# Why Has the UK Spending on Rail Increased?

## A Discourse Analysis

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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# Acknowledgements

# Abstract

This research looks to understand why, since the turn of the millennium, the UK Government has funded rail at record levels when compared with real terms historic averages. There are two issues: the initial provision of higher funding levels and its maintenance since. This research outlines that such a phenomenon is historically unique and expands existing research on rail industry costs and inefficiencies by identifying why such funding was made available against other policy options, such as network closures or other 'efficiency' interventions. This research utilises critical and mixed methods discourse analysis to identify whether noted concepts within the literature on policy change could explain this. The timing of change, the establishment of ideas, the role of lobbying and the rail industry structure are a focus. House of Commons debate transcripts and discourses referenced within the debates are studied as mediums for policy rationalisation, pressures to Government and advocacy. This research demonstrates that a series of events occurred which culminated in a policy pathway. Rail was privatised in the mid 1990's and subsequently championed for its potential to achieve sustainable transport outcomes on the back of private sector investment. Issues in the early 2000's led to Government being tied by a regulator's bill for network maintenance with alternatives being ruled out by legislation. High funding levels were initially considered a temporary policy, however the emergence of two pro-rail advocacy groups, notably private sector actors and devolved Governments, saw the case for rail evolve. This led to the maintenance of high rail funding. By studying the mechanisms behind policy change, this research suggests that an upcoming future rail industry restructure and the COVID-19 pandemic will unlikely lead to funding reductions as existing advocacies will remain. New pro-rail narratives, such as decarbonisation and 'levelling up', are already emerging.

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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| BRB | British Railways Board |
| BTC | British Transport Commission |
| CTRL | Channel Tunnel Rail Link |
| COBA | Cost Benefit Analysis |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| CUP | Capacity Utilisation Plan |
| DfT | Department for Transport |
| DETR | Department for the Environment, Transport, and the Regions |
| DoT | Department of Transport |
| FDA | Foucauldian Discourse Analysis |
| GBR | Great British Railways |
| GLA | Greater London Authority |
| HS2 | High Speed 2 |
| IRP | Integrated Rail Plan |
| LTS | Large Technical Systems |
| MMDA | Mixed Methods Discourse Analysis |
| MLP | Multi-Level Perspective |
| NAO | National Audit Office |
| NATA | New Approach to Appraisal |
| ORR | Office of Rail Regulation / Office of Rail and Road |
| PTE | Public Transport Executive |
| QDAS | Qualitative Data Analysis Software |
| RDG | Rail Delivery Group |
| ROSCOs | Rolling Stock Leasing Companies |
| SNP | Scottish National Party |
| SRA | Strategic Rail Authority |
| TOC | Train Operating Company |

TAG       Transport Analysis Guidance

VB       Visual Basic

# Chapter 1
# Introduction

This research focuses on rail policy, specifically concerning decisions by Government impacting funding allocations for the British rail industry. Since 2001, Government funding for the rail system has increased substantially and remained at historically high levels (ORR, 2021a). Rail's history leaves a question as to why this phenomenon occurred. Alternative options to funding increases, such as systems closures, managed decline or industry reform were the historic precedents (Gourvish, 1980; 1986; 2002; 2008; Dudley & Richardson, 2000; Harris, 2016). Previous research has indicated that rail system subsidy rates vary not just based on industry or network characteristics, but also political choices and decision making processes, though it has also been noted that this is an under-researched area (Crössmann & Mause, 2015). As such, the overarching research question is:

*"Why have observed levels of UK Government funding to the British rail industry increased significantly since the early 2000's?"*

This research looks to extend the debate surrounding rail by providing a different outlook on drivers of rail funding increases. It contributes toward debates concerning the future of the rail industry by outlining how drivers of rail funding may be impacted by upcoming restructure proposals (DfT, 2021a). It also sets out a method of studying policy decisions impacting other network industries such as power, water, and telecoms.

To answer the question, this research seeks to study rail funding from a policy change perspective and identify whether factors linked to policy change within the literature can explain funding increases. These factors range across a number of themes, but as outlined by Dudley & Richardson (2000) can be broadly categorised as relating to: timing, the establishment of ideas, lobbying and industry. Figure 1 shows the logic of the thesis structure and contribution of each chapter, which is then summarised in this chapter.

**Literature Review**

**Chapter 2 Literature Review on Rail History**
- *Outlines observable phenomenon within the history of rail and high funding rates since 2001.*
- *Outlines gaps within existent academic research on rail funding, noting a lack of viewing the issue from a policy change perspective.*
- *Develops research question.*

**Chapter 3 Literature Review on Policy Change**
- *Outlines general theories of policy change based on Dudley & Richardson (2000) research and contributions since.*
- *Develops propositions based on core themes in this work.*
- *Develops 'cross cutting' sub questions to the research question which link the four propositions.*

**Methodology & Research Method**

**Chapter 4 Methodology - Analysis**
- *Develops the analysis method from epistemological perspectives based on the research needs.*
- *Justifies the use of Mixed Methods Discourse Analysis (MMDA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).*

**Chapter 5 Methodology - Data**
- *Identifies options for data to be analysed under the methods selected in Chapter 4.*
- *Rationalises the use of House of Commons debate transcripts and discourses referenced within those.*
- *Rationalises the selection of a study period and snapshot approach.*

**Chapter 6 Method**
- *Outlines how data selected in Chapter 5 was collected and prepared for analysis.*
- *Outlines how data was analysed through the methods selected in Chapter 4.*
- *Identifies variables for study, based on the policy change themes identified in Chapter 3.*

**Results & Discussion**

**Chapter 7 Results**
- *Sets out the results from the MMDA and CDA.*
- *Structured based around sets of variable assessed, rather than propositions, to aid in identifying cross cutting themes.*
- *Provides numerical results and quotations to support stated findings.*

**Chapter 8 Discussion**
- *Discusses the four propositions identified in Chapter 3 in light of the research results and the literature presented.*
- *Discusses choices made in the methodology chapters.*

**Chapter 9 Conclusion**
- *Summarises the thesis.*
- *Answers the research question and sub-questions.*
- *Provides recommendations for future research.*
- *Provides recommendations for policy.*

**Figure 1 Logic of the thesis structure and contribution of each chapter**

Chapter 2 outlines that rail's history leaves many questions as to why the phenomenon of high Government funding occurred. The relationship between Government and the rail system has been one of frequent change, restructuring and inconsistent direction setting. The Victorian era saw Government involvement with a privatised industry through regulations and price-setting (Gourvish, 1980). During the interwar period, new competition from road saw rail lobby for equivalent regulation for its competitors (Gourvish, 1986). The post-war era saw rail nationalised and moved down

the political hierarchy below the British Transport Commission (BTC) and insufficiently funded to conduct overdue maintenance (Gourvish, 1986). A partially delivered Modernisation Plan (BTC, 1955) failed to return profitability and rail was subject to major closures (BRB, 1963; 1965). This did not return profitability and Government changed policy, installing structured annual subsidies through the Transport Act (1968). Rail was generally left to decline with subsidies fluctuating in the £1bn-£3bn range, in real terms[1], for several decades (ORR, 2021a). Rail was privatised in the 1990's with some commentators suggesting this policy was aimed at cancelling out subsidies altogether (Dudley & Richardson, 2000; Harris, 2016). Contrarily, Government funding levels increased to £6bn-£8bn per annum in real terms from the early 2000's (ORR, 2021a). Section 2.7 reviews academic research into rail industry costs, considering the issues of 'buying more output' and 'efficiency', which outlines a knowledge base necessary to create a more cost-effective rail system. However, such recommendations have not consistently been implemented by Governments despite continued high funding rates thus suggesting other considerations are at play. This research views rail funding levels as a Government policy decision, whether intentionally made or resulting from other policy, regulatory or legislative decisions. After the initial increase in funding rates from 2001 comes the question of why funding levels remained so high longer term.

Chapter 3 presents a review of policy change literature, generally structured on the four themes of change identified by Dudley & Richardson (2000). Section 3.2 outlines the wider context of the timing of policy change (Kingdon, 1995), issue salience (RePass, 1971; Robertson, 1976) and commitment. Section 3.3 outlines how policy ideas may establish themselves and be driven by policy frames (Tomaney & Marques, 2013), party political positions (Slapin, et al., 2017) and geographic considerations (Tallon, 2015). Section 3.4 outlines that policies may be subject to lobbying by vested-interests (Baumgartener, et al., 2009) and trade narratives (Bowman, et al., 2013). Section 3.5 presents rail as a network industry, which may be subject to power transfer away from politicians towards industry, appraisal methodologies (Hughes, 1989) or regulators (Dal Bo, 2006). These theories lead to the definition of four propositions (one for each

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[1] Throughout this thesis 'real terms' means 2020/21 prices

section of Chapter 3) and two cross-cutting sub-research questions, within the primary research question, which apply to all four propositions.

- **Proposition 1:** Rail funding policy will have become a more politically salient topic amongst Government and policy makers.

- **Proposition 2:** The rationale for rail funding will have shifted towards a hegemony that rail is a worthwhile use of Government money.

- **Proposition 3:** Rail advocates will have undertaken a lobbying campaign aimed at promoting the allocation of higher Government funding levels for the rail industry.

- **Proposition 4:** There will have been a degree of power transfer from Government to the network of rail interests over rail funding policy development.

Sub-question 1: *"How has the discourse on Government funding for rail changed over this timeframe?"*

Sub-question 2: *"In what ways could the changing network of rail interests over this timeframe have contributed to Government funding increases?"*

Chapter 4 selects an analysis method based on the needs of the research. Section 4.2 discusses epistemological outlooks and rationalises the use of the critical realist outlook. Section 4.3 explains the use of qualitative and mixed methods approaches through discourse theory, given that much of the policy change literature focuses on how rationales for policy change are communicated through discourses. 'Discourse' refers generally to the 'transfer of information', although a more detailed understanding is presented later. Section 4.4 outlines methods that may be used to analyse discourses and rationalises using 'critical discourse analysis' (CDA) and 'mixed methods discourse analysis' (MMDA).

Chapter 5 develops a data method in line with CDA and MMDA. Section 5.2 sets out a rationale for utilising documentary analysis, due to the timescales associated with this research. Section 5.3 identifies the datasets for study; House of Commons debates on rail and discourses referenced within those debates. This enables the research to go further than analysing Government rationales alone, identifying pressures applied to Government through the

democratic system of elected parliamentarians and advocates. Section 5.4 considers sampling and utilising snapshots to cover the studies' lengthy time period (major rail policy changes occurred from the 1990's to present).

Chapter 6 presents a detailed walk through of the research method with a step by step guide to ensure replicability of these results and an ability to utilise similar methods for other studies. The variables used for CDA and MMDA are outlined. Computer coding used for this research has been made available online, and Appendix A provides further detail. Table 1 outlines the fundamental information presented within this thesis derived from Chapters 2 to 6.

The remainder of this thesis consists of Chapter 7, which presents the results organised by analysis method and variables; Chapter 8, which discusses the results in light of the research propositions and method choices; and Chapter 9, which answers the research questions and makes recommendations for both future research and policy.

**Table 1 Fundamental information of the thesis**

| Research Question | Propositions *(derived from the Research Question and the literature on policy change as shown in Figure 10)* | Related Theories of Policy Change | Method / Data | Variables / Nodal Sets |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main question: *"Why have observed levels of UK Government funding to the British rail industry increased significantly since the early 2000's?"* Sub-question 1: *"How has the discourse on Government funding for rail changed over this timeframe?"* Sub-question 2: | Proposition 1: Rail funding policy will have become a more politically salient topic amongst Government and policy makers. | The significance of time as an independent or a dependent variable (Dudley & Richardson, 2000); policy windows (Kingdon, 1995; Dudley, 2013; Hebbert, 2014); issue salience (RePass, 1971; Robertson, 1976); media influence theory (Stachowiak, 2013); punctuated equilibrium theory / large leaps theory (Cerna, 2013); commitment (Fairclough, 2003). | MMDA – House of Commons rail debates. | Table 3 Classification of House of Commons debates as related to rail or rail funding by criteria |
| | | | CDA – House of Commons rail funding debates, and referenced episodic discourses | Table 6 Variables covering references to the perceptions of the timeliness of a policy idea Table 7 Variables covering the level of commitment displayed on the provision of Government funding to the rail industry |
| | Proposition 2: The rationale for rail funding will have shifted towards a hegemony that rail is a worthwhile use of Government money. | The relationship between ideas and interests (Dudley & Richardson, 2000); Hegemonies (Howarth, et al., 2016); Policy Framing (Schön & Rein, 1995); Party Politics (Diermeier & Feddersen, 1998), Political Will and Survival (Cerna, 2013) / Group Formation Theory (Stachowiak, 2013); Geography / Diffusion Theory (Shipan & Volden, 2008; Cerna, 2013; Stachowiak, 2013) / Multi-Level Governance Theory (Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Cerna, 2013). | CDA – House of Commons rail funding debates, and referenced episodic discourses | Table 8 Variables covering hegemony in discourses Table 9 Variables covering perceived value for money for rail funding Table 10 Sets of variables covering the political (manifesto) priorities of the Government at the previous election Table 11 Variables covering references to geography |

| "In what ways could the changing network of rail interests over this timeframe have contributed to Government funding increases?" | Proposition 3: Rail advocates will have undertaken a lobbying campaign aimed at promoting the allocation of higher Government funding levels for the rail industry. | Lobbying (Baumgartener, et al., 2009); Stakeholder Communication (Shepherd & Pryke, 2014); Grassroots Theory (Alinsky, 1971); Regime Theory (Alinsky, 1971); Trade Narratives (Miller & Rose, 1990; Callon, 1998; Bowman, et al., 2013); Intertextuality (Fairclough, 2003); Legitimisation (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999). | MMDA – House of Commons rail debates. | Table 4 Frequency of reference to rail industry organisations by category of organisation<br><br>Table 5 Frequency of reference to episodic discourses and discourse production data |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | CDA – House of Commons rail funding debates, and referenced episodic discourses | Table 12 Variables covering references to episodic discourses<br><br>Table 13 Variables covering legitimisations for decisions impacting the provision of Government funding to the rail industry |
| | Proposition 4: There will have been a degree of power transfer from Government to the network of rail interests over rail funding policy development. | Large Technical Systems Theory (Hughes, 1983); Embedding (Hughes, 1998); Objectives (Hughes, 1998; Tomaney & Marques, 2013); Elite Projection (Mills, 1956; Dudley & Richardson, 2000); Regulatory Capture (Sittle, 2004) | CDA – House of Commons rail funding debates, and referenced episodic discourses | Table 14 Variables covering references to types of railway spend<br><br>Table 15 Variables covering references to the essential requirements for the privatisation of British Rail<br><br>Table 16 Variables covering Government objectives for the railways as measured through factors considered during scheme appraisal |

# Chapter 2
# Literature Review on Rail History

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by setting out key events from the history of the British rail system with sections covering differing periods based on rail industry structure. Section 2.2 covers the early history up to 1921, Section 2.3 the 'big four' years up to 1948, Section 2.4 nationalisation up to 1982, Section 2.5 sectorisation up to 1994 and Section 2.6 privatisation/franchising from 1994. The first four of these periods pre-date the study period of the thesis but provide critical context, whilst the latter introduces the study context. This chapter reflects on the role of Government in defining rail system policy to highlight the routine and changing nature of Government interference and to set out the history of rail funding. Without such a review, it would be difficult to understand the distinctiveness of contemporary policy changes. Throughout, consideration will be given to the socio-political context and wider developments within the transport industry as key influences on rail's development. This provides an understanding of why and how many changes occurred, as transport is often considered an enabler of other activities and thus depends heavily on patterns external to it. Section 2.6.3 introduces a critique of the history presented in this chapter, outlining how our modern outlooks may skew our interpretations of historical events. Section 2.7 reviews academic literature studying rail industry costs from the perspective of 'efficiency' and 'buying more output'. Gaps within existing research are noted to outline the scope for further academic research.

## 2.2 Early History (1825 – 1921)

From the start of rail history there has been Government involvement and policy interventions impacting the financial performance of the rail system. Government played a major role in shaping the early rail system. As this section sets out, initial public policy changes concerned a number of questions still relevant today; what is the right level of regulation? Where should be served by rail? How should fares / revenue be regulated? And should the system be private or nationalised? Early attempts of rail companies to lobby Government and investors can also be observed.

The rail system began as an innovation and a more efficient means of transporting goods than existing systems, such as canals. This enabled the birth of what is commonly thought of as the 'modern' railway, which began in 1825 with the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (Gourvish, 1980; Holland, 2015). Politics had been involved from the start, notably in the form of advocacy such as William Huskisson MP's role as a key advocate for construction of the line in parliamentary circles (Holland, 2015). The following decades saw an explosion of private railway lines across the country, mostly in pursuit of lucrative freight traffic with passenger rail considered an 'add-on' source of revenue (Harris, 2016), though some routes operated primarily for passengers (Gourvish, 1980).

Government intervention was very much on the agenda. Permission to build railways during this time required political decision making in the form of parliamentary scrutiny of a Private Bill, deposited to the Houses of Parliament. Bills sought permission to construct and operate proposed rail routes. Parliament might refuse a railway on the grounds that it infringed on a competitor, the usual grounds for rejection, or for other reasons such as property owner objections or sub-standard design. The fact that Parliament would look to uphold the monopoly status of a private railway over a certain geography might be considered an early form of Government 'support' for rail companies. However, there was nothing significant in the way of funding transfers during this era (Harris, 2016).

Between 1830 and 1875 c.70% of the British rail network's historic peak total route mileage was built. However, construction activity was not evenly profiled; three 'manias' occurred with peaks in 1839/40, 1847 and 1865/66. Construction activity took place in years between at lower rates (Gourvish, 1980). Raising capital for construction often occurred through stock sales and fixed interest loans, and stockbrokers could be considered a key section of the railway 'investment lobby' that looked to sway money-holder sentiment in favour of funding rail (Gourvish, 1980).

The UK had opted for private sector led development of the rail system with some Government oversight, unlike European counterparts who more heavily involved the state in network planning stages. Government oversaw the rail industry through the Railway Department of the Board of Trade (1840-1844), the Railway Board (1844-1845), the Railway Commissioner (1846-1851) and a subsequent return to the Railway Department model thereafter (Gourvish, 1980). Liberal MP William Gladstone's Act of 1844 allowed for the state purchase of railways after achieving a 10% or greater

return on capital investment after 21 years of operation, though this was not used. A general divide emerged between pro-private Conservatives and Liberals favouring greater Government oversight and even nationalisation.

Gourvish (1980) notes the varied success of rail advocacies in influencing Government policy during this time. Gladstone's act was watered down on the recommendations of senior railway figures in 1844, who were able to keep Government intervention to a minimum due to a lack of clear rail policy. Later, an organised advocacy group, the United Railways Companies' Committee, was set up in the late 1860's (Gourvish, 1980).

Legislation impacted the railways' ability to raise revenue. The Rail and Canal Traffic Act (1854) set freight charges and prevented refusal of service following request. This was intended to guard against issues created by natural monopolies given the absence of competition and the decline of canals. Government also regulated to ensure third-class carriages on services, leading to an explosion of ridership through a high volume low cost revenue policy in the 1850's. The Regulation of Railways Act (1868) saw Government intervene into rail operation methods by requiring a communication cord for passenger trains. This was followed by many other acts impacting railway operations, particularly from a safety perspective. Regulation to rail freight tariffs has been linked with lobbying from the UK canal industry (Gourvish, 1980; Harris, 2016). By 1900, most aspects of railway management were regulated in some respect (Gourvish, 1980).

In the late nineteenth century, the rail companies took a new direction towards generating profits by developing suburban housing around new rail lines. This was an early example of transit-oriented development and played a major role in shaping modern towns and cities and the entire commuter lifestyle (Cervero, 1998). This development saw the market for rail travel transform once more, with a new focus on 'peak time' demand, which led to crowded trains for a few hours per day in one direction.

