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A Vehicle for Socialism

Momentum and the Labour Party

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SUMMARY

This thesis is a case study of how an institutionally oriented social movement organisation organises and mobilises to reach its aims and goals in a digital age. Momentum emerged from the social movement which sprung up in support of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership campaign in 2015. It would provide an organisational core for the movement, maintaining its activism and engagement and supporting Corbyn as leader. Momentum is oriented towards a democratisation and transformation of Labour, seeking to use the party as a 'vehicle for socialism'.

Scholars have argued in favour of a perception of movement-party relations encompassing the more fundamental ties between movements and parties, an argument this thesis supports through looking at the strong ties between Momentum and Labour and Momentum's strategic proximity to Labour, and by examining Momentum's tactics and mobilisation methods. Furthermore, digital communication and social media have heralded monumental shifts in the social movement arena: mechanisms of organisation, mobilisation, framing, and identity formation seem to be shifting. This thesis examines how a social movement organisation organises and mobilises in a digitalised age, where some scholars have suggested digitally fuelled trends of decentralisation and individualisation threaten to make formal organisation in movements obsolete. Movements are also arenas of internal struggle. The thesis will examine how Momentum has struggled over questions of internal democracy and formal organisation.

The thesis leans on a framework of social movement theory. It triangulates data, consisting of documentary evidence in the form of former research and historical accounts through books and news articles; of first-hand interviews with Momentum activists and organisers; and of first-hand observations. The analysis is split into three parts: 1) examining Momentum's strategy and tactics, how these can be related to political opportunities and constraints and to opportunity framing; 2) examining how Momentum organises and mobilises, as well as the internal struggles which mount over questions of organisation; and 3) what characterises frames and collective identities in Momentum, and how they may affect mobilisation efforts.

The analysis shows that through facilitating movementist and grassroots action within the party arena, Momentum has contributed to a gradual transformation of the Labour Party. However, the analysis points to shortcomings as well as successes, and to variations in political opportunities across different Labour substructures as a possible explanation. The

analysis finds that Momentum has innovated in tactics and mobilisation, combining old and new, and that this innovation has provided an effectiveness and reach to Momentum's mobilisation efforts which has allowed it to punch above its weight – but that these innovations come up short in its attempts at balancing movement democracy and centralised organisation. The analysis concludes Momentum activists share collective identities and solidarities built on socialist values and symbolism, shared experiences of precarity, a shared struggle of “the many against the few” and explicit opposition against elites and opportunists who are framed in opposition to their values, including within the Labour Party. The analysis points to how these collective identities and solidarities are both layered on the foundations of a long history of marginalisation of the Labour Left, which Momentum regards itself a part of, and constructed from the lived experiences of activists.

The thesis rounds off with suggestions for future research and a discussion on the future of Momentum with the movement delegitimised by the 2019 general election loss, and further by the loss of ‘Continuity Corbyn’ candidate Rebecca Long-Bailey in the 2020 leadership election. How Momentum activists’ ties to the Labour Party will hold up post-Corbyn is an open question.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BLP	Branch Labour Party
CAC	Conference Arrangements Committee
CLGA	Centre-Left Grassroots Alliance
CLP	Constituency Labour Party
CLPD	Campaign for Labour Party Democracy
ICT	Information and communication technology
LOTO	Leader of the Opposition's Office
LRC	Labour Representation Committee
MP	Member of Parliament
NCC	National Constitutional Committee
NCG	National Coordinating Group
NEC	National Executive Committee
NPF	National Policy Forum
OMOV	One member, one vote
PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
PM	Prime Minister
SCG	Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs
SMO	Social movement organisation
TWT	The World Transformed

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At Prenton Park in late May 2017, where The Libertines were about to play a concert, a ragged, old, white, male politician came on stage, briefly interrupting the programme. The predominantly young audience responded by chanting his name to the melody of The White Stripes' *Seven Nation Army* (Kogan, 2019). At 67 years old, Jeremy Corbyn was an unlikely superstar for young concertgoers in Birkenhead, but his radical politics had hit the right tunes and given hope and enthusiasm to a generation of young Britons. Years on, supporters would still chant "Oh, Jeremy Corbyn". How did he get here?

What can be described as a social movement emerged in support of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership campaign in 2015, sometimes referred to as the "Corbynista movement". Flipping the trends of declining party memberships and youth aversion to institutional politics over a short summer, Jeremy Corbyn's politics represented a decisive break with Labour's support for the politics of war, austerity, and neoliberalism, which had driven many away from the party over the decades. For many, Corbyn embodied the honesty, principledness and down-to-earth attitude otherwise found lacking in politics. Jeremy Corbyn has met unrelenting hostility over his years as Labour leader, from forces within the Labour Party and in the media, but has still held on. Momentum was founded as an organisational core for the movement, to protect Corbyn and take his political project further. The grassroots have been the Corbyn project's base of power, and Momentum has been a crucial facilitator, uniting broader segments of anti-austerity, socialist, and radical currents.

Momentum is inspired by anti-austerity, left-wing movements and movement parties, like the Indignados and Podemos in Spain, SYRIZA in Greece, and Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign in the US. With varying success, these movements have rallied against established institutions through institutional politics, either by creating their own movement parties or by trying to capture existing ones, building its political power on broad, anti-austerity grassroots movements brought together by the innovative use of new communication technologies and a collective frustration with neoliberal institutions and austerity politics. Momentum is, at the same time, a very British phenomenon. Established by a mix of veterans of the traditional Labour Left, extra-parliamentary currents, and a politicised young generation, it is an influential social movement organisation with a rich historical inheritance which has found its chief place of activism to be within the structures of the Labour Party. Momentum aims to transform the Labour Party, and make it a 'vehicle for socialism'. Fighting to pass radical policies, democratise the Labour Party's structures, elect left-wingers

to party positions, and select left-wing local and parliamentary candidates, Momentum has achieved noteworthy – but varying – success in shaping British politics by organising within and towards the Labour Party.

Traditionally, the relation between political parties and social movements has been conceived as conflictual, but the growing trend of ‘party movementisation’, tying parties and movements closer together, challenges this view (Avril, 2018). The insider/outsider divide of politics is challenged by scholars pointing to how activists can develop strong ties to both party and movement (Heaney & Rojas, 2015), or to how some contemporary movements have explicitly aimed to transform entire parties and party systems, and succeeded (Kriesi, 2015). Recent research point to a trend of ‘party movementisation’ and a synergising of institutionalised politics and movements (Hutter, Kriesi & Lorenzini, 2019). Momentum aims to transform the Labour Party. Examining the case of Momentum and the Labour Party will provide valuable insight into how institutionally oriented left-wing movements operate in the 21st century, working through political parties to achieve their aims and goals. Through the case of Momentum and the Labour Party, this thesis will examine how fundamental movement-party relations can develop, and how movements aiming to transform political parties organise and mobilise. The thesis thus lends itself to the broader academic discussion on movement-party relations.

Momentum constitutes a sizable part of the Corbynista movement, encompassing many of its supporters and activists. It was founded with the intention of becoming an organisational core for the movement, which could support it and provide it with strategic direction and organisation to further the movement’s aims and goals. Formal organisations created to represent movements can be helpful tools in setting up actions and pooling a movement’s resources in a coordinated fashion, and getting activists to turn up. However, formal organisation also poses the danger of leading movement figures becoming more interested in survival than in achieving the movement’s original aims. The importance of organisation in social movements has therefore long been disputed amongst social movement scholars (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Piven & Cloward, 1979; Hond, Bakker & Smith, 2015). This discussion has found new grounds for dispute following the development and increasing centrality of digital communication and social media (Earl, 2019; Walker & Martin, 2019), developments which have heralded monumental shifts in how social movements coordinate and mobilise (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014; Gerbaudo, 2019). Contributing to this discussion, this thesis will examine how Momentum has innovated in organisation and mobilisation and adapted to the digitalised

environment of the 21st century, combining old and new to punch above its weight as a resource-strapped, people-powered movement organisation. Studying how a movement mobilises can provide valuable insight into the general development of successful mobilisation tactics, trends in movement mobilisation, and possibly even what influences their choice of methods.

This thesis aims to answer the following research question:

How does Momentum organise and mobilise to achieve its aims and goals?

To answer this, we need to examine what Momentum's aims and goals are, examine in which arenas they focus their action to achieve these aims and goals, and understand the factors which may have affected Momentum's choices of strategy and tactics. We also need to understand where these aims and goals are derived from, and what informs movement strategy, mobilisation tactics, and different modes of movement organisation.

For example, activists' values and preferences attached to certain means and goals (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015) or familiarity with certain strategies and tactics (Doherty & Hayes, 2019) can play a role; as can opportunities and constraints, for example a two-party system compelling institutionally oriented movements to align with existing major parties, party structures and rules giving opportunity to grassroots-based action, or a sense of opportunity amongst activists compelling them to participate in action (Benford & Snow, 2000). Therefore:

- Through which arenas does Momentum channel its efforts, and how can these strategic choices be related to opportunities and constraints, and to activists' values and preferences?

The advent of digital media in the 21st century has revolutionised social movement mobilisation and their tactical repertoires, as demonstrated by, for example, anti-austerity movements in the 2010s. Examining Momentum's mobilisation tactics and mobilisation agents in the context of a digital age will aid in understanding these developments.

- Which mobilisation strategies and tactics does Momentum employ, and through which channels?

Movements face dilemmas, where they have to make difficult prioritisations between conflicting aims. One of these dilemmas is the 'organisation dilemma', where movement

democracy and organisational efficacy come into conflict. As movements are not monolithic structures, but rather complex networks of actors with diverging priorities and interests, these dilemmas can spark internal conflicts in movements when different groups in the movement prioritise differently. As part of understanding how Momentum organises, and obtaining a better understanding of its aims, the thesis will examine how Momentum has been faced with, and how it has dealt with, the organisation dilemma.

- How has Momentum been faced with, and how has it dealt with, the ‘organisation dilemma’?
- How do activists understand the power relations between Momentum’s local groups and the national executive?

To understand how Momentum activists perceive themselves and their environment, we need to examine how Momentum activists define their shared interests and create collective identities and solidarities, and how they identify their political opponents and the sources of their grievances. This is done through different framing processes. Therefore:

- How does Momentum produce frames to define themselves, differentiate themselves from other groups and direct its grievances?
- What characterises collective identities and solidarities in Momentum?

Chapter 2 will present the historical context of Momentum and Corbyn’s Labour and outline the historical frame within which this case takes part. The chapter will address historical and academic accounts on Corbyn’s political project and the emergence of a social movement, as well as a brief history of Momentum. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework of this project. It provides a definition of social movements and social movement organisations, touches upon general mechanisms of social movements, and presents theory particularly relevant to this thesis. Chapter 4 outlines and discusses the research strategies and methodological considerations in this project, how the empirical data has been produced, present ethical considerations and outline the process of analysing the data. It will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the research strategy. Chapter 5 is an analysis of Momentum’s strategies, tactics and arenas of operation, and the political opportunities and constraints affecting these decisions, as well as the political opportunity framing which motivates activists to particular forms of action. Chapter 6 is an analysis of Momentum’s mobilisation strategies and tactics, and their digital innovations in mobilisation. The chapter also analyses how internal tensions over strategic prioritisations between organisation and democracy have

sparked conflict. Chapter 7 is an analysis of collective identity and framing processes in Momentum. The chapter will examine the roles of symbolism, values, adversarial frames and threats in the construction of collective identity and for mobilisation. Lastly, Chapter 8 will present the main conclusions of this thesis and suggestions for further research.

2.0 BACKGROUND

What fuelled Momentum's rise, and what have been the major developments from then and up until the autumn of 2019? The intention of this chapter is to provide a historical context for better understanding the case of Momentum as a social movement organisation. The chapter will take the approach of an historical walkthrough which will shed light on the context in which Momentum came into existence, by looking briefly at the history of the Labour Left, Corbyn's election as Labour leader, and the circumstances of his leadership. The chapter will also present the developments within Momentum over the years.

2.1 Corbyn's path to power

Immediately following the general election defeat in 2015, Labour leader Ed Miliband resigned, kicking off a leadership election. Left-wing veteran John McDonnell said about the event: *"this is the darkest hour that socialists in Britain have faced since the fall of the Attlee government fell in 1951"* (Nunns, 2018:57). Looking back to 2014, when Miliband reformed the party's processes for electing leaders with support from the party's right wing, nobody – even at the eve of Corbyn's candidacy – expected what would be the result a mere year later. In the wake of the Falkirk Scandal and with the intent of limiting union influence and reversing a decades-long trend of declining party membership, the implementation of recommendations from the Collins Review resulted in changes in the process of electing Labour leaders. The old bloc-voting system was broken up and replaced with a "one member, one vote" (OMOV) system, where members, registered supporters and affiliated supporters could vote. The Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), the party's elected parliamentarians, would still act as gatekeepers in having a monopoly on nominating new Labour leaders. The required nominations from Labour members of Parliament (MPs) to qualify as a candidate were increased to 15 percent, as a measure to prevent the party's radicals from fielding candidates (Leys, 2018). Despite the measures put in place to prevent it, the left-wing veteran MP Jeremy Corbyn managed to scrape together the required nominations. Many of these nominations were from MPs who only nominated Corbyn on the argument of widening the debate by including a socialist. Of the 36 nominators, only 14 actually voted for Corbyn (Panitch & Leys, 2020).

The battle for the narrative of why Labour had lost the 2015 general election had

begun. As one of few Labour MPs, Corbyn had marked his strong opposition to Blair's neo-liberal project and its continuation under subsequent leaderships, and the austerity politics in the wake of the financial crisis. Having spent his political life as a left-wing outsider, pundits reckoned he had no chance. All the while, during the leadership campaign, Corbyn's rallies gathered audiences of several thousand supporters across the country, unmatched by his opponents. The popular appetite for Corbyn's political project – anti-austerity, anti-war, a new kind of politics away from New Labour – was evident (Kogan, 2019:346). At the same time, as it became apparent Corbyn was going to win the leadership, the attacks on Corbyn by the media and by his colleagues in the Parliamentary Labour Party were ramped up.

The changes to the leadership election process had unexpectedly paved the way for a candidate overwhelmingly popular with the membership, like Corbyn, to be elected leader. The PLP, a bastion of the Labour right, had stripped itself of influence in a compromise with the unions and now acted only as a gatekeeper; both the PLP and the unions had lost their bloc votes in the Labour leadership election following the 2014 Collins reforms. Instead, members and supporters had all the votes after candidates were nominated, in the new OMOV (one-member-one-vote) system for electing leaders. Support from the unions still proved crucial, as they provided legitimacy, resources and skilled staffers to Corbyn's campaign. Corbyn had the support of many of the largest unions, most centrally the left-wing union Unite, which provided considerable legitimacy and organisational resources to Corbyn's leadership campaign. The party apparatus would go on to worry over, rather than welcome, the massive increase in membership – forewarning an internal struggle particularly against the party's bureaucracy and the PLP which would last for the entirety of Corbyn's leadership (Panitch & Leys, 2020). Even with Corbyn elected leader, the Labour Party establishment was structurally entrenched in the PLP and the party bureaucracy, protected by processes and rules which did not allow for the same sort of 'sweeping conquest' by Corbyn and his supporters as had proved possible with the very leadership of the party (Nunns, 2018:291).

Corbyn's nomination to the leadership election proved to be a major left-wing outlet for public disaffection with the political consensus on austerity and Labour's commitment to Thatcherite orthodoxy and globalisation (Leys, 2018). The new electoral rules laid much of the foundations for Corbyn's success (Dorey & Denham, 2015), but Corbyn's popular appeal and the methods utilised to reach out to sympathisers, especially young people, were key (Pickard, 2018:118-120), as were the networks and alliances Corbyn had built during his years in lone opposition to the Iraq War and against the consensus on austerity (Hannah, 2018:212). Supported by an overwhelming part of the membership, and with hundreds of

thousands of supporters flocking to the party to support his political project, the election of the outsider Corbyn as leader of Labour was a radical departure from Blair's New Labour, fuelled by an emergent grassroots mobilisation. The extremity of Blairism had allowed for the 'explosive return of the left' (Hannah, 2018:214). This was channelled through Labour rather than through a third party, because of the structure of the British electoral system (Hannah, 2018; Leys, 2018).

Corbyn's principled approach to politics, holding on to his beliefs during his years in politics, contrasts with perceptions of the typical politician, has made him appear more authentic and down to earth to his supporters (Pickard, 2019:316). Even shortly after the fateful 2019 general election defeat, Jeremy Corbyn polled amongst Labour members as the most popular Labour leader in the last 100 years (Smith, 2020). Pickard comments on Corbyn's peculiar appeal:

"Jeremy Corbyn seemed to sympathisers as the antidote to the New Labour years associated with Tony Blair [...] and caught the political imagination of many young people in terms of authentic style and substance, offering a 'coherent, inspiring and, crucially, a hopeful vision'." (Pickard, 2018:121).

Corbyn's election as Labour leader was a monumental event in the history of Labour's socialists, who had spent a century of marginalisation on the party's flank (Hannah, 2018). In its "darkest hour", as McDonnell put it, the Labour left captured the party leadership on a wave of popular action. The victory contributed to a rare feeling of agency with his supporters, that Corbyn's political project was possible to win, and that an active movement was a force to be reckoned with (Ghadiali, 2018). But despite winning with 59 percent in the first round against three establishment candidates, Corbyn's leadership stood on extremely shaky ground. Faced with a hostile elite, both in the party and outside, there was a need for an alternative base of power that could counter the assaults from the media, the party bureaucracy and the PLP. Weeks after Corbyn's election as Labour leader, Momentum was founded.

2.2 Momentum: founding and developments

Momentum came into being as the unexpectedly successful *Jeremy for Labour Leader* grassroots campaign had parachuted Corbyn into position as leader of the Labour Party – a feat few to none deemed possible only months prior. Jon Lansman, veteran left-wing activist and head of Corbyn’s campaign co-founded Momentum, building on a massive enthusiasm amongst particularly young people who had now turned to institutional politics (Panitch & Leys, 2020). Momentum’s membership is an amalgamation of Corbyn supporters from different generations and political traditions (Avril, 2018; Pickard, 2018). Lansman explains that bringing these currents together to support Corbyn was a difficult task, because they looked to different methods of activism and lacked a cohesive identity as a group (Ghadiali, 2018). Many of the new activists engaged in politics for the very first time, some were already active in Labour left-wing organisations, others returned to Labour after being disengaged during the New Labour years, others again came to Labour from fringe left parties and social movements (Kogan, 2019). In the view of Momentum’s national organisers at the time, Momentum is made up of four ‘main tendencies’ who supported Jeremy for Leader: 1) extra-parliamentary social movement activism like UK Uncut; 2) traditional left-wing protest coalitions like Stop the War; 3) the existing Labour Left through organisations like the *Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD)* and the *Labour Representation Committee (LRC)*; and 4) the trade union left (Klug, Rees & Schneider, 2016:37). They stressed the importance of building a mass movement and making Labour a mass party, more movement-like and engaged in both activism and campaigning for radical change (Klug, Rees & Schneider, 2016). Momentum was from its early days a conscious attempt to give the Corbynista movement an organisational core and to help maintain the activism moving forward (Nunns, 2018:280; Kogan, 2019). It aimed to “be a tool for organising support for Corbyn’s policies, both by being a platform inside Labour and by being an organisation for building social movements outside it” (Hannah, 2018:228). For Clive Lewis, a left-wing Labour MP who helped found Momentum, the organisation was an attempt at creating a mass movement which could capture the fragmented activism of the many single-issue campaigns (Nunns, 2018:282). Momentum has energised large numbers of people, and particularly a generation of young people, who had been disillusioned by mainstream politics (Jones, 2016; Pickard, 2018:123).

Over the years, Momentum has formally aligned itself closer to Labour. In January 2017, a Momentum Constitution was implemented, which centralised power and agency in the hands of a new central organ, the National Coordinating Group (NCG) (Hannah, 2018:231-2), required Momentum members to be Labour members. The constitution also

formalised aims and goals committing Momentum to campaigning for a Labour government, and to transforming Labour by democratising its structures and processes, getting left-wingers elected into local and national Labour Party positions and selected as Labour candidates in local and parliamentary elections. These changes to Momentum's organisation came as a culmination of months of factional conflict which had ravaged Momentum, over the nature of the organisation and its ties to Labour. The different experiences activists and organisers in Momentum carried with them, translated into different understandings of what Momentum's role should be (Kogan, 2019:362). Following accusations of Trotskyist entryism in Momentum (Kogan, 2019:409), Lansman argued that the changes were in the interest of reversing a trend of shrinking local activity because of sectarianism and unpleasant meetings (Kogan, 2019:419). On the other hand, there were allegations that the changes implemented with the constitution were intended to "give Lansman and his allies more power to expel far-left factions and activists from Momentum" (Silvera, 2017; Stewart & Syal, 2017), that the changes were anti-democratic and against Momentum's purpose of facilitating grassroots engagement (Wallis, 2019), that they risked reducing Momentum's appeal amongst young people (Avril, 2018), and that they 'consolidated the control of a small office faction' (Hannah, 2018:232). The constitution also implemented several functions aimed at democratising decision-making processes in Momentum, like a digital OMOV platform for members and an advisory Members Council (Momentum, 2017a). David Kogan argues that "from that moment, Momentum became a different type of organisation and its politics were orientated entirely around the Labour Party [...] with a clear agenda for *taking* power rather than only influencing those in power." (Kogan, 2019:427) (for a more detailed account on the 2016/17 conflict and Trotskyite controversy, see Kogan, 2019:419-428). Chapter 6 analyses the state of internal conflicts over organisation in Momentum in the autumn of 2019, and how activists on a local level relate to these conflicts.

