and which in turn appeared to be having an impact in the ordering and dynamic of local civic life and democratic engagement.

The further rationale for choosing two local cases was research capacity; my methodology and research questions required that I gathered rich qualitative data from a range of sources within each case, and I felt that as my time was limited, I would only have the capacity to undertake two case studies. The aim was not to conduct a 'comparative study' as such (c.f. Ward 2010), but rather to enhance the range and observed repetition of identified social practices and social processes that could then be used to problematize and enhance my chosen strand of academic debate and theory. In an ideal world, it would have been useful to widen the choice of case study areas to incorporate a wider range of geographical and political contexts in which the new organising methods were being deployed, but this was not possible in this PhD research. However, in this regard, there is a further rationale for choosing Cardiff and Southampton. Cardiff is an area of the country with a very strong labour tradition – and it is commonly called a heartland area for the labour movement (Pelling 1968) – and in contrast, Southampton has always been an area with a relatively shaky history of engagement in the labour tradition. While it had two Labour MPs for much of the post-war period, non-Labour voters now surround the city and in 2015 the party lost the seat John Denham had held in the past.

4.1.5 Data analysis

Once my research ceased with M4C I returned to the academy and began collating and analysing my data, which took three forms – interview transcripts, day-to-day field diary notes, and a series of comments and longer reflections on my observations. For analysis of my interview transcripts I used Nvivo and constructed a coding structure to reflect both the empirical and theoretical focus of my research (see Appendix 2). Once the material was collated around these codes, I sifted through all the quotes and discussion and began identifying the material that would be particularly relevant to my theoretical framework, and which directly related to my research questions. I sought to demonstrate the breadth of data collected whilst also retaining a coherence to the interview data material presented in my empirical chapters.

I also typed up my field diary notes and comment/reflection notes, which were mostly handwritten. These were then used as references to ensure the chronology of my empirical data presentation was accurate, but more importantly, they also began to influence the arguments I hoped to make through my research. These on-the-spot reflections, often scribbled down in between meeting activists, or during political events, were invaluable once I had returned to the academy and began making sense of what I had collected. For example, at the end of my three month internship with M4C in January 2012 I wrote:

‘Are those using community organising [in the Labour Party] attempting to reverse those historical trends [of declining participation], or is it being used to make these trends irrelevant through the promotion of alternative organisational forms? What is the relationship between the political energy produced through community organising and the existing local structures of the Labour Party? In practice and principle when does community organising clash with local labour party organising, and how, if it all, are these issues being overcome? Answering these questions relies a clear pronouncement of what form community organising is taking in the labour movement’

Such thoughts would go on to help me refine the contributions I hoped to make through my research, building upon the research questions and aims I had in draft form at the end of my first year. Later on during my time with M4C my reflections became more specific to my research cases and the context in which I found myself. Here is an example of my field diary from the 7th September, written after a day spent in Southampton having meetings with Labour Party activists, including a meeting with Renata Bogus:

‘We sat alongside the campaign material in the ‘Situation Room’, and the walls were covered with old Labour Party propaganda slogans and photos from canvassing sessions. ‘The work goes on!’ from 2010 and ‘Education, Education, Education’ from ’97. I have always felt a bit uncomfortable with the idea that you can create a sense of local solidarity and ownership by projecting national icons and narratives. Relationships are local and cannot flourish when politics is leveraged entirely by the dynamics of national parties and parliament. The walls of Southampton Labour Party reflect their failure at being relational. They do not talk to one another and have not constructed

a local story, instead relying on the vacuous lines of central PR officers and spin men. Southampton Labour is more an outpost, an arms-length political operation, fulfilling the dictates of the central party, than an honest and potentially transformative politics.'

Such case-specific reflections would influence the direction of my argument as I read through my notes in the first few weeks after finishing my data collection in October 2013, prompting me to remember passing moments or thoughts that had would have otherwise been lost.

Reading these notes when beginning my data analysis also highlighted how my positionality in relation to my study had changed throughout the year. While I began as an enthusiastic researcher willing to observe, learn and participate the political practices I was studying, by the time I was half way through my year-long immersion, I was entirely engrossed and committed to the projects I was working on with M4C. There was a period from April through to September 2013 when I almost lost the connection to my academic work, giving up any notion of a critical perspective and internalising the aims and objectives of both community organising generally and M4C in particular. I will now explain this shifting positionality in much greater depth.

4.2 Approaching the subject

I began my doctoral programme in October 2011 self-identifying as a 'radical geographer'. During my Undergraduate and Masters training I had been drawn to the theories and thinkers who saw injustice in the world, and who in turn hoped to develop ideas and actions that could challenge that injustice. On the pages of *Antipode*, and in the work of David Harvey and Neil Smith, I saw powerful critiques of the status quo, vivid explanations of what was really going on, and the potential intellectual foundation for radical political action. These ideas motivated me to come back to geography after a couple of years away, and they were the motivation for the choice of my research subject.

This initial position was no surprise. I was a product of an academic discipline that had turned to radical and critical theory some thirty years prior. In the late 1960s and 70s geographers were influenced by the social and political changes going on beyond the academy. Influenced by a highly political atmosphere in society and on campus, geographers turned to welfare economics, anarchist theory and various strands of Marxism

to question the spatiality of social and economic inequalities they observed in the world (Cloke et al 2004). *Antipode* was established in 1969 by a group of young academics at Clark University, growing to become the home of radical geography within the discipline. This shift was also a reaction to the dominance of 'politically sterile and people-less quantitative geography' (Fuller and Kitchen 2004, p.1), and it reflected the development of a new cadre of geographical scholars and a new approach to scholarship. This spirit was encapsulated by David Smith (1976, p.84) when he said:

'We are beginning to realize that masses of numerical data and sharp analytical tools are not in themselves enough: basic mechanisms for resource allocation and real-income distribution must be changed if spatial inequality/discrimination/injustice is to be reduced or eliminated. This, in its turn, requires changes in personal and professional values. We cannot retreat into abstract analysis and ethical neutrality. The real world requires involvement in social change, for we are among the 'actors' ourselves. As part of the problem, we must participate in the solution.'

During the 1970s this political spirit coalesced around a Marxist political-economy within human geography. Scholars followed the lead of David Harvey's (1973) *Social Justice in the City* and began developing ideas that people needed to encourage and engage in revolutionary change in the world. It was not until the 1980s that greater attention was paid to the research process itself, particularly by feminist and postcolonial geographers. This brought positionality to the fore by problematising the encounter between researchers and researched, and encouraging researchers to work with their research subjects to bring about social change. However to do so researchers had to consider their own political stances, values and prior experiences they brought to the research encounter, and how these shaped the work that was done. They also highlighted the potentially unequal power relations between often white, middle-class, western researchers and those they choose to study (Massey 1984).

Such considerations of politics, positionality and situatedness are now a core component of the radical and critical geography research process. Once again responding to theoretical developments in other social sciences; a further shift came in the 1990s when radical geographers began to think more carefully about the relationships they built up through the research process with activists 'on the streets'. Up to this point, with only a small number of notable exceptions (c.f. Bill Bunge), radical geographers had remained distant experts able

to observe and analyse injustice and inequalities from afar, and who used these insights to influence the world through engagement with policy makers and policy discussions. The agency of the 'victims' studied by radical geography in the research process was largely absent. However, by the time I started my post-doctoral research radical geography had internalised the principles of participatory methods, turning the separation between the researched and the research process on its head.

Academics are now encouraged to become activists themselves, while communities of activists in the 'real world' could become integral within the design of geographic research, selecting issues, designing data collection, analysing findings and using the research output to further their causes. Academic knowledge is no longer valorised as expert when compared with the everyday of research participants. Indeed, these two forms of knowledge were argued to be different but equal, each having been developed in alternative frames of reference; research participants have tacit insider knowledge based on practices, while academic knowledge is learnt second-hand, being more theoretical, systematic and specialised (Fuller and Kitchen 2004).

I thus began by PhD research within this disciplinary context, considering that an attempt to study transformation ongoing within the British Labour Party required a closeness to, and participation within, the changes I sought to understand. This approach to my research subject was also informed by my own experience between finishing university as a Masters student and beginning my PhD research two years later. Between 2008 and 2010 I was involved in the work of the Labour Party and I experienced first-hand the need for reform. After finishing my undergraduate degree I began working in local government, holding two roles with a South London local authority; first as a Policy Assistant to the Labour Leader of the Council, and then as a Project Officer on a large regeneration project of a council estate. These positions allowed me to contrast the formal democratic processes on-going in the Town Hall with the everyday messiness of negotiation, attempted relationship building, and inevitable social disruption of a large rehousing and demolition programme. Political authority in the town hall rested on the legitimacy of the local electoral system. Yet on the estate, this authority, and corresponding accountability, had little resonance for the individuals struggling to maintain a voice in a process that was slowly undermining their community and even their homes. At a practical level, the Ward Councillors, MPs and other representatives were absent from the process, never fulfilling the role of representative of the residents in the regeneration scheme. This was due to constitutional topography (the estate represented a small portion of the smallest electoral area) and intent; the decision to

demolition the estate had been taken years before any of the residents got word of the proposal. Taken within the senior ranks of the Council and ruling Labour Party, this decision closed down the avenues open for local residents to have a say on the process.

My anger with the constitutional arrangements at the local level was compounded by what I witnessed when working closely with residents as they planned their move or applied for rehousing expenses from the Council's Housing Department. The social fabric of the estate had dissolved years ago. Fuelled by a slow ebbing of public money and high population turn over, the community had suffered from high levels of gang activity, resulting in families retreating indoors, becoming distant from and even fearful of one another. There was a civic vacuum, in that the communal institutions that could facilitate association and mutual support were replaced by individual relationships with the Council as the provider of welfare. The estate community centre was permanently locked, opened by our team only once for a consultation event at which, from an estate of 1,064 'units', a dozen people turned up to hear the proposals for their estate. This was unsurprising given that the plans outlined a vision to build new private homes which would be out of reach to the existing tenants, who had no right to return and were unlikely to be able to afford to buy.

Local policy makers and politicians would use the condition of the estate to justify their decisions. Being not far from the civic centre, the Director of Housing and Regeneration once stood in a project team meeting, pointed out of the top floor window towards the grey concrete slabs that lined the bank of the River Thames, and proclaimed 'I am going to knock that bastard down'. It was an estate beyond repair, full of 'problem families' and gangs, effectively condemned by the original designers' adherence to the modernist aesthetic of the 1960s. The manner in which Officers discussed the estate, the timing of the decision to demolish, and even the recruitment of particular regeneration professionals with expertise in managing other controversial South London demolitions, frustrated me. It seemed obvious that the community's condition was a consequence rather than a cause of the Council's decision to demolition and withdrawal of maintenance. When the Leader of the Council decided to promote 'mixed communities' in the local area (requiring a reduction in the concentration of Council housing) the estate was earmarked for removal. After the money for physical maintenance was drawn down, and short-term tenants began to replace long-term, the process caused the slow decay of the physical and social condition of the community on the estate over a ten-year period.

I believed then that the reversal of cause and effect by Council leaders when justifying demolition came about because of the two factors mentioned above. First, the local system of democratic representation was inadequate for conveying the interests of citizens to decision-makers, and second, the civic life of the estate, which would normally enable citizens to hold to account decision-maker empowered by the representative system, had disintegrated. Trapped in a reinforcing spiral, the boldness of politicians and officials undermined the capacity of the community to have a voice, which in turn, justified the local authority to take further 'decisive' actions, which subsequently further eroded the ability of the community to organise itself.

My anger with this situation was compounded by the role played by the local Labour Party. Having been in control of Greenwich continually since 1971, the party and local authority appeared indistinguishable, particularly if viewed from the position of the residents living on the estate. The interests of both organisations were aligned, particularly in regard to the demolition of the estate. The leadership of the local party had sanctioned a 'new model of regeneration' for the estate. The public land of the estate would be transferred to a private developer, who in exchange, would pay for the demolition, as well as shouldering the cost of rehousing the tenants in other Council properties, and then build new private homes on the land. In the era of austerity post-2007, when government funding for regeneration had dried up, the project was seen as a litmus test for whether large-scale private-sector funded regeneration was possible.

I felt at the time that the local Labour Party should have a natural instinct to withhold a local public asset, such as the land in question, from private ownership, and at the very least attempt to bring those impacted by public policy interventions into the decision making process. What I came to realise was that it was not so much that the local Labour Party lacked this political instinct, but rather that the dissonance between the representative and participatory forms of politics had effectively tied their hands. I am sure for those in positions of authority, the power of the local party felt absolute. But without being held to account by local citizens, such as those on the estate, the power of the local political leadership had become subsumed by the bureaucratic interests of the local authority. This closeness crowded out the potential for an articulation and realisation of, what I then understood to be, social democratic values and practice.

My opinion of the Labour Party was taken from my parents, who were both party members, public sector workers, and who had both displayed anger at the Tory governments

throughout the 1980s and 90s and elation when Tony Blair was elected in 1997. It is difficult to shake off the deeply held values of your parents, but as I saw the internal mechanisations of the local Greenwich Labour Party, my naïve assumption that a social democratic party would protect the interests of ‘the people’ was tested. I thus came to the topic of my PhD research not as an impartial bystander, influenced by the geographical canon and with a wish to conduct impartial scientific research. Rather I began my PhD research as someone hopeful about the potential of community organising to renew the democratic credentials of the Labour Movement by realigning the party to reflect the interests of civil society over those of either the state or private sector. As such, my subjectivity and positionality were initially informed by my political values and hopes for the future.

I began my research in 2011 as someone sympathetic to the arguments made by those advocating for reform of the party using the principles and techniques of community organising. As I have explained, this positionality was informed by my own political preferences regarding the Labour Party as well as my experiences while working in local government. It was not however overly influenced by my knowledge of geographic literature or academic debates. While I had studied geography at undergraduate level, I approached my PhD as someone who had drifted from the disciplinary traditions of geography. Instead, I saw the discipline as a suitable vehicle for conducting politically engaged work in the interests of understanding the need for political change.

As my doctoral programme progressed, through the first year of training and literature review, and into the second year of data collection, I had to renegotiate my initial positionality a number of times. Additionally, my desire to use the discipline as a means of undertaking political work created methodological challenges. As I became fully engaged with my role as an organiser with M4C, I struggled to retain a grasp on the academic purposes of the research. I reflect further on this in the following section, but also use this reflection to argue that ensuring the vitality and broader societal contribution of the geographical discipline requires an engagement with, and navigation of, the political contexts within which all geographical research inevitably takes place but doing this can be tricky in practice.

4.4 The challenges of party political research

The challenges I faced during my year of data collection were in many ways typical to those researchers undertaking participant observation of a specialised skill (Laurier 2010). Once access was acquired, I had to learn the skills of a community organiser and apply these

alongside other M4C organisers. While initial access was opened for a three month 'internship', keeping this access open required a continued contribution to M4C that, lacking resources and time, did not have the capacity to facilitate my research. As the three months came to an end, I was offered a paid role three days a week as a community organiser by Kathryn Perera. This presented a dilemma as it felt at the time that turning down the position would undermine the access and trust I had built with M4C, while to accept meant potentially compromising my independence as a researcher. I also considered that agreeing to take the position would guarantee my access, to a higher degree than if I were a 'tag-along' researcher, and that such an opportunity should not be turned away.

Even writing today, over a year since I ceased my time with M4C, I still struggle to assess the degree to which I retained my identity as a researcher during my time with M4C. I certainly managed to collect data, record my activities and observations of others, but by the end of my research year I also felt a great attachment to M4C – to the community organisers who I had shared the struggles of working life with, and to the large number of activists I had met and worked closely with over the previous year. That attachment remains, and I worry that it has either blunted my critical edge, or conversely, whether I want to seem 'academic' rather than politically biased has guided me towards an overly critical analysis.

This anxiety is acute because I choose to study the evolution of a political party. While activism and scholarly labour in support of social movements is seen as a healthy and almost required component of critical social and cultural geographies today (ref), to be engaged practically and intellectually in the cause of a political party (and not only any political party, but the social democratic wing of the Labour Party) caused much condemnation from fellow PhD students and colleagues alike. In a discipline with a long tradition of radical left thought (Blunt and Wills 2000), applying the participatory methodological approaches to a political party that many do to social movements (cf. Castree 1999, Pickerill and Chatterton 2006) prompted accusations of bias and partisanship. It was with such suspicion that I was asked during my Progression Meeting at the end of my first year whether I would be able to repeat my study with the Conservatives; the implication being that my research aims and design were informed by a partisan loyalty. Rather than questioning the assumption of the question, I said that repeating the study with another party would be possible, thereby finding safety in the notion that my research was politically disengaged and nonpartisan. Of course, in hindsight I realise the answer should have been no, and that the ability to have multiple identities as a participatory researcher (Fuller 1999) must also apply to political parties, and that my time researching Labour's turn to community

organising necessarily entailed a healthy number of multiple conflicting identities and positionalities.

Choosing to take a paid position with M4C exaggerated this anxiety. Not only was I undertaking research that could easily be construed as supportive of a political party, but I was in employment with an organisation supporting a particular reform agenda within that party. However, the immediate challenge was practical rather than methodological. As I became engrossed in the work of M4C, internalising the struggles the organisation faced as my own, and beginning to really enjoy the work I was being asked to do, the original purpose for being there slowly started to slip from my mind. The challenges I faced on a day-to-day basis – holding 121 meetings, running training sessions, working closely with campaign leaders on their political development, organising public actions, holding negotiations with campaign targets and strategizing with other organisers – were challenging and rewarding, and seemed immediate and urgent compared to the monastic retreat of the QMUL library and endless reading.

In the end though the sense that access into M4C always been conditional on the research I was conducting, as well as a want to make sense of M4C's purpose and wider implications, led me back to the academy. Additionally, after twelve months of organising for M4C I was also beginning to feel the strain – regularly travelling across the country, late night meeting in far flung constituencies, and an unceasing pressure to deliver new leaders, actions and campaign wins, had left me exhausted. Being a professional community organiser is a tough job, and one which does not allow for much time to reflect. By the end of the summer in 2013 the prospect of writing up my findings and contributing to broader debates about the future of the political party and Labour Party was once again appealing to me.

4.5 Ethics

To conduct geographical research that is ethical required that I 'consider carefully the ethical significance of [my] actions in those contexts within which they have meaning and be prepared to take responsibility for [my] actions' (Hay 2010, p.35). Such ethical significance is in essence a judgement about whether my research and research activities were 'right or wrong', and whether I conducted my research 'morally' (Mitchell and Draper 1982). In this vein, I set out to conduct an ethical piece of geographic research by being consistently reflective and thoughtful as to the implications of my research for those individuals and organisations participating in my research. In essence, I aimed to do the right thing for the Labour members, M4C community organisers, the politicians and the civil society actors I

came into contact with during my research, and I sought to minimize the risk of any harm coming to them as a result of my research.

To ensure my approach was ethical I took four specific measures. First I sought verbal consent from each interviewee at the beginning of my interview with them, and gave them with an Information Sheet (Appendices 3) that provided an overview of my research, as well as offering a verbal explanation. Second, I verbally introduced the focus and purpose of my research at the monthly General Committee meeting attended by roughly one hundred Labour Party members in Southampton, and offered to meet any member who wanted to discuss any ethical concerns they might have about my research. Third, I was willing to remove the names of any research participant I encountered during my research, or redact elements from quotations, if I felt during my analysis that inclusion might cause them any harm. I took this decision in a number of instances when analysing data collected in Cardiff, Southampton and generally with Movement for Change. Finally, I discussed the purpose of my research in detail with Kathryn Perera, Chief Executive of M4C, and offered to tailor my research aims so that my findings might be of benefit to the strategic development of M4C as an organisation. I was extremely grateful to Kathryn for allowing me to access her organisation, and as outlined above, I hoped to conduct research that was useful to her and M4C as well as the broader agenda seeking to integrate community organising principles and techniques into the Labour Party. As such, we agreed that the most useful research intervention would be made by an honest and critical appraisal of M4C's model of organising, not one that simply regurgitated their own political objectives.

As my data analysis progressed it became apparent that my initial ethical consideration would have to be broadened and reconsidered. As my position as a researcher and a community organiser with M4C had been active simultaneously, I became concerned about using data regarding individuals collected from participant observation who may not have been aware of my dual roles, and may have acted or spoken differently if they had known I was present as a researcher. To overcome this I decided to remove the identity of a number of individuals commented on throughout my research, and to further redact comments made by individuals I had interviewed, even when they had given consent.

4.6 Conclusion

My research took a qualitative approach and used interviews and participant observation to collect data so that I could respond to my research aim and questions. This chapter has

explained the practical steps I took to gain access to M4C and my local cases, and how such politically engaged research intersected with my own positionality. I have demonstrated the self-reflection that is needed when conducting research that is explicitly political, whilst enabling my interaction with individuals and organisations through my research to remain at all times ethical. This chapter has also served to justify the choice of my research techniques and case selection. M4C offered a unique opportunity to study the relationship between political parties and civil society, whilst observing and participating in M4C's projects in Southampton and Cardiff gave me access to that relationship as it evolved in response to the introduction of community organising techniques.

There are alternative methodological approaches I could have taken in response to my research questions, and some minor points, which I would, with hindsight, change if I were to repeat the same research project. The typical approach to matters of organisational change in political parties is to combine statistical observations of party capacity (for example membership levels or party finances) with electoral data (for example election results, voting intention, demographics of voting support). I could have taken such an approach with my research, using the outcome of the 2015 General Election to compare those constituencies who integrated a degree of community organising compared to those that did not. However, I do not feel this approach would really get to the heart of the change occurring in the Labour Party's relationship to civil society. Unless combined with qualitative analysis, such an approach would fail to capture the emotional and cultural barriers and outcomes of the turn to community organising, and the evolving perceptions of the party with civil society.

The more minor points that I would change in my research include the access to interview participants, and the data collection techniques. It would have enriched my research if I were able to interview more individuals within civil society who choose not to become involved in M4C projects, allowing me to compare the motivation of those who choose to participate with those who did not. Additionally, I would have liked to innovative some more with my data collection techniques, possibly asking the activists and organisers to keep their own verbal or written diaries of their experiences they faced. This might have helped my analysis move even further beyond the political narratives well honed by those operating in the Labour Party.

5.0 The M4C model

In the following three chapters I advance my arguments by moving from the theoretical to the empirical. Based on the framework laid out in the second and third chapters, I now argue that there are two variables influencing the extent to which the M4C model of community organising is able to reconfigure the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society. The first is the level of institutional integration between M4C's organising projects and the local Labour Party where the organising takes place. The second is the extent to which M4C organising projects are sensitive and responsive to the interests of local civil society. My research exposed the importance of M4C projects operating in and beyond the institutional boundaries of the local party, including the membership, formal party meetings, and the authority of the local executive, to also respond to local civil society interests, giving M4C the potential to change the relationship between the local Labour Party and civil society.

When M4C projects operated in this way, they produced benefits for the Labour Party, allowing it to identify and develop new leaders from within civil society, advance its organisational capacity, and improve its understanding of issues of common concern within civil society. This relationship between the party and civil society produced a politics that was pluralistic, resonating strongly with both the post-cartel model of party development theorised by Yishai (2001) and with the arguments made by Blue Labour supporters regarding party reform (Glasman et al 2010). However, to gain the benefits associated with the party-civil society relationship I describe, the local party had to be willing to give up authority over campaign design, focus and messaging. This release of authority did not come easily for local party actors, and this created barriers to successfully implementing M4C community organising projects on the ground.