During World War 1 the multitude of private rail companies were placed under state control, revealing some advantages of state coordination first mooted by William Gladstone in the 1840's. Reduced internal competition allowed a timetable with more output. A fixed fee for the Government's usage of the railways to transport goods, troops and equipment was organised. This enabled railway profits to remain flat, as increased revenue was met with increased operational costs, and there is some evidence maintenance and renewals activity widely reduced (Harris, 2016).

Having started with Gladstone, calls for nationalisation later grew with the formation of the Railway Nationalisation Society in 1908, endorsement by the trade union movement and the emergence of the Labour Party who supported public ownership of railways and all inland transport. Even Conservative Winston Churchill MP had promised in 1918 that the Government had decided to nationalise the railways (Gourvish, 1986). This would not be the first time that a policy concept formed and 'bubbled away' for many decades, awaiting a major contextual shift (as occurred with the First World War) before rising up the political agenda as a salient issue.

## 2.3 Grouping (1921 – 1948)

This section outlines a new role Government took on, that of directly restructuring the rail industry through legislation, leading to the grouping years. Reasons for this policy were primarily stated as improvements to efficiency. Grouping may also have been a means of calming an emerging pro-nationalisation sentiment, once more demonstrating that throughout the history of rail idealism influenced many policy changes. There is also further evidence of the rail industry lobbying to influence Government policy.

Post war, calls for nationalisation of the rail companies became prominent and this issue was thus pushed further up the political agenda, made 'salient' by a growing railway nationalisation advocacy. Perceived successes in Europe were key. Government rejected nationalisation along with the status quo, and 'grouping' became policy with 120 private railways grouped into four new private companies by the Railways Act (1921). This was a policy change implemented by the Conservative-Liberal coalition, creating:

- Great Western Railway (3,566 route miles).

- London, Midland and Scottish Railway (7,311 route miles).

- London North Eastern Railway (6,772 route miles).

- Southern Railway (2,116 route miles) (Holland, 2015).

The Ministry of Transport, formed in 1919, was responsible for Government oversight of the industry (Gourvish, 1986). Whilst most rail companies had been vertically integrated before, creation of the 'Big Four' enabled vertical integration to become absolute (Gourvish, 1980). Railway companies were sufficiently sized to develop their own locomotive factories, new

technologies, even power stations so most aspects of running a railway were conducted internally (Holland, 2015).

The Big Four had a lower rate of return on capitalisation (indicating a lower ability to produce profits) compared with pre-grouping averages. Rail companies began to face competition, particularly for short distance freight and passenger journeys. New road-based transport technologies had less strict regulation, improving their competitiveness. An attempt to influence Government policy was made by a pro-rail advocacy, known as the 'Square Deal Campaign', which sought greater parity between regulations for road and rail companies. However, the outbreak of World War 2 ultimately halted the almost successful passage of this legislation (Gourvish, 1986).

World War 2 saw the railways placed under national control once more to support the war effort. Investment into upgrading the network dried up, leading to maintenance backlogs and decaying performance. This would be an issue throughout normal service and was worsened by damage sustained from Nazi bombing. Harris (2016) and Gourvish (1986) both note the railways continued to pay dividends throughout the war, but at a rate broadly considered unfair by many railway shareholders with Government stating low profits as a wartime sacrifice. There were also renewed calls for nationalisation and the Railway Companies' Association was formed in 1941 to lobby Government against this (Gourvish, 1986). A maintenance and rolling stock replacement programme following World War 2 could not be completed as reconstruction plans hoped. Government funding allocated was not sufficient to meet increased materials and staffing costs. Such was the state of the economy that a new works programme, initially expected to allow for a £500m investment into railway enhancements, was scaled back to little more than a few electrification schemes (Gourvish, 1986).

## 2.4 Nationalisation (1948 – 1982)

This section outlines a third major restructure. Previously, Government intervention had been through regulation of a private industry. In this era Government took on all aspects of running the rail system, specifying investment, and developing strategy. This was also the case for many other transport modes, leading to the rail industry needing to fit into an overarching transport strategy and account for political priorities whilst remaining profitable. However, losses began to emerge once road vehicles took much of rail's modal share leading to changes to Government policy focusing on decline and closures. A public backlash against this led to further policy

change to instigate formal subsidy arrangements and the advent of the 'social railway'.

Following a Labour general election victory in 1945, Government policy changed to support nationalisation. There was no political unity (hegemony), in support of nationalisation with many Conservatives favouring continuation of the Big Four. However, many accepted that war had strained the rail network such that private rail companies would struggle to fund repairs and maintenance to keep their systems operating to the pre-war standards (Holland, 2015). Government support to the Big Four to fund maintenance was a policy option, but nationalisation was selected. Due to fixed tariffs, higher operating costs, backlogs of maintenance and emerging competition from road, the financial state of the railways on the eve of nationalisation was worse than in the Big Four's most difficult years in the late 1930's (Gourvish, 1986). Five policy options were considered (Gourvish, 1986):

- Nationalisation.

- State purchase of the freehold and the granting of operating leases.

- Amalgamation into a single private railway company.

- Regrouping.

- Unification through a central body the Big Four report into.

Ultimately, nationalisation was implemented by the Transport Act (1947) creating British Railways, under the remit of the BTC alongside bus, tram and goods companies and all other forms of inland transport. The railways initially retained the Big Four structure within the Railways Executive of the BTC, however future reorganisations changed this (Gourvish, 1986). The BTC was tasked with the provision of providing good integrated public transport services, and the reconstruction of Britain's dilapidated rail system was a priority (Harris, 2016). British Railways was several tiers down the reporting chain to Ministers, Cabinet Office, and HM Treasury. This likely represented a significant loss of influence relative to the previous generations of rail organisations who maintained clear and well-connected links within the House of Commons. Many parliamentarians used to be railway shareholders and directors. The Railway Executive generally accepted top-down prescribed spending cuts, contrary to other nationalised industries, such as electric and water, that successfully fought for better terms (Gourvish, 1986).

The demand for rail travel remained steady in the post-war era, but declining profitability became a pressing topic. To enable nationalisation, Big Four shareholders were guaranteed fixed dividends on their shares for a period following nationalisation. These dividends were highly generous by historical comparison of the interwar period (Gourvish, 1986). Rising staffing costs outstripped growth in revenue following Government interventions, such as to freeze fares and freight charges to keep inflation low during the 1950's. This shows the railways being used as a tool to achieve wider policy goals, irrespective of the business implications for the rail industry, a common theme in this era. By 1955 operating costs no longer met income, with losses retained on British Railways' books (Holland, 2015; Harris, 2016). Mismanagement by the nationalised industry appears a simple reason to explain the troubles facing British Railways. However, management appeared to have had the necessary experience and were generally seasoned professionals from Big Four. Maintenance levels were lower than pre-war, with regular annual maintenance deficits (Gourvish, 1986).

Government became concerned about the financial performance of the railways and sought action to return to profitability. The 'Modernisation and Re-equipment' plan looked to adjust rail to its changing environment by improving the service offered to the public (BTC, 1955). The BTC successfully convinced HM Treasury to approve the £1.2bn plan (1955 prices) profiled at £85m per annum over 15 years. Despite the requirement for HM Treasury approval there was no Government funding for its delivery other than a public sector debt risk guarantee to British Railways. This contrasts greatly with our current perception of subsidy as direct funding transfers. Instead, the plan would be funded by £400m generated by 'internal' railway sources and £800m from external borrowing. Thus, British Railways needed additional profit to this degree and projected an additional £35m passenger and £60m freight profitability, minus £10m for expenses, each year (BTC, 1955).

The plan sought to replace steam with diesel, electrify key routes and construct new stabling and marshalling yards. This spending was not entirely wise (Harris, 2016). The BTC invested significant sums into measures which did not deal with fundamental inefficiencies. Small stations remained excessively staffed and money was wasted attaining small efficiency gains in marshalling yards which failed to attract freight back to rail from road. The industry was not preparing itself adequately for competition incoming from road. Marginal consolations, such as diesel's more efficient performance

over steam, did not make sufficient gains to reverse declining profitability and the 15 year plan was drastically cut short (Harris, 2016).

The Conservative Government of 1957-1959, under Prime Minster Harold Macmillan, conducted an urgent review of railway finances led by the 'Stedeford Committee' (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). The committee examined options for industry structure and opportunities to return the railways to profitability. Through this committee Dr. Beeching was introduced to rail. Beeching recommended the BTC be abolished and replaced with a British Railways Board (BRB) to assume arms-length management of rail. Beeching's plans were adopted and he was appointed chairman of the BRB in 1961. By 1961, British Railways were losing circa £110m per year in nominal prices (£2.5bn in real terms) (Payne, 2015). Beeching viewed each route as a business that should achieve profitability and did not challenge operational practices such as staffing numbers or technologies used, thus missing opportunities to return individual routes to profitability (Harris, 2016). In 1963 the BRB published 'The Reshaping of British Railways' which proposed to close 9,700km of railway, mostly through rural and lightly used industrial areas (BRB, 1963). This amounted to one third of the network. The impact of this can be observed in Figure 2 and Figure 3.
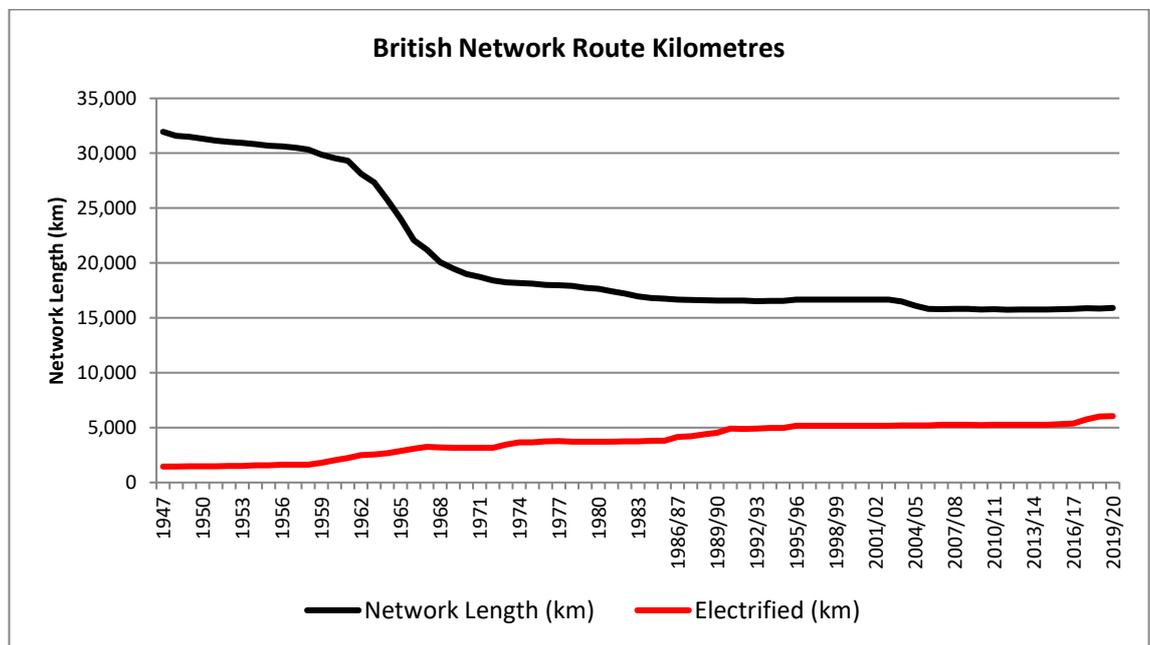


**Figure 2 Total length of British rail network (ORR, 2021b)**

**UK Rail Network Annual Closures (Route Kilometres)**
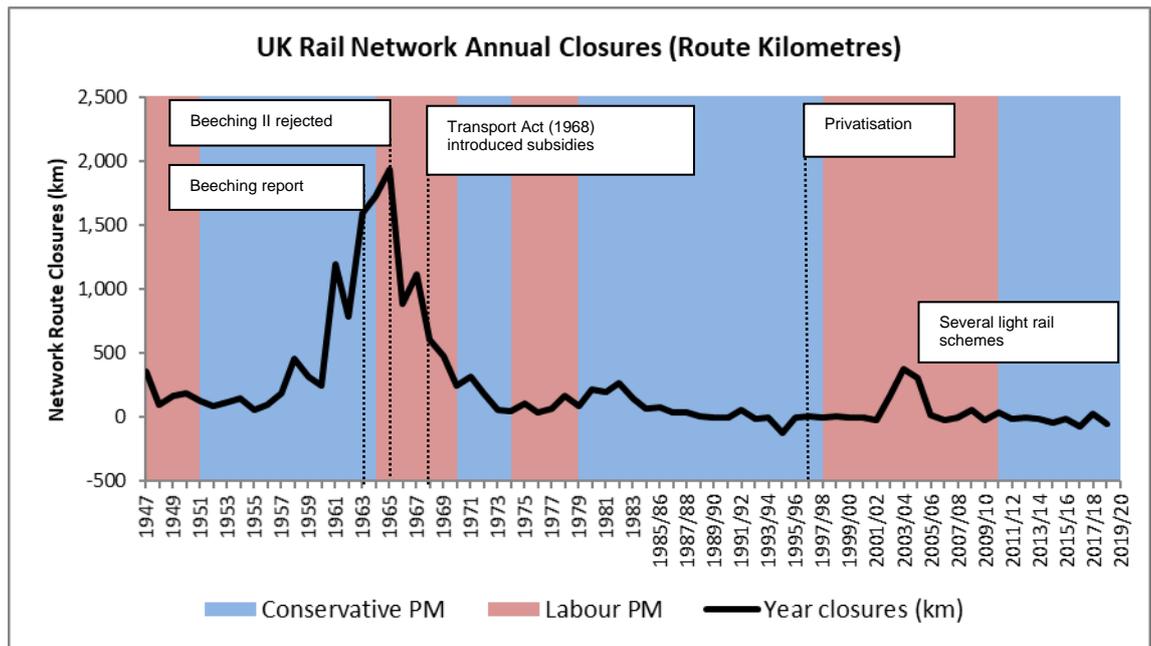
**Figure 3 British rail network annual closures (route kilometres) and party in Government (ORR, 2021b)**

The BRB could not themselves close routes as this power lay with the Government and their job was to make recommendations (Dudley & Richardson, 2000; Harris, 2016). However, Ministers sold on the future of road-based travel felt that rail was past its prime, and losses needed to be curbed. British Railways had struggled to adjust to its new context. Major road construction programmes, at great cost to the taxpayer, accelerated in pace for the next decades (Dudley & Richardson, 2000).

When Harold Wilson's Labour party won the 1964 general election the Beeching closures continued despite a pledge during campaigning to immediately halt them; demonstrating challenges with changing policies once a path is taken. In 1965 Government rejected Beeching's second proposals 'The Development of Major Trunk Routes' which proposed certain key routes be upgraded with the fate of other lines unspecified (BRB, 1965). It is possible that major closures would have followed once more. Following Beeching's departure the rate of railway closures reduced (ORR, 2021b).

The Transport Act (1968) caused the closures programme to come to a near complete end by introducing structured Government grants to support unprofitable but socially necessary services. This aligns with the modern view of subsidy as direct transfers of Government funds. In many respects, the subsidy provision in the Transport Act (1968) was a new policy concept for Britain's' railways. The idea of buying 'socially necessary' rail services that could not fund themselves because of the positive externality benefit

reaped by those who needed to travel had not permeated Government policy decisions before. This was the advent of the social railway (Gourvish, 1986). Public Transport Executives (PTEs) were created by the Transport Act (1968) and had responsibility for specifying, coordinating, and integrating public transport within local and regional geographies. Merseyrail opened in 1977 following Liverpool City Council's rejection of Beeching's recommendations to close Liverpool's electric commuter rail network (City Centre Planning Group, 1965). The Tyne and Wear Metro opened in 1979 following the local planning authorities rejection of Beeching's recommendations to de-electrify and scale back Newcastle's commuter rail network (Tyneside PTA, 1971). Nationally, ad hoc major programmes such as the Intercity125 project were developed to target new markets.

Throughout the 1970's the rail system implemented a policy known as 'managed decline', a planned and gradual reduction in capability. The 1973 OPEC Oil Crisis drove inflation, particularly for fuel, whilst simultaneously restricting Government funding due to a recession (Gourvish, 2002). British Rail was routinely asked to cut planned investments by up to 30% throughout this time, often at only a few months' notice contradicting agreed settlements. The BRB stated their frustration clearly in annual reports. Whilst Government did occasionally write off some British Rail debt, this shows a system where Government had extensive control over investment and spending plans. Gourvish (2002) notes a lack of clarity over the objectives of the rail system. Rail had gone through a significant transition (commercial enterprise to state-controlled) and there were multiple logics about what the railway was for and how it should be funded. With a lack of clear objectives, British Rail was unable to set direction (Dudley & Richardson, 2000).

Rail achieved above UK-average productivity gains during this time, with output per worker growing at 6.8% per annum compared with a UK average of less than 3%. The trouble was that rail's road-based competition did even better (Gourvish, 1986). Continued reorganisations, political interference, and an inability for British Railways to innovate and venture into growth areas limited revenue to a declining passenger and freight business (Nelson, 2019).

## 2.5 Sectorisation (1982 – 1994)

This section outlines major changes to the internal workings of the rail industry, but not a change in ownership as occurred with the previous eras. Rail was not considered a prime candidate for privatisation, though it was

subject to the selling off of many of its 'non-core businesses'. This contrasts with policy decisions made elsewhere during an era which saw mass privatisations of other nationalised industries. It is worth noting that privatisation in this era referred to a general removal of an industry from Government ownership and oversight, alongside deregulation. We observe the role of electoral party politics impacting rail policy change, due to the rejection of the Serpell Report in 1983 which proposed further closures of rural and commuter routes in Conservative voting constituencies.

Margaret Thatcher's Conservative party won the 1979 general election with a pledge to drive forward market-led planning of the UK economy. Rail was reorganised in 1982, dividing its internal workings into business sectors (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). The justification was to make sectors more accountable for their performance, as accountability was considered lacking in the previous structure. British Rail was split into five business sectors each responsible for their own segment of operations. These included; freight, parcels, Intercity, Network Southeast and Provincial (Gourvish, 2002; Shooter, 2018). There was an acceptance within Government that some British Rail sectors would not be commercially viable, whilst others would be (BRB, 1979). Commercial targets were set for each business, thus improving accountability for financial performance. Of the British Rail passenger businesses, Intercity was the only one required to operate without subsidy. Other elements of British Rail, such as ferries, hotels, and manufacturing, were privatised by Government (Holland, 2015). A strong devolutionary presence also existed whereby local decision-making forums, such as PTEs, were responsible for managing rail services within their local area.

Despite the market-led planning and major privatisation programmes of the Thatcher-era, British Rail was not privatised. This was contrary to other industries such as utilities, buses, and aviation. Parker (2016) notes a reason being acknowledgment by Government that rail would require subsidy for the foreseeable future, and that HM Treasury research indicated privatisation through franchising may be unnecessarily expensive and lead to difficult contractual relationships between Government and industry (HM Treasury Papers, 1983).

Government commissioned a report (the Serpell Report) into British Rail to evaluate options for future British rail network scenarios. Published in 1983, it made no recommendations but stated that options for a profitable railway could see the network reduced to 2,000km (DoT, 1983), mainly comprising core InterCity corridors. It did not reflect on ownership changes. This report

caused a considerable backlash, and subsequently was shelved. This episode shows that Government subsidy was being scrutinised with a desire to reduce the financial burden of the railways. It also shows the role of electoral politics in railway policy; many of the Serpell closures would have been in largely Conservative voting rural and Network Southeast areas and caused uproar from backbench Conservative parliamentarians. The Beeching cuts, implemented first by a Conservative Government, had been primarily in Labour voting areas (Gibbons, et al., 2018).