Four years on from its conception, Momentum had increased its members from a few thousand in April 2016 to 40'000 in late 2019 (Proctor, 2019). It had been through several successful grassroots-powered campaigns, like the 'Chicken Coup' against Corbyn in 2016 (where a large majority of Labour MPs voted for a motion of no confidence in Corbyn as leader of Labour), triggering a new leadership election (Stone, 2016) which Corbyn won with an even greater margin (Nunns, 2018); the 2017 general election, where Labour garnered massive support from the younger generations, pointing to what Pickard calls a "Corbynmania zeitgeist" (Pickard, 2019:335), Momentum being crucial in building support (Pickard, 2019:339; Panitch & Leys, 2020). In the years that have passed, Momentum has seen some

success in mobilising delegates at Conference in support of left-wing resolutions (Panitch & Leys, 2020). By late 2017, Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) had a pro-Corbyn majority, much thanks to Momentum's efforts to get support for its slate, and by 2018 the left had the general secretary in Unite the union's Jennie Formby (Panitch & Leys, 2020). Since Corbyn was elected leader of Labour, there have been significant changes to the top of the party, in which Momentum has played an important role. Efforts directed at structural changes to Labour and at parliamentary selections have only seen limited success, however. Chapter 5 provides an analysis which touches upon these developments in much greater detail.

2.3 Establishment and media relations

Corbyn and his allies met strong opposition from several fronts from the very beginning. Establishment hostility against Corbyn and his supporters is well documented by a rich and varied literature on the subject, which has laid bare the immense hostility and vitriol levied against Corbyn and his supporters from the media as well as from the Labour Party bureaucracy and the PLP (Seymour, 2016; Hannah, 2018; Leys, 2018; Nunns, 2018; Pickard, 2018/2019; Panitch & Leys, 2020). For example, one internal report on the party bureaucracy and executives' handling of the antisemitism controversy (an internal conflict in Labour over allegations of widespread antisemitism), which also touched upon the 2017 general election campaign, was leaked in April 2020, revealing concerted attempts at sabotage against Corbyn – working to lose the 2017 general election to smear his reputation and weaken his legitimacy to oust him as leader (Labour, 2020a). According to the report, some senior staffers joked about “hanging and burning” Jeremy Corbyn, or said Labour staff members who “whooped during Corbyn's speech should be shot” (Labour, 2020a:51). The leak was reported in several news outlets (Bastani, 2020; BBC, 2020; Booth & Mason, 2020; Stewart & Walker, 2020; Stone, 2020).

Regarding media coverage, one study uncovered “*an overall picture of most newspapers systematically vilifying the leader of the biggest opposition party, assassinating his character, ridiculing his personality and delegitimising his ideas and politics [...] mainly through lack of or distortion of voice, through ridicule, scorn and personal attacks, and through association, mainly with terrorism*” (Cammaerts, DeCillia, Magalhães & Jimenes-Martínez, 2016). Another study on the 2019 general election coverage “*demonstrates how*

substantial the negative coverage of Labour was throughout the formal campaign and how it intensified” (Deacon, Smith & Wring, 2019; Deacon et al., 2019). In a 2017 poll, self-identifying left-wingers were found to conceive of the Daily Mail, the Daily Express and The Sun in particular as ‘very right-wing’ (Smith, 2017). Chapter 7 contains an analysis of how Momentum activists frame the Labour establishment and much of the British media (especially papers conceived as right-wing, but also outlets like the BBC and The Guardian) as adversaries.

3.0 THEORY

How can we understand the case of a social movement organisation operating through party politics to address its grievances? Understanding Momentum as a social movement phenomenon and being able to analyse the case requires us to examine the expansive and expanding literature on social movements. The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the theoretical foundations and framework for the analysis, such as contributions to the social movement literature – on movement emergence and sustained participation; on modes of action and mobilisation; on power and agency; on cultural context and collective identity; and on strategies, tactics, and organisational forms. The chapter will look at how research on social movements develops dynamically following changes to movement dynamics and what drives movements' choices of strategies, tactics and organisational forms, and point at gaps in the current literature which this project aims to help fill through a case study of the British social movement organisation Momentum.

For analytical reasons, this chapter splits into subchapters discussions on topics which naturally are deeply interconnected and interrelated. The relation between framing and identity, and the role of social media, or the relation between organisation, democracy and movement strategy, are examples of such interconnected topics. This chapter attempts to provide clarity to relevant subgenres of what is a complicated and broad field by dividing their attention, despite their natural interconnectivity.

3.1 Defining social movements and social movement organisations

This chapter outlines a working definition of social movements for this thesis, and will point at how social movements and political parties may develop fundamental and interconnected relations. As the primary subject of study in this thesis is a social movement organisation (SMO), the chapter will discuss movement organisation and provide a definition of SMOs, and discuss how SMOs can be crucial in advancing the aims and goals of social movements.

The field of social movement research and researchers' interests are dynamic. Approaches and perspectives have adapted to the changing socio-political contexts which movements operate within and originate from. Social movements take on different organisational forms, utilise different tactics and follow different strategies, depending on

their political and cultural contexts (Heaney & Rojas, 2015).

There are many possible ways by which to define social movements, and difficult to cut clean definitional borders. Social movements are dynamic and have varied in structure and composition over time. As such they can be ‘moving targets’, and searching for precise boundaries can be a waste of energy, requiring a pragmatic approach to define movements. Definitions can become too inclusive, thereby too broad to say anything useful; they can be informed by political sympathies to certain causes, risking blindsiding legitimate cases of social movements on an ideological background; they can be defined in opposition to power-holders, excluding movements which support power-holders (Rucht, 2017).

Dieter Rucht lists four important elements in defining social movements. One is the aim to fundamentally change society (or resist such change), changing the distribution of power, resources and values in a society (Rucht, 2017:42). Another is the feeling of a collective identity, a “we”, as it brings people together for a common cause and discerns between “us” and “them” (Rucht, 2017:44). A third is collective action, used by movements as a key instrument to achieve its aims and goals, communicating its demands and pressuring its opponents (Rucht, 2017:44). A fourth is that structurally, movements are networks of individuals, groups, and organisations which may or may not be highly formalised like political parties, but the movement itself is not an organisation (Rucht, 2017:44). Concluding the discussion on conceptual challenges of defining social movements summarised above, Rucht concludes that a social movement can be defined as a “*network of individuals, groups and organisations that, based on a sense of collective identity, seek to bring about social change (or resist social change) primarily by the means of collective public protest*” (Rucht, 2017:45).

Some movements direct their protest to extra-institutional channels, others to institutional politics, to further their aims and goals. Approaches encompassing both avenues are not uncommon, and many social movement activists are not shy of engaging in party politics to achieve their goals (Heaney & Rojas, 2015). Movement-party relations are often conceived as conflictual (Avril, 2018), but scholars have increasingly called for dispelling of the rigid analytical separation of movements and parties, particularly due to a growing trend of ‘party movementisation’ (Kriesi, 2015; Hutter, Kriesi & Lorenzini, 2019). Criticising Tilly’s ‘polity model’ which divides politics between insiders (institutional politics, political parties) and outsiders (extra-institutional protest, social movements), scholars point out how parties and movements often overlap in activist membership, participation and identification, a phenomenon called ‘dual identifications’ (Heaney & Rojas, 2015), and how certain

movements have the aim and capacity to fundamentally transform political parties and entire party systems (Kriesi, 2015). In this regard, Lijphart's distinction between *consensus* and *majoritarian* political systems (1984) is relevant as the structures of the political system constitute opportunities and constraints for social movements seeking power in the electoral arena. In *consensus systems*, where third parties are a viable recourse of institutional political influence, movements may create their own parties – like Podemos in Spain, or SYRIZA in Greece (Della Porta, Kouki, Mosca & Fernandez, 2017). Majoritarian systems (like the United Kingdom) encourage two-party systems and make third-party breakthrough difficult, limiting third party formations as a viable course of action (Lijphart, 1984). Movements in majoritarian systems may instead try to 'capture' mainstream parties (Kriesi, 2015:672). Historical examples of the transformation of existing parties by social movements in majoritarian democracies include the US People's Party in 1896 (Kriesi, 2015:675), or the Tea Party movement in 2010 – a movement “moving within and across the edges of the GOP, but not under party control” (Skocpol & Williamson, 2012). Movements can mobilise for party election campaigns, like the Tea Party did for the Republicans in 2010, through 'proactive electoral mobilisation' (Tarrow, 2015:95).

Social movements need to be organised in one way or another, to coordinate and mobilise for action directed at reaching their aims and goals (Hond, Bakker & Smith, 2015:292). Social movements can organise in different ways. They can organise and mobilise chiefly through informal networks without formalised structures and have no formal membership to distinguish active supporters from sympathisers or bystanders. On the other hand, social movements can be aided organisationally by social movement organisations (SMOs) with more or less formalised structures acting as organisers and mobilisation agents. SMOs can aid a movement with structure, direction and formalised aims, and organising supporters through, for example, formal memberships (Hond, Bakker & Smith, 2015:295). SMOs can also play a role in maintaining and forming collective identities and communities in a movement (Carroll & Ratner, 2001:606). A classic and relatively straightforward definition of SMOs which works fine across different definitions of social movements, including the one outlined above, is a “*complex, or formal organisation which identifies its preferences with a social movement or a counter-movement and attempts to implement these goals*” (McCarthy & Zald, 1973:1218). As outlined in Chapter 2.2, Momentum is one example of an SMO specifically set up to function as an 'organisational core' for the Corbynista movement. The presence of SMOs is not a definitional requirement to social movements, but SMOs can be key to a movement's success. SMOs are “a central topic of

research within the broader field of contentious politics” (Walker & Martin, 2019:167), and their importance for social movement success is disputed. Chapter 3.6 presents a more detailed discussion on formal organisation in movements.

With recent developments in *Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)* lowering costs of participation in action and decentralising mobilisation, scholars have discussed the shifting role and importance of SMOs as agents of mobilisation and coordination for social movements (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014; Earl, 2019:296). Some scholars posit that SMOs are still invaluable for organising and mobilising for many types of collective action – especially for facilitating offline engagement (Walker & Martin, 2019:169). Chapter 3.5 discusses in further detail the development of ICTs in the movement arena and their possible implications on the role and importance of SMOs as agents of mobilisation and coordination, and as ‘maintainers and facilitators’ of ‘oppositional culture and identity’.

The field of social movement research is extensive and expanding, and defining social movements is not straightforward. Collective action comes in different forms, movements employ different strategies and mobilisation tactics, and vary in their degree of formal organisation. With technological developments and social change comes new social dynamics movements have to adapt to. Moving forward, the following subchapters will present theoretical aspects in social movement research that are relevant for this thesis, and thus develop a conceptual framework through which the case in this thesis will be analysed.

3.2 Strategy and tactics

While strategy is the long-term thinking which connects action to a movement’s goals, tactics are the particular means chosen to advance those goals (Doherty & Hayes, 2019:280).

Strategy permeates the actions of social movements. Strategic choices are made to attain a movement’s goals. Goals can sometimes be toned down in the interest of movement survival (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015). Strategic choices are made within a complex set of cultural and institutional contexts that shape actors, options perceived, choices made from among them, and the outcomes (Jasper, 2004:5).

Movement actors act within more or less institutionalised arenas, which are sets of resources and rules that channel contention into certain kinds of actions and offer rewards and

outcomes (Jasper, 2004:5). One strategic project may be to change an existing arena so that it operates more according to the movement's aims and values, but working within the system always risks co-optation – the group's survival or benefits for leaders surpassing its original goals (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015:402). Positions in arenas can help or hinder a movement depending on who holds them. Capturing positions can help the movement gain agency; attending a meeting is one thing, facilitating it is another (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015:403). Political parties are potential arenas for movement contention: some movements may attempt to capture positions within existing political parties in an effort to transform them. Movements themselves are also arenas, where movement actors often compete with conflicting views on what should be the movement's values, goals, strategy, and tactics (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015). Viewing social movements not as monolithic actors, but rather as complex webs of individuals, groups, and organisations (Rucht, 2004) with differing aims, values, priorities and strategic and tactical preferences, allows us to understand how intra-movement conflicts can occur. Chapter 3.6 touches upon internal conflict over strategic choices in movements.

There exist a number of strategic dilemmas which complicate strategic action by movements, and which can be sources of internal conflict between movement actors with diverging priorities. One is the 'organisation dilemma', where implementing formalised and centralised organisation to increase efficacy can be at odds with the principles of participatory democracy, important to many movements (Jasper, 2004). Another is the 'survival or success dilemma', where the members of a group have an interest in its survival, which may interfere with the goals it was originally formed to pursue (Jasper, 2004). Chapter 3.6 discusses how these strategic dilemmas may contribute to internal conflict in movements. A third strategic dilemma is the 'naughty or nice dilemma', where a movement's primary goals can be toned down in demands made, in the interest of achieving any success (Jasper, 2004).

Tilly's 'repertoires of contention' is still a central term in social movement research on tactics (Doherty & Hayes, 2019:271). A tactical repertoire is the range of actions and tools a movement can employ, for example to further its goals, attain public attention for a certain cause, mobilise for collective action, and maintaining commitment through building on solidarity and reinforcing collective identities. Tactical repertoires can change over time and with societal and technological change, and movements can innovate and create new tactics. Examples of tactical forms include petitions, demonstrations, strikes, rallies and public meetings (Doherty & Hayes, 2019:272). Tactics can be invented by the movement itself,

through tactical innovation, or be borrowed from other movements, through tactical diffusion. For example, the introduction of ICTs has opened up tactical innovations in the use of digital communication (Earl & Kimport, 2011). The ability to choose between options and invent new actions and arguments sometimes allows movement actors to punch above its weight (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015:403-407). Chapter 3.5 presents theory on innovation in digital tactics and mobilisation.

Choices in strategy and tactics are not simply up to a rational assessment of the opportunities and constraints present. Human actors perceive, choose and act, and attach moral value to their means as well as to their goals (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015:407). Familiarity with and knowledge on how to perform certain tactics over others can also contribute to the choice of tactics (Doherty & Hayes, 2019:272). Tactics are rarely morally neutral means about which protesters do not care. It is not easy for groups to change their tactics, because they reflect moral commitments and shared histories; tactics are subject to a collective rationality (Doherty & Hayes, 2019:278).

3.3 Resources and opportunities

The availability of resources is crucial for movements to be able to effectively address their grievances and facilitate action. Resources for movements come in many different forms: material (like finances), human (like people, skills and experience), social-organisational (like networks and SMOs), cultural (like identities and values), and moral (like legitimacy and solidarity) (Edwards, McCarthy & Mataic, 2019). Social movement organisations are both resource reservoirs for movements, and a tool for mobilising movement action (Edwards, McCarthy & Mataic, 2019:81).

Political opportunities and constraints influence the strategic and tactical choices of a movement (Kitschelt, 1986). Political opportunities and constraints are “consistent dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from collective action” (Tarrow, 1994:18). Political opportunities can change over time and vary in their degree of openness, and when they do, new opportunities for movement action and mobilisation can open up (Kriesi, 2004). Examples of political opportunities include the degree of openness of formal political access, through for example a country’s electoral and party systems; the stability or instability of political alignments; the availability of influential

allies; and elite division (Tarrow, 1994; Della Porta & Diani, 2015). One such recent, major change in political opportunities is the widespread use of ICTs, allowing for rapid and effective mobilisation outside traditional communication channels in the repressive political contexts of Middle Eastern dictatorships during the Arab Spring (Earl, 2019), or anti-austerity protests like 15M (Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014). In addition to providing opportunities for movements, ICTs also constitute a social-organisational resource as they lower the cost of mobilisation.

Scholars have criticised early research into resource mobilisation and political opportunities for focusing too much on structures and risk-cost calculations, and de-emphasising other factors which influence movement activism, for example group grievances like inequality and austerity (Taylor & Whittier, 1999:169), activists' efforts to develop and articulate an oppositional consciousness (Adair, 2001:148-149), or shared ideas, values, meanings and solidarities within movements (Benford & Snow, 2000:613). They argue political opportunities are rarely, if ever, clear structural entities; their existence and openness are subject to debate and interpretation – ‘political opportunity framing’, where perceptions of opportunities are articulated, is routinely performed by movement actors (Gamson & Meyer, 1996:285; Benford & Snow, 2000:631). If activists believe a goal to be within their reach, they will be more prone to participate in movement action than if they do not believe so, regardless of the “objective reality” of their opportunities. Crises of legitimacy can serve as opportunities (Della Porta, 2015:6). Mistrust in institutions, especially if bridged with confidence in the efficacy of collective action, will foster mobilisation, but only if there are perceived opportunities for change (Della Porta, 2015:122). A movement might create new opportunities for itself, for example by using new tactics or by establishing new alliances, (Adair, 2001:148), or by performing political opportunity framing, creating opportunities by stimulating action (Gamson & Meyer, 1996:287; Benford & Snow, 2000:631). Identifying new political opportunities itself depends on movement activity (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999).

3.4 Framing processes and collective identity

The emergence and persistence of collective identities is an important part of explaining social movement mobilisation; social movements are not only arenas where individuals, groups and organisations come together because of common values and goals; they are also

arenas where collective identities and practices are developed (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Clemens & Minkoff, 2004:158). Political consciousness can develop when activists learn that they share their frustrations and experiences with others, creating an awareness of their grievances as structural rather than individual issues, demanding collective, structural solutions rather than individual ones (Goldner, 2001:75), opening up room for collective identities to develop. Collective identity touches upon the activists' shared definition of their situation, the affective bonds that motivate movement participation, the experience of solidarity within movements, enabling movements to facilitate and sustain participation (Billig, 1995; Polletta & Jasper, 2001:284-285; Della Porta, 2015:13). Collective identity can be defined as the “*shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity*” (Goldner, 2001:71), or as “*an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution*” (Polletta & Jasper, 2001:285). Other scholars argue collective identity is both located in individuals and group movements, and reproduced through action and interaction (Fominaya, 2019:431).

Emotions also play an important role in social movements (Fominaya, 2019). Emotions can run high during protests and meetings or from stories and narratives, and can help tie bonds between individuals and groups, creating shared identities and strengthening movement cohesion, particularly in ideologically coherent groups (Della Porta & Giugni, 2013; Della Porta & Rucht, 2013b).

One part of how collective identities are developed is through framing processes: the juxtaposition of “us” versus “them” is a defining feature of collective identity (Virchow, 2017:627). A ‘frame’ can be defined as mentally situated schema by which one interprets the social world (Johnston, 2002:64), guiding a particular way of understanding different phenomena (Lindekilde, 2014:201). Activists frame collective identities by differentiating challengers from groups in power, defining their shared discontent and interests, and politicising everyday life (Goldner, 2001:71). The creation of boundaries to distinguish the movement from other groups, and to be understood as different, is an important aspect of collective identity (Fominaya, 2019:435). *Boundary framing* (Hunt, Benford & Snow, 1994; Silver, 1997) and *adversarial framing* (Gamson, 1995) attribute values to and delineate boundaries between “good” and “evil”, and construct movement protagonists and antagonists (Benford & Snow, 2000:616).

Framing processes also affect collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000:614). Collective action frames are a shared understanding of grievances which need to be addressed, who or what is to blame, and urgency of acting to affect change. Through framing

processes, social movements direct collective action at those who are identified as the sources of their grievances. Disagreements on who or what is to blame can occur, however, and cause controversies within social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000:615-616). Collective action frames are dynamic; they are continuously contested, produced, reproduced and replaced during the course of movement activity. Framing does not occur in a structural or cultural vacuum; political and cultural opportunities affect the framing process (Benford & Snow, 2000:628).

Activists use stories to mobilise participants, enlist supporters, and influence decision makers (Polletta & Gardner, 2015:534). The use of these narratives relates to framing processes and cultural contexts. Successful frames are often based on their ability to highlight structural unfairness in culturally meaningful ways, resonating with the targeted groups or individuals of the given frames (Buffonge, 2001:30-31). Stories do not always resonate. For example, gripping personal stories touching on the consequences of austerity has a greater chance of resonating in a population affected by austerity politics.

There is also a connection between the collective identity and tactical repertoires of a social movement. Resource mobilisation and political process theories have been criticised for tending to see activists' choice of strategies, tactics, targets, and organisational forms through a rationalistic lens, pointing at environmentally given opportunities and constraints on the basis of cost-benefit. Instead, critics point out that activists also make these choices based on "who we are". (Polletta & Jasper, 2001:292). For example, the Clamshell Alliance perceived themselves as opposing domination, and adopted and held onto consensus decision-making despite its eventual paralysing effects on the movement (Polletta & Jasper, 2001:293). Activists can develop tastes in different tactics, partly independent of their efficacy in attaining certain external goals. Some participants may take pride in moderate tactics, others in radical ones (Polletta & Jasper, 2001:293).

3.5 Digital communication and social movements

With the advent of digital platforms like social media in the 21st century and facing restraints in more traditional arenas, emerging social movements adopted new modes of communication and mobilisation based on these digital arenas (Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014; Anduiza, Cristancho & Sabucedo, 2014; Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016; Mosca & Quaranta, 2017).

The innovative use of social media and ICTs has been crucial for the success of movements parties like Podemos and M5S (Gerbaudo, 2019:202). Digital communication has a unique ability to disseminate information, facilitate tactical innovation and diffusion, and give a feeling of opportunity to movement activists (Earl, 2019:297). ICTs have rapidly and massively altered the landscape of social movement mobilisation, tactics and collective action, and collective identities, as traditional mobilisation actors are, at least in part, replaced by individualised and decentralised mobilisation (Della Porta & Diani, 2015:3) and a decentralisation of the production of news (McNair, 2006).

Micó & Casero-Ripollés present two main views on the contribution of social media to the organisation of social movements and political activism: the hypotheses of *reinforcement* and *innovation* (2014:860). The *reinforcement* hypothesis claims that digital communication facilitates traditional collective action, reinforcing existing ties, rather than creating new ones, making social movements more effective (Diani, 2000; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002). The *innovation* hypothesis claims that digital communication fosters new forms of collective action. This participation takes an extra-representative shape, developed outside institutional channels, giving a disruptive capacity towards traditional politics. More than enhancing conventional collective action, digital communication creates new ways of exercising it (Loader & Mercea, 2011).

