

# **Intergenerational memory, The Labour Party, and The Ghost of the Two Tony's**

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## Abstract

This dissertation will examine the Labour Party memberships' understanding of its own history. By use of an online survey the individual grassroots membership was contacted and asked to give their opinion regarding certain major leaders, figures, internal and external events in the recent history of the party. These results were cross referenced with published studies carried out by Seyd and Whiteley in the 1980s and 90s. The results illustrate that there is a generational split in the collective memory of the party between two groups, basically these two groups are younger and older party generations. This split can be explained by the 'reminiscence bump' which is a concept from the world of psychology. Those who identify with a particular ideological section of the party are much more likely to have a different perceptions of the past compared with other sections. As Whiteley has shown, people join the party for either instrumental or expressive reasons and that those two reasons become manifest in different perceptions of the two figures of Tony Blair and Tony Benn. These differing perceptions reinforce the idea that the past is always viewed through the lens of the present. This dissertation offers a framework for historians to use when analysing popular cultural perceptions of history with generational memory at its heart.

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.



"Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!"

Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald

## Introduction

The current membership card of the Labour Party of the United Kingdom contains a detailed statement on the aims and values of the party which in terms of its length – it has five distinct sub-sections - stands in stark contrast to the equivalent statement by its main political rival the British Conservative Party, which simply states that the party exists to promote its aims and values<sup>1</sup>. The Labour Party statement is in fact Clause IV of its constitution as re-drafted in 1995 under leadership of Tony Blair as part of his re-branding of the party as ‘New’ Labour. Blair’s campaign to re-draft, or as he would see it, ‘modernise’ the existing Clause IV, adopted in 1918, with its commitment to ‘common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange...’ has been seen as the pivotal moment in the ‘New Labour’ project. This episode became part of a study of the recent history of the Labour Party in the early to mid-1990s, for an undergraduate dissertation based on recording the memories of members of the party active at the time. The interviews covered such matters as their reaction to Labour’s defeat in the 1992 election as well as their feelings about the amendment of Clause IV. Whilst the number of interviews was not sufficient to make it a representative survey, it was large enough to illustrate the way that the memories of those members of the period had been shaped by subsequent events and that there was a significant level of ‘hindsight bias in those memories. Whilst all contemporary evidence suggests that the defeat of 1992 was a great shock to the vast bulk of the membership, many respondents claimed that it came as no surprise to them. An ‘I knew it all along’ mentality obtains which the psychologist Daniel Schacter states is often prevalent when remembering the events and outcome of elections.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the ‘modernisation’ of Clause IV was achieved by Tony Blair with surprisingly little opposition from the rank and file, but many of the respondents characterised it as evidence of Blair’s perfidy and something that was achieved in the teeth of substantial rank and file opposition, fitting into a narrative of ‘leadership betrayal’ which has a long history inside the Labour Party.<sup>3</sup> That study ultimately concluded that the respondents’ memories of the debate over Clause IV as ‘betrayal’ rather than a pragmatic response to four general election defeats, was the product of

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<sup>1</sup> “Constitution of The Conservative Party” <http://politike.al/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Statuti-i-Partise-Konservatore-Britani.pdf>

viewing the event through the lens of memories of the later Blair years and, in particular, the Iraq war of 2003.

This study seeks to further develop and broaden the methods used in the earlier dissertation, to study and analyse the way that the current membership of the party views its history and the extent to which those perceptions have been framed by autobiographical memory and the construction and recollection of the past by those members. It will show that the party membership is haunted by two ghosts, the spectres of Tony Benn and Tony Blair, who are the personification of two strands of motivation for the membership that were set out by Paul Whitely in his book *The Labour Party in Crisis* (1983)<sup>2</sup>. Since the completion of the earlier study in March 2015, the Labour Party has suffered two further electoral defeats, two very divisive leadership elections and, paradoxically, a massive increase in individual membership. These factors therefore needed to be taken into account when developing the methodology of the new study. The study draws on the memory of two groups, those that lived through the events of the period from 1979 to 2015 and who experienced them first hand, and those born during the period and whose perceptions of them are largely second hand.

What follows will be survey of the literature on the Labour Party membership. This historiography of Labour Party membership studies indicates that there is little or nothing about the membership's 'sense of history'. What does exist are sociological studies of the party, usually dealing with issues such as class and ideological position of members. This dissertation will use these studies as a frame of reference for its own survey and conclusions. The key texts to be referenced will be the work of Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley who wrote two books about the Party membership. The first, *Labour's Grass Roots* in 1992 and the second *New Labour's Grassroots* in 2002. These books will offer a starting point for a comparative analysis of the membership in the not too distant past and the membership today.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Whiteley. *The Labour Party in Crisis* (Methuen: London, 1983)

British political parties generally offer good opportunities to analyse these issues with their relationships to the past because they are to a significant extent bound together by a sense of collective memory. The Labour party membership offers a particularly good example to use for a political party because, as Jon Lawrence said in 2000, they have internalised the past to understand their present and future<sup>3</sup>. This has been supercharged recently due to the divisive leadership elections in 2015 and 2016, further exacerbated by the general election of 2017.

There will then be an explanation of the role of memory as a psychological function in individuals and a brief explanation of relevant studies into memory by psychologists. This will be less comprehensive as this is a History MA not a Psychology MA but it will seek to outline the role of autobiographical memory in the construction and recollection of the past by the membership. The study of memory in psychology is very extensive but this dissertation will focus on the concept of “reminiscence bump”. This is the fact that individuals will acquire and recall more memories during the ages of fifteen to thirty five. This is a period that is closely associated to individuals learning about their place in the world and their identity becoming more defined. This involves the absorption of culture as a means of defining the self, it appears to be a breeding ground for nostalgia by, groups and their idea of the past. This, then, is a new approach and it is hoped that it can become a tool for historians to better understand individuals and how they view the past and a political group’s history. As will be demonstrated, there are two types of nostalgia and how nostalgia informs a person’s construction of the past. In all the psychological work done in this area very few have directly studied political groups and their ideas of the past. This, then, is a new approach and it is hoped that it can assist historians to better understand individuals and how they view the past and a political group’s history.

There will follow a discussion about how this reading has informed the construction of the survey, and how each question was formulated. All the methodology will be explained including how the survey was issued to the respondents and the time frame in which the data was collected. This will conclude part one of the dissertation.

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<sup>3</sup> Jon Lawrence, “Labour - The myths it had lived by,” in *Labour’s First Century*, Duncan Tanner et al. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2000) 342.

Part two of the dissertation will show the results of the survey with a brief discussion about them. The collation of results will be discussed as well as further details regarding respondents who agreed to give follow-up phone interviews. A balance of quantitative and qualitative analysis will be undertaken to try and get an overall picture of Labour members, to provide a broad perspective of the two 'generations' and their 'sense' of their own history and that of the Labour Party.

Part three of the dissertation will provide the conclusions drawn from the survey and how it relates to the historiography, as well as suggesting what lessons can be learnt by historians. This MA will ultimately conclude that historians have for many years downplayed, with good reason, the importance of oral history or oral testimony because of the inherent unreliable nature of such sources. The survey and interviews conducted for this dissertation show how the membership views its own past on an individual level. However, due to the fact that technology drives history, people are now able to publish their own versions of history digitally and much faster than ever before. This means that historians will now have to engage with oral history and point out the inherent problems that such sources pose. This 'democratisation' of history is a double edged sword as it allows for 'official histories' to be questioned but also means that poorly evidenced histories and analyses can be given parity with more rigorous research. By using the framework of the Reminiscence Bump and the quantitative nature of political science, historians can better understand the role of individual perceptions of history and how the contemporary debates can be framed by such perceptions, both individual and collective generational terms.

### **Historiography**

In seeking to embed this study within a clear historiographical framework it has to acknowledge that the existing range of studies into the relationship of Labour Party members and the history of that party is quite sparse. Nevertheless, the Labour party does offer a good opportunity to study this topic because as Drucker has said:

“The Labour party has and needs a strong sense of its own past and of the past of the labour movement which produced and sustains it. This sense of its past is so central to its ethos that it plays a crucial role in defining what the party is about to those in it. Labour’s sense of her past, is of course, an expression of the past experiences of the various parts of the British working class. It is these pasts which dictate that Labour must be a party of the future and what kind of future policies it will tolerate<sup>4</sup>”

This new approach will inform how individual members perceive the past of their party, and how that in turn can affect broader perceptions within the wider membership. This approach is also novel because political histories are generally written with the major players, or ‘high politics’ in mind. As Barry Hindess says in his book *The Decline of Working Class Politics* (1971) the political leaders and researchers looked at the rank-and-file membership of political parties in a way “[A] referee or a groundsman maybe concerned with the state of the pitch.<sup>5</sup>”

The object of this research is to drill down into the Labour party membership and try to find out what the membership understands of its own history, in a way that is new and unique to the study of Labour Party history. Given that the Labour Party is over a century old, it has been decided that, rather than looking at the party's history overall, this research will focus on the current living memory of the party as that will provide a manageable sample. What will be looked at here are two groups, those who lived through and experienced a period of history and another group who can only have experienced it with the amnesia of childhood and heard about it second hand. Indeed, in the 2015 general election, people who were born in 1997 were able to vote for the first time and those who are members must have some sense of the party’s history. This research will seek to establish what those perceptions are and how they contrast.

Putting all this into a historiographical framework is difficult, as it seems that, at present, no similar research has been undertaken. Early studies of Labour Party membership were more sociological in nature. *Constituency Politics: A study of Newcastle-under-Lyme* (1965) is the earliest such study that could be found. It looks

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<sup>4</sup> H. M. Drucker, *Doctrine and ethos in the Labour Party*. (G. Allen & Unwin: London, 1979), 25.

<sup>5</sup> Barry Hindess, *The Decline of Working Class Politics* (London: Granada, 1971), 17.

at the political makeup of Newcastle-Under-Lyme not just from a Labour perspective but Conservative as well. It breaks down voters into social groups, especially class, and shows that there is a strong 'working class' emphasis to the politics in that constituency, something that greatly benefits the Labour Party who held the seat from 1922 until the time of writing in 1965. Bealey et al do admit that their class definitions are slightly problematic due to the survey letting the respondents define their own class which is, of course, not objective<sup>6</sup>. This is a problem that Seyd and Whitley have noted in their research of the 1990s. The book offers a study of a constituency but not an exclusive study of Labour Party membership and its sense of history but is worth noting as a ground breaking rank-and-file study.

*The Decline of Working Class Politics (1971)* by Barry Hindess gives a quantitative study of the Labour Party membership where he looks at, what he feels is, the decline of working class participation in politics, especially within the Labour Party and offers a suggestion as to where British politics is heading as a result. He cites a perceived increase of middle class members and suggests that this will cause problems in future for democracy as a whole, not just The Labour Party. In his introduction he acknowledges that very few studies of the Labour membership have been done. He also points out that:

“Quite simply there is remarkably little evidence concerning grass-roots politics (below the level of the council chamber) or of changes therein. Records are often unavailable or unreliable accounts of the past given by, say, full-time party officials often contradict those given by one-time party activists.<sup>7</sup>”

This is more a social study and offers little in a way of the membership interpreting its own history, more an attempt to understand working class political behaviour and participation. This is similar to the book *The Labour Party and the Working Class (1976)* by Tom Forester who looks at the question posed by Hindess but Forester does look at the perceived past by the party and suggests that there was some idea of a 'Golden Past' of the socialist working class. He also offers two narratives of the past that are prevalent in Labour History, the "History of the Glorious Struggle" and

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<sup>6</sup> Frank Bealey, J. Blondel and W. P. McCann, *Constituency Politics: A Study of Newcastle-under-Lyme* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 176.

<sup>7</sup> Bealey, *Constituency Politics: A Study of Newcastle-under-Lyme*, 176.

the “History of Betrayal.”<sup>8</sup>

Forester also created a survey for the constituency members of Brighton Kemptown, the purpose of which was to test the Hindess thesis that the party was declining in working class members and experiencing a ‘middle class takeover’ and that the working class are experiencing a ‘de-radicalisation’. Forester asks a number of demographic questions as a way of trying to examine Hindess claims but also includes a few questions that he knows the members will enjoy answering. Such as section B, question seven, in his survey where he asks who the respondent thinks would make a better leader of the party (than presumably the leader at the time of writing which would have been James Callaghan). The respondents are given a choice of an equal number of ‘left’ ‘right’ and ‘centrist’ candidates to try and get an idea of the membership’s preferred leader and give additional weight to the preferred political views of the membership . One of the candidates is Tony Wedgewood Benn but rather frustratingly, for this research, the results of this part of the survey are actually not disclosed as such a question was not central to the author’s’ main argument.

An early study of the membership’s perceptions of their party’s history was compiled by Hugh Jenkins, the former Labour MP for Putney, who put together a book about his constituency members who told their own story in the early 1980s. Some surveys were undertaken by Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley during the early to mid-80s and early to late 90s of Labour members. Their books, *The Labour Party in Crisis*, *The Rise and Fall of The Labour Left*, *Labour’s Grass Roots* and *New Labour’s Grass Roots* are good sources of material on the earlier generation of membership and will be the starting point for the historiographical framework and will be used to inform the survey and define the questions that will be put to the two generations. The other important work that will be considered will be the chapter Labour and Its Membership in Duncan Tanner’s *Labour’s First Century*. Tanner attempts to look at the membership as a whole in the party’s first hundred years. It also draws from Seyd and Whiteley for the last part of the chapter. Other more recent studies have looked at UK party membership as a way of trying to understand the trend of declining party

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<sup>8</sup> Tom Forester, *The Labour Party and the Working Class* (Heinemann: London, 1976), ix.



membership in, not only UK politics but western democracy as a whole. Studies by Whiteley in 2008, Pemberton and Wickham-Jones in 2013, dealt with that issue directly but subsequently such studies have been overtaken by the Labour Party's membership surge in 2015-16. What follows is an overview of each book and journal article and how it will inform the eventual survey and the final dissertation.

The book *Rank and File* (1980) by Hugh Jenkins, former Labour MP and Minister for the Arts from 1974-76 and CND chairman 1979-81, is a compilation of members' contributions telling their own story about their time in the Labour party. It is exclusively qualitative in its research and offers no analysis with it. It does however contain a contribution by a certain Peter Hain who would go on to become a Labour minister in the Blair and Brown governments<sup>9</sup>. The book will play little to no part in this thesis but it is worth noting in the grand scheme of studies of Labour party membership.

No study of Labour party membership, or indeed any UK political party membership, can be undertaken without reference to the work of Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley.

Paul Whitley's *Labour Party in Crisis* (1983) picked over the bones of the party's worst election defeat for around fifty years and attempted to survey individual members via conference delegates in his Chapter "The Membership Crisis". In this chapter Whiteley asks the question why members join the party. He shows that there are two types of reasoning for members to join the party; the instrumental and the expressive. The instrumental reasoning is pragmatic, members wanted in to achieve outcomes and see the implementation of policies, this contrasts with the expressive reasoning which is more ideological, such as believing in Clause Four/socialism. Whiteley shows that members are more likely to be working class if they have instrumental reasons and more middle class if they have expressive reasons. This concept of instrumental and expressive reasoning is a theme that shall be investigated in this research. It will be suggested that those two reasons still exist within the party and that the two Tony's are the personification of those reasons and lead to the ideological splits that have always existed but are more evident today.

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<sup>9</sup> Hugh Jenkins, *Rank and File* (Croom Helm, London, 1980.), 122.

*The Rise and Fall of The Labour Left*, was published in 1987 and provides an account of the internal troubles of the Labour Party in the early 1980s. Seyd's monograph is a descriptive account of the events of the 1980s and although there is a survey of two constituencies, Sheffield Hallam and Attercliffe, it offers little actual analysis of the two constituencies. The book does provide some interesting points about the 'Labour Left', about its genesis within the party before the early 1980s with some perceptive analysis regarding the successes and failures of the Left. For instance, Seyd offers a criticism of the Labour Left and its attitude to power.

"It is as if the Left believed that to think about structures of power was to become contaminated by them."<sup>10</sup>

This seems to link to Whitney's idea of expressive reasoning, seeing political identity as an expression rather than method of policy implementation. It would be interesting to see in the survey if this is a sentiment that still resonates today in both or either generations.

The book *Labour's Grass Roots* is more interesting in terms of the membership of the late 80s. It would have been conducted just after Tony Benn's crushing defeat in his attempt to win the leadership in 1988. This meant that, when this survey took place, the Labour Left had clearly been defeated. In the extremely extensive survey Seyd and Whiteley get the membership to outline their positions on many issues in order to define the predominant ideology of the membership and also ask about their occupation and age but does not about their length of party membership. Parts of this survey have been replicated for the purposes of this study. For instance Seyd asks the members to rate Labour party figures on a thermometer scale, 50 being a neutral rating, 1 being the lowest opinion of that person to 100 being the best possible rating. It would be interesting to see what has changed from when this survey was carried out and how similar figures, although not all, as I doubt many people will even remember who Joan Ruddock is let alone new members. This can then be cross referenced with the second generation to see if there are significant

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<sup>10</sup> Patrick Seyd, *The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left* (Macmillan Education: Basingstoke, 1987) 177.

differences. The new survey will also include Tony Blair who was not in the original one which maybe a little unfair but it could be interesting to cross reference his score to Tony Benn's who gets a comparatively low score to the others in the list in 1989 but that would have been after his leadership challenge that was seen by many to have been unnecessary.

Seyd notes in his next book, *New Labour's Grassroots*, that the membership of 1999 is not as socially different from the membership of the 1980s as many would assume. There are some differences, for example over the issue of nuclear weapons, but the other differences are small. Part of the survey will ask the earlier generation and the later generation what they believe the members in the late 80s and the members in the late 90s believed. To assess what the perception of the current membership, both first and second generation, is of the past to the attitudes and opinions of earlier members of the party.

In both books it is clear that there is very little evidence of significant dissatisfaction with the leadership in both the late 80s and 90s. This is a theme picked up on by Duncan Tanner in his entry into *Labour's First Century*:

"Despite myths created by some radical activists and echoed by some historians, there has been considerable area of agreement between organised Labour Party members and party leaders at most points in the party's history. Moreover...when tensions have spread more widely, it has seldom been a direct consequence of formal ideological differences. Rather, past actions and suspicions became fossilised into a party tradition which exaggerated tensions between leaders and members and created a language of conflict which even some moderates found difficult to resist."<sup>11</sup>

The last part of that paragraph is most interesting. The 'past actions and suspicions' phrase is something that will be tested with both generations of the membership, especially the Blair/Benn dynamic. It seems that Blair and Benn have become personifications of certain ideals that exists within the party. It will also be useful to test the hypothesis that Labour members' perceptions of the past are viewed through the lens of the Iraq war. some questions have been formulated that tests this theory

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<sup>11</sup> Duncan Tanner, "Labour and its membership," in *Labour's First Century*, Duncan Tanner et al. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2000), 266.

while at the same time not making it obvious that the study is trying to gauge the membership's view and their memory of both Tony's to avoid too much baggage and axe-grinding. This is a sentiment picked up by Steven Fielding who, in his 1997 book *The Labour Party: 'Socialism' and Society since 1951*, noted that "the sound of axes to grind is almost deafening when reading most studies of the party"<sup>12</sup>.

Lawrence Black wrote about socialism in the 1950's in his article 'Still at the Penny-Farthing Stage in a Jet-Propelled Era': Branch Life in 1950's Socialism'. About the difficulty the left had in recruiting members in the fifties because of it seeming out of date younger people<sup>13</sup>. This is a similar theme spoken about in Steven Fielding's article 'Activists against "Affluence": Labour Party Culture during the "Golden Age." Circa 1950 – 1970' who writes that there was a timeless appeal to socialism and that some members were wedded to this creed at the mid-20th century<sup>14</sup>. This shows a generational difference in attitudes to what socialism and the Labour Party were about. This is more at the membership level but offers not quantitative analysis.

Paul Whiteley made a journal entry to Parliamentary Affairs in 2008 which expanded on his and Seyd's concern at the decline of party membership. After the surge of Labour members in the mid-90s Whiteley returns to the subject to look at UK political membership as a whole, this thesis looks at his findings that relate to the Labour party. His analysis is now bordering on obsolete given the massive increase of Labour membership in 2015-16, but it does throw up some interesting statistics; most of all the amount of people surveyed who were former members political parties. The Labour party disproportionately make up the amount of former members of that group and show that, even though the largest number of members leaving was in the period 2001 - 2005 it is not by a significant amount. The party lost a similar number in the first period of government 1997 - 2001. The explanation offered by Whiteley is that the 2001 - 2005 period probably is the highest because of the Iraq war but people who joined in the mid-90s surge probably left because, it is suggested, being a

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<sup>12</sup> Steven Fielding, *The Labour Party: 'Socialism' and society since 1951* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1997), 20.

<sup>13</sup> Lawrence Black, "Still at the Penny-Farthing Stage in a Jet-Propelled Era': Branch Life in 1950s Socialism" *Labour History Review* Vol 65, No 2 Summer 2000, 220

<sup>14</sup> Steven Fielding, "Activists against "Affluence": Labour Party Culture during the "Golden Age," Circa 1950-1970 *Journal of British Studies* , Vol 40, No2 April 2001, 266

member of a governing party is less interesting than being one of opposition, hence the similar amount leaving in the first period of Labour government'<sup>15</sup>.

This is also echoed by Pemberton and Wickham-Jones in their 'Labour's lost grassroots: The rise and fall of party membership in British Politics' (2013). They also express concern at the decline of Labour party membership since 1997 but offer a nuanced analysis as to the reasons for such a decline. They suggest that Whiteley and Seyd in previous studies were right that a lot of members left due to disillusionment with parties and the structure within them but they have failed to take into account, what they call, a 'revolving door' of membership. They point out that following the Iraq war Labour actually gained 25,000 members, which they attribute to members re-joining after leaving, for possibly ideological reasons or possibly that their membership just lapsed, which gives rise to their metaphor of the 'revolving door'. This is a theory that I would like to test out. Nobody disputes that Labour Party membership declined after 1997 but what does the membership believe? The journal offers some interesting analysis of the Labour Party membership but is rather undone by its final lines. Stating that:

"We believe that the era of mass Labour membership is over."<sup>16</sup>

Proving that hindsight is indeed a wonderful thing.

These studies of the membership more often than not use quantitative evidence but only in a social studies form not in a historical context. None of them really delves into the membership's 'sense' of history. That was not their remit, the qualitative studies, such as *Rank and File* (1980) gives individual members accounts of their relationship to the party but not their interpretation of the party's history. This is where this dissertation comes in, it seeks to combine both the quantitative and qualitative evidence and aggregate the perceptions and views of the individual membership. It is in this regard different from what has been done before and as such other histories

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<sup>15</sup> Pemberton, HR & Wickham-Jones, "Labour lost grassroots: The rise and fall of party membership", *British Politics* 8 (2) (2013)

<sup>16</sup> Pemberton, "Labour lost grassroots: The rise and fall of party membership", 34

written about the party. In the main, historical studies of the party have dealt with 'high' politics, the leaders and prominent figures and their policies and actions rather than interpretations and perceptions of the membership. The book *A Party With Socialists In It: A History of The Labour Left* by Simon Hannah (2018) gives a narrative history of the party from the left's perspective, something that is relatively new, possibly spurred on by the election of Corbyn as leader in 2015. Its opening line:

"The Labour Party was founded by socialists, but it was not a socialist party they founded.<sup>17</sup>"

The book concedes that, despite what some people may believe, that party was never from the outset explicitly socialist. Along with the book *Labour and the left in the 1980s* (2018) edited by Jonathan Shaw Davies it shows an appetite for histories of the 'left' of the party in an area that has been mostly dominated by the social democratic wing of the party. The book attempts to offer a new interpretation of the party's struggles in the 80s and offers a new idea that actually the party was more successful than given credit for, especially the party's attitude towards LGBT rights<sup>18</sup>. These studies look at the party as a whole but do not analyse it at an individual membership level. However, they all do attempt to make the case that the party's present situation has always been there, an attempt to explain current developments and events as part of a long, unfurling tradition of the party. The same can be said of all the books written about 'New' Labour in the mid to late 90s, culminating in the definitive text *The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the making of 'New' Labour* (2003), where the author Stephen Fielding makes the case that 'New' Labour was not really new and that it fits right in with the traditions of the party, only for Richard Toye to take issue with that argument a year later in his article 'The Smallest Party in History' (2004). Much more recently, Richard Jobson's book *Nostalgia and the post war Labour Party* (2018) goes deep into the role of nostalgia within the party. He states:

"Labour's nostalgia has provided the emotional adhesive that has held the party

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<sup>17</sup> Simon Hannah, *A Party With Socialists In It: A History of the Labour Left*. (Pluto Press: London, 2018) 1.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Davies and Rohan McWilliams, *Labour and the Left in the 1980s* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2018) 15.

together. Yet it has also served to constrain the party's political development and restrict Labour's ability to communicate effectively with the modern demands of the party."<sup>19</sup>

However, it must be stressed that none of these texts use a quantitative methodology and do not deal with the membership at an individual level, they focus on the high politics and the intellectual wings of the party. This dissertation is, then, offering an approach that has not been undertaken before, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence at 'grassroots' level as a counterpoint to the earlier more leadership focussed studies of party history.

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<sup>19</sup> Richard Jobson, *Nostalgia and the post war Labour Party* Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2018) 185.

## Autobiographical Memory

This dissertation will look at the role of autobiographical memory in the recollections of the membership. Autobiographical memory (AM) is a psychological term that is described as memory across the lifespan for both specific events and self-related information. In the psychological world it has medical uses for conditions such as amnesia and post-traumatic stress disorder. This dissertation breaks new ground by using this field of study to understand the memory of the Labour Party membership and its uses for history more generally. Due to the medical nature of the psychological research much of the work done has a focus on brain scans and cognitive functions. This dissertation does not use that part of the research and uses a more general and layperson approach as, after all, this is a history thesis. Some of the issues arise from AM are issues of recall such as the 'reminiscence bump', the emotional connection and motivated forgetting, hindsight bias, and confirmation bias. There will now follow a short breakdown of the research carried out into these areas by psychologists and then how these papers relate to the qualitative research carried out for this dissertation.

Drew Westen wrote a book called *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation* (2007) where, as the title suggests, he wrote about the role of emotion in electoral campaigning. When Westen wrote about George H.W Bush using historical comparisons as justification in the run up to the Gulf War of 1991 Bush used the comparison of Hitler to Saddam Hussein but as Westen points out, another historical comparison could have been made to the American experience to Vietnam but Bush understandably does not make that comparison. Westen says this is because Bush is linking his own, and by extension his generation's, attitude to the Second World War rather than the younger generation's more salient memory of the Vietnam. Westen calls this 'imprinting', late adolescence and early adulthood are the period of people's life where they form lifelong political attitudes<sup>20</sup>. Bush clearly sees the Second World War as a more justifiable campaign and those of his generation would almost certainly agree. This is an example of what psychologists

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<sup>20</sup> Drew Westen, *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation* (Public Affairs: New York, 2007) 95.



would call the Reminiscence Bump. Westen makes a link to this period of a person's life and how it affects their political attitudes and relationship to recent history. This requires a deeper understanding of what the Reminiscence Bump is and how it works in relation to AM.

Martin Conway has AM as being part of the 'Self-Memory System'<sup>21</sup>. It is a complex system of active goals and associated self-image, its relationship between it and long term memory is a reciprocal one<sup>22</sup>. The role over all of this system is to maintain coherence and lower accessibility of memories that threaten or undermine that self-image<sup>23</sup>. The study of AM is relatively recent as at the end of their chapter in *Theories of Memory* (1993) Conway and Rubin state that the study of AM has "only just begun"<sup>24</sup>. Twenty four years there is now much more research carried out especially in the area of the 'Reminiscence Bump'. The Reminiscence Bump (RB) is the tendency in people over the age of forty to show a high rate of recollecting personal experiences from their late teens to early twenties<sup>25</sup>. Alison Holmes, together with Martin Conway, had said in earlier research that the RB must relate to the maturation of the self, in fact it leads to a creation of a generation identity when the individual recognises that he/she is part of a particular social sub-group with whom they share goals<sup>26</sup>. This extends to social movements, religious groups, other subgroups, and, more importantly for this dissertation, political groups<sup>27</sup>. Rubin, Rahhal and Poon have shown that things learnt in early adulthood are recalled best<sup>28</sup> this would be the early part of the RB and as Rathbone, Moulin and Conway have shown, those memories and section of life become a self-defining experience for those acquiring them<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Martin Conway "Memory and the Self" *Journal of Memory and Language* 53 (2005): p594.

<sup>22</sup> Conway "Memory and the Self", p594.

<sup>23</sup> Conway "Memory and the Self", p605.

<sup>24</sup> Conway and Rubin "The Structure of Autobiographical Memory" in *Theories of Memory*, ed Alan F. Collins (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Hove, 1993) 103 – 132.

<sup>25</sup> Alan Baddeley, Michael Eysenck and Michael C. Anderson, *Memory* (London: Psychology Press, 2015), 304.

<sup>26</sup> Alison Holmes and Martin A Conway, "Generation Identity and the Reminiscence Bump: Memory for Public and Private Events" *Journal of Adult Development*, Vol 6, No 1, (1999): 22.

<sup>27</sup> Holmes, "Generation Identity and the Reminiscence Bump: Memory for Public and Private Events", 22.

<sup>28</sup> David C. Rubin, Tamara A. Rahhal and Leonard w. Poon, "Things Learned in Early Adulthood are Remembered Best" *Memory & Cognition* 1998, 26 (1): 17.

<sup>29</sup> Clare J. Rathbone, Chris J. A. Moulin and Martin Conway, "Self-Centred Memories: The Reminiscence Bump and The Self" *Memory and Cognition* 2008. 36 (8): 1412.

This has been an area of discussion with the respondents to the survey who allowed themselves to be interviewed. There are two generations participating in these interviews; ones who have collated their RB (post thirty years old) and those who are currently going through their RB (between sixteen and twenty five). One group has been questioned to see how their RB is affecting their view of the party's past and the other to see how they are judging the party's history and from where that judgement comes. This is where inter-generational memory comes into play.

It can lead to a tribalism between cultural groups that Dan Kahn as written about in his paper *Misconceptions, Misinformation, and the Logic of Identity-protective Cognition* (2017) that people when confronted with facts that counter their beliefs, people will engage with that information in a manner geared to generating identity-consistent rather than factually accurate beliefs<sup>30</sup>. This causes problems for historians who will face fierce resistance from those groups when talking about cultural icons, such as political figures, from those groups. For this dissertation the figures of Tony Blair and Tony Benn will be the two historical figures who seem to haunt the party in different ways. This is a new approach to understanding how people perceive history and memory.

### **History and Memory**

This is a much more scientific approach to history and memory compared to the more abstract approaches as laid out in books such as *History and Memory* (2007) by Geoffrey Cubitt. The role of memory in history has mostly been used as a philosophical exercise seeing memory as being part of a collective consciousness like Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora who looked at French memory and identity. Most importantly Halbwachs book *La Mémoire Collective* (1950) who advanced the idea that there is a collective memory as well as an individual one. That idea of a collective memory is of course a socially constructed one as memories of the Second

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<sup>30</sup> Misconceptions, Misinformation, and the Logic of Identity-protective Cognition Cultural Cognition Project Working Paper Series No. 164, Yale Law School, Public Law Research Paper No. 605, Yale Law & Economics Research Paper No. 575 May 2017

World War, from the British perspective for example, would have certain key events and ideas such as the Dunkirk spirit and The Blitz but they have all become part of a collective memory but how accurate they are on an individual level is disputable. Also, the ability of people to counter such narratives at the time was difficult as publishing your side of the story was difficult due to the nature of publishing at the time. This would allow grand narratives to become established. In the twenty first century however because of the internet getting published is infinitely quicker and easier than it would have been in the 1940's. More individual historical accounts will become prevalent when recounting the past. This dissertation will use political science methods to quantify interpretations of the past rather than the more abstract language of Halbwachs and Nora allowing historians to see it as a more statistical analysis with psychology based research to understand such rationalisations.

### **History, Heritage and Tradition**

The role of tradition within the party will also be looked at in this dissertation. As seen earlier with Tanner's comments on 'past actions and suspicions' becoming party of a party tradition Eric Hobsbawm wrote in *The Invention of Tradition* (1987) that tradition:

“[T]hrows considerable light on the human relation to the past, and therefore on the historian's own subject and craft. For all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion.<sup>31</sup>”

Hobsbawm is saying that groups will try to say that “it's always been like this” when confronted with their relationship to the past. This is a theme that was picked up on by Steven Fielding, in this book *The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the Making of 'New' Labour* (2003). For Fielding, Blair remained remarkable faithful to Labour's past<sup>32</sup>. He admits that it is a controversial statement and indeed he is challenged on it by Richard Toye in his article 'The Smallest Party in History? New Labour in Historical Perspective' (2004) who contends that Blair lead a shrinking of

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<sup>31</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions” in *The Invention of Tradition*, Edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 12

<sup>32</sup> Steven Fielding, *The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the making of 'New' Labour*. (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, 2003), 217

the power base within that Labour party which went against the history and heritage of the party. This is a matter of historical debate that can be argued over and the degree of nuance that is being examined here could be placed under a microscope at times to better understand it. This is where the academic debates about Labour party history, heritage and tradition become difficult for laypersons to follow. So, given that the period of history under examination by the members is the period in which that party became 'New' Labour under Tony Blair the members were asked to give their judgement on the newness of 'New' Labour. This was done to assess how the members defined their positions. The issue of who leads the party is the area of contention for Fielding and Toye but how did the grassroots define it? Did they see the organisational changes to the role of the unions made by John Smith in 1993 that fundamentally changed the way the party operated according to Thomas Quinn or did they look to the redrafting of Clause IV in 1995, something that had been tried by Gaitskell in the 1950s but who was soundly defeated because of the expressive nature of the clause to the party membership as documented by Tudor Jones<sup>33</sup>. This was also evident in 1995 during the debates around the new clause even though it was comfortably passed, albeit with a turnout of 27%, there was a vocal minority from the Defend Clause 4 Campaign, a group of MP's led by Tony Benn<sup>34</sup>. As Emily Robinson says, opposition to the change was not widely spread but it was deeply felt. It was seen as to require a painful break with the past and that the whole operation was to find a proper relationship to the past<sup>35</sup>. What did happen in 1995 with Blair's reforms was a creation of two ideas of Labour 'Old' and 'New'. Two new approaches to Labour history that seemed to be in direct competition. Two separate narratives about the parties past. Both embedded in some facts and both embedded in some myths. This is evident in Eric Shaw's account of the creation of 'Old Labour' who sees Corbyn's Labour as a more authentic version and that there was a sense that the party was being taken back from 'New' Labour<sup>36</sup>. This can be seen as evidence of something that Svetlana Boym wrote about in 2001 in her book *The Future of Nostalgia* where she writes about two types of nostalgia, the reflective kind and the

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<sup>33</sup> Tudor Jones 'Taking genesis out of the Bible': Hugh Gaitskell, Clause IV and Labour's Socialist Myth, *Contemporary British History*, 11:2 (1997), 16

<sup>34</sup> Emily Robinson, *History, Heritage and Tradition in Contemporary British Politics*. (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2012), 137

<sup>35</sup> Robinson, *History, Heritage and Tradition in Contemporary British Politics*., 138

<sup>36</sup> Eric Shaw Labour and the Left in the 1980s 41

restorative kind. She defines the two as thus:

“Restorative nostalgics manifests itself in total reconstruction of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time.<sup>37</sup>”

Here there is a problem for the role of historians. As was mentioned earlier, nuance is important for historians. But for the layperson, the casual consumer of histories, what they really want are compelling protagonists and antagonists. There are competing narratives that J H Plumb refers to as a difference between the past and history, the point being that the past is about vivacity and that history is about veracity. There will always be a sense that things were better in the past and that at some point, groups of people ‘lost their way’. This is where the restorative nostalgia as spoken about by Boym comes into play. This is also evidenced by the role of the reminiscence bump and how identities become formed after the age of thirty five and there may be a sense by people over that age of a lost golden age when in fact as Ziva Kunda has said:

“Our memories reflect not only what we have observed but also what we expect to have observed.<sup>38</sup>”

This, then, will cause problems for historians as people are now much more able to produce their own histories due to the ability to be published on the internet with no filter of a detached editor to get past to check the validity of the evidence that underpins it, its veracity. Then only the most vivacious historical narratives will be compelling. This dissertation will hope to shed light on the extent of this problem and offer a framework for historians to understand people’s motivations in their understanding of the past. In the past few years there has been increased interest into the role of nostalgia in politics. The recent report by the think tank Demos: *At Home in Ones Past: Nostalgia as a Cultural and Political Force in Britain, France and Germany* (2018)<sup>39</sup> stressed that they believe that nostalgia has an increased role in modern politics but this dissertation will argue that it has in fact always been the case.

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<sup>37</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books: New York, 2001),41

<sup>38</sup> Ziva Kunda, *Social Cognition: Making Sense of People* (MIT Press: Cambridge, 1999) 176

<sup>39</sup> Demos Report

It is only now that we are able to understand the role of nostalgia because of the ability of grass roots members to air their beliefs about the past on the internet on such social networking sites and blog posts. This ability to publish your own views and make it available to millions, even billions of people, in a matter of seconds, has only be achievable in the past twenty years and in that time we have seen the rise of the conspiracy theory as a strong narrative in people's interpretations of the past. Also in that time we have seen the rise of the nostalgia industry. Such theatrical shows as 'Buddy', which has been running since the late 80s, and 'Dreamboats and Petticoats' has been consistently popular for the past ten years. Both use the 50's and 60's as their period of recollection but such nostalgia doesn't stop there, with individual radio stations dedicated to one decade of music freely available to the population it is possible to stay immersed within a certain generation's culture. The capability for individuals remain stuck in the past has never been greater.

## Part Two

### Construction of the survey.

This section will explain how the survey was constructed drawing on the concepts and interpretations to be found in the historiography discussed in the previous chapter. It will also show how each question in the survey was constructed and how it relates to previous published work on Labour party membership.

It was decided that responses would be sought and collected via the internet as that would be the most efficient and effective way to collate and analyse the results. Seyd and Whiteley used mail and targeted specific constituencies whereas this survey did target specific constituencies but also, in order to secure a broader range of respondent it was decided to use a more generalised approach looking to target individual members through social media. The hope was to gather as many responses as possible and a tentative target of 100 - 200 was made. The width of the target range was because of the somewhat unpredictable nature of the respondents as, even though members of political parties would seem likely to want to give their opinion about the party's past there was no guarantee that they would. Taking time to complete a fairly long survey might be seen as a "*big ask*" especially as they would not be likely to see the results. An email request was sent to the chairperson of the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CLP and appeals were made via social media such as Facebook to disseminate the survey amongst known Labour Party members.

When respondents started the survey they were first greeted by a welcome page that explained the purpose of the survey and that it had been cleared by the ethics committee of the University of York and complied with the Data Protection Act of 1998. They were then reminded that the survey was voluntary and they were able to leave the survey at any point if they wished<sup>40</sup>. The very first question related to the

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<sup>40</sup> Only one person declined to take part according to the data. That still showed up in the responses

time that the respondent first joined the party.

\* 2. When did you first join the Labour Party?

- Before 1997
- After 1997

As you can see, when the respondent first joined the party is key here. Given that people can leave and re-join the party almost at will it was decided that it was best to get a sense of when the members first joined that party to get a better appreciation of the generational range of the party members in the survey. The Labour Party before and post 1997 after are, in many ways, two different beasts. Although many members would still remember and been part of the party during the last Labour government of 1974 - 1979 there had, in the intervening time period of 1979 - 1997 been a transformative era for the party and had been part of a the creation of an 'Old' Labour/'New' Labour narrative to the consternation of some within the party. The huge election victory of 1997 was the zenith of 'New' Labour and started thirteen years of a Labour government so this seemed to be the best way of drawing a generational line within the party itself.

\* 3. What age range are you in?

- 15 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 - 55
- 56 - 65
- 65+

This question allows the respondents to broken down into individual age groups allowing the filtering of results into generational groupings. There are the Millennial groups of 15 - 25 and 26 - 35, the Generation X group of 36 - 45 and 46 - 55, and finally the Baby Boomers of 56 - 65 and 65+. As this research is using the idea of the

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so that response was expunged from the record.



reminiscence bump the age groups were actually broken into two major groupings, the Acquiring Bump and the Post Bump generations. Breaking the respondents into six groups would allow for an even more microscopic look at the results if so desired.

\* 4. Have you resigned your membership at any time following your decision to join?

- Yes
- No

\* 5. If Yes, what year did you leave?

If you have left multiple times please select each year you left.

- |                               |                               |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1979 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1988 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1997 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2007 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1980 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1989 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2008 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1981 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2009 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1982 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1991 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1983 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1992 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2011 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1984 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2003 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2012 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1985 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1994 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2004 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2013 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1986 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1995 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2005 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2014 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1987 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1996 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2006 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2015 |

\* 6. What was the main reason for leaving?

- Ideological (IE disagreed with direction of party)
- Practical (IE Not enough time to be active in party)
- Financial
- Membership Lapsed
- Don't want to say/ Can't remember

These three questions dealt exclusively with the issue of leaving the party, relating directly to the research conducted by Whiteley in 2008, and Pemberton and Wickham-Jones in 2013 about the decline in Labour party membership after 1997. The Pemberton and Wickham-Jones concept of a membership as a 'revolving door' will be tested here as the respondents who state that they had left and then re-joined the party were given a chance to say why they did so. They were given the chance to state their reasons, if they were ideological or if there other reasons such as time or

financial constraints. As has already been noted, there have been few studies into the Labour membership but the studies by Whiteley, Pemberton and Wickham-Jones were carried out well before the sudden, and unexpected, explosion of membership numbers in 2015 so what comes out of this question will be interesting to cross reference with this studies' findings. Whilst this section of the survey draws mainly on the techniques of political science it still deals with a key element of historical concern regarding as to why people leave and re-join a political party.

7. Please think of a thermometer scale that runs from 1 to 100 degrees, where 50 is the neutral point.

If your feelings are warm and sympathetic towards something or someone, give them a score higher than 50; the warmer the feelings the higher score.

If your feelings are cold and unsympathetic, give them a score less than 50; the colder your feelings the lower the score.

