Understanding the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster

An analysis of institutional change in the UK Parliament

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Declaration

I, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

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Abstract

Legislative buildings matter. They affect the behaviour within and act as symbols of the institution. Decisions about parliamentary buildings are informed—implicitly or explicitly—by dominant views of the role of the legislature and its relationship with citizens. Understanding such policy decisions thus helps us understand the institution. In 2018 the House of Commons and House of Lords approved a significant policy change for the UK Parliament—a major refurbishment of the dilapidated Palace of Westminster—representing both a major shift away from centuries of patch-and-mend management of the Palace and also continuity through the decision to return to the Palace as its permanent home. This thesis provides the first comprehensive academic analysis of this policy change, the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) programme. It draws on 35 semi-structured elite interviews with MPs, Peers and parliamentary officials and extensive textual analysis to argue that we can understand R&R by examining the institutional context at Westminster and combining this with a public policy theory, the Multiple Streams Framework. It sheds light on an understudied area—the governance of the UK Parliament—while also providing a new perspective on reform and institutional identity within Parliament, and locating these findings within broader debates about institutional change, democratic renewal and the politics of megaprojects. The R&R of the Palace of Westminster is therefore not just the refurbishment of a crumbling building on the banks of the Thames but about the future of UK politics. Understanding R&R can help us make sense of this future.

Acknowledgements

Contents

List of tables and figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

"The Palace of Westminster, a masterpiece of Victorian and medieval architecture and engineering, faces an impending crisis which we cannot responsibly ignore."
(Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, 2016a, p 5)

1.1 Research topic

The Palace of Westminster is, in the eyes of Sawyer (2003, p 238), "the emblem of British national identity". This iconic building, however, is in a state of advanced disrepair, and faces what has been described as "an impending crisis which we cannot reasonably ignore" (Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster (JCPW), 2016a, Summary). This 'impending crisis' developed over many decades, as the infrastructure serving the building was allowed to go far past its expected lifespan, and essential maintenance neglected. As a result, the building risks a catastrophic fire, flood or failure of the infrastructure, with the potential to cause a significant loss of life and the destruction of a Grade I listed building (JCPW, 2016a). Baroness D'Souza, the Lord Speaker between 2011 and 2016, described the building as:

> "A fire hazard of such enormous proportions that every day in Parliament thereafter when I visited the cellars, I was to think how lucky we are to have survived another day. The question of urgency was one that was very great." (Interview, July 2019)

Labour's accommodation whip, Mark Tami MP, who described the building as a "disaster", spoke about his responsibility of allocating offices in the most dangerous parts of the Palace:

> "I put people on the top floor of the Upper Committee Corridor, now if a fire takes hold in a certain way, am I sure those people are going to get out? No." (Interview, Tami, May 2018)

The primary concern is in the depths of the building, described by former Clerk of the Commons, Lord Lisvane, as "the cathedral of horror" (Lisvane, 2015, p 10). An internal survey revealed the perilous state of the basement in 2000, but it was not until early 2018 that a major rebuilding project was approved by the House of Commons and House of Lords. This rebuilding project—the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) of the Palace of Westminster—marks a significant policy change for the institution, moving away from decades of piecemeal alterations and patch-and-mend, towards a strategic plan to develop a parliamentary building "fit for the 21st Century and beyond" (JCPW, 2016a, p 54). The approval of the R&R programme was a lengthy process, involving a wide range of (political and non-political) actors within Parliament at different stages (an overview of these actors is at Appendix A).

The approval of R&R will mean the full closure of the Palace for at least five years, before parliamentarians return to new chambers, committee rooms, and offices. The scale of the rebuilding work, with an estimated cost of £3.5 billion, places R&R into the category of a megaproject (Flyvbjerg, 2014), making the project valuable for our understanding of the politics (and depoliticisation) of such projects. But its significance goes beyond simply a construction or heritage project. As the home of the nation's legislature, any debate about the future of the Palace of Westminster entails a wider debate about the institution of the Westminster Parliament. Furthermore, it speaks to the future of representative democracy in the UK. The design of a building affects the culture and behaviour within, and for a legislative building, acts as a symbol of the institution and the nation. As Jones (2011, p 65) argues "architectural form is always 'political' in the sense that it emerges from particular political circumstances, and comes to represent social identities and events that help frame our understandings of the social world". By necessity, rebuilding the Palace raises questions about the kind of legislature we want to design, and whether the features of the current building, such as the adversarial design of the chambers, limited public access, and Gothic style reflect this vision, feeding into debates around democratic renewal at a time of declining satisfaction with the Westminster Parliament and anti-politics sentiment.

The Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster is therefore not just about a crumbling building on the banks of the Thames, but speaks to far broader issues of our understanding of the UK Parliament, the administration of legislatures, democratic renewal; institutional change; megaprojects and depoliticisation. These issues are set out further in section 1.4.

1.2 Research questions

The primary research question of this thesis is: **Why was the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster approved in early 2018, after multiple failed attempts to achieve policy change in this area?** This thesis further answers five secondary research questions:

1. Why does the Palace of Westminster matter?
2. What insights can be gained from the understanding the historical and institutional development of the UK Parliament?
3. Is it possible to identify a policy entrepreneur or problem broker in the 2012-2018 period?

4. How useful is the MSF Plus approach for understanding policy change in this case?
5. What insights does this research have for parliamentary governance, specifically, and concerns about disaffection with democratic governance more broadly?

This thesis does not seek to answer hypotheses; instead, in line with an anti-foundationalist ontology, and interpretive epistemology, this thesis aims to understand how the actors involved interpret the situation around them, and how these beliefs "frame actions, practices and institutions", as described by Bevir and Rhodes (2003, p 17). This thesis will argue, however, that in contrast to Bevir and Rhodes' rejection of Historical Institutionalism, it is possible to develop a nuanced version of HI, which focuses on how institutions are changed by the beliefs of individual actors, in addition to shaping—but not determining—how those actors behave (as in Kelso, 2009b). This nuanced version of HI has been combined with a modified version of John Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework, termed MSF Plus (explored further in Chapter 3). This theoretical framework has been operationalised through extensive textual analysis and 35 semi-structured elite interviews with the key actors involved in the decision-making process for the Palace of Westminster. Taken together, the Research Questions, theoretical framework and methodology have provided a coherent explanation of policy change in the UK Parliament: this introduction moves to set out the core findings of this research.

1.3 Core findings

This thesis argues that legislative buildings matter. Not only do they act as symbols of the institution, but their architecture, design, and décor affect how people—parliamentarians, staff and visitors—behave within. Decisions about parliamentary buildings are therefore informed—implicitly or explicitly—by dominant views of the role of the legislature and its relationship with citizens. Furthermore, the process by which such decisions demonstrates the 'hidden wiring' of the legislature, illuminating the governance, relationships and balance of power within the institution. This is particularly true in a context like the UK Parliament, where past decisions set in place a process of path dependency from which it has proven difficult to depart. Understanding policy decisions about legislative buildings helps us understand the legislature.

This thesis offers an in-depth analysis of the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. It shows that we can understand this policy change by looking to the history of the institution and the Palace of Westminster, and combining an Historical Institutionalist lens with a modified version of the Multiple Streams Framework, adapted to include the

concept of a "problem broker" (Knaggård, 2015, p 451). Using this theoretical framework, this research found that a policy window opened at Westminster through the actions of senior parliamentary officials acting as problem brokers, who sought to draw attention to the risks faced by the building due to ageing infrastructure and crumbling stonework. After a lengthy period of delay when the streams were not ready to be coupled, the issue of the Palace was forced onto the decision-making agenda by key actors: backbench MPs and a supportive Leader of the House of Commons—who acted as policy entrepreneurs. These actors defined the 'problem' to be solved by R&R narrowly: the risk from the failing infrastructure within the building, rather than a wider crisis of UK democracy, symbolised by the Palace of Westminster. This problem definition reflected the institutional context at Westminster, which included the precedent set by past policy decisions of remaining within the Palace and—linked to this, the strong emotional attachment to the building—as well as the wider political context and the closed policy stream, in which there was little opportunity for outside input. Policy change was then achieved when MPs worked to couple together the problem of the Palace with a policy solution—Restoration and Renewal—designed to match this problem. While political events during the policy window—particularly the 2015 and 2017 general elections and the 2016 EU referendum (and its after-effects)—had delayed decisions on policy change, the MPs acting as policy entrepreneurs deployed the institutional context—in this case, their credibility as senior parliamentarians, the growing power of the legislature vis-à-vis the executive, and the emotional attachment to the building—to convince colleagues that the risk of not acting on the risk to the building was greater than the risk of acting. The policy decision was then endorsed without a vote in the House of Lords, which can be attributed again to the institutional factors and a different focus on the national mood.

1.4 Contributions to knowledge

As indicated in the Core Findings section, this thesis provides an original and distinctive contribution to knowledge in multiple ways. It provides the first comprehensive academic analysis of the Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal programme, drawing on extensive archival research and semi-structured elite interviews with the key actors involved in the decision-making process in order to understand how R&R was approved. This has clear "real-world" impact: understanding how the project was approved offers valuable and original insights for the future management of R&R, which is expected to run until at least the mid-2030s, and of the Palace, in general. These insights are also relevant and valuable to the numerous other rebuilding projects ongoing in legislatures across the globe.

Increasing our understanding of Restoration and Renewal in turn increases our understanding of the UK Parliament. The R&R case study demonstrates how power is dispersed throughout the institution, as evident through the absence of a clear structure in decisions about the Palace of Westminster are made. Responsibility for the building is divided between the Commons and the Lords, but also the Queen (it remains a royal palace) and, through its status as part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Treasury. Even within Parliament itself, there is no one single figure, either for the institution as a whole, or even within either House, either on an official or political level, that has both the responsibility and power to make decisions about the building's future. It is this complex and opaque governance system that has, in part, enabled the neglect that has imperilled the building and has made achieving policy change, in the form of R&R, a slow process. This complex governance structure also means there is no a single figure to 'speak for Parliament' (Norton, 2017). Analysis of R&R offers a valuable case study of the development of an institutional identity at Westminster and, crucially, the role of staff in this process. This thesis thus also helps us understand the governance of the UK Parliament: a recognised gap in the literature in legislative studies (as noted by Geddes, 2016). By hearing directly from key actors about how they understand and interpret their roles, and how these roles interact with each other, this thesis uncovers the 'hidden wiring' that makes the institution work (or not work) and provides a new level of understanding about the beliefs and traditions which make up the institution of Parliament. Furthermore, and crucially, changing policy on the Palace of Westminster required Parliament to make a strategic decision about its own future, but this decision relied on Government support and cooperation. This thesis thus offers original insights for understanding the relationship between the executive and legislature.

Policy decisions around the building are intrinsically linked to wider debates around democratic renewal and what the public want from their legislatures. In the UK, the Hansard Society reported in 2019 that 72% of the public "say the system of governing needs 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of improvement", the highest in the history of the organisation's audit of political engagement, exceeding even the immediate aftermath of the MPs' expenses scandal (Hansard Society, 2019). This reflects a wider fall in trust in established institutions across the world (Tormey, 2015), with a specific lack of faith in existing institutions in place to govern through representation (Flinders and Judge, 2017). This case study offers therefore offers relevant insights for a much broader debate around the effectiveness of parliaments and legislatures, and democratic institutions more generally.

The scale of the R&R project means that this case study also offers value for understanding the politicisation—and depoliticisation—of 'megaprojects'. Crucially, by understanding the way the problem of the Palace was defined, and how this affected the choice of solutions, and the role of the political context throughout this process, we can consider how questions of blame, accountability and public opinion affect policymaking around megaprojects.

The complex and opaque governance structure that means understanding change in the Westminster Parliament has value for understanding institutional change more broadly. Crucially, R&R offers an example of significant policy change within an institution, taking place without the spur of a crisis. Mahoney and Thelen (2010, p 4) have noted that there is a "challenge" to explain change within institutions, which are viewed as "relatively enduring features of political and social life (rules, norms, procedures) that structure behavior and that cannot be changed easily or instantaneously". This thesis helps to understand how such change can occur. It does so by bringing together Historical Institutionalism with a modified version of John Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework—MSF Plus. It shows that this combined approach—MSF Plus—offers a not only a credible explanation of the R&R policy change but multiple opportunities for significant theoretical refinement that demonstrate the framework's potential use in different institutions.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis has opened by setting out the research topic, its contribution to knowledge, and the research questions that guide this project, as part of **Chapter 1**.

Chapter 2 of this thesis explores the history of the Palace of Westminster, setting out key themes in the building's management and its relevance as a case study. The chapter further highlights how the literature on the Palace has largely failed to consider how decisions are taken about the management of the building.

Chapter 3 links the paucity of literature on the Palace of Westminster to a larger literature gap about the governance of the UK Parliament. In turn this highlights a gap in the theoretical toolbox for understanding change within the legislature, which this chapter aims to address by establishing the MSF Plus framework, and demonstrating its value for the case study.

Chapter 4 explores out how the MSF Plus theoretical framework can be operationalised, setting out the methodology for this research and, in turn, reflecting on the value of the methods chosen. It then sets up four empirical chapters, which use these methods and the

MSF Plus theoretical framework to understand the approval of the Restoration and Renewal programme between 2012 and 2018. This is split into three periods:

- **Chapter 5** explores the period from the start of the R&R programme in January 2012 to the UK's referendum on EU membership in June 2016.
- **Chapter 6** examines the aftermath of the referendum in June 2016 to the announcement on 18 January 2018 that the House of Commons would debate R&R.
- **Chapter 7** considers the 13 days between the announcement of the Commons debate, the Commons debate itself on 31 January 2018 and then the Lords debate on R&R on 6 February 2018, when policy change was achieved.

Within each of these three chapters the first half sets out the events of the respective period. The second half then identifies developments within each of the multiple streams in the MSF Plus framework—the problem, policy and politics streams—and how these developments were interpreted by the relevant actors. It further considers how institutional context and past policy decisions shaped each of the streams and the likelihood of policy change.

The role of key actors is explored further in **Chapter 8** which looks deeper at the concepts of policy entrepreneurs and problem brokers in the MSF Plus framework. It considers if such figures can be found within the case study and further explores what an examination of these key actors can tell us about the UK Parliament.

The conclusions from the empirical chapters are then drawn together and summarised in **Chapter 9**. These conclusions feed into a discussion about the broader relevance of the R&R case study, leading in turn to a final conclusion about the key findings and value of this research.

Through these nine chapters this thesis thus explains how Restoration and Renewal was approved and in what ways this matters.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has set out the core question at the heart of this thesis: why, after years of indecision, delay and muddling through, was the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster approved by the Commons and Lords in early 2018? It has also discussed out why this policy change is important: the Palace of Westminster is more than just a building. As the home of the UK Parliament, the building not only shapes the culture and

events within, but acts as a symbol for the country's democratic system. What happens to the Palace matters. Furthermore, understanding how policy change occurs about the Palace of Westminster helps deepen our understanding of Parliament as an institution. Through exploring the internal governance of each House and, crucially, the importance of key actors, this case study sheds light on the relationships and power dynamics within the corridors of power. This introduction has further set out the implications of this research on broader debates. Understanding the R&R policy change provides a valuable contribution to our understanding of issues around democratic reform, institutional change and the politics of megaprojects. Finally, this introduction has set out the contribution that this research can make to theory, as the first empirical test of the MSF Plus framework. This thesis thus not only answers the key research question of why R&R was approved, but provides a significant, distinctive and original contribution to knowledge that is both theoretically-informed and policy-relevant.

Chapter 2: The Palace of Westminster

"I went into what was the Members' cloakroom and saw a scene of devastation: confusion, wreckage, broken glass everywhere, and the loveliest, oldest part of the vast building a shambles. Suddenly I came upon Winston Churchill [...] "It's horrible" he remarked to me without removing his cigar, and I saw that he was much moved, for he loves Westminster" (James, 1967, p 278)

How and *why* should we research the Palace of Westminster? This chapter sets out to answer both questions. The first part of this chapter draws on extensive archival research to demonstrate how the Palace has evolved into a legislative building, and the relationship between the building and the legislature. It does not intend to act as an exhaustive history of the Palace but to highlight recurring issues, policy choices and the factors that affect how decisions are made (or not made) about the building. In this way it sets up the second part of the chapter, which examines the key themes we can take from understanding the history of Palace, and how these themes can help us understand Restoration and Renewal. The chapter then examines the value of researching R&R and concludes by assessing the current literature in the field.

2.1 The evolution of the Palace of Westminster

When construction of the Palace of Westminster began in 1042, the building was intended to be a royal residence, not a parliamentary building (JCPW, 2016a). It was not until 1258 that the legislature met in the Palace, and not until 1547 that it became the permanent home of the Commons and Lords together (Bryant, 2014; Given-Wilson, 2009). The new status of the Palace reflected less a verdict on its suitability for the role than its availability, following the decision of King Henry VIII move into the newly completed Palace of Whitehall (Blackburn and Kennon, 2003). Within the Palace the Commons adopted the chapel of St Stephen as its chamber, prompting immediate complaints about the acoustics and size—it could not accommodate all of the 379 MPs at the time (Hawkyard, 2009; Bryant, 2014). This worsened: in the early 17th century only half of MPs could be accommodated in the Chamber (Hunneyball, 2009; Seaward, 2009a). The overcrowding (also in the Lords) was further exacerbated after the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707, when limited alterations to each chamber still did not provide sufficient room to accommodate the new parliamentarians (Thomas, 1971; Colvin, 1976).

Throughout the 18th century there were numerous, unfulfilled plans to construct a new parliamentary building (Summerson, 1993). The issue was not simply about capacity, but also the dilapidated state of the Palace. In 1789 a select committee reported that:

> The House of Lords, Princes Chamber, and Painted Chamber are Buildings of great Antiquity, in many Parts defective [...] All the Buildings east of the House of Lords are in so bad a State, that many of them are in immediate Danger of falling down [...] the other Buildings [...] are in Part built with Timber, liable to rapid Decay, and Accident' from Fire and the remainder extremely old and ruinous. (House of Commons, 1789, p 5)

The Committee concluded unanimously that the risk of fire was "so great" that they were "astonished at their having so long and happily escaped" a major fire within the Palace (House of Commons, 1789, p 8). Plans for a radical refurbishment of the Palace were taken up by Sir John Soane in 1794, at the request of a Lords Select Committee (House of Lords Journal, 30 June 1794; Mordaunt Crook and Port, 1973). The plans were approved by the King, but went no further (discussed in Section 2.2). The issue of overcrowding in the chambers, however, could not be ignored, particularly when Parliament began discussing plans for a legislative union between Britain and Ireland, which would lead to a substantial increase in the numbers of MPs and Peers (Mordaunt Crook and Port, 1973; Thorne, 1986; Pole-Hennessy, 1975). Only minor alterations to the Commons were made, however, (although the Lords moved to a larger chamber), as the legislative union was viewed solely as a minor expansion of the existing parliament and there was no appetite for a new building (Davis, 2009; Innes, 2003).

As in 1707, these alterations (and further piecemeal changes in the early nineteenth century) failed to address the long-running concerns about the building (Salmon, 2009). The Commons chamber in 1830 was described by the writer James Grant as:

> "dark, gloomy, and badly ventilated, and small that not more than four hundred out of the six hundred and fifty-eight members could be accommodated in it with any measure of comfort [...] the members were really to be pitied; they were literally crammed together, and the heat of the house rendered it in some degree a second edition of the Black Hole of Calcutta" (Grant, 1836, p 3).

In the early 1830s Commons attendances increased when MPs debated electoral reform (what would become the Great Reform Act 1832), exacerbating the overcrowding (Port, 1976). Two separate Select Committees, reporting in 1831 and 1833 called for a new chamber for the Commons; the first arguing that "no such alterations or improvements could be made in the present House of Commons as would afford adequate accommodation for the Members," (House of Commons, 1831, p 3; see also House of Commons, 1833). The Chair of the 1831 Committee, Colonel Trench, warned the Commons that:

> "the bad state of the atmosphere, and the exposure to unequal draughts of air had already caused the death of several hon. Members in the course of this arduous Session" (HC Deb, 11 Oct 1831, c555).

Neither Committee, however, could agree on what should replace the existing chamber (HC Deb, 11 Oct 1831, cc555-6; HC Deb, 2 July 1833, c 65). Further, they failed to convince the majority of their colleagues of the need for change (overcrowding was seen, for example, as a temporary problem (HC Deb, 2 July 1833, c65)) and no action was taken. Fifteen months after the Commons voted down the motion for a new chamber, however, the decision was taken out of their hands when fire destroyed almost all of the old Palace (Shenton, 2012).

After decades of inaction and indecision, MPs and Peers could not escape making a decision about their future. Any suggestion that Parliament should leave Westminster, even temporarily, were rejected by the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, who warned the King that such a move risked changing the "character" of the Commons (Melbourne, 1889, p 214). Instead, Parliament chose to stay on site, both temporarily and for the future, in what has been viewed as a commitment to continuity rather than change, reflecting the "inherent Conservatism of the Commons" (Salmon, 2009, p 251). This conservatism can also be seen in the terms set for the public competition to rebuild the Palace, which required an Elizabethan or Gothic design, described by Fredericksen as "a romantic gesture, prompted by the overwhelming response to the destruction caused by the fire, relief that Westminster Hall had survived the blaze, and nostalgia for the lost structures" (Fredericksen, 2000, p 101; see also Quinault, 1992). The winning design, by Charles Barry (which would be complemented by Augustus Welby Pugin's décor) resulted in a building described by Cannadine (2000, p 15) as "more a royal residence than a democratic legislature", focusing on the monarch and the Lords, with the Commons in a secondary role.

The construction of the new Palace of Westminster, detailed by Shenton (2016) and Cocks (1977) is a story of delays, overspending and political interference. MPs did not move into their new chamber until 1850 and were immediately critical of its capacity, acoustics, and lighting (White, 1897, Cocks, 1977). On the latter, Colonel Sibthorp warned that:

> "Members were in danger of breaking their necks even before dinner, and what might be the case afterwards he could not say [...] The New Palace at Westminster was not a house built for business" (HC Deb, 2 Aug 1850, c727).

Minor alterations were carried out, but it became clear by the mid-1860s that these could not address the lack of capacity for MPs in the chamber. In an echo of events thirty years

previously, overcrowding was exacerbated during debates to further extend the franchise, in what would become the Representation of the People (or Second Reform) Act 1867 (HC Deb, 25 Jun 1867, c539). The overcrowding was caused, Thomas Headlam MP suggested, by the combination of a new cohort of MPs, more active than their predecessors and a chamber "built for quite a different state of things to what now existed" (HC Deb, 6 April 1869, c259-66). This view was not shared by many MPs, who viewed the increased attendance as a short-term problem (e.g. HC Deb, 6 April 1869, c284, 293). Crucially these members included the Prime Minister, William Gladstone, who cited his own experience in the Commons during the 1830s and the "perceptible decline" in attendance during subsequent sessions after the Great Reform Act as a reason not to increase capacity in the chamber (HC Deb, 6 April 1869, c303). On Gladstone's urging, Headlam's motion was withdrawn (HC Deb, 6 April 1869, c305).

As with a century before, concerns about the Palace were not just limited to the size of the chamber. In contrast to the past, however, the frustrations focused on the suitability of the Palace and its facilities, rather than the risk of fire or decay. The new Palace of Westminster was considered unable to cope with the changes that had occurred in the institution of Parliament during the nineteenth century, including a rapid growth in the activity of committees; an increase in the number of constituents visiting Westminster; greater public interest in events at Westminster; the need for government ministers to conduct departmental business in Westminster, and the increased demand for dining space caused by fewer MPs being members of clubs (Port, 1976; Port, 2002, Chester, 1981, House of Commons, 1868; HC Deb, 6 April 1869, cc270,271,300). There was no political appetite to change the building, however, and, while a small minority of MPs continued to push for a new chamber, they gathered even less support than previously (House of Commons, 1894). By the early 20th century such calls for a new chamber were viewed as an inconsequential part of Commons life: the then Minister of the Works commented that such a demand was made at the start of each new parliament, "but in the second session it becomes less urgent; and, as a rule, it wholly disappears in the third" (HC Deb, 24 March 1908, c1309).

It would not be until some 90 years after the new Palace opened that Parliament would consider seriously its future. As in 1834, this was not a result of concerns about overcrowding but a response to a crisis: the damage to each chamber by incendiary bombs on the nights of 10 and 11 May 1941. Both Houses had already temporarily moved to nearby Church House, after plans for an evacuation out of London were made but abandoned at the wishes of MPs (Herbert, 1950). While rebuilding of the Palace would be delayed until the war was concluded, in 1943 the Commons was asked to approve a motion, tabled by the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, establishing a select committee to consider rebuilding the chamber and "such

alterations as may be considered desirable while preserving all its essential features" (HC Deb, 28 October 1943, cc406-9). In his opening speech Churchill spoke passionately in support of replicating the previous chamber:

> "Our House of Commons was destroyed by the violence of the enemy, and we have now to consider whether we should build it up again, and how, and when. We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us. Having dwelt and served for more than 40 years in the late Chamber, and having derived fiery great pleasure and advantage therefrom, I, naturally, would like to see it restored in all essentials to its old form, convenience and dignity." (HC Deb, 28 Oct 1943, c403)

He received a broadly supportive response (e.g. HC Deb, 28 Oct 1943, c410), but not all MPs were convinced by his arguments. Viscountess Astor (one of just nine female MPs at the time) cautioned that Churchill was looking "backwards instead of forwards" (HC Deb, 28 Oct 1943, c417). Colonel De Chair told the House that:

> "The Prime Minister, in a pregnant phrase, said, "We shape our buildings and our buildings shape us." That is very true, but do they shape us so very well? They shaped the Parliaments which twice failed to prevent world wars [...] We may not, therefore, conclude that the type of building we had before will necessarily produce the most sparkling Legislatures in the future." (HC Deb, 28 October 1943, c463)

When the Commons divided, however, only three MPs voted against the decision to preserve the essential features of the old chamber (HC Deb, 28 Oct 1943, c473). This position was confirmed in 1944 when the select committee reported unanimously, "that the sense of intimacy and almost conversational form of debate encouraged by the dimensions of the old Chamber should be maintained" (House of Commons, 1944, p 4). Calls for a more modern and convenient chamber persisted, but were overwhelmingly defeated (HC 25 Jan 1945, cc1009,1018-20,1067).

After moving into their rebuilt chamber, the focus of MPs' concerns was the rest of the building. Office space was described in 1954 by Richard Stokes MP as "quite deplorable and inadequate" (HC Deb, 22 July 1954, cc1647-8). In 1960, Barbara Castle MP described the Palace as a "neo-Gothic monstrosity in which we have to work" (HC Deb, 31 March 1960, cc1530,1546). In an echo of debates a century earlier, the changing role of MPs (in this instance, the significant increase in secretarial staff (Ryle, 1994)) had changed the demands on the legislative building. The limited space within the footprint of the building meant that, instead of changes to the Palace itself, the focus was instead on expanding the parliamentary estate. This was a slow process: in 1989 Judge reported that "500 backbenchers currently have access to only 150 single rooms" (Judge, 1989, p 401). New buildings at 1 Parliament Street and on Bridge Street—Portcullis House—opened in 1991 and 2001 respectively (Blackburn and

Kennon, 2003). The focus on new buildings, however, meant that essential maintenance in the Palace was neglected. In 1990 a review of Commons management structure by Sir Robin Ibbs found that Members' greatest dissatisfaction was with the quality of accommodation within Parliament. Sir Robin also identified that "a substantial amount of work" was necessary "to bring the buildings and facilities up to reasonable standards", describing the work as "essential" (House of Commons Commission, 1990, p 5). By 1999 a follow-up review by Michael Braithwaite found that accommodation was "no longer the source of dissatisfaction [for MPs] it once was" (House of Commons Commission, 1999, p 72). The focus on member satisfaction perhaps missed the main problem with the building: the derelict state of the infrastructure hidden from view in the basement. Indeed, Braithwaite found that while "half of the 'neglect' work" identified by Ibbs had been completed, "some remaining neglect work was substantial" (House of Commons Commission, 1999, p 71). Rush and Giddings (2011, p 199) have noted that progress on the Ibbs recommendations was "slow". A "basement condition survey" carried out in 2000 found that that much of the infrastructure would need replacing before 2010 (PFS, 2012, p 15). In 2007 a further review warned of "the growing backlog in maintenance of the Estate, including the roof of the Palace and the Basement Mechanical and Electrical project" (House of Commons Commission, 2007, p 44).

It is important to note that concerns about the neglected infrastructure were held mainly at an official level. Shailesh Vara MP suggested that when he was first elected in 2005 the state of the Palace "was not on the radar, of myself or indeed the vast majority of parliamentarians" (interview, July 2018). The opening of Portcullis House had improved the accommodation for the majority of MPs, so while conditions were still poor within the Palace (the Administration Committee reported in 2006 that "the quality of some of the space available to Members remains poor: 45 offices are windowless and a number of others have very little natural light" (House of Commons Administration Committee, 2006, p 19)) this did not affect all MPs. Discussions around the state of the building first became public in June 2007, when the governing body for the Commons, the House of Commons Commission (hereafter: the Commission) (2007, p 72,84) reported that planning would start on major infrastructure projects in the Palace. In October 2007 *The Times (*Coates, 2007*,* p30) suggested that this work might mean the closure of the Commons chamber for up to three years. In response, the Commission Spokesman, Nick Harvey, sought to reassure MPs that any plans that would involve decanting the Commons were at a very early stage, but accepted that repair work would be necessary over the next ten years (HC Deb, 18 Oct 2007, c322WH). A change in approach, was later reported, following "growing concern about the widening scope and escalating costs of the project", it was decided to "revisit the assumptions behind the work done so far" (Pre-Feasibility Study (PFS), 2012, p 16). By October 2008, however, the prospect of moving out

seemed to be likely, once again, when a year-long feasibility study was jointly commissioned with the House of Lords in order to "examine whether substantial savings in cost, time and risk could be made by moving some operations of both Houses out of the Palace for a period to enable modernisation to be carried out continuously until its completion" (HC Deb, 15 Oct 2008, c1243-4W). Separately, an internal study was commissioned in 2009 by the Commons Management Board to help inform decisions about the long-term future of the building by identifying the likely needs of parliamentarians in 2030. The report was received by the Commission in March 2010, less than a month before Parliament would be dissolved ahead of a general election. The Commission decided against publication, concerned (in a post-MPs' expenses scandal landscape[1]) about the potential for the press to seize upon ideas within it (Interview, 2018, anonymous official[2]). As a result, by the start of the 2010 Parliament, there was no long-term strategy about the future of the building. Speaker Bercow summarised the situation as below:

> "The place frankly is in a terrible mess, and I think it's been put off for a long time, I think we've tended to adopt a policy of make do and mend, and inevitably it comes to bite you" (Interview, September 2018)

2.2 Key themes

This brief examination of the history of the Palace has revealed multiple opportunities for policy change, only some of which were taken. This section digs deeper to identify five recurring themes which can help us understand how and why the Palace of Westminster moved on and off the policymaking agenda and why certain policy decisions were taken.

Analysis of the history of the building makes clear that, for its occupants, it is not simply a case of bricks and mortar. Many parliamentarians feel a physical connection to their predecessors, transmitted through the very fabric of the Palace. John Wilson Croker MP said of St Stephen's Chapel in 1831:

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[1] In May 2009 *The Daily Telegraph* published un-redacted details of claims made by members of the House of Commons under the Additional Costs Allowance provision, which had been designed to enable MPs to manage the costs of an additional residence away from their constituency, to enable them to fulfil their duties in Westminster. The disclosure of the claims—which included items such as a duck house and moat cleaning—led to "a perfect storm that dominated media coverage in the weeks that followed" (vanHeerde-Hudson and Ward, 2014, p 3). The effect of what is widely referred to as the 'MPs' expenses scandal' on the confidence of the institution of Parliament is discussed in Norton (2017).

[2] A full list of interviewees is provided in Chapter 4, section 4.3. The month of interview is not listed where it could be used to identify the source of an anonymous quote.

> "He could not forget that it was the place in which the Cecils and the Bacons, the Wentworths and Hampdens, the Somers's and the St. Johns, the Walpoles and the Pulteneys, the Pitts, the Foxes, the Murrays, and the Burkes, had 'lived, and breathed, and had their being.' [...] as long as the human mind was susceptible of local associations, he could not disregard the beneficial effect that might be felt from their continuing to assemble on the scene where so many illustrious actors had performed such splendid parts. If patriotism could grow warmer on the plain of Marathon, and piety amid the ruins of Iona, the zeal and talents of British senators might also be exalted by the religious and legislative sanctity with which time and circumstances had invested the ancient chapel of St. Stephen" (HC Deb, 11 Oct 1831, c558-9).

By working within the same building, MPs aligned themselves with great names from the country's past, placing their own achievements on the same level. A century later, when decisions were again to be made about the future of the Commons, the same predecessors were again invoked: Dr Russell Thomas MP argued for Parliament to stay within the same building where "Burke, Sheridan, Charles James Fox, Pitt and others there laid down the foundations" of parliamentary democracy (HC Deb, 28 Oct 1943, c452). The building and the institution were intrinsically linked. Crucially, by the mid-20th century it was not just about the same location, but about the very design of Barry and Pugin's chamber, which was seen as symbolic of a golden age of parliamentary democracy (for example, HL Deb, 14 May 1941, c171). This was particularly important during wartime, when the affection in which parliamentary democracy was held and the wish to preserve it in the face of the threat of fascism was at its peak (despite, as Norton (1998b, p36) noted, "parliament appeared marginalised during the war", with low attendance and limited scrutiny of the executive). When considering the future of the Palace, therefore, the prevailing view of the period was of fidelity to the structures of a building viewed as central to the existing traditions of Parliament. This was reiterated in 1946 when the Commons Procedure Committee argued that "the prestige of Parliament has probably never been higher", with the continued sittings of both Houses throughout the war identified as symbolically important and a key factor in the nation's victory (House of Commons, 1946, p 5). The Committee concluded that there was "not at the present time any strong or widespread desire for changes in the essential character of the institution": and thus no desire for changes to the building, which was so closely linked to the institution (House of Commons, 1946, p 5). The emotional attachment to the Palace, and all it symbolised, acted as a deterrent against changes to the Palace.

The connection between the physical building at Westminster and the institution is a factor in a further recurrent theme that emerges in the historical analysis: the unwillingness to make radical change to the Palace. When disaster occurred, there was a tendency to recreate the past: either in the exact replica of the previous Commons chamber in the 1940s (described by one MP as taking "nostalgia to the stage of absurdity" (HC 25 Jan 1945, c1031)), or in Barry's

design for the new Palace after the 1834 fire, which, in the words of Cannadine (2000, p 17) "embodied in stone and ceremony a view of Britain's constitution and society that was more Tory and backward-looking than progressive and forward-looking". In the absence of disaster, any changes to the building, that went beyond piecemeal alterations or gradual evolution, were seen as unnecessary. The link between the institution and the building meant that admitting changes were necessary to the building would be admitting a fault in Parliament itself, damaging their sense of institutional, and even national, identity. In 1869, the Prime Minister, William Gladstone, argued that making significant alterations to the new Palace, as requested by some MPs, would require parliamentarians to "make a very deplorable confession" about the failures of their building, adding:

> "It certainly is remarkable that a great country qualified to overcome the obstacles that stood in the way of her enterprise, and to perform feats which make the world almost stand aghast for their arduous and difficult character, should prove itself totally incompetent at an expense of £3,500,000 to erect a Chamber which should last for a single generation." (HC Deb, 6 April 1869, c304)

The preference for adaptation and evolution in the Palace of Westminster matches the same instinct within the institution itself: the belief in "muddling through" and "*ad hocery"* that Hennessy (1996, p 13-14) was attributed to the wider Westminster and Whitehall system. It further reflects an unwillingness to change a building that is considered to promote an adversarial, majoritarian model of governing, based around the constraining effect of norms and traditions: the Westminster Model (Saalfeld, 2003). The Westminster Model While the Westminster Model is a contested concept (Rhodes, 1997), it can be usefully understood less as a narrative of how governance works in practice than as a belief adopted and maintained by key actors (Hall, 2011). In this context, the absence of radical change to the Palace of Westminster, despite opportunities to do so, can be considered unsurprising.

Each decision against radical change served as a precedent for future decisions to be followed. Indeed, such decisions were often cited in decision-making. For example, the decision not to build a new building for the 'Imperial Parliament' created by legislative union with Ireland followed the precedent of union with Scotland a century earlier, which had also not prompted a new building. The history of the building is intrinsic to how it operates: Puwar (2010, p 311) has described the Palace as a "living mausoleum/museum and working environment". Applying a Historical Institutionalist lens to the history of the building thus identifies path dependency as a further theme in policymaking in the Palace of Westminster.

A further institutional factor that can be identified in the history of the Palace of Westminster is a confused governance structure. In the eighteenth century this manifested through the

divided patronage between the King and Prime Minister in the appointment of architects to work on the Palace (Mordaunt Crook and Port, 1973; Sawyer, 1996; Goodall, 2000; Sawyer, 2003). Where changes were made to the Palace, accountability was opaque: responsibility for alterations to the House of Lords at the start of the nineteenth century "was denied by every leading politician in or out of office" (Mordaunt Crook and Port, 1973, p 519, for further, see HC Deb, 13 June 1808, cc863-865). During the rebuilding of the Palace after the 1834 fire, responsibility was again unclear: Augustus Stafford MP highlighted, what would now be considered, in the language of contemporary political science, as "a blame game" (Hood, 2002, p 16, also Hood, 2011) when the Commons moved into their new chamber, which he described as "a complete, decided and undeniable failure":

> "But wherever they attempted to place the blame, it was shifted to someone else. If the blame was charged on Mr. Barry, he charged it upon a Committee, the Committee charged it upon another Committee, both the Committees put it upon the Woods and Forests, the Woods and Forests charged it on the Government, and the Government upon that House." (HC Deb, 2 Aug 1850, c728)

Nearly a century later, accountability appeared just as labyrinthine. Earl Winterton MP described governance of the Palace as "worthy of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera", listing four individuals all "interwoven in the control of the building" (HC Deb, 28 Oct 1943, c457). Gay (2017, p 37) has noted how "the frustrations of MPs with their accommodation in the post-war period, detailed above, was "the main driving force behind backbench demand for effective Commons management for the rest of the twentieth century", but that "changes emerged only slowly". The hereditary post of the Lord Great Chamberlain remained in control of the Palace during non-sitting hours until 1965, when responsibility was transferred to the Speaker and Lord Speaker, (HC Deb, 22 July 1954, c1643). Even after this point, the "fabric of the Palace" remained the responsibility of the Minister of Public Building and Works and all expenditure on the Palace of Westminster remained directly under the control of the Treasury (HC Deb 23 March 1965 c332; Seaward, 2009b. It was not until the 1978 House of Commons (Administration) Act that MPs took control over its financial estimates (Seaward, 2009b), and not until 1992 that responsibility for the works on the parliamentary estate was transferred from the Government to Parliament itself (HC Deb, 24 Feb 1992, c778). Despite this, Parliament remains unable, in practice, to act on the state of its building without government cooperation, as set out in *Table 2.1.* (below). This reflects the wider truth of the "executive mentality" at Westminster (Judge, 1993, p 212).

Table 2.1. Management of the Palace of Westminster

Management of the Palace of Westminster (after 1992) in theory	Management of the Palace of Westminster (after 1992) in practice
The Corporate Officers of the House of Lords and Commons (the Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the House of Commons) have the powers to "acquire, hold, manage and dispose of land and other property of any description for any purpose" of their respective Houses (Parliamentary Corporate Bodies Act 1992)	The Government's control over the parliamentary timetable means that the House could not schedule a substantive debate about the Palace of Westminster without the executive's cooperation. A major refurbishment of the Palace would require additional funding beyond the usual estimate provided to each House (Interview, Gray, June 2018; interview, Leigh, May 2018).

The lack of a single client within Westminster, meant that individual MPs and Peers were able to influence—or obstruct—policy decisions, with no-one to act as an adjudicator. Richard Stokes, who acted as Minister for Works before chairing a select committee examining parliamentary accommodation, noted how this structure obstructed decisions in the 1950s.

> "They all conflict with one another, and nobody really has the say. There is no better organisation than exist here at present for passing the buck. It does not matter what one recommends; somebody can always do one down, because there is no real top decision-making authority which can correlate and is strong enough to decide between the requirements of Members of this House and the requirement of another place [the House of Lords]" (HC Deb, 22 July 1954, c1643)

The "incessant tyranny of Parliament over the public offices" (Bagehot, 1867, p151) has been a perpetual problem: Charles Barry faced over a hundred select committee inquiries during the nineteenth century rebuilding process (Shenton, 2016; Cocks, 1977). Club government (Moran, 2003), manifested through an absence of clear lines of responsibility, and allowed political interference—and also, crucially, a valuable shield from blame (Bache et al, 2015, p 67)— thus shaping policy-making around the Palace of Westminster.

The historical analysis further demonstrates, however, that you cannot explain decisions about the Palace of Westminster purely by considering what was happening *within* the building. The intrinsically political nature of the legislature means that wider political events influenced the policies chosen for the building. For example, one of the eighteenth-century plans for a new Palace, a neo-Palladian design by William Kent in 1739, was approved, but not constructed, with Colvin (1976) attributing this to the cost of foreign wars and Walpole's loss of office. Cost was a recurring issue: during times of austerity, when the public faced spending cuts, expenditure on the Palace—home to politicians and a political institution—has been considered politically impossible. During the rebuilding after the 1834 fire Colonel Dunne told

the House that he "protested against sums being lavished upon objects of national vanity, while the hospitals of Dublin were to be robbed of the trifling sum they had hitherto received (HC Deb, 24 May 1850, c358); in 2008 Sir Nick Harvey accepted that it would be "a serious challenge for the House to seek funding for [repairing the Palace] at a time of economic restraint" (HC Deb, 23 Oct 2008, cc142-3WH). Other political events also mattered: Soane's plans for a new Palace of Westminster in the 1790s were rejected as the style of his designs fall out of favour as neoclassical styles became identified with the French Revolution (Goodall, 2000), and political unrest, demonstrated when the King's carriage was attacked when he arrived for the 1795 State Opening of Parliament, meant that the priority for the Palace was securing the building from public demonstrations, rather than a big architectural project (Sawyer, 2003). The wider political context during which decisions are taken around the Palace of Westminster thus impacts the policies chosen.

This analysis has highlighted five recurring themes that can help to explain policy decisions in the Palace of Westminster, as set out in *Figure 2.1.* (below).

Figure 2.1. Key themes from the historical analysis
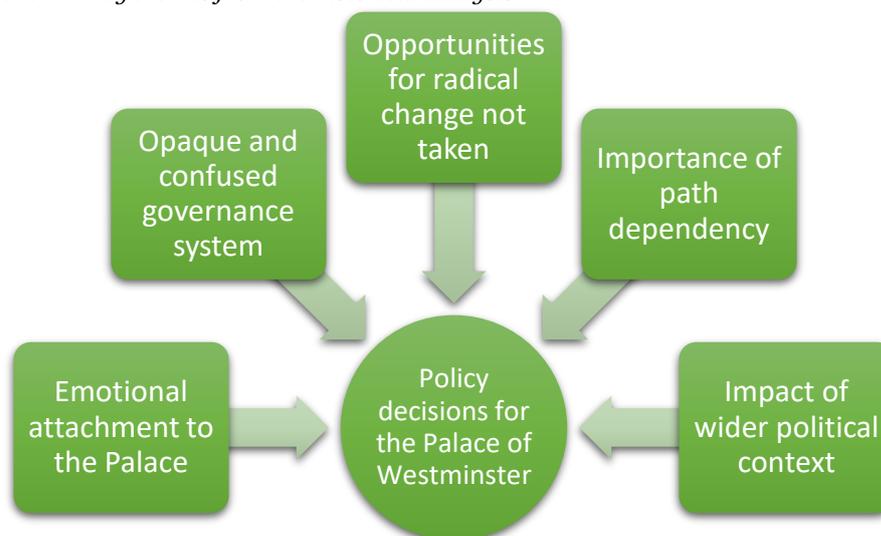
It follows from the identification of these themes that a theoretical approach to understanding the Restoration and Renewal process must be able to take these themes into account, that is, the interplay between context, agency and structure. Crucially, it shows how understanding R&R requires recognising both the specific institutional context of the UK Parliament—to recognise the symbolic importance of the Palace and how it is connected to the institution of Parliament itself, as well as the governance system and emphasis on precedent in policy decisions. It further shows the need for a public policy approach to understand why opportunities for policy change occur and how decisions are taken within a broader political

climate. This thesis will use a theoretical framework designed to include all of these themes, which will be set out in depth in the next chapter.

2.3 Why does the Palace of Westminster matter?

This chapter has considered the history of the Palace of Westminster, and the key themes that can be seen to have recurred when decisions have been taken about the building's future. But why does the parliamentary building matter? Is the Palace of Westminster important just for architectural, design and heritage reasons? This section argues against such a proposition, setting out three reasons why the state of the parliamentary building should be considered a part of legislative studies, and relevant to political science overall:

1. The impact of physical design
2. Symbolic importance of the building
3. Understanding institutional change

Having demonstrated the value of research into parliamentary buildings, this chapter moves to consider the current literature in the field, and highlights critical gaps at all three levels in our understanding of how decisions are taken about the Palace of Westminster.

The impact of physical design

The physical design of a building influences what occurs within (Edelman, 1964). In non-political settings, factors such as the lighting, acoustics and shape of a building has been shown to affect the wellbeing of patients in hospitals and the educational achievement of students in schools (CABE, 2002). It has been argued that this effect also applies within parliaments: Goodsell (1988 p 287) described legislative buildings as "artefacts of political culture", adding that:

> "these buildings, as self-consciously built stages for the performance of political rituals, may be assumed to reflect the shared norms of governance and underlying patterns of political behaviour that constitute political culture." (Goodsell, 1988, p 287)

Parliamentary buildings, Goodsell argued, have three effects: "they perpetuate the past, they manifest the present and they condition the future" (Goodsell, 1988, p 288). On the latter point, Goodsell stressed that the effect of legislative buildings was not to "deterministically control the attitudes and behaviour of people" but to "condition their thoughts and actions in preliminary, subtle and interactive ways" (Goodsell, 1988, p 288). In the UK, the design of the

new parliamentary buildings designed for the devolved parliaments in Scotland and Wales supports this claim. The winning design for the Senedd building in Cardiff placed the chamber "sunk below the public space"—in the words of the designer, Lord Rodgers of Riverside:

> "The hierarchy – members below and the public above – deliberately reflects how politics should operate. [...] Transparency, for passers-by and visitors, and for the people watching the democratic debates below, is the driving force" (Rogers, 2015, pp13-14)

There is some evidence that this has translated into practice: Rogers quotes the then Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales, Dame Rosemary Butler AM:

> "The building is more than simply the place where the process of parliamentary democracy takes place – the Neuadd and Oriel gives visitors a sense of openness and they are drawn to the central chamber and want to look down into the debating chamber" (Butler, quoted in Rogers, 2015, pp13-14)

In Scotland, Judge and Leston-Bandeira (2017, p 6) have noted how the Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood was "designed with clear symbolic intent". Indeed, the new parliament was intended to offer a sharp contrast to Westminster: a more open, accessible institution, which promoted sharing power with the people and equal opportunities (Brown, 2000). Malley (2012a) reported that, from interviews with Members of the Scottish Parliament from across the political spectrum, the design of the building had been successful in creating such a culture in Holyrood overall (she has also noted that there was conflicting evidence as to whether hemi-circle design had led to less adversarial behaviour in the chamber, but that where such behaviour was reported, it was less gendered and exclusionary than in Westminster (Malley, 2012b)). The design of the interior at Holyrood has been praised by MSPs, who noted, for example "the convivial interaction between MSPs, staff and even visitors that is engendered by the compact layout" (Spring, 2010).

The influence of design on an institution is not an uncontested concept, however. Peschel (1961) notes how the two-party system has flourished in both the US and UK despite the different chamber layout. Parkinson argues that

> "A building's meaning is established in a context and built up through use and association, and thus it is cultural factors that have more to do with explaining political culture and how we come to symbolize it than any direct effect of bricks and mortar on our behaviour". (Parkinson, 2009, p 79)

Parkinson does accept, however, that even if the layout of the chamber does not have a material impact on behaviour, the size of the chamber may do so (Parkinson, 2012). Indeed, Malley (2012a, p 74) argues that while "a deterministic relationship between political space

and behaviour cannot be established", we can understand the culture of an institution through its buildings.

Support for Goodsell also comes from the lived experience of MPs working within the Palace, who have been clear that the design and structure of the building did indeed set the atmosphere and tone of the institution. Prior to the 1834 fire, Colonel Davies MP commented:

> "The appearance of the House was frequently rather that of a debating-club or a bear-garden, than of a deliberative assembly. The noise was excessive, and Members, instead of attending to the proceedings, amused themselves with talking, or laying stretched at full length asleep upon the benches. A great deal of this arose from the bad construction and want of proper accommodation of the House" (HC Deb, 2 July 1833, c62)

In the debates over rebuilding the Commons chamber in the 1940s, Churchill argued against altering "the physical structures which have enabled so remarkable an organism to carry on its work". (HC Deb, 28 October 1943, cc405-6). Dr Russell Thomas MP suggested that remaining in the Palace "will act as a controlling force and will help to guide men to sane conclusions" (HC Deb, 28 October 1943, cc451-2). A similar view was shared by the Leader of the House, Rab Butler MP, in 1958, when he argued that changing the layout of the Commons chamber would "ruin the whole spirit of the British House of Commons" (HC Dec, 31 Jan 1958, c759).

Arguments about the physical impact of design have also been used to argue for change to the Palace. In 1943 Viscountess Astor suggested that it may be better to have a circular House", adding:

> "I have often felt that it might be better if Ministers and ex-Ministers did not have to sit and look at each other, almost like dogs on a leash, and that controversy would not be so violent" (HC Deb, 28 October 1943, c417)

A similar view was shared by another a female MP, Louise Haigh, speaking 76 years later:

> "I never thought about the actual importance of how the chamber is structured until I was elected. [...] I never thought about how the layout of the chamber affects debate, and affects the atmosphere and affects [...] the way people conduct themselves, but being in there and being so close to your opposition and being forced to address people that are, because they are sat confrontationally opposite you, are therefore encouraged to be adversarial, encouraged to shout you down, encouraged to knock you off your stride, it does mean that the whole nature of our debate and the whole way that we frame legislation and try to solve problems is adversarial and confrontational." (interview, August 2019)

Haigh's further comments address the disparity between the literature and MPs' own views about the impact of the physical design: crucially, parliamentarians believe there is an impact and this affects their own behaviour. She states:

> "I think back to when I was first elected and going into the chamber and moving around the Palace of Westminster and obviously being completely in awe [...] I felt like it really put me in my place, and I know from talking to lots of colleagues that they feel the same and you know, those who haven't come through Eton and through Oxbridge and through the debating clubs and are very much used to engaging with chambers like the House of Commons, are very much awed by it, and don't feel that they can't participate fully and feel that they have to earn their place even after being elected [...] Whereas, you see, those who have come through those routes feel very comfortable." (interview, August 2019)

The varying effect of the architecture on different individuals reflects Edelman's argument that:

> "Like the linguistic terms that serve as symbols, spaces can therefore take on quite disparate meanings for different people and for diverse social situations. The space itself does not convey meaning as if it were a simple code. It serves, rather, as an objectification of whatever shared meaning a particular group of people need to reinforce in each other, so that the meanings for groups with conflicting interests are frequently dialectical". (Edelman, 1995, pp74-75)

The effect of the building is not simply limited to the size and layout. Kelsey (2002, p 12) has argued that "there are numerous ways in which the physical space of the chamber has affected the conduct of parliamentary business and the institution's gradual evolution" noting the acoustics and lighting. The issue goes beyond just the chambers of each House. Crewe and Sarra (2019, p 7) note that select committee meeting rooms "communicate a seriousness of purpose through both their architectural gestures and the artefacts displayed within, such as paintings which confirm the historical association of powerful figures or displays of fine art". Norton (2019) has highlighted how new buildings or changed configurations of space (such as the construction of Portcullis House) can change the use of informal space within legislatures. The literature (e.g. Ross (2002) and Childs (2004)) has also explored how design reinforces the gendered nature of Parliament, drawing on the gendered nature of political institutions designed and shaped by men as explored by Acker (1992) and discussed also in the context of the US Congress by Duerst-Lahti (2002). Crawford and Pini (2011) noted how the paintings in the new Parliament House in Australia "provide symbolic evidence of the construction of political space as male space". Louise Haigh MP shared the same concern for Westminster:

> "The fact that it is pictures of men and statues of men, everywhere, that really stands out, even in the Lady Members' Room, all the portraits are of men" (Interview, August 2019)

A 2019 independent inquiry into bullying and harassment in the House of Lords explicitly linked the design of the building to behaviour within:

> "The Palace of Westminster is not designed to accommodate, or inculcate, modern ways of working. Staff work in small rooms (often housing only two individuals) on long corridors and can be physically distant from their managers and other colleagues. Contributors told me that, in particular when doors are closed, the environment can feel threatening and inappropriate behaviour can go unobserved by colleagues" (Ellenbogen, 2019, p84)

The design of the building also affects how the public perceive Parliament. Walker (2012, p 274) noted that "Parliament did not feel 'open'" and that while "visiting Parliament makes a strong impact […] the buildings can be intimidating in their splendour". Puwar has written of her experience as a woman of colour visiting Parliament:

> "As I walked through the grand entrance to Parliament I felt a sense of unease with my own bodily arrival in this monument to democracy, nation and Imperial Englishness. A set of stories come with the building." (Puwar, 2004, p 35)

The design of the Palace of Westminster therefore matters. It influences how actors perceive their roles and undertake their tasks, and is therefore worth further examination.

The value of symbolism

The influence of design also goes beyond purely physical effects—particularly for legislative buildings. Yanov (1995, p 408) has argued that political "buildings may be seen as telling policy 'stories'". Jones (2011, p 2) suggests that within architecture "particular visions of publics are forged". In her seminal work Pitkin (1967, p92,111) conceived of "symbolic representation" as one of the four types of representation, and recognised that this "representing can be by inanimate objects". Legislative buildings act as symbols, with their own meaning and relationship with citizens in this concept (Rai, 2010; Manow, 2010). Saward (2010) built on Pitkin's work to conceive representation as "a dynamic process of claim-making", and he highlighted "the symbolic architecture of our political systems" as part of this process (Saward, 2010, p 3, 90). Similarly, Parkinson argued that parliamentary buildings:

> "Entail public claims themselves: all embody claims about who the rightful decision-makers are; many have design elements that tell stories about who 'the people' are; and all are, or come to be, symbols of national politics and national culture." (Parkinson, 2012, p 93)

Such symbolism can be observed in legislative buildings around the world, as a result of deliberate decisions by architects. Jones argues that:

> "Questions about the political construction of collective identities and the cultural legitimation of power find a clear focus in those objects of state-led architecture that are framed as symbols of national identity; rather than simply reflecting an existing, authentic reality in an unproblematic way, such state-led projects are active attempts to contribute to the cultural construction and consolidation of communities such as the nation". (Jones, 2011, p 64)

Alternatively, symbolism can "arise as unintended and unacknowledged products of a widely shared acculturation" (Vale, 2008, pp 33-34). Ameller (1966, p 122) described how where legislative buildings have been constructed or refurbished the "design has undoubtedly been influenced by political considerations peculiar to each country". Decisions on changes to existing parliaments or the creation of new parliamentary buildings have symbolic value: choosing to remain in an existing building, for example, demonstrates continuity rather than change. Where new buildings have been built, the symbolism can be even more stark. The refurbished Reichstag building in Berlin, for example, is topped by a glass dome, symbolising transparency (Roberts, 2000; Jones, 2011; Vale, 2014; Waylen, 2014) (although it is important to note the complex nature of this symbolism, as discussed by Delanty and Jones (2002) and Barnstone (2005)). In contrast the various parliamentary buildings (and designs) in Myanmar have, Egreteau (2017) argued, symbolised different views of national identity during the country's evolution from the early twentieth century. Vale (2008, p 374) has described how the Sri Lankan parliamentary building, offers an "inclusive" design that reflected the history of the country. Dovey (1999) has discussed at length the symbolism of the new Parliament House in Canberra (and where at times, he argues the symbolism has failed: the Members' Hall, Dovey (1999, p 101) suggests "symbolizes an empty democracy and a growing distance between people and power" where the symbolic intent "was inverted through a profound failure of the program"). This demonstrates that not only can the symbolic value of a building may reflect an unintended decision by an architect or decisionmaker, as a result of their own biases or assumption, but further, that, as Edelman (1995, p 84) argues, it can "diverge radically from whatever the architect intended".

The Palace of Westminster certainly has symbolic importance. Judge (1989, p 400) has described how the "architectural splendour" of the Palace has "enchanted" people. Gillin argued that:

> "As far as architecture goes, the Palace is the ultimate symbol of political power. Though to look at the Houses of Parliament building is not to see a bastion of

democracy, but a fantastic shrine to the medieval powers of monarchy, church, and aristocracy." (Gillin, 2017, p 1x)

As Parkinson (2012) noted, the symbolic effect goes beyond just the power of the architecture and beauty of the building, but also incorporates the emotional attachment and link to the institution noted earlier in this chapter. The then Commons Speaker, Bernard Wetherill, writing in 1991, described the symbolic power of the Palace during World War Two:

> "A free Parliament is the proudest symbol of a democracy, and if anything, I think the pictures of the familiar Chamber a mass of rubble, twisted girders, and broken arches, made the British people even more aware than they were before of the mortal threat that Hitler posed to the tolerant and fair-minded way of life they enjoyed. And the picture of Churchill [...] standing defiant among the ruins of the Chamber that even then he had debated in for more than 40 years, must have steeled our resolve to have away with the evils of Nazism once and for all" (quoted in Tanfield, 1991, p viii).

As a symbol, the Palace thus represents a particular type of politics. In the battle against fascism the building was considered to stand for worthy virtues and ideals of national identity. Symbolic representation is not objective. As Judge and Leston-Bandeira (2018, p 4) argue that "exactly how those symbolic cues are interpreted and received by audiences of citizens is dependent upon political context, culture and time". The meaning of symbols can thus change, in different contexts (Parkinson, 2012), and multiple MPs have expressed caution about the current symbolic power of the Palace. Labour MP, Laura Pidcock, has argued that:

> "The Palace of Westminster is a beautiful, historic building. We have to recognise, however, that for many in this country it is also a symbol of corruption, power, dominance, greed and suffering." (Pidcock, 2018)

The sole Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas has called on the Palace to be redesigned to offer a different image, taking lessons from other legislative buildings:

> "In the Netherlands the new Parliament building has glass walls so that the public can look in on their representatives-a symbolic way of reminding their MPs why they are there and who they are supposed to serve." (Lucas, 2015, p 203)

In her seminal work, *Feminizing Politics*, Joni Lovenduski described how decisions about the building reflected the norms of the institution:

> "Parliament is masculine [...] it institutionalizes the norms of the men who founded it and for so many years inhabited it as a wholly male institution. This is why Westminster for so long boasted a rifle range but not a crèche." (Lovenduski, 2005, p 48)

Norton (1991, p 217) noted how the symbolism does not always reflect the reality: "the corridors of the Palace of Westminster are variously treated as synonymous with the corridors of power"—despite Parliament not being the governing body of the UK. This, however, fits with Pitkin's understanding of symbolic representation, for which she argued "concerning symbols it makes no sense to ask for reasons for belief, or when men ought to believe" (Pitkin, 1967, p 111). Similarly, Edelman (1988, p 9) argues that the interpretation of a symbol depends on the "specific context of privilege, disadvantage, frustration, aspiration, hope and fear in which it is experienced".