This argument is clarified and evidenced over the following three chapters. This first chapter provides an overview of the M4C model of community organising, focusing on its aims, the practical steps taken within the model to achieve its aims, and the tensions within the application of M4C's model of community organising. Reflecting on this material, I end this chapter by outlining a key dilemma facing M4C in its work. This concerns the decision whether to act 'within the party' or 'beyond the party' in meeting its goals. The following two empirical chapters then test my arguments regarding the application of the M4C model of community organising, and the varied implications for efforts to reconfigure the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society. I present data that illustrates the implications of

applying the M4C model of community organising within and beyond the party in two different locations where I conducted in-depth research: Cardiff and Southampton. The former case, written up in Chapter 6 highlights the benefits of M4C operating beyond the party and the latter, covered in Chapter 7, demonstrates the impact of applying the M4C model within the party.

5.1 What is the aim of Movement for Change?

As outlined in my introduction, Movement for Change emerged during the Labour Party leadership contest in 2010. Originally set up as a component of David Miliband's leadership campaign, it was continued despite his failure to win the campaign, and from 2011, M4C was established on a permanent basis as a vehicle for promoting community organising in the Labour Party. At the time of my research (Sept 2012 to Sept 2013) M4C had already been operating for two years, and it had won the support of the then Labour leader Ed Miliband. It had established local bases of support within a number of areas across the country, and had achieved a number of campaign successes including national legislative action to restrict the spread of payday lenders. It had also established a group of leaders active within its campaigns, and it seemed to have developed a consistent model and approach throughout its work. Taken from M4C's organisational strategy at that time, its aims were to:

1. Develop leaders who can make change in public life.
2. Create a live political network
3. Advocate and enthuse cultural change at every level of politics
4. Bring policy development closer to the everyday lived experience of people in their communities.

These aims were designed to strengthen relationships between the Labour Party and place-based civil society associations and the local community. As outlined in previous chapters, I understand this to be about producing *a political party that is more pluralistic, focused on the development of new leaders from across civil society, and that is sensitive and responsive to the myriad interests within civil society*. In many ways, these developments resonant with the ideas of Eduard Bernstein and the concept of 'the movement' as being critical to the success of any political party – especially one on the left. While many of those involved in M4C and the turn to community organising developed different understandings of the work they were doing and there was no clear 'party line' behind this initiative, my research interviews highlighted the importance of the link to 'the people' in justifications for the projects being done. Most of the organisers and the political leaders involved in the work

were focused on reconfiguring the relationship between the Labour Party and the wider community. As Madlin Sadler, David Miliband's Director of Strategy during his leadership campaign, explained when I asked her about the initial purposes of M4C: *'[David] felt really strongly that ... we needed to change the Labour movement back into something that innovated and responded to the British people. That's how he would have run the party, [and] that's how he would have run the country, therefore, that's how he ... [ran] his campaign.'*

This quote indicates that it was a willingness to reform the Labour Party's relationship to 'the people' and civil society – so that it reflected the diversity of interests across civil society – that led to the establishment of M4C. Furthermore, it was clear that in better engaging with 'the people', the party itself had to change. As Madlin reflected on the failures of the 2010 General Election campaign, she highlighted the way that the Party had failed to change the way it undertook its campaign: *'As we were coming up to the [2010] general election... people were thinking about how we would do things differently. We did machine politics, we always do machine politics and I naively thought, as everybody probably did think: what a missed opportunity, we could have done so much more...'*

As would be expected, many of those advocating the move to community organising made their pitch in the language of modern electioneering, arguing that organising would facilitate a change that produced greater electoral success. As an example, Marcus Roberts, at the time of interview the Deputy General Secretary of the Fabian Society, and previously Ed Miliband's Head of Field Operations, framed the three-fold benefits of a turn to community organising as being related in the first instance to the party's electoral prospects:

One, we thought after 2010 we had a bigger brand problem as the Labour party than it turns out we actually did¹. We thought that we were about to risk a 1979/83 style moment in which we'd be rejected for a generation and thus community organising offered a way of detoxifying our brand².

¹ This comment by Marcus is particularly interesting given the situation of the Labour Party at the time of writing the final draft of this thesis (November 2015). Having lost the 2015 election by an even greater margin than in 2010, and the election of Jeremy Corbyn MP representing a wholesale rejection of the moderate Labour 'brand', the problems Marcus points to were actually much worse than he imagined. The Labour Party found itself in the '1979/83 style moment' that Marcus thought had been avoided.

[The second reason] is more operational. Community organising is a great way for the Labour party to tap into more locuses (sic) of power. That provides you with more volunteers, more funding, more activists, more candidates and more members. It ties you in more with the community which ultimately means more votes.

Now this leads me onto the third point, [...] the existential one. It gave us a sense of purpose and a 'reason to be' after we had lost power. So the prospect of being able to demonstrate that we were out of office but not out of power by being able to deliver change on the ground was tremendously appealing to a party full of activists and ex-decision makers for whom the prospect of not being able to do anything for 5/10/15 years, simply because we didn't possess office in Westminster was anathema.

Over time, different advocates attached more or less importance to these arguments about winning elections in their justifications for supporting community organising techniques. While some supporters remained chiefly focused on electoral success, others had a much broader view of reconfiguring the Labour Party in relation to the wider community – and even changing the national political culture. In his interview, Jonathan Cox, the CUK organiser seconded to develop and lead M4C highlighted the tension between the theory and practice of community organising, which from his perspective was a form of non-partisan political activity, in its application to a partisan electoral machine. In response to those who sought to use community organising to simply improve the Labour Party's electability he asked: *'Is the Labour Party primarily a machine about capturing the state? Or, is it a movement, which is about trying to deliver on a much broader scale for a wider range of people?'* When M4C was simply about winning the leadership for David Miliband, this tension could easily be submerged in the focus of the campaign, but afterwards, it became more obvious and difficult to resolve. While some in the party wanted to use community organising to win political power, others were more sympathetic to Cox's argument and wanted to use community organising methods to reconfigure political culture writ-large.

Thus while some respondents highlighted the complementarity of winning elections and connecting with a wider movement, others were less certain of this. As Karin Christiansen, who at the time of interview was the General Secretary of the Cooperative Party, suggested, it was possible to link the goal of building a stronger civil society with the inherently partisan objectives of a political party. For her, the political party could strive for electoral success

while at the same time build stronger civil society organisations that were able to respond to issues of common concern. As she put it organising is: *'both a means and an end.'* For her, the Party needed a stronger civil society just as it also needed to win political power and she went on to explain the practicalities of how this integration would work:

To do electoral politics well we need more people ... [especially] the Labour Party which is always going to have to rely on people rather than cash because we don't have enough money to do it any other way. ... [A]t election time you need to turn people out and get them to vote... And how you get people to vote is strengthened if they know their neighbour and their neighbour's saying: "Hey I'm going to the polling booth, do you want to come along?" That will always be more powerful than you or I knocking on their door, or phoning them for the fifteenth time because the system's crashed and we can't tell whether someone phoned before. So we know that 'like recruits like', that peer is the best way to get action to happen.

In Karin's analysis there was no tension between organising and winning the vote but this analysis rests upon an assumption that the Labour Party will automatically benefit from a stronger civil society. This argument elides the interests of the party with the interests of the people even though the latter may vote for somebody else. Indeed, M4C had the opportunity to test this assumption as they were established and began organising projects across the country, testing the boundaries between themselves, the Labour Party and civil society, and incrementally, defining the scope and purposes of their version of community organising. This was evident when I interviewed their community organisers and asked them to explain the purposes of what they were doing. While some focused on the benefits to be gained by the party, others were more committed to a non-partisan approach to strengthening civil society organisations and political action as goods in themselves.

For Kathryn Perera, Chief Executive of M4C since June 2012, community organising was *'a method of collective action based on leadership development which seeks to bring about change through people and with them in their communities'*. Stewart Owadally, the most experienced community organiser working for M4C, provided a similar explanation, but substituted *'change through people and with them in their communities'* with *'bringing people into relationship to build power'* as his full quote attests:

'I mean there are obviously tons of theoretical definitions but to me, in practice, all it is, is creating power in people. I think when I'm out organising or when I'm

thinking about organising or strategizing or whatever ... the overarching thing that is always in my mind is: where's the power, how do we build power? So I think, pretty straightforwardly, I would define community organising as bringing people into relationships to build power.'

These definitions are taken from the non-partisan tradition of community organising as practiced by organisations like CUK and their application to a partisan political party was often 'buried' in the language they used. However Jack Madden, who joined M4C after time spent volunteering with CUK, did make a more explicit link to the work of the Labour Party saying:

'It's about building the power of relationships with people both inside and outside the Labour movement, to take action on the issues that matter to those people, whether that be state forces or market forces. I suppose a secondary goal that we do is about strengthening the Labour movement and the Labour Party within civil society, as well as strengthening civil society.'

Jack's quote covers both the theory and practice of community organising, being focused on '*strengthening civil society*', as well as its application within the Labour Party to '*strengthen the Labour movement and the Labour Party within civil society*'. The focus is on traditional community organising albeit that it has a secondary goal to strengthen the Labour Party as well.

However, this assumes that the purposes of each can be closely aligned and as such, M4C's model presents a significant deviation from the tradition of community organising associated with Saul Alinsky (1947, 1971), Ed Chambers (1978) and Michael Gecan (2008), outlined earlier on in this thesis. From that perspective, the political party is not a component of civil society to be included within an organising alliance but it is a potential decision-maker to be held to account by a local or national alliance. As such, local organising might run counter to the existing interests of any local or national political party, and the organisers involved with M4C were faced with this potential tension as they developed their model after 2011. Organisers had to grapple with the issue of the role and place of the party in the work they were doing. They had to grapple with the dilemma of bridging the potential divide between the aim of strengthening civil society (as per community organising theory) and the purpose of improving Labour's capacity to contest elections and wield power. Moreover, they were doing this 'blind' without a clear model for the work they were doing. Through their local organising work they were exploring how to reconfigure the relationship between the Labour

Party and civil society so that the party might become more pluralistic, open to diverse civil society interests, and able to identify and develop new leaders from within civil society. These goals were focused on benefits to the Party while the techniques they were using were developed in the context of non-partisan political work.

Over time, the organisers had to try and overcome the challenges raised in this work and in the following section, I present a more detailed analysis of the work that was done in each local organising campaign.

5.2 The phases of M4C community organising

When they move to a new area to start their work, M4C go through an 'organising journey' that may take different amounts of time but follows a similar approach to achieving their goals. This comprises the initial steps taken to gain access to a locale as well as the point at which there is a sustained M4C presence that is establishing campaigns, producing change, and continually developing new leaders attuned to the practices and ideals of community organising. From my observations of the M4C's model of community organising, this journey involved the organisers completing five stages in any locale:

1. Negotiating with the Labour Party
2. The 121 Meetings
3. Listening Actions
4. Campaign strategy sessions
5. Developing leaders

While presented in a linear manner, it is clear from observing M4C that this process is never straightforward. In reality, these stages often overlap, blending one into another, getting lost or overly emphasised, or being overtaken by events. There is also a circular, re-iterative process whereby progression through an organising project requires constant circling back over previous steps. This is true throughout the process, going over particular stages, and also true of the process as a whole. Thus what I am presenting here is an ideal type built up from observations of and interviews with M4C community organisers who were working in different parts of the country.

5.2.1 Negotiating with the Labour Party

M4C organisers set up local community organising projects in areas where the local MP, or parliamentary candidate, had invited them in, thereby providing legitimacy. After being invited in, the organiser would have 121 meetings with the top tier of the local party executive, influential Councillors, and any significant party members. The Labour MP or parliamentary candidate provided these names to the organiser as well as giving them information about potential issues in the area that may be prescient enough for building campaigns. In this regard, Stewart Owadally described the importance of the local knowledge and legitimacy provided by Stephen Doughty, MP for Cardiff South and Penarth, both before and after his election, in the subsequent organising work that was done:

'We [M4C] had to wait for him to win before we went in and started organising, but it was all laid out beforehand ... we had a discussion ... and then he just gave me an idea of some of the issues. He gave me 6 or 7 things that he knew were going to come up but also things that were politically useful to him.'

Relationships with local MPs provided access for M4C organisers, who would then have 121 meetings with useful contacts within the local Labour Party, furthering the degree to which the party supported the initiation of a M4C project within their local electoral territory. However for M4C, this initial phase was not understood as organising in itself. Rather, it was seen as a form of negotiation with the local party, providing their community organisers with acceptance by the local party and some sort of legitimacy for working in their patch.

This was emphasised by Kathryn Perera when she reflected on the necessary relationship she expected organisers to have with the local parties, which she described as 'the gate' to the places they organised:

'You can have endless conversations with 'the gate' but ultimately you're never going to organise that way. We [need to] know we've got good will there with local Councilors and with local activists - so that's in the bank - [but then we need to] focus on identifying and recruiting leaders and developing a pure kind of Citizens organising product.'

Kathryn felt that before she began as Chief Executive in 2012, the M4C organisers had been spending too much time building unnecessary relationships with senior members of the

Labour Party. Given the professional background of many of the organisers and the origins in which M4C emerged this is unsurprising; compared to the milieu of civil society, the organisational culture of local Labour Party's would be familiar for organisers. However, as the M4C model developed under her leadership, the organisers had to change their approach to the party. She conceived of the party institutions as being 'a gate' that the organiser had to respect, and gain acceptance from, but quickly move through in order to reach wider civil society in the locality.

Organiser Jack Madden described the pitfalls of relying too heavily on the local Labour leadership and membership for support at M4C events. Having arranged a training session without the necessary relationships with civil society associations and the local community, he felt his only option was to attract people from the local Labour Party. However this meant the session was attended by '*a bunch of people that all say broadly the same thing*' which risked having the effect of making '*you lazy in your analysis*', and deciding that '*the Tories are the problem*'. He found that attendees were from a very narrow group of people who all tended to think the same thing and he wanted to shake things up more,

Jack recognised the benefits of involving a more diverse group of individuals from within and beyond the party, even if this would go beyond the more immediate and partisan electoral objectives of the local Labour Party. He wanted to bring party actors into contact with individuals from civil society who had experienced first-hand the issues that could be chosen as the focus of a campaign. The assumption here is that contact with the individuals affected by an issue will take party actors beyond their normal political choices to consider a broader set of issues that are not pre-determined or influenced by partisan electoral competition. The strength of the relationships between party and non-party actors, combined with the emotive impact of knowing those impacted by a potential campaign issue, would '*break that institutionalism*' which Jack understood to constrain the range of voices articulated within the Labour Party as well as the issues being contested by Labour Party actors. This was about developing an organising space beyond the party in which M4C could construct local campaign groups consisting of party members and those from within civil society.

Within the tradition of community organising associated with Saul Alinsky and the IAF, power is understood as a neutral concept meaning simply 'the ability to act', and it was this focus on action that allowed M4C organisers to bring new people into their work. Indeed, echoing the influence of CUK, M4C teach their activists that power is created by organising people or

money. Those who have organised money or people at their disposal are more able to fulfil their intentions than those who do not. The power of private businesses is derived from their ability to organise money by making ever-greater profits, while the state is powerful as it is able to organise both people and money through a number of legislative functions, such as taxation, employment or law. In contrast, civil society is generally not as powerful when compared to the power of big business and government, as it lacks organised money. It therefore has to rely on the organisation of people.

In this respect, M4C were trying to organise people around campaigns to develop the power to effect change and develop local people (the classic goals of community organising) while also helping to reconfigure the internal culture of the Labour Party as well as boosting its power to win elections and secure local change (through new activity and new leaders). These aims were based on a key argument that electoral victory is often not enough to affect social change, and that a broader conception of power as rooted to the organisation of people around issues of common concern is required. By working through the local party, M4C sought to build the power of both civil society and the Party to effect change by orchestrating local campaigns.

Once a space beyond the institutional boundaries of the party was accepted by the local party, usually led by a supportive MP, a M4C organiser would move onto the second stage of their organising project; growing their relationships throughout civil society.

5.2.2 The 121 Meeting

As intimated above, M4Cs community organisers were focused on building, maintain and coordinating *public relationships* in and beyond the Labour Party in the area where they were working. Without this work, any organiser would be unable to achieve their goals and/or would be faced by dwindling numbers of people at meetings and actions, or the selection of issues that lacked resonance across the community within their 'organising patch'. In his interview, Jack Madden emphasised the importance of building public relationships within his role as an organiser with M4C saying that his work:

'...entails building relationships with people, building up a sense of community. The difference between organising and good community campaigning is that the relationships come first. Building the relationships is in many ways as important as the wins or the outcomes of the campaigns. And when you live

in a much more individualistic society, the idea that the relationships between people come first is a challenge. It's not necessarily about liking each other, it's about working together and having that public relationship compared to a private one.'

The principles that 'relationships come first' or that 'relationships precede action' is common to community organisers beyond M4C. However, the application of this principle by M4C necessarily involved relationships with Labour Party actors, politicians, officials or local executive members, alongside others. Kathryn Perera explained how these two types of relationship created two sides to the role of a M4C organiser comprising a 'community' and a 'political' side. She argued that M4C organisers were really '*community organisers who are also politicians*'. While more traditional community organisers would also engage in political strategy, the M4C organisers had to start with the Labour Party rather than perhaps coming to it at the end of an organising campaign. Their organisers needed to be able to relate to the Labour Party, and to think strategically about that, as well as building public relationships with a much wider range of local people through local organising campaigns.

To ensure that 'public relationships come first' M4C prioritised the use of the individual face-to-face meeting as their core organising tool. Widely used in community organising (Stout, 2011) the '1-2-1' meeting is designed to develop a relationship that is focused on action. In theory at least, 121s last a maximum of 45 minutes, and have a clear structure that comprises:

1. Introducing the organiser and M4C
2. Explaining why you are meeting and establishing your credentials
3. Clarifying the timing and structure of the 121 and asking for consent
4. Giving a two minute 'political introduction' that explains why and what M4C is about
5. Let the other person respond about their experiences
6. Asking 'Why' questions, focusing on which issues make them angry and might drive them to act
7. Telling an organising story to illustrate how organising has solved similar problems
8. Agreeing next steps

These 121 meetings had three purposes within the M4C model of community organising. First, 121s were understood to be an exercise in *listening and understanding*, through which M4C organisers hoped to understand the 'self-interest' of the people they met. In the context of a modern electoral organising campaign, driven by canvassing scripts, the

quantification of voting intentions collected on the door step, tightly controlled messaging for activists, and tightly itemised agendas for every meeting, the chance to sit and speak, and to be listened to, proved remarkably radical for many of those involved. One activist who got involved in a campaign to ban payday lenders in Cardiff, described her first meeting with the organiser Stewart Owadally and the impact this had on her and her subsequent engagement in the campaign:

'When I was speaking to Stewart about it [debt] that was the first time I'd had that conversation without feeling guilty. And the more I was talking to him, the angrier I was getting ... and it was such a liberating experience because being angry is so much better than being guilty or ashamed or embarrassed. It's a weird... it's almost like a release [realizing] I have a thing I can be justifiably angry about. And that was quite formative, finding that anger ... and realising that actually I wanted to do something about this. I think at the Sharkstoppers campaign [event] I realised that I could. And that was the big thing I learnt. But it wasn't until I started talking to Stewart later that I realised that I really wanted to, that I didn't want to walk away from this. And it wasn't just a case of 'well, what can I do', it was, 'I have to sit and think of something now that I can do to contribute'.'

Second, 121s were designed to enable organisers to *recruit and plan*. Community organising is the coordination of people as a means for bringing about change, and organisers used the 121 meetings to recruit new people to a particular campaign. Indeed, when a M4C campaign was thought to be losing steam, an organiser would increase the 121s they were doing in the relevant area for a period of time, attempting to bring in new people with enthusiasm and new perspectives to boost the campaign.

Following 121 meetings organisers would be considering the role that the individual they have just met may play in a campaign as it develops. It might be that they could provide first-hand testimony about an issue that would help to galvanise a campaign. It might be that they would be able to bring others and help with turn out at events, or they might be a political ally able to support their organising in some other way. For those who were already active with M4C and were part of a campaign group, the planning element of a 121 would also involve the distribution of practical responsibilities for an up and coming action or a meeting.

The third purpose of 121s was to build a *culture of accountability*. As with other models of community organising, accountability acts as the glue that binds individuals together in their free time, in relationships beyond the private and/or economic realm. M4C organisers sought to be accountable to the leaders involved in their campaigns, both agreeing responsibility for actions and being held to account for the fulfilment of those actions. Equally, leaders were to be held accountable to one another, agreeing with each other actions they would take forward. At times, activists and leaders would be ‘pulled up’ by organisers and asked to explain why they had not fulfilled a commitment they made during a 1-2-1 meeting.

Being held to account by an organiser often proved uncomfortable. Tara McInvey, a student activist from Cardiff, described how she felt when ‘pulled up’ by the organiser Ewan Moore after missing a number of meetings for the Home Sweet Home campaign that sought to improve conditions in the private rental market:

TM – ‘He was like, “So, you know, you haven’t been coming to the meetings”, and I was like, “Ah, shit, sorry” and I did go on holiday so ... [trails off]

JS – ‘How did you feel when he asked?’

TM – ‘Yeah, I felt guilty. He didn’t... he didn’t make me feel guilty but I felt guilty just because I felt guilty. It was like my conscience ... because I believe in the campaign wholeheartedly. Like, I felt shit for not going. It was obviously because of what I’ve endured with my own experiences. I did feel guilty to think that I could be doing something that could potentially in the future stop other people from putting up with what I put up with and that I wasn’t doing my bit and, you know--, no, I did feel crap’

The guilt Tara described was a result of the relationship she had built up with Ewan as well as the interest she had in the issue. She respected Ewan enough to feel guilty when he, even gently, held her to account for not attending the meetings they had to organise the campaign.

Thus the 121 meeting was critical to the M4C model of community organising, allowing organisers to identify issues within civil society, recruit new activists and embed a culture of accountability amongst those activists and to orchestrate some campaigns. Through a

period of intensive 121s, the M4C organiser's network of relationships was expected to expand. It was after an intensive period of 121s with firstly, Labour Party members, and secondly, individuals across civil society that a campaign group would begin to emerge. At that point the M4C organisers turned to collective listening and strategy.

5.2.3 Listening Actions

Once a campaign group was beginning to form through the use of 121s, the community organiser would begin to facilitate listening actions. These had two purposes. First, they were intended to shift the pattern of relationship building from 'first tier' organiser-activist relationships to 'second tier' activist-activist relationships. This increased participation in the M4C campaign added a second ring of relationships outwards from the individual relationships initiated by the organisers. Second, listening actions provided the campaign group with a collective understanding of the issues faced within a community or locality, knowledge that would then feed into their collective organising strategy; a plan that outlines the problem they hope to address together and how they will solve that problem.

When I conducted my research, M4C listening actions took numerous forms but they were always characterised by an ambition to listen and learn from a wider and more diverse set of individuals than those currently constituting the local organising group. At one end of the spectrum was a plan made between an organiser and a group of leaders to spend the next period of time, for example a month, each doing a set number of 121s, with the group reconvening after a month to report on their findings. These 121s could be with anyone within a particular area, such as a neighbourhood or ward, or with a set of people with common experiences. This was an open form of listening action that required little facilitation from the organiser. At the other end of the spectrum was a highly facilitated listening action. This could take place at one time, with all activists present, working as a team to a prearranged plan, such as a high street walk or a door knocking session. The activists participating may be given a script or a set of questions, which would be open-ended and designed to prompt an unstructured conversation, and the organiser would facilitate a reflection session where those who participated in the action discussed what they had found.