Please rate these former Labour Leaders on the thermometer scale.

There is a comments box if you wish to add anything.

**If you don't know then you can leave the slider at 50.**

James Callaghan	<input type="range" value="50"/>	50
Michael Foot	<input type="range" value="50"/>	50
Neil Kinnock	<input type="range" value="50"/>	50
John Smith	<input type="range" value="50"/>	50
Tony Blair	<input type="range" value="50"/>	50
Gordon Brown	<input type="range" value="50"/>	50
Ed Miliband	<input type="range" value="50"/>	50

Comments:

8. Please rate these Labour Party figures on the thermometer scale.

There is a comments box if you wish to add anything.

**If you don't know then you can leave the slider at 50.**



Comments:

These two questions deal directly with the ratings system created by Seyd and Whiteley in both their books *Labour's Grass Roots* (1992) and *New Labour's Grassroots* (2002). In fact the wording of the question is verbatim from the one posed by Seyd and Whiteley in 1992<sup>41</sup>. This question demonstrates how the membership feels towards its past leaders since 1979 to 2015. It also allows a comparison to be made with the ratings given in 1992 and 2002 surveys to the ones given in 2017, showing in some instances, see how the ratings have changed.

<sup>41</sup> *Labour's Grass Roots: The Politics of Party Membership*, Seyd and Whiteley Clarendon 245.

Context will play a huge role in this question but the ability for the survey to use context in this way is interesting and informative. Context showed the transient nature of feeling within the party and related directly to the work done by Schacter in his hindsight bias 'I knew it all along' thesis. However, the surveys carried about by Seyd and Whiteley were collected in a different way from the one for this dissertation. There were two periods of collection by Seyd and Whiteley, 1990 to 1992 and 1997 to 1999. Those surveys used a two-stage systematic random sampling procedure to select the samples from party lists of members obtained from Labour Party headquarters<sup>42</sup>. That survey was also sent by mail to members so probably explains the two relatively lengthy time periods, whereas this survey was completed digitally and over shorter and single time period. It is unknown, but reasonable to assume, that the first collection, 1990 to 1992, was conducted before the general election of 1992 and the second period, 1997 to 1999, after the general election of 1997. Another difference between the questions used in this study and those of Seyd and Whiteley is that in the 1992 and 2002 questionnaires respondents were to write in their response, so if a respondent wanted to give a person a score of 50 they would actually have to write that in, in this survey the respondents were given a slider that started at 50 and could be left alone giving that person a score of 50 rather than no score being written in. Seyd and Whiteley give a saliency score in their survey, for example Neil Kinnock, the then leader got a saliency score of 99% whereas Gordon Brown, at the time a relatively unknown personality outside of the PLP got a the lowest score of 73%<sup>43</sup>. In this survey all scores were measured at 50 if left untouched. Also, in this survey a comments box is there for respondents to add anything they feel they want to say in order to allow them explain their reasons for giving a particular score to certain personalities. This allows for a more fleshed out understanding of the scores given. Also respondents with comments that could give further insights could be identified for the qualitative part and be approached for interviews. This was not present in the 1992 or in 1999 surveys.

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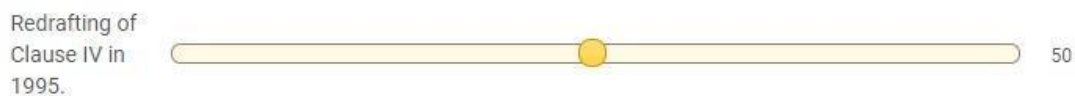
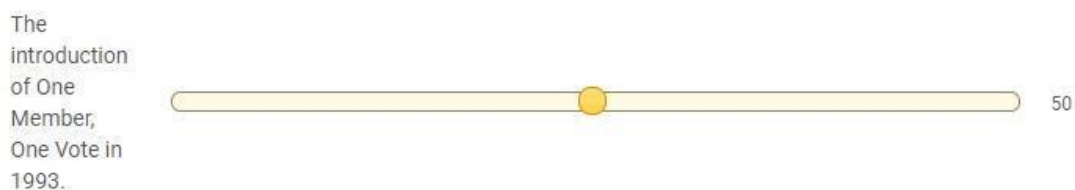
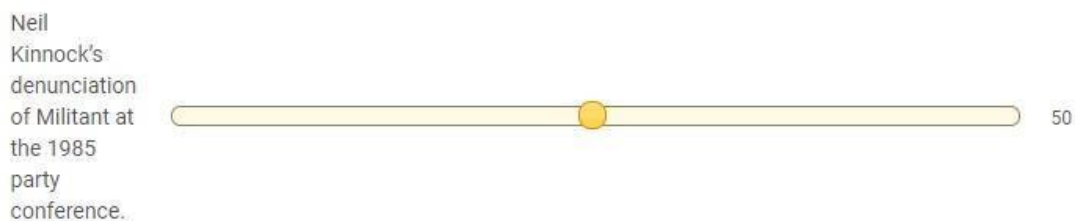
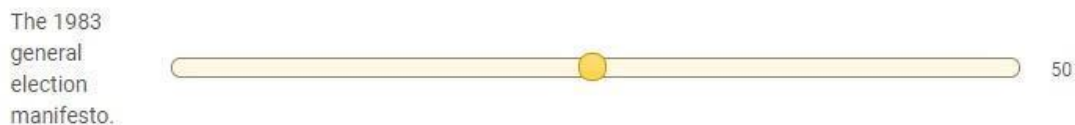
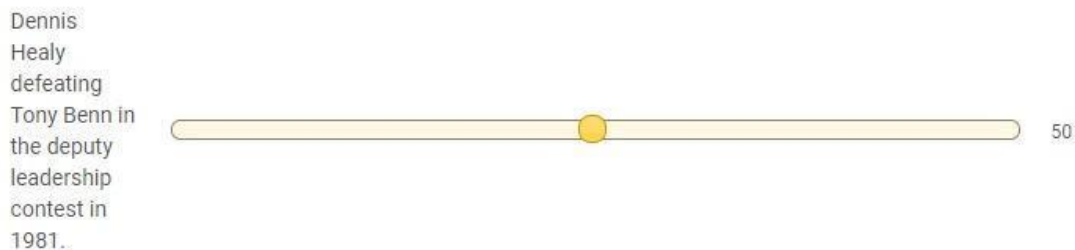
<sup>42</sup> Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley, *New Labour's grassroots: the transformation of the Labour Party membership* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2002), 187.

<sup>43</sup> Seyd. *Labour's Grass Roots: The Politics of Party Membership*, 153.

9. Please rate these internal Labour Party events on a thermometer scale. 50 being neutral, 1 being the lowest possible score and 100 being the highest. Please rate the event with regards to how good you believe it was for The Labour Party.

There is a comments box if you wish to add anything.

**If you don't know then you can leave the slider at 50.**

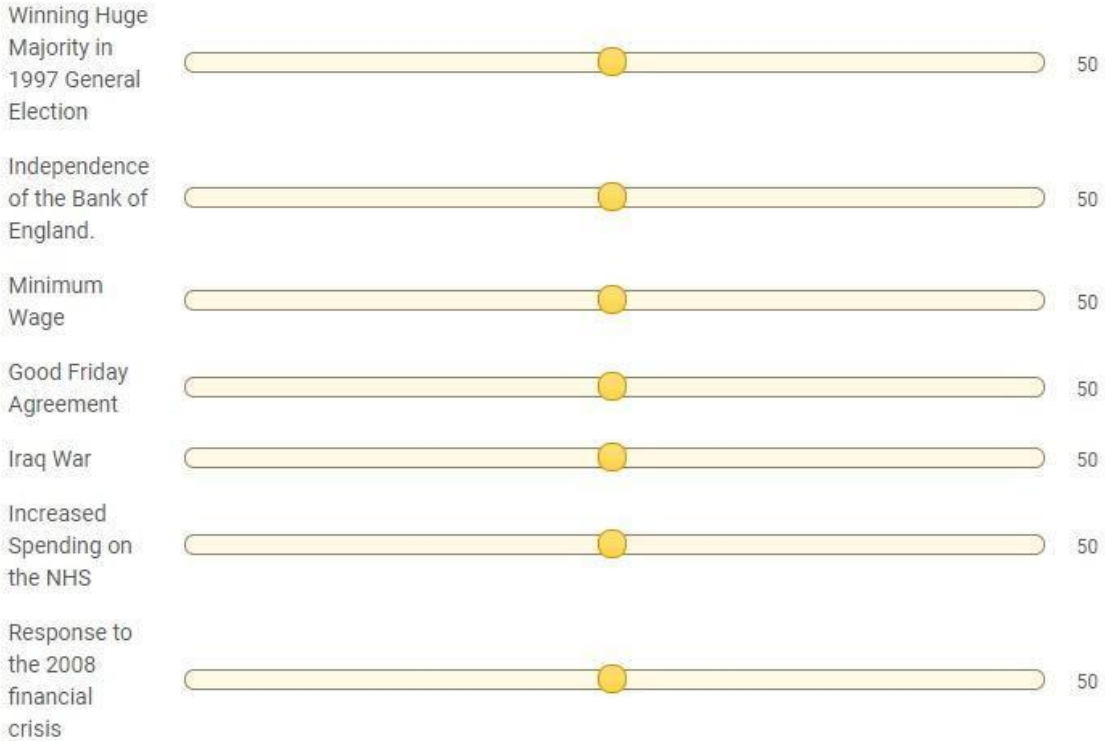


Comments:

10. Please rate these external Labour Party events on a thermometer scale. 50 being neutral, 1 being the lowest possible score and 100 being the highest. Please rate the event with regards to how good you believe it was for The Labour Party.

There is a comments box if you wish to add anything.

**If you don't know then you can leave the slider at 50.**



Comments:

These questions are unique to this survey and are more to do with the Duncan Tanner quote from *Labour's First Century* (2000).

“[p]ast actions and suspicions [that] became fossilised into a party tradition<sup>44</sup>”

What did the membership make of the major events that have taken place since 1979 to 2015? How did the membership who were around at the time react to such events

<sup>44</sup> Duncan Tanner, “Labour and its Membership,” in *Labour's First Century*, Duncan Tanner et al. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2000), 266.

now also, how did the members who were not and can only have heard about them second hand react to them? Dennis Healey's defeat of Tony Benn for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party was deeply divisive at the time, how has the passing of time affected the members' attitude towards it now? The introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993 was viewed with deep suspicion at the time and required John Prescott to appeal to the conference to:

"Give us a little trust<sup>45</sup>"

How does the membership now feel about giving the leadership that trust now? The redrafting of the totemic Clause IV was a defining moment in the emergence of 'New' Labour and one of Tony Blair's first actions as leader. There will be some Labour members whose first memory of the party will be that period, including the election victory of 1997. There are two distinct periods of opposition and government for the members to mull over, what is their assessment of those periods? A comments box was also provided for the respondents to explain their choices.

\* 11. How much do you agree with this statement?

**Party members in the 1980s were generally more left wing than they are today.**

You can use the comments box to explain your choice.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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<sup>45</sup> Patrick Wintour and Keith Harper, "Smith pulls off high-risk gamble" *The Guardian* September 30, 1993, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/1993/sep/30/labour.uk>

\* 12. How much do you agree with this statement?

**Party members in the 1990s were generally more right wing than they are today.**

You can use the comments box to explain your choice.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments:

These questions deal with the membership's perception of its own past. Seyd and Whiteley asked a similar question in their surveys but they had a key difference. The question posed in 1990 was what they perceive the party to be, this means that respondents would be considering the leadership, the membership, the NEC and before 1993, it could be argued the Union leaders, but for the purposes of this survey it was put to the respondents as a question about the membership. Seyd and Whiteley asked the respondents in 1990 and 1999 about their image of the party at the time, so we this can be cross referenced with the members' responses back in 1990 and in 1999 and see what changes there have been. These two surveys give us a very good idea as to how the respondents in this survey resemble or diverge from the membership in the 1990s as the two Seyd and Whiteley surveys cover that decade in its entirety. For the 1980s it is more difficult. A certain amount of overlap can be allowed for the 1990s survey as many of the members in that year will also have been members of the party in the 1980s but there is no real direct comparisons that can be made. Small scale surveys by Whiteley in his *The Labour Party in Crisis* (1983) and Seyd in his *Rise and Fall of the Labour Left* (1987) can be used as markers to give us a glimpse into what the membership was really like in that decade. Also the small scale quantitative work by Forrister in *The Labour Party and the Working Class* (1976) can also help us understand how the membership had changed from being in government in 1976, losing power in 1979 when the time period for this survey commences and going through its tumultuous early 80s period up to 1983 when Whiteley's small scale survey takes place.



\* 13. How much do you agree with this statement?

**The Labour Party should focus on gaining power.**

You can use the comments box to explain your choice.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments:

\* 14. How much do you agree with this statement?

**The Labour Party should always put commitment to its principles first even at the expense of electoral success.**

You can use the comments box to explain your choice.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments:

This section deals with the electoral pragmatism of the membership and attitudes to power. Seyd stated in *The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left* (1987) that for the Labour Left:

“[b]elieved that to think about structures of power was to become contaminated by them.<sup>46</sup>”

The survey was able to filter the results to analyse the ideological attitudes towards the primacy of gaining political power in contrast to sticking to what are perceived as Labour principles even at an electoral cost to the party. Also the generational divide between attitudes to power and electoral pragmatism can be clearly cross referenced here as Seyd and Whiteley asked the same question in 1990 and 1999. The three time periods offers interesting perspectives as in 1990 the party was in opposition

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<sup>46</sup> Patrick Seyd, *The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left* (Macmillan Education: Basingstoke, 1987), 177.

and out of power for eleven years, but with aspirations of winning the next election in 1992. In 1999 the party was two years into government and in 2017 the party had been back in opposition for seven years and actually experienced an election at the time of the completion of the survey.

\* 15. How much do you agree with this statement?

**The Labour Party membership in the 1980s generally was more working class.**

You can use the comments box to explain your choice.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments:

\* 16. How much do you agree with this statement?

**The Labour Party membership in the 1990's was generally more middle class?**

You can use the comments box to explain your choice.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments:

As with the earlier question regarding the ideological position of the membership this section deals with class. This can be cross referenced with the results by Seyd and Whiteley to get an idea of the membership's image of the party. The key difference is that in 1990 and 1999 respondents were asked how they thought the party was at the present and in this case they are being asked how the membership believed it to be in the past. It can be seen how the current membership has made an intuitive judgement about the party's past and see how accurate it is.

\* 17. The historians Richard Toye and Steven Fielding have debated the 'Newness' of 'New' Labour. Fielding has argued that 'New' Labour is not that new while Toye disagrees. I want to know what do you think?

**Did 'New' Labour mark a decisive break with the history, heritage and traditions of the Labour Party?**

You may use the comments box to explain your choice.

- Yes  
 No

Comments:

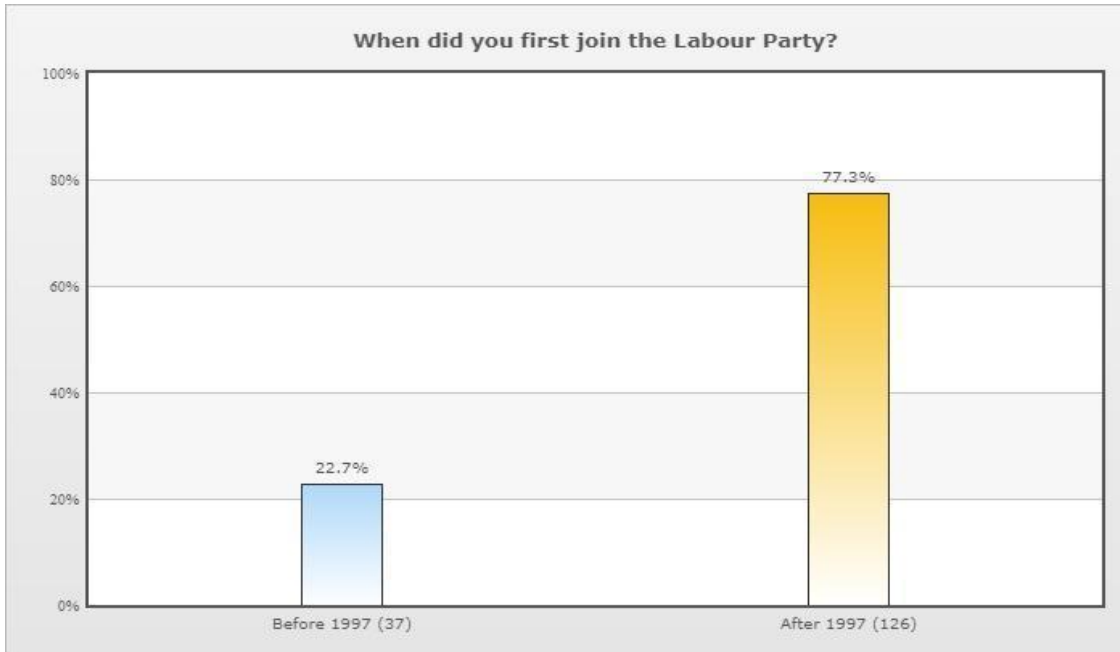
This final question relates directly to a scholarly debate between Steven Fielding and Richard Toye. In his book *The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the making of 'new' Labour* (2003) Fielding makes a case that 'new' Labour is simply carrying on a traditional role of the party and it does not signify a decisive break with its past. This was challenged by Richard Toye in his article *The Smallest Party in History: New Labour in Historical Perspective* (2004) who stated that it in fact did signify a break due to the overreaching power of the leadership. Although this is, at one level, a minor academic disagreement between two historians of the party, this question does give the rank and file membership the chance to give their impression and perception of the party's past. It is unlikely that the members will have read both, if indeed any, of the texts used in this study but the question does allow insights into the membership's perception of the creation of 'new' Labour in the mid-90s and what that means for the history, heritage and traditions of the Labour Party, a quantifiable look at the membership's 'sense' of history. The comments box helped respondents qualify or explain their answers asking them to make a judgement without, presumably, reading the texts.

## General

The survey was put online on February 17<sup>th</sup> and responses were collected until the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2017. An email was sent out to Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland Constituency Labour Party members and a significant number of them replied. It was noted that the age range of the people to who responded was mostly over the age of 35, so a request was put on the Labour Party forum on the website Reddit. A large number of people who responded were in the age range of 15 - 35, in fact too many, so the survey was kept online for a few more weeks as more responses from people aged 35 and over could be found through friends and acquaintances. When the survey was finally closed there had been 163 responses. It had been hoped that over 100 would be collected so the final number of respondents meant that the response rate could be deemed a success. What follows is a simple outlay of the results from the survey. It will give the results first across all age ranges, then through a generational filter and then as an ideological filter.

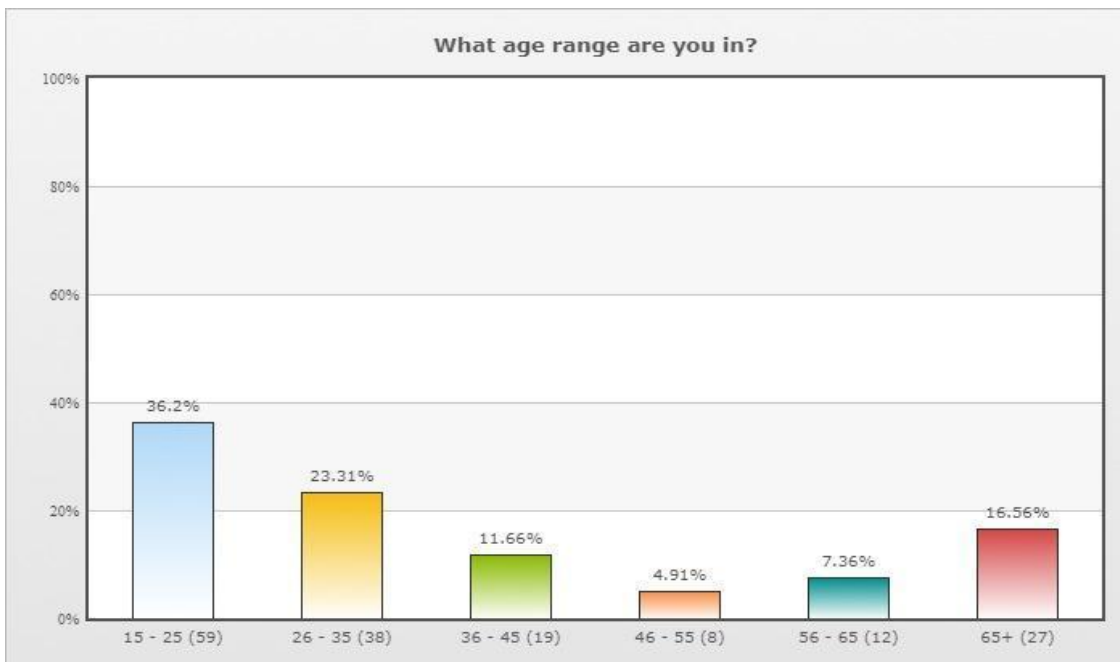
## Demographics

The results of the first question about when the respondent first joined the Labour party were as follows.



Graph 1.1

The strikingly large number of members who joined the party post-1997 is reflected in the age range groups.



Graph 1.2

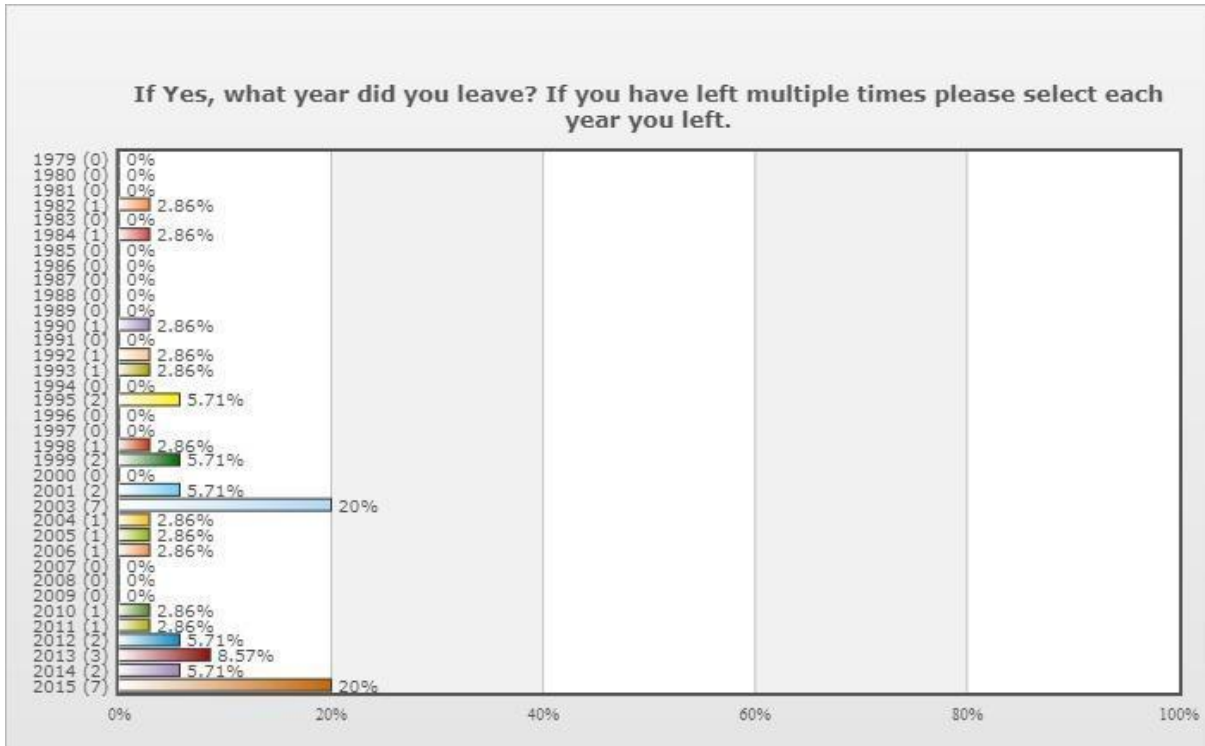
Over half the respondents in the survey were in the age range of 15 - 25 with 59.51%. The increased membership of the Labour party in recent years has added another 17% to the post 1997 joiners. It difficult to find respondents in the 46 - 55 group. This is possibly because they make up the lowest age cohort within the party membership or simply that they are the most reluctant to complete online surveys. The younger group might be more comfortable with filling out an online form as it is has become second nature to them with technology being an integral part of their lives. The 65+ group are more likely to be retired and would have more spare time to fill out an online form despite perhaps being less likely to be 'tech savvy'. The only disappointment in the number of responses gained is that large disparity between age ranges. In a more ideal situation there would have been a more, if not exact, match between the groups. However, it is still possible for this survey to be statistically significant given that the overall number of responses was good. Also, as will be shown the individual age groups are less important when considering the role of the reminiscence bump later.

The number of people who have left the party at one time or another also reflects the amount of people who have joined after 1997.



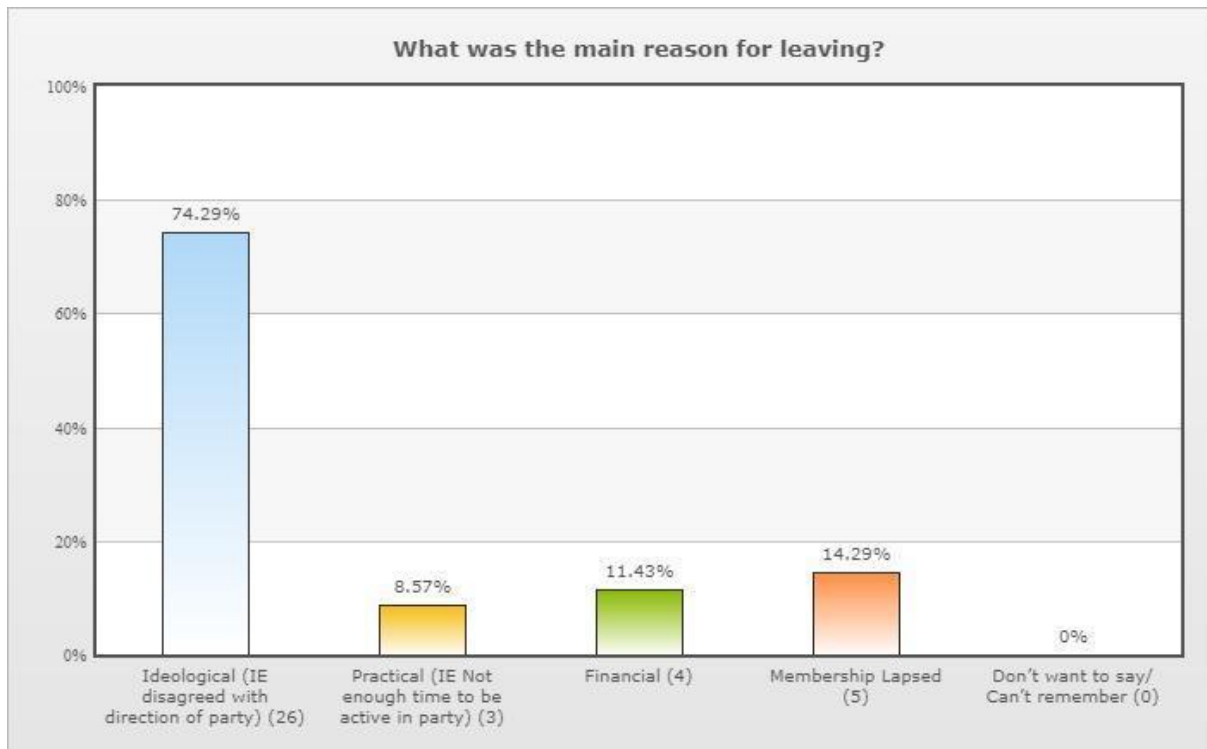
Graph 1.3

As most people have joined after 1997 and most of them are in the 15 - 36 age group this means that they have had less time to leave the party. Of the people who have left the year of leaving looks like this.



Graph 1.4

The number of people who left being 35 and the time period that they could choose being thirty six years means that there is an average of just under one a year. Looking at the results it shows a clear trend to people leaving in 2003 and 2015. It doesn't take too much analysis to realise what happened in those years to cause members to leave. When the reasons for members leaving are looked at it is clear that ideological factors are the main motivator.



Graph 1.5

This relates to the work done by Pemberton who said that ideological factors are not always the reason for people to leave the party but this survey suggest that, although that is to a certain extent true, ideological reasons are usually the overwhelming factor<sup>47</sup>. This might also be true that members would prefer to say it was ideological as it lends a certain credibility to their actions (or inaction).

<sup>47</sup> Pemberton, HR & Wickham-Jones, "Labour lost grassroots: The rise and fall of party membership", *British Politics* 8 (2) (2013),



## Leaders and Figures

The ratings of the Labour leaders provides an interesting response.

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
James Callaghan	54.52	8.00	87.00	13.19	163
Michael Foot	52.61	10.00	100.00	21.67	163
Neil Kinnock	57.77	1.00	98.00	19.54	163
John Smith	68.83	25.00	100.00	16.13	163
Tony Blair	48.83	1.00	100.00	29.16	163
Gordon Brown	62.05	1.00	100.00	21.63	163
Ed Miliband	64.04	1.00	100.00	18.47	163

Table 1.1

Due to the responses being collected in a digitally, this survey is able to do something that Seyd and Whiteley were unable to do without lots of extra hours of work.

Standard deviation shows the divisiveness of a person or event, showing the strength of feeling about a person or event along with the average score. As can be seen in the chart James Callaghan gets a slightly higher score from neutral of 54 and has a pretty low standard deviation of 13.19. The larger younger generation response block probably less inclined to rate him more extremely due to their lack of experience/knowledge about him. This is also reflected in Ed Miliband's score. A healthy 64.04, the second highest, and a relatively modest deviation of 18.47. The most recent former Labour leader and the one most of the respondents are prepared to rate<sup>48</sup>. The most striking score is the standard deviation of Tony Blair. His score of 48.83 is the only negative score and even then this low score is dwarfed by his huge deviation with a score of nearly 30 showing his the scale of his divisiveness within the party.

When looking at the scores for the Labour party figures another interesting, and a little unexpected, result occurs.

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<sup>48</sup> Also Miliband's personality has gone through something of a renaissance during the collection of this survey with his social media posts and TV appearances possibly contributing to his high score.

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healey	57.57	17.00	100.00	15.51	163
Tony Benn	60.67	1.00	100.00	28.74	163
Joan Ruddock	53.26	15.00	99.00	10.95	163
Roy Hattersley	52.52	1.00	100.00	14.57	163
Margaret Beckett	54.09	2.00	99.00	14.21	163
Ken Livingstone	37.48	1.00	100.00	26.88	163
Harriet Harman	55.91	1.00	100.00	18.55	163
Dennis Skinner	67.03	10.00	100.00	23.17	163
David Blunkett	53.95	12.00	90.00	15.27	163
Mo Mowlam	65.49	1.00	100.00	17.76	163
John Prescott	63.84	22.00	100.00	14.65	163
Peter Mandelson	43.68	1.00	100.00	26.26	163

**Table 1.2**

The highest score is for veteran MP Dennis Skinner which, bearing in mind that he has never held high office within the party is a little surprising, however as a perpetual ‘backbench’ MP and never holding any real power in the party or in government means he rarely alienated the membership. Ken Livingstone gets the lowest score, which must be due to the controversial figure he has become, especially after his comments on Hitler and Zionism. Livingstone’s deviation of 26.88 is quite large but the largest deviation is reserved for Tony Benn. At 28.74 he is very close to the score of Tony Blair who had 29.16, less than a score of 1 divides the two. Tony Benn’s score is made all the more interesting due to the fact that his score has hardly changed from the ratings that he was given in the studies by Seyd and Whiteley in 1990 and 1999. As can be seen:

	Mean Score out of 100	Saliency*
Neil Kinnock	73	99
John Smith	73	84
David Blunkett	71	84
Gordon Brown	70	73
Robin Cook	69	87
Harriet Harman	67	78
John Prescott	66	86
Joan Ruddock	64	80
Dennis Skinner	63	86
Bryan Gould	63	89
Roy Hattersley	60	96
Tony Benn	59	96
Ken Livingstone	55	94

\* Percentage of members responding, when asked to leave a score blank if they felt that they knew little about the person.

Image 1.1

Benn is given a score in 1990 of 59 which is almost identical to his score he managed in 2017. Tony Blair was not included in the 1990 survey as he was not, at that time, well known outside the PLP. When Blair was eventually rated in 1999 he gets a large score of 70 as can be seen here:

Mean scores out of 100 where 0 indicates that the respondent feels very cold and unsympathetic and 100 means they feel very warm and sympathetic

	1990	1999
The Labour Party	84	77
The Liberal Democrat Party	30	39
The Conservative Party	8	5
The Scottish National Party	32	23
Plaid Cymru	29	25
The Labour Party Leader	74 (Kinnock)	70 (Blair)
The Liberal Democrat Leader	34 (Ashdown)	46 (Ashdown)
The Conservative Leader	6 (Thatcher)	8 (Hague)
Tony Benn	60	59
Gordon Brown	70	67
David Blunkett	71	62
Robin Cook	69	53
Harriet Harman	67	44
Ken Livingstone	55	60
John Prescott	66	68
Jack Straw	—	57
Dennis Skinner	63	60
Peter Mandelson	—	44

Image 1.2<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> For some reason Benn is given a score of 60 in the 1990 survey when in the publication of that

It would be expected that Blair would get such a high score in 1999 as the party was two years into government after a huge win in 1997, it would also be expected that his rating would fall so much between 1999 and 2017. Kinnock's rating in 1990 has also dropped in that time and the fallout from the invasion of Iraq in 2003, along with the other pitfalls of government would be expected to contribute to a lower score over time. What is surprising is the stubbornness of Tony Benn's score. After Benn left Parliament in 2001 and his presidency of the Stop the War Coalition during the 2003 invasion he managed to acquire something of a, in Tony Blair's words, national treasure status<sup>50</sup>. With all that, it would be reasonable to expect his score to be, even a little bit, higher yet he only manages to get a par with his score in 1990 and 1999 when he was something of an unknown figure in the PLP. The huge deviation score is also surprising. In the early 1980s there was possibly no person, not only in the Labour party but in British politics in general, who was more divisive but for him to retain that level of discord for thirty five years is remarkable.

So, it has been shown that for Labour party members, in 2017 that there are no two figures more divisive than Tony Blair and Tony Benn. It is this ideological divide that shall be investigated in more detail later but it is also reflected in the score for the internal Labour party events.

### Internal and External Events

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healy defeating Tony Benn in the deputy leadership contest in 1981.	53.18	1.00	100.00	26.44	163
Gang of Four leaving to create SDP	31.91	1.00	100.00	25.41	163
The 1983 general election manifesto.	41.68	1.00	100.00	20.37	163
Neil Kinnock's denunciation of Militant at the 1985 party conference.	63.08	1.00	100.00	26.32	163
The introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993.	65.67	25.00	100.00	18.35	163
Redrafting of Clause IV in 1995.	50.10	1.00	100.00	25.38	163

Table 1.3

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survey we can see he was in fact given 59. I'm not sure what's happened here (possibly the scores should be switched round) but it's only a score of one point that is the difference and doesn't require much fuss over.

<sup>50</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey*. (Arrow: London, 2011), p35.

Dennis Healey defeating Benn for the deputy leadership is the most divisive internal event, almost as turbulent as it was at the time some thirty six years ago. The most popular and also the least controversial is the introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993 with nobody giving it a score less than 25.00.

The score for external party events was as such.

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Winning Huge Majority in 1997 General Election	86.00	1.00	100.00	17.29	163
Independence of the Bank of England.	59.52	1.00	100.00	19.76	163
Minimum Wage	86.69	5.00	100.00	14.94	163
Good Friday Agreement	86.29	1.00	100.00	15.66	163
Iraq War	17.53	1.00	84.00	19.53	163
Increased Spending on the NHS	84.98	45.00	100.00	13.38	163
Response to the 2008 financial crisis	57.51	1.00	100.00	24.68	163

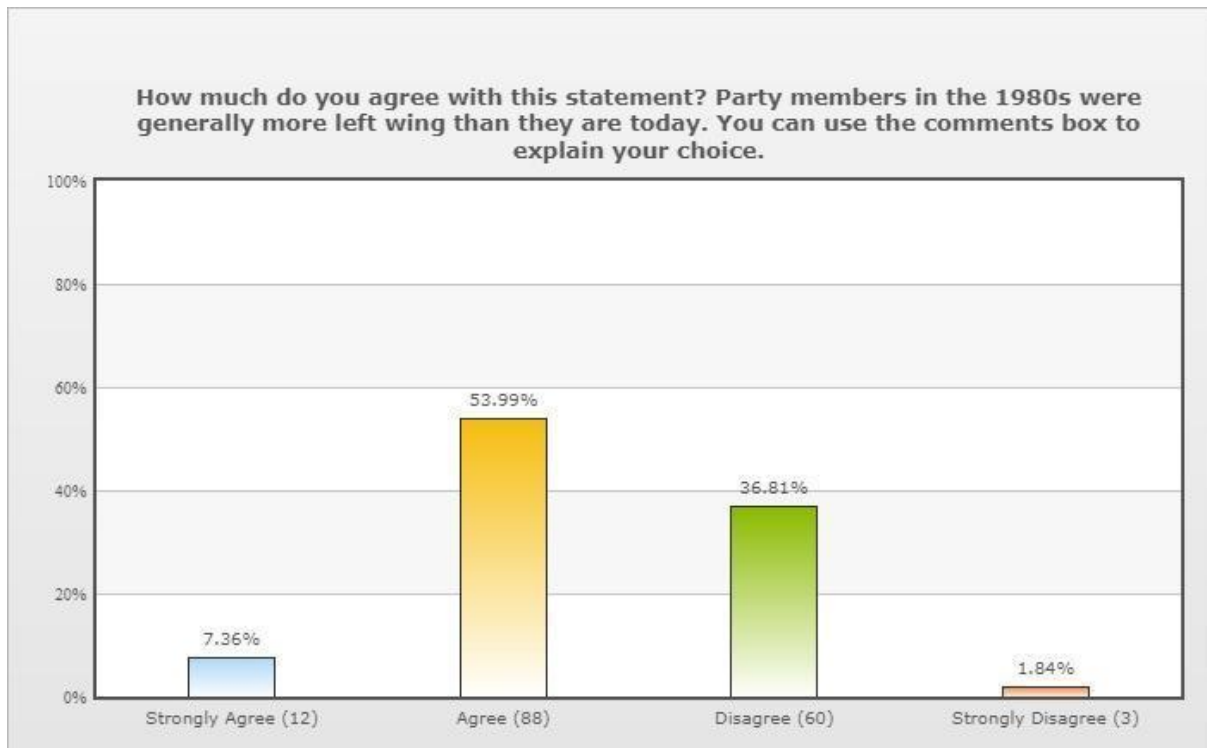
Table 1.4

The lowest score to be seen on our thermometer scale is the Iraq war with 17.53. It also has a pretty modest deviation at 19.53. There seems to be a bit of a tie for the most popular event, the election victory in 1997, introduction of the minimum wage, and the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement all score around 86 and have pretty modest deviation scores. The lowest deviation is for the increased spending on the NHS that never received a score lower than 45. The highest deviation is for the response to the 2008 financial crisis. This was something of a surprise as the option was only put in late on the drafting of the survey and has received a pretty high deviation.

It obviously comes as no surprise that internal events are more polarizing than the external events and that the Iraq war would get such a low score. It will be interesting to see how these results are broken down into generational groups later on to see how they get rated and what differences there are.

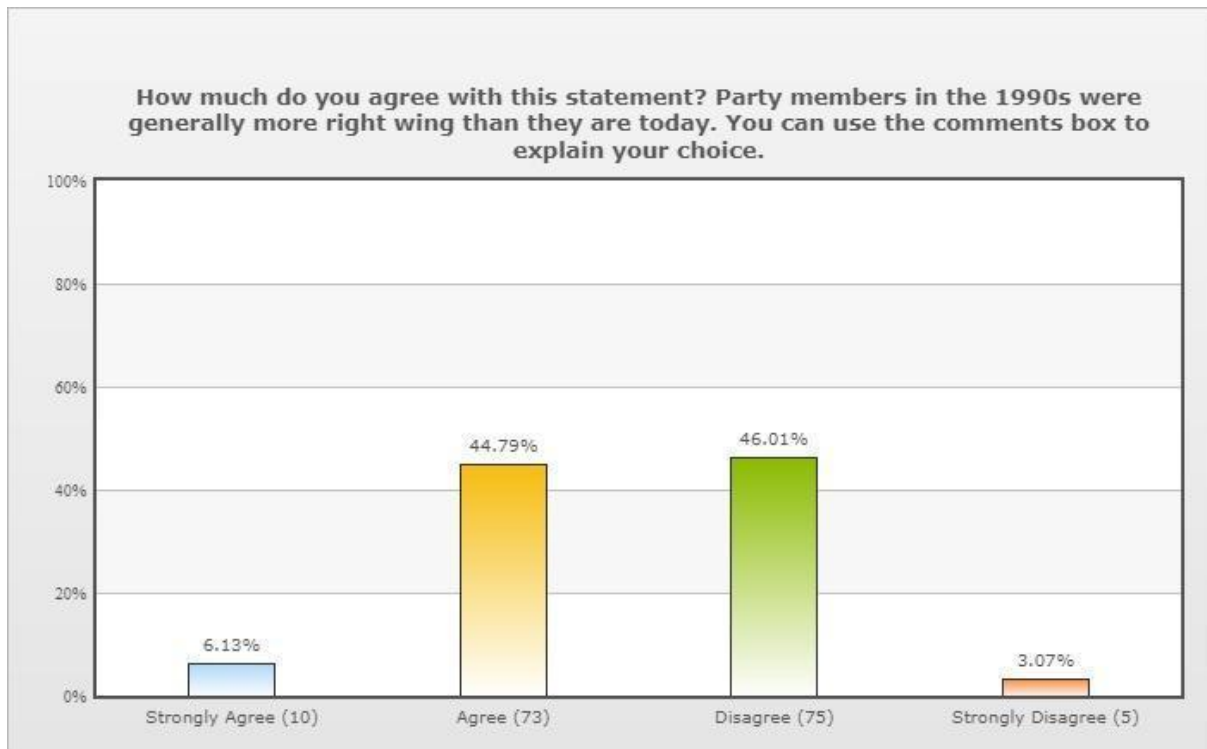
## Perceptions - Ideology

The next set of questions deal with perceptions of the membership of the party. The first two questions deal with the perceived ideological makeup of the membership in the past.