While it is contested whether the Palace of Westminster acts as a positive or negative symbol of UK democracy (and whether this symbolism reflect reality), it is widely accepted that the building *does* have a symbolic role (e.g. Kalitowski, 2009). This thesis will show how the symbolism of the building influenced debates around its future, particularly in the context of wider political turmoil in the UK. The future of the Palace of Westminster is not, therefore, simply an issue of an old building and its derelict infrastructure, but relevant to UK democracy as a whole.

An example of institutional change

As this chapter has demonstrated how policy decisions around the Palace of Westminster are intrinsically connected to the institution of the UK Parliament, and parliamentary democracy. Understanding changes to the building, therefore, provides a new perspective on institutional change. Specifically, it can build on the literature examining the relationship between gradual and sudden policy change (e.g. Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; Pierson, 2004), and on the way institutions react differently to endogenous and exogenous pressures (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; Kelso, 2009b). Streeck and Thelen (2005, p 8) warned of the risk of associating "incremental with adaptive and reproductive minor change, and major change with, mostly exogenous, disruption of continuity", and instead called for a distinction between the "processes of change, which may be incremental or abrupt, and results of change, which may amount to either continuity or discontinuity".

Crucially, the Restoration and Renewal programme did not develop from an exogenous shock and can instead be considered to be classified as a type of change "produced by the very behaviour" Parliament "itself generates" (Streeck and Thelen, 2005, p 19). This case study will test the extent to which the policy change caused by this internal pressure was first, abrupt or incremental, and then if it served either as a form of adaptation, preserving institutional continuity, or disruptive change, a form of discontinuity. This will also build on the literature

around parliamentary reform (discussed further in Chapter 3), and particularly the divide between modernisation, parliamentary reform, and incremental-bounded reform (Wright, 2004, Flinders, 2007).

2.4 The literature gap

There is little academic research on the Restoration and Renewal programme itself (for exceptions, see Flinders et al, 2018; Yong, 2018; Flinders et al, 2019). In part, this reflects the relatively recent establishment of the programme, but it is also indicative of a wider gap in the literature around the of the Palace of Westminster itself. Indeed, our understanding of the building reflects the fact that it was created as (and remains) a royal palace, with existing work in this area tending to come from architecture (e.g. Summerson, 1993; Sawyer, 2003; Gleich, 2012; Schoenefeldt, 2016, and as noted in Kelsey, 2002) or history (e.g. Salmon, 2009; and the detailed multi-volume history of the Office of Works (Colvin, ed, 1963-1982) which provides useful background but has been criticised for lacking critical judgment (Gomme, 1986)), rather than political science. Such accounts can only tell part of the story: as Cannadine (2000, p 11) states: "we must recognize that the history of the Palace of Westminster is as much about nation and empire, politics and ceremony as it is about architecture and the decorative arts". As this chapter has highlighted, the Palace of Westminster should not be viewed simply as a piece of important architecture, but as part of our democratic framework.

Specific histories of either the Palace (e.g. Pole-Hennessy, 1975; Port, 1976; Goodall, 2000; Cannadine, 2000) or of Parliament itself (e.g. Ilbert, 1956; Jones, ed, 2009; Bryant, 2014, 2015) do connect the building with the institution. However, such texts are often descriptive, rather than analytical, focusing more on **how** the building changed over time, rather than **why**. Understanding how decisions are taken around the design of the building has changed (or not taken) over centuries requires understanding the politics behind such decisions.

In recent years a small, but growing, sub-field of parliamentary studies has considered the UK Parliament from an ethnographic standpoint, connecting the physical building with the institution. Crewe (2005) for example, discussed how the fabric of the House of Lords creates an atmosphere that is welcoming to a certain type of person, and unwelcoming to others:

> "Ex-public schoolboys, Oxbridge graduates and gentleman who frequent the august London clubs near Pall Mall tend to feel at home there. They recognise the long tables in the dining rooms, the leather armchairs in the library [...] The past is everywhere: soaring arches, the luxuriance of sculpted dead kings sprouting from the mouldings, painted historical tableaux on the walls, marble statues of deceased parliamentarians." (Crewe, 2005, p 9).

Geddes (2016) discussed how "organisation of space, whether the design and layout of meeting rooms, debating chambers or the Palace as a whole" affected how MPs conducted their scrutiny work. Similarly, first-hand accounts of experiences of the Palace from former or current parliamentarians or staff offers a valuable resource in how they experience the building (for example, Baker, 1958; Mitchell, 1982; Hardman, 2018) and sometimes with suggestions for improvement (e.g. Lucas, 2015; Frith ed, 2018). As noted in section 2.3, the impact of the Palace on the institution is also examined in literature around design (e.g. Parkinson, 2012; Goodsell, 1988). Leston-Bandeira (2012, p 523) has noted how "symbolic representation, however, is often ignored by the literature, and yet it offers a crucial dimension to understanding the relationship between parliament and citizens". Judge and Leston-Bandeira (2017, p 5) have provided a valuable examination of the "symbolic intent of parliamentary architecture", however, this places the focus on the outcome of policy decisions around the Palace—in the impact of the design of the building—rather than the decision-making process itself.

The limited analytical research which does consider policymaking with regards to the Palace tends to consider a limited period of time in isolation: primarily, for example, the rebuilding proposals after the 1834 fire (e.g. Roraburgh, 1973; Shenton, 2016; Gillin, 2017). The exception here is Cocks (1977) who, while also focusing on the immediate period following the 1834 fire, also related his findings to the management of Parliament in the 20th century. In the 40 plus years since Cocks' work, however, there have been substantive governance changes to parliamentary administration, specifically affecting the management of the Palace of Westminster, which have received little scrutiny (for an exception, see Yong, 2018). Separate to the Palace of Westminster, there is a useful analysis of the policymaking process with regards to development of a legislative building—the National Assembly for Wales—in Edwards (2004).

This section has considered the limited literature on the Palace of Westminster. It has shown that the existing research tends to be descriptive, rather than analytical. Alternatively, the literature is focused on the output of the design of the building, rather than the input: how policy decisions are made. Crucially, where analytical research has considered the policymaking process it has focused almost entirely on the immediate period following the 1834 fire, rather than more recent events. We can conclude, therefore, that there is a significant gap in the literature on how decisions are made about the Palace of Westminster, particularly relating to the Restoration and Renewal programme.

Conclusion

How does this chapter help us understand Restoration and Renewal (R&R)? By highlighting key themes from the history of the building, we can be guided towards a theoretical lens for this research. This lens must be able to consider how past policy decisions inform the future and the specific institutional context—vital in studying a contemporary issue, as Bellamy (2011, p 84) has argued: "the danger of focusing research in the present is that it encourages an over-emphasis on its distinctiveness from what went before"—but also the importance of wider political events. The use of this lens will also enable this research to fill a gap in the literature on policy decisions about the state of the Palace.

This chapter has also demonstrated that R&R is not just about the fate of a Victorian building on the banks of the Thames. Its status as the home of the legislature means that the Palace of Westminster serves as a valuable subject for research on three levels. This chapter has shown how actors within Parliament—most notably, Winston Churchill—believe that the very design, décor and physical environment of the Palace shapes how the politics operates within. The reference to Churchill is important: all debates around R&R are infused with symbolism, importance of the building and the history of the institution. On a deeper level, then, policy decisions around the Palace of Westminster tell us about Parliament as an institution. In turn, this informs our understanding of institutional change more broadly.

To achieve this new understanding, this thesis turns now to consider the theoretical framework which will be applied to the R&R programme.

Chapter 3: The Theoretical Framework

"But what makes an idea's time come? [...] We know more about how issues are disposed of than we know about how they came to be issues on the governmental agenda in the first place, how the alternatives from which decision makers chose were generated, and why some potential issues and some likely alternatives never came to be the focus of serious attention." (Kingdon, 2014, p 1)

In light of the lack of literature around the Palace of Westminster, as detailed in the previous chapter, how can we understand how Restoration and Renewal? This chapter sets out a theoretical framework for understanding parliamentary governance and the R&R programme, which can consider the recurring themes outlined in Chapter 2. It will start with a brief discussion of the dominant approach to understanding the UK Parliament and the management of the Palace of Westminster, and demonstrate why a new theoretical approach is necessary (section 3.1). It will then move to a summary of the Multiple Stream Framework (MSF) and how the framework has been refined and applied (section 3.2). It will then consider how the MSF can be combined with Historical Institutionalism (section 3.3) and demonstrate the fit between this combined approach—MSF Plus—and the case study (section 3.4).

This chapter will demonstrate that to understand R&R, we need to understand the institutional context, norms and values of the UK Parliament and how these shape internal policy decisions. Further, it shows that there is an extremely limited literature discussing governance of legislatures, which can be linked to a gap in the theoretical toolbox for understanding how policy change within the administration of the UK Parliament. For this reason, a public policy approach, if combined with a recognition of the importance of institutional context, can explain the approval of R&R.

3.1 Understanding the UK Parliament

The literature gap around the Palace of Westminster, detailed in Chapter 2, can be linked to a larger institutional gap in our understanding of internal parliamentary governance, which is significant for our understanding of how Parliament works as an institution. While there is a rich history of analysis reform within parliamentary studies, this literature tends to focus on reform vis-à-vis the executive, and specifically the power balance between Parliament and the Government. Reforms are divided between those seeking to improve parliamentary effectiveness (tipping the balance of power towards the legislature and away from the executive) or efficiency in terms of the Government securing its business (tipping the balance of power towards the Government and away from the legislature) (e.g. Crick, 1965; Walkland,

1976; Norton, 1981; Norton, 2000; Wright, 2004; Flinders, 2007; Power, 2007; Kelso, 2009b; Russell, 2011). Such themes are of limited (although some) relevance to Restoration and Renewal: a parliamentary issue, primarily concerned with the decisions the institution of parliament makes about itself, rather than its relationship with the Government.

As Yong (2018, p 76) notes, "house governance is a subject rarely covered in detail, because it appears to lack the raw excitement of law-making and scrutiny of executive action". Indeed, there has been only a very limited literature examining the internal governance within Parliament, and this work is often textbook based (e.g. Ryle, 1981; Blackburn and Kennon, 2003); or address only one specific element of parliamentary governance (e.g. Rush and Ettinghausen, 2002 or Crewe, 2006 on the 'usual channels'); or touch upon governance as a supplement to the main topic of the work (Crewe, 2005, 2015, Geddes, 2016). Where governance is the main topic, it often focuses on one House in particular, rather than Parliament as a whole (the exceptions here are Norton, 2017; Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2018; and Yong, 2018). As the pipes and wiring serving the Palace of Westminster do not distinguish between the Commons and Lords, to explore Restoration and Renewal we need to look at the governance of Parliament as a whole.

Historical Institutionalism

The 'internal governance' gap in the literature is matched by a gap in the theoretical toolbox for considering this element of the legislature. The early parliamentary studies literature has been criticised for using a traditional institutionalist, descriptive approach, and failing to explicitly attempt to use the study of the institution for theoretical development (e.g. in Peters, 2009). While later work in the field has used new institutionalisms, particularly Historical Institutionalism (HI), to explain how change occurs within Parliament (e.g. Wright, 2004; Waylen, 2010; Norton, 2013), this theoretical position is often implicit: despite the clear links between the area of study and the theory, much of the literature does not state a theoretical framework, or epistemological position. Indeed, Geddes (2016, p 31) suggests that "the sub-discipline has not engaged in significant theoretical reflection". An exception is Kelso, who in her 2009 study of the House of Commons Modernisation Committee argued that HI "forces us to take account of Parliament's history, and how that history frames what is and is not possible in the present" (Kelso, 2009b, p 27). While this section does not attempt to provide a detailed summary of HI ("a sprawling literature characterised by tremendous internal diversity" (Thelen, 1999, p370)) or the key literature, it is necessary simply to note that it is a theoretical approach which "examines how temporal processes and events influence the origin and transformation of institutions that govern political and economic relations" (Fioretism,

Falleti and Sheingate, 2016, p 3; see also Hall and Taylor, 1996). Its core theme is that institutions structure interactions and thus influence—but do not determine—outcomes (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992). This influence, it is argued, is enacted through path dependency, a concept originally developed in economics, which was adopted in HI to explain "why institutions persist, even after they are no longer efficient" (Fioretism, Falleti, and Sheingate, 2016, p 11). Paths are set during critical junctures, "brief phases of institutional flux" during which radical change is possible (Capoccia and Keleman, 2007, p 341). The exact mechanisms by which path dependency determines future outcomes has been subject to debate. Bevir and Rhodes (2010, p 77) have argued that the "metaphors" of critical juncture and path dependency are used to describes processes and mechanisms that are "entangled" with "determinism, reification and foundationalism". Historical Institutionalism, (along with the other new institutionalisms), they argue, views "the past through modernist-empiricist and positivist spectacle" (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010, p 26)—a position contested by Hay and Wincott (1998). Bevir and Rhodes base this argument on the definition of path dependency used by Pierson which it is worth setting out in full:

> "In an increasing returns process, the probability of further steps along the same path increases with each move down that path. This is because the relative benefits of the current activity compared with other possible options increase over time. To put it a different way, the costs of exit—of switching to some previously plausible alternative—rise". (Pierson, 2000, p 252)

This definition, Bevir and Rhodes claim, relies on a rational decision-making process, in which policies are chosen based on a calculation of the costs of each option. Similarly, Bevir and Rhodes criticise HI for what they perceive to be an implication "that there is a causal mechanism that fixes the content or development of an institution by fixing the agency of the relevant people": that structure negates agency (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010, p 62). It could be argued that this is a simplistic view of HI, which sets up a strawman in contrast to Bevir and Rhodes' proposed alternative of an interpretive approach. Contrary to Bevir and Rhodes' arguments, many Historical Institutionalists do not adopt the narrow path dependency definition used by Pierson, choosing instead to consider how past policy decisions influence future decisions through the shaping of traditions and practices, which in turn affect how problems are viewed and the scope of alternative policies (for example, Sager and Thomann, 2016; Weir, 1992; Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). In a parliamentary context Kelso (2009b, p 181) described this as "a 'logic of appropriateness' that MPs use as a reference point in order to perceive events around them and to determine their goals and actions". This approach to path dependency enables HI to be used in a more nuanced way than Bevir and Rhodes contest, allowing it to be combined with non-rational approaches to analysing policy decisions.

Historical Institutionalist accounts of parliamentary reform have a particular strength in explaining why change has not occurred. Across political science, HI has, however, been criticised for failing to be able to explain change that happens gradually or in unexpected ways (Flinders, 2007; Peters, 2009). Furthermore, it has been argued that HI cannot explain in what instances a critical juncture will occur (Hall and Taylor, 1996), although Norton (1998a, 2000) provides an exception in the parliamentary studies field (as discussed further in section 3.3). It has also been accused of applying "retrospective rationality", identifying "chosen policy options as the logical, and generally the most rational (taken broadly), choice at any given time" rather than considering "the complexity and uncertainty that characterize formative moments in the creation of policies" (Peters et al, 2005). Finally, HI has also been criticised for failing to accord sufficient weight to individual agency in achieving change, or shaping institutions (Peters, 2005; Schmidt, 2006). What is therefore missing from a solely HI approach to understanding Parliament, therefore, is a way of explaining the status of the Restoration and Renewal programme, both in terms of decision-making and non-decision-making: what makes an opportunity for change occur, and what factors, beyond institutional constraints, affect whether change is achieved?

This section has demonstrated that although traditional approaches to understanding Parliament can provide an overview of how the institution can be resistant to change, they may not provide a fine-grained explanation of how decision-making and non-decision-making. In order to address this weakness, the next section suggests that the Multiple Streams Framework could act as a complementary theoretical lens.

3.2 The Multiple Streams Framework

The Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) was first developed by John Kingdon in his 1984 work, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (later editions published 2003, 2011 and 2014). This section will provide an overview of the MSF; and discuss how it has been applied; how it has been refined; and the main critiques of the framework. Serving as further intellectual reference points for this chapter are the works by Weir (1992), Cairney (2013a; 2018), Bache and Reardon (2016), and Spohr (2016). This section will demonstrate that the versatility of the MSF works as a strength, and emphasises the value of the MSF in helping to explain messy, ambiguous and irrational policy decisions. In this way, this section will demonstrate the potential value of using an approach based on the MSF to understand the Restoration and Renewal programme.

Overview of the Multiple Streams Framework

Kingdon's objective for the Multiple Streams Framework was to explain how "an idea's time has come"—how ideas get onto a government's agenda, and why some alternative policies are given serious consideration while others are neglected (Kingdon, 2014, p1). By identifying the factors that lead to certain issues being considered or not considered seriously, Kingdon sought to explain why and when policy change occurs, in opposition to rational or incremental models of change. Cairney (2018, p 201) describes Kingdon's framework as "an antidote to the biggest work of fiction in policy studies: rational policymaking during a policy cycle". The MSF builds on Cohen, March and Olsen's (1972, pp1-2) "garbage can model", an explanation of how decisions are made in complex organisations, described as "organized anarchies". These organisations, it was argued did not meet the conditions for rational models of policymaking, as they are characterised by one or more of three factors: "inconsistent or ill-defined preferences"; processes and technology that were unclear to users; and fluid participation by decision-makers (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972, p 1). Cohen, March and Olsen identified four independent streams: problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities—a "garbage can" into which problems, solutions and participants are inserted. Policy change would occur when these streams interacted in an "extremely complex" manner, requiring computer simulation to understand (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972, p 16). The model also set out the "partial uncoupling of problems and choices": arguing that solutions were often developed in search of a problem (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972, p 16).

Kingdon (2014) refined Cohen, March and Olsen's model to identify three independent streams: the problem, policies and politics streams. The problem stream was comprised of the "various problems [that] come to capture the attention of people in and around government" (Kingdon, 2014, p 87). The policy stream is where policy proposals are proposed and considered, in an evolutionary process where they combine and recombine until the most feasible survives. The politics stream comprised developments such as election results or a change of "national mood" (Kingdon, 2014, p 146). Kingdon argued that an issue had the highest chance of going on the Government's agenda during a 'policy window' when an advocate for a policy—a 'policy entrepreneur'—was willing to invest "resources" (such as time, reputation or political capital) on coupling the streams (Kingdon, 2014, p 122). This is a critical point: Kingdon's choice of "coupling" instead of "alignment" in this instance is important as it signals a further departure from the Garbage Can Model, in which policy decisions occur randomly, rather than being actively advocated (Zahariadis, 2007). While the role of the policy entrepreneur is critical, however, for an issue to achieve agenda status, however, it relies on a "complex combination of factors", beyond the agency of a single actor (Kingdon, 2014, p 76).

Kingdon's framework therefore consists of five concepts, which come together to result in policy change, as set out in Table 3.1 (which includes examples of the concepts in a parliamentary context).

Table 3.1. Overview of Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework

Concept	Definition	Examples – including in parliamentary studies	Related literature
Problem stream	The list of problems of which the Government is aware. A problem is defined when it is agreed that action should be taken about an undesirable condition (Kingdon, 2014, p 109).	A crisis, such as a rail crash, or indicators of a growing problem, such as maternal mortality rates. In a parliamentary context, the MPs' expenses scandal was a crisis in the problem stream.	Problem definition and framing (Stone, 1989)
Politics stream	Kingdon used a narrow definition of politics, comprising of "electoral, partisan or pressure group factors" (2014, p 145).	Turnover within key positions within government, election results and changes of administration and changes of the national mood. During the MPs' expenses scandal, there was a sudden and dramatic loss of trust in MPs and Parliament as an institution.	Anti-politics; pressure groups (Jordan and Richardson, 1987; Richardson and Jordan, 1985)
Policy stream	The policy "primeval soup" in which solutions (matched or not matched to problems) are found (2014, p 124). Kingdon envisaged a lengthy period of policies combining and merging, before an alternative is ready for selection.	Alternative policies require momentum to attract support from a wider policy community, and be able to maintain this support over a longer time period. Reforms to the select committee system following the MPs' expenses scandal had long been proposed and developed.	Policy analysis (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984); Evolutionary theory (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993)
Policy window	Opportunities for action on a particular problem, which can result in major policy change. Changes in the problem or politics streams can cause windows to open, but windows are scarce, and open only for limited periods.	The MPs' expenses scandal was a development in the problem stream which opened a policy window. A development in the politics stream which can open a policy window is the period directly after a general election, when a new administration has a mandate	Critical junctures; Non-decision making (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963)
Policy entrepreneur	An advocate for a particular policy, who works to couple the streams when a policy window opens, and soften the ground for their preferred policy.	Advocates can be found both inside and outside of government. An example is Tony Wright MP, who pushed for reforms to the select committee system following the MPs' expenses scandal.	Veto players, institutional blockages (Tsebelis, 2000, 2002)

Applications of the Multiple Streams Framework

A historical analysis of the use of the Multiple Streams Framework demonstrates that the framework has been applied extensively, in multiple contexts and policy areas. This section provides a summary of these applications, and highlights that while citations of the MSF are numerous due to its flexibility, there is a need for further empirical research which applies the framework and its concepts in their entirety. This is a critical point. A key element of the existing literature has been a tendency to be selective in the use of MSF concepts, even though the interaction of its independent parts is central to the value of the framework (as argued in Cairney and Jones, 2016, Jones et al, 2016). This section further considers the value of the recently-developed concept of a "problem broker" (as developed by Knaggård, 2015, p 451) in the specific parliamentary context, and sets the ground for the development of a theoretical framework which provides an empirical test of the full MSF Framework and the additional problem broker concept.

In the thirty years since the MSF was first developed the concepts have been directly operationalised or tested in over 300 studies, across a wide range of policy and geographic areas (as discussed in Jones et al, 2016; Baumgartner et al, 2006, Rawat and Morris, 2016). Cairney and Jones (2016, p 40) have praised the versatility of the framework, arguing that it can be "applied to nearly any place, time, or policy" (an analysis of the sectors and governance levels analysed using the MSF is in *Table 3.2*). While the MSF was developed for use to explain policymaking at a national level within the federal government of the USA (Kingdon, 2014), and was primarily used at first within a US context, applications have spread to domestic policymaking analysis first in Europe (e.g. Zahariadis, 1995), and then more widely to Canada (e.g. Blankenau, 2001), Australia (e.g. Tiernan and Burke, 2002), and across Asia (e.g. Zhu, 2008). It has also been used in foreign policy (e.g. Durant and Diehl, 1989). There is also a substantial body of literature applying the framework to cross-national governance, particularly at the EU level (e.g. Bache and Reardon, 2016; Borrás and Radaelli, 2011; Zahariadis, 2008; Ackrill and Kay, 2011; Princen, 2011). It is clear from *Table 3.2*, however, that the framework has rarely been applied to policymaking *within* a single institution, or at a parliamentary level. This analysis has shown a further research gap: the MSF has not been used to analyse constitutional policy in general and parliamentary reform in particular. There is an additional research gap in the use of the MSF in British politics, as identified by Bache (2013). He noted that Jennings et al (2011) argued in their analysis of the "speech from the throne" or Queen's Speech, that "not much is known about agenda setting in British politics" (Jennings et al, 2011, p 74). As also highlighted in *Table 3.2*, there is a further, and significant gap in the existing literature, as no use of the MSF to understand decision-making within the

administration of a parliament or legislature has been recorded (perhaps reflecting the comparative lack of research, using any theory, to understand the internal administration of a parliament or a legislature).

Table 3.2. Applications of Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework by sector

Selected policy areas	Governing level	Use of MSF	Examples
Healthcare	National	Sector with the largest proportion of applications of MSF (Rawat and Morris, 2016).	Exworthy et al (2002).
Education	National	Second highest proportion of MSF applications (Rawat and Morris, 2016).	Zahariadis and Exadaktylos (2016), Mills (2007).
Governance/Public administration	Trans-national (e.g. EU), National	Third highest use of MSF, particularly at EU level (Rawat and Morris, 2016).	Nugent and Saurugger (2002); Borrás and Radaelli (2011).
Environment and climate change	Trans-national (e.g. EU), National	A growing field in use of MSF.	Jordan et al (2003).
Transport	National	Limited use of MSF, despite being one of Kingdon's case studies.	Dudley (2013).
Parliament	National	No recorded use.	Focus of this thesis.

MSF Light

A substantive criticism of the Multiple Streams Framework is that the versatility of the framework undermines its strength as a tool of analysis. In their introduction to the *Policy Studies Journal* special issue on the MSF in 2016, Weible and Schlager argued that the framework "is at the empirical and theoretical crossroads of its development", and suggested that despite the large number of case studies, "knowledge of the policy process has not advanced under the MSA (Weible and Schlager, 2016, p 8, 11). As outlined in the previous section, the framework has been widely used: Jones et al (2016, p 31) recognised the "unparalleled empirical richness" of the MSF. The number of applications has, however, led to a criticism that it is a framework that "many scholars quote but few explicitly use" (Zahariadis, 2007, p 79), and an argument that while there have been over 12,000 citations of Kingdon's work, the vast majority of these citations simply refer to the concepts or model, without engaging with or operationalising the framework (Cairney and Jones, 2016). Where the MSF has been operationalised, it has been suggested that the versatility has led to the use of the framework in contexts unplanned by Kingdon which "has reduced the precision of key concepts" (Herweg, Huß, and Zohlnhöfer, 2015, p 436). In this way, it has been argued that

the versatility of the framework has undermined its "conceptual development" (Jones et al, 2016, p 31).

Further, where the MSF has been applied, almost two-thirds of the applications do not use the framework in full (Jones et al, 2016). Instead, a majority of articles used just part of the framework, focusing solely on policy windows, for example, or without using the three streams (for example, John's 2006 study of agenda setting in UK urban policy). Rawat and Morris (2016, p 628) also recognised this feature of the literature, but suggested instead that "Kingdon's framework can be viewed as a grand theory from which several meso-level and micro-level theories (such as problem framing, policy windows, and policy entrepreneurs) have been drawn". It could be argued, however, that using the concepts in isolation in such a way that the concepts comprise their own theory does not fit with Kingdon's intellectual justification for his framework, which emphasised the interaction between the concepts by the coupling of the streams. It is therefore questionable, however, whether the use of the MSF in this limited way—which could be described as MSF Light—can deliver deeper insights into agenda-setting in the policymaking process.

Theoretical refinement

A related criticism of the MSF is that the theoretical refinement of the framework has been limited and uncoordinated. It was estimated by Jones et al (2016) that only around 10% of the MSF literature has added new sub-concepts or further refinements to the framework, meaning that the vast majority of applications of the framework do not refine the theory. In considering the refinement of the MSF, however, it is first necessary to recognise that there has been a lack of engagement with the wider literature by Kingdon himself. Cairney and Jones (2016, p 51) have argued that the "original architect" of the multiple streams approach, has "played a minimal role in theory development and coordinating empirical applications (beyond producing several editions of his book). The "coordinating" aspect is critical here: authors who have refined the MSF have been criticised for a perceived failure to engage with the wider development of the theory. Cairney and Jones (2016) called for researchers using the MSF to draw on a larger literature base, both past studies utilising the MSF and, more widely, and to specify how their findings would refine the MSF framework. There is, it has been argued, a split in the literature between research which examined a single case study, without refining the theory for wider use, and theoretical refinement which was not tested empirically (Zohlnhöfer, 2016).

One new concept has been developed by Knaggård (2015, p 451) who conceived of a new role in the MSF, that of a "problem broker", defined as "actors who define problems but do not couple them with policies". This differentiates the problem broker from the policy entrepreneur: "the former makes suggestions that something needs to be done, whereas the latter makes suggestions for particular policies" (Knaggård 2015, p 453). This further differentiated, Knaggård argued, the problem broker from the actors in theories of Advocacy Coalition Frameworks and Epistemic Communities, where again the actor is committed to a particular solution. Knaggård suggested that this concept will be of particular benefit for scientific policy areas, in which a clear solution is unknown, citing the example of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which, its first chairman argued, should raise problems with policymakers but refrain from making policy suggestions. There has been little empirical testing of Knaggård's concept, but it is likely that it may be of particular use in studying Parliament, in which a number of key actors, such as parliamentary clerks, are restricted by the terms of their jobs, and the institutional norms, in advocating for a particular policy. The value of this concept for the case study in particular is explored further later in this chapter at section 3.4.

In this section, it has not been possible nor desirable to undertake an exhaustive study of every fragment of the MSF literature. Instead this section has had a more specific aim of considering the spread of applications of the MSF and how the framework has been refined. The four critical findings of this extensive analysis are:

1. While there has been substantial use of the MSF concepts in peer-reviewed case studies in the thirty years since Kingdon's first edition was published, the framework has only been used to a limited extent in British politics.
2. There has been no use of the MSF to understand the inner working of a parliament or legislature.
3. The majority of applications have not used the framework in full or engaged with the wider literature—MSF Light.
4. The MSF has not been subject to extensive theoretical refinement, and where new concepts have been developed, they have rarely been subject to empirical test.

This section therefore suggests the existence of not just a research gap, but a research opportunity. The aim is not simply to adopt an existing framework uncritically but to build upon and develop this framework in order to make a contribution to both theory and practice.

3.3 The Multiple Streams Framework and Historical Institutionalism

This chapter has thus far considered the Multiple Streams Framework and how it has been refined and applied. It moves on to address one of the primary critiques of the MSF: that it does not give sufficient weight to the role of institutions, and considers if MSF and Historical Institutionalism (HI) can be combined together.

It has been argued that the power of the MSF to explain agenda-change is constrained because it ignores the role of historical and institutional constraints (Weir, 1992; Zahariadis and Allen, 1995; Jordan et al, 2003). Rüb (2016, p 59) outlined three "institutional framework conditions for the politics of time" which, he argued, were "strongly underestimated by the MSF". Spohr (2016, p 251) argued that "capturing path-dependency with the MSF is problematic, due to its insufficient incorporation of institutions". Weir (1992, p 191) argued that "Kingdon's model provides a way of thinking about the conditions under which innovation occurs, but because it is ahistorical, it is in many ways too fluid" (a similar criticisms was made in Bakir, 2009). This is perhaps unfair: Kingdon's conception of the policy stream involves the "gradual development" of alternative policies (Kingdon, 2014, p 227). Furthermore, in a later edition of his work, Kingdon himself recognised that the MSF could complement an institutionalist approach, arguing that "institutions at least constitute important constraints on policy-making. Governmental forms and procedural requirements make some outcomes possible and other outcomes unlikely" (Kingdon, 2014, p 230). This thesis, however, adopts an even more explicit incorporation of the role of institutions, in line with the argument that institutions do matter (March and Olsen, 1984; Weaver and Rockman, 1993a; Lowndes, 2013). To do this, this research brings together Historical Institutionalism and the MSF.

This approach argues that MSF and HI can complement each other. Ackrill *et al* emphasised how the MSF and Historical Institutionalism could work well together, stating that both share "a stress on change being contingent on particular moments where the regular reproduction of patterns within institutionally complex environments is disrupted and reform moments present themselves" (2013, p 878). Both approaches recognise the importance of limited time periods when policy change is possible: critical junctures in HI and policy windows in the MSF. As noted in section 3.1, HI has been criticised for a perceived failure to explain why critical junctures occur (Hall and Taylor, 1996). An analysis using the MSF, however, can point to the changes in the problem or politics stream to understand why a period of policy change is possible. In addition, adding MSF to HI addresses the criticism of Peters et al (2005) as noted

above, that HI does not place sufficient emphasis on the complexity and ambiguity of policy decisions.

Furthermore HI has been criticised for its approach to structure and agency (for example Hay and Wincott (1998, p 953) argue that HI "lacks a specific conception of the relationship between institutions and behaviour save that which it borrows from either rational choice or sociological institutionalism"–although they accept that some HI scholars, namely Thelen and Steinmo (1992) have offered a "highly sophisticated view" of this relationship). This is a contested view: in their response to Hay and Wincott, Hall and Taylor (1998, p 961) suggest that a HI approach can offer "new perspectives on the structure-agency problem", for example "through more intensive examination of the terms within which institutions condition power relations". This thesis argues, however, that explicitly combining HI with a more agency-focused theory, such as the MSF, can therefore assess the varying influence of structure and agency in setting the decision-making agenda (Immergut, 1992). In this way, as Zahariadis and Exadaktylos (2016, p 62) have argued, we can understand how the institutional context "regulates social interaction" and thus influences the behaviour of key actors. Similarly, Zahariadis (1995) has further argued that the "dynamic" element intrinsic to the MSF, through the coupling process ensures that the model avoids the trap of determinism that may befall institutionalist models. Combining the two approaches thus addresses a key criticism of HI that it does not give sufficient weight to individual agency and of the MSF that it does not give sufficient weight to institutions.

It is necessary to acknowledge that the fit between MSF and HI is not perfect. Spohr (2016) notes that a greater focus on institutions into the MSF does "bring into question the independence of the streams, the basic presumption of the framework" (2016, p 264). This is, however, an already contested element of Kingdon's framework (for more, see Bendor, 2001). Kingdon himself accepted in his second edition to *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy* that there are some links between the streams at various points, describing them as "loosely coupled" (Kingdon, 2014, p 229). In combining MSF and HI, this thesis goes further, and argues that the streams are highly interdependent, partly as a result of the institutional context (which ensured, for example, a very closed policy stream which in turn was shaped by the problem definition).

It is possible to identify a very narrow seam of literature which has attempted to combine MSF and HI, however, there are only very limited empirical tests of a combined approach. For example, Borrás and Radaelli (2011) and Spohr (2016) combined HI and the MSF, arguing that neither theory on its own can tell the full story of institutional and policy change. There

remains a clear research gap in how MSF and HI can work together and thus a need for further empirical research, as recognised by Cairney and Jones (2016). Incorporating HI with the MSF offers an opportunity to fill this research gap. Furthermore, it can help us to deepen our understanding of how the values and norms of an institution, developed through its origins and operation, affect how problems are defined; the nature of the political landscape; which policies are seen as acceptable; and whether policy change will occur within a policy window. This combined approach could be termed "MSF Plus".

The MSF Plus approach takes the five core concepts from Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework, and incorporates the new concept of a problem broker, as a potential addition to a policy entrepreneur. It further posits that all five concepts are shaped by the institutional context and past policy decisions through Historical Institutionalism. An issue can move onto the decision-making agenda during a policy window, when each of the multiple streams is aligned and a key actor (a policy entrepreneur or problem broker) couples the streams, by linking the problem and policy together in a favourable political climate. Policy change can then be achieved once the issue is on the decision-making agenda. The MSF Plus framework is thus made of seven elements, which when combined can result in policy change—as set out in *Figure 3.1*. As the diagram shows, the process is not linear: the streams do not have to be coupled in a particular order, but must be aligned for coupling at the same time during a policy window.

Figure 3.1. The MSF Plus Framework
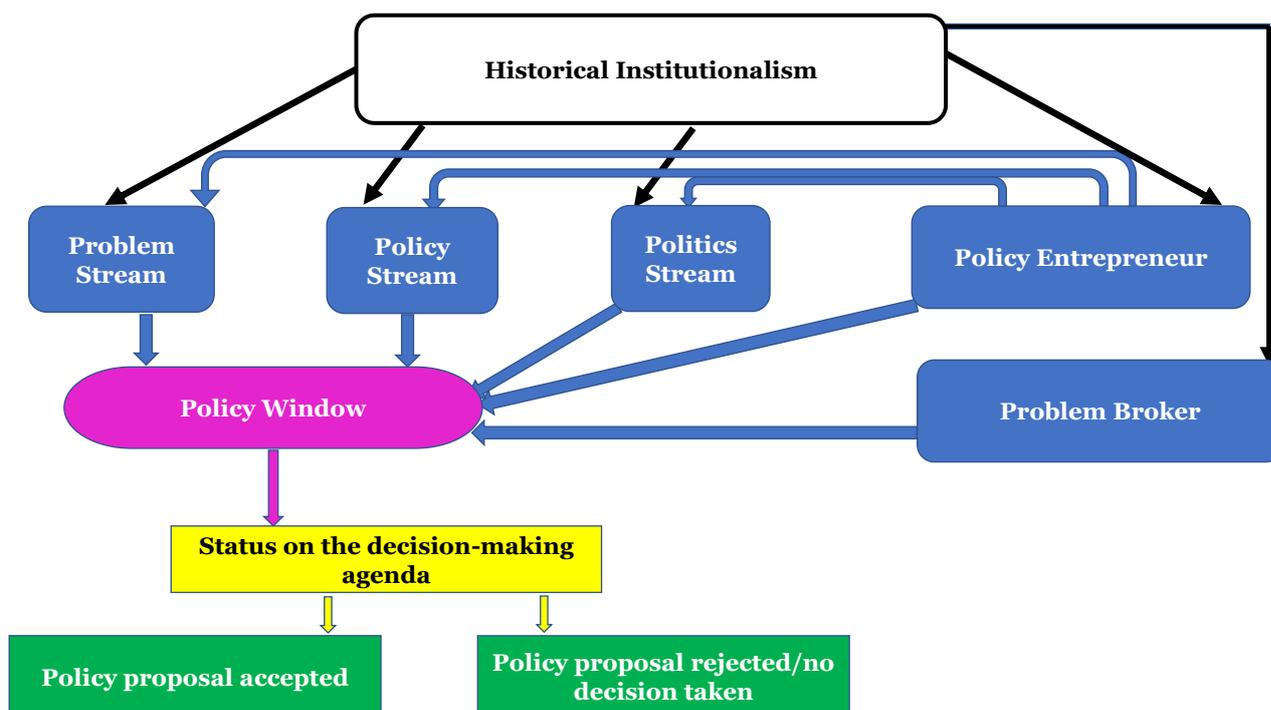
A combined HI and MSF approach to analyse change in Parliament builds on the work of Norton (particularly 1998a and 2000), who, while not using either framework explicitly, argued that dramatic change in the House of Commons required "a combination of three independent variables": namely, a window of opportunity, both in terms of time and substance (for example, the start of a parliament, and coherent reform proposals); "political willingness on behalf of MPs to use that window of opportunity"; and political leadership by the Leader of the House of Commons (Norton, 1998a, pp153-154). Norton's variables translate well to Kingdon's concepts: the window of opportunity (time) is the policy window; the window of opportunity (reform proposals) is the policy stream; the political willingness of MPs is the political stream; and the political leadership of the Leader of the House of Commons is an example of a policy entrepreneur. This thesis seeks to develop further, by bringing in the other concepts that form part of the MSF Plus: considering how problems are defined (and by whom), other elements in the politics stream, and the role of other policy entrepreneurs and problem brokers; and different ways policy windows are opened (e.g. through crises). At each concept, the role of institutional norms and values are considered, in order to take account of how these beliefs and values shape how actors interpret situations and potential actions. By incorporating HI into an assessment of the politics, problem and policy streams, the MSF Plus approach can provide an explanation of how the institutional structure of Parliament affects the likelihood of the streams coupling, leading to policy change.

This section has considered how Historical Institutionalism and the Multiple Streams Framework can be combined to form the MSF Plus approach. This chapter now moves to consider why this combined theoretical approach is the most appropriate to use specifically for a study of the Restoration and Renewal proposals for the Palace of Westminster.

3.4 Theory and empirics fit: MSF Plus and R&R

This chapter has so far provided an overview of the Multiple Streams Framework and Historical Institutionalism, and the value in combining the two approaches as a new theoretical framework: MSF Plus. It now proceeds to set out what MSF Plus offers for a study of the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) process, and the wider agenda-setting process within Parliament. The aim is not to provide an exhaustive explanation of how this theoretical framework will be used, but to demonstrate how the theory may work to explain the fortunes of the Restoration and Renewal programme between 2012, when the programme began, and 2018, when policy change was achieved.

Kingdon sought to uncover "what makes an idea's time come?" (2014, p1). Bache argued that the MSF "helps us to address the question of *why now?* in relation to its recent emergence on political agendas" (2013, p 21-22). In this case study, the physical fabric of a historic Royal Palace is in an advance state of disrepair, to the extent that a number of reports have detailed the impending crisis. Proposals to rebuild the Palace struggled to gain agenda status, until they were unexpectedly successful in January 2018: the idea's time had come. Like Kingdon and Bache, this thesis therefore seeks to understand what makes an idea gain political support, achieve a place on the decision-making agenda, and change policy.

Focusing on the agenda status of an issue enables us, as Page (2008, p 208) argued, to "outline the proximate causes that lead to attention being devoted to an issue: how an issue comes to emerge from relative obscurity to becoming something that is being discussed as a serious contender for legislation or some other policy measure". This is valuable for the R&R case study which certainly moved from obscurity to a place on the agenda and to policy change between 2012 and 2018.

By considering the approval of R&R by the Commons and Lords this thesis draws on the work of Zahariadis (1995) who extended Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework beyond the point of agenda-setting and used it to explain decision-making. This is a contested point in the literature: Howlett et al (2015, p 422) argued that "a three stream model cannot simply be applied wholesale to other stages of the policy process" and that "doing so requires consideration of additional streams". Instead, Howlett et al (2015, p 426) proposed a refined "five stream 'confluence' model", in which the move between stages of policymaking is marked by "confluence points" and "sub-confluence points" which brings the streams together (Howlett et al, 2015, p 427).

This framework rejects the Howlett et al model and argues instead that the problem, policy and politics streams can be applied to the policymaking process as well as agenda setting process. The institutional context of the UK Parliament places similar importance on the agenda-setting part of the policymaking process as Kingdon's original MSF (the importance of the agenda-setting stage is also emphasised by Barzelay (2003)). Further, while the Howlett et al model has used "confluence points" to demonstrate where the streams interact, with each point "representing a 'window' in Kingdon's sense," the revised MSF Plus model allows for greater continual interaction between the streams, removing the need for such confluence points (Howlett et al, 2015, p 427).

The previous section has set out the seven elements of the MSF Plus theoretical framework. This chapter moves to consider how these elements can be applied to the R&R case study, to demonstrate the match between the theory and empirics.

Policy windows and critical junctures

Kingdon defined periods of time when policy change is possible as "policy windows" (Kingdon, 2014, p 20). This thesis considers the period between January 2012 and January 2018 as a policy window in the Palace of Westminster. Why do opportunities for change—or policy windows—occur in the Palace of Westminster? The historical analysis of the Palace in Chapter 2 demonstrated how policy change only occurred when it was considered unavoidable, due to crisis or disaster, and that piecemeal change was otherwise the norm. In contrast, policy change occurred in the R&R case study in the absence of a physical crisis in the building. This examination thus tests the difference between policy change when a window has been opened by a problem or crisis, or due to changes in the politics stream. Incorporating Historical Institutionalism into a study of policy windows enables this research to draw on the literature around critical junctures (Collier and Collier, 2002; Capoccia and Kelemen, 2007) and can link the literature on critical junctures to the narrative that crises act as a dominant force in driving policy change.

This analysis will further fill the need identified by Ackrill *et al* (2013) for future research on understanding why some policy windows lead to reform and others do not: they argued that there was circular thinking in the literature, where only windows that did have reform were considered (and evidence of a policy window was that policy change happened). By considering the 2012 to 2018 period as a whole this thesis explores if it can be considered as a single policy window or multiple windows. There are limited examples of research into windows where policy change did not occur (these include Bache, 2013, Bache and Reardon, 2016), despite the particular value of the MSF in understanding why a policy fails to take-off, rather than a successful policy: Kingdon recognised that "inaction is a decision" (2014, p 96). Understanding the factors behind inaction draws on the literature around "nondecision making" (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963, p 641), and address a concern expressed by Baumgartner *et al* (2006), that there had been few empirical studies of non-decision making because a non-decision was difficult to observe.

Problem stream

Kingdon delineated between a condition—a potentially undesirable state; and a problem, when it is agreed that action should be taken about a condition. To be considered as a problem, a condition must come to the awareness of politicians through, for example, a crisis event, or when indicators demonstrated the need for a response. Problem are, Kingdon emphasised "not entirely self-evident": they require defining as a problem (2014, p 90). This opens up a wide range of literature around the issue of problem definition (e.g. Stone, 1989; Dery, 1984, Rocheford and Cobb, 1993).

The R&R case study posed a number of questions relevant to the issues raised around problem definition. There is no agreed definition of "the problem" Restoration and Renewal aims to solve: whether it is the dangerous state of the building; working conditions for MPs, Peers and staff; the need to protect an important heritage building; the preservation of all existing traditions and cultures within the Palace; the creation of a parliament fit for the 21st century; concerns about how the building affects the culture of Parliament; or the relationship between Parliament and the public. Different actors have sought to define the problem in different ways, either stretching or narrowing down the scope of the problem and thus the potential solutions—this thesis will consider whether these different definitions—and, crucially, the existence of different actors able to promote a different definition—mean the problem stream should be considered to include 'multiple streams within a stream'—or tributaries. These tributaries serve as components of the overall problem stream, and join together to enable to the stream to be coupled. The term 'tributary' has been used previously in the literature: Howlett et al (2015, p 426) for example, consider the multiple streams as tributaries which "converge into a whirlpool" at confluence points during the policymaking process. This framework does not adopt such a definition, preferring instead to view the tributaries as sub-streams within the problem (and also politics) stream.

Zahariadis has emphasised the value of the MSF for "policymaking under conditions of ambiguity", noting that policymakers and the public "frequently do not have a clear well-articulated set of preferences" (2003, p 3). The existence of several definitions of "the problem" to be solved and a lack of clarity over who actually has the authority to define the problem (the nature of the R&R programme as a parliamentary policy separates it from other public policy areas in which the government is the primary decision-maker; the ambiguity is thus heightened by a leadership vacuum) highlights the ambiguity in this case study.

The difficulty over problem definition is itself not new in the management of the Palace: as Chapter 2 demonstrated, the Palace of Westminster has faced a number of different conditions which could have been defined as problems: from concerns about the building from those working within it and from those who feel that the Palace promotes a certain style of politics, to the crisis events of the 1834 fire and 1941 bombing. Furthermore, our understanding of how problems are perceived and defined is helped by an understanding of an institution's values (Spohr, 2016). Indeed, Sager and Thomann (2016, p 3) argued that "inherited policy paths impact and interact with the actors' problem perception". In this way, the MSF Plus approach, which brings Historical Institutionalism together with the Multiple Streams Framework can help us understand developments in the problem stream.

Policy stream

The development of internal policymaking within Parliament in is in marked contrast to many areas of public policy. As Griffith and Leston-Bandeira (2012, p 497) state, "due to their nature, parliaments have traditionally been closed institutions"—and while Norton (1991) noted the trend of the UK Parliament becoming more open and accessible in the late twentieth century, the statement remains particularly true for the internal governance of parliaments, rather than their outward-facing roles of legislating and scrutiny. Examination of the policy stream shows how policies for the administration of Parliament and proposals for the Palace of Westminster were developed in a restricted policy stream, with certain options (such as a new parliamentary building, or moving out of London) removed at the early stage of the policymaking process. Analysis of this policy stream will help to understand why some alternatives are considered seriously, and why others fail to gain traction within the policy stream. In this way, it tests the criteria outlined by Kingdon for an alternative policy to be considered seriously: it must be feasible; fit the values of the policy community; be an acceptable cost; likely to be supported or accepted by the public; and have a reasonable chance of success (Kingdon, 2014, p 131). The addition of HI, in the MSF Plus framework, provides a further level of understanding to these criteria, helping to explain how the values of a policy community are set, and which policies are likely to gain public support: Weir argued "action taken at one time can make some future perceptions and decisions more plausible than others" (1992, p 192). In addition, HI can help to explain how the policy stream develops and, particularly in the case of the Palace of Westminster, how it excludes the consideration of certain alternatives: described by Immergut (1992, p 64) as "limiting the points of decision where alternative proposals can be considered". In this way, by utilising both the criteria set by Kingdon, and the institutional context explained by HI, MSF Plus helps us to understand the development and specification of policies for R&R.

Politics stream

The "politics" of R&R was described by one official as "the challenge" to the programme (Interview, anonymous, 2018). Exploring the different factors of this political context help explain why this was the case. Kingdon cited turnover within government as a key factor in the politics stream: the 2012-2018 policy window included a change in Prime Minister in July 2016, and an early general election in June 2017. Recognising the importance of these factors can provide an explanation of where policy proposals have failed to get onto the agenda in the early and middle parts of the policy window, when rational models would have predicted their success. In addition, Kingdon's emphasis on the "national mood"—and, specifically, politicians' perception of the national mood—as part of the politics stream has particular use for understanding proposals to rebuild the Palace of Westminster—a building with symbolic importance to the nation—at a time of austerity (Kingdon, 2014, p 68). Kingdon argued that public opinion more often constrains governments from acting, rather than promoting a certain course of action (Kingdon, 2014, p 65). In his original research, Kingdon looked at the failure of multiple proposals for national health insurance in the US during the Carter Administration, when he argued, there was "an increasingly anti-government mood in the public at large, or so seasoned politicians perceived" (2014, p 10). It was this national mood that was a key factor in the proposals' failure, Kingdon posited, questioning how "in retrospect, given the budget constraints and perceived national mood, how could advocates have thought this was the right time?" (2014, p 9). In a period of austerity and with a similar mood of anti-politics, there may be similarities between the national mood during Kingdon's case studies and that of the UK during the 2012-2017 period. A wealth of literature (for example, Norris, 1999; Hay, 2007; Tormey, 2015) has indicated that there is a "crisis of representative politics", demonstrated through widespread disaffection with the existing institutions of representative government, and a wider sentiment of "anti-politics" (Tormey, 2015, p 16). Incorporating Historical Institutionalism helps to ensure that factors within the politics stream, such as the national mood, can be understood fully as the role of the institution in shaping how actors interpret the context around them is critical (Spohr, 2016).

Policy entrepreneur

Central figures within Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework are the "policy entrepreneurs": advocates for a particular policy, who work to couple the three streams together in an open policy window (Kingdon, 2014, p 204) Kingdon argued that such figures can be found at any point within the system, whether internal or external to government, and is not solely responsible, but is almost always present and playing a central role (Kingdon, 2014, p 204).

Chapter 2 has already identified a number of actors who could be considered as policy entrepreneurs can be identified: for example, the architect, Charles Barry, following the 1834 fire; Winston Churchill as Prime Minister in 1941; and Richard Stokes as Minister for Works in the 1950s. The 2012 to 2018 period can be analysed for how they worked to couple, successfully or unsuccessfully the three streams and achieve policy change. In particular, MSF Plus helps to understand where change did not happen. This thesis will also posit the existence of negative policy entrepreneurs', for actors who sought to prevent or block policy change.

Problem broker

This case study provides an opportunity to test the concept of a "problem broker", as posed by Knaggård (2015, p 451). This concept may be of particular use given the role of the parliamentary clerks, who are limited by their role in acting as advocates for a specific solution, as envisaged by Kingdon for the policy entrepreneur role. This research will show that it is possible to identify several different problem brokers and policy entrepreneurs, operating at the same time, but with different definitions of the problem to be solved. One of the aims of this research will be to provide an empirical test of the problem broker concept, and to analyse how and when problem brokers and policy entrepreneurs have been present and worked together or separately. In addition, by considering the role of the clerks as problem brokers this research will add to the very limited literature on parliamentary staff in Westminster (a gap highlighted in Geddes, 2016; for exceptions, see Crewe, 2005, 2015, 2017b; Yong, Davies and Leston-Bandeira, 2019, and reflecting a wider gap in other legislatures, e.g. Winzen, 2011).

Institutional constraints

Understanding how the decision was taken to repair the Palace of Westminster is not as simple as understanding a normal construction or heritage project. The institutional context matters. It is this institutional context that shapes how the problem of the building is perceived and which policy solutions can be seriously considered. It shapes who can play a role in considering these policy solutions or in bringing the streams together. Past policy decisions act as precedent, building institutional norms and traditions. The institutional context also shapes when decisions are possible: from how agendas are set to when opportunities for policy change take place. As Loewenberg (2016, p 63) argued, "parliamentary organisation" is one of the "complex products of the development of the institution over time and across space". Bevir and Rhodes have argued that "historical analysis is the way to uncover" such "traditions as they develop in response to dilemmas" (2003, p 77). R&R is thus a puzzle with historical roots. The historical analysis in Chapter 2 provides the understanding of the historical context and

how it has shaped past decisions. In turn, understanding these past decisions through the effect on each of the multiple streams can help us understand the R&R policy window.

Historical Institutionalism (HI), as Kelso (2009b, p 72) argued, "compels us" to place individuals reforms and "place them in a much broader historical frame of reference". Incorporating HI with the MSF connects the historical findings to the agenda status of a topical issue. In this way, this research will provide a parallel with Bache and Reardon's (2013, 2016) study of the rise of wellbeing on the government's agenda.

Conclusion

The compatibility of the MSF Plus framework for the R&R case study was demonstrated during the policy window, when in evidence to the Public Accounts Committee about R&R, Andrew Wolstenholme, the Chief Executive of Crossrail Ltd discussed the key aspects in agreeing policy change for major projects, unknowingly drawing on Kingdon's key concepts:

> "In Crossrail we had four elements in order to get to the start line. The first was the need, which I think you understand. The second is the solution and the response to that need, which is still at quite a low level here, even though some options have been put down. The third is understanding how you are going to fund. The fourth, for Crossrail, is what I call alignment. That actually came as political alignment"
> (House of Commons, Public Accounts Committee, 2017a)

Wolstenholme's 'need' is the problem stream; the 'solution' and the need for funding is the policy stream; and the 'political alignment' is the politics stream. The analogy with Crossrail, however, does not reflect the specific institutional context of the UK Parliament—which meant that R&R differed considerably from other major projects. This is where the Historical Institutionalist approach can help understand the policy change process. MSF Plus can therefore provide a powerful heuristic to analyse policy change for a major and complex project, with historical and institutional factors.

In order to understand the Restoration and Renewal programme—a public policy decision within the context of the UK Parliament—this chapter has attempted to bring together two largely disconnected islands of theorising to cultivate what has been termed MSF Plus. Combining the Multiple Streams Framework with Historical Institutionalism addresses critiques of both theories, and, as this chapter has explored, offers value as a framework for analysing the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

Chapter 4: Methodology

"So, if you're talking about decision-making, the intelligence I've given you is, I mean I probably wouldn't have spoken as honestly as I have done to a journalist, but as you're doing an academic study, I think you should know the truth. And the truth is that what you see written on the can, is often not what happens in reality" (Sir Edward Leigh MP, interview, May 2018)

At its heart, this thesis aims to explain why, after years of indecision, delay and muddling through, the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster was approved by the Commons and Lords in early 2018. It further seeks to understand what this means for our understanding of Parliament as an institution, and for institutional change and democratic change more generally. This chapter proposes out how these aims will be achieved, by setting out the empirical operation of the MSF Plus framework. It will first consider the fit between research methods and theory (section 4.1) and then move to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the two main research methods: textual analysis and elite interviews, and discusses how these methods were applied during this research (sections 4.2 and 4.3).

4.1 The fit between research methods and theory

Ontological foundations

This thesis adopts a qualitative research design to understand policy change in the UK Parliament. Qualitative methods, Wagenaar (2011, p 33) argued, do not seek "invariant truth but verisimilitude, the accurate rendering of the actors' point of view". This approach is consistent with the anti-foundationalist ontological position on which this research is based: that there is no "real" world waiting to be discovered, objective of our understanding of it, but that this understanding is shaped by the institutions and values around us (Furlong and Marsh, 2010). This ontological foundation leads to an interpretive epistemological position, in line with the belief of Bevir and Rhodes (2003, p1) that "to understand actions, practices and institutions, we need to grasp the relevant meanings, the belief and preferences of the people involved". The approach defined by Crang and Crook (2007, p 14) has been adopted in this research:

"Research must involve the struggle to produce *inter-subjective truths,* to understand why so many versions of events are produced and recited. It is the ways in which people make sense of the events around them, and render these 'true' in their own terms, that is most revealing about how their/our lives are embroiled in larger social, cultural, economic and political processes. Therefore, stories told in the research encounter are not simply to be regarded as means of mirroring the world, but as the *means through which it is constructed,* understood and acted out." (Crang and Crook, 2007, p 14, italics in original)

This approach requires a research design which aims to understand how actions are shaped by actors' understanding of their context. More precisely, the aim of this research design is to understand how actors are shaped by their understanding of the "problem" of the Palace of Westminster, and the dialectical relationship between this understanding and their behaviour, and the capacity for mutual self-reinforcement. Further, this research design accepts that there is a "double hermeneutic": the interpretation of a situation by the actors involved in the agenda-setting process, and how their interpretation is in turn interpreted in my role as a researcher. As Geertz (1973, p 9) describes: this research provides "our constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to". In this way, there can be no objective observer or researcher: no "pure" data to be discovered. This research design therefore acknowledges my own positionality in carrying out this research, while also noting the potential benefits for securing access and building trust with interviewees (as discussed further in section 4.3).

In this thesis qualitative methods have been deployed within a case study approach to understand the developments between 2012 (when the programme began) and 2018 (when policy change was agreed), drawing on an analysis of the historical and institutional context. In doing so, this research adopts the position of Page (2008) as below:

"There is no simple answer to the question of where policies come from. The best we can do is indicate the proximate events leading to the authorization or other form of adoption of policies" (Page, 2008, p 222-223)

This thesis thus aims to uncover these events, and further, why the motivations and meanings of the actors involved. It can be considered a "dense data case-study" in the words of Peattie (2001, p 259) which "shows the characteristics of actors and inputs and the indications of outcome as embedded in their particular manifestations" (Peattie, 2001, p 259). In this way, it seeks to build a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p 6). As (Dewey, 1920, p 3) argued: "it is the story, the drama, which counts".

Fit with theory

The primary qualitative research methods used in this research are semi-structured elite interviews and textual analysis. Both methods are consistent with the two theoretical foundations for the MSF Plus Framework: Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework and Historical Institutionalism. Kingdon's original research aimed to "follow the development of public policy over time" (Kingdon, 2014, p 4). Kingdon interviewed key figures both inside and outside of government in four tranches between 1975 and 1979, asking the same questions each year about what the respondents felt were the most important current issues, and which policy proposals they were considering. He also drew on publicly available information including government and congressional papers, press coverage and academic literature. In this way Kingdon was able to track the agenda status of different issues, and alternative policies. These methods also align with Historical Institutionalism, which has sought to bring back an emphasis on the agency of the actor, and in turn, how the actor affects the institution (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). Historical Institutionalism also recognises the role of informal rules, norms and practices in affecting behaviour (Waylen, 2009, 2010). Semi-structured elite interviews and textual analysis can provide a way of tracking causal patterns, and understanding how institutions constrain behaviour, both formally and informally (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). These methods enable us to understand how actors perceive their worlds. As Wagenaar (2011, p 3) argued, to understand the meanings that shape institutions and actions, we need to utilise "methods that allow us to record and analyze the original language in which people express their feelings, beliefs, ideals, fears and desires, in relation to themselves, their neighbourhood, their community, or the impact of a particular public policy".