Kathryn described a 'listening campaign' (taken to mean an on-going series of listening actions) that she organised with a woman's safety group in Brixton. Alongside training the group in the techniques of community organising, she was also facilitating an on-going

listening campaign that focused on the issue of woman's safety in Brixton. She told me that: *'Most weekends we'd been going out and doing listening, so we'd been going to H&M, local shops, local bars, talking with young women and men and asking them two questions: "what do you think of Brixton, vaguely linked to safety?" and "if you could change one thing to make you feel safer, what would it be?" And we were collecting stories through that process.'*

Her team conducted their listening but they then shared this material and provided testimony for a national Labour Party campaign. In Spring 2012, the Labour Party was developing its manifesto commitments around women's safety and Kathryn arranged for Stella Creasy and Kate Green MP to visit some of the activists in Brixton. They organised a community event during which local women gave their testimony, helping to win support for local concerns.

Thus while listening actions fulfilled important steps in the development of an organising strategy for a particular place or community, they also played a role in the overarching purpose of M4C. As organiser Mike Kane explained to me, the listening campaigns differentiated the work of M4C from the wider Labour movement and party. Listening was about just that, finding out about local people rather than *'promoting candidates or having policy positions on anything, other than what the listening campaigns come out with about what people locally want to change. I think that puts us in a unique position within the movement'*.

Emphasising the act of listening and learning from others in the community is often highlighted as a defining characteristic of community organising, and it is this that distinguished community organising from other forms of political organising within the Labour movement. It was the practical way that M4C ensured that 'relationships precede action', and that campaigns were grounded within the experiences and lives of those living in an organising patch that differentiated them from other parts of the labour movement. It was the issues and priorities that emerged through their listening actions that informed the content and objectives of their subsequent organising campaigns and strategies. The interests of local people engaged in each local campaign replaced the ideological positioning that might have characterised party campaigns in the past.

5.2.4 Campaign Strategy Sessions

Once a group of leaders and activists had undertaken a listening action, or a listening campaign, they were then able to bring their knowledge together and begin developing a campaign in a Strategy Session (see Figure 4).

The structure and purpose of the numerous strategy sessions I observed while with M4C varied depending upon the degree of common understanding among activists about the purpose of community organising, and the scale and duration of the relationships that existed within an organising patch. If an organiser was facilitating the first strategy session in a new patch, having built relationships with a number of newly identified activists, undertaken desk based research, and organised a listening action, then the strategy session would be straightforward. There would be a discussion about the problems faced in the local area. These problems would be 'sliced into issues', involving the specification of feedback from the listening actions to very particular, concrete issues. When the organiser has an agreed set of issues, the Strategy Session would turn to more concrete objectives. Finally, the organiser would turn to tactics; asking the room to consider the practical steps they could go through to secure their objectives.

At this step, the organiser would bring in some teaching about public relationships and power, and explain that the number of public relationships they could build around this issue would improve the chances of the campaign becoming a success. As power is 'organised people and organised money', building more public relationships would give them more power, and as power is defined as 'the ability to act', to achieve their objectives they must build more relationships. If this lesson was taught well, those present at the strategy session would consider the first necessary tactic for their campaign to be the building of more relationships with individuals they expect may support their campaign, and whose support would add to their power and the pressure brought to bear on their target.

The next step was often an exercise of listing those who the group feel they should build relationships with through the use of 121s. The participants were taught the principles of 'power analysis' by beginning to identify potential powerful allies in their community, and to be intentional in building a relationship with them to increase their power. As with the previous Listening Actions, this process was another method of prompting those involved in M4C to begin widening the network of activists involved, guiding them to build their own secondary tier of public relationships.

A Strategy Session held later on in the organising process, when leaders had a deeper understanding of the purposes of M4C, and when their relationship with the organiser was more robust, might take a different path. The meeting would take account of the previous actions, and the organiser may facilitate a reflection so that the group could assess what worked well, what did not work, and how to improve in the future. The group may also have already agreed objectives and even made contact with a campaign target, and so the discussion would focus on the necessary choice of tactics. Eventually, the Strategy Session may incorporate an evaluation of a campaign victory and the organiser would help the group decide how to move the organising forward, choosing a new target based on further listening and targeting a new range of allies based on the power needed for the new campaign.

Figure 4: Strategy Session in Cardiff



Following the maxim of Saul Alinsky, learnt from CitizensUK, that community organisers should 'never do for people what they can do for themselves', the M4C model of community organising also reflected a belief that people acting within their local community had the ability to decide their own future and act on those decisions. M4C followed this principle even when faced with an organisational culture and individuals in the Labour movement that saw their role as *helping others*, through either state action or charitable projects, such as establishing food banks. When the M4C organisers strategised with their local activists they

begin to make a counter argument, positing that all citizens were able to have a voice and take an active role within the democratic process, and that it is not the role of the Labour Party to do this on their behalf. As such, the M4C model required that activists developed new skills and capacities through the campaigns. In the language of community organising, this is referred to as leadership development, and the M4C organisers sought to develop leaders who had the capacity to act again over different issues in future.

5.2.5 Developing leaders

As indicated above, the M4C model of community organising placed a strong emphasis on the development of leaders. Indeed the number and quality of leaders on an organiser's 'books' was used as the measure of an organiser's competence and impact. Additionally, local leaders influenced the selection of issues around which to campaign, as well as the likelihood of achieving successes. At the outset, M4C adopted the CitizensUK model of leadership development in which activists were 'ranked' by the number of 'followers' they were able to 'turn out' to events and public actions, and the role of the organiser was to test an activist's leadership credentials by challenging them to turn out a certain number of people at future events. The suggestion was that if a person could bring up to five people they were categorised as 'tertiary leaders', between five and ten they would be 'secondary leaders', and if over ten, they were seen as 'primary leaders'.

However, M4C had to adapt this model of leadership for their own institutional context, which was distinct from CitizensUK. Anyone who the organiser had met with was classed as a potential leader, and then encouraged to engage in their organising project. M4C meetings were open to anyone from the local area who was interested in getting involved and the organiser would work with the people who turned up. As a result, the kinds of people who engaged tended to reflect the personality of the organiser concerned. As an example, Mike Kane had spent his entire adult life involved professionally and voluntarily in the Labour Party. He had been a Councillor in Manchester for many years, he had worked as a researcher for James Purnell MP, and after his time as M4C Chief Executive (standing in for Kathryn Perera when she was on maternity leave), he went on to become an MP for the Wythenshawe constituency in Greater Manchester. As a result, he focused much of his organising efforts on finding leaders from within the labour movement telling me that we 'already have a rich vein to dig.' For him, the existing movement involved many potential leaders who were able and willing to engage in campaigns, and he focused his efforts on

this group of people. In contrast, those organisers with less experience in the Labour Party tended to build up their work through a wider range of contacts in any locale.

The balance between 'party people' and 'community leaders' was a consideration for the M4C organisers I met during my research period, influencing their ability to carve out a space beyond the party with which to build new campaigns. Stewart discussed this balance when building a team of activists and leaders in St Mellons Ward in Cardiff where he sought to bring together Labour Party members and community members to work on a campaign tackling a large derelict site in the centre of the ward. Having spent time within David Miliband's team, he was both a Labour Party insider, and had been given contacts by the local MP Stephan Doughty, but he was also committed to building community organising projects which involved a wider range of people. He sought to find individuals who were able to work in collaboration over shared interests and concerns.

For Stewart the leaders he selected from within the party had to be able to work collaboratively with other M4C activists from civil society and if they were '*troublesome*' his aim of bringing in civil society members would be jeopardised. This was reflected elsewhere as well, organisers sought to find people from within the party who would be able to work alongside civil society actors whose interests and campaigns were not defined by any form of partisanship in advance.

When I began my research a number of local leaders had been participating in M4C since the David Miliband leadership campaign two years previously, staying committed to the organisation and developing their leadership through periods of participation, and by then, they were taking increasingly significant roles within M4C campaigns. Interestingly, their development as M4C leaders was often matched with an increasing level of profile and responsibility within the Labour Party and as, Kathryn Perera suggested during interview, this involvement might change over time. Citing the example of Rukaya, an M4C activist in Brixton as: '*heavily involved at one point and [then] stepped out and is now coming back in at a much more strategic level because of the development she's had ... she is now looking at whether she would want to seek office or other things. It's not about her becoming part of an organisation ... it's much more nebulous than that, it's much harder to track, to capture.*'

Here Kathryn pointed to the way in which Rukaya had moved in and out of participation with M4C over an extended period of time, depending upon her circumstances, while also feeling able to consider taking on a more official public role. In this respect, M4C organisers had to

try and create organising projects that benefitted people at different stages of leadership development. While it was possible to engage people through initial campaigns, it proved more challenging to sustain their engagement long-term. For Kathryn: *'The ideal is that we create a self-sustaining eco-system within Movement for Change that gives people at different levels the ability to continue to develop and engage with us. That's why we've started [to formalise roles] with the top activists. But we're a way off that [for all leaders]'*.

Once a group of new leaders were recruited within an organising patch, it was often unclear where to take them next. Over time, M4C started to establish a firmer structure to which people could join as a member but it was not clear how these people would relate to the Labour movement in the long term.

5.3 An experimental model of organising

So far I have outlined the stages of the M4C model of community organising. The model was designed to test the limits of the party, creating a space in which new relationships could be built across civil society, campaigns would be organised, and in which new leaders would be selected and developed. The space was designed to allow individuals, from the party and civil society, to deliberate with one another about areas of common concern, to create campaign strategies together for tackling local issues, and in which individuals would lead campaigns into action and produce change. For the modern Labour Party such a space was a novel and potentially threatening phenomenon, questioning the established role of the party and its embedded institutional boundaries, but also potentially producing a number of benefits that could allow the party and movement to overcome the crisis of declining participation it has faced for the past twenty years.

The M4C model of community organising was therefore experimental, applying a non-partisan model of community organising within a partisan context in the hope of producing a number of benefits for the party. These perceived benefits can be categorised as *capacity* and *legitimacy* benefits. First, M4C's model of community organising was expected to improve the organisational reach and capacity of the local Labour Parties in the areas it was applied, and second, it was expected that when applied, the model would improve the legitimacy of the Labour Party, by which I mean the extent to which the broader public viewed the party as representing issues that were of concern to them.

Capacity was expected to improve as activists and leaders from within local M4C campaign groups became associated with Labour Party members also participating in M4C organising. Such individuals from civil society would be developing their campaign and political skills, whilst also becoming more likely to participate with the party in the future having met and associated with party members during M4C campaigns. The party could therefore expect a supply of new activists, hopefully politically trained, to bolster their ranks. Similarly, as party members participated in M4C organising projects, they were expected to become more politically astute, developing skills in public speaking, negotiate, power analysis, listening and strategy. These skills would improve the value of their existing participation in the Labour Party, heightening the party's organisational capacity. Improved capacity for the party would be indicated by a local party's ability to mobilise greater numbers of activists, thereby having a beneficial impact on the party's ability to contest elections.

Second, the Labour Party's *legitimacy* was expected to improve as the use of the M4C model of community organising prompted the local Labour Party to take up campaign issues that had been selected through the process of listening, 121s and strategy sessions with the M4C process, and were therefore more accurately reflective of the issues of common concern within civil society. The M4C process of selecting issues was felt to be more able at selecting issues felt broadly within local civil society than those issues selected and imposed on local parties by either the central Labour Party or indeed local party executives. The sensitivity and responsiveness to issues of common concern within particular places would be transferred into the agenda of the Labour Party as party activists participated in both M4C organising projects and the continuous machinations of the party, and as civil society individuals became more engaged with the Labour Party, as described above.

However the potential benefits of the M4C model of organising for the party were reliant on a number of factors. First, M4C had to create campaign groups in which party actors and civil society actors collaborated together beyond the institutional boundaries of the party. If the groups did not operate beyond the party, and did not therefore contain both types of participant – party and civil society – capacity would not be improved and issues felt broadly within civil society would not be known to the local party.

Second, responsibility for selecting the issues had to lie within the new organising space and capacity created by M4C, rather than within the party. If the party were to listen to the issues deliberated upon within M4C campaign groups, but retain ultimate responsibility for the issues, they would be denying the agency of the civil society actors and the potential to

realise new capacity would be lost. To allow new 'leaders' to develop meant allowing them to take responsibility for selecting issues based on their listening and the group deliberation and reflection.

Third, the M4C organiser had to be able to find local people, cement relationships and develop leadership through the local campaigns, whilst maintaining positive and acceptance from the local Labour Party. Put simply, if the organiser was not up to the job of a traditional community organiser as well as a political organiser (as described above by Kathryn Perera), the space beyond the party in which capacity and legitimacy grew would not be created, or would not last long enough for benefits to be felt.

Finally, improved capacity and legitimacy depended upon the extent to which activists and leaders within the M4C campaign group conducted activity that extended far and wide into the civil society of the local community. Selecting issues based on narrow, or sectional, interests would produce campaigns that were not relevant to, or reflective of, the broad non-partisan civil society within the area in which M4C was organising. Without these four conditions being met, it was difficult for the local Labour Party to accrue any potential benefits from M4C.

The model I have presented so far throws up a number of important questions and potential tensions that are not yet addressed. As outlined, M4C has shifted away from the original focus on the party during the 2010 leadership campaign towards an approach focused on facilitating collaboration between party members and civil society actors. What was an internally-oriented political campaign became something more akin to a series of community organising campaigns based in different parts of the country. That M4C developed from a position within the party to one beyond the party raises questions about the extent to which community organising techniques and principles can be applied within a political party as well as the extent to which it is possible to deploy community organising in the context of a partisan political party.

As M4C has developed, its organisers have established new local campaign groups and although the work is done with the blessing of the party, these groups have autonomy from the local and national party. They represent an alternative form of *authority*, and there is therefore potential for them to come into conflict with the party itself. Partisan culture encourages obedience whereas community organising seeks to hold power to account.

Indeed when decision-makers shift from potential campaign targets to participants within the community organising project, does that not undermine the model?

It is also unclear how such campaign groups will benefit the political party. While it is argued that increased participation, listening, action around new issues, and leadership development will benefit the party, improving its organisational capacity and legitimacy, there can be no certainty that this will occur. The list of factors required for this to happen within the model, outlined above, are stacked against M4C organisers. Added to which, the scale of investment in M4C was limited – at the time of the research, M4C had five full time organisers – each of which was trying to develop this model in a number of places at any one time. Given the scale of the country and the size of the party (roughly 200,000 members at the time of the research), M4C's organisers were facing the challenges of scaling-up their model as well.

Finally, from the data I have presented so far, it is still not clear whether M4C's aims were unified and clear. During my ethnographic placement within the organisation it was often unclear whether organisers were expected to build the party or to build a political movement within civil society, or to create a number of separate local campaign groups and civil society associations with no overarching coordination. It was also unclear whether organisers were expected to develop new civic leaders, or to identify individuals who would go on to become Labour politicians. In practice, organisers were expected to grapple with all these goals but at times, they came into tension and I explore this further in the chapters that follow.

5.4 Conclusion

M4C was founded on the basic assumption that if the Labour Party is to reach out to civil society, to build stronger relationships of 'reciprocity, trust and solidarity' with civil society, it must begin organising beyond its own institutional apparatus. This represents an inverse trajectory of the party's relationship to civil society during the majority of the twentieth century. In that phase, the party developed from a movement of civil society to become a national institution mediating the relationship between the state and society. Now however, the M4C model seeks to recreate a movement of civil society from the party's current state as a national institution operating at close proximity to the state.

The M4C model of community organising described above presents a pragmatic response to the observation that the contemporary Labour Party, and local Labour Parties around the

country, are no longer capable of being an institutional bridge between civil society and the state. The existence of M4C represents a degree of consensus within the Labour Party that the arguments of the 'cartel party model' are accurate; the Labour Party is now too close to the state and has become too distant from civil society to function as an intermediate between the state and civil society. The fact that M4C emerged as it did after the 2010 general election defeat is an affirmation of the cartel party system thesis, and M4C represents an aspiration to create a political party that adheres to the pluralist and democratic elitist theories of the role of the party in democratic life.

However, there is an overarching tension in M4C's approach to party-civil society relations; to build stronger relations between the party and civil society the party must act beyond itself. The party must forego authority to build power; it must rethink its own means of developing leaders in order to see new leaders develop; it must appear to be concerned with community campaigning rather than electioneering so that it can become more able to contest elections. If M4C organisers are to create the institutional space in which the Labour Party can build stronger relations within civil society, the party itself has to change.

In general then the role of the political party in M4C's model of community organising is unclear. Does it act as a gatekeeper, through which M4C enters a local area, but has little subsequent formal involvement in the M4C organising campaigns? Or does it remain present within the institutional spaces that M4C creates, supplying activists and ideas? Does M4C act within or beyond the party? The model I have described is ambiguous about the on-going involvement of local Labour Parties in the campaign groups that M4C establish, which leads to the ambiguity over M4C's organisational aims. The type of associations formed within M4C campaign groups, the practices of those associations, and the issues selected as the focus of campaigns, will be influenced by the involvement of the party. Ultimately, the extent and form of this involvement will influence the way in which the M4C's model of community organising alter the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society. However, as yet these relationships have been only weakly understood; they are being tested through practice and my research represents the first attempt to step back and make sense of this practice for the party, civil society and the nature of democratic engagement.

In the following two chapters I explore these tensions in more detail. The following chapter presents empirical data that illustrates the implication of a party acting as a gatekeeper only, without active involvement in M4C's organising within civil society, while the second chapter

demonstrates the opposing case, when the party remained integrated within the community organising campaign group. In presenting these comparative cases I aim to untangle some of the tensions and dilemmas within M4C's model of community organising and its implications for the evolving relationship between the party and civil society. These issues are then revisited at the start of the conclusion in Chapter 8.

6.0 Organising beyond the party: M4C in Cardiff

Building on the themes highlighted in the previous chapter, I now explore an example of how M4C's model of organising was applied beyond the party as an attempt to redesign the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society. I focus on the establishment of an M4C presence in Cardiff and the resulting 'Home Sweet Home' campaign for improved conditions in the private rented sector. Exemplifying the model outlined in the previous chapter, the work in Cardiff was started from scratch. With no organised people, no leaders, no campaigns and no wins under their belt, the Cardiff experience shows how M4C begins to build power through campaigns which give people the opportunity to change themselves and their communities. The story of M4C's activities in Cardiff demonstrates how the principles and practices of community organising may be used to change the way in which a political party operates – the case exemplifies ways for politicians to relate more closely to civil society leaders through their party organisations, it demonstrates how responsibility can be distributed within and beyond the party ranks, and provides a test case of how the party can rethink its understanding of leadership development. In this case, M4C's activities are shown to supplement the inherent *raison d'être* of the political party to win political power by diversifying the people within, and the practices of, the political party.

The city contained the most developed of M4C's organising projects, as demonstrated in the way it has produced a continuous line of 'leaders', had two paid Community Organisers, had strong positive relationships with a number of key figures in the Welsh Labour Party and local politicians, and had achieved significant victories in a number of campaigns, aided in part by a devolved system of government in Wales. I was quickly able to identify Cardiff as the most developed example of community organising by M4C when beginning my field research. While sitting in my first team meeting in the organisation's central office in Brixton, London, it was clear that there was a higher level of activity on-going in the region, given the reports made by the organiser Stewart Owadally about active leaders and their actions. While the organisation's work in Cardiff may have benefited from Stewart's skill as an organiser, as well as the devolved system of government in Wales, it had also been running continuously for longer than any other organising project in M4C; covering three years from 2010 to 2013.

I use this case to discuss the extent to which M4C's experimental model of organising was able to work through the tensions, described in the previous chapter, produced when attempting to redesign the relationship between the party and civil society. Using interview

data and notes from participatory observation, I explore the tensions created as a M4C organising drive emerged in Wales, examine the way M4C incorporated civil society actors into their campaign groups, and suggest some characteristics of M4C's work which enabled it to overcome tensions, and in so doing, establish novel relationships between the Labour party and wider civil society.

This chapter begins by focusing on the initial engagement by Stewart in the region as he started to build his organising project. It then examines the Home Sweet Home campaign in Cardiff, which resulted from M4C's organising in the city, describing a negotiation that took place as part of this campaign between M4C activists and Labour politicians. Finally, I reflect on these cases and argue that M4C's organising in Wales brought about a diversification of authority, contesting the accepted view of how campaign issues are selected, leaders are developed, and how the party builds relationships with civil society. I argue this organisational shift brought benefits for the party's capacity to achieve its political aims.

6.1 Negotiating space to organise

Stewart was assigned to Cardiff in 2011, a year after a number of activities had been undertaken there as part of David Miliband's leadership campaign in 2010. Being originally from Penarth, a small seaside town just south of Cardiff, he had an understanding of the broad issues facing Cardiff, and was sent to the area to build a network of activists and organisers that would span the region, including the cities of Cardiff and Swansea. When I asked Stewart how he had initially approached the task given to him he told me that:

'When I first started working in Cardiff we planned a campaign in the centre of Cardiff, in the run up to local elections, which would utilise members from across the four CLPs in Cardiff, and that would be for two things. It would be to run as a genuine campaign, which we wanted to run. And we picked that seat deliberately because the leader of the Council, the Liberal Democrat Leader of the Council was in that seat. But also to develop those people from across Cardiff, so that once the elections had passed by we'd have a small group of really well developed people who could go back to each constituency and begin to organise.'

Beginning his organising drive in Cardiff, Stewart assessed that the May 2011 local elections presented him with two opportunities to open up space for future M4C organising projects.

First, he would be able to begin developing a relationship with the local Labour Party in Cardiff, building on the relationship he already had with Stephen Doughty MP, by running 'a genuine campaign' that would assist that Labour Party's electoral efforts in the seat of the Lib Dem Council Leader. Such a campaign would, he calculated, be within the self-interest of the local party and would therefore help Stewart and M4C gain acceptance amongst local and Welsh national Labour Party actors, particularly if it helped to dislodge the Lib Dem Leader of Cardiff Council from his seat.

The second opportunity it provided was a period of time in which he could develop a tranche of M4C leaders who would disperse across the city and begin new organising projects in their local areas once the local elections had taken place. An election campaign is a limited period of time in which local Labour Parties are a hive of activity; inactive, lay members begin to volunteer their time; more doors are knocked and conversations are held with members of the public and; there is a concentration of media coverage of the party's activities and policies. Importantly for Stewart, there is also an expectation amongst members that additional time will be given to political activity, knowing that there is definite end point and specific objective to reach. The local elections were therefore conducive for Stewart to undertake to a short and intense spell of organising with a group of members keen to be involved with M4C, as he explained:

'There were about four people who were really, really key to that; Ewan [Moor], this guy called Michael, Alex Bevan, and a bloke called Chris Davis, they were the kind of key drivers for that. And Ewan developed so much through that campaign, he was running the listening campaigns, he was taking in all the data, he was collating all the evidence we'd gathered. He was having one to ones, he was talking to people and listening in a really, really effective way, finding issues, finding leaders. And then we drove the thing to action. We got four business people into a room with some of the residents, and Alex and Ewan running a meeting to basically plan an action.'