Graph 1.6

There is a clear agreement, although not overwhelming, that the party was more left wing in the 1980s. The results for the perception of the membership in the 1990s is pretty much a straight tie.

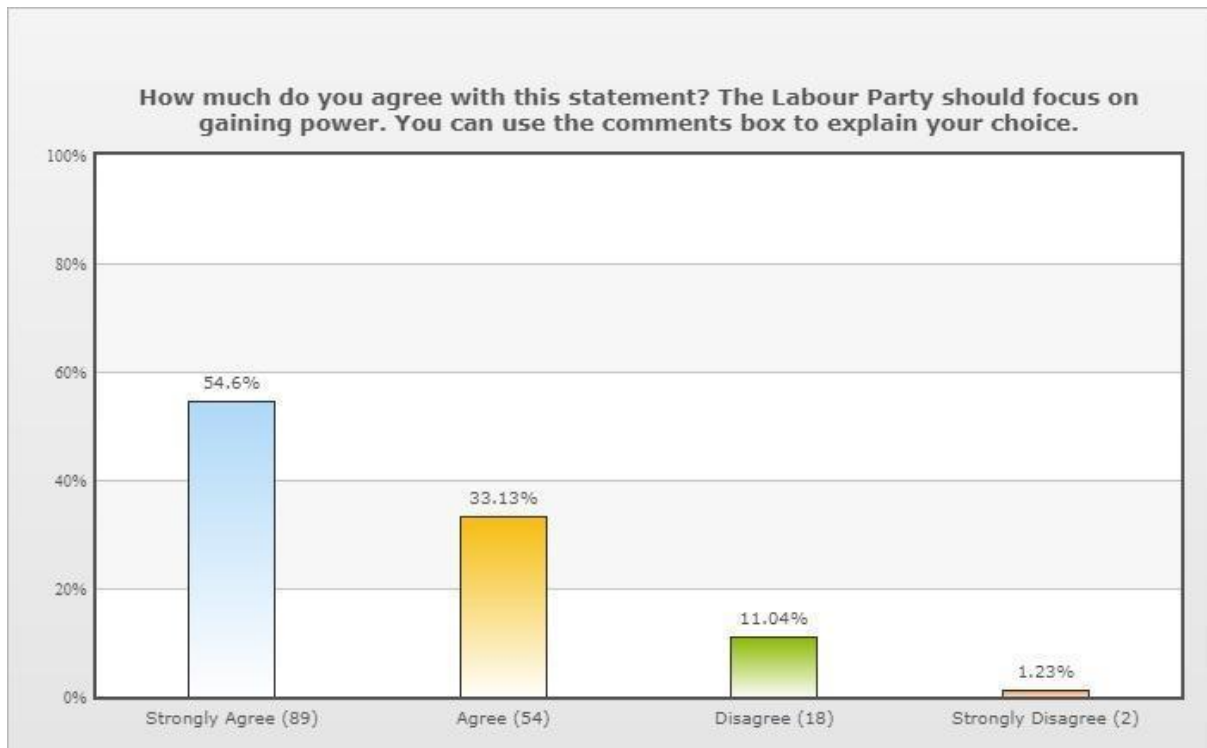


Graph 1.7

The agree columns amount to 50.92 and the disagree amounts to 49.08. It seems that the current membership is split right down the middle as to perceptions of the ideological make-up of the party in the 1990s.

## Power v Principles

The next set of questions deals with the membership's attitudes to power.

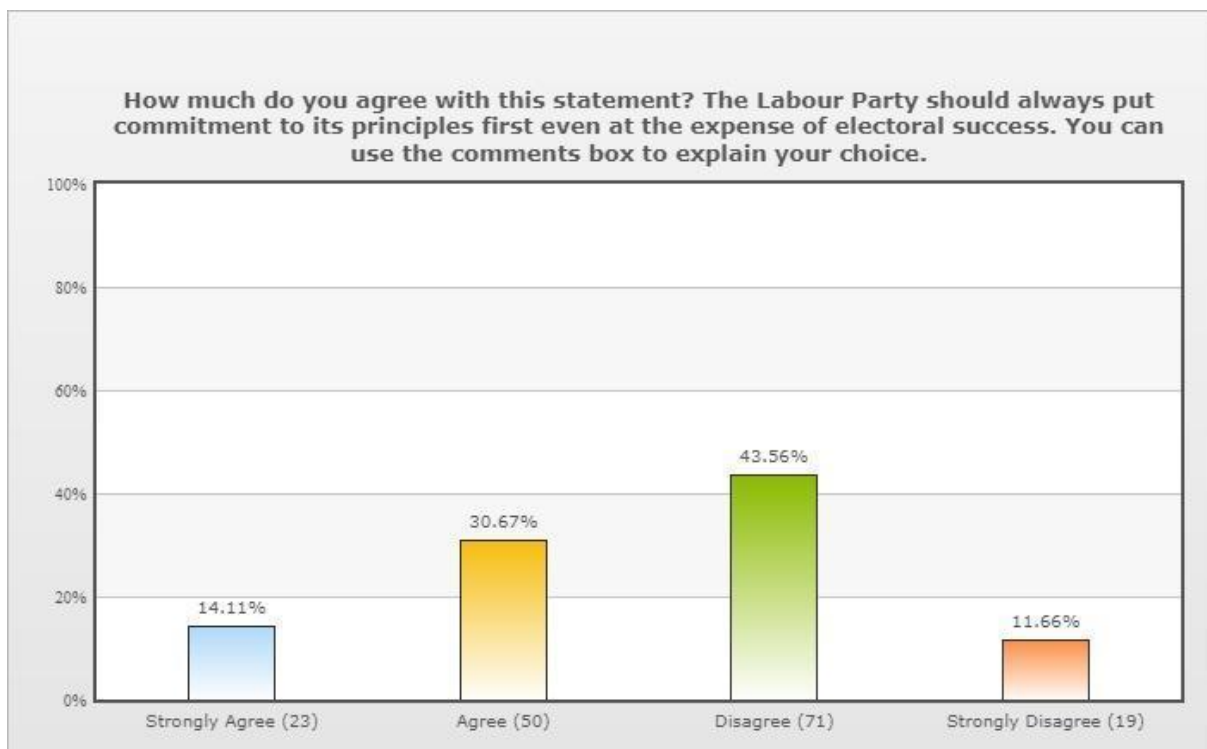


Graph 1.8

There is an overwhelming preference to agreeing with the statement that the party should focus on gaining power with strongly agree getting the majority of responses. When added together with agree there is 87.73 people agreeing with the statement.



So, with such a large majority how does that impact on the next questions about commitment to principles?

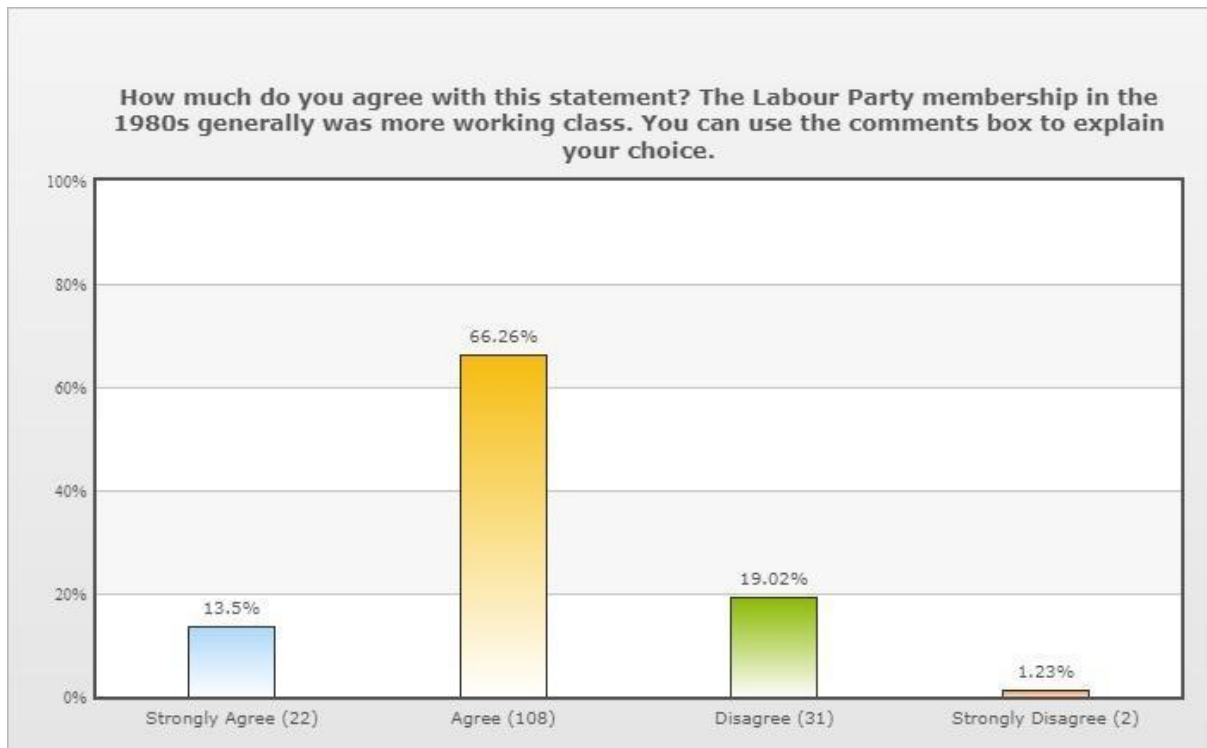


Graph 1.9

This is a much closer response rate. 55.22% of respondents disagreed with the statement about committing to principles over electoral success. This is hugely at odds with the last question about focusing on gaining power. This apparent disconnection with responses to the earlier question requires further investigation. Is this an issue with the phrasing of the question or is something else at play?

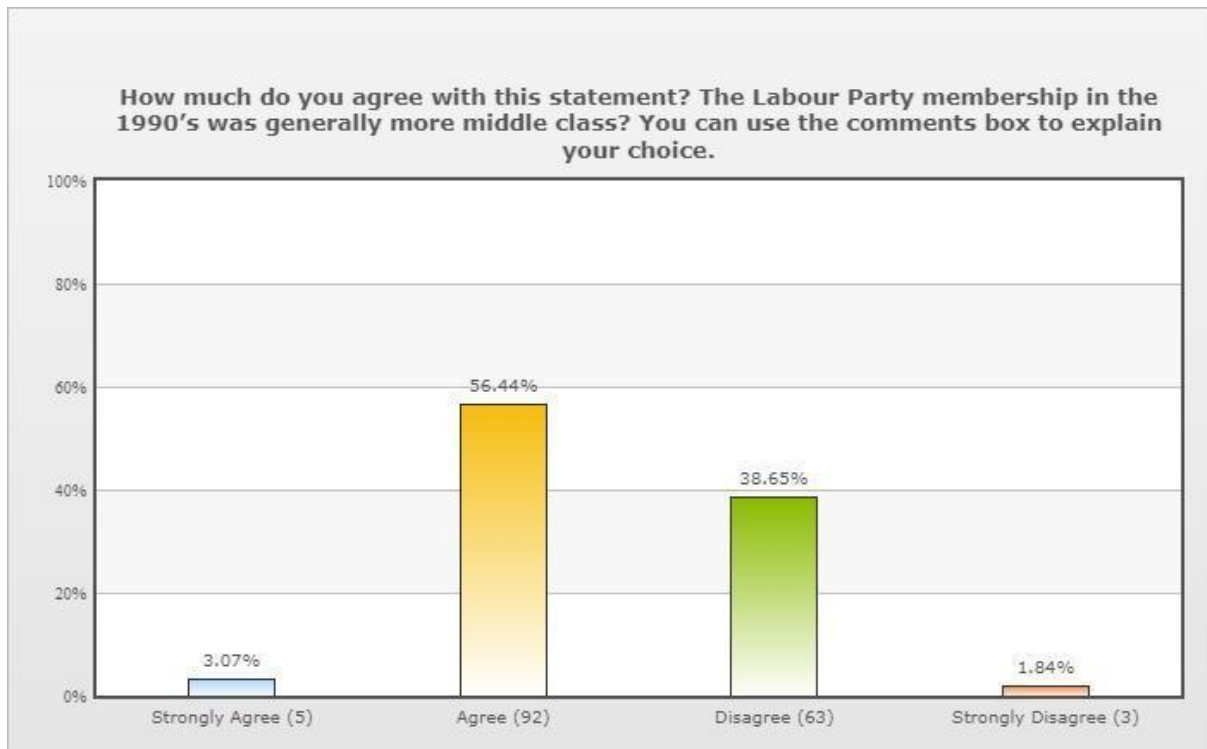
## Perceptions - Class

The next two questions deals with the perception of the social makeup of the party membership with regards to class.



Graph 1.10

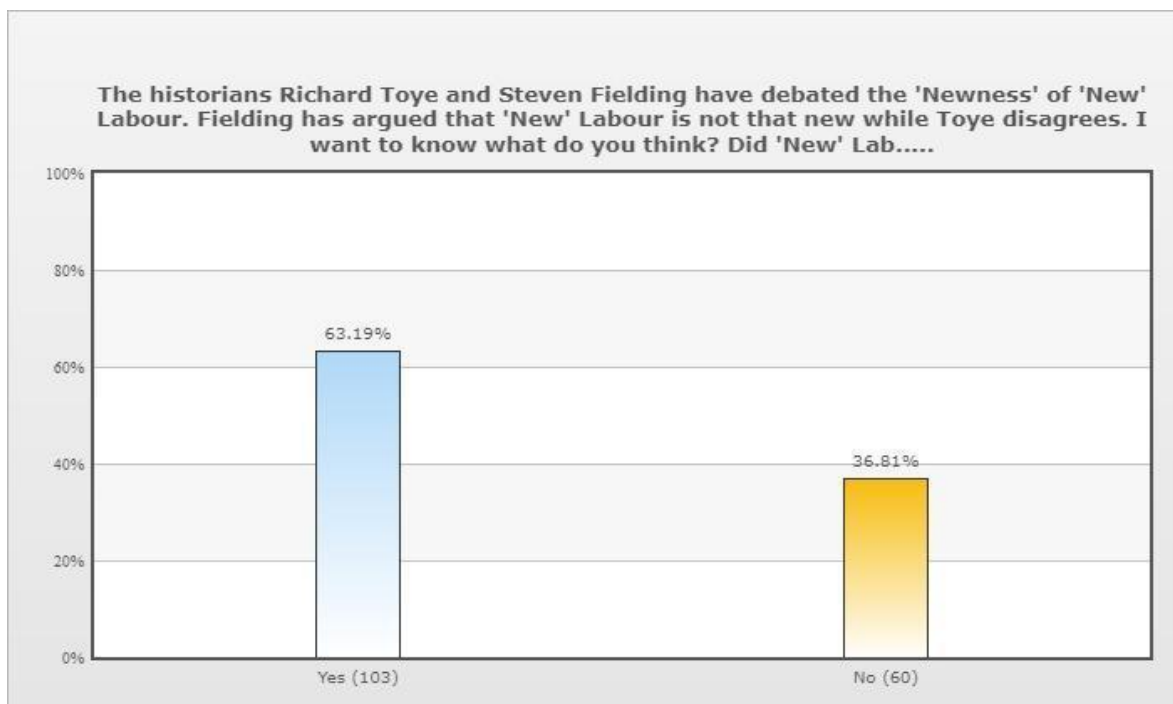
There is overwhelming agreement that the party membership was generally more working class in the 1980s. 66.26% of people agreed with the statement with and other 13.5% strongly agreeing. There is also agreement about the next question but not as strong. 56.44% of people agreed that the party was more middle class in the 1990s and there was only a small amount of people who strongly agreed. There seems to be a strong feeling within the membership that further in the past the more working class the party was.



Graph 1.11

### 'New' Labour?

Finally, for this section is the question regarding the historical debate about the newness of 'new' Labour?



Graph 1.12

There is a predominant belief in the membership that ‘new’ Labour marked a decisive break with the history, heritage and traditions of the Labour Party. It is this section that received the most comments with 47 respondents offering some comments to go with their selection, possibly because if the need for an answer many felt that they had to qualify their answer which is understandable.

With all this in mind, the results of the survey will now be analysed though a few filters. Although there are many ways of filtering the results of this survey the responses through two filters have been chosen. The first being the generational differences. The generations will be broken into two groups. The Millennials and both the Generation X and Baby Boomers combined. As has been discussed previously, the two groups are being analysed this way because of the Reminiscence Bump (RB). The millennials are currently acquiring their ‘bump’ and shall be referred to as the Acquiring Bump (AB). The Generation X and Baby Boomers will be called the Post Bump (PB). We shall look again at the leader, figures, internal events, and external events ratings and compare and contrast the ratings by both groups.

### Generational Differences

### Leaders and Figures

#### **Acquiring Bump**

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
James Callaghan	53.74	8.00	87.00	14.26	97
Michael Foot	50.59	10.00	90.00	20.15	97
Neil Kinnock	59.42	1.00	98.00	19.48	97
John Smith	65.42	25.00	100.00	14.41	97
Tony Blair	51.93	1.00	100.00	26.74	97
Gordon Brown	66.64	1.00	100.00	18.40	97
Ed Miliband	70.34	28.00	100.00	14.10	97

Table 2.1

## Post Bump

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
James Callaghan	55.67	26.00	82.00	11.35	66
Michael Foot	55.58	10.00	100.00	23.42	66
Neil Kinnock	55.33	1.00	95.00	19.38	66
John Smith	73.85	27.00	100.00	17.17	66
Tony Blair	44.29	1.00	100.00	31.84	66
Gordon Brown	55.30	1.00	100.00	24.11	66
Ed Miliband	54.79	1.00	100.00	20.17	66

Table 2.2

The first thing that should be noted is that the controversial nature of Tony Blair has remained. It is all the more prominent in the PB group with a large 31.84 deviation. Blair also gets a lower than 50 rating from the PB group and only scrapes a plus 50 rating from the AB group. Neil Kinnock gets a similar rating in both groups and an almost identical deviation, he actually gets a better rating from the AB group than the PB group who would have been around throughout his leadership. There would be a small section of the membership who might remember the leadership of Kinnock but it would be much closer to the electoral disappointment of 1992 so this rating from the AB group is slightly surprising. Ed Miliband's rating is also interesting. He gets the best rating from the AB group despite his electoral failure in 2015 and doesn't get a rating lower than 28 and actually gets the lowest deviation score with 14.10. As has been previously mentioned, his reinvention as a star of social media seems to have helped his standing in the AB group. This cannot be said for the PB group, he gets a mediocre rating of 54.79 and is noticeably more contentious within the PB group with a deviation of 20.17. John Smith is probably the biggest winner from the two groups as get gets a positive rating from both groups and a low deviation score.

Next Labour Party figures will be looked at.

## Acquiring Bump

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healey	56.15	25.00	90.00	13.09	97
Tony Benn	55.86	1.00	100.00	28.99	97
Joan Ruddock	49.32	30.00	68.00	3.84	97
Roy Hattersley	51.52	7.00	94.00	12.23	97
Margaret Beckett	55.40	7.00	88.00	13.18	97
Ken Livingstone	30.95	1.00	90.00	24.08	97
Harriet Harman	56.88	10.00	100.00	17.23	97
Dennis Skinner	66.43	10.00	100.00	24.00	97
David Blunkett	54.22	12.00	90.00	15.83	97
Mo Mowlam	61.01	25.00	100.00	15.61	97
John Prescott	64.27	35.00	100.00	14.37	97
Peter Mandelson	48.35	1.00	100.00	23.22	97

Table 2.3

## Post Bump

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healey	59.65	17.00	100.00	18.31	66
Tony Benn	67.76	10.00	100.00	26.82	66
Joan Ruddock	59.05	15.00	99.00	14.76	66
Roy Hattersley	54.00	1.00	100.00	17.35	66
Margaret Beckett	52.15	2.00	99.00	15.41	66
Ken Livingstone	47.08	1.00	100.00	27.89	66
Harriet Harman	54.50	1.00	92.00	20.25	66
Dennis Skinner	67.91	14.00	100.00	21.86	66
David Blunkett	53.56	25.00	86.00	14.41	66
Mo Mowlam	72.08	1.00	100.00	18.66	66
John Prescott	63.21	22.00	100.00	15.03	66
Peter Mandelson	36.82	1.00	100.00	28.84	66

Table 2.4

Both groups have their individual favourites with Dennis Skinner and Mo Mowlam taking that accolade from the AB and PB groups respectively. What is surprising and not surprising at the same time is that the AB group made Skinner the most popular and that the PB group made Mowlam their favourite. Skinner is a veteran backbench MP who is probably most famous these days for his 'quips' when Black Rod requests the House of Commons attendance in the Lords during the state

opening of parliament. It is less of a surprise that Mowlam gets the best rating as the bulk of the respondents in that group are from the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland area where she had strong local connections.

What is very surprising is that Tony Benn gets such a high deviation score from the AB group. As has been stated previously Tony Benn went through a renaissance after he left parliament in 2001. This is a period that most of the AB group would be aware of and would have seen his work with the Stop the War Coalition with the Iraq war in 2003. With all this in mind he gets a slightly lower score than his ones in both the previous surveys by Seyd and Whiteley and also the general score from this survey. This cannot be attributed to the younger members giving him a neutral rating of 50 as his deviation score is a large 28.99. That score is higher than Tony Blair's score from the same group of 26.74. This is at odds also with Benn's score from the PB group who give him a high 67 score but also a high deviation score of 26.82. This is not the highest deviation from the PB group that goes to Peter Mandelson who gets a 28.84. Being one of the main architects of 'new' labour and also his personal scandals in the late 90s and early 2000s have possibly caused his very low score of 36.82.

### Internal and External Events

What of the differences between the two generations and Labour events. The tables are as follows.

#### **Acquiring Bump**

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healy defeating Tony Benn in the deputy leadership contest in 1981.	55.52	1.00	100.00	25.15	97
Gang of Four leaving to create SDP	29.23	1.00	90.00	23.96	97
The 1983 general election manifesto.	39.49	1.00	84.00	20.25	97
Neil Kinnock's denunciation of Militant at the 1985 party conference.	66.44	1.00	100.00	25.50	97
The introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993.	64.34	33.00	100.00	17.19	97
Redrafting of Clause IV in 1995.	52.27	1.00	100.00	22.96	97

Table 2.5

## Post Bump

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healy defeating Tony Benn in the deputy leadership contest in 1981.	49.74	1.00	100.00	27.89	66
Gang of Four leaving to create SDP	35.86	1.00	100.00	26.91	66
The 1983 general election manifesto.	44.89	1.00	100.00	20.12	66
Neil Kinnock's denunciation of Militant at the 1985 party conference.	58.14	1.00	100.00	26.74	66
The introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993.	67.62	25.00	100.00	19.78	66
Redrafting of Clause IV in 1995.	46.92	1.00	100.00	28.26	66

Table 2.6

There isn't that much of a difference between the two groups and also between the general results. It seems that internal party conflicts of the past still resonate as within the membership. Even those conflicts that took place way before most of the AB group were born, such as Dennis Healey's contest with Tony Benn for the deputy leadership and Kinnock's denunciation of militant is as contentious with that group as it is with the generations who lived through them. The AB group give nearly identical deviation scores to these two events despite that generation being too young to remember them, if they were even born at all! The biggest discrepancy between the two groups is Kinnock's denunciation of Militant in 1985. The AB group see it much more positively than the PB group, this is possibly because of the context of the survey. When the survey was put out in early 2017 the party was bitterly divided. It is possible that the AB group were looking at the 1985 incident and saw it as analogous with the state of the party in 2017 with regards to the political group Momentum. Given that Momentum is seen as being an organisation that has a lot of younger members this is surprising. The PB group have their highest rating for the introduction of One Member, One Vote (OMOV) with a high 67.62. It is also the least contentious with a modest 19.78 deviation. The most factious internal event for the PB group is the re-drafting of Clause IV, in contrast to the AB which is more ambivalent. It does seem that both groups are quite positive with OMOV with nobody from either group rating it below 25 and both groups having it as their lowest deviation.

So moving on to the external events.



## Acquiring Bump

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Winning Huge Majority in 1997 General Election	89.16	30.00	100.00	14.70	97
Independence of the Bank of England.	60.27	22.00	100.00	18.55	97
Minimum Wage	89.34	50.00	100.00	12.25	97
Good Friday Agreement	86.78	50.00	100.00	14.93	97
Iraq War	16.94	1.00	78.00	18.79	97
Increased Spending on the NHS	85.48	50.00	100.00	13.26	97
Response to the 2008 financial crisis	59.21	1.00	100.00	24.32	97

Table 2.7

## Post Bump

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Winning Huge Majority in 1997 General Election	81.35	1.00	100.00	19.62	66
Independence of the Bank of England.	58.41	1.00	100.00	21.37	66
Minimum Wage	82.79	5.00	100.00	17.47	66
Good Friday Agreement	85.56	1.00	100.00	16.66	66
Iraq War	18.41	1.00	84.00	20.54	66
Increased Spending on the NHS	84.23	45.00	100.00	13.52	66
Response to the 2008 financial crisis	55.02	1.00	100.00	25.00	66

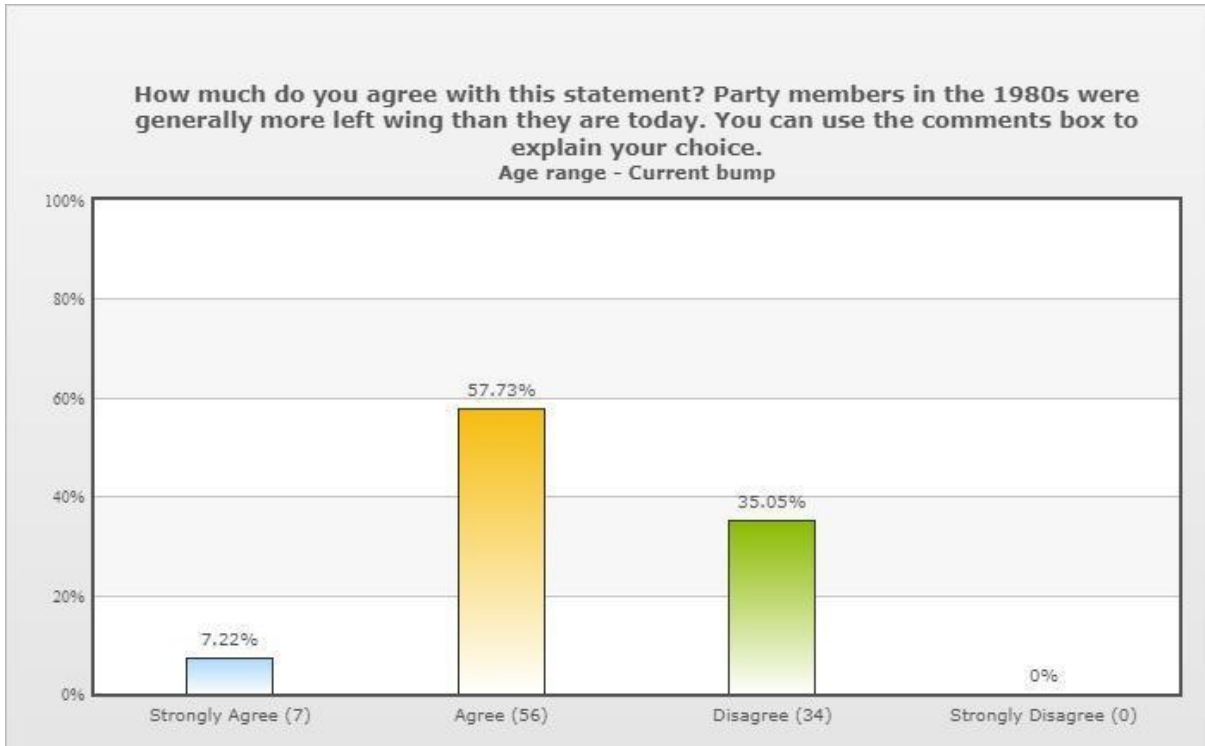
Table 2.8

The first point that that must be noted between the two groups is that the AB group, despite having more respondents, are much more positive about the external events than the PB group. As can be seen from the charts, nobody in the AB group gave a rating lower than 50 to the Minimum Wage, The Good Friday Agreement, and the Increased Spending on the NHS, winning in 1997 and the Independence of the Bank of England didn't receive a score lower than 30 and 22 respectively. This is in stark contrast to the PB group who managed to give every event bar the Spending on the NHS a rating in single figures. Also the AB group always gave a higher rating than the PB group for each event with the exception of the Iraq war. Both groups found the Response to the 2008 Financial Crisis to be the most contentious as it is probably something that both groups are able to refer to with some degree of experience and/or knowledge.

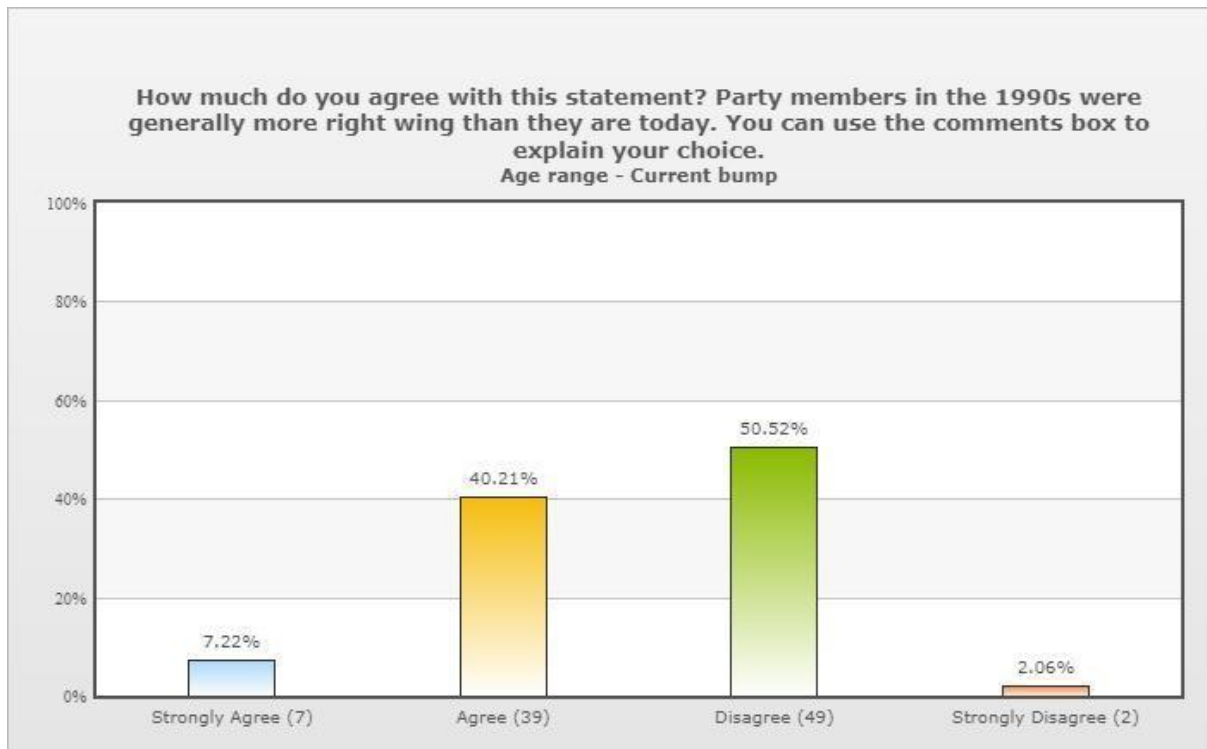
## Perceptions - Ideology

The next part of the survey deals with perceptions of the party's past. The first dealing with the members' perception to the political spectrum of party members in the 80s and 90s. The results broke down as such:

### **Acquiring Bump**

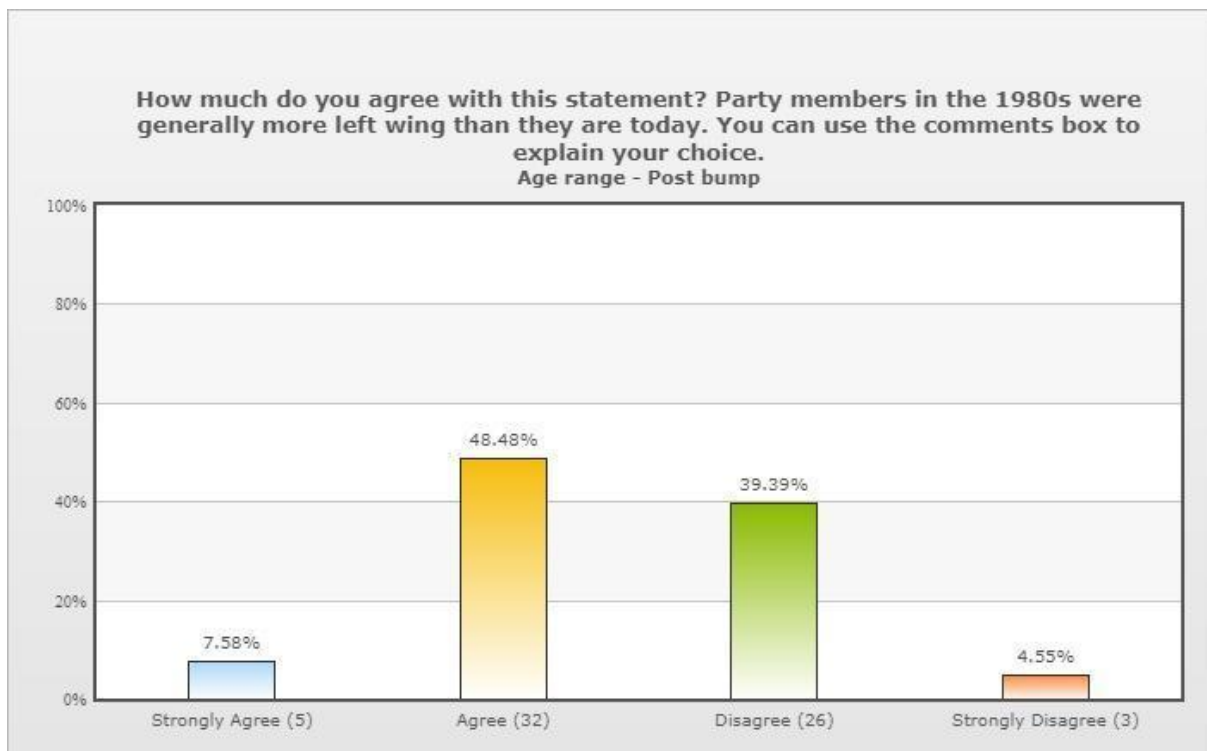


Graph 2.1

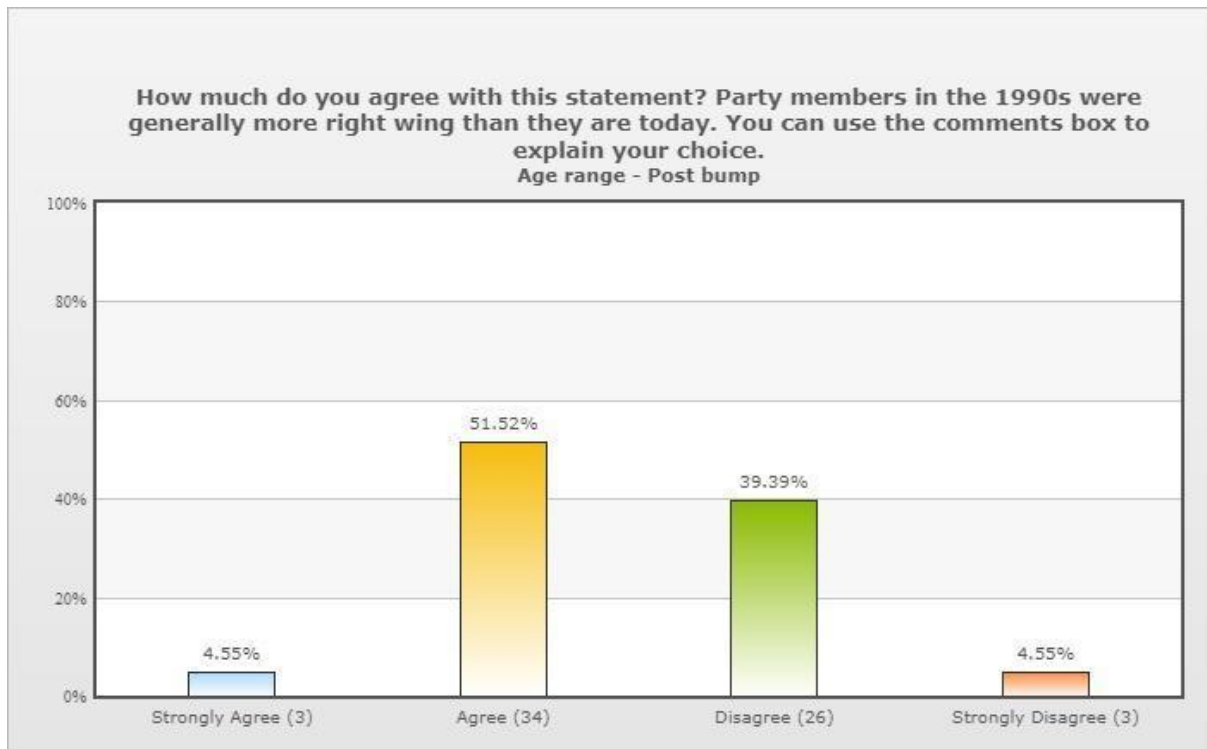


Graph 2.2

**Post Bump**



Graph 2.3

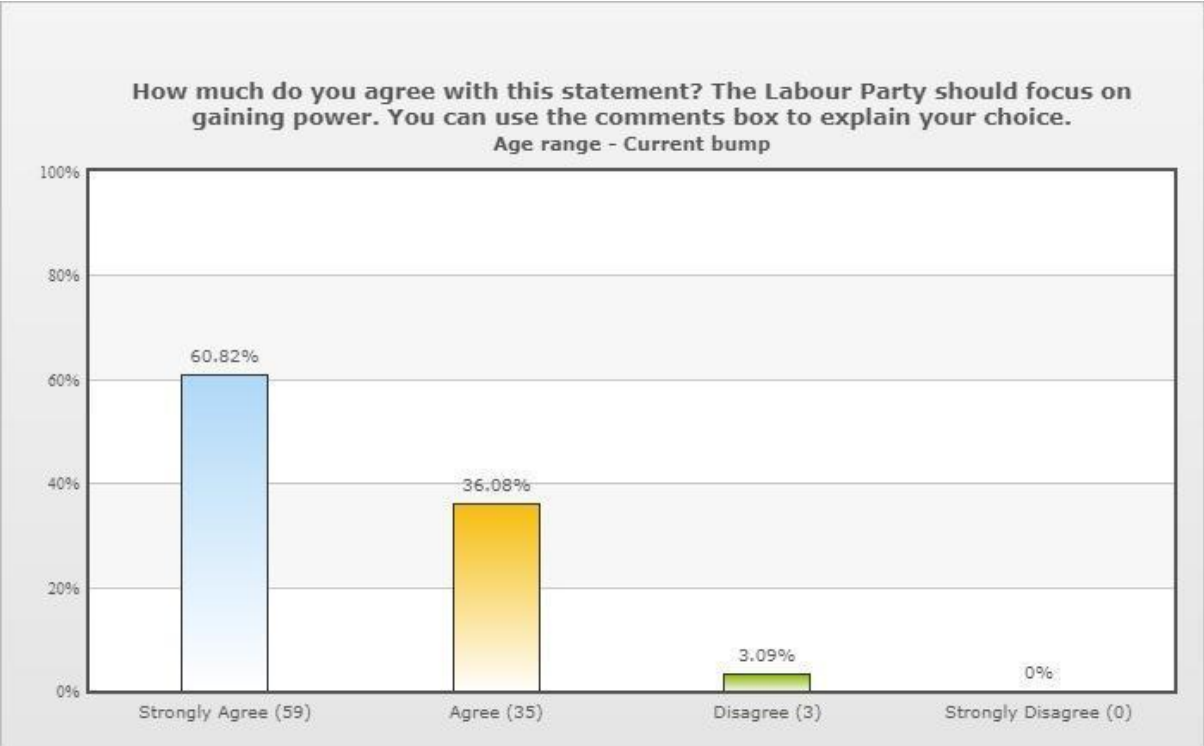


Graph 2.4

It is interesting to note that the AB group have differing perceptions regarding the political leanings of the membership in both time periods. They generally seem to think that party members were more left wing in the 80s and generally disagree that members were more right wing in the 90s. This is in contrast to the PB group who generally agreed with both statements. The strength of the agreement by the AB group about the membership in the 80s is interesting as this time period was before most of them had become politically aware.