ICTs have made mobilisation easier and less costly for activists, and allowed for a broader participation in framing and action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2015). It also helps facilitate collective identities by allowing for easy contact between large amounts of people self-selecting into groups and networks by shared values, views and interests (Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014:861). It has been argued that these new modes of mobilisation and collective identity facilitation springing from digital communication has fostered a *logic of connective action*, reinventing the mechanisms, channels and agents of mobilisation (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014), also referred to as *ephemeral mobilisation* (Earl, Hunt, Garrett & Dal, 2015); but some scholars argue that digital communication creates weak links, and only favours activism based on a low threshold of participation, making no difference for political dynamics (van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010; Harp, Bachmann & Guo, 2012). This is referred to as ‘slacktivism’ by some scholars; others point to how some ‘slacktivism’ proponents make empirically unsupportable assumptions that activists would choose high-cost forms of protest if these new, low-cost forms were not available to them (Earl et al., 2015). Post-2008 street protests have benefited greatly from these new modes of communication, as *new mobilisation channels* allowed for *new*

mobilisation agents to rapidly mobilise *new groups of protesters* who had previously not participated in protest, bringing huge crowds of old and new protesters out into the streets (Anduiza, Cristancho & Sabucedo, 2014:751). Reducing the cost of participation does not guarantee increased participation; the question for social movements seeking to facilitate institutional change is rather how successfully this online participation can be transferred to traditional arenas of collective action. But some scholars argue that “it is artificial to divide online and offline spaces, given the fluidity with which people move between physical and online worlds and the extent to which digital communication is embedded in everyday action and relationships” (Earl, 2019:300).

Social media have also caused another significant development: it has broken up the centralised news-production and journalistic monopoly over information, instead decentralising news production. But if people self-select their news and sources of information, digital communication is to the detriment of the diversity of information, rather than a diversification of the production of information and the framing of reality and social meanings (Boczkowski, 2010; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014:863). Della Porta points at the control of information as the primary source of social power and highlights the importance of developing counter-hegemonic discourses for social movements (Della Porta, 2017:460). Counterhegemonic discourse can be described as an alternative legitimisation of power in society, opposing the legitimacy of the status quo, laying the foundations for transformative social change. Media attention is important to bring attention to the grievances and causes of social movements. Social movements have a limited ability to influence conventional media and turn to alternative media which they consider to be more trustworthy and open to their views and interests, often establishing their own channels of news production. Movements innovate when traditional media are unreceptive by turning to digital platforms, both commercial ones like Facebook and self-produced social networks, to organise and mobilise (Della Porta, 2011; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014). The self-selective nature of digital communication and social media fosters a “mass self-communication”, allowing people to self-select the news they receive and the people, groups and networks with whom they communicate (Castells, 2009).

ICTs can be construed as 1) new political opportunities, as they open up new channels for movements to address their grievances, pressuring their opponents, and reaching out to broad swaths of potential supporters and activists, circumventing traditional channels with various mediations and constraints inhibiting communication and activism; as 2) new mobilisation structures, as they have radically transformed the cost and nature of mobilisation,

and as 3) arenas of framing and identity construction, as activists communicate and build networks and collective identities through the same or similar mechanisms as in physical arenas.

ICTs have also affected the role and function of social movement organisations. They have allowed for looser affiliations and more individualised, decentralised mobilisation without SMOs directing it (Earl, 2019:296-297); they have forced SMOs to adapt to these new digital environments (Earl et al., 2015), “a trend of online decision-making replacing more traditional decision-making processes, which contributes to more direct membership participation in discussions, votes on policies and nominations” (Gerbaudo, 2019). The developments in ICTs have had profound effects on the movement arena: for modes of participation, communication, framing of collective identities and tactical innovation and diffusion, and not least for the role and importance of traditional structures of organisation and mobilisation. We should not expect the “death of social movement organisations”, as SMOs still appear crucial in their ability to facilitate offline action (Walker & Martin, 2019:173), but the role of SMOs in future protests may well depend on their willingness and ability to adapt to and innovate in a rapidly changing movement arena.

3.6 Organisation and democracy in social movements

The strategic dilemmas outlined in Chapter 3.2 can be sources of internal conflict over organisation and democracy within social movements and SMOs. The networks of individuals, groups, and organisations which make up social movements are not monolithic structures, but rather complex sets of actors varying in size, ideology, organisation, resources, priorities, and preferred strategies and priorities (Alimi, 2015:411), and internal conflicts can emerge over such priorities and strategies. The question of formal organisation often becomes a flashpoint of internal struggle and conflict within movements. It is also a monumental and ongoing discussion within social movement research. Some scholars have suggested formal organisation itself inhibits the action forms which can successfully extract concessions from elites, resulting in co-optation (Piven & Cloward, 1979); others argue formal organisation constitutes resources for mobilisation and is crucial for movement survival and success (McCarthy & Zald, 1977); others again argue various issues arise from both formal and informal organisation, mobilisation not inherently being inhibited by certain ways of

organising a movement (Hond, Bakker & Smith, 2015).

Piven & Cloward's rejection of formal organisation resonates with the new left's embrace of participatory democracy (Clemens & Minkoff, 2004:155). Democracy-oriented movements often aim to set examples by prefiguring various models of democracy within their own organisations or collectivities which they want to see practised in the institutions of society (Della Porta & Rucht, 2013a:3). For example, the Global Justice Movement (GJM) mobilised against what they perceived as undemocratic, non-participatory and unaccountable decision-making processes in neoliberal institutions (Saunders & Rootes, 2013:72). Yet, even for movements which support democratic practices in principle, the choice between prefigurative democratic practices and organisational efficacy becomes a strategic dilemma, a situation where two strategic interests come in conflict and become or seem incompatible. There may be disagreement within movements over whether to prioritise movement democracy or organisational efficacy, and it is often a question of degrees, as within SMOs, which already utilise formal organisation. Some groups within the movement may perceive the democratic processes and principles of participatory democracy as the movement's *raison d'être*, a goal in itself, whilst other groups within that movement may favour implementing a formal hierarchy, willing to compromise on prefigurative democracy in the hopes of achieving more as a more effective organisation (Della Porta & Rucht, 2013a:6-8).

Unintended consequences can complicate the organisation dilemma: democracy-oriented movements can struggle with the execution of democratic practices, and formal organisational hierarchies can be manipulated. First, the lack of formal structures in movements can disguise informal hierarchies and unaccountable leadership, exemplified in Freeman's 'tyranny of structurelessness' (1972). Informal power structures can play a central role together with, or even instead of, formal power structures; even in self-declared leaderless movements, informal power structures which produce relations of power, mediation, and hierarchy are found (Gerbaudo, 2019). Second, formal hierarchies can be manipulated so that the leaders of movement organisations get undue influence over decision-making processes, for example through the power of setting the agenda for votes or meetings. It is one thing to participate in a meeting, and another to be tasked with arranging it. 'Structurelessness' does not guarantee equality or democracy, and formal structures does not guarantee efficacy or democracy (Haug & Rucht, 2013).

ICT-fuelled innovations like online democracies in SMOs also struggle with these issues in their execution, often becoming cosmetic attempts to paint over a top-down process of agenda-setting and decision-making (Gerbaudo, 2019). Despite the trend of

decentralisation and circumvention of traditional gatekeeping arenas and actors, mediation between leaders and members has not disappeared, but rather been centralised to the leadership; “concealed and unscrutinised, constituting a major issue regarding accountability and transparency” (Gerbaudo, 2019).

3.7 Conclusions

Some social movements direct their action towards institutionalised politics, not only in the form of attempting to influence the power holders, but through capturing power themselves. Kriesi (2015) and Heaney & Rojas (2015) show how movements oriented towards party politics in majoritarian systems can try to “capture” mainstream parties, as a chief strategic aim. Social movement organisations can sometimes be indispensable actors in advancing the aims and goals of movements, and addressing their grievances. The role of social movement organisations is multi-faceted: in pooling movement resources, facilitating and directing action, mobilising supporters to action, and creating collective identities and participating in framing. Movements also have a multi-faceted makeup, containing individuals, groups and organisations often with varying strategic priorities, tactical preferences, values, and aims. This theoretical framework allows us to examine how institutionally oriented social movement organisations work to capture mainstream parties. At the same time, it allows us to examine the inherent tensions in social movements where different interests pull in different directions, in our case sparking internal conflict over organisation and democracy. It allows us to examine how institutionally oriented social movement organisations mobilise their supporters and innovate in a digital age. Last, but not least, it allows us to examine dynamics of identity construction, the roles of ideology and values, and framing processes in ideologically coherent movements.

4.0 METHODS & DATA

This chapter outlines and discusses the methodological considerations in this project, and how the empirical data used in the analysis has been produced. I explain and discuss in detail these considerations for each of the different types of data I have collected, as the considerations are somewhat different in nature depending on the method of data production. I also discuss how I have analysed the data, and ethical concerns coupled with the methods used.

4.1 Research strategy

The project bases itself on ethnographic methods, through a combination of in-depth interviews, participant observation, informal conversations and documentary analysis. Ethnography bases itself on an “empathic understanding” of the people in a given situation (Wood & Bloor, 2006). My empathic understanding of what it means to be a socialist, and my personal interest in the Corbyn case over the years since he was first elected, is a positive feature to bring into the analysis, as it gives me a better ability to understand cultural codes and references than if I did not have these understandings. Being aware of the implications these sympathies can have on analysis if the researcher does not treat the project with some objective distance, is still very important.

Documents, interviews and observations reveal slightly different facets of social life. Where documents can be useful for understanding the historical context of our case, interviews are useful for understanding activists’ own experiences and perceptions, and observations are useful for examining the collective practices of movements. Interviewing activists in movements gives us access to representations of the movements which have not been filtered through the internal accounts of social movement organisations. Documentary evidence, in the form of a movement organisation’s own historical records in the form of meeting minutes or webpages, can be useful in informing on the historical context of a movement, but often selectively tell the story (Clemens & Hughes, 2002).

Social movement studies have a “toolkit of imperfect methods”, where all methods of data production have positives and negatives associated with them (Ayoub, Wallace & Zepeda-Millán, 2014:70). Therefore, it is important for the researcher to attain a critical assessment of the content and claims of any form of data on its own. By using a combination

of different methods of data production, like interviews, observations and documentary evidence, investigating the same question, the researcher can increase the level of detail and nuance presented about the topic and counteract threats to validity associated with any one of the single methods, for example the threat of selection bias. This combination of different kinds of data is called triangulation (Blee & Taylor, 2002:111; Snow & Trom, 2002:150). This project triangulates by combining in-depth interviews of Momentum activists; observation at The World Transformed, a four-day-long festival intended for movement activists, but open to anyone who pays for a ticket; and documentary evidence like pre-existing research chiefly on topics related to Labour, books which recount major events in Labour since 2015, told from the perspective of the left, and news articles which recount historical events.

The research questions in this thesis are the result of a dynamic process. In the course of my fieldwork, data collection and analysis, I altered the research questions somewhat. What began as a far more structural-institutional approach developed into an analysis focusing on questions of movement strategy, mobilisation, collective identities and framing. The analysis has adopted an abductive strategy, combining empirical evidence with pre-existing literature to construct new knowledge (Blaikie, 2000).

4.2 Data production

The collection of data has been limited according to the scope of the project, with notable exceptions in documentary evidence of particular value which discuss historical topics very relevant to the thesis: in particular, this relates to a couple of reports (discussed in Chapter 2.3), released after the cut-off point for this project, which are relevant for the discussion and analysis of adversarial frames in Chapters 7.2 to 7.4 in particular.

4.2.1 Documentary evidence

Documentary evidence can come in many different forms. ‘Documents’ in this regard encompass anything like public records, textbooks, an organisation’s internal records, magazines, newspaper articles, webpages, social media, and so on (Loseke, 2017:100). It is useful for studying historical changes, but stands best as a complementary method of data

production to observations and/or interviews (Loseke, 2017:100-101). The documentary evidence in this thesis is mostly used to supplement the interviews and observations as part of the triangulation. For example, news articles are useful for confirming events. Historical accounts of Labour, especially from 2015 and onwards, are valuable for understanding historical events particularly pertaining to Labour, and getting a basic understanding of the structures and power relations in the party. Party documents like the Labour Party Rule Book help to understand the structures and rules Momentum aims to change. Momentum's internal documents and records are also valuable sources of information for the analysis: the NCG's meeting minutes help to paint a picture of decisions made since the NCG was created in 2017, Momentum's constitution outlines the structures, priorities, aims and rules of Momentum, and Momentum's e-mails to supporters outlines its priorities and urgent matters at the time.

The documentary evidence is not only valuable in the sense of serving as a skeleton onto which to put the meat of the observations and interviews. It also serves to understand the perspectives of the British left on Labour under Corbyn and on Momentum, for example through the story about the history of the Labour left and Corbyn's rise to power being told with a left-wing narrative in a number of books. It helps us to understand how Momentum "markets" itself to a broader audience, through interviews with prominent Momentum figures in magazines and papers, both in mainstream and in alternative media. Interviews with leading Momentum figures were particularly useful in understanding the perspectives of the national organisation, as my access to their perspectives was otherwise limited to the NCG meeting minutes. Momentum's e-mails to their supporters and members, and their social media posts, are also useful data in an analysis of Momentum's mobilisation, framing and collective identities. All the documentary evidence used in this project is publicly available, and there are no ethical concerns regarding the protection of participants, as with the other data types used.

4.2.2 Observation

Ethnographic observation is useful in studying social movements, as it gives insight into the practices of social movement activists (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014). The criteria for selecting sites for ethnography should be based in theoretical criteria (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014:154). I chose to observe a small number of protests and meetings out of convenience as I was in the area either way, but chiefly the observations in this study were directed as Momentum's annual festival The World Transformed (TWT), which runs parallel to the annual Labour

Conference. The choice fell on TWT and Labour Conference because at the time, with the focus of the project being on Momentum's close relations to Labour and their efforts to change the party's structures, I believed this event in particular could provide great insight into these topics. I soon discovered, however, that the observations at TWT and Conference also provided great insight into activists' values, ideas, preferences and strategic priorities, the use of symbolism and emotion in collective action, and attempts at prefigurative democracy. It also provided access to a large number of informal conversations with activists – both in Momentum, and on the Labour left in general. That being said, TWT is a special annual event, and may not reflect the more daily nature and culture of Momentum meetings and decision-making processes, especially on a local level. There is reason to believe the symbolism and emotion in collective action is accentuated here because of the elevated status of the event compared to the more “mundane” tasks of activism in local groups.

I went to London and Brighton on fieldwork over the course of two short trips in September and October. TWT and Labour Conference were arranged in Brighton, where I stayed for the duration of the events before returning to London for a couple of days. I spent my time in Brighton going to lots of formal meetings – a few Labour left-wing fringes, but overwhelmingly TWT meetings. I observed activists in protests and in informal and social events.

Access to a field may depend on a degree of political alignment with activists' values and ideas (Milan, 2014:446). Being a participant, or perceived as aligned with the activists' views, can provide access and trust which the researcher otherwise would not get. Carrying out observations also often have the complication of the researcher being an outsider (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014:158). However, the meetings I went to during my observations were open to anyone who had paid for a festival ticket. The large number of participants from different parts of the country likely made me stand out less as an outsider. The fact that I had come all the way from Norway to participate and observe, combined with my political sympathies, was rather met with curiosity and a desire to discuss with me from many activists. I had several informal conversations with a large number of activists in event queues, on the street, and in cafés, restaurants and bars. I listened to discussions, both political panels and over-the-table sitting with groups of activists, over the course of these four days. I listened to lots of speeches and collected flyers handed out in event queues. Following all these events and conversations, I took extensive notes, and I continually took notes on my general impressions. I wrote down notes in the field during observations, and fleshed out these experiences and impressions and my thoughts on them in full at the first opportunity. Taking notes, I chose to

take notes on my own impressions with, for example, the Socialist Campaign Group rally at the end of the festival.

The issues of privacy, confidentiality and informed consent are important for researchers engaging in participant observation to consider (Milan, 2014:459). Staying incognito in arenas where participants can reasonably expect privacy and confidentiality will contribute to ethical dilemmas for the researcher (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013:88). But in public or semi-public arenas, with hundreds or even thousands of participants, it is impractical or even impossible to obtain consent from all the participants with whom the researcher may interact, and the researcher should instead weigh how to balance observation with protecting the rights of the observed (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013:101). In my case, the festival was open to anyone who paid for a ticket, and thousands of activists were present. In many of the meetings I participated in, national media were present and covering the events. Taking very specific field notes on informal conversation invites ethical concerns. Taking notes and analysing instead on a very general level, invites few privacy concerns (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013:103). In my field notes, I made sure to leave out any descriptions that could possibly be traced back to any individual participants, like age and gender. The field notes I took on informal conversations with participants were on a very general level, often just summarising the topics of the discussions. Even so, I made sure to inform those I came into longer conversations with that I was a researcher and that I was there to collect data for a research project. I also asked whether it was okay for me to use my conversations with these activists as data for my project, provided nothing could be traced back to the activists in question. I was never met with reservations about this – rather often, however, with enthusiasm and curiosity, and an interest in discussing the topics I was curious about. In conversations where I did not reveal my role as a researcher, I did not take field notes, but the experiences from these conversations no doubt still coloured my general impression of the festival and the participants. Observing public behaviour generally does not need informed consent from participants (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013:102). In observing meetings at TWT, which were very public affairs, I did not consider privacy or informed consent to be salient issues: national media were often present, and speakers were public and high-ranking figures in Labour and the movement. On these occasions, I have named and quoted some of the speakers in question in my field notes and in the analysis. The main purpose of observing meetings was, however, to provide an understanding of the group dynamics of Momentum and the Labour left.

My observations in Brighton give valuable insight into a particular arena of movement

activism, as well as the creation of collective identities and framing processes. It also supplemented the in-depth interviews in this project with a dozen informal conversations with activists, which were useful in analysis. Several of these informal conversations were with self-identifying socialists and Corbyn supporters who had not joined Momentum, which particularly complemented my understanding of activists' diverging perceptions of Momentum's role and function, and their relation to democratic processes.

4.2.3 In-depth interviews

The interview part of this project is built on semi-structured interviews of movement activists. Semi-structured interviews allow for the interviewer to scrutinise how the informants regard their participation, and how they understand their social world (Blee & Taylor, 2002:95). Analysis and interpretation of semi-structured interviews is a continuous and dynamic process. Interviews can provide valuable knowledge which can in turn be applied to future interviews, by changing up the interview guide. Performing sets of interviews in waves, rather than all at once, allows for the researcher to begin broadly, adapting the approach to any new information which comes up during the process, and focus future interviews on the topics which stand out as particularly interesting or critical to answering the research question (Blee & Taylor, 2002:110). As opposed to structured interviews, which more resemble rigid questionnaires, semi-structured interviews allow for the interviewer to be flexible in a given interviewing situation, allowing for digression and probing when interesting and unforeseen factors come to light during an interview. The questions in the interview guide and my relation to it were modified as information came forward throughout the interviews. Originally, my approach was to treat the interview guide rigidly, as if I needed to "stick to the path I had prepared". In the course of performing the interviews, I found that deviating from the interview guide, asking follow-up questions to interesting topics or perspectives that were brought up, was very beneficial to getting better access to the in-depth knowledge about the informants' perspectives on the issues raised. My personal presuppositions about the topics I raised with the informants no doubt coloured the information I received from the interviews, as they do for all interviewers, but less so than if I had stuck to a rigid approach.

I interviewed six informants (not including casual conversations during observations, discussed in Chapter 4.2.3) in the space of two trips in September and October, and one over the phone in November. The interviews varied in length between 45 and 90 minutes, with an average of around an hour. The physical context of the interviews was mainly public cafés,

but interviews were also held in people's own homes, in their offices, and one over the phone. Whilst performing interviews in public may have a constraining effect on informants in politically repressive contexts (Melby, 2017:30), this did not seem to be an issue for the informants for this project. Recording interviews allow for the researcher to focus on the topics and dynamics of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:205). Most of the interviews were recorded, both to make the conversations during the interviews more natural as I could focus on listening and asking questions, and for transcribing the interviews to get the informants' precise phrasings, not only my personal impressions of what the informants had roughly said. It also allows the researcher to go back and look at things the informants said with fresh eyes, for example if the scope or topic of the project changes slightly. Where the interviews were not recorded, notes were taken by hand during the interviews, and immediately following their termination, hours were spent extensively detailing what was said and mentioned by the best of my ability.

In semi-structured interviews, informants are selected on the basis of their particular experiences in social movements, not on the basis of representativity (Blee & Taylor, 2002:100). Prospective informants were originally limited to active Momentum members. However, interviewing non-participants in vicinity to the movement, *outsiders*, can also provide valuable perspectives on assumptions which participants take for granted (Blee & Taylor, 2002:97). One informant, Chris, was a Labour activist, but not a member of Momentum. This still proved beneficial as Chris had valuable knowledge about processes in Labour, and self-defined as a member of the broader Corbynista movement, and shared Momentum's aims and goals of democratising the party and changing its structures. The recruitment of informants was made through an array of methods. I will not go into specifics on the recruitment process of informants, as I believe that it risks providing information which could aid in uncovering some informants, but I applied a multi-pronged approach which provided some degree of variety in the background of the informants, in age, gender, geographic location and the longevity and depth of their political engagement. The informants may have self-selected beyond the intended criteria. Hypothetically, there may be a strong connection between certain personal characteristics or ideological convictions and the likelihood of wanting to participate in this project, which could end up overrepresenting certain views. I believe the triangulation of data helps to balance out any eventual bias in self-selection.

In the interest of protecting the informants in this project, I have chosen to omit some information on the make-up of the informants as well, despite how I believe it could play as a

strength to the analysis. Informants were not selected for balance in gender, age or background, but ended up with a spread in age and background. Particularly the spread in age proved to be beneficial as it provided a range in political experiences which is also reflected in Momentum as a whole. The informants were overwhelmingly (but not entirely) male, but since gender is not a central topic or centrally relevant to this thesis, it is unlikely that this will have significantly affected the findings of this project. Failed attempts were made to approach members of the NCG for interviews. The consequence of this is a limited analysis, particularly when it comes to how the national organisation considers relations between the NCG and local Momentum groups. In what regards the dealings of the NCG, this project is thus limited to be guided by news articles, Momentum's constitution, the NCG's publicly available meeting minutes and declarations, and the claims made by informants.

The question of access to the field also concerns interviews: in a time period where information is easily accessible, there is reason to think potential informants might look up the interviewer online, and in very politicised movements (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014:155). As I identify as a socialist and am active in politics in Norway, I doubt my political views were a hindrance to accessing informants. I believe my general alignment with the informants' views may have helped to loosen up the conversations during interviews. Even so, I did my best not to explicitly profess my personal beliefs in interviews, as this could risk hyping up informants and contaminating the data.