Working with Stewart, those four leaders built a campaign that aimed to organise a local business forum, enabling residents and business leaders to discuss local issues, find common agreement, and then makes asks of, and negotiate with, local Councillors. To do this Stewart organised listening sessions and conducted door knocking in the ward of Plasnewydd, and he trained the activists to ask questions which would open up conversations with residents and the numerous local small businesspeople.

Through this initial phase the four activists from the local Labour Party and Stewart were able to understand common interests within the local community, and put this to use in a way that was beneficial to the local party so that it would accept the presence of an M4C organising project beyond its control in the future. Stewart described to me this strategy he developed with his activists and what actually happened through the course of events:

'So we got a load of issues from some businesses and a load of issues from residents, and the idea was let's map something up so we can bring the business community together with the residents to take action on something, and parking was the big thing that came up. So we were finding that a lot of small businesses saw their custom decreased when the council brought in these quite strict parking regulations on this one street and the residents were annoyed because customers were coming in and parking by their house. So we thought let's do something on parking, even though it's crap, but you can do it for election purposes as well as getting a change done.'

Stewart and the four activists had identified an issue of common concern that they could use to bring into alliance local residents and small business owners, thereby growing the power of their campaign and M4C. Although he hints at the limited appeal of parking as a campaign issue, referring to it as 'crap', he recognises that selecting this issue was advantageous for M4C as it enabled a quick win during the on-going local elections, and therefore built recognition from actors within the local and national Welsh Labour Party. The delivery of this plan would provide M4C, and the activists who he had begun to work with, acceptance by the local Labour Party. He would have successfully negotiated M4C through the local party and into a space beyond its authority in which he could organise and bring together party members and individuals from civil society. He continued to explain the practicalities required for achieving this:

'We had about 20 residents who were willing to come out, and six businesses. One of the businesses was willing to be the central cog, as he owned a business forum. It was a Lib Dem controlled ward, [and they had] costed this parking change as well so it was all ready to go, and the idea was we would write a letter in the local paper to the Liberal Democrat authority saying we want this, but we'd not give them enough time to respond and then when Labour came in, we'd have a public meeting with them and ask them to do the change'

Parking was selected as the focus of the campaign as it was a consistent issue of concern among local businesses and residents, and because the campaigners knew that the policy change they would ask for had already been investigated by the Council. They were pushing at an open door on an issue that was popular across the community, and use the timing of the election to benefit the Labour Party; first by demonstrating inaction on the issue by the Liberal Democrats, and second by providing newly elected Councillors with a popular and easy-to-implement policy once elected.

Stewart's calculated that this tactic would align his aim of developing a community organising project with the self-interest of the politicians seeking election, and he was therefore shocked at what then followed:

JS: Were the Labour Councillors brought into that plan?

SO: The candidates were, [but] as soon as they became Councillors it all changed. So the Labour candidates were kept abreast of everything and ... once Labour came to power we could have the meeting to develop it all and the [local] Labour leadership was all on board with it and Welsh Labour. So we'd had all of that energy, it was all ready to go, and we wrote the letter to the Echo, no response [from the Liberal Democrats], Labour won all those seats and we wrote to the Labour Councillors saying: "can we pull this meeting together?" and they were just obstructive and one of the Councillors in particular just wouldn't meet with us so we were like: "Well we've got all these people, and we discussed this months ago".

JS: What do you think happened in their minds?

SO: I think she had a problem with M4C all along because of the David [Miliband] thing but [she has] also always seen that little area of Cardiff as her little chiefdom [...] And then she wouldn't meet with us and I said: "well..." I just kept pressing her because we had these people who weren't involved in politics who wanted to meet the Councillors and she said: "Come along after the surgery", so I said: "no" and it just kind of died off.'

For Stewart the willingness of the candidate to engage with M4C campaign before the election was replaced by the complacency of a set of elected politicians who dismissed the need to speak with local residents in a meaningful dialogue. His frustration indicated that he thought a political open goal for the local Councillors was missed, to both their

disadvantage and his own. The implicit aim of community organising to build sustain relational power throughout civil society was of potential use to the candidates prior to the election, but seemed superfluous once the election had taken place.

However while Stewart was disappointed about the outcome of his local campaign in Cardiff, the process of research and listening had not been a waste. Indeed it helped him build relationship with, and recognition for M4C from, national leaders within the Welsh Labour Party. By the first months of 2012 the Welsh Labour Party were beginning to accept the presence of M4C in Cardiff. Stewart explained how this happened:

'The thing with that was that [Labour] won the council election, they swept the board and the First Minister did a speech afterwards saying that community organising in Cardiff helped contribute to the election. So the seat we were working in was the leader of the Lib Dems seat and he lost in the end by like 7 or 8 votes and if you think of the people we spoke to, they all would have turned up because all along we were like: "remember the election, remember the election, remember the election" and most of them were like: "yeh cool, we'll vote Labour". And just by getting our presence out there, a lot of people would have spoken to us, not been like harassed by us for their vote but have a chat with a Labour person in their area'

So while his first objective of opening up space for future M4C organising may have been missed in that particular ward, the campaign was a success as it gave Stewart important recognition from the Welsh Labour Party. This was achieved not due to the development of a traditional community organising campaign, but rather the application of certain community organising techniques – 121s, listening actions, leadership development – within a typical electoral campaign.

The relationships with Welsh Labour figures were of greater value for Stewart than his relationship with the ward Councillors, providing extra leverage as his organising drive continued beyond the ward in the centre of Cardiff. To take forward his overall strategy he now needed the four activists he had been working with to go back to their own constituencies and start new M4C organising projects.

Of those four, Ewan Moor and Alex Bevan emerged as the stand out leaders willing to begin their own M4C campaigns. Of the two, Alex Bevan had far more political experience. Although only in his late twenties, he had already been involved in a number of electoral campaigns for Welsh Labour MPs, and had been a member of the party since he was

nineteen. He was also by that point running his own Living Wage organising project in Swansea under the M4C banner after attending one of the community organising trainings delivered there during the leadership campaign.

I spoke to him about his involvement with M4C, and why he was political. For him the Labour Party and Labour Movement were integral to his sense of community and his hope for a revival of Cardiff, a region still struggling from the impact of de-industrialisation in the 1980s. When I asked him about why he had initially got involved in community organising and M4C he linked it to the conditions he saw around him in Cardiff and South Wales:

'I read about it in places like the Guardian, which is ridiculous, but it's true, because it did get a lot of coverage because it's novel. But why did it tweak me to take action more than just being interested and putting it down again? Because when I grew up in the Rhondda [and] when there was de-industrialisation... the economy was sucked out of the place basically, with that I think a sense of purpose was sucked out of it. So when you talk about community leaders, what are you leading when a place doesn't have a purpose, where people aren't going to start out very hopeful that things are going to get better?

He also explained the appeal of finding and developing new leaders from his local community, and South Wales generally, which he felt would go some way to re-rooting the Labour Party back in the places from which it originated. A more explicit focus on leadership development would also mean the people from those places were able to tackle the socio-economic problems he associated with de-industrialisation and social dis-organisation:

'I'm so worried that if you go to a party meeting in the valleys in 20 years time there are going to be empty rooms. Then what's the Labour Party for if they don't have any members there? So for that area where I grew up, if people aren't in the Labour party, how can we hope to actually improve the area and offer those communities more power and help to rebalance the chronic economic and social problems that makes the country wheeze... So yeah community organising is not sufficient but it's necessary, it's not going to solve the whole thing but actually it's a means by which you can make people think that what is happening around them is political, it's a challenge we had at the turn of the 19th/20th century and we have a similar challenge now.'

Alex articulated an anxiety that with the demise of the local party organisation his community has become powerless to face and challenge the social dis-organisation created by deindustrialization. Although the party was not able to stop deindustrialization happening in the 1980s, he felt that a reinvigorated party would be the means by which his community could rebuild the social organisation and power necessary to address the problems it now faced. Reflecting on the current state of the party and the state of his hometown in South Wales left him despondent, and he projected a sense of urgency in rebuilding the party and wider movement through the use of community organising.

His interest in community organising was therefore broad; as he spoke he entwined the condition of his hometown with the electoral and organisational strength of the Labour Party, and justified this convergence of interests by explaining the reasons why he had initially become active in politics in his late teenage years:

'I got involved through meeting a local assembly member. I spent a bit of time in their office and saw how actually she was a lot like people in my family. She was from the same area, from the same background and she wanted to help people out. So taking my mother as an example, a massive contrast between what she did as a single parent with no help and hardly any financial support, certainly none from the other parent, and it meant that ... she was very concerned we had a good education and by doing that she thought: what is the best way I can do that? By becoming a Governor and making sure everyone in the street gets a good education as well. So I think that the reason I became a Labour party member was because I saw this local assembly member as a link to the values I learnt at home'

Given the recent slump in party membership numbers, and the historic decline of participation in political party activities, I challenged Alex as to whether the Labour Party was still able to fulfil the ideals of communal self-reliance and betterment he articulated. As an institution, was it still able to bring about a convergence between the self-interest of an individual and the interests of a wider community? Would someone like his mother, seeking a better education for her children, see contributing in some form to the strength of the local Labour Party as the way to achieve those aspirations? I implied that without the power represented by mass membership, the ability of the party to present themselves to people as a means of aligning their own individual self-betterment with the interests of their community might have broken down.

JS: 'I think the party lost 60% of its members over its time in government?'

AB: 'But we gained something like fifty thousand since the election... I think we are at about two hundred thousand, maybe a drop below... So we know we do have a movement of people, and we do have a concept that they take responsibility for changing their circumstance and changing the circumstance of the country. At a very basic level I see the wider Labour party as the right vessel for this work, and that's where I think the fight is now. Our history is steeped in movements making a difference in peoples' lives, from the NHS starting out as the kind of co-operative model where people were eager to do health visits, and then they thought let's club together so that nobody dies when they don't need to. And around that we built a movement that was about emotion, before it was about legislation, and before the professionalism that followed.'

Having identified four leaders through the short campaign in central Cardiff, and having built a degree of recognition and support for the Welsh Labour Party, Stewart then sought to find an MP who could be a further support his organising activities and provide greater protection in a particular place if his organising activities were opposed by local Labour Parties at the ward or constituency level. The strategic choice reflects the status and authority of MPs within the Labour Party, as well as Stewart's perception that he needed support within the Labour Party if his organising drive across Cardiff were to be accepted and a success. As outlined in the previous chapter, M4C's activities grew in tandem from within the party's existing organisational structures and authority rather than building an entirely separate organisational entity from outside. For Stewart this meant building a relationship of accountability with an MP that would inform the next stage of his organising project.

Stephan Doughty MP was selected to contest the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency by-election in November 2011, prompted by the resignation of Alun Michael so that he could contest the election for the Policy and Crime Commissioner. Originally from Cardiff, he had previously worked for Oxfam, and then as a Special Advisor to Douglas Alexander MP, who had Co-Chaired David Miliband's leadership campaign. Doughty was therefore from the very beginning on '*our wing of the party*', as Stewart would put it, and his election provided Stewart with the opportunity to further embed M4C's presence in Wales.

When I spoke to Stephen about the early relationship between himself and M4C he corroborated Stewart's account, but placed a stronger emphasis on the degree of autonomy that Stewart had in his work:

'I mean I kind of suggested to him some areas in which he may want to look in the constituency, and to build work or whatever. He suggested some things he thought might work in the constituency. And then we thought well, let's pilot that, but ... we had an initial conversation, and then I let him go off there and do that.

Obviously Stephen did not wish to openly say to me that Stewart's activities may be 'politically useful to him', as Stewart phrased it, as this perhaps indicates a degree of Machiavellian political calculation for electoral gain that could be perceived as being purely self-interested. Rather, Stephen preferred to emphasise, much in the same way that Alex framed the activities of M4C, the broader socio-political benefits that could be brought about for communities in South Wales and the resonance with the traditions of place-based organising in the area:

JS: So is there a [electoral] strategy in your constituency that says community organising has that role to play?

SD: Yeah I mean I hope, obviously in the long term, that a number of these people will ... want to work with me, whether that's as full members of the Labour Party, supporters, or just kind of people who vote for me. I mean there's, obviously, different levels of it, but it's not a necessity, because ultimately if they're working with me to change something for the better in a community, or I'm working with them to change something for the better in the community, then that's a good thing.

JS: It's an end in itself?

SD: Yeah, it's an end in itself.

I pushed him further on this point, asking how he could turn down an opportunity to be the centre of a local campaign if it could potentially provide him with favourable local media coverage and direct contact with more potential supporters and voters. We were talking at that point about a campaign against land banking he had suggested to Stewart when first elected in 2011, specifically targeting the owner of a derelict Kwik Save in St Mellons, a deprived ward in his constituency:

SD: Yeah well, I mean I've always tried to consciously not to do that.

JS: Why do you think that is?

SD: Just because I think ultimately I want to see, you know, organic political capacity and awareness develop, and if 15% of that comes my way or people respect me and want to vote for me as a result of it, or they see me as a support, that's great. But actually [the St. Mellon's campaign is] in an area particularly where there's been very low levels of political engagement and activism. You want to let it flourish and grow without it being, you know... and also because of people's suspicions about partisan political campaigning at the moment, and their kind of disaffection with politics, so it's a bit of an experiment.

He later added:

SD: 'Had I turned up at a meeting with a bunch of people who'd previously been very sceptical about politics, and they see the MP there and they go oh this is a Labour Party plot, or you know... [they think] 'it's just about the MP...' then immediately you crush that kind of activism and kind of sense of involvement, and so I wanted to be very careful that I didn't do that, and that people felt it was something they owned and were engaged in, and then if that happily coincided with my ability to support them great.'

In the way Stephen explained his role in regards to Stewart's organising in his constituency, he appeared to be presenting an ideal situation in which a Movement for Change organiser could be provided with the space to organise freely without any constraints to the benefit of local people as well as himself. Of course, for Stewart such a situation would be incredibly favourable, enabling him to undertake a power analysis and build campaigns that reflected the interests of community members and party activists above the interests of the local MP or local party executive. In this vein Stephan continued to present a laissez-faire role for himself:

'So it's quite hands off in a way. I mean we've met up .. and we contact each other and he informs me what's going on. Similarly my staff have been involved, or other activists keep me informed about what's going on. But you know, there's not a kind of a big ground strategy driving it'

In this regard there appears to be something of a discrepancy between Stewart and Stephan's accounts of their relationship. According to Stewart, as outlined in the previous chapter, his organising in the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency initially had to 'wait for

[Stephen] to win', and he then choose to build campaigns around issues that were 'politically useful to him'. This implies that the direction of M4C in Cardiff was heavily influenced by the election of Stephan Doughty; how quickly Stewart was able to build recognition from the party to enable him to organise, the areas within the city in which he would focus his organising drive, and the types of campaigns he developed.

However, Stephen believed he had 'quite hands off' approach, and just let Stewart 'go off and do that' without much on-going oversight, and he even said he has had no strategy driving his support of M4C in his constituency. His support M4C is likely explained due to his existing allegiances to Douglas Alexander (and therefore David Miliband), and perhaps out of an interest in the long-term impact of what for him is 'a bit of an experiment'. Speaking to him he was clearly passionate about the potential of M4C and community organising to rebuild the party's links to those communities that had become disengaged from politics, as well as being a mechanism for building leadership capacity in those communities. However, he positioned it at an arms-length from the day-to-day 'political' activity he had to undertake as a sitting MP. He went on to explain this distinction by comparing M4C's work to his involvement in a set of on-going issues around Council cuts in his constituency, and he was keen to emphasis the contrasting roles that a 'Movement for Change type approach' may take compared to what he calls 'a traditional approach':

SD: 'There's been a big controversy around the closure of a leisure centre and swimming pool in my own ward. Now had we known about this early enough, and had we been involved enough, I think a Movement for Change type approach would have been really, really helpful there. In my view it was too late in the political process. Barriers had already been set up, groups had already been set up, partisan lines had been drawn and it had become highly political, including rows within the Labour Party itself. So unfortunately on that I've had to take a much more kind of traditional approach.

JS: So for Movement Change to work, do you feel as an MP they have to find new issues?

SD: New or abandoned issues, or ones that have perhaps become stale, or not too partisan or too divisive in a way. I mean if we had more time on this issue around the leisure service in the local area, it would be brilliant to bring Movement for Change in and actually have a much wider conversation around leisure and community services in an area which is quite deprived. However, you have to

also be realistic that the community organising is a much longer, slow burn approach, about the issues, people's capacities and the relationships which ultimately form part of it. In the end I think it's much stronger, which is one of the reasons why I want to see it flourish, and why I want to see it develop. But there is also a sort of real politic about short-term decisions and things that have to sometimes be done and said. You can't wait for...

JS: ...community organising relationships...

SD: (Agreeing with me) No ... But whereas on, for example, an area like St Mellons which has increasing numbers of people not voting, increasing numbers of people not engaging with parties, an increasing number of people not engaging with anything in the community, and yet lots of challenges, that seemed to be much more ripe ground for doing it'

I was left wondering whether Stephen saw M4C as political, or whether he likened Stewart's work to a form of development or capacity building he may have witnessed while working for Oxfam. Politics involved taking the hard, day-to-day decisions, in tough circumstances and with difficult consequences (and other clichés), while M4C organising was a slow, incremental, development focused activity. Also this description places M4C at arms-length from the Labour Party, interesting and useful, but hardly important enough for a local MP to take the time to oversee activities on an on-going basis.

Stephen was able to take this perspective because he felt confident that Stewart's organising work was unlikely to impact the 'traditional', 'partisan' and 'contentious' politics he described. He seemed confident that the activity prompted by M4C organising would bypass that realm of his political life, including the internal party politics he raised in regard to the leisure centre. This implies a dual approach to the party taken by Stewart and M4C in Cardiff. While in the first instance, Stewart used the opportunities of an election to build his organising capacity and leadership base, in the second instance, he sought out a sitting Labour MP to sponsor M4C, and in the third instance he appeared (based on Stephen's comment) to want to bypass any politically contentious issues. The party was minimised to being an institutional gatekeeper, providing opportunities and, with the support of a local MP, legitimacy.

Reflecting this relationship between the party and M4C's activities, Stephen was willing for Stewart to organise in areas of his constituency that he understood as being out of reach or beyond the institution of the Labour Party, because that way, M4C's organising would have

less chance of conflicting with the priorities of ward Councillors or electoral organisers, for example, whilst at the same time laying the foundations for increasing the reach of the party into that area in the future. By out of reach I do not mean in the sense that the area was not represented by Labour Councillors, or that the area was beyond the limits of authority by the Labour controlled local government. Rather, however, due to the lack of democratic participation by local residents, no party actors were held to account by members of the community, and there was therefore little democratic legitimacy. In an area of Cardiff such as St Mellons, the people were ignoring the Labour Party, and indeed all parties.

Having explored the initial steps Stewart took in Cardiff during 2011 to get his organising drive going, I now move on to focus on how his organising produced an on-going campaign that led to change and leadership development. Ewan Moor, mentioned above as a leader during the initial Cardiff Central campaign, returned to his constituency and started to lead his own organising project. After a hesitant start, this effort produced the Home Sweet Home campaign, a new organisation of private tenants in the centre of the city, campaigning to improve their housing conditions. This campaign emerged due to the terrible state of privately rented homes in the city, and it provides a useful window for considering the relationship between Movement for Change and the Labour Party, and the tensions that have emerged due to the implementation of the new model of community organising within a Labour Party context.

6.2 Campaigns beyond the party - Home Sweet Home Cardiff

I met Ewan Moor and Stewart Owadally in a café on the high street running through the centre of Riverside Ward in central Cardiff. It was a bright Saturday morning in May 2013, and the street outside was busy with traffic and shoppers. We squeezed onto a table in the corner of the crowded café and began discussing the public meeting scheduled for that afternoon; a negotiation between Home Sweet Home activists and local Labour politicians, private landlords and Cardiff University Housing Services about their willingness to help improve the conditions of the private rented housing market in the city. The negotiation was part of the Home Sweet Home campaign, and represented the culmination of a six-month organising drive by M4C that had attempted to bring private tenants living in Cardiff into an effective political campaign.

Turn out for the meeting was looking good; fifty activists were confirmed to attend the small community hall around the corner from the café. Mostly private tenants, the group was made up of a mixture of Labour party activists and local community leaders, and they planned to present a 'Tenant's Charter' to local landlords and politicians, asking them to sign up to the commitments laid out in the charter. The issues addressed in the charter had emerged from listening actions undertaken by the campaigners over the previous three months. The problems and stories heard through door knocking and street stalls had been condensed by the group into three 'asks' which they felt were both possible to realise and substantial enough to address the issues they had identified through their listening campaign. Those asks became the three commitments that made up the Home Sweet Home Charter, central to the negotiation that day:

1. Provide full contact details for the landlord who owns the property as well as an alternative contact when the landlord is not available
2. Respond promptly, in line with the urgency of the matter, when contacted by the tenant
3. Supply an information pack to tenants about how to use services provided in the accommodation and local information related to living in Cardiff

Ewan had joined the Labour Party six months before he first met Stewart in Cardiff in 2012, but he had been disappointed with the bureaucratic style of meetings and types of activities offered to new members. In an interview he described this initial experience when joining the party:

EM: 'I joined the Labour party and I thought, that's enough, that's probably enough, but when I wanted to get a bit more involved I went along to a branch meeting saying, "Well what can I do? You know, I really want to do something," and they said, "Yeah, of course, lots to do, in six months' time we'll give you some leaflets to deliver," and that wasn't really enough. I kind of left the meeting a bit, 'what the hell?' I accidentally found Stewart's training session about community organising and I didn't have any idea what it was so I went along to that and I was very, very intimidated because I was surrounded by [Labour] Councillors and Labour party members saying, "Oh yes, and who do you work for?" I said, "I don't work for anyone".'

JS: 'Credential yourself please?'

EM: Exactly, CV. Who do you know? It was automatically... like, 'define yourself'... And yeah, that kind of pushed me away, but the idea of actually going out and doing something turned into a listening campaign and that was my first introduction to politics.'

Perhaps because he appeared as an outsider, not yet embedded within the local Labour Party networks of Cardiff (although this contrasts sharply with Alex Bevan's position), Stewart judged Ewan to have the potential to develop as a leader. When they first met, Ewan was certainly not a leader in the traditional community organising sense as did not have a following, and to be successful he would have to commit to working closely with Stewart over a long period of time.

Observing their interactions as they discussed the Home Sweet Home negotiation in the café that day it was clear that Ewan had become committed to the idea of community organising. This was evident in the form of their relationship, the way in which Stewart challenged Ewan on details on the meeting, and the way he in turn questioned Stewart's advice. There was a mutual respect that enabled each to critique the other but to then come to joint decisions after navigating each other's critiques and opinions. However there was a distinctive division of knowledge between the two as they discussed the meeting. Ewan clearly identified Stewart as more knowledgeable on the issues of strategy and navigating the political context in which they worked; but Stewart seemed to accept that Ewan was more able to make decisions about the role and capacity of particular activists in the Home Sweet Home campaign, and the impact of different stories that had been developed by members of the group. Ewan was able to outline who was attending the meeting that day, the number of attendees and their position in the community, whereas Stewart seemed to speak with authority about the structure and objective of the meeting. Observing this interaction it struck me that there was a lack of deference between the two, and that meant the division of knowledge and labour within their relationship could work smoothly. Deference would have undermined the ability of one to speak with authority on an element of the developing campaign. Rather than Ewan deferring to Stewart, as might be expected based on experience and professional position (Stewart was paid by Movement for Change, Ewan was not), they appeared as co-conspirators. My interpretation was that this form of relationship between organiser and leader was only have been possible when each understood, implicitly or explicitly, they were committed to working together for an extended period of time. They had developed a relationship of reciprocity in which they both needed each other to achieve a shared goal; Ewan was able to develop his political skills while

Stewart was able to demonstrate the ability of M4C to identify and develop new leadership capacity within the Labour Movement.