4.2 Textual analysis

Parliament, both as an institution, and the individual actors within, creates a vast wealth of formal and informal documents. Formal documents, such as official parliamentary reports, select committee transcripts and reports, minutes of meetings, the record of parliamentary debates, questions and motions, and Command Papers, are invaluable in setting out the official position of the institution and the states reasons for decisions. The informal documents produced within the institution and by key actors, such as tweets, blogs, media statements, diaries and memoirs can complement the formal sources, helping to address the weakness of official accounts that may offer an incomplete explanation of why an issue moved on or off the agenda. Personal accounts provide an actor's understanding of the importance of an issue. In using these sources, however, there is a recognition that each document has been created by a

particular person with a specific audience in mind, for a set purpose and within a wider context (Mason, 2002). This has been explicitly acknowledged within the research design, and again fits with the ontological and epistemological position that this research is not seeking to obtain a single objective truth, but individual interpretations of a situation. With this being noted, however, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations of document analysis, as the available documents may not provide a fully detailed, or reliable, report of actors' views or interpretations: for example, official documents may also present an agreed position, not the beliefs behind such a position. Again, this is where the research design draws on the theoretical framework: the interpretive understanding of institutional stability recognises that it is how beliefs are perceived and passed on between successive personnel that it is critical.

Application

The starting point for this research was textual analysis of primary and secondary sources. This included Hansard, the official report of the House of Commons and House of Lords, which offers a valuable longitudinal data source, covering the management of the building and development of the institution over two centuries; select committee reports; administrative documents such as agendas and bulletins from the House of Commons Commission; newspaper and magazine articles and cuttings; and records of speeches. Other key documents included the numerous reports into the state of the building, primarily the Pre-Feasibility Study (PFS, 2012), the Independent Options Appraisal (Deloitte, 2014) and the report of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster (JCPW, 2016a). Extensive archival research took place at the Parliamentary Archives to uncover parliamentary documents and correspondence to inform the historical analysis in Chapter 2. Additional contemporaneous sources, such as diaries, memoirs, and tweets have also been used to establish feelings towards the Palace of Westminster and the Restoration and Renewal programme.

This research also drew upon the data provided in Hansard for the three votes on Restoration and Renewal in the House of Commons on 31 January 2018. Two of these votes (Divisions 111 and 112) took place on proposed amendments to the Government's motion on the issue: the first was defeated (410 votes to 47), but the second, approving the R&R programme with the full decant, was passed (236 votes to 220). The amended motion was then put to the House (Division 113) and passed by 234 votes to 185. These votes thus serve as the moment for when the R&R policy change was confirmed in the House of Commons (it was endorsed by the House of Lords without a vote six days later). The division data has been analysed to examine these votes by party and gender. It has also been cross-referenced against a self-compiled database of MPs' declared (contemporaneous) positions on the 2016 EU referendum, drawn from their

statements or news reports from the time (primarily BBC, 2016).[3] The use of this division data provides a valuable record of MPs' official position on Restoration and Renewal. It is worth noting two potential minor drawbacks of using this data.

1) Voting in the House of Commons is not compulsory and division data does not record the reason why an MP did not vote, which may include being absent through sickness or parental leave or on other parliamentary business (such as a select committee visit). Recognition of this fact does not, however, affect the conclusions of the data, which are drawn on the demographics of the MPs that did vote.

2) There is a small error in the division lists as provided by the House of Commons. The number of votes cast in favour of the Hillier amendment (Division 112) is 236, but only 235 names are listed. This was raised with the UK Parliament digital team but could not be rectified. The tiny magnitude of this error in the data as supplied means it should not affect the conclusions drawn.

Neither of these weaknesses should be considered fatal to this research, however, but simply acknowledged.

4.3 Elite interviews

In addition to textual analysis, this thesis utilises semi-structure elite interviews to establish "how people understand their world" (Furlong and Marsh, 2010, p 200). Bailer (2016, p 167) has argued that interviews "deliver the most direct measure of the thoughts and intentions of politicians", and notes the particular value of interviews for understanding developments that have occurred in secret or closed meetings. In this way they can complement textual analysis: Seldon (1988, p 4,5) argued that "interviews can be particularly helpful in fleshing out documents when it comes to reconstructing the roles and methods of personalities and their relationship with others" and by "revealing the assumptions and motives lying behind documents". Interviews can also help to reveal informal activity, not recorded in formal documents (a difficulty in studying legislatures discussed by Blondel, 1973, p 24). While this research does not claim to be a full ethnographic study, it accepts the basis of ethnography, as expressed by Agar (1996, p 27) that "*no understanding of a world is valid without*

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[3] The use of this data is explained further in Chapter 7, but data on MPs' positions (Remain or Leave) from ahead of the referendum in June 2016 has been preferred to the same data from the time of the R&R vote in the Commons (January 2018), as following the referendum the issue shifted from being about a preference for remaining or leaving the EU to a constitutional argument about reflecting the will of the electorate.

representation of those members' voices" (italics in original). In line with the epistemology of this project, the interviews did not aim to discern facts: as Richards argued:

> "By their very nature elite interviews provide a subjective account of an event or issue. Thus, elite interviewing should not be concluded with a view to establishing 'the truth', in a crude, positivist manner. Its function is to provide the political scientist with an insight into the mind-set of the actor/s who have played a role in shaping the society in which we live and an interviewee's subjective analysis of a particular episode or situation." (Richards, 1996, p 199-200)

Instead the interviews aimed to explore the understanding of each actor about the proposals to rebuild Palace of Westminster and their role in the decision-making process. Utilising a semi-structured format allowed interviewees to "explain the meanings of their actions, providing an authenticity that can only come from the main characters involved in the story" (Rhodes et al, 2007b, p 209). Due to the different roles of each key actor during the policy window, there was not a set list of questions presented to each interviewee. Instead, the interviews sought to understand how the actor viewed their actions and the wider situation. All interviews present a potential problem of memory (as cautioned in Seldon, 1988 and Lillekar, 2003) and I sought to minimise this effect by holding the interviews as soon as practicable after the events in question. A further potential weakness of interview data is hindsight—for example, Williams (1980, p 311) described the "strong propensity of politicians to interpret the past in the light of the present". This must simply be recognised in the analysis and may also be valuable in itself, as the choice of story an actor chooses to tell is significant.

The political science literature denotes an 'elite' interviewee as someone with privileged knowledge of the situation or in "close proximity to power or policymaking" (Lillekar, 2003, p 207). As the list of interviewees (*Table 4.1*) shows, these also were elite interviewees in the traditional sense of the word. Of the 35 actors to whom I spoke, there were six knighthoods or damehoods, and a further three had knighthoods prior to being elevated to the peerage. Eight interviewees were members of the Privy Council, and three were sitting or former Cabinet Ministers.[4] This opened up important questions about power dynamics—a pitfall well-acknowledged in the literature (e.g. Seldon, 1988; Burnham et al, 2004; Rhodes et al, 2007b, Thomas, 1995). Occasionally interviewees sought to dominate the conversation and close down lines of enquiry with which they were uncomfortable. The power relationship was not always as obvious as it may seem, however. Bailer (2014, p 171-172) suggested that "parliamentarians can also feel exposed and vulnerable in interviews, so that the power asymmetry is not only defined by structural power but also by the situation". Anthropologist

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[4] Some interviewees fell into all three categories: for example, The Rt Hon Dame Caroline Spelman, former Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Emma Crewe, who immersed herself in the UK Parliament for her ethnographic studies of each House noted that "MPs' willingness to talk was revealing in itself; they become programmed to please and impress but many seemed in need of a sympathetic ear" (Crewe, 2015, p 6).

Positionality and access

It is acknowledged in the literature that no academic interviewer can be completely neutral (e.g. Bailer, 2014; Steier, 1992). As Crang and Crook (2007, p 9) argue: "research is an embodied activity that draws in our whole physical person, along with all its inescapable identities. What we bring to the research affects what we get". Before undertaking this work, I had to consider my own positionality on many levels. Prior to starting this research, I spent many years working within the institution of Parliament: both for individual MPs and for the House of Commons service. I worked in multiple offices on the parliamentary estate and spent considerable time working inside the Palace of Westminster. I knew the building well: I had carried out tours for constituents, explaining the history of the Palace and highlighting the intricate details of the décor. Like anyone working in or around the parliamentary estate I was aware of many of the problems caused by the neglect of the physical building: from mice to leaking pipes, decaying windows and faulty heating and ventilation systems. All of this lived experience would shape how I considered the future of the building. Additionally, I also had to consider the extent to which I was myself 'institutionalised'. Time and time again this research demonstrated how key actors were bound by what they viewed as possible or appropriate for the future parliamentary building: to what extent had I internalised the same logic? Was I conditioned to think that radical change was neither possible or necessary? Another aspect of my positionality was my status as a researcher on a project entitled "Designing for Democracy"—under which banner this thesis was funded.[5] The title of the project implicitly advocates change rather than continuity (through the implication that the building has not been designed for democracy in the past) again potentially placing me on a particular side of the policy debate.

A further theme that emerged was the 'love' that almost all interviewees expressed for the Palace of Westminster on both an emotional and aesthetic level: I thus had to consider my own feelings towards the building. I also had to consider my bias regarding the institution

itself: would my research be affected by having worked for the House of Commons and holding a belief in the essential benefits of parliamentary democracy? The risk of 'going native' is well-documented in the literature (e.g. O'Reilly, 2009; Busby, 2011); my past employment posed the question of whether I was 'still native' and would be over-sympathetic to former colleagues, or alternatively, was I now a 'gamekeeper turned hunter', seeking to criticise and expose them? These questions prompted uncomfortable soul-searching, but were necessary. My answers referred back to the theoretical foundations of this research. This is not a positivist thesis: I was not seeking to prove or disprove a hypothesis or determine a single truth (on the grounds that such an approach would not be possible). Further, this is also not a normative thesis: I am not arguing for or against a particular policy change with regards to the building. Instead, I was seeking to explain what happened during the policy window, and more importantly, *why* this happened. The focus was thus on exploring key actors' own interpretations of their roles rather than my own views. By reflecting on my positionality, I designed my questions to enable the interviewee to discuss their own perceptions of the situation, in their own words, minimising the potential for my own biases to affect their answers. In analysing their answers, I also sought to place the focus on their interpretation of the situation.

While these answers helped guide my internal approach to the research, I also had to consider my positionality as it appeared externally. Even if the design of my interview questions minimised my own biases, these might still influence the interview through how I presented myself and knowledge of my biography. Prior to the interviews I had had some contact (through previous jobs) with around a third of the interviewees. This was to varying degrees: some I had known and worked for, or with, for months or years; while others I had had brief contact with, and no expectation that they would remember me, particularly in a different context.[6] For those that had worked with me, there was a risk that they would say more than they had intended: the sentiment of "I wouldn't usually say this, but you're ex-House [of Commons] staff" was invoked on more than one occasion. This required extra care with consent: while all interviewees signed a consent form and had the project explained thoroughly to them, I made sure that such interviewees gave explicit sign-off to each quote, after the interview. For interviewees I had not met previously, I had to consider whether to disclose my past employment in the House. There were potential benefits of doing so: Rhodes *et al* (2007b, p 221) reflected on the importance of "local knowledge and empathy" when interviewing elites. Referring explicitly to my own experience could demonstrate my understanding of the institution and could enable us to bypass the introductory chat about the problems of the building, that occasionally threatened to take up a significant amount of the

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[6] For example, working for a select committee or as a division clerk.

limited time of the interviewee. It would further avoid any potential accusation that I had provided a full disclosure of my background. This is an important point: one theme in this research is the suspicion of parliamentary officials and their role in the R&R programme. By sharing my own background as a member of House staff, I would potentially be placing myself on the other side of an 'us and them' divide, which could limit or influence what the interviewee would say. My other parliamentary employment—working directly for MPs—was also a risky subject for conversation. In the highly partisan environment of Westminster, there was a danger that my research would be viewed as party-political and I would struggle to gain the trust of MPs from different parties. In practice, neither concern materialised in any of my interviews.

This discussion has focused on the potential negative aspects of my positionality. It is important to also note the positives. One benefit of lengthy experience working in Westminster was the understanding gained by simply "being there" (Rhodes *et. al.*, 2007a). I had worked in Parliament for two-thirds of the duration of the policy window, and while I was not researching R&R at the time, I had witnessed first-hand how the issue was considered and discussed among the wider population of the parliamentary estate (although it is important to note that this did not involve the inner decision-making processes, due to the closed nature of the policy stream, as discussed throughout this thesis). Furthermore, having been immersed in the institution, I had a basis for understanding its norms and values, which helped in applying a Historical Institutionalist lens to the data I received.

An additional benefit of my past work was in helping to secure access to key actors, sometimes simply through having contact details already. This then opened up the possibility of gaining new interviewees through snowballing, which then had the advantage, as suggested by Crang and Crook (2007, p 19) of making me "a somewhat accepted part of an already known community rather than a completely unknown and difficult-to-place stranger". Despite this advantage, access remained a challenge throughout this research project (a further acknowledged difficulty in studying elites, e.g. Ostrander, 2005) and I was not able to interview every single individual who had played a role in the policy window. Some current government ministers declined, citing the advice of the Cabinet Secretary; one individual simply ignored repeated communications. I sought to address any potential weakness this may cause to my research by ensuring that I spoke to other actors who were present at key meetings and drawing on the public comments of such individuals.

I also sought to gain access through developing a reputation as an independent and knowledgeable figure on the issue of R&R. I tweeted regularly on the subject (sharing factual

information, rather than opinion), and when I contacted parliamentarians for an interview, I was told on multiple occasions by their staff that my tweets ensured I was viewed as a credible researcher. One interviewee contacted me by email after reading a blog post in which I had discussed my research, wanting to ensure that his own view of the situation was presented.

Application

I carried out 35 semi-structured elite interviews, between April 2018 and August 2019. Interviewees were selected primarily based on the roles they played in the policy window: either as a consequence of their office or job, or from their interest in the issue. The list is thus in no way representative by party, gender, or race, and is not intended to be. Instead the interviewees were chosen on the grounds that they could offer insights into how they viewed the policy window, why they acted in the way they did, and how they interpreted their roles and those of other actors. Crucially, all the actors were within the 'Westminster bubble': either as elected or appointed parliamentarians, or parliamentary staff. This reflects the very closed policy stream within which there was little external input. To understand how decision were taken (or not taken), therefore, I needed to talk to the people involved in these decisions. The full list of interviewees is below: note three members of serving staff chose to remain completely anonymous (and all interviewees were offered the opportunity for some or all of their quotes to be used on an anonymous basis).

Table 4.1: List of interviewees

Name	Reason for interviewing
Ian Ailles	Director General of the House of Commons, 2015-present
Sir David Beamish	Clerk of the Parliaments, 2011-17
The Rt Hon John Bercow MP	Speaker of the House of Commons, 2009-present
Sir Paul Beresford MP	Chair of the Administration Committee, House of Commons
The Lord Blencathra	Former member of the House of Commons Commission
The Rt Hon the Lord Blunkett	MP 1987-2015, Peer 2015-present
Tom Brake MP	Deputy Leader of the House of Commons, 2012-15, Member of the House of Commons Commission 2015-present
The Baroness Brinton	Peer 2011-present
Chris Bryant MP	Chair of the Finance Committee, House of Commons; member of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster 2015-16
The Lord Cormack	MP 1970-2010; Peer 2010-present
The Rt Hon Baroness D'Souza	Lord Speaker 2011-16
Lord Faulkner of Worcester	Member of the Pre-Feasibility Study Group Advisory Group of MPs and Peers, 2012
Neil Gray MP	Member of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, 2015-16
Louise Haigh MP	MP 2015-present
The Rt Hon the Lord Haselhurst	Member of the Pre-Feasibility Study Group Advisory Group of MPs and Peers, 2012
Tom Healey	Clerk to the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster 2015-16, Director of the Restoration and Renewal Programme 2015-19
Meg Hillier MP	Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, House of Commons, 2015-present
Sir Bernard Jenkin MP	Chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, House of Commons, 2010-present
The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP	Leader of the House of Commons, 2017-19
Sir Edward Leigh MP	MP 1983-present
The Lord Lisvane	Clerk of the House of Commons, 2011-14
The Lord Naseby	MP 1974-97, Peer 1997-present
Sir David Natzler	Clerk of the House of Commons, 2014-19
The Lord Norton of Louth	Peer 1998 - present
Ian Paisley MP	Member of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, 2015-16
The Rt Hon Dame Caroline Spelman MP	MP 1997 – present
The Rt Hon Baroness Stowell of Beeston	Leader of the House of Lords, 2014-16
Mark Tami MP	Member of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, 2015-16
The Rt Hon the Viscount Thurso	Member of the House of Commons Commission, 2010-15
Shailesh Vara MP	MP 2005-present
Dr Richard Ware	Director of the Restoration and Renewal Programme 2012-16
Dr Alan Whitehead MP	MP 1997-present
Anonymous	Worked close to the Restoration and Renewal programme
Anonymous	Worked close to the Restoration and Renewal programme
Anonymous	Senior House of Lords official

The interviewees can be split into three categories: parliamentary staff or former staff, MPs, and members of the House of Lords. The balance of interviewees between these three categories, based on their role at the time of the interview, is set out below in *Table 4.2.*

Table 4.2: Interviewees divided into job categories

Interview categories – at the time of the interview	All	Proportion
Staff/ex-staff	8	23%
MPs	15	43%
Peers	12	34%
Total	35	100%

Several members of the House of Lords, however, were selected for interview due to the roles they held previously: the Lords Blunkett, and Haselhurst and the Viscount Thurso were all former MPs who had taken an interest or active role in the state of the Palace of Westminster during their time in the Commons.[7] Another peer, Lord Lisvane, had a crucial role in the early stage of the policy window, as Clerk of the House of Commons.[8] When the table is adjusted to reflect the position of each interviewee relevant to the policy window, as below in *Table 4.3.*, the majority of interviewees are or were MPs. This reflects the dominant role of MPs in the agenda-setting and policy-making processes.

Table 4.3. Interviewees divided into job categories (during the policy window)

Interview categories – during the policy window	All	Proportion
Staff/ex-staff	9	26%
MPs/former MPs	18	51%
Peers	8	23%
Total	35	100%

The involvement of each interviewee in the policy window varied considerably. This was partly temporal: as the policy window progressed key actors changed roles and different offices were called upon to play more active roles. Involvement also depended on the time and political capital which was invested by each actor. Some, most notably Chris Bryant MP and Andrea Leadsom MP had taken the issue on as a personal commitment. Others had only a passing involvement - e.g. as MPs asked to vote on the issue. Many interviewees apologised for what they perceived to be a lack of detailed knowledge of R&R—this did not mean that their answers were less valid or useful. In fact, the opposite is true. They offer a depiction of the

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[7] Lord Haselhurst was known as Sir Alan Haselhurst and Viscount Thurso as John Thurso during their tenures as MPs. For consistency, this thesis will refer to both using their current titles.
[8] As Clerk of the Commons between 2011 and 2014, Lord Lisvane was known as Robert Rogers (or Sir Robert Rogers after 2013). He was ennobled as The Lord Lisvane in December 2014, and this thesis uses this title for all references to him for consistency.

understanding of, and interest in, policy change with regards to the Palace of Westminster, that is both accurate to their own lived experience and revealing about the context in which policy decisions are taken.

All but one of the interviews took place in person (there was one telephone interview at the request of the interviewee). Of the in-person interviews, all but two took place on or near the parliamentary estate, with locations selected by the interviewee.[9] Primarily, the interviews took place in parliamentary offices or in the assorted cafes and dining rooms in the Palace of Westminster. Interview location matters (Crang and Crook, 2007) and in this research the location occasionally became an extra participant in the interview: interviewees would point to the Pugin wallpaper or brass windows to emphasise arguments about the impact of the décor or the state of the building.

All interviews were audio recorded to ensure accuracy. Transcription took place alongside the interviews to allow for contemporaneous analysis and this transcription included the recording of intonation, pauses and emphasis, using punctuation symbols, as described by Agar (1996, p 49) who argued that "the structure of pause and emphasis helped see what we usually hear". At the start of each interview, all interviewees received an information sheet (reproduced at Appendix D) and signed a consent form (or, in the case of the one audio interview, provided verbal consent) (reproduced at Appendix E) which offered interviewees the chance to approve quotes before use. The majority took up this offer, and obtaining quote approval was not without its challenges. As Rhodes et al (2007b, p 215) experienced, politicians may seek to "defend their public image irrespective of whether the comments are accurate", and some participants later declined to authorise the use of some of their quotes. This potential drawback was worthwhile, however, in that it helped to build trust with the interviewee, and may have ensured that the interviews could take place at all. In some case, the sign-off process also helped to clarify certain issues and increase my understanding of the situation, a benefit noted by Crewe (2017a). In addition to the formal interviews, this thesis is also informed by many informal conversations with parliamentarians and staff which provided background and related information about their experiences of the Restoration and Renewal programme. These conversations have not been drawn on directly in this thesis, but have helped shape a broader understanding of the institution.

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[9] Two interviews took place at locations local to the interviewee.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to answer the primary research question: Why was the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster approved in early 2018, after multiple failed attempts to achieve policy change in this area? This chapter has set out the qualitative research design used to answer this question. This approach is consistent both with the concept of path-dependency and feedback loops within Historical Institutionalism, and with the weight accorded within the Multiple Streams Framework for the individual agency of key actors. It has demonstrated the coherence between the theoretical frameworks and the methodology to be used, and how the design provides the relevant information to answer the research questions. It has also highlighted the limitations of the textual material and the difficulties of securing access.

With the research methods outlined this thesis moves to consider the findings achieved using these methods. The next three chapters first set out what happened in the R&R programme between 2012 and 2018 and then use the MSF Plus theoretical framework to explain why these events happened.

Chapter 5: Opening the Policy Window

"If the Palace were not a listed building of the highest heritage value, its owners would probably be advised to demolish and rebuild." (Pre-Feasibility Study, 2012, p 5)

In the early days of the 2010 Parliament, any significant policy change relating to the physical infrastructure of the Palace of Westminster appeared unlikely. This was not because of a lack of need: as discussed in Chapter 2, decades of patch and mend and neglect of essential maintenance, meant that much of the essential infrastructure was long past its expected lifespan. Plans to move out of the building to allow for refurbishment had been developed between 2007 and 2009, but in the face of a lack of enthusiasm from the then Speaker, Michael Martin, it was chosen instead to undertake "aggressive maintenance"—tackling the short and medium-term problems, while research was carried out into a long-term solution (PFS, 2012, p 18). This decision was taken against a tumultuous political backdrop: in the aftermath of the MPs' expenses scandal Parliament was an institution in "unparalleled turmoil" and seeking to restore its reputation (Kelso, 2009a, p 329). A new Speaker, John Bercow, was elected in June 2009 on a manifesto to restore public trust in politics, and "drive the process of renewal" (ConservativeHome, 2009). Separately, a special select committee proposed significant reforms aimed at making the Commons "a more vital institution, less sterile in how it operates, better able to reflect public concerns, more transparent, and more vigorous in its task of scrutiny and accountability" (House of Commons, 2009). Crucially, however, revisiting the long-term problems of the Palace was not part of either reform agenda.

With no political appetite for address the state of the building, it was left to parliamentary officials to lobby for policy change. In 2011, the most senior clerk in each House (Sir Michael Pownall, who had served as Clerk of the Parliaments since 2007[10] and Sir Malcolm Jack, the Clerk of the House of Commons since 2006) retired. For their successors, Sir David Beamish and Lord Lisvane the issue of the Palace of Westminster was "extremely high" on their to-do lists (Interview, Lisvane, June 2018). Both Lisvane and Beamish were career officials, well-acquainted with the risks facing the building's infrastructure, and with their new legal responsibility for the building, used their first months in post to place into motion the first steps of a study into a potential refurbishment.[11] In doing so, Lisvane and Beamish created an opportunity for major policy change: they opened a policy window.

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[10] The Clerk of the Parliaments is the most senior official in the House of Lords.
[11] This legal responsibility reflects their roles as Corporate Officers for the Commons and Lords, and is discussed further in Chapter 8.

This chapter will proceed in two parts. The first part will set out what happened after this policy window opened in January 2012, covering the period to June 2016. These events are set out in *Figure 5.1* (below).

The second part provides an analysis using the MSF Plus theoretical framework for this period. Using this analysis, this chapter will demonstrate how the institutional context of the Palace of Westminster shaped how the problem was defined, the potential policy solutions and the way the politics of the period influenced the chances of policy change. It shows the existence of 'multiple streams within a stream' in the problem and politics streams, and how this influenced the policy stream. It further explains how policy change was not achieved due to the failure of the streams to be coupled between January 2012 and June 2016. To explore this period in depth, this chapter now begins.

Figure 5.1. Events in the policy window, January 2012 – June 2016. Key: White boxes represent developments in the R&R programme, orange boxes reflect external events affecting the programme
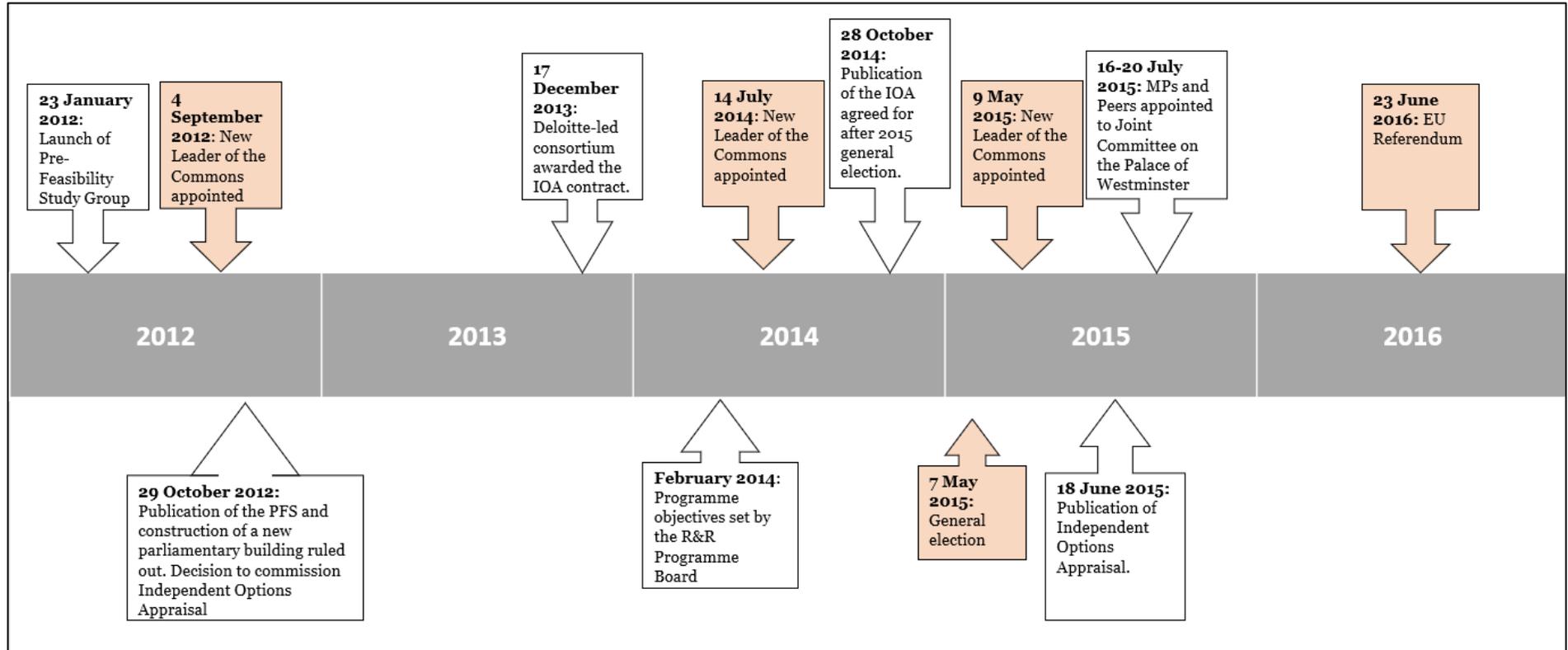
5.1 Developments in the policy window

January 2012 – October 2012

In January 2012 the House of Commons Commission (hereafter: the Commission) endorsed the establishment of a Study Group, at the request of Lord Lisvane, the senior official in the Commons (who had worked with his equivalent in the Lords, Sir David Beamish) to examine the state of the Palace of Westminster, and the potential work required to ensure a safe environment (House of Commons Commission, 2012a).[12] The decision of the Commission was echoed by the equivalent body in the House of Lords, the House Committee, the following month, and the Study Group—three parliamentary officials and an industry representative, advised by two members of each House—began its work (House of Lords House Committee, 2012a). The Group was given the freedom to consider "the full range of possibilities […] from either a new build Parliament or a completely modernised Palace at one end of the spectrum, to a programme of managed replacement and condition-based maintenance at the other" (PFS, 2012, p 1). It was also made clear that the work was to focus on the long-term not the short-term: the Commission explicitly stated that no decision about the future of the building would be made until after the 2015 general election: over three years away at this point, and no work would commence until after 2020 (House of Commons Commission, 2012b).

The group's report was completed in October 2012 with the title: "Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case" (PFS). The findings were stark, emphasising both the known risks of the antiquated nature of the infrastructure and the unknown risks posed by the inaccessible parts of the building:

> "… there has been no general renovation of the building and its services since the partial rebuilding of 1945-50 and some of the services are older still. The original basements and vertical shafts are now crammed with pipes and cables making further work difficult and expensive. […] Much of the work undertaken over the past half-century is undocumented and since many areas are inaccessible, the state of dilapidation and therefore of risk is largely uncharted." (PFS, 2012, p 5)

This message was emphasised in a single, powerful sentence: "If the Palace were not a listed building of the highest heritage value, its owners would probably be advised to demolish and rebuild" (PFS, 2012, p 5). A clear conclusion was identified: patch-and-mend solutions are no longer sufficient, the risks to the building are growing and "fundamental renovation can no

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[12] The origins of the study group can be traced back to autumn 2011, when Sir David Beamish and Lord Lisvane sought approval from the Management Boards in their respective Houses, for a piece of work that demonstrated the need for a major work programme.

longer be avoided" (PFS, 2012, p 27). The report recommended a "full options appraisal and outline business case for modernisation" (PFS, 2012, p 45).

Crucially, the conclusions and recommendations in the PFS reflected the need to act bicamerally—the problem of the building could not be addressed by one House acting in isolation. The report noted, however, the difficulty in doing so: as had been the case during the nineteenth century rebuilding (as discussed in Chapter 2): "there is no single client for the modernisation of the Palace of Westminster" (PFS, 2012, p43). Furthermore, there was no single, formal decision-making structure for Parliament as a whole: the Commission and House Committee each had responsibility for acting on the PFS. This posed the risk of conflicting steps forward: something officials were keen to avoid by scheduling the meetings of the Commission and House Committee on consecutive days, and discussing the PFS and likely courses of action with members of each body ahead of the meeting (interview, Beamish, May 2018).

The Commission met first, on 29 October 2012 (House of Commons Commission, 2012c), and despite the preparation, the reaction to the report was surprisingly negative. In particular, there were concerns that the PFS had been an internal, not independent, report, and about the qualifications of the authors to conduct a scoping study on this level (interview, Thurso, June 2018). However, Dr Richard Ware, who had led the study, stressed the positive outcomes from the meeting, such as the publication of the PFS (Interview, June 2018). Crucially, the Commission had also declared it was "of the unanimous view that doing nothing is not an option" (House of Commons Commission, 29 October 2012d). By stating that policy change was necessary, the statement confirmed the existence of an open policy window.

In this meeting, the Commission made two further key decisions which shaped the future decision-making process for the Palace:

- The option of a new parliamentary building away from the Palace of Westminster was ruled out.
- Further analysis would be required on all remaining options before a decision could be made about the way forward.

The House Committee met the following day to consider the PFS and endorsed the three decisions of the Commission (House of Lords House Committee, 2012b,2012c). Attendees reported, however, that the tone of the meeting in the Lords differed greatly from the Commons, with Peers far more "enthusiastic" about the PFS and the possible need to move

out during the work (interview, anonymous official, 2018; interview, Baroness D'Souza, July 2019). This different attitude can be detected in the statements issued by the Commission and the House Committee after their respective meetings—the differences in which are set out in *Table 5.1.* below. The scepticism of MPs towards the PFS is clear from the Commission's statement. Despite a recognition of the state of the building, there was no sign of a quick change of policy.

Table 5.1. Comparison of statements, House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee, October 2012 (House of Commons Commission, 2012d; House of Lords House Committee, 2012c)

Key point	Statement by House of Commons Commission: 29 October 2012	Statement by the House of Lords House Committee: 31 October 2012	Main difference
Publication of PFS	Not mentioned.	"The House of Lords House Committee yesterday agreed to publish a Study Group report on options to undertake the essential refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster, including a possible temporary relocation of Parliament."	By describing the refurbishment as "essential" and references the potential decant, the Lords reflect an acceptance that the work needs doing, and that a rolling programme may not be the solution.
The cost	"Equally, the Commission is acutely conscious of the current public spending environment and is committed to ensuring that any consideration of how the Palace could be restored is based upon securing maximum value for taxpayers' money."	Not mentioned	The Lords statement does not mention value for money, which could be viewed as a reflection on the fact that Peers do not face the electorate like their counterparts in the Commons.
Further analysis	"The Commission was not persuaded that the case for a decant had been made, and wished to ensure that all options were rigorously tested by independent analysis, detailed costings and robust technical information, to ensure no suggestion of internal bias. Fulfilling their obligations as custodians of the Palace of Westminster requires informed, considered decision-making by both Houses of Parliament."	"The House Committee also decided to ask officials to commission a fully costed appraisal of all the options that retain the Palace of Westminster as the long-term home of Parliament and as an iconic building for the nation."	Both refer to the commissioning of further analysis. But while the Lords specifically refers to the role of officials in commissioning this work, the Commons sets out the need to avoid "internal bias", implying that work led by officials would have this bias, a suspicion implied in the reference to decant.
Comment on the PFS	"The report is a useful first analysis of the issues. [...] A great deal of work remains to be done before Parliament is in a position even to consider the merits and demerits in principle of particular options."	"The Committee welcomed the thorough and comprehensive report of the Study Group."	The Lords statement is more effusive than the Commons, which states further work is necessary for a decision to be made.

November 2012 – June 2015

Despite the differences of tone between the Commission and House Committee, both had accepted that a refurbishment programme was necessary, and agreed on the need for detailed costing of potential work and delivery options. In line with the Commission's concern about the independence of the PFS, a £2.02 million contract for this work was awarded to a consortium led by Deloitte in December 2013 (HC Deb, 17 Dec 2013, c89WS). The consortium's final report—*The Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal* (IOA)—was discussed by the Commission and House Committee at their October 2014 meetings. Both bodies agreed to delay both a decision on the report and its publication until the next Parliament (House of Commons Commission, 2014b; House of Lords House Committee, 2014a). Instead, further studies on the building were commissioned, to be completed ahead of the scheduled 2015 general election, and officials were given the authority to publish the IOA after the election without further political agreement (House of Lords House Committee, 2014a). The IOA was thus launched in June 2015, with only a written statement from a backbench member of the Commission (HC Deb, 18 Jun 2015, c11WS). The launch of the report to MPs and Peers was left to the R&R Programme Director, Dr Richard Ware, with no politician chairing the meeting (a repeat of the absence of politicians to lay the foundation stone of the new Palace in 1840, as noted in Chapter 2). Ware described the meeting as "possibly one of the most difficult things I ever had to do" (interview, June 2018).

At 250 pages long, the IOA report appeared to achieve the stated objective of a thorough and independent examination of the costs and practicalities of the potential outcomes for the Palace, and the different delivery options (Deloitte, 2015). The report's length and weight of technical detail marked a clear contrast with the persuasive prose of the Pre-Feasibility Report. Unlike the PFS it was not seeking to make a case for the work, and did not express support or recommend any outcome level or delivery option. It did, however, set out some potential timescales and costings for the work, as below in *Table 5.2*.

76

Table 5.2. Summary of delivery and outcome options in the IOA (adapted from Deloitte, 2015)

	Scenario EIA	**Scenario 2A**	**Scenario 2B**	**Scenario 3B**	**Scenario 3C**
Scope	An ongoing rolling programme of works with no additional amenity and functionality and achieves the built environment standards expected for public buildings.	A partial decant that addresses statutory requirements and achieves the built environment standards expected for public buildings.	A partial decant that delivers enhanced amenity and functionality	A full decant that delivers enhanced amenity and functionality	A full decant that delivers significantly enhanced amenity and functionality
Timescale (most likely)	32 years	11 years	11 years	6 years	6 years
Capital expenditure	£5.67bn	£3.94bn	£4.42bn	£3.52bn	£3.87bn

The IOA report concluded that the main factor affecting the costs and risks of any refurbishment was not the outcome level—the extent of improvements to the building—but how the work would be delivered and specifically the extent to which the Palace would be emptied for the work to take place. The report concluded that:

> "Delivery Option E1 [the rolling programme] provides the slowest rate of operational risk reduction given the piecemeal nature of the delivery of the Programme, with the greatest potential residual risk of a catastrophic event such as fire or flood as a result of life expired services, fabric and structure." (Deloitte, 2015, p 25)

Part of the 2014 agreement to delay publication of the IOA was a commitment to establish was a Joint Select Committee to consider the options for the Palace (House of Lords House Committee, 2014). The IOA was clear about the need to avoid further delay: the cost and timescale estimates were based on a planned start date of quarter 2, 2020, which, the report argued, would require a decision in principle, from each House, about the chosen delivery of the programme in March 2016. In fact, the Joint Committee would not report until September 2016, and the decision in principle would not be taken until early 2018. To understand why, we move now to the work of the Joint Committee.

July 2015 – June 2016

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster was formally established in July 2015 (HC Deb, 16 Jul 2015, c1189; HL Deb, 20 Jul 2015, cc901-902). Chaired by the Leaders of the Commons and Lords (an unusual arrangement, discussed further in Chapter 8), it worked primarily in private. While the Committee issued a call for evidence, it was defined in narrow terms, and engagement with the wider parliamentary community and the public was limited. Only two oral evidence sessions were held, and 64 written submissions were received in total, a relatively low number for a select committee inquiry, with no imaginative uses of public engagement tools, as seen in other select committee inquiries.[13] Only 10 Peers, and six MPs responded (although there were group responses from the Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee and the SNP Parliamentary Group). Of the individual MPs who provided evidence, all six were male, and five of the six were Conservative MPs. Steve Brine's evidence is representative of the majority view of these MPs: "I would like to state my strongly held view that Parliament should remain **on site** for the duration of the works". (JCPW, 2016b – emphasis in original). This opposition to decant had also been shared by many members of the Joint Committee at the start of their inquiry (interview, Paisley, June 2018; interview, Tami, May 2018; HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c910; Chris Grayling, HC Deb, 9 Jul 2015, c445), but by spring 2016, the Committee were ready to recommend a major refurbishment with full decant (interview Tami, May 2018; interview, Paisley, June 2018; interview, Bryant, April 2018). Publication of their report, however, would not take place for another four months, as ministers requested a delay to publication until after the EU referendum (interview, Bryant, April 2018).

The Committee had started work in the aftermath of a general election. As it completed its work in May 2016, the country was preparing to go to the polls once more, this time to decide whether the UK remained a member of the European Union. In the four years and five months between the commissioning of the Pre-Feasibility Report and the EU referendum, the state of the Palace had been deteriorating, but no policy change had been agreed. To understand why, this chapter moves to a detailed analysis of how the problem, policy and politics streams changed during the January 2012 – June 2016 period.

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[13] For comparison during the same session, an inquiry into animal welfare by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee received 307 written submissions.

5.2. MSF Plus analysis

This chapter has set out the events of the first period of the Restoration and Renewal Programme: from the commissioning of the Pre-Feasibility Study in January 2012 to the EU referendum in June 2016. The establishment of the Pre-Feasibility Study Group is a critical point in this thesis. It opened up the potential for major policy change: the group's remit was clear that it would be doing the groundwork ahead of a major project, at this point described as a "modernisation programme" (House of Commons Commission, 2012b). As such, a policy window opened.

This analysis will set out how the problem, policy and politics streams developed and changed during the period and the influence of the institutional context of Westminster on all three streams. These developments are set out in *Figure 5.2.* (below), which show how the policy window did not mean linear or sequential progress towards policy change. The likelihood of policy change is shown when a line moves up the graph (for example, as the problem definition was confirmed) and delays to policy change are shown by downwards movement. The graph further shows how institutional norms and values acted as a countervailing force away from policy change.

The analysis will also show the interdependence of each stream, and the existence of multiple streams within a stream—termed tributaries—within the problem and politics streams, and how each tributary needed to be aligned for the stream as a whole to be ready for coupling. This analysis further demonstrates why policy change did not occur during the January 2012 to June 2016 period, as the streams could not be coupled.

Figure 5.2. MSF Plus January 2012 – June 2016

MSF Plus analysis: Jan 2012 – June 2016

Legend: Problem stream · Policy stream · Politics stream · Historical Institutionalism

Oct 2014 Publication of IOA delayed

June 2015: IOA published

Oct 2012 Publication of Pre-Feasibility Study

June 2015: IOA: supports full decant as cheapest/least risk option

Oct 2012 Agreement to stay in PoW

June 2015: New Parliament opens

July 2015 JCPW appointed through usual channels

June 2015: JCPW report delayed due to EU Ref

Oct 2012: No political support for urgent policy change

Oct 2014: IOA delayed due to general election

The Problem Stream

This section looks at the problem stream in the January 2012 to June 2016 period, considering how the problem was defined during this period, and then the likelihood of the stream being ready for coupling. It makes two main arguments:

- The institutional structure of Westminster meant that the problem would need to be defined and redefined multiple times: in effect, there were multiple smaller problem streams, comprising different actors, that all needed to agree a problem definition to make the overall problem stream ready for coupling.
- Each definition of the problem of the Palace of Westminster was not objective, but defined by a small group of key actors. Their definition was shaped by the perception of the situation, which was in term influenced by the wider political context and institutional norms and traditions.

Multiple problem streams – or tributaries

The first part of this chapter showed how the policy window progressed through 2012 to 2016, as different actors became involved. This is a product of the institutional structure at Westminster as discussed in Chapter 2. There was no single chief executive, or even a board of directors, that could make the decision to address the growing risk posed by the building. *Figures 5.3.* and *5.4.* set out the governance arrangements in place in each House in September 2014 (the mid-point of this part of the policy window). There is no overall organisation chart for Parliament itself, reflecting the absence of formal structures to enable the institution to act as a single entity (as this thesis will show, such an action requires each House to vote separately on an issue, but neither House has the capacity to determine its own substantive timetable).

Figure 5.3. The House of Commons Administration (House of Commons Commission, 2014a, p 39)

The Governance Structure of the House of Commons Administration

- Speaker's Office — supports → Speaker
- Joint Committee on Security* — advises → Speaker
- Works of Art Committee — advises → Speaker
- Speaker — chairs / advises → HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION (Chairman: The Speaker)
- Finance & Services Committee — advises → HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION
- Administration Committee — advises → Finance & Services Committee; advises → HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION
- HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION — appoints → Administration Estimate Audit Committee
- HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION — delegates power to → MANAGEMENT BOARD
- Clerk of the House / Chief Executive — attends → HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION
- Administration Estimate Audit Committee — advises → Clerk of the House / Chief Executive
- Clerk of the House / Chief Executive — chairs → MANAGEMENT BOARD
- Office of the Chief Executive — supports → Clerk of the House / Chief Executive; supports → MANAGEMENT BOARD; supports → Departments of the House
- MANAGEMENT BOARD (Chairman: Clerk of the House and Chief Executive) — consults & advises → Administration Committee
- MANAGEMENT BOARD — manages → DEPARTMENTS OF THE HOUSE

DEPARTMENTS OF THE HOUSE:
- CHAMBER & COMMITTEE SERVICES
- INFORMATION SERVICES
- FACILITIES
- PARLIAMENTARY ICT*
- FINANCE
- HUMAN RESOURCES & CHANGE

*Joint Services with the House of Lords

Figure 5.4: House of Lords Administration Chart (House of Lords, 2014, p 47)
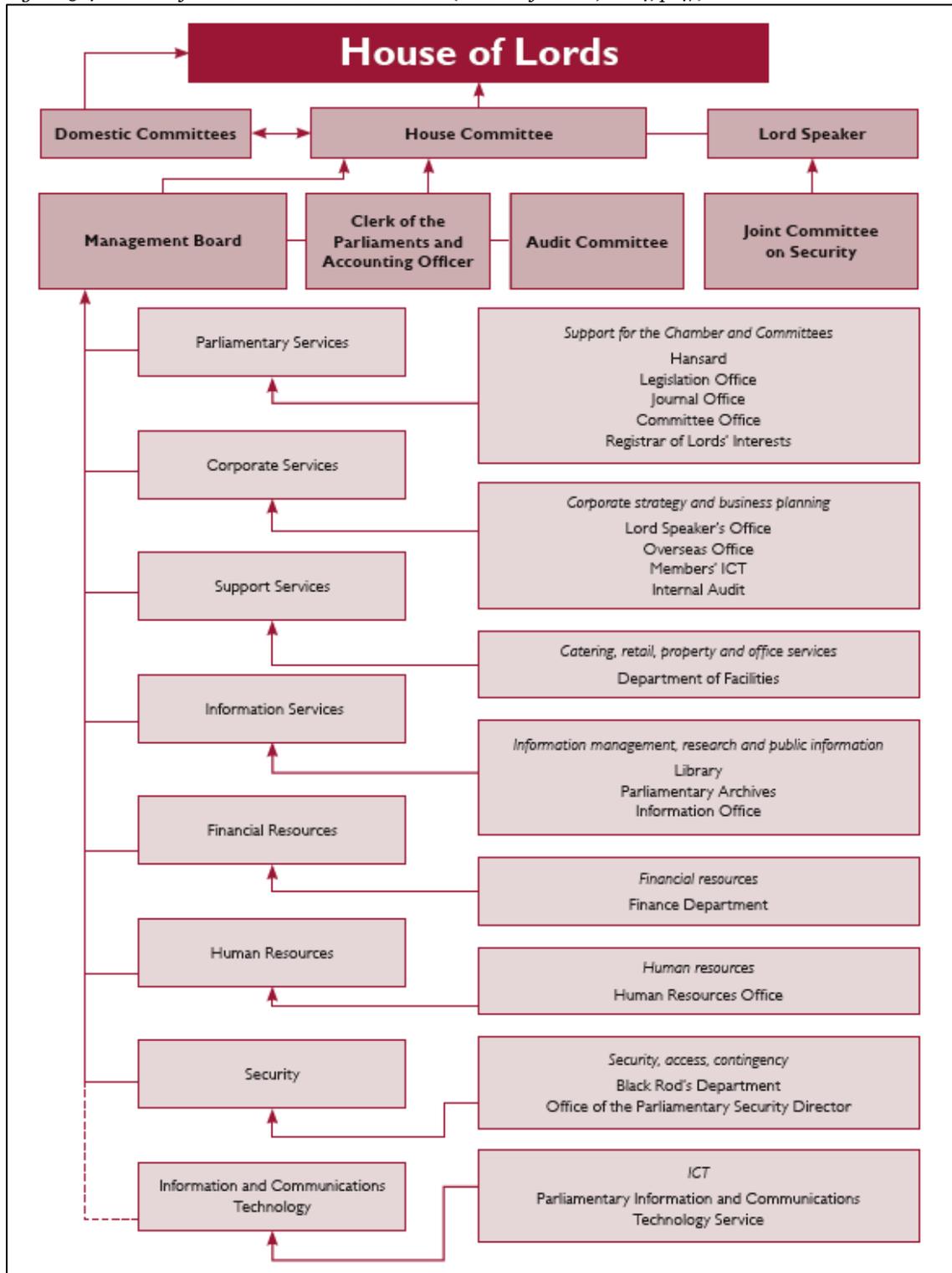
These charts reflect the multitude of stakeholders involved in the governance of each House. It is notable that the Commons chart does not include the actual Commons itself, unlike the Lords, despite the fact that the Speaker (as discussed in Chapter 8), for all his powers in House administration, remains a servant of the House. There is a lack of formal interaction between

the two Houses—or any individual or body empowered to adjudicate between the two. Tom Brake MP, a member of the House of Commons Commission, noted how "the processes in the Palace of Westminster, are not very well-suited to having a clear hierarchy of decision-making processes", adding:

> "things like the Restoration and Renewal, whilst probably in any other business or any other field, there would have been a clear process involving the people in charge of the estate saying "this is something that is critical if we don't deal with this now, something drastic is going to happen, we've got to deal with it". That's not the way it works in Parliament." (Interview, May 2018)

Decisions made within the Commons governance system have regularly been criticised by MPs for being opaque and lacking accountability (e.g. HC Deb, 15 Mar 2012, cc413-414; HC Deb, 01 Feb 2010, c66). Even where decisions fall within the purview of the House of Commons Commission, MPs have questioned the transparency of appointments to the Commission and the communication of these decisions (e.g. HC Deb, 5 Nov 2018, cc1304,1312; HC Deb 18 Jun 2019, cc197-198) and even the Speaker, who chairs the Commission, has declined responsibility for some of its decisions (e.g. Mendick, 2017). Andrea Leadsom, the Leader of the House of Commons and a member of the Commission between 2017 and 2019 suggested that "coming from a business background, the way the House is run just defies any form of logic" (interview, May 2018).

What does this confusing governance structure mean for the problem stream? The main finding of this analysis is that a condition needed to be framed in order to convince multiple actors that it required action. Bache (2013, p33) has highlighted the need for a "common problem definition or 'framing' of the problem" in order for an "issue to move to the decision agenda". This chapter has shown that the initial work to define the state of the building as a problem was led by the senior official in each House, Lord Lisvane and Sir David Beamish (their role as 'problem brokers' is explored further in Chapter 8). For both Clerks, the risks to the infrastructure was well-understood: particularly in light of their legal responsibility for safety within the Palace (discussed further in Chapter 8). On an official level, then, there was agreement that there was a problem: the infrastructure of the Palace was dilapidated to the point that it was a danger to people working in or visiting the Westminster Parliament, and it could only be rectified by a major refurbishment, rather than the patch and mend policy of previous decades (which had, in part, caused the dilapidation). The issue then moved to a wider group of individuals: the Pre-Feasibility Study Group. While this group was led by officials, it was advised by four parliamentarians, who in turn needed to be convinced of the problem. Once this group accepted the problem definition (as defined by the Clerks), the issue moved to two parallel groups: the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House

Committee, who in turn needed to agree there was a problem. By the time of the EU referendum, these four groups all agreed with the problem definition as defined above. The Joint Committee had not yet publicly adopted this definition however and, crucially, there had been little to no engagement with two further groups who would need to accept that the state of the building's infrastructure was a problem and that action—in the form of a new policy— was necessary. These two groups were MPs and Peers, who remained largely unaware of the growing issue in the basement of the Palace—out of sight, wires were degrading and essential services were still being used decades beyond their expected lifespan (interview, Tami, May 2018). The Government also remained unconvinced of the extent of the problem. To fit with the 'streams' concept, each of these different groups, with their own problem definitions existing simultaneously, can be conceived as a 'tributary' to the wider problem stream. A tributary must be aligned—that is, for the stakeholders within the tributary to agree—for the overall stream to be ready for coupling. *Figure 5.5*, (below), sets out these tributaries at the start of the policy window in January 2012, and *Figure 5.6.* presents the state of the tributaries at June 2016: we can see that five of the tributaries have aligned.

Figure 5.5. The Problem Stream, January 2012. Key: medium blue box = aligned, light blue box = unaligned.

Figure 5.6. The Problem Stream, June 2016. Key: medium blue box = aligned, light blue box = unaligned.

Parliamentary officials

Pre-Feasibility Study Group

House of Commons Commission   House of Lords House Committee

Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster

The Government

House of Commons

House of Lords
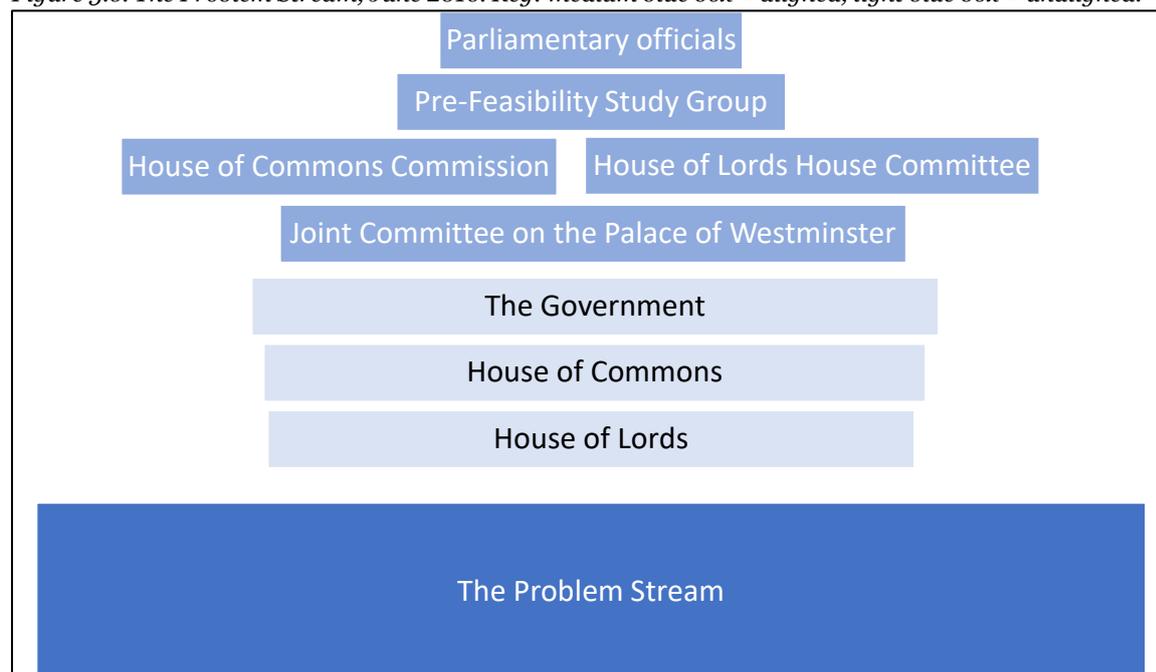
The Problem Stream

Without all the tributaries in agreement that there was a problem, and the nature of that problem, the problem stream would not be ready for coupling. It is to the problem definition that this section now turns.

Defining a problem

In Kingdon's definition of the problem stream, "conditions become defined as problems when we come to believe that we should do something about them" (Kingdon, 2014, p 109). In categorising a condition as a problem, however, you must define 'what' the undesirable situation is and why it is undesirable: a problem does not exist independently but must be defined as such (Kingdon, 2014, p 109). Understanding the problem stream thus draws on the literature around problem definition. The MSF Plus framework (and indeed, Kingdon's original MSF) uses a constructivist view of problem definition (Dery, 1984). This reflects the principle that, as Stone (1989, p 282) stated, "our understanding of real situations is always mediated by ideas", and that "political actors use narrative story lines and symbolic devices to manipulate so-called issue characteristics, all the while making it seem as though they are simply describing facts". Simple problems may be considered as such to encourage coupling with a preferred solution, while problems may be defined as complex to discourage action: preferring to recommend further study (Rocheford and Cobb, 1993). Defining a problem thus frames an issue in line with the wishes of the actor to promote a particular view and policy solution (Cairney, 2018).

This chapter has demonstrated the existence of multiple tributaries within the problem stream. Not only did this mean each tributary would need to agree that a problem existed, but also on the definition of the problem. In this case study, the first definition of the problem came in the report of the Pre-Feasibility Study Group in October 2012. The report's title: "Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case", was the first use of the phrase "Restoration and Renewal" for a project which had previously been described as a 'modernisation' or 'renovation' of the Palace. The title set twin aims for the project—opening up the potential for conflict between the two. This was exacerbated by the fact that each term used was open to a degree of interpretation: '*restoration*' could be viewed as a focus on simply restoring the building's derelict infrastructure; preserving its heritage or restoring its position as a legislative building. Similarly, '*renewal*', could mean simply updating the infrastructure or going further—in the way the term is used in geography (for example, 'urban renewal') to refurbish the building to support a new type of legislature, or even to reconnect the public with their parliament.

Any ambiguity about the problem, however, was eliminated when the next tributaries joined the problem stream. In October 2012 the Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee set out a narrow problem definition: R&R was about the physical fabric of the Palace of Westminster, not the wider fabric of UK democracy. Renewal was not about restoring trust in politics, after the MPs' expenses scandal, or reconnecting parliamentarians to the public, but more limited (for example, essential work to improve disability access). While there had been potential for conflict between the two aims of restoration and renewal, the decision to rule out a new parliamentary building indicated that a narrow version of 'restoration' would take precedence over any broader concept of 'renewal'. As a result, the problem to be solved by a new policy was simply the dilapidation of the building's infrastructure: specifically, the mechanical and electrical services.

Why was the problem defined so narrowly? *Figure 5.7.* sets out three main factors.

Figure 5.7. Factors affecting the problem definition
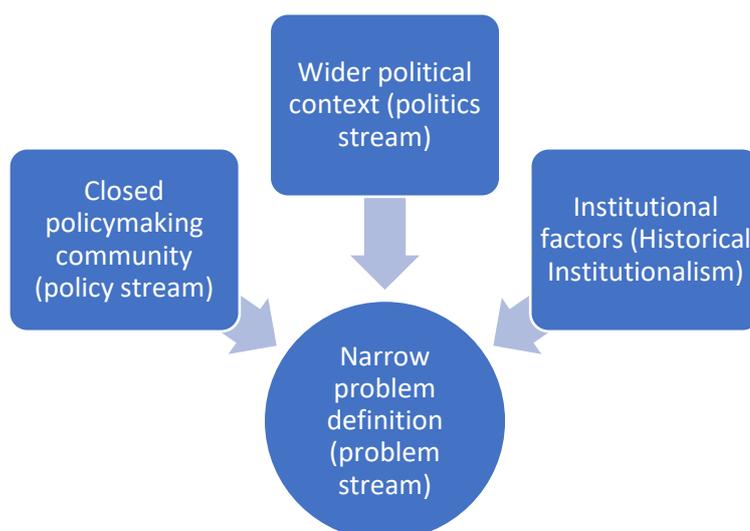
The first explanation is the narrow policy community. During the policy window involvement in each part of the policymaking process—or tributary—was highly restricted. The Pre-Feasibility Study Group was led by officials, with a small advisory board of parliamentarians, hand-picked by the Speaker. The original four parliamentary members of the advisory group were all four were male, older, and able-bodied (Dr Richard Ware, who led the Study Group, reported that the cross-bench Peer, and former Paralympian Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson later joined this advisory group, however, this was after the publication of the PFS (interview, June 2018)). The issue of R&R then moved to the Commission, who ruled out (as noted above) the construction of a new parliamentary building. Indeed, the idea of a new building was not "seriously entertained" by "anyone round the table", according to Viscount Thurso, who attended the meeting as the Lib Dem MP on the Commission at the time (interview, June 2018). The 'table' at the Commission meeting included only six MPs: three *ex-officio* and three backbenchers, selected by the usual channels.[14] It is interesting, and revealing, that none of my interviewees expressed surprise that this major decision, with significant cost implications, was taken by such a small group of MPs, rather than, for example, on the floor of the House of Commons, or with any public involvement. This was Westminster 'club government' (Marquand, 1988; Moran, 2003) at work.