Figure 4 shows that by the late 1980's rail had been on a path of decline for several decades. Managed decline continued throughout the 1980's, as emphasised by continued cuts to rail subsidies and increasingly stringent financial targets on each British Rail sector (Gourvish, 2002). Gourvish goes on to note that in the 1980's investment into upgrades and maintenance was low compared with the previously stated under-investment years of the 1960s, leading to a continued net disinvestment in the railways.
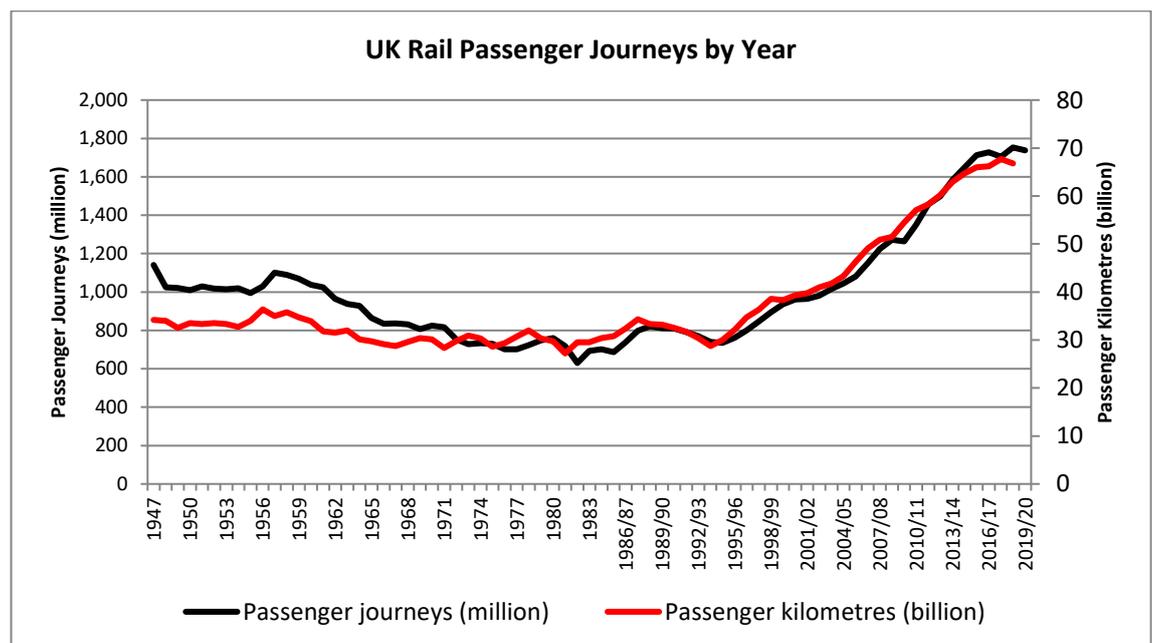


**Figure 4 Total rail passenger journeys by year (ORR, 2021c; 2021d)**

## 2.6 Privatisation (1994 – present)

This section is divided into two parts; privatisation through franchising (1994 – 2020) and current and future developments. It describes how the observed outcomes have been highly contradictory to the stated aims of privatisation when implemented. The Government White Paper 'New Opportunities for the Railways: The Privatisation of British Rail' set out the case for rail privatisation, proposing six 'essential requirements' (DoT, 1992):

- Safety – maintaining existing safety standards.

- Quality of Service – improvements to passenger and freight services.

- Essential Passenger Services – provision of subsidised services.

- Network Benefits – maintaining through ticketing and a national timetable.

- Opportunities for Employees – ensure the transfer of established workforce into the private sector and provide ownership opportunities.

- Environmental Benefits – maintain existing environmental standards.

The White Paper was clear that subsidies for socially necessary services would continue but does hint at a long-term objective to reduce those as a result of more efficient operation caused by private sector 'know how'. Dudley & Richardson (2000) suggest that an objective of privatisation was reduction and potentially elimination of subsidy. Following privatisation, rail was routinely restructured by Government, faced a lack of direction setting but gained the highest level of state support observed in the system's history. It also generated significant growth and expansion programmes.

## 2.6.1 Privatisation Through Franchising (1994 – 2020)

By the end of the Thatcher administration and the beginning of John Major's Conservative Government, rail was one of only three major state-run industries (others being coal and post) which had not yet been privatised. A shock 1992 general election win gave Major the political remit to address this (Holland, 2015). Harris (2016) states Government would set one ground-rule for how rail should be privatised; that the process be irreversible.

Several options were considered for the future industry structure, though all would likely have required some degree of Government funding or regulation. These ranged from a complete sell off of the existing company to form a 'BR Plc', to the reinstatement of the big four, or the creation of a vertically separated franchising system. The later was chosen. There is debate as to the exact reason why a vertically separated franchising system was selected. The European Union in 1991 issued directive 91/440/EEC advising EU Governments on the bloc's favoured approach to promoting rail integration and competition which mandated the separation of track authorities and rail operators from an accounting perspective to encourage

competition (EEC, 1991). However, this could be implemented with vertical integration to an extent, as in Europe after, but it has been noted that the UK Government was influenced and adopted franchising (Harris, 2016). Freeman & Shaw (2000) dispute this, though note that HM Treasury used the EU's new legislation as justification for a vertically separated model. Instead, a special advisor on rail privatisation who particularly supported a franchised model due to perceived efficiency gains through the franchising process was considered to have significantly influenced the Secretary of State in the direction of a franchised system. This contrasted with British Rail's preference for a vertically integrated system. Freeman & Shaw (2000) also note that this decision was not based on detailed policy analysis owing to time constraints, and the main focus from the Secretary of State was whether vertical separation could work. Privatisation through franchising broke British Rail into over 100 new companies, establishing a track authority called 'Railtrack Plc' and a Director of Passenger Rail Franchising that issued franchises to Train Operating Companies (TOCs). Rolling stock was sold to Rolling Stock Leasing Companies (ROSCOs), and freight was privatised into separate competing companies. There were to be two regulators; the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Rail Regulator (Holland, 2015).

The privatisation of British Rail began in 1994 and was concluded by 1997 (Harris, 2016). This was not as simple as selling off physical assets but, as Wolmar (2001) highlights, there was also the releasing of knowledgeable and skilled British Rail employees to private consultancies. British Rail was internally reorganised in line with the proposed industry structure, and train operating businesses were franchised out to TOC's by the Director of Passenger Rail Franchising. Freight operations were sold outright, as was the new infrastructure manager Railtrack. The 'Rail Regulator', amongst other functions, had responsibility for setting the financial framework under which the rail industry operated. This was intended to prevent Railtrack from overcharging operators by setting access charges at a level to ensure the competent operation of the network. Gourvish (2008) notes the anxiety amongst the Conservative Government in selling off Railtrack before the 1997 General Election, having not given the new company time to show its competence in managing Britain's rail infrastructure. Gourvish (2008) also notes the 'reduced cost' at which much of British Railway's rolling stock was sold to private sector bidders, a conclusion also reached by the National Audit Office (NAO) (NAO, 1998).

Labour won the 1997 general election, promising a reform of transport policy which emerged as the White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport' (DETR, 1997). Goodwin (1999) highlights this abandoned 'predict and provide' methods of determining transport investments and shifted the burden of externalities onto the user. It also recognised the importance of sustainable modes and integrated transport with other Government priorities. It effectively ended the prospect of major highways expansion (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). Docherty & Shaw (2011) dispute the achievement of these goals. No drive existed to nationalise Britain's railways, instead focusing on reforming the Department of Transport (DoT) and merging it into the Department for the Environment, Transport, and the Regions (DETR).

The immediate aftermath of rail privatisation raised several serious problems, with further Government reforms responding to critical events. In 1998, Government confirmed the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), originally promoted as a private project during the years of Conservative-led privatisation, would be delivered by a Public-Private-Partnership model and funded by a combination of private and state funding. By 2007 it provided Britain with its first 300kph high speed line, the first new mainline for a century. The Transport Act (2000) created the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA), an arm's length Government body with responsibility for overseeing long term planning of the rail industry and to issue rail franchises. This expanded the role of Government during the privatisation era. Government published 'Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan' in 2000, highlighting an anticipated £49.0bn worth of rail investment over the next decade (DETR, 2000). Details show that mainly private sector (£34.3bn), not Government (£14.7bn), would be funding rail. This appeared to be the crux of the privatisation argument; Governments of both Conservative and Labour believed they could retain low level of state funding but attract funding for rail from elsewhere (DETR, 2000). Government funding in the 10 Year Plan was consistent with historic long-term annual funding levels prior.

Rail demand grew substantially, and more trains were run to both generate and accommodate demand. This was coupled with the separation of track and train, the introduction of shareholders, and a loss of technical expertise to consultancies. These changes came together within a very short period, thus not allowing the industry to adapt. The Hatfield crash in 2000 brought to public light issues created by franchising. The separation of track and train allowed TOCs to run more trains without Railtrack's contractors accounting for extra maintenance (Wolmar, 2001). Railtrack had not updated industry

practice since British Rail days, despite Government hoping privatisation would stimulate efficiency. There were several organisational layers between decisions regarding the number of trains operable and the track maintenance. This disconnect has been recognised widely as the primary cause for the crash (Wolmar, 2001; ORR, 2006; Gourvish, 2008).

Hatfield had a relatively small number of fatalities when compared with road traffic accident rates or some rail crashes. However, Railtrack's response was incoherent and caused widespread chaos across the network. It was the latest in a string of crashes and Railtrack feared political intervention should another occur. Railtrack's managers implemented significant speed restrictions when there was not necessarily the engineering requirement. Many managers lacked rail industry experience and restrictions would unlikely have been put in place widely had Railtrack retained sufficient in-house knowledge (Wolmar, 2001). These restrictions led to over a year of chaos with operators unable to run services to timetable. TOCs were able to claim lost revenue caused by both the need to issue compensation and passengers choosing not to travel. Railtrack thus went bankrupt and was reformed by Government into Network Rail in 2002. Network Rail possessed a similar remit to Railtrack but with in-house teams relying less on contractors (Gourvish, 2008). Network Rail was a not-for-profit private organisation without shareholders with debts guaranteed by Government.

This time spelled the beginning of a substantial and consistently maintained rise in long term Government funding for the rail industry. Funding rose to historically high levels after 2001, reaching a five year average that was more than double the five-year average before 2001 (ORR, 2021a). Funding was spent on maintenance, operating companies, and enhancements. It is unclear why Government provided such significant funding as rail crashes were not uncommon; rail averaged 3 crashes with fatalities per year from 1968 (RDG, 2016). This may not have been a discretionary choice with the franchised system binding Government to contractual obligations. Figure 5 shows Government funding rates, including funding from the DfT, Transport Scotland and the Welsh Government for enhancements and operations. Also includes funding for British Transport Police, Transport Focus, station improvement funds, security initiatives and research.
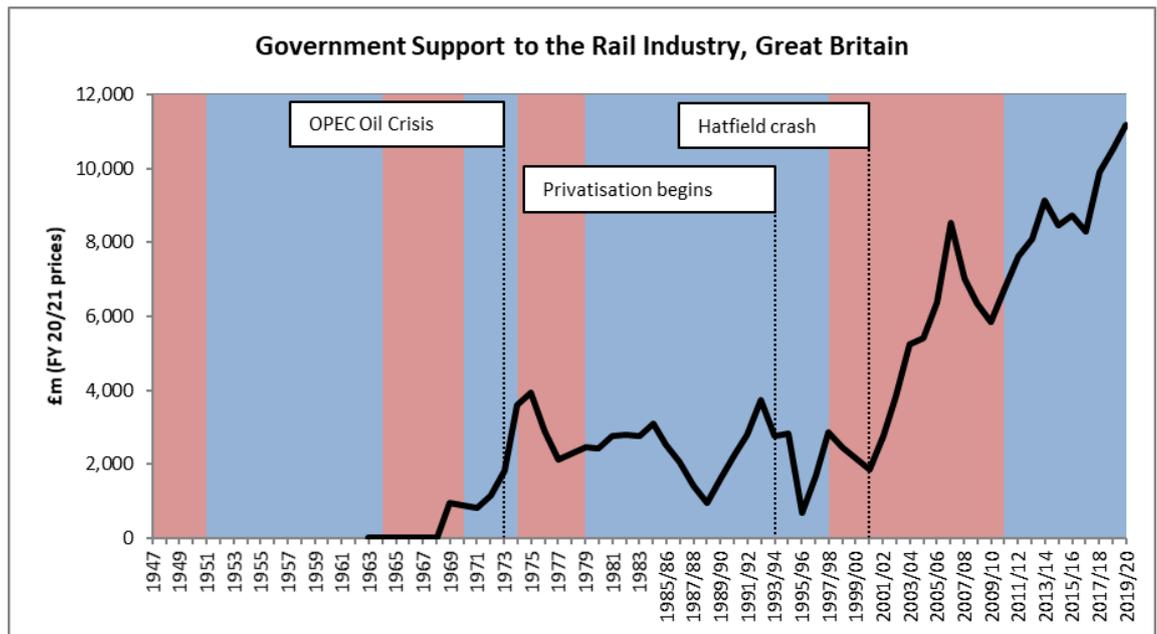
**Figure 5 Government support to the rail industry in Great Britain (2020/21 prices) (ORR, 2021a)**

The SRA was abolished after only 5 years of existence by the Railways Act (2005), with responsibilities transferred to the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) in 2006 (Gourvish, 2008), which replaced the Rail Regulator. Reasons for the SRA's abolition are not clearly stated. This put the role of planning for the rail industry, and the issuing of franchises, firmly in the hands of Ministers. There were also issues associated with West Coast Mainline Upgrade plans which had risen in cost from the £2bn agreed with Railtrack to over £15bn, leading Government to seek cuts and efficiencies through Network Rail.

The ORR has numerous responsibilities and is involved in the budget setting process for the British rail industry. The ORR's role follows the Government's identification of what it wants the railway to achieve for five-year budget periods (Control Periods). The ORR advises the Government on how much funding is needed to meet objectives, with the Government then making decisions on how much it can afford to provide and what outputs it would like to be achieved (ORR, 2017). The Government announces a 'Statement of Funds Available' identifying how much funding is available for the rail industry in each five-year control period, with the ORR then ratifying spending plans and identifying what Network Rail can deliver in line with Government funding levels and objectives. Network Rail produces business plans to show how it will achieve Government wants in line with the regulator's requirements. ORR regulates Network Rail in a price cap target model of regulation (Gillies-Smith & Wheat, 2016).

In 2007 the UK found itself deep into a financial crisis second only in scale to the Great Depression of the 1920's (ONS, 2021a). Government continued to fund the rail system following only a slight impact on demand growth from the recession. A £6.5bn rail upgrade in London, Thameslink, was approved in 2007 and a new £17bn railway from East to West London, Crossrail, was approved by Parliament in 2008 (Wolmar, 2018). Wolmar notes the role of an aligned advocacy, primarily the Greater London Authority (GLA) and London businesses as having driven the case for Crossrail. Docherty, et al. (2018) note that around this time, Government's appeared to shift from technically-driven transport planning to emergent objectives from wider debates, policy and political actors.

The continuation of high Government funding levels after a significant recession is a historically unique event. The UK had recessions in the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's which often prompted Governments to seek savings from rail due to the impact on rail finances of lower revenue. The recession of 1992 caused British Rail to cut planned investments due to lost revenue. However, the recession of 2007 did not yield such an outcome. Docherty, et al. (2018) note it is not fully clear how rail subsidy was able to survive when there were such severe cuts to other Government budgets. This demonstrated a significant change on historic sentiments towards rail where it was more than a simple 'cost to be reduced', perhaps owing to wider pro-infrastructure sentiment in the pursuit of economic growth. This is a gap this research looks to address.

In 2010 a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition Government took charge and rail funding remained high. In 2012, Government awarded a new Intercity West Coast franchise to First Plc and subsequently faced a major legal challenge by competitor Virgin Trains, leading to collapse of the competition. Several reviews took place to investigate what had gone wrong and to plan for a recommencement of franchising (Laidlaw, 2012; Brown, 2013). This demonstrated Government being held to account by the rail industry for not adhering to law. In 2013, Government announced Network Rail would be re-classified as nationalised by 2014 due to the level of public funding it was receiving (DfT, 2013). Figure 6 shows transport spending to be disproportionately focused on rail.

**Department for Transport Spending by Transport Mode (£)**
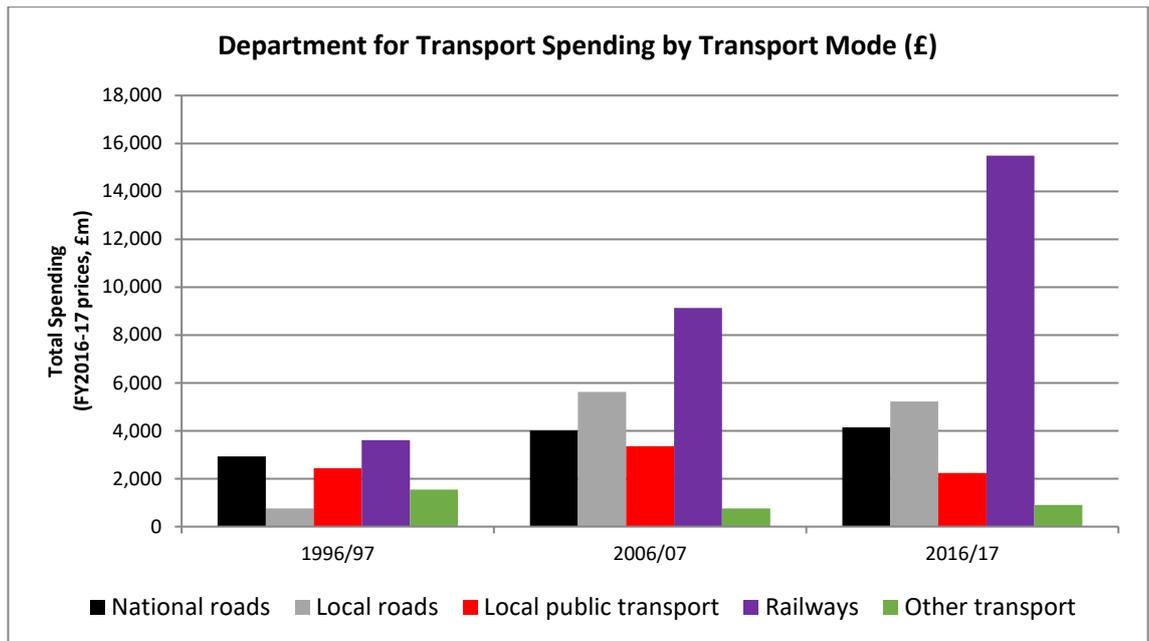


**Figure 6 Distribution of spending by transport mode (DfT, 2018a)**

The Coalition, and subsequent Conservative Governments, continued to progress rail as a key priority. Funding for schemes such as Crossrail and High Speed 2 (HS2), as well as for enhancing the conventional rail network, was provided. This contrasted greatly with the 'austerity' spending cuts applied to many other sectors at the time. It also puts rail on another historically unique footing, avoiding austerity and spending cuts whereas in the post-World War 2 austerity programmes rail had been less successful than other nationalised utilities at protecting its budgets. It appears to show a historically unique period in which Conservative Governments appeared content with high Government funding and significant political involvement in rail. KPMG (2018) note that the drive to stimulate economic growth from Government through infrastructure, and by extension rail, spending was consistent with other Governments who chose to build their way out of the recession. However, British rail subsidies had been high for several years before the recession of 2008 and its aftermath and remained at similar levels over the 2010's– long after the country returned to economic growth.

## 2.6.2 Current and Future Developments

Preston (2016) highlights that there have been five phases of passenger rail franchising, with changes to the industry in each attempting to account for ongoing issues in the franchising process. These are detailed below. Since Preston's work there has potentially been a new phase dominated by a significant number of direct awards instead of new franchise competitions.