Later that day fifty attendees filed into the community hall and took up seats in concentric circles facing a small stage at one end. Ewan greeted them all, gave his political introduction that explained why he was involved with M4C and why he believed community organising could help private tenants in the city. He then outlined the running of the day and facilitated a big round of introductions. Each person was given time to introduce themselves and explain why they are involved in the campaign. Those present told of their anxiety or anger about the condition of the private rental sector in Cardiff. Absent landlords, no information about utility providers leading to unexpected high bills, and unannounced letting agents fees and the problem of damp all were common. As the rounds continued, some of the participants also began to also say that they were members of the local Labour Party, adding that detail tentatively at the end of their introduction, almost unsure as to whether this was the sort of meeting in which party allegiance was declared in public. ‘...And I am a member of the Labour Party as well’. As more attendees said this, this declaration took on a degree of insider, knowing humour. However, the second to last person introduced themselves and ended by saying in a cutting voice ‘And no, I am not a member of the Labour Party!’ the room filled with a tense, guilty laughter.

The round of introductions came to an end, and Ewan introduced Tara McInervey, who had joined the campaign after Ewan had given a presentation to her class at Cardiff University. She stood on the stage and told her story to those present. She described the feeling of annoyance when she realised that the flat her and her boyfriend had rented was damp, and of frustration when the landlord refused to clear the backyard that was piled high with dumped rubbish. She also described how angry she was that there was no one she could turn to for help or advice. Although I knew the story had been scripted, in that it had been practiced with Ewan a number of times previously, it was delivered with emotion, and when she said she was angry, many of the heads in the room began to nod with conviction and agreement. The purpose of this extended story, delivered by Tara at this point in the meeting, was intended to agitate the room of attendees at the meeting, so that they felt compelled to act on this issue as part of the Home Sweet Home campaign.

When Tara came to the end of her story, and as the clapping died down, a member of the audience stood and introduced herself as ‘Councillor Iona Gordon, representing Riverside Ward’. She turned and spoke directly to Tara, and began to explain that on-going organisational restructuring within the Council’s Management and Housing Departments

brought about by Labour Councillors would mean that Tara's circumstance could not happen again. The Council would now proactively intervene, and someone in Tara's situation would have his or her situation rectified. This intervention was not part of the plan that had been meticulously thought through by Stewart and Ewan, and in my mind seemed to have the effect of immediately undermining the agitating impact of Tara's personal story. As the Councillor continued to speak a broader implication became clear; she was saying that the campaign group she saw in that community hall did not have a role to play in the improvement of the condition of private tenant housing. Rather it was the Council and elected Councillors who were able to solve problems faced by tenants, before they would ever come to light within the Home Sweet Home campaign or any other similar public forum. This was possible because the elected Councillor, representing the whole community, felt that she had a greater understanding of the problems people face in their lives and were able to take action on their behalf to solve those problems, using her position of authority within the local council.

Watching this intervention, I could sense Ewan's frustration as he stood at the front of the room. The campaign group he had built up, through months of 121s, listening actions, and strategy meetings, and which was finally getting to action, was being undermined and threatened by a local Labour Councillor during the opening stages of their first public negotiation. He managed to restrain himself and intervened tactfully, not losing his temper, but thanking her and steering the conversation back towards the Home Sweet Charter and the process by which the activists had listened to private tenants.

The meeting then turned to the business of seeking commitments from the landlords and Labour politicians for the Charter. First a landlord who owned a number of properties was asked to come to the front and sign the Charter, then a Welsh Assembly member signed the charter and spoke of his willingness to advocate for the campaign in the national assembly, and finally the head of student housing support at Cardiff University signed the Charter and committed to making sure the landlords they work with adhere to the commitments. Stewart and Ewan had prepped each about the commitments, and they were aware that they were going to be asked to sign up to the Charter in public. While these pre-agreements were not outlined explicitly in the meeting, others in the room must have realised this was the case.

Following the signing, the meeting turned to next steps. The attendees split into groups of six and were asked to discuss together where they would like to see the Home Sweet Home campaign go next, and to then present back to the whole room. The politicians, university housing official and landlords, had to move to sit amongst the activists, participating in the

discussion about strategy. They quickly shifted from targets to active participants in the organising process, and began contributing their distinctive and specialized knowledge and experience to enhance the capacity of the discussion. The landlord offered to put the group in contact with other landlords he knew. The University housing official said the group should approach the university administration, and the politicians pointed the campaigners in the direction of other potentially sympathetic local and national Welsh politicians.

Once feedback from each discussion had been noted by the flipchart stand, and a follow-up date set for the next meeting, the meeting came to an end. While most of those at the meeting began to either drift away or chat informally near the door, Ewan gathered a group of six activists into a circle into a corner of the large hall to evaluate the action. Amongst this group were Alex Bevan and Tara McInvey, who had delivered her testimony earlier. While the participants in this evaluating group, other than Tara, had not played a specialized role during the meeting itself, it became clear these were a group of activists who were more invested in the campaign than others, and who had brought the ‘turn out’ to the community centre that afternoon. In discussion, this group assessed whether they had achieved their objectives, which seemed to be building a positive relationship with the Welsh housing minister as well as getting the targets to sign up publicly to the Charter. There was some discussion about the need to recruit more landlords if the campaign was to have a larger impact on the condition of private tenants in the city. Ewan and Stewart finished by thanking this core group, who then joined the remaining attendees for a photo outside.

6.3 Authority beyond the party

The Home Sweet Home event demonstrated the characteristics of the M4C model of community organising outlined in the previous chapter, and illustrated a number of the tensions produced by the application of community organising within a Labour Party context.

The first of these tensions was produced by the creation of authority beyond the party. As outlined in the previous chapter, the M4C model has the potential to improve the organisational capacity and legitimacy of the Labour Party by constructing spaces beyond the formal institutions of the party in which party members and civil society actors are encouraged to collaborate on community organising projects. The key to fulfilling this potential is, I argue, that those collaborating in this new space have the *authority* to select the campaign issues they wish to focus on in their campaigns. The authority is embodied in

the leaders who are selected and developed by M4C organisers, who lead others cooperating within that space through the journey of a community organising campaign.

The implication of this model is that there are new concentrations of authority beyond those legitimised by the electoral system or the institutional procedures of the Labour Party. Leaders associated with community organising are given authority because they are able to bring together groups of people, are able to articulate issues of shared concern, can develop campaign strategies that address those concerns, and can inspire people to take action. As Stewart's work in Cardiff progressed, this new form of authority was interpreted as a challenge by those who authority was established by elections or the formal procedures of the party. This was evident in the reaction by Councillors to the central Cardiff parking campaign once they had been elected, refusing to meet with and therefore recognise the M4C leaders, and by the Councillors intervention during the Home Sweet Home meeting, which sought to strip the Home Sweet Home campaigners of any purpose and responsibility for tackling the issue they had identified. Both of these reactions were fuelled by the Councillors who wanted to reassert their authority over the M4C community organising project, rather than attempting to incorporate the new form of authority, which represented potential capacity and legitimacy benefits, into the Labour Party fold.

The result of this reaction by the Councillors is that the potential benefits for the party were likely to be missed. Indeed, the potential benefits of capacity and legitimacy, described in the previous chapter, were evident within Stewart's organising in Cardiff. He had built two campaigns that brought civil society actors into association with Labour Party members, and it is likely that such associations would result in improved support for, and activism within, the local Labour Party by those civil society actors. In the parking campaign this included those businesses and local residents whose shared interest was articulated by the campaign, while in Home Sweet Home the campaign group of Ewan Moor, Tara McInvey, Alex Bevan, and the other core activists, were all potential Labour Party activists.

The loss of potential legitimacy benefits is slightly more complicated. In both cases outlined above, the Councillors rejected the authority of the M4C campaign group, but they did not reject the validity of the issues selected – parking and conditions in the private rented sector. Indeed the Councillor at the Home Sweet Home campaign sought to take sole responsibility for acting on the issue, thereby recognising its importance as a local issue. However, by denying the authority of the leadership in the campaigns they were making it less likely that the space opened up by M4C would grow in the future. M4C's collaborative space was authoritative when both recognised by decision-makers and when the activists were granted

responsibility for tackling the issues identified. The authority of those occupying the space grew in tandem with their responsibility. By denying one or both of these elements, the Councillors minimised the scope for the campaign groups to continue listening to civil society and developing campaigns in the future. The scope for improved future legitimacy based on issue selection was therefore lost.

The competing centres of authority and loss of potential benefits described here resulted from the third tension listed in the previous chapter – an ambiguity around the overarching purpose of M4C, and whether it sought to build the party, to develop isolated community organising projects, or to construct a movement within civil society that supported the Labour Party. Without a compelling explanation it is easy to see how those in positions of electoral and institutional authority within the party would be wary of M4C and might seek to deny its validity in their geographical area of influence, in part because M4C represented an alternative political organisation with a distinct organisational culture to that within the Labour Party. Without a clear statement of intent, the distinct organisational culture encouraged by M4C – in which authority and responsibility is distributed, relationships proceed action, and in which partisan obedience is discouraged in favour of a pragmatic appeal to collaboration across civil society – could be seen as competing with the Labour Party rather than complementing it.

The most striking example of the pragmatic culture encouraged by M4C was in the way Stewart encouraged M4C activists to understand their relationship to those of authority within the Labour Party. Following a principle of traditional community organising learnt from the IAF and CitizensUK Alinskyite tradition, M4C aspired to have ‘no permanent enemies and no permanent allies’. This principle implies that any person or organisation, even one of the longest running campaign targets or the staunchest of opponents to the idea of community organising, can at some point be accepted as a campaign ally. The reverse is also true; even the longest running supporter of your organising project may in the future be viewed as a target. Ewan illustrated this pragmatism to me in a conversation after the Home Sweet Home meeting, in which he reflected on the interruption by the Councillor, and what he understood as the appropriate way to respond, and his feelings when he learnt that Stewart was willing to work with the Councillor in the future:

JS: When she interrupted you she was disruptive, and the way you dealt with it was really good. But what did it feel like when she did that?

EM: I tried very, very hard not to dismiss her and kind of take on what she was saying and just react, I wouldn't say professionally but just neutrally. I don't want to be what she is. I don't want to ridicule her. I don't want that to reflect in how I talk to her... it takes a lot to do that because she's a foul woman. And yeah, it almost comes in that the reason I wouldn't deal with it is she's just doing it for the sake of doing it; she's not really doing it for a reason.

JS: ... do you think its insecurity?

EM: I definitely think she feels threatened. She's actually tried to start a Sharkstoppers campaign, which is good... When I mentioned that Movement for Change was doing something she dismissed it and said, "Oh no, we don't need advice," and now I've just heard from Stewart that she's just asked if she can meet with him. It's just that kind of arrogance, we will do it right whatever we do. And it's actually... a constructive thing that she's [now] trying to push out the boat. So she's a strange one. I think her heart is in the right place but she's just a twisted individual. So yeah, it's not personal with her, she's just being who she is. She's just an unpleasant person.

Ewan articulated his dislike of the Councillor to me in an interview; feelings based on previous experience of trying to work with her and unsuccessfully seeking her support for the M4C campaign. But while he was angered by her previous actions, as well as her interruption during the negotiation, he knew he had to respond 'neutrally' without losing his temper or ridiculing her. He also saw Stewart's willingness to work with her in the future as 'a *constructive thing*', rather than a move that was counterintuitive based on his prior experience with her. There was therefore a pragmatic culture within the Home Sweet Home campaign team, fostered intentionally by Stewart.

The dilemma facing M4C organisers, evident in this example, was that it was their pragmatic approach to relationship building with the party as well as civil society that allowed them to create the collaborative space beyond the party, from which benefits would flow, but it was also this pragmatism that created tensions with individuals in positions of authority within the Labour Party. The challenge facing Stewart and other M4C organisers was how to overcome this dilemma. Stewart reflected on this challenge to me:

SO: I guess whatever you're doing it's always building a challenge to those people [Councillors] but it's not inevitable that they'll respond to the challenge in the way she did. I think it will often happen, people will respond like that but there

are other instances, in St Mellons for example, where the two Councillors there, they'll help us when they can and will speak about the campaign and feed people into us... I had a pre-existing relationship with those Councillors in St Mellons and it may come down to that as well because the Councillor who got annoyed at the Home Sweet Home action, hadn't had a relationship ... and she's just really patronizing... so I don't think there was ever a constructive relationship with her.

JS: So the relationships can cut through?

SO: I guess you put it on the table to them and say you are building an organisation, they may well take action on council, because we're there to help build the Labour party as well so we don't want to make Labour Councillors look stupid or be divisive or whatever, so having them in on it is really important.

For Stewart the responsibility of building relationships with party actors was the means by which his organising drive could be a success, which he understood as then helping to build the party's organisational capacity. In this case he had not built a prior relationship with the Councillor involved in the Home Sweet Home negotiation (although it is unclear whether this was intentional or not; whether his organising strategy did not initially take account of her presence, or whether he felt Ewan was developed enough to realise that a constructive relationship with the Councillor was in his self-interest) which backfired at the Home Sweet Home meeting. At that point he and Ewan had a choice to make; did they decide that the Councillor was now an obstacle to their campaign, and possibly even a campaign target, or did they move immediately to build a 'constructive' relationship so that the campaign could continue to grow and focus on other targets? Following their pragmatic organisational culture, Stewart decided to have a 121 with the Councillor soon after the Home Sweet Home negotiation, and 'brought her on board' so that she would give the campaign group space to organise in her ward, take on responsibility for changing the private rented sector, and build a concentration of authority and power alongside her own electorally mandated authority. If they had taken a principled stance and decided that, given her statements at the meeting, the Councillor was fundamentally incompatible to the ethos of community organising, and that she should there be treated as a target, they would have picked an unnecessary battle. This would have slowed down the growth of the campaign, creating an oppositional campaign focused on the problems within the Labour Party rather than a productive campaign that was willing to take responsibility and be authoritative on the issue of improving the private rented sector in Cardiff. Without encouraging a pragmatic approach to relationship building within the organisational culture of the Home Sweet Home campaign,

Stewart would have undermined his ability to grow M4C organising in Cardiff and jeopardised the potential benefits of this organising for the Labour Party.

6.4 Conclusion

Considering the entirety of the M4C organising drive in Cardiff between 2012 and 2013, it is clear that while the focus was on the party to start with, giving Stewart space to begin building M4C, over time the focus shifted to bringing in new civil society actors to participate through campaigns. By shifting focus from the party to civil society, and from membership to activism, M4C's organising work began to challenge the established culture and practice of the Labour Party, in particular, the established patterns of authority, whereby elected officials act *for* people within their constituency. In organising broad-based groups of individuals, meaning those from civil society beyond the official party membership, M4C enabled their campaign groups to articulate the interests of their local community, make new campaign demands, and prompt the creation of new associations that were led by new activist 'leaders'. Once a campaign team had been established, they then called for elected officials to work *with* M4C, sharing responsibility for decision-making and enacting social change, as the means to building a stronger party and movement in the longer term.

This approach was not without problems. The distinctive organisational culture and the lack of a clear statement of intent led some Councillors to reject M4C's campaign, refusing to recognise the authority that M4C groups had built, and this risked losing the potential benefits around improved capacity and legitimacy for the Labour Party. So while taking the approach of building a space beyond the party in which actors from the party and civil society would collaborate meant the creation of new campaigns grounded in the broad concerns of civil society, as well as the development of new leaders, the potential benefits for the party were put at risk because of this approach.

Whether this mattered depended upon the purpose of M4C's organising in Cardiff. If the purpose was to build successful community organising projects, linking them together as a civil society alliance under the M4C banner, then Stewart was on the way to achieving that. His initial success negotiating entry through the Labour Party, resulting in the support of Stephen Doughty MP and the Welsh Labour Party, was instrumental in providing him with places in which to organise in this way. However, if his approach was to build community organising projects that were publicly understood to be institutional components of the local

Labour Party, it is hard to see how this would happen if Councillors were rejecting his campaigns.

In the next chapter I examine examples from M4C's work which sought to create a space *within* the party in which civil society actors and party members could collaborate and build community organising projects. This choice, between establishing a M4C presence within or beyond the political party, speaks to the discussion from the previous empirical chapter about whether to conceptualise M4C as an organisation rooted within civil society, or as an organisational extension of a political party, and how these two approaches have differing implications for M4C's impact on the relationship between the party and civil society. If M4C is successful at overcoming this conceptual dichotomy, creating a political space that incorporates both partisan rationality as well as the ethos of broad-based community organising, it may well present a challenge to dominant narratives of the political party in the UK. There is the potential to allow political parties to move on from the malaise and atrophy associated with 'ruling the void' thesis, showing the iron law of oligarchy to be flawed. Of course, M4C, and the ideas and principles upon which it rests, are inchoate with the Labour Party, British Labour movement and broad British Left; they are an emergent set of ideas yet to be fully crystallised and which may fail to fully institutionalise, remaining peripheral to the core purposes and functions of the Labour Party. However, the very presence of individuals attempting to incorporate the lessons of community organising into the party political sphere is evidence of the potential for change, demonstrating that some are fully aware that the political party system has to change if it is to rebuild itself for the future.

7.0 Organising within the party: M4C in Southampton

This chapter advances my argument in a different direction from the previous chapter. While M4C activity in Cardiff was focused on establishing a space *beyond* the party in which new forms of collaboration between civil society and party actors could occur, the M4C activity in which I participated during my time in Southampton attempted to stay *within* the party, building a space for collaboration between the party and civil society that remained focused on the existing institutions of the local party. Here I use my experience as a M4C community organiser, building relationships across the local party and the resulting ‘Southampton Sharkstoppers’ campaign, to explore this work. The Sharkstoppers’ campaign gave me unfettered access to the experience of starting a M4C organising project from scratch, following the model laid out in chapter 5. My experience in Southampton highlighted the challenges faced when attempting to integrate community organising techniques within the party, and it exposed how the party’s institutional focus on contesting elections undermined its ability to create space for collaboration with civil society. As such, this case illustrates the limitations of the M4C model of community organising, and shows how having a closer integration within the party during M4C organising projects produced a different set of outcomes in terms of the impact on the relationship between the party and civil society, to those outlined in the previous chapter.

Southampton was my core organising patch during my year working with M4C. During my first meeting with Kathryn Perera in September 2012 she floated the idea of establishing a presence in Southampton after being approached by John Denham MP. By joining M4C as a community organiser I had given the organisation additional capacity, and she hoped to use this to cement the support of Denham, a senior MP whose close links to Ed Miliband would be useful for ensuring M4C was supported by the national leadership of the Labour Party. Whereas Cardiff represented the most developed case of M4C organising in the country, Southampton represented the opposite end of the spectrum. Additionally, being the person that was attempting to facilitate these processes, I experienced first-hand the reactions of those within the local party who disagreed with the M4C model. I was able to see how those who supported M4C negotiated new forms of authority, and the way in which my application of M4C’s model of community organising altered the relationship between the local party and civil society.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First I document the timeline of my engagement in Southampton, presenting an overarching chronological story of the phases of organising I went through from September 2012 to September 2013. The chapter then focuses on three components of this story which are illustrative for understanding my application of M4C's work and the impact on the relationship between civil society and the Labour Party.

The first is the initial period of time in Southampton, in which I attempted to negotiate a space for a M4C organising project by building relationships across the local Labour Party and undertaking 121 meetings with key local figures. The second component is the 'Southampton Sharkstoppers' campaign, which consisted of Labour Party members and attempted to address the impact of payday lenders in the city. The third component focuses on the activity of Arnie Graf in Southampton, an American community organiser who had been hired by Ed Miliband to advise the party centrally on integrating community organising techniques and principles. Arnie was invited to Southampton by John Denham MP, and his approach focused on reforming the local party institutions by integrating some practices and techniques of community organising into their work. While this was not part of the M4C project, it raised broader issues about the relationship between community organising and the Labour Party and the wider implications for understanding the link to civil society.

At the end, this chapter reflects on the data presented here and my experiences throughout the year in Southampton, and argues that the approach I took, and which Arnie Graf's presence encouraged, of focusing on building space within the party for community organising campaigns to emerge severely restricted the ability of the model to facilitate new forms of collaboration between the party and civil society. My presence did not produce the potential benefits associated with the M4C model, including improved organisational capacity and legitimacy for the Labour Party. However, it did have some small impacts on the internal culture of the party itself.

7.1 Organising Journey

My organising project in Southampton was characterised by six phases of organising activity:

1. **Negotiation:** From September to November 2012, I held a number of 121s with the aim of building relationships with key figures in the local party, and gaining an understanding of the city.

2. **Sharkstoppers:** From December 2012 to April 2013, I focused on creating a team of leaders who would build a local Sharkstoppers campaign.
3. **Arnie Graf:** From February to April 2013, I responded to the impact of Arnie Graf's collaboration with Southampton Labour Party, and the emergence of new leaders and new campaign areas.
4. **Candidate selection:** Occurring concurrently from February to July 2013, my organising activities had to respond to the on-going party selection process, in which a candidate would be chosen to stand in Southampton Itchen seat at the 2015 General Election.
5. **Leadership growth:** From May to August I focused on growing the group of leaders with who I was working, developing their capacity and expanding the number of campaigns M4C activists were running.
6. **Consolidation:** From September through to October, I attempted to consolidate the leaders I had been working with, hoping to create a sustained M4C presence beyond my exit.

These phases of my organising activities in Southampton broadly followed a plan I had designed at the start of the year, which reflected the model of organising described in Chapter 5. However, as my activities remained within the party and did not, as Stewart had in Cardiff, establish a space beyond the party, they were more susceptible to the institutional machinations of the local party in Southampton. In particular, this included the fact that the Southampton Labour Party had recently contested local elections prior to my arrival in September 2012, and that as John Denham MP was standing down at the next General Election, there was to be a selection contest to decide who would stand as Labour candidate in the Itchen constituency of the city, culminating in a vote by party members in July 2014. Arnie Graf's arrival in the city also influenced my application of community organising in Southampton and the wider reception it received.

The plan I designed at the beginning of the year included building a relationship between key figures in the Southampton Labour Party, identifying a core group of leaders, taking those leaders to action on a campaign of their choosing, expanding the leadership team to involve civil society, non-party actors, and finally, institutionalising the presence of a M4C

leadership team in time for my departure twelve months later. This plan was a response to the requirements placed on me as a M4C community organiser, and explicitly articulated to me by Kathryn Perera. My skills as an organiser would be judged on my ability to identify and develop new leaders, and then facilitate these leaders taking political action; however, these had to be publicly declared as being part of M4C, rather than simply a local Labour Party campaign group. In other words, the outcomes of my organising had to be framed and understood as being party of M4C, rather than just the work of the local party.