In each tributary, the definition of the problem was influenced by the wider political context. The Commission's statement, examined in depth earlier in this chapter, noted the need for value for money in the "current public spending environment" (House of Commons Commission, 2012d). When the Commission met, the UK was deep into a period of austerity

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[14] The *ex-officio* members were the Speaker, John Bercow, the Leader of the House, Andrew Lansley, and the Shadow Leader of the House, Angela Eagle. The backbench MPs were Sir Paul Beresford, Frank Doran, and Viscount Thurso.

policies, introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government. With public spending reduced and schools, hospitals and local councils cutting their budgets: the contrast with plans to spend billions the Palace would have been stark. This influenced whether actors would agree that there was a problem—and what that problem entailed (a larger problem would potentially mean a larger, and more expensive, solution). Tom Brake MP told me:

> "I think the political climate, particularly, I guess since 2008, after the crash, is one in which no government […] feels that they've got a lot of spare cash to spend on big ticket items, and this is a very big example, it would be perceived as being another big project, in London." (Interview, May 2018)

The Speaker agreed, expressing his concern that the public view would be:

> "What a disgrace, the MPs spending all this money on themselves, when there are all sorts of under-resourced public services, and we're in an age of austerity and there's a massive deficit to repay and so on." (Interview, September 2018).

This was especially the case in 2012, just three years after the MPs' expenses scandal, which had the effect of "confirming and hardening" the already-low popularity of politicians and parliament (Hansard Society, 2010, p 1). The fact that parliamentarians would not benefit financially from either a new building or repairs to the Palace was immaterial; as Brake argued, R&R would be "perceived" as MPs "spending money on themselves" (interview, May 2018). Limiting the project to simply an essential rebuilding programme would help to make the cost appear more acceptable (although concerns about carrying out any work at all during a period of austerity would continue to be raised through the whole policy window). Again, we can return to the Commission's statement, which referred to the 'responsibility' they had towards the Palace: further emphasising that the work was essential—and not, therefore, the unnecessary development of luxury accommodation for MPs.

It was not simply the fear of a public backlash that prevented the problem from being defined more widely, however. There is no evidence of the idea that rebuilding of the home of the UK's democracy could help rebuild that very same democratic system. To understand this, it is necessary to understand Parliament's history: the institutional factors that shaped the decisions likely to be taken in the future. As Spohr (2016, p 252) argues: "as institutions shape values, they also affect interpretations and the definition of problems". The symbolism of the Palace of Westminster, and a reluctance to leave is part of this. We have seen in Chapter 2 how the idea of a new parliamentary building was repeatedly raised and rejected throughout the eighteenth century, and that after the 1834 fire, the prospect of leaving even temporarily was rejected. Prospects of a permanent move after the bomb damage in 1941, were almost unanimously dismissed. Remaining in the Palace became the tradition to be followed: MPs

referred to these earlier decisions to justify their own opposition to decant when the issue was raised in the Commons (e.g. Sir Edward Leigh HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c909). For many MPs, there is a powerful attachment to the physical building and, as in 1834, a reluctance to leave even for repairs to be carried out: an example of institutional 'stickiness'. This met with frustration from some MPs: Lord Haselhurst described his reaction to such a view:

> "The other emotional thing that came into it was, 'well some Members will never serve in this building'. And my attitude to that was, frankly, I'd sit in a marquee if it was what I had to be a Member of Parliament, the job is the job, you either want to do it or you don't, the building you do it in, surely is not something you say 'oh I think, I don't think I want'." (Interview, Haselhurst, May 2018).

At times the narrowing down of the definition was almost subconscious—interviews demonstrated that the prospect of using the need to repair the old Palace to explore radical change to the building was not viewed as realistic or even desirable by the limited group of officials and parliamentarians involved in the decision-making process, and as such received little consideration. In part this demonstrated the importance of path dependency and traditions: the commitment to remaining in the Palace was in line with the history of the building. At other times, however, it appeared to strategic: supporters of R&R both on the official and political side appeared to believe the best chance for achieving action was to frame the problem by focusing on the clear risk to the physical infrastructure (and heritage) of the Palace, rather than opening up new options for the parliamentary building. This fits with the literature on policy entrepreneurs: Mintrom and Luetjens (2017, p 1366) note how "almost always it is better to gain acceptance of an 'inferior' policy proposal over no policy change". This raises the question of 'better' for whom? In this case, it may be that officials believed that by focusing on the narrow problem definition, the R&R project would be more likely to achieve political support and thus policy change, even if limited in scope. There is some evidence to support this view: the narrow problem definition—a crisis of the physical infrastructure rather than the need for a 21st century parliamentary building—that originally emerged in 2012 survived through multiple redefinitions by each of the tributaries, suggesting that its limited nature increased its appeal to multiple audiences. It would also be consistent with the theory promoted by Dr Tony Wright when an MP: that parliamentary reform can be "a matter of exploiting cracks and getting wedges into doors" which can be the basis for later reform (Wright, 2004, p 871). The length of the R&R programme is relevant here: simply leaving the Palace for five or more years may lead to unintended and unpredictable changes to how Parliament operates.

Concluding thoughts

This analysis has shown how by the end of June 2016, the state of the Palace of Westminster was considered to be a problem by multiple tributaries within the problem stream, and further, that these tributaries shared a narrowly-defined view of the problem. Crucially, however, we can see how the debate around the problem was very limited: key groups—which can be considered as tributaries in the problem stream, such as the broader population of MPs and Peers, and the general public—had played almost no role in either considering the state of the building (deciding if there is a problem) or in defining the problem. These tributaries thus remained unaligned by June 2016, preventing the problem stream overall from being ready for coupling.

Policymaking, however, does not proceed in a rational or sequential manner. Even without full agreement on the problem of the Palace of Westminster, work was underway to develop ideas for policy change. As Cairney (2018, p 206) notes: "problem definition is only one part of the puzzle; a necessary but insufficient condition for major policy change". This chapter moves to consider another condition for policy change: the development of solutions in the policy stream.

The Policy Stream

This analysis has so far revealed that there some—if not all—groups involved in the policymaking process had accepted that the state of the Palace of Westminster was a 'problem' (defined narrowly) requiring action. Such recognition of a problem, by necessity, means considering policy change (Wildavsky, 1979). This section will consider how ideas for policy change developed during the first part of the policy window. It will show how, in contrast to the problem and politics stream, there was a single policy stream, with restricted options to develop proposals for policy change. This narrow stream moved significantly towards a chosen solution during the January 2012 to June 2016 period, with three key points shaping the stream:

1. The October 2012 decision to rule out a new parliamentary building.
2. The February 2014 agreement of 'Programme Objectives' for the R&R project.
3. The June 2015 publication of the Independent Options Appraisal report, which focused primarily on the delivery options for the work.

This section will analyse how and why these key points occurred, demonstrating how they can be directly linked back to the narrow problem definition and closed policy-making community.

The core argument is that these three points narrowed down the policy stream but that even within the small group of people considering alternative policies there was not agreement on a chosen policy solution. To consider why, this section then looks at how the institutional context shaped the policy stream, and demonstrates why the policy stream was not ready for coupling by June 2016.

Ruling out a new parliamentary building

The October 2012 decision by the Commons Commission and Lords House Committee to rule out a new parliamentary building in is a crucial point in this policy window, and in this thesis. This decision helped to ensure that the 'problem' became about repairing an old building, rather than the wider issue of how the legislature of the UK should be designed for the future and how this design affects the effectiveness and function of the institution. As a result of this problem definition, the policy stream was restricted almost completely, with the refurbishment of the Palace the only policy option that remained. Crucially, however, few interviewees I spoke to considered this a crucial turning point. The prospect of a new building was not, in general, viewed as possible or desirable. Only Neil Gray, a SNP MP who had lobbied for parliament to leave Westminster entirely, expressed disappointment at the decision to maintain the Palace as the permanent home for institution. He also, however, stated his acceptance of the legitimacy of the decision, and noted that his view gathered very little support in the Commons (interview, June 2018). Why was the prospect of leaving Westminster ruled out? Viscount Thurso, now a member of the House of Lords, but in 2012 an MP and a member of the Commission, attributed this to non-party politics:

> "If you are truly looking at all the options you have to put that [a new building] down as a credible option. It may be credible from a purely administrative and technical point of view, but it was never, in my judgement, likely to be credible when you took the small p politics." (Interview, June 2018)

The "small p politics", to which Thurso refers was the lack of support for such an option either within the Commission, or in parliament at all (interview, June 2018). In Kingdon's criteria, a chosen policy solution needed to fit the values of the policy community—in this case, MPs. The 'values' of such a community are shaped, in part, by the institution itself, and their experiences within it. This highlights the value of a Historical Institutionalist perspective within the MSF Plus framework: by understanding the history of the institution we can understand how values and traditions develop over time and the influence they have on the decision-making process. It was clear from interviewees that while there was support from the sole Green MP, Caroline Lucas, and MPs representing the nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland, for a new building, this was not widely shared by MPs from the two main parties in the Commons, the

Conservatives and Labour (which made up 89% of the MPs elected in the 2017 general election). One explanation could come from the system of parliamentary government: by its the very nature, the majority of MPs are members of the governing party.[15] As discussed in the literature (e.g. Kelso, 2009b) reforms to the legislature instigated by the governing party tend to focus on efficiency, enabling the government to pass its programme without obstruction or delay. Changes to the design of a legislature—where that design has been credited with helping to maintain the majoritarian, executive-dominated model (for example, through the adversarial layout of the Commons chamber)—may be opposed by a government whose survival depends on maintaining the status quo (Goodsell, 1988; Flinders *et al*, 2018; Lijphardt, 2012).

An alternative explanation came from the former Labour MP, and now Peer, Lord Blunkett, who described how, after Labour's landslide election win in 1997, changing the legislative building itself was simply not part of the new government's reforming agenda, adding that he was "really surprised" there was no push for "making it a much better working environment" (interview, Blunkett, July 2018). This brings in a hypothesis from Herweg *et al's* (2015, p 442) adaptation of the MSF for parliamentary systems: "proposals are more likely to be adopted by a particular party if they can be attached to the basic party ideology or if they address already well-known core positions". While wholesale change to the Palace of Westminster could have been attached to left-wing or left-of-centre ideology: the 1997 Labour manifesto described a "a national crisis of confidence in our political system" (The Labour Party, 1997), and proposed modernising the House of Commons and reforming the House of Lords, amounting to what Flinders (2002, p 28) described as making "parliamentary reform a central part of their platform". These proposals did not include the building itself: while the extent of the risk in the basement was not widely recognised at this point, the idea of a modern legislative building could have been adopted broadly. Blunkett described how attention was instead focused on constitutional issues, such as devolution or, where it was looking internally, on issues such as childcare provision in Parliament (interview, July 2018). Flinders (2009) has suggested that this was because of the Labour Party's intrinsic commitment to maintaining the Westminster model. Lord Blunkett suggested that MPs "get sucked in" at Westminster (interview, July 2018), something he has ascribed this to "the allure of the building and its atmosphere" (Blunkett, 2017).

The emotional attachment to the Palace has been noted already in this chapter. Several interviewees used the word "love" to describe how they feel about the building (interview,

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[15] With exceptions for rare periods of minority government.

Faulkner June 2018; interview, Bercow, September 2018; interview, Thurso, June 2018). These feelings are not simply about the beauty of Charles Barry's design or Augustus Welby Pugin's décor, but about the history it contains. Ian Paisley MP discussed his own history of visiting the building where both his parents served (his father in both Houses and his mother in the Lords) as a "wee boy", and how he connected to the wider history of the Palace:

> "Every time I walk through St Stephen's Hall, I try to think of the words of William Wilberforce echoing for **28 years** trying to change slavery, you know, all of those things just are in this building and in this fabric." (Interview, June 2018)

The design and décor of the Palace promotes such a view, for example through the artwork which celebrates former Prime Ministers and military heroes. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, Barry's Palace was designed to look backwards to a glorious past, not forward to create a new future. It is no surprise that an atmosphere of reverence for the beauty of the Palace and its history—combined with a historical precedent of remaining in the building—affected the decision-making process for the future of the Palace. In this way, ruling out a new parliamentary building could be seen as an example of "aversive constitutionalism", defined by Scheppele as:

> "backward-looking, proceeding from a critique of where past (or other) institutions and principles went badly wrong and taking such critiques as the negative building blocks of a new constitutional order. Aversive constitutionalism does not just refer to those options considered second- or third-best and therefore not chosen because there was something better. Aversive constitutionalism identifies a deeper sense of knowing who you are by knowing what you are not; it incorporates a nation-making sense of rejection of a particular constitutional possibility." (Scheppele, 2003, p 300).

Similarly, Erdos (2010, p 119) has detailed how policy decisions can be driven by an "aversive trigger", looking backwards, rather than to the future. While in Erdos's (2009) case study this acted as a spur to drive policy change (the Human Rights Act 1998); with R&R it acted against radical policy change. The rejection of a new parliamentary building was informed by an implicit critique of modern parliamentary buildings in other institutions (see, for example, the way that other chamber layouts have been referred to during Commons debates on R&R, e.g. HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c926). Alternative policy options are dismissed not on simply rational grounds (cost or suitability) but due to a deeper, more emphatic refusal, that such an option would be "horrifying" (Scheppele, 2003, p 303).

Whether the roots lie in an emotional attachment to the building, a commitment to the model of democracy which it promotes or an intrinsic opposition to an alternative idea of what a parliamentary building should look like, it is clear that parliamentarians, the only policy

community with the power to take decisions about the future of the Palace, through the Commons Commission and Lords House Committee, were opposed to leaving or replacing the Palace of Westminster with a new parliamentary building. This enabled the policy stream to be narrowed down to a single policy option: the refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster.

The R&R programme objectives

With the decision taken to refurbish the Palace of Westminster, there remained significant scope to decide the form of the refurbished building. Waylen has noted how existing parliamentary buildings were maintained after major political change in both Germany and South Africa, but with a deliberate attempt to change their meanings:

> "The decision was made, as part of that political transformation, not to build a new legislature for the new democracy but to retain the existing one. And in each case the decision to use the pre-existing building was also accompanied by attempts to refashion the content and symbolic meaning of that building, as part of the creation of a new inclusive representative democracy that would turn its back on a troubled past." (Waylen, 2014, p 211)

The scope for major changes within the Palace of Westminster was reduced, however, in February 2014, when programme objectives were agreed by the R&R programme board. The objectives (below in *Table 5.3.*) were not agreed or even discussed by either House, nor subject to a public consultation (the Programme Board has no published membership, although it is understood to be an internal body, comprised of officials and non-executive members, rather than parliamentarians). Four of the five objectives underscore how narrowly the problem of the Palace was defined: the programme is considered primarily as a construction project, focusing on the cost and disruption of the project, and the potential risks to heritage.

Table 5.3. R&R programme objectives (adapted from Deloitte, 2015, p 4)

1) "Allow the business of Parliament to continue uninterrupted, mitigate any adverse operational impact, and reduce risk over the longer term
2) Accommodate the needs of a 21st Century Parliament
3) Address existing building structure, fabric and service issues
4) Preserve and protect the PoW's status as a Grade I listed building and a UNESCO World Heritage Site (for the foreseeable future)
5) Deliver value for money for the taxpayer, generating a range of economic benefits"

In contrast, Objective 2 states that the R&R programme aims to "accommodate the needs of a 21st Century Parliament"—potentially opening up the policy stream to a more imaginative discussion about the future of the building (Deloitte, 2015). As with the other objectives, however, there was no debate on what this could mean. The agreement and publication of the

Programme Objectives could have been a key turning point in this policy window. Agreeing the needs of a 21st century parliament offered the opportunity for a wide political and public debate about the future of the institution, and how these needs could be accommodated by the design of the building. Such a decision would have expanded the policy stream dramatically. It can be assumed that a parliamentary building constructed for the 21st century, even within the constraints of returning to the Palace of Westminster, would be substantially different from one designed in the 1830s, prior to mass suffrage, female parliamentarians, the expansion and reform of the House of Lords, and the technological and communication revolution of the late twentieth century. Further, as discussed in Chapter 2, Charles Barry's 'new' Palace of Westminster was viewed as outdated even before it opened, designed for a past era in which the monarch and Lords had primacy over the Commons. The closed nature of the policy stream meant that, while there had been some limited discussion of ideas for a new building (e.g. Jones, 2015), this had received little serious consideration or formal response (as noted earlier in this chapter, the governance structure made it difficult to know who would respond to such suggestions). The absence of a debate on the Programme Objectives prevented these early ideas (or potential alternatives) from being given serious consideration. As such it continued the path of closing down policy options further.

The Independent Options Appraisal report

Not only was there no public debate on the Programme Objectives, but they were not even made public until the publication of the Independent Options Appraisal (IOA) report in June 2015. This report is another key point in the policy window: by providing an examination of the costs and practicality of different options of what was presented as a construction project, the key policy decision became about how the work would be delivered, rather than the scope or imagination of the work, or the potential for the refurbishment to renew the democratic system as well as the building. The major decision about future of the nation's legislature and how it could serve the country had been narrowed down to almost entirely a discussion about the five to ten years in which construction work would take place. The potential decades or centuries for which the building would be used and the future changes it would need to accommodate were barely mentioned. In this way, the IOA report continued the process of narrowing down the acceptable policy options to resolve a very narrow problem, rather than opening up or expanding the policy stream.

The negative reaction to the IOA report from the wider parliamentary community (as discussed in Section 5.1, see also: Norton, 2015; Fabricant, 2015) demonstrated, however, that even this narrow perception of the problem did not gain approval across the policy community

of MPs and Peers. There was no sign that this had changed by June 2016: the limited input to the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster meant that there had been little discussion in the policy stream of how the issue should be resolved, and thus no agreement on the solution.

The institutional lens and the policy stream

This analysis has revealed three key findings: one which differs from Kingdon's model of the policy stream, and two in line with his model. All three points reflect the importance of the institutional lens.

The point of difference relates to the development of alternative policies. Kingdon (2014, p 124) described how the "policy primeval soup does not closely resemble a rational decision-making system with a few well-defined alternatives among which decision makers choose" but instead an evolutionary process where a very large number of proposals mutate and recombine until "they are ready to reach a serious decision stage". The policy stream for R&R differs in a crucial regard from Kingdon's experience as a result of the closed policy community (as discussed already in this chapter). In this we can see the impact of the institution of Westminster. Immergut (1992, p 64) argues that "institutional rules resolve conflict by limiting the points of decision where alternative proposals can be considered". A similar example has been discussed by Edwards (2004) who attributed poor disability access in the original design for the National Assembly for Wales legislative building to the limited external input into the policy decision-making process. She added:

> "a model of policy making which relies on its own narrow experience and expertise will tend to replicate institutional discriminations, leading to unforeseen consequences and bad policy outcomes" (Edwards, 2004, p 39)

This case study has shown how both the formal and informal structures in the UK Parliament worked against the development of alternative policies. This meant that, unlike the multiple tributaries that formed the problem stream, there was just a single policy stream, comprising of MPs and Peers. Imaginative ideas for architectural changes for the legislative building and its environs from external sources (e.g. the pedestrianisation of Parliament Square (Hansard Society, 2011; or moving out of London entirely (The Guardian, 2015)) received little serious consideration. In this early part of the policy window we can also see how the policy stream was so narrow that it even excluded MPs outside of the formal governance structures (or the small group selected to advise the Pre-Feasibility Study Group) in the Commons. While engagement with the state of the Palace of Westminster was limited in this group, where a very small number of MPs did propose imaginative ideas around the R&R programme (often

involving moving the Commons to sit within their constituency (e.g. HC Deb, 3 Mar 2015, c1083; HC Deb, 18 Jun 2015, c478; HC Deb, 9 Jul 2015, c444)) these received similarly low levels of consideration.

Kingdon's (2014, p 124) description of the "primeval soup", indicating a long period of consideration of alternative policies, which he viewed as essential for "softening up" before an idea would be taken seriously (reported also in a UK setting by Bache and Reardon, 2016) does, however, fit with the developments seen in the early part of the R&R policy window. Over the course of four and a half years the policy stream narrowed down in stages. By the time of the EU referendum the available policy alternative was simply a refurbished Palace of Westminster, with the only remaining decision to be the method of the delivery of the work and the extent to which either or both House would leave their historic chambers. This further reflects the importance of the institutional context: a softening-up period matched the glacial pace of change in Westminster (as discussed further in section 6.2).

Within the policy "primeval soup", Kingdon (2014, p 124) argued for the existence of a key individual—a policy entrepreneur—who would champion a particular policy solution. The absence of such an individual has been attributed in the literature as a cause for the streams failing to couple (e.g. in Ridde, 2009). This was the case in the early part of the R&R policy window when there was no individual pushing for a particular policy change. Again, this can be directly linked to the institutional context, in which responsibility for the building was scattered across a range of individuals, both in Parliament and Government (as indicated in *Figures 5.3.* and *5.4)* and within which there was a lack of interest in pushing for policy change. The role of the policy entrepreneur and the absence of such a figure in the early part of the policy window is explored further in Chapter 8. For this section, it is necessary simply to consider if the absence of a policy entrepreneur was a factor in the failure to align the policy stream and couple the multiple streams.

Concluding thoughts

During the first part of the policy window (January 2012 to June 2016), we can see, therefore, how the policy stream narrowed, in line with the problem definition and institutional context, with a single idea of policy change: a refurbished Palace of Westminster gaining support. As with the problem stream, however, the policy stream remained overall unaligned. There was no clear political champion (the role of officials is discussed further in Chapter 8) and a lack of support within the policy community, the solution was not ready to be adopted. This lack of

support from MPs leads us to consider the third of Kingdon's multiple streams: the politics stream.

The Politics Stream

Kingdon's original formulation of the Multiple Streams Framework, adopted a narrow view of the 'political', including election results, turnover of key actors, ideological positions in legislatures, and changes in public opinion (Kingdon, 2014). The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated already the impact of these variables on the problem and policy streams. This section goes deeper to explore the overall impact of the politics stream, and argues that not only did the politics stream shape the definition of the problem and which policies were considered as suitable (as already examined) but it also delayed decision-making (and promoted non-decision-making).

To make this argument, this section utilises Kingdon's narrow interpretation of the political stream. In doing so, it rejects the modification proposed by Zahariadis (1995, p 34) for parliamentary systems, which combines the components of the political stream (such as national mood, interest groups and governmental turnover) "into one conceptual variable: the ideology and strategy of governing parties", noting the strength of party discipline in the votes in the House of Commons. Zahardias's proposal has been contested: Herweg et al (2015) argued that elements such as the national mood were as, or even more, important than party ideology. As will be shown in Chapter 6, while there was a party politics element to the eventual decision on R&R, the issue was decided on a free vote, and proponents of policy change did not explicitly attach the issue to a particular ideology. Focusing solely on party politics, as advised by Zahariadis, would not help understand the politics stream within this case study.

This section examines in detail two aspects of Kingdon's politics stream: first, the impact of elections, and second, the broader political mood. In doing so, it demonstrates the existence of multiple politics tributaries, and argues that these tributaries remained unaligned, which in turn prevented the politics stream from being ready for coupling during the first part of the policy window.

Elections

The first element of Kingdon's politics stream to be considered here is the role of elections. During this policy window, the impact of two general elections was crucial. The first occurred prior to the start of the policy window in 2012 but its impact shaped the political context of the

early part of the R&R programme. The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government that took power after the 2010 general election produced a detailed "Programme for Government", which included a set of constitutional and parliamentary reform measures, under the statement "the Government believes that our political system is broken" (HM Government, 2010, p 26). While these reforms included a pledge to "cut the perks and bureaucracy associated with Parliament", there was no mention of changes to the Palace of Westminster. This is an important point: at this very early stage of the Parliament the political and constitutional reform agenda was set for the next five years. There was no appetite for opening up the Coalition Agreement and adding new policies to it—indeed, towards the end of the Parliament, Matthews notes the view of a Labour MP that the coalition had "'run out of things to agree on' (Labour frontbencher, quoted in Matthews, 2019, p 163).

The Coalition Agreement, and specifically, the decision to legislate to fix the date of the next general election as the first Thursday in May 2015, further influenced the R&R decision-making process. The prospect of this election in turn defined the timetable for policy decisions (and non-decisions) regarding the Palace of Westminster. This was made clear from the very start of the policy window: the statement from the Commons Commission announcing the establishment of the Pre-Feasibility Study noted that it was not "envisaged" that any decisions on the refurbishment would be taken "until the next Parliament (2015-2020)" (House of Commons Commission, 2012b)—delaying any decision for at least three and a half years. This chapter has noted the fear held by many parliamentarians of being seen to spend money during a period of austerity, when politicians were unpopular, and during the run-up to the 2015 general election this concern was even more heightened. The decision to put off action on the state of the Palace, despite the warnings of the state of the building, demonstrates how politicians felt that approving policy change—and thus approving expenditure on the building—would have a greater negative than positive effect on the election. This attitude would align with Weaver's (1986, p 371) classic theory of blame avoidance: "politicians are motivated primarily by the desire to avoid blame for unpopular actions rather than by seeking to claim credit for popular ones". In this case study, the weight of potential blame against credit was perceived by MPs to be sufficient that it would cost them votes in a general election: in 2018 a "Tory source" was quoted in *The Times* as arguing against action on R&R, because "there are no votes in spending money on [restoration]" (Chorley, 2018, p6). Politicians later accepted that their fears had been overblown (interview, Bercow, September 2018) and indeed the experience of the 2009 MPs' expenses scandal demonstrated that anger with Westminster politicians did not inevitably translate into a loss of votes (Pattie and Johnston, 2014). But whether accurate or not, the belief was sincerely held and affected how actors behaved about the issue: in this case, it was responsible for the decision to delay the publication of (and action

on) the IOA. In their adaptation of the MSF for parliamentary systems, Herweg et al (2015, p 437) hypothesised that: "the more a condition puts the policy makers' re-election at risk, the more likely it is to open a policy window in the problem stream". This case study suggests a modified, inverse hypothesis is also correct: the less likely an issue is to win votes, the less likely it will be that a condition will be classed as a problem, thus leading to policy change. It was concern about the impact of the IOA on the 2015 general election that prevented a decision being taken on the future of the building.

The 'politics' within Parliament

Even after the 2015 general election, there was further resistance to policy change, caused in this period by another element of Kingdon's politics stream: the ideological position within Parliament. Discussing the immediate post-election period Lord Lisvane said that his "biggest fear was that we'd have all this (preparatory) work done, and then there simply wouldn't be the political will to do anything about it" (interview, June 2018). The political will required was from the Government, who had the agenda-setting power after the May 2015 election—while R&R remained in theory a matter for Parliament itself, in practice, the Government's control over the parliamentary timetable meant that progress was reliant on ministerial cooperation, first in the establishment of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster and then to debate the Joint Committee's report (this divide between theory and practice is discussed further in Chapter 8). An example of this power was discussed in the first part of this chapter: the delay to the Joint Committee report because Government ministers were unwilling to publish ahead of the referendum given the opposition to R&R and decant in the Commons, and specifically among Conservative MPs. This delay—which officials were powerless to resolve—demonstrated the importance of understanding the role of the politics stream. Approving Restoration and Renewal was not simply about attaching a solution to a problem: the 'politics' of R&R governed the decision-making process.

The 'politics' was not a single factor, but instead reflected the existence of multiple politics streams. Crucially, there was a divide between the MPs who had engaged with the issue of R&R and the state of the building, and the wider population of the Commons. Interviews with members of the Joint Committee showed how, at the start of their inquiry, they were unanimous in their scepticism towards decant, overcome only through the weight of the technical reports and evidence about the need to move out. Without this immersion in the facts about the state of the building many other MPs continued to doubt whether decant was required, with many believing that there was a technical solution unexplored by staff (e.g. HC Deb, 12 Sept 2013, c1156). As with the concern about the public's perception about R&R

discussed above, this belief did not need to be accurate to affect how MPs behaved. It demonstrated however, how securing political agreement for policy change, as with problem definition, was not a single task. Again, we can identify multiple elements of the politics stream—tributaries—that all needed to be aligned to achieve policy change, as set out in *Figure 5.8*. Again, each tributary needed to be aligned within itself, before the overall stream is ready for coupling.

Figure 5.8. The Politics Stream, January 2012 – June 2016. Key: medium purple box – aligned, light purple = unaligned.
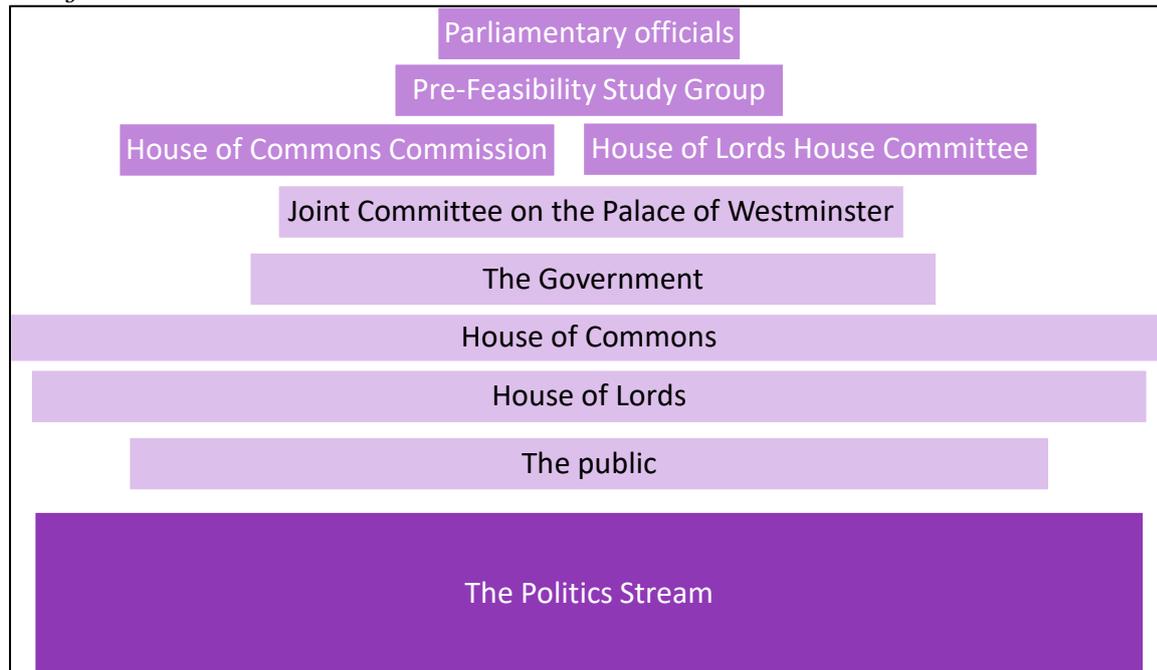
During this period, four of the tributaries were aligned. But five tributaries remained unaligned, preventing the stream overall from being ready for coupling and thus blocking policy change.

Concluding thoughts

The MSF Plus analysis of this period has shown the importance of the political context. Not only did it contribute to a narrow problem definition and promote a policy solution viewed as the cheapest and most acceptable to the public but, crucially, it also prevented policy change from occurring. Kingdon's definition of the politics stream is narrow, but broad enough to be attributed the non-decision-making in this period. It includes elections: the 2015 general election was responsible for shaping the decision-making timetable from the very start of the policy window. Partisan factors were another component: the wish to avoid the publication of the Joint Committee's report during the 2016 EU referendum would fit this category. Finally,

Kingdon stressed the importance of the national mood in the politics stream. Here we can point to the concerns of MPs about a public backlash to the cost of R&R, particularly during a time of austerity, and how this deterred decision-making.

Crucially, as with the problem stream, we can identify different elements of the politics stream which all needed to be ready for alignment—the politics of R&R was not one element or group to be convinced. Despite the progress made during this period in persuading the MPs who advised the Pre-Feasibility Study Group or served on the Joint Committee, the politics stream as a whole was not ready for policy change on Restoration and Renewal. This again reflects the institutional context: particularly how power to block policy change was dispersed between the different tributaries, enabling multiple veto players. It is to a deeper analysis of the institutional context that this chapter now turns.

Historical Institutionalism

The analysis of each of the three streams has highlighted how the view of the problem, the potential solution and the likelihood of political agreement was shaped at all points by the institutional structures of the UK Parliament. This section aims to look deeper at this impact, drawing on the Historical Institutionalist (HI) approach intrinsic to the MSF Plus framework. In doing so, this section shows how bringing in HI is crucial to using the MSF to understand the particular context of the UK Parliament: an institution governed by precedent and tradition. The key argument of this section is that these norms and traditions acted as a countervailing force to pressures for radical policy change, thus affecting each of the other streams in the MSF Plus framework.

Why is it important to understand the historical development of the institution to explain developments within the policy window? The theoretical underpinnings of the MSF Plus framework reflect an acceptance of the interdependence of structure and agency as discussed in Chapter 3. This draws on the importance of institution in the HI tradition: Sanders (2006, p 39) argues that institutions "are themselves human creations" and their rule structures shape the context in individuals act. This can materialise through the values and norms of an institution, which "preference the recognition of some conditions as problems" (Reardon, 2018, p 5) and determine how a problem is perceived (Sager and Thomann, 2016, p 3). Once a problem is defined, these norms and traditions then shape the goals of actors: in contrast to rational choice institutionalism, HI argues that such goals are not automatically driven by self-interest, but dependent on the context (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992). This was placed into a Westminster context by Lowndes (2013) who noted that a common view of the 2009 MPs'

expenses crisis was a behaviourist one, in which MPs were perceived to be acting to maximise their self-interest. Lowndes argues that such an approach this did not take account of factors revealed by an institutionalist account including the looseness of the rules and the lack of political will to strengthen the rules, and nor could it explain why all MPs did not exploit the system. Instead, as Kelso's analysis of parliamentary reform suggests, we can only understand why individuals at Westminster acted as they did, by understanding the institution:

> "The structured institutional context at Westminster creates a 'logic of appropriateness' that MPs use as a reference point in order to perceive events around them and to determine their goals and actions" (Kelso, 2009b, p 181)

To what extent did a "logic of appropriateness" shape this part of the policy window? This chapter has shown how the institutional development and identity acted as a block to radical change; most notably in how the problem definition and choice of policy solution focused on refurbishing the Palace of Westminster, as the idea of moving to a new parliamentary building would have been a departure from previous decisions. Chapter 2 noted the analysis of the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster after the 1834 fire and the management of the building in the twentieth century by House of Commons Clerk Sir Barnett Cocks (1977). The subtitle of Cocks' book was: "an institution unable to get its own house in order". The patch-and-mend approach was part of the institutional mindset, and was compounded by the emotional attachment to the building.

An additional institutional factor was the "incredible and innate conservatism" of the Commons in "organisational matters", as described by Walkland (1979, p 2). Lord Lisvane confirmed this from his own experience, noting that: "parliamentarians on the whole don't like change, especially when it is their home, their workspace" (interview, June 2018). Judge (1989, pp 409-410) argued that this reflected the "institutional values of a parliament dominated by the executive", as the "the norms of the House reflect the interests of the most powerful actors therein, and so support the existing distribution of power and the status quo". This manifested itself through the governing bodies: Yong (2018, p 88) argued that "inertia is the default position" of the Commons Commission. Viscount Thurso suggested that internal House committees "have tended on occasion to be the repository of some of those who feel that conserving the past is more important than exploring the future" (interview, June 2018). McKay et al (2019, pp19-20) noted "the over-representation of white, male MPs" taking on the role of "good House of Commons man" (using Searing's (1994, 1995) definition, which included serving on domestic committees), and suggested that this "may help explain, for example, the relatively slow pace of reform with regard to workplace culture within the House of Commons". The appointment of parliamentarians to advise the Pre-Feasibility Study and

to serve on the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster did not open up the decision-making processes to challenge this institutional thinking. For the former, the MPs and Peers were not elected, either by the House as a whole, or in their party groups (as now customary for most Commons select committees, although not for domestic committees), nor were the roles formally advertised to MPs or Peers. As a result, it is likely that the chosen parliamentarians were considered to share the values of the institution, and as such were not seeking radical change. For the Joint Committee, members were chosen by the 'usual channels'—primarily through a "tap on the shoulder" from the Whips (interview, Paisley, June 2018), who again would be unlikely to select members who sought to challenge the institutional norms that promoted executive dominance. The institutional norm of small 'c' conservatism can therefore be said to act as a countervailing force.

Concluding thoughts

This section has shown the pervasive influence of the institutional context on each of the multiple streams. It has examined at one particular aspect of the institutional effect: the institutional norms that worked against radical policy change. The practical effect of these norms during this part of the policy window was exacerbated by a further institutional factor: the closed policymaking community that limited the consideration of new ideas or policies.

Conclusion

At the start of 2012, the state of the Palace of Westminster—primarily the fire and flood risk of the outdated infrastructure—was considered by senior staff working within the building to be so serious that the existing policy of 'patch and mend' could no longer be sustained. By pushing for policy change the officials, acting as problem brokers, opened a policy window. Major policy change—from a new parliamentary building to a widespread refurbishment of the Palace—became possible. In the subsequent four and a half years progress towards such a policy change was slow. While the Pre-Feasibility Study demonstrated the extent of the problem of the building, this was not accepted by all actors and groups—demonstrating the existence of tributaries that made up the problem stream. Where a problem was accepted, it was defined in narrow terms: a crisis of the building rather than the wider state of UK democracy: a definition shaped by the institutional context, but also the policy stream and political context, showing the interdependence of the multiple streams.

The period also saw work to narrow down the choice of policy options. Crucially, this was shaped by both the problem definition—leading to a narrow solution—but also an institutional

context that blocked new ideas. Potential policy solutions were presented in the Independent Options Appraisal, but received a lukewarm reaction from the MPs and Peers who comprised the policy stream. But with the work of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster delayed by political events, no single policy solution had been chosen.

The delay to the Joint Committee's work was reflective of a wider political climate that remained resistant to policy change. This chapter has drawn on Herweg et al's (2015) hypotheses for how political events can shape agenda-setting, and demonstrated how R&R was blocked from the agenda, as part of a defensive aversive elite mode of governance which viewed the risk of R&R as higher than the risks of not acting. This was connected to a deep concern about the national mood and R&R, linked both to national policies of austerity and the institutional context of a Parliament in crisis, and lacking confidence (Norton, 2017) after the expenses scandal. As with the problem stream, the politics stream can be said to be comprised of multiple tributaries, with different powers to act. Again, the failure to align all the tributaries meant that the politics stream overall was not ready to be coupled.

All three multiple streams worked within an institutional context that served as a countervailing force away from radical policy change—and even, through dispersed power and responsibility, any policy change at all. We can therefore highlight four main findings from the MSF Plus analysis of this period

1. The institutional structure of the UK Parliament meant that problem definition was not a one-off event: the problem would be defined multiple times by multiple actors, and agreeing a single definition was not possible during the period. We can therefore consider there to be multiple 'tributaries' making up the problem stream.
2. Each problem definition in turn influenced the development of solutions, and the existence of multiple problem definition prevented the policy stream from being ready for coupling.
3. The wider political context further prevented policy change, as MPs and the Government based decisions on the electoral timetable. We can identify similar tributaries in the politics stream, as in the problem stream, with differing levels of weight to influence the stream.
4. The institutional context of the Palace of Westminster shaped how the problem was defined, limited the policy stream, influenced the choice of potential policy solutions and the way the politics of the period influenced the chances of policy change. It also worked against policy change, through an innate small 'c' conservatism.

The MSF Plus theoretical framework adds particular value in assessing this part of the policy window. By considering a period of time when the streams were not coupled (a noted gap in the literature) we can counter the argument (made, for example, by Ackrill *et al*, 2013) that a multiple streams approach has primarily been used to explain policy change. Crucially, it is by drawing on the institutional lens that we can understand fully why change did not occur. This chapter has also tested one of the tenets of the MSF Plus framework: the interdependence of the multiple streams and institutional context. It is clear in this case study that the problem definition was shaped by the political context and in turn shaped the choice of policy solutions.

In the course of this analysis this chapter has highlighted the importance of key individuals within the policymaking process—and how the absence of political support for policy change was also critical during this period. We have seen how the role of the Speaker was crucial during the early part of the policy window, specifically through his composition of the Pre-Feasibility Study Group, and his chairing of the October 2012 Commons Commission meeting. The role of the senior Clerks during this period was also critical: not only in pushing for action on the state of the building, but also through their relationship with parliamentarians. These roles, whether they fit the criteria for problem brokers or policy entrepreneurs within the MSF Plus model will be explored further in Chapter 8. Before that, however, this thesis moves to consider what happened after the EU referendum and the start of January 2018, when the issue of R&R was finally scheduled for a debate in the House of Commons.

Chapter 6: An open policy window?

"Unless an intensive programme of major remedial work is undertaken soon, it is likely that the building will become uninhabitable" (Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, 2016, p 5)

This chapter picks up the story of the R&R policy window, and sets out what happened after the EU referendum was held in June 2016, covering a 16-month period until a debate was scheduled on the report in the House of Commons in January 2018. It is a period of nondecision-making—but this does not make it any less important to understand (as argued by Crenson, 1971), particularly because understanding the period helps understand the power dynamics in place (Lukes, 1974). Indeed, as C Wright Mills (1956, p 4) argued of "the power elite": "their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, is itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions they do make".

This chapter is comprised of two main parts. The first will examine the events of the second part of the policy window: from June 2016 to the dissolution of parliament in May 2017, then from the new parliament in June 2017 to the scheduling of the Commons debate in early January 2018. These events are set out in *Figure 6.1.* (below), divided between developments internally to the R&R programme and wider developments at Westminster, relevant to the chances of policy change. The second half of the chapter provides an analysis of this period using the MSF Plus theoretical framework. Using this analysis, this chapter makes four main arguments:

1. Not all of the multiple 'tributaries' within the problem stream were not aligned preventing the stream overall from being ready for coupling. Crucially, alignment of each tributary was not a one-off process: the Government stream moved from aligned to unaligned during this period.
2. The policy stream continued to narrow down towards a single policy solution, but the stream overall remained unaligned, in part due to 'miscoupling' caused by multiple problem definitions.
3. The wider political context continued to work against policy change, as the issue of Brexit dominated political attention. This suggests that referenda should have the same status in an MSF model as elections.
4. The institutional context of the Palace of Westminster—and work of parliamentary staff—enabled the policy window to remain open during a period without policy change, as it matched the slow pace of change in Westminster.

The fact that the multiple streams (each shaped by the institutional context) remained not ready for coupling of alignment in each of the multiple streams, thus prevented policy change between June 2016 and January 2018. To explore this period in depth, this chapter now begins.

Figure 6.1. Events in the R&R policy window, June 2016 to January 2018. Key: White boxes represent developments in the R&R programme, orange boxes reflect external events affecting the programme
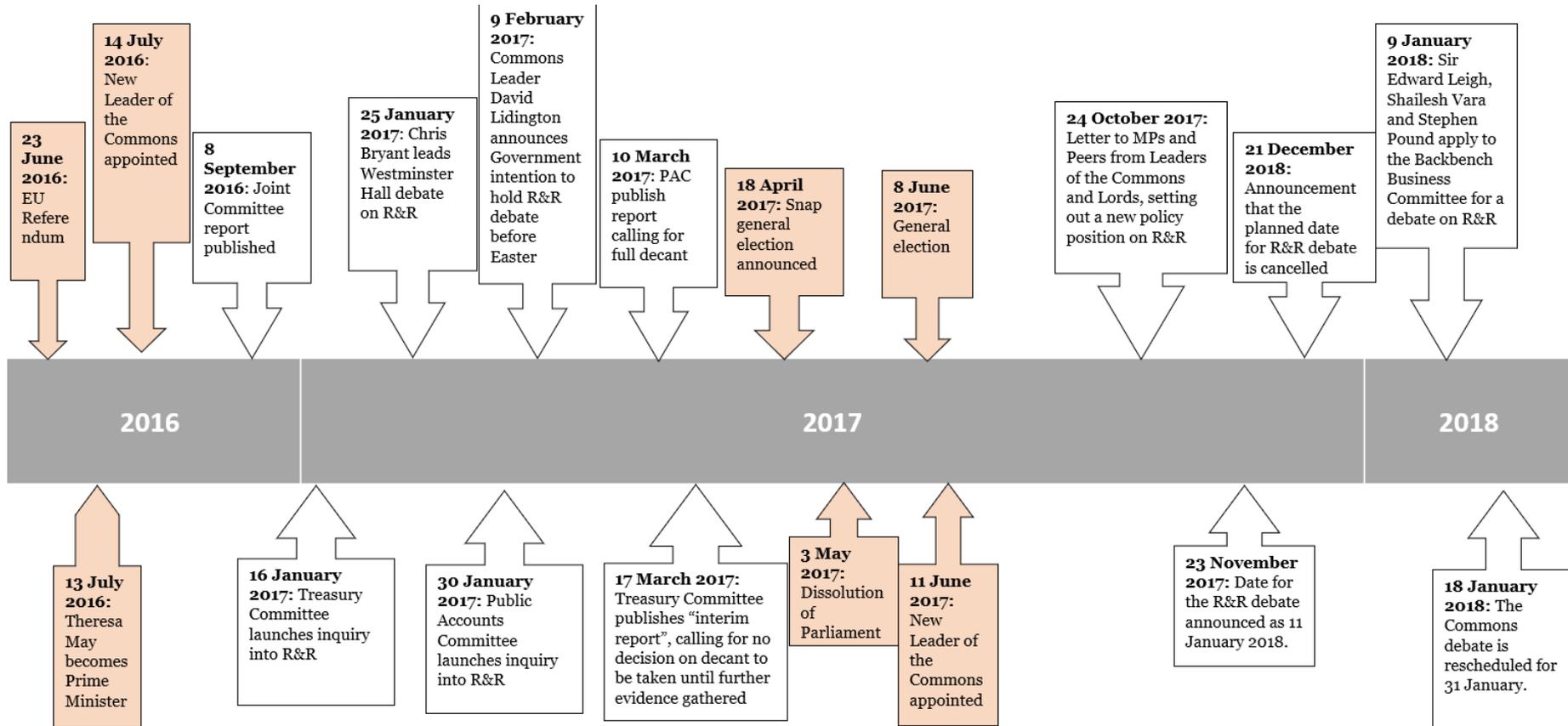
6.1. Developments in the policy window

June 2016 – December 2016

On 23 June 2016 the UK went to the polls in a referendum on the country's membership of the European Union. The referendum split the Commons between Leavers and Remainers, rather than the traditional tribal party lines; with divisions most stark in the Conservative Party, where collective responsibility was suspended in the Cabinet. It was in this political climate that the imminent publication of the report by the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster was viewed as unhelpful by the Government. Committee member, Chris Bryant, reported that he was advised that "it would be very inconvenient if you produce the paper now, but if you produce it in a few weeks' time then, well, you will be able to have a debate very quickly" (interview, April 2018). Hopes of a quick publication after the referendum were dashed, however, when the Leave side triumphed unexpectedly, leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister, David Cameron. His successor, Theresa May, then jeopardised the report further when, in her first cabinet reshuffle, she appointed new Leaders of the Commons and the Lords, taking responsibility for R&R away from the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee, the previous leaders of each House, Chris Grayling and Baroness Stowell. It was agreed, however, that Grayling and Stowell, would remain in place to chair the Committee's meeting on 5 September 2016 when the draft report, prepared in the spring, would be considered.

At the meeting SNP member, Neil Gray, argued that the Committee should not report until it had considered the costs and benefits of the construction of a new parliamentary building (JCPW, 2016a). This was rejected and the Committee went on to agree the draft report, which:

1. Recognised that the 'problem' of the infrastructure in the Palace required policy change;
2. endorsed a strategic approach to this policy: the R&R programme; and
3. recommended moving out of the Palace entirely for this work to take place (the full decant).

The Formal Minutes list the report as agreed unanimously (JCPW, 2016a). Gray, however, told me that he did not believe he had put his name to the report:

> "I felt, on balance, I couldn't support the report because it didn't include any mention or discussion or evidence about the potential merits of a new-build Parliament and I felt that the process was undermined as a result [...] I just could not, I couldn't sign up and put my name to a report that I fundamentally disagreed with the background to." (Interview, June 2018)

Other committee members, however, pointed to the absence of divisions on the final reading of the report, to argue that it was agreed unanimously (seen as important for the credibility of select committee reports). Baroness Stowell, who co-chaired the meeting said:

> "We all ended up agreeing that a full decant was the right way forward. Which I have to say, is not where I thought we would be when the Committee was first formed." (Interview, July 2018)

Whether unanimous or not, as with the Pre-Feasibility Study Group report four years earlier, the conclusions of the Joint Committee's report were stark. The opening lines of the summary set the tone:

> "The Palace of Westminster, a masterpiece of Victorian and medieval architecture and engineering, faces an impending crisis which we cannot responsibly ignore. It is impossible to say when this will happen, but there is a substantial and growing risk of either a single, catastrophic event, such as a major fire, or a succession of incremental failures in essential systems which would lead to Parliament no longer being able to occupy the Palace." (JCPW, 2016a, p5)

The urgency of the work was stressed, with the warning that: "unless an intensive programme of major remedial work is undertaken soon, it is likely that the building will become uninhabitable" (JCPW, 2016a, p5). The Committee concluded that "in principle, a full decant of the Palace of Westminster is the best delivery option", arguing that it offered the least disruption, the quickest timescale, the lowest overall capital cost, the lowest risk, and the greatest scope for improvements (JCPW, 2016a, p5). Conscious of the delay caused to its own work by the political climate, the Committee warned of "a potentially costly delay" unless Parliament "now takes some key decisions". To enable this, the Committee published a draft motion, which they recommended "both Houses should agree […] as soon as possible" (JCPW, 2016a, p100).

The Government's request for a delay in publishing the Joint Committee's report was, it was understood by committee member Chris Bryant, accompanied by a promise for an early Commons debate once the report was published. This was crucial: while the Joint Committee had supported the R&R programme and recommended full decant, the report on its own had no substantive power. Bryant's understanding was shared by the Co-Chair of the Joint Committee, Baroness Stowell. Stowell had lost her role as Leader of the Lords when Theresa May took office, but believed her former colleagues had committed to holding the debate—as set out in the interview extract below:

> "AM: And were you expecting a debate before Christmas that year?
> Baroness Stowell: "Yes. Definitely."
> AM: Had you had indications from the Government?
> Baroness Stowell: "Yes, that is what I was told to expect." (Interview, July 2018)

During this period, Grayling's successor as Leader of the Commons, David Lidington, was pressed repeatedly on the issue, as frustration grew among the members of the Joint Committee. Lidington sought to defer these complaints by pointing to the need for the Committee's report to be considered carefully, and for the Government to take advice from the Major Projects Authority (HC Deb, 17 Nov 2016, c405; HC Deb, 13 Oct 2016, c458). While Lidington's weekly appearances at Business Questions made him the target of these frustrations, neither officials and MPs believed that the ultimate cause of the delay lay with him personally. The Director General of the Commons, Ian Ailles, told me that "the whole Commission sympathised with this position David Lidington was in with regards to the scheduling of the R&R debate alongside all the necessary government business" (interview, October 2018). The Speaker, who chaired the Commission concurred:

> "David Lidington in particular, he was very keen to get on with it, and you know, he was only able to say "look I'll make my best endeavours but I can't promise". So, was that frustrating? Yes, it was." (Interview, September, 2018)

Wherever the root of the delays lay, the result was that, by the end of 2016, over 100 days had passed after the Joint Committee had reported and no debate had been held or decision taken on their recommendations. Policy change appeared to have stalled.

January 2017 – May 2017

In January 2017, in the absence of a Government-led debate on the Joint Committee's report, Chris Bryant, who had taken on the role of unofficial spokesman for the Joint Committee, secured a Westminster Hall debate titled 'Palace of Westminster: Restoration and Renewal'.[16] Crucially, there is no option for divisions on Westminster Hall debates, meaning that debates cannot be used to decide policy officially. In his opening remarks Bryant argued that, for this reason, the debate was no substitute for a Government-led debate in the main chamber, and cited the "19 and a half weeks" since the Joint Committee reported, a delay, he argued, was "verging on the irresponsible" (HC Deb, 25 Jan 2017, c97WH). Michael Ellis, the Deputy

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[16] Westminster Hall debates are granted by the Speaker through a lottery system: securing a debate reflects no indication that the Speaker (or the Government) agrees that a subject is of importance, or of wider support within Parliament.

Leader of the House, accepted that "make-do-and-mend is simply not an option", but declined to commit the Government to more than holding a debate "as soon as possible". Even this concession was only made after he originally stated the debate and vote would be held "in due course" and referred to the pressures on government time (HC Deb, 25 Jan 2017, c118WH). Ellis's speech was not well-received: Bryant accused the Minister of making "excuses for nothing", and lobbied for the debate to be held before the February recess (HC Deb, 25 Jan 2017, c121WH).

Despite Bryant's call, there was no debate on R&R in the Commons chamber in February 2017. There was, however, consideration of R&R within the Palace: but on the committee corridor. One of the lessons of the construction of the new Palace of Westminster, as discussed in Chapter 2, was how multiple select committees could frustrate the building process: Sir Barnett Cocks, a former Clerk of the House of Commons, described the mass of select committee inquiries faced by the architect Charles Barry as "a mighty procedural octopus with which Barry slowly became more and more entangled" (Cocks, 1977, p52). In the early months of 2017 the Restoration and Renewal programme, having already been analysed in detail by the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, was placed under scrutiny by two further committees. The Treasury Committee was first, announcing an inquiry on 16 January 2017, followed two weeks later by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). As is typical for PAC inquiries, PAC reported quickly, endorsing the Joint Committee recommendation on full decant and pressing the Government to put the issue before both Houses without further delay, warning of the risk to public money of failing to make a decision (Public Accounts Committee, 2017b). Exactly a week after the PAC reported, the Treasury Committee published what it titled a "preliminary report" (House of Commons, Treasury Committee, 2017a). This was an unusual move. The committee had not held any oral evidence sessions, and the report did not refer to any of the written evidence received. Instead the report detailed what the committee intended to consider during its inquiry (something traditionally contained in a press release, if at all) and stated that its aim was to offer "constructive challenge" to the case for full decant, suggesting that it sought to counter or spoil the PAC report (House of Commons Treasury Committee, 2017b, p 3-4). This was further suggested by the last sentence of the short report:

> "Until this work [the Treasury Committee inquiry] has been carried out it, it is our view that it would be imprudent for the House to commit to a specific option or timetable" (House of Commons Treasury Committee, 2017b, p 3-4).

We can be clear, therefore, that the Treasury Committee sought to delay any debate on the floor of the House of Commons. Another date for a debate had been circulating, to take place after Parliament returned from its Easter recess. The seniority of the Treasury Committee

Chair, Andrew Tyrie (he also held the position of Chair of the Liaison Committee), and status as an MP from the governing party suggested that he would be successful in delaying the planned debate. As the Government had shown itself unwilling to put the issue of R&R into the spotlight, being able to point to a select committee of the House considering an issue as a reason not to hold a debate might have been helpful. We cannot know, though, how successful the Treasury Committee's request would have been. Just hours before Commons had been due to return from recess, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, announced her intention to hold a general election. By the time of the dates envisaged for debates in each House on R&R, the 2015 Parliament had been dissolved. Dissolution did not just stop work in each chamber, but also on the Committee corridor: all select committees were disbanded automatically, and the Treasury Committee's inquiry would remain incomplete. Any action on R&R would have to wait for the new Parliament.

June 2017 – January 2018

When the new Parliament opened in early June, Theresa May had survived as Prime Minister only through a confidence and supply agreement with the Democratic Unionist Party (the impact of this is discussed further in section 6.2). In a post-election reshuffle a new Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom was appointed, and in just her second weekly appearance at the Despatch Box, she was pressed on a date for the R&R debate. Her response was non-committal:

> "On restoration and renewal, the Commissions of both Houses are looking at the proposals and at what is to be done, and we hope to make some announcements in due course." (HC Deb, 29 Jun 2017, c741)

By the time the Commons and Lords returned from their summer recess on 5 September 2017, 362 days had passed since the Joint Committee had called for action to be taken on R&R "without delay" (JCPW, 2016a, p 168). On the eve of the one-year anniversary of the report, Baroness Stowell, who had co-chaired the Joint Committee, pressed the Government on when the report would be debated and was informed of a new timetable: the intention was for the debate to be held in autumn (HL Deb, 14 Sept 2017, 1424). At her next appearance at the Despatch Box, Leadsom confirmed this timing and also spoke of her "determination to see some progress" (HC Deb, 12 Oct 2017, c458)—indicating a change in her position over the preceding three months. The sense of personal ownership over the issue was reinforced 12 days later when Leadsom, alongside her counterpart in the Lords, Baroness Evans, wrote to MPs and Peers "to inform colleagues of our proposed approach" (Leadsom and Evans, 2017). This is a crucial point in the R&R process: after over a year of silence from ministers, the letter

provided a crucial insight into their thinking. Furthermore, the language used to define the purpose of the project suggested a departure from the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster:

> We believe that there is a clear and pressing need to renovate the Palace of Westminster in a comprehensive and strategic manner to first and foremost improve the safety and security of school children, visitors, staff, members and peers, and to prevent significant building failure. (Leadsom and Evans, 2017)

This suggests a reframing of the problem: the primary focus of R&R had become "safety and security", with the school children visiting the building listed first in the order of who needed to be protected. This change may have reflected an increased concern about security in Westminster, following a terrorist attack in March 2017, in which a police officer guarding the Carriage Gates entrance to the Palace was stabbed and killed. The need to prevent major infrastructure failure is listed second, and then the need to protect the heritage of the building. The 'renewal' part of 'Restoration and Renewal' is not mentioned.

Beyond the language used, there was an even more significant departure from the Joint Committee's report. MPs and Peers would no longer be given an opportunity to choose a delivery option and make what had been termed "a decision in principle", to allow preparatory work to begin (HC Deb, 2 Feb 2017, c1176; HC Deb, 26 Oct 2017, c435). Instead, the Government's motion would propose establishing the necessary governance bodies, and instructing them to consider the costs and benefits of three delivery options:

1. full decant;
2. partial decant of each House separately, and
3. a new concept of a 'parliamentary foothold', in which Parliament would retain access to part of the Palace, such as Westminster Hall, during the works.

After this work (an estimated 12-18 months), one of the new governance bodies (the R&R sponsor board) would make a recommendation to Parliament on the way forward (Leadsom and Evans, 2017). Leadsom accompanied the letter with an interview on BBC Radio 4's *World at One* in which she suggested that the costs of full decant had not been "properly bottomed out" by the Joint Committee, and thus the Government's motion would not endorse it as a delivery option (World at One, 2017). It was, however, Leadsom added, "a decision for Parliament, not for Government" (World at One, 2017).

The progress towards a debate was welcomed by Tom Brake MP, speaking for the Commons Commission, in the chamber two days later. In an answer to a tabled question (suggesting the

answer was pre-written and approved by the Commission), Brake indicated frustration with the Government's lack of action to date describing how "substantial progress" had been "hampered by the lack of a decision in principle": something only the Government could enable (HC Deb, 26 Oct 2017, c435). In the chamber Brake was prompted to go further. Liberal Democrat MP, Jo Swinson, suggested that the "public might be somewhat puzzled at the thought of a further 12 to 18 months' delay while options that have already been assessed are discussed yet again", and Chris Bryant argued that it was "downright irresponsible of the Government consistently to delay" (HC Deb, 26 Oct 2017, cc435-436). Brake's diplomatic response reflected the difficulty in speaking for the Commission:

> "For the reasons I set out about the risk profile associated with the services in the building, I certainly support what the hon. Gentleman says about the need for urgent action to be taken, although I may not echo the tone that he uses." (HC Deb, 26 Oct 2017, c436)

On 23 November 2017, a date was finally set for the Commons debate: 11 January 2018—only for Leadsom to be criticised by Shadow Leader of the House, Valerie Vaz, for breaking the commitment to hold the debate before-Christmas, and for scheduling the debate on a Thursday, when many MPs would have returned to their constituency (HC Deb, 23 Nov 2017, c1185-86). On 21 December Leadsom announced that the planned debate would be cancelled and rescheduled in the New Year (HC Deb, 21 Dec 2017, c1287).