4.3 The process of analysis

Collecting empirical data for the project through two short bursts of field work, one interview over the phone, and collecting and studying documentary evidence over the course of the months between June 2019 and November 2019, left me with a large amount of data. As mentioned, I transcribed the interviews as quickly as possible. I began the process of analysis by coding the data from the interviews, field notes and documentary evidence into different "sorting-based codes" (Tjora, 2012:180), a method of coding which sorts quotes from the interview transcriptions by the topics the activists were talking about. I then categorised the data from documentary evidence, field notes from my observations, and not least interviews into different categories. I categorised them according to topics, for example "selections", "local Momentum groups" and "mobilising activists" when the section of an interview or –

spoke about these topics, even when it was not clear at that point whether these categories would be strictly relevant for the analysis. Several categories were later omitted from analysis.

After categorising the data, I moved on to analysis, and ended up treating the categories a bit like trying to make a puzzle fit. I had to split up the analysis into a number of chapters to be able to coherently analyse and discuss a selection of topics without moving too much back and forth, despite all of the categories being intertwined and interrelated in different ways. The thesis ended up with three topical chapters of analysis which I decided were roughly the best fit, after many attempts at fitting the categories together in larger topics in different ways. For example, originally Chapter 6.2 on the organisation dilemma was part of Chapter 5, and the parts in Chapter 7.4 on alternative media was part of Chapter 6.1 on mobilisation.

Particularly in transcribing the interviews I was faced with difficult analytical priorities. Kvale & Brinkmann succinctly note that “by ignoring methodological questions about transcriptions, the interviewer’s road to hell is paved with transcriptions” (2015:204). There are many difficult decisions to make when transcribing interviews, as the transcription can easily become an abstraction of conversations, where intonation, irony, tempo, and body language is lost (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:205). Different levels of “realistic” detail in transcriptions and different choices of what to omit can contribute to transcriptions of the same interview suggesting different content. I chose to transcribe the interviews to a readable text, but kept all the “like-s” and “uhm-s” to begin with, which gave me the ability to decide later on whether I wanted to keep parts of the transcriptions which then seemed irrelevant. Quotes in the analysis are somewhat altered and compressed post-transcription and post-categorisation, to more concisely illustrate the points the activists were making in the analysis. Very often, informants could start making a point, only to try to explain the situation, or digress and talk about something completely different, before coming back to the point they were making. In analysis, I was aware this methodological choice could risk stripping away some of the essence in the points activists were making, but I preserved the essence of the quotes according to their prior categorisations. Although the transcriptions were direct, containing all the “like-s” and “uhm-s” of regular conversation, these were removed in quotes presented in the analysis in the interest of concise quotes, and because these small words were irrelevant for the analysis. Sociolects, however, represented by words like “gonna”, were not altered.

4.4 Ethical concerns

Prior to consenting to participating in the project, informants were informed in writing about the general topic of the project and their rights as informants. As the interviews were performed, I obtained their written consent to participating in an interview on paper, with the exception of the phone interview where the e-mail confirmation that I could interview the informant is the scope of written consent. Before this interview, I obtained verbal consent.

It is necessary for the researcher to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of their informants (Milan, 2014). To protect the informants from being discovered by third parties through this thesis or the data behind it, the interview transcriptions are anonymised. As part of the anonymisation, the informants are given pseudonyms and their real names are removed. Their geographical place of activity, references to their specific local groups, their eventual membership and activism in other organisations and other information which could risk giving away informants' identities when coupled together, has been removed. The same goes for all references to local geographies, locally specific party and movement figures, and references to other organisations and movements on the British left, except if strictly necessary for the analysis, where such information is written down on separate paper notes with codes referring back to the transcriptions (this also goes for the non-recorded interviews). The interviews which were recorded were transcribed with immediacy and the recordings deleted straight thereafter. None of the informants expressed issues with being recorded, and the ability to record the interview was a prerequisite for consenting to the interview detailed in the project information.

4.5 Conclusions

The research questions this thesis aims to answer are the result of a dynamic process of continuously adapting the theoretical framework, the methods and data, and the analysis to each other. The data produced for this thesis are chiefly based on my observations of The World Transformed festival in 2019, informal conversations with activists at the festival, and in-depth interviews with Momentum activists. These data are supplemented by documentary evidence in various forms. All methods of producing data have different backsides to them,

but by triangulating the data I can look at the analysis from different perspectives with different dynamics, counteracting weaknesses associated to each of the data types on their own.

In the process of analysing the data, I coded and categorised the data by topics and adapted the structure of the three chapters of analysis to the way in which I found best fit these many categorisations. Anonymisation and privacy were important aspects to keep in mind. In my case, these concerns were most relevant for the in-depth interviews because of the nature of my observations of publicly accessible meetings at a festival with thousands of attendees. I anonymised informants in the transcriptions, and made some methodological choices pertaining to the way in which I transcribed them, amongst other things cutting out some digressions in quotes. While it risks taking away some of the “human essence” in the quotes, I believe the more concise quotes better convey the point for the reader.

5.0 MOVEMENT STRATEGY IN AN INSTITUTIONAL-POLITICAL CONTEXT

How does Momentum operate within Labour Party structures to achieve its aims and goals? Why has Momentum been largely successful in reaching its aims and goals in certain arenas of the Labour Party, but come short in others? This chapter aims to map out the preferences, opportunities and constraints directing Momentum's activism and mobilisation towards certain arenas. The chapter also aims to examine the work Momentum does in these arenas, and where Momentum has succeeded and failed in their aims of transforming the Labour Party. The chapter will end with a discussion on how certain party structures constitute constraints which limit Momentum's ability to succeed in their aims of transforming the party.

5.1 The 'vehicle for socialism': political opportunity framing and strategy

I briefly joined the Labour Party as a student in the 80s, but as the party drifted rightward, I let my membership lapse. But when Corbyn got elected, I joined both the Labour Party and Momentum. Daniel

Why did thousands of activists not only join Labour given the opportunity of campaigning and voting for Corbyn, but continue their activism in Momentum and Labour for years to come? This subchapter analyses how activists' values, preferences and grievances, and their opportunities and constraints, inform Momentum's strategic choice of directing movement action *into* Labour Party organs in capturing positions and facilitating structural change, and *for* Labour in proactive electoral mobilisation (Chapter 6 examines mobilisation in Momentum). How can we relate Momentum's strategic choices to its political opportunities and constraints?

We recall from Chapter 3.1 that majoritarian political systems constrain third parties as a viable option (Lijphart, 1984), and that movements seeking inroads in electoral politics in majoritarian systems may try to capture major parties instead of creating their own movement parties (Kriesi, 2015). The majoritarian system in the United Kingdom constitutes structural constraints for Momentum. As an institutionally oriented social movement organisation,

Momentum aims to transform society by transforming Labour and using it as a vehicle for socialism. Activists are acutely aware of these constraints. Momentum is an explicitly socialist movement organisation (Momentum, 2017a). Avowedly socialist parties exist in Britain, like the Socialist Workers Party. Still, when asked whether joining and campaigning for any such parties was an option, activists either reject any affinity to these parties, or say spending time on activism for them would never be an option because they lack the potential for exerting any meaningful institutional-political influence.

We also recall from Chapter 3.2 that movements' strategic choices are informed by the perceptions and moral values of human actors (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015), and from Chapter 3.3 that the articulation and framing of political opportunities and constraints by movement actors shape the perceived opportunities and constraints which actors in turn relate to and act upon, possibly creating new opportunities by articulating them (Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Benford & Snow, 2000). We also recall from Chapter 3.3 that group grievances like inequality and austerity influence movement activism (Taylor & Whittier, 1999:169).

We have the leadership contest. Corbyn wins, and the reason he wins, is there was a groundswell of support from mainly young people like myself, and older people who had quit the party with disillusionment either because of the Iraq War, because of Blair's economic policies, or based on other international policies that were led by the Labour Party in government. So, we all joined, and we campaigned hard, and we got this guy elected. And then what we realised was, this really powerful, progressive message that he has been taking around the country, which has transformed the political conversation, is going to be ignored. Unless what we have inside the Labour Party, is an organisation that can help to win and capture... different political positions at the inner parliamentary party. And within the constituency parties. That's what Momentum was formed for. And also to act as an independent, left-wing organisation to go further. Francis

Corbyn's candidacy for, and later election as, Labour leader, was a major motivating factor for activists joining Momentum. It also served as motivation for joining – or returning to – the Labour Party. For older informants, Corbyn's election was a watershed moment in providing an opportunity to bring the party back to its 'true Labour values', prompting them to return to the party after leaving or becoming inactive over its rightward drift since the 1980s. Corbyn's candidacy pulled younger informants into political activism. Labour under Tony Blair is remembered by activists as a particularly bad period for the left, politically as well as

organisationally. Failing to address issues like inequality and austerity, supporting foreign wars and conforming to neoliberalism, Labour alienated many of its core supporters on the left. The centralisation of power, agency and decision-making under Blair's leadership also alienated many activists dedicated to a democratisation of the party, preferring to see agency and decision-making handed to the grassroots. The combination of an unrepresentative and undemocratic party was a tough pill to swallow for many. Corbyn was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to break off decades of rightward drift, centralisation of agency and decision-making, and media-focused campaigns.

Becoming active in Momentum was a way of helping to support Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, as well as to advance socialism within the party and democratise the party. The sense of opportunity came with Corbyn's successful leadership campaign on the back of a massive grassroots mobilisation, against the Labour establishment and the media. There was also a sense of urgency: as Corbyn was faced with immense hostility from the top of the party he was elected to lead, activists felt the need to keep fighting to preserve their victory and take it further. What had formerly been a closed-off political landscape for the British Left for decades with Blairites' tight control over the party, had unexpectedly broken up with the Collins reforms in 2014. As presented in Chapter 2.1, the PLP retained their gatekeeping function on leadership nominations, but the introduction of an OMOV ballot on the Labour leadership provided opportunities for a movement-based campaign. Nevertheless, it required political opportunity framing (Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Benford & Snow, 2000) to articulate their existence and openness. The British socialist left has a long history of marginalisation within the Labour Party (Hannah, 2018). With Corbyn's leadership victory, the claims that opportunities at institutional power for socialists are within and through Labour, were amplified and legitimised, and had made people aware of those opportunities. The Labour left was galvanised: the grassroots were legitimised as a base of power, and grassroots mobilisation was legitimised as a source of political influence and agency. The emergent movement began to see opportunities to widen their success. If their mass mobilisation could win such monumental upsets against the establishment, what more could they achieve? Corbyn's victory in the Labour leadership election gave his supporters a feeling of agency and opportunity, strengthening the belief that regular people could have agency within the top-heavy Labour Party system: if regular people discontented with austerity could choose Labour's leader against the heavy opposition of the PLP and the mainstream media, they could certainly change the party's policies, structures, decision-making processes and elected officials to better reflect the priorities and voices of the grassroots.

After months of internal conflict, the 2017 general election had a ‘refocusing’ effect on the movement. It upped the stakes, brought back to the forefront a common enemy, and united Momentum for a common cause and against a common adversary: winning the election for Labour, wresting power from the Conservatives. According to one activist, it turned the trend of demobilisation in the movement caused by infighting and burnout, bringing activists back together for a common cause. The unexpectedly positive results for Labour in the 2017 general election also helped to both motivate activists, and “prove” that grassroots mobilisation was effective. The success of the campaign, along with Corbyn’s successful leadership campaigns in 2015 and 2016, helped to cement a legitimacy for the movement and a belief that mass mobilisation of supporters was an effective way to bring about electoral success.

The general election comes in 2017. And Labour are really, really, really far behind in the polls, we are on 24% and the Tories are on 48%. All of a sudden, there are lots of people who have barely done any campaign work before, who have not really managed to get many parliamentary changes through, who haven’t really changed the structures of the party, but are now basically tasked with trying to win a government. What happened at that period was a real refocusing. We’d had two years of infighting, a lot of people falling out, CLPs changing hand from right-wing to left-wing, a few going in the other direction. The election really kicked into gear people’s focus. Factional differences can often disintegrate in a general election setting. Although there were some places where lots of people were getting involved, and they were losing votes, and then they were quitting, when the general election came, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people basically kind of... re-came back together, and fought for, on a common basis, a manifesto that they felt would fundamentally transform society. And I think that’s what really engaged people. Francis

Codifying tight relations between the SMO and the party, Momentum’s constitution requires Momentum members to also be members of Labour, and for Momentum to campaign for a Labour government (Momentum, 2017a). In addition to these formal ties, many if not most of Momentum’s activists share an affinity and a political preference towards Labour. In 2018, Momentum’s co-founder Emma Rees urged people to understand Momentum within its wider ecosystem, citing that Momentum’s motivations behind working through the Labour Party were “*trying to transform society and building socialism, part of that being about transforming the Labour Party to enter government*” (Ghadiali, 2018). Momentum aims to

use the Labour Party as a ‘vehicle for socialism’, utilising the party’s vast resources and its access to the electoral arena as a major political party in a majoritarian political system. It aims to do this through transforming Labour’s policies and structures, electing left-wingers to internal positions and selecting left-wingers as candidates for local and national elections, constituting in Momentum’s eyes a more democratic, representative and socialist political party. Recall from Chapter 3.2 that movements act within arenas, constituting sets of resources and rules (Jasper, 2004), and that one strategic project for a movement can be to transform an existing arena so that it operates in accordance with the movement’s aims and values, amongst other things by changing its rules, the resources on which it depends, and capturing positions in that arena to gain agency (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015). Momentum aims to change the Labour Party’s rules to make the party more representative and democratic; it aims to make Labour more dependent on its members as a resource, rather than on media affinity or rich donors, by transforming it into a mass party; and it aims to capture positions within the party, giving the movement influence over decision-making and thereby over the party’s political and organisational direction.

Strategic choices are influenced by cultural and institutional contexts and perceived options (Jasper, 2004), by the moral value activists attach to these strategic choices (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015:407), and by activists’ preferences based on familiarity (Doherty & Hayes, 2019:272). Momentum’s strategy of transforming the Labour Party, creating new opportunities and removing old constraints for the movement, is informed by the institutional context of Britain’s majoritarian system, by Momentum activists’ socialist ideology and the long-standing history of marginalisation of the Labour left (emphasising the threat of a new, long period of marginalisation), by the preferences of its activists, by the opportunities for such a transformation articulated following the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader, succeeding on the back of grassroots mobilisation as grassroots support now proving to be a potentially crucial base of resources and power for actors within the Labour arena. When asked what Momentum would gain from the strategic approach of transforming Labour, informants are quick to apply value-based arguments, pointing to principles of representativity and democracy, for example saying like Francis, “*members should have a say in how their party is run*”. ‘Democratising Labour’ means opening up the party’s many decision-making processes to regular members, handing more agency over the party’s direction to the grassroots, as opposed to having small, unrepresentative groups of party elites running the show. Doing this requires that movement supporters capture important and influential positions in the party to be able to influence the direction of the party – taking

power, not just influencing the powerholders. Activists disagree on what precisely qualifies as democracy, however. Some view formalised majority-decision votes in delegate structures as sufficient. Others view democracy as something less formalised and much more decentralised, where decision-making power should be handed to the people whose lives the decisions affect. Chapter 6.2 analyses how these disagreements over the form and function of democracy, and not least over the importance of prefigurative democratic practices in Momentum, end up sparking internal conflict.

Momentum activists see themselves as politically aligned with the membership, and their efforts for change within Labour to be in accordance with the aims and goals of the party's membership. This perception, that "the membership is with us", serves to legitimise Momentum's aims of transforming and democratising Labour. Membership-based victories for the movement also serve to affirm and reaffirm this perception.

Political opportunity framing is a continuous process. Significant events throughout Momentum's history have affirmed and reaffirmed the ability of a mass movement to facilitate change, both within Labour and in society at-large. Corbyn's leadership election victories in 2015 and 2016 were won by mobilising the grassroots against a hostile party elite and media, winning 59 and 62 percent of the vote, respectively. The surprise upshot for Labour in the 2017 general election is perceived by activists to be much thanks to the innovative and digital mobilisation of tens of thousands of grassroots supporters facilitated by Momentum. How the internal dynamics of Momentum and Labour will change post-Corbyn is an open question which will have to be left to future research – but working to transform Labour into a 'vehicle for socialism' is, at the very least, a viable strategy as long as the opportunities provided by Corbyn's leadership and movement successes were left intact.

5.2 Conquering the Labour Party

There's no point in Jeremy being leader if we have an NEC that doesn't have the right members on it, that aren't supporting him. Or a general secretary who doesn't support him. So, bit by bit Momentum has made sure that the right people are in place. Ethan

How is Momentum working to transform Labour into a vehicle for socialism? We recall from Chapter 3.3 that movements can create their own opportunities not only from emphasising them (Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Benford & Snow, 2000), but also from capturing positions,

changing the rules, structures and decision-making processes, and changing the resources the arena depends on (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015:403). We recall from Chapter 5.1 that Momentum aims to transform Labour by capturing positions and changing its rules, structures and decision-making processes, chiefly based on the framing of capturing Labour as a viable political opportunity, on ideological and value-based preferences, and on arguments of democratisation and representativity. Momentum participates in proactive electoral mobilisation: a key aim for Momentum, codified in its constitution, is to “work for the election of a Labour government” (Momentum, 2017a). After all, Momentum aims to use Labour as a ‘vehicle for socialism’ to get somewhere. A transformative Labour government requires both transforming the party and winning general elections. Chapter 6.1 examines how Momentum has mobilised for Labour in elections. Momentum aims to make use of the Labour Party’s vast resources in the service of socialism, by transforming the party structures and which resources it depends on, and by securing the election of movement candidates to party positions. This subchapter will analyse Labour arenas and organs which Momentum has worked to change, examine its successes and failures, and discuss how the constraints of Labour structures in certain arenas have limited Momentum’s ability to succeed as a movement with a grassroots power base.

5.2.1 Capturing Labour Party positions

Holding positions in arenas provides agency (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015). One strategic priority for Momentum is to get left-wing and movement-supported candidates elected to various executive and decision-making organs in the Labour Party, like the National Executive Committee (NEC), the National Constitutional Committee (NCC), the National Policy Forum (NPF), and the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC). Holding positions in these and more of Labour’s organs are vital for setting the agenda and taking important decisions for the party.

The availability of allies can shape the political opportunities for a movement (McAdam & Tarrow, 2019:21). Momentum’s National Coordinating Group (NCG) has cooperated with other groups aiming to democratise Labour like the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD), through the Centre-Left Grassroots Alliance (CLGA), a co-operation between left-wing groups aiming to increase left-wing candidates’ chances at success in internal elections. They field common election slates for left-wing candidates to improve their chances to get elected. The NCG routinely passes motions to support CLGA

slates and left-wing candidates in general, for various internal elections for positions within the Labour Party. Most important is the NEC, Labour's chief executive organ, which controls the overall direction of the party, sets strategic objectives and oversees policymaking (Labour, 2020b). The NEC consists of a variety of groups with interests in the Labour Party: representatives from trade unions, socialist societies, the PLP, local councillors, Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) and more. Momentum has seen considerable successes in getting left-wing and movement candidates elected to Labour positions; for example, what in 2015 was a Blairite majority on the NEC, had been swung to a slim left-wing majority by 2017.

It's by no means a Jeremy Corbyn-supporting, left-wing NEC. It's pretty marginal, but at least it's not a Tony Blair, right-wing NEC as it was two years ago. Ethan

Momentum activists have run for executive positions in Labour, both nationally and locally. One informant who ran for local Labour positions along with a group of friends did so with an aim to reflect the membership better, following the surge of mainly left-wing members into Labour in 2015. They also recognised the strategic importance of movement supporters holding positions, both in their local Labour executive and as Labour candidates for local elections. Starting with taking over the local Branch Labour Party (BLP), which are subdivisions of CLPs, it only piled on from there:

A few of us got together and thought, "well, why don't we go for these positions, and we could have an executive that mirrors more of what the membership looks like". So, I took on an executive position in my branch, and various other colleagues took on other positions. These positions aren't usually very popular, but now, these had become quite important positions, because we were doing stuff. I was on the executive of the CLP as well. And then we had local elections. So, I ran to be a council candidate. Then we had a selection meeting that was really well attended, a hundred people, and those meetings usually had about 20 to 25 if you were lucky. I was one of the ones who were selected as candidates. Daniel

Positions on the local executive became more strategically important as the political distance between left and right became more accentuated. Factional struggles over the political direction and priorities of the local group contributed to a 'mutual mobilisation' of the left and right in the local party, vying for control. After getting themselves elected onto branch and constituency party executives, these Momentum activists also stood for council selections, mobilised a marked rise in turnout to the selection meeting, and were voted in as candidates.

These Momentum activists went from mobilising to become elected to their local party executives on the argument of representativity, to being able to mobilise to get selected as the official Labour Party candidates for the local council elections – where, in the election campaign and if elected, they would incarnate the local Labour Party in elected office. This is one example of Momentum activists mobilising to “capture” the party locally.

5.2.2 Labour Conference and The World Transformed

Changing the structures and rules of an arena to make it operate more in accordance with the movement’s values and aims can be a strategic goal for movements (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015). Momentum aims to make Labour a “democratic and member-led party” (Momentum, 2017a). The annual Labour Party Conference is a crucial venue to pass left-wing policies and change the party’s rules. Organising delegates at Labour Conference, and organising The World Transformed as a festival for activists parallel to Conference in space and time, are parts of Momentum’s tactical repertoire. Organising at the annual Labour Party Conference is a priority for Momentum. Momentum supports members who want to stand as delegates, encourages members to attend, organises networks for Conference, supports rule change proposals which hand agency and decision-making power to the membership, and promotes and supports radical policy motions. Facilitating more democratic and member-led processes at Conference was particularly important for informants. Among these are the Democracy Review, looking at structural changes to democratise Labour; the battle over mandatory reselections at Conference in 2018, which ended in a compromise; and getting more motions than usual debated in 2019. At Conference in 2019, Momentum faced the survival or success dilemma on several fronts. Momentum had toned down its efforts on mandatory reselections and other structural changes aimed at democratisation, compared to 2018:

Well, we do a lot [to democratise the party]. Conference is the highest organ of the party, so actual changes to the party structures have to happen there. And this year there’s not that much happening on that front, because we don’t want to create a huge row this close to a general election. Last year we had this big fight on mandatory selection, but the result was disappointing, it got very watered down. Amy

Concerns about starting large internal battles on the brink of a possible general election, combined with the break-off of several prominent centrist Labour MPs into the ‘Independent

Group’ in April 2019 in fresh memory, had some Momentum activists cautious of handing out any more reasons to break off or get distracted from the ‘real prize’. At Conference in 2019, according to activists, Momentum moderated itself much because of a fear of the party splintering over sore issues like Brexit, where different factions in Labour were pulling hard in different directions. The party split in April 2019 proved the threat was real. This self-moderation of the movement in the defence of Labour can hint at movement co-optation, where the movement has internalised some of the strategic dilemmas the Labour Party is faced with pertaining to, for example, keeping the ‘Labour broadchurch’, the politically broad unity between the Labour left and the more centrist and neoliberal elements in the party, united.