- 1996-2000: Office for Passenger Rail Franchising led.

- 2001-2004: SRA led, which let 9 franchises with 1 failed and 13 renegotiated. Also experienced cost overruns following the Hatfield crash.

- 2005-2012: DfT led 'cap and collar' approach to 50% upside and downside risk sharing though many franchises observed revenue shortfalls.

- 2012-2013: DfT led with the subordinated loan facility requiring bidders to have capital available should their bids be over-zealous (Brown, 2013), leading to short comings in evaluations.

- 2014 onward: DfT led model of bespoke arrangements by route.

In 2018, Government announced a 'root and branch' review of the rail industry, the largest since privatisation, stating this was due to the *"structure we inherited [being] no longer fit to meet today's challenges and cope with increasing customer demand"* (DfT, 2018c). The COVID-19 pandemic hit before the review, eventually titled 'The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail', was completed. The pandemic had a notable impact on rail finances, primarily caused by Government's lockdown policies which effectively banned many reasons to travel. Journeys fell from 1.7bn in 2019-21 to 0.4bn in 2020-21 (ORR, 2021c) and revenue took a substantial hit. Views range on whether demand will recover to its previous extent, but at this stage it remains uncertain how long a potential recovery would take. Research outlines how major events can lead to substantial changes in travel patterns (Marsden, et al., 2020) and Marsden (2020) outlines a view that people will travel less often for a significant time after the pandemic. Government funding for the rail industry increased in 2020-21 to a record £22bn in real terms as the loss of revenue was not met with a reduction in industry costs with trains kept running as far as possible during the pandemic.

The complex suite of franchised passenger service contracts changed as TOCs were not able to meet their financial obligations. A concession (gross-cost) model, titled 'Emergency Measures Agreements', was installed (DfT, 2020). This demonstrates once more the role of a paradigm shifting contextual change impacting policy (Marsden & Docherty, 2021). After years

of debate on privatisation and a review of the future industry structure having been started in 2018, reform was introduced in response to an unforeseen pandemic and brought an end to the franchising model.

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail has outlined a further substantial reform of rail becoming Government policy (DfT, 2021a). A new organisation, Great British Railways (GBR), will take over responsibility for infrastructure management from Network Rail. It will also set some fares and contract out passenger services through a concession model. Integration is a theme of the policy, with the previous fragmented system broadly condemned. GBR will be accountable for the overall performance, including financial performance, of the British rail industry. This bears a stark similarity to the earlier drives towards a single organisation responsible for rail transport integration under the BTC. Whether the new GBR model will continue to receive the same Government funding levels as observed in the franchising years remains to be seen. This research seeks to understand underlying factors from past restructurings and funding policy decisions to shed some light on what we may expect for rail funding policy going forwards. There are some clues emerging. The Government's Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) was published in 2021 and outlined £96bn (2021 prices) worth of funding for rail enhancements and new lines through to 2050 (DfT, 2021b). This averages £3.3bn of spend per annum, a reduction on the £5bn per annum five-year average before 2020-21 (ORR, 2021a). When combined with operations, maintenance and renewals grants, rail will likely continue to roughly meet the 'new norm' of Government funding observed since 2001. An unknown is whether the IRP will be delivered in full, unlike the 1955 Modernisation Plan, or expanded to account for pressures towards decarbonisation or economic recovery. This research aims to shed light on factors and narratives that may support in advocates making the case for full delivery of this plan.

The future impact of climate change and the role of rail as a low-carbon transport option has also been linked as a key future development. Armstrong & Preston (2011) note this, but caveats with a suggestion that changes to the rail network are needed to ensure resilient services in the face of climate disruption. Such future changes may necessitate classifying the UK rail network to identify key links and appraising resilience interventions (including duplicate routes) to support rail delivering its low-carbon capabilities despite changing climates (Armstrong, et al., 2016).

### 2.6.3 Historiographic Considerations

This chapter has provided a review of the history of the rail system in Britain from the perspectives of funding, regulation, and state involvement. As with any historiographic study, however, there is a risk that must be considered alongside the information gained from the literature. That is the difficulty of accurately depicting events, considerations and rationales from the past. Researchers can often project their own understanding of the past into their work with a belief that the past was 'a certain way' distorting perceptions. Researchers that lived through the events being written about still may be at risk of incomplete memory or having observed events from a limited perspective thus biasing interpretation. Whilst such concerns are fundamental, and potentially restrictive of our ability to fully comprehend past events, the potential risks of historiographical research can be understood and recorded alongside findings. Section 4.2 sets out the basic theoretical principals behind such research, and how this thesis looks to account for and minimise risk where possible. Where not possible, Chapter 8 discusses how such risks may have impacted the findings of this research.

## 2.7 Literature on Rail Industry Costs

This section extends the historical review of the privatised rail industry to evaluate academic literature on rail industry costs. Adjusting for inflation, the last 20 years have seen substantially higher levels of Government funding for the rail industry than previously (ORR, 2021a). This section sets out the case for this research to focus on the phenomenon of high Government rail funding rates since 2001 as a policy change. It sets out how the existing cannon of literature on rail costs is focused into two areas: (a) rail industry efficiency and the issue of buying the same output for high cost, and (b) delivering more output and thus increasing total costs. This section is structured around these two subsections.

How Government spends money on the rail industry varies significantly between operations, maintenance, and renewals costs, for which the regulator has a key role, or enhancements and new lines which follow different processes. It is difficult to disaggregate the levels of Government support provided to cover the costs associated with operations, maintenance, renewals and enhancements of the rail network due to varying subsidy arrangements throughout the years. Particularly, changes between the way Railtrack was funded (predominantly by highly subsidised TOCs) and how Network Rail has been funded (which later in the timeframe

includes a direct grant) distorts consistency within the data (ORR, 2021a). There is limited granularity of rail industry cost data publicly available which may be limiting research. Available data is displayed in Figure 7.



**Government Support to the Rail Industry, Great Britian**
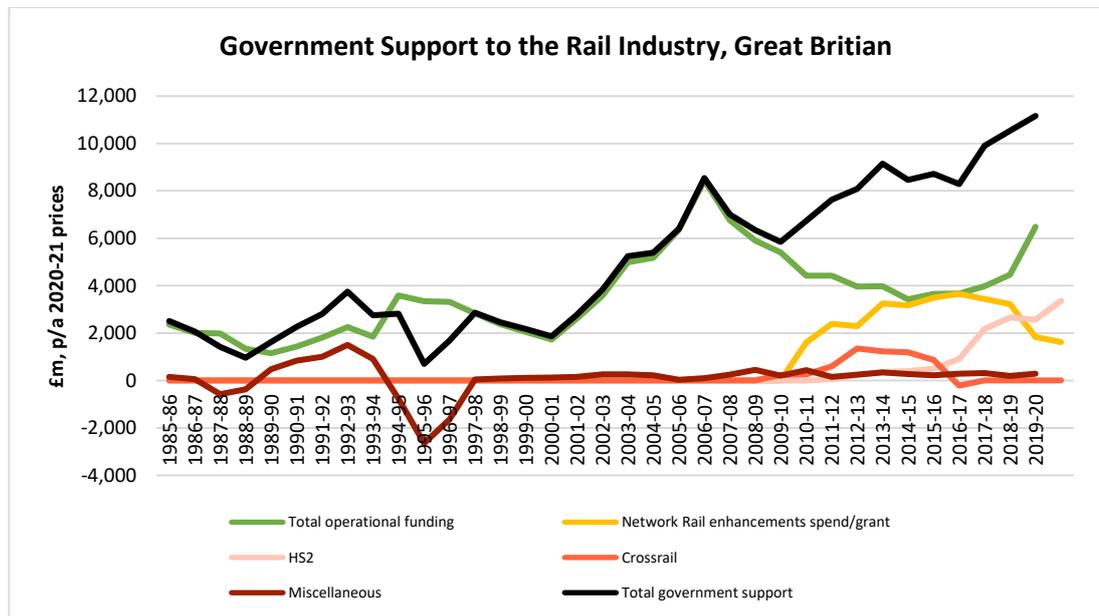
**Figure 7 Total Government support to the rail industry (ORR, 2021a)**

Whilst HS2 and Crossrail can be identified as new line 'enhancements', other enhancements such as the West Coast Mainline upgrade, Thameslink, the Northern Hub and others were wrapped up under 'Direct Rail Support' and 'Miscellaneous' categories in ORR data, alongside infrastructure renewals work and operational costs. In its early years, Network Rail also borrowed significantly to fund enhancements against the future revenue schemes would generate. In Figure 7, the 'miscellaneous' category covers funding for British Transport Police, Transport Focus, station improvement funds, security initiatives and research. A negative total for the 'miscellaneous' category can be observed in 1995/96 and 1996/97 owing to the income generated by rolling stock sales and sales of Railtrack shares during privatisation. The 'total government support' line shows the same total funding as outlined in Figure 5.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) have identified Network Rail's proportion of expenditure based on their regulatory account publications (RDG, 2016). RDG (2016) analysis shows a decline in Network Rail's operating, maintenance and renewal expenditure between 2003-04 and 2015-16, over the period where total Government support had risen above longer term averages. Analysis has shown that operations, maintenance and renewal spending efficiency varies by Network Rail region over this time period (Gillies-Smith & Wheat, 2016), thus critiquing the meaningfulness of

headline figures. Enhancement spending has increased from circa £1bn to circa £3bn over the same period. This data is shown in Figure 8.
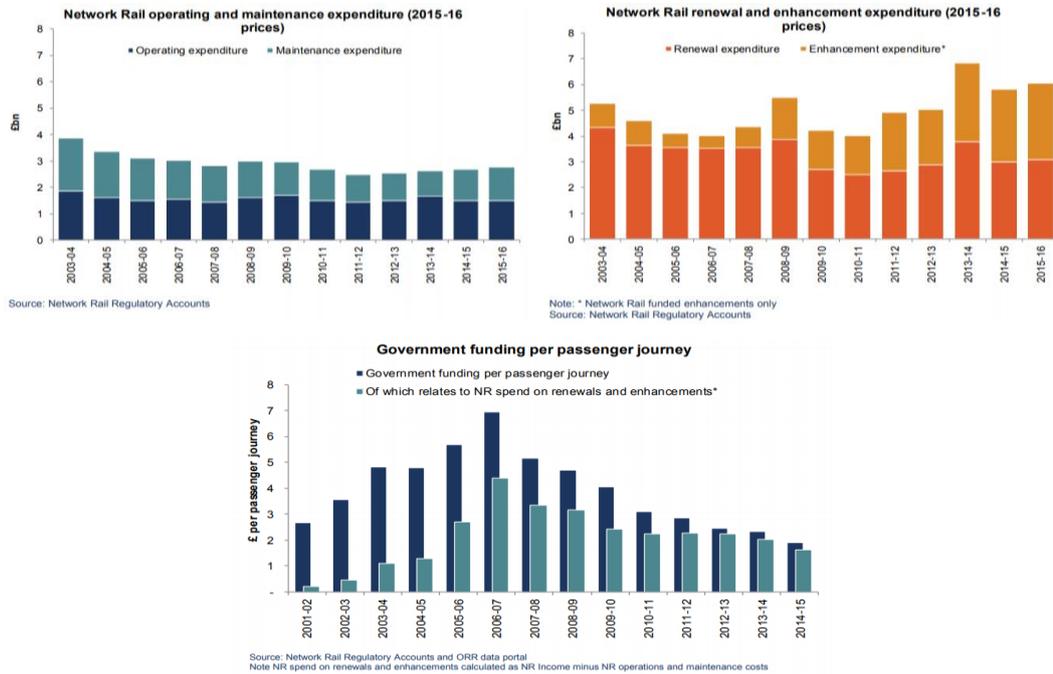


**Figure 8 RDG data on Network Rail expenditure by type (RDG, 2016)**

Figure 8 also shows an increase in the Government funding per passenger journey between 2001/02 and 2006/07, with a decrease after. This must consider two things; first that rail funding increased substantially between 2000/01 and 2006/07 before temporarily reducing for four years, and second that throughout this time period the number of journeys were increasing substantially. The increase in funding aligns with an increase in rail industry costs around this time. However, increasing journeys do not necessarily mean an increase in funding levels, as more journeys should mean more revenue and thus better utilisation of capacity. What can be observed clearly is an increase in Government funding for enhancements from circa 2010. Government has hence reduced the proportion of operational funding and increased the proportion of enhancement funding throughout the study period. However, why headline numbers remain high despite a reduction in the regulated 'operating, maintenance and renewals' expenditure is an important policy change question. Though demand was rising, choosing to enhance the rail network was still a policy choice and it is curious that potential savings in one aspect of the rail industry were countered by Government with higher spending in another.

## 2.7.1 Inefficiency - Buying the Same for More

With rail industry funding rising significantly from 2001, the first question is whether the industry is costing more to deliver the same output. Given the timeframes of this phenomenon, privatisation is generally scrutinised for the role it may have played. The existence of debate over whether privatisation led to efficiency gains in the rail industry is surprising as efficiency gains were a core policy rationale in 1992 (Conservative Party, 1992). Many of these efficiency gains were to come from Railtrack and TOCs.

Preston & Robins (2013) argue the passenger benefits of privatisation have been offset by higher operating and infrastructure costs, especially prominent since the Hatfield crash in 2000. Following the franchising of passenger operations, long term TOC operating costs did not fall in the same way as observed in other European countries, and infrastructure maintenance inefficiency rose dramatically following the Hatfield crash (Smith & Nash, 2014). Such inefficiencies led to an overall negative value of welfare performance for rail privatisation as a policy early on (Smith, 2006). Recent work has found privatisation to be welfare positive if excluding infrastructure cost increases (Preston, 2018b). The higher levels of subsidy observed are suggested to be caused by the market 'correcting' itself in the years following the Hatfield crash by providing for decades of underinvestment in infrastructure (DfT, 2004; Preston & Robins, 2013). However, the observed spike in Government funding levels noted in the Preston & Robins (2013) study did not decrease back to 'normal' levels following the completion of maintenance works.

Research has investigated the cost of operating the British rail network before and after privatisation. Cowie & Loynes (2012) found that by 2010, following the aftermath of Railtrack's collapse, maintenance costs had returned to pre-privatisation levels for each unit of work done. This was offset by higher management costs and could be considered in light of the promises of privatisation to deliver efficiency gains. It concluded that maintenance costs should not be considered significantly higher than would have been the case under British Rail. Jupe & Funnel (2017) evaluated the value for money for rail privatisation, highlighting that cost increases can be explained by the new industry structure noting that leakages and dividends leaving the rail industry significantly increased the cost of rail operations.

Nash, et al. (2020) state that fragmentation of the privatised rail industry may also present a barrier to adopting innovation as organisations may not reap the full benefit of investment. Preston (2016) highlighted that cost reduction

initiatives within rail franchises often do not come forward to the same degree as forecast at the start of franchises. Although this does not imply cost increases, it does highlight that TOC efficiency gains have not been achieved to a significant level and that costs have not reduced since privatisation. Nash & Smith (2020) note that cost increases may be explained by efficiency measures, including those planned under British Rail, not coming forward during franchising unless specified by the franchising authority. Wheat & Smith (2015) note that franchises in Britain may be too large for competition to generate efficiency. Smith & Wheat (2012) note the poor cost effectiveness of 'management' contracts compared with 'franchises' in the early years of privatisation. However, more recent research in Europe by Nash, et al. (2016) has found that gross-cost contracts can be effective at reducing funding requirements. Wheat, et al. (2018) argue that rigidities in the rolling stock market and a lack of willingness for TOCs to challenge union agreements have prevented cost reductions. Lower cost bases were observed in open access operators, albeit lacking economies of scale cancelled this out. This overall view that competition for the market and competition in the market do not drive higher or lower costs overall is supported by Casullo (2016).

Changes to management knowledge following privatisation may have increased inefficiency (Wolmar, 2001; Forsdike, 2018). British Rail was considered to have a management team with experience in technical areas concerning rail operation, but Railtrack was not. This, according to Wolmar, led to the overreaction of Railtrack to the Hatfield crash which was one event preceding the dramatic increases in Government funding. Railtrack's bankruptcy and lack of understanding of its assets led to a major costly renewals programme. Questions remain as Network Rail has been accused of inefficiency despite possessing in-house engineering teams.

Regulation is important when considering rising rail industry costs and rising Government funding (Preston, 2018a). Nash, et al. (2020) note how regulatory arrangements may hinder innovation. Benedetto, et al. (2017) found that since 2012, European rail regulators generally remained independent from Government though were lacking consistency in their approach to shaping track access charging regimes and in driving industry efficiency. Smith, et al. (2018) identified that in a vertically separated rail system, economic regulation can lead to reduced rail system costs, based on European (including UK) experience between 2002 and 2010. It is within

the policies available to Government to change regulation models to drive efficiency, thus indicating a research gap if this has not happened.

## 2.7.2 Output – Buying More

In an interview in the early 2000's John Major only sparsely defended the privatisation of British Rail (Hickson & Williams, 2017). When asked about the matter, Major was only able to justify rail privatisation on the grounds that the previous governments had been unwilling to invest in rail and that no change would be likely in the future. Major's comments outline that it was not common for Government to consider 'buying more output' from the rail industry. This subsection considers research into rail industry output.

Preston (2018a) notes that although the railways were privatised, regulation (including of fares) was in many respects increased. Government was able to push British Rail to deliver more for less (Gourvish, 2002), but this was lost with the ORR playing its role. Government buys 'outputs' from the rail industry, with the regulator setting what the price of each output is. This potentially reduced the level of pressure Government could apply to the industry on costs and makes clearer to decision makers within Government the trade-off choices of spending more or buying less. Political sensitivity around the option of 'buying less' could be a factor behind rising rail funding, however it remained an option on the table for the Government. Buying less was effectively policy during the Beeching cuts and 'managed decline' episodes of railway history in the 1960's and 1980's, respectively, so why this was not selected is a gap in the existing research.

Privatisation occurred during a decade where rail demand was showing some signs of increasing, contrary to the long term trend following World War 2 (DfT, 2018a). Growth continued through the pre-pandemic years. The long-term decline in demand is curious, as is the reversal. Worsley (2012) notes the general position reached in understanding 'what drives rail demand higher'. Factors are both external and internal to the rail industry. Demand for travel, and by extension demand for rail, grows when GDP, employment and population grow and these grew overall since World War 2, (ONS, 2021a; 2021b; 2021c). How journeys are then apportioned across transport modes depends on their relative performance (Worsley, 2012). During the British Rail era, Government policy was heavily in favour of expanding road and aviation often at taxpayer expense (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). The rail network was being closed and managed decline was policy, so rail decline would be expected despite overall growth in demand for travel. However, in the 1990's things changed. 'A New Deal for

Transport' rejected further major highways expansion and preferred sustainable modes (DETR, 1997). Coupled with improvements to the rail system, it is unsurprising rail demand increased since. Britain stopped building roads and started enhancing rail (DETR, 1997; DfT, 2018a). Nash et al. (2019) also note that demand increases post-privatisation in Britain were not entirely either independent from or a result of rail privatisation, with much demand growth due the ending of road building and urbanisation. Rail itself could be criticised for not providing new competing services on existing corridors where alternative modes dominate, with Blainey, et al. (2015) demonstrating the case for smaller regional interventions to enable new inter-urban links.