When I developed my organising plan at the beginning of the year, neither Arnie Graf's presence nor the party's selection contest were considered. The selection process to choose a candidate to replace John Denham MP formally began in January 2013, and the two frontrunners were Rowenna Davis and Cllr Sarah Bogle. Davis was an external candidate from London, a Councillor in Peckham and a journalist. She had recently published a book that was supportive of 'Blue Labour', and as outlined in Chapter 3, this was a somewhat controversial current of thinking within the Labour Party associated with the ideas of Maurice Glasman (Glasman et al. 2011). Blue Labour was widely understood to be a conservative intellectual movement that promoted community organising as one way in which the party could rebuild the social democratic tradition around English 'faith, family and flag'. Davis was also close to Arnie Graf, having interviewed him for the Guardian. Cllr Sarah Bogle, on the other hand, was a local candidate, then serving as a Cabinet Member for Children's Service in Southampton. She was widely respected by the serving local party administration. In this regard, community organising became somewhat implicated in a perceived battle between the local party and non-local forces urging change from outside (even though it was supported by the sitting, soon-to-be-retired local MP).

Prior to coming to the UK to work for Ed Miliband (then leader of the national Labour Party), Arnie Graf was a Director at the Industrial Areas Foundation, the organisation set up by Saul Alinsky in 1940. Following an introduction by Maurice Glasman in 2012, the Labour Party hired Graf to train members and candidates in the techniques of community organising with the purpose of improving the organisational capacity of the party in the lead up to the 2015 General Election. Beyond delivering training and advice to national officials employed by the party, Graf was to focus his energy on marginal seats, providing flagship campaign 'wins' in the run-up to the General Election so that the central party could demonstrate the potential value of the techniques of community organising to the health and vitality of the party. Given that John Denham MP had been re-elected in 2010 by just 192 votes, and that he was at that time the Parliamentary Private Secretary to Ed Miliband, it was unsurprising that Graf

was invited to Southampton as a place to develop a flagship community organising project. In addition, the fact that Rowenna Davis, the front-runner in the candidacy to replace John Denham following his retirement, had built a relationship to Arnie Graf through her media work, made this case even stronger.

An overarching consideration of this chapter is the extent to which the work of a M4C organiser is influenced by the natural flow of politics on going within the Labour Party, or conversely, the degree to which an organiser is able to dictate the direction of their activities independent from the political influences of party life. As has been shown in Cardiff, Stewart Owadally took measures to secure strategic independence from the partisan and electoral rationality of the Welsh Labour Party by taking initial steps to build relationships with key individuals in the party at the start of his organising drive. This focus on positioning himself and M4C *beyond* the party allowed him with the time and space needed to develop his organising projects, with the time needed for the development of strong relationships and collaboration between civil society and party actors. However, as my timeline of 121s and meetings shows (table XX), my organising project struggled to move beyond the party, remaining constituted primarily by party actors. This would influence the outcomes the M4C model of organising employed in Southampton was able to produce when compared to Cardiff.

Figure 5: Southampton research and organising activities

Sept	28 th – Met with John Denham and his staff. Meeting with Cllr John Noon.
Oct	12 th – Cllr Georgie Laming and Senior Cabinet Member meetings 18 th – Southampton Student Union – Olivia Vaughan and Jacob Saxton (Labour Students) 20 th – John Denham MP coffee morning and community walk in Bargate Ward 26 th – Quaker leader, Cllr Andrew Pope and Cllr Satvir Kaur 121 31 st – Mohamed Mohamed (Hampshire Somali Centre) and Cllr Sarah Bogle 121
Nov	28 th – First Sharkstopper House meeting with Ryan Carter, Roxana Andrusca, Renata Bogus and Gavin Midgley (Labour Party members)
Jan	9 th – Planning emails with Arnie Graf 12 th – Sharkstoppers send letter to Cllr Simon Letts about payroll deduction 26 th – Arnie Graf event
Feb	7 th – Mohamed, Renata and Rob Joy meetings (Labour Party members) 20 th – Sharkstoppers Meeting

Marc h	9 th – Shirley High Street Research Action for the Sharkstoppers campaign
April	13 th – Second Arnie Graf event 19 th – Strategy meeting following from Arnie Graf event, Cllr Paul Lewzey, Emily Rainsford and Becca Ridley (Labour Party members) 23 rd – Sharkstoppers Strategy meeting, planning negotiation 30 th – Sharkstoppers negotiation with Solent CU (John Merritt), Ian Woodland and Kelly Tomlinson (Unite) meetings
May	1 st – Reverend Gary Philbrick meeting, Cllr Dave Shields meeting, House meeting with Somali parents, with Mohamed and Rainsford 8 th – Held M4C training in Quaker Meeting House 10 th – Rowena Davis 121 16 th – John Denham update Portcullis House
June	10 th – Southampton Echo cover Solent win 18 th – Nick Thomas (Christians Against Poverty) meeting, shadowed by Ryan Carter 28 th – Sharkstoppers sent letter to Southampton University Vice Chancellor Don Nutbeam about payroll deduction
July	3 rd – Visit to Christians Against Poverty drop in centre with Ryan Carter 13 th – Sharkstoppers Listening Action Southampton Centre, deliver letter to banks 31 st – Mohamed email Rowena about starting a PRS campaign
Aug	7 th – Chat with Emily Rainsford and Rowena Davis 13 th – Emily Rainsford sends a freedom of information request to Southampton University regarding Living wage 14 th – Jacob Saxton meeting 21 st – Georgie Laming meeting
Sept	23 rd – Labour Party Conference

I now reflect on the three phases of my organising project – the initial attempt to negotiate a space beyond the party (which did not succeed), the consequential emergence of the Southampton Sharkstoppers campaign as a campaigning group within the party, and the arrival and activities of Arnie Graf which reinforced the position of community organising within (rather than ‘without’) the local party.

7.2 Initial 121s and access through the party

My plan for the first two months in Southampton was to conduct 121 meetings with key local Labour Party actors. I hoped that they would point me in the direction of party members, or community figures in their local wards who they felt might be interested in being involved with community organising campaigns. My first priority was to find people to organise with, as without this I would be isolated and 'walking alone'. My expectation, perhaps naively, was that Councillors would be happy for me to contact active members in their local ward, and would gladly give me their contact details. This turned out to be a miscalculation on my part and I encountered a number of Councillors whose instinctive reflex was suspicion and reluctance to engage.

On my first day in Southampton, on the 28th September 2012, I met with John Denham MP and his staff, and Cllr Paul Lewzey, a recently elected Councillor who had been given responsibility for organising future electoral campaigns. John Denham gave me a detailed overview of the local Labour Party in Southampton. He explained why he wanted to develop community organising and why he had asked M4C to begin work in the city. He had two main concerns that he felt M4C could help to address. First, he felt the party was lacking organisational capacity to fight coming elections. This was exacerbated by the election to Council of a core group of younger party members earlier that year. They had brought additional energy, numbers and leadership to electoral campaigns, but were now more regularly tied into the bureaucratic responsibilities of being Councillors without having the time to organise door-knocking sessions or galvanise other party members. For John, community organising was attractive as a way to bring in a new tranche of activists who had the time and energy to fight future election campaigns. His second concern was that the party had become distant from its core electoral base, understood to be the 'white working class of Southern England'. If community organising was a means by which the Labour Party could rebuild its links with particular communities, then M4Cs efforts in the city could be focused on this particular community that was perceived to have been left behind by the modernisation of the Labour party during the 1990s and 2000s.

After meeting John Denham, Paul Lewzey gave me a lift to John Arnold's house in the north of the city. Arnold, the Chair of Southampton Itchen Labour, lived in a leafy, suburban area near the University of Southampton. He was in his 70s and had been a serving Councillor for twenty years since the 1990s and 2000s. His role as Chair of the party meant he played a key stabilising role within the local party, chairing the monthly meeting of the city-wide

Labour Party and ensuring that the necessary functions to run a political party were all in-hand. Tall, with a large grey beard, he was fondly thought of by everyone I met in the local party. He was seen as someone who could be trusted to be impartial and take decisions for the good of the party rather than his own self-interest. When I met him we talked about the history of the Southampton Labour Party and he indicated that he was not positive about using community organising to build greater capacity in the party. His hesitation was based on his experience of overseeing large community consultations as a senior Councillor earlier in his life, and throughout our conversation, he repeatedly conflated community organising by Labour Party members with various forms of community engagement that had been conducted by Southampton City Council. Whether this was intentional or not, his position on community organising seemed to indicate that he did not see the Labour Party as an agent for bringing about change in the city, but rather, its role was to be a conduit between the electorate and the local authority in Southampton. In this regard, the role of the party was to win elections, take hold of the City Council and the constituency, and then represent local people. It was not about mobilising people to campaign for change or foster local capacity beyond the party itself.

He kindly typed up the points from our conversation and sent them to me a few days after our meeting. Although framed as a history of the Southampton Labour's policies towards community engagement, he made a number of points that illustrated his thoughts about the potential of building stronger relationships between civil society and the local Labour Party. Thus when discussing the possibility of Council services being delivered by community associations, he said that *'most geographical communities do not want to do things, they want the Council to do things'* and that *'community groups (with exceptions) are not an effective forum for consultation on city-wide policies. Electronic communication gives the possibility of obtaining wider and more representative views and opinions'*. He concluded the piece by stating that *'building and strengthening communities remain desirable objectives but it is far from clear how Councils can do this.'* Reflecting his background as a senior Councillor, his framing of the potential for the Labour Party to use community organising techniques is focused on how the party would work via the Council to do things. He then notes that *'the Bridle/Marsh-Jenks leadership [of Southampton Labour during the 2000s] was openly dismissive of community groups. However it was significant that the only two wards that Labour managed to hold in the 2008 Tory landslide (Bevois and Woolston) were the wards where local councillors had made sustained efforts to work with community groups.'* This admission showed me that while there had been an ingrained culture of suspicion within Southampton Labour towards 'communities' as they were seen to be

unrepresentative and insignificant actors of social change, there was also awareness that building strong relationships with communities could benefit the party come election time. Organised communities were understood as being potentially useful in building electoral support, but they were not to be facilitated to do much else other than vote. Indeed, the council was understood to be the voice and vehicle for local community work.

My next visit to Southampton was on the 10th October, and I had arranged to meet two Councillors; a senior Southampton Council Cabinet Member, and Cllr Georgie Laming, one of the younger group of Councillors who had been unexpectedly elected at the last local election. My slightly disappointed feeling after meeting with John Arnold was compounded when I met the senior Cabinet Member. My notes taken immediately after meeting him explain why:

'Worst 121 yet. Constantly interrupting, talking over me. When I asked why he had joined the Labour Party he said to fast track his career, 'to get power more quickly than in the slow career of a LG officer'. When working for Southampton Council he had seen Councillors as powerful people who could boss around senior officers, and he wanted that power. Came across as a bit of a maniac, and certainly a careerist who could not articulate any political principles. Also when I asked if he knew any party members who may have been interested in organising, he couldn't even name one of his ward members!

His ward didn't have a Chair or Secretary, and he tried to fob me off by naming John Arnold. When I asked what he thought were the issues most concerning his members, he said 'their sofas'. Really condescending. His only reflection on membership was when he went door knocking before his reselection and only five people turned up, which didn't surprise me.'

I was shocked by how little this Councillor knew of his local ward party membership, and became worried that individuals like him, very prominent in Southampton Labour, were the wrong route to meeting active members who might become involved in community organising. I realised that I would have to find other means, beyond the party organisation, for finding leaders. However my second 121 that day with Cllr Georgie Laming made me more optimistic. My notes from that meeting read:

'Georgie is one of the new young Councilors mentioned by John Denham. Recently elected, when 20 years old, and currently a student of journalism at Solent University. She was very enthusiastic about campaigning, but said she was motivated by 'local pride' and trying to boast it, which is a bit of an abstract issue for campaigning, and may be more likely secondary outcome rather than a primary objective.

When I asked why she joined the party, she said she was head girl at her school and organized an election in sixth form. She joined the Labour Party to fulfill the role of the candidate more fully.

Voiced frustration at being typecast as young.'

Her enthusiasm seemed genuine, and I was hopeful that she would want to work together to build a campaign in the city. However at that point I had been organising for M4C for about three weeks, with little prior experience as a community organiser. So when presented with a capable person in a 121, who may have lacked anger about specific issues but was highly enthusiastic, I was not sure what to offer her in the way of next steps. What was the best way for making sure I built a relationship with Georgie that would take her to action under a M4C banner? At that point I did not know. In the end I told her that I was planning on conducting more 121s over the first few months, asked her if she knew any other party members who may be interested in building campaigns, and said I would be in contact once I had organised a first meeting. This was a mistake, demeaning her potential role in a future organising project. My response should have been to ask her to do something particular, to give her a task that would contribute to building a campaign, and to then hold her to account on fulfilling that task. I could have tested her, and if she responded positively, her commitment to M4C would have strengthened.

For the following week I had arranged a series of 121s with the Southampton University Labour Club. By that point I had started to develop a strategy for the Southampton organising drive, one that was open to the possibility of starting a Living Wage campaign at Southampton University. I had yet to speak to anyone about this in Southampton, no one had raised it in a 121 as an issue they were angry about, but I had realised after my first tranche of 121s that I had to have a plan which people could 'buy into' and follow. It was not sufficient to just conduct as many 121s as possible and hope that a campaign emerged in an organic, authentic way once leaders and issues had been identified. This decision was a

response to the feeling that I had to prove my worth in Southampton sooner rather than later; some sort of political action had to emerge because of my presence, otherwise any support within the local party for M4C activities would begin to wane before anything got off the ground.

My notes from the day at Southampton University describe how my 121s went:

'I Met with University Labour Society President, Olivia Vaughan, today and Jacob Saxton, the club's secretary. Olivia Vaughan's self-interest was not clear to me; possibly she wants a career in politics after graduating? Interested in M4C though and has stood as a Cllr in Southampton. Tended towards the non-relational in our 121.

Jacob was more interesting; he had tried and failed to do a LWC a few years ago. Basically from what I can tell, he sent an email to the VC, who said no, too expensive, and so that was that, campaign over. He seemed passionate about it, but hadn't tried to organize the cleaners.

We then walked around campus and spoke to a couple of cleaning and maintenance staff. They seemed to be paid okay, and didn't have major grumbles about the conditions, except a talkative young man called Aaron working in a catering area. Only 19, he wanted to leave as could see there was no progression. Both he and his mother worked for the university. He would be good to ask to come along to our meeting. Same age as the activists, local etc. Family story.

Jacob seemed to react positively to leadership development. That is his self-interest.'

Jacob said he would take the idea of starting a Living Wage campaign to his Club's committee, and see if they supported the idea. This seemed positive, and I was hopeful that this would become a focus on my organising drive over the next few months. However the group did not choose to take forward the campaign, and I think in hindsight it was due to me proposing it rather than allowing them to choose a campaign and working with them around their own concerns. I had not managed to find the right balance between pro-actively suggesting campaigns to satisfy the professional demands being placed on me by M4C and

the expectations of Southampton Labour Party, with the principle of listening and deliberation engrained within the theory of community organising. While the need to find the right balance between proactive campaigning and bottom-up listening and issue selection, it was probably harder for M4C organisers than other 'traditional' community organisers given the presence and pressures associated with operating within a Labour Party context.

7.3 Southampton Sharkstoppers

Two days later I attended a Coffee Morning organised by John Denham and his staff. The meeting took place in Bargate Ward, and was a well-attended open discussion in which Denham engaged local residents in an open discussion. No agenda was pre-agreed; the conversation was led by the concerns of those present. I noted how the meeting went:

'The issues raised were national – banks, Torys, welfare – but slowly became more local and practical – debt, car parking.'

'When debt was raised many of the attendees became animated, and many said they knew people who were struggling for money, and had turned to the provy (The Provident doorstep lenders) for help. JD began to look up at me at that point, obviously thinking this was an area we could work on'

John Denham spoke to me afterwards and said that if I would like to take this up as a campaign area, I should speak to Councillor Andrew Pope, who had been pushing the Council to take more action on financial exclusion. This potential campaign area seemed to be strategically useful for me as an organiser as it reflected the on-going priorities of a Councillor in Southampton (albeit one I had not met yet), and could be tied into the Sharkstoppers campaign which was at that time M4Cs flagship campaign. I felt that building a campaign base in Southampton on this issue, with links to other organising patches and to M4Cs national work, would assist in cementing M4Cs presence in the city.

I therefore arranged to meet Councillor Andrew Pope on the 26th October. In our 121 he immediately mentioned payday lending and financial exclusion as issues he was angry about, and learning from my mistake with Georgie Lamming, I pushed him to bring together a group of party members to hold a house meeting on the issue. I interviewed Andrew later in the year, and he reflected on the early process of working together to establish a

'Southampton Sharkstoppers' campaign, and why he took the opportunity when we met in October 2012:

'I'd [already] taken a bit of an initiative on financial inclusion. I wanted to push things on a bit and I have to say there was a lack of support from within my own group of Councillors. However I could have done more perhaps ... so it was very good, it was quite handy actually that Movement for Change turned up really and I thought I might as well take the opportunity to get some help with it and it's worked extremely well I think. It's exceeded my expectations and I'm very grateful for it.'

Andrew's self-interest in working with me seemed clear; he had been trying to focus the attention of the Southampton Labour Group on the issue of financial exclusion, and to see bring about some tangible policy response by the Council, and felt the M4C model of organising could assist him in achieving this. Andrew agreed to bring a group of party members together to begin the process of building a campaign. A month later on the 28th November, I met with five members brought together by Andrew; Ryan Carter, Roxana Andrusca, Renata Bogus, Gavin Midgley and Eileen Wharam. Thus in this case, in contrast to the Cardiff case outlined in the previous chapter, the motivation for the campaign came from within the party rather than from deliberation between party activists and civil society. However, having said this, the organising facilitated a group of party members to get together and focus on a concern and this wouldn't have happened without M4Cs intervention.

Andrew was an atypical community organising leader, but he perhaps represented a typical leader within the M4C model of organising. He was rooted to the Labour Party, culturally and procedurally, he had grand individual ambition for his political career, he operated in public life through the formal mechanisms of electoral and representative politics, and he saw M4C as a way of assisting him in achieving his objectives. However, importantly for me at that time, he put effort into building relationships with junior members and activists within the local party, and he was willing to facilitate their engagement with M4C. Whether he had done this to further his own goals or out of an interest to develop others seemed irrelevant at the time. I felt that he was able to marry my own objectives as a M4C community organiser with his own political self-interest.

In an interview later in the year, I asked Andrew if he felt the members he brought together for the first Sharkstoppers meeting had any expectations about what they would be involved in, and why they had decided to attend and commit to being involved and he told me:

'I don't think they had any expectations. They were just interested in doing stuff and partly because of my relationship with them they were prepared to come so it depends on whether you've got a good relationship with them and you know that they're keen and they are keen and I was pleased that you were able to activate them on that issue. But then some of them, they're very energetic, they will do lots of stuff whereas others wouldn't. Others would be more dismissive or not have the energy to do it.'

Here Andrew demonstrates that he saw the value of building relationships with broad networks of people; something that is obviously important for an active local politician. It is also significant that he was able to identify particular individuals from those networks as having the capacity and willingness to take further action in a campaign, which was a skill above that normally expected of a local politician.

The first meeting with the potential Sharkstoppers campaigners was my first group session in Southampton, and it happened two months after I had first started my organising drive. At the meeting each person introduced him or herself and explained why they were interested in the issue of payday loans and financial exclusion. I gave my political introduction and talked through the organising work of M4C. It was immediately apparent that none of the group had direct personal experience of payday loans, and they were all Labour Party members. Explaining their motivation, they highlighted abstract concerns that are common to those within the Labour movement - poverty, exploitation, protecting the poorest and resisting commodification. They also pointed towards credit unions as an alternative to payday lenders, and hoped that the campaign could take action to build the capacity of the credit unions in Southampton. After each committed to the campaign, we agreed to some tasks focused on research, and set a date when each person would report back their findings. After hearing their concerns, and recognising their interest in strengthening credit unions, I took the decision at this first meeting to ask the group if they would like to take some initial action to get things started.

Towards the end of the meeting, sensing that the activists were keen to move to action sooner rather than later, I presented the option of writing a letter to the Labour Leader of

Southampton Council, Councillor Simon Letts, asking him to implement a pay roll deduction system enabling Council staff to save automatically to a local credit union straight from their pay packages. I had heard about this system through my own research for the Sharkstoppers campaign strategy being developed by M4C, and I knew it was fairly easy to implement and could have a sustained and beneficial impact on local credit unions, giving them access to a large number of high value savers. This can help to capitalise credit unions, enabling them to lend more, thus competing with payday lenders. The group agreed to this move, and we decided that Roxana and Ryan would draft a letter and send it around to the rest of the group for confirmation. I also suggested that they use this letter to grow the number of those involved in the campaign, asking others to publicly sign the letter. They agreed to do this, and the meeting ended with a clear plan and a group of activists who seemed to me to be excited about starting a new campaign. Although I was anxious that I had taken too much of a lead in the groups decision about what would come next in their campaign, I felt it was a necessary move to ensure action was taken as soon as possible (perhaps due to the pressure to deliver and report back progress to M4C HQ in London). This would give me more breathing space, justifying my presence in Southampton, and satisfy the activists who wanted to get something done soon.

The letter was drafted over the following weeks, and myself and the activists sought out others who were willing to sign it. Through this process, I was able to begin to teach the Sharkstopper activists some of the community organising lessons about power; that power is organised money or people, and because we did not have money, as a campaign group we had to focus on organising people. Asking people to commit a public signature was a first step to organising them into the campaign group, and once they had signed, we would be able to hold them to account on this commitment, bringing them along as we took more actions in the future.

In January 2013 Simon Letts, Leader of Southampton Council, responded to our letter and he was positive. He agreed to implement the payroll deduction system and publicly support the campaign as it grew. This gave the activists a boost of enthusiasm, particularly those younger members, Roxana Andrusca and Ryan Carter, who had not previously been involved in organising a campaign and they came to realise that change on an issue they felt strongly about may occur as a direction result of their actions. We held our next strategy meeting in Eileen Wharam's house on the 20th February, and the group decided to invite a representative from Solent Credit Union, one of the two larger credit unions in Southampton, for the last half hour of the meeting. The activists framed this meeting such that when the

representative arrived they wanted to gauge whether a local credit union could compete with payday lenders on the high street. However, based on desk-based research undertaken by Renata Bogus, the Sharkstoppers group had already decided that working with a credit union was their preferred route. The real aim of the invitation and discussion with Solent Credit Union was to collate information that would inform a full negotiation that the group planned with the credit union at a later date, and to get a commitment that the leaders of Solent Credit Union would attend. Sitting in the living room of Eileen's home, the activists asked the Solent Credit Union representative a lot of questions, seeking to understand how the organisation worked while also identifying ways in which the credit union could be altered so that their operations were directly competing with pay day lenders. They also sought and received a commitment that the President and Vice President of Solent Credit Union would attend a meeting on the 30th April 2013.

Before this date, the group decided to undertake research into the payday lending industry in Southampton. We decided to conduct a 'mystery shopping' exercise visiting the payday lenders on Shirley High Street in the west of the city. The lenders had concentrated there, seeking business from a community comprising recently arrived migrants from Central and Eastern Europe and the white working class who had once been employed on the docks running perpendicular to the high street. The group met on a cold Saturday morning in March in a branch of McDonalds. After practising with me for fifteen minutes before the others arrived, Ryan and Roxana outlined the plan for the action and explained what the group was trying to achieve. It was primarily a research action focused on understanding the experience of those who used payday lenders, and to understand the techniques used by lenders to lure customers into their shops without them realising the extremely high interest rates. Understanding these issues would, Ryan continued, help the group to begin organising the people who used payday lenders.