For activists, democratising Labour is not only about making politics more accessible to ordinary people by changing the structures and rules of Labour introducing more membership agency, member-led initiatives and bottom-up decision-making. Democratisation is also about political consciousness and political education. Democratisation requires incentivising increased membership participation, building a broad base of politically educated activists. Momentum does this at Conference through providing accessible and dynamic arenas with policy discussions and workshops encouraging grassroots participation, touching on a wide range of topics. For the last four years, parallel to Labour Conference, Momentum has organised a political festival, The World Transformed (TWT). The proximity of TWT to Conference in time and space is a conscious choice by Momentum, aiming to make Conference more accessible to activists who are not delegates. It also makes Momentum as a political force more visible to participants at Conference. Amy says *“it really helps to broaden the appeal of Conference and it makes Conference more accessible and interesting for people. There are good and interactive events that are interesting for everyone.”* The number of attendees has varied in the numbers between 5’000 and 10’000. The festival is stuffed to the brim with various events like panel discussions, debates, and live podcast recording sessions. Panellists and event participants could be representing organisations affiliated to Labour, central Labour figures, prominent left-wing media figures or left-wing activists. TWT has both mobilising and identity-building functions. TWT events in 2019 contained discussions on the future of Labour; future strategy for Labour and for Momentum; pressing political issues and Conference motions; the hostile nature of British media and establishment discourse; strategies for and challenges in mobilising activists; and the nature of the Labour Party. Prefigurative policy workshops were also a central piece of the festival, spread over several workshops and sewn together in a “Manifesto for the

Movement”, aimed at demonstrating how ‘bottom-up’, grassroots policy development could work. Present at the festival were alternative media institutions like Novara Media and Red Pepper, and left-wing publishers like Pluto and Verso. So were several trade unions. The presence of these actors at TWT is a signal of affinity towards Momentum, and overlapping ideologies, identities and political priorities. Gatherings at the festival with central figures of the Labour Left, like Jeremy Corbyn, Diane Abbott and John McDonnell, drew enormous crowds. The main tent was stuffed to the bursting point when the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs (a group for the most left-wing Labour MPs) had a get-together to wrap up the festival. This speaks to a close connection between the parliamentary left and the grassroots. That Momentum’s TWT festival is arranged parallel to the annual Labour Conference, is an indication of Momentum’s strong ties to the Labour Party. The festival is intended as a supplement to Conference, aimed at increasing its grassroots appeal and activists’ interest in Conference.

5.2.3 Selections

We deserve the right to choose exactly who represents us. And we deserve the right to do that within our political party. And at the moment we don’t have a system that allows us to do that. If we are gonna transform Labour, we’re gonna have to transform its parliamentary representatives. And the only way we can truly do that, is by having direct control over their re-elections. We have, nominally, a left-wing leadership, and we have a lot of support of left-wing parties in local areas, and we have lots of people who are now prominent within the party who are on the left, and yet, a lot of the structural changes that we wanted to see, haven’t happened yet. And that has disillusioned people. Francis

Why are selections important? We recall from Chapter 3.2 that capturing positions in arenas can help a movement gain agency (Jasper, Moran & Tramontano, 2015:403). The struggle over selecting parliamentary candidates, getting movement members into positions in the PLP, is a monumentally important part of the effort to transform Labour. Labour MPs have significant agency and influence over Labour’s direction as a party by virtue of their positions. For one, they act as gatekeepers in Labour leadership nominations. They also have the power to trigger new leadership elections: the 2016 leadership election was the result of a motion of no confidence in Corbyn, put forward by a majority in the PLP. Not least, MPs are

the lawmakers in Britain. Future Labour MPs will be tasked with passing any potential transformative socialist programme in government, which is the movement's ultimate aim. For the movement, having MPs representative of the Labour membership is therefore paramount to achieving their aims and goals. There are historical comparisons to be made. In his book on the history of the Labour left, on the internal battle between left and right in Labour in the 1970s, when the left "held a majority in the party and dictated policy", Simon Hannah writes this: "*What was lacking, however, was the capacity to channel that grassroots anger into a responsive mechanism that allowed them to hold their MPs to account or pressure them. Essentially the left could make no further progress in the current constitutional set up. The guerrilla war in some CLPs to deselect unpopular MPs was the consequence*" (2018:155).

Local Labour Parties are divided into Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs), following the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies. These are further divided into Branch Labour Parties (BLPs), usually following the boundaries of councillor's wards. Some CLPs have "all-member meetings", where all members can turn up and vote on important decisions, whereas other CLPs have a delegate structure where only delegates elected from branches and affiliated organisations can vote.

Selections of parliamentary candidates are handled by CLPs. CLPs usually nominate Labour's parliamentary candidates through selections, where after a longer process, members ultimately vote on the candidate of their preference. There are exceptions. First, selections only occur automatically in constituencies without sitting Labour MPs. If the constituency has a sitting Labour MP, having a selection process requires 'trigger ballots', where at least one third of all local branches have to call for a reselection, a threshold lowered from 50 percent in 2018. These trigger ballot requirements in practice function as constraints on activists aiming to replace sitting MPs to ensure a more representative PLP, and provide great protection for MPs even in cases of deep discontent. Very few trigger ballots have succeeded, even after lowering the threshold. Second, the NEC can choose to impose candidates onto the local groups, usually for the sake of quick process when a snap election is called. Impositions can also be used as a political advantage by any faction with a majority on the NEC, in imposing candidates over candidates from a rival faction favoured locally.

Under Blair, they parachuted in goodness knows who. A lot of the right-wingers who are leaving the party were just given nice, safe seats by the national party for some reason or another. Ethan

Momentum activists perceive the PLP as an unrepresentative entity, a ‘bastion of the right’. A crucial aim for many activists is to ensure that the PLP better represents the membership, through selecting more representative candidates in selection processes. Part of this effort is the battle for ‘mandatory reselections’, which has been waged for a long time in Labour. The trigger ballot system has been criticised for its favouritism of sitting Labour MPs, which in turn favours the PLP establishment which leans heavily to the right, compared to the more left-wing Labour membership. Removing the trigger ballot requirement and instead introducing mandatory reselections would make selections in all constituencies automatic. This would remove a rule-based protection of these crucial positions in the Labour Party system; in other words remove a constraint Momentum activists out to transform Labour are faced with. The measure was up for a vote at Conference in 2018, but was defeated and replaced by a compromise of lowering the trigger ballot threshold to 33 percent. Arguments of democratisation and representativity are at the heart of activists’ efforts to implement measures like mandatory reselections. To effectuate any change in the composition of the PLP, however, action at Conference aimed at changing the rules which dictate how safe sitting MPs are in their seats is not enough: the actual selections happen locally. While the threshold for trigger ballots has been lowered, activists are disappointed in the low return of successful trigger ballots since then.

It was a horrible compromise between the Left and the moderate faction. We should have pushed for full open reselection when we had the chance, I'm disappointed that we didn't. Chris

Momentum activists’ views of trade unions are conflicted. Unions are viewed simultaneously as ideologically important entities in engaging the working class in politics and in fighting for working class rights, as preferable allies exemplified by their crucial support of Corbyn, and as unaccountable obstacles in the way of party democratisation seen by their opposition to structural changes crucially important for Momentum. The influence of the unions over selections is felt both on a national and on a local level. The opposition of the unions to the proposed implementation of mandatory reselections at Conference in 2018 did much to sink the proposal. In local selection processes, Momentum activists have experienced unions standing in the way of Momentum’s priorities.

The work we do in the selection processes is really hampered by the big trade union bureaucracy. The trade unions like to control their MPs. So, when a trade union

supported MP is selected and elected, they really go out of their way to keep them there. They still have a lot of power in the party, you know. Benjamin

Local trade union branches can affiliate to their local CLPs, adding to the total of that CLP's branches. One Momentum activist in a CLP with a delegate structure argued trade unions misuse the branch system to prevent "their" MPs from being triggered, even if a clear majority of local party members want to hold a reselection. Activists recognise the limits of Momentum's influence on its own in democratising the Labour Party by opening up its structures, rules and processes. Though an agent instrumental in facilitating democratisation, Momentum relies on the support of the overwhelming majority of the membership and both true allies like CLPD and some unions, and allies of convenience like many of the unions to get anything passed. The importance of having allies for reaching the movement's goals, like the CLPD and the unions, is not lost on activists.

Around the time of Conference in 2019, activists feared the Labour leadership was looking more insecure than in a long time. There had been progress in making Labour more member-led and left-wing, through for example the election of left-wingers into important party positions and the passing of radical policies. Efforts at transforming the PLP, however, had not yielded the same results. *"They are fairly cemented, and it doesn't look like that's gonna change anytime soon"*, one activist said about the PLP just weeks before the 2019 general election was called. Around the same time, Momentum's NCG motioned that Momentum would prioritise resources for trigger ballot selections and winnable selections. At Conference in 2019, activists expressed deep worries regarding the selection processes in preparation for the clearly approaching general election. Some CLPs had halted their selection processes. Activists were concerned the NEC would have to impose candidates on local groups, which would tamper with democratic processes. There were also concerns that these CLPs were halting selections deliberately, in the hopes of preventing left-wing, membership-supported candidates from winning selections, instead banking on the (still left-wing, but often less so than local parties) NEC to impose politically balanced candidates which would be "fair to the factions". The Labour leadership responded that they wanted selections, and that they had urged CLPs to go ahead with them.

When it comes to selections, the success of Momentum in transforming the party and capturing positions has fallen short of expectations. The discrepancy between successful selections of left-wing candidates in open selections, compared to the amount of successful trigger-ballots, is stark. According to Panitch & Leys (2020:487-488), Momentum worked

hard in advance of the 2019 election to select left-wing candidates for “winnable seats” in open selections, winning about half of the 100 new candidates selected for the Labour left. On the other hand, while several MPs have been successfully triggered, not a single MP has been deselected through trigger-ballots under Corbyn’s leadership. When backing the December election in October, the NEC decided to halt the few ongoing trigger ballots (Syal & Stewart, 2019). Looking at the discrepancy in Momentum’s success between open selections and trigger ballots, it is reasonable to assume that if Momentum had won their battle for mandatory reselections in 2018, which would automatically force open selections even for sitting Labour MPs, the tally of left-wing Labour parliamentary candidates in the 2019 election would be dramatically higher. The trigger-ballot threshold for sitting MPs constitutes a significant structural protection for MPs, to the detriment of Momentum’s efforts to transform Labour.

I think the majority of constituency parties are towards the left-wing of the party. And we would’ve seen, if [the trigger-ballots] were working, a lot of new, vibrant, left-wing candidates winning these selections – and instead, a lot of the standard, old MPs, who may not agree fully with what the party wants to do, are still winning these battles.

Francis

MPs controversial in the Labour membership not being triggered for reselection sticks out as a strong indication of the structural constraint the trigger ballot system constitutes for movement action. One of Momentum’s strengths is its ability to mobilise a broad mass of supporters through innovative digital campaigning (Chapter 6 will examine mobilisation in detail). This strength risks amounting to little when faced with mobilising for selections on the level of individual branches in constituency after constituency. Combined, the structural constraints of Labour’s decentralised selections and the rule-based constraints of the trigger ballot system entail a situation where change comes agonisingly slow, in contrast to the sweeping changes made to Labour’s own party organs with regular elections by OMOV ballots of the nationwide party membership. It is easier for Momentum to mobilise its mass membership and supporters towards changing the composition of Labour Party organs like the NEC or the NCC, with nationwide OMOV ballots and low-cost participation, than for high-cost activism through locally organised physical selection meetings.

5.3 Conclusions

Momentum's strategy of making the Labour Party a 'vehicle for socialism' entails creating new opportunities and removing old constraints, by changing the structures, rules and processes to increase membership agency, and by capturing positions in Labour for the movement. Momentum's institutional-political strategy is informed by the constraints in Britain's majoritarian system, socialist ideology, activists' strategic preferences, a history of socialist marginalisation in Labour elevating the sense of threats, and by the opportunities discovered and articulated by Corbyn's meteoric rise to the Labour leadership in 2015 on the back of a mass mobilisation of dedicated supporters.

Political opportunity framing, affirming the ability of a mass movement to facilitate change against heavy opposition, has affected Momentum's mobilisation efforts. Activists are more prone to participate in action when there is a sense that doing so will influence the outcome. Framing political opportunities for the movement within the Labour Party channels activism through the party's arenas. Momentum frames Labour's mass membership as a crucial resource for the party for winning elections and holding off adversaries, and as indispensable for democratic legitimacy.

Momentum has successfully exploited the political opportunities for mass movements discovered and articulated in the structures, rules and processes of the Labour Party by using movement activists as a resource. In membership-wide OMOV ballots, for example for national party organs with regular elections like the NEC, and to a degree in local parties, Momentum has managed to play the resource of a mass membership off as a strength. Where structural and rule-based protections exist, like for trigger-ballots in the PLP or positions in Labour organs not elected by Labour members, Momentum is constrained and their successes in transforming Labour have been limited.

6.0 MOBILISATION AND ORGANISATION IN A DIGITAL AGE

How does Momentum's digital activity translate into activism? As seen in Chapter 5, Momentum has seen considerable success in reaching some of its aims and goals, whilst struggling with others. To facilitate change, Momentum relies on its mass base of supporters and activists to participate in protests, votes, campaigns and meetings. How has Momentum mobilised these supporters and activists and directed their efforts towards achieving concrete aims? Some scholars posit that the development of ICTs and individualised and decentralised mobilisation weakens the historically central role of SMOs as mobilisers (Earl et al., 2015), forcing SMOs to adapt to new mobilisation trends (Walker & Martin, 2019). This chapter analyses how Momentum has adapted to ICT-fuelled shifts in the mechanisms of mobilisation, reinventing the SMO in a digital age.

How has Momentum dealt with strategic priorities and internal conflicts over organisation and democracy? SMOs are made up of a complex network of actors with different interests and strategic priorities, which can spark internal conflict (Alimi, 2015), for example over internal democracy and formal organisation (Della Porta & Rucht, 2013b). SMOs are affected by ICT-fuelled innovations in organisation, which some scholars criticise for often facilitating and enabling top-down processes camouflaged as online democracies (Gerbaudo, 2019) hinting that difficulties in strategic priorities over organisation have not been made easier with ICTs. This chapter analyses how Momentum has reacted and adapted to ICT-fuelled innovations in organisation, and how internal conflicts over organisational efficacy and movement democracy in Momentum have played out.

6.1 Mobilisation and coordination

Not everyone is comfortable with knocking on people's doors, so letting people sign up to do things they're comfortable with, like phone banking or volunteering in other ways, lets everyone actually contribute as much as they can in the ways they want.

Amy

Which methods and channels does Momentum as a social movement organisation employ in its efforts to mobilise its activists and supporters in the context of digitalised communication? Social movement organisations can play a crucial role as mobilisation agents (McCarthy &

Zald, 1977; Walker & Martin, 2019), directing a movement's resources into certain forms of activism. ICTs have profoundly transformed movement mobilisation and activism, fostering more individualised and decentralised forms of mobilisation, weakening the traditionally central role of SMOs as mobilisation agents (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). It has also significantly lowered the cost of mobilisation (Bennett & Segerberg, 2015). According to some scholars, dividing offline and online spaces is artificial given the extent to which ICTs are embedded in our everyday lives (Earl, 2019:300). Other scholars suggest that the digitalisation of movement activities has opened up for efficient mobilisation, despite limited economic resources (Gerbaudo, 2019:56). Competence in digital communication and the use of social media is a valuable resource for a movement operating in a digital context.

Momentum mobilises for campaigns and protests, in support of strike action, for selection meetings in the Labour Party, for votes on national and local Labour organs, and for local and national elections. Who mobilises Momentum activists and supporters for various actions? Both the national Momentum organisation and local groups can act as mobilisation agents, depending on the activity. Local groups tend to mobilise for local meetings, votes, protests and elections, whereas the NCG tends to mobilise for national activities like votes for national Labour positions, national elections, campaigns, and more high-profile activities. The national organisation mobilises through membership-wide e-mails and newsletters, the SMO's official communication channels on social media, like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, where they reach out to a broad array of activists, members and supporters. The broader Corbynista movement sometimes overlaps in mobilisation efforts, with Facebook pages like *Red Labour* and *For The Many* (formerly Jeremy Corbyn for PM) spreading messages and news of important events rapidly to their hundreds of thousands of followers.

Various events and meetings are organised and mobilised for by local Momentum groups, individual members and the NCG. Local Momentum groups organise local campaigns and rallies in support of various causes. Local Momentum groups sometimes organise rallies and events in cooperation with local campaigns, mobilising through common mailing lists and phone-banking efforts and turning up to each other's events in reciprocal support. Local Momentum groups use e-mails and phone-banking sessions to mobilise supporters to turn up for important meetings. Phone-banking sessions can be set up in the living rooms of activists, or in offices. They require more work than e-mails but also tend to give a higher return, and are reserved for the most important activities, like local elections, internal Labour Party elections of officers and local selections of councillors and parliamentary candidates.

Momentum mobilises for low-cost activism like voting for left-wingers in internal

Labour elections online or by postal ballot. The national organisation does much of this work through social media and e-mails to its members and supporters. Momentum also mobilises for more high-cost activism, like physical meetings, strike action and demonstrations. Key to Momentum's efforts is its proactive electoral mobilisation for Labour in election campaigns. Canvassing for Corbyn and Labour Party candidates has taken the form of both traditional canvassing and leafletting, as well as phone-banking sessions and social media (Pickard, 2018:125). Door-knocking was an important focus of Momentum's activist-based campaign in 2017. Several hundred people could turn up to knock on doors in certain constituencies. The countless individual conversations had by door-knocking groups are believed by activists to have played an important role in the 2017 election having went as well as it did, reaching out to voters and non-voters first-hand. Effective communication is crucial for movements to get their message out, and to organise and mobilise supporters. One important way movements do this, is through the media people consume. Momentum focused heavily on social media and the production and distribution of videos during the 2017 general election, using Facebook to spread them – enjoying a wide reach thanks to the spread of other groups and social media pages within the movement (Nunns, 2018:331), reaching more people than Labour's own official campaign with its videos (Kogan, 2019:447).. In the 2017 general election, new, left-wing and digital alternative media like *Canary*, *Evolve Politics* and *Novara* had a good reach, thanks to supporters and members of the movement eager to spread their stories in social media. New media and the movement were mutually reinforcing (Nunns, 2018:324). The movement has successfully managed to bypass traditional media with their broad reach when such channels have been biased or closed off. To allegations that these alternative news sites and social media campaigns only amounted to an “echo chamber” or “safe space for Labour activists”, one account rebuts: “*The example of Double Down illustrates the point. When Theresa May called the election, it did not exist. By polling day, half of Facebook users in the UK had seen one of its posts.*” (Nunns, 2018:325). The use of social media has been fundamental to Momentum's success (Pickard, 2018:125). It has been successful because it manages to circumvent traditional media, especially the overwhelmingly right-wing and vociferously anti-Corbyn and anti-Momentum newspapers; because it creates a direct link between Momentum and its supporters, bypassing formal Labour structures; because it gives a voice to the grassroots and allows them to create content, reflecting the movement's ambitions for participatory and direct democracy; because it creates a sense of community; because it is almost cost free, both financially and effort-wise; and because it is fast and has a large reach (Pickard, 2018:126).

Momentum has used digital messaging services like WhatsApp and Slack as communication tools, and mobilises through e-mails and through social media like Facebook, Twitter, but also through more traditional methods like phone-banking, canvassing and leafleting. Activists recognise the need for a balanced approach between digital and traditional mobilisation methods, stressing the importance of online campaigning for disseminating information and increasing participation. The mailing list built up during Corbyn's 2015 campaign and thereafter maintained in founder Jon Lansman's ownership, is a crucial resource which enables Momentum's vast and targeted reach. The mailing list is made up of members and those who have expressed support for Momentum and signed up as part of the mailing list, enabling rapid, low-cost and widespread communication to supporters, telling them to participate in various actions.

The core of Momentum's efforts to get activists to participate in action is digital. Different digital communication channels are used for different purposes. Through e-mails in the build-up to the 2019 general election, Momentum asked activists to tell them how they could participate, with many different activities to choose between. They also asked activists with certain skills to sign up to their Creative Network and Digital Network, and people in general to join their "Social Media Army", organised to make social media posts go viral. In addition to e-mails and social media, Momentum's digital mobilisation efforts include several mobile apps and websites Momentum have developed to help campaigning and mobilisation efforts (Kogan, 2019:447). Many of them are closely or directly related to proactive electoral campaigning for Labour. One of these websites, *MyNearestMarginal*, was used in the 2017 general election and directed activists to their five nearest marginal seats, and organised activists with information on campaign events and carpooling (Nunns, 2018:342). A more sophisticated version, *MyCampaignMap*, was developed for the 2019 general election, where organisers and activists could plan and look up various election events in various constituencies on their phones and be directed to the constituencies where the algorithms deemed they would be of most use. By November 30th, My Campaign Map had been accessed over 1.4 million times and used to set up 21'000 canvassing events (Clarke, 2019). Momentum has also developed digital tools for other purposes: in September 2019, *Univotes* was launched to help students register to vote in the constituency (either at university or at home) where their vote would "make the biggest impact for Labour" (Momentum, 2019b). Developing these tools are only a couple of permanent staff members, but a large group of volunteers Momentum have sought out for their technical skills (Clarke, 2019). The use of highly centralised digital tools for organising and mobilising activists is combined with a

strategy of ‘distributed organisation’, inspired by Bernie Sanders’ US presidential campaign in 2016, encouraging self-organising rather than following centralised direction (Clarke, 2019). The digital tools lower the cost of participation for activists by providing structured, detailed and easily accessible information, direction and abundance of choice, and aids in network-building between activists. Through highly centralised mobilisation efforts, deciding beforehand what sort of activism is important, Momentum allows for activists to choose on an individual basis when, where and how they may participate by providing an abundance of choice.