Increases in observed subsidy levels could be due to improved safety standards leading to higher costs (Smith, 2006; Gillies-Smith & Wheat, 2016). Improved safety rates can be seen in the reducing number of fatal train crashes occurring since privatisation, in Figure 9. A more safety-focused British Rail would have likely cost more to run, and as such this cost is not necessarily attributable to privatisation. Maintaining existing rail safety standards was an objective of rail privatisation but there was no objective to improve rail safety (DoT, 1992). Evans (2010) found rail privatisation improved safety rates in Japan.
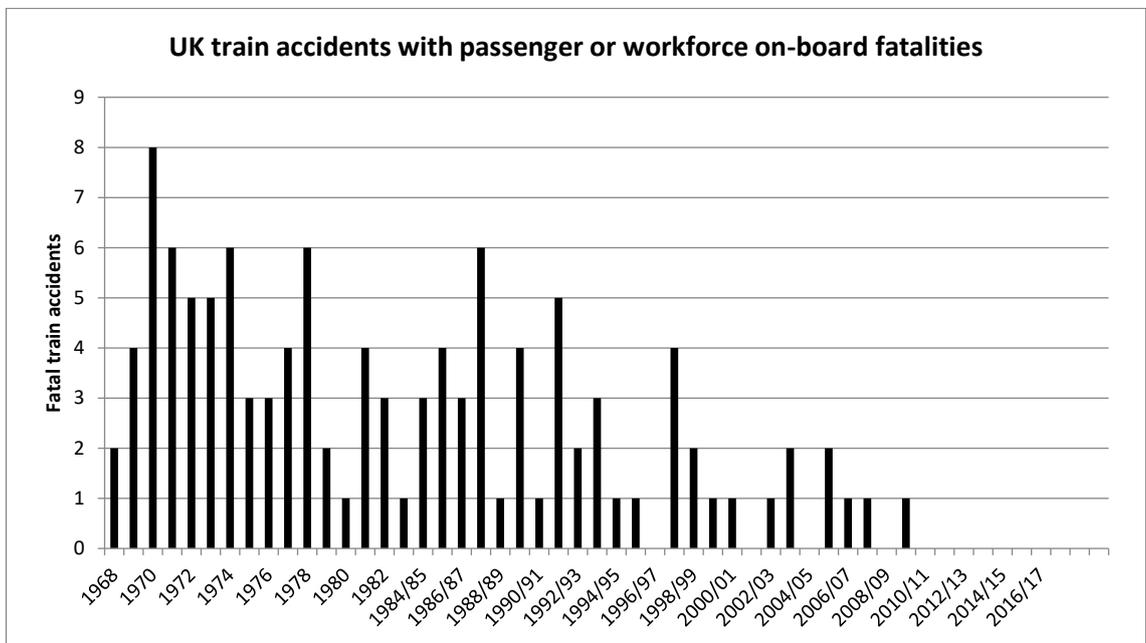


**Figure 9 UK train crashes with passenger or workforce on-board fatalities (RDG, 2018)**

The cost effectiveness of service changes has been researched. Wheat & Smith (2015) note reducing train services operated (by km) generally

translates into proportionate savings, albeit with some loss. However, capacity can be cost effectively retained through train lengthening over running additional services. Generally, increased reliability of service adds cost to the railway, though in a franchised system certain franchises may yield greater opportunity for improvement relative to others (Smith & Ojeda Cabral, 2022). As such, buying less may be considered a reasonable approach to reducing Government funding burdens, but this has not been selected as policy despite intentions to reduce subsidy (DfT, 2007).

Franchises are often specified to deliver new and additional services during their term. However, the increase in trains operated between FY1997-98 and FY2016-17 (28%) was not proportionate to Government funding increases (189%) (DfT, 2018a). Smith, et al. (2009) note that following a rise in franchised train operator costs in the first ten years of privatisation, subsidies rose to account for this. Smith & Wheat (2012) note this may be explained by operator costs rising initially, to deliver service improvements specified by the franchising authority, followed by a 'catch up' partial improvement in efficiency in subsequent years. This demonstrates that there may be a link between the trade-offs associated with improving efficiency and delivering more output in franchising.

It raises the question of policy decisions; why did franchising authorities specify improvements at Government expense despite such decisions undermining the cost effectiveness of franchising? Why such improvements were sought is another gap in the literature. Further to this, whilst the literature is focused on buying more from the conventional network (such as more services, reliability, franchise commitments, a safer railway) there is limited discussion over the budget allocations to infrastructure enhancements and new lines. Figure 8 shows these items represent an increasing quantum of the total headline Government funding rates for rail.

## 2.8 Summary & Gap in the Literature

This chapter has outlined that throughout the past two centuries there have been many key events which occurred within the British rail industry. Political interference, restructuring and heavy regulation have been commonplace (Gourvish, 1980; 1986; 2002; 2008). The industry found itself in a state of near constant review, change and criticism (Nelson, 2019). Issues with early privatised railways were attempted to be resolved with regulation, and subsequently restructuring, though the privatised companies often lobbied to water down or cancel unfavoured policies. There was a sense of inevitability

around the eventual transition to a nationalised industry given a developing political hegemony in favour at the start of the 20th century, which provided Government unhindered control. The era of nationalisation was not exempt from criticism; increasing losses, lacking investment and closure programmes reduced access to rail services for many. The modern era, coinciding with privatisation in the 1990's, saw rail demand grow (by 2013/14 doubling 1996/97 levels). Debate continues as to whether this is a result of privatisation initiatives or whether other Government policy changes, such as a decision to halt major road construction programmes, are more intrinsically linked (Harris, 2016).

Government funding for the rail industry has been uniquely high since the early 2000's, both in terms of funding to maintain the network and funding to enhance it. 'Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan' outlines that Government did not plan for increases to rail funding rates as observed (DETR, 2000) and the 2007 White Paper sought to reduce funding (DfT, 2007). There appears to be some degree of consensus that the cost of operating Britain's railways increased following Hatfield, however, there remains debate concerning whether this additional cost was subsequently tackled. Through the academic canon and its comprehensive analysis into efficiency and costs under various industry structures and regulation regimes, there is clear knowledge as to what works well and what does not in regard to rail costs and efficiency. However, not all recommendations have been implemented and Government funding for rail has continually increased.

There exists a comprehensive catalogue of research analysing rail demand, efficiency and costs in light of franchising, various forms of regulation and competition, however less so policy change, implementation and design (Nash, et al., 2019). Docherty, et al. (2018) note a lack of understanding as to how rail subsidy was able to survive in post-2010 Government budgets. Crössmann & Mause (2015) note their surprise in the absence of studies evaluating whether Government ideologies or other politico-economic factors matter for the allocation of rail subsidies. Comparing subsidy rates across EU member states, their analysis shows that sector-specific technical details alone do not explain variations in subsidy levels which leaves room for political ideological influence (Crössmann & Mause, 2015). A major gap in the literature concerns analysis into rail funding policy rationales within a single political structure and how rationales have changed with time.

The historical context of rail identifies a clear question on why Government changed or allowed a change in policy towards providing higher rail funding

levels from 2001 when it was unwilling to do so at any other point in rail history. Even if this change was not at the bequest of Government initially, it did not appear to implement any means to reduce funding levels back to historically equivalent levels (such as new regulatory regimes or reform) and instead increased enhancement budgets. Government has many levers, such as increasing rail fares, buying less, or changing the industry structure in an attempt to drive efficiency. It could also be argued that Government, whilst funding the industry, was not necessarily choosing to do so and was instead being held to account by interest groups, regulatory processes, or unfavourable contractual terms with the private sector. These questions are not prompted by speculation but instead by the historical contexts of the rail and transport industry observed in this chapter. These issues are also not fully addressed in the academic literature on rail industry costs. Marsden & Reardon (2017) note a potential under representation of research into transport policy choices, pathways and decision making within journal articles. Why additional funding was selected as the solution to the rail policy problem appears an unanswered question and one that, if answered, could shed light on what we can expect after future reform (DfT, 2021a).

As such, this research expands on the available literature by viewing rail funding as a question related to policy decisions and change. The question, concerning rail funding levels, seeks to address the unknowns derived from previous academic research and the review of rail history and data as outlined in this chapter. The research question has been defined as follows.

*"Why have observed levels of UK Government funding to the British rail industry increased significantly over the past twenty years?"*

## Chapter 3
## Literature Review on Policy Change

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the factors politicians think and talk about when making changes to policy that may impact the rail industry. There are many different factors at play. To understand what influences political decision making, this chapter builds on previous work by Dudley & Richardson's 'Why Does Policy Change? Lessons from British Transport Policy 1945-1999' (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). This work is one of the most comprehensive analyses into British transport policy from the view of policy change. Their approach to analysing policy change has yet to be applied to the period from 2001 that has observed historically high rail funding levels and thus this research will extend its themes over this timeframe.

'Policy' is defined as *"a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions"* (Merrian-Webster, 2022). Chapter 2 outlined that funding the rail system is one course from alternatives, such as network closures, managed decline, or industry reform. 'Policy change', as noted by Cerna (2013), is a term often used interchangeably with 'policy reform' in the literature. Here, 'change' refers to incremental shifts within existing structures, whilst 'reform' refers to major changes. Dudley & Richardson (2000) outline previous work by Peter Hall in identifying first, second and third order policy changes. First and second order changes are smaller, under a consistent paradigm. Third order change reflects a very different process where a major paradigm-shift occurs (Hall, 1993), similar to 'reform' as defined by Cerna (2013). This may be likened to rail privatisation or dramatic increases in funding. Peters (1996) identifies 'four I's of third order policy change': ideas, interests, institutions, and individuals. Dudley & Richardson (2000, p. 19) build on this by introducing time as a variable, and combining ideas and interests, noting the following four factors:

- *"The relationship between ideas and interests and the status of each as an independent or dependent variable of third order policy change;*

- *The role of separate policy arenas as institutions;*

- *The role of individuals as key agents of 'third order' policy change;*

- *The significance of time as an independent or a dependent variable."*

This thesis adopts this approach and develops one proposition for each of the four points. However, some small amendments are necessary to account for other policy change research. Hughes (1989) notes, in a study of railway developments, how institutions and individuals may be interrelated and that the 'embedding' of individuals by institutions can impact Government policies. Baumgartener, et al. (2009), in 'Lobbying and Policy Change' also note this. As such, Dudley & Richardson's identification of individuals and institutions seeking influence requires some alterations. There are two ways individuals and institutions may seek influence, from 'outside' Government under the headline of 'lobbying', or 'inside' through embedding. 'Individuals' and 'institutions' are hence replaced with 'lobbying' and 'industry and power transfer', be that from individuals or institutions. Cerna (2013) and Stachowiak (2013) provide typologies of theories of policy change, which have been considered to ensure the breadth of content in this chapter is sufficient. All theories outlined within the typologies are covered within the four sections outlined.

The overall structure of this chapter is shown in Figure 10. Section 3.2 presents theories concerned with the timing of policy change, noting that change may only occur during certain time periods on account of an issue becoming salient among decision makers. Section 3.3 presents theories concerned with the establishment of policy ideas, the role of party politics or geographically based influences. Section 3.4 presents theories concerned with lobbying, through individuals or institutions. Section 3.5 presents theories concerned with 'industry and power transfer' away from those actors typically expected (owing to their role) to be in charge of policy decision making and this may be to the rail industry network of interests. Propositions for this research are outlined in each section and underlying themes are considered in the development of the research question. Further, throughout the development of the propositions two cross-cutting themes emerge which apply to all propositions; the role of discourse in driving developments and the role a changing network of rail interests may play. These cross-cutting themes are represented in two sub-questions to the research question and are set out in Section 3.6.

**Research Question:**
*"Why have observed levels of UK Government funding to the British rail industry increased significantly over the past twenty years?"*

**Theories of Policy Change**
*Dudley & Richardson (2000), Hughes (1989), Baumgartener, et al. (2009)*

**3.2 Timing**
*Policy Windows*
*Issue Salience*
*Commitment*

**3.3 Ideas and Interests (Hegemonies)**
*Policy Framing*
*Party Politics*
*Geographic Interests*

**3.4 Lobbying**
*Understanding Lobbying*
*Stakeholder Engagement*
*Trade Narratives*
*Cross-Actor References*

**3.5 Industry & Power Transfer**
*Industry Interactions (LTS theory)*
*Government Objectives*
*Elite Projection*
*Regulatory Capture*

**Proposition 1**
*Rail funding policy will have become a more politically salient topic amongst Government and policy makers.*

**Proposition 2**
*The rationale for rail funding will have shifted towards a hegemony that rail is a worthwhile use of Government money.*

**Proposition 3**
*Rail advocates will have undertaken a lobbying campaign aimed at promoting the allocation of higher Government funding levels for the rail industry.*

**Proposition 4**
*There will have been a degree of power transfer from Government to the network of rail interests over rail funding policy development.*

**Cross-cutting sub-questions to the research question:**
Sub-question 1: *"How has the discourse on Government funding for rail changed over this timeframe?"*
Sub-question 2: *"In what ways could the changing network of rail interests over this timeframe have contributed to Government funding increases?"*

**Figure 10 Development of the research propositions and sub-questions from the Literature Review**

## 3.2 Timing

Dudley & Richardson (2000) note that a key concept within the consideration of why policies change is the timing of those changes. *"A longitudinal study, in itself, highlights the importance of time"* (Dudley & Richardson, 2000, p. 22). This section outlines concepts concerned with the 'timing' of policy change. First, it discusses the theory of 'policy windows', potential windows of opportunity for policy change owing to a temporary alignment between contextual circumstances and the proposed policy. Second, 'issue-salience' is discussed, which considers how a policy, or a problem to be solved by the policy, is pushed up the political agenda leading to an opportunity for policy change to occur. A common theme throughout is 'agenda setting', which outlines a link between the emphasis placed on issues within society (such as by the mass media) and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audiences and political figures (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Howlett, et al., 2009). Third, how politicians talk and think about the timing of a policy is considered with how commitment may be expressed towards a policy idea.

### 3.2.1 Policy Windows

'Policy windows' refers to time periods outside of which policy change is unlikely (Stachowiak, 2013). Research has noted the importance of environmental context and the alignment of policy narratives with political agenda setting in the delivery of policy change (Kingdon, 1995; Dudley, 2013; Hebbert, 2014). Kingdon (1995) suggests that numerous policy ideas can exist and fester, but only those whose 'time has come' will progress into delivery. This requires alignment through the agenda-setting processes of problems, policies and politics coming together in unison; a reference to the metaphorical window opening. Kingdon (1995) notes that windows are highly time sensitive and, just as agenda-setting can allow policies to prosper, with time the 'detanglement' of this alignment will ultimately 'kill' policies not established. Contextual shifts and disruptive events have been linked with creating windows for policy innovation (Marsden & Docherty, 2021).

Hebbert (2014) reviews the role of policy windows in post-war investment into new rail lines in London. Hebbert (2014) notes the importance of policy windows in allowing for delivery of schemes due to changing political contexts. Initial 1950's attempts to justify links on the basis of integration and user benefit were ruled obsolete by falling demand in the 1960's. A Labour driven move away from roads in the 1970's resurrected hopes, however these plans also failed due to a change of Government to pro-road

Conservatives in 1979. Support recurred in the 1990's due to a growing London economy, but suffered set-backs during the consents process owing to the lack of a unified planning authority leading to objections from boroughs not to be served directly by the new line (Harris, 2016; Wolmar, 2018). The creation of the GLA and alignment of political will, growing public transport demand and a consistent case for investment in the early 2000's coincided. A new cross-London railway scheme was able transition from policy idea to delivery as 'Crossrail' with the policy window finally remaining open for a sufficient amount of time (Hebbert, 2014).

The concept of policy windows, whilst demonstrable in certain cases, is open to criticism. Policy windows are often used to explain why policies attracting a lot of attention either do or don't occur. However, this ignores the idea that the context could be perfect at any given point for a policy that simply isn't salient (widely noticed or important). This highlights the importance of salience as without it a policy is unlikely to occur regardless of whether its time has come or not. Policy windows also do not account for the role of lobby groups in promoting a policy, thus increasing its salience and chances of success. Policy windows do not support in understanding why any given change occurred contrary to alternative policy changes. A window for change towards rising rail funding may be important to note, but it would not explain why such a change occurred in its totality.

Another theory outlined is 'path dependence', which describes that once a policy is in place there are significant barriers to changing it (Cerna, 2013). Path dependence notes that costs and time penalties of reversing or changing a policy once that pathway has begun are likely to be prohibitive to changing plans (Levi, 1997). This theory focuses on explaining why policy continuity is more likely than change and that once a new policy path is defined it is unlikely to change. There is a role for explaining how and when change may occur – through critical junctures, major contextual events after which a change becomes more likely. These changes may be pushed by a wide variety of agents. This aligns with notions of 'policy windows' in identifying short time periods in which policy change is likely. The theory of 'policy learning' builds on this. It concerns how experience may lead to alterations of thought towards the attainment of policy objectives (Cerna, 2013). It states that, over time, a policy is likely to change either during or after implementation as its real-world outcomes become more apparent and actors seek to align the policy closer to their goals. Modifications to the rail industry following privatisation (Section 2.6.2) may be linked to this.

### 3.2.2 Issue Salience

Chaney notes that issue salience is an important consideration for the study of policy development; *"a conceptualisation whereby key importance lies not only on party issue-positions but on the prominence and attention afforded to different issues in their campaigns; ergo the more an issue is emphasised by a party (making it 'salient'), the greater the likelihood it will attract voters"* (Chaney, 2014, p. 276). Chaney (2014) demonstrates the role of issue salience in a study of British rail policy by analysing the salience of rail in political party manifestos.

Should a policy concept, or problem, become more salient within the political sphere there is scope to theorise that policy change is more likely to occur (RePass, 1971; Robertson, 1976). The role of the media, in particular, is noted as being highly influential in driving policy issues up the agenda through generating salience among the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The media also has a role in shaping reality, as opposed to reflecting it, and generally seeks to do so in line with the points of view of media institutions. This may be important for the study of rail over the last few decades. The additional rail patronage observed may have meant more people using the railway, hence more votes to be won from delivering salient pro-rail policies.

Chapter 2 noted the role of salience in several issues related to the development of rail policy. Section 2.4 sets out how once nationalised, the rail industry struggled to gain political traction with decision makers due to the new layers of separation between the Rail Executive, the BTC, the DoT and the Government. This has been linked with resultant undesirable policies being implemented on the rail industry at the time (Gourvish, 1986). The end of the Beeching closures has been linked with a consideration by the Labour Government in the 1960's that there were votes to be won from rail policies, due to closures being a salient issue among voters (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). Section 2.5 also noted how rejection of the Serpell report may have been linked to voter concerns.

Expanding issue salience to include the role advocates have in driving public attention, can be known as 'punctuated equilibrium theory' or 'large leaps theory' (Cerna, 2013). This was developed by Baumgartener & Jones (1993) and suggests that large scale policy change may occur, but is not guaranteed, if an issue becomes more salient, new actors become involved or if an issue gets redefined (Stachowiak, 2013). It possesses similar characteristics to policy timing, requiring an alignment of conditions, though recognises a greater role for advocacy and framing. It assumes Government

holds power over policy decision making and that the public may only consider or focus on a few salient topics at any given time. Media and lobbying interests drive salience among the public thus increasing likelihood of policy change.

### 3.2.3 Commitment

Alongside timing comes the issue of commitment. Fairclough (2003) notes the level of commitment expressed by individuals towards ideas is not simply a fixed measure but can vary with time. The same individuals may show a 'low' level of commitment to a policy idea in one year, but later have moved towards a 'high' level of commitment for that same idea as the idea matures. This may occur as the policy window opens. Whilst policies may become more or less likely through time, Fairclough argues that tracing the level of commitment shown by actors, in this case Government, towards policies may show the likelihood of such a policy coming into reality.

For rail, schemes at various stages in the scheme development cycle may warrant differing levels of commitment. For example, as time progresses Government may become willing to commit more strongly to certain schemes and thus be held account for their political commitments to scheme delivery. This may be irrespective of eventual cost escalation or other reasons to later justify cancellation. Another concept is the capability for Government to row-back from 'high' levels of commitment, and how interactions with industry and trade groups take place following attempts.