From my perspective, the action was a success. I had three objectives; first, to test Ryan and Roxana's leadership ability; second, to agitate those in the group for whom, having never been in financial difficulty, the issue remained abstract; and third, to create publicity about the group's activities that would help recruit more individuals from within and beyond the party to the campaign. The second objective was key; asking the campaign activists to walk into a payday lender, provide a fictitious scenario for why they needed a loan, to see how the lender responded, and to compare the cost of these loans to those from a high street bank, made the problem a real one that they felt angry about rather than an abstract problem they were concerned about. In terms of its adherence to the community organising

model practiced by M4C, this was a compromise. The members of the campaign group should have been responding to their own problems, rather than the problems of others, in which case such as exercise would not have been necessary. However, my approach in Southampton was to begin organising within the local Labour Party membership, a group of individuals who seemed largely void of problems, and whose politics was motivated by concern for others rather than themselves or those in the proximate social networks. They seemed to me at that time to be mostly middle class liberals.

The following month, on April 30th, the group congregated in a cramped side room of the Labour Party offices for the second meeting with Solent Credit Union. By this point the Sharkstoppers group had grown, with more party members contacting Ryan and Roxana, who had emerged as the lead activists, asking to be involved. Together, we decided on a group of ten activists for the negotiation with Solent Credit Union, including Mohamed Mohammed, the Director of Southampton's Somali Community Centre, who I had first met at John Denham's coffee morning back in October and with whom I had a follow-up meeting, Councillor Andrew Pope, Councillor Georgie Lamming, who had become involved in the campaign after our first meeting, and Eileen Wharam, the elderly member of the party who had told me how she had used doorstep lenders when she was a young single mother. The activists arrived half an hour before John Merritt, the President of Solent, and they agreed the running order of the meeting and possible 'asks'. However there was still uncertainty as to what the credit union would agree to, and so we decided to split the negotiation in two; the first half would be a further discussion of the way in which the credit union currently lent money, then a short 'caucus' for the group to decide specific asks without the credit union present, and then a second half when the asks would be presented and negotiated between the two sides. The first half of the negotiation began with a substantial round of introductions in which Mohamed told a harrowing story of a good friend who had used payday lenders, driven by unemployment and the bad health of his mother. Contrasted with the rational and conceptual arguments of the Labour Party members present, Mohamed's story brought colour and anger to the room. As had been the effect during the mystery shopping exercise, the impact of payday lenders was shifted from a general concern to a problem that required urgent action, stunning the room into a moment of silence as Mohamed's emotional story came to an end.

Following this, we listened to John Merritt talk about their work before breaking out for a caucus. During an intense and frenzied fifteen minutes, in which I struggled to keep the discussion calm, the Sharkstopper activists realised that they might be able to leverage the

credit union into lending more to those most at risk of using payday lenders by using the security of the new money coming from the Council's pay roll deductions. This was to be brought in by the Council on the 22nd May 2013. They decide to seek an agreement from John Merritt that for every two new savers recruited to the credit union through the payroll deductions scheme, they would offer one additional loan to someone earning £15,000 or less per annum. After returning to the room, John Merritt listened to the proposal and almost immediately agreed. His self-interest was clear; he wanted to grow his credit union, bringing in more capital from new savers and interest payments from additional loans. The meeting came to end, and the activists were jubilant during the debriefing session. They sensed they might be on the verge of creating a local, community orientated solution to a huge problem, and doing so in an innovative way not attempted by anyone else taking action as part of this nation-wide campaign. They were proud, and I felt I had certainly developed their capacity as Labour activists, being involved directly with a negotiation and implementing a strategy to solve an issue they felt was important.

Figure 5: Southampton Sharkstoppers negotiation with Solent Credit Union



Ryan and Georgie wrote a blog outlining the story of the campaign so far, and explaining the strategy for Southampton Sharkstoppers going forward. In it they said that '*this agreement*

is a huge achievement but it is also a challenge. It means we can help the local credit union to grow, while at the same time making it more possible for those on the low incomes in this city to borrow money in a safe and responsible way. But we are also challenging ourselves and the labour movement in Southampton to organise their money, to join the credit union, and to make a difference locally. It is only by organising our money that we will have the power necessary to take on the pay day lending industry'. The group were beginning to use the language of community organising, to understand the role of power and way they had to build it if they were to be a success. Furthermore, this experience had allowed them to rethink the role of, and their relationship to, the local Labour Party.

In challenging the 'labour movement' to help them organise new credit union members, they were presenting an alternative understanding of the local party. Rather than being an institution whose sole objective was to win elections, the party was framed as a potential source of power due to the organisation of people rather than whether they were able to win office. This alternative conception of power opened up the potential for new concentrations of authority, beyond electoral authority, rooted in the ability of party members to organise themselves into campaigns focused on issues of common self-interest, such as the Sharkstoppers campaign. This seemed to be a radical step change in the type of political actions that were commonly accepted by the Southampton Labour Party, whose central figures had, as outlined above, articulated a suspicion of community organising, as they understood it.

However, the group was still predominantly made up of Labour Party members. At the time this did not register as a risk to me, but it seemed to be exactly what I was meant to be doing; recruiting party members into community organising campaigns, improving their capacity through action, and in turn, influencing the internal culture of the local Labour Party. However, on reflection, the absence of civil society (except Mohamed Mohammed from the Hampshire Somali Centre, who quickly joined the party and later stood as a Council candidate), either directly through individual participation in the campaign or through extensive listening and 121s, meant the group was not having to deliberate on issues of common concern with non-party members in the wider society. Rather, they were in a traditional political campaign in which issues were selected that reflected the motivations of Labour Party members, and not through deliberation and collaboration with broad-based civil society. Even with this different form of application, focused *within* the party rather than *beyond* as in Cardiff, the model was still able to produce a number of outputs that were useful for the local Labour Party – the development of a cadre of 'leaders' from within the

membership, campaign actions and wins, and the presentation of activist stories demonstrating the value of the M4C model. My organising focus on those already participating in the local party, rather than both party members and civil society, was further entrenched with the arrival of Arnie Graf in Southampton.

7.4 Arnie Graf and the central Labour Party

Arnie Graf's first event in Southampton happened on the 26th of January 2013. His arrival came after planning between Graf and myself, discussions I had with John Denham MP, and conversations with Kathryn Perera about the boundaries of our roles in Southampton. It soon became evident that his arrival would complicate my position. I was first and foremost a M4C organiser, fulfilling a role in which I was accountable to Kathryn Perera as Chief Executive of M4C. However, in this role I was also expected to be supportive of the Labour Party, undertaking campaigns that would enhance the organisational capacity of the local Labour Party in Southampton. As such, it was necessary to carefully negotiate the separation of responsibilities between my role as a M4C organiser and the degree to which I assisted Arnie's work as a direct employee of the Labour Party HQ.

The risks were that if I assisted Graf's activities in Southampton fully, the output of my work would not be seen as part of the work M4C was doing but just part of the Labour Party's own internal organising projects led by Arnie Graf. However, if I choose to keep my organising projects, namely the local Sharkstoppers campaign, separate from Arnie's work, there was a risk that my organising would be seen as independent of the party, and thus the relationships with local party actors that gave me space to organise would be jeopardised. I therefore had to find a balance between the integration and separation of our organising projects.

The process of negotiation between myself, Kathryn and Arnie was on-going during January 2013, and it highlighted many of the tensions created by M4Cs positioning in relation to the party, and thus demonstrated the tensions I hoped to uncover through my research. Namely, the way in which the use of community organising techniques and practices within a Labour Party context redefines the boundaries between the party and broader civil society, and how this process of redefinition challenges embedded forms of authority within the British Labour Party. In other words, due to Arnie Graf's arrival in Southampton, I was expected to use community organising in a way that was loyal and supportive of the local

Labour Party whilst at the same time, remaining independent and working under the authority of the M4C Chief Executive.

In an interview with Kathryn Perera we discussed the distinction between M4C's organising and Arnie Graf's work with the Labour Party:

'If what we do is facing out from the party, using the party as a gatekeeper through which we go in order to find new leaders and build a movement, what Arnie does faces into the party and is about changing the culture of the way that it organises, particularly in regard to its staff, and meshing that with the primary objective of the party which is electoral success. So, using techniques of community organising to make the party more electable by dint of the way that it organises internally. Whereas what we do is use the techniques of community organising to build a movement around the party which is of validity in its own terms'

This explanation gives a broad overview, but does not explain what Arnie hoped to achieve in Southampton, and it appeared that he hoped to kick-start organising projects that were primarily focused on developing the capacity of the party membership, an ambitions that was similar, albeit more focused on the party, to M4C's goals. Kathryn explained that Arnie Graf had to legitimise his presence to those sceptical of his methods within the party by conducting successful public-facing organising projects:

JS: So why is he doing anything public?

KP: Because the way that you prove to the party staff that this works is about public attraction so it's not about just teaching them to have more effective one-to-ones with each other internally, what he wants to do is to prove that by using relational politics you can increase your votes and the way that you do that is obviously to do public actions. You can't prove that unless you do it.

Southampton was therefore designed to be a public showcase of the impact that his organising techniques would have on the electoral capacity of the party, a process which he had been used by the Lancashire Labour Party leading up to the local elections there in 2013 that was widely report as a success (Ferguson 2013). This would help him to make the case to other Labour candidates taking part in internal training sessions that it was in

their interests to integrate his community organising techniques into their repertoire of organisational activities. I interviewed Arnie in April 2013, and I asked him what his strategy was for organising in Southampton. He laid out an organising process that included undertaking joint organising activity up to the 2015 General Election:

After the [Southampton] training, from June, through December 2013, we should be doing the organising we're talking about. And build our capacity, campaign on local issues that people are raising, be in the community, be seen as people who care about the things that people care about. Begin to let people know that the party... is in the community... it's the place [where people] try to get things done and listen.

So we build our capacity and then coming into the next year, from January, February to May [2014], we're into the council elections, MEP elections and council elections. Taking hopefully that energy and support relationships into an open manifesto... hopefully through the training people are more and more open to... an open manifesto situation... and people are invited who aren't in the Labour party because those that have been engaged and involved in the actions would have, whatever the actions-the pot holes or the loan shark, whatever they're talking about, whatever they're going after, whatever they come up with, housing or whatever it is... they're invited in to help talk about it. They won't necessarily have the final say but they're in it.

So this is 2014, in the winter, hopefully for seven months we will have been out doing work in the community ... and building relationships and campaigning on community issues... and then we try to bring that into: "okay, so we've been campaigning on these things, what do you want in your manifesto?" And I would assume that the things they're fighting for would get reflected, and maybe some other ideas. They write it and then they have to figure out how they're going to win their manifesto, which is to take their council back.

The open manifesto takes it all the way in until we focus on winning the election. And then we have a year until the general election, so from June of 2014, through conference, all the way into December, hopefully with more numbers because we've been growing ... people feel it's important and ... building the capacity, developing volunteer organisers. We never have enough paid people but if

they've been engaged in our organisations we can have two organisers with 250 people walking... they're volunteer area captains...

Arnie describes an organising process which begins with a series of training sessions to prompt the formation of campaign groups made up of existing party members, these then grow to include non-party members and civil society leaders, who then participate in discussions about an 'open manifesto' developed by Southampton Labour Party for the 2014 local elections. Through this process of dialogue and manifesto writing, those non-party members feel it is important to support Labour come the 2015 election, and crucially, the local party identifies 'volunteer area captains' from within the campaign groups who facilitate the focusing of the campaign group's capacity on to electoral campaign in 2015.

In many ways, the work I had done with the Sharkstoppers group fits into this model and it is just the final two steps, expecting non-members to sign up to the party and transferring community campaign activities into electoral capacity, that separates the objectives of M4C from the purposes of Arnie Graf's work with the party. Whereas the central Labour Party sought to build organisational capacity as a means for growing and then activating a volunteer base during electoral campaigns, M4C sought to build organisation capacity that would create stronger relationships between party and civil society as an end in itself. Both would change the culture of the local party and impact on the way things were done but the distinction can be understood in two ways. First, there is a difference in relation to party-building versus movement-building. Party-building indicates an effort to bring about organisational changes that will mean the party is more effective at winning elections and gaining state power, whereas movement-building attempts to bind the party to civil society in a way that ensures politicians and the party remain accountable to those within civil society, an aim which exists independently of this electoral mission.

Second, there were differences in relation to a debate about ideas versus procedure. The Labour Party's use of community organising techniques facilitated by Arnie Graf was wholly focused on issues of procedure; on improving organisational procedures so that the party would be more effective at winning future elections. These procedures included the recruitment of new volunteers, the creation of campaign groups, and the organisation of volunteer captains who led the shift towards electoral campaigning nearer election time. Positive outcomes of this procedural focus were organisational efficiency, responsiveness and resilience. In contrast, M4C's community organising model was focused on the fermentation of new ideas about the role of the party, and specifically, the relationship

between the party and civil society that would create a stronger political movement more able to affect change. It seemed that the generation and incorporation of these ideas, rather than improving the processes which enabled the party to win elections, underpinned the way in which M4C employed the techniques of community organising.

Of course this distinction was not always clear-cut. For example, M4C organisers would often have to implicitly justify their presence in local areas by making claims, similar to Arnie's, that their activities would enhance the ability of parties to win elections. Indeed, M4C probably needed to be clearer about the purported impact of its work on the electoral capacity and outcomes for the party. When discussing the ideas about the party's relationship to civil society associated with both Arnie Graf's work and M4C's model, John Denham MP told me how this lack of clarity over M4Cs purposes was being perceived:

Denham: I think for some people that idea [of organizing] is quite threatening. It's very much in the [cooperative movement] of the Party; you get together, you discuss politics, you decide what is right and then you go out and campaign for it. But the [current] assumption is that you probably know what it is that other people want, so the idea of negotiating change and involving other people and empowering people, some people find quite threatening. And the second thing is some people still – and I confess I don't think Movement for Change actually explains this at all well - can't see the connection between this work and anyone ever voting for the Labour Party. That is not articulated well in the model and I think that is a problem for quite a lot of people...'

Scott: 'Do you think Arnie's got an explanation for how his input into the Party organisation will translate into votes?'

Denham: '... well you know, I think it's be fair to say he hasn't, you know, I've not heard him articulate it'

This lack of clarity and the underlying tensions between the interests of the Labour Party and community organising in general (i.e. between party-building and movement-building; and the link to elections), were evident in an with Kathryn Perera during which we discussed Arnie Graf's work with the Labour Party. She explicitly questioned the causal link between community organising efforts and improved electoral capacity saying:

'The way he tells the story is: "so we went to Preston, I built a team of three or four people, trained them up, they went out and did lots of one-to-ones, twenty people turned to fifty, turned to one hundred, turned to 350 people" and then there's this leap where he says, "You know this time last year in Preston they were making 10,000 contacts a year, in the build up to this election we made 120,000 contacts." Now the causative link between the two is never explained because in my view it barely exists other than that the personnel that Arnie was relying on to turn out 350 were the same personnel who decided to use electoral organising more effectively, but the premise of what he's implying is by doing one-to-ones, mass actions, developing leaders, that's transferring into more door knocking, more canvassing, more capacity.'

Kathryn's concerns about Arnie Graf's organising strategy reflected one of the challenges facing her own organisation during 2013. At that point in the development of M4C, it was apparent that they had to do more to take ownership of the 'community organising' method within the Labour movement in the face of opposing claims of ownership from the Labour Party (specifically associated with Arnie Graf) as well as certain trade unions. The trade unions and the party were seen, from the M4C perspective, as utilising a more limited number of community organising techniques, and doing so within their existing organisational areas of activity - electoral politics or work-based organising. M4C, on the other hand, saw themselves as using a fuller range of community organising practices, without any pre-agreed area of activity or influence. Instead, M4C was working to establish themselves solely as a community organising institution that operated in new spaces of political activity between the party and civil society. If others within the Labour movement also presented themselves as practicing community organising, even within existing areas of activity, this presented a threat to the purposes of, and therefore, the rationale for, the existence of M4C.

In this regard, M4C had decided to position themselves as not being overly focused on winning elections, in contrast to the pitch being made by Arnie Graf and his Blue Labour supporters. Kathryn hoped that M4C would not be judged on its ability to assist the Labour party to win elections. In many ways, M4C was more ambitious in its vision to branch out beyond the party to find new talent and energy in civil society. However, this also made it harder to win the argument for its work in the Labour Party. While M4C wanted to be judged in relation to the number of new leaders identified and developed, campaign actions and wins, and the scale of public events; the local party would also expect more concrete results

when it came to election success. Moreover, Arnie Graf's alternative model increased these expectations of electoral success.

This competitive dynamic over the ways in which Labour movement institutions were using community organising techniques seemed to have an immediate impact on the relationship between my own organising projects in Southampton and the new round of activities instigated by Arnie Graf. Prior to Arnie Graf's first 'training session' in Southampton on the 26th January 2013 we discussed the structure of the meeting via email (Graf was in the USA), and I suggested that we combine the training session with a public action related to the Sharkstoppers campaign, which had been ongoing for two months by that point. His training session was expected to have a large turnout, and I hoped to use the event to recruit activists and members to the campaign, as well as showing those present that community organising was a fun and public facing method which emphasized action over discussion. Graf's response was that the three hour slot scheduled would not give enough time to both teach those present the basics of community organising and also undertake a public action. My suggestion had been a public walk from the training event to Southampton's main shopping centre, with members conducting some face to face interviews as they walked on the way.

Arnie did not feel that taking the group to action was the correct approach in his first meeting in the city. Instead, when 80 Labour Party members from across Southampton turned up for the training he told stories of his organising in America intertwined with lessons about the principles of community organising, and finished by asking each member to go out and have one on one conversations with their neighbours to find issues that might be suitable for building a campaign around. They were also asked to communicate their findings back to the wider membership at a follow up meeting.

Reflecting back on Arnie's approach, the outcome of his work with the Southampton Labour Party was limited to two large public events and the establishment of a core team of members who were instructed to organise interested party members into groups focused on particular sets of concerns. This latter process did not occur, and the groups dissipated as soon as they were formed, with only two of the core group turning up for the follow up meeting two weeks after the initial event. . The intended development of new campaigns did not happen, and at the time that my research period came to an end, and there was no discussion about organising an 'open manifesto' dialogue.

The impact of Graf's involvement, which had the backing of John Denham MP, Rowenna Davis (who during his presence in Southampton was selected as the parliamentary candidate to replace John Denham), and the executive of the local party, was to reinforce the perception that community organising was entirely focused on the activities of existing party members, and secondly, that outcomes could be achieved in quite a short amount of time without expending much resources or time. Arnie Graf effectively raised Southampton Labour's expectation but did not deliver in the long run.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that M4C's model of community organising produces different outcomes depending on whether it is applied *within* or *beyond* the party. In Southampton I faced a number of barriers when attempting to move beyond the party, as Stewart Owadally had in Cardiff. Sceptical Councillors were tired and weary having just contested a difficult local election. They were also entrenched in an organisational culture that saw statist solutions to problems as the preferred response to decline. In addition, the intervention by a party-focused organising model associated with Arnie Graf, and my own lack of experience as a community organiser, meant that while I was able to get a campaign off the ground it struggled to move beyond the party and create spaces in which actors from the party and civil society could collaborate together.

Even with these limitations, however, my activities still produced a number of benefits for the local party. A tranche of members were activated beyond the normal electioneering activities of the party, developing new political skills and confidence, and they were beginning to alter their expectation of the role of the party (evidenced within the blog written by Ryan and Roxana after their negotiation with the credit union). The party members involved took action and actually affected change through the agreement struck with the local credit union and Southampton Council. While I was able to build a campaign, and help these individuals take action and affect change, these outcomes revolved around the participation of existing members and not any collaboration with wider civil society. As such, the work served to deepen existing organisational capacity rather than broaden it through stronger linkages to civil society.

The creation of a space *within* the party in which party members participated in community organising campaigns, as developed in Southampton, conformed to a particular conception of the party which differed from what was presented in the previous chapter. In

Southampton, the party often felt adrift from civil society, located in the city only in as much as its members lived there and its electoral fortunes reflected the extent to which it selected issues that happened to reflect the interests of resident voters. I applied some of the techniques of community organising to its existing organisational model, enabling it to activate its existing membership and demonstrate immediate action on issues, but it did not create a space in which the principles of 'reciprocity, subsidiarity and solidarity' influenced who participated, how issues were selected, or who was responsible for dealing with issues of common concern.

In contrast, the party occupied a different role in Stewart's organising work in Cardiff. While it also acted as a gatekeeper, enabling initial access to the area, and it also provided a tranche of activists to begin an M4C organising campaign, the party soon became somewhat distinct from his work. The party began to fulfil the role of a potential campaign target for M4C in Cardiff, standing in tension with the campaigns that his leaders developed. The primary comparative examples are the way that the Southampton Sharkstoppers campaign leaders wrote a letter to their own party leader in the city, who was the Leader of the Council, whereas in Cardiff, the Home Sweet Home activists made demands of the Councillors during a public meeting led by a group of party members and civil society actors. In the former, party members were asking for support from the local party hierarchy, and in the latter, party members were working with civil society activists to make demands on the local party machine. If I had organised a similarly confrontational action on a Labour Councillor or the Labour-run Council in Southampton, I suspect that my work in the city would have come to an end. Indeed, during my time in the city, I did not manage to challenge the prevalent perception that the party existed to act on behalf of civil society, and was not meant to engage with civil society and work together in response to problems faced by the people. While the Sharkstoppers campaign did strengthen the political capacity of those involved, it did not involve a wider group of people nor ensure that the party was better connected to local civil society.

8.0 Conclusions

The context of this thesis is a political party system that has been stripped of its popular component, indicated by declining levels of participation and increasing disinterest in UK political parties. This increasing divide between the popular, sovereign will of the people and the elite form of decision-making required of modern government has fuelled a crisis in the Labour Party, whose historical origins, identity and purpose can be traced to the winning of universal suffrage at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the mass participation by civil society within the British polity. The more immediate context of this research is the response by sections of the Labour Party to this dilemma, with the turn to community organising representing a desire to rebuild the party's relationship to civil society around the principles of reciprocity, solidarity and trust. This organisational development, surfacing after the party's losses at the 2010 General Election under the banner of M4C, is an exemplar case of political party reform in the face of the declining levels of participation in the party system, and it presents an opportunity to consider the future of the political party.

Responding to this context, my research has posed four research questions to guide a consideration of the future of the political party in the face of evolving relationships to civil society:

1. What is M4C's model of community organising?
2. How are they applying this model in the party?
3. How is M4C's model changing the relationship between the Labour Party and civil society?
4. What are the implications for the future of the Labour Party and political parties more generally

The theoretical underpinning that I have used to guide my research questions and empirical observations is a conceptualisation of the political party as dependent for organisational capacity on an ability to build and maintains relationships to place-based civil society associations. This leans on the pluralist theories of democracy associated with Robert Dahl (1961) and Duverger's (1971) theory of democratic elitism. I have drawn on Dahl in understanding that if the political sphere and political parties are open to infiltration, they will come to represent and embody 'the most widely shared values and goals of society' (1961, p.91). I combine this argument with the institutional arguments of Duverger, who conceived

party procedures for selecting leaders as being instrumental for maintaining the link between elite rule and the popular will of civil society. In identifying, recruiting and training new 'elites', who are then accepted or rejected by the electorate, parties channel and manage the conflictual and contradictory array of interests within civil society into distinct groups of interests. In so doing, they are also better able to represent the characteristics and interests of the demos-at-large.