ICTs have drastically lowered the cost of disseminating information. Posts on social media and targeted e-mails reach far more potential supporters in a shorter period of time than costly methods such as postage or phone-banking. However, information alone is not enough to make people turn up to meetings and protests. In its mobilisation efforts, Momentum has recognised that potential activists may not sense that their participation will make a difference, or may not feel comfortable participating in the activities Momentum organises. Momentum attempts to solve this problem by providing an abundance of choice, setting up a wide array of possible actions to participate in but letting people base their activism on individual preferences like place and time, the type of action, and the amount of participation required. This ‘abundance of choice’ strategy for mobilising supporters also plays on supporters’ individual strengths, by allowing those who have experience with certain actions to pick out these.

As the 2019 general election was just called, Momentum launched its “Plan to Win”, outlining its strategy for proactive electoral mobilisation for Labour and telling supporters to participate in the campaign (Momentum, 2019a). Some of the actions outlined were to become organisers, responsible for running the operation locally; to organise carpools to marginal constituencies, which Momentum’s digital platform MyCampaignMap pointed activists towards; organising phone-banking parties; organising voter registrations; becoming online volunteers; and training first-time activists. Months ahead of the 2019 general election being called in late October, Momentum prepared by “*gathering names to phone-bank, posting videos, and sending out e-mails to get people to engage and prepare*” (Amy). At Labour Conference and TWT in 2019, Momentum canvassers used the opportunity of thousands of activists being gathered in one place to go around and sign up activists for the general election – whenever it would come – on paper sheets. The sheets contained many choices of activities volunteers could sign up for, which one canvasser argued “*gave people that extra feeling of having committed to something specific, increasing the chances that they*

actually follow through once the day comes”, and that *“letting people sign up to do things they are comfortable with, lets people contribute as much as they can in the ways they want”*. Commitment and abundance of choice are mobilisation strategies Momentum uses. The abundance of choice mobilisation strategy is informed by a belief that this contributes to an increased level of activism, and by Momentum’s conception of its wide base of supporters as an important resource. Invoking the success of mass grassroots mobilisation in 2017, one e-mail to supporters in late October 2019 reads, amongst other things: *“[Boris] Johnson has just announced that he’s tabling a motion on Monday for a general election and we say: bring it on. Our movement is stronger than ever. We defied all expectations at the last election. If tens of thousands of us step up and give it everything we’ve got - we can win.”* Playing on socialist ideology, political opportunity and the threat of the alternative, another e-mail on October 29th attempted to drum up supporters to activism: *“We’ve just got six weeks to fight this election, and it’s going to be the fight of our lives. It’s socialism or barbarism, and this is our chance to change the course of history.”* Yet another e-mail was sent out on October 26th to verify the address and contact information of e-mail subscribers.

Momentum used WhatsApp to coordinate activists at Conference in 2019. The chat functioned as a tool for rapid communication and mobilisation, as only admins could write messages. Spontaneous protest actions were organised, and canvassers were recruited on extremely short notice, using this chat with several hundred members which in its turn was announced via a Momentum e-mail prior to Conference. The official Facebook page and e-mails to supporters also gave updates on Conference, and Momentum’s self-developed app *M.App*, first launched at Conference in 2017 (Elgot, 2017), functions as a coordination tool which gives information on the goings-on of Conference, which motions were important, who to lobby, and how to vote if you were a delegate. To a degree, Momentum was ‘herding sheep’, providing both direction, cohesion and confidence to the many Momentum delegates at Conference, in what is otherwise a very energy-consuming and time-consuming activity.

Momentum has innovated in its use of ICTs as a social movement organisation to play a crucial role as a mobilisation agent and in facilitating and coordinating action. Momentum uses digital communication to punch above its weight, by using social media to reach out to its supporters and using and developing useful apps and websites as tools for mobilising thousands of activists to action. Momentum’s innovative use of ICTs lowers the cost of participation for activists through detailed coordination and by providing rich information about how, when and where activists can contribute.

Instead of SMOs retreating into the shadows as individualised and decentralised

mobilisation trends took hold, Momentum is a case of a social movement organisation where mobilisation is arguably simultaneously centralised and decentralised. Momentum develops and uses highly centralised digital tools for organising and mobilising supporters, but efforts are still adapted to individualised and self-mobilising movement trends, using a strategy of distributed organisation. Defying suggestions that the SMO will play a less central role in movement mobilisation and coordination, Momentum has innovated and adapted to a digitalised context, and plays a crucial role as a social movement organisation. Even so, not everyone agrees with the strategic choices Momentum has made: one activist at 2019 Conference claimed Momentum had “*betrayed its origins as a spontaneous campaigning group and become too like a ‘top-down vehicle’ for enforcement*” (Wallis, 2019). That sentiment is shared by many informants. The following chapter examines the internal conflicts over strategic priorities, and over movement democracy in particular, in Momentum.

6.2 The organisation dilemma

We’re not at loggerheads with the NCG. They just don’t seem to consult us at all about things that are happening in this borough, like who should be the parliamentary candidate for our constituency when they select one. Ethan

Momentum’s centralised and individualised approach to mobilisation has been a successful recipe for adapting to a digital context as a social movement organisation. However, the centralising strategy has another side to it, which has been met with frustration by activists who believe Momentum has betrayed its purpose as a facilitator of democracy and grassroots agency. There is often an inherent tension within movements (Della Porta & Rucht, 2013b), as movements are made up of complex networks of actors with different interests and priorities (Alimi, 2015). The organisation dilemma, discussed in Chapter 3.2, is a strategic dilemma over whether to prioritise formal organisation and efficacy over movement democracy (Jasper, 2004). These tensions over organisation and democracy are accentuated in an institutionally oriented SMO – dependent on efficient organisation to be able to compete with its adversaries – at the same time dedicated to democratisation of the party and society at-large. In Momentum, there is a profound internal disagreement over the roles and functions of formal organisation and movement democracy between different groups.

As seen in Chapter 5, Momentum works within the Labour Party to democratise it and

increase member agency changing rules and structures, and through capturing positions for socialist candidates within Labour Party arenas. In the quest for democratisation, groups in Momentum have diverging views on strategy. Prefigurative democracy, modelling the movement itself after the principles of democracy the movement seeks to implement in institutions in society at-large (Della Porta & Rucht, 2013b), or in our case also within a political party, can often be a strategic choice for progressive and grassroots-oriented movements. The academic discussion on the benefits and backsides of formal organisation on the one hand and movement democracy on the other, is large and decades-old, with some scholars denigrating formal organisation as damaging to movement organisation as a whole (Piven & Cloward, 1979), others insisting on the crucial function of formal organisation in movements for coordination, mobilisation and maintenance (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), others still saying neither formal organisation nor structurelessness inherently guarantees efficacy or democracy (Haug & Rucht, 2013; Hond, Bakker & Smith, 2015). The introduction of ICTs onto the movement arena has fuelled innovations in organisational structures and dynamics, and the facilitation of democracy, but attempts at online democracies often result in cosmetics hiding a top-down process simultaneously enabled by digitalisation (Gerbaudo, 2019). How has Momentum been faced with, and how has it dealt with, the ‘organisation dilemma’?

Momentum has seen significant structural changes which have been criticised for constituting a considerable centralisation of agency and decision-making to the SMO’s central organ, the NCG, “consolidating the control of a small office faction” (Hannah, 2018:231-2). This centralisation has been a source of frustration for some activists, and accusations of being anti-democratic and against Momentum’s purpose of facilitating grassroots engagement (Wallis, 2019). As Kogan writes (2019:362), activists and organisers came into Momentum from different political traditions, carrying different conceptions of democracy and of what the SMO’s internal structures and role in society should be. These diverging strategic priorities continue to contribute to internal conflicts over the issue of structure and organisation in Momentum. Activists have conflicting views on the centralised control in Momentum, some seeing it as an affront to grassroots democracy, others seeing it as a necessary measure to secure that Momentum has the organisational efficacy necessary to be a serious actor within the Labour Party and in elections.

It is one thing to envision democracy, it is another thing entirely to put it into practice. Many in Momentum perceive participatory democracy, opening up for broad participation in decision-making processes, to be important for a grassroots movement with ‘the masses’ as a base of power (Ghadiali, 2018). To Amy and Francis, movement democracy was not just

about democratic structures and processes within the movement organisation, but also (or even more so) about handing agency and decision-making to ordinary people in their everyday lives, over decisions which affect them. We recall from Chapter 3.4 that movement strategies, tactics and organisational forms are informed by the identities of movement actors (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Particularly for Francis, the perceived importance of bottom-up decision making for movement success was informed by ideology and socialist values. Community organising, which is about engaging people in their local areas in their everyday lives through direct action and on their own terms in a bottom-up manner, is an important part of facilitating and sustaining participatory democracy in practice. In late 2019 Amy and Chris recognised a shift in focus in Momentum and Labour in favour of community organising. One CLP had hired full-time employees dedicated to community organising, who subsequently saw success in organising tenants against the demolishing of their homes to build rich people's homes in their place. Community organising was believed by its proponents to be an important tool in engaging in politics those currently disillusioned by a distant and unrepresentative political class. Community organising was also believed to be a potential democratic bulwark against the mounting problems of an exhausted, disillusioned and less motivated activist cohort after years of struggle. The focus several informants and broader segments of the movement place on community organising shows how there is internal tension in Momentum around both conceptions of democracy and strategic priorities. Movements have limited resources (Edwards, McCarthy & Mataic, 2019), and paying greater attention to community organising will necessarily, to some degree, come at the expense of other strategic priorities like those oriented more directly towards the Labour Party's structures. Activists fear the popular engagement aimed at through community organising and political education has not yielded as much engagement as hoped.

What we have to do is transform society democratically from below and seek to democratise everything within it. That is what we should've been trying to do within Labour. We spent a lot of this time winning key roles, and I think that's important, certainly at the start of these things. But then it never went as far as trying to empower the membership. Francis

With facilitating broad participation as an important part of a functioning movement democracy, Momentum has programmes for political education aimed at training activists and facilitating broader engagement. Both activists and panellists at TWT in 2019 recognised that Momentum had not succeeded in tapping into the broader enthusiasm and engagement in the

grassroots through these programmes or in general. TWT itself is an arena which gives opportunities to Momentum activists to be more engaged in politics, as a festival of accessible political education for activists.

[TWT] really helps to broaden the appeal of Conference and it makes Conference more accessible and interesting for people, because only delegates can access Conference and vote on the motions. Amy

The introduction of ICTs has produced new opportunities for movements to facilitate online democracies. As part of the constitution implemented in 2017, Momentum established a digital democracy platform which would “ensure that all members are empowered to initiate and vote on campaign priorities, constitutional amendments or overturning decisions by the NCG” (Momentum, 2017b). The platform was named My Momentum. Under the constitution’s §10, named “Direct Democracy”, all members can propose constitutional amendments or supporting particular campaigns, but with thresholds of 1000 members or 5% of members to be considered by the NCG, or 10% of members to reach a members’ vote. In the event of membership votes, 30% of members must vote for a motion to be valid (Momentum, 2017a). The NCG also uses the platform to consult members on decisions. The digital democracy platform has been criticised for being a mock democracy hiding what is in reality a top-down process, where the threshold for getting membership-initiated motions considered is high, whilst the national organisation can take already made decisions to a vote after the fact for the sake of legitimacy.

Activists are frustrated at the lack of democratic oversight of central decision-making, and important decisions being made on a national level without members being consulted beforehand. At Labour Conference in 2019, leaflets were handed out criticising the NCG for landing important issues without consulting the membership, resulting in “a lack of confidence in the Momentum leadership from large segments of the Labour Left” and an “exodus of too many good socialists from our ranks”, criticising the Momentum Constitution for being deeply undemocratic. In a casual conversation with one Labour activist and self-proclaimed socialist who had entered the party after Corbyn’s election as leader in 2015, the activist scoffed at the accusations in the leaflet, saying “this sort of infighting is why I never joined Momentum”. One activist at Conference accused Momentum of having become a ‘top-down vehicle of enforcement’:

The big question is: can they mobilise the young and get people engaged in the agenda like they did before? [Lansman] is more interested in controlling the party machine

than earnestly pursuing popular engagement. His priority is making sure the other people don't take over. (Wallis, 2019)

Not only the formal democratic structures of Momentum have consequences for its democratic practices. Frustrations over the top-heavy nature of Momentum are also felt by local groups as a consequence of Momentum's centralised communications, with allegations of top-down enforcement, information control and undemocratic processes. Local groups trying to organise and mobilise for local meetings, activities, protests, and more, need to communicate their activities to local activists. They do so formally through e-mails to local members, which first pass through the national organisation as they hold the data on Momentum's members and supporters. Sometimes, the local groups have conflicting interests with the NCG. The centralised control over communications in Momentum leaves informants feeling powerless in these situations.

The NCG holds all the data. They're the only way we can communicate with our members. All our communication goes through them, and there are no other methods of communication [...] we don't really have all that much power against the NCG. They dictate everything – from the posts they post on Facebook and the videos they make, to the motions and candidates they tell us to support and which policies are important, and so on. Local groups don't have their own funds, either. Benjamin

The database of members and supporters is owned by national Momentum, and any notices the local Momentum group wants to put out to people in the area about meetings have to go into national Momentum to be approved, and then e-mailed out. The mailing list is important for contacting members and supporters and informing them about current and important activities, and is the only formal channel through which local groups can communicate with its members. The centralised control over communications also results in some inefficiency for local groups, in some cases preventing effective mobilisation.

We try to hurry them up on getting the mailing out. If we decide on a meeting we're gonna have in two weeks' time, it can sometimes take that long for the staff to get 'round to sending it out. And I think if you can't mail people out quickly, you're a lot less effective as a local group. Ethan

Disagreements with the NCG over local issues has forced some local groups to cancel meetings, like hustings for parliamentary candidates in their constituencies, because the NCG had other priorities than the local groups in question. Local groups sometimes come into

conflict with the national organisation over who Momentum should support or put forward as candidates in parliamentary selection processes. Benjamin recalls one local CLP's selection process, and how the local Momentum group supported a local candidate. The NCG in this case supported someone else. Despite the local group winning out in the end, Benjamin says the case exemplifies the skewed power relations between the NCG and local groups, saying *"they can be at odds with the wishes and priorities of local groups at times"*. As the NCG sits on all the information on Momentum's members, and everything goes through the NCG, even the local group's communications with its members in this case were controlled by the national organisation. Benjamin is frustrated over alternative means of communication being unavailable to their local group, but expresses some understanding for the need for centralised control, referring to the internal conflicts in 2016/17 and how local groups could operate in counterproductive ways and cooperate with organisations Momentum *"really did not want to affiliate with, many of them not really understanding the Labour rules"*. Ethan shares the frustration over the NCG having a practical monopoly on formal communications with Momentum members, with the ability to censor and screen local groups. Ethan's local group was once involved in a similar conflict over selections, where the national organisation shipped in a parliamentary candidate from outside of the local area, and against the local Momentum group's wishes. The local group circumvented the national organisation by using other, less formal channels of communication via social media:

Suddenly, out of the blue, some of our members are being phoned up by people from outside the area, being told that the Momentum-supported candidate is this random person. And it's like, "hang on a minute, we've got our own, local candidate as part of the applied candidates" ... we weren't even consulted or contacted. And then we weren't allowed to put out an e-mail to our members, saying "we did not have any say in selecting Momentum's candidate", so we then found other channels to reach out to our members, which had people go "oh, you're washing your dirty linen in public", it's like... we weren't given any other choice. We couldn't e-mail our members because our e-mails have to be approved by national Momentum. Ethan

Another example of local groups circumventing formal communication channels through social media, was during the NEC elections in 2018, when Pete Willsman, a CLPD veteran and member of the NEC, was dropped from Momentum's slate (meaning Momentum would tell its members and supporters to not vote for him in the NEC elections) over comments about the ongoing antisemitism controversy in Labour despite voting having started, but was

re-elected nonetheless (Kogan, 2019). One activist's local group disagreed with the decision to stop supporting Willsman, because it *"would literally mean letting a right-winger in"*, as it was too late to select any new candidates since voting had begun. But, as the activist said, *"we couldn't email our members telling them to still support Pete Willsman. Because it had to be approved by national Momentum before they would then send it out."* The local group then used social media and announcements at meetings to make sure their members knew they were sticking to the slate and to Willsman. The local activist perceived this as a problem with internal democracy, as the local groups had no autonomy in their decision on whether to keep supporting Willsman, and were not consulted on the decision by the NCG to retract support for the NEC candidate.

On the other hand, NCG meeting minutes show that the national organisation is aware of the issues with communication with local groups, and of the need for better communication in selection processes. Where local groups might want someone local to represent them, because getting "shipped in" might mean you are more invested in getting a career in politics than representing the constituents you are elected to represent, the NCG minutes suggest the national organisation is more accepting than many local groups of prospective parliamentary candidates coming from outside a given constituency, as long as they "put the work in".

The national organisation is described by activists as an absent entity, out of touch with the grassroots whereas the local groups organise regular meetings and make sure people feel welcomed in Momentum. Local groups are *"not a Jon Lansman fiefdom that tells everyone what to do, but rather a friendly bunch of socialists"*, according to Ethan. The growing disillusionment with the Momentum leadership comes from activists' experiences of a growing distance between the grassroots and the leadership, not feeling like the grassroots, who the leadership draw their power from and are supposed to represent, are the source of decisions being made at the top. Some activists have stopped being active, and new groups have broken off from Momentum or formed to campaign against what they perceive to be undemocratic structures in Momentum.

6.3 Conclusions

Momentum has innovated and adapted to current mobilisation trends, playing on individualised mobilisation and the self-mobilisation of activists, developing deeply

centralised digital mobilisation tools with an abundance of choice which gives activists a range of activities to choose from. Deciding centrally which activities will benefit the most in reaching Momentum's aims, simultaneously lowering the cost of activism by providing activists with direction and rapid and detailed information about how to contribute, has allowed Momentum to tap into a large base of grassroots activists. Momentum is a case of a social movement organisation which has successfully innovated and managed to stay relevant as a highly effective mobilisation agent in a digitalised, decentralised and individualised movement arena.

Simultaneously, Momentum is torn between the desire to be an effective campaigning organisation and the demands for a more extensive movement democracy. Conflicting conceptions of democracy, as well as conflicting strategic prioritisations between different groups in the movement organisation, have been sources of tension and conflict. Local activists and organisers share a frustration with the skewed power relations between local groups and the national organisation, and a feeling of lacking agency and influence over decision-making, even over decisions very much pertaining to their local groups. Among local activists there is a feeling of powerlessness in confrontations with the NCG, as the NCG has a practical monopoly on formal communication channels and the ability to censor local groups' formal communications with their local members, forcing activists to find other means to communicate with their local members when in disputes with the national organisation. Activists share frustrations about what they perceive as a top-heavy and unresponsive bureaucracy in the national organisation. Efforts at implementing grassroots platforms like the Members' Council or digital democracy platforms are perceived as ingenuine attempts to cover over a top-down process or provide democratic legitimacy to decisions already made from above. The combination of Momentum's efficient and successful innovations in mobilisation on the one hand, and the frustration in local groups over undemocratic processes and top-down decision-making, suggest that the national organisation's attempts at balancing different priorities have not succeeded. The organisation dilemma is no less of a dilemma in the digital age.

7.0 COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES AND FRAMING PROCESSES

What characterises collective identities and solidarities in Momentum, and what characterises the frames Momentum produces to define itself, differentiate itself from other groups, and direct its grievances? Social movements are not only networks where groups, organisations and individuals come together to fight for common values and goals. Common values, identities, goals and practices are also produced in social movements (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Clemens & Minkoff, 2004:158). Action and interaction in social movements creates collective identities (Fominaya, 2019), both through common interests, experiences and solidarity (Goldner, 2001:71) and through the framing of value-based boundaries to differentiate themselves from other groups (Fominaya, 2019).

In Chapter 5, we analysed the political opportunities and the political opportunity framing which opened up for Momentum's success, and we pointed to how Momentum is creating new opportunities through strategic action. In Chapter 6, we analysed the way Momentum organises and mobilises supporters to action, and found significant successes as well as some issues. Framing affects opportunities, and opportunities affect framing processes (Benford & Snow, 2000:628); framing also affects mobilisation efforts, for example through the use of gripping personal stories and narratives (Polletta & Gardner, 2015:534). Shared emotions in protests and meetings or from stories and narratives can tie stronger bonds and shared identities between movement participants (Fominaya, 2019), especially in ideologically coherent groups (Della Porta & Giugni, 2013; Della Porta & Rucht, 2013b). The aim of this chapter is to examine the framing processes that take place in Momentum, as well as the collective identities and solidarities present, and how these frames, identities and solidarities may play into Momentum's mobilisation efforts. The roles of ideology, symbolism and factionalism in building collective identities will be examined.

7.1 Collective identities and socialist symbolism

We aim to strengthen democratic, popular social forces in Britain, to grow Labour, help it win and reconnect it with its radical heritage. In short, Momentum organises to shift power away from the 1 percent. (Schneider, 2016).

We recall from Chapter 3.4 that movement actors can use gripping personal stories and narratives to reinforce collective identities and mobilise supporters (Polletta & Gardner, 2015:534). Emotions can run high during protests and meetings or from stories and narratives, which can help to tie bonds between movement actors and create shared identities and strengthen movement cohesion, particularly in ideologically coherent groups (Della Porta & Giugni, 2013; Della Porta & Rucht, 2013b). Momentum is an ideologically coherent movement organisation, explicitly socialist (Momentum, 2017a), and its activists overwhelmingly self-identify as socialists.