At the start of 2018, three MPs (Sir Edward Leigh, Shailesh Vara and Stephen Pound) sought to take matters into their own hands by applying to the Backbench Business Committee (BBCOM) for an R&R debate in backbench time (House of Commons Backbench Business Committee, 2018). While all three MPs believed that the building was in a dangerously dilapidated state, they opposed full decant. They had drafted a motion supporting this position, but called for this to be amendable, recognising the need above all else for the Commons to make a decision. The BBCOM approved this debate, but before it could be held, the Leader of the House committed to a new date—Wednesday 31 January—for the Government-led debate in the main chamber (HC Deb, 18 Jan 2018, c1055). Sir Edward Leigh claimed the Government might not have rescheduled the debate without this intervention (interview, May 2018). Indeed, the rescheduling of the debate was viewed as a success for backbenchers. Ian Paisley MP, a member of the Joint Committee told me:

> "I think there was a lot of cowardice in the Government, in terms of not being prepared to take this immediately and drive it forward, instead they waited and waited and waited and eventually we really bludgeoned this back on the floor." (Interview, June 2018)

For the first seven months of the 2017 Parliament, progress on reaching a decision on Restoration and Renewal was slow and stuttering. This part of the chapter has chronicled the delays on the part of the Government, and crucially the way that opposition and backbench MPs pressed the Leader of the House to act. This chapter now moves to an analysis of how the problem, policy and politics streams developed during this period, the countervailing force of institutional traditions, and how understanding the politics of the period can explain not just the delays in policy change in 2016 and 2017, but also how R&R gained a place on the decision-making agenda in January 2018.

6.2 MSF Plus analysis

This chapter has set out the developments for the second part of the policy window, after the publication of the Joint Committee's report in September 2016, to the announcement of an R&R debate in the House of Commons in January 2018. It has shown initial optimism that the Joint Committee's report would be debated and a decision taken on the future of the building was quickly replaced with frustration as the Government declined to hold the debate, due to opposition among ministers and MPs. After a substantial delay caused by the snap 2017 general election, this opposition was then defeated by a concerted effort from (primarily) backbenchers (both supporters and opponents of the decant proposal), who sought to redefine the key political arguments around R&R. This pushed the Government into holding the debate. By mid-January 2018, the issue had moved onto the decision-making agenda, but the streams were not yet ready to be coupled for policy change.

This analysis is divided into four main parts, each considering one of the main elements of the MSF Plus theoretical framework: the problem, policy and politics streams, and the Historical Institutionalist lens. The developments in each of the streams is set out below in *Figure 6.2*. which demonstrates how the chances of policy change fell substantially in mid-2017 due to the snap general election. It further shows how institutional factors continued to work against policy change.

Figure 6.2. MSF Plus analysis: June 2016 – January 2018

MSF Plus analysis: June 2016 – Jan 2018

Legend: Problem stream — Policy stream — Politics stream — Historical Institutionalism

Sept 2016: JCPW report published

Sept 2016: JCPW recommend full decant

Mar 2017: Treasury & PAC reports showed competing problem definitions among MPs

Oct 2017 Leadsom letter states "clear and pressing need" for repairs

Jan 2018 BBCOM request shows urgency of problem

Jan 2018: Backbench pressure forces Govt to hold R&R debate

Sept 2016: Govt support indicated by JCPW chairs backing report.

Oct 2017: Leadsom commits to holding R&R debate

Mar 2017: Treasury & PAC reports showed 'miscoupling' of problem and policies

June 2017: GE delays R&R debate

Oct 2017: Leadsom letter shows further miscoupling of problem and policy preventing alignment

Sept 2016: Narrow scope of JCPW report shaped by institutional norms

Mar 2017: No-one to adjudicate between conflicting select cttees

Spring 2017: Govt unwilling to table debate

X-axis: Jul-16, Aug-16, Sep-16, Oct-16, Nov-16, Dec-16, Jan-17, Feb-17, Mar-17, Apr-17, May-17, Jun-17, Jul-17, Aug-17, Sep-17, Oct-17, Nov-17, Dec-17, Jan-18

The Problem Stream

This analysis looks at how the problem stream developed during the June 2016 to January 2018 period. It makes two core arguments:

1. This period provides further evidence for the existence of multiple elements of the problem stream—tributaries—which made up the stream as a whole. Each tributary needed be aligned internally (i.e. by agreeing a problem definition) before the problem stream could be coupled.
2. The definition of the problem continued to be shaped by three factors: the narrow policy community, the wider political context, and institutional norms and traditions. This worked against a broader problem definition.

It concludes that the overall problem stream did not become ready for coupling by January 2018.

Multiple problem streams – or tributaries

A key theme in this case study is that there are multiple problem streams—tributaries—each comprising different critical actors, which needed to be aligned before the stream was ready for coupling. As a result, defining the 'problem' of the Palace of Westminster was not a one-off task. The previous chapter has shown how a problem definition emerged between 2012 and 2016, but that the stream as a whole remained unaligned, as the definition was not shared across all stakeholders and key groups. This is a crucial point: without widespread acceptance that there was a problem, policy change could not occur. This section considers how acceptance of the problem developed in two of the tributaries developed between June 2016 and January 2018: the Government and the House of Commons.

Figure 6.3. indicates the state of the tributaries when the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster reported on 8 September 2016. This was a critical point in the policy window. The chairing of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster by two ministers—the Leader of the Commons and the Leader of the Lords—indicates that the problem definition that had developed during the first part of the window: "an impending crisis which we cannot responsibly ignore" was in effect adopted by Government. A crucial tributary was thus aligned, moving closer to the problem stream being ready for coupling. Crucially, however, there is little evidence that the definition had been adopted widely across the rest of the problem

stream: even after the Joint Committee reported, there was little evidence of awareness or support for R&R among MPs.

Figure 6.3: The Problem Stream, September 2016. Key: medium blue box = aligned, light blue box = not aligned.
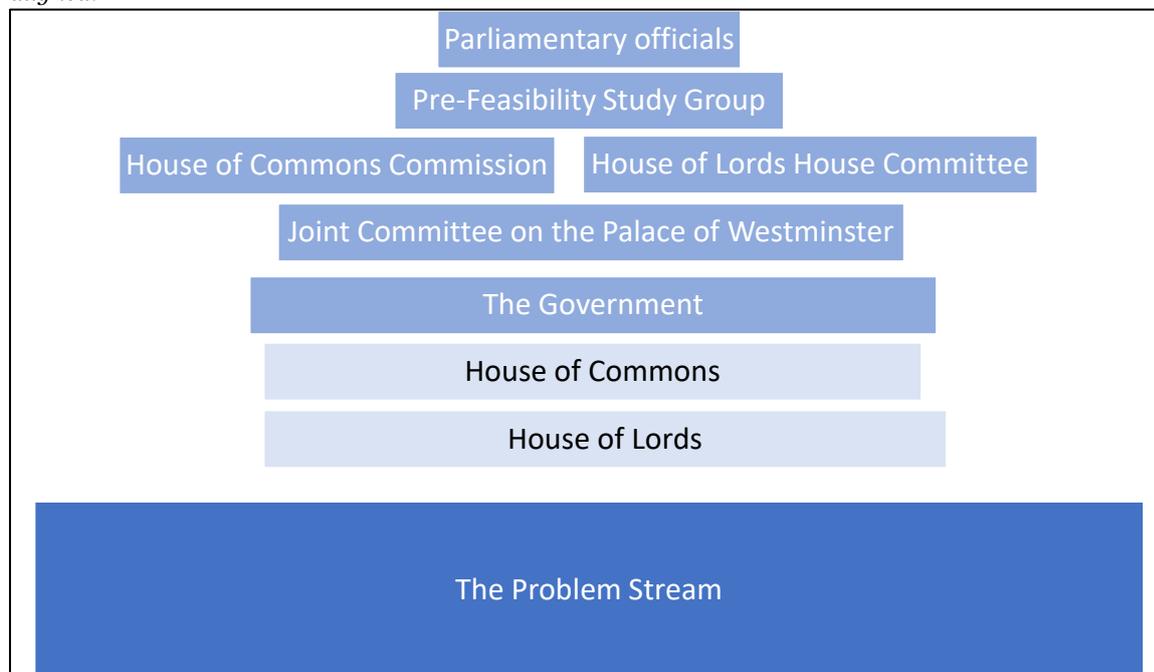
Furthermore, the joining of each tributary to the overall stream needed to be a continual process. While the support of the two Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster for the Committee's recommendations indicated Government support at the time the report was written, by the time the report was agreed and published neither were still in post (and there would be a further change in Leader of the Commons before the report was debated in the Commons). An official close to the programme noted how each new minister needed to be persuaded of the 'problem' (interview, anonymous official, 2018). Crucially, however, the Government tributary was not just the Leader of the House (or Lords) but comprised of a range of actors, who also perceived the issue of the Palace differently (Chapter 8 notes the particular difficulty faced by Commons Leaders in persuading colleagues of parliamentary reform). Within the Government, key figures, including the Chief Whip during this part of the policy window (Gavin Williamson MP) did not consider the state of the Palace to be a problem requiring urgent policy change (this is explored further in Chapter 8). The absence of an agreed definition means that the 'Government' tributary can therefore be said to be changing through this period, from aligned to unaligned, as shown in *Figure 6.4. Figure 6.4.* also reflects the change in internal governance arrangements in the House of Lords during this period: the replacement of the House Committee with the House of Lords Commission in 2017.

Figure 6.4: The Problem Stream, October 2016 - January 2018, showing that the Government became unaligned during this period. Key: medium blue box = aligned, light blue box = unaligned.
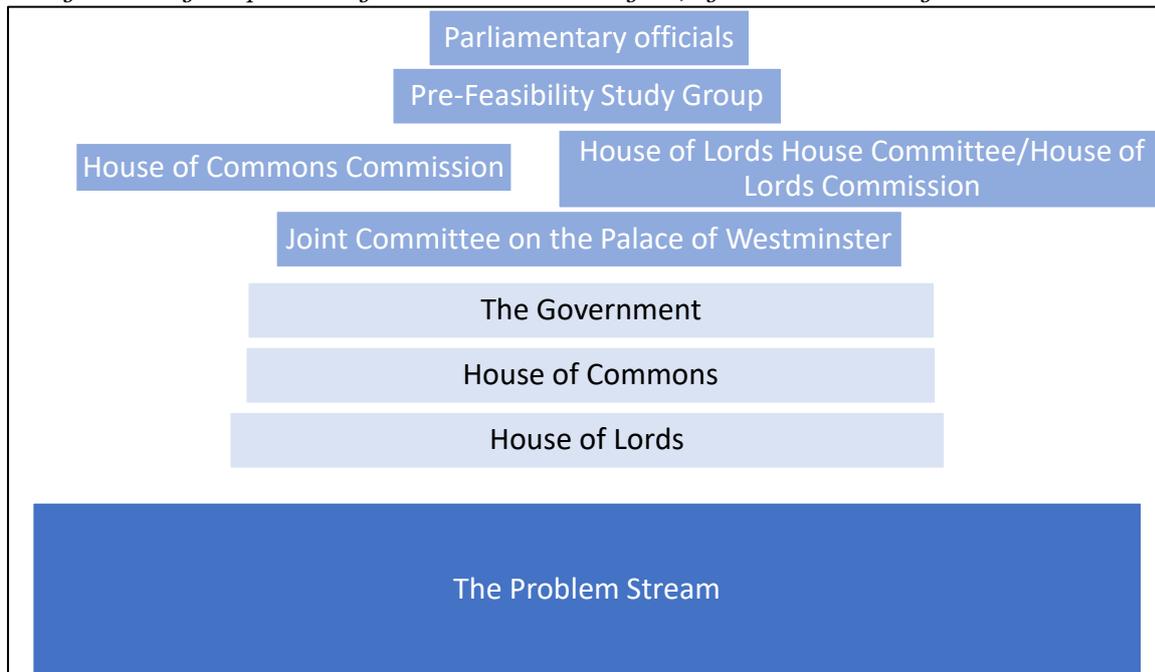
Part of the Government's resistance to the problem definition was a belief that policy change—which definition of a 'problem' deems necessary—was unpopular in the Commons as a whole. Section 6.1 has further shown how the Government referred to the lack of support among MPs as a reason for not bringing forward a motion backing the full decant option (in the Leadsom and Evans letter to Parliamentarians in October 2017). Crucially, the Treasury Committee inquiry showed how the scepticism that the risks to the infrastructure were so severe that parliamentarians would need to move out (decant) to enable a refurbishment programme. This disagreement on the state of the problem directly led to an alternative policy proposal: an example of miscoupling between problem definition and policy solution. This is explored further in the next section of the chapter, but it is necessary to note here that the House of Commons tributary remained unaligned.

Defining a problem

The Joint Committee's report confirmed a narrow definition of the problem focusing primarily on the condition of the physical building, rather than the wider condition of democracy in the UK. While the Committee recommended that Restoration and Renewal should also include making the parliamentary building "more open, efficient, inclusive and outward-facing", it described the "main problem", as "the building's mechanical and electrical (M&E) services: the vast network of pipes, cables and machinery that carry heat, ventilation, air-conditioning,

power, water, data, and dozens of other essential services around the building" (JCPW, 2016a, p 5). As discussed in the previous chapter, this narrow problem definition can be traced back to three main factors:

1. the narrow policymaking community;
2. political factors; and
3. institutional norms and traditions

This section looks at these three elements in turn.

In theory, the establishment of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster marked a shift to a more open policymaking process, as responsibility for R&R moved away from the internal governance bodies in each House and to a joint select committee. In practice, however, while this development opened up the issue to new voices and opinions, this was only to a very limited extent, as discussed in Chapter 5: the call for evidence was drafted narrowly, attracting relatively few external submissions and responses from only a tiny proportion of parliamentarians. Beyond this self-selecting group, there was a lack of wider engagement, with no additional public engagement activities. In effect, the policy community remained closed and the problem remained defined narrowly.

The wider political context continued to influence a narrow problem definition. The austerity of the 2010-2015 Parliament had continued after the 2015 general election and MPs remained concerned about the prospect of spending money on their legislative building. Shailesh Vara told the Westminster Hall debate in January 2017:

> "at a time of austerity when we are writing to our constituents and saying that they cannot have an additional few pounds for whatever they are seeking money for, do we really want to go to the public and say that, nevertheless, we want to spend billions of pounds on our place of work? I do not think that in the present economic climate that is sustainable." (HC Deb, 25 Jan 2017, c113WH)

As a result, even supporters of R&R were at pains to stress the essential nature of the work (for example, Chris Bryant argued in the same debate "this is not about a fancy tarting up of the building" (HC Deb, 25 Jan 2017, c97WH)). As noted in Chapter 5, this reflected both a belief that the best way to get R&R approved in a period of austerity was to pitch it as a necessary construction project, but also a lack of interest in exploring the potential of a broader project (which would have entailed a different 'problem' to be solved).

This narrow problem definition was also shaped by the institutional context. The "norm-building aspects of institutions" (Boräng, 2015, p 228) shape how problems are perceived. In Westminster, the norms and traditions worked against addressing even the physical problems of the building. Lord Lisvane suggested there was an "institutional, cultural caution, an ability to ignore potential hazards" in Westminster, adding:

> "I think it was successive generations of politicians and all the habits of thought 'too soon after the war'... If you look fifty years back it was easier to say 'well actually we can muddle along for a while, surely', and then you look thirty years back and people are saying 'well it's worked alright so far'." (Interview, June 2018)

If Members were able to look past the leaking pipes and crumbling stonework in front of their very eyes, it is easy to see how a more abstract problem—the potential link between their derelict workplace and the state of democracy in the wider country would be neglected. This wilful blindness was fostered by being within the institution at Westminster: as discussed in Chapter 4, Labour Peer (and former MP) David Blunkett discussed how his colleagues changed their views on parliamentary reform soon after entering the Commons: "it was as though a spell has been cast on them" (Blunkett, 2017). It is notable that the few recent voices calling for changes to the parliamentary building—and arguing that such changes would transform the culture of the institution—have come from newer MPs (for example Frith ed, 2018) or from MPs representing the SNP or Plaid Cymru, who have wider objections to the Westminster Parliament. Across the wider population of MPs, with much greater experience in the Commons, such views were rare. Indeed, many of these MPs adopted the attitude described by Lord Lisvane, resisting calls for action on the building. This attitude supports the argument made earlier in this section: the Commons tributary remained unconvinced by the problem definition, and thus unaligned.

Concluding thoughts

This analysis has shown how the 'problem' of the Palace of Westminster continued to be defined in narrow terms during the June 2016 to January 2018 period. Despite this definition, the problem stream as a whole, however, did not become ready for coupling with the policy and politics streams during this period. This was a result of the multiple tributaries within the problem stream: the problem—even defined narrowly—had not been recognised by the broader population of MPs or the Government. This analysis has further noted that disagreement over the problem definition led to 'miscoupling' with policy solutions, and it is to the policy stream that this chapter now turns.

The Policy Stream

The policy stream, in Kingdon's original model, was a "policy primeval soup" in which a large number of policy proposals go through an "evolutionary" process as they are refined and combined over a long period, until ready for the decision-making agenda (Kingdon, 2014, p 124). Chapter 5 demonstrated how the R&R case study offered both reinforcement and departure from this model: institutional factors enabled the long period of 'softening up' envisaged by Kingdon, but also restricted entry into the policy stream, preventing the input of new ideas from the outside. It also demonstrated the absence of a policy entrepreneur during this early part of this policy window.

Analysing the policy stream for the middle part of the policy window—June 2016 to January 2018— reveals two key findings:

1. The Joint Committee's report continued the process of narrowing down the policy stream to a single policy solution: the refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster with a full decant.
2. The policy stream remained unaligned, as the broader population of MPs remained unconvinced about the case for full decant.

This section looks at each finding in turn, and then further tests the findings from Chapter 5 relating to the institutional influence: the 'softening-up period', the development of new alternatives; and the role of the policy entrepreneur, in order to understand why the policy stream remained unaligned

Narrowing down the policy stream: the report of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster

Not only did the Joint Committee report endorse the problem of the Palace of Westminster, but it also narrowed down the policy stream. The report took the analysis of the IOA report and did not seek to reopen or challenge the 2012 decision to rule out a new parliamentary building. Instead, it narrowed down the policy options to just one: a refurbished (but not significantly changed) Palace of Westminster after a full decant. The Joint Committee did conclude that the policy solution should go beyond the bare minimum approach, stating that R&R offered "a one-off opportunity to renew and transform the Palace of Westminster into a home fit for a 21st Century Parliament" (JCPW, 2016a, p 81). As with the R&R programme objectives discussed in the previous chapter, there was little exploration of what a 21st Century

Parliament meant. Furthermore, these words were immediately undermined by the rest of the recommendation which argued that any such changes must offer "excellent value for money", and warned against spending "taxpayers' money on unnecessary embellishments and fripperies" (JCPW, 2016a, p 81). This awkward juxtaposition was repeated later in the report, when the Joint Committee recommended that the programme should go beyond the "do minimum" option, as the "marginal cost of much of this work will be relatively low"—but then added a test for any such work:

> "A key test for all the design decisions for the Programme should be the delivery of value for money for the taxpayer. In the current fiscal climate, we will need to be able to demonstrate convincingly that every penny which is spent on the Programme, beyond the bare minimum which is needed to secure the future of the Palace of Westminster, delivers a clear benefit to the nation." (JCPW, 2016a, p 82).

The Joint Committee's report revealed an institutional ideology at the core of the policymaking environment for Restoration and Renewal: the continuation of existing policies (by maintaining the building without changes) would be the standard against which other policies would be judged. The value for money of replicating the same design of the Palace of Westminster would not be required to show a "clear benefit to the nation", but any changes would have to face such a test. This set out an uneven playing field for policy solutions, demonstrating a mindset which prioritises the history of the building, and constrains what would be viewed as acceptable or appropriate in the future: a demonstration of institutional factors on the policy stream. As Bird (2010, p 525) set out: "it is contextual matters that very much shape policy outcomes".

Furthermore, as with the '21st century parliament' programme objective, there was no clear definition of what 'value for money' or 'clear benefit to the nation' actually meant. Without this, it must be assumed that the concepts refer solely to the country's economic, rather than democratic position. Again, this is influenced by the problem definition: any work beyond the absolutely essential mechanical and electrical engineering work is viewed as potentially unnecessary. A wider scope of the problem would have allowed more scope for demonstrating the potential benefits of a wider policy stream. This link between the problem definition and choice of policy solution challenges a tenet of the literature using the Multiple Streams Framework, which highlights the propensity for solutions to be developed in isolation to problems, or for solutions already developed to be assigned to a problem, with the problem stream being the last to align (as noted in Rochefort and Cobb, 1993). For example, Stone (1989, p 298) described how "people with pet solutions often march around looking for problems that need their solutions" noting how urban mass transit was presented as an answer to different problems, such as congestion or pollution) over different decades. In contrast, no

actors sought to assign the problem of the Palace of Westminster to a pet solution: this chapter has discussed how there was little appetite for a new parliamentary building, for example. The R&R programme—and specifically the full decant—was seen, even by its supporters, as a necessary but not desirable response to the risk caused by the Palace. Very few MPs, it seems, wanted to leave the Palace even temporarily (with the exception of the SNP and Plaid Cymru MPs, as noted above). The framing of the problem of one of construction and heritage determined the choice of policy solution. Not only was this a policy window opened by the problem stream, but the search for solutions—the policy stream—was shaped by the definition of the problem.

The Joint Committee's conclusion also reflects the political context of the time, specifically the concern about the use of taxpayers' money during a time of austerity, thus making "every penny" so significant (JCPW, 2016a, p 82) Opening up the policy stream to ideas that potentially could cost more than simply recreating the Palace of Westminster (albeit without clear evidence that this would be the case: indeed, an argument could be made for the wider value for money delivered by a more imaginative scheme), was seen as unthinkable both due to the institutional mindset in Parliament, but also in the political climate of the time.

Resistance in the policy stream

Even the narrow policy solution identified in the Joint Committee's report struggled to gain acceptance in the broader policy stream. This was demonstrated in January 2017 by the announcement of an inquiry into R&R by the Treasury Select Committee, as discussed in section 6.1. The announcement was a surprise: the parliamentary status of R&R meant that the Treasury Committee did not have an explicit remit to examine the project. House of Commons select committees, however, have a large amount of autonomy in their choice of inquiries[17] (the only body that could have adjudicated between two committees, the 'super-committee' of all Committee Chairs, the Liaison Committee, was also chaired by Tyrie). It was not simply the question of the legitimacy of the inquiry that concerned supporters of R&R. Crucially, they felt that the inquiry was seeking to reopen the question about full decant—that is, whether the refurbishment of the Palace required the building to be emptied of MPs and Peers, or whether work could be done on a rolling programme, over several decades. Baroness Stowell, who had co-chaired the Joint Committee's inquiry, said it was "intensely frustrating

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[17] Beyond the usual parliamentary restrictions around considering issues that are *sub judice* for example.

that one Select Committee felt it appropriate to sit in judgement of another which had spent a year scrutinising the matter, and potentially adding further delay" (interview, July 2018).

In the same month that the Treasury Committee launched its inquiry, opposition to decant was also made clear by two MPs—Sir Edward Leigh and Shailesh Vara—in the Westminster Hall debate on R&R. Both Leigh and Vara have stated that they do not dispute the need for the work (indeed, both have argued that if the fire risk is as high as reported, building cannot wait for R&R to start in the mid-2020s (HC Deb, 25 Jan 2017, c118WH; interview, Leigh, May 2018)). However, both were strongly opposed to a decant: partly for financial reasons, but primarily for symbolic reasons. Vara closed his speech by accepting that full decant was in fact "the best answer" to the question of how to deliver R&R, but that it should never have been considered, as the main criteria was that parliament should remain in the Palace during the works (HC Deb, 25 Jan 2017, c113WH). Both the Treasury Inquiry, and the Westminster Hall debate thus demonstrated the fundamental opposition to decant in parts of the Commons. It also demonstrated the potential for 'miscoupling' of policies to problems. If the definition of the problem was shaped by the precondition that the Palace had to remain the home of the UK Parliament (whatever the state of the building), this in turn shaped the choice of policies to tackle the problem.

The opposition to full decant can be viewed as one of the key reasons behind the change of approach taken to R&R, by the new Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom, and the Leader of the Lords, Baroness Evans, in October 2017. The ministers' letter to MPs and Peers, which announced a departure from the Joint Committee's recommendation for a vote on the full decant option, noted the "range of views held by members of both Houses" (Leadsom and Evans, 2017). How widespread was the opposition to decant at this point? Joint Committee member, Chris Bryant, has argued that if the Committee's report had been held "immediately in 2016 [after publication] there was quite a substantial view in favour of 'let's get on with it'", but that instead, during the "enormously lengthy delay" caused by the Government not scheduling the debate, the "vacuum was filled by Edward Leigh and Shailesh Vara" (interview, April 2018). But it remains unclear whether this opposition remained confined solely to a small group of MPs (led by Leigh and Vara) or had spread across the 650-strong House of Commons. At their request to the Backbench Business Committee in January 2018 Leigh, Vara and Pound claimed to have 50 MPs supporting their request for a debate (although it was noted that they had only provided 22 names) (House of Commons Backbench Business Committee, 2018). Even if the higher figure was correct, it would comprise of fewer than 8% of the membership of the Commons. It can be argued, however, that large-scale lack of support could be as damaging as smaller-scale opposition: there were few voices (particularly on the

Conservative side) countering the anti-decant views (Mudie, 2017). One notable finding from this research was how little knowledge or interest there is in R&R among the general population of MPs. As was noted in the previous chapter, mentions of the state of the building or the potential for decant, in the Commons chamber highlighted the difference between members who had served on the Joint Committee or taken an interest in the issue, and the vast majority of their colleagues. This can be attributed to two main reasons: first, the role of a Member of Parliament by necessity involves prioritisation, the undefined scope of the role meant that it would not be possible for any MP to take an interest in all—or even most—issues that cross their desk. The second reason is linked to this: the internal administration of the House was one that would be prioritised by very few MPs. The level of attention paid to a subject in a policy community has been said to be critical to understanding policy change (Zahariadis, 2008). The infrastructure of the Palace of Westminster was not only seen as, quite frankly, dull, but crucially, fixing the wiring of the building was not what parliamentarians felt they had been elected to do. A slightly less charitable explanation for the lack of interest came from one Labour MP:

> "I don't think Members generally have taken a great interest in it […], you know, from the sort of days when the House was a gentlemen's club onwards, then you wouldn't, as a member of a gentlemen's club go in to the gentlemen's club and want to know substantially what's been happening with the plumbing in the building, and how it works, you just want the bloke on the door to open the place and the butler to take your coat and serve you drinks and that's the end of it, and some chaps who aren't gentlemen will deal with it all, and there still is that sort of approach." (Interview, anonymous MP, 2018)

The institutional lens and the policy stream

The assessment of the policy stream using an institutional lens in Chapter 5 identified three key findings: the institutional influence enabled the long period of 'softening-up' envisaged by Kingdon, but also restricted the policy community, preventing the input of new ideas from outside the institution. This further restricted the potential number of policy entrepreneurs working to couple the streams.

This analysis has shown how, in the June 2016 to January 2018 period institutional factors continued to shape the policy stream. The slow pace of change in Westminster (explored further later in this chapter) may have blocked immediate progress but one official argued that it was necessary for exactly the type of 'softening-up' envisaged by Kingdon:

> "The major delay was really getting a widespread understanding among Members of the seriousness of the problem, and getting public opinion informed about that, and

that trickling down and gradually turning into a kind of consensus, that was always going to take a long time." (Interview, Ware, June 2018)

Ware's comments confirm how the policy stream was linked to the problem definition. In doing so, this provides further evidence for the argument promoted by Blum (2018, p 102) that softening-up should be considered "not as the process inside the policy stream as which it is usually portrayed, but rather as building channels between the streams". It also confirms the first of the findings about the influence of the institution on the policy stream.

Ware's description of the 'softening-up' period further confirms the second key finding of the institutional impact on the policy stream: it remained restricted to MPs and Peers (and policy proposals that met their values), making it difficult (although not impossible) for new ideas to enter the policy stream. This period provides a clear example of the restricted policy community: Professor Sarah Childs was seconded into Westminster for a year to consider how the institution could become a more diversity-sensitive Parliament. Her final report was published in July 2016 and included several recommendations on the design for any temporary or refurbished parliamentary building (Childs, 2016). Despite her report being launched within the Palace of Westminster by the Speaker of the House, it was not mentioned by any MP or Peer in the Westminster Hall debate on R&R just six months later, nor in the 2018 debates in either House (UK Parliament, 2016). Ideas for major changes to the building were not even considered, even when specifically commissioned by the institution. As a result, the policy stream was entirely restricted to the extent of the decant during a rebuilding project, with no consideration of alternative ideas.

In contrast to the earlier period, however, we can see the emergence of key actors working to couple the multiple streams—and thus acting as policy entrepreneurs. Crucially, these figures were coming from the backbenches—as MPs sought to force the issue onto the agenda in the face of resistance from Government. Chris Bryant (through his Westminster Hall debate in January 2017), Meg Hillier (through the PAC report recommending full decant) and Sir Edward Leigh (through his application to the Backbench Business Committee) all sought to play this role. They were each aided by their status within the institution: as senior MPs with the credibility gained from their roles as current or former select committee chairs.[18] The progress achieved by the end of this period—the scheduling of the R&R debate—can be attributed to these MPs, which provides evidence for Kingdon's argument for the presence of

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[18] Bryant chaired the Finance Committee; Hillier chaired the Public Accounts Committee; and Leigh chaired the Public Accounts Commission and was a former Chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

policy entrepreneurs in agenda-setting. The tactics of Bryant, Hillier and Leigh are further explored in Chapter 8.

Concluding thoughts

This section has considered how the policy stream developed between June 2016 and January 2018. It has shown how the stream continued to narrow down towards a single policy solution: the refurbishment of the Palace with a full decant, a policy that was shaped by the problem definition. The stream moved closer to a policy solution after the publication of the report of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, but the combination of the lack of widespread interest in the issue, and the small-scale (but strongly felt) opposition to full decant, meant that the policy stream remained not ready for coupling. This analysis has further shown how the developments within the policy stream were shaped by the institutional context: particularly in the slow pace of change and the closed policy community. It has also demonstrated how key figures began to act as policy entrepreneurs (for the first time in this policy window) to force the issue onto the agenda, in line with Kingdon's model of the stream. Their success is linked to how they used events in the politics stream—which is where this chapter moves next.

The Politics Stream

The "politics" of R&R was described as "the challenge" to the programme by one senior official (Interview, anonymous, 2018). This fits with Kelso's (2009b, p 199) pre-conditions for institutional change, in which she argued that the "most difficult condition to secure is that of political will". Political will was a particular issue during the June 2016 to January 2018 period: Ian Paisley MP, who had served on the Joint Committee said:

> "We took politics out of it for the Committee, when it came back to Parliament politics came back into it." (Interview, October 2018)

Paisley uses the term 'Parliament', but it might be more accurate to say that it was in the Commons in which the 'politics' of R&R was problematic. This is a key point. The previous chapter suggested the idea of multiple elements of the politics stream (with equivalents in the problem stream): these 'streams within the streams' have been termed 'tributaries'. At the start of this middle part of the policy window, while various stakeholders had accepted the need for policy change, five tributaries remained unaligned, blocking policy change.

Figure 6.5: The Politics Stream, June 2016. Key: medium purple box = aligned, light purple box = unaligned.

Parliamentary officials

Pre-Feasibility Study Group

House of Commons Commission   House of Lords House Committee

Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster

The Government

House of Commons

House of Lords

The public

The Politics Stream
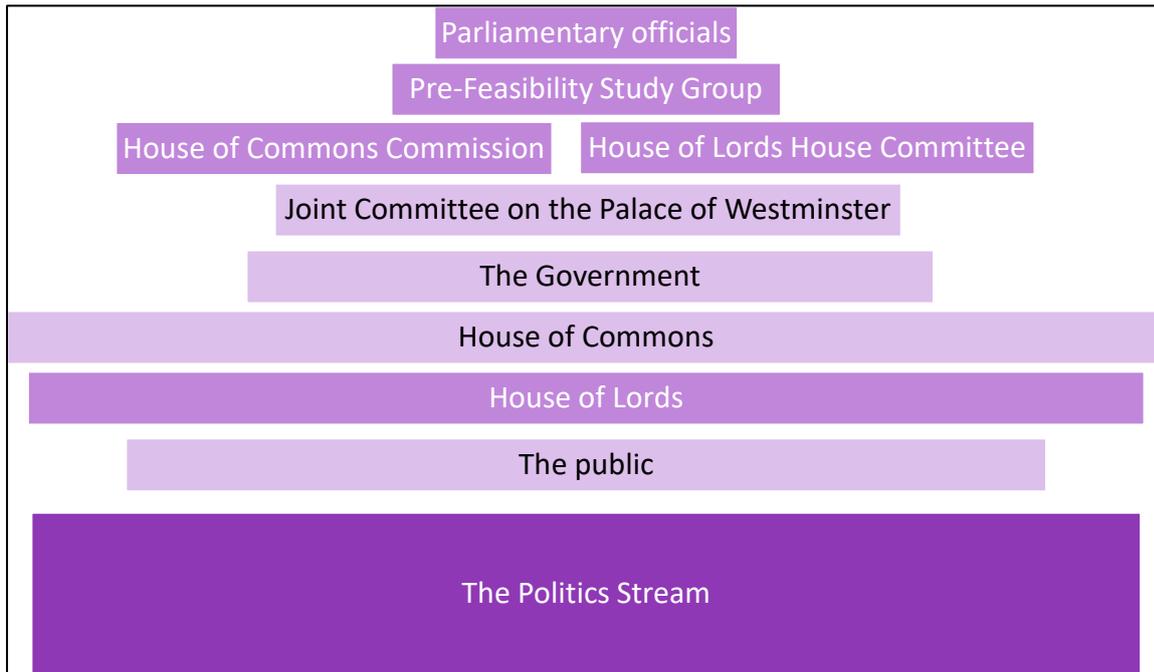
This section considers the impact of political events on policy change between June 2016 and January 2018, using Kingdon's definition of the 'politics stream', as outlined in Chapter 5. It makes three main arguments:

1. Analysis of the June 2016 – January 2018 period provides further evidence for the existence of multiple politics tributaries, combining into a single politics stream.
2. This case study further indicates that referendums could have a similar level of influence on the politics stream as elections.
3. The weight of the House of Commons tributary meant it could shape the overall politics stream.

The EU referendum

The politics stream—particularly in the Government and House of Commons tributaries—during this period was dominated by Brexit, demonstrating why referendums can have as important a role in the politics stream as elections. The Government that had been asked to act on the Joint Committee report in September 2016 was very different to the one that had brought forward the establishment of the Joint Committee 14 months earlier. Immediately after the EU referendum David Cameron resigned as Leader of the Conservative Party, and was succeeded by Theresa May after a short, but brutal, leadership campaign. The early days of May's premiership were, focused on the tasks of implementing the UK's exit from the EU, while governing both a party and country that had split, fundamentally and perhaps

irrevocably, during the referendum campaign. MPs, Peers, and officials, were all unanimous on how the prospect of Brexit monopolised the political agenda. One senior House of Lords official described how Brexit "eats up politicians' brains' bandwidth, they haven't got much time to focus on anything else, because it's really massive" (interview, June 2018). Lord Norton described how "Brexit took over in a way, took over everything so R&R almost became a distraction from the point of view of Government, because Brexit is immediate, R&R is sort of immediate but nonetheless the actual getting out and all the work is for the future" (interview, September 2018). This finding fits with the agenda-setting literature, which finds that the severity of a problem does not necessarily affect the level of government attention it receives, if there is a different problem considered to be more urgent as "attention to one problem depends on the sum of attention currently being paid to all other problems" (Baumgartner et al, 2011, p 953). With numerous domestic issues close to the heart of the Prime Minister (for example, the concerns regarding racial equality raised in her Downing Street speech upon taking power (May, 2016) struggling to receive any attention alongside Brexit, an issue that did not even fall within the Government's remit, such as R&R, fell to a low position on the executive's agenda. The potential cost of R&R, and the concern about a public backlash (discussed in the previous chapter, and explored in depth in Chapter 8) further weakened any resolve to act on the issue. The impact of the EU referendum on the politics stream was thus significant and long-lasting.

The 2017 general election

The EU referendum can also be directly linked to the second general election of the policy window. On 18 April 2017 Theresa May announced her intention to seek an early general election (BBC News, 2017). A general election falls firmly into Kingdon's politics stream, and the immediate impact of the announcement was to reduce the prospects of coupling the streams and policy change. One element of this was simply practical: a date had been agreed between the usual channels for the Commons and Lords to hold their debates on the Joint Committee's report, and the R&R programme as a whole: by the time the date arrived, Parliament had already been dissolved. The very act of calling an election prevented the debate from being held for a minimum of 12 weeks (the wash-up period, the election campaign, and, once the Commons returned, the swearing-in of members and debate on the Queen's Speech, during which there is no substantive business). In practice, however, the delaying effect of the election was even greater, primarily due to the post-election reshuffle and appointment of a new Leader of the House.

The result of the election offered a further obstacle to policy change. The Prime Minister held the election with the aim of increasing the Government's slender working majority (which stood at 17 prior to the election) but ended up losing its majority entirely. As a minority government, not only would securing Brexit prove a challenge, but so would legislating on any issue. In response, the Government sought to avoid holding votes where possible (for example, the parliamentary session was extended from one year to two, to avoid a vote on the Queen's Speech), or simply chose to ignore the results of votes it decided were non-binding (for example, opposition day debates). The prospect of bringing forward a vote on R&R, which was still not a government policy, seemed remote. Senior Conservative backbench MP, Sir Bernard Jenkin placed the lack of a majority second (behind Brexit) as the reason for Government delays on R&R (interview, September 2018). As discussed in Chapter 3, the 'Norton View' posits that that dramatic change in the House of Commons required "a combination of three independent variables": namely, a window of opportunity, both in terms of time and substance; "political willingness on behalf of MPs to use that window of opportunity"; and political leadership by the Leader of the House of Commons (Norton, 1998a, p 153-154). One of the examples of a window of opportunity identified by Norton was the start of a Parliament, if there was a coherent reform proposal. Such a proposal was in place, but the start of the 2017 Parliament did not offer this opportunity for dramatic change. Crucially the political willingness and leadership also required by Norton was also absent.

The lack of political will had a direct impact on the policy window. While Restoration and Renewal was a parliamentary matter, it was reliant on the Government to enable progress. Any decision to accept the recommendation of the Joint Committee had to be taken by both Houses in plenary. Furthermore, there was no automatic mechanism for a debate to be held in either House after the report was published. The allocation of time in the Commons is almost entirely in the hands of the Government (as determined by Standing Order 14). The 2010 and 2015 Parliaments were notable for an increase in opportunities for backbenchers to raise matters on the floor of the House, through the introduction of the Backbench Business Committee, and a dramatic increase in the number of Urgent Questions granted by the Speaker. Crucially, however, neither option could guarantee a substantive debate or vote. As such, they would not enable a decision on R&R. Furthermore, without a decision in the Commons, the Lords felt they could not proceed with their own debate. Reliant on the Government to allocate time, and without this commitment, progress had stalled.

The politics within Parliament

Another factor in Kingdon's politics stream was the "battle for their share of the policy turf" between congressional committees (Kingdon, 2014, p 153). Such a battle, on the committee corridor of the House of Commons rather than the halls of congress, can be seen in this part of the policy window. This chapter has already noted how the Treasury Committee's inquiry was considered as a challenge to the Joint Committee's recommendation for full decant. In response to the Treasury that the Public Accounts Committee announced its own inquiry into the issue. The Committee Chair, Meg Hillier, said:

> "We were getting frustrated by the fact that while emotions were riding high, we wanted to get the NAO [National Audit Office] and PAC approach to this issue, and we felt that it would be quite authoritative if we got it right." (Interview, September 2018)

While this might simply be seen as a spat between two select committees (chaired by MPs from different parties), it highlights a deeper use of committees to shape the political stream. Both inquiries were attempts to define the political context: the Treasury Committee wanted to prevent the Government from holding the debate; the PAC wanted to place its credibility and weight behind the Joint Committee's recommendations in response. The latter could be said to be successful: the PAC's report, which endorsed R&R and full decant, was cited by several interviewees as being a key factor in winning over MPs who were wavering on the issue. In contrast, the Treasury Committee inquiry fell at the dissolution of Parliament, before it could substantively report, and its Chair, Andrew Tyrie, retired from the Commons.

The select committee turf battle demonstrated a key development in the politics stream during this part of the policy window. MPs who sought policy change were seeking to transfer responsibility moved from the Government to the backbenches. The inaction of the Government, particularly since the Joint Committee reported in September 2016, led MPs to feel the need to take control of the process. It is notable that this sense of responsibility was felt on both sides of the pro and anti-decant debate. The request to the BBCOM for a debate on the issue came from three MPs opposed to decant: one of whom, Shailesh Vara, argued that, because the Government had repeatedly failed to meet their own deadlines, he could not be certain that it would ever hold a debate (Backbench Business Committee, 2018). The response of BBCOM to his request by Leigh as the reason why the Government committed to a debate in government time—and he later suggested that "perhaps we were foolish to force the issue because perhaps there still wouldn't have been a debate now" (interview, May 2018). Whether that is accurate, MPs had successfully forced the issue of the Palace of Westminster onto the agenda, despite the wider political climate—a minority government, a costly project

at a time of austerity, and Brexit. In doing so, the strength of backbench MPs (an issue explored in greater depth in Chapter 8) suggested the possibility that the Commons tributary was not only aligned but could help to make the politics stream overall ready for coupling. This highlights the potential for understanding the tributaries as having different weight: the Government's opposition was able to be overcome by the support in the House of Commons. This is an extension of a concept from Kingdon's original MSF, in which he posited that the different elements in the political stream (such as the national mood and elections) are not of equal strength (Kingdon, 2014, p 164) and reflects the institutional context in which the R&R decision was made. *Figure 6.6.* reflects this by showing the House of Commons tributary as aligned and as a larger size.

Figure 6.6: The Politics Stream January 2018. Key: medium purple box = aligned, light purple box = unaligned.
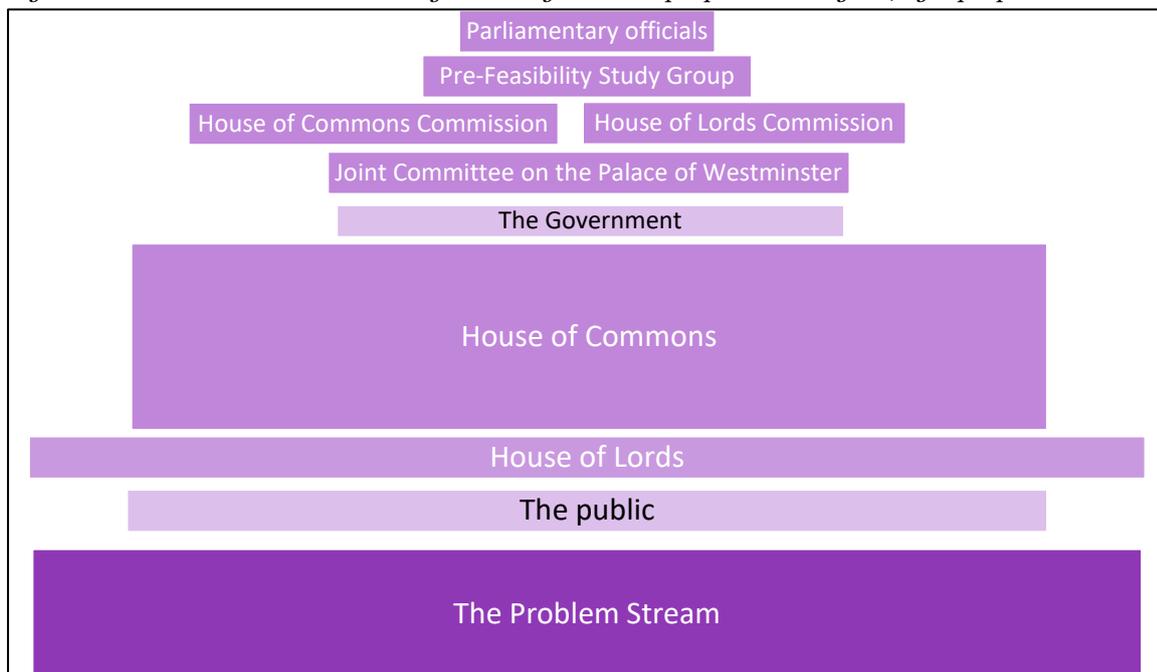
Concluding thoughts

Between June 2016, and December 2017, the Government tributary remained unaligned, and prevented the politics stream overall from being ready for coupling. This section highlighted the impact of the 2016 EU referendum and the 2017 general election to explain why this occurred, and has shown why referendums should be considered as a key part of the politics stream. It then examined the politics within Parliament and demonstrated how the House of Commons tributary became aligned due to the work of influential backbench MPs, pushing the issue of R&R onto the decision-making agenda. The institutional context at Westminster meant that once MPs were able to put the issue onto the agenda, the key tributary became the

Commons stream, demonstrating the different weights of the tributaries. The again highlights the importance of the institutional lens, to which this chapter turns.

Historical Institutionalism

This chapter has considered how the institutional norms and traditions in Westminster shaped how the problem was perceived and the likely policy solutions. Two further elements of the institutional impact on the policy window in this period should also be considered: the impact of past policy decisions and the institutional pace of change. This section looks at both in turn.

Past policy decisions

Interviews highlighted the particular impact of previous policy decisions around the Palace of Westminster. Chapters 2 and 5 demonstrated how the emotional attachment to the building had been fostered through the decisions taken to remain on site since the Palace had become the permanent home of the UK Parliament. A further element of the impact of past decisions was a belief that any building projects on the parliamentary estate would exceed both budgets and timescales. Mark Tami MP suggested that for "some of the buildings around here, it's been pretty disastrous" (interview, May 2018). Viscount Thurso argued that "the House authorities" have:

> "an appalling track record of predicting costs, I mean, if you look at Portcullis House, if you look at the Northern Estate, if you look at virtually every large project, if you started from a basis of 'whatever the number agreed is, double it' you wouldn't be far off." (Interview, June 2018)

The use of Portcullis House as an example of poor construction is perhaps unfair—the National Audit Office compared the timetable for construction of PCH favourably to other public sector projects, and noted that it achieved value for money (National Audit Office, 2002). A belief does not have to be accurate to be influential, however, and the way that interviewees brought up Portcullis House without prompting and the reference to it by an opponent of R&R during the Commons debate in January 2018 demonstrated how it influenced the R&R debate (interview, Brake, May 2018; interview, Gray, June 2018; HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c912). A more recent example of a policy decision on the parliamentary estate affecting how actors viewed the issue of R&R was the August 2017 row over repairs to the Elizabeth Tower in the Palace of Westminster, which necessitated the chimes of Big Ben to be silenced for four years. The work became embroiled in controversy on two points: first, it was unclear who had approved the

silencing of the bongs, with three separate select committees, the Commons Commission, and the Speaker all having varying levels of input, and members or representatives of each denying they approved the work. As such it served as a microcosm of the confused and opaque decision-making process across all governance issues in Westminster. The second point of controversy was over the cost: the expenditure on the Elizabeth Tower was cited a reason not to trust the estimate costs for R&R, as Shailesh Vara MP does in this example:

> "Big Ben has gone from 18 months at 29 million to now being four years and 60 something million. And that four years will rise, because when I spoke to the officials they weren't saying: "yes we're going to get it done in four years" and they weren't saying "it's going to be 61 whatever million it is". So, if their assessment, and these are the same people, these are the same people who said it would take 32 years for a rolling programme and five to eight years for a full decant. They got Big Ben completely wrong." (interview, July 2018)

It is notable, of course, that the Elizabeth Tower row took place during the 2012-2018 policy window, and as such, was fresh in MPs' minds, when considering R&R. Tom Brake MP, the Commons Commission spokesman, was clear that the Elizabeth Tower row affected the trust MPs had for decisions around the parliamentary estate (interview, Brake, May 2018).

A long policy window?

A Historical Institutionalist lens can also help understand how the policy window stayed open during the June 2016 to January 2018 period, when there was little progress in moving towards policy change. This is a critical point in the application of a theoretical framework based on the multiple streams. Kingdon was clear that the periods of time during which policy change would be possible are brief: "once a window opens it does not stay open long" (Kingdon, 2014, p 169). Kingdon suggested that it is not always clear if a window is open, and this has been supported in the literature. Dudley (2013, p 1141) emphasised that "closing of the window may be an event that is only perceived clearly in retrospect, with the result that participants at the time may assume that the window remains open, and act accordingly". Sharma, in his MSF analysis of social policy in India shared this view, agreed that the status of a window can be difficult to discern, suggesting that a window could be considered to be closed if there was a lack of political support (Sharma, 2008). This opens the possibility that instead of one policy window covering the 2012 to 2018 period, there were multiple windows, with all but the last failing to deliver policy change. In this case study, however, this thesis argues that there was a single policy window. During the June 2016 – January 2018 period the possibility of R&R policy change was not ruled out nor explicitly delayed (and there was no new development in the problem or politics stream to open a new window in January 2018). Instead, it just proceeded slowly: positing the theory that the duration of a policy window is

affected by the institutional context and that the specific institutional context in Westminster enabled a long window. For insiders in Parliament, while delays in the decision-making process were considered frustrating, they were not viewed as surprising. Lord Lisvane stated:

> "But after years, and years, I mean I think you could probably say, effectively, 75 years of having done nothing, I don't think anybody expected fast movement." (Interview, Lisvane, June 2018)

Put simply, as Baroness D'Souza argued "things always take time in Parliament" (Interview, July 2019). Why was this the case? One senior official noted how, after hearing a Member describe change in Westminster as "glacially slow", he considered why this was the case, and attributed it to the structure of decision-making (Interview, anonymous official, 2018). Within this context it was parliamentary staff who continued to press for action on the state of the building (for example through taking MPs and Peers on tours of the basement), deploying their responsibility for the institution of parliament and protection of the building. These tours demonstrated that the 'problem' of the dilapidated infrastructure had not gone away (and, in fact, had worsened due to inaction) which helped keep the window open. The role of staff, and how it fits with the concept of a problem broker, is discussed further in Chapter 8 but here it is necessary to note that understanding the specific institutional context, and how this shaped the roles of key actors, helps explain how the policy window was able to remain open during periods of slow progress. The issue of policy window length is explored further in Chapter 9.

Concluding thoughts

Using a Historical Institutionalist lens helps explain why the policy window remained open during the period of lack of progress on R&R, as the slow pace of change in Westminster meant that the duration of a policy window was not as brief as envisaged by Kingdon. This reflected the status of R&R as a parliamentary issue, rather than a government policy and the presence of problem brokers: even if Government attention was elsewhere, there were still officials pushing for action. The institutional lens can further help explain the lack of progress itself, as past policy decisions—such as the construction of Portcullis House and repairs to the Elizabeth Tower—affected how MPs viewed the R&R programme. The institutional context thus adds extra value to an MSF framework.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered a period of approximately 18 months in the policy window for the management of the Palace of Westminster, and shown how it was dominated by delays and inaction. After the publication of the Joint Committee's report, there was an expectation among members of the Committee that their recommendations would be debated and agreed by the Commons and Lords in a matter of weeks. In practice, the Government's control over the agenda prevailed—the exercise of power to effect nondecision-making (Lukes, 1974)—and no debate was held.

To understand how this occurred, we will look deeper. Why could the streams not be coupled? This chapter has set out four main reasons. First, the narrow definition of the problem developed during the first part of the policy window—shaped by the closed policy community, institutional norms and traditions, and the wider political context—and focusing solely on the infrastructure of the Palace, was adopted by the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, indicating progress towards alignment. This period, however, provides further evidence of the multiple tributaries within the problem stream, with different definitions of the problem. In one tributary, while the Government appeared to have accepted the problem definition of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, ministerial turnover and the concerns about opposition to R&R (and specifically, full decant) among MPs (a further tributary of the problem stream that was also unaligned) reversed this position. Without a shared problem definition, the stream could not be aligned for coupling. Second, the multiple problem definitions and an institutional unwillingness to leave the Palace of Westminster prevented the policy stream from aligning around a single solution (full decant) and encouraged the 'miscoupling' of different policies. This prevented the policy stream from aligning. Third, the politics stream also could not be aligned: the 2017 general election, and the continuing fallout from the 2016 EU referendum made policy change on R&R impossible in the political context. Fourth, the institutional culture acted as a disincentive to acting quickly on the state of the building.

This chapter has noted, however, a key development in the politics stream that moved the stream closer coupling and policy change Backbench pressure for policy change led the Government to finally commit to holding a debate on R&R. It did not mean policy change was inevitable, however. The Government continued to work to block the recommendations of the Joint Committee from being agreed in the Commons, as the next chapter will show. Crucially, however, supporters of Restoration and Renewal had forced the issue onto the decision-making agenda, and now had an opportunity to shape the political stream and achieve policy

change. In doing so, they had shown a willingness to act as 'policy entrepreneurs'—key actors that had not been present in the first part of the policy window.

This chapter has again showed the value of the MSF Plus theoretical framework. It has shown how past policy decisions and traditions within the UK Parliament shaped this part of the policy window: through the resistance to leaving the Palace. The institutional context also shaped the problem definition and prevented any new ideas for policy solutions from being considered. In these ways, the institutional context worked against policy change. Crucially, however, it was the institutional context that allowed the policy window to remain open for an extended period, in line with the glacial pace of change within Westminster. This would keep the option of policy change open: as the next chapter will consider.

This analysis has provided valuable insight into why policy change did not occur between June 2016 and January 2018, noting how the multiple streams were not coupled and importance of the institutional context. It has also shown how the emergence of policy entrepreneurs can force an issue onto the decision-making agenda. Through this analysis we can also identify opportunities for theoretical refinement: through the identification of multiple streams within a stream—tributaries—in the problem and politics streams; the operation of a closed policy community preventing 'evolution' of policy solutions, as envisaged by Kingdon; and the interdependence of each of the multiple streams (seen, for example, in the way the problem definition was shaped in part by the political context). These implications for theory are discussed further in Chapter 9, but first we must turn to the final part of the policy window.

Chapter 7: Closing the policy window

"Over the past 10 years, 60 incidents have had the potential to cause a serious fire. Secondly, there is a huge amount of asbestos packed into the walls that needs to be carefully and expensively removed to enable repairs. Thirdly, many pipes and cables are decades past their lifespan, with some now being impossible to access. The likelihood of a major failure grows the longer the systems are left unaddressed."
(Andrea Leadsom MP, HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, cc880-1)

This thesis has so far explored the policy window that opened in January 2012, and has analysed why policy change regarding the Palace of Westminster was not achieved by the end of 2017. In January 2018, however, the Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom, announced that the Commons would debate R&R on 31 January, giving MPs the chance to decide the future of their building. At the end of this debate the Commons voted to support Restoration and Renewal (including 'full decant') to the surprise of the Government. The approval was then endorsed by the House of Lords six days later. This is the policy change at the heart of this thesis: after years of delay and prevarication, the approval of R&R and full decant marked a significant policy change.

The main argument of this chapter is that this policy change was achieved when key actors worked to couple the problem, policy and problem streams. They achieved this by aligning the Commons tributary of the problem stream through sharpening the problem definition to stress its urgency. With the problem defined as urgent, the argument was made that the only feasible solution was a full decant, aligning the policy stream. The two key tributaries in the politics stream—the House of Commons and House of Lords—aligned through a combination of the impact of party politics, the EU referendum and deployment of arguments around the national mood, making the politics stream overall ready for coupling. Key actors were able to utilise the institutional context to support, rather than block, policy change, helping R&R and full decant to be approved in both the Commons and Lords.

This analysis therefore builds on the previous empirical chapters to answer the key research question of this thesis: Why was the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster approved in early 2018, after multiple failed attempts to achieve policy change in this area?

This chapter further tests the MSF Plus theoretical framework and provides further evidence for its key components:

- The existence of multiple streams within a stream (tributaries) within the problem and politics streams.
- The interdependence between the multiple streams.
- The value of the institutional lens in understanding developments within each individual stream;
- how the streams interact; and
- the length of the policy window.

In doing so, this chapter helps to answer the fourth supplementary research question: How useful is the MSF Plus approach for understanding policy change in this case?

The first half of this chapter examines this decision-making period. It is split into three sub-parts, examining first, the thirteen days prior to the debate, as the Government struggled to maintain control of the decision-making agenda; then the Commons debate itself, and then the debate in House of Lords, held six days after the Commons. The second half of the chapter uses the MSF Plus theoretical framework to explain how this policy change was achieved, examining how the problem, policy and politics streams developed in this period, all shaped by the institutional context.

7.1. Developments in the policy window

18 – 30 January 2018

The confirmation that the R&R debate would take place at the end of January 2018 offered the opportunity for clear progress towards a policy decision, ending the long period of delay and prevarication on the issue. Despite this step forward, MPs remained concerned about the Government's intentions. In an unusual move, two motions for the debate were tabled, both in the name of the Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom. The first stated that "there is a clear and pressing need to repair the services in the Palace of Westminster in a comprehensive and strategic manner to prevent catastrophic failure", but committed only to reviewing the need for the work at the end of the 2017 – 2022 parliament, in effect further delaying policy change for several years (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c878-879). Leadsom described the rationale behind this motion:

> "What we couldn't risk in bringing forward this debate was that one party or other would break ranks and say 'this is a complete waste of money' [...] So keeping all parties committed to it meant that we had to really carefully formulate a motion that would first of all deal with the issue of cost [...] the first part of the motion was to enable people to decide 'well actually we love it but we can't afford it' but having not decided to go for that, it then means that forever, for the duration of this restoration, all parties have concluded that a democratic decision was taken that, expensive as it is, we must nevertheless commit to spending the money as a Parliament, so the opposition can't turn around and say 'well this is a government that's mad and spending loads of money unnecessarily'." (Interview, Leadsom, May 2018)

The second motion was in line with the commitment made by the Leaders of the Commons and Lords in their October 2017 letter to parliamentarians (as discussed in Chapter 6), not endorsing a delivery option but instead establishing governance bodies for a future refurbishment programme who explore the options (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c879). The work required to consider these costs would again delay a decision on a single policy option, and thus the necessary work to the Palace.

For MPs supporting full decant, there was frustration that neither of the Government's motions reflected the Joint Committee's recommendation of supporting the R&R programme and committing to a full decant, which was seen as the only feasible way to protect the building. Baroness Stowell, who had co-chaired the Joint Committee, said:

> "When the Government came out with its motions, I was disappointed. What they proposed was unsatisfactory, because it was kicking the can down the road basically and it just missed the point. But I thought, 'well, some progress is better than no progress'." (Interview, July 2018).