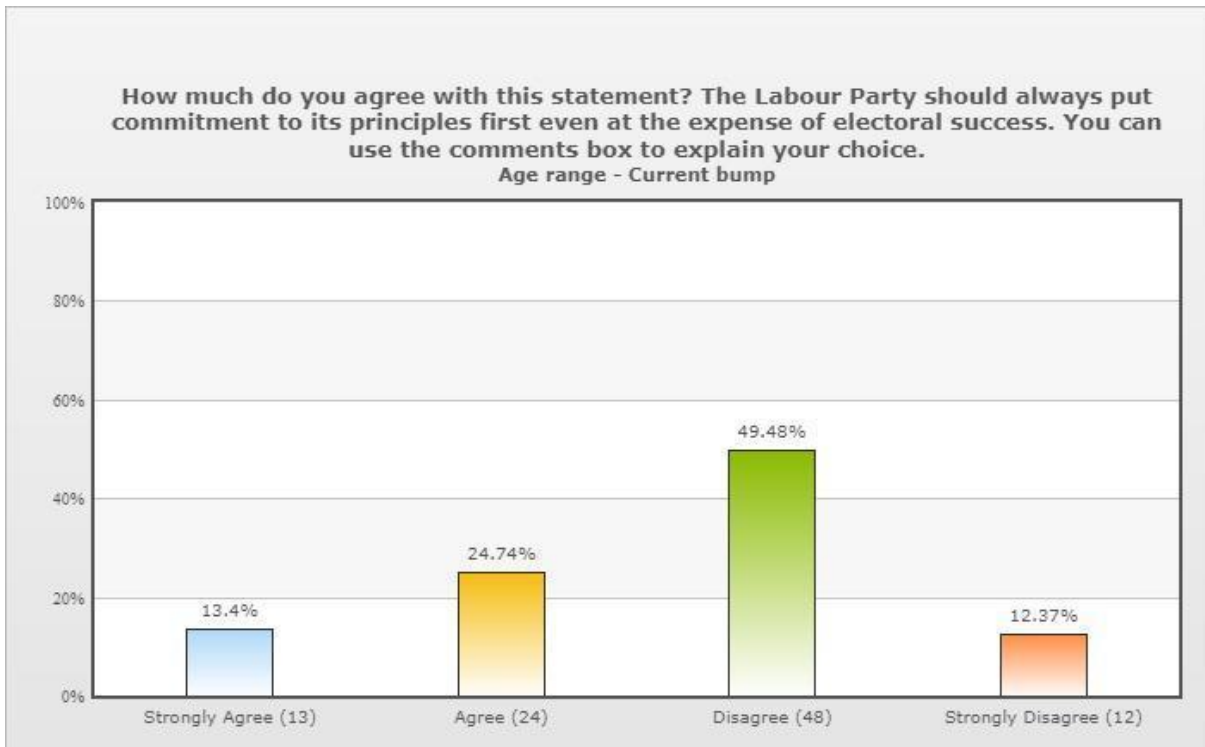
Power v Principles

**Acquiring Bump**



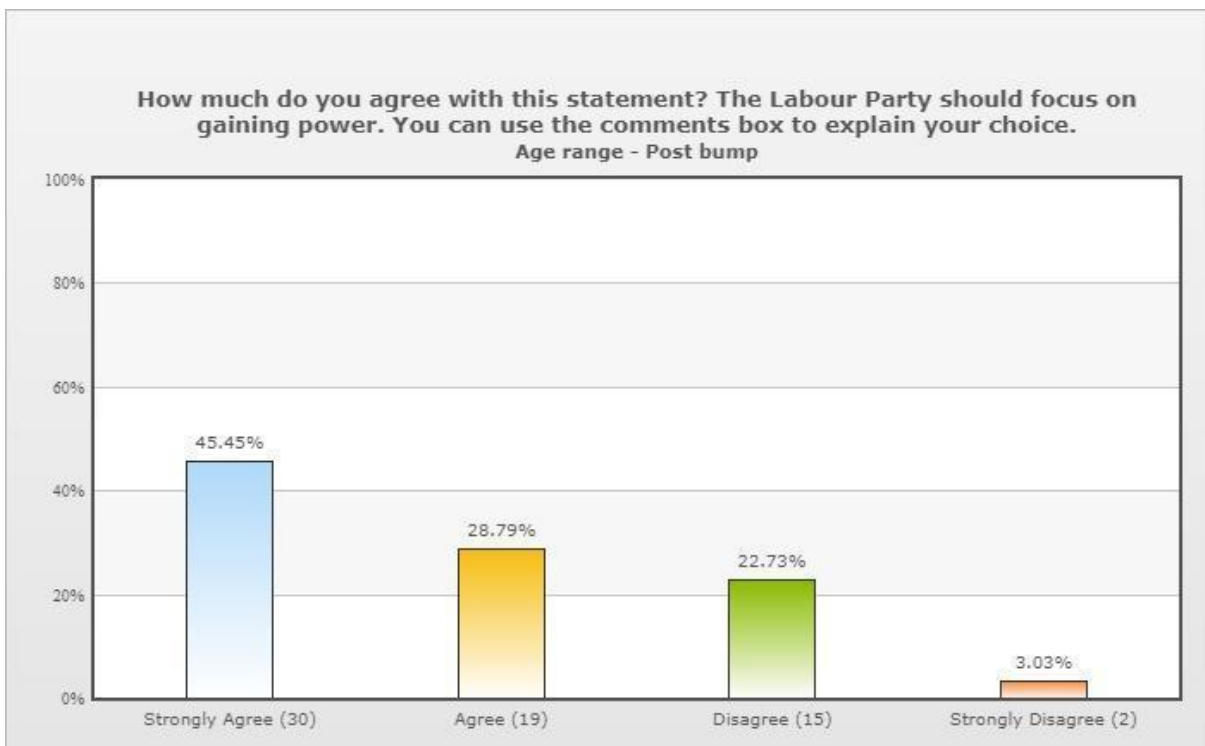
Graph 2.5

## Post Bump



Graph 2.6

## Post Bump



Graph 2.7



Graph 2.8

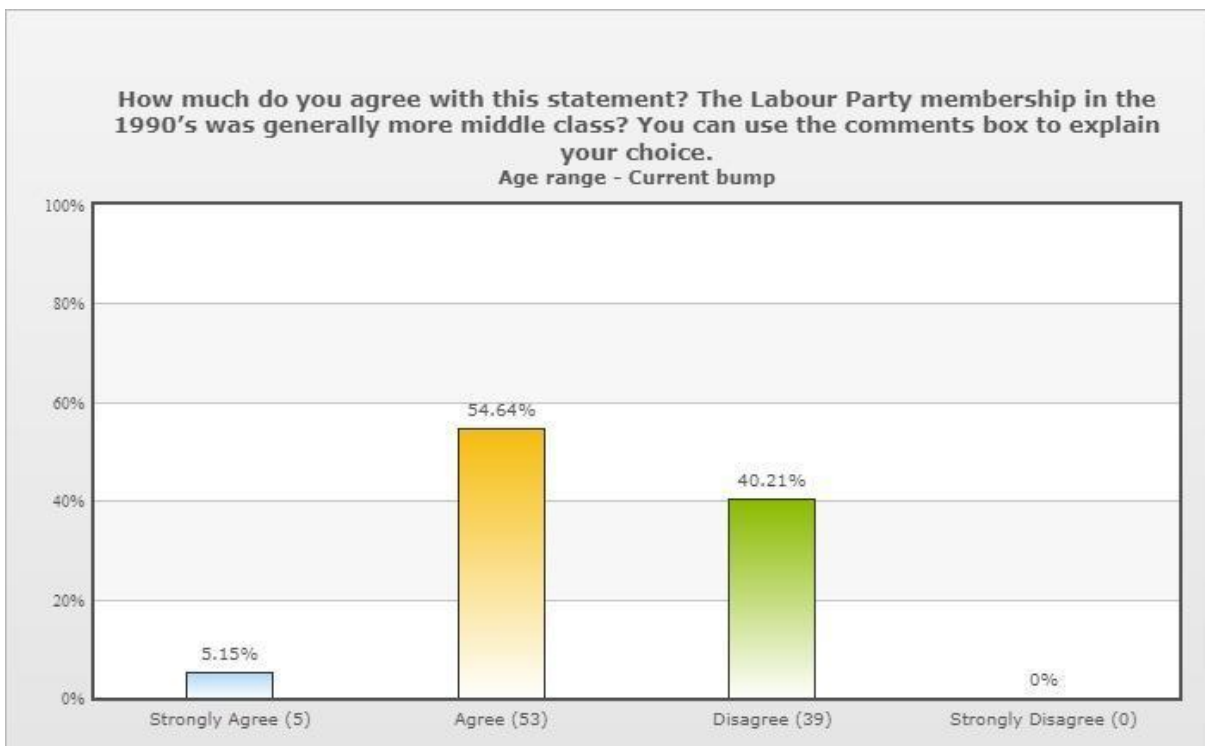
Here, it can be shown that there is a difference between the two generations, especially regarding the question about electoral success. The AB group overwhelmingly agreed strongly with the statement with only three people disagreeing. Here the context of the time that the survey was taken must be borne in mind. It was just before or around the UK election of 2017 so something like electoral success would be on their minds. The PB group also agreed but not as strongly as the AB group. The commitment to principles question was strongly disagreed with by the AB group compared to a more split attitude by the PB group. This begs the question about generations and how they deal with their relationship to power. It seems that younger members appear more willing to accept compromise in order to win an election whereas the older generation are possibly more 'stuck in their ways' having formulated their opinion and identity and are less prepared to change it.

## Perceptions - Class

### Acquiring Bump



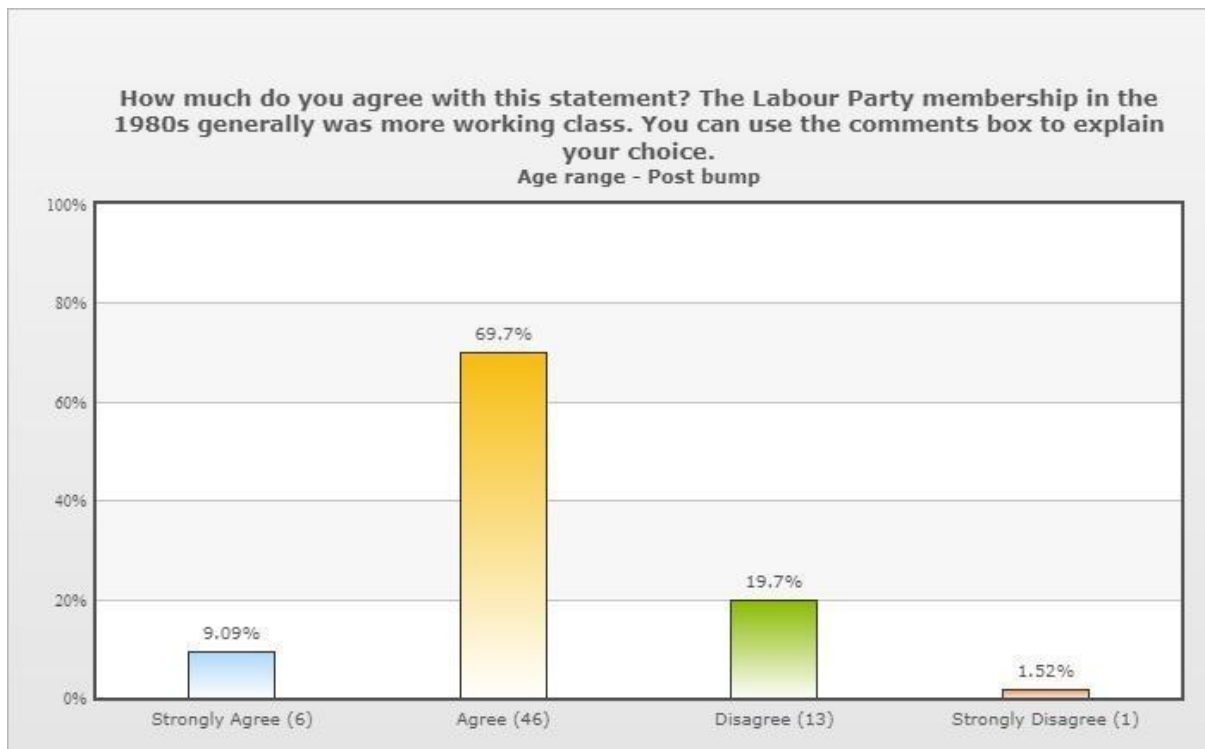
Graph 2.9



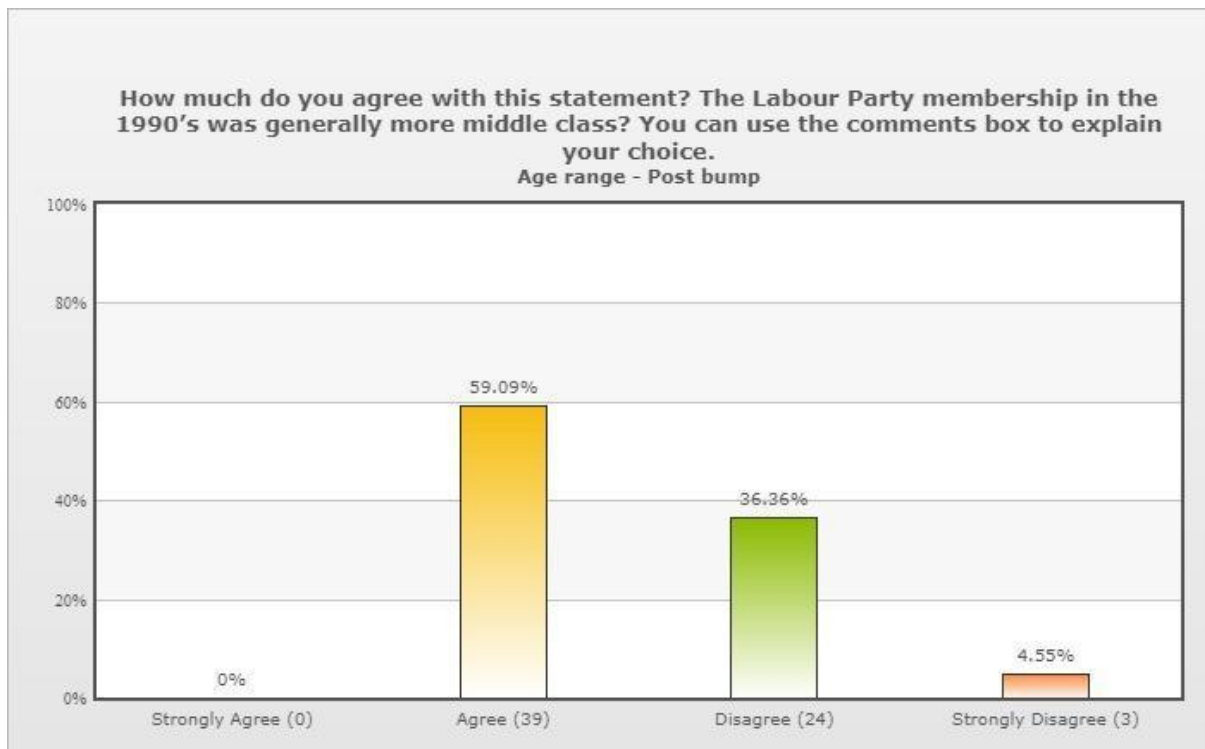
Graph 2.10



## Post Bump



Graph 2.11



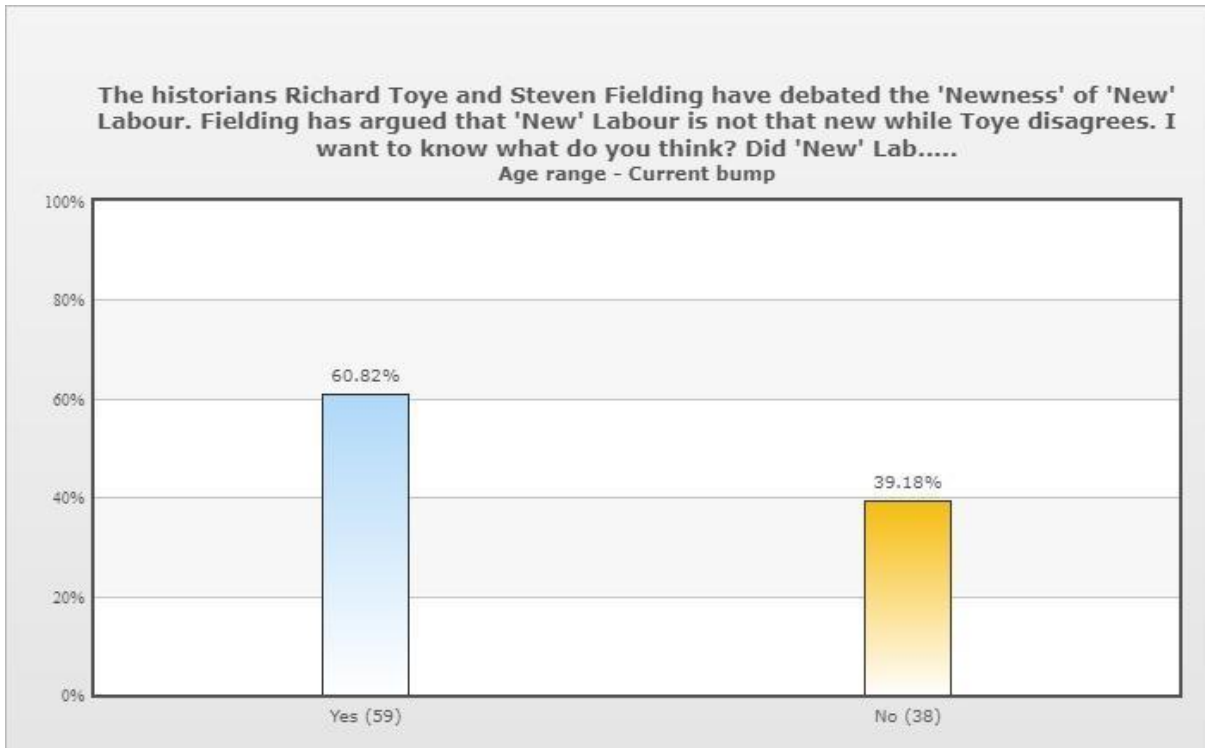
Graph 2.12

Both groups are in general agreement about the social makeup of the party members in the past with only minor discrepancies between the percentages. Both groups

agreed that the party in the 80s generally had more working-class members and the 90s were a bit more middle-class.

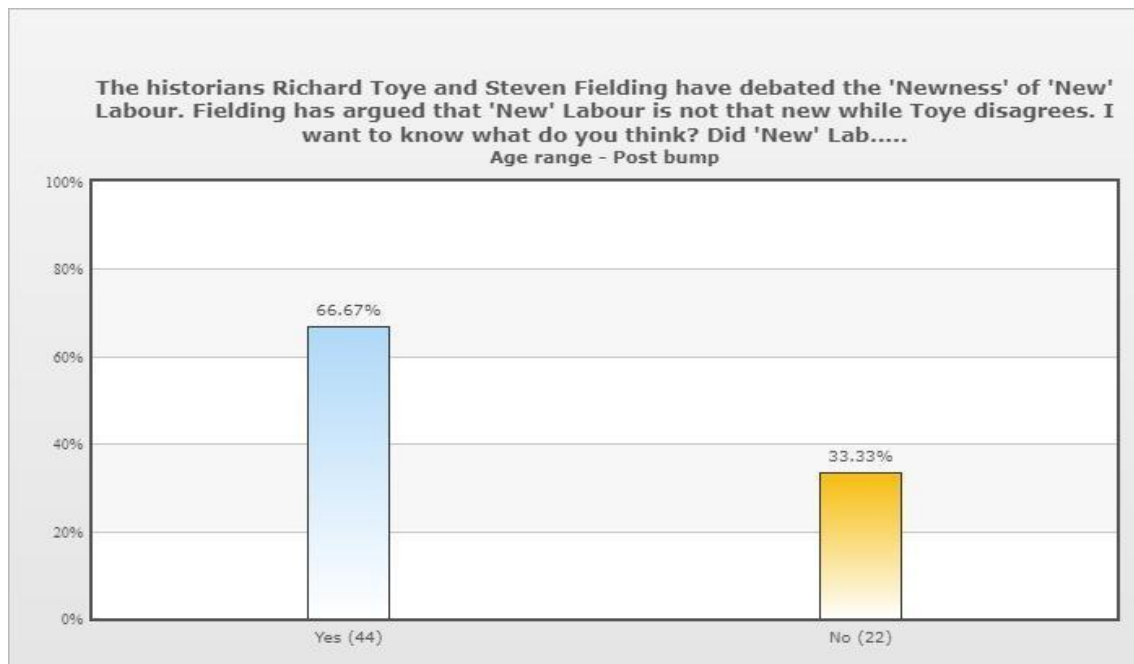
### 'New' Labour?

#### Acquiring Bump



Graph 2.13

## Post Bump



Graph 2.14

Once again there is little difference between the two generations. Only slightly more respondents thought that 'New' Labour marked a decisive break with the history, heritage and traditions of the party. Only the PB group have a stronger sense that 'New' Labour marked a decisive break.

### Ideological Differences

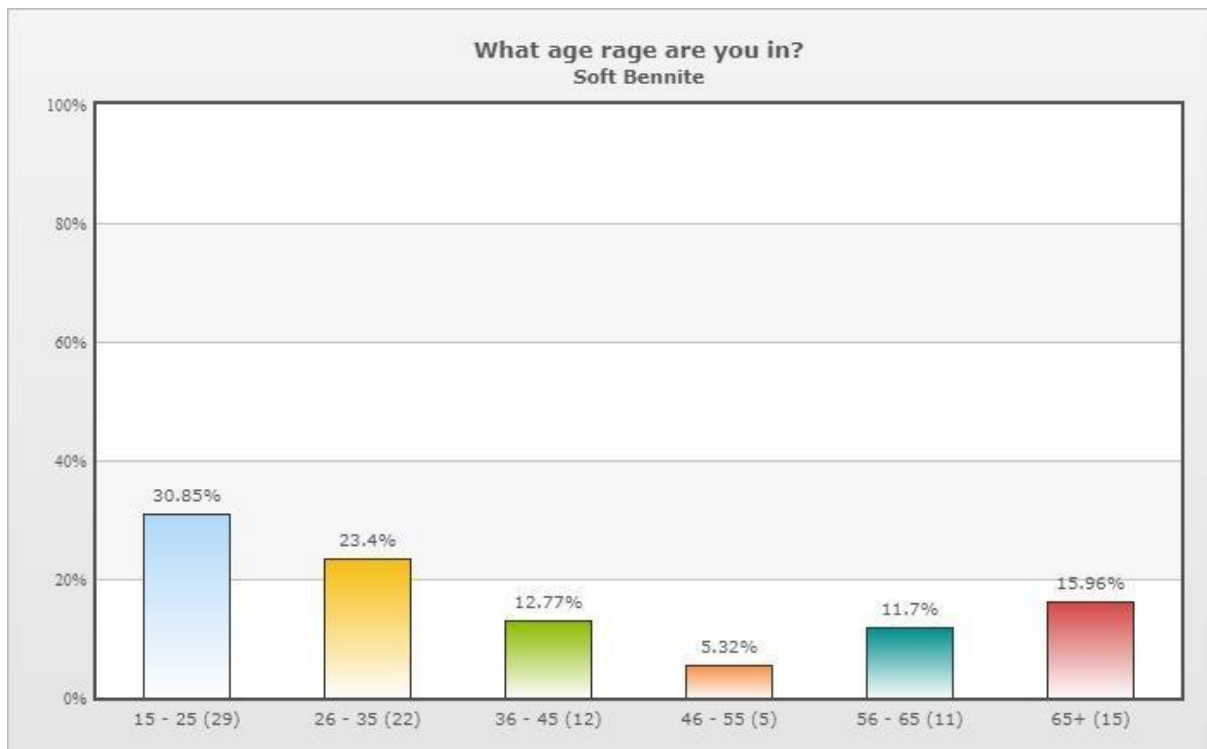
This section deals with the split within the Labour party with regards to attitudes to the two Tony's i.e. Tony Blair and Tony Benn. As was seen earlier in the general results there are no two figures in recent Labour party history that are more divisive.

Because of this, the respondents have been broken down into four groups. There are the 'soft' Bennites who gave Tony Benn a rating of 60 or higher in the Labour party figures section and also a 'hard' Bennite group that gave Benn a 60+ rating but also gave Tony Blair a rating lower than 40 in the Labour party leaders section. This was also repeated for respondents who gave Tony Blair a rating higher than 60 for his 'soft' group and also the 'hard' group who gave Benn less than 40. From the 'soft' groups there were only six respondents who did not give Tony Blair and Tony Benn a rating higher than 60 and fall into a 'soft' group for either. Each group will be

presented question by question and the results will be compared to analyse the differences between the two groups and their attitude to people and events of the party and their perceptions about the membership. The first question was a demographic one about their age.

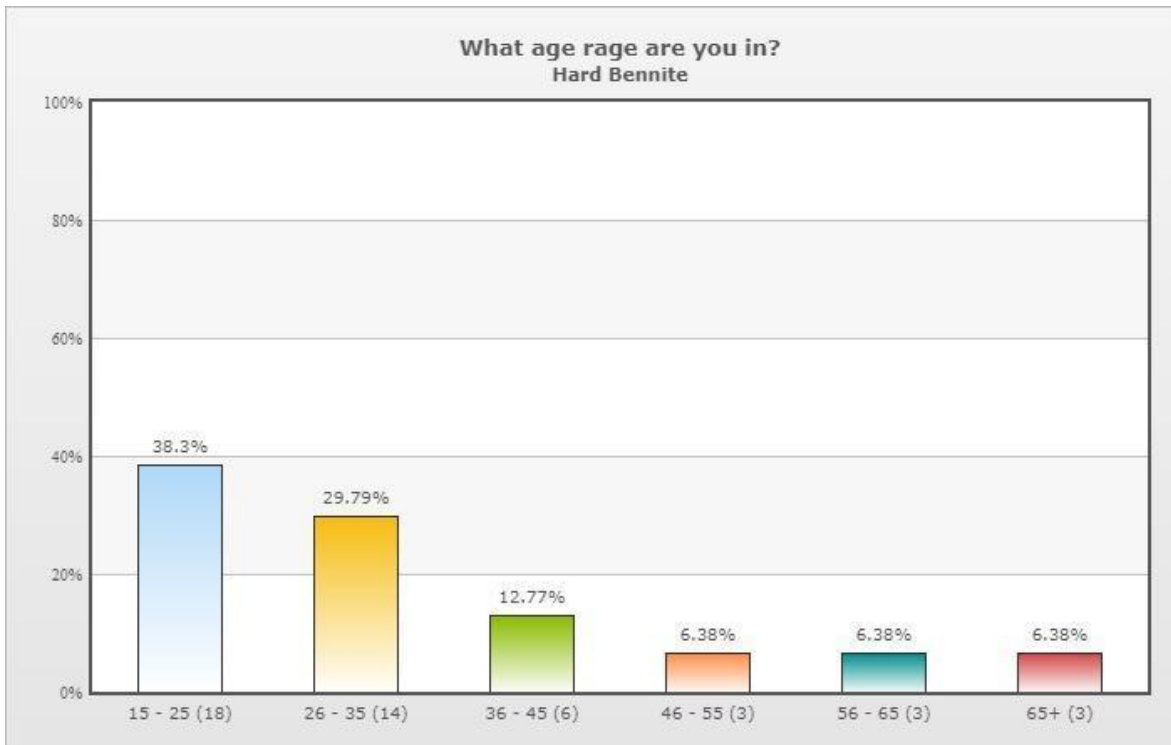
### Demographics

#### **'Soft' Bennite**



Graph 3.1

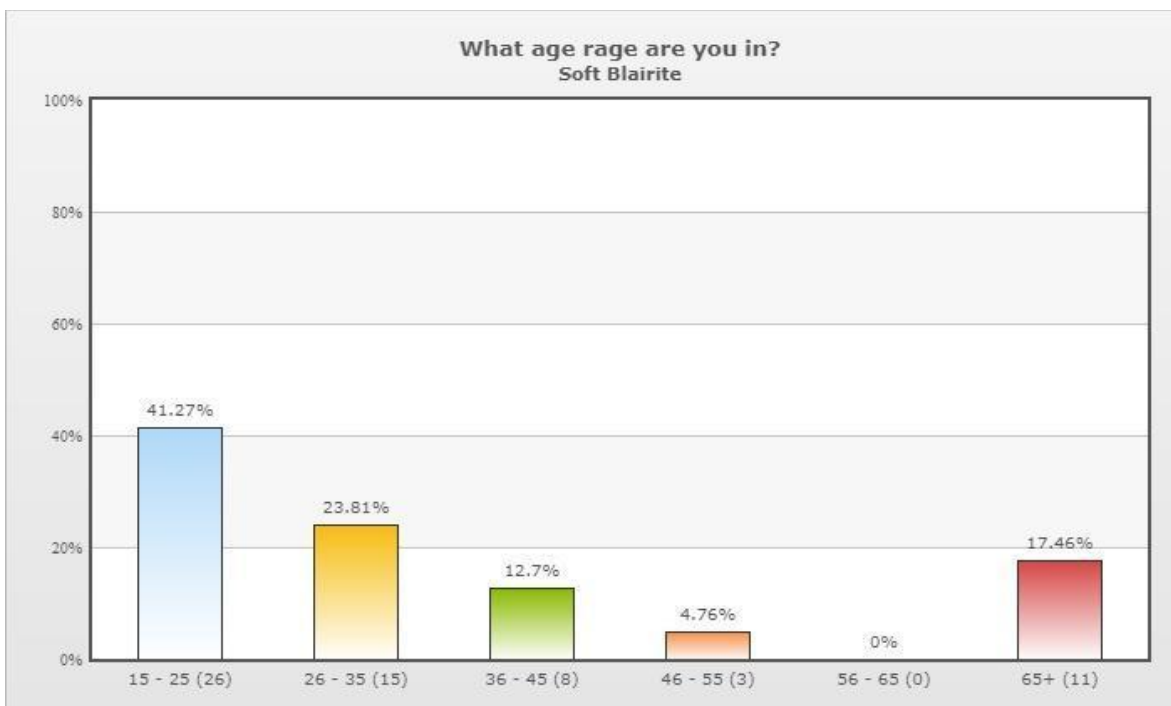
### 'Hard' Bennite



Graph 3.2

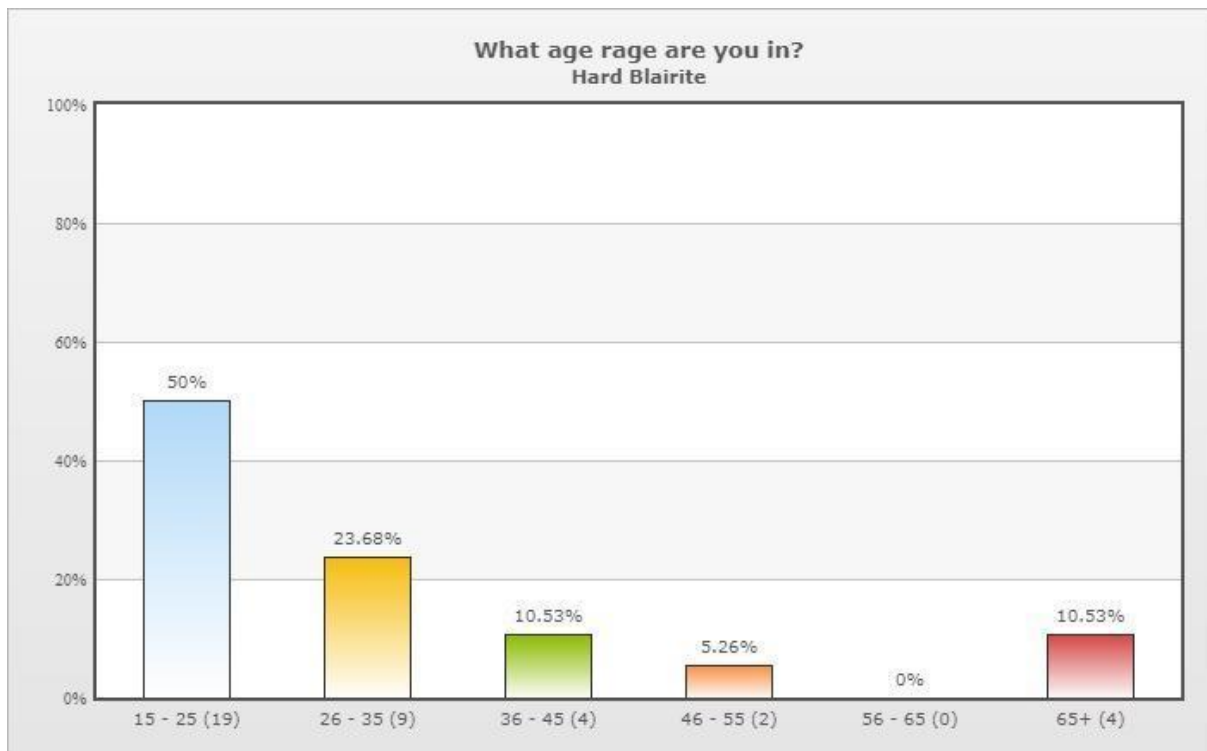
There wasn't too much difference between the age demographic for either groups.

### 'Soft' Blairite



Graph 3.3

## 'Hard' Blairite



Graph 3.4

The same can be said for the Blairite groups with all groups recording the largest section coming from the AB group which would be expected due to the large number of responses from that group. The only noteworthy thing is that in both 'soft' to 'hard' changes, only the AB group actually increases its percentage share.

## Leaders and Figures

### **'Soft' Bennite**

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
James Callaghan	53.19	8.00	87.00	13.37	94
Michael Foot	62.15	14.00	100.00	19.29	94
Neil Kinnock	52.45	1.00	95.00	19.28	94
John Smith	68.01	25.00	100.00	17.42	94
Tony Blair	36.53	1.00	100.00	26.22	94
Gordon Brown	58.26	1.00	100.00	22.20	94
Ed Miliband	65.20	1.00	100.00	17.80	94

Table 3.1

### **'Hard' Bennite**

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
James Callaghan	52.00	8.00	87.00	13.87	47
Michael Foot	66.87	34.00	100.00	15.60	47
Neil Kinnock	45.72	1.00	75.00	19.05	47
John Smith	63.17	27.00	100.00	16.39	47
Tony Blair	21.94	1.00	40.00	13.70	47
Gordon Brown	53.81	1.00	100.00	23.46	47
Ed Miliband	64.51	1.00	93.00	16.92	47

Table 3.2

Tony Blair scores badly in both groups with a significant drop in the 'hard' group but only Kinnock registers a score change that is significant. Blair maintains his divisiveness in the 'soft' group but Gordon Brown gains the title as most controversial in the 'hard' group with a very modest positive overall score.

### **'Soft' Blairite**

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
James Callaghan	55.54	22.00	83.00	14.12	63
Michael Foot	40.10	10.00	95.00	19.78	63
Neil Kinnock	67.48	11.00	98.00	15.38	63
John Smith	71.81	25.00	100.00	15.69	63
Tony Blair	79.22	61.00	100.00	11.25	63
Gordon Brown	74.13	1.00	100.00	16.65	63
Ed Miliband	64.87	1.00	100.00	20.41	63

Table 3.3

## 'Hard' Blairite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
James Callaghan	58.37	33.00	83.00	14.08	38
Michael Foot	35.24	10.00	88.00	18.00	38
Neil Kinnock	70.95	11.00	98.00	17.13	38
John Smith	72.05	50.00	100.00	13.13	38
Tony Blair	77.26	60.00	100.00	12.28	38
Gordon Brown	71.47	1.00	100.00	18.22	38
Ed Miliband	63.16	1.00	100.00	20.06	38

Table 3.4

The immediately striking things about the 'soft' and 'hard' Blairite change is that Blair actually drops a few points in his overall score although not by much. Both groups are very harsh on Michael Foot, presumably due to his dire electoral performance in 1983.

## 'Soft' Bennite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healey	54.51	17.00	94.00	15.01	94
Tony Benn	81.40	61.00	100.00	12.14	94
Joan Ruddock	55.54	35.00	99.00	12.79	94
Roy Hattersley	50.19	1.00	100.00	14.30	94
Margaret Beckett	52.47	2.00	99.00	14.09	94
Ken Livingstone	49.81	1.00	100.00	25.12	94
Harriet Harman	50.90	1.00	92.00	18.23	94
Dennis Skinner	79.49	26.00	100.00	17.10	94
David Blunkett	52.85	12.00	90.00	14.91	94
Mo Mowlam	67.33	25.00	100.00	17.76	94
John Prescott	65.63	22.00	100.00	14.92	94
Peter Mandelson	34.40	1.00	100.00	25.78	94

Table 3.5



## 'Hard' Bennite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healey	49.38	17.00	90.00	13.44	47
Tony Benn	83.32	60.00	100.00	12.39	47
Joan Ruddock	52.36	36.00	84.00	9.08	47
Roy Hattersley	47.36	1.00	81.00	12.95	47
Margaret Beckett	48.49	2.00	70.00	13.10	47
Ken Livingstone	52.00	1.00	100.00	24.85	47
Harriet Harman	46.40	10.00	79.00	15.72	47
Dennis Skinner	85.17	55.00	100.00	13.03	47
David Blunkett	49.02	12.00	80.00	13.38	47
Mo Mowlam	64.81	25.00	100.00	18.34	47
John Prescott	64.87	35.00	94.00	12.28	47
Peter Mandelson	27.96	1.00	81.00	23.57	47

Table 3.6

Tony Benn manages to actually increase his score, unlike Blair, in both his groups. Dennis Skinner remains perennially popular and Peter Mandelson is equally durable in both groups for his unpopularity.

## 'Soft' Blairite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healey	63.78	34.00	100.00	15.04	63
Tony Benn	40.51	1.00	100.00	27.41	63
Joan Ruddock	51.30	15.00	99.00	10.58	63
Roy Hattersley	57.10	20.00	100.00	15.17	63
Margaret Beckett	58.44	11.00	88.00	14.60	63
Ken Livingstone	24.02	1.00	97.00	22.45	63
Harriet Harman	64.05	1.00	100.00	18.10	63
Dennis Skinner	54.57	11.00	100.00	21.92	63
David Blunkett	59.94	26.00	90.00	13.85	63
Mo Mowlam	66.71	40.00	100.00	17.45	63
John Prescott	64.89	36.00	100.00	15.16	63
Peter Mandelson	64.21	20.00	100.00	17.41	63

Table 3.7

## 'Hard' Blairite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healey	66.39	50.00	100.00	15.13	38
Tony Benn	19.08	1.00	40.00	13.25	38
Joan Ruddock	48.87	15.00	60.00	6.75	38
Roy Hattersley	57.16	10.00	100.00	16.94	38
Margaret Beckett	56.66	11.00	88.00	15.90	38
Ken Livingstone	12.32	1.00	55.00	12.95	38
Harriet Harman	66.63	39.00	100.00	14.15	38
Dennis Skinner	43.37	10.00	100.00	19.86	38
David Blunkett	57.79	27.00	83.00	13.49	38
Mo Mowlam	63.05	40.00	100.00	17.11	38
John Prescott	61.58	37.00	100.00	15.65	38
Peter Mandelson	63.16	1.00	100.00	18.90	38

Table 3.8

In contrast to the Bennite groups the Blairite groups are much more positive about Peter Mandelson and more ambivalent to negative about Dennis Skinner. This is interesting because to the Bennite groups possibly see Skinner as being more of a traditional Labour Party figure with his strong northern accent and upbringing as a miner in Derbyshire whereas Mandelson is a symbol of privilege with his middle class roots and Oxford education. They are of course two perfectly valid routes into the Labour parliamentary party but it is clear that the split between the groups that shows how members value the differences.

## Internal and External Events

### **‘Soft’ Bennite**

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healy defeating Tony Benn in the deputy leadership contest in 1981.	38.44	1.00	71.00	19.33	94
Gang of Four leaving to create SDP	33.46	1.00	100.00	28.52	94
The 1983 general election manifesto.	49.54	7.00	100.00	17.43	94
Neil Kinnock's denunciation of Militant at the 1985 party conference.	50.76	1.00	100.00	23.18	94
The introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993.	67.53	25.00	100.00	19.23	94
Redrafting of Clause IV in 1995.	37.19	1.00	90.00	21.66	94

Table 3.9

### **‘Hard’ Bennite**

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healy defeating Tony Benn in the deputy leadership contest in 1981.	31.21	1.00	61.00	16.41	47
Gang of Four leaving to create SDP	32.83	1.00	99.00	26.68	47
The 1983 general election manifesto.	54.32	20.00	100.00	16.07	47
Neil Kinnock's denunciation of Militant at the 1985 party conference.	43.55	1.00	100.00	20.56	47
The introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993.	69.81	25.00	100.00	20.72	47
Redrafting of Clause IV in 1995.	33.21	1.00	70.00	19.54	47

Table 3.10

It is possibly no surprise that the Bennite groups are not positive to regarding the defeat of Benn in the 1981 deputy leadership contest. No respondent gave it a score higher than 71 in the ‘soft’ group and no higher than 61 in the ‘hard’ group. This is also the case for the redrafting of Clause IV in 1995 where it is deeply unpopular in both groups, however, it is interesting to note that there is a much warmer feeling towards the introduction of One Member, One Vote (OMOV) which is striking due to the left of the Labour party’s opposition towards it both before and at the time<sup>51</sup>. The highest deviation is the ‘Gang of Four’ leaving the party, possibly because some

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<sup>51</sup> Keith Alderman and Neil Carter, “The Labour Party and the Trade Unions: Loosening the Ties,” *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 47, Issue 3, 1 July (1994): p322.

members saw it as bad for the party because it split the vote in the 1983 election but also some others who liked it because it 'got rid of the right wingers from the party'.

### 'Soft' Blairite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healy defeating Tony Benn in the deputy leadership contest in 1981.	72.11	11.00	100.00	22.00	63
Gang of Four leaving to create SDP	32.25	1.00	100.00	24.71	63
The 1983 general election manifesto.	29.73	1.00	72.00	17.71	63
Neil Kinnock's denunciation of Militant at the 1985 party conference.	81.17	20.00	100.00	19.15	63
The introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993.	63.60	33.00	100.00	16.95	63
Redrafting of Clause IV in 1995.	69.60	12.00	100.00	19.53	63

Table 3.11

### 'Hard' Blairite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Dennis Healy defeating Tony Benn in the deputy leadership contest in 1981.	83.26	35.00	100.00	18.43	38
Gang of Four leaving to create SDP	28.53	1.00	64.00	21.75	38
The 1983 general election manifesto.	24.32	1.00	72.00	18.82	38
Neil Kinnock's denunciation of Militant at the 1985 party conference.	88.08	20.00	100.00	18.03	38
The introduction of One Member, One Vote in 1993.	62.84	33.00	100.00	18.27	38
Redrafting of Clause IV in 1995.	73.53	40.00	100.00	18.74	38

Table 3.12

In both groups the denunciation of Militant in 1985 scores very highly possibly due to the reasons discussed earlier but the redrafting of Clause IV actually score a surprisingly lower score in comparison. This is surprising given that this is a Blairite group and this was the first major act by Blair and was probably the defining moment for 'new' Labour. The 'Gang of Four' leaving gets the highest deviation possibly because those who scored it, scored it lowly compared to the large number of younger respondents who may not know who the Gang of Four were and thus left it at 50. The deputy leadership contest has the inverse reaction to the Bennite groups once again proving that thirty-six years after the fact it is still deeply polarising topic within the Labour party.