There are a number of social practices through which framing processes happen and collective identities are produced and reproduced. In Momentum, these can be meetings, festivals, various campaigns, and discussions on social media, either in groups or in comment sections on Facebook pages like Momentum's own. Collective identities in Momentum are produced and reproduced through value-based and ideological symbolism, like socialist songs and imagery. Take the 2019 Conference in Brighton as an example: large, all-red banners flew over the TWT main tent in 2019, and the word "SOCIALISM" was spelled out in huge letters in the back of the area. Songs like the Red Flag or the Internationale were sometimes sung. Crowds could spontaneously break out into singing the "Oh, Jeremy Corbyn" chant to the tune of "Seven Nation Army" by The White Stripes, evoking shared emotions amongst those who participate. Slogans and phrases like "For the many, not the few" and "fighting for a society that works for all of us" are used in e-mail communications with members. These are examples of how Momentum uses socialist symbolism and historical references to create the feeling of a shared struggle and a collective identity. The annual Labour Conference has many fringe events, with discussions on different topics. One of the most anticipated fringe events in 2019 was the return of the Tribune Rally, a gathering at Conference of the Labour Party's left-wing. At the Tribune Rally, spirits were through the roof. The hallways outside the venue were filling way ahead of time in anticipation. The venue became packed to the brim with activists and media. Chairs were orderly placed in rows inside the huge room, but people eventually had to line up along the walls. The feeling was electric. People cheered and gave roaring applauses to speakers delivering fiery speeches about the new dawn of socialism, about the sure-to-come victory, about how the Labour left had never been stronger, and about how the movement opened up lots of possibilities to cement left-wing policy for the future. The framing of the Left as "stronger than ever" came in spite of dreadful polling. The focus was on the large and vibrant movement which could reproduce the surprise results from 2017. In the front was a stage with a wall of screens behind it, coloured in deep red with words in

white: “*TRIBUNE RALLY: For Victory and Socialism*”. Speeches made by prominent figures in left-wing rallies at Conference and TWT referred to socialism and values like justice, equality and equal opportunity, and evoked emotional responses from the audience.

Prominent movement and party figures at Conference and TWT tended to talk about a ‘movement’ rather than a ‘party’, even when talking explicitly about Labour. In addition to the understanding many activists share of Labour having obtained hegemony with a fundamentally transformed and left-wing membership, conceptions of legitimacy and agency inform the framing of the Labour Party as part of a movement: the movement, the bottom-up social organ of ordinary people working for change in their ordinary lives, are the legitimate representatives of a people-powered and democratic force aiming for radical social change. One panellist at a TWT event said the ‘road to socialism’ came through empowering the grassroots, connecting democracy and socialism. The movement’s diversity was recognised and framed as a strength by both panellists and informants.

Activists had conversations in the event queues, bars, restaurants and cafés, they exchanged ideas and shared experiences. There was an air of confidence over Conference: participants were proudly promoting socialism and socialist values, and felt confident that Labour had become ‘a socialist party’. This experience was reinforced by meeting and conversating with other socialists present at Conference and TWT and speeches by prominent party figures proclaiming Labour a socialist party. Ahead of arriving in Brighton, activists were dispirited at the ‘unrelenting media hostility’ and weak polling. Their spirits were lifted, however, throughout the days spent with others committed to the same ideas, values and causes as themselves. Leaving Conference and TWT, many activists felt more confident. Activists had shared emotions and experiences, and an air of opportunity for a socialist transformation of Britain – if they only worked hard enough for it.

Momentum activists overwhelmingly self-identify as socialists and as “on the left” in Labour. Historical figures on the Labour left like Tony Benn, and contemporaries like Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell, stand out amongst activists as front figures of socialism in Britain. They identify themselves in opposition to the party’s right wing, represented above all in activists’ minds by former Labour Prime Minister (PM) Tony Blair, and the Blairite wing. Many activists loathe Blair with a passion. Contemporary figures like deputy leader Tom Watson, and with him most of the PLP, were also seen during the autumn of 2019 as adversaries and as opposed to the “true Labour values” that Momentum activists and the Labour left held.

Momentum brings together activists with different political experiences from different

political eras, young and old, all with different ways of doing things and of viewing the world. Some have been active in party politics for decades, others in campaigns and protests; others are fairly new to politics altogether, only becoming active during or following Corbyn's 2015 leadership campaign. There is a generational divide within Momentum, and the movement organisation's collective identity is profoundly shaped by the history and identities of the old Labour left. Many of the most prominent figures in the movement, along with many of its activists, are veterans of the Labour left of whom many have spent a political life marginalised on the outer flanks of Labour, systematically shut out from power and influence in the party under Blair under Peter Mandelson's infamous "sealed tomb", the Blairite project of keeping the left out of power by modifying the party structures so that it would evaporate the left's institutional power. The activists who lived through decades of marginalisation in Labour carried those experiences with them into Momentum. One young informant describes a situation where young activists are enthusiastic about the project whereas the old are more keen on "settling scores with the right"; informants who are old enough to remember the '80s and '90s, recall with some bitterness the decades leading up to Corbyn's 2015 leadership victory, being robbed of a political home, only being able to "come home to Labour" when there seemed to be a real chance for radical change.

Recalling the discussion on dual identifications between movements and parties from Chapter 3.1 (Heaney & Rojas, 2015), Momentum activists identify with the movement and with the party. Activists campaign for Momentum within the Labour Party, and for Labour in elections. They strongly disavow of elements on Labour's right wing. Their affinity towards Labour is somewhat conditioned on the party's continued radicalism. If Labour 'loses its way', activists might quickly disengage from party activism and disown Labour.

Collective identities in Momentum are characterised by an affinity to socialism. Momentum engages in socialist symbolism, amongst other things through visual references like red flags, aural references like songs characteristic of socialist ideology, and through historical references to the socialist struggle in Britain and Labour. Momentum's collective identities are also characterised by a 'unity in opposition' against the Labour right.

7.2 Ideology, moral claims and adversarial frames

The idea that the wealthy should actually pay a bit more tax, suddenly makes them go “keep this guy out at all costs”. Since the moment Jeremy was elected, the knives were out. There has been a ridiculous amount of vitriol and attacks on Jeremy Corbyn from the mainstream media, including the BBC, and from right-wing careerists within Labour. Ethan

“*The Labour Party is a socialist party*”, the Labour Party’s chair Ian Lavery said at a Socialist Campaign Group rally at Conference in 2019. Roaring cheers erupted from a large audience of activists and supporters. The feeling that Labour had made a significant turn to socialism in the four years under Corbyn’s leadership was shared by activists. The membership had completely transformed in favour of the left, and the right-wing was a shadow of its former self. Momentum activists confidently expressed socialist ideas, called themselves socialists, and openly discussed the nature of socialism and how to achieve it. There was a certain pride to it, and a recognition that this newfound pride and security in being socialist would have been by far not as common only years earlier. Motions proposed and passed at Conference in 2019, like the 4-day week, renationalisation of water, mail, broadband and mail, and a shift in the tax burden towards the wealthiest contributing more, were touted as flagship policies and were referenced by activists as proof that Labour had turned towards a more defined, left-wing, socialist profile. One quote from an e-mail to Momentum supporters on September 10th, 2019 is repeated leading up to the December election: “*We face a choice between socialism or barbarism*”. It is a deeply ideological phrase, elevating moral claims in support of socialism, simultaneously referencing a historical term, “socialism or barbarism”, which Marxist theoretician Rosa Luxemburg is particularly known for (Luxemburg, 1916). It is also an example of motivational framing, stressing the importance of joining the fight for socialism by threat of the alternative, barbarism, serving as a call to action for activists. Questions of whether Labour should be a party for reform or revolution, and the nature of class consciousness and class in the 21st century were discussed in high-profile discussions at TWT. One activist reflected around the question of class, emphasising that the class makeup of Momentum and Labour was largely middle-class academics, despite the party’s class interests being largely in favour of the working class, who “*should rationally support Labour when you look at the policies*”. This constituted a major issue for several activists because the base of power for Momentum is widely conceived to be the ‘popular masses’. Not sufficiently engaging the working class in political struggle is a

problem because the working class-oriented politics and ideology of Momentum and Labour are in their ‘class interests’. This framing of class interests contributes to understandings of strategy and democracy: one informant stressed the urgency of getting the working class politically active again to make the best use of the movement’s base of power, and perceived community organising as a good way to do this. The framing of rational class interests builds a logical connection between Labour’s socialist policies and the support of the working class. The informant recognises that Labour is struggling to engage working-class people at the level they had hoped, but explains this by pointing at an erosion of trust in Labour’s commitment to the working class during the decades of right-wing control of the party before Corbyn.

[The working class] are the ones who should really be out in the streets fighting for Labour. But they aren't. Labour members are middle-class [...] the working class has seen politics work the way they have for so long, and they can answer 'well, what's it got to do with me?', and rightfully so. Benjamin

Frame alignment is a strategic effort by movement actors to get un-mobilised potential participants to contribute in movement action (Snow, Vliegenthart & Ketelaars, 2019:400). Emphasising the rational interests of the un-mobilised working class to participate in movement action is an example of an attempt at ‘frame bridging’ (Snow, Vliegenthart & Ketelaars, 2019:400): the linking of the movement’s ideological interests with the supposed rational interests of the working class, in an attempt to draw the group into activism in support of the movement’s aims and goals. The decades that Labour spent under right-wing rule from the 80s and onward, are remembered as a traumatic period. Momentum activists heavily participate in the diagnostic framing of Labour’s right wing as the source of Labour’s electoral problems, as they eroded the party’s trust with the working class. An example of a combination of diagnostic and adversarial framing, is the assignment of blame for Labour’s undemocratic structures and processes and the loss of Labour’s traditional values of standing up for democratic rights and being rooted in trade unions and communities, to the Labour right, Blair and the Blairite faction. Stressing how Blair took the party away from the form of democracy and decision-making the informant values highly, contrasting the undemocratic, top-down Blairism with the bottom-up grassroots democracy of the movement, the informant explains why Labour must be democratised and assigns the blame for Labour’s lacking democracy to Blair.

The Labour Party went through some real major changes under Blair and Blairism. They did this by basically capturing the structures of the Labour Party. They had people employed in senior positions, several high-profile Labour Party politicians, and hoisted people in positions who agreed with the Tony Blair ideology, the Tony Blair way of doing things. In my view, it went the wrong way. Entirely. It gutted out some of the internal democracy the Labour Party used to have. It gutted out a lot of the political perspectives that the Labour Party used to have. It turned it into more of a polished and soundbite focus-room sort of political party, rather than what it was previously, which was a party that was always rooted in the trade unions, and it was always rooted in communities, and standing up for democratic rights. Francis

Informants use value-based boundary framing to distance the movement from their adversaries in the Labour right. Blair and the Blairite faction are framed as cynical, destructive careerist opportunists who are not interested in ‘true Labour values’ or working in politics on behalf of others than themselves. Labour organisations and networks like Progress and Labour Students are perceived as very right-wing, or Blairite, organisations in the Labour system. In activists’ views, the Blairites’ potential return to power would be a catastrophe for Labour and for Britain. The framing of present threats aids as motivational frames as people are more prone to participate in activism to counter the threat. The threat of a right-wing return to power in the Labour Party has contributed to a mobilisation of activists despite the common feeling of the left being in a hegemonial position in 2019. References to the ‘Chicken Coup’ in 2016 in particular underline for activists the right’s capability to undermine Corbyn’s leadership, and the latent threat they pose to left-wing hegemony in Labour. Emphasising threats can also intensify commitment to the movement and make the movement erect walls around itself to protect from outsiders and intensifying activists’ identification with the community (Van Ness & Summers-Effler, 2019:415). One quote from an informant exemplifies the use of adversarial framing, moral claims and threat emphasising to draw borders between Momentum and their left-wing sympathisers, fielding ‘true Labour values’ on the one hand, and opportunists who talk the talk and manoeuvre and manipulate their way to the top on the other – and how Jeremy Corbyn is an antithesis to opportunism and cynicism: authentic, consistent and true to his values, even despite isolation, ridicule and hostility. Jeremy Corbyn’s authenticity serves as a moral resource, which when attacked by adversaries like the media or the PLP prompts mobilisation amongst his supporters.

Last year's Progress member might suddenly be standing for election in Momentum. This is how careerists operate. I've been in the party long enough to see people making wonderful left-wing motivational speeches about how we're all socialists, until they get elected. A lot of people can talk the talk, but I think one of the reasons that so many of us are big fans of Jeremy is that he has been consistently true to his values, and he has not sold out, over many, many years. And despite the fact that there is so much media hostility. Ethan

One informant cites concerns about right-wing moles (non-movement people participating in the movement to gather information and undermine it) in Momentum's mailing list and at local meetings, with examples of audio recordings being made from meetings and being leaked to newspapers commonly perceived as extremely right-wing amongst Momentum activists. In signalling that sticking to principles of openness and democracy trumps getting rid of moles, the informant makes a moral claim that elevates the principled movement above its cynical opponents, who dare to collaborate with the right-wing press. Making moral claims about socialism, elevating the movement above its adversaries inside the party and in society at-large, is very common. This framing of the Labour right as cynical, more interested in holding powerful positions than good values, and a latent threat to the left's project of transforming society is found elsewhere as well. In the shifted political climate within Labour, where Momentum and the left-wing grassroots members to a large degree dominate Labour, having left-wing support is almost necessary. Activists fear that certain Labour politicians use left-wing rhetoric to gain positions they otherwise would not, jumping on a wave of enthusiasm for the sake of getting significant positions within the party but not representing what the membership wants. The framing of cynical opportunism as a difficult-to-spot threat to left-wing hegemony creates an air of suspicion which may make it more difficult to feel welcome in the movement for up-and-coming newcomers. This is another way in which walls are erected between the movement and 'everyone else'. Movement opponents also produce frames of the movement, which contribute to a reciprocal construction of borders (Virchow, 2017:626). The Labour party's right reciprocate and actively frame the movement as an opponent. Here, an informant brings up one example of this:

There is this "right-left" split, and I think a lot of people identify that with Momentum. On the Right, they would often talk about people like myself as "Momentum" in a derogatory term. "Oh you're all Momentum". Daniel

The informant talked about how the left had “taken over” the party membership, and the ideological distance between new and old members of Labour in their own local area. The increase in marked political differences in their local area increased turnout and helped mobilise people to come to important meetings, because activists understood the importance of turning up if the consequence of staying home is increasing the odds of a Blairite getting elected. The threat of Labour’s right-wing winning positions at the expense of socialists mobilises activists to turn up to meetings.

Momentum makes moral claims about socialism and socialist values. It heavily participates in diagnostic framing of the Labour right as the source of Labour’s contemporary problems of lacking internal democratic processes, extensive political opportunism, and in failing to sufficiently reach out to and appeal to its traditional base of the working class. It participates in adversarial framing of the right, as cynical opportunists more busy building careers than espousing the correct Labour values. Momentum emphasises threats like the prospect of the Labour right getting back in control, or Labour losing elections to the Conservative Party (ref. “socialism or barbarism”), to mobilise supporters to combat these threats. Momentum and Momentum activists combine many of these framing processes, aiding in elevating the movement on the basis of values and drawing borders against perceived adversaries. These practices aid in mobilising activists and tie the movement community closer together by emphasising the shared ideas, values and goals of activists and emphasising external threats to the movement.

7.3 Media hostility and counterhegemonic discourse

We walked around and knocked on doors in the constituency and actually talked to people, and they saw that we were decent people with decent ideas, despite what the media were telling them about us day out and day in. Amy

By advocating their cause through the megaphone of traditional media with large audiences, movements can address their grievances to a significant number of people. But conventional media can be unreceptive to movement actors and their causes (Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014), and even act as an opponent to the movement and actively frame a movement in a negative light (Virchow, 2017:626). We recall from Chapter 2.3 the extent to which traditional British media are hostile towards Corbyn and his political project and

systematically misrepresented Corbyn and Labour under Corbyn's political views, when compared to other political figures and parties (Cammaerts et al., 2016; Deacon, Smith & Wing, 2019), and how most of these media channels are perceived as "very right-wing" by self-described left-wingers (Smith, 2017). The ICT-fuelled decentralisation of news production (McNair, 2006) has enabled movement actors to self-select their news sources. When traditional media are unreceptive to movements, they tend to turn to or create their own supportive 'alternative media', and use digital platforms like Facebook or self-produced social networks (Della Porta, 2011; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014). Alternative media is also important for the framing of reality (Boczkowski, 2010), creating counterhegemonic discourse and controlling information (Della Porta, 2017). We recall from Chapter 3.3 that activists' ability to develop and articulate an oppositional consciousness influences movement activism (Adair, 2001:148-149). Alternative media help to maintain the cohesiveness of values, ideas, goals and collective identities in a movement, as long as movement activists consume these media.

Magazines like *Red Pepper*, *Jacobin* and *Tribune Magazine* contribute to the plethora of alternative media on Britain's socialist left. Podcasts like *Red Hacks* and *Novara Media's* podcasts give space to radical politics and discourse, allowing ideas to grow and develop in a vibrant space. Left-wing book publishers also contribute to giving space to Left discussion and discourse. Publishers like *Verso* and *Pluto Books* are active contributors to a diverse array of left-wing literature in the United Kingdom. Momentum's own social media channels also serve as a media presence as they selectively share news, stories, or videos which reaffirm their framing of problems, solutions and adversaries. The presence and prevalence of alternative media in the broader movement contributes to the development of counter-hegemonic discourse. They produce and reproduce values and discourses which in the end aid in building and maintaining a collective identity in the movement. They are also valuable arenas for left-wingers to present themselves and be known and recognised within and by the movement. Left-wingers within the Labour Party can gain traction on building a consciousness around their political convictions and thereby a following. The "Red Hacks LIVE!" event at TWT carried discussions on how the neoliberal hegemony is kept alive and cemented through existing mass media, where "*a small handful of people own nearly all of the media that people consume*". This handful of people have vested interests in preserving the status quo own the media, and thereby the lens through which the movement wants to communicate that message. It was held that the BBC, required by law to be impartial, is also biased in favour of the right. Alternative media are mentioned as a possible solution.

However, this was problematised: producing counterhegemonic discourse should happen through media channels which most people consume as well, according to some activists.

A central frame in the broader movement is the ‘hostile mainstream media’ frame. Conceptions about a hostile mainstream media and PLP are broadly accepted as self-evident truths in the movement and on the Labour left. At the Tribune Rally at Conference in 2019, union leaders McCluskey and Ward, together with several MP speakers, railed against the hostile media and the PLP who refused to gather behind Corbyn. They praised Corbyn for his vigilance in the face of the vicious attacks by the media. The TWT podcast event *Red Hacks LIVE!* was explicitly about how to build a media which does not work for the status quo or the narrative of the governing Conservative Party. Momentum activists and central actors in left-wing alternative media place the majority of larger media outlets in the hostile mainstream media frame. Papers like the *Daily Mail*, the *Express*, the *Telegraph* and *The Sun* are framed by activists as right-wing, Tory (Conservative) newspapers. Papers which are perceived by activists to lean more towards the left, like *The Guardian* or TV channels like Channel 4 News are also framed as hostile against the Corbyn project by activists. “Even the BBC”, which is bound by law to be neutral and impartial, as several informants point out, is perceived by activists to disfavour the movement in its coverage:

The media would give a lot of attention to people on the right of the party, like Margaret Hodge. She gets a load of airtime on the BBC and if you're on the left you don't get that. Daniel

Successful framing requires that the frame be credible and can resonate with the experiences of the group or individual targeted by the framing process (Snow, Vliegthart & Ketelaars, 2019:402). The lived experience of Momentum activists resonates well with an adversarial framing of the mainstream media as being partial and having a hidden agenda in ‘sabotaging’ Corbyn’s political project, and multiple studies support the “objective reality” of the bias of British media against Jeremy Corbyn. The systematic vilification, character assassinations and associations to terrorism against Corbyn (Cammaerts et al., 2016) and the biased coverage of the movement (Deacon, Smith & Wing, 2019) from the ‘mainstream media’ constitutes a systematic adversarial framing of the movement by one of its opponents. Watching character assassinations against Corbyn, a leading inspiration for many activists, and being subject to systematic hostility for years has driven movement activists and supporters to distrust media outlets in general, to the degree that any negative coverage of Corbyn will quickly be dismissed as partial and with a hidden agenda by some activists. To a certain degree, it also

drives activists to diagnostically frame the blame of political conflicts within Labour and the movement, and left-wing defeats, on the media's coverage of the movement and on how this coverage unfairly shapes the perceptions of activists and voters.

The media survives on soundbites, so they can write things like "Momentum for lefty loony" or something, and mention Labour and Corbyn and Venezuela in the same sentence, it's ridiculous. Daniel

The experience of being systematically vilified by much of the media strengthens solidarities within Momentum – between activists, and between activists and those who are targeted, like Corbyn. Because of how the media spins stories, according to one informant, Momentum has felt it necessary to moderate the claims it makes and the criticisms it levels at the Labour leadership, for example in discussing policy motions at Labour Conference. Momentum's self-moderation can be perceived as a strategic choice related to the 'naughty or nice' dilemma of movements toning down their demands to achieve any success. This self-moderation can also be perceived as a form of solidarity with Corbyn and Labour, as actively avoiding giving suspicions of conflict within the movement helps to prevent the media from creating those conflicts by accentuating them.