Ian Paisley, a member of the Joint Committee, also described them as "kick can down road" motions (interview, June 2018). Some parliamentary staff also shared this frustration: one official close to the programme noted how staff had been planning for the debate to give them a "decision in principle" but that neither of the Government's motions, she said, actually amounted to a decision, adding:

> "It was a decision to defer yet again. It was hard to get excited about it after the long delays and numerous false starts, but at the same time, you start to be a little bit more philosophical about these things: focus on the baby steps, at least you get there in the end." (Interview, anonymous official, 2018).

Having sought to delay the decision-making process the text of the Government motions demonstrated a continued wish to shape the decision to be taken by the Commons. It was further evidence of the effect of "executive mentality" (Judge, 1993, p 212) of the UK

parliament, as discussed in Chapter 5, on the policy window. This effect can also be identified after the tabling of the motions, when Leadsom told the House that "because of the seriousness of the decision before the House, the two motions will not be amendable" (HC Deb, 18 Jan 2018, c1062). The attempt to make the motions unamendable was widely criticised by members on all sides of the issue and proved to be unsustainable. Within days amendments began to be tabled to the Order Paper[19] by backbench MPs in a pushback by the legislature against the executive (interview, Leigh, June 2018; interview, Tami, May 2018). The institutional context is important here: the Table Office clerks were able to accept amendments from MPs, demonstrating the weakness of the Government's procedural position, and the shift in power from the Government to MPs once the issue was officially on the Order Paper (and thus the Commons' decision-making agenda). A week later Leadsom backtracked officially:

> "I wanted to see what sort of amendments were tabled. I think that I made it clear last week that we needed some sensible alternatives for the House to discuss, and some very sensible amendments have been tabled. I commit to undertaking to ensure that they are included in the options available to the House." (HC Deb, 25 Jan 2018, c411)

By the time of the debate five amendments were tabled across the two motions. The full text of the motions and amendments is at Appendix B. The amendments are also summarised in *Table 7.1*.

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[19] The agenda of upcoming business in the House of Commons.

Table 7.1. Amendments tabled to the Government's motions for the R&R debate in the House of Commons, as on the Order Paper, 31 January 2018. Key: Con = Conservative, DUP = Democratic Unionist Party, Lab = Labour, PC = Plaid Cymru, SNP, Scottish National Party. Adapted from House of Commons (2018).

Amendment (as listed on the Order Paper)	Main purpose	Member in charge	Total signatures	Which parties?
Motion 1, amendment c	'Regretted' that no analysis had been undertaken of the cost of a new build Parliament away from Westminster, and called for any new reviews to consider this option.	Ian Blackford (SNP)	12	6 SNP, 4 PC, 1 Lab, 1 Green
Motion 1, amendment b	Endorsed the Joint Committee and PAC recommendations: supported full decant, established governance bodies and pledged the return of both Houses to the Palace at the end of R&R.	Meg Hillier (Lab)	44	32 Lab, 11 Con, 1 DUP.
Motion 2, amendment a	Proposed that the Commons debating chamber should stay within the Palace of Westminster or Portcullis House during the building works.	Sir Edward Leigh (Con)	44	39 Con, 4 Lab, 1 Ind
Motion 2, amendment b	Proposed that any temporary chamber and the rebuilt Commons chamber have sufficient seats for all MPs and are equipped for electronic voting.	Pete Wishart (SNP)	6	2 SNP, 3 PC, 1 Green
Motion 2, amendment c	Proposed that the Commons debating chamber should stay within the Palace of Westminster, Portcullis House or Church House during the building works.	Dame Caroline Spelman (Con)	1	1 Con

It is notable that no amendment gained the support of more than 7% of MPs, highlighting the lack of wider interest in the issue among parliamentarians. The two amendments with the most support demonstrated the two main sides of the issue: one calling for full decant (Motion 1, amendment b) and one ruling out decant for the Commons (Motion 2, amendment a). The latter amendment was tabled by the Conservative MP, Sir Edward Leigh, who as noted in earlier chapters, argued that he supported the need for repairs to the building, but was strongly opposed to moving out while the work takes place. Supporters of R&R and some officials, however, felt that his objection to full decant would, in effect, block the whole project, noting the difficulties of continuing to meet in the Palace during building work. Lord Haselhurst said that the idea of MPs "walking through a sort-of tunnel [and] asbestos" to get to the chamber was "absurd, utterly utterly bizarre" (interview, May 2018).

MPs also expressed frustration as the policy of staying on site during the repair works had already been considered and rejected by the Joint Committee, in favour of moving out entirely (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2019, c907). Implementing the Joint Committee's recommendation was the aim of Motion 1, amendment b. It arose from cross-party cooperation between Labour MPs Chris Bryant, who had served on the Joint Committee and also chaired the Finance Select Committee and Meg Hillier, the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), and Sir Paul Beresford, the Conservative chair of the Administration Select Committee. It was tabled in Hillier's name, with Bryant and Beresford listed as two of the six supporters, alongside two senior Conservative MPs: Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, the Deputy Chair of the PAC and a former Chair of the Committee of Selection; and Sir Roger Gale, a member of the Panel of Chairs. This was a deliberate strategy by Bryant and Beresford who sought get senior MPs to declare their support for full decant. By the day of the debate 16 select committee chairs had added their name to the full decant amendment. Five of these were Conservatives, including the Treasury Committee Chair, Nicky Morgan (viewed as particularly significant given the £3.5bn price tag of full decant) and Dr Sarah Wollaston, Chair of the Liaison Committee, the 'super-committee' of all committee chairs.[20] The focus was on gaining critical actors in support, which would in turn persuade the wider population of MPs.

While the two key amendments (the Hillier amendment supporting full decant, and the Leigh amendment opposing decant) to the Government motion had the same number of signatures (44) by the start of the debate there was a key difference in the composition of supporting members. The presence of the committee chairs made the Hillier amendment appear to be the preferred option of senior parliamentary (as opposed to ministerial) figures, and thus of the Commons itself. In contrast, 39 of the 44 supporters of the anti-decant amendment came from the governing party, and only two committee chairs were listed (Sir Edward Leigh and Sir Bill Cash). Notably, there was also a gender contrast: 45% of MPs supporting the Hillier amendment were female (despite women making up 32% of MPs at the time) compared to only 11% of the MPs listed as supporting the Leigh amendment (House of Commons, 2018).

Despite the significant level of support garnered for the Hillier amendment, ahead of the debate no-one on any side felt able to predict with confidence what the Commons would decide. Both the Conservatives and Labour had committed to a free vote on any divisions, (without the usual party whipping system). While free votes are not unusual, the status of R&R

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[20] At the time of the debate she held the Conservative Whip, although she would later sit as an independent, and then as a Lib Dem.

as a parliamentary matter, rather than a conscience issue, on which free votes are most typically used, meant there was little precedent on which to draw.[21] The level of understanding of (or interest in) R&R among the general MP population (as discussed in Chapter 6) further complicated predictions of what would occur. In short, as *The Times* political journalist Sam Coates suggested ahead of the debate: "if you're not confused about what's going on with the Restoration and Renewal debate then you haven't been listening closely enough, because it is hellishly confusing" (Westminster Hour, 2018).

31 January 2018

Some 510 days after the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster had reported (and six years after the Pre-Feasibility Study Group commenced work), the Commons finally considered the future of the Palace. The debate was opened by the Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom, speaking to each of the Government's motions. As she neared the end of her speech Leadsom switched from speaking for the Government to giving her personal view. She would, she explained, be "voting to take action", by voting for the second of the Government's motions (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c889). In an interview, she described how she approached the debate:

> ""Even in my introduction of the motion, I had to be very careful to be entirely neutral in my presentation of it but then at the end, I appealed to members and said "now I'm speaking as an individual, this is unwhipped, so I'm now speaking as a Member of Parliament not as a Government Minister and my view is that we should do this". So, I had to very carefully be strictly on the fence first, and then only give my view at the end." (Interview, Leadsom, May 2018)

The MPs speaking in the debate divided almost exactly evenly between supporters and opponents of full decant, which had become the key dividing line in policy change. One notable speech on the latter came from Jacob Rees-Mogg, who had served on the Joint Committee and voted for the report recommending full decant, and then agreed to the Treasury Committee's report arguing against full decant until further costings were known. He used the Commons debate to explain his change of position, noting that the Joint Committee's report had identified the courtyard of Richmond House as the favoured location for the decanted Commons chamber, using the measurements on the building's floorplan, but that after the Committee's report it was found that these measurements were incorrect and that the

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[21] Twenty-nine free votes had been held in the House of Commons in the previous decade (January 2008 to January 2018) but only one had been held on a non-conscience issue (the division on the use of a secret ballot to elect the Speaker) (HC Deb, 25 March 2015, c1629; House of Commons Library, 2018)

courtyard was in fact too small.[22] As a result, he argued, "the conclusions that we drew have been fatally undermined" (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018). The mistake over the measurement was a source of frustration for other Joint Committee members. Mark Tami described how they had sought reassurance on this issue during their inquiry:

> "I remember, when we were asking:
> 'It is big enough isn't it?'
> 'Yes, it is big enough, it is big enough'
> 'You're sure?'
> 'Yeah, no look, we've got the plans, it's big enough.'
> They never measured it." (Interview, Tami, May 2018)

This frustration, however, did not cause other Joint Committee members to waver from support for full decant (e.g. HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c905, 910, 926). Their position was echoed in two further significant speeches from former Conservative ministers (discussed further in Chapter 8): Sir Patrick McLoughlin, a former Chief Whip and Transport Secretary, and Damian Green, the former First Secretary of State. Green, in particular, stressed the risks of the current building:

> "It might be an exaggeration to say that Parliament is a death trap, but it would not be a wild exaggeration. Anyone who has taken the tour of the basement will have seen the full horror of the current arrangements. We have already heard about the regular fires that break out [...] Chunks of masonry have fallen off high parts of the building. We are lucky that no one has been killed so far because of this. It is not remotely conceivable that people would be allowed to work here if this were a normal building, let alone that thousands of tourists would be allowed to visit it (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c901).

At the end of the debate MPs voted first on the SNP amendment, which called for more analysis on moving Parliament away from Westminster. The amendment failed to gain significant support outside of the Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties and was defeated by 363 votes (discussed further in section 7.2). The House then moved to consider the Hillier amendment on full decant. On a much closer vote, the amendment succeeded by 16 votes: a result which was a "surprise" to Speaker Bercow (interview, September 2018), and apparently to ministers as well: Mark Tami reported that "the Government Whips Office assured Number 10 that everything was fine" (interview, May 2018).

With the amendment passed, the Commons moved to vote on the main motion, as amended to endorse full decant. With the main argument over how the work should be done resolved, the vote on the amended motion was viewed as more of a formality. It was passed with a far

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[22] Other locations considered by the Joint Committee included the atrium of Portcullis House, Westminster Hall, Victoria Tower Gardens and a floating building on the River Thames.

more comfortable majority of 49—and even gained the support of Andrea Leadsom, who had abstained on the vote on the Hillier amendment. The passing of the amended motion meant that the Government's second motion, and the three amendments to it (including the Leigh amendment), were not voted on. Instead, the amended motion, now endorsing R&R and full decant, moved to the House of Lords.

6 February 2018

The following week, on 6 February 2018, the House of Lords were asked whether they concurred with the Commons and would approve the same motion (the full text is at Appendix C). In contrast to the Commons debate, the proceedings in the Lords revealed that Peers were almost unanimous in their belief that both Houses needed to move out of the Palace entirely during R&R. It also became clear that the Government's position had changed substantially: Baroness Evans, the Leader of the Lords said she had "no hesitation in commending the Motion that the other place voted for to your Lordships", placing the Government firmly behind the recommendation for full decant (HL Deb, 6 Feb 2018). Some limited opposition had been signalled: Lord Naseby, a former Commons Deputy Speaker, had tabled an amendment rejecting the support for full decant, and calling instead "for a more thorough evaluation of the options available for a phased programme of renewal" (HL Deb, 6 Feb 2018, c1920). As Peer after Peer stood up to warn about the risk to the building from fire or flood and to argue that decant was the only practical option, however, it became clear that Lord Naseby was largely isolated in his position. Faced with this opposition, he withdrew his amendment, although he remained sceptical: in an interview he later dismissed concerns about the building, commenting that "pieces of masonry can fall off anywhere. It's your bad luck if you happen to be under it (interview, May 2018). The motion then passed without a division. Both Houses had formally agreed a significant policy change, adopting the R&R programme and full decant.

This half of the chapter has covered just a short period of time chronologically—from the announcement of the Commons debate on R&R on 18 January 2018 to the Lords supporting the full decant motion on 6 February 2018. During these 20 days, however, both Houses of Parliament agreed a substantial and significant change to policy regarding the Palace of Westminster. After years of patch and mend, and disjointed management of the building, the Commons and Lords not only agreed a major infrastructure project, but also to move out while the work is carried out. This policy change was achieved against the will of a government who had only tabled the debate after extensive pressure from backbenchers and only made their motions amendable after similar pressure. Understanding how this policy change was

achieved is the central question of this thesis. To answer it, this chapter moves to consider the decision-making period using the MSF Plus framework.

7.2. MSF Plus analysis

This chapter has set out the events of January to February 2018, during which both Houses of the UK Parliament approved a significant change to policy regarding the Palace of Westminster—the decision to carry out a major repair programme and leave the Palace for the duration of the works. This analysis goes deeper to examine how this change occurred. In doing so, it draws on the work of Zahariadis (1995) who extended Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework beyond the point of agenda-setting and used it to explain decision-making (noting the contested nature of this extension, as discussed in Chapter 3).

The five key arguments of this section are:

1. Multiple problem definitions continued to exist within the problem stream, which then enabled 'miscoupling' with policy solutions blocking alignment of the policy stream.
2. The policy stream became further closed to new ideas once the issue achieved a place on the decision-making agenda.
3. Backbench MPs worked to align the three multiple streams: attaching their chosen solution to a particular problem definition, and exploiting key elements of the politics stream.
4. The House of Lords should be counted as a separate tributary in the problem and politics streams.
5. Institutional norms and traditions help to explain the narrow victory for full decant in the Commons and the almost unanimous support in the Lords.

Figure 7.2. (below) sets out how the streams aligned during this period—enabling policy change. By explaining how the streams were coupled and institutional factors were harnessed to help (not block) this process, this chapter demonstrates the value of the combined MSF Plus theoretical framework. It also contributes to theoretical development by providing evidence for the existence of multiple tributaries that contribute to each of the multiple stream; the interdependence between the multiple streams and the value of the institutional lens within the framework. This chapter now moves to consider each of the multiple streams in turn.

Figure 7.2 MSF Plus analysis, January 2018 – February 2018.

MSF Plus analysis: Jan 2018 – Feb 2018

Problem stream — Policy stream — Politics stream — Historical institutionalism

Sept 2016: JCPW report published

Backbench action and Labour whipping organisation mobilised support

Full decant pitched as only workable policy

Credibility of senior parliamentarians helped build support for full decant.

18 Jan 2018   31 Jan 2018   6 Feb 2018

The Problem Stream

The two preceding chapters have shown that instead of one single problem stream, there were multiple streams, each involving critical actors, and requiring separate acceptance of the problem definition. Ahead of the Commons debate in January 2018, four of the tributaries remained unaligned to the problem definition adopted by the Joint Committee.

Figure 7.3. The Problem Stream, January 2018. Key: medium blue box = aligned, light blue box = unaligned.
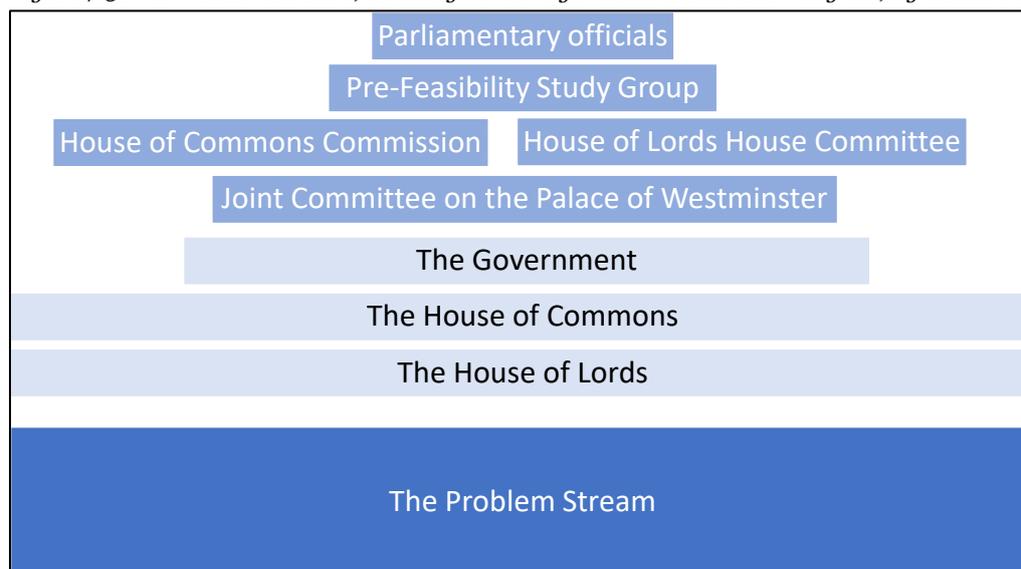
This analysis will examine the problem stream during this final part of the policy window and makes two main arguments:

1. There is evidence of the continued existence of multiple tributaries within the problem stream causing multiple problem definitions.
2. Key actors sought to redefine the problem of the Palace as so urgent that action could not be delayed, despite the wider political context.

Multiple problem streams

The presence of multiple tributaries within the problem stream enabled different definitions of the 'problem' of the Palace of Westminster, as set out below, in *Figure 7.4*. This analysis considers how the definitions varied between the Government, House of Commons, and House of Lords tributaries, linking each definition to the three key factors identified in Chapter 5: the narrow policymaking community, the institutional norms and traditions and the wider political context.

Figure 7.4. Multiple problem definitions, January 2018. Key: Light blue box = unaligned, medium blue = aligned.

The Government
- Problem definition: The 'problem' of the Palace of Westminster not urgent enough to require policy change, given the the broader political and institutional context.

The House of Commons
- Problem definition: Varied between MPs: for some, the 'problem' was the need to repair the infrastructure without Parliament moving out of the Palace, for others, how the essential work could take place without a public backlash.

The House of Lords
- Problem definition: The 'problem' of the Palace was not just the state of the infrastructure, but also the poor accessibility of the building.

Within the Government tributary, there was scepticism about the urgency of the repairs required and whether this urgency outweighed the political cost of acting. The 'problem' of the Palace became political: it was defined as not simply a threat to the building but also to the unity of the Conservative Party (due to opposition to R&R being primarily held by Conservative MPs, as discussed below); the Government's own spending plans (because of the cost of the programme); and also to public opinion (due to concerns about the lack of popularity of the programme). This problem definition was shaped (as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6) by history of the Palace of Westminster and UK Parliament: as set out in Chapter 2, the Palace has not been a priority for any government. It was further informed by the political context, and specifically the Government's lack of a parliamentary majority following the 2017 general election (as discussed in Chapter 6), which increased the need to maintain party unity on the Conservative benches in the Commons. As with the Commons tributary, we can also see the effect of the narrow policy community: there was little opportunity to open up the problem definition more broadly. This problem definition, predicated on a lack of urgency of the state of the Palace, meant that the Government tributary was not aligned for coupling.

This need to maintain Conservative party unity reflects the fact that, for many MPs, the 'problem' of the Palace of Westminster was shaped by the primary consideration that Parliament should not leave the Palace, even temporarily. Shailesh Vara MP argued that this criterion should have been central to any discussion about the problem of the Palace and the solution:

> "The experts said 'the best way is if you leave the premises', which makes sense, of course it would be, it suits the builders, but we are not here for the convenience of the builders, we have a specific purpose here, this is Parliament, we are here to serve the people". (Interview, Vara, July 2018)

Again, we can see institutional context here, and the commitment to staying within the Palace of Westminster, which had informed previous policy decisions (as discussed in Chapter 2) playing a role here. While this view was not universal across all MPs, the general lack of interest in the issue of R&R meant that this definition remained influential in preventing the Commons tributary from aligning.

The Lords debate also demonstrated how the understanding of the problem stream differed between the two Houses, as each formed its own tributary. This chapter has noted the higher support for R&R in the Lords compared to the Commons. As with the Commons, there was a recognition of the risks facing the building–as highlighted repeatedly, for example, by the Lord Speaker (Fowler, 2017a, 2017b, 2018). A key difference, however, was the prominence of accessibility issues for Peers, compared to MPs. In the Commons debate no MP spoke about their own personal experience of not being accommodated in their workplace due to a disability. In the Lords, while there are no official, or even unofficial estimates of the number of peers with a disability, it is widely understood to be a much higher number (and proportion) than in the Commons, attributable to the higher average age in the Lords and their appointed, not elected status (enabling disabled parliamentarians to avoid both "veto role of local selectorates" (Durose et al, 2012, p 256) and the high additional cost of standing for office) Both officials and parliamentarians to whom I spoke attributed the greater support for R&R in the Lords, in part due to the higher proportion of Peers than MPs with a disability, which resulted in a different perception of the problem (interview: anonymous official, 2018; interview Faulkner, June 2018). The Lords tributary can thus be considered as aligned during this period, based on its separate problem definition.

Defining a problem: an urgent problem?

Analysis of this policy window has shown that the 'problem' of the Palace of Westminster, even narrowly defined, was not agreed by key decision-makers within Parliament, let alone the general public. To align these remaining groups—or tributaries—supporters of policy change sought to demonstrate that the problem was so overwhelming that it became more important than the wider political context: sharpening the problem definition already agreed in part of the stream. This role for key actors fits with Zahariadis' (2008, p 521) argument that "coupling the three streams is more likely when entrepreneurs frame issues appropriately". Kingdon noted how, in his case study of the transport sector in the US, crises or disasters were powerful in putting an issue on the agenda. He quoted a respondent from the transport policy community who told him "the whole process is crisis. This system responds to crisis. It's the only thing that it does respond to. That's what politics is all about. In the American system you

have to get hit on the side of the head before you do something" (Kingdon, 2014, p 95). Stone (2012, p 301) argued that crises "create a mentality of absolute prevention". This view was shared by Keeler (1993) who argued that crises can create a sense of urgency that may override innate caution, leading to a smooth passage for reform and the potential for radical change. Similarly, Birkland (2006, p 5) argued that "a disaster can often do in an instant what years of interest group activity, policy entrepreneurship, advocacy, lobbying, and research may not be able to do: elevate an issue on the agenda to a place where it is taken seriously in one or more policy domains". Kingdon argued that the power of crises was particularly applicable to less "visible" policy areas, not at the heart of government (Kingdon, 2014, p 95). The management of the parliamentary estate would certainly fall into this category.

The argument about the power of crises—and its corollary: the lack of incentives for policy change in the absence of a crisis—is supported by a Historical Institutionalist view of the history of the Palace. Despite previous threats of a major fire—an undoubtable crisis—before 1834 no action was taken until fire destroyed the old Palace. But during the 2012-2018 policy window, despite warnings of a further fire, or catastrophic failure of essential infrastructure, there was no physical crisis in the Palace during this period (parliamentary staff were in fact working desperately to avoid one—the building is allowed to stay open due to the presence of fire marshals patrolling the building twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure that the regular minor fires caused by the derelict wiring do not escalate). Baroness D'Souza suggested that for some members of the House of Lords were of the opinion that "well it's been alright for the last 200 years, or 600 hundred years, so why shouldn't it go on for another fifty years, what's the rush?" (interview, July 2019). Previous policy decisions were thus shaping the future: path dependency in action.

In the (welcome) absence of a fire or the building becoming uninhabitable, how did key individuals push for (and achieve) policy change? Their message focused on the threat of imminent crisis, if the Commons failed to act. The recipients of the message were becoming more and more aware of the problem of the building, from their day-to-day experience of the failing infrastructure. Ian Paisley MP sought to explain why such a message would resonate: "I mean you can't walk through every day a building that smells of sewage, and think that people are just going to keep living with that" (interview, June 2018). A survey of MPs and their staff in 2014 found high levels of concern about rodent infestation and the dilapidated state of toilet facilities, in addition to frustration about the accessibility for people with disabilities (Administration Committee, 2014). Mintrom and Norman (1997) noted how potential policy entrepreneurs had to overcome risk aversion among decision-makers, by reducing the perception of risk resulting from a particular policy change. In this case, MPs

sought to present the risks of changing policy—and supporting R&R—as less than the risk of not acting. In line with the literature on "negativity bias" (Hood, 2011, p 3), this approach sought to utilise the powerful political fear of being blamed for a failure. Indeed, failing to act in the past, following the path of previous governments, had caused this balance to shift. Pete Wishart MP told the Commons:

> "The failure of successive Government to face up to their responsibility in looking after this place means we now have a building that could, as people have said, face a catastrophic failure at any time". (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c896)

Conservative MP Damian Green argued that the risk of a negative response to the expenditure required was now less than the risk to life:

> "The argument is that in the wake of the terrible tragedy of Grenfell Tower, we cannot be seen to be spending large sums of money on this place. I would turn that argument absolutely on its head. Having seen the appalling effects of a fire in a building that had inadequate protection, I think it would be the height of irresponsibility not to take action to make safe a building that we know is barely safe now and that is getting more dangerous every year." (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c901)

The argument that action on the state of the Palace could not be delayed, despite the political context—persuaded sufficient MPs to support policy change. A sharpening of the existing problem definition to emphasise its urgency thus enabled the House of Commons tributary of the problem stream to be aligned for coupling. This was critical: once the issue had been placed on the decision-making agenda in the R&R debate, the alignment of the Commons tributary became the key part of the problem stream. The stream as a whole could now be coupled.

Concluding thoughts

This analysis has considered how the problem stream developed during the decision-making period. It has noted how the existence of different tributaries within the problem stream led to multiple definitions of the problem preventing the problem stream from being ready for coupling. Once the debate was scheduled the problem stream focused on just a single tributary of MPs, and this section has shown how a 'sharpening' of the problem definition to focus on the urgency of the issue aligned the Commons tributary and thus the stream as a whole.

The Policy Stream

Kingdon's policy stream was formulated for a governmental public policy analysis, in which the specification of a list of alternatives, and the choice of an alternative policy are separate

processes. This was contested by Zahariadis (1995) who argued that both elements are part of one process: decision-making, and that the MSF model can be used for this whole process. This analysis adopts Zahariadis's position on this point, as it is particularly useful for the context of the House of Commons. Using this approach, this analysis considers how the policy stream developed during the short decision-making period. It makes three main arguments:

1. The policy stream was narrowed down further after the issue was placed on the decision-making agenda, eliminating any consideration of alternative policies beyond those tabled by MPs.
2. The existence of multiple problem definitions led to three policies being seriously considered: enabling 'miscoupling' of solutions to problems.
3. Full decant aimed to succeed by being seen as most cost-effective and quickest policy solution to a problem defined as an urgent crisis of the infrastructure.

This section considers each argument in turn, and then considers the policy stream through an institutional lens.

Narrowing down the policy stream: the parliamentary debates and miscoupling

The scheduling of the debate on R&R entailed both the selection of alternative policies—through the tabling of motions and amendments—and the selection of a policy—through the division at the end of the debate. This reflects how the internal governance of the UK Parliament provided a very different context for policymaking. This was clearest in the policy stream where, as the analysis in Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrated, the restricted community limited the consideration of alternative policy proposals. Schattschneider (1960, p68) described "*the definition of the alternatives*" as "*the supreme instrument of power*" (italics in original). After the scheduling of the R&R debate in January 2018, the policy community narrowed further: the only policies that had a chance of being adopted had to be formally tabled on the Commons Order Paper, and as such either needed the Government's support or had sufficient support from MPs. There was no opportunity for public consultation or input from outside experts (for example, to bring in ideas around democratic innovation or conservation).

Section 7.1 demonstrated that four policies had the necessary support from the policy community to be seriously considered:

1. The Government's first motion: calling for no action on R&R during the 2017 parliament.
2. The Government's second motion: calling for further research on three delivery options: full decant, partial decant, and the parliamentary foothold.
3. The Leigh amendment: no decant away from the Palace of Westminster or Portcullis House.
4. The Hillier amendment: R&R work to start without delay and repairs to be carried out with a full decant.

The lack of an agreement over the definition of the problem opened the possibility of 'miscoupling' with policy solutions. This miscoupling prevented the alignment of the policy stream as different actors chose selected policies based on their understanding of the problem. The Government's motions, for example, reflected the divided view of the problem definition within the Cabinet (as discussed in Chapter 5, and explored further in Chapter 8). The first motion, which delayed any decision on R&R was based on a definition of the state of the Palace that did not view the issue as sufficiently urgent to require immediate policy change. The Government's second motion, allowing further research on delivery options, reflected a problem definition that, again, did not match that of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, instead finding that the state of the Palace of Westminster required action but without the urgency. Sir Edward Leigh's definition of the problem recognised the risks of the derelict infrastructure to the future of the building but was also based on a belief that to leave the Palace would be "tearing the heart out of politics" (Interview, May 2019). The primary element of the problem became the need to remain within the same building, rather than the risk of fire or flood. The miscoupling worked against policy change: analysis of the previous two parts of the policy window has shown how the tributaries slowly coalesced around the definition of the problem first articulated in the Pre-Feasibility Study. The development of alternative policy solutions—due to the different conceptions of the problem—suggested the policy stream was not aligned for coupling.

How then did policy change occur? The earlier analysis of the problem stream during this period has demonstrated how the Commons adopted the problem definition agreed by multiple stakeholders (the Pre-Feasibility Study Group, the House of Commons Commission, the House of Lords House Committee and the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster) in the early and middle part of the policy window. This problem was defined as the urgent need to address the dilapidated infrastructure of the Palace. As shown in Chapter 5, this definition shaped the narrowing down of the policy stream towards the policy of the Hillier amendment—full decant—which was presented by its supporters as the cheapest and quickest

way of doing so. The Commons debate reinforced the connection between the problem definition and policy solution. Mark Tami MP described how he changed his position on decant due to the evidence they received on the scale of the risk to the building (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c910). The same connection was made in the House of Lords debate, where it was again argued that the only policy solution to match the agreed problem definition would be a full decant. Baroness Andrews, a Labour Peer was one example:

> "I commend the basement tour to anyone who is in any doubt that this Motion is the right thing to do. Forget about Guy Fawkes—think about burst boilers, random electric fires, routine and constant maintenance and equipment failures, and floods. Frankly, I am amazed that this building functions as well as it does. I am even more convinced that we are living on borrowed time [...] The only way this can all be done safely, effectively and at cost-benefit is if we move out." (Hl Deb, 6 Feb 2018, c1922)

The alignment of the problem stream, with the acceptance of the 'urgent' problem of the Palace thus enabled the policy stream to align in turn, as full decant was accepted as the only feasible policy to match the problem. Agreeing a single problem definition ensured the policy stream would become ready for coupling.

Institutional lens

Why was full decant considered as the only feasible policy to match the problem definition? Understanding how the policy stream aligned around full decant requires understanding how the institutional context shaped what was considered feasible. Chapter 5 noted how, in Kingdon's definition of the policy stream, a chosen policy solution needed to fit the values of the policy community—in this case, MPs—and argued that the institutional context shaped these values. This chapter has shown how the two SNP amendments were able to get onto the Order Paper but the first, calling for consideration of a new building was rejected by MPs. As the analysis in Chapters 2 and 5 demonstrated, the idea of a new parliamentary building away from Westminster had little support, and can be considered not to be in line with the values of the institution. These values were demonstrated in repeated decisions ruling out a new building, further showing the power of path dependency within the institution. The SNP's second amendment, which called for more radical policy change—remaining in the Palace of Westminster but with sufficient seats for all MPs in the chamber and electronic voting—gained only six signatures ahead of the debate, and none from the two main parties (the amendment was not voted upon). Again, we can see how this amendment failed to meet the values of the institution (reflected in the interventions received by Pete Wishart MP when he spoke to the amendment in the Commons (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, cc895-900)). The size of the chamber may seem like a small issue, but reflected a decision by the Commons (at the urging of Winston

Churchill) when rebuilding the chamber after bomb damage in the Second World War (the reverence of Churchill has been noted in Chapter 2). Retaining a chamber without sufficient seats for MPs had become a precedent and tradition to be maintained—again showing the value of the Historical Institutionalist lens.

Concluding thoughts

This analysis has shown how the policy stream aligned during this period due to the earlier alignment of the problem stream: the institutional context of the policy community meant that full decant was considered the only feasible solution for the urgent problem of the Palace. In doing so, it has further demonstrated the interdependence between the problem, policy and streams. As highlighted in Chapter 5, and contrary to the literature in the field, policy solutions were not developed first and then applied to problems. Instead, policies were developed based on a problem definition, with both the problem definition and policy solution being shaped by the values and norms of an institution. This section has therefore provided a valuable test of one of the principles of the Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework: that the "independence of the streams is still largely noticeable in the real world" (Kingdon, 2014, p 229). A greater level of interdependence between the streams is suggested by this case study, and is discussed further in Chapter 9.

The Politics Stream

How did the politics stream develop in the final part of the policy window? To understand this, we must return to the concept of multiple 'streams within a stream' or tributaries within the politics stream. The previous chapter has demonstrated the different weight of tributaries within the politics stream. Crucially, once the issue moved onto the decision-making agenda the only tributaries that mattered were the memberships of the House of Commons and House of Lords, who had the power to achieve policy change, even without the support of the Government. This is a significant departure from the argument proposed by Herweg, Huß & Zohlnhöfer (2015, p 439) that the "political stream" can be considered to be "ripe when the majority party or the governing coalition embraces a proposal", and reflects the context of R&R as a policy decision outside of a governmental policymaking context. It further suggests a conclusion about the existence of the tributaries: policy change was possible when one of three conditions was met: either all the stakeholders within a stream were aligned for change; or the differing weight of the tributaries meant that one stakeholder could force the stream to align (as seen in the problem stream); or finally, as in this instance, the institutional context changed to place the power of policy change on a limited number of the tributaries.

Instead, to understand the politics stream this analysis considers two elements of that affected the House of Commons: party politics and the EU referendum; and a further concept that affected both the Commons and House of Lords tributaries: the national mood—as set out in *Figure 7.5.* below.

Figure 7.5. The Politics Stream January – February 2018
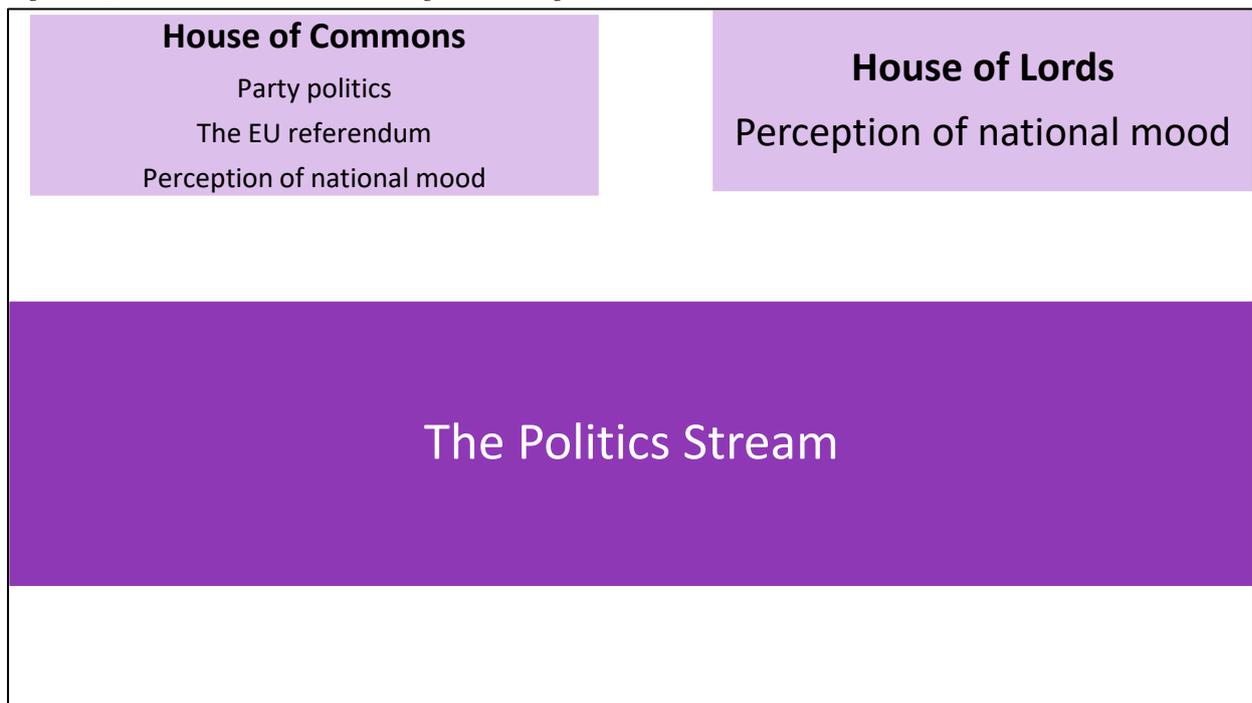
This section makes three main arguments:

1. While R&R was, in theory, a non-partisan issue, party politics did affect the vote, through party organisation, the power of voting with your colleagues and the SNP decision to vote against the Hillier amendment.
2. There was a correlation between supporting Leave at the time of the EU referendum and voting against full decant—which helped build support for R&R, due to the overall Remain-leaning tendencies of the House of Commons.
3. While concerns about the potential for criticism about the public expenditure has served to block alignment of the politics stream earlier in the policy window, MPs and Lords supporting full decant were able to deploy arguments based on the national mood—the need to protect the building, and the related sentiments of nostalgia, history and continuity—to support full decant.

As a result, the House of Commons and House of Lords tributaries became aligned and the stream overall was ready for coupling.

Party politics

One explanation for the success of the Hillier amendment can be found by considering one key element of the politics stream: the party-political divide. A deep exploration of the division lists on the Hillier amendment show a clear party divide: over two-thirds of Conservative MPs (who took part in the division) voted against full decant. In contrast 94% of Labour MPs (who took part in the division) voted for full decant.

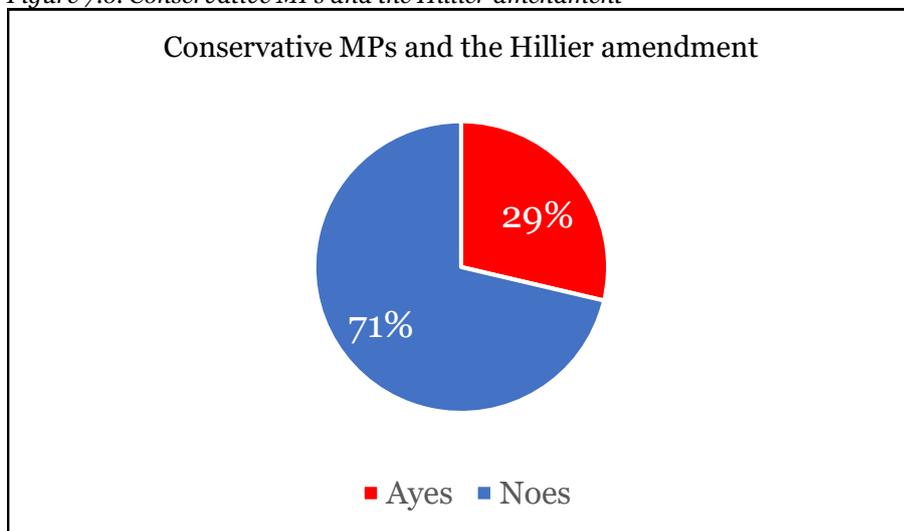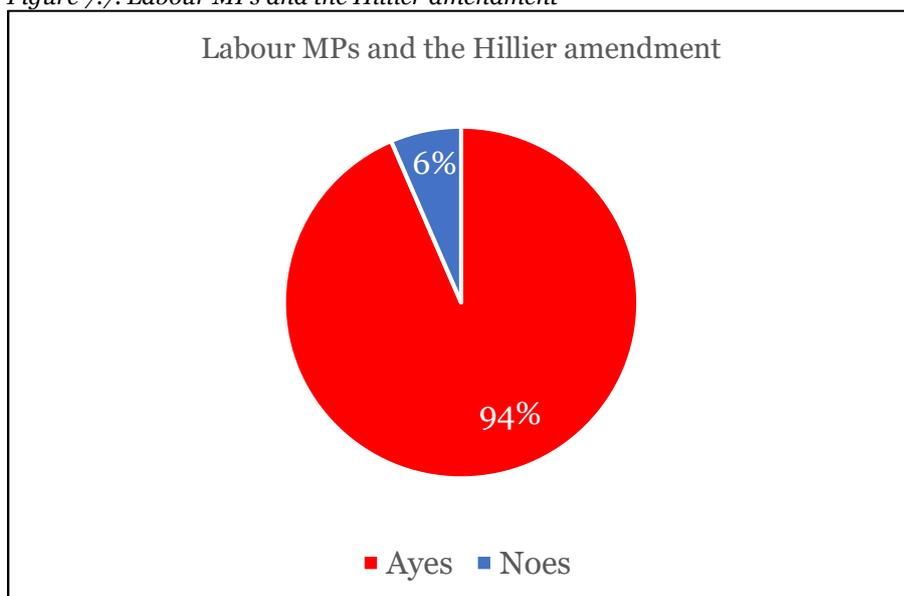*Figure 7.6. Conservative MPs and the Hillier amendment*

Figure 7.7. Labour MPs and the Hillier amendment

Why was this case on a free vote? One reason is the partisanship baked into the core of the House of Commons (Judge, 2005). MPs are used to entering the same division lobbies as their party colleagues. Here we look again to the institutional history of the Commons. Cowley and Stuart (2010, p 174) have noted how "party still tends to remain the key determinant of vote outcomes on conscience issues" which, like R&R are held on a free vote. Two main explanations for why this is the case have been posited: both of which highlight the importance of key individuals (policy entrepreneurs—to be discussed further in Chapter 8). The first is that representatives of the same party are likely to have similar policy preferences, leading them to vote the same way, even when unwhipped (Hibbing and Marsh, 1987). On the R&R vote, backbench policy entrepreneurs were able to find arguments in favour of R&R that would appeal to the broad, natural preferences within each party: the issue could be pitched as improving the working conditions for staff, to appeal to the trade union tradition in the Labour Party (e.g. HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c897, 901, 910) and as protecting the heritage of the building to appeal to Conservatives (e.g. HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c923, 928). A party-political anti-decant argument was also pushed by Sir Edward Leigh, who drew upon the Conservative Party's intrinsic opposition to change (and the institutional history of remaining in the Commons) to argue against full decant. A second explanation is that the "psychologically binding nature of party identifications" (Raymond and Overby, 2014, p 321), encourages voting with your party even when it goes against your own preferences. During normal parliamentary business party discipline is maintained by the presence of party whips, literally corralling MPs into the correct lobby. While the Hillier amendment was a free vote (for the main two parties), there was an unofficial whipping system in place, as described by Chris Bryant:

> "We won the organisational battle. We had people at either end of the lobbies. We had whips. We had set up whips of our own". (Interview, Bryant, April 2018)

Bryant discussed how his whipping operation was not just for his party colleagues, noting how some Conservative MPs were seeking his advice on how to vote on each division. Over two-thirds, of Conservative MPs, however, did not vote with Bryant. On the anti-decant side, Sir Edward Leigh and Shailesh Vara had built up their own whipping system, primarily for their Conservative colleagues. Sir Edward explained:

> "[Vara] had all lists of colleagues and things, our problem was that we were very successful in the Conservative Party who tend to be more traditional but when it came to the crunch, we had a few Labour members on our side, but the bulk of them appeared to be convinced by Chris Bryant that it was a cheaper option to move out. So, the vote, like a lot of these free votes, most of the Labour Party were on one side with a few Conservatives and on the other side was most of the Conservative Party with a few Labour, but not enough Labour". (Interview, Leigh, May 2018)

Sir Edward's comments reference one reason for opposition to R&R and full decant within the Conservative Party: the idea that Conservative Party members are "more traditional". Research by Malley (2012a, p 75) found a split on party lines about attitudes to the Palace, noting that "it is primarily Tories who express affection for the older parts of the parliamentary estate, and only Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs who are critical" (this reinforces the argument made in Chapter 2 about the variation in how different individuals experience the symbolic and actual effect of the architecture of the Palace). While many senior Conservative figures voted for the Hillier amendment, only two serving Cabinet Ministers joined them in the Aye lobby (one of which was the former Leader of the House and Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, Chris Grayling). Crucially, the Conservative Chief Whip, Julian Smith, voted against.

In contrast, the Labour Chief Whip, Nick Brown, voted in favour of the Hillier amendment. Indeed, from the opening comments of the Shadow Leader of the House, Valerie Vaz, it became clear that the opposition front bench would be supporting full decant (although it remained a free vote). Crucially, this included not just Vaz, but the Leader of the Opposition, Jeremy Corbyn and the Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell. Chris Bryant described how he lobbied his party leadership to gain their support:

> "I spoke repeatedly to John McDonnell to make sure he was going to vote, and vote the right way. And Jeremy did vote [...] I had guaranteed to Theresa May that Jeremy Corbyn would vote for the proposal, and she didn't believe me, but anyway he did. So, I think that helped because obviously we needed to get both the formal Labour frontbench in favour and our backbench. I knew I had our backbench but there was always the danger that the Labour frontbench might do what the SNP did." (Interview, Bryant, April 2018)

Bryant attributed the support of McDonnell and Corbyn to the success of his argument that the refurbishment could not be avoided, and the quickest and cheapest way of making the building safe would be to move out while it was repaired. It is worth noting, however, that, while Corbyn did not have a history of pressing for a new parliamentary building (there was a surprising absence of such a campaign on the Labour side, as discussed in previous chapters), he had repeatedly called for improved disability access to the Palace, dating back to his first arrival in the Commons in the 1980s (for example, HC Deb 29 June 1984 cc1292-331; HC Deb 29 June 1990 cc620-58; HC Deb 25 November 1991 cc411-2W411W; HC Deb 17 June 1997 cc113-4113). As with the recognition of the declining safety of the building through their lived experience within it, many MPs had first-hand experience of the appalling disabled access from bringing constituents to Westminster. Again, these factors may have influenced their

support for a policy which would have meant less of a wait for a refurbished and more accessible Palace of Westminster.

One further partisan divide was the block voting of the Scottish National Party MPs (referenced by Bryant above). Of their 35 Members, 34 participated in the vote, and all voted against the Hillier amendment. Bryant argued that this opposition was due to political, not substantive, reasons, because the R&R debate was taking place on the same day that the Scottish Parliament were considering the Budget in Holyrood:

> "It was complicated by the fact that the SNP decided to vote against our amendment because they couldn't spend money on Westminster on the day when the budget was going through in Scotland. Which I thought was nonsense, but anyway. So, they voted against our amendment though they were in favour of our amendment really." (Interview, Bryant, April 2018)

Neil Gray, the SNP MP who had served on the Joint Committee, rejected this accusation, claiming instead that his party would never have voted for the full decant amendment, because the cost-benefits of a new build parliament had not been considered. He agreed, however, that if the work had to be done, then full decant was the only delivery option. Further, Gray admitted to being surprised that the vote was "tighter" than he had expected (interview, June 2018). The role of the SNP highlights the value of the MSF Plus framework, as a purely rational model of policymaking would not explain their decision to vote against the Hillier amendment.

As a parliamentary matter, R&R did not 'belong' to either of the main parties. The full decant recommendation had been made by a cross-party Joint Committee and sought to address a deliberately narrow problem—a crisis of the infrastructure, rather than the broader crisis of UK democracy. The free vote offered by the two main parties confirmed the non-partisan status of the issue. This analysis has shown, however, that party politics still mattered, for three reasons:

1. Party organisation: while there was no formal whipping system, the informal whipping system was more successful on the Labour side than the Conservatives. Chris Bryant's informal organisation helped to ensure that only 6% of Labour MPs voted against full decant. In contrast, 29% of Conservative MPs voted against Sir Edward Leigh and Shailesh Vara's whipping system.
2. Institutional partisanship: MPs are more likely to vote with their own parties, even on free votes. The low level of interest in R&R in the Commons more generally might have been countered for Labour MPs by the presence of their Party Leader, Shadow

Chancellor, Shadow Leader of the House, and Shadow Chief Whip all going through the Aye lobby for the Hillier amendment.

3. The SNP factor: the almost universal opposition to the Hillier amendment from Scottish Nationalist Party MPs demonstrates how the issue could become partisan. While it did not change the end result of the vote, the narrow margin of victory meant that party politics could have blocked policy change, even on a non-partisan issue.

The EU referendum

Separate (to some extent) from the divide on political lines was a different partisan split. In January 2018, the House of Commons remained divided over the UK's membership of the European Union following the 2016 referendum on the issue. This chapter argues that the Leave/Remain split was even more important than party political loyalties in explaining the support of the Hillier amendment. There is a clear correlation between the two issues: 83% of the MPs who had declared for Leave ahead of the EU referendum voted against the Hillier amendment. In contrast, two-thirds (67%) of Remain-supporting MPs voted for the amendment. Furthermore, this number includes 37 MPs from nationalist parties (34 SNP and three Plaid Cymru) who supported Remain but voted against the Hillier amendment, despite supporting full decant (as discussed above). If you remove these MPs from the analysis, the figures are more stark: 76% of Remain-supporting MPs supported full decant.

Figure 7.8. Leave MPs and the Hillier amendment
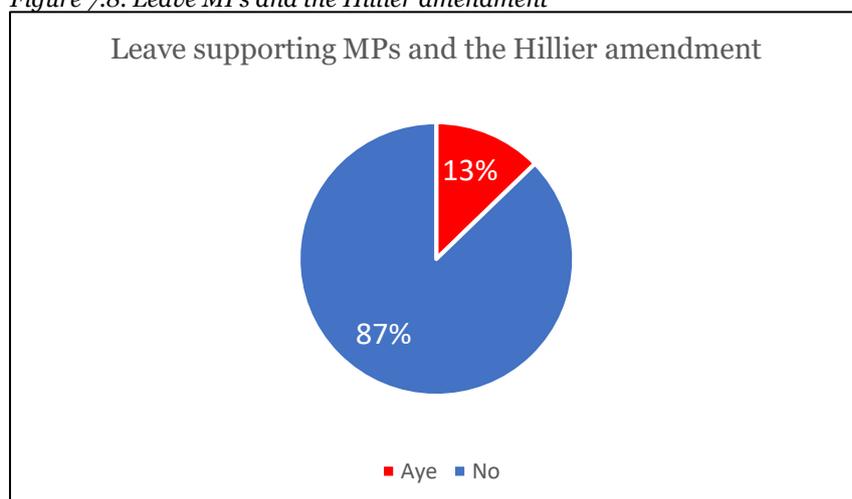
Figure 7.9. Remain MPs and the Hillier amendment
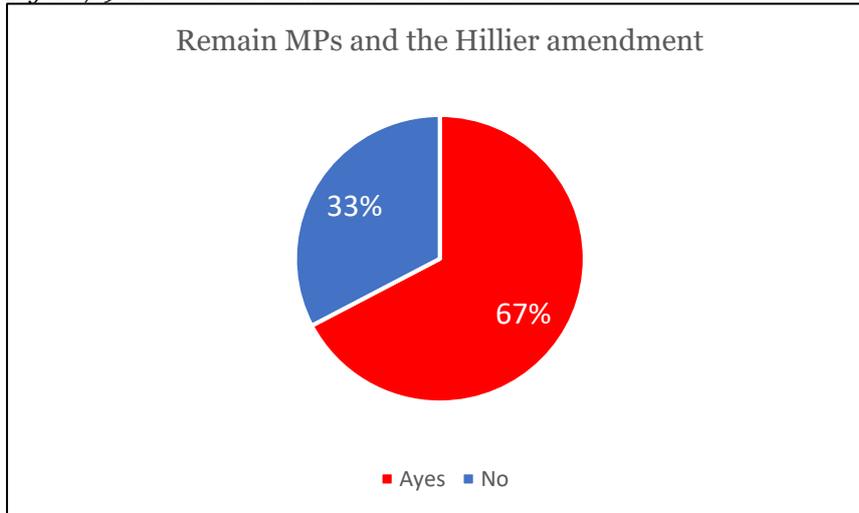
Figure 7.10. Remain MPs (minus the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru) and the Hillier amendment
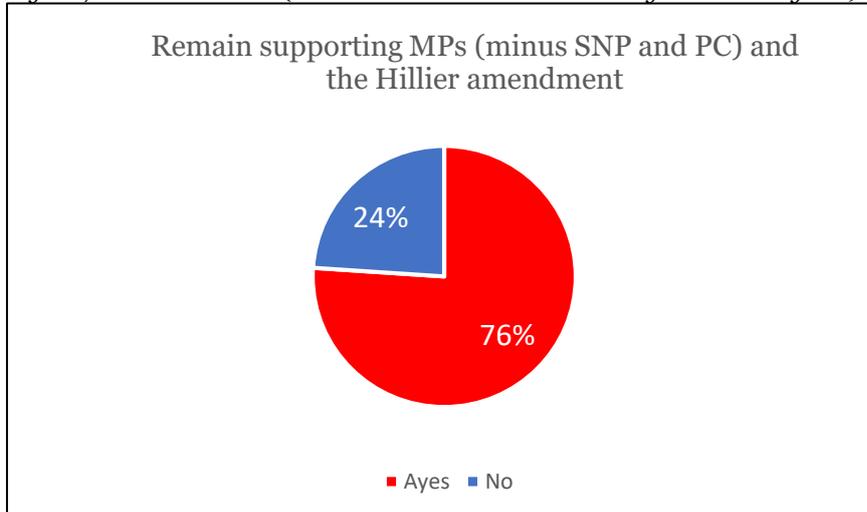
Correlation clearly does not mean causation. Being pro-Leave in the EU referendum did not make MPs vote against the Hillier amendment. It is important to note, however, that the link between leaving the Palace of Westminster and leaving the EU was made by many MPs: they interpreted the link as significant and as such it may have influenced how they approached the issue. In an interview, Shailesh Vara argued that the soft power of the Palace was crucial "at a time of Brexit":

> "We also need to remember that at a time of Brexit one of the features of promoting the United Kingdom is this building, it is known, it is an iconic building, it is known the world over, and at a time when we need to be really selling UK PLC, as we try to deepen relationships with non-EU countries, striking favourable trade deals, we're going to be working from a temporary House of Commons in Richmond House, which was built thirty years ago. I don't think that's the image we want to portray" (Interview, Vara, July 2018).

Speaker of the Commons, John Bercow, noted that 'it's often been joked about here in the House' that 'some of the most prominent leavers are the remainers'". He added that:

> "there are quite a lot of the Brexiteers who are taking the attitude "we shall not be moved' you know, 'we refuse to leave this great Parliament, it is all a quite unnecessary plot to remove us'." (Interview, Bercow, September 2018).

During the Commons debate multiple MPs compared their positions on decant and Brexit: Anna Soubry (who campaigned for Remain) called for 'absolutely everybody [to] vote leave' on this particular issue (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c886, see also c918 for a Leave MP opposing decant). The issue of decant—of leaving the Palace—seemed to divide the Commons on the same lines as the issue of Brexit. This may reflect the fact that the Leave campaign had been based, in part, on the restoration of parliamentary sovereignty: supporters of such a campaign may have been predisposed to oppose the idea of leaving the building that represented this sovereignty, even temporarily (for a discussion on the role of sovereignty in the Brexit campaign, see Young and Gee, 2016; Yuratich, 2016). For officials, however, there was frustration at what they perceived to be a false conflation of two different timescales. One spoke with frustration about MPs using the phrases "Brexit in a car park" and "negotiating with Europe from a portacabin", noting that the decant was not due to commence until long after the UK had departed the EU (interview, anonymous official, 2018). While this is a valid point, the statements from MPs opposed to Brexit shows that the link was present, even if unfounded. As with perceptions of public opinion, it is the impact on the decision-making process of the link with Brexit, that is critical in this analysis, rather than the accuracy of that link.

We can also see a link on the Remain side. All but one of the six senior MPs identified as being particularly influential in lobbying for full decant had identified with Remain ahead of the referendum.[23] These actors are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, but it is worth considering that lobbying by senior parliamentarians for full decant may have been more successful if they were already considered to be on the same side in the new—and particularly tribal—division in the Commons that had developed on Brexit.

Why does the link with Brexit matter? In January 2018 the electorate for R&R was restricted only to MPs: the only people that would be able to vote on policy change. This was an electorate that had overwhelmingly backed Remain in 2016: analysis ahead of the referendum showed

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[23] Sir Paul Beresford, Chris Bryant, Damian Green, Meg Hillier, and Sir Patrick McLoughlin all declared for Remain ahead of the referendum, while Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown declared for Leave.

that of the MPs that had declared their position, Remain was preferred to Leave by 75% to 25% (BBC, 2016). It is difficult to get an accurate picture of the Remain-Leave balance in the House at the exact time of the R&R vote on 31 January 2018: for many MPs their position on Brexit had shifted from being simply Leave or Remain to a constitutional argument about reflecting the will of the electorate.[24] For this reason, the 2016 declaration should be considered a more accurate picture of MPs' position on Brexit. This chapter has suggested a correlation between positioning on Brexit and R&R, with supporters of Remain more likely to support full decant. This can therefore help to explain the surprise victory for the Hillier amendment: a House that leaned towards Remain would therefore lean also towards full decant.

The national mood

This chapter has shown how MPs backing full decant sought to redefine the problem as urgent and unavoidable to persuade colleagues to support the R&R programme. In an example of the interdependence of the streams, this problem definition was then used to shape the politics stream: specifically by changing the national conversation around R&R. MPs sought to focus on the cost of not acting, drawing on the risks to the building outlined in the problem definition, to overcome the dominant focus on austerity that had shaped the politics stream earlier in the policy window. This draws on the concept of "transaction-cost augmentation" (Twight 1991, p 154), of which a crucial part is recognising that the balance between blame and credit (and how each incentivises certain policy choices) can change over time, as a result of deliberate strategies by politicians. In this case study, the risk of not acting was promoted as a larger than the risk of acting, a strategy Chris Bryant MP argued was successful, referring to the press coverage on the day after the Commons voted for the Hillier amendment:

> "It was not on any front page the next day and it was barely referred to in the news. And all the opinion poll work that had been done showed that the vast majority of people in the country thought it was one of the most beautiful buildings and it had to be looked after" (Interview, Bryant, April 2018).

The final speaker in the Commons debate, Conservative MP and chartered surveyor, Peter Aldous, provides an example of how this argument was deployed:

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[24] The 2017 general election had also led to a 70-seat turnover in MPs. For the new MPs, this chapter uses their 2016 position on the EU referendum (if declared) (sources: Rankin, 2016; Neicho, 2016; News and Star, 2017; Hughes, 2019)

"The Palace of Westminster is the most iconic building in the UK. It is not ours; it belongs to the nation. We are the custodians, with the responsibility of passing it on to the next generation in a better condition than we inherited it. For my part, the evidence is compelling. We need to get on with this work as soon as possible." (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018)

It is clear that perceptions of the national mood differed between the Commons and the Lords. This has been attributed this difference in part to the appointment for life for Peers, compared to the far shorter tenure for most MPs (Interview, Norton, September 2018). There was a wider belief that members of the House of Lords were freer to support R&R because, without constituents, they had less of a concern about a public backlash about the costs of R&R than MPs (as noted previously, even if a concern was not founded in an accurate view of public opinion, it can still have a powerful impact on behaviour). Lord Faulkner, an early supporter of full decant and R&R suggested that the primary reason for the delays in achieving policy change was the "great deal of nervousness in the Commons about the cost, and the ability that MPs have in justifying these huge figures to their constituents" (Interview, Faulkner, 2018). The lifelong appointments of Peers also meant, one official suggested, that it was more likely that they would feel a "sense of legacy and national pride" that would compel them to save the building (interview, anonymous official, 2018).