### 3.2.4 Proposition

The literature suggests that whilst understanding the timing of a policy change is of vital importance, a key theme to detect is the rise in salience of a policy and how much commitment is shown to it. Such increases in salience can suggest that a policy is being pushed up the political agenda, either by contextual circumstances or by individual/organisational actions. The literature suggests that Government decisions to dramatically change rail policy, be that funding increases directly or indirectly through other changes, would follow the issue becoming a more salient topic. So long as this remains so, we may expect rail funding to remain high. The data suggests this would have occurred around the financial year 2000/01 and continued to the date of this research. Proposition 1 is noted below.

- **Proposition 1:** Rail funding policy will have become a more politically

  salient topic amongst Government and policy makers.

## 3.3 Ideas and Interests

This section outlines theories concerned with how ideas are established as hegemonies in the development of public policy. 'Hegemony' is understood as *"a type of political practice that involves the making and breaking of political coalitions, as well as a form of rule that speaks to the maintenance of the policies, practices and regimes that are formed by such forces..."* (Howarth, et al., 2016, p. 100). Dudley & Richardson (2000) state that hegemony in transport policy can explain why radical ideas have been allowed to progress with a lack of major opposition preventing the issue being turned into a contentious political football. Laclau & Mouffe (1985) theorize hegemony being represented through logics of 'difference' and logics of 'equivalence'. The greater the degree of equivalence between parties, the greater the degree of hegemony on any specific given topic. As set out in this section, there are key factors that must be considered in the analysis of policy hegemonies within the UK.

### 3.3.1 Policy Framing

Stachowiak (2013) notes 'messaging and frameworks' as a theory of policy change. This states that individuals and decision makers often do not make rational decisions of support for a policy idea, but rather that discursive frames can 'sell' policy ideas to gain support. Nie (2003) states that policy frames are stories told by various actors which can rationalise positions on policies, controversial or not. They can be amended, or designed, to promote a policy as a solution to a particularly salient issue. Policy framing identifies how policy change is communicated and justified through discourses (Schön & Rein, 1995). Rein & Schön (1993) highlight the need to follow policy framing stories to understand actor statements and actions, as older frames can become redundant and fall out of use due to changing situations. Blumer (1969) notes how understanding the defining process of the actor will help provide insight into their actions. Effective policy frames have hence been linked with the establishment of policy hegemonies.

In a study on the failure of the Merseytram light-rail project in Liverpool, Smith et al. (2014) track changing policy frames to explain the project's early justification and ultimate cancellation. Liverpool City Council and Merseytravel struggled to offer a unified framing for scheme justification to the DfT, varying messages between social benefit to deprived communities or to connect the economic hub of Liverpool City Centre with the airport. Smith et al. (2010) note this variation within policy framing as being a

potential cause behind Ministers losing support for and being able to justify cancellation of funds for Merseytram's construction. Policy frames may be used by organisations with an interest in pro-rail policies to generate wider support for those policies. A rail policy may be promoted as supporting key salient Government priorities, such as 'levelling up' as observed in the 2021 IRP (DfT, 2021b). The theory states frames may be entirely discursive, and not supported by technical analysis. Whilst framing can lead to support for a policy, it can also cause failure when detangled from wider public opinion.

### 3.3.2 Party Politics

Policy change may struggle to occur, despite issue-salience or supportive frames, due to party-political conflicts preventing hegemony establishment. 'Party politics' refers to the alignment of party members through common philosophies and ideological frameworks, despite the often-existent reality that party members will disagree on the detail of how those ideas should be implemented (Slapin, et al., 2017). Cross-party support has also been noted as important in keeping policies on the table for enough time to see them transition into delivery, particularly within the slow changing transport system (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Cowan & Hultén, 1996; Dudley & Richardson, 2000; Wolmar, 2018). Diermeier & Feddersen (1998) outline studies of policy change are required to fully account for issues of party politics. Party politics and the division of beliefs along party lines, or lack thereof divisions, is an important consideration in the study of public policy and institutions impacted Government (Hughes, 1998). 'Group formation' theory of policy change states that individuals will associate with groups based on self-definition (Stachowiak, 2013). It may be linked to party politics owing to the notions of shared group ideology by outlining that individuals within a group will seek shared outcomes and make salient similar policy ideas. It extends beyond political groups and covers any definition of a group.

Generally, elected politicians in the UK Government must be either independent or party members, with the majority being party members in legislative chambers, such as the House of Commons. Mycock & Hayton (2014) identify that the three main political parties in the UK are the Conservatives, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats. These parties are the only parties with major representation across multi-level political systems across Britain. The Conservatives are generally a pro-capitalist party supporting a smaller state, whilst Labour are a more socialist party supporting greater state intervention. Both have often accepted the role of public – private sector collaboration albeit to varying degrees. The Liberal

Democrats occupy the centre ground. The UK also has several nationally focused parties, such as Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party (SNP), and parties with smaller representation, such as the Green Party. Since 2015, the SNP have held third spot in the House of Commons at the expense of the Liberal Democrats.

Slapin, et al. (2017) note that parliamentarians within the House of Commons generally tend to vote in line with their party position and thus to consider only an individual's perspective on a policy, or law, will lack correlation with the vote outcome. Rebellion is uncommon, though identifiably more common when a party is in Government and amongst party members with more 'extreme' views. Slapin, et al. (2017) note that observing Government position is more critical for public policy research, with lesser consideration to individual opinions. The political party in Government is a more effective identification of the nature behind policies and laws than the individuals putting those laws forward.

Party politics has profound implications for the study of rail policy development. Section 2.5 shows during the 1980's, the in-Government Conservative party did not propose a privatisation of British Rail during the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, who considered the privatisation of rail to be 'a privatisation too far' (Harris, 2016). The majority of Conservative parliamentarians remaining in their seats after Thatcher's departure and an election in 1992, changed with the party line to be in support of British Rail's privatisation and thus the Railways Act (1993) was voted into law. Not just party representation but also party leadership is fundamental to the study of political policy change. Party politics has been linked with rail funding policy whereby in an analysis of funding levels for European railways, research has found funding rates to be higher in countries with 'bourgeoise' Governments and lower with left-wing Governments (Crössmann & Mause, 2015).

One final consideration is that political drivers for policy change may not be limited solely to party political alignment. Cerna (2013) notes that two other factors come into play; 'political will' and 'political survival'. The first of these outlines that policy change is more likely where the state and Government are more secure. Election cycles and strong leadership may also increase the political will for change. Second, political survival is where Government officials make policy decisions whilst seeking to protect individual interests. This may include political power grabbing, favours for political allies or a need to protect a politician's own reputation prior to an election.

Discourses, such as speeches, made by politicians are often aligned with party positions. Attributing hegemony to individual political speeches may risk identifying the existence or not of hegemony at a senior level across political parties, whilst significant underlying objections in a politicians own mind still exists (Slapin, et al., 2017). As such, it would be sensible for any testing of hegemony to be critical of politician discourses and to relay information presented to the context of party position.

### 3.3.3 Geographic Interests

Another important consideration in the UK context is geography. House of Commons parliamentarians may not all represent parties, but they all represent a geographically defined constituency. This takes analysis of how hegemonies establish into additional geographic considerations. What is shown here is an example of a noted theory of policy change, 'diffusion theory'. This theory outlines that policy ideas may spread from one Government to another (Shipan & Volden, 2008; Cerna, 2013; Stachowiak, 2013). It can describe such ideas spreading across a range of geographies, such as from country to country or from local to national Government. Separately, 'multi-level governance' theory, outlines how in a complex political environment with many tiers of Government (national, regional, local) the impact of stakeholders, the movement of political actors between tiers, and the role of devolved law and authority all have to be considered (Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Cerna, 2013).

In the House of Commons there are cross-party working groups where parliamentarians from a variety of political backgrounds work together to achieve common goals. This collaboration can take many forms, informal or formal. Select committees and other parliamentary committees often have objectives that vary from party leadership and comprise a cross-party membership. All party parliamentary groups are one type and in rail many examples exist. For example, the 'All Party Parliamentary Group on the Western Rail Link to Heathrow', in 2021 was stated to *"support the case for and delivery of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow"* (Parliament, 2021). It was co-chaired by Tan Dhesi (Labour) and Laura Farris (Conservative) with six registered members all representing constituencies located in the West of England and Wales, locations most benefited by that project (Parliament, 2021). This shows that beyond party politics there can also be alliances between parliamentarians through common geography and interests. Geographic objectives can vary and depend on spatial needs, so how policies impact certain geographies must be considered.

There is a significant history to be told regarding devolution and the role of national and local authorities in the UK, so this work must consider the variations over recent decades. Historically centralised, Blick (2022) outlines the UK consists of differing political contexts in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland with different legal systems, departmental responsibilities and local government systems. In Britain, the UK Government devolved a variety of powers concerning law, policy, and taxation to national parliaments within Scotland and Wales. These were established in 1998 following referendums a year earlier, allowing newly elected politicians to make decisions on devolved matters. Policy and law in England continue to be administered through the UK parliament (Blick, 2022). Rail franchising, infrastructure management and investment have been devolved to various extents. The Scottish Government has controlled its main train operating franchise (ScotRail), strategic planning and investment in Network Rail's infrastructure since 2005, but infrastructure itself is not fully devolved (Transport Scotland, 2022). In Wales, the Welsh Government has been responsible for rail franchising since 2015 (Senedd Cymru, 2021). The details of devolved responsibilities vary.

As well as national devolution, there has also been a series of regional and city devolution policies over recent decades. In England, the history sets out variations between moves towards localism and centralisation, with the 1980's representing a significant shift towards centralisation at the expense of regional and city councils (Lupton, et al., 2018). The Labour Government of 1997-2010 had significant plans for devolution, which led to the creation of the GLA in London in 2000 but, following defeat in the North East, devolution referendums were abandoned at a regional level. Regional assemblies were instead created, with less power over taxation, policy and infrastructure compared with London or initial Labour plans (Lupton, et al., 2018). 'City Deals' were incepted in 2011 during the Conservative - Liberal Democrat coalition years which provided a 'negotiated' devolution between Government and regions and cities. Such deals promised new infrastructure funding for city regions despite wider austerity (Streeck & Schäfer, 2013), though have been criticised as highly unbalanced on account of national Government retaining key decision making power (Tomaney, et al., 2017). Many infrastructure policies were still highly influenced by business interests due to the nature of growth-based or 'value capture' funding proposals (O'Brien & Pike, 2019). The role of cities, devolution and local business interests has hence been linked with infrastructure policy development.

Hall (2022) outlines the presence of geographic economic divides in England, noting both north-south divides and urban-suburban/rural divides. The decline of urban areas is noted to have occurred following deindustrialisation in the post war era. Initial pushes for renewed growth by Government in the 1970s were cut short by the laisse-faire economic management adopted by Government in the 1980s, resulting in 'peak' urban decline (Couch, et al., 2011). Hall (2022) notes that since the 1990's, however, many urban areas have been subject to renewed growth following favourable policies and direct Government investment, argued as successful in parts (Couch, et al., 2011). Interrelated is the north-south economic divide, which concerns a disparity in regional prosperity between the less prosperous north of England and the more prosperous south of England (Tallon, 2015). Centre for Cities (2015) outlines deindustrialisation and a long-term economic shift to a services based economy, plus a disparity in Government investment in favour of the south, have been major influences. Investment since the 1990's benefitted city centre regeneration, though likely leading with London (Couch, et al., 2011).

Such concerns impacted rail. Gibbons, et al. (2018) note the Beeching cuts impacted northern and midlands east-west links the most and less so London. Gibbons, et al. (2018) state this loss in transport infrastructure over such a specific geographic area led to economic and population decline: *"that loss of access by rail did cause relative population decline, decline in the proportion of skilled workers, and decline in the proportion of young people in affected areas."* (Gibbons, et al., 2018, p. abstract).

A recent divide between funding in the north and south has been highlighted by several thinktanks. IPPR North (2019; 2021) outline higher transport funding levels both planned and historic in London compared with the north of England. Coalitions have sprung up between leaders from north of England cities to make the case for significant transport investment into Northern Powerhouse Rail and other salient rail projects (One North, 2014). The UK Government disputed this investment differential initially (Yorkshire Post, 2017), but since accepted the view in the IRP whilst announcing £96bn of investment into rail in the North and Midlands (DfT, 2021b). Transport for the North outlined disappointment among northern leaders at the perceived insufficient funding in the plan (Transport for the North, 2021).

This demonstrates the role of geographic interests and Government in vying to establish ideas and policy hegemony. It also demonstrates processes at play within rail policy decisions over matters such as funding. Hence, these

examples show a case for the study of transport investment and spending to consider geographic factors and their impact on policy development.

### 3.3.4 Proposition

The literature suggests that the establishment of policy hegemonies are vital for policy change. This section has outlined that to establish a policy hegemony in the UK context, there can be framing of policy rationales supported by party political positions and geographic sentiments that must align to support policy change. Dudley & Richardson (2000) note the establishment of a now dissolved road-building transport policy hegemony during the years of British Rail decline, and so it would be a logical extension to propose that in the years of rail renaissance (at least from a state funding perspective) since the turn of the millennium a pro-rail hegemony would have likewise been established. Proposition 2 is noted below.

- **Proposition 2:** The rationale for rail funding will have shifted towards a hegemony that rail is a worthwhile use of Government money.

## 3.4 Lobbying

This section outlines the role of lobbying in driving policy change. This extends themes from Section 3.3 from regional and urban activism into all forms of lobbying. Dudley & Richardson (2000) note the role of lobbying by vested interest groups (for-profit or not) and their pushing of ideas in the policy development process. Baumgartener et, al. (2009) provide further insights into the role of lobbyists during policy change. This section outlines that public policy development is shaped by stakeholders that interact with the policy development process. It also discusses 'trade narratives', a form of industry lobbying aimed at preserving policies. An understanding of lobbying is critical to recognising the forces at play in the policy development process, with this specifically acknowledged in literature on transport policy in British. However, no major studies have looked at rail funding policy over the last few decades in light of stakeholder influences.

### 3.4.1 Lobbying

*"To study lobbying is to study efforts to change existing public policies"* (Baumgartener, et al., 2009, p. 19). Political lobbying is understood to play a role in the development of public policy with professional lobby groups from a range of organisations ensuring policy change does not 'wither away' due

to a lack of long-term salience (Baumgartener, et al., 2009). Baumgartener et al. (2009) state four basic observations in the study of lobbying:

- Lobbying is about changing existing public policies.

- Policies are complex, with multiple and contradictory effects on diverse constituencies.

- "Sides" mobilised tend to be quite heterogenous.

- Policy maker attention to these issues is scarce.

The lobbyist paradigm is generally a long-term dynamic with little change to the quantity and type of lobbying occurring with time. This is, primarily, due to previous iterations of law making having already accounted for power balances. Policy regimes will generally already favour those with the most influence in a fixed industry structure. In an industry structure subject to reform, there would be a resetting of the power, influence and methods employed by actors leading to a potential change in dominance of actors involved and a flurry of lobbying activity (Baumgartener, et al., 2009).

### 3.4.2 Lobbying within Transport

Researchers have shown that lobbying in the UK is well established, although up until the early-nineties is noted as being limited to pressure and interest groups (Richardson, 1993). Harris & Lock (2010) state that lobbying towards corporate matters in the UK context is less well studied, having only become common place and influential since the mid-nineteen eighties. Other studies have contradicted Harris & Lock (2010) by highlighting a longstanding presence of political lobbying, including in infrastructure. Bogart (2016) identifies the impact of interest groups and business owners in lobbying parliamentarians as far back as the development of canals and waterways during the industrial revolution. Bogart notes that business owners had the capability to encourage parliamentarians to reject applications for new waterways when they believed it would impact their business's profitability. Section 2.2 notes the success of canal and river interests in convincing Government to regulate rail freight tariffs and conditions of carriage during the late nineteenth century.

Along with business concerns, the development of transport projects is also subject to lobbying effort and stakeholder influence. The CTRL shows how stakeholders, such as environmental groups and councils lobbying for route

alignment alterations, were able to influence the development of a transport policy (Ward, et al., 2014). Dudley & Richardson (2000) highlight the development of trunk road policy during Britain throughout the 1970's and 1990's as being influenced by environmental pressure groups. HS2 has been subject to attempted lobbying from similar movements in support of either its delivery or cancellation. Whilst reviewing the history of the British rail system in Chapter 2, numerous studies identified the existence of lobbying at various points in the British railways' history, from both private sector organisations through to non-profit and local advocacies (Gourvish, 1980; 1986; 2002; 2008; Dudley & Richardson, 2000; Holland, 2015; Harris, 2016; Nelson, 2019).

Whilst these examples highlight the prevalence of lobbying activity within the British transport industry there is a lack of analysis into how rail lobbying has changed since privatisation in the 1990's. British Rail would previously attempt to lobby the Government, but with limited success. Chapter 2 outlined British Rail's inability to gain funding to account for historic maintenance backlogs (Gourvish, 2002) and its inability to secure the 'BR Plc' model of privatisation in the 1990's (Harris, 2016). Perhaps even the Beeching cuts can be attributed to British Rail not convincing Government of the value of rail. Dudley & Richardson (2000) note the power of the 'road' lobby over rail for much of the British Rail era and noted the downfall of road building was influenced by the environmental lobby.

A core element of the Baumgartener, et al. (2009) research is the power professional lobby groups can hold in pushing forward a policy until its eventual realisation. This is generally a long-term process and only realised in a 'big bang' effect of significant change. This may be likened to the sudden, significant increases for rail funding in the early 2000's. Crössmann & Mause (2015) note that it is worth exploring whether interest groups play a role in the field of rail subsidisation, suggesting that in some countries there might be powerful railway trade unions and/or associations of railway enterprises lobbying for more subsidy. This thesis contributes to this gap.

### 3.4.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement processes may be related to lobbying. Shepherd & Pryke (2014) state that stakeholder engagement is often led by Government, and there have been discoveries of a 'loose' network of communicative discourses between Government and stakeholders upon request for consultation. Shepherd & Pryke (2014) note that stakeholder organisations often help to define Government policy in the British planning and rail

industries. Stakeholder consultation is not always Government asking stakeholders for advice on its policies but may lead to stakeholders formulating and advocating their own policies. In Britain, Government often runs consultation exercises when considering major transport proposals, however the extent of influence likely varies between stakeholders.

One related theory is 'grassroots' theory (Stachowiak, 2013). This describes an idea that a community, rather than elites, may seek to instigate policy change by organising and creating power (Alinsky, 1971). Such a theory may be limited in its study of rail as it neglects industry lobbying, but there are important considerations regarding the roles communities play in shaping rail policies. Some Beeching closures, for example, did not go ahead on account of local community advocacy. There are also a number of rail user groups that engage with Government over rail policy through stakeholder engagement but can occasionally extend to protest events.

### 3.4.4 Trade Narratives

'Trade narratives' defines a behavioural trait rooted in structural economics, whereby organisations and individuals with vested interests in an economic structure actively voice their support to preserve the status-quo (Miller & Rose, 1990; Callon, 1998). This is generally to guard against negative public perceptions of the status quo and to reduce the threat of increased regulation or removed subsidy (Bowman, et al., 2017). This is a 'defensive' form of industry lobbying, where status-quo supporting narratives are pushed by companies with vested interests. The characteristics of trade narratives can be different to other forms of lobbying. The concept of 'trade narratives' is one aspect of restrictions against policy change identified in path dependence theory described in Section 3.3.

The literature suggests that trade narratives are formed through collaboration between trade groups and outside experts that accredit the existing 'regime' to societal goods. "*Trade associations typically commission outside expertise in a consultancy firm to do the work of calculation; the resulting trade narrative classically takes the form of a list of social benefits – big numbers on jobs created, exports generated and taxes paid – which are directly attributed to private firms operating under the existing regulatory and contractual regime.*" (Bowman, et al., 2017, p. 104).