We're wary of criticising motions fronted or supported by Corbyn because they don't go far enough, even though that's how we feel about a lot of them. Because if we do, you know how the media works, they'll spin it as a "party rift" and "party conflict". Same with the party's right, they'll just support that narrative, that the left is "split" somehow if we disagree on the details of some motion. So we've moderated a bit, and whenever we do criticise, we have to be wary and say things like "that's a great motion, but we could even go a little bit further". Amy

While media coverage can serve to mobilise supporters and legitimise a movement's protests, tactics and actions through constructing what is termed 'discursive opportunities', the "features of political discourse that make protest seem attractive" (Jasper & Polletta, 2019:65), media coverage can also serve to delegitimise the movement and vilify its tactics, preventing the movement from being as effective and bold in its approach. What we are seeing here, is an example of this. Momentum moderates its tactics because of the negative media spin that would follow from being bolder in their criticisms of policy motions at Conference. Benjamin tells a similar story about selections:

A lot of our MPs are really out of touch and even unhelpful to the point of sabotage. But whenever we try to deselect an MP, that's presented in the media as bullying and just a waste of time we could have spent 'doing the actual politics, doing what actually matters'. They have friends in high places. It's frustrating. Benjamin

More than just constituting a source of frustration for activists, the negative media coverage of Momentum's tactics of promoting radical policies in Labour and attempting to replace unrepresentative Labour MPs through selection processes, is a constraint for Momentum. On the other hand, as the 'hostile mainstream media' frame delegitimises negative media coverage, the 'right-wing elites' frame delegitimises right-wing Labour MPs as cynical opportunists, and the 'elite solidarities' frame (see Chapter 7.4), Momentum's framing contributes some insulation against assaults on Momentum's tactics from the media. Responding to overwhelmingly negative media coverage by framing the media as an adversary, the movement weakens the media's ability to shape the discourse among movement activists.

Nevertheless, the media is still able to make inroads into the movement's discourse. A study into the media's coverage of Labour's antisemitism controversy found that no less than 5500 news stories had been published in eight national newspapers in the span between June 2015 and March 2019 (Philo et al., 2019:1). Examples of headlines are "*Corbyn has brought anti-Semitism into the MAINSTREAM*" (Express) and "*No wonder Corbyn's Labour is riddled with anti-Semites*" (Mail Online), a coverage which has profoundly shaped the public's perceptions of antisemitism in Labour, with people believing between 25-40 percent of Labour members have been accused of antisemitism, whilst the real amount is 0.1 percent (Philo et al., 2019:2). Some informants legitimise and support the claims of antisemitism, like Chris who says "*The elderly male people in my family are like that. I feel like that's what happens with Jeremy. There's nothing wrong with living in a racist society, but there's a lot of things wrong with not confronting that*", and Benjamin who says "*Lansman has been vocal in condemning antisemitism, where others want to deny that Labour really has an antisemitism problem*". Other informants frame the media coverage of antisemitism in Labour as part of the 'hostile mainstream media' frame, like Daniel, who says "*the coverage of antisemitism is way overstated*". Ethan points at this 'selective coverage' by the media of similar issues in different parties as proof of media bias against Labour and Corbyn:

Every time a Labour Party spokesman or MP has been interviewed on the BBC, they've always thrown in, 'what about antisemitism'. When was the last time you saw

a Tory MP being interviewed and being asked, “what about islamophobia?” You know, they don’t ask the same questions. Ethan

Momentum and movement activists contribute to diagnostic framing of traditional media in Britain as biased against the political project of the Labour left, the movement and Corbyn. They contribute to prognostic framing in suggesting that part of the solution is to create their own, alternative news sources to ensure the impartial coverage they are not getting from ‘mainstream’ media channels. Another part of the solution is for Momentum to moderate its claims to avoid unnecessary conflict, as there is an expectation the media will blow any disagreement between Momentum and the Labour leadership out of proportion. One consequence of the ‘hostile mainstream media’ frame is that movement adversaries and boundaries are defined, and activists identify with a movement community which is being assaulted in the media, aiding in the production of collective identities. The ‘hostile mainstream media’ frame also partly insulates movement discourse against the media, by delegitimising the media as an adversary with an anti-movement agenda.

7.4 Elite solidarities and political outsiders

Momentum was always going to have a rocky first few months: attacked by swaths of the media and a small but vocal group of Labour MPs. An organisation that seeks to make ordinary people more powerful is a threat to many of the most powerful in our society. (Schneider, 2016).

Activists draw connections between the adversarial frames of the Labour right wing, represented here by Labour MPs under Blair, and the adversarial frames of the media. Diagnostically framing ‘elite solidarities’, alliances between Labour right-wingers and the established powers in society like the media and business interests, one informant alleges that there are “ways of paying off people who’ve been useful to the establishment”, and that right-wing Labour MPs have “good career options waiting for them after their time in Parliament”. The informant frames the Labour right MPs as prioritising elites over democratic processes, more interested in self-serving than in the voters who entrusted them to hold powerful positions to begin with. This frame makes negative moral claims about the Labour right: the informant points a finger at all the “immoral jobs” right-wing Labour MPs

take on after their tenure in Parliament is over. The informant talks about the animosity of the Labour Party and media elites against Corbyn, which only ramped up to new heights after he was elected leader. In the informant's view, the media and Labour Party elites are out to "*completely kill off the chances of someone that isn't one of them*" (Ethan). The informant thinks it is hypocritical of the media to focus so much attention on unfounded accusations against Corbyn being "an IRA sympathiser" or a "terrorist supporter", whilst Thatcher was "dining with dictators and selling arms to Saudi-Arabia". Momentum has reacted to the hostility from elites by mobilising in Corbyn's defence.

A lot of people can talk the talk, but one of the reasons so many of us are big fans of Jeremy is that he has been consistently true to his values, and he has not sold out, over many, many years. I'm impressed that he's taken this badgering for so long, and it's been ten times worse since he was elected. And then there's an attempt by all these careerist, right-wing MPs to throw him out – and we have another leadership election – and Momentum was very useful in defending him when it came to the coup and all the undermining. Ethan

The perception of the PLP and the Labour Party bureaucracy as hostile entities is widespread amongst informants and Momentum activists. Amy says, "*the party bureaucracy is full of hostile people who were hired during the Blair era around 20 years ago, who despise us and despise Corbyn*". In a panel discussion at TWT in 2019, a panellist stressed that a Labour electoral victory would still invite problems because the PLP are overwhelmingly right-wing and would refuse to implement left-wing and radical policies which were voted through in Conference. One informant talked about the disloyalty of the PLP towards the leadership as one of the main problems for Momentum and the broader movement.

There's lots of power in just being an MP alone. A lot of them got there because they have a lot of influence. And they're disloyal towards the leadership, which is a problem. Benjamin

Due to allegations and character assassinations against Jeremy Corbyn, the movement's figurehead and the leader of the Labour Party for years, by the British media and central, influential figures in the Labour leadership as well as in the PLP, Jeremy Corbyn continues to be perceived as a political outsider – a part of "Us", not a part of "Them" – by his supporters and Momentum activists, despite being in charge of the party for years. The relentless

hostility against Corbyn and his political project has helped to maintain and cement the image of Corbyn as a political outsider, as “one of us” for the movement and for Momentum.

7.5 Conclusions

Collective identities in Momentum are characterised by socialist ideology and widespread use of socialist symbolism; by principled attitudes towards democracy, equality and peace; and by a unity in struggle against powerful adversaries within Labour, in the media and in society at-large. Momentum makes moral claims about socialism and socialist values, and participates in diagnostic and adversarial framing of the Labour right, who are framed as 1) the main source of Momentum’s grievances pertaining to a lacking party democracy, a loss of contact with the working class, and social inequality and as 2) a potential threat if they were to return to power. The threat of the Labour right winning positions in Labour contributes to mobilisation.

Momentum also contributes to diagnostical framing of traditional media in Britain as biased against the political project of the Labour left, the movement and Corbyn. The ‘hostile mainstream media’ frame describes a hostile media territory for the movement, prompting them to create their own news sources; and it defines traditional media as an adversary to the movement, delegitimising the media as having an anti-movement agenda and partly insulating movement discourse; and it contributes to the production of collective identities, as movement activists share the experiences and solidarities of being a target of the media for prolonged periods of time and borders between movement community and ‘Them’ are drawn.

Activists also frame alliances between party elites, the media and business interests in society as ‘elite solidarities’, another way in which boundaries between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ are drawn in Momentum, delineating the movement community of ‘ordinary people’ and movement values, morals and principles in contrast to the cynicism of the movement’s adversaries. Momentum and Momentum activists’ framing efforts aid in elevating the movement on the basis of values and drawing borders against perceived adversaries. These practices aid in mobilising activists and tie the movement community closer together by emphasising the shared ideas, values and goals of activists in contrast to their adversaries and by emphasising external threats to the movement.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis set out to answer the research question: *How does Momentum organise and mobilise to achieve its aims and goals?* To answer this, we have analysed Momentum's strategies and their origins; Momentum's mobilisation tactics; how the SMO has dealt with the organisation dilemma and relations between local groups and the national organisation; and what characterises collective identities and frames in Momentum. This chapter presents the main conclusions of the analysis.

The analysis in the previous chapters has shown that Momentum is a social movement organisation facilitating, coordinating and mobilising for action chiefly within or towards the Labour Party, and on behalf of Labour in local and national elections. Its chief aim is to make society more democratic, fair and equal, fundamentally transforming it through collective action and Labour values, electing a transformative, socialist Labour government. To do this, Momentum aims to make Labour a more participatory, democratic and member-led party (Momentum, 2017a). Echoing Kriesi's research on movements capturing political parties in majoritarian systems (2015), the analysis suggests Momentum works to pass radical policy motions, changing the party's rules, structures and processes, capturing positions in party organs, and channelling movement activism into proactive electoral mobilisation for Labour in local and national elections. Momentum's strategy can be summarised as "transforming Labour into a 'vehicle for socialism'"; capturing the party to use its vast material, human and social-organisational resources and its established access to electoral politics in Britain's majoritarian system in the struggle for fundamental social change and socialism. Momentum works, in essence, for the movementisation of the Labour Party: a democratisation of the party entails a shift in Labour's resource dependency in favour of a mass membership ready to mobilise in support of the party as a crucial resource, and to the detriment of resources like media support. The analysis suggests that Momentum's strategic goal of 'conquering the Labour Party' is informed by the framing of political opportunities, and the strategic preferences and values of activists.

Momentum's coordination and mobilisation for action both within Labour and in support of Labour in elections shows the development of fundamental ties and dual identifications between movement and party, echoing the findings of Heaney & Rojas (2015). The analysis here suggests that activists commit to both Momentum and to Labour. Momentum's institutionally-oriented strategy is informed by the structural constraints of the British majoritarian political system, by activists' ideological coherence around socialism,

values like democracy and equality, the strategic and tactical preferences of activists familiar with institutional politics, a history of socialist marginalisation in Labour, and the opportunities for mass movements in the Labour Party discovered and articulated first in Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership campaign in 2015, and reaffirmed in the 2016 leadership election and the 2017 general election. This 'political opportunity framing' affirms the ability of a mass movement to facilitate change against heavy opposition, affecting Momentum's mobilisation efforts as activists are more prone to participate in action when there is a sense doing so will influence the outcome. The framing of political opportunities within Labour also directs action towards Labour Party arenas – local, national and digital. The opportunities provided for mass movements in Labour are limited, however, and vary by different arenas: whereas Momentum has seen significant success in membership-wide OMOV ballots like for the NEC, where Momentum can mobilise a vast number of supporters for low-cost action, the limited success in changing the party's structures and rules indicate the limits of a vibrant mass membership as a resource for Momentum's tactical repertoire. In selections, Momentum's successes in selecting left-wing candidates in open selection processes compared to the limited success in trigger-ballot attempts, demonstrate the major constraint that the rule-based protection of sitting Labour MPs constitutes for Momentum's efforts to transform the PLP. The active opposition by the trade unions and other factions in Labour against Momentum's attempts both at removing these rule-based constraints at Conference, and at local trigger-ballot attempts, has played a significant role in limiting Momentum's successes in transforming the PLP.

Which mobilisation strategies and tactics have Momentum employed, and through which agents and channels? Despite some scholars' suggestions that the role of SMOs in mobilising supporters is losing ground to more individualised and decentralised mobilisation (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Della Porta & Diani, 2015; Earl, 2019), the analysis here suggests that Momentum has played a central role in facilitating and coordinating action, and mobilising movement supporters and activists. Innovating and adapting to mobilisation trends, Momentum combines a highly centralised mobilisation strategy, with an 'abundance of choice' strategy which appeals to activists' individual preferences. Through the use of digital tools and analytics, Momentum lowers the cost of participation by providing activists with choice and information on how to best contribute. ICTs constitute political opportunities for Momentum, as the movement organisation's presence on social media has allowed them to skilfully address their grievances to broad audiences, reach out to supporters in a low-cost manner. ICTs have also allowed Momentum to access and create invaluable mobilisation

structures. Momentum's tactical innovations in digital mobilisation, particularly through self-developed digital tools and apps, are made possible despite limited financial resources by their active recruitment of Momentum activists with technical expertise as volunteers. Momentum uses its members' expertise on different topics as a resource to counter the constraints of limited funds. Momentum also uses more traditional forms of mobilisation, like canvassing and phone-banking, typically reserving these more costly mobilisation tactics for when other mobilisation channels are unavailable, or mobilising for particularly important events like selection meetings in local groups.

Simultaneously, the analysis suggests that the centralisation of Momentum sparked internal conflict over Momentum's organisational structures and internal democratic practices. Movements are faced with the 'organisation dilemma', a strategic prioritisation between organisational efficacy and movement democracy. As former research on the topic of movement democracy has found, the question of movement democracy is particularly prone to create tension in progressive, democracy-oriented movements (Clemens & Minkoff, 2004; Della Porta & Rucht, 2013b), like the Corbynista movement Momentum is a part of. Different groups in the movement prioritise differently. For some, like the national leadership, having an effective campaigning organisation with centralised mobilisation is paramount to being able to reach Momentum's aims. For others, prefiguring participatory democracy in the movement, or focusing on community organising as an alternative way of empowering activists, are important aims in itself. Activists on the local level describe a top-heavy and unresponsive bureaucracy, and a feeling of powerlessness in confrontations with the NCG over for example diverging priorities in selection processes, which holds a practical monopoly on formal communication with Momentum members, even over the heads of local groups. Local groups attempting to circumvent the NCG's monopoly on formal communications with members by turning to other methods of getting their message out, risk being derided for "washing their dirty linen in public". The feeling of being "foot-soldiers" for a bureaucratic machinery has created distance between the national organisation and local groups who hold diverging strategic priorities and perceptions of what sort of organisation Momentum should be. Attempts at implementing grassroots democracy platforms like the Members' Council or the digital democracy platform, to better involve the Momentum membership, are perceived as ingenuine attempts to cover over a top-down process or provide democratic legitimacy to decisions already made from above, mirroring Gerbaudo's criticisms of digital democracies (2019). On the one hand, Momentum has innovated in mobilisation, and particularly in facilitating effective, proactive electoral mobilisation for Labour through the development and

individualised use of digital campaigning tools; on the other hand, the centralisation of agency in Momentum “to a small office faction” (Hannah, 2018) has sparked tensions in the movement organisation and frustrated activists dedicated to democratic processes and membership agency as strategic priorities.

The analysis shows that collective identities in Momentum are characterised by socialist ideology, the widespread use of socialist symbolism, principled attitudes towards democracy, equality and peace, and solidarity against powerful adversaries within Labour, in the media and in society at-large. These findings echo what previous research on ideologically coherent movements has found: that they tend to create shared identities and strengthen cohesion through shared emotions (Della Porta & Giugni, 2013; Della Porta & Rucht, 2013b). Momentum is an ideologically coherent movement organisation, explicitly socialist. Its activists largely self-identify as socialists. Momentum engages heavily in the use of socialist symbolism, which evokes emotional responses for participants. Emotions run high amongst Momentum activists during protests, and at motivational gatherings of socialists like the SCG rally and Tribune Rally at Conference, from being united in a common struggle for large principles like equality, peace, solidarity and socialism. An important part of the construction of collective identities in Momentum happens through adversarial framing, creating boundaries between “Us” and “Them” through distinguishing the movement from what they are not. This adversarial framing is directed at 1) the Labour right and Tony Blair in particular, framed as the main source of Momentum’s grievances pertaining to party democracy, the soul of Labour, and Labour’s weakened links to the working class, 2) the media, through the ‘hostile mainstream media’ frame, where British traditional media has an agenda against the movement and against Corbyn in particular, and 3) the established powers in society, through the ‘elite solidarities’ frame, where society’s elites are portrayed as in alliance against the socialist project of Momentum and Labour under Corbyn. These frames contribute to tie the movement community closer together, uniting them against common adversaries and emphasising their own shared ideas, values and goals, morally elevating the movement’s values and portraying adversaries as cynical and less principled. It is possible that aggressive opposition from adversaries like the PLP and the media has contributed to an intensification of these framing efforts, as emotional reactions are provoked in activists when talking about these issues.

8.1 Suggestions for future research

Momentum is indelibly linked to the fortunes of Jeremy Corbyn, which raises the question of what will happen when he is no longer leader of the Labour Party.

(Pickard, 2018:131).

The fateful defeat in the 2019 general election constitutes a loss of legitimacy for Corbyn's political project and for Momentum as a political force. With Corbyn's departure as Labour leader and Momentum's preferred successor losing the subsequent leadership election, cracks are beginning to form in Momentum's foundations. Are we witnessing the beginning of the end for the Corbynista movement? The eventual implications of Labour's general election loss in December 2019 for Labour and for Momentum are still far too early to tell, but it will likely have profound effects on Momentum moving forward – without the Labour leader it was founded to defend and support, and carrying the weight of a string of bad defeats. Whatever the way forward, however, Momentum has shaped not only the Labour Party, but also the political landscape in Britain.

The hard prioritisation of focusing on a selection of issues meant focusing less on the mechanisms of internal conflicts over political issues, as well as the demobilisation and disengagement that follows from accentuating internal disagreements. The Brexit issue in Momentum and Labour, particularly towards the December 2019 general election, is a complicated issue which could likely be dedicated its own thesis: examining how all-encompassing political conflicts like Brexit has affected Momentum as a movement organisation oriented towards the Labour Party, ripped apart by the Brexit issue, would be an interesting endeavour which could shed light on how internal party conflicts affect party-oriented movements. The loss of legitimacy and the string of bad defeats Momentum has faced since the general election in 2019 spell a downwards turn for Momentum. Whether it constitutes Momentum's fall, or whether a revitalisation of the movement organisation is possible, only time will tell. Examining how Momentum deals with the situation, simultaneously attempting to counter demobilisation in the wake of Corbyn's exit and facing off a less friendly Labour leadership, would be a very interesting project to pursue which could shed light on how institutionally oriented movement organisations handle demobilisation trends.

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Appendix 1: Project information

Sent to prospective informants.

Would you like to participate in the research project:

«Party organisations and structural power: Momentum and Labour»?

This is a request to you regarding participation in a research project where the purpose is to shed light on how the activist organisation Momentum works toward structural changes in the Labour Party. In this sheet we provide you with information about the aims of this project and what participation will mean for you.

Purpose

The research project is a master's degree in sociology at the University of Oslo (UiO).

Organisational structures matter. They shape how decisions are made, and structural change can drastically change power relations in the organisation. Since different rules and structures can produce different outcomes, studying how groups in organisations with different interests compete for the shape of rules and structures is a productive way to get deeper insight.

The purpose of this study is to shed light on how factional struggles in party organisations play out in the shaping of internal power structures, by examining how the activist organisation Momentum plans and works for structural change in the Labour Party, as well as examining the arguments brought forward for proposed changes.

The empirical material in this project will consist of a mixture of: interviews of activists and/or organisers in Momentum, who plan and work for structural changes in the Labour Party on a daily basis (more or less); observations of meetings in which strategies for achieving structural change are either discussed or brought into practice; relevant internal documents from Labour and Momentum; and relevant historical sources.

The aim is to interview a small number of persons in-depth. These interviews will be used together with a combination of other forms of data.

Who is responsible for this research project?

The University of Oslo (UiO) is responsible for this project.

Why are you asked to participate?

You are asked to participate in this research project because of your experiences as a Momentum activist, which are important for this project to be able to achieve its goals.

The prospective interview participants (including you) are all Momentum activists and organisers, or have a relatively close relation to the Momentum organisation. This request is sent to those prospective participants who show interest through preliminary and informal contact.

What does participation mean to you?

If you agree to participate in the project, this means participation in an interview roughly 1 hour in length.

You will be asked questions related chiefly to your relation to Momentum and the Labour Party.

For accuracy in the analysis of this interview, the interview will be recorded on a tape recorder. All recordings will be stored safely and deleted before the end of the project.

Participation is voluntary

Participating in this project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can at any time withdraw your consent without citing any reasons as to why. Withdrawing from the project will not have any negative consequences for you, regardless of whether you do so before or after the interview.

Your privacy – how we store and use your information

Your participation in this project will be anonymized as a safety precaution, and nobody other than the interviewer will have access to data that can be used to identify you. You will not be identifiable in the published end product of this project. This is because as a participant, you should feel safe that you do not need to weigh and/or moderate your answers (or even decline to participate) in fear of eventual repercussions.

Your information will only be used for the purposes listed in this information sheet. We treat your information confidentially and in accordance with privacy policy.

- Any information you provide will be accessible only by the researcher and the project supervisors.
- Any information you provide will be protected through measures listed below as a safety precaution, so that nobody unauthorized will be able to identify you through any information (or combination thereof) you provide.
 - The interviews will be recorded on tape recorders inaccessible by internet.
 - The audio recording of the interview will be deleted by the end of the project.

- The transcriptions will be encrypted and stored on secure servers owned by the institute.
- Your name and contact information will be replaced with a code and stored on a list separate from other information.

What happens to your personal information when this project ends?

The project is due to end on May 25, 2020. When the project is finished, personal information stored about you, including your name, contact information and interview recordings, will be deleted.

Your rights

As long as you are identifiable in the data, you have the right to:

- Insight into any personal information about you stored with the project
- Having personal information about yourself corrected
- Having personal information about yourself deleted
- Having a copy of your personal information delivered
- Sending a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or the Norwegian Data Protection Agency (Datatilsynet) about the treatment of your personal information

What gives us the right to treat personal information about you?

We treat personal information about you only with your consent.

On the request of the University of Oslo (UiO), the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) has considered the treatment of personal information in this project is in accordance with privacy policy.

Where can I learn more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- The Institute of Sociology and Human Geography at the University of Oslo (UiO) by: Kjell E. Kjellman, by e-mail (k.e.kjellman@sosgeo.uio.no).
- Our Data Protection Officer: *Maren Magnus Voll*, at personvernombud@uio.no
- NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS (Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS), by e-mail (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or phone: 0047 55 58 21 17.

Kind regards,

Kjell E. Kjellman
(Project supervisor)

Jørgen Skogan
(Student)