Concluding thoughts

This analysis has focused on two tributaries of the politics stream: the House of Commons and House of Lords. This analysis has shown, that, even though the votes on R&R in the Commons on 31 January were free votes, they were still influenced by party politics. This is explored further in Chapter 8, which considers the role of senior parliamentarians, but is also an important element of the politics stream. The party balance of the House of Commons directly influenced the result of the vote, leading to policy change. It has further highlighted the influence of the EU referendum on the vote result: the connection made between decant and Brexit may have led a Remain-leaning Commons to support the Hillier amendment. It has also considered how the MPs sought to deploy arguments around national mood to support the case for full decant, and how perceptions of the national mood differed in the Lords, again to the benefit of the case for full decant. These developments enabled the politics stream to be coupled for policy change.

Historical Institutionalism

How does a Historical Institutionalist lens help explain the approval of R&R in early 2018? It is first necessary to note that HI is considered better at explaining policy continuity rather than change, given its emphasis on path dependency (Immergut, 1990). In particular, while departing from a given path is considered possible during a critical juncture, HI has been criticised for failing to predict how and why such junctures occur (Hall and Taylor, 1996). By combining HI with the Multiple Streams Framework, this weakness of the approach can be addressed: Chapter 5 set out how the critical juncture (or policy window) was opened, and Chapter 6 considered why the institutional context enabled the window to stay open. The key question this section seeks to answer then, is how did institutional norms and traditions influence the decision-making period?

Explaining change in the Commons

In the Commons, analysis of the policy window up to January 2018 showed how the history of the institution and its structures acted primarily as a countervailing force against policy change. Previous chapters have set out the emotional attachment to the Palace, based in part on the history of the building. This continued when MPs debated R&R: there were several references to the decision of the Commons to use the chamber of the House of Lords during World War Two, including from Sir Edward Leigh:

> "When the chips were down in 1941, Clement Attlee and Winston Churchill decided that this Chamber would not move from this building." (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c909)

Leigh's speech and his amendment to the motion, were based on a belief that the Commons should not meet away from its historic home, again proving the power of precedent. This view was echoed in the debate by Sir John Redwood MP:

> "I agree with those who think there is something very special about this place and something important about it for our democracy. This is the mother of Parliaments and this building does have great resonance around the world, being associated with the long history of freedom, and the development of the power of voice and vote for all adults in our country [...] it is important that our visitors can come to be reminded of our national story and why we are where we are. All those of us who seek to represent people should be daily reminded of that national story when we come here". (HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c918)

Neil Gray MP, the SNP member from the Joint Committee, argued that Leigh's position was based on a fear of change:

> "it was just the worst of all options, which is to go ahead but to stay in the Palace, that would just be crazy quite frankly, and that was based on a romantic, rose-tinted spectacle view of the fact that we couldn't countenance moving out of the Palace for fear that some of the conventions might change" (Interview, Gray, June 2018)

Leigh admitted to such a fear, describing himself as "very worried […] that once we move out, all the customs, everything will go". He added:

> "You know, being an MP is not the easiest of jobs, one of the upsides of it is that you are working in a bit of history." (Interview, Leigh, May 2018)

However, we can also look to history of parliamentary reform for reason why change was achieved. Walkland (1976, p 6) argued that a lesson of past parliamentary changes is "that successful reform can only take place, and in the past has only occurred, after the political groundwork has been laid". The analysis of the politics stream demonstrated how this groundwork was carried out and its impact (this is further explored in Chapter 8). We can further revisit the Norton view of reform, which was drawn from considering the history of change in parliament (as discussed in Chapters 3 and 5). Norton outlined three conditions: a window of opportunity, both in terms of time and substance; "political willingness on behalf of MPs to use that window of opportunity"; and political leadership by the Leader of the House (Norton, 1998a, p 153-154). The window of opportunity was provided by the Hillier amendment, the "political willingness" by the amendment's supporters, and the Leader of the House provided a level of leadership by putting the issue onto the decision-making agenda (this is discussed further in Chapter 8).

Supporters of full decant could also draw on the emotional attachment to the Palace discussed in Chapter 5. Dr Richard Ware, former Director of the R&R programme, attributed part of the success of the full decant amendment to the place the building occupies within the identity of the institution:

> "I think in many ways, the hero of the piece is the Palace itself, you know, the Palace speaks very powerfully and is in distress and the idea that this fantastic building could burn down or just fall into an unusable ruin, and actually would if we didn't do the right things with it, is so counter-intuitive and so horrible to contemplate that I think it does bring people together" (Interview, Ware, June 2018)

Therefore, while opponents of full decant drew on history to highlight past policy decisions to make their point, supporters were able to utilise lessons from history to counteract this and achieve policy change. Policy change—adopting the R&R programme and full decant—became a way of maintaining stability and continuity, in line with the Westminster Model.   In this way, actors used the institutional context to support, rather than block, policy change. This is

a critical point: institutional factors acting to support rather than block change did not happen by chance but reflected choices by the key actors involved. This feeds into the agency and structure debate: we can see both agency and structure present in this period. It also reflects that the natural tendency of an institution is to promote the status quo - path dependency. The absence of policy entrepreneurs in the first part of the policy window thus meant that the institutional factors were not interpreted to act differently and so worked against change.

Explaining change in the Lords

The primacy of the Commons in the R&R decision-making process meant that the effect of the institutional context analysed in Chapters 5 and 6 was primarily in the Commons—the Lords could not act independently on R&R (itself a further consequence of the institutional context). Once the issue moved to the Lords, we can again see the institutional context acting acted to promote, rather than block change. One reason why Peers were so supportive of R&R and full decant, especially in contrast to the more divided Commons was the need to agree with the Commons. Baroness Evans told Peers "this House must agree a Motion which is substantively the same as that agreed by the other place—otherwise we will once again reach an impasse" (HL Deb, 6 Feb 2018). This thesis has shown that the Lords made up a separate tributary in the problem and politics streams, noting the higher level of support for R&R among Peers compared MPs. Baroness Evans' argument may not therefore have been necessary to swing the vote but it did persuade some of the minority of Peers who had been minded to vote against the motion. Lord Cormack, a former MP, who did not support full decant, agreed:

> "Before the Commons took its vote last week, I was minded to argue for remaining. I took advice from architects and others, all of whom said that it was an entirely practical course. But I have often said in this House, in debates on Brexit and on the size of your Lordships' House, that we should defer to the elected House, and this is a case in point." (HL Deb, 6 Feb 2018)

Lord Norton agreed that this mindset was a factor in the Lords approving R&R:

> "Once there was a majority in the Commons, however small, we weren't going to go against the Commons. So, it shut up those at our end, who I think were not as numerous as in the Commons anyway." (Interview, Norton, September 2018)

This demonstrates an example of path dependency: Peers were advised to continue with a decision taken by the Commons, because the cost of deviating (further delays to R&R) would be too high.

Concluding thoughts

This section has shown how the institutional context during the decision-making period shifted from being a countervailing force to helping to promote change. This was driven by key actors in the Commons who sought to use norms and traditions to support the case for R&R and full decant. In the Upper House, the fact that the House of Lords has long since ceded primacy to the Commons, and this affected how Peers approached the issue This is a clear example of the power of institutional factors in understanding policy change on R&R. Simply considering the politics, problem and policy streams in isolation, as Kingdon originally intended, does not allow for individual actions to be influenced by the history of the institution.

Conclusion

The approval of R&R and full decant was a significant moment of policy change for the UK Parliament. This thesis has shown how the history of the Palace of Westminster is one of indecision and piecemeal changes to the building, with major refurbishments or plans for a new building delayed or rejected until a major crisis (such as the 1834 fire or Second World War bomb damage) occurred. When such a crisis made changes to the building inevitable, the policy solutions were governed by looking more to the history of the institution, than the future. On 31 January, and 6 February, 2018, the House of Commons and House of Lords made a decisive break with the past by taking a decision to move out their historic home to allow a major refurbishment (while still limiting the scope of the change by committing to returning to the Palace).

This chapter has sought to explain how the Restoration and Renewal programme, including full decant, became adopted as the official policy for the Palace of Westminster in early 2018. It has considered how and why the Government tried to keep control over the debate, and how this was defeated by a backbench amendment, with the support of senior parliamentarians. With the possibility of full decant on the decision-making agenda, the multiple streams were coupled by MPs supporting full decant. The urgency of the impending crisis of the infrastructure was emphasised in a sharpening of the problem definition, which not only positioned policy change as unavoidable, but also that full decant was the only policy solution. Within the politics stream, which had previously been hostile to policy change, the supporters of R&R turned concerns about a potential public backlash about expenditure into a case of backbenchers acting responsibly to take action on a risk to part of the country's heritage. This case was enhanced by the intrinsically partisan nature of Westminster, with party political organisation and the connection with Brexit bolstering support for full decant. Crucially,

institutional norms and traditions became a factor in supporting, rather than blocking, policy change, for example through the House of Lords supporting the decision of the Commons.

This chapter has tested and provided further evidence for the MSF Plus theoretical framework. It has shown how it was necessary for all three streams to be coupled before policy change was possible. It has demonstrated how 'tributaries' continued to exist within the problem and politics streams, and how these streams could have different weights. This has been a crucial development, as by examining each tributary separately we can understand how policy change could be achieved even in the face of resistance (or at least, lack of explicit support) from the top of government (an issue explored further in Chapter 8). The existence of tributaries has also highlighted the potential for the existence of multiple problem definitions leading to the 'miscoupling' of policy solutions, preventing both the problem and policy streams from alignment.

Further, as the concept of miscoupling suggests, this chapter has shown how, there is greater interdependence between the multiple streams than Kingdon originally envisaged (he described the streams as "loosely coupled" (Kingdon, 2014, p 229)—and also the institutional context. The problem definition shaped by the narrow policy community and political context, in addition to the effect of institutional norms and traditions. The choice of policy solutions was shaped by the problem definition and what met the values of the policy community: values that have again been shaped, in part, by the institution in which the policy community resides, the UK Parliament. The 'politics' of R&R was in turn shaped by these same institutional values.

The importance of the institutional context within each of the multiple streams demonstrates the value of the MSF Plus theoretical approach. By focusing on the developments in the multiple streams—and why these developments occurred—in addition to the institutional context we can understand the role of key actors in a way that a purely institutional approach would not provide. Additionally, the Historical Institutionalist lens provides a specific contextual understanding of why individuals act in a certain way, that a purely public policy approach might not provide. Indeed, in all three of these empirical chapters, we can see how the House of Commons and House of Lords offered different institutional contexts, shaping the multiple streams (and further demonstrating the presence of tributaries within the problem and politics streams). While each House comprises part of the overall institution of Parliament, analysis of the debate in each chamber, complemented by the interview data, reveals how the Commons and Lords served as individual arenas for decision-making, with different definitions of the problem, and a different wider political context. These different

interpretations of the situation can be explained in part by the institutional development and norms and traditions of the two Houses.

This chapter, and its two predecessors, have set up a base for the next chapter of this thesis which will explore in more detail the key roles of individuals in approving policy change. This will in turn provide evidence for how understanding Restoration and Renewal helps us to not only understand the UK Parliament better, but also broader debates around institutional change, democratic renewal, and the politics of megaprojects. To contribute to these debates, this thesis turns to examine the potential policy entrepreneurs and problem brokers who emerged within this policy window.

Chapter 8: Parliamentary problem brokers and policy entrepreneurs

"No one's conscience should be comfortable with the potential consequences of delay and inaction in these circumstances" (Damian Green MP, HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c902)

How do individual actors achieve policy change? The previous three chapters have set out how the politics, policy and problem streams developed through the course of the policy window, highlighting the effect of the institutional context and the different roles and contributions of various MPs, Peers and officials. This chapter builds on that analysis by going deeper to look at the specific actions of key figures to achieve (or in some cases block) policy change. The roles of key individuals are a central part of Kingdon's original Multiple Streams Framework. He defined actors who pushed an item onto the agenda as 'policy entrepreneurs' and argued that:

> "When researching case studies, one can nearly always pinpoint a particular person, or at most a few persons, who were central in moving a subject up on the agenda and into position for enactment." (Kingdon, 2014, p 180)

The MSF Plus framework builds on Kingdon's original conception of the policy entrepreneur by expanding to look at policy change, as well as agenda-setting, and also by considering individuals who worked to *block* policy change or were unsuccessful in efforts to achieve policy change. Identifying policy entrepreneurs in the R&R policy window contributes to the literature explaining how such actors help to deliver policy change. The MSF Plus framework seeks to explain the specific steps taken by key individuals, but also to combine this focus on individual agency with an analysis of the institutional context, in line with the Historical Institutionalist belief that this context structures (but does not define) the actions of individuals (Kelso, 2009b). By considering both agency and structure, this combined approach follows Zahariadis (2008, p526) in recognising that "institutions make things possible, but people make things happen" and Borrás and Radaelli (2011, p 479) in the belief that "institutions enable or constrain policy entrepreneurs".

Operationalising the MSF Plus theoretical framework in this case study therefore means understanding how the structures of Parliament influenced key actors and how they used these structures to achieve change. This goes beyond just formal structures (noted by Yong (2018) to be ambiguous) to understand where power lies in Parliament and how it is exercised. It also includes looking beyond political actors to assess the role of parliamentary officials, a further gap in the literature identified by Geddes (2016). This chapter considers whether the two

Clerks of the House of Commons during the policy window (Lord Lisvane and Sir David Natzler) could be considered as policy entrepreneurs or as 'problem brokers'. In doing so, this chapter provides an empirical test of the problem broker concept, identified as missing from the existing literature (Knaggård, 2015).

The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to assess the differing roles played by policy entrepreneurs and problem brokers during the policy window. The identification of these critical actors reflects both the closed policy community—there was little external policy input—and the importance of the institutional structure. This analysis also focuses primarily on the role of actors based in the House of Commons, due to the primary role the lower house played during the policy window. The policy entrepreneurs can thus be divided into four categories based on their roles within Parliament, as in *Figure 8.1.* below.

Figure 8.1. Key actors in the R&R policy window

This chapter uses this categorisation to analyse the critical actors, and is thus divided into four parts. First it considers the role of the Speaker of the House of Commons in the policymaking process. The chapter then moves to the role of key ministers: the Leader of the Commons, the Prime Minister and the Chief Whip. The third part of the chapter looks at how opposition within Government was overcome by backbench MPs, who had credibility based on their seniority in the House. The final part of the chapter looks at the role of parliamentary officials, and considers whether any individuals could act problem brokers. The chapter then concludes by considering what we can learn about power in Parliament through this analysis of critical actors.

The key argument of this chapter is that there were a number of critical actors who can be considered as policy entrepreneurs or problem brokers, at different points of the policy window, with different resources and sources of credibility depending on the decision-making arena and the institutional constraints on their role. This fits the conclusion of Copeland and Scott (2014, p14) that "policy entrepreneurship is not a simple function of an agent's structural position, but instead is fluid, dynamic and relational in nature". The dispersion of power over the management of the Palace of Westminster between various actors within Parliament (such

as the Speaker of the House of Commons, Leader of the House of Commons, Leader of the Lords, Lord Speaker, Clerk of the House of Commons and Clerk of the Parliaments) means that there was no one individual that could act as a policy entrepreneur for the whole window. Furthermore, key actors did not agree on the definition of the problem or the preferable policy solution, and were working towards different goals, in conflict with each other. These different goals meant that some key actors—such as the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Government Chief Whip—can be considered 'negative policy entrepreneurs' at key points of the policy window as they sought to block, rather than promote, policy change. This was particularly the case in the early part of the policy window, when there was no policy entrepreneur working **for** policy change. This in turn provided parliamentary staff space—and responsibility—to act as problem brokers. The impact of key actors varied, depending on their powers, their willingness to expend political capital (if required), and their success in coupling the streams. It is critical, therefore, to look at these actors in turn, to understand fully the policymaking landscape.

8.1. Speaking for Parliament? The Speaker of the House of Commons

This chapter will argue that Speaker Bercow was the key actor in the decision-making process in the first part of the policy window (as discussed in Chapter 5) between 2012 and 2015, but that his involvement challenges the traditional definition of a policy entrepreneur, raising the potential for a "negative policy entrepreneur" to be considered as part of the MSF Plus framework.

There is little research into the Speaker's role in parliamentary governance: the least public of his trifecta of duties (Marsden, 1979). While the Speaker chairs meetings of the House of Commons Commission, these are held in private and he does not speak for the Commission publicly.[25] Speakers of the Commons have not been chosen for their potential skills at managing the administration of the Commons, but "primarily to sit in the Speaker's chair" (interview, Thurso, June 2018; see also Armitage, 2010). Chapter 2 of this thesis noted the opposition of Speaker Michael Martin to any major refurbishment or decant plans between 2007 and 2009. While Martin's successor, John Bercow, was elected on a manifesto to rebuild trust in parliamentary democracy, this did not include rebuilding the home of parliamentary democracy. In fact, when asked where the state of the Palace was on his to-do list on taking

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[25] By convention the role of Commission spokesperson is assigned to the Lib Dem backbench representative on the Commission.

office, Bercow said: "candidly, at that point, it was scarcely visible on the list, or if it was on the list, it was very low down the list" (interview, September 2018). During this early part of the policy window Bercow described himself as "very unenthusiastic about the whole idea", adding:

> "My reasoning really was that R&R, though it may well be necessary, was in no sense part of the modernisation project in which I felt I was involved [...] it seemed to me, 'gosh, this is not very exciting', it doesn't actually **do** anything by way of **reform,** in a way that will help the primary function of the House as a legislature, nor did I did see it as something that would help what I, slightly pompously, called the secondary part of my agenda, which is to try to reform things outwith the chamber, for example, by making the House more family-friendly through having the nursery, or by enhancing the education and citizenship function, by having an Education Centre." (Interview, Bercow, September 2018)

The Speaker's framing of the R&R project as not about reform influenced the definition of the problem within the House of Commons Commission tributary in the problem stream. Why did the Speaker have such power at this stage? This can be explained, primarily, by the importance of the Commons Commission as the key decision-making arena during the 2012-2015 period (as discussed in Chapter 5). Yong (2018) has identified three reasons why the Speaker can set the Commission's agenda. First, his higher than average length of service on the Commission compared to the other attendees: which was indeed the case for the crucial October 2012 meeting when a new parliamentary building was ruled out. Second, Yong argued that the Speaker has more the day-to-day contact with House staff, than other Commission members. Third, Yong (2018, p 88) suggested that the Speaker's authority in the chamber "bleeds into his administrative role". This was echoed by Viscount Thurso, who described the "obvious patronage" of the Speaker's control over the granting of urgent questions and who speaks in the Commons, and the impact this would have on how people acted in Commission meetings (interview, June 2018).

There are a number of constraints on the Speaker's powers, however. While the Speaker is "both master and servant of the House" (Blackburn and Kennon, 2003, p 212), the 'master' aspect of the role is subordinate to that of the 'servant'. As Laundy describes: "while the Speaker's powers may seem formidable, he exercises none which the House has not conferred upon him" (1979, p 130). In addition, the powers are conferred less on the individual than the office (HC Deb, 10 Dec 1970, c671). The Speaker is also expected to have a particular role in protecting and maintaining, rather than reversing traditions (as noted, for example, in the valedictory debates on the retirement of Speakers King (HC Deb, 13 Jan 1971, c 85), Thomas (HC Deb, 12 May 1983, c919-920, 927), and Boothroyd (HC Deb, 26 July 2000, c118)). Speakers of the House are thus bound by the history of the institution, restricting their powers

to change policy. Where change was possible it would need to have the support of the institution, rather than being a personal cause: as the Speaker experienced in 2014 when the House pushed back against his reforming efforts, blocking his choice of an external candidate to replace Lord Lisvane as Clerk of the House, on his retirement (for more, see Geddes and Meakin, 2018).

Bercow's 2012 position, as discussed in Chapter 5, was described by his then counterpoint in the Lords, Baroness D'Souza as "full decant over his dead body" (interview, July 2019). His instincts during this time to work against R&R was in line with the view of the wider House and the institutional tendency to block radical change, giving the Speaker a zone of discretion in which to work. In the October 2012 meeting, the Speaker could have simply been outvoted by the rest of the Commission if he was isolated in his position. The absence of support of R&R or moving away from Westminster, however, in the Commission, and the Commons as a whole, (as discussed in Chapter 5) meant that Speaker's position in the meeting was unchallenged, enabling him to shape his preferred outcome. During this period, the opposition of the Speaker, with the tacit approval of the House of Commons Commission and broader membership of the House, served to block policy progress. Speaker Bercow can thus be considered a key actor in the period. He does not, however, fit the traditional definition of a policy entrepreneur, as he was working to maintain the *status quo*, rather than putting an issue on the agenda or working for policy change. His actions therefore force us to consider the potential for a 'negative policy entrepreneur', using political capital to block radical change.

During the policy window there was a substantial shift in the position of the Speaker. He described how "over a long period" his mindset changed, and he decided while R&R would be "highly inconvenient" and "not at all desirable", it would be "the least worst option" (Interview, September 2018). This extended to accepting that the full decant option for delivering the refurbishment was "the most prudent and pragmatic" (Bercow, 2018, p850). As a result, he came to believe that Parliament could not postpone a decision on the future of the Palace any longer as it faced a "moment of truth" (Bercow, 2018, p 849). The Speaker's conversion went far beyond simply supporting the limited policy change recommended by the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster: he argued that R&R offered "the chance to fashion a progressive Parliament", adding that "the only limitations on us are those which we allow to constrain our ambitions and our imagination" (Bercow, 2018, p 850, 852). Why then, if the Speaker now supported radical policy change would it take over two years for even a narrow version of R&R to be approved? The answer lies in the qualified power of the Speaker—as noted above, he was unable to drive forward change without the consent of the House, particularly when he was seeking a substantial change from the institutional path dependency of the House, and was

thus denied the 'zone of discretion' from which he had benefited earlier in the window. The Speaker's change of position did not reflect a wider surge of support for R&R in the Commons, which remained largely unaware of (or instinctively hostile towards) the looming issue.

The Speaker's powers were also qualified in the second half of the policy window—after June 2015 and the publication of the IOA report—when the decision-making arena shifted away from the House of Commons Commission and to the broader House of Commons. The Government's control over substantive time in the Commons chamber meant that power to set the agenda in the 2015-18 half of the policy window lay with the Government, and not the Speaker or the House of Commons Commission. Chapters 5 and 6 showed how this delayed a debate on R&R, which was described by Speaker Bercow as "hugely frustrating" (interview, September 2018). He also noted his lack of power to resolve it:

> "There is quite a large number of things that people assume that the Speaker can decide or control or make happen, which in fact the Speaker can't decide, or control or make happen at all [...] the Commission could recommend that a debate now take place [...] but actually that's all we can do." (Interview, September 2018)

While the literature has recognised the capacity of the Speaker to influence the Government through the usual channels (e.g. Blackburn and Kennon, 2003), this case study reveals the limitations of that influence. In part, this can be attributed to the Speaker working against opposition within the Government (discussed further in section 8.2). However, the particular political context of the period is also relevant here, and the importance of relationships in Parliament. Speaker Bercow, while originally elected as a Conservative MP, had a difficult relationship with ministers from his own party in the 2010-2015 Parliament. The outcome of the 2014 row over the new Clerk of the Commons (discussed earlier in this chapter) was considered as a defeat for the Speaker by members of the Government (e.g. HC Deb, 23 Mar 2015, c1120). With the Speaker viewed as weakened, the then Leader of the Commons, William Hague, sought to implement a secret ballot for Speakership elections (HC Deb, 26 Mar 2015, cc1617,1622). The Government was defeated by 26 votes (HC Deb, 26 Mar 2015, cc1630-32), and it was backbench Conservative MPs that were viewed as saving the Speaker, against their own Prime Minister (Wintour, 2015). In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Speaker's informal influence through the usual channels to push the Government to act on R&R was limited.

Zahariadis and Exadaktylos (2016, p 63) have argued that "entrepreneurial strategies are bounded by institutional context". This can be witnessed in the Speaker's role in the R&R case study. For example, his power was constrained once the R&R debate was scheduled in the

Commons, as impartiality on the part of the Speaker meant he was unable to influence the outcome. Once the issue then moved to the House of Lords, the Speaker had no influence at all, with no formal role or powers in the upper House. While addressing the problem of the Palace of Westminster required a bicameral approach, the Speaker's authority to address the issue extended only as far as the Commons. Despite his dominant role in the early part of the policy window, and his overall responsibility for the administration of the Commons, the Speaker would have no input on whether Parliament approved the R&R programme. Furthermore, the Speaker's call for the scope of R&R to include a broad exploration of changing Parliament as an institution has appeared to go unheeded.

What can we learn about the role of the Speaker from the examination of Speaker Bercow's role during the 2012 – 2018 policy window? This analysis reveals four key findings:

1. When choosing a new Speaker MPs do not view the administration of the Palace as a core task of the role.
2. The Speaker's influence over the House of Commons Commission is helped by his powers of patronage in the Commons chamber. This enabled him to shape the outcome of the Commission meeting considering the Pre-Feasibility Study, and thus meant that he was instrumental in defining the problem of R&R and delaying policy change.
3. The Speaker's ability to act as a policy entrepreneur is dependent, however, on implied consent from the Commons, offering him a zone of discretion in which to act. The Speaker could exercise power due to the lack of support for R&R from political members of the Commission, and absence of any wider pressure from MPs.
4. The Speaker is responsible for the administration of the House, but his influence on the decision-making process is almost completely constrained once issues move from the arena of the Commission to the Commons, due first to the government control over the agenda, and then through the impartiality of his office.

These findings demonstrate why and how the Speaker was able to act as a negative policy entrepreneur during the early part of the policy window, and how his influence declined after 2015, when the Government took control of the agenda. It is to the role of key ministers that this chapter now turns.

8.2. The Government

The role of the Government on R&R is, in the words of Yong (2018, p 100) "fundamental, but lacks transparency". This section aims to shed light on the Government's role in the R&R process, considering both the public and private behaviour of key actors—considering both the on-stage and off-stage activities. During the policy window the key ministerial officeholders with influence over the R&R programme were the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Commons, and the Commons Chief Whip. This list is not exhaustive: at various stages other ministers have been involved in discussions and decisions around R&R (for example, given the price tag of the work, as noted above, the Treasury maintained an interest throughout the policy window, the Cabinet Office also played a role through the Major Projects Authority and its successor, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority). But the posts analysed have been chosen based on their responsibility and activities during the policy window and on the analysis undertaken for this thesis. The focus on the Government recognises the key role of the executive in the Westminster model. The UK has been categorised by Lijphart (2012) as a majoritarian power-hoarding system. Judge (1993, p 143) has further discussed the "executive mentality" within Westminster. It also reflects the difference, as argued by Page between the US system analysed by Kingdon and other countries which are less fragmented and more dominated by the executive: "for the most part those seeking to influence policies, and above all, agendas, have to convince one audience above all which has disproportionate influence on the policy process: the political members of the core executive" (Page, 2008, p 209). In considering the role of the Government, however, this analysis recognises, as noted already in this thesis, the shifting balance of power away from the executive and towards the legislature (e.g. Flinders and Kelso, 2011; Russell and Cowley, 2016; Norton, 2017), and the finding of Matthews and Flinders (2017, p 176) that "during the 2010–2015 parliament, the UK moved further away from the caricature of a power-hoarding polity, as power became more diffuse and the executive more constrained". A nuanced position of executive power is appropriate for R&R: while ministers regularly insisted that R&R was a matter for Parliament (e.g. HC Deb, 25 Jan 2017, c119WH; HC Deb, 31 Jan 2018, c888), the preceding chapters have shown how progress on policy change was delayed at the hands of the Government due to their control over the decision-making agenda. This reflects Judge's argument that "parliamentary sovereignty" must be recognised as "concentrated in the hands of an executive working *through* parliament", and thus viewed as a "constitutional cloak within which executive seek to maintain their relative political autonomy" (Judge, 1993, p 193, italics in original).

This section examines the role of the Government during the 2012-2018 policy window and examines to what extent R&R was, in practice, a matter for Parliament. To do this, it considers

the actions of key ministers: *Table 8.1. (*below) sets out the parliamentarians in three roles during this period: Prime Minister, Leader of the House of Commons and Chief Whip. Not all of the individuals serving in the three offices took an active role, and some of the posts were of varying importance as the policy window progressed. For example, while the Leader of the House and Prime Minister were key figures from the very start of the period, the Chief Whip took on a more active role after the publication of the Joint Committee's report in September 2016. This section will look first at the role of Leader of the House, and then moves to consider the view of the wider government, primarily the Prime Minister and Chief Whip, setting out the opposition which was faced by the Leader of the House in seeking to achieve policy change. This will then set up the third part of the chapter, which will analyse how backbenchers succeeding in overcoming this opposition.

Table 8.1. Critical actors within Government, 2012-2018

Leader of the House	Prime Minister	Chief Whip (Commons)
Sir George Young (May 2010 – Sept 2012)	David Cameron (May 2010 – July 2016)	Sir Patrick McLoughlin (May 2010 - Sept 2012)
Andrew Lansley (Sept 2012 – July 2014)	Theresa May (July 2016 – July 2019)	Andrew Mitchell (Sept – Oct 2012)
William Hague (July 2014 – May 2015)		Sir George Young (Oct 2012 – July 2014)
Chris Grayling (May 2015 – July 2016)		Michael Gove (July 2014 – May 2015)
David Lidington (July 2016 – June 2017)		Mark Harper (May 2015 – July 2016)
Andrea Leadsom (June 2017 – May 2019)		Gavin Williamson (July 2016 – Nov 2017)
		Julian Smith (Nov 2017 – July 2019)

The Leader of the House

The role of the Leader of the House of Commons has been recognised as a key player in either promoting or blocking parliamentary reforms (Flinders, 2007; Gay, 2017). The holder of the post serves as both the Government's representative to Parliament and Parliament's representative to Government (HC Deb, 26 October 2019, c459). The conflict inherent was noted by Yong (2018, p 89) who argued that while "the Leader of the House can be a powerful actor in terms of House administration" their duty to the government almost always takes precedence over their duties to the House. As a result, Yong concluded, "the rare Leader committed to reform faces formidable challenges, not least from their own whips and an indifferent to hostile Prime Minister" (Yong, 2018, p 89). Greg Power, a former special adviser to Robin Cook when he was Leader of the House, also noted the opposition the Leader faced from ministerial colleagues:

> "When other policy areas get discussed in Cabinet, the relevant Secretary of State may accept some criticism, but ultimately enjoys a degree of deference from colleagues as the minister responsible for that area. For the Leader of the House, there is no such leeway. Changes to the way parliament operates affect every member of the cabinet, and given they have usually been in parliament for some time, each can claim to know a fair bit about procedure. The Leader of the House potentially, therefore, has a more difficult job, building support for his policies than any other minister" (Power, 2007, p 500).

While Power was referring specifically to parliamentary reform, the same problems arose for R&R: all ministers had their own views about the Palace and what should be done. This thesis has already highlighted how there was little support for R&R among Conservative MPs in

general. This was no different among the MPs in the government: only 15% of ministers voted for the Hillier amendment (lower than the 29% of Conservative MPs who voted Aye, although there was a significantly higher level of abstention among ministers). In the face of this opposition, how did R&R get on the agenda and then succeed? This part of the chapter will look at the role of the Leader of the House to answer this question, and classify Andrea Leadsom as a key policy entrepreneur for the R&R case study.

Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum recognised Leadsom's part in achieving progress on R&R, particularly in contrast with her predecessors. Tom Brake, a Liberal Democrat MP, said:

> "Give her her due, Andrea Leadsom is the person who actually brought forward this debate, eventually secured the time for it in Government […] all credit to her in actually taking action on something which frankly people had avoided like the plague." (Interview, Brake, May 2018)

How did Leadsom succeed? One reason was that her capacity to act was had been strengthened by the shift in the key R&R policy-making arena after the publication of the IOA in June 2015 (noted in section 8.1). The powers of the House of Commons Commission over the policymaking process in the 2012-15 period meant a minimal role for the Leader of the House: who was a member (but not the chair) of the Commission. Leadsom described her experience of Commission meetings:

> "I find House Commission meetings deeply frustrating because usually on principle I'm outvoted, so everyone looks to see "what does the Leader think?". Right we'll vote the opposite then, regardless of the subject, because it's politics, and they have the majority." (Interview, Leadsom, May 2018)

After the publication of the IOA, agenda-setting powers moved to the Government, thus transferred making the Leader of the House the responsible minister. The then Leader of the House, Chris Grayling co-chaired the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster with the Leader of the Lords, Baroness Stowell, and while Grayling admitted to being originally sceptical about R&R and decant (e.g. HC Deb, 9 Jul 2015, c445), members of the Joint Committee were effusive in praise for him and Stowell for how they led the inquiry (interview, Bryant, April 2018; interview, Tami, May 2018; interview, Paisley, June 2018; interview, Gray, June 2018). There was recognition from officials, however, that in the dual role of the Leader

of the House, the responsibility to government had taken precedence, in the rare situation of ministers chairing a select committee.[26] One official close to the R&R programme said:

> "This is the thing about having two ministers chairing a select committee. How can the will of the Government not have prevailed? Because that was their number one priority, not the programme. And because there was so much going on outside of R&R: referendum, new leader, all of those things. All valid concerns but that was driving the narrative and when and how that should be communicated more than I think other committee members were aware." (Interview, anonymous official, 2018)

Under Grayling's successor, David Lidington, a close ally of the Prime Minister, Theresa May, there is even more evidence that progress on R&R was a casualty to the dual nature of the Leader of the House role. As with Grayling, Lidington was widely recognised by interviewees as both understanding the problem of the building, and being committed to tackling it, but his period in post, however, was notable for the lack of progress on bringing forth the debate. Lidington drew considerable personal sympathy from MPs across the House (e.g. interview, Bercow, September 2018) for this lack of progress, which was attributed to the wider opposition to R&R within Government.

While Leadsom, like both Grayling and Lidington, had a clear personal commitment to R&R, her capacity to act was increased by the personal and political context of her time in post, having been appointed as Commons Leader in June 2017, less than a year after being the last challenger to Theresa May for the Conservative leadership. The decision to move Leadsom to Leader of the House after the 2017 election was viewed as a demotion from her previous Cabinet role (Yorke 2017). Unlike two of her predecessors at the start of the policy window, Hague and Andrew Lansley, however, Leadsom did not appear to treat the job as a valedictory role in Government. Furthermore, her relationship with the Prime Minister meant she was unlikely to expect a promotion (unlike her immediate predecessors, Grayling and Lidington). This may have given Leadsom a greater level of freedom to drive forward policy change in the face of opposition among colleagues. She was further strengthened by the wider political context: the loss of May's majority at the election meant that the role of Leader of the House, often seen as a junior role, became crucial to the Government's survival. The management of time in the Commons and passage of business—the Leader's responsibilities—were elevated to an importance not present during a majority government. Leadsom was thus in a highly unusual position as a Leader of the House: determined to carve out a personal legacy, operating with rare ex officio power, and not reliant on the patronage of the Prime Minister

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[26] This arrangement was unusual, with the only precedent being the Modernisation Committee in the Commons, which had been chaired by the Leader of the House during its existence between 1997 and 2010.

(there are parallels here with a previous Leader of the House, Robin Cook, who also had a clear reform agenda (Flinders, 2007; Cook 2003)). This provided a freedom to manoeuvre, particularly on issues affecting the House: Lord Norton suggested that R&R would be one such issue given "the fact it is a minority Government, this is one area where the Leader probably could make greater leeway, because it's non-partisan" (Interview, September 2018). While this thesis has noted the potential disadvantage of ministerial turnover on the R&R project, the specifics of Leadsom's situation meant that the change of Leader of the House actually aided the chances of coupling the multiple streams (such events have been recognised in the literature: Henstra (2010, p 250) argued that turnover of key actors "can sometimes result in a more sympathetic and receptive audience for advocates").

After being appointed Leadsom described how "what was really important to me was to do my own homework" on R&R, taking a tour of the Palace basement, which she described as "the beginning of a journey" on the issue (interview, May 2018). With this understanding of the state of the building, Leadsom described why she was determined to achieve progress, pointing to a personal commitment to deliver change, indicating a shift in the dual nature of the role compared to her predecessors:

> "I love a good challenge [...] I really was just determined to get action, you know 'let's do something, let's kill it or cure it. Either we're going to do it, or we're not, but we're not going to sit around pontificating'" (Interview, Leadsom, May 2018)

It is important to note that Leadsom was seeking to achieve a different policy change—R&R with a parliamentary foothold, rather than full decant—than most of the supporters of the R&R programme. As discussed in Chapter 6, this reflected the multiple problem tributaries, each reflecting a different policy option, that led to miscoupling with the policy stream. After the vote on the Hillier amendment had been successful, however, Leadsom described how she changed her position believing that "action is better than inaction" and voted for the amended motion, which proposed full decant (Interview, May 2018). This set Leadsom apart from the majority of her Cabinet and party colleagues.

How can we evaluate the role of the Leader of the House during the policy window? This analysis has shown that the role became a critical actor when the decision-making arena shifted to Parliament, rather than the Commons Commission, in June 2015. Given the control of the Government over the scheduling of business in the Commons, this transferred power over the R&R programme to the Leader of the House, from the Speaker of the Commons (who chairs the Commission). The Leaders of the House between 2015 and 2018 (Grayling, Lidington and Leadsom) were therefore in a stronger position to deliver policy change than

their predecessors since 2012 (Sir George Young, Hague and Lansley). This thesis argues, however, that both Lidington and (to a lesser extent) Grayling were constrained by their interpretation of the role of Leader of the House, which placed priority on serving the Government (a valid interpretation of the role, which may have reflected their own personal political loyalties and the wider political context). As this chapter has shown, Leadsom arrived in post in a vastly different political context due to the minority Government and less reliant on the Prime Minister for patronage. While Leadsom did not achieve the specific policy change on R&R which she had sought, she was viewed as instrumental in ending the delays by placing the issue onto the policy agenda, and in making the case for policy change (see for example, HC Deb, 23 May 2019, c822,823; Bryant, 2019; Elmore, 2019). Her advocacy for the issue and use of political capital to drive forward progress means she can be classed as a key policy entrepreneur. Notably, Leadsom was recognised for having achieved progress on R&R in the face of opposition amongst her cabinet colleagues (interview, Bercow, September 2018). Understanding the nature and effect of this opposition is the aim for the next section of this chapter.

The Prime Minister and the Chief Whip

Historical analysis of the parliamentary reform has demonstrated how the role of Prime Ministers is crucial, even (or especially) when they are not pushing for change. Kelso (2009b, p 183), for example, described how Tony Blair's "ambivalence" about the need for Lords reform "structured the reform debate" in the 1997 Parliament. This section will show how prime ministerial ambivalence—or even hostility—influenced the debate around Restoration and Renewal. As a result, the impact of David Cameron and Theresa May to the policy window was understood to be delaying or blocking policy change, rather than delivering it: acting as 'negative policy entrepreneurs'.

When David Cameron was elected as Prime Minister in May 2010, there was no evidence that the state of the building was a pressing concern for him. Lord Haselhurst, one of the MPs who advised the Pre-Feasibility Study in 2012, told me that he "tried to persuade the Prime Minister [Cameron] to go down the cellars and have a look" but that the Chief Whip and Cameron's PPS refused the request (interview, May 2018). Nor was there evidence that Cameron would support full decant: when the Independent Options Appraisal (IOA) was published in June 2015: Cameron's immediate reaction at a press conference was reported by the BBC as follows:

> "David Cameron says renovation is an issue primarily for the House of Commons authorities. The PM says he has not yet read the report and may give his view after the weekend - but added, 'in all these things we obviously have to be cost effective'." (Hunt and Moseley, 2015)

A fortnight later, the IOA report was raised at Prime Minister's Question Time, producing what would be Cameron's only parliamentary comment on R&R:

> "As for the future of this House of Commons and where we stand and where we debate, that is a matter for the House of Commons, but I have to say that I have a slight emotional attachment to this place—the place at this Dispatch Box specifically." (HC Deb, 1 Jul 2015, c1477)

This intervention was viewed as the Prime Minister pre-empting the decision of Parliament, as reflected in the newspaper coverage the next day which included a headline stating "Cam against MPs moving" and the suggestion that the Prime Minister had "dropped a heavy hint" that the Commons would move into the Lords during the refurbishment (Daily Mirror, 2015; Perraudin, 2015b). Indeed, partial decant became known in the media as the Prime Minister's "preferred option" (e.g. Waugh, 2016). Some coverage even suggested that Cameron would prefer a rolling programme of work, to avoid the multi-billion cost of the R&R programme (e.g. Allen and Parker, 2016). Indeed, Sir Edward Leigh was firm on this point:

> "David Cameron specifically didn't want to do it, because it was going to be spending £4 billion on us, which was thoroughly unpopular with the public." (Interview, Leigh, May 2018)

Baroness Stowell contested this view, noting the lobbying she and her Co-Chair of the Joint Committee, Chris Grayling, carried out with their colleagues: "David Cameron, took a lot of persuading, but in the end, I think we convinced him" (interview, Stowell, July 2018).

Cameron's successor as Prime Minister, Theresa May, was viewed by many MPs as sharing the same concern about the cost. Labour MP, Mark Tami, said:

> "I think Downing Street has always had this idea that it's politically, from the public's point of view, disastrous. You never want to be the Government that signs off spending, there you are, cutting this and that, and there you are spending billions of pounds on this place." (Interview, Brake, May 2018)

Kingdon noted the importance of public opinion in policymaking, arguing that politicians feel that they can accurately "sense" the national mood, and when that mood changes (Kingdon, 2014, pp 146-7. Furthermore, the predominant position of the Prime Minister in UK politics

(Bennister, 2008; Heffernan, 2005; Dowding, 2013) means that their understanding of public opinion assumes even greater weight than that of the average politician.

It is worth noting that concerns about public opinion may not have been well-founded. Chris Bryant MP suggested that "most Members' view of what the public opinion was, was pretty ill-informed. They all thought 'oh the voters will hate us'", but that the opinion polls and newspapers did not reflect this (Interview, April 2018). Kingdon argued, however, that it does not matter how valid these perceptions are, the relevant point is that the perception is believed by the participant, thus affecting how they act (Kingdon, 2014, p 68). A politician's perception of public opinion, he further argued, is more commonly used as a reasoning **not** to do something, rather than to act: making it more likely that fear of a public backlash would block action on R&R rather than promote action (Kingdon, 2014, p 65).

Some interviewees believed that Theresa May, as Prime Minister, was opposed to R&R: Chris Bryant described May as a "sticking point" (interview, April 2018); Speaker Bercow suggested she was "not altogether persuaded" (interview, September 2018). Mark Tami said he was "clear the Prime Minister never wanted to do it" (interview, May 2018). One official who worked closely with the Government during this period contests this view, arguing that May did not seek to block R&R (interview, anonymous official, 2019). Another senior parliamentary official described how May had been supportive of R&R at the start of the programme, but that this may have faded away in the face of the political context:

> "I had begun to feel that it was being kicked into the long grass, and that the strains of Brexit would be just so great, and take up too much bandwidth, and particularly that that early support that we believed we had from Theresa May might have been eclipsed by all the Brexit problems." (Interview, anonymous official, 2018)

As May did not intervene in public, we cannot definitively assess her position. Sir Edward Leigh however, discussed how he worked with the Chief Whip (at the time, Gavin Williamson) against the full decant proposal, and that this must have been sanctioned by May:

> "No Chief Whip ever acts against the interests of the Prime Minister. So, if Gavin Williamson was actively encouraging Shailesh and me to delay this, and to have an alternative point of view, he was almost certainly acting on the instructions of the Prime Minister." (Interview, Leigh, May 2018)

The accuracy of Leigh's belief about May cannot be verified, however his argument that Gavin Williamson was opposed to R&R was accepted as true by other interviewees (e.g. interview, Bercow, September 2018). Two months prior to the Commons debate on R&R Williamson was promoted to Defence and was replaced as Chief Whip, by Julian Smith. While Smith was not

considered to be as strongly opposed to R&R as Williamson, he was understood to be the architect of the two government motions for the Commons debate, which were widely criticised by MPs. Sir Edward Leigh:

> "But then the Chief Whip intervened and he wanted to do the two motions idea [...] So it was his idea. And the idea was that we were going to vote on the first motion, which I think basically said that we should just carry on working on it [...] So that was his wheeze." (Interview, Leigh, May 2018)

The Times reported that Smith did so with the cooperation of the Prime Minister (Coates, 2018). It is possible that the Chief Whips during this period thought, mistakenly, that they were acting on the wishes of the Prime Minister (an example of what Bachrach and Baratz (1963, p 635) described as "the rule of misanticipated reactions"). While it may not have been a deliberate intention to delay or prevent R&R, the effect was the same. One official close to the programme described "the power of the whips" as "the biggest obstacle at the time" (interview, April 2018). They understood why this was the case: the job of the whips is to maintain the survival of the government: a difficult task after the 2017 general election. The problem of the Palace of Westminster: an issue for Parliament, not Government, was seen as an unnecessary distraction.

This chapter has discussed the role of the Prime Minister in the R&R policy window. Crucially, it has shown how the David Cameron and Theresa May rarely intervened, either publicly or privately on the issue, but how the Chief Whip and his team were viewed to be carrying out May's wishes in seeking to delay R&R. As with the Speaker, during the early part of the policy window, the influence of these actors on the policymaking process was considerable, but acted against policy change. To understand how the full decant amendment succeeded despite the opposition of the Prime Minister and Chief Whip, we move to the next section.

8.3. Backbench MPs

The first two sections of this chapter have set out the roles of the key political actors in positions of authority within each House and in the Government. As Chapters 6 and 7 showed, however, it was backbench pressure that several interviewees credited with putting R&R onto the agenda when the Government appeared unwilling to do so, and then succeeding in amending the Government's motion to push through R&R and full decant. Given that, a recurrent theme in this thesis is the absence of a wider interest in the issue of the Palace of Westminster among the majority of MPs, how did a small group of backbenchers bring about

policy change? The analysis in this chapter reveals three interlinked elements of political capital drawn upon by the MPs pushing for R&R to be approved.

1. Credibility of senior parliamentary figures
2. Non-partisan issue
3. Strength of parliament vis-à-vis the government

This section takes each element in turn.

Credibility of senior parliamentary figures

It is notable that the backbench MPs shown in the previous chapters to have had important roles in the R&R policy window could all be classed as senior parliamentarians—all with at least a decade of experience in the Commons, and having spent time either as select committee chairs or in the cabinet, as set out in *Table 8.2.* below:

Table 8.2. Key backbenchers in 2012-2018 period

Name	First elected	Current/former select committee chair?	Ministerial experience?
Chris Bryant	2001	Yes: Finance Committee 2017-present	Yes
Meg Hillier	2005	Yes: Public Accounts Committee 2015-present	Yes
Sir Paul Beresford	1992	Yes: Administration Committee 2015-present	Yes
Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown	1992	Yes: Committee of Selection 2010-2015; Deputy Chair of the Public Accounts Committee 2017-present	No
Damian Green	1997	No	Yes (Cabinet level)
Sir Patrick McLoughlin	1986	No	Yes (Cabinet level)
Sir Edward Leigh	1983	Yes: Public Accounts Committee 2000-2010, Public Accounts Commission 2011-present	Yes

In part this reflected a higher level of interest in the subject among longer-serving Members. It was also a deliberate strategy on the side of those pushing for full decant to draw on the credibility of senior MPs. It was in this context that Chris Bryant and Paul Beresford asked Meg Hillier to table the full decant amendment, in her position as the Chair of Parliament's oldest and most senior select committee, the Public Accounts Committee. Hillier discussed how her Committee's report backing provided authoritative evidence backing the amendment:

"We had a discussion, the discussion was "who's best to put their name to the amendment" It was this brutal. And the belief was, because of my constitutional position, there was a feeling that I could put my name to it and the PAC report would be what I was basing it on [...] A lot of Members who've never been on the PAC don't really understand how the PAC and the NAO work. But they know, if something comes out from the PAC, it's an authoritative report [...] the Joint Report had become quite political. The PAC report was much less so. So, the view was that my name attached to it would make it less heated." (Interview, September 2018)

Hillier also worked with her PAC Deputy Chair, Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, to write to all MPs about the need for full decant, highlighting her correspondence with UNESCO, which noted the Government's responsibility to protect the World Heritage Site in Westminster (of which the Palace is part). This approach again drew on the credibility of the PAC and its Chair and Deputy Chair:

"Geoffrey Clifton Brown and I wrote a letter saying "we did this report, we think this is the way forward, don't delay". I think that, it's again, for the average Member, thinking 'I just want to work in this building, I haven't got time to get into all the detail', they want to know that they're following a leader, the lead of people they've got respect for, it's about our positions, and we were both from different parties and we were speaking with one voice for the committee and Geoffrey has a long career as an MP." (Interview, Hillier, September 2018)

Bryant and Beresford then sought to get select committee chairs to sign up to the Hillier amendment pushing full decant (as discussed in Chapter 7). Bryant described the tactics:

"It was obviously more important to get Tories than Labour ones but also just the number. It felt like quite a lot of the senior figures in Parliament, who had all been voted for to be Chairs of their committees, were signed up." (Interview, Bryant, April 2018).

A key part of this quote is how Bryant refers to the chairs being elected. The 'Wright reforms', named after Dr Tony Wright MP, who led a special select committee on reforming the Commons after the MPs' expenses scandal had included the election of select committee chairs, by secret ballot of all MPs, to departmental and cross-cutting select committees (House of Commons Reform Committee, 2009).[27] Kelso (2016, p 119) noted how the Wright reforms has meant that MPs wishing to chair departmental and cross-cutting committees were thus "compelled to secure cross-party support" and as such this "had clear consequences for the perceived legitimacy of chairs and also for their agency and capacity for action". This was echoed by Maer (2019) who noted the increased confidence of chairs due to their elected status. It is worth noting that neither Bryant and Beresford, as chairs of the Finance and

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[27] Committee chairs had previously been appointed from within the committee membership, which had been chosen by the Whips (House of Commons Reform Committee, 2009).

Administration Committees respectively, had not been elected by the whole House (the 'domestic' committees had not been subject to the Wright reforms). Both fitted the definition of "parliament men" as defined by Searing (1995, p 425)—MPs who are "interested in the perpetuation of Parliament and the esteem of Parliament". While Searing cautioned that the "force" such individuals would have on colleagues as "extremely weak" (1995, p 425), this warning is now quite dated (as noted by Geddes (2016) the research on which it was based predated departmental select committees). Furthermore, while Bryant and Beresford did not benefit directly from the effect of being elected by the whole House, the overall credibility of select committee chairs and the increased strength of the backbench *vis-à-vis* the executive may have increased their status. Further, Bryant in particular had built up significant personal credibility on the issue from his time on the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster: one Labour backbencher told me that she would "defer to his expertise" on the issue, as he had engaged so intently with the state of the Palace (interview, Haigh, August 2019). Both further benefited the respect assigned to senior figures, reflecting the values and traditions of the House of Commons, where seniority is prioritised (for example, the status of the Father of the House, and the precedence given to select committee chairs in the chamber). Seniority thus provided two tools to influence other MPs: knowledge of the system (shown, for example, in forcing the issue onto the agenda) and credibility due to status (allowing them to warn of the dangers of the building without being perceived as scaremongering). The value of seniority fits with the findings of previous studies of policy entrepreneurs which have highlighted the importance of "know[ing] the rules of the game" (Zahariadis, 2008, p 527), and commanding widespread respect (Mintrom, 2000).

As Bryant indicated, there was a specific effort to get support for full decant (and thus opposition to the Government's motions) from MPs from the governing party. The previous chapter highlighted the contributions in the Commons R&R debate from former ministers Sir Patrick McLoughlin and Damian Green, which were considered to be particularly influential in gaining support of Conservative MPs for full decant (Interview, Bercow, September 2018). The cross-party nature of the backbench efforts is the next subject for this chapter.

A non-partisan issue

The credibility of senior MPs was bolstered by R&R being a non-partisan issue. While the adoption of R&R by the Conservatives or Labour may have made policy change easier (Page, 2008), as Chapters 5, 6 and 7 showed, however, neither of the main parties had an ideological affinity with radical policy change for the Palace of Westminster, noting in particular that there was no attempt from Labour MPs to make R&R part of a wider push for parliamentary reform.

Instead the narrow problem definition—focusing on the risks to the building rather than a wider crisis of democracy—meant the programme became a necessary construction project, and separate to party politics. Dr Richard Ware, the former Director of the R&R Programme told me:

> "I think one of the interesting and heartening things about this programme is that most Members have put party politics aside when they've approached this project". (Interview, Ware, June 2018)

This categorisation made it suitable for lobbying by select committee chairs—the exemplars of cross-party working, and also draws on the increase in the UK Parliament acting in a "non-party mode", since Anthony King's seminal 1976 work on executive-legislative relations, credited in part by Russell and Cowley (2018, p 19) to the growth of select committees (highlighting the importance of understanding the institutional development of the Commons).

It is important to recognise, however, that the non-partisan problem definition and chosen policy solution did not mean that political parties became unimportant. Chapter 7 discussed the clear divide on party lines when the Hillier amendment was put to a vote. In this case study, the unofficial whipping operation led by Bryant (Labour) on the full decant side, and Leigh (Conservative) in opposition to decant, may have encouraged MPs to vote with their usual colleagues, even if they were unconvinced by the preference-based arguments (or, more likely, were less engaged with the issue). These two explanations are more powerful for explaining the vote on the Labour side (which divided 94%-6% on the full decant amendment) than the Conservatives (71%-29%), pointing to the success of Hillier and Bryant as policy entrepreneurs.

While the Labour Party organisation helped win the amendment on full decant, the lack of explicit identification with the issue from the Labour frontbench meant senior Conservative MPs (such as Sir Paul Beresford and Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown) were able to work across party lines on the issue. These pro-decant Conservative policy entrepreneurs were considered crucial in winning the support of the 66 Conservatives who voted for the Hillier amendment. The non-partisan definition of the issue may have allowed these MPs to support the amendment without fear of being perceived as a 'rebel' (even on a free vote) against the Government's motion. It is to this issue we turn to next.

The legislature pushing back against the Government

The willingness of MPs to vote for the Hillier amendment against the Government's own wishes reflected the growing strength of the legislature in relation to the executive. The House of Commons in particular has been considered in recent years to be at its strongest and most effective (Norton, 2017), attributed in part to the increased credibility of elected select committee chairs (Fisher, 2015). The Government's own precarious position after losing its majority in the 2017 general election (as discussed in Chapter 6) had also strengthened Parliament. In this case study, the policy entrepreneurs identified were able to take advantage of the frustration among MPs at the Government's efforts to control the outcome of the R&R policymaking process, in what the senior Conservative backbench MP, Sir Bernard Jenkin described as a "non-government establishment push" (interview, September 2018). Chris Bryant agreed, arguing that it was a case of "the backbenchers telling the Government what to do" (interview, Bryant, April 2018).

These three factors are all connected: senior MPs were able to use their credibility, gained through the growth of non-party working in the Commons, to push for action on an issue defined as non-partisan, taking advantage of the strength of the legislature against the executive. Can all the backbenchers in *Table 8.2.* be considered policy entrepreneurs? As with the previous parts of this chapter, it is clear that the length of the policy window means different individuals were important at different times. The research conducted for this thesis highlighted the particular contribution of three backbench MPs on the issue—as set out in *Table 8.3.* (below).

Table 8.3. Backbenchers as policy entrepreneurs

Name	Worked to put issue on the agenda	Advocate for policy change	Broker for policy change	Achieved policy change
Chris Bryant (Labour)	Yes: regularly raised the issue in the Commons to press the Government, and held crucial Westminster Hall debate in Jan 2017.	Yes: pushed for full decant.	Yes: worked cross-party to gain support of senior parliamentarians in push back against the Government.	Yes
Meg Hillier (Labour)	Yes: PAC inquiry put pressure on the Government to act.	Yes: pushed for full decant.	Yes: used political capital from role as PAC chair to persuade colleagues.	Yes
Sir Edward Leigh (Conservative)	Yes: Application to Backbench Business Committee viewed as forcing the Government's hand.	Yes: pushed for rolling programme (no decant)	No: unsuccessful in gaining cross-party support.	No

Bryant and Hillier deployed the three key factors outlined above: the backbench working against the government, on a non-partisan issue, as argued by senior parliamentary figures—to achieve win the vote in the Commons. Crucially, both committed their own political capital to achieve policy change, classifying them as policy entrepreneurs. In contrast, Sir Edward Leigh acted as a policy entrepreneur to put R&R onto the agenda, in the face of opposition: Cairney (2018, p 205) describes how entrepreneurs do not simply wait for the right moment to come, but also "*help create* windows of opportunity" (italics in original). When it came to the vote, however, Leigh was unsuccessful in achieving policy change. While he had the requisite seniority, he was working with, rather than against, the Government (as noted in section 8.2), and failed to position his proposed change as sufficiently non-partisan to win over Labour votes.

8.4. Parliamentary staff: the problem brokers?

This chapter has analysed the influence of key political actors—MPs and Peers—in the policy window. It moves to consider the role of non-political actors—the parliamentary staff, working for the Commons, Lords or across both Houses. As Geddes and Mulley (2018, p 38) argue "understanding how staff shape the institution will significantly help us to understand Parliament as a whole". This section seeks to add to this understanding, examining how staff interpreted their roles, and how their positions were perceived by other actors. It concludes that while some MPs considered certain officials as policy entrepreneurs, their roles can be

more accurately be described as 'problem brokers", providing an empirical test for the concept introduced by Knaggård (2015).

Knaggård defined a 'problem broker' as an actor who works to persuade decision-makers that a condition should be deemed a problem by using their personal or expert knowledge of a situation, but also by framing the issue around values: why individuals should act (Knaggård, 2015). The key difference between problem brokers and policy entrepreneurs is that the latter are working for the adoption of a specific solution, while the former may simply be seeking action to address a problem without advocating a specific solution. It is this difference that suggests parliamentary staff, who are required to be politically neutral, could be considered as problem brokers: as demonstrated by this quote from Ian Ailles, the Director General of the House of Commons, who joined the House from a business background:

> "From where I come from, I felt very neutralised [...] in commerce even if you're a chief executive going to board, you've got a view, and you're there to put a view, and you're there to say 'this options works, and these are sub-optimal options'. And here [...] you go 'here are all the options', and I'm sitting there, saying, well actually, you know, almost in my heart of hearts, I'm saying 'only one of them is workable, which is full decant, everything else is not workable'. But you're not in a position to... You can put the risks, and the challenges of each option, but you can't actually say 'you can't do it' because they... And I found that really strange." (Interview, October 2018)

The extent to which parliamentary staff can be considered solution-neutral is not completely clear cut, however. Chapter 5 has shown how Dr Richard Ware, the Director of the R&R Programme, presented the Independent Options Appraisal findings to MPs and Peers after the 2015 general election. It is not clear if this was a deliberate decision by the Commission (for example, an attempt to depoliticise the issue), or simply a consequence of the absence of political voices to champion the project. The potential consequence, however, was to make a politically-restricted parliamentary official appear as a spokesman for policy change.