### ‘Soft’ Bennite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Winning Huge Majority in 1997 General Election	81.82	1.00	100.00	19.19	94
Independence of the Bank of England.	54.33	1.00	100.00	20.13	94
Minimum Wage	85.12	5.00	100.00	16.24	94
Good Friday Agreement	84.13	1.00	100.00	17.40	94
Iraq War	11.53	1.00	80.00	16.28	94
Increased Spending on the NHS	86.02	50.00	100.00	13.56	94
Response to the 2008 financial crisis	51.56	1.00	100.00	26.16	94

Table 3.13

### ‘Hard’ Bennite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Winning Huge Majority in 1997 General Election	76.13	1.00	100.00	19.82	47
Independence of the Bank of England.	48.60	1.00	95.00	20.49	47
Minimum Wage	85.21	50.00	100.00	13.80	47
Good Friday Agreement	78.89	1.00	100.00	20.72	47
Iraq War	6.06	1.00	35.00	9.40	47
Increased Spending on the NHS	85.09	57.00	100.00	13.02	47
Response to the 2008 financial crisis	44.04	1.00	100.00	24.63	47

Table 3.14

Both groups here are very positive about the Minimum Wage and Increased Spending in the NHS. The increased spending on the NHS never scored less than 50 so at no point did it get anything like a negative rating. The Iraq War scored very poorly which is not a surprise from a Bennite group who were very vocal at the time in their opposition to it.

### ‘Soft’ Blairite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Winning Huge Majority in 1997 General Election	96.16	75.00	100.00	6.01	63
Independence of the Bank of England.	67.71	38.00	100.00	16.39	63
Minimum Wage	92.57	70.00	100.00	9.25	63
Good Friday Agreement	91.54	50.00	100.00	10.72	63
Iraq War	27.92	1.00	84.00	21.14	63
Increased Spending on the NHS	86.37	45.00	100.00	11.77	63
Response to the 2008 financial crisis	66.83	5.00	100.00	23.07	63

Table 3.15

## 'Hard' Blairite

Item	Average	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	Total Responses
Winning Huge Majority in 1997 General Election	95.79	70.00	100.00	8.05	38
Independence of the Bank of England.	66.92	38.00	100.00	16.60	38
Minimum Wage	90.79	55.00	100.00	11.48	38
Good Friday Agreement	91.82	65.00	100.00	9.51	38
Iraq War	28.87	1.00	84.00	21.87	38
Increased Spending on the NHS	82.37	45.00	100.00	13.95	38
Response to the 2008 financial crisis	69.42	32.00	100.00	18.64	38

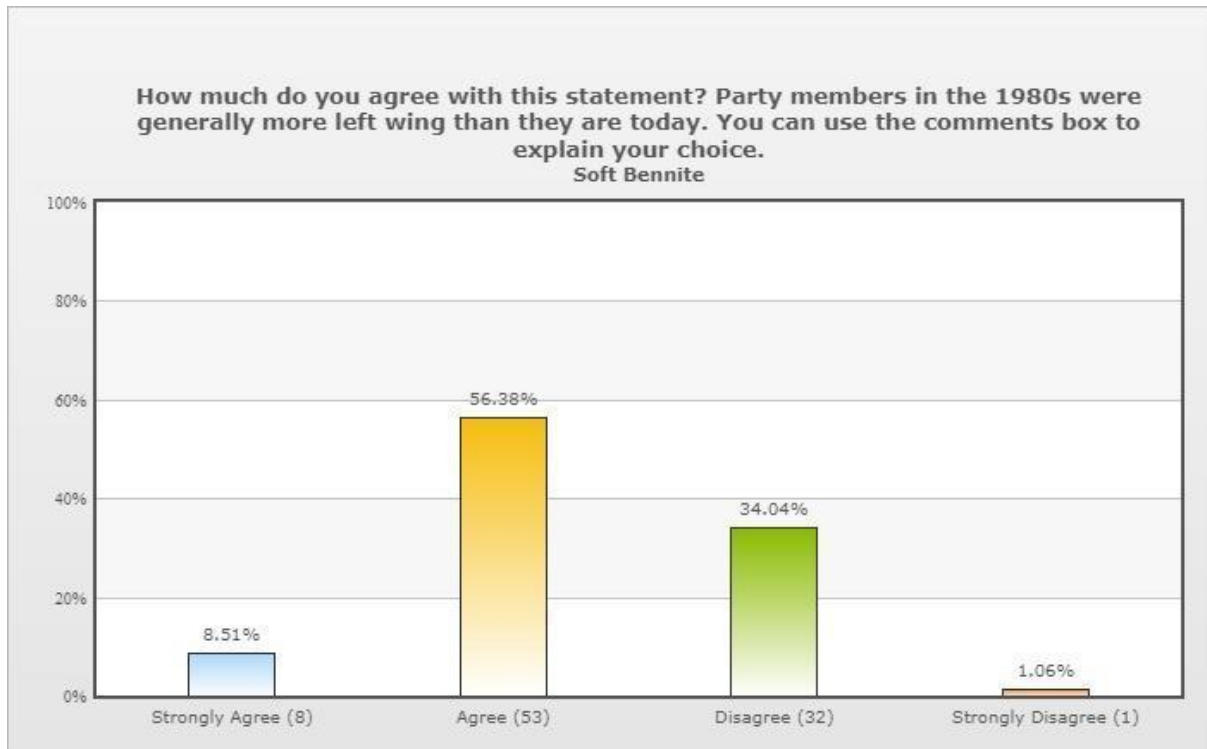
Table 3.16

The winning of the election in 1997 gets the single highest score in any question and subsequent filtering in this survey from the 'soft' Blairite group. At 75, it also gets the highest minimum score recorded in the course of this survey and also one of the lowest deviation seen. Most respondents in these groups are very positive about all external events with the exception of the Iraq War. There is virtually no difference between the 'soft' Blairites' and the 'hard' Blairites' attitude to that war and virtually no change in the deviation.

All groups are positive about certain aspects of external party events, the only difference being that the Blairite groups are much more positive about them than the Bennite groups. With the low score for the Iraq war from both groups, just the Bennite ones scoring it much lower, it shows that there is a consensus as such between these ideological groups it's just the value that are put on such events differ..

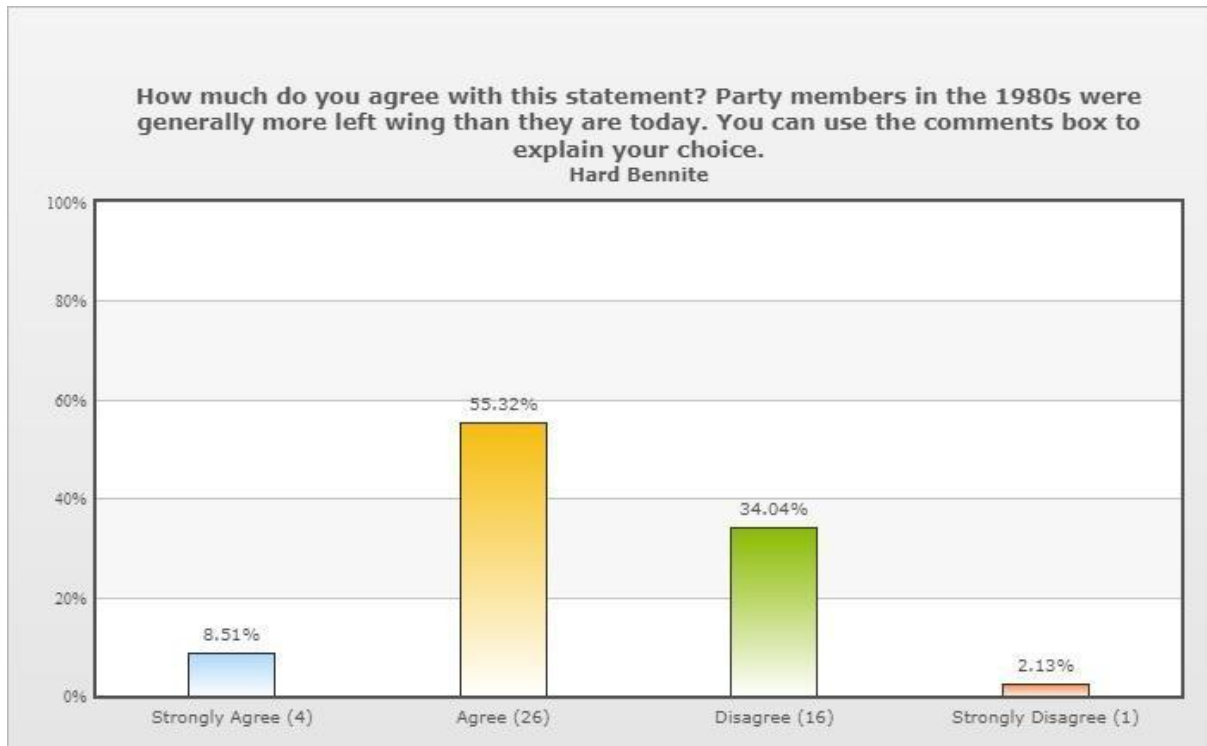
## Perceptions - Ideology

### 'Soft' Bennite



Graph 3.5

### 'Hard' Bennite

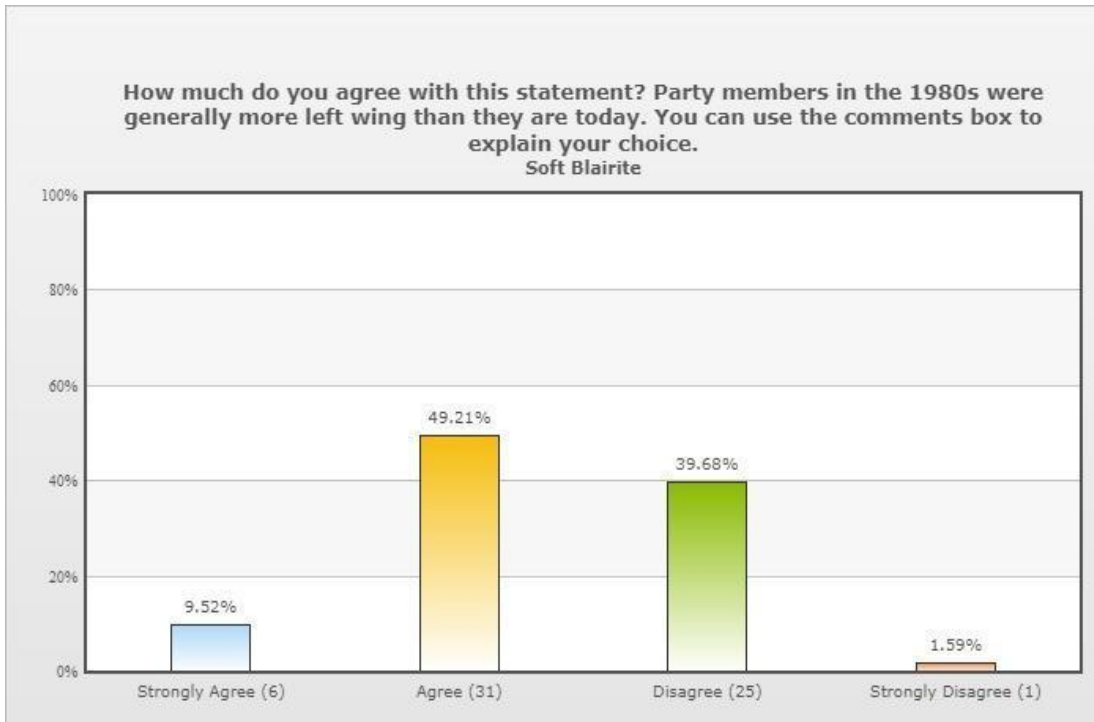


Graph 3.6



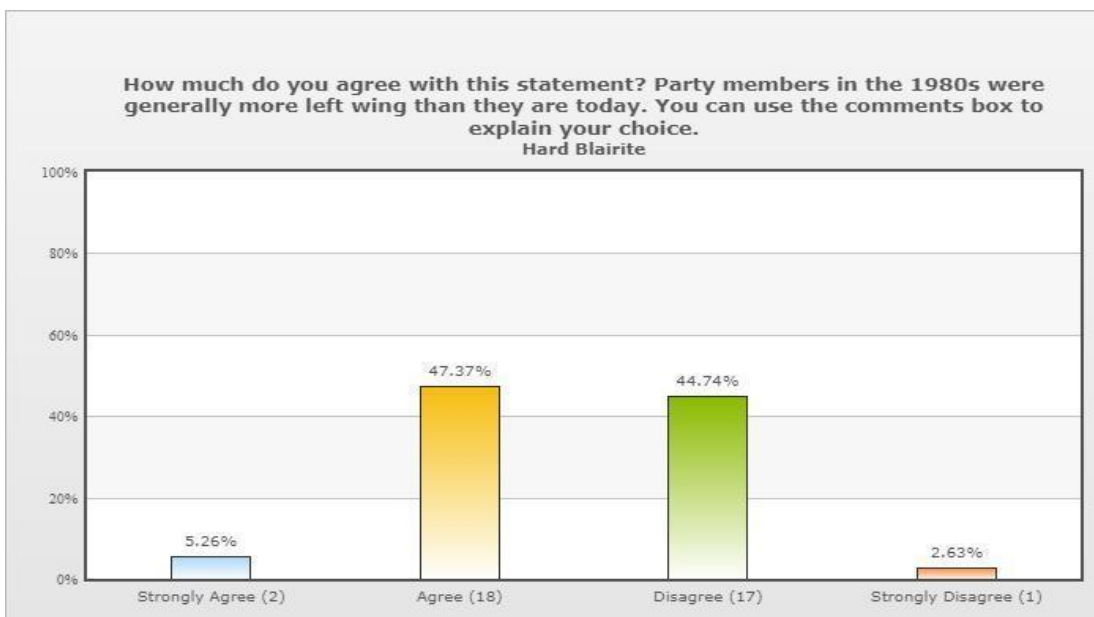
No real change between the two Bennite groups about the political persuasions of the 80s membership.

### 'Soft' Blairite



Graph 3.7

### 'Hard' Blairite

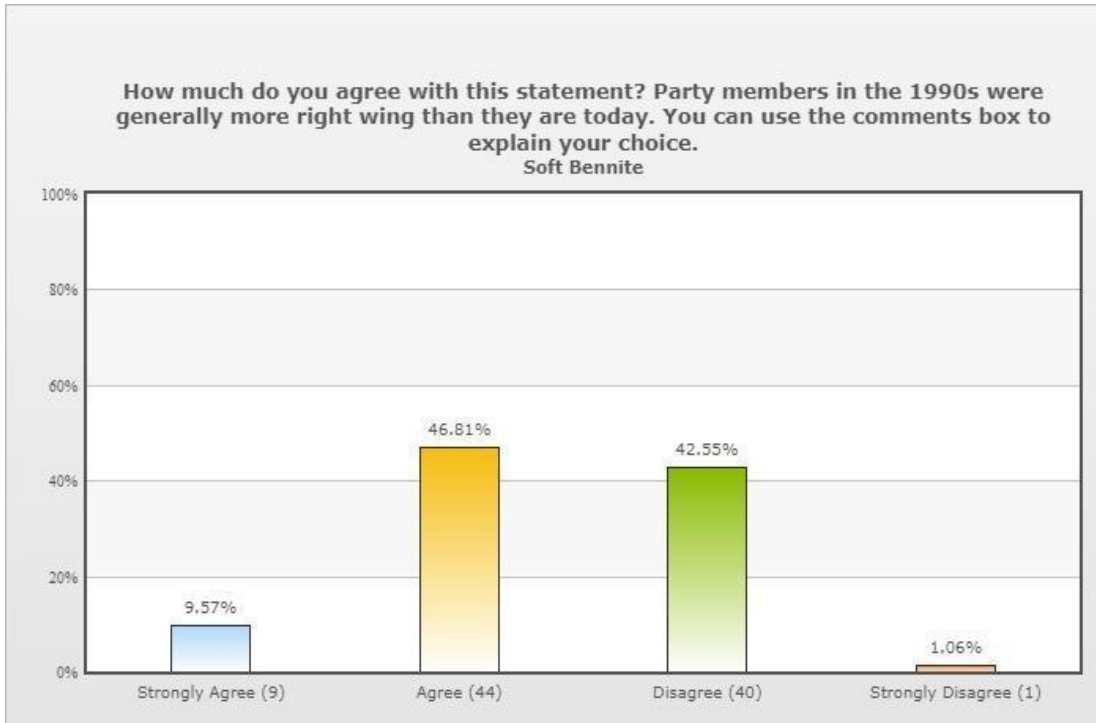


Graph 3.8



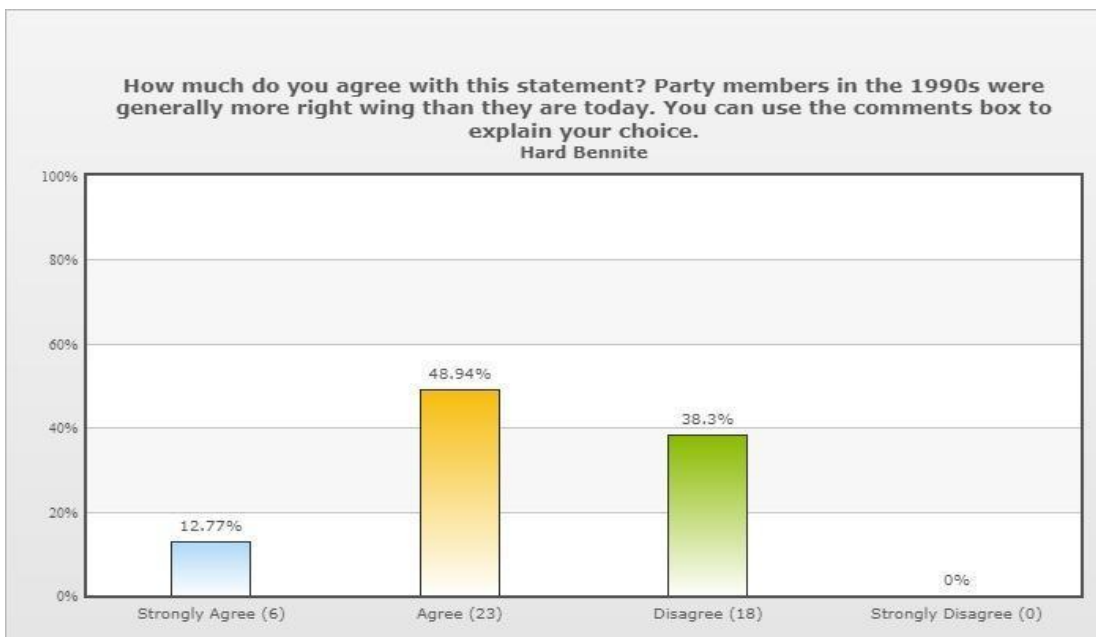
The surprising thing is that the Blairite groups have a similar perception about the 1980s membership. With a slight increase for disagree in the 'hard' Blairite but nothing that is significant.

**'Soft' Bennite**



Graph 3.9

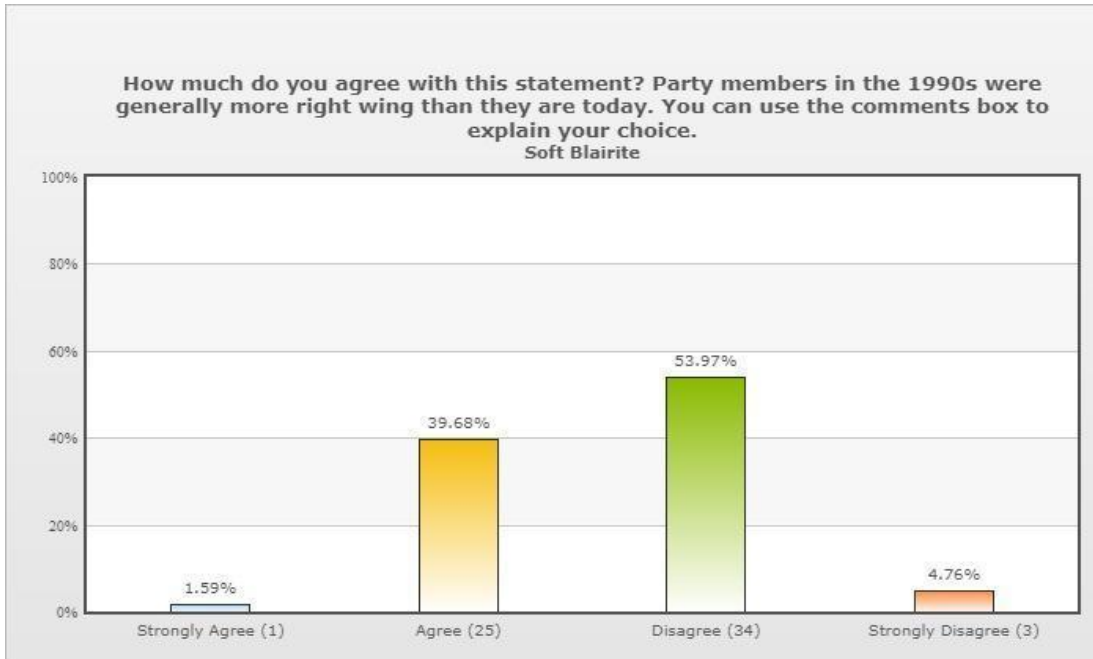
**'Hard' Bennite**



Graph 3.10

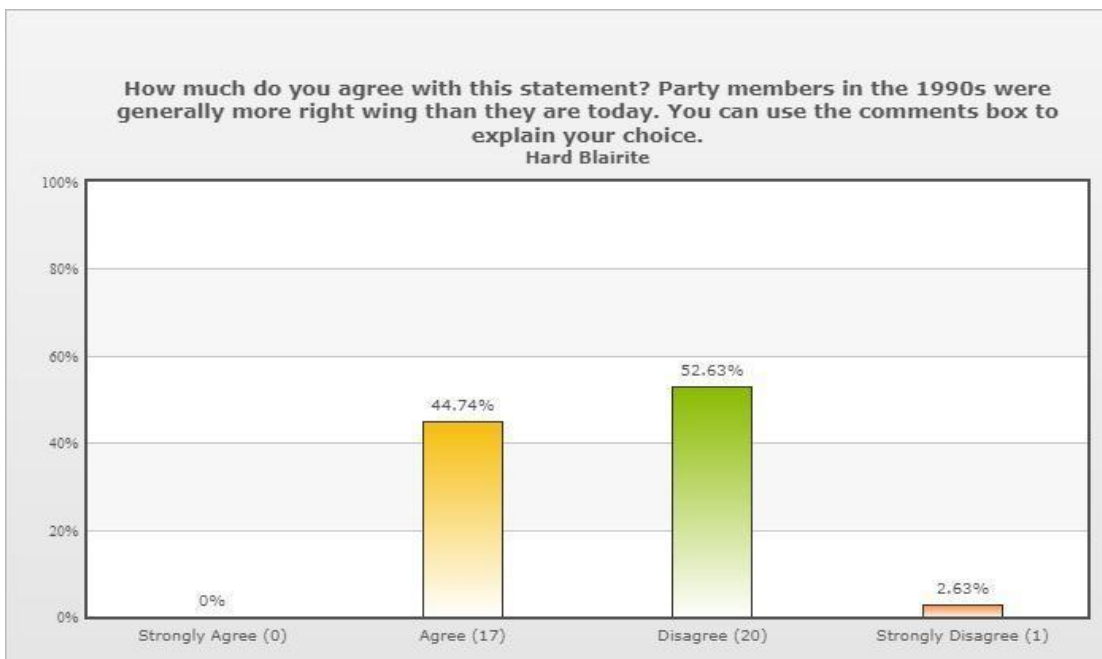
There is a slight increase from the 'hard' group to the soft about the membership in the 1990s but once again the difference is not huge.

### 'Soft' Blairite



Graph 3.11

### 'Hard' Blairite

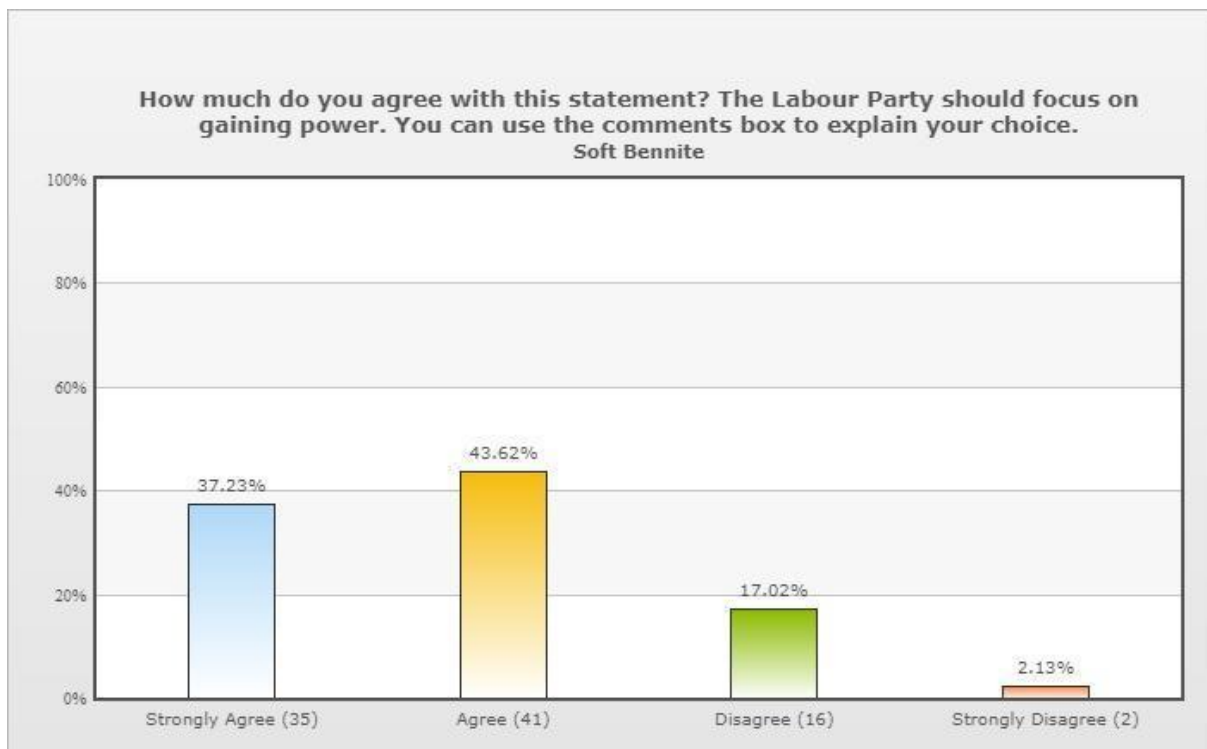


Graph 3.12

There is a clear difference, although not huge, between the Bennite and Blairite groups but it is surprising that the 'soft' group, rather than the 'hard' group, have a greater strength of feeling about it. Either way all groups have a pretty ambivalent feeling about their perceptions about the political leanings of the membership in the 80s and 90s. There is a difference between the groups about the 90s but it is not statistically significant.

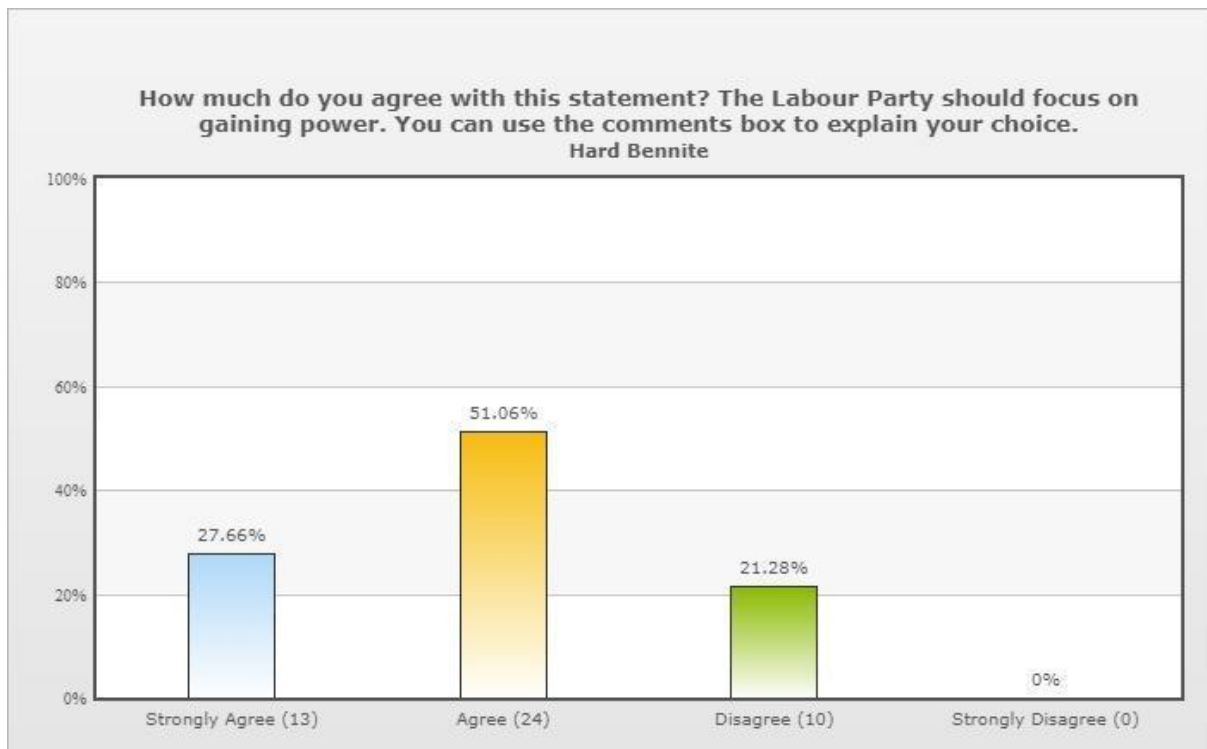
### Power v Principles

#### **'Soft' Bennite**



Graph 3.13

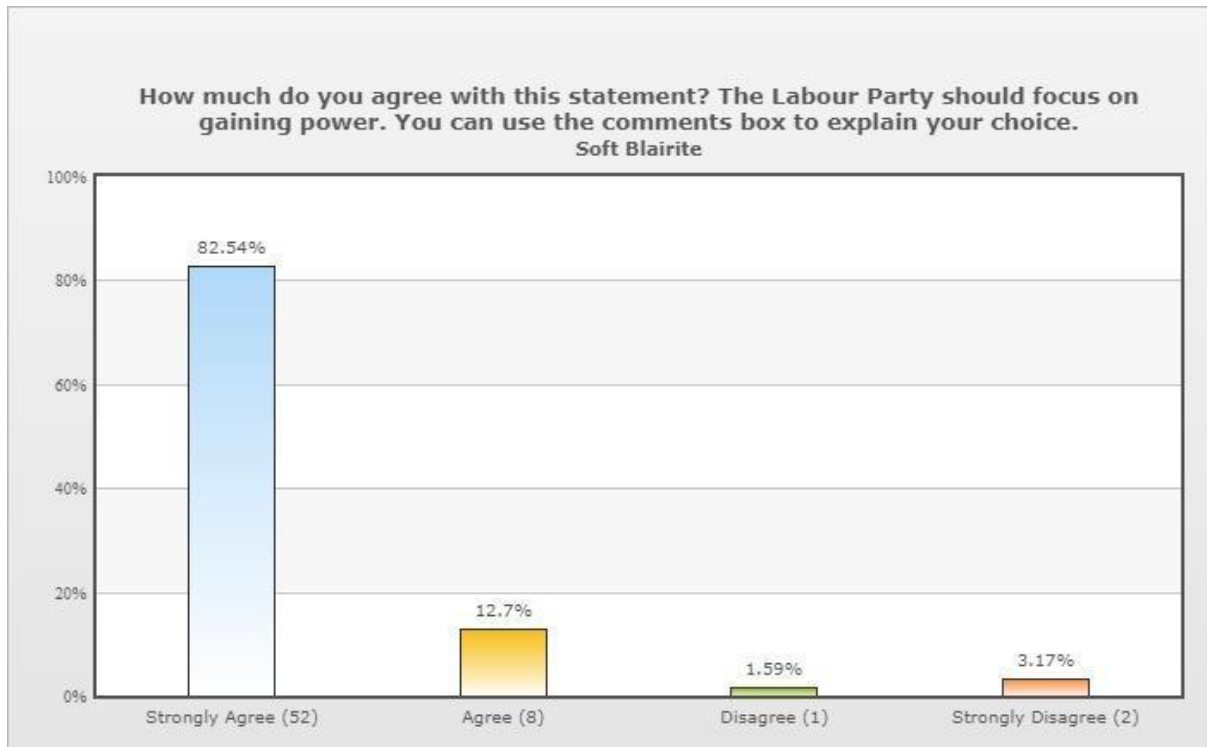
## 'Hard' Bennite



Graph 3.14

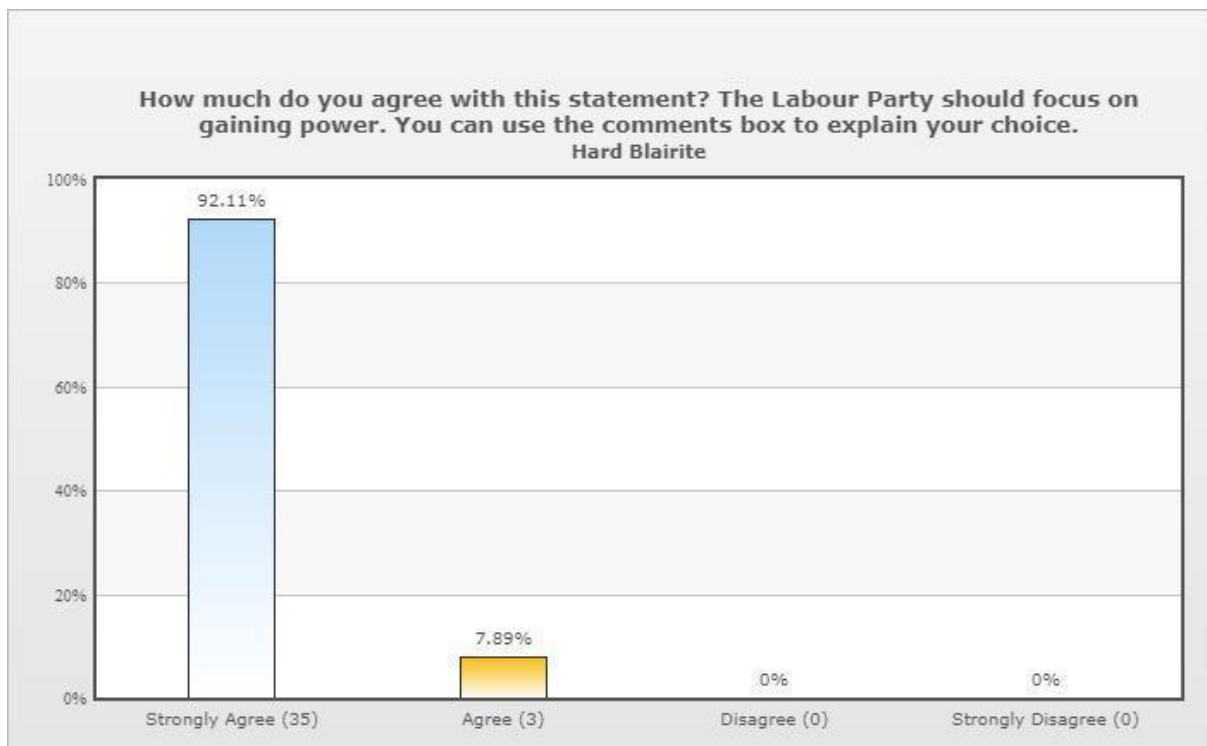
The 'hard' group is much more weighted towards agreeing that the party should focus on gaining power. Because the survey was being conducted around the time of the general election of 2017 issues around securing political may have enjoyed particular saliency in the minds of the respondents, even though the party, at the time, was not expected to form a government.

### 'Soft' Blairite



Graph 3.15

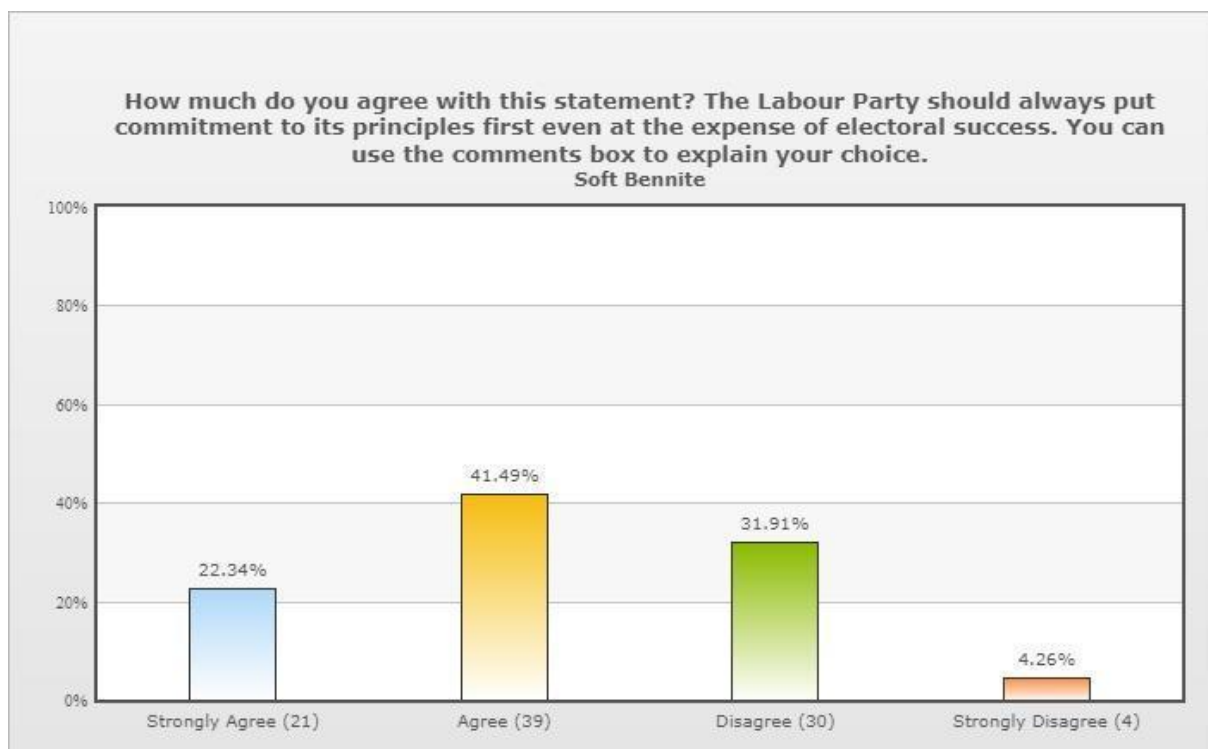
### 'Hard' Blairite



Graph 3.16

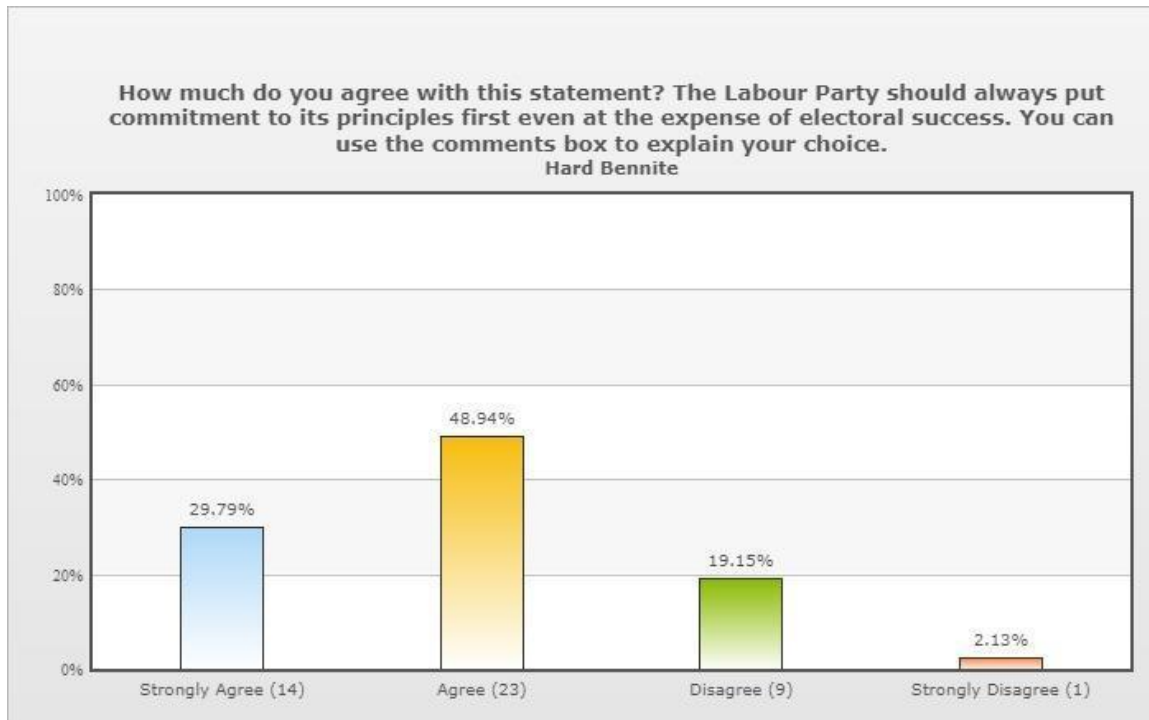
Here can be seen a huge difference between the two groups. Only three people disagreed with the statement in the 'soft' group and nobody at all from the 'hard' group. Once again the role of the 2017 election cannot be discounted but such a huge difference between the two groups would not just be down to context alone. While the Bennite groups generally agreed that the party should focus on power, the sheer overwhelming strength of feeling from the Blairite groups may cause the Bennite groups to view that side of the party with suspicion which leads nicely into the next question.