Bowman (2015) notes trade narratives may be occurring in the rail industry since privatisation in the 1990's. Bowman (2015) argues that statistics supporting rail privatisation, such as passenger numbers, are put forward by

privatisation-supporting industry associations and lobby groups whilst other statistics, such as the financial performance of Network Rail, are ignored or brushed aside (Bowman, et al., 2013; Bowman, 2015). Sections 2.2 and 2.3 outline that at various points in the history of rail trade associations pushed against policy innovation to maintain a status quo. Such organisations were not as strong in the nationalised era, with rail struggling to advocate for favourable policies (Gourvish, 1986). Dudley & Richardson (2000) state that the pro-highways trade narratives defended pro-road policies against environmentalism from the 1970s, supporting a boom in the 1980's.

Bowman, et al. (2017) note that there is limited extant literature on trade narratives in general. Baumgartener, et al. (2009) also note the existence of defensive, pro-policy preservation lobbying activity. Whilst some work has outlined how trade narratives may be supporting rail privatisation policy (Bowman, et al., 2013; Bowman, 2015), there exists limited research into their effectiveness at influencing rail funding policy decisions. This can be considered a literature gap.

### 3.4.5 Cross-Actor References in Policy Rationales

The literature also outlines how a footprint of lobbying may be left within discourses concerning policies. This is referred to as 'intertextuality', defined as the relationship between discourses. Intertextuality shows how one set of discourses may be referenced by another, to rationalise or justify a given view. For example, information gained from lobbyists or rail industry experts may be referenced in policy rationales expressed by decision makers. Fairclough (2003) demonstrates how references between discourses may be used to identify the meaning behind texts. Four orders of attribution can show a number of insights into the formulation of a discourse and the opinion presented to its audience. The theory suggests that the greater the detail given toward the source of a reference, the more an audience can assume validity of the information presented. High degrees of intertextuality, for example, are expected of references in academic research. The relevance of intertextuality in studying public policy is due to policy being formulated through advocacies (Callon, 1989; Latour, 2005). Fairclough (2003) argues that tracing intertextuality identifies degrees of influence over the development of information presented in discourses, and hence can be used to identify reasons and sources behind the information presented to lawmakers developing public policy.

Further related to how discourses rationalise positions, Van Leeuwen & Wodak (1999) identify that different language may be used to 'legitimise'

ideas with some types of language demonstrating influence from actors. 'Legitimisation' refers to the means of using discourse to justify an action, opinion, or decision. In policy development, politicians often communicate policy legitimisations to the public or other elected parliamentarians, as the others want to know why certain policies are proposed. Van Leeuwen & Wodak (1999) outline that legitimisation can take several forms, ranging from legitimising a position based on moral arguments, information from other actors, rationalisation or political narratives. Lobbying could lead to an imprint of legitimisation by utilising authorities outside of Government, such as industry organisations or external groups. Logics supported by Government that originate from such external organisations may also align without direct quotation or reference.

### 3.4.6 Proposition

The literature suggests that lobbying is important for studying policy change or preservation. Lobbying is linked with influencing policy development as politicians seek to appear to co-operate with citizens and businesses. Such cooperation can range from allowing major policy influences through to minor changes or ignoring certain actors over others. Given the history of rail, it is considered necessary to include a proposition regarding a potential change in the lobbyist landscape following privatisation in the 1990's. This proposition is worded to remain ambivalent to the role privatisation may have played. This allows the research to be open to other potential contextual shifts stimulating new lobbying. Proposition 3 is noted below.

- **Proposition 3:** Rail advocates will have undertaken a lobbying campaign aimed at promoting the allocation of higher Government funding levels for the rail industry.

## 3.5 Industry and Power Transfer

Building on Section 3.4, this section outlines the role of industry structures and 'power transfer' in policy change. For this research, notions of 'power' concern which individuals or institutions are of primary importance in decision making concerning rail funding policy. This is an admittedly narrow focus on the concept of power; however, it does encompass the key considerations of this research. The purpose is to determine whether Government ever made a policy decision to increase rail funding levels, or whether this power over decision making was held by other actors within the

rail industry. Hughes (1998) notes that the whole of an industry, particularly in network industries like rail, is important when considering policy decisions. Dudley & Richardson (2000) note the role of individuals and institutions as agents of policy change by means beyond lobbying, such as the transplanting of individuals into positions of power akin to 'elite projection'. This section first reviews the characteristics of rail and outlines how industry institutions and individuals may interact with the policy development process 'internally' within such an industry.

### 3.5.1 Studying Network Industries

This section sets out why rail is a 'socio-technical system' and a 'large technical system' (LTS). Socio-technical systems comprise the coming together of systems and practices of collaborative working between traditional concepts of technology with human 'social' elements (Rip & Kemp, 1998). *"A system involving the interaction of hard systems and human beings, in ways that either cannot be separated or are thought to be inappropriate to separate."* (Law, 2016, pp. socio-technical system). 'Technology' acts as an umbrella term that encompasses all 'configurations that work' (Rip & Kemp, 1998). Wilson et al. (2007) outline criterion to define a socio-technical system:

- It is open to influences, but also able to influence its environment in technical, social, economic, demographic, political and legal ways.

- There must be collaboration amongst people working within the system or else it will not work properly.

- It will only be successful in implementing change if it can successfully combine and optimise its technical, social, and economic factors.

Rail has been classified as a socio-technical system and meets the definitions set by Rip & Kemp (1998), Wilson et al (2007) and Law (2016). Rail represented a step-change in technology leading to the redefinition of the way society behaves, thus also meeting socio-technical system definition of Geels (2002). Wilson et al. (2007) state rail is an 'excellent' example of a socio-technical system. Figure 11 shows the Government's view of the rail industry structure in 2021.
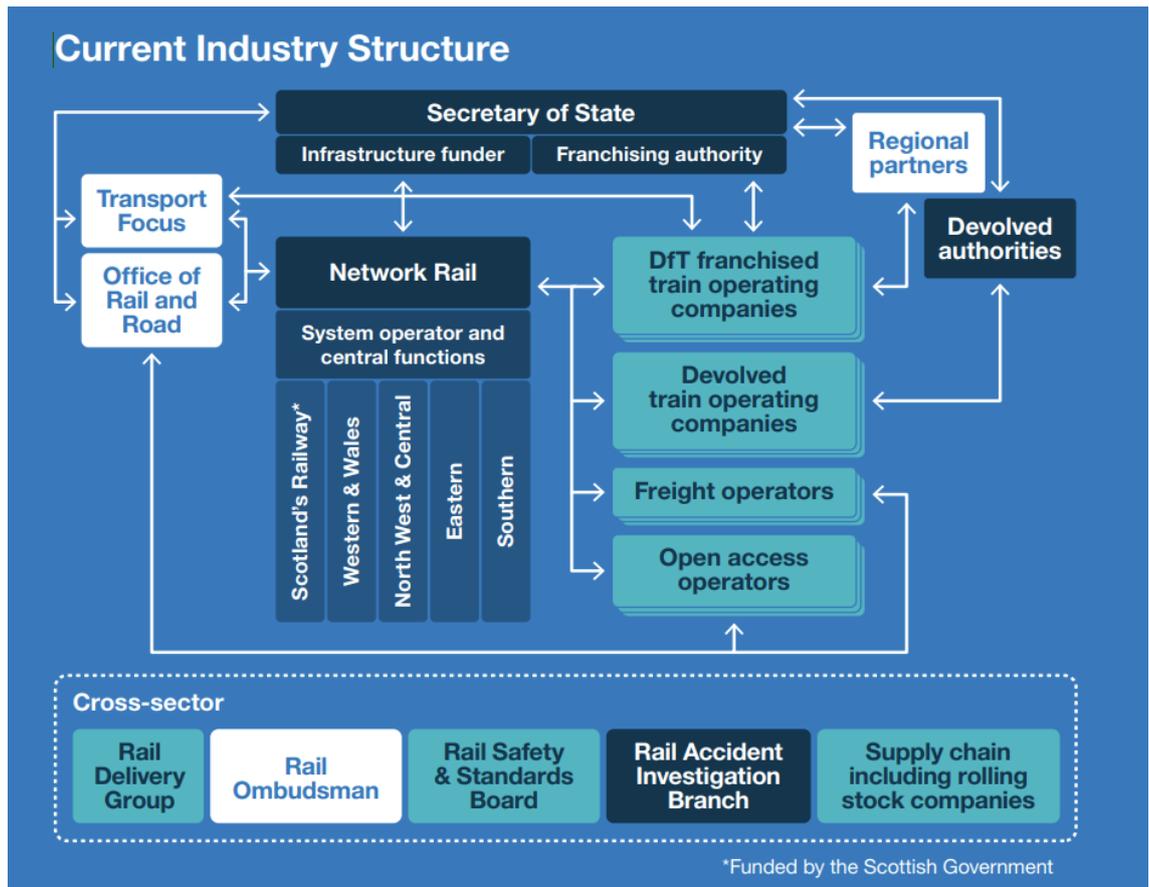
**Figure 11 'Current' industry structure in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail (DfT, 2021a, p. 50)**

There exists a wide canon of literature on the topic of socio-technical systems concerning everything from their definition, their methods of change and applications of emergent theories on socio-technical change to case studies (Sovacool & Hess, 2017). Socio-technical systems are under a constant threat of change (Geels, 2002), but there are a range of theories explaining why changes may occur. Sovacool and Hess (2017) provide a comprehensive typology of socio-technical change theories. Some theories focus on changes to technological aspects, such as the 'multi-level perspective' (MLP) (Geels, 2002; 2004; Geels & Schot, 2007; Geels, et al., 2016a), shown in Figure 12. This is similar to policy change theories such as the 'theory of disruptive innovation' which states that changes in technology may necessitate policy change, such as new regulations to change ways of working with new technology (Cerna, 2013). Others socio-technical change theories focus on outlining how changing societal practices may cause technologies to be changed, such as 'social practice theory' (Shove & Walker, 2010; Shove, et al., 2012). There is debate on the suitability of

various theories within the literature often focussing on the trade-offs between placing emphasis on 'social' versus 'technological' factors.
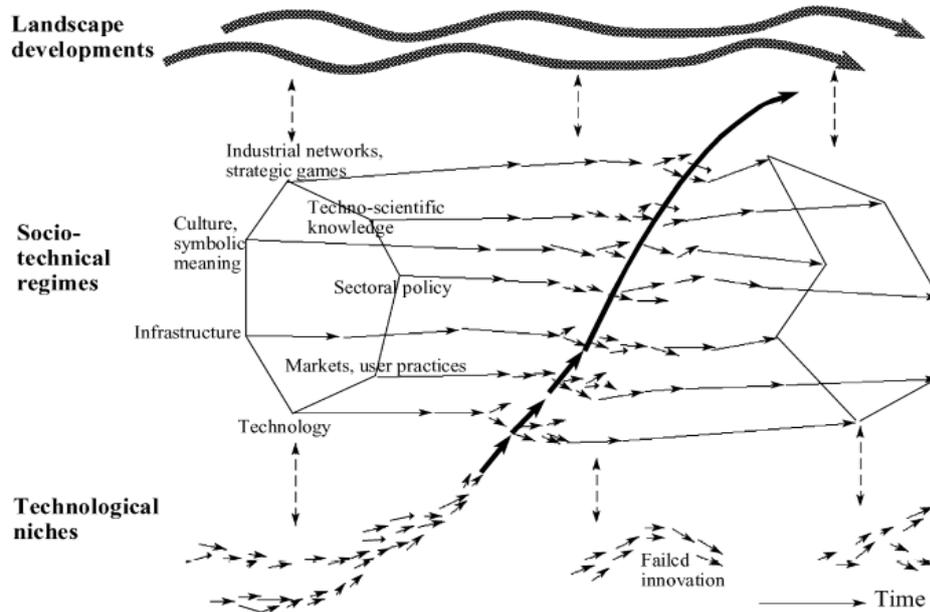


**Figure 12 The MLP to technological innovation (Geels, 2002)**

Hughes (1983) identified that certain socio-technical systems have properties that require a unique approach. LTS theory moves the focus of study away from specific technical or social developments and toward a holistic understanding of changes across the environment or 'complete system' (Sovacool & Hess, 2017). Hughes (1983) suggests that an LTS, including network industries such as rail, cannot be viewed simply as independent technological niches or social patterns but instead must be considered as a system of interacting and dependent components connected together through an infrastructure network (Hughes, 1989; Mayntz, 1988; Hirsh & Sovacool, 2006). Hughes (1989) states that an LTS comprises a significant sociological element in so far as people, opinions and actor networks influence their design and development.

Hughes (1998) outlines how LTS theory can be applied to studying major engineering and public service projects, including transport systems planning. Hughes (1998) notes how interactions between organisations within network industries, such as state organisations, private sector firms or special interest groups, may influence public policy. This could be through representation during the democratic policy development lifecycle or through more hidden lobbyist activities and the embedding of executives within top-level Government institutions. LTS theory considers organisations owning or operating technical systems and policy making institutions that ultimately

impact them, and vice versa. LTS theory also places emphasis on changes and 'dynamic inertia' (Cowan & Hultén, 1996), meaning network industries may either change due to wider environmental or contextual changes, or instead simply appear to change whilst retaining the same internal characteristics. Magnusson (2012) uses LTS theory to both classify stagnation and identify strategic changes of direction for an industry faced with the need to grow but limitations owing to high expansion costs.

A key criticism of LTS theory is that it is too large and centralized with too great an emphasis on supply-side analysis, leading to the neglect of agency aspects (Genus & Coles, 2008; Rutherford & Coutard, 2014). Alternative theories, such as 'actor network theory' (Callon, 1989) and the 'advocacy coalition framework' (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1988) attempt to account for this but ultimately struggle to define the extents of an industry. 'Institutional change' theory also defines a similar process by which policy change may impact and be impacted by an institution (Streeck & Thelen, 2005; Cerna, 2013). 'Regime' theory of change is also noted, and argues that interests of both a public and private nature must be collaboratively worked with by Government if policy change is to occur (Stone, 1989). Interests, which form a competing regime to Government, bring knowledge and expertise to the table that Government does not have and thus cannot utilise without consultation in policy development. This includes knowledge of industry, strategy, practices and how policies may impact individuals. Stone argues that interests have power over information and can use it to modify or frame policies to 'win over' opponents. The interconnected nature of the rail industry has been demonstrated throughout Chapter 2, so in line with LTS theory interactions within the rail industry must be considered.

### 3.5.2 Aligning Frames with Objectives

Hughes (1998) outlines that a reliance upon 'systems processes' in the development of network industry policy may lead to the bypassing of democratic checks, balances and processes as decision makers place too much trust in models created by industry consultants. Behind the scenes 'powers' may be influencing policy development through defining analysis methods. This represents a potential method by which power may transfer away from democratically elected politicians and towards systems, processes, and the creators thereof (Hoos, 1972).

DfT (2018d) provides some indication of how such a phenomenon may occur within the rail industry. The Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) method for appraising transport policies assesses the suitability of rail

funding decisions through a series of predetermined methods. This leads to decisions potentially being made by, or weighted towards, policy performance regarding appraisal outcomes. Research in Europe contradicts this by stating that appraisal outcomes are more often used to rationalise decisions already made, if analysis supports a politicians preconceived policy position (Nyborg, 1998; Mouter, 2017). 'The Central London Rail Study' is an example of appraisal not leading decisions. The first scheme delivered was the Jubilee Line Extension despite its cost benefit ratio of 0.6 being lower than all other recommended schemes (DoT, 1989).

Tomaney & Marques (2013) suggest that since the early 2000's, Governments in many countries have begun a shift towards 'evidence-based policy' having previously selected policies through alignment with principles, though this is debated (Shaw, et al., 2006). Tomaney & Marques (2013) analysed the case for HS2 and highlighted that political discourse for promotion of the scheme often differed from outcomes derived from expert analysis. Narratives concerning the schemes' capability of closing the north/south regional economic disparity was in contradiction with international case-studies and economic modelling which forecast a worsening of this divide. Docherty, et al. (2018) note the gradual decline in emphasis placed on appraisal by the UK Government in recent decades and a shift towards selecting transport policies on the basis of specific technical outputs and narrative justifications. Dimitriou (2014) also notes that appraisal does not often lead to better performing infrastructure projects progressing, but rather new and emergent objectives aligning with wider political considerations taking precedence. CTRL is an example of how changing context during project development creates a need to change project objectives (Ward, et al., 2014). This further emphasises the role of discourses, narratives, and rationales in legitimising policy change.

### 3.5.3 Elite Projection

'Power politics' theory also outlines that a small group of elites hold the power to drive policy change (Mills, 1956; Stachowiak, 2013), whilst Hughes (1998) references the potential embedding of private executives into the political arena to influence public policy in a direction that suits their firm. This shows a method organisations within network industries may use to influence public policy. Extending this, 'elite projection' states that individuals with vested interests may play a role within policy development processes and individuals may yield substantial influence in driving policy direction regardless of their motives. This could also be elected politicians. Dudley &

Richardson (2000) identify political inertia in transport policy development and the seeming non-change of ideas in what is described as a 'hollow-core' industry. 'Hollow-core' means transport policy may continue along its path until an individual or organisation with sufficient power seeks change. Dudley & Richardson (2000) state this allows for the elite-projection of paradigm-shifting ideologies, which subsequently become adopted into mainstream policy until a new occupier of the 'hollow-core' triggers change. As issues become salient, there is a greater chance of a political figure or a figure from the given industry occupying the hollow core and guiding the industry in new directions.

Elite Projection could be exemplified by Richard Beeching's closure programmes or John Major's decision to privatise the rail industry, as discussed in Chapter 2. Famous engineers and innovators, such as Brunel and Stephenson have also been considered to occupy the hollow core to drive forward their innovations and visions. The role of the early private railways and the Big Four in influencing Government policy to their advantage also suggests this may not be limited to persons but also organisations within an industry.

One criticism of 'elite projection' is the extent of influence any one given individual or organisation may be able to play within a network industry. Such an individual would need to be in a significant position of power, with limited routes for other vested interests to substantially challenge them. Dudley & Richardson (2000) note the limited 'pro-rail' challenge by British Rail towards Dr. Beeching, or Transport Minister Ernest Marples who arguably had vested interests in road-building. This contrasts with the substantial and successful legal challenge made by Virgin Group against Government leading to the collapse of the InterCity West Coast franchise competition in 2012 (Section 2.6). Government would subsequently amend and arguably never fully restart its franchising programme. Considering the question of rail funding since the turn of the millennium, for a single entity domination of the industry to occur would require a similar power vacuum. This appears unlikely in a privatised system with multiple organisations vying for their own interests. However, if this was possible, a substantial change to policy may be quick and lead to a dramatically different long-term policy pathway. Though speculative, rail funding rose quickly rather than gradually in the early 2000's (ORR, 2021a).

### 3.5.4 Regulatory Capture

Section 2.6 outlined that rail is highly regulated and as such it may be at risk of a phenomenon called 'regulatory capture' (Dal Bo, 2006). There are a variety of definitions of regulatory capture theory with Sittle (2004) noting the Laffont & Tirole (1991) definition is relevant to rail; "*interest groups try to capture government decision making because it directly affects the industry and consumers' welfare*" (Laffont & Tirole, 1991, p. 1091). 'Capture' refers to a bargain being struck between organisations and regulators, leading to capture of Government policy. Capture may occur by: personal relationships, future employment opportunities for regulators, or a refraining from publicly criticising the regulator (Laffont & Tirole, 1991). There is a tendency for individuals employed in a regulatory function to later seek employment within the private sector, particularly as advocates, resulting in a closed group or 'inner circle' of actors dictating industry direction (Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021). This is noted as a process that unfolds organically from the business perspective rather than as a deliberate strategy. With potential restrictions on policy decisions, regulatory capture represents another potential means by which industry, or actors, may influence rail policy. Most studies note regulatory capture to be an undesirable situation (Tai, 2017).