Some MPs believed that the view of officials that full decant was the only workable solution extended to an explicit campaign for full decant. Sir Edward Leigh described Sir David Natzler, the Clerk of the House of Commons between 2014 and 2019 as "absolutely fanatic for moving out", adding: "I think he's behind this" (interview, May 2018). Despite officials having no powers in the decision-making process, Sir Edward described them as "the people who run the House of Commons", and described staff as "determined to kick us all out" (interview, May 2018). Another opponent of full decant, Shailesh Vara, agreed, stating: "they wanted everyone out of this place" (interview, 2018). Lord Haselhurst, acknowledged this existence of this view and similarly, a "mystifying" attitude among colleagues believing that elected members were "the last people to be taken into consideration [...] Everyone else who works in this place has

got more consideration than we have" (interview, May 2018). Such a view has been openly expressed by MPs through previous years (e.g. HC Deb, 9 March 1973, c749), but Lord Haselhurst linked this particular concern regarding leaving the Palace to the wider political climate, noting that after the creation of an independent organisation to manage MPs' allowances (after the MPs' expenses scandal), the "atmosphere was absolutely filthy" (interview, May 2018). The creation of IPSA created a "surly reaction" from some MPs, which was seen on other issues – he mentioned changes to the rules around guests to the Members' Smoking Room, which some MPs viewed as "giving up even more of our privileges". It was this attitude, he said, that was at the core of concern that "if we go out of this place, then they will never let us back in". Lord Haselhurst said he questioned who the "they" were, and was told "officials. Civil Servants" (interview, May 2018). The Speaker even appeared to reference the belief that MPs were not in control of the situation, expressing in 2015 a concern about full decant because "once MPs had moved out, it would be difficult for them to return" (as reported by Perraudin, 2015a).

This suspicion—that officials were trying to remove parliamentarians from the Palace and then prevent them from returning—was not widespread throughout the whole of the Commons. But as Leigh and Vara's comments above show, it was a genuinely-held belief. It is interesting to note that there was no evidence of such a concern in the Lords: Lord Faulkner reported that Peers did not think they "were the victims of a clerkly conspiracy" (interview, June 2018). Furthermore, pro-decant MPs reported how the suspicion extended to doubts among some MPs about the risks to the building. Mark Tami MP said:

> "There are people that are convinced, there's a great conspiracy at work here, to make us leave, and it's all made up [...] some people will be just like 'no it's fine, there's nothing, I don't, it's all lies, all this stuff'. [...] I've had people say to me "oh they set the fire alarms off on purpose, you know'" (interview, Tami, May 2018)

This suspicion about the motives of parliamentary staff influenced developments during the policy window. At the critical meeting of the House of Commons Commission in October 2012, discussed in Chapter 5, Lord Lisvane, the then Clerk of the Commons, reported that "there was a feeling expressed in the Commission, that this was simply scaremongering by officials to enhance their own position" (interview, June 2018). Speaker Bercow's comments appeared to endorse this view:

> "And so, I was, in all honesty, very unenthusiastic about it, and I think I said something to Robert at that time, to the effect that "you know, I'm very sceptical" and it became apparent to me that he was very keen on the whole idea." (interview, Bercow, September 2018)

Lord Lisvane described the Commission's meeting as "very difficult", adding that "the Commission, and particularly the Speaker, was very hard to convince" (interview, June 2018). The Speaker also described himself as "not, frankly, very convinced" (interview, September 2018). The use of the word 'convince' by both Lisvane and Bercow indicates that politicians were inherently sceptical about the case staff were making for R&R. The suggestion was that officials were being over-cautious, overstating the extent of the problem and, due to their position, were not required to have the same level of concern for public opinion or taxpayers' money. In response, officials accepted that politicians were naturally unwilling to accept the need for the expenditure on a project that would not only fail to win votes, but could also derail their own political priorities. They questioned, however, what they would have to gain from overstating the problem, and also pointed to their own responsibility to act. In 2000 the Clerk of the House of Commons was officially retitled as the Clerk and Chief Executive of the House of Commons Service (Evans and Ninkovic, 2017), and while the appointment of a Director General of the House of Commons in 2015 (Ian Ailles) shared some of the responsibility for the building, the Clerk remained the Accounting Officer, accountable to the Public Accounts Committee for taxpayers' money spent maintaining the building. The Clerk also has legal responsibility safety of people on the parliamentary estate, as the Corporate Officer. Lord Lisvane has discussed how the "penalties prescribed by the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act" caused him "sleepless hours" when he held this role (HL Deb, 6 Feb 2018, c 1972-3). He discussed this further in an interview, noting that it was a responsibility borne by an official, not a parliamentarian:

> "I felt that there was an extremely high level of risk which we collectively, and I as Corporate Officer, were not in a position to mitigate [...] one of the things that one is very conscious of as a corporate officer, is that you carry—no member carries it—not even the Speaker, you carry the legal responsibility if something goes wrong" (interview, Lisvane, June 2018)

This is a critical point. Unlike government ministers, the Speaker or backbench MPs, officials had a specific responsibility for protecting the building. The parliamentary scholar and peer, Lord Norton of Louth, noted how officials had this responsibility but not the power to act:

> "They are restricted [...] they have legal responsibilities but of course they don't have the political position which is necessary for leadership; they might prompt, they can advise those in leadership positions, but they are reliant on the political leadership to act" (Interview, Norton, September 2018)

Given the lack of power officials had to change policy (as discussed in Petit and Yong, 2018) why did some MPs believe them to be "the people who really run this place"? (Interview, Leigh, May 2018) In part, the answer can be found in a labyrinthine governance structure which

enables individual or small groups of members to block or delay policy change. A deficit of transparency means that it can be almost impossible to track how and why a decision is made. Officials can find themselves held responsible as a result, and have no way of defending themselves, dividing MPs and crown servants in Westminster on the same lines as ministers and civil servants in Whitehall.[28] Lord Lisvane noted how staff were also seen as blocking change, again demonstrating the power they were perceived to hold:

> "Members get very frustrated with what is often the glacial pace of making decisions within the administrations of both Houses but the glacial pace is very often attributable to, well it is largely attributable, to Members who are a small-c conservative group of people, who on the whole don't want change." (Interview, Lisvane, June 2018)

Why would blame fall on staff? One explanation is the intrinsic insecurity of elected parliamentarians: MPs are conscious of their temporary status—subject to confirmation from the electorate at regular intervals—while staff were viewed as permanent. Given that almost all senior officials had spent their entire career: upwards of three or four decades in Westminster (a much longer period than the average MP), this attitude is understandable. But a fuller explanation comes the from the "fundamental tension" in the role of parliamentary officials (Yong, 2018, p 90). Staff are required to serve current parliamentarians, placing their own political beliefs to one side, and showing deference. Alongside this duty, however, is a requirement to act as stewards of the institution (as discussed in Yong, Leston-Bandeira and Davies, 2019; Crewe, 2017b, Geddes, 2016; Geddes and Mulley, 2018). Pressing for the state of the building to be considered as a problem requiring policy change—even when MPs sought to avoid the issue—was considered necessary to ensure the future of the Palace.

Ahead of the consideration of the Pre-Feasibility Study by the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee, the then Clerk of the Parliaments, Sir David Beamish spoke of the need for "careful stage-management behind the scenes to ensure that we got the same decision out of both Houses" (interview, May 2018). This quote demonstrates the performance (and on-stage/off-stage divide) of House governance, as discussed in Geddes (2016) (and drawing on Goffman, 1990). The quote also indicates, however, that coming to the "right" decision was less of a priority than coming to a decision at all, a position echoed by an official close to the R&R programme, when discussing the frustration with the Government's motions in January 2018: "on the one hand I was thinking 'at least we're having a vote, I don't really care what the outcome of it is, just make a decision of some kind'" (interview, anonymous official, 2018). The responsibility of staff—for the reputation of the institution, the

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[28] The coverage of the repair works to the Elizabeth Tower in August 2017, and the subsequent silencing of the Big Ben's bongs is a good example of this.

expenditure of public money, and the safety of people within the Palace—meant that their priority was simply to get agreement that the state of the building was a problem requiring action. Staff sought to highlight the problem of the building by talking directly to Members and taking them on individual tours of the basement. Parliamentary officials recognise the politics of a situation: Crewe (2017b, p 49) described how Clerks are "apolitical in the sense of striving to sit on the fence and never taking sides, but they are intensely political because they have to understand the politics and motivations underlying different groups and individuals well enough to guide MPs about how to navigate the maze of political procedure" (this is also noted in Yong, Leston-Bandeira and Davies, 2019). As noted throughout this thesis, however, R&R was not a normal piece of business in the chamber: it was not government policy. The line between emphasising the problem and pushing a solution is not always clear: as noted throughout this thesis there was a view that the only feasible solution to the state of the problem was full decant. Overall, however, this research demonstrates that parliamentary officials—specifically the two Clerks of the Commons in this period, Lord Lisvane and Sir David Natzler—can be classed as problem brokers, rather than policy entrepreneurs. Their role was particularly important in the early part of the policy window, in the absence of any political figures pushing for policy change.

Conclusion

What makes a policy entrepreneur? The concept and terminology are contested (Cairney, 2018). While Roberts and King (1991) argue that the term should only be applied to actors outside of Government (as part of a typology of "public entrepreneurs"), this thesis uses the term as originally envisaged by Kingdon (2014) to include individuals at any point in the system. Broadly speaking, a policy entrepreneur, as described by Mintrom and Norman (2009, p 651), "can be identified by their efforts to promote significant policy change".

This definition of a policy entrepreneur highlights the divide in key actors in the R&R policymaking process between those who wanted to keep the status quo—a patch and mend policy—and those who pushed for policy change, in the form of R&R. This is not to say that the individuals who pushed for policy change were united in what that change should be: a theme of this thesis has been how different actors pushed for competing and contradictory policy change: primarily over the extent to which Parliament continued to use the Palace of Westminster during building works (to summarise: those who pushed for full decant (e.g. Bryant and Hillier), those who argued that some element of the Palace of Westminster should remain open (e.g. Leadsom) and those who argued against any decant (e.g. Leigh)). Crucially, however, while all three groups reflected different tributaries in the problem stream, they

agreed some policy change was required and worked to put the issue on the agenda: enabling them to be classified as policy entrepreneurs.

In contrast, this chapter has considered a number of actors who played a critical role in the policy window, but their main contribution was to delay rather than promote policy change. These contributions did not manifest as explicit attempts to block approval of the Joint Committee's recommendations or the R&R programme overall, but in seeking to delay policy change—through the response to the Pre-Feasibility Report; by delaying the Commons debate; or the text of the Government's motions in the Commons—the effect was to block policy change and maintain the status quo. The Speaker, between 2012 and 2015 could be considered in this role, as could Gavin Williamson and Julian Smith as Chief Whips, and Theresa May, as Prime Minister. This chapter has proposed classifying such individuals as 'negative policy entrepreneurs', to reflect the advocacy and lobbying they undertook, against policy change.

In highlighting negative policy entrepreneurs, it is important to maintain a distinction between the individuals who blocked policy change and those who simply chose to stay out of the policymaking process. The analysis has shown that no members of the frontbench of the official opposition or the official third party in the Commons (the SNP) could be classed as policy entrepreneurs. In part this can be explained using the converse argument from section 8.3: the definition of R&R as a non-partisan and parliamentary issue, and also through the opposition of the SNP to an R&R programme that maintained Westminster as the parliamentary building (as discussed in Chapter 7). Further, the institutional context of Westminster helps to explain another absence from the decision-making process: younger or newer MPs played a very limited role, lacking the credibility and status afforded to the senior figures.

We can also see how the role of policy entrepreneurs changed throughout the policy window. During the January 2012 to June 2016 period there were no MPs or Peers using their political capital to work towards a particular policy solution: Bryant, Hillier and Leadsom all took on their roles in the latter two parts of the window. The absence of such a champion reflected the absence of a key figure to lead policy change in this area within the formal power structures in Parliament. It also indicates the importance of parliamentary officials to drive policy change, in the absence of political support.

This again highlights the necessity of understanding institutional context. This is reflected in the literature: Lieberman (2002, p 709) argues that policy change does not occur simply due to the strength of an idea, but when key actors have the "institutional position" at certain

political moments to "translate" the idea into policy change. It is the interaction between the ideational and institutional elements, for Lieberman, that is crucial to understanding policy change. Again, this refers back to the structure-agency debate: the analysis of the role of the Speaker in the R&R policy window has demonstrated the validity of Mintrom's (1997) statement that agency on its own is not always sufficient to achieve change. The MSF Plus framework enables this institutional context to be taken into account, explaining why key actors have a critical role at different times. In turn, this analysis has increased our understanding of how power is dispersed and exercised by critical actors involved in institutional change in parliament. Three key conclusions emerge:

1. Power to affect institutional change in Parliament is dissipated and qualified.
2. Different key actors have varying influence at various points of the policy window.
3. There is a lack of understanding over where power lies, particularly with regards to the roles of officials.

These findings will be considered in the next chapter, which considers the value of the MSF Plus framework within this institutional framework, and this case study for enhancing our understanding of Parliament and of institutional change.

To conclude, then, this chapter has thus analysed the actions of critical actors in the 2012-2018 policy window, and examined how they used the different powers available to them. Throughout four subsections it has shown how there was a range of policy entrepreneurs influencing the policy window at different times, and to a varying extent, due to the institutional constraints on their roles and their own ability to achieve policy change within these constraints. It has shown how three MPs: Chris Bryant, Meg Hillier and Andrea Leadsom, were particularly successful in coupling the multiple streams to achieve policy change. It has considered the extent to which the Speaker, Prime Minister and Chief Whip could be considered as 'negative policy entrepreneurs', and the value of this concept to the MSF Plus framework. Finally, this chapter has also provided a case study to test Knaggård's concept of a problem broker, identifying Lord Lisvane and Sir David Natzler as fulfilling this role. This chapter has thus not only provided a deeper insight into developments in the policy window to explain this case study, but a further empirical test of key concepts in the MSF Plus framework. It is to a reflection of the MSF Plus framework and this case study that this thesis now turns.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

"What drives things forward in Parliament? [...] It's the alchemy of politics." *(Interview, Meg Hillier MP, September 2018)*

This thesis set out to answer the question: **Why was the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster approved in early 2018, after multiple failed attempts to achieve policy change in this area?** The first part of this conclusion brings together the key findings from this thesis to answer this question, and in doing so also answers two of the secondary research questions:

1) What insights can be gained from the understanding the historical and institutional development of the UK Parliament?

2) Is it possible to identify a policy entrepreneur or problem broker in the 2012-2018 period?

This summary of the key findings then acts as a foundation for the next three parts of the chapter, which consider the wider value of this research. In essence, this is the "So What?" section: addressing the implications of this research for the broader landscape, highlighting the links between the (necessarily) micro focus of this thesis and ongoing meso- and macro-debates. It reveals nine themes revealed by this research, summarised in *Table 9.1.* (below).

Table 9.1. So What? Nine emergent themes

So What?	Understanding of Parliament	Implications for theory	Relevance for broader debates
1	Power	Length of policy windows	Understanding institutional change
2	Institutional identity	Interdependence of multiple streams	Dimensions of democratic renewal
3	Parliamentary reform	Multiple streams within a stream,	The politics (and depoliticisation) of 'megaprojects'

In exploring these themes, the second half of this chapter will thus answer the other three secondary research questions.

3) Why does the Palace of Westminster matter?

4) How useful is the MSF Plus approach for understanding policy change in this case?

5) What insights does this research have for parliamentary governance, specifically, and concerns about disaffection with democratic governance more broadly?

This thesis will then come to a close with some final thoughts on this research project.

9.1. Key findings

Why was Restoration and Renewal approved in early 2018, after multiple failed attempts to achieve policy change in this area? This thesis has shown how the problem, policy and politics streams were coupled together by a group of policy entrepreneurs, aided by problem brokers, in an arena shaped by institutional norms and traditions. If we return to the MSF Plus diagram as set out in Chapter 4, we can see how the framework was originally envisaged—below in *Figure 9.1*. We can now apply the main findings—as revealed in Chapters 5-8—to this model—below in *Figure 9.2*.

Figure 9.1. The MSF Plus Framework
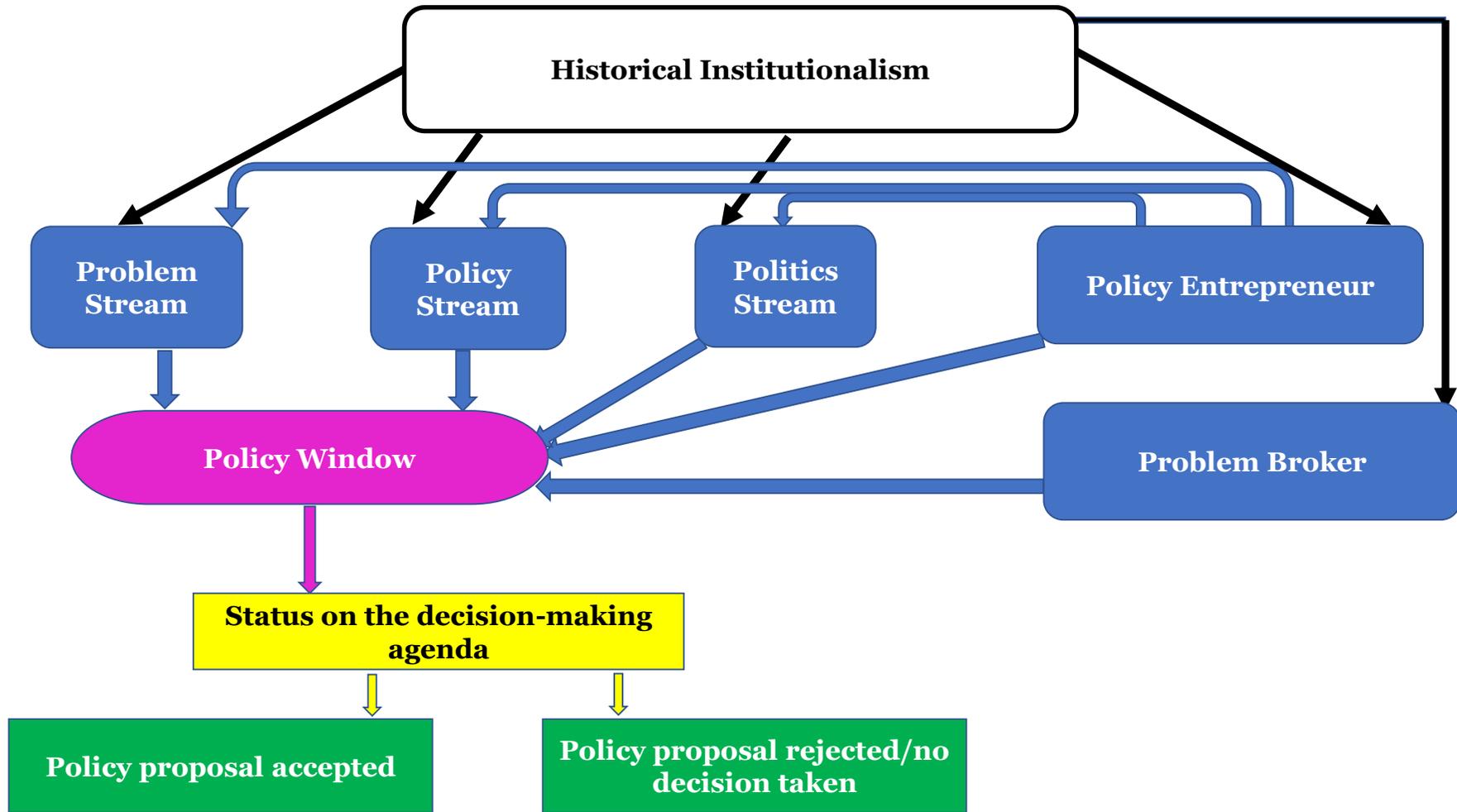
Figure 9.2. Key findings in the MSF Plus Framework

Historical Institutionalism
Past policy decisions—most notably keeping the Palace of Westminster as the home of the UK Parliament—shaped what was viewed as possible in the policy window. Further institutional norms and traditions—the emotional attachment to the building and closed policy community—influenced the development of each stream.

Problem Streams
Coupled: Problem defined as an urgent and impending crisis of the infrastructure.

Policy Streams
Coupled: Full decant seen as cheapest, quickest and most effective way to address urgent infrastructure crisis.

Politics Streams
Coupled: Risk of not acting counterbalanced austerity concerns. Party organisation and Brexit.

Policy Entrepreneur
Andrea Leadsom worked to get issue onto the decision-making agenda; Chris Bryant and Meg Hillier successfully coupled the streams for policy change to R&R with full decant.

Policy Window
January 2012 – February 2018

Problem Broker
Parliamentary staff, primarily the two Clerks of the Commons, Lord Lisvane and Sir David Natzler worked to get MPs to make a decision about the building.

Status on the decision-making agenda
House of Commons: January 2018. House of Lords: February 2018

Policy proposal accepted
House of Commons: 31 January 2018. House of Lords: 6 February 2018

Policy change was achieved in early 2018 at the culmination of a policy window that had opened in January 2012. The window was opened by a development in the problem stream: after senior officials worked as 'problem brokers' to argue that the state of the Palace of Westminster was so dangerous as to require a change from the 'patch and mend' policy adopted since the Palace was rebuilt in the mid-nineteenth century. The window was shaped at all points by the specific institutional context of the UK Parliament: the window stayed open for a lengthy period (discussed further in section 9.3) due to the slow pace of policy change in Westminster and the institutional responsibilities of the problem brokers. The institutional context—alongside the wider political context and closed policy community—also shaped the definition of the problem as a narrow issue of failing infrastructure rather than a democratic crisis. This closed policy community was again a result of the institutional context, in which only MPs and Peers (and at certain points, only MPs), could propose alternative policies. This context also helped set a "logic of appropriateness" (Kelso, 2009b, p 181) around which policies would be seriously considered within this policy community.

Between 2012 and 2016 support in the policy community gradually coalesced around a proposed policy change that was consistent with the values of this community: retaining the Palace of Westminster as the permanent home of the UK Parliament, but moving out temporarily (a full decant) to allow for a major refurbishment of the building's infrastructure. This policy failed to be adopted in the short-term, however, due to the existence of multiple tributaries within the problem and politics streams (as indicated on Figure 9.2 by the gradated colour). These tributaries acted as 'streams within the streams', requiring the problem definition to be agreed by multiple stakeholders, and then for different elements of the politics stream to agree that it was the right time for policy change. While there was only a single policy stream, the existence of multiple problem definitions resulted in 'miscoupling' with different policy solutions, preventing the policy stream from being ready for coupling.

The issue of R&R was forced onto the decision-making agenda, however, by key actors—a combination of backbench MPs and the Leader of the House of Commons acting as policy entrepreneurs, and senior parliamentary officials as problem brokers. Once the issue of the Palace moved onto the decision-making agenda the problem and politics streams narrowed to only the House of Commons and House of Lords tributaries. Policy change was then achieved when backbench MPs supporting full decant utilised institutional factors: seniority and cross-party credibility of select committee chairs; political organisation; and the emotional attachment to the building, while sharpening the problem definition and drawing on the political make-up of the Commons in January 2018.

This explanation demonstrates the value of the MSF Plus approach to understand how and why policy change was achieved. Crucially, it can explain the combination of continuity and change, as it recognises the power of path dependency and institutional constraints in shaping agency and the extent of change possible, while also assigning weight to individual actors as policy entrepreneurs and problem brokers.

Approving Restoration and Renewal and full decant was a major policy change for the UK Parliament, committing to a strategic decision about the future of the Palace of Westminster. Restoration and Renewal, however, is not just a construction project. This thesis moves to consider the broader implications of this research, split into three categories: our understanding of Parliament, our understanding of theory, and the broader debates in which this research falls.

9.2. So what? Implications for our current understanding of Parliament

The story of the approval of Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster is one of institutional change in the UK Parliament. From this research we can identify three broad, but interconnected themes, as set out in *Table 9.2.* (below), and then explored in turn.

Table 9.2. So What? Implications for Parliament

So What?	Understanding of Parliament
1	**Power:** Power is dispersed across a range of actors, but the case study suggests MPs can work collectively outwith formal structures.
2	**Institutional identity:** Restoration and Renewal forces Parliament to act as a single institution, with potential impact for debates around 'who speaks for Parliament?'
3	**Parliamentary reform:** Parliamentary reform cannot be viewed simply in the lens of the relationship between the Government and legislature. This feeds into debates around 'parliamentary decline theory'.

Power

A clear theme from this research is that power in Parliament—over its own building and affairs—is dispersed. Put simply, there was no one single individual able to act on the serious and imminent threat to the Palace of Westminster. The building remains a royal palace, but with no active role in the management of the building from HM The Queen or the Lord Great Chamberlain. Neither the Lord Speaker or Speaker can act for Parliament as a whole—and indeed, have only limited powers over their own House. The Leaders of the Lords and Commons are bound by their dual responsibilities to the Government as well as each House,

and are further limited, both by their own limited powers as members (but not chairs) of the respective governance bodies in each House and by the convention that internal affairs are matters for parliament and not government.

As has been recognised in the literature (e.g. Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2017; Norton, 2012b; Yong, Davies, and Leston-Bandeira, 2019), individual members of either House have, traditionally, not chosen to act collectively as a single organism. Tony Wright, then an MP argued in 2004: "there is no Parliament, in that collective sense, to insist on anything. There are simply Members of Parliament who have preoccupations and inhabit a career structure in which attention to the sustained strengthening of the institution is not a central priority." (Wright, 2004, p 874). This case study, however, highlights the potential for backbench MPs to work together on parliamentary matters. Such cooperation would be consistent with the evidence of a stronger legislature *vis-à-vis* the executive as identified in recent literature (e.g. Flinders and Kelso, 2011; Russell and Cowley, 2016; Norton, 2017) and in contrast to 'parliamentary decline theory'. As Chapter 8 noted, this can be linked to the post-expenses Wright reforms and the strengthening of select committee chairs (Kelso, 2016; Crewe and Sarra, 2019; Maer, 2019). The wider political context has also been important: Maer (2019, p 13) argued that "ten years of coalition, small majority, and minority government have created a new 'backbench culture'". This demonstration of the power of the legislature—acting as a collective—against the government may also be considered as a precursor to further similar developments since the R&R vote (for example, MPs taking control of the Order Paper in September 2019 (HC Deb, 3 Sept 2019, cc132-139)).

Institutional identity

The fact that Parliament is not, in practice, a single institution, has been linked (e.g. Kelso, 2007) to an absence of a single corporate identity. As Norton (2017, p 201) noted, the absence of a "head" of the legislature means that "there is no one single individual who can claim to speak for Parliament". Norton called for parliamentarians to speak up for the institution and, as noted above, there are signs that backbench MPs have started acting in this way. Historically, however, as Judge and Leston-Bandeira argued, "the people who 'speak for' (most loudly and most persistently) and 'act for' parliaments as institutions are not primarily elected representatives but rather non-elected officials" (Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2017, p 15-16). As discussed in Chapter 8, officials who felt that they had a responsibility to Parliament (both as 'stewards' of the institution and, in some cases, through their legal role as corporate officers) were placed in a difficult position, balancing this responsibility against the suspicion in which they were held by some MPs who were opposed to full decant.

This case study thus has interesting implications for the question of 'who speaks for parliament'. One such implication is in the use of social media by the institution. The potential benefit of new media for parliaments, as institutions, to build a direct relationship with citizens has been acknowledged in the literature, particularly in light of a history during which such a relationship has not been " a priority for legislatures" (Leston-Bandeira, 2012b, p 269; see also Griffith and Leston-Bandeira, 2012; Norton, 2012b). The UK Parliament has sought to improve its public engagement work over the last decade, in response to criticism in reports by Modernisation Committee report and the Puttnam Commission, with the first public engagement strategy for the institution produced (House of Commons Modernisation Committee, 2004; Commission on the Communication of Parliamentary Democracy, 2006; Walker, 2012). These efforts were intensified after the MPs' expenses crisis (Norton, 2012b), but as Kelso presciently warned, "the road along which such an institutional identity is to be built will certainly be far from an easy one" (Kelso, 2007, p 372).

One difficulty along this road was noted by Leston-Bandeira and Bender (2013, p 286) as the challenge social media poses in "identifying a voice" for "a non-partisan collective such as a legislative institution". The tweets by the official UK Parliament Twitter account (@UKParliament) ahead of the Commons debate on R&R on 31 January 2018 are worth considering in this light. Three examples are reproduced below.

> "Our restoration and renewal programme aims to secure a Parliament that is fit for future generations. We want to make the Palace of Westminster more accessible and repair key features #RestoringParliament
> https://restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk" (UK Parliament, 2018a)

> "Significant improvements are needed to visitor access, particularly disabled access, in the Palace. This will be debated on Wednesday 31st January in the House of Commons. #RestoringParliament
> https://restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk/factsheets.html" (UK Parliament, 2018b)

> "MPs are debating the restoration & renewal of the Palace of Westminster on Wednesday. One of the key issues that needs addressing will involve improvements to fire safety. Find out more here. #RestoringParliament
> https://restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk/factsheets.html" (UK Parliament, 2018c)

These tweets appear to present the case for R&R, in contrast to the usual neutral tone of tweets on upcoming parliamentary business. While the tweets do not expand the discussion of R&R away from the narrow problem definition and policy solution, they present evidence of Parliament talking directly to the public: making claims about the building (and through the

links between the building and institution, making claims about Parliament itself (Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2017)) and taking a policy position, drawing in the balance between stewardship and suspicion discussed earlier. The communication by the institution of the UK Parliament thus provides a valuable insight into the changing relationship between the public and their legislature, and how that relationship is communicated.

The effectiveness of a legislature, Loewenberg (2016, p 102), argued, "depends on some public understanding of the institution". This argument highlights the importance of an institutional identity for Parliament. Developing its own identity, however, raises a potential conflict for the Westminster parliament, designed as Flinders and Kelso (2011, p 261) note as "subservient to a dominant party in order to facilitate and legitimise 'strong government'". Indeed, Leston-Bandeira (2012, p 525) contrasted the "the relationship between parliament and government—which is essentially a trade-off in decision-making power" with "the relationship between parliament and citizens [which] reflects all variables of a political system, including the citizens' irrational sense of identification with this institution". The R&R case study provides a valuable insight into this sense of identification. In doing so, it also provides evidence for the presence of symbolic representation through the Palace of Westminster.

Parliamentary reform
The idea of an institutional identity for Parliament, as part of a direct relationship between the legislature and the public, separate to the relationship between the legislature and the executive, is linked to a further theme in this research. The literature on parliamentary reform has traditionally focused on the government-parliament relationship (such as the debate between efficiency and effectiveness reforms in the Commons (Wright, 2004) or the concept of incremental-bounded reform (Flinders, 2007)). By exploring an issue of internal governance, which focuses on its own institutional identity and design, the R&R case study offers a new perspective on parliamentary reform.

What can we learn about the nature of parliamentary reform from R&R? The approval of the R&R programme (and full decant) in early 2018 marked a departure from the path followed by the UK Parliament since the Palace of Westminster became its permanent home. The House of Commons and House of Lords have agreed to meet elsewhere—without being forced out due to a crisis in the building—despite the strength of emotional attachment to the building. It also, however, marked a continuation in the institution's history. The decision to return to the Palace of Westminster after the refurbishment is complete, and the lack of a wider reform programme, demonstrate the strength of institutional constraints and traditions. This raises the question of whether the limited scope of R&R means it served as what would be termed

institutional continuity or if it can be viewed as radical change—or if it could be both? Streeck and Thelen (2005) emphasised the need to split process and end result (discussed further in section 9.4, below), and this could perhaps provide an answer: R&R is radical because it involves taking action about the future of the building without a crisis. Furthermore, it may be that while the scope of R&R was constrained through this policy window, as discussed in this thesis, the consequences of leaving the Palace of Westminster, even temporarily may yet be significant (with potential for changing how Parliament works or the culture within, for example). It is too early to evaluate the extent of the significance of this reform for the institution, and for democratic change more generally.

Even at this stage, however, it can be recognised that the development of institutional identity and the concept of MPs acting as a collective, as discussed in this chapter, does make a meaningful contribution to debates around parliamentary decline theory (PDT). The PDT assumed a dominant position in the literature during the twentieth century, based on the ideas that Parliament had become too weak (in relation to the executive), that MPs had become less independent of government and party and that both of these developments were, normatively, bad for the legislature (Flinders and Kelso, 2011). The power of the PDT as a dominant narrative can, arguably, be seen in the R&R debates, for example, in the invoking of great parliamentary figures from the past and the Palace of Westminster during the R&R case study. One of the "fundamentally misguided assumptions" of the PDT, identified by Flinders and Kelso (2011, p 254, 258) was of a "Golden Age in which Parliament had been more powerful". Did the opposition to full decant, and indeed the commitment to staying in the Palace of Westminster reflect a wish to revisit the golden age? Chapter 2 noted the belief among parliamentarians after the 1834 fire and during the Second World War to remain in the same building as their illustrious predecessors. In contrast, however, by offering an example of Parliament acting to safeguard its own heritage, thinking strategically about the future of the institution, and the power of the backbenchers, the R&R case study offers a counter to the PDT.

9.3. So what? Implications for theory

This theory has provided the first empirical test of the MSF Plus theoretical framework, which sought to combine a modified version of Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework with Historical Institutionalism to explain a public policy decision in a deeply institutionalised context. The findings in section 9.1. demonstrate the success of the MSF Plus framework in explaining R&R and show the value of this combined approach. The explanation has further highlighted three key themes that emerged during this research and provide further

refinement of the MSF Plus framework. These are set out in *Table 9.3.* (below) and further discussed below, with suggestions for further empirical testing.

Table 9.3. So What? Implications for theory

So What?	Implications for theory
1	**Length of policy windows**: the institutional context enabled the policy window to stay open for a longer period than envisaged by Kingdon.
2	**Interdependence:** there was greater interdependence between the multiple streams than envisaged by Kingdon, again due to the institutional context.
3	**Tributaries:** within the problem and policy streams there were multiple streams within a stream.

Length of the policy window

This thesis has considered the January 2012 to February 2018 period as a single policy window: an opportunity for radical policy change. In doing so, it raises the question of whether you can have a six- year window? Kingdon's original MSF argued that policy windows "stay open only for short periods" (Kingdon, 2014, p 166). Considering a six-year window raises the risk of "conceptual stretching" (Sartori, 1970, p 1034). This ties into a wider concern about MSF based theories: is their flexibility a strength or weakness?

This thesis argues, however, that a six-year policy window is not inconsistent within the MSF Plus model. As discussed in Chapter 6, it is the institutional context that enables the policy window to stay open for an extended period. This draws on Historical Institutionalism: Collier and Collier (2002, p 32) argue that critical junctures can last for an "extended period", such as one or more presidential terms, attributing the length of the juncture to its cause. It is also consistent with Zahariadis's argument that crises "shorten the duration of windows of opportunity, [so] action must be almost immediate. The logic of coupling suggests a search not for the perfect solution at some future point but for a "satisficing" solution now" (Zahariadis, 2003, p 71). The absence of a physical crisis in the Palace of Westminster may have enabled the policy window to remain open for longer. This argument is consistent with the finding of Ackrill and Kay (2011, p 85) who argued that the institutional factors—in their case study, this involved "uncertainty over hierarchy within [EU] commission structures"—affected the duration of policy windows. Furthermore, Blankenau has combined institutionalism with an MSF approach and posited that "political structure affects how long and large a window of opportunity is necessary for policy change"—although his study of health insurance in the US and Canada leads him to conclude that "a parliamentary system, with a fusion of legislative- executive relations, is more tenable to quick, significant change, so a shorter duration for a policy window is sufficient" (Blankenau, 2001, p 40). As discussed

within this thesis, however, internal governance within the UK Parliament is not a standard public policy issue. The slow institutional pace of change enabled a longer policy window.

In addition, three further factors linked to the institutional context and recognised in the MSF Plus framework contributed to the length of the policy window. First, as noted in Chapters 5-7, the policy stream was highly restricted by the institutional context. This fact that there was very little external input into the policy stream meant that the process of 'softening up' envisaged by Kingdon had to be done internally, and formed part of the policy window. This, by necessity was a long process. Indeed, Cairney (2013b, p 290) noted how the language of "'evolutionary change' may conjure up an image of a process that can take hundreds or thousands of years to complete – yet few accounts have this in mind".

Second the interdependence between the streams meant that policy solutions were not drawn up independently of the other streams. There was no policy solution ready to go before the policy window opened (as argued is necessary in some uses of the MSF, e.g. Lange and Garrelts, 2007), because the policy window was opened by a development in the problem stream, and without that development—and, crucially, the definition of the problem which it entailed—there could be no policy solution developed.

Finally, the MSF Plus framework considers the role of structure and agency together. Exworthy et al (2002) conclude that "policy windows need to be 'wedged' open" to enable implementation of policy change. This opens up the possibility that actors can determine the length of a window. This would fit with the findings of this thesis which reflect the role of parliamentary staff in keeping the policy window open, in line with their institutional responsibilities (as discussed in Chapter 6). The potential for policy windows to be longer than a brief opportunity for change has implications for how we understand policy change to be achieved, and requires further empirical testing. It further reflects the interdependence of the multiple streams, to be discussed next.

Interdependence

A clear finding from this research is that the multiple streams cannot be considered to work independently: we have seen the impact of the political context on the problem definition and how the problem definition shaped the choice of policy solutions, for example. Chapter 3 noted how the independence of the multiple streams, a key part of Kingdon's MSF, was already a contested concept (Bendor, 2001, Spohr, 2016). Indeed, Kingdon himself in his second edition of *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* argued that while the streams are independent, there are links between them at additional times and this continues to meet his description of

the streams as "loosely coupled" (Kingdon, 2014, p 229). This thesis argues that there is a high level of interdependence between the streams, and that this strengthens, rather than weakens the MSF Plus framework. Why does this strengthen the framework? Crucially it now reflects the context in which the policy decision was taken, in which there is no separate policy community producing policy solutions separate to the emergence of the problem. Within the UK Parliament the institutional context meant that the problem definition and policy development was carried out by the same people—and these people were by their nature political. There cannot, therefore, be an artificial separation between the streams.

By demonstrating the interdependence of the streams, this thesis highlights the need for further empirical testing of the MSF Plus framework in a separate context to understand if the same interdependence is present within a different institutional framework

Tributaries

The final major theoretical refinement from this empirical test of the MSF Plus framework is the existence of multiple streams within a stream. This case study has found that in the problem stream there were multiple stakeholders to be convinced of the problem definition. Similarly, in the politics stream, this research found the same multiple stakeholders again needing to be convinced that the elements of the politics stream (for example, the national mood or party-political issues) were ready for policy change. These streams can be of different weight and have varying force at different points of the agenda-setting and policymaking process. This thesis has termed each of these 'streams which make up the larger stream' as tributaries and suggested that for policy change to be achieved one of three conditions needed to be in place:

- all the tributaries either needed to be aligned;
- one or more tributaries needed to gain sufficient weight to push out the unaligned tributaries; or
- the institutional context shifted to place policy change responsibility to a limited number of aligned tributaries.

The existence of tributaries affected the strategies of policy entrepreneurs and problem brokers, who had to work to persuade these different groups and actors of their case for change. Crucially, alignment had to be a continual process: turnover of stakeholders or changes to the institutional context meant that alignment could be reversed.

The presence of tributaries within the problem and politics reflected the specific institutional context in which there were multiple stakeholders within the policy process (as did the absence of tributaries within the policy stream, which was the product of the restricted policy

community specific to the UK Parliament). However, policymaking is, by its nature, often conducted in such environments (indeed, changing policy with regards to the Palace of Westminster is perhaps more simple than an issue that spans multiple levels of governance, requiring alignment at local, national and transnational arenas). Further empirical testing would help to understand if the existence of tributaries is present within different institutional contexts.

9.4. So what? Implications for broader debates

The final part of this conclusion considers the question: why is this case study relevant to a broader audience? To answer it, this section looks at how R&R speaks to broader debates about institutional change, democratic renewal and megaprojects, and in each case warrants further empirical research. This is summarised in *Table 9.4.* (below) and set out in more detail.

Table 9.4. So What? Implications for broader debates

So What?	Implications for theory
1	**Institutional change**: the approval of R&R marked a significant policy change within a complex institution, offering a new perspective on institutional change.
2	**Democratic renewal:** R&R offers an opportunity to reconnect the public with their parliament, linking to debates around anti-politics.
3	**Megaprojects:** the nature of the building and scope of the projects offers a new understanding of the importance of the 'politics' of megaprojects and blame games.

Institutional change

The approval of Restoration and Renewal, and full decant, marked a significant policy change for the institution of the UK Parliament. Crucially, it also reflects a case of institutional change when institutional factors had previously worked against policy change. It can therefore speak to broader debates about how institutions change. The deployment of institutional factors to promote change, rather than continuity have been discussed in Chapter 7, but it is worth noting again the contribution this makes to the literature around how institutions react differently to endogenous and exogenous pressures (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; Kelso, 2009). In this case study major policy change occurred without a crisis event, as forces within the institution built a case for change.

A further, but linked, contribution to the wider debate on institutional change relates to the scope of change. Streeck and Thelen (2005, p 9) discussed the concept of "incremental change with radical results": as discussed in section 9.2, above, R&R has the potential to deliver radical results, despite the narrow scope of the project established during its approval phase.

This warrants further empirical study to see the effect of the decant period and return to the rebuilt Palace of Westminster on the institution of Parliament.

Democratic renewal

This thesis has shown how the Palace of Westminster is not just a building, but a symbol of democracy. The decision made around R&R, therefore, must be viewed in the context of its potential influence on the relationship between the public and their legislature. This is especially important in a context of heightened anti-political sentiment. Saward (2010, p 167) conceived of representative democracy as "*not so much a given set of institutions as a design challenge*" (italics in original). R&R offers the chance to think about how the design of the legislative building fits with the design of the institution within and how in turn that fits with the design of a functioning and fully representative democracy. Understanding how the R&R process was approved, and crucially where the scope of the project was narrowed down, is to understand this design challenge. It thus feeds directly into discussions about political alienation and loss of trust in representative institutions. As the project develops, further study is warranted to help understand the relationship between R&R and anti-political sentiment.

Megaprojects

The process of approval for Restoration and Renewal also speaks to the politics of 'megaprojects' (Flyvbjerg, 1998, 2006). Jennings (2013, p 3) noted the "tensions between high politics, risk and the modern state" in the planning and delivery of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: the governance of which is seen as a model for Restoration and Renewal. R&R has the potential to offer an even further heightened tension, given the intrinsically political nature of the building, and its status as an example of "icon politics" (Moran, 2001). Indeed, previous building projects within the Westminster Parliament (e.g. the construction of Portcullis House and the Elizabeth Tower refurbishment works) could be considered to have neglected the 'politics' involved, failing to recognise how the management of the project would be perceived externally, and the lasting effects on the image of the institution (as discussed earlier in this thesis). A similar effect can be seen in the construction of the Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood: writing six years after the building opened one journalist noted a "lingering defensiveness" from parliamentary authorities about discussing Holyrood, which they attributed to "the scandal over the cost of the project, which rose from £40m to £414m" (Spring, 2010). This thesis has shown that the nature and purpose of the Palace of Westminster means it cannot simply be treated as a construction project. Understanding the 'politics' of R&R will be crucial to its success.

This thesis has demonstrated the difficulty in identifying a single figure responsible or empowered to lead on R&R. This demonstrates how this case study offers—and R&R will continue to offer for many years to come—a perspective on blame avoidance within megaprojects. The independent governance system for R&R to be established could be considered as an example of a "blame game" defined by Hood (2002, p 17) as "agency strategies - the selection of institutional arrangements to minimize or avoid blame". As such they may lead to "blame reversion", defined by Hood (2002, p 24, 35) as "a failure to deflect blame by delegation", which may occur if "delegation is perceived as cosmetic" by the public. Alternatively, Hood (2002, p 29) further defined "managerial blame boomerangs", as occurring when "politicians try to shift blame by (ostensibly) placing direct responsibility for operational failure in the hands of managers or other quasi-autonomous actors [...] those actors also may respond with blame-deflection strategies of their own". In turn this feeds into the literature on depoliticisation (Flinders and Buller, 2006; Flinders and Wood, 2014; Hay, 2014; Wood and Flinders, 2014). The establishment of the independent governing structure for the R&R project is worth further consideration once the bodies are established in statute, to understand if it enables a clear line of accountability. Crucially, this will depend on the extent to which political interference is minimised in practice as in theory, as Bache et al (2015, p 72) warned: "the fuzzier the governance the fuzzier the accountability".

Final thoughts

"Legislatures matter" Norton (2012a, p 520) argued, "because they are the essential link between the people and those who govern them". This thesis has shown that the buildings of legislatures, which both symbolise the governing system and shape what occurs within, must also matter. Understanding changes to a legislative building thus helps us understand the legislature itself. The approval of the Restoration and Renewal programme and full decant marks a significant policy change in the institution of the UK Parliament. Furthermore, the extent of the significance is likely to increase dramatically over the next decade, as we start to understand how leaving the Palace of Westminster, even if only temporarily, has changed how politics operates in the UK. The policy decision also represents continuity: this thesis has demonstrated the power of the emotional attachment to the Palace among parliamentarians and the physical and symbolic power of the design of the Palace has on all those who work within or visit it. Leaving the Palace for multiple years will test the extent of this powers and opens up the opportunity for unplanned, unexpected changes to our political culture. As a result, the 2018 approval of R&R may have planted a seed of more radical change in UK politics. The nature of this change, however, is unknown. At a time of crisis in representative politics, Restoration and Renewal may serve to connect the public with their parliament or to

light a touchpaper for anti-political sentiment. The explanation this thesis has provided of how Restoration and Renewal was approved—how institutional norms and traditions shaped a public policy decision—will help us make sense of this uncertain future.

Appendix A: Selected key individuals during the 2012-2018 policy window

Sir David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments 2011 – 2015

Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons 2009 - present

Sir Paul Beresford, Chair of the Commons Administration Committee 2015 – present

Tom Brake MP, Deputy Leader of the Commons 2012 – 2015, Member of the House of Commons Commission 2015 - present

Chris Bryant MP, Chair of the Commons Finance Committee 2017 - present

Rt Hon David Cameron, Prime Minister 2010 – 2016

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park, Leader of the House of Lords 2016 – present

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, Leader of the House of Commons 2015 - 2016

Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the Commons Public Accounts Committee 2015 - present

Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, Leader of the House of Commons 2016 – 2019

Lord Lisvane (formerly Sir Robert Rogers), Clerk of the House of Commons 2011 - 2014

Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Prime Minister 2016 – 2019

Sir David Natzler, Clerk of the House of Commons 2014 – 2019

Baroness Stowell of Beeston, Leader of the House of Lords 2014 – 2016

Dr Richard Ware, Director of the Restoration and Renewal Programme 2012 - 2016

Appendix B: Government motions and amendments for House of Commons debate on Restoration and Renewal, 31 January 2018

6. RESTORATION AND RENEWAL (NO. 1)

No debate (if the Business of the House (Restoration and Renewal) Motion is agreed to)
Andrea Leadsom
That this House–

(1) affirms its commitment to the historic Palace of Westminster and its unique status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Royal Palace and home of our Houses of Parliament;

(2) takes note of the report of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster 'Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster', HL Paper 41, HC 659;
(3) accepts that there is a clear and pressing need to repair the services in the Palace of Westminster in a comprehensive and strategic manner to prevent catastrophic failure in this Parliament, whilst acknowledging the demand and burden on public expenditure and fiscal constraints at a time of prudence and restraint;

(4) accepts in principle that action should be taken and funding should be limited to facilitate essential work to the services in this Parliament;

(5) agrees to review before the end of the Parliament the need for comprehensive works to take place.

    Amendment (c)
    Ian Blackford
    Kirsty Blackman
    Pete Wishart
    Neil Gray
    Stewart Hosie
    Patrick Grady
    Ben Lake Liz Saville Roberts Hywel Williams
    Jonathan Edwards Ian Austin Caroline Lucas
    At end of paragraph (2), insert: '(2A) regrets that no detailed assessment has been carried out of the cost-effectiveness of relocating Parliament away from the Palace of Westminster, and calls for any future review to include such an assessment.'

    Amendment (b)
    Meg Hillier
    Sir Paul Beresford
    Chris Bryant

Ian Paisley
Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown
Sir Roger Gale
Mr Clive Betts Rachel Reeves Tom Tugendhat
Frank Field Jim Fitzpatrick Lilian Greenwood
Johnny Mercer Stephen Twigg Ms Angela Eagle
Anna Turley Stephen Doughty Stephen Kinnock
Mrs Madeleine Moon Diana Johnson Sir Kevin Barron
Ian Mearns Stella Creasy Heidi Alexander
Kate Green Albert Owen Jo Stevens
Melanie Onn Liz Twist Paula Sherriff
Jenny Chapman Bridget Phillipson Mr Mark Prisk
Nick Boles Chi Onwurah Hilary Benn
Mr Gavin Shuker John Cryer Stephen Timms
Nicky Morgan Dr Sarah Wollaston Paul Masterton
Robert Neill Yvette Cooper
Delete paragraphs (4) and (5) and at end add:

'(4) accordingly endorses the unanimous conclusion of the Joint Committee that a full and timely decant of the Palace is the best and the most cost-effective delivery option, as endorsed by the Public Accounts Committee and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority;

(5) accepts that expenditure on the Palace during this Parliament will be limited to preparatory work for the comprehensive programme of works envisaged, together with works essential to ensure the continuing functioning of the Palace;

(6) endorses the Joint Committee's recommendation that a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority be established by legislation to develop a business case and costed programme for the work to be approved by both Houses of Parliament, and to commission and oversee the work required, and that immediate steps be taken now to establish a shadow sponsor Board and Delivery Authority;

(7) instructs the shadow Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority and their statutory successors to apply high standards of cost-effectiveness and demonstrate value for money in the business case, to report back to Parliament with up to date costings and a realistic timetable for the duration of the work, and to include measures to ensure: the repair and replacement of mechanical and electrical services, fire safety improvement works, the removal of asbestos, repairs to the external and internal fabric of the Palace, the removal of unnecessary and unsightly accretions to the Palace, the improvement of visitor access including the provision of new educational and other facilities for visitors and full access for people with disabilities;

(8) affirms that the guarantee that both Houses will return to their historic Chambers as soon as possible should be incorporated in primary legislation.'.

7. RESTORATION AND RENEWAL (NO. 2)

No debate (if the Business of the House (Restoration and Renewal) Motion is agreed to)
Andrea Leadsom
That this House -

(1) affirms its commitment to the historic Palace of Westminster as the permanent home of both Houses of Parliament;

(2) takes note of the report of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster 'Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster', HL Paper 41, HC 659;
(3) agrees that there is a clear and pressing need to repair the services in the Palace of Westminster in a comprehensive and strategic manner to prevent catastrophic failure; including steps to safeguard the safety of visitors, schoolchildren, staff and members;

(4) notes that works in the Palace should commence as early as possible in the next decade;

(5) authorises necessary preliminary work required to avoid unnecessary delay, without prejudice to a parliamentary decision on the preferred option;

(6) endorses the Joint Committee's recommendation that a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority be established by legislation to commission and oversee the work required, and the establishment of a joint Commission to lay estimates;

(7) agrees that steps be taken now to establish a shadow Sponsor Board and shadow Delivery Authority, and to ensure that its members have a range of relevant expertise;

(8) instructs the shadow Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority to undertake a sufficiently thorough and detailed analysis of the three options of full decant, partial decant and retaining a parliamentary foothold in the Palace during a full decant; to decide whether each option properly balances costs and benefits, and whether or not the identified risks can be satisfactorily mitigated; to prepare a business case for the preferred option for the approval of both Houses of Parliament; and thereafter to proceed to the design phase;

(9) instructs the shadow Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority to apply high standards of cost-effectiveness and demonstrate value for money, and to include measures to ensure: the repair and replacement of mechanical and electrical services, fire safety improvement works, the removal of asbestos, repairs to the external and internal fabric of the Palace, the removal of unnecessary and unsightly accretions to the Palace, the improvement of visitor access including the provision of new educational and other facilities for visitors and full access for people with disabilities;

(10) instructs the shadow Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority to ensure the security of Members, Peers, staff, and visitors both during and after the work;

(11) affirms that in any event the delivery option must ensure that both Houses will return to their historic Chambers after any essential period of temporary absence.

Amendment (a)
Sir Edward Leigh
Stephen Pound
Sir Desmond Swayne
Sir Nicholas Soames
Sir Graham Brady
Dr Julian Lewis
James Duddridge Jack Lopresti Kate Hoey
John Spellar Mrs Pauline Latham Bill Wiggin
Iain Stewart Mr John Hayes Mr Peter Bone
Martin Vickers Robert Halfon Dr Matthew Offord
Daniel Kawczynski Sir William Cash Craig Mackinlay
Simon Hoare Richard Drax Philip Davies
Dr Caroline Johnson Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger Leo Docherty
Steve Double Charlie Elphicke Mr Alister Jack
Alex Burghart Sir Robert Syms Mrs Anne Main
Priti Patel Eddie Hughes Alex Chalk
Sir David Amess Bob Stewart Andrew Bowie
Ross Thomson Mr William Wragg Stephen Kerr
Mr John Whittingdale John Mann
At end of paragraph (11), add 'During the progress of work, the debating Chamber of the House of Commons will remain in the Palace of Westminster or Portcullis House.'.

Amendment (b)
Pete Wishart
Patrick Grady
Caroline Lucas
Ben Lake
Liz Saville Roberts
Hywel Williams

Jonathan Edwards
At end of paragraph (11), add 'and that any temporary chamber, and the renewed historic chamber, must include a sufficient number of seats for all Members and the technology necessary to enable electronic voting.'.

Amendment (c)
Dame Caroline Spelman

At end of paragraph (11), add 'During the progress of work, the debating Chamber of the House of Commons will remain in the Palace of Westminster, Portcullis House or Church House.'.

Appendix C: Motion approved by the House of Lords, 6 February 2018

"That this House concurs with the House of Commons in their resolution of 31 January, and accordingly resolves that this House—

(1) affirms its commitment to the historic Palace of Westminster and its unique status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Royal Palace and home of our Houses of Parliament;

(2) takes note of the Report of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster (Session 2016-17, HL Paper 41);

(3) accepts that there is a clear and pressing need to repair the services in the Palace of Westminster in a comprehensive and strategic manner to prevent catastrophic failure in this Parliament, whilst acknowledging the demand and burden on public expenditure and fiscal constraints at a time of prudence and restraint;

(4) accordingly endorses the unanimous conclusion of the Joint Committee that a full and timely decant of the Palace is the best and the most cost-effective delivery option, as endorsed by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority;

(5) accepts that expenditure on the Palace during this Parliament will be limited to preparatory work for the comprehensive programme of works envisaged, together with works essential to ensure the continuing functioning of the Palace;

(6) endorses the Joint Committee's recommendation that a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority be established by legislation to develop a business case and costed programme for the work to be approved by both Houses of Parliament, and to commission and oversee the work required, and that immediate steps be taken now to establish a shadow Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority;

(7) instructs the shadow Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority and their statutory successors to apply high standards of cost-effectiveness and demonstrate value for money in the business case, to report back to Parliament with up to date costings and a realistic timetable for the duration of the work, and to include measures to ensure: the repair and replacement of mechanical and electrical services, fire safety improvement works, the removal of asbestos, repairs to the external and internal fabric of the Palace, the removal of unnecessary and unsightly accretions to the Palace, the improvement of visitor access including the provision of new educational and other facilities for visitors and full access for people with disabilities; and

(8) affirms that the guarantee that both Houses will return to their historic Chambers as soon as possible should be incorporated in primary legislation." (HL Deb, 6 Feb 2018, cc1916-7)

Appendix D: Participant information sheet

Alexandra Meakin
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Information Sheet for Interviewees

Doctoral Project: *The Politics of the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster*[29]

You are being invited to take part in an interview for a doctoral research project examining the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. This project has been funded by the Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics at the University of Sheffield. It is part of a wider project *Designing for Democracy* under the supervision of Professor Matthew Flinders.

The purpose of this research is to understand the factors that led to the approval of the proposals to repair and rebuild the Palace of Westminster—the Restoration and Renewal Programme—by the House of Commons and House of Lords in early 2018. Specifically, this project examines past policy decisions relating to the Palace of Westminster, and considers whether there are recurrent factors that affect how the Palace has been managed at different times since 1800, that can help to explain why the Restoration and Renewal Programme was approved. This thesis will seek to improve our understanding of the internal governance of Parliament and the role of the Government, backbench MPs and Peers, and House of Commons and House of Lords staff in the agenda-setting process.

The core of the research is made up of semi-structured interviews. Approximately 30 interviews will take place with participants who have been selected based on their roles within Parliament or the Restoration and Renewal Programme. All participants are free to decline participation in the interviews. If participants have agreed to be interviewed, they are also free to withdraw their participation at any time. Participants may request that their quotes or other information they have provided is used on a non-attributable or anonymous basis. Participants may request that all or part of the information they provide is used solely for background information.

These interviews will ask individuals to reflect upon key points during the recent history of the Palace, and specifically: the agenda-setting process and their role within that process; how they understood problems relating to the infrastructure and condition of the Palace; concurrent political and policy developments relating to the Palace; and how interviewees interacted with, and viewed the roles of, other political actors during these periods.

These interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The data will be password protected and stored on an encrypted hard drive for a maximum of five years after submission of the PhD thesis, before being destroyed. Personal data will not be stored with the recordings or transcriptions. Both the original recordings and the transcriptions will be anonymised where requested, and where this is the case, it will not be possible to identify any individual through the transcriptions or the analyses that follow as a result. No data will be shared with anyone who is not directly working on the Designing for Democracy project.

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. In order to collect and use your personal information as part of this research project, we must have a basis in law to do

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[29] This is a working title and remains subject to change.

so. The basis that we are using is that the research is 'a task in the public interest'. Further information, including details about how and why the University processes your personal information, how we keep your information secure, and your legal rights (including how to complain if you feel that your personal information has not been handled correctly), can be found in the University's Privacy Notice https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general. For further information about the project more generally, please contact the Lead Researcher: Alexandra Meakin: a.meakin@sheffield.ac.uk or the Director of the Designing for Democracy project, Professor Matthew Flinders: m.flinders@sheffield.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information sheet, and for your participation in this project.

Appendix E: Interviewee consent form

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Informed Consent Form for Interviewees

Doctoral Project: *The Politics of the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster*[1]

Please tick the following:

I confirm that I understand the purpose of this research and have had the opportunity to ask questions ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons ☐

I agree to take part in the above study ☐

I consent to being audio recorded and understand that the audio record will be transferred to the researcher's external hard drive and not stored on any other device. ☐

Please choose ONE of the following options:

I consent to the use of attributable and anonymised quotes/information ☐

I consent to the use of anonymised quotes/information only ☐

I consent to the use of background information being used in the research but not to quotations ☐

Name of participant: Signature: Date:

_____   _____   _____

Name of researcher: Signature: Date:

_____   _____   _____

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