### 'Soft' Bennite



Graph 3.17

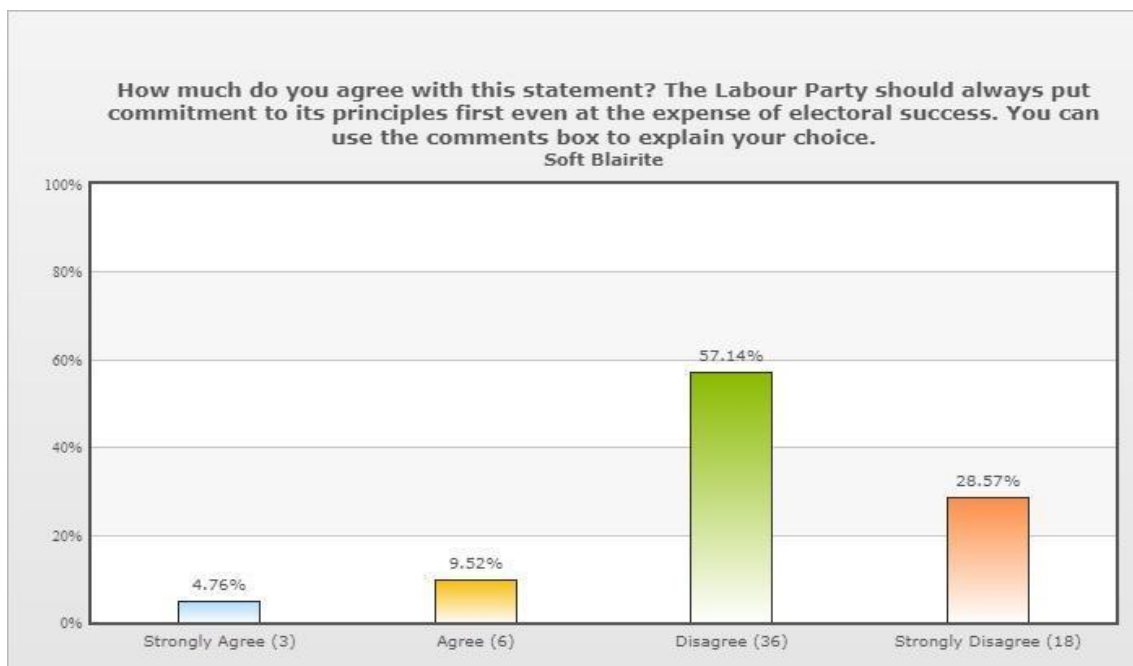
### 'Hard' Bennite



Graph 3.18

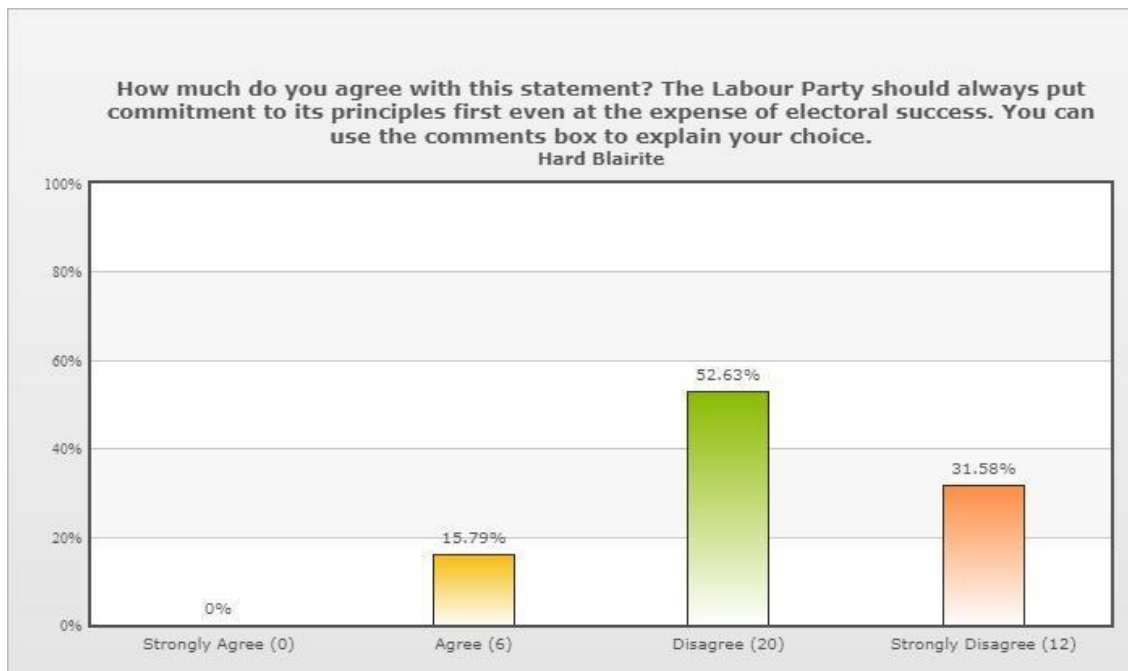
The Bennite groups clearly agrees that the party should commit to its principles at the expense of electoral success, with the 'hard' group increasing with that feeling.

### 'Soft' Blairite



Graph 3.19

## 'Hard' Blairite



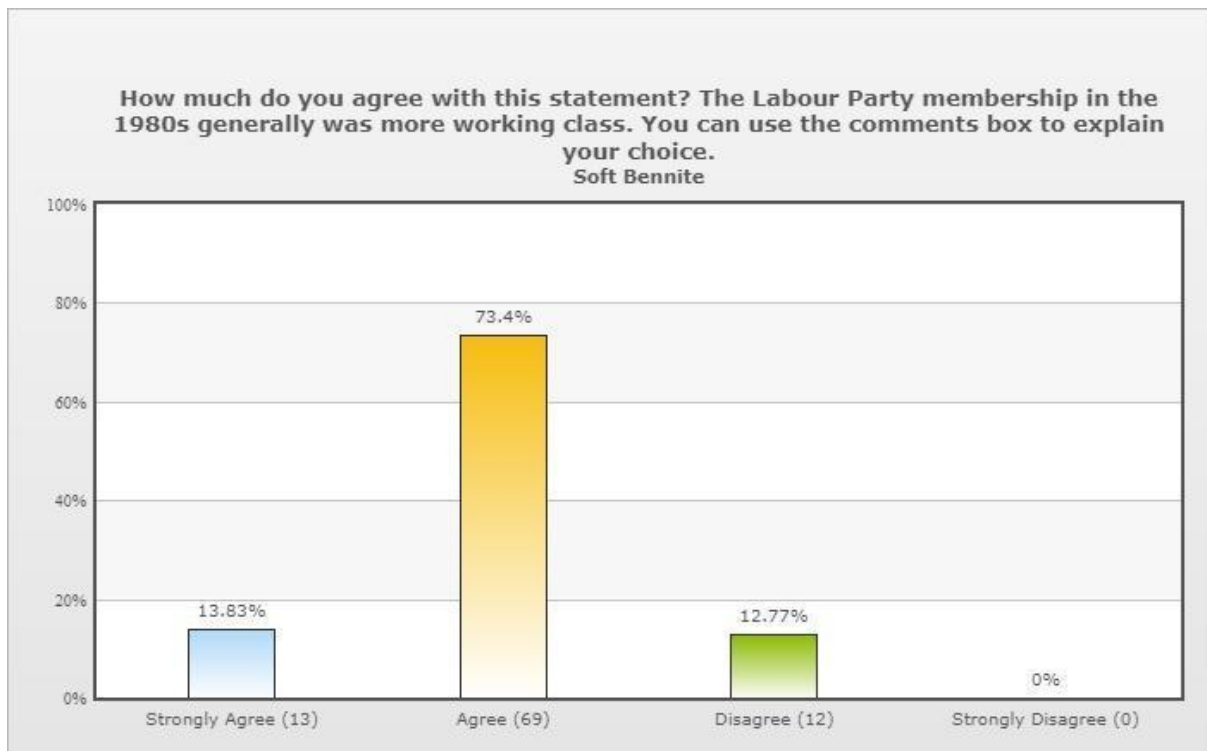
Graph 3.20

Here we can see that both the 'soft' and 'hard' groups have a clear majority in disagreement with an increase in strongly disagreeing from the 'hard' group. Once again, context of the time the survey was collected must be considered but the sheer strength of feeling again cannot explain it all. Both these questions shows a possible reason why these two sides view each other with suspicion. The Bennite groups are suspicious of the Blairite groups for what they see as a cynical attempt to win power whereas the Blairite groups view the Bennite groups as not being interested in actually getting into government but the survey seems to show that they do, just in a way that does not compromise fundamental principles.



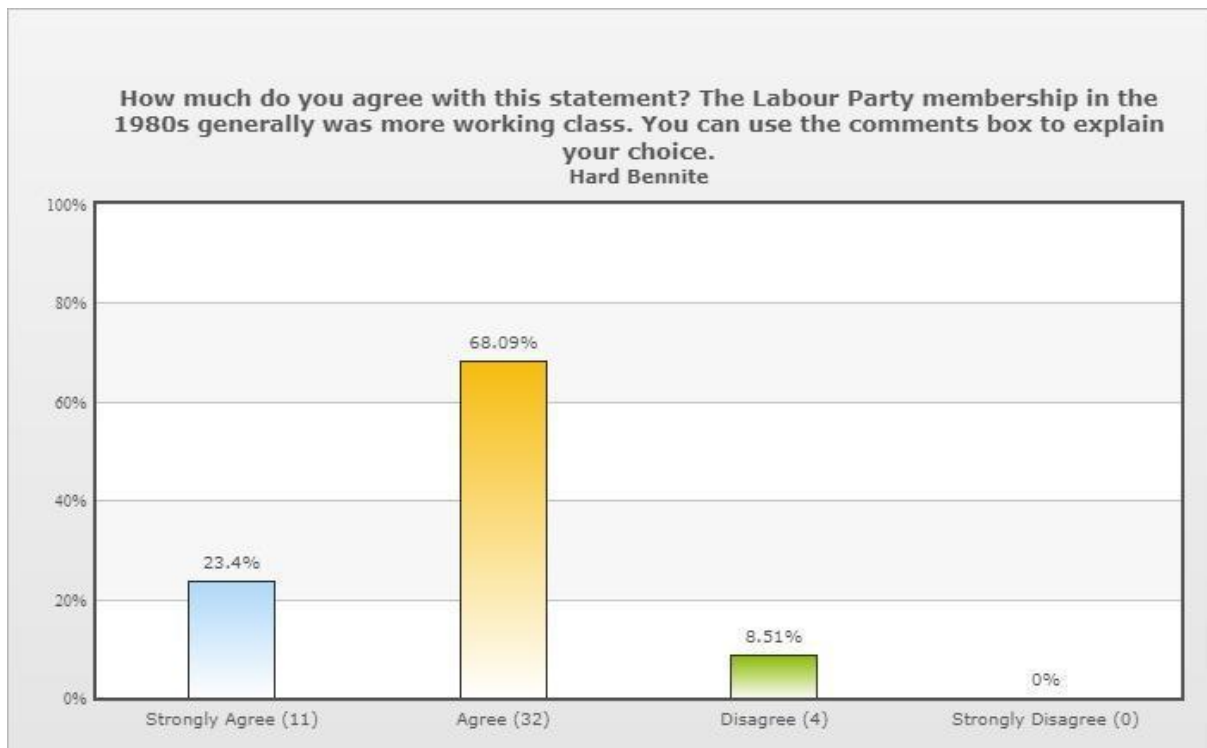
## Perceptions - Class

### 'Soft' Bennite



Graph 3.21

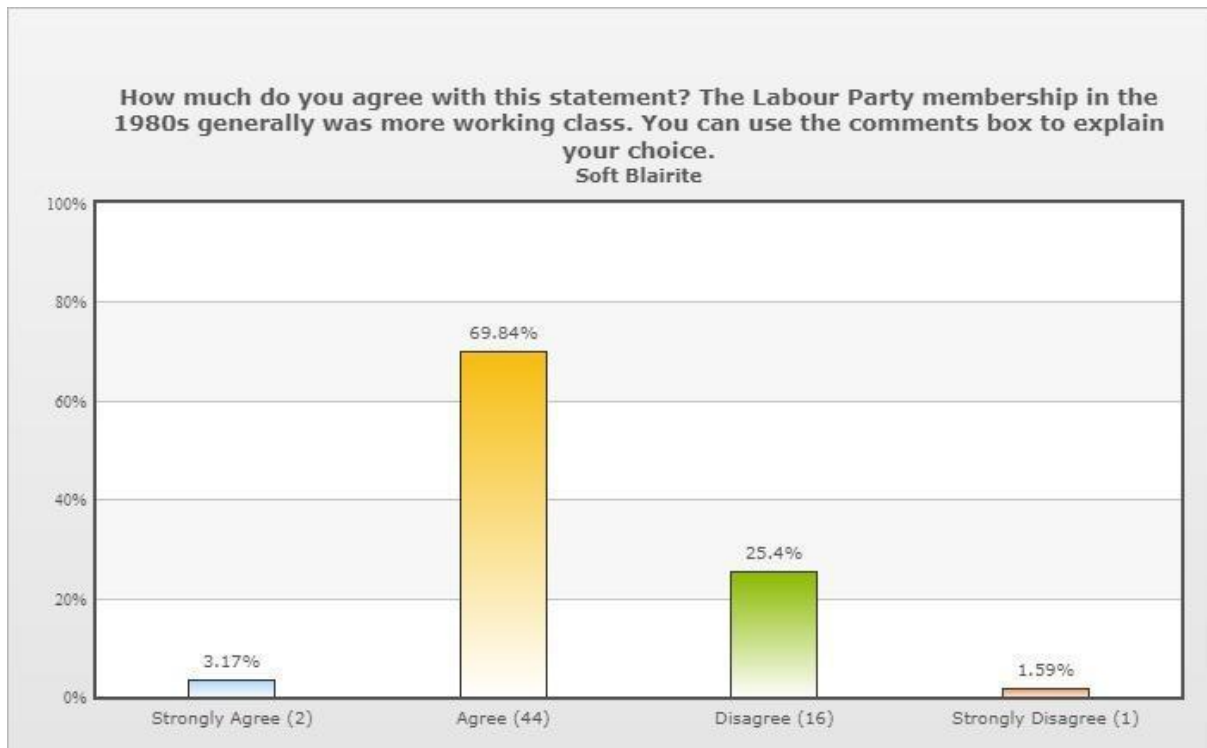
### 'Hard' Bennite



Graph 3.22

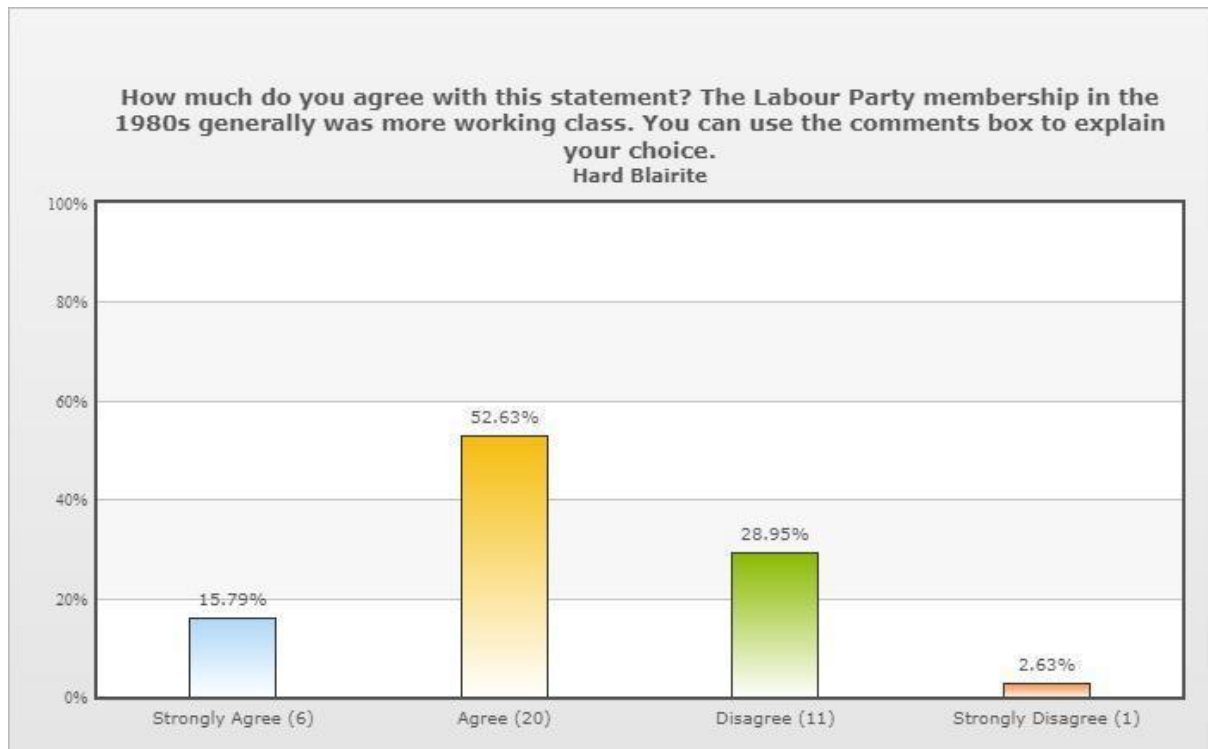
The Bennite groups clearly agree that the membership in the 1980s was generally more working class. A slight increase in the strength of agreement from the 'hard' group.

### 'Soft' Blairite



Graph 3.23

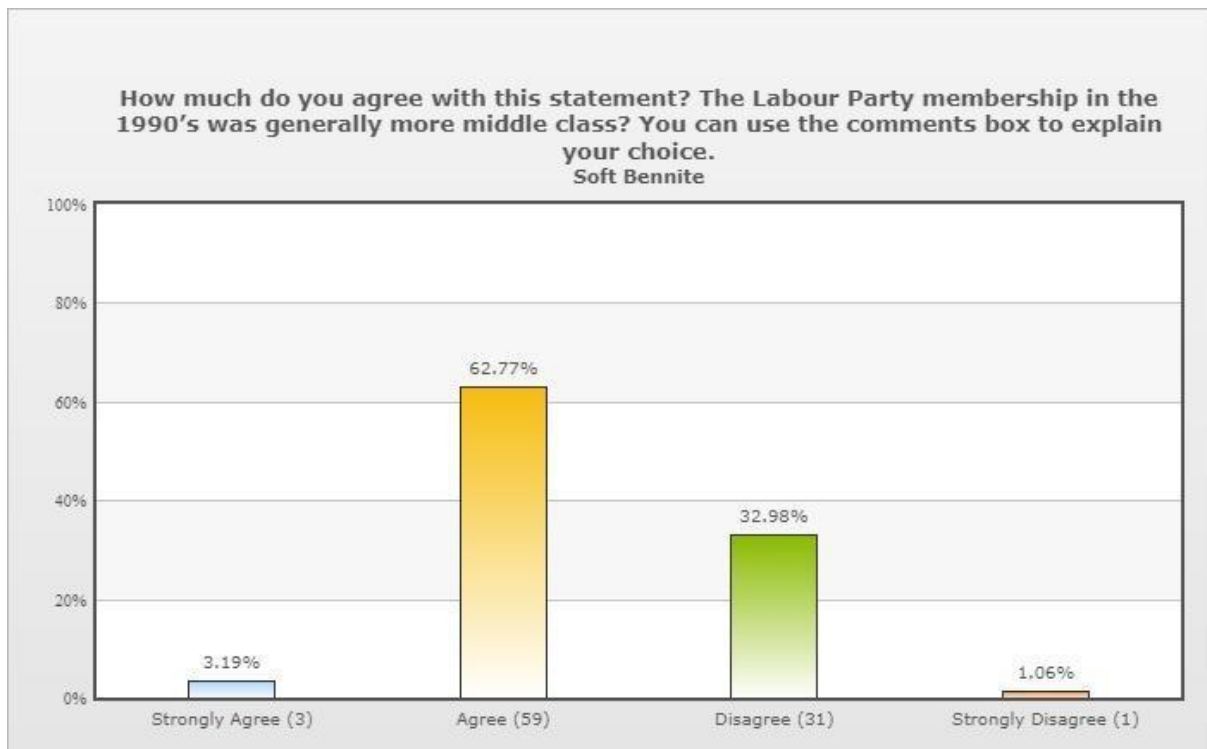
## 'Hard' Blairite



Graph 3.24

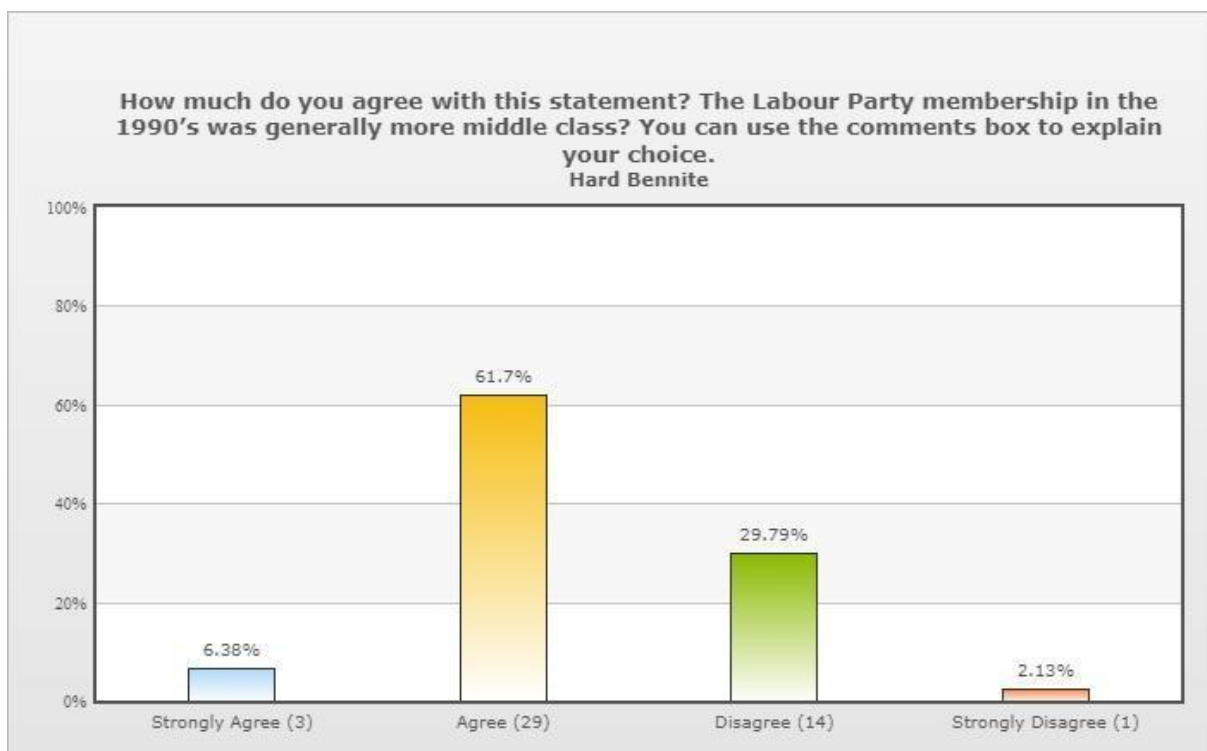
The Blairite groups agree with the Bennite groups that the membership was more working -class in the 80s with even an increase of strongly agreeing from the 'hard' group, but also a slight increase in the disagreement figures.

### 'Soft' Bennite



Graph 3.25

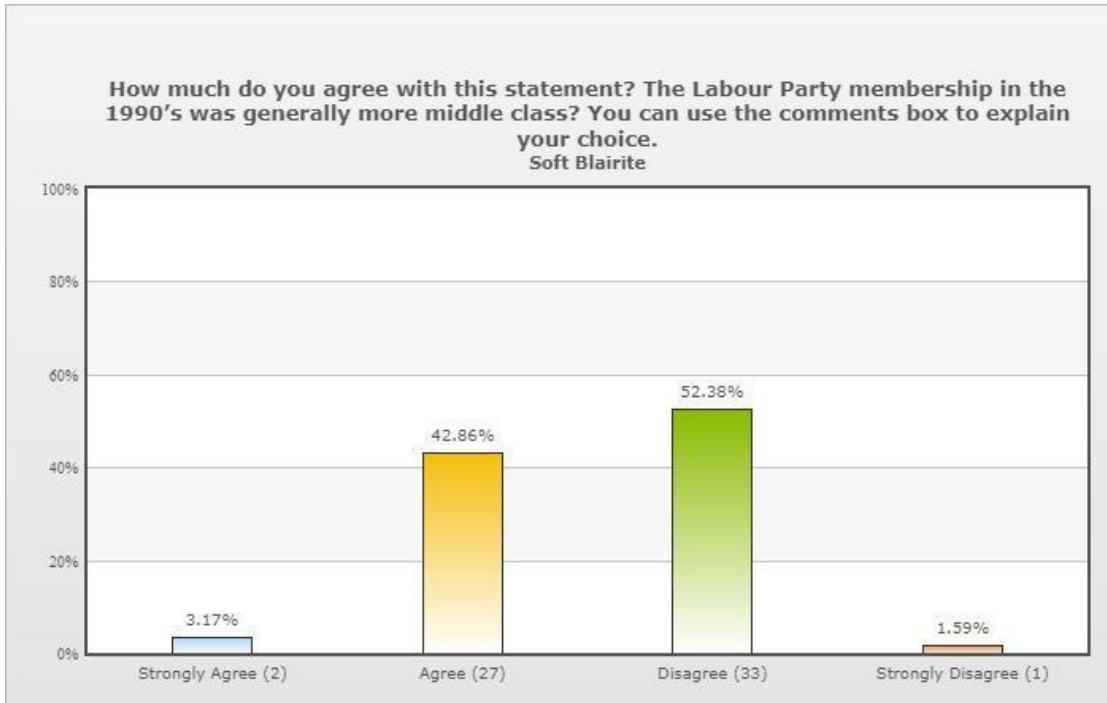
### 'Hard' Bennite



Graph 3.26

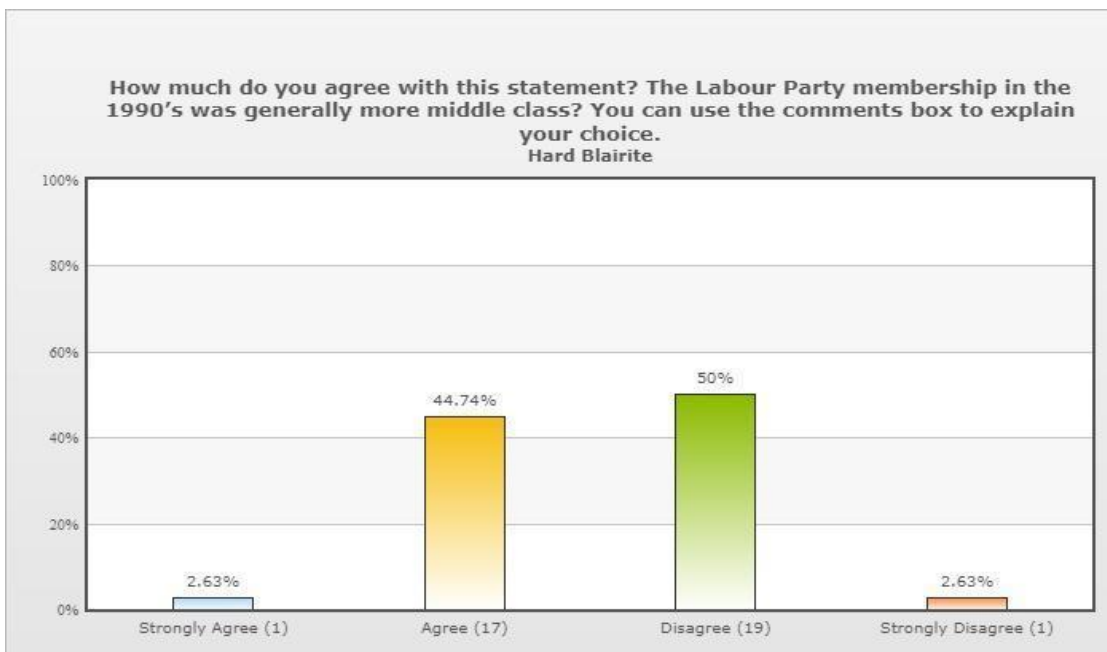
There is practically no change between the two Bennite groups with regards to the membership in the 90s. They clearly see the membership as being generally more middle class.

**‘Soft’ Blairite**



Graph 3.27

**‘Hard’ Blairite**

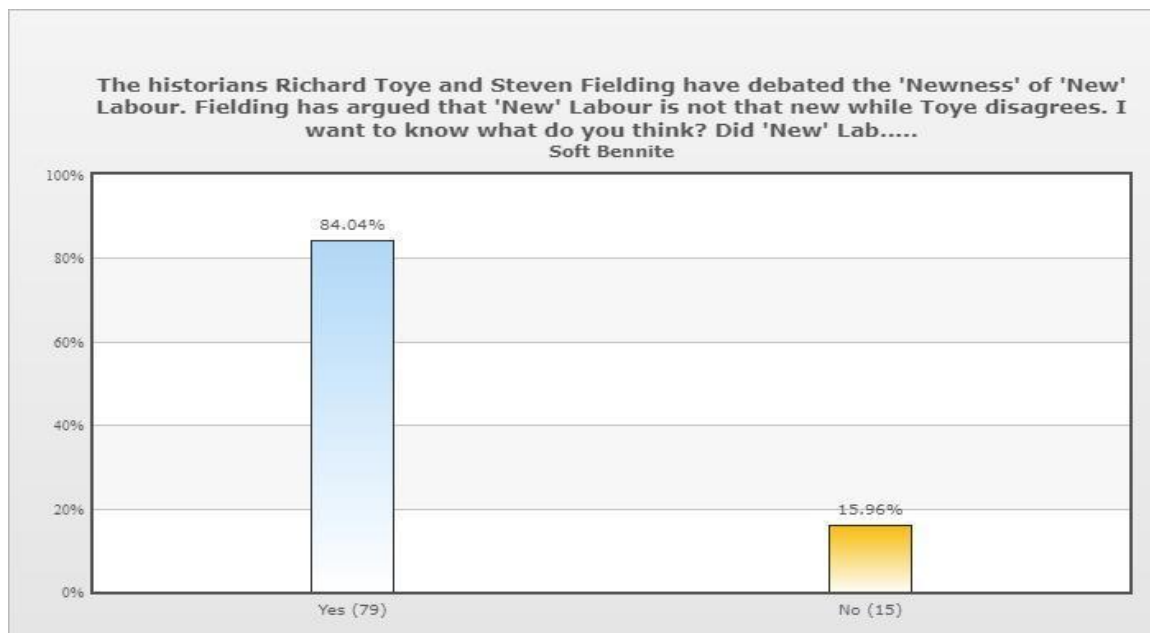


Graph 3.28

Once again the Blairite groups disagree, in this case by a small amount, with the Bennite groups but it is interesting to note that the groups do not disagree about the membership in the 80s as was seen in both the political persuasions of the membership in the 80s and the class of the membership in the 80s but when it comes to the membership of the 90s there is a difference of opinion. This divide is difficult to explain as the 80s were much further in the past and the groups sharing a perception about that period and not one much closer to the present day is curious. This is further tempered by the fact that the largest amount of respondents was from the AB group who would have little to no memory of the time period of the 1980s. Quite how they arrived at this judgment possibly requires further investigation.

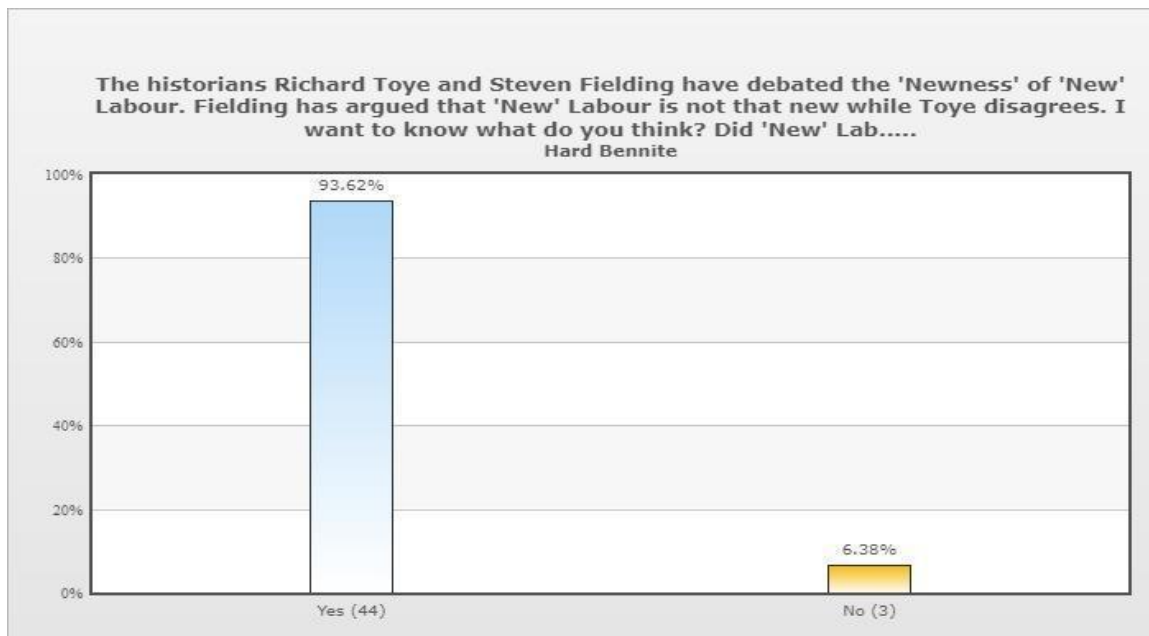
### 'New' Labour?

#### **'Soft' Bennite**



Graph 3.29

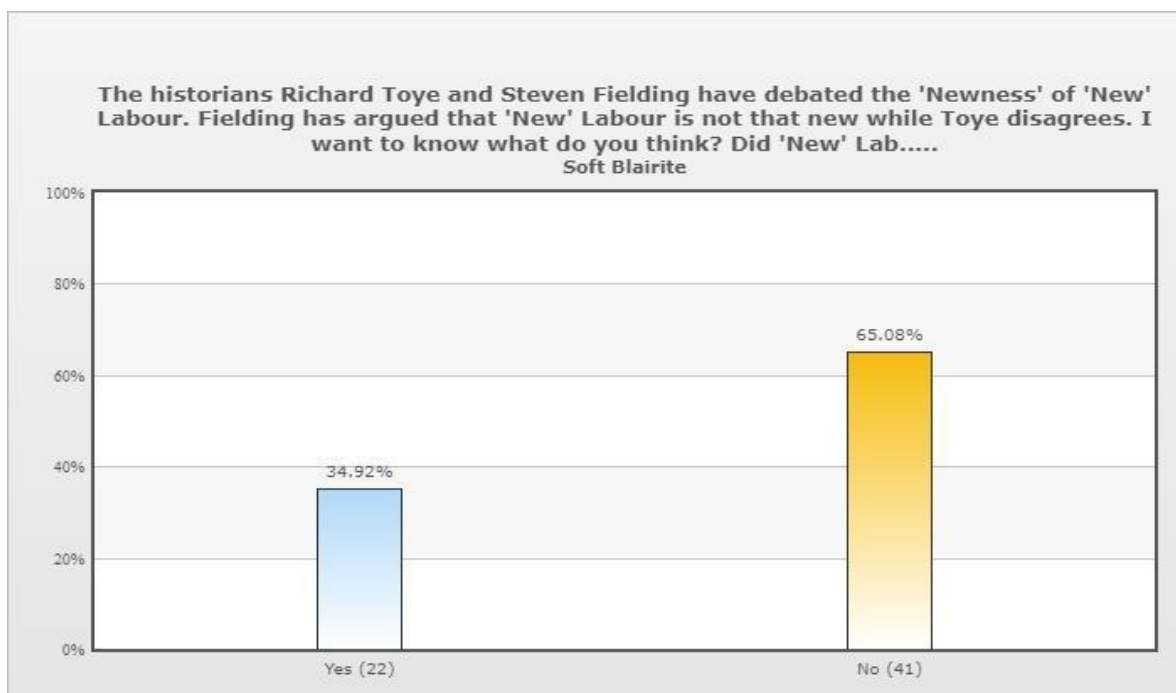
## 'Hard' Bennite



Graph 3.30

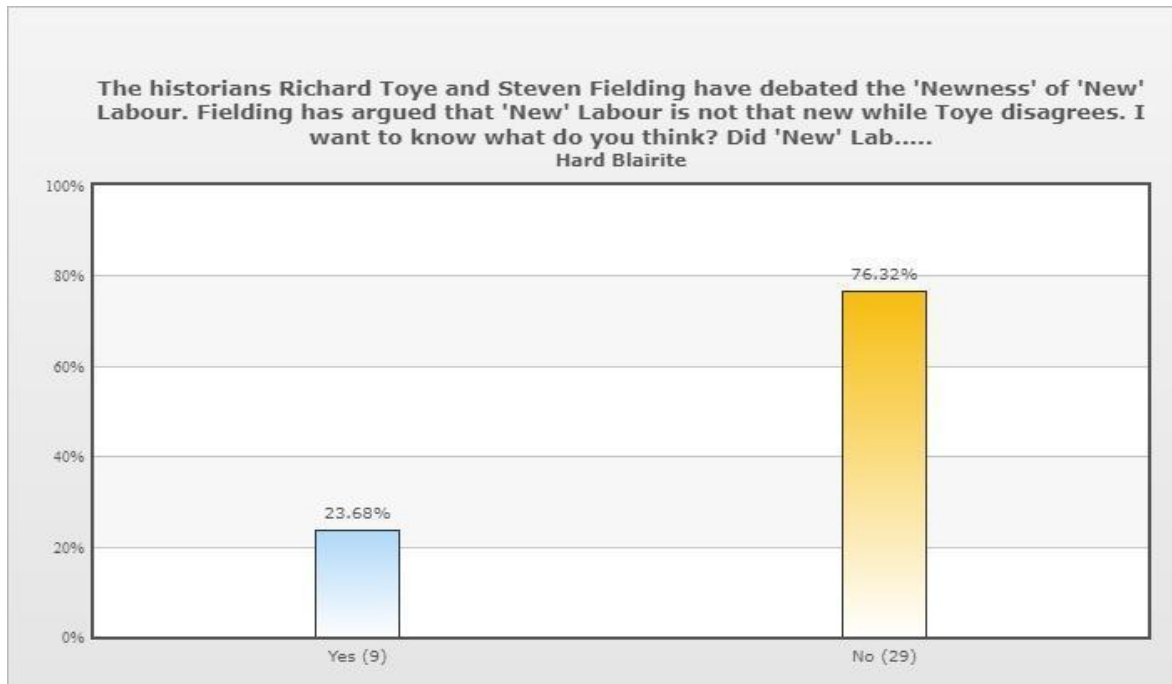
A substantial, even what might be described as a crushing, win for the Bennite idea that 'new' Labour marked a decisive break with the history, heritage and traditions of the labour party.

## 'Soft' Blairite



Graph 3.31

## 'Hard' Blairite



Graph 3.32

There is a strong feeling shared by both Blairite sub-groups that 'new' Labour was not that new but not as inversely strong compared to the Bennite view.

## OMOV and CLIV

As has been shown the survey has produced some surprising and some less surprising results, this section will examine some of these results further on a group by group basis. Starting with the general results, then by generational groupings and finally by evaluating the ideological differences within the Bennite and Blairite groups. The general results will be compared to the Syed and Whitley results of the 1990s whereas the other results will be compared to each other. Comments from the survey will be added give more 'flesh to the bones' of the survey along with the qualitative research from the interviews that were made with some of the participants.

The first thing that must be noted is the result regarding the perception of Tony Benn by the membership in this survey compared to the results of the survey carried out by Seyd and Whiteley. His score hasn't changed at all. Compared to the other personalities who appears on both this survey and from the 1990 survey there is a



shift one way or the other. Everybody sees their score drop with the exception of Dennis Skinner who sees it actually rise. Benn's rating stays exactly the same at 60. His score of 59 in 1999 is no real change either way. This was a surprise as it would be reasonable to assume that his score would rise given that in the 1990s he was an isolated figure within the party after, what many commentators have seen, as his futile challenge for the leadership in 1988 and when 'New' Labour was sweeping all before it in 1999. Subsequently his renaissance in the early years of the 21st century when as the president of the Stop the War coalition he gained a new prominence and his passing in 2014 would see him as being viewed more favourably by the general membership, even gaining something of the status of a 'national treasure.' It is plausible to think that leaders and figures such as Callaghan, Foot, and Healey have achieved modest scores due to their passing and that the membership are more forgiving to them because of this, death softening perceptions of such figures. Indeed, Smith gets the highest score of all, probably because of his untimely death in 1994, occurring so early in his career as Labour leader that there was little that he had done to provoke hostility. The product of a combination of memories produced by 'rose tinted spectacles' and hindsight bias. Figures such as Callaghan and Foot don't seem to be blamed personally for the general election defeats in '79 and '83 respectively which were terrible set-backs for the party but this attitude can be summed up in one of the respondent's comments on the leadership rating question:

"Trade-off is whether they can possibly win versus whether I empathise with them. Hence I like Michael Foot but he can't possibly win.<sup>52</sup>"

Another said:

"Foot was a terrible leader, but a good man and a great parliamentarian.<sup>53</sup>"

Both of these comments came from the Post-Bump group so given that Foot led the party to one of its worst ever election defeats it is rather surprising that he scores so well. The warmer comments about him as a person seem to off-set harsher judgements that could be expected bearing in mind his terrible electoral performance. Enough time has passed since his leadership and his death in 2010 for a certain

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<sup>52</sup> Smart Survey ID 61632524 Collected 23/7/2017

<sup>53</sup> Smart Survey ID 57584498 Collected 14/5/2017

reflective nostalgia to shape perceptions of him among the older Post Bump group.