This thesis represents the first in-depth academic examination of the British Labour Party's attempted integration of community organising techniques and principles. I have combined democratic theories of the party with a historical analysis of Labour's evolving relationship to civil society throughout the twentieth century and in combination with empirical research, I have sought to explore the wider implications of these developments. In this final chapter of the thesis I group the theoretical and empirical contributions of my research under three headings: parties and place; civil society within the Labour tradition; and the future of the political party.

8.1 Parties and place

Movement for Change was founded on the assumption that if the Labour Party is to reach out to civil society, to build stronger relationships of 'reciprocity, trust and solidarity' (Glasman et al. 2011) with civil society, it must begin by organising beyond its own institutional apparatus in order to do this. The emergence of M4C was a pragmatic response taken by certain sections of the party elite to provide a new institutional bridge between civil society, the party and the state. Referencing my theoretical framework, the party had ceased being open to infiltration by civil society interests, and was incapable of selecting, training and presenting to the electorate leaders who represented their interests. It had come to represent a party operating with a cartelised system of competition (Katz and Mair 1995), relying on state resources for its survival, incentivised to avoid competition with electoral revivals, and devoid of the benefits associated with closeness to civil society.

The emergence of an organisational model that sought to integrate community organising techniques within the Labour Party indicated an aspiration to move the Labour Party beyond the cartel party system, rebuilding links to civil society as a means of reversing the decline in participation it had experienced over the past thirty years. The role of the party was to

become more aligned to the pluralist and democratic elitist theories of the party in democratic society.

In attempting such a redesign of the party and its relationship to civil society, M4C was an empirical verification of Yishai's (2001) 'post-cartel party', in that it deviated from the cartel model by displaying a 'strong orientation to civil society' implied through the establishment of 'party-affiliated groups and or organizational links with existing associations' (2001, p.671). By 'incorporating society into politics' (*ibid*), M4C was attempting to overcome the problems that plague cartel parties – financial strain, competition from actors emerging from civil society, and an increasingly precarious hold on power. In Yishai's model, the post-cartel party seeks to overcome these problems by allying with 'voluntary associations', establishing 'social groups', and coalescing with already existing groups with which it shares 'common interests' (2001, p.672). Similarly, M4C's approach used the techniques of community organising, learnt from the USA via CitizensUK, to build campaign groups that provided a space in which individuals and associations from within civil society would collaborate with party actors, deliberating over issues of common concern, and developing campaign strategies for tackling those issues together.

In my conceptualisation of the political party and account of M4C's model of community organising, I have sought to emphasise the significance of place for understanding Labour's turn to community organising. By place I mean the confluence of interests, issues, values and behaviours enacted under the umbrella of 'tradition' by civil society within a particular geographical area. Building on Bevir (2001), the concept of tradition allowed my research to capture how the particularities of a place are constructed through the tensions and dilemmas faced by those occupying that geographical site. To engage in such tensions and dilemmas is to be sensitive to place in the hope of influencing the tradition created therein.

Applied to my empirical account of M4C's model, when space for party-civil society collaboration is constructed *beyond* the party, as in Cardiff, the model enables party actors to become sensitive to broad-based interests and issues felt within the particular place in which the model is applied. Applying my frame, party members can become engaged in the on-going re-creation of tradition of that place, and this can potentially accrue organisational benefits – in greater capacity and legitimacy – for the party. So in Cardiff, party members and civil society actors took action together on the conditions in the private rented sector. They formed a group – Home Sweet Home – that deliberated on the potential solutions and asked landlords and the Council to take action. Communal self-preservation, political action and resistance against commodification of land and homes were all involved in the

campaign, demonstrating a convergence between the contemporary issues felt within civil society and the tradition of place-based organising of the Labour movement, as outlined in my third chapter.

However, when M4C's model was applied primarily *within* the apparatus of the party as it was in Southampton - sanctioned by the local party executive, embedded within the party's electoral campaigning apparatus, and directed by pre-existing interests of the members and policy emphasis of the party in general – it struggled to build a space in which party members and civil society could collaborate as equal partners. As such, in this case, the party did not become more sensitive and responsive to the issues felt broadly within civil society. Instead, it was necessary to select a campaign based on the ideological positioning of the party and which was already in existence elsewhere in the UK, and the work involved a number of activists from within the local party to lead in the campaign. There was little evidence that the local Sharkstoppers campaign transcended the institutional boundaries between the Labour Party and civil society, and so the activities were not engaged in the re-creation of the labour tradition in that particular place.

These observations contribute to existing perspectives on the relationship between place and political parties within the academic literature. Although it is widely recognised that place has a critical impact on political behaviours and outcomes (Agnew, 1987), much of the debate has focused on mapping out election results. Indeed, electoral geographers have traditionally applied positivist analyses to voting patterns and choice preferences, developing models to explain the relative importance place and context (Johnston and Pattie, 2003, 2006), campaign techniques (Gerber and Green, 2000), the perceived efficiency of local and national economic management by parties (Pattie, Dorling and Johnston, 1997), highlighting the 'neighbourhood effect' that 'people who talk together vote together' (Pattie and Johnston, 2000). Such accounts of political parties tend to rely upon quantitative electoral data in their consideration of how the spatial arrangement of electoral architecture and party organisation interacts with voting preferences, and the implications of this for voting outcomes. In focusing on elections and voting behaviours they omit consideration of how the practices and behaviours of party actors open up or close spaces of collaboration with civil society between elections and the periods of intense election campaigning by parties, and how the characteristics of this collaboration may benefit the organisational capacity and legitimacy of the party. In others words, to date at least, the geographical literature on political parties has been overly focused on the outcome of party-civil society relations as demonstrated in election results, rather than looking at the processes by which parties seek to engage with civil society in a particular place on an ongoing basis. Although Low (2007) makes reference

to the need for more work in this field, highlighting the importance of geography in shaping political culture, this thesis represents an attempt to take on his challenge.

8.2 The relationship to civil society within the Labour tradition

The turn to community organising by the Labour Party is the latest episode in the evolution of the party's relationship to civil society ongoing throughout the twentieth century. This thesis has presented a historical analysis of that relationship, showing how the party coalesced from an alliance of civil society associations –trade union, faith, intellectual and cooperative – in the latter part of the 19th century, before going through a process of institutional centralisation and a focus on statist policy responses in the post-war period. Over time, the party's relationship to local place-based associations was overshadowed by a relationship to national party-affiliated trade unions and a large body of individual members, in the form of a 'mass party' (Duverger 1964). This institutional arrangement suited the party's political economy at that time, which emphasised Keynesian intervention in the national economy, state welfare and the imagined support of a large homogeneous working class.

In the latter half of the twentieth, two attempts to redefine the party's relationship to civil society laid the foundations for the Labour Party's more recent turn to community organising in the aftermath of the 2010 general election defeat. Anthony Crosland developed an alternative political economy for the Labour Party in the 1960s, arguing the party should seek to regulate the capitalist economy rather than transferring ever large sections of the economy and means of production into state ownership. This argument re-materialised as a policy agenda during the New Labour era, when central proponents of a Labour Party government emphasised the role of community, civil society and citizenship in the pursuit of social justice. However, this emphasis within policy formulation was not applied to the party's own organisation, membership and relationship to civil society, and these issues remained neglected during New Labour's period of government. Indeed, during this period the party suffered a 60% decline in its membership (between 1997 and 2010). With the electoral defeat of 2010, and a corresponding fall in membership, these issues became more important and in this context, Blue Labour emerged as an intellectual agenda that argued for community organising to be used to recast the relationship between the party and civil society around the principles of reciprocity, solidarity and trust. Community organising was identified by many in the Labour Party as providing the principles and practices needed for crafting a new relationship between the party and civil society, enabling the party to grow

and become a legitimate force for transformational change throughout the country (Stears 2011). The principles and practices of community organising were then applied within the party by M4C.

This thesis has argued that the model developed by M4C is strikingly similar to the practices of the Labour Party during its period of emergence and ascendancy in the first decades of the twentieth century. I come to this conclusion by reflecting on Craig Calhoun's (1982, 1983) history of Labour as emerging from the reactionary radicalism of working class communities resisting ever-greater commodification of their lives throughout the 19th century, the later mediation by the Labour Party of the 'practical politics' of working class capacities within local areas as the means of building a national party, as argued by Mike Savage (1987), and described within the influential arguments of Eduard Bernstein (1899) in the 19th century. These arguments encourage party actors to reach out to civil society associations, grounding their party politics in the experience, capacities and concerns of 'everyday' working class life. The M4C model reflects such practices by constructing spaces in which civil society actors and party members deliberate together, building campaigns from the issues in their lives that they share as problems, and then compounding their understanding of the resonance of these issues by extensively listening to and working alongside, rather than simply mobilising, fellow community members in their locale.

It would be misplaced to draw from this analysis a simple historical binary between localised, communitarian and associational practices of the party in the 19th and early 20th century, tied to strong imaginary of working class communities 'standing up for themselves', and the liberal, centralised and individualised practices of a party operating predominantly at the national scale in the latter half of the 20th century. The challenge of the Labour Party has always been to subvert this dichotomy, and to offer a politics of practice that combines the participatory and particularistic character of civil society with the universalism and abstraction necessary to compete in, and win, elections. Accepting the dichotomy by resting too heavily on the former leads the party away from the transformative potential of state power, and clashes with a political party's primary objective of winning elections. Conversely, letting the latter guide the party widens the 'void' (Mair 2013), leading parties into the realm of oligarchy and emotional absenteeism. Blue Labour touches on this challenge when Glasman (2011, p.15) discusses the political traditions that have characterised the 'English nation'. The 'political parties and movements' that constitute the English political tradition are 'rooted in the lives and experiences of people' and blend 'folk and academic concerns through a politics of interests'. This combination of the everyday and the abstract may be an 'incoherence' to philosophers, but are a 'source of vitality and

strength to a [Labour] tradition which contests with others for democratic power' (2011, p.15).

As my research has shown, in attempting to reinvigorate this 'vitality and strength' through the integration of a model of community organising, M4C faced a series of internal challenges. A sceptical reception from some local representatives, an engrained organisational culture suspicious of outsiders and greater degrees of accountability amongst activists, and an assumption that responsibility for affecting change lies with elected officials as representatives rather than with coalitions of active citizens from within and beyond the party. Such internal barriers are matched by a series of external challenges faced by the Labour Party as it seeks to rebuild its relationship to civil society. In particular, the Labour Party now faces competition from alternative political movements and new forms of democratic action which are avidly non-partisan, and whose network-based, non-hierarchical and issue-specific campaigns (Christakis and Fowler 2009, Micheletti 2010, Norris 2002) may be more appealing to those within civil society who prefer lower barriers to entry, are energised by populist narratives and who seek instant recognition and gratification from political activism. Whilst not the focus of my research, these external challenges will certainly influence the evolving relationship between the Labour Party and civil society, and so warrant further research when considering the future of the political party.

8.3 The future of the political party

The political party is the pre-eminent institution within modern representative democracy. As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, political parties are understood to enable modern representative democracy to function by bridging the divide between elite-rule and participation by civil society in the affairs of government. Their institutional design is the critical factor in fulfilling this function, selecting individuals to be candidates and leaders, and choosing policies that reflect issues of common concern within civil society. If they function well they enable a closeness between the people and the ruling elite, but when they are institutionally moribund and suffer declining levels of participation, they create the sense of a void between the people and the elite, leading to apathy, scepticism or dissatisfaction with 'the system'. As such, the act of bridging the divide between the state and civil society is critical to maintaining stability within modern society, and this critical function deserves greater attention both in geography (Low 2007) and political science (Allern and Bale 2012). I hope to have contributed to this task, providing a novel empirical contribution to

understanding how one particular political party has sought to redesign its own relationship to civil society.

I have understood the political party to be about more than representation and contesting elections. Whilst these are obviously necessary functions of the political party, the argument of this thesis has been that parties cannot survive if they focus solely on elections, and that as institutions, they must encompass a greater range of activities than simply electioneering. This perspective clashes with accounts of electoral results and the actions of politicians that dominate journalistic and academic accounts of political parties. Contesting and winning elections should be seen as the outcome of a party's work, rather than the sole process by which a party gains power. As discussed in Chapter 3, it took the Labour Party forty-five years before it won its first majority in parliament, during which time it expended much time and resources building linkages to civil society associations, aligning 'working class capacities' and place-based traditions of working class political organising with its own electoral objectives.

Such linkages exist still exist, albeit in geographically varied ways, and they played a part in my own research experience. I found that Cardiff had a stronger tradition of place-based working class organising around particular issues, meaning that M4C's activities were more readily accepted and could more easily grow beyond the party's capacity. Moreover by creating a space of collaboration between party actors and civil society associations, M4C was able to increase the legitimacy of the party and identify and develop leaders through engagement with their campaigns. This tradition was weaker in Southampton, which lacked the place-based traditions of the Labour movement in South Wales. When I visited Southampton it felt as if the Labour Party was hanging on by a thread, and in 2015 the party lost the Southampton Itchen constituency even with a candidate (Rowenna Davis) who seemed to understand the potential of community organising. Rather than expending the time and resources needed to grow its organisational capacity through building linkages to civil society in the city, the Southampton Labour Party seemed destined to rely upon favourable national conditions and the use of an efficient electoral machine to squeeze the maximum return from potential voters. Trapped in a cycle of diminishing returns, the local party was likely to put more and more time and effort into mobilising rather than organising, and it would continue to view potential supporters as voters to be turned out to vote rather than as active citizens whose capacity could be fostered in support of their wider political movement.

The core challenge M4C took up when it was established was rebuilding the traditions of place-based organising that had fuelled the emergence and rise of the Labour Party in the 19th and 20th centuries. I do not know whether this effort, undertaken by M4C but also recognised as necessary across sections of the Labour Party, will be successful. However, without rekindling such relationships to place-based civil society capacity, the Labour Party will surely face terminal decline. It is particularly hard for a Labour Party to survive without a movement of ongoing support within civil society, operating at the local scale, that is conducive to electoral politics, but which does not become subsumed and lost within the party's electoral objectives.

Of course, civil society has changed throughout the 20th century, and the composition of civic associations and participation in the UK is widely debated (Hall 1999). In this context, the exact institutional design of the Labour Party's future relationship to civil society will have to be open to experimentation. However, such experimentation will require huge resources and dedication, training new organisers able to operate in relationship with civil society associations as well as the political party, backed up with a culture change in the party that allows its institutional boundaries to become permeable and open to influence by the many interests of civil society. Equally, the changing nature of civil society will require a rethink of our theoretical approaches to the political party. Although I have identified pluralism and democratic elitism as useful for understanding Labour's contemporary turn to community organising, these surely require updating as new institutional arrangements compete with political parties, seeking to build non-partisan linkages throughout civil society and represent broadly-felt issues to the state. As the established parties respond to the emergence of institutional competitors, both non-partisan and party political, so too, our theories will have to be reformulated to explain new forms of political action, broad-based collaboration, leadership development and the novel ways in which the people seek to make voices heard in the governance of their country.

If the challenge of experimenting with its organisation and rebuilding a social movement are too great for the Labour Party then it faces an uncertain future. Competition will only increase from both non-party forms of democratic engagement and alternative political parties willing to offer populist narratives to an electorate frustrated by the increasing divide between civil society and the state. With the rise of the SNP and UKIP (Goodwin and Ford 2014) such populist alternatives already seems to be gaining ground. Whether these new parties or alternative democratic institutions are capable of providing the institutional bridge between civil society and state remains to be seen. The virtue of the Labour Party has been the tradition of connecting the plural world of civil society with the state, and how through its

roots in place-based civic associations it was able to identify and develop new leaders who would then represent the interests of the people within the institutions of the state. Without this century old tradition it is hard to see how the current crop of political alternatives would be able to provide the stability and representation to those citizens who wish to see elites held to account.

Such experimentation will run concurrently with the question of what it means to be a social democrat, and a social democratic party, today and into the future. Just as mid twentieth century social democracy ossified around the 'mass party', as described by Duverger, and state socialism, so the social democrats of today must find a *partnership* between the bridge they build between their party and civil society and the form of governance they aspire to enact. The strength and cohesion of this partnership – between their relationship to civil society and the form of governance – will determine the electoral success of future social democrats. If either side of the partnership is overbearing then the other will be negated, undermining the viability of Labour as a potential party of government.

As my research has argued, the challenge for social democrats will be transforming their existing partnership with civil society so that they are once again able to mobilise large sections of civil society around a set of coherent and common interests. This will legitimise the social democratic aspiration of achieving transformative political action using the apparatus of the state. For the Labour Party to continue in its historical tradition of representing the plurality of civil society to the state it must discover a form of social democracy that recreates its traditions for the world in which it finds itself today, replicating and adapting such traditions so that they are appropriate and suitable to the institutions that constitute the places across the UK. This may be a painful process in which established traditions are challenged and discarded as new forms of communication and economic activity alter the nature of place-based institutions. However it is only by recreating the traditions of the party, and what it means to be a social democratic in the UK today, that a Labour Party can once again hope to gain support across the country.

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10.0 Appendices

Appendix 1:

Interview Schedule: Labour Party member

Name of interviewee:

Date of interview:

Age:

Place of interview:

Occupation:

Labour Party Membership

- How long have you been a member of the Labour Party?
- How often do you attend a local Labour Party event or meeting?
- Do you have an official role within your local party?
- Please remember back to when you first joined; what were your reasons for joining?
- Have you ever considered leaving the Labour Party, and if so, why?

Experience of the Labour Party

- Please speak openly about your experience locally of being a Labour Party member since you joined the party?
- What has been the most and least enjoyable engagement with the local Labour Party during your time as a member?
- What would you change about the local party?

Labour Party Campaigns

- Have you been active in many community campaigns ran by the local Labour Party?
- If so, what was your role and how did you find the experience?
- Do you feel the campaign was a success?
- What was your motivation for being involved in such campaigns?
- Have such campaigns built links with other organised community groups in the local area?
- Do you feel the success of such campaigns impacted the local electoral support for the Labour Party?

Civil Society

- Are you a member of or active within any local civil society organisations? [Defined as any non-state, non-commercial organisation].
- Please explain any official roles you have in this area, and also any unofficial activities you take on?
- How long have you been active in this area?
- Could you compare this experience with your work in the Labour Party?
- Do particular local issues emerge simultaneously within both the local Labour Party and [aforementioned organisation]?
- If so, can you compare the general response by each organisation?
- Has there been an occasion when your involvement in both was a benefit for achieving a campaign or political objective?

- Has there been an occasion when your involvement in both restricted your ability to act fully to achieve a campaign or political objective?

Political motivation

- What is it that drives your involvement in the Labour Party?
- What is it that motivates you to be involved in [aforementioned organisation]?
- Have your political opinions changed throughout your time as a Labour Party member, and if so, how?
- Are there any particular local issues which anger or frustrate you, and which you would like to see solved?

Community organising

- What is your understanding of community organising?
- What is your understanding of the role of Movement for Change in your local area?
- Do you feel community organising offers a set of techniques that are different from what has been used before by the local Labour Party?
- Has there been any resistance by local members to the use of new techniques, and if so, for what reason?
- Why do you feel that certain members are keen to use community organising?

Expectations

- Do you feel the use of community organising will change the local party? If so, how?
- Do you expect community organising to mobilise other party members who are currently inactive?
- Is there an expectation that community organising will enable the local party to challenge problems facing members of your local community?
- Do you feel that community organising will help the local party electorally?

Additional Questions for members of the local Labour Party Executive

Movement for Change

- Why have you invited Movement for Change to your constituency?
- How do you expect the local Party to change due to their involvement?
- Are there any particular issues of common concern you would like Movement for Change to address?
- Do you feel Movement for Change will be supported by the local party members?
- Do elected officials aware of the planned involvement of Movement for Change, and if so, do they expect to be asked to respond to campaign asks?

Electoral Campaigning

- What is your local projection for the next election [local and general]?
- Do you have a Campaign Group? If so, who runs this?
- Do you expect community organising activities to complement current electoral activities?
- Have you thought about how members activated through community organising will be used in electoral campaigns?

Interview Schedule: Local civil society leader

Name of interviewee:

Date of interview:

Age:

Place of interview:

Occupation:

Organisation/Occupation:

- What is the purpose of [organisation]?
- Who are the constituents/members of [organisation]?
- What is your role in [organisation]?

Background:

- Why are you involved in [organisation]?
- How long has [organisation] been active?
- What was the factor which led to its creation?
- Who funds [organisation]?

Members:

- How many members do you have?
- How many active members do you have?
- How often do you meet and talk with your members?
- What are the primary concerns of your members on a day to day level?
- Do your members seek support through the relationships offered by your organisation?
- Do you ask you membership to provide support [financial, voluntary time, advise etc] for local campaigns?

Relationship to local Labour Party:

- Have you ever worked together with the local Labour Party on a community campaign?
- If so, how did you personally find this experience?
- Did engagement locally with the Labour Party help [organisation] achieve its objectives?
- If you have not sought to work together on issues of common concern, why not?
- If you have, would you say overall it was a positive experience for your members?
- Are you aware of many members who are active in both [organisation] and the local Labour Party?

Community Organising:

- What is your understanding of 'community organising'?
- Have you heard of Movement for Change?
- Would you been resistant to working more closely with local Labour Party members who were willing to campaign on issues of common concern?
- How would your membership feel if local Labour Party members offered to assist them on campaigns?

Appendix 2: Coding Structure

Cases:

- Sharkstoppers national campaign
- Cardiff
- Southampton

Themes of Community Organising:

- Accountability
- Definition
- Electoral cycle
- Leaders
- Leaders and organisers
- Politicians
- Power Analysis
- Self-interest
- Strategy
- Training

Movement for Change

- Historical background
- Building national M4C institution
- Building local M4C institutions
- Comparison to Citizens UK
- Purpose of M4C
- Relationship between M4C and LP
 - o Local
 - o MP
 - o National

Theory – statements that may relate to elements of theory

Democracy:

- Individual expression of interests
- Collective discussion of issues
- Collective social enquiry
- Negotiation and change

Habits of citizenship:

- Formal training
- Informal training
- Social action
- Reflection and learning

Civil Society (the public):

- Organisation of individuals
- Organisation of institutions
- Emerging publics
- Struggling publics

The political party:

- Changing cultures
- Power over
- Power with
- Role of the expert (politician and policy maker)
- Role of the activist
- Scale

Appendix 3: Information Sheet



Doctoral Research Information Sheet

The emergent geographies of place-based social democracy: the Labour Party and community organising

I am conducting a study into the emergence of community organising in the British Labour Party. I intend to ask why community organising techniques are being used by Labour Party members, and how these techniques are impacting on the relationship between local parties and civil society. I am also interested in the way community organising sits alongside and complements electoral campaigns, and the way local parties innovate the techniques of community organising to fit their particular needs.

My study involves observing a number of local labour parties as they begin to use community organising, and interviewing in depth those activists who are involved in this process. This is important as community organising is a relatively new phenomena in Britain, and little is known about its impact on and relationship to electoral organising. Also the information you give me will be used to build up a picture of the way local labour movement organising is currently evolving, and will help to identify lessons that can be drawn from this for the development of social democracy and labour politics more generally.

I also hope that my research will assist the work of Movement for Change, reflecting on their practices and the form of community organising they are developing. I intend to write a report for Movement for Change based on my research.

If you would like any further information about my study or have any questions, please feel free to contact me on the details below.

Thank you,

James Scott

PhD Candidate
School of Geography
Queen Mary, University of London
j.h.scott@qmul.ac.uk