The ability of this survey to be to record the standard deviation, something that would have been incredibly difficult for Seyd and Whiteley in their surveys, shows us that another reason for Benn's low score is that he was so divisive. This was not recorded in 1990 and 1999 so it is not possible to compare the two scores but it can be noted that he shares a very similar score, in fact not even a 1 point difference, with Tony Blair. This was a bit of a shock. It would be reasonable to assume that Blair would be a divisive figure within the party after the fallout of Iraq and the Chilcot Inquiry reporting in 2016, but for him to share a standard deviation score with Benn is a genuine surprise.

This high deviation score for Benn is also reflected by the score of for the question regarding the deputy leadership election bid by Benn in 1981. The election took place, at the time of writing (2017), thirty six years ago and is still as divisive as ever. Healey won the election with a paper thin majority gaining just over 50% of the vote and the reaction to that victory today is not that much better with it receiving a score of 53.16. The election of Healey in '81 ties with the denunciation of Militant in '85 but as previously stated that may have something to do with the modern context of the emergence of Momentum within the Labour Party. The actual event scores well with a score of 63.08 but it is still controversial. The most interesting result from this group is that the introduction of OMOV gets the highest score generally and also the lowest deviation. This is interesting because at the time of its introduction OMOV was a controversial and contentious issue and it almost didn't happen<sup>54</sup>. When the party conference met in September 1993 it was assumed by most commentators that OMOV would be rejected and it was only the last minute switch of MSF (Manufacturing, Science and Finance union) block vote from opposition to abstention that managed to carry the motion 47.5% to 44.4%<sup>55</sup>. This attitude towards OMOV is something that will be returned to later, it should also be noted that nobody gave this internal event a score lower than 25, every other internal event did receive a score of

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<sup>54</sup> Patrick Wintour and Keith Harper, "Smith Pulls Off High-Risk Gamble" *The Guardian* September 30, 1993, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/1993/sep/30/labour.uk>

<sup>55</sup> Keith Alderman and Neil Carter, "The Labour Party and the Trade Unions: Loosening the Ties," *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 47, Issue 3, 1 July (1994): 327.

1 by at least one respondent. The final take away from this section is that it should be noted is that the redrafting of CL IV scored almost exactly 50 showing that the debate over the redrafting is still continuing amongst the party membership, but as will be seen later, in a bit more complex form.

When it comes to the perceptions section it can be seen that the membership does believe that the membership in the 1980s was generally more working-class and more left wing, also that they believe that the party should focus on gaining power. As has been seen in the perceptions of the ideology and class makeup of the party in this section. The membership does seem to think that a significant change took place in the 1990s and this is reflected in the question about 'New' Labour with a convincing amount of people believing that there was a decisive break between in the history, heritage and traditions of the party.

What then happens when these results these results are broken up into groups? The two generational groups still see Blair as the most controversial personality but a generational split is clearly evident with Benn. The AB group give Benn a high deviation of nearly 30 which is higher than Blair but the PB group see Blair as the most contentious with a huge score of 31.84. The other important results from this section are that the AB group, the oldest member being 35, stills sees the election of Healey in '81 as controversial. This means that no member of that group was alive at the time of this event yet is still scores 25.15 on the deviation. This is mirrored from the PB group who also still see it as alienating but from the position of those alive and aware of the debate at the time.

In relation to OMOV and CL IV both groups seem to like the introduction of OMOV but the PB group does not like the redrafting of CL IV compared to relative ambivalence from the AB group. This can be cross referenced by the perceptions of the two groups. Both groups seem to be in agreement about the social composition of the party in the 80s and 90s but there is an inverse reaction to the question about the ideology of the party in the 90s. The AB group marginally don't believe that the membership was more right wing in the 90s and this is almost identically flipped by the PB group. The AB group seems to also have a stronger belief that the membership was more left wing in the 80s, this is shared by the PB group but not as

strongly.

Those differences are somewhat minimal, the real difference between the groups is over the issue of power versus principles. There is a clear preference among the AB group for the party focusing on gaining power. Only 3% people disagreed with that statement from the AB group compared to around 25% from the PB group. Here context must be a factor, with the 2017 election playing a role in the responses. The desire by the AB group to win an election and to gain back power for, what would be for most of them the first time that could remember that happening, must be huge. However the reaction to the second question is interesting. The commitment to principles at the expense of electoral success shows a clear difference. The AB group disagrees with the statement whereas the PB group is more ambivalent and shows a slight inclination to agreeing with the statement. As was discussed the PB group have gone through their 'bump' phase and their identity can be seen as defined, almost certainly guided by principles that could emanate from the CL IV debates. The AB group whose identity has not yet fully formed is less interested in sticking to the principles, probably because they have no affinity to the old CL IV. This would explain the split in the two groups' attitudes to the redrafting of CL IV. Finally both groups seem to agree that 'New' Labour did mark a decisive break in the history, heritage and traditions of the party. This is interesting again for two reasons. One that the PB group is generally against the redrafting of CL IV, the old version that became something of a shibboleth to them but it is hard to see exactly where the major change is between the 1918 version and the 1995 version. The issue is probably that it was changed at all. Both groups however are more positive about the introduction of OMOV, something that profoundly changed the way the party operated and ended the original link between the party and the unions. Ernest Bevin once described the party's origins as coming 'out of the bowels of the trade unions'<sup>56</sup>. This link between the attitudes towards OMOV and CL IV is something we shall again return to later.

When the results are looked at through a filter of 'hard' and 'soft' feelings towards Benn and Blair the attitudes towards Labour leaders and figures is not surprising.

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<sup>56</sup> Lewis Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1992), 3

What is surprising however, is the score for OMOV from all groups. From both sides of the ideological spectrum, both 'hard' and 'soft', see it as a good thing and it has a relatively low deviation score. This is surprising as there is a clear split from the groups as to the attitudes towards 'New' Labour from the groups. The Bennites see it as a decisive break whereas the Blairites less so. As discussed earlier the link between the unions was being weakened with the introduction of OMOV and as the party grew out of that movement Tony Benn voiced his displeasure with the move in his diary where he seems to suggest that he didn't like it because it went against the history, heritage and traditions of the party.

"Membership is not about money, it is about commitment, and many old members in the party, not particularly on the left, don't know what the party stands for anymore. The party has existed for ninety-six years; I have been a member of it for fifty, half its life, and on the Executive for thirty-two years, which is one third of its life. I think, candidly, what is happening is that the Party is being dismantled. The trade union link is to be broken; the economic policy statement we are considering today makes no reference to the trade unions. Clause 4 is being attacked; PR is being advocated with a view to a pact with the Liberals of a kind that Peter Mandelson worked for in Newbury, where he in fact encouraged the Liberal vote. The policy work has been subcontracted. These so-called modernisers are really Victorian Liberal, who believe in market forces, don't like trade unions and are anti-socialist. The party needs to be rebuilt by putting it back to local control, as it was before in 1918. I was listened to in silence. Whether anyone took my comments on board, I don't know.<sup>57</sup>"

The introduction of OMOV was originally proposed by the right wing of the party and supported by Blair. As has been shown earlier it was only just passed at conference but the Blairites probably saw it as necessary part of becoming electable and managed to get rid of the perception of 'Union Barons' being in control of the Labour 'selectorate.' There was a perception by the right wing of the party, or as they preferred to be known the modernisers, that the unions link was the main reason why Labour lost in 1992<sup>5859</sup>. The pro-Blair grouping positive rating of that event probably stems from their view of the past of it being a key part of making Labour electable. The introduction of OMOV did change the Labour Party and its history and heritage. Thomas Quinn wrote in his book *Modernising the Labour Party: Organisational Change since 1983* (2004) that:

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<sup>57</sup> Tony Benn, *Free at Last! Diaries 1991 - 2001*, ed. Ruth Winstone (Arrow Books: London, 2002) 177

<sup>58</sup> Keith Alderman and Neil Carter, "The Labour Party and the Trade Unions: Loosening the Ties," *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 47, Issue 3, 1 July (1994): 331.

<sup>59</sup> Lewis Minkin, *The Blair Supremacy* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2014), 54.

“The principle of OMOV altered the very nature of the Labour Party. Since 1918, Labour has had an organisational structure, but while it was for long a mainly federal party with some unitary features, in the 1990s the federal features were eroded (though not abolished) and the unitary features considerably extended.<sup>60</sup>”

The relationship to the unions has always been seen as a contentious matter within the history for the Labour Party. Lewis Minkin titled his book about that history *The Contentious Alliance* (1992) written presumably the year before the 1992 General Election and definitely before the 1993 introduction of OMOV. Minkin’s next book about the party was named *The Blair Supremacy* (2014) which alludes to the changes, or at least perceived so changes, that took place after 1992. However, these changes have been, to use Minkin’s title, contentious. Although OMOV managed to get rid of the union block vote in leadership elections and conference votes it did not get rid of the party’s reliance on union money<sup>61</sup>. The left of the party probably likes OMOV because it has helped them to eventually to install a left wing leader, Jeremy Corbyn, in 2015 and re-election in the 2016 challenge by Owen Smith, with comfortable majorities. The fact that they would be able to do so because of the proposals originally promoted by the right wing of the party is ironic but also ahistorical. It is reasonable to assume that supporters of Corbyn would also be more likely to be supporters of Benn but as has been shown, Benn was very much against OMOV as he saw it as a breaking of the history heritage and traditions of the party. This puts us into a very bizarre place as it seems both ideological sections of the party ‘left’ and ‘right’, or ‘modernisers’ and traditionalists’ have myths built up about the union link that are, to borrow Minkin’s title again, contentious. While it is correct to say that OMOV reduced the power of union leaders in party leadership elections and conference policy votes this does not mean that union influence in the party disappeared completely.

Although Tony Blair sought to reduce the party's reliance on union money after his election to as leader in 1994 he did so only partially. The party remained tied to the unions in a way not found in other major social democratic parties<sup>62</sup>. This reliance on

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<sup>60</sup> Thomas Quinn, *Modernising the Labour Party: Constitutional Change since 1983* (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndsmills, 2005), 179

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Quinn, “New Labour and the Trade Unions in Britain,” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 20:3, (2010) 378.

<sup>62</sup> Quinn, “New Labour and the Trade Unions in Britain”, 367.

union money is ultimately what kept the union link with the party and also allowed the unions to have access to government, the principle desire of unions. This way they can facilitate their growth by delivering benefits to their members but it can only be delivered with a Labour government a financial link in the past that was used as a charge against the party, that it was the ‘union barons’ who called the tune in matters of policy. This was very much not the case for Lewis Minkin who, in *The Contentious Alliance*, quotes Ben Pimlott who says:

“He who paid the piper merely played the tuba and the big bass drum.”<sup>63</sup>

Minkin states in 1992 that:

“[t]here were and remain unwritten prohibitions against open threats of financial sanctions, and there were and are inhibitions and constraints which limit the implementation of such sanctions. The NEC’s responsibility for the government of the party generally provides a meaningful insulation from direct organisational control by senior leaders.”<sup>64</sup>

This was until 2004 when the Warwick agreement was reached with the unions and the Labour government about what Labour policy would be after the next election, 2005, would be. This agreement was needed because in 2001 and 2002 two unions, the CWU and GMB actually withheld funds from the Labour Party<sup>65</sup>. Thus the party’s reliance on union money remained evident and the ability of the unions to use it as leverage for policies still seemed to exist. Thus, after a brief attempt to weaken the link after 1997, the party still had to go back to union money to fund itself. What did no longer exist was the block vote of the unions at conference, candidate selection, and in leadership elections. The left wing of the party had fears that modernisation would be used to control the party seem to have been wrong and that the right wing of the party feared that such a link would make Labour unsuccessful at the ballot box equally as incorrect. Labour won the 2005 election comfortably albeit with the political albatross of the Iraq war around its neck, union involvement with party not appearing to have an appreciative effect on its electoral fortunes. Nevertheless, the union link

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<sup>63</sup> Lewis Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1992) 626.

<sup>64</sup> Minkin *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*, 627.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Quinn, New Labour and the Trade Unions in Britain, *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, (2010) 20:3: 375.

with the Labour Party has fundamentally changed in relation to its history heritage and tradition. From being a federal party from its early days to a position where unions are essentially a cash cow for the party but still retaining some access to government which was ultimately the political aim of the party in its early days. Simon Hannah bemoaned the collusion between the union leaders and Labour Party leadership at that time in his book: *Party with Socialists in it: A History of the Labour Left* (2018). He states that:

“Union leaders ruthlessly policed their own members using anti-union laws...The key factor sustaining control exercised by the Milbank tendency was the sheer relief felt by the unions that Labour was electable again. They may have grumbled in public but within the Labour Party their half-hearted opposition was easily defeated by the might of the Blairite machine.<sup>66</sup>”

As has been seen in the survey, the Iraq War was by far the most unpopular Labour Party event yet the party was able to secure a historic third term despite it. It could be argued that this shows that party was indeed in dire need of union money and support, as without such funding the party would certainly have found the 2005 election a much tougher challenge. Part of the problem here possibly arises out of a misconception about the nature of OMOV. The idea is possibly that members see OMOV primarily as a way of electing a party leader and that change is seen as positive. Whereas in fact the major change was the way that OMOV replaced the block vote at conference in relation to policy and in parliamentary candidate selection. Labour leaders had, until 1983, been elected by a secret ballot by the PLP. Members completing the survey may not be aware of this fact given that the majority of people taking the survey first became members after 1997, and, when presented with the OMOV question see it mainly as a leadership selection issue, rather than relating to parliamentary candidate selection and conference policy. It could be argued then, that if the response rate was more equal between members from before 1997 the score could be significantly different. This may very well be the case and requires further investigation. Given the available results it is surprising that only two respondents in the study actually mention OMOV in the comments section, those two comments are in the internal events section and nobody mentions it as a reason behind their answer to the question about the party's history, heritage and traditions

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<sup>66</sup> Simon Hannah, *A Party with Socialists in it: A History of the Labour Left*. (Pluto Press: London, 2018) 207.



despite what has been covered previously in this dissertation. What is mentioned by one respondent was:

“One-member-one-vote gave more agency to the individual members which is attractive, but removing the block votes of the unions (and then abolishing [sic] the electoral college competely [sic]) has not noticeably improved decisions taken by the party; or indeed even made those decision-taken; more widely excepted [sic] and respected.<sup>67</sup>”

Despite attempts to contact this respondent, who gave an email address, we are unable to get them to expand on this point but what we can do is look at the answers given by them in more detail. This person was in the 36 - 35 age group and first joined the party after 1997 and has never left the party since doing so. He/she gave the introduction of OMOV a low rating of 40. This respondent is unique in this survey as they do not fit into any ideological group that has been filtered as has been mentioned previously. A negative rating is given to both Benn and Blair. Also, when asked if ‘New’ Labour marked a decisive break with the history, heritage and traditions of the Labour Party, a ‘No’ answer is given. The reason for this is that ‘New’ Labour:

“[s]eems to have had no lasting legacy [.]<sup>68</sup>”

This is an interesting response because as has been seen, in relation to the union link, the ‘New’ Labour attempt to de-link itself with the unions was ultimately short lived. The comment then goes on to say that:

“I think Kinnock into Smith period was much more transformative.<sup>69</sup>”

It would be correct to say that both Kinnock and Smith delivered much more lasting change to the party because of the implementation of OMOV that did turn the party from a federal structure to a unitary one, with a stronger role for individual party members. The difference here can be noted in the fact that Blair, when elected party leader in ‘94, moved to re-draft CLIV, something that this respondent called:

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<sup>67</sup> Smart Survey ID 57584091 Collected 15/5/2017

<sup>68</sup> Smart Survey ID 57584091 Collected 15/5/2017

<sup>69</sup> Smart Survey ID 57584091 Collected 15/5/2017

“[T]he most meaningless publicity stunt in the entire history of the Labour party.<sup>70</sup>”

This idea of a publicity stunt is something that will be returned to later but now we must consider why it is that only one respondent seems to address the issue of OMOV and most chose to cite CLIV as an issue. In the section that relates to internal party events the redrafting of CLIV is the most referenced but with mixed attitudes towards it. One person says that:

“Clause IV has always been symbolic, not of real political importance.<sup>71</sup>”

And another says:

“Clause 4 change irrelevant<sup>72</sup>”

However another two respondents are less ambivalent about it, one stating:

“Never understood why anyone would want to get rid of clause [four].<sup>73</sup>”

and another:

“[t]his started the drift to the right cl4.<sup>74</sup>”

So why then, when does so few respondents mention OMOV in their responses and no respondents at all cite the union link at all in their answer to the ‘New’ Labour question about history, heritage and tradition. For a possible answer to this, we must take into account three other internal Labour party events and the rating they received. The first being the earliest event on the list, namely the Deputy Leadership election between Healey and Benn in 1981. This event took place over thirty five years ago and is still proves to be as divisive as ever. This is even more surprising considering that the vast majority of respondents first became members after 1997. The redrafting of Clause IV was passed in 1995 with little resistance, albeit with a lot

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<sup>70</sup> Smart Survey ID 57584091 Collected 15/5/2017

<sup>71</sup> Smart Survey ID 57559795 Collected 14/5/2017

<sup>72</sup> Smart Survey ID 60820274 Collected 14/7/2017

<sup>73</sup> Smart Survey ID 60499682 Collected 09/7/2017

<sup>74</sup> Smart Survey ID 61207107 Collected 22/7/2017

of abstentions, as only 27% of eligible voters participated in the ballot<sup>75</sup>. So, how has the situation arisen where an event like the deputy leadership election remains as divisive as ever, the introduction of OMOV becoming more popular and the redrafting of CLIV becoming less popular?

The answer probably lies in the other internal event, Kinnock's denunciation of Militant in 1985. The denunciation section of Kinnock's party conference speech in '85 is the most memorable and most dramatic. It provides a good sound-bite for the television news and is arguably the most famous party conference speech in British political history. Kinnock's '85 speech was seen as taking down the hard left Militant and actively separating the Labour Party from that extra-parliamentary wing of the party. What must be understood here is the context of when the survey was conducted. As has been stated previously the survey was conducted before and during the General Election of 2017. When that election was called, Labour was expected to suffer a wipe-out by the Conservatives. The Labour party had recently been through two acrimonious leadership elections, with accusations of infiltration by hard-left elements and a growing influence amongst rank-and-file Labour members of a new extra parliamentary group 'Momentum'. With the positive rating of Kinnock's denunciation there is also a large standard deviation. But as can be seen, compared to other events from that question, it is the second most popular event after OMOV. What may be happening here is that respondents were looking at the event with a view to current events with some pining for a leader to stand up to the hard left elements that they felt were rife in the Labour membership. This presents a possible case of hindsight bias with people not really looking at the event in the context of its time. How is this idea tested? One way is to break the results into two groups. The two groups mentioned earlier, namely the AB and PB groups. The PB group being ones who possibly experienced the event first hand and the AB group who can only really be aware of it second hand.

The PB group, all of whom would have been of an age to remember the event, give it collectively a slight neutral score of 58, but it is the second most popular event with

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<sup>75</sup> Steven Fielding, *The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the making of 'New' Labour*. (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, 2003) 128.

that group. Whereas, the AB group see it as the most positive event with a score of 66, a difference of 8 points. There is a switch around when it comes to the issue of OMOV, the PB group see it as the most positive and the AB group see it as the second most positive. This may lead us to possibly discerning that the two groups see a difference in the most important internal Labour issue at the time of completing the survey. One group, the PB, see the implementation of party democracy as the most important issue and the other, the AB group, as dealing with hard left faction within the party.

The old scars of internal division are still evident with the close rating for the Benn/Healey election. Despite it happening over 35 years ago and with most respondents' only becoming members after 1997 it is still as contentious as ever. This must be a projection by the members on the past viewed through the lens of the present. This is confirmed by the respondent Naiyan Jones, 23, who, in his phone interview stated that:

"I think my opinion of Militant...I'd been mainly influenced by the rise of Momentum I suppose more than anything else.<sup>76</sup>"

However, when Naiyan attempts to expand on his reflective nostalgia for Kinnock standing up to Militant and gets a key detail wrong and that is revealing. He talks about the background to that moment and states, correctly, that a 'hard left' faction was infiltrating the Labour Party and that councils were breaking the law by not balancing the books, he then goes on to say:

"I can't remember which City Council it was, it was a London Borough, the one where Livingstone was in charge at the time I believe?<sup>77</sup>"

What has happened here is that he has conflated some pieces of information. A London council did defy the rate capping set by the then Tory government, that was Lambeth, but Ken Livingstone had nothing to do with that. Livingstone was involved with the Greater London Council not Lambeth, who considered defying rate capping but decided against such action<sup>78</sup>. Also Livingstone had nothing to do with Militant, for

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<sup>76</sup> Telephone Interview with Naiyan Jones on 28/7/2017 Transcript page 7.

<sup>77</sup> Telephone Interview with Naiyan Jones on 28/7/2017 Transcript page 7.

<sup>78</sup> Ken Livingstone, *If Voting Changed Anything, They'd Abolish it*. (Collins: London, 1987) 336.

his eventual decision to set a rate he was attacked by Militant<sup>79</sup>. The Kinnock speech was dealing more specifically with the Liverpool council and Derek Hatton who was heavily involved with Militant. What has happened here is, again, he has equated Militant with the 'hard' left and Livingstone is still a figure in the Labour party who is extremely divisive and controversial as this survey has shown. It is simply not accurate to say that Livingstone was a target of the '85 conference speech, Kinnock may have had antipathy towards him at the time, but that speech was more about Derek Hatton and his Militant allies. It seems that Naiyan has looked at the past through the lens of the present, hoping for a current Labour Party to reprimand Livingstone in a similar way to Kinnock in '85. At the time of conducting the survey and interview Ken Livingstone was suspended from the party for his comments on Hitler and Zionism and, as has been shown in the survey, become a very divisive figure in the party. Naiyan is probably using his intuitive judgment here because he was not around during the rate capping rebellion of the mid 1980s and has attempted to link it to something that he does know about, like Ken Livingstone's controversial comments. This issue of intuitive judgement when completing the survey is something that will be returned to later.

The issue of dealing with the 'hard' left is the major bone of contention for the AB group as the Benn/Healey election and Kinnock's denunciation tie for a standard deviation score with 25. This is counteracted by the score given to the CLIV issue which the PB group are generally negative about and end up with a rather large deviation of 28. It is possible that the PB group see it as either a betrayal or a necessity giving the large deviation score. As shown in the comments from earlier it is given one of those labels. In the phone interviews that were conducted Rosemary Nicholls, 67, who was part of the PB group talked about CLIV stating that it was "very important" and that:

"[I]t was changing such a lot about what the Labour Party was aiming at, it wasn't...looking for more and more nationalisation, it brought in whole lot of other issues and really changed what the Labour Party was promoting. We were doing something right in terms of our electability.<sup>80</sup>"

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<sup>79</sup> Ken Livingstone, *If Voting Changed Anything, They'd Abolish it*. (Collins: London, 1987), 335.

<sup>80</sup> Telephone Interview with Rosemary Nicholls on 29/7/2017 Transcript page 6.

Rosemary gave a score of 90 to CLIV and 75 to OMOV.

Chris Snowdon, 69, also part of the PB generation, is even blunter about the redrafting saying that he felt it was fine because:

“[I]t meant nothing. I’d been in that party twenty years by then... what was the point in worrying over something which obviously wasn’t going to happen and it was only just words.<sup>81</sup>”

Chris Snowdon gave a score of 90 to CLIV and 55 to OMOV.

Christine Davies, 68, mentions the redrafting of CLIV briefly but talks about how she didn’t like the changes made in the 1990s. She talks about how she didn’t think that CLIV should have been redrafted and how ‘New’ Labour:

“[C]hanged the emblem from the red flag to the red rose...tried to go very right wing I felt and get rid of anything that was, left wing or socialist...they were doing it at the time trying just to appeal to the public and the yuppies. They were appealing to the wrong, well not appealing to the wrong people, they should appeal to everyone but they were moving their ideas across to look more acceptable.<sup>82</sup>”

Christine Davies gave a score of 12 to CLIV and 47 to OMOV but admitted that she didn’t know much about OMOV. It is interesting to note that Christine Davies states that the emblem was changed by ‘New’ Labour from the red flag to the rose when in fact the emblem wasn’t changed by ‘New’ Labour but by Kinnock in the mid-80s from the old liberty emblem with the spade and the quill crossed behind a torch. It is possible that she’s thinking about the song The Red Flag that was sung at the end of the party conference but that was never taken out by ‘New’ Labour. The idea of a ‘red flag’ in politics is a predominantly socialist one and Christine is probably thinking about the clear move away from more socialist imagery of the Labour Party in the late 80s and the party’s attempt to appeal to a wider electorate.

What can be seen in relation to internal issues such as CLIV and OMOV is a divergence of attitudes that don’t really line up with what actually happened in the

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<sup>81</sup> Telephone Interview with Chris Snowdon on 28/7/2017 Transcript page 12

<sup>82</sup> Telephone Interview with Christine Davies on 27/7/2017 Transcript page 10

past. Certainly in relation to OMOV the current feeling is not that which can be easily reconciled with the debates over the matter that took place in 1993. When looking at the two generational groups and their scores for OMOV, it should be noted that nobody gave it a score lower than 25, in fact nobody in the AB group scored it less than 33. This may be because the AB group were less likely to give it a more extreme rating through a lack of confidence in scoring it. The issues around OMOV are very complicated. Most people probably don't realise that the bone of contention was to do with selection of parliamentary candidates and probably thought that it was more to do with the election of the leader. The AB generation may also not fully appreciate the history of the party with its pivotal connection with the trade union movement, and the breaking of that link is just not as important. Also, many younger members, if not older members also, may not realise that at one point you had to be a member of a trade union in order to be a member of the Labour Party. The AB generation may assume that individual membership has always been there from the foundation of the party. From the PB group Chris Snowdon, mentions that he ended up joining the party due to being pushed by his union boss in the 1970s, he stated:

“[R]egional secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union that I was active in at the time held a meeting and encouraged us all, all the union activists to join the local Labour Party. That sort of pushed me into doing it. It facilitated it rather than, I was already thinking about it...I could join immediately become a delegate, you know, have some position in the party rather than just a member.<sup>83</sup>”

This may seem strange to the AB generation who are currently used to a mass individual membership of the party. The connections to the party via the unions is not, for many, perhaps most of them, a central part of their political identity and therefore have no fundamental attachment to them.

Looking at the ideological differences and how they relate to OMOV by using the 'Hard' Blairite and Bennite filters an interesting picture emerges. The Blairite group give OMOV a positive score of 62 but contrasts with the Bennite score of 69 which is comfortably their highest score for an internal event. This is surprising because as has been seen earlier Benn was firmly opposed to the introduction of OMOV. It is

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<sup>83</sup> Telephone Interview with Chris Snowdon on 28/7/2017 Transcript page 4

also surprising that the Blairite group are less enthusiastic about it as it was a move initially promoted by the 'modernisers' of the PLP at the time, of whom, Blair was a leading member. What must have happened here is that the Bennites have embraced OMOV as it has enabled them to get a 'left wing' leader. This is a good example of one ideological wing of the party introducing a measure to try and consolidate their grip on power, only for it to backfire on them later on. The introduction of the electoral college in the early 80s was an attempt by Benn and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy but it ended up electing leaders who were less sympathetic to the Bennite wing. This can be demonstrated in the demographics of the 'Hard' Bennite filter who all come from members who first joined after 1997 and has a strong weighting (along with the general results from the survey) towards the AB group.

With regards to the CLIV issue it is entirely possible that members are either not that bothered about it as, if you were to look at both drafts of the clause, both the 1918 version and the 1995 version, it is difficult to see exactly what is so different about them. The 27% turnout as mentioned earlier to the CLIV vote is indicative as to the membership's apathy at the time. The party has been through a traumatic experience. The failure of the party to at least be the largest party in parliament after the 1992 election and its fourth consecutive defeat at the ballot box, followed the internal arguing and last moment passing of OMOV then further confounded by the sudden and unexpected death of their new leader John Smith while they were polling well after the government's Black Wednesday, concentrated the minds of many Labour members. The writer John O'Farrell explains it best:

"I was attached to Clause Four for its nostalgic; symbolic value - it proclaimed to the world that, once upon a time at least, we were a left wing party...I avoided reading about the ongoing debate in the papers and once again bottled out of voting on the issue. I wasn't sure enough that Tony Blair was wrong to oppose the change openly. I suppose deep down I was really saying, if you think that's what it will take to get rid of this lot then so be it. Do what you have to do, Tony; I'll pretend I wasn't looking.<sup>84</sup>"

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<sup>84</sup> John O'Farrell, *Things Can Only Get Better: Eighteen Miserable Years in the life of a Labour Supporter, 1979-1997*. (Black Swan: London, 1999), p294



That tacit support for the new CLIV has now evolved into a much more contentious issue. The 'Hard' Bennite filter is firmly of the view that it was bad. It only manages a score of 33 whereas the 'Hard' Blairite group are much more positive giving it a glowing 73. The attitudes to CLIV today are interesting, they are either one of utter ambivalence, a practical necessity, a statement to the pointlessness of the redrafting or a belief that it was a betrayal of Labour principles.

What is evident is that there is a much stronger feeling towards CLIV rather than OMOV which, as Thomas Quinn has stated, fundamentally changed the party's relationship to the unions. This survey has demonstrated that there is currently within the membership no such animosity towards that change, in fact every demographic, from the general results to the generational divide to the ideological differences has seen OMOV as something positive, despite that being a slightly ahistorical attitude to take from the 'Hard' Bennite wing. This is probably because OMOV is a much more technical issue that is complex and difficult to understand. CLIV however is much more visceral, expressive and easier to understand (it's only a few paragraphs of text) and those who feel strongly about it see it as being an integral party of their identity. Members of the PB especially would have grown up with the old CLIV and therefore would have seen it possibly as being party of their identity, this would add to their formative experience during their reminiscence bump. The younger members of the PB group would have started to become more aware of events outside of their own experience as the acquisition bump starts around the age of 15. So some basic maths suggests that those who were born in 1980 would have been turning 15 around the time of the adoption of the new draft of CLIV in 1995. Feelings would have been high during that time, and it would have been remembered by younger groups. Either you would have seen the CLIV debate as a betrayal of Labour values or alternatively as an electoral necessity. The next section will look at the question that asked respondents about their attitudes to gaining power. It will look at the reaction to the answers first through the two generations and then through the ideological filter of the two Tony's, as well as using the comments from the survey to add more colour to the quantitative data. Using that framework it will also look at the current members' perception of the membership in the 1980s and 1990s and compare the questions to the findings made by Seyd and Whiteley in the early and late 90s.

## **Power, Principles and Class.**

This section is look at the responses to the questions around power and principles, as well as the perceptions about the class makeup of the party in the past. They will be looked at in reference to other research that has been undertaken, especially work by Seyd and Whiteley.

The act of redrafting CLIV by Tony Blair was undertaken to show that the Labour Party had changed<sup>85</sup>. This change was designed show the electorate that the party was different to from the Labour Party that had gone before, the party leadership then used the term 'New' Labour when referring to the party, of course, suggesting that there was an 'old' Labour. It was seen as a political necessity by the leadership and, as shown from the survey, from a section of the membership. This was seen as a move too far by the hard left in the party but as Seyd said in *The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left* such a use of a piece of strategic thinking was anathema for the left. For them even to think about power over principles would contaminate them<sup>86</sup>. It was because of this that the question was put to the membership about their attitude to power and principles. From the general results it can see that, for the most part, the membership agrees that the party should focus on gaining power, a tiny number of people disagree with the statement. However, when the question is asked in a slightly different way:

**The Labour Party should always put commitment to its principles first even at the expense of electoral success.**

There is a different response. Although a noticeable amount of people disagreed with the statement a much larger group of people agreed with the statement. Thirty percent of people agreed with the statement with a significant fourteen percent strongly agreeing. This question also gained a large amount of comments from the respondents. Those comments will examined more deeply later when looking at the

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<sup>85</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey*. (Arrow: London, 2011), p77

<sup>86</sup> Patrick Seyd, *The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left* (Macmillan Education: Basingstoke, 1987), 177.

same question thought the filters of generation and ideology. Seyd and Whiteley posed a similar question in 1990 asking the members:

### **Should Labour stick to principles even if this should lose an election?**

The results are different from the survey carried out for this dissertation. There is a much more overwhelming agreement that the party should indeed stick to its principles even at the expense of electoral success, sixty one people agreeing with the statement and only twenty seven disagreeing<sup>87</sup>. Here context must be employed. The survey by Seyd and Whiteley, conducted in 1990 is at a time when Labour was doing well in the opinion polls. There would have been a feeling that Labour was on course for a win in the next general election so why would you need to ditch principles? This attitude has changed a bit in the survey of 1999 when the membership as whole has become a bit less enthusiastic about committing to principles over electoral success. Over all the surveyed members agree with sticking to them but with less vigour. A drop of ten points strongly agreeing with the statement and a small increase of five points neither agreeing nor disagreeing, the amount of people disagreeing has essentially stayed the same. Once again, it should be remembered that in 1999 the party secured a huge win in the 1997 general election so when the results for this survey in 2017 are considered, the spectre of the election and the anticipated wipe-out, respondents would be using that to inform their judgement. It seems there's nothing like an election to change people's perceptions about getting into government. It would seem that the defeat of 1992 had a tremendous effect on the party, as John O'Farrell had stated<sup>88</sup>. Then, when the huge victory of 1997 was delivered, people began to temper their attitudes.

Next what the membership as a whole thinks of the party's past membership, needs to be considered. When asked about the class makeup of the party in the 80s and 90s the respondents overwhelmingly agree that the membership was more 'working class' in the 80s. How accurate are the membership perceptions in this assessment?

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<sup>87</sup> Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley. *Labour's Grass Roots: The Politics of Party Membership* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992), 134.

<sup>88</sup> John O'Farrell, *Things Can Only Get Better: Eighteen Miserable Years in the life of a Labour Supporter, 1979-1997*. (Black Swan: London, 1999), 294.

Seyd and Whiteley conducted a demographic study of the membership and did use class as a way of sorting them. The definition of class is a difficult one. Seyd and Whiteley use the Hope-Goldthorpe method, university education, and housing tenure, whereas for this survey just the terms 'Working Class' and 'Middle Class' are used. Seyd and Whitley also asked the respondents to assign their own class as well as using their occupational status. The 1990 survey can be used as a guide to the class makeup of the party from the 80s as there will be a lot of overhang from the period, despite it not technically being the 80s. The results show that members are very much more likely to be middle class<sup>89</sup>. However, when asked to assign themselves their own class, they are much more likely to give themselves the position of working class even though the sociological definitions wouldn't really agree. So when using the survey of 2017 the general membership's perception of their own class is simply wrong, but in fairness to them, in the comments section a lot of people took the opportunity to argue the question, with statements such as:

"Where's the evidence? How do you define working class?<sup>90</sup>"

and

"I don't know the statistics so it is hard to agree or disagree."<sup>91</sup>

Such comments are typical. The question relating to the class make-up of the membership in the 1990s is closer but with a clear majority thinking that the party was more middle class. In this case the membership would be correct in their assessment as Seyd and Whiteley have shown<sup>92</sup>. There is certainly a perception that in the 80s the party was more working class but the available evidence when using a more objective methodology is that is that they were very middle class. Also, Seyd and Whiteley found that Blair actually attracted more manual workers into the party membership in the 90s after his election to as leader in 1994 even though the social

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<sup>89</sup> Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley. *Labour's Grass Roots: The Politics of Party Membership* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992), 71.

<sup>90</sup> Smart Survey ID 60944211 Collected on 18/7/2017

<sup>91</sup> Smart Survey ID 57552713 Collected on 14/5/2017

<sup>92</sup> Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley. *New Labour's Grassroots: The Transformation of the Labour Party Membership* (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, 2002), 46.

make-up of the party was still predominantly middle class<sup>93</sup>.

What about party membership ideology? When asked about the ideological positions of members in the 80s and 90s the membership of 2017 is a lot closer; a majority agree that the members were more left wing in the 80s but it is neck and neck when it comes to the membership in the 90s. There is no clear majority on that question. When it comes to what we have from Seyd and Whiteley, once again it is difficult to assign an ideological position to a group of people when ideology has many branches but, in relation to CLIV we can use the question they insert were asked:

### **Should privatized industries be returned to the public sector?**

There was a huge endorsement to that statement with eighty two percent agreeing with it and only eight disagreeing<sup>94</sup>. Looking at the results from 1999 there is a marked difference as fewer people are in favour of more nationalization but it should be noted that there was a shift in preference to just 'leave things as they are now' and that a tiny amount of respondents thought that there should be more privatization<sup>95</sup>. Using this it would be unfair to call the membership of the 90s 'right wing', so in this case the contentious nature of the membership in 2017 is probably more accurate.

What happens when use the generational and ideological filters are used on these questions? Firstly the generational filters, using the PB group as they were the ones who actually lived through the two decades and both experienced the electoral disappointments of the 80s and 1992 as well as the success of 1997.

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<sup>93</sup> Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley. *New Labour's Grassroots: The Transformation of the Labour Party Membership* (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, 2002), 42.

<sup>94</sup> Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley. *Labour's Grass Roots: The Politics of Party Membership* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992), 132.

<sup>95</sup> Seyd. *New Labour's Grassroots: The Transformation of the Labour Party Membership*, 52.

“Chasing popularity at the expense off [sic] principles just leads us to a situation where the electorate don’t know what we stand for. Especially if we constantly change our offering on which way the opinion polls blow.<sup>96</sup>”

“This is naive and damaging to those who need a Labour government most.<sup>97</sup>”

“What’s the point otherwise? Tell people what you’re offering; they’ll either vote for it or they won’t. If you take office under false pretenses (sic) you just add fuel to the fire of the lying politician argument.<sup>98</sup>”

“[A]solutely not the poor the working poor the disabled all look the Labour Party for help if we are sticking by the principles were would never win another general election as people do not trust left wing governments<sup>99</sup>”

“Failing to do so gave us Blair and the Iraq war.<sup>100</sup>”

When it comes to the class make-up of the party the party in the past, the AB generation are almost in agreement with the PB generation, and similarly so with the ideological position of the membership in the 80s but there is a divergence when it comes to the ideological position of the members in the 90s. Looking at this section it is remarkable that the younger AB generation are less interested in sticking to Labour principles than the older PB group. This matter will be returned to later.

The major difference between the two generations is the attitude to electoral success. The AB group are quite clear that they want the party to focus on power and they disagree that the party should stick to its principles at the expense of electoral success. Only three percent disagreed with the statement about gaining power and over sixty percent disagreed with the statement about sticking to principles. The statements given in the comments box are revealing. There were a few mentions of Clause I of the party constitution such as:

“There are no principles if we have no power: Clause I<sup>101</sup>”

“It’s [sic] principles are electoral success: clause I<sup>102</sup>”

“Principles without power and power without principles are equally pointless<sup>103</sup>”

“There are occasions when I feel principles should come first, such as Iraq-style

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<sup>96</sup> Smart Survey ID 57580384 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>97</sup> Smart Survey ID 57584498 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>98</sup> Smart Survey ID 60815725 Collected on 14/07/2017

<sup>99</sup> Smart Survey ID 60940289 Collected on 17/07/2017

<sup>100</sup> Smart Survey ID 60893316 Collected on 17/07/2017

<sup>101</sup> Smart Survey ID 57555638 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>102</sup> Smart Survey ID 57558675 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>103</sup> Smart Survey ID 58048659 Collected on 22/05/2017

wars that negatively affect the lives of others, but some compromise is usually necessary.<sup>104</sup>

“Principles are important, however in order to make a difference to people’s lives you need the tools of power to implement those changes. Plus, I feel that entering office on a centrist-ticket is actually beneficial to our long-term goal of shifting the country left-wards. Show the public that you can be trusted to run the country and they will take your proposals to shift the agenda to the left more seriously.<sup>105</sup>”

When it comes to the class make-up of the party the party in the past, the AB generation are almost in agreement with the PB generation. Similarly so with the ideological position of the membership in the 80s but there is a divergence when it comes to the ideological position of the members in the 90s. Looking at this section it is remarkable that the younger AB generation are less interested in sticking to Labour principles than the older PB group. We shall return to this issue later.

Now the ideological filter of Benn and Blair and their attitude to power and their perception of the past will be examined. It probably comes as no surprise that the Bennite filter thinks that the party should stick to its principles at the expense of electoral success compared to the Blairite who disagree, but what about the perception of membership social class and ideology in the past? The Bennites overwhelmingly agree that the membership was more working class in the 80s with only eight percent disagreeing. They also overwhelmingly agree that the membership was more middle class in the 90s with only thirty one percent disagreeing. It is interesting to note that there was such a large margin when it came to the perception about the membership in the 80s.

The Blairite filter shows that they also thought of the membership in the 80s as being more working class but there were thirty percent of people who did not agree, also a small majority of people disagree that the party was more middle class in the 90s. Also they are split on the ideology of the party in the 80s. What is surprising is the complete reversal of the attitudes towards gaining power. Every single respondent agreed that the party should focus on gaining power with ninety two per cent strongly agreeing. Only fifteen percent of people thought that that party should put its principles first at the expense of electoral success, leaning over eight per cent

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<sup>104</sup> Smart Survey ID 57986552 Collected on 21/05/2017

<sup>105</sup> Smart Survey ID 57599174 Collected on 15/05/2017

disagreeing. Once again, Clause I gets mentioned:

“I reject the premise. The key principle of the party, outlined in Clause I, is that it should gain power. The winning of power IS a principled position and for Labour it is THE principle. Other principles are less important.”<sup>106</sup>

Here we can see a huge disparity between the two ideological factions. What might be a surprise to some is that the Bennite faction is not as polar opposite to the Blairite faction as might be expected. It seems that the Bennite, or ‘hard’ left of the party does want to win elections, they just differ on how to do it.

What is going on in this section? It is clear that both ideological factions differ in relation to the gaining of power and that may very well have been expected, but what is surprising is that younger generations are more in favour of a pragmatic approach to elections. This is probably because of the reminiscence bump. The younger you are the less likely you are to have attachments to a political cause because you are currently forming your identity and place in the world. As you age your sense of self and identity is much more solid and you are less likely to be open to new ideas and approaches. You will have an idea as to how elections should be fought and, hopefully, won. If somebody wishes to tell you that something must be done that goes against those principles you will fight against it because it is attacking your identity. This can feel like a personal attack and people will become resistant to it. Younger people have no such problem as they have not yet formed their solid political identity.

This also will apply to a certain degree with the answers given to the questions about class and ideology. When it comes to ideology, both generations and ideological factions probably realised that political ideology has many branches so their answers were more diverse but when it came to class every single demographic said they agreed that the membership was more working class in the 80s. This can be seen as more evidence that the membership believe in a ‘golden’ past of socialism. This is nothing new, Ralph Miliband wrote a piece called *Socialism and the Myth of the Golden Past* in 1964 where he said:

“Socialist decline in these highly industrialized countries presumably means that at

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<sup>106</sup> Smart Survey ID 57618031 Collected on 15/05/2017



some particular point of time, at some point of the historical curve, socialist prospects were better, more hopeful, in the sense that there were then more socialists about, or, if there were not more of them, that socialists were then at least of better, higher quality, more clear-minded, or class-conscious, or committed; also, that there was, at some stage in the past, more popular support for socialists in the working classes, among the young, among intellectuals, and that, from this high point, there has been a perceptible, not to say a catastrophic, reduction in that support, so that socialism in the West, save in its loosest sense, is at a greater discount with every passing year...This view of the past is now pretty well taken for granted. One would therefore expect the evidence for it to be blindingly obvious, or at least very easily obtainable. But it is not. In fact, the evidence points mostly the other way.<sup>107</sup>

This was a point picked up on by Tom Forester in his book *The Labour Party and the Working Class* (1976) who also rejected an idea of a 'Golden Age'<sup>108</sup>. The problem arises here because it is an issue of identification. More evidence from the makeup of the social class comes from Paul Whiteley. His attempt to get a sense of the demographic make-up of the membership in the early 1980s showed that people would mostly join the party for expressive reasons, with middle class members more likely to join for expressive reasons than working class members<sup>109</sup>. He also noted that middle class members were more likely to remain members and working class members were more likely to leave as Labour governments would fail to deliver on promises or become ineffective (as the Labour government did in 1979)<sup>110</sup>. This survey did not try to find out the respondents class but any related future study would do well to see if the Whiteley study can be replicated in the 21st century. Whiteley's study was carried out in the early 80s so, with his study of the membership in 1990 with Seyd can it is possible to say with some confidence that the membership in the 1980s was more middle class than working class. This would then mean that the membership of 2017 is wrong to say that the membership was generally more working class in that period. The membership has always liked to believe that the party was more working class than it was, as Jon Lawrence has said:

“[A]ctivists have displayed a powerful need to believe in continuity - seeking to place themselves within an unfolding, seamless history of political commitment.<sup>111</sup>”

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<sup>107</sup> Ralph Miliband. "Socialism and the Myth of the Golden Past" *Socialist Register* Vol 1 (1964): 93.

<sup>108</sup> Tom Forester. *The Labour Party and the working class* (Heinemann Educational: London, 1976), 124.

<sup>109</sup> Paul Whiteley. *The Labour Party in Crisis* (Methuen: London, 1983), 60.

<sup>110</sup> Whiteley. *The Labour Party in Crisis*, 79.

<sup>111</sup> Jon Lawrence, "Labour - The myths it had lived by," in *Labour's First Century*, Duncan Tanner et al. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2000), 342.

This possibly stems from a belief that the party was always a working class party or a party for the working class; this is not entirely accurate as has been seen. This is also a form of hindsight bias. A belief that it was ever thus, when in fact the origins of the party was to get representatives of organised working men into parliament; this is an important distinction to make. Working class is not necessarily synonymous with organised labour. Looking at the LRC's election manifesto from 1906 it can be seen in the text that they are asking for Trade Unionists to be allowed to be represented in parliament along with:

“Landlord, employers, lawyers, brewers, and financiers. Why Not Labour? The Trade Unions ask the same liberty as capital enjoys. They are refused.”<sup>112</sup>

Labour's incarnation was to represent the Trade Unions, so when OMOVs is talked about it is not in a way that helps to further the cause of organised Labour. There is a strong sense from all the responses in this survey, of some kind of mythic past for the party that there is a need to get back to, but exactly what this past was, remains unclear. This idea of a mythic past is something we shall return to later.

As stated earlier, when it came to identifying who would be in what class for the surveys conducted by Seyd and Whiteley there were a few ways to do this, occupation, income and education were used and it gave the picture that the party was more middle class in 1990 and 1999 but when it came to self-identification the majority said they were working class! This plays into the idea that personal identity is an important factor in peoples' perception of the party and its past. Next the ratings of the leaders and prominent figures as well as the external events will be assessed.

### **The Ghost of the Two Tony's.**

This sections will show that the personalities of Tony Blair and Tony Benn had had a huge effect on their membership and that they are the personification of two types of Labour member, as outlined by Paul Whiteley, the Instrumental member, who can be personified in Blair and the Expressive, who can be personified in Benn.

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<sup>112</sup> Edited by Iain Dale. *Labour Party General Election Manifestos, 1900-1997* (Routledge: London, 2000)

When looking at the results for the Labour leaders it is interesting to note that John Smith, despite only being leader for just under two years gets a very high score. As was discussed earlier, it was Smith who tried to introduce OMOV, with much recrimination within the party at the time. Smith scores well with all sections under investigation here, what is in some ways most surprising is that he scores so well with the AB group, as many of the respondents would have been very young during his brief leadership even if they have been alive at all. This becomes highlighted when Smith is compared to the AB group's combined rating for leaders who not only were leaders for longer and led the party into election campaigns but were leaders before very few respondents were actually alive. Callaghan, Foot and Kinnock achieve modest scores with Kinnock getting the highest with fifty nine. Kinnock's score is very modest compared to Smith's when you also consider that the AB group's most popular internal event was Kinnock's denunciation of Militant in '85. It should be noted however that there was a high deviation score for that event, compared to Smith's signature event, the introduction of OMOV which had a very low deviation of seventeen. As was discussed earlier the introduction of OMOV was a very important change to how the party operated. It is very likely that younger members are simply not aware of this. However, when looking at the PB group, who would have been alive and aware of the change to the party, Smith also scores highly, with a relatively large score of seventy three. This is the highest score given to an individual in the PB group. It is the second highest score given to an individual in, with the exception of Benn and Blair in their respective ideological groups, all the different groups under investigation. This warmth of feeling for Smith is reflected in the high rating given to OMOV.

This generational interaction is important to note but how does Smith get rated when we use the ideological filter is used? It would be no surprise that Smith scores highly with the Blairite group. Smith was seen to be on the 'right' of the party and was considered very much a moderniser. Blair was a big supporter of Smith and even tried to convince him to replace Kinnock before the '92 election<sup>113</sup>. Given the fact that Smith was on the right of the party and introduced OMOV, which fundamentally

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<sup>113</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey*. (Arrow: London, 2011) 50.

changed the party's relationship to the unions it is quite a surprise to see him score so well with the Bennite group. He is not the highest rated individual but scores a very healthy sixty three. As was discussed earlier, Benn was opposed to Smith's introduction of OMOV so this warmth of feeling is, indeed, most surprising. It seems that dying before your time does wonders for your legacy.

Less surprising is the reaction to Tony Blair. Labour's most electorally successful leader is a divisive figure. It will be no surprise that respondents in the two ideological filters have polar extremes towards Blair (as the filter was designed) but what of the figures who were party of Blair's cabinet and mostly associated with him. There is a relative ambivalence towards people such as Blunkett and Beckett and more warmth towards people like John Prescott and Mo Mowlam who both get a healthy sixty four. Prescott is interesting because he was Blair's deputy for the entirety of his leadership of the party. The sharp distaste from the Benn group is reserved for Peter Mandelson, he scores a very low twenty seven. One respondent probably summed up the attitude towards him best in their comment:

"Mandelson seems to have no Labour feeling, and seems to treat his position as a profession modelled on "The Prince", Benn is the heart and soul of everything Labour means to me.<sup>114</sup>"

From this response can be seen a clear instrumental and expressive trade off. Accusing Mandelson of treating his position as "a profession" and being Machiavellian can be seen as being instrumental when compared to the declaration of Benn being "the heart and soul of everything Labour", obviously a much more expressive reason to like somebody. Mandelson's often quoted statement, but selectively so, about being:

"Intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich [as long as they pay their taxes].<sup>115</sup>"

has come back to haunt him here. This would be too much for some Labour members and is echoed to an extent by Eric Shaw in his analysis of the ten years of

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<sup>114</sup> Smart Survey ID 60957385 Collected on 18/07/2017

<sup>115</sup> John Rentoul, "The Top Ten: Misquotations." *The Independent* May 11 2013. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/the-top-ten-misquotations-8611230.html>

a Blair led Labour government in his book *Losing Labour's Soul? : New Labour and the Blair Government 1997 – 2007* (2007) where he applauds the achievements of the government but has reservations about it not being against the aggressive acquisition of wealth, so much so that Shaw states that in his opinion Labour has “lost its soul”<sup>116</sup>.

The Blairite filter offers little in the way of surprise. It is worth noting that the scores given to figures such as Mowlam and Prescott are similar to those given by the Benn group and that Blunkett and Beckett score better but not overwhelmingly so. Mandelson's reputation is, of course much higher. What of the generational groups?

As can be seen from the results, both Benn and Blair are as controversial as ever. The AB group, almost certainly never knowing Benn as an MP are surprisingly unenthusiastic about him. As was seen in relation to the rating of John Smith, Benn's passing has not increased his reputation in the AB group. A score of fifty five is pretty lukewarm and a score of twenty eight in his deviation is the highest for an individual in the AB responses. Many of the respondents must have been aware of the closeness between Jeremy Corbyn and Benn. The context of the survey must reinforced the perception that the AB group see Benn as being linked to Corbyn and his leadership of the party. Ken Livingstone, who is linked to Corbyn gets a much more diverse response. He gets a low score of thirty, even less than Peter Mandelson, this is in stark contrast to the score that Livingstone gets from the PB group, where he gets a much better forty seven. He still gets a very high deviation rating but compared to Mandelson he is equally divisive but manages a higher score, Mandelson only gets thirty six from the PB group. There is a clear generational divide here. The PB group are much more sympathetic to the more Bennite figures (Skinner gets a healthy score from both groups but it might be easy for him to get such a score when all you have done is just be a backbench MP and never had the chance to get something wrong in government). A respondent from the PB group said:

“I support the policies of Tony Benn, principled, Ken Livingstone, Dennis Skinner fearless anti Tory and supporter of the working class. I don't like the right of the Labour party, Healey, Hattersley and Blunkett. Mo Mowlam was courageous,

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<sup>116</sup> Eric Shaw, *Losing Labour's Soul? : New Labour and the Blair Government 1997 – 2007* (Routledge: Oxford, 2007) 207.

Prescott sort of in the middle, trade unionist and working class I hate the machinations of Peter Mandelson.<sup>117</sup>

Once again this does seem like an expressive explanation to their answer. Calling Benn principled is curious however. As Kenneth O. Morgan has pointed out in his short biography of Benn in *Labour People: Hardie to Kinnock* (1987) Benn completely disavowed some of his former positions on key questions which he held in the 1970s<sup>118</sup>. Unless the respondent is starting the clock on Benn's principles in the 1970s which would be more accurate if a completely ahistorical assessment of Benn.

This all does seem to tie in with the issue of identity being created during a specific generation. The AB generation is much more ambivalent about certain figures within the party, except for the two Tony's, who really do haunt the party. The membership does seem conflicted about its purpose, as has been seen before the issue of power and principles really divides the party. This can be linked again to the issue of instrumental reasons and expressive reasons behind party membership. Being part of a certain generation would seem to make you more likely to be sympathetic to a certain figures and more likely to have a different attitude to gaining power. Something that can be shown is part of the Seyd and Whiteley survey from 1990 which shows the demographic breakdown of people who rated Tony Benn compared to those who rated Neil Kinnock. The survey took place only a few years after Benn's disastrous leadership campaign in 1988.

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<sup>117</sup> Smart Survey ID 60944211 Collected on 18/07/2017

<sup>118</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan. *Labour People: Leaders and Lieutenants, Hardie to Kinnock* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992), 306.

TABLE 7.7. Attitudes to Tony Benn by Social and Political Characteristics (percentages)

	Cold	Cool	Warm	Hot
<i>All respondents</i>	12	25	36	27
<i>Age</i>				
17–25	8	21	44	27
26–45	8	23	38	31
46–65	15	27	35	24
66+	17	29	29	25
<i>Class</i>				
Salariat	10	24	38	27
Routine non-manual	12	25	34	29
Petty bourgeoisie	9	19	40	33
Foreman and Technician	15	36	28	21
Working class	12	26	34	28
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	10	26	35	30
Male	13	25	36	26
<i>Income</i>				
Under £10,000	15	27	31	27
£10,000–£25,000	10	24	37	29
£25,000+	10	26	39	25
<i>Graduate</i>				
Yes	8	23	41	28
No	13	26	33	28
<i>Activism</i>				
Inactive	16	29	34	22
Occasionally active	10	26	37	27
Fairly active	12	23	37	28
Very active	12	25	32	30
<i>Ideology in party</i>				
Hard left	3	7	31	59
Soft left	6	22	42	30
Centre	18	35	35	12
Soft right	22	41	27	11
Hard right	28	37	26	10

Image 1.3

It can be seen from this table that the warmest feeling towards Benn comes from the younger group. The 17 to 25 demographic has the warmest feeling towards Benn. Bear in mind that this survey was completed in 1990, that's twenty seven years before this survey was completed so twenty seven added to seventeen gets forty four, right within the PB demographic for the 2017 survey. Also, twenty five and added to twenty seven gets fifty two, almost exactly the same age as the average member of the party<sup>119</sup>. When the demographics are compared to the Kinnock responses it can be seen that the older generation are much warmer to him than the

<sup>119</sup> Tim Bale, Paul Webb and Monica Poletti. *Grassroots. Britain's Party Members: Who Do They Think They Are?* (Queen Mary University of London: London, 2018), 8.  
[https://esrcpartymembersprojectorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/grassroots-pmp\\_final.pdf](https://esrcpartymembersprojectorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/grassroots-pmp_final.pdf)

younger age grouping.

TABLE 7.6. *Attitudes to Neil Kinnock by Social and Political Characteristics (percentages)*

	Cold	Cool	Warm	Hot
<i>All respondents</i>	4	12	35	50
<i>Age</i>				
17-25	7	13	40	40
26-45	6	15	38	41
46-65	3	10	32	55
66+	1	7	27	65
<i>Class</i>				
Salariat	4	14	40	42
Routine non-manual	5	11	35	49
Petty bourgeoisie	2	15	31	53
Foreman and Technician	2	9	25	64
Working class	4	9	26	61
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	4	14	36	46
Male	4	10	33	53
<i>Income</i>				
Under £10,000	3	10	27	60
£10,000-£25,000	5	13	37	46
£25,000+	4	13	41	43
<i>Graduate</i>				
Yes	6	16	43	35
No	3	10	31	56
<i>Activism</i>				
Inactive	2	11	31	55
Occasionally active	3	11	37	49
Fairly active	4	13	34	49
Very active	6	12	33	50
<i>Ideology in party</i>				
Hard left	14	23	32	31
Soft left	3	13	39	46
Centre	2	6	28	64
Soft right	1	5	37	58
Hard right	0	7	26	67

Image 1.4

This shows that the older you were the more likely you were to be favourable to Kinnock. This is more likely that in 1990 the party was generally in a good and confident mood as they felt like they were on course to win the next general election. However, this does show that the younger you were the more open you were to new ideas. Benn was challenging the party orthodoxy, rightly or wrongly, in the 1980s and this would have been more acceptable to the younger generation as their political identity was not set as they were going through their reminiscence bump.

When looking at the external events it is possible to see that there is little difference between the two generations. The only thing worth a mention is that the AB group are



slightly warmer about the 1997 election victory. The PB group give it eighty one whereas the AB group give it eighty nine. The context of the 2017 election is probably at work here. The PB group, having tasted such a huge win are possibly more complacent about it but the AB group are pining for such a huge win having never experienced anything like it. The PB comments section for the external events are much larger than the AB group. The PB group have thirteen comments to the AB's three. This must be because the PB group experienced it all the events and are more willing to comment whereas the AB group only comment about the financial crisis and the Iraq war. The slightly less enthusiastic attitude to the election victory of 1997 by the PB group can probably be summed up by this comment:

“THE HUGE MAJORITY WAS GOOD, BUT NOTHING LIKE ENOUGH WAS DONE WITH IT. THE IRAQ WAR WAS AN EXTERNAL EVENT THAT WOULD NOT HAVE INVOLVED US AT ALL IF HADN'T BEEN FOR BLAIR<sup>120</sup>”<sup>121</sup>

Both generations are deeply unhappy about the Iraq war. For many of the AB group it must have been their first memory of political events. This is a contributing factor to the surprise of the low rating of Benn by the AB group. Benn had a renaissance during this period, becoming a very avuncular figure but Benn is unable to better his favourability rating with the AB generation than what he got in the Seyd and Whiteley surveys in the 90s which were very much his wilderness period.

The PB group's comments are mainly about the Iraq war and the response to the financial crisis but other things do get mentioned. Only one person is saying anything slightly positive and even then they are attempting to bend the rules a bit to say so:

“What we know now about the Iraq war is different to what we knew then so my response to it is to when it was not now<sup>122</sup>”

That respondent gave the Iraq war a score of eighty four, the highest recorded in the survey. As seen earlier in the reasons for leaving the party, 2003 was a peak year for members of the PB group. This is shown in the comments with two respondents

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<sup>120</sup> Smart Survey ID 60815725 Collected on 13/07/2017

<sup>121</sup> The response was made in all caps which has been reproduced here to try and convey the respondents' zeal.

<sup>122</sup> Smart Survey ID 60940289 Collected on 17/07/2017

saying:

“Iraq war reason I left in 2003.<sup>123</sup>”

“Almost left the party over Iraq, our branch protested against involvement.<sup>124</sup>”

One respondent gave a much more detailed response to the whole section:

“Victory in 1997 was great - living in the Thatcher years was a disaster for huge areas of UK, miners strike, blight of U.K. Industry, Labour govt in 1997 revitalised parts of the country that were dying and it was a fantastic achievement. I stayed up to watch the results celebrating when Michael Portillo lost his seat! The Good Friday agreement was also a fantastic achievement, something I never expected to see living through the 70s. Iraq War was a betrayal, a disgrace, a disaster.<sup>125</sup>”

There is such a glowing response to the first part of that statement. It speaks about the Labour government in such glowing terms but when the Iraq war gets mentioned the respondent is unequivocal about how they feel about it. It is interesting that they refer to it as a betrayal. Betrayal is a theme that exists within the Labour party, something that exists all the way back to 1931 with the creation of Ramsay Macdonald's national government. It seems that the narrative of leadership betrayal is always very powerful and never far beneath the surface within the party.

The ideological filters show that there is more of a difference than in the generational filters. What we can learn from them is that the Bennite group are, as was shown earlier, less enthusiastic about the election win of 1997. This doesn't mean that they are against it in any kind of way but their score of seventy six is nowhere near as enthusiastic when compared to the Blairite group score of ninety five. This would seem to fit the earlier comment that the election win of '97 gave the party the Iraq war so they're less enthusiastic about it.

There is no surprise that the Bennite group is extremely negative about the Iraq war with it only getting a score of six. The Blairite group does score it significantly better but a score of twenty eight is far from a ringing endorsement. As has been seen, those who do attempt to justify it do so in an attempt to put it in the context of the

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<sup>123</sup> Smart Survey ID 60820274 Collected on 14/07/2017

<sup>124</sup> Smart Survey ID 60499682 Collected on 09/07/2017

<sup>125</sup> Smart Survey ID 60944211 Collected on 18/07/2017

time. Most of the group probably gave the event a neutral score of fifty thus giving it a better score compared to the Bennite group and also contributing to a high deviation.

The most interesting difference is the response to the financial crisis of 2008. What has happened here is that it is possibly too close to the present day, the survey being carried out in 2017 before and during the general election with the memory of the failure of the 2015 election still uppermost in their minds. The Bennite group are less happy with the response getting a negative rating of forty four and a high deviation of twenty four compared to the Blairite group of sixty nine. The comments reveal the frustration of the membership not at what Labour did but how it came about and how they dealt with the explanation about it afterwards.

“I believe that Gordon Brown's reaction to the financial crisis was excellent in what was an otherwise torrid leadership and this is the biggest reason that I scored his leadership highly. I have put this as an eighty as it was a double edge sword - whilst I believe the reaction was good, it facilitated the "overspending Labour" narrative that still affects the public perception of the party nearly a decade on.<sup>126</sup>”

“The problem was how ED Miliband etc reacted to the 2008 crisis by accepting Labour was to blame.<sup>127</sup>”

“The initial steps taken by the Labour Party in response to the financial crisis were completely overshadowed by the subsequent Miliband/Balls tactic of taking the blame and probably lost us the 2015 election.<sup>128</sup>”

“2008 crisis, great response but there should have been more regulation before the event to prevent the situation happening at all.<sup>129</sup>”

“The response to 2008 itself was good, they just didn't sell it and allowed a false narrative to be perpetuated: that Gov overspending had caused the crisis. And one could argue that they should have put measures in to prevent the financial crash. It was their watch.<sup>130</sup>”

This shows that there is still a lot of issues left over from this event and is probably too close to the present day to gage a real sense of the party's attitude towards it.

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<sup>126</sup> Smart Survey ID 57594953 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>127</sup> Smart Survey ID 58310100 Collected on 26/05/2017

<sup>128</sup> Smart Survey ID 60815725 Collected on 14/07/2017

<sup>129</sup> Smart Survey ID 57580384 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>130</sup> Smart Survey ID 61038593 Collected on 19/07/2016

## Is 'new' Labour, new?

This section will look at the final question in the survey that relates to the academic debate by Steven Fielding and Richard Toye. How have the membership understood this question? It will look at the answers with a wider context of Labour history.

The general consensus amongst the membership is that 'new' Labour was a decisive break with the history, heritage and traditions of the Labour Party, with just under two thirds agreeing with the statement. The same amount is roughly the same for the generational groups. The biggest difference is in the ideological groups. The Bennite groups are unequivocal that 'new' Labour did break with the traditions of Labour with ninety six per cent agreeing whereas seventy six per cent of the Blairite group disagree

When the comments are analysed it can be seen that a few respondents mentions about CLIV:

"The repeal of Clause IV, courting of businesses and relationship with the press in the late 1990s was certainly new.<sup>131</sup>"

"Blair turned the prime minister role into a presidency. Clause 4 removed one of the main ideals of the party. The party became infiltrated by Tories.<sup>132</sup>"

"Getting rid of clause 4 signalled the break, PFI [PFI] was also a bad idea.<sup>133</sup>"

"clause 4 went.<sup>134</sup>"

"abandoned clause IV.<sup>135</sup>"

"Clause IV ditched.<sup>136</sup>"

What is interesting is that CLIV gets mentioned a lot but OMOV doesn't get a single mention. A few of these comments say that CLIV was ditched or abandoned but it is not entirely accurate to say that. CLIV was redrafted and when both the old clause and the new one is put side to side it is difficult to see exactly where the difference is.

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<sup>131</sup> Smart Survey ID 57986552 Collected on 21/05/2017

<sup>132</sup> Smart Survey ID 61037829 Collected on 19/07/2017

<sup>133</sup> Smart Survey ID 60499682 Collected on 09/07/2017

<sup>134</sup> Smart Survey ID 60820664 Collected on 14/07/2017

<sup>135</sup> Smart Survey ID 60893316 Collected on 17/07/2017

<sup>136</sup> Smart Survey ID 61281295 Collected on 23/07/2017

The sense is that there was a different feel to the party and that 'new' Labour was merely just a marketing exercise.

"There was certainly a shift to the right but it was not so much that it compromised traditional values. The "New" Labour was merely a marketing ploy for a modern public and as times were changing so we had to change with them. Unfortunately it also created the myth of "Old Labour"<sup>137</sup>"

"New labour was a repackaging of traditional labour values updated for the present day. The biggest change "Clause 4" was simply rewritten so it would actually reflect what most in the party had thought for many decades, i.e. the party in reality had not actually been focused on mass scale nationalisation since the fifties and yet the old clause 4 was ossified into dogma.<sup>138</sup>"

"Only I think in marketing and in taking a positive view on wealth creation. Policy wise New Labour was in some ways quite similar to what Foot wanted, and also was in some ways quite 'Blue Labour'. New Labour was definitely still 'Labour' and differed hugely from the Tories.<sup>139</sup>"

"New Labour was no more than a clever marketing ploy, to boost the profile of a tarnished brand. A political party has to modernise and change policy to change with the times. New Labour was as committed to Labour values as any other period of the Labour movement's history.<sup>140</sup>"

So it seems that the party is split in its attitude towards 'new' Labour as a battle between expressive reasons and instrumental reasons for membership of the party. Those who opposed the redrafting of CLIV do so as they saw it as changing the feeling, the soul of the party but those who were less opposed saw it as being instrumental in getting Labour elected. This was reiterated by Rosemary Nicholls who said:

"Well it was going back to Clause 4 again and we were moving away from nationalisation being the answer to such a lot I think there was an effort to bring in Labour Socialist policies which I approved of, you know, the minimum wage and more money for schools and more money for hospitals and so on, we won three elections so we were doing something right in terms of our electability.<sup>141</sup>"

Chris Snowdon does see 'new' Labour as a decisive break and rationalised it as such:

"To me, it was just a rebrand to demonstrate that we've become more professional,

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<sup>137</sup> Smart Survey ID 57554560 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>138</sup> Smart Survey ID 57576219 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>139</sup> Smart Survey ID 57584498 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>140</sup> Smart Survey ID 57586369 Collected on 14/05/2017

<sup>141</sup> Telephone Interview with Rosemary Nicholls on 29/7/2017 Transcript page 6.

we were serious about achieving power and sort of ditching and dumping the things that were holding us back. I didn't see New Labour as significantly different, it was just that we had to portray ourselves as different but Labour, when people thought of Labour they thought of unions, winter of discontent and everything else and New Labour was just different, New Labour was Tony Blair.<sup>142</sup>

The fact that he sees Tony Blair as being 'new' Labour illustrates that it was just a change in leadership, which is linked to Richard Toye's point about the party becoming the smallest in history. This sense that it was just a marketing and rebranding exercise is something that runs through all the interviews. Christine Davies said:

"['new' Labour were] trying to fit in with the image, an image that they had, that they're new that a lot of us did not agree with and people left around that time as well<sup>143</sup>"

Jenny Day, 65, agrees:

"I think although New Labour was, well in my view was sort of much more slick at the way they marketed themselves and perhaps some of the allies that they were able to make within business.<sup>144</sup>"

So it seems that it wasn't so much the lyrics but the tune. As has been said earlier it is difficult to see where the difference is between the old and new versions of CLIV but Joe Feeney, 25, seems to exemplify the feeling between the 'new' and 'old ideas of Labour:

"he [Blair] was borrowing Republican International politics from America so yeah it was certainly New Labour in that sense. And it was new in the sense of like I said previously about stripping away some of the socialist foundations of the party, Clause 4, taking out the word socialist from the party. They no longer sang The Red Flag at the Party Conference, didn't address people as comrades. Yeah it was a new way of doing things and it was new in the sense of breaking away from socialist tradition.<sup>145</sup>"

As was mentioned previously there was no mention of OMOV, something that people like Thomas Quinn, Lewis Minkin and Richard Toye have mentioned as being a significant change in the party structure and management that was a significant shift

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<sup>142</sup> Telephone Interview with Chris Snowdon on 28/7/2017 Transcript page 10.

<sup>143</sup> Telephone Interview with Christine Davies on 27/7/2017 Transcript page 11.

<sup>144</sup> Telephone Interview with Jenny Day on 1/08/2017 Transcript page 6.

<sup>145</sup> Telephone Interview with Joe Feeney on 1/10/2017 Transcript page 14.

in the history, heritage and traditions of the party. This suggests that members are, for the most part, less interested in instrumental issues of the past and more interested in expressive ones. This feeling intensifies as you age because of the attachment to identity. It would seem, then that in labour history the two figures of Tony Blair and Tony Benn are the personification of this battle. Tony Blair is the personification of instrumental issues. Tony Benn is the personification of expressive issues. That is the ghost of the two Tony's.

### **Where next?**

There are of course certain limitations with this study, due to the fact that this study can only be seen as illustrative not representative of the party membership at present. As was stated earlier the average age of a Labour party member is fifty three. The majority of respondents in this survey were below the age of thirty five. This means the survey has far too many respondents who are not representative of the membership as whole. What has been illustrated is that being part of a certain generation informs your ideology because of the reminiscence bump. That there has been a certain perceived wisdom that "you get more right wing as you get older". This survey illustrates that is not really the case. What might be more accurate is to say that you get more conservative as you get older. Given that that the Labour Party is the focus of this research using the word conservative is problematic. Even though clearly the small 'c' version of the term is being used there is far too much baggage associated with the word so from now on the word 'traditionalist' will be used when referring to conservation of identity.

This survey has thrown up some interesting areas of discussion. It seems that younger generations are more interested in gaining power and are more prepared to compromise on certain principles than older generations. This seems counterintuitive to most people's perceived wisdom. Because of this more research is clearly needed. It is entirely possible that this survey hit a large group of moderate Labour members that skewed the results, but it is equally possible that it is more representative than is being assumed. There should be another survey conducted where the people surveyed are more representative of the overall membership. Such a survey would try to get a clearer picture of how Labour members view the recent past as was done

in this survey but in order to get this clearer picture it is suggested that two new groupings be introduced. Instead of just Labour members, Conservative members should also be surveyed along with people who have never been a member of a political party. The time period under scrutiny would be the same. IE from 1980 to the present. This would give a good spread of time for the older generations and the younger ones, not so far back that people can't remember. Also Seyd and Whiteley conducted similar surveys to the ones about the Labour membership as they did with the Conservative members. That survey was taken early 1992 and was set out in their book *True Blues: The Politics of Conservative Party Membership* (1994)<sup>146</sup> They can be used as a frame of reference to see how generations have changed, if at all. This would contribute to the debate about to what extent people more traditionalist as they age.

The survey would take a similar format to the one completed for this research. This time however there would be a difference. After a consultation with professional survey creators and a psychologist whose field of research is the reminiscence bump, the survey would ask respondents to use the sliding scale again regarding personalities and events that took place from 1980 to the present day. The members from the political parties and the non-members would rate all the people and events, there would not be a set of people and events exclusive to one membership. The figures and events would not be exclusively political. Sporting figures and events and other cultural people and events would also be used. Some would be famous events, other would be deliberately obscure. For example, respondents would be asked to rate the television actress Anita Dobson, this is because she participated in one of the most watched television events in British history in 1986, with around thirty million viewers, which was around half the population of the country, watching on Christmas day to see her character get handed divorce papers in *Eastenders*. This was a huge cultural event but has somewhat faded from popular conscience, also how would people who were not alive rate this huge national event? This would also act as a control question, along with other selected events. It would not be made known at this stage that the survey was a predominately political and survey. This would allow for a

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<sup>146</sup> Paul Whiteley, Patrick Seyd and Jeremy Richardson, *True Blues: The Politics of Conservative Party Membership* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1994) p1.



more measured response rather than asking people, especially the younger respondents to put their political hats on and give responses that they think they're supposed to give. Members of political parties will end up giving more partisan answers anyway. After this point more overtly political questions will be asked, such as the questions relating to their attitude towards gaining power and class. The respondents will also be asked to answer questions that will determine their social class so it can be seen how it relates to the Seyd and Whiteley findings of the 90s. Also Whiteley's investigation into the instrumental and expressive reasons as to why people joined the party will be attempted to ascertain. Along with the other demographic data such as age and gender, it will be hoped to give a much more definitive answer to some of the issues raised in this research. A recent study by James Tilley and Geoffrey Evans suggested that as you age you become more conservative and there more likely to vote Conservative<sup>147</sup>. The research carried out in this dissertation suggests that you are not necessarily more conservative politically but more traditional as you age. You acquire a sense of identity around fifteen to thirty five, be it 'left wing', more moderate or 'right wing' your identity is formed after the age of thirty five. A much more wide ranging survey would be able to give us a much clearer picture if this is the case. This is why using the group of non-members would be interesting to see how traditional their views are throughout the generations. A sample size that has an equal number of respondents within the generations can then be broken into groups to see how their generation affects their attitude to people and events, along with their perceptions of the political parties. This would provide a much clearer picture of how being part of a generation informs an individual's perspective on the past and the role of the reminiscence bump on that viewpoint. This would give a picture of individual histories but what would also be useful would be to focus group respondents to see how the 'sense of the past' works in a group setting. Would people's sense of the past change in a setting where they are challenged in a group that does not share that same 'sense'? How then would they react in a group that was very receptive to that sense? As Cass R. Sunstien and Reid Haste wrote in their book *Wiser: Getting Beyond Groupthink to Make Groups Smarter* (2015) polarization is a problem in groups. They make the point that:

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<sup>147</sup> James Tilley and Geoffrey Evans "Ageing and Generational Effects on Vote Choice: Combining Cross-Sectional and Panel Data to Estimate APC Effects," *Electoral Studies Volume 33*, March (2014): 25.

“[P]eople become polarized because they are attempting to conform to the position that they see as typical within their own group.<sup>148</sup>”

This means that those in certain groups will likely take more extreme positions because of their identity to an issue because it is seen as being the group identity. If we could relate that group position to individual positions it would be interesting to see the change. This would also be interesting to relate to the ideas of collective histories relating back to the works of Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora.

### **The Future of History**

What has been shown here is that, certainly within the Labour Party, is that there is a clear generational divide in attitudes towards the party's history. The older generation are much more irate at some of the events and figures within the party than the younger ones. This may not seem a surprise for the casual observer but it shows that the effect of the past on younger generations isn't as great as some would like to believe. The younger generation's favourable score for Kinnock's denunciation of Militant was a shock but must be understood in the context of when the survey was being completed. Since the start of this piece of research the Labour Party has gone through an eventful twelve months. At the beginning the Party was deeply divided and was suffering huge splits on a number of issues, then an election was called where the Party was expected to suffer a wipe out at the ballot box even worse than the '83 defeat. This, as it turned out, was not to be the case and Labour managed to gain over twelve million votes and a net gain of thirty seats. The questions around Jeremy Corbyn's leadership have been put to bed, for now. This fluid context would have been in the mind of the younger generation when they were completing their answers as, we shall see, they only had that context to work with, compared to the older generation who had many years of party membership or political memories to fall back on.

The role of the reminiscence bump is key here. The younger generation, currently

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<sup>148</sup> Cass r. Sunstien and Reid Haste, *Wiser: Getting Beyond Groupthink to Make Groups Smarter* (Harvard Business Review Press: Boston, 2015), 85.

acquiring their memories and therefore political identity are much more fluid, their attitude to somebody like Tony Blair is much more ambivalent compared to the older generation, who are much more antagonistic towards him. The recollection from the younger generation that he won three general elections, a simple indisputable fact, is recalled because of the context of the time they are in. They wish for the party to win elections again whilst, at the time, looking down the barrel of what they thought was an electoral wipe out. Their attitude to things such as Blair's redrafting of CLIV is much more ambivalent because they never grew up with the old one. Its old form was never able to manifest itself into their political identity. Whereas the older generation would have carried the old form on their membership cards and when Blair sought to change it in '94 they would have seen it as an attack on their values and identity. Thus, everything Blair did afterwards for them came from this piece of iconoclasm, so when the respondent who said that the 1997 election was good but it gave the party the Iraq war is looking back through the lens of that war. It doesn't matter at all that the two version of the clause are not that much different, it was the fact that he was doing it at all. CLIV to them was a much more expressive piece of writing. What does not seem to square with history is that both generations are positive to the introduction of OMOV in '93. This is surprising, especially from the older generation. As we have seen it was very acrimonious at the time and was opposed by the left of the party. What must have happened here is that the left have come to terms with it as it has allowed them to elect a leader much more sympathetic to their ideology. Also, its introduction by Smith a man who was unable to do anything else with the party before his sudden death, gives it a certain legitimacy for them even though it was strongly opposed at the time and fundamentally changed the party structure and did go against the history, heritage and traditions of the party. When an event in the past plays out in your favour it stands to reason that somebody would view it more favourably. This fits into Eric Hobsbawm's observation that tradition is invented. This framework could also be used on a range of different cultural groups or on different generations of fans of a football team, for example if two distinct generations of fans were to pick their favourite XI players it would be possible clearly to note the differences between those two generationally selected teams. The same goes for any cultural phenomenon, be it music, television or film, there will always be a prevailing attitude that their generation's experience was somehow 'best'. This may seem obvious but it's important to remember that things are only obvious after the fact, a

hindsight bias if you will! This explains cultural zeitgeist and how it informs views of the past. There are clear generational divides within cultural groups but within the Labour Party that divide is reinforced by the 'reminiscence bump' phenomenon, this makes the past a much more visceral place but under the belief, as Ziva Kunda has said, with the cloak of veracity draped around it. We not only recall what we think we saw, but what we expected to have seen. It is also a reflection of the motives for joining the party as demonstrated by Paul Whiteley with his 'instrumental' and 'expressive' reasons behind joining the party and confirmed by this dissertation with regards to the purpose of the party, between those who focus on seeking power to effect change and those who prioritise the maintenance of principles over electoral success and political power. This dynamic is manifest in the two figures of Labour Party history Tony Blair and Tony Benn. Blair with his ruthless electoral pragmatism against Benn's belief in principles.

This is a problem for historians. When people think about history they will almost always make their perception of the past fit to their interpretation of the present. Those who experienced the past will view the events and figures with a high degree of hindsight bias. Their political identity formed they will attempt to justify their currency feeling even though it maybe ahistorical. As we saw with Christine Davies her erroneous belief that 'new' Labour changed the emblem of the party to a rose and that they stopped the sign of the red flag at the party conference is symptomatic of this. Christine Davies would probably happily withdraw such a statement but it speaks to her intuitive judgement. It was a much more expressive statement but Christine Davies is not alone in this. Naiyan Jones gets his assessment of the Kinnock/Militant event slightly wrong, equating it with Ken Livingstone, his intuitive judgement is more in line with a desire to see Livingstone denounced by the leadership for his comments on Zionism in the present day rather than seeing it as an attack on Derek Hatton. These are symptomatic examples of the veracity of recollection. As with Christine Davies I have little doubt that Naiyan Jones would happily withdraw that statement when he realised his error.

This is the future of history. Historians have sought to understand the past in economic terms but in the present day, grassroots members of a political party seek to understand the past in terms of culture and identity; that culture and identity is

conceived during the 'Reminiscence Bump' as laid out in this dissertation. The vote to leave the European Union in 2016 and the election of Donald Trump in the same year are indicative of this. Both those campaigns used slogans such as "Take Back Control" and "Make America Great Again". Both these slogans evoke an idea of the past, where things used to be good suggesting we have lost our way and we need to get back to that time. This is something that Svetlana Boym has talked about. Boym talked about two types of nostalgia, the reflective kind and the restorative kind. What we have seen with the Brexit and Trump campaigns is restorative nostalgia. Boym said:

"Nostalgics [restorative] do not think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe their project to be about truth. Restorative nostalgics manifests itself in total reconstruction of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time.<sup>149</sup>"

Restorative nostalgics are like Jay Gatsby in their desire to repeat the past. A belief that if only they could go back to that time and everything would be well, this restorative nostalgia exists within the Labour party. The party's average age is fifty three and as has been shown that is the age group that was more favourable to Tony Benn in the Seyd and Whiteley survey of 1990 when you consider the passing of time. It is that group that is in charge of the party now, in the last leadership election of 2016 the only age demographic that didn't vote for Corbyn was the 18 - 24 group<sup>150</sup>. The generation very much in the AB group of this research. What this poll has shown is that the younger generation are more interested in gaining power and are less interested in sticking to principles but the older generation are not. The older generation actually want to go back to a time when they felt the party was more pure, more socialist, more working class but as we have seen such time does not exist. It has been the perceived wisdom that as you grow older you become more conservative and that you are more likely to vote but this poll has shown that conservatism actually goes both ways. What should be stated is that as people grow older they become more traditionalist. This would mean that those who have no political persuasion when they are younger would be more likely to vote Conservative

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<sup>149</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books: New York, 2001), 41.

<sup>150</sup> "Labour leadership election: members' vote breakdown" YouGov, last modified on September 24, 2016, 2:32 p.m. <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/09/24/labour-members-exit-poll-corbyn-wins-all-except-yo/>

as that is the party that would play to their instinct and identity and sense of the past. Generation informs identity which informs ideology which becomes a filter on the past.

Generational identity is now, if it was before, the most important factor in mass histories. This is due to the ability of people who write their own perceptions of history due to the huge literacy rates in western countries and the ability to publish your own accounts due to the internet. Past histories could only be written by those who were first literate and secondly who were able to be published. Historians have concerned themselves mostly with economic histories, or economic determinism but as Inglehart and Norris has shown culture and identity has taken over as explanations and interpretations of the past<sup>151</sup>.

Part of the problem is that popular historical discourse take place on social media, it is not an exercise in sharing insight, more an attempt to get the opposing viewpoint to accept your perception of the past, the problem being that there's no such thing as a wrong perception.

This image was shared during the Leadership election of 2016 on the internet and is illustrative of the problem that historians of Labour Party history face:



First the image suggests a past where the Labour Party was explicitly socialist and

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<sup>151</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash" (July 29, 2016). 29 HKS Working Paper No. RWP16-026. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2818659> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2818659>

the Kinnock moved the party into being a 'non Socialist party', secondly it suggests that party leaders have 'terms'. Thirdly, it forgets to mention that Corbyn was the chair of the campaign for Tony Benn and his challenge to Kinnock's leadership in 1988 which was during Kinnock's second term, going by the rationalization of the picture. These factors do not matter for the person who created the picture and those that shared it on social media platforms. It uses a perception of the past as justification for present day action.

Such discourse does not allow for nuance, that most favourite of words for historians, so hopefully, with this work and any further work that follows on, can provide a framework for historians to understand the differences between generations and ideologies equipping historians with the tools necessary to counter such oversimplifications made by laypersons in the discipline of history.

## **List of Abbreviations**

AB – Acquiring Bump

CLIV – Clause IV

OMOV – One Member One Vote

PB – Post Bump



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