Preston (2001) noted that the rail industry in Britain may be at risk of regulatory capture, should TOCs with poorly performing franchises persuade the franchising authority to allow early renegotiation. Sittle (2004) outlines that regulatory capture is likely to have occurred in 2001 following the regulator's decision to reduce track access charges for freight operators with Railtrack's shortfall made up by Government subsidy. However, there exists limited additional research into regulatory capture within the rail industry beyond these examples and the long-term picture of this phenomenon remains unknown. Studies of rail regulation across Europe outline a potential risk of regulatory capture where a single person rail regulator model is used, though do not test for evidence of this within the British rail context specifically (Benedetto, et al., 2017; Smith, et al., 2018). How exactly regulatory capture is proven to exist is also a challenging issue. Ways of doing so vary from analysing discourses in: public documents (Sittle, 2004), interviews with industry figures (Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021) or by analysing conflict of interest declarations among regulatory board members (Millstone & Lang, 2008). There does not appear to be a widely accepted framework to test for regulatory capture outside of the characteristics identified by (Laffont & Tirole, 1991).

### 3.5.5 Proposition

This section has outlined that there exist several ways by which power may transfer away from Government towards industry individuals or institutions. This may be driven by changing rail industry structures and characteristics. The literature suggests that for this research any power transfer would likely occur towards 'rail interests', given that rail funding increased. 'Rail interests' denotes a variety of actors that may benefit from this. Specific means of power transfer must be investigated, but it would not be reasonable at this stage to limit the research to any stated theory. As such, Proposition 4 leaves such concepts open-ended.

- **Proposition 4:** There will have been a degree of power transfer from Government to the network of rail interests over rail funding policy development.

## 3.6 Summary

This chapter has undertaken a review of the literature on influencing factors concerning public policy development and change. Many theories of policy change concern how ideas are communicated between actors through discourses, and how politicians think and talk about policies. This section outlines why the four key factors of policy change outlined by Dudley & Richardson (2000) remain relevant to research concerning rail policy.

Section 3.2 outlines how policy change often involves extended time periods in the build-up (Kingdon, 1995), with suggestions that until issues are salient change is unlikely to occur (RePass, 1971). Section 3.3 explores the role of policy frames in demonstrating contextual alignment to drive support for policy change, whilst factors such as party politics and geography can also stimulate support allowing hegemony (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). Section 3.4 outlines how advocates seek to influence policy makers during decision making processes through lobbying (Baumgartener, et al., 2009). This may also take the form of trade narratives whereby change is guarded against by such lobbying (Bowman, et al., 2013). Lobbyists themselves may be referenced or discourses from lobbyists used to substantiate policy rationales. Section 3.5 sets out notions of 'industry and power transfer' whereby the policy decisions are effectively not made by Government, but instead through systems processes (Hughes, 1998), elite projection (Dudley & Richardson, 2000), or regulatory capture (Dal Bo, 2006). There is a need

to consider the full rail industry and interactions between organisations and actors to understand changes (Mayntz, 1988; Hughes, 1989; 1998). This section developed the following four propositions for study:

- **Proposition 1:** Rail funding policy will have become a more politically salient topic amongst Government and policy makers.

- **Proposition 2:** The rationale for rail funding will have shifted towards a hegemony that rail is a worthwhile use of Government money.

- **Proposition 3:** Rail advocates will have undertaken a lobbying campaign aimed at promoting the allocation of higher Government funding levels for the rail industry.

- **Proposition 4:** There will have been a degree of power transfer from Government to the network of rail interests over rail funding policy development.

In Chapter 2, the main research question was defined as:

*"Why have observed levels of UK Government funding to the British rail industry increased significantly over the past twenty years?"*

Common themes emerged throughout this chapter causing a further two sub-questions to be developed. These questions cut across all four propositions. The first outlines the role of discourses in communicating information and rationales being fundamental to policy change themes. All propositions suggest a change to the nature of rail policy discourse in one form or another would have occurred. The second question outlines how the network of rail interests may have changed with theories concerning network industries, lobbying, hegemony, and salience all link with a changing networks of interests. The two cross-cutting sub-questions are:

Sub-question 1: *"How has the discourse on Government funding for rail changed over this timeframe?"*

Sub-question 2: *"In what ways could the changing network of rail interests over this timeframe have contributed to Government funding increases?"*

# Chapter 4
# Methodology - Analysis

## 4.1 Introduction

The methodology (the study of research methods) within this thesis is divided into two chapters, one selecting analysis methods (this chapter) and another (Chapter 5) selecting data collection methods. This chapter reviews the theory concerning knowledge production and analysis methods that couple to answer the research questions outlined. It does not present a detailed, duplicable step-by-step guide to its implementation, which is set out in Chapter 6. It follows Chapter 3 identifying key themes likened to policy change and adds to the basic understanding of discourses that made such concepts intelligible. The framing of this chapter is based on Johnson, Reynolds and Mycoff's 'Political Science Research Methods' (Johnson, et al., 2016) and Clive Seale's 'Social Research Methods' (Seale, 2004). Chapter 3 outlines how policy change may be driven by actors, institutions, and individuals communicating ideas and their supporting rationales and frames through discourses. This is why, as will be discussed, discourse analysis methods are central to this chapter.

This chapter first evaluates ontology; a branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being. This is necessary owing to the variety of philosophical theories concerning whether and how we can know reality. Raadschelders (2011) outlines the principals of ontology in policy studies, as *"Ontology generates theories about what can be known (epistemology), how knowledge can be produced (methodology), and what research practices can be employed (methods)"* (Raadschelders, 2011, p. 920).

A consideration of these three aspects of ontology, in that order, helps to incrementally reduce the significant catalogue of methods by making earlier epistemological and methodological choices. This chapter is structured around Raadschelders' breakdown of ontology into epistemology, methodology and methods. Each section reviews literature, considers options and makes choices about what option is to be taken forward. This thesis follows an empirical approach, where a phenomenon for study was identified and literature is reviewed to develop propositions. A suitable method was then selected based on the need for research. This opposes a

rationalist approach in which a theory was selected first and a research phenomenon later to assess the phenomenon's fit toward the theory.

Section 4.2 outlines epistemological concepts within the philosophy of science through the types of outlooks available and rationalises using a critical realist view. Section 4.3 outlines research methodologies and determines their suitability for this research. Qualitative and mixed methods are considered suitable for policy change research with 'discourse theory' considered the overarching approach. A particular focus on discourses as the object of the study follows themes in Chapter 3. Section 4.4 selects a research method from options within discourse theory. CDA is selected to produce both qualitative and mixed methods outputs, the later through MMDA. Figure 13 summarises the development of the research method throughout this chapter, outlining how options were restricted throughout. Throughout the chapter, bold text references the options in Figure 13.
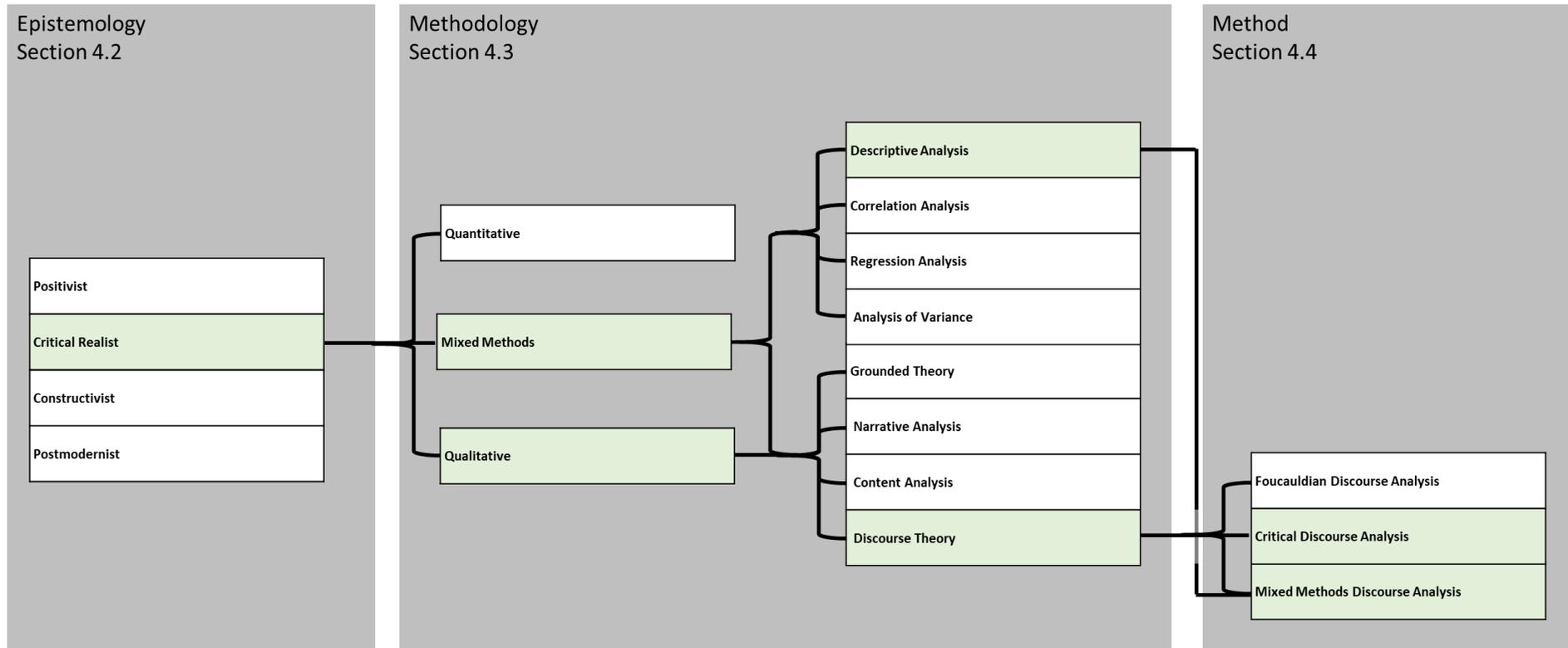
**Figure 13 Development of the analysis method from epistemological principles (green indicates selected approaches)**

## 4.2 Epistemology

This section covers epistemology, or 'the theory of knowledge'. Given the vast array of views and debate on the topic, this section focuses on epistemology from the perspective of technological systems and public policy. Existing work from noted authors in this field are the key references. It justifies a critical realist outlook for this research. It then considers how critical realism may be applied to a study of historical phenomena.

### 4.2.1 Empiricism and Rationalism

What we can truly know is perhaps one of the oldest and most fundamental philosophical debates. Plato wrote that Socrates once claimed *"I neither know nor think I know"* (Durant, 2009). Descartes famously pronounced *"I think therefore I am"* in response to a dominant question of the time surrounding whether we may truly know even of our own existence (Descartes, 1998). Raadschelders (2011) attributes David Hume with a distinction between facts and values in study.

What we can truly know is perhaps one of the oldest and most fundamental philosophical debates. Hindess & Hirst (1977) outline there are broadly two main types of epistemology: empiricism and rationalism. Empiricism outlines that knowledge is derived first through experience, prior to being translated into thought. Rationalism outlines that, assuming the universe is logically ordered, knowledge can be derived through removing contradiction and logically ordering conceptual thought. There is also the sceptical approach to epistemology, which questions the possibility of knowledge and may go so far as to reject it entirely. Such an outlook could yield relevance to researchers studying a post-truth political environment. Scepticism may be criticised on the basis that to refute knowledge, a philosopher must first claim some knowledge in the process of doing so (creating an evidence base against knowledge). Macdonell (1991) outlines that rejections of epistemology are ultimately subject to this contradiction. Chapter 2 assumes we know Government funding for the rail industry increased following the turn of the millennium based on official data (ORR, 2021a).

This leaves empiricist and rationalist outlooks. The nature of selection here, once more, lies in the development of the research itself. Chapter 2 outlined that this thesis studies rail funding and Chapter 3 identified theories from the literature linked to policy change. The research concerns an observed phenomenon and seeks to develop a methodology to address this issue based on the suitability of the methods available. A rationalist outlook would

instead seek to develop a methodological theory and to later identify a case study for research to determine its fit to the theory. For such a question the Platonic or Descartes approaches to rationalising from first principals could not apply. Hindess & Hirst (1977) outline that empiricism and rationalism may be combined as either alone presents contradictions, such as through the Kantian approach. Kant outlined that *"reason [cannot] achieve anything, and that it stretches its wings in vain when it ties to soar beyond the world of the senses by the mere power of speculation"* (Kant, 2007, p. 499) and subsequently that knowledge begins with what is observable, through to understanding and finally reason. This attempt at combining reason with observations to determine meaning yields further questions of outlook. Prior to reason, outlooks of reality are considered.

## 4.2.2 Outlooks of Reality

Having established that this research acknowledges an observable and real 'empirical' phenomenon, this section considers potential outlooks on reality. Research referenced in Chapters 2 and 3 take a variety of approaches referenced here. Geels, et al. (2016b) outline that there exist a number of analytical approaches to the study of social and political sciences which have fundamental underlying differences in regard to epistemology. Geels et al. (2016b) describe four outlooks, shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Different philosophies of science (Geels, et al., 2016b, p. 578)**

|  | *Positivism* | *Post-positivism, critical realism* | *Constructivism* | *Relativism, postmodernism* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Assumptions about the nature of reality* | Reality is independent and objective (that is, empirical and measurable). | Reality is independent and layered, consisting of surface level 'events', mediating mechanisms, and generative structures. | Reality is socially constructed through intersubjective meanings. | There is no single reality, but multiple stories and narratives of different realities. |
| *Explanatory goal and style* | Deterministic: uncover general laws and relations between variables (and represent these mathematically). | Interpretive: explain processes by analysing actions in the context of structures, mediated by causal mechanisms. | Interpretive: describe evolving meanings to understand reality construction | Critique dominant narratives: uncover hidden interests and power structures, emancipate the silenced voices, raise normative questions (on justice, equity, and fairness). |
| *Methodology* | Experiments, model simulations, manipulation of variables and quantitative data. | Trace processes and event chains (quantitative or qualitative) and attempt to infer causal mechanisms and deeper structures. | 'Follow the actors' in real-life contexts, describe interpretations, disagreements and (emerging) consensus. | Reveal contradictions and paradoxes, show multiplicity and alternatives, opening up debates |
| *Typical disciplines* | Mainstream economics, system analysis and operations sciences. | Structuration theory and neo-institutional theory | Interpretive (micro)sociology, phenomenology, and social psychology. | Critical theory, post-structural sociology, critical management studies, critical discourse theory and cultural studies. |
| *View on governance* | Policymakers 'outside' the system, pulling 'levers' to steer developments. | Policymakers are part of the system and dependent on other actors. They can try to 'modulate' ongoing dynamics, but not steer at will. | Deliberative governance based on consultation and participatory debate. Governance as open-ended learning process, based on experiments, projects and sense-making. | Policymakers align with societal elites to protect vested interests. |

As detailed in Figure 13, a 'critical realism' outlook was selected for this research. However, it is important to discuss why and to outline the reasons for rejecting other outlooks. **'Positivism'** assumes that reality is measurable and observable, thus that it is objective and independent of the observer/researcher. This assumes that general laws may be discovered which apply and explain relations between variables (inevitably that they can be expressed mathematically). Analytical methods towards such approaches may include modelled scenarios, simulations, or the manipulation of variables though quantitative datasets. A significant quantity of research discussed in Section 2.7 applied such outlooks and methods, particularly work focused on the appraisal of rail policies, analysing industry efficiency and forecasting costs and demand. Positivism is highly useful for such analysis by supporting the quantification of known variables. For questions of policy change, positivism involves researchers analysing systems that are assumed independent of policy makers, in order to define and appraise interventions that impact the system. However, this does not account for some themes outlined in Chapter 3, particularly when considering the role of lobbying outlined in Section 3.4 and the role of industry in driving policy change or preservation in Section 3.5. As such, a positivist approach was not taken forward for this thesis.

**'Constructivism'** assumes that reality is socially constructed by individuals. Analytical methods seek to understand actor movements within a context, and to describe interpretations of these to approach a consensus. For questions of policy, this approach seeks to understand how actor participation in policy development creates changes. However, this approach is open ended and faces similar criticisms to actor network theory and the advocacy coalition framework (Section 3.5.1), particularly in a rail context. Changes in the rail system may not be socially constructed but driven by technological innovations or wider contexts, including natural impacts and damage, a key theme of LTS theory. This outlook was thus not used.

**'Postmodernism'** assumes that there is no single reality, but rather multiple narratives of individual realities. This is rooted in an understanding of how power structures shape individual interpretations through conditioning. Research methods generally seek contradictions to outline perspectives. For policy studies, this approach seeks to view policies as developed by social elites seeking to protect vested interests. It aligns with theories on elite projection and vested interests assuming power over policy (Sections 3.4 and 3.5). However, it is not suited to tracing more quantifiable issues, such

as salience and timing discussed in Section 3.2. It does not fully consider other themes identified in Section 3.3 necessary to establish hegemonies, such as geography. This outlook was thus not used.

**'Critical realism'** assumes that reality is objective, however that there is a differentiation between this 'real' world and the 'observable' world. Analytical methodologies are either quantitative, for analysis of what is 'real', or qualitative for analysis of what is the objective difference. As Geels, et al. (2016b) note, critical realism seeks to trace processes or pathways to outline structures, such as through 'structuration theory', a view that social systems are products of both structures and agents. This aligns with theories of lobbying (Section 3.4) and takes an outlook towards industry similar to LTS theory (Section 3.5). Another theory of critical realism, 'neoinstitutionalism', considers how social structures, rules, and cultures, may constrain choices of political institutions and aligns with themes concerning salience and timing (Section 3.2) and the establishment of hegemonies (Section 3.3). For policy studies, critical realism treats policy makers as though they are part of the policy system with other actors and may seek to steer developments, although they will be dependent on or influenced by those other actors. This alignment of outlooks treads the water between rationales of policy change (the factors politicians think and talk about) with other influences (lobbying, elite projection, industry) aligns with themes in Chapter 3. Critical realism permits the use of a variety of methodologies discussed in Section 4.3.

Raadschelders & Lee (2011) outline that there appears to be an unmistakable bias in political sciences towards the utilisation of quantitative, positivist methodologies and outlooks. Earlier, we considered views by Marsden & Reardon (2017) (Section 2.7), and Nash, et al. (2019) (Section 2.8), that qualitative methods were less well represented in transport policy studies. Raadschelders & Lee (2011) attribute this to the work of von Hayek (1974) in suggesting what is important in social science is what is measurable, and quantifiable. Raadschelders & Lee (2011) note a risk of quantitative approaches in overstating measurable influences on policy decisions and an ignorance of qualitative arguments. However, Rip (2009) acknowledges that when studying socio-technical systems we cannot ignore the existence of real and measurable physical 'stuff'. Rip (2009) notes how the value, purpose and use of technology (which is physical 'real' stuff) is highly influenced by perspectives of those impacted which aligns well with a critical realist outlook.

Chapter 3 identified that policy change may be communicated from highly biased, counter factual positions due to vested interests. However, as this study concerns rail funding policy which is an observable and real phenomenon, the combination of realism and critiques aligns with general views expressed by Rip (2009). There is a physical rail system (technology), the official funding levels stated by ORR (2021a) that are assumed accurate and a physical phenomenon under evaluation. There is hence a policy, existent and observable, being studied. However, processes and event chains leading to policy change may not align with facts, objectives or outcomes communicated (Section 3.5). This aligns with the policy change literature, particularly regarding the role of discursive frames (Section 3.3). Policy makers are generally considered part of the policy sub system and cannot steer it at will. This justifies a critical outlook on the research.

### 4.2.3 Epistemology and Historiography

There is one further consideration that must be accounted for, how to apply critical realism to a study of historic phenomena. Foucault (1966) suggested that each historical period had variations in what was 'accepted' truth and knowledge and what was not, leading to altered perceptions. Foucault (1972) theorised that the study of history is often biased by modern outlooks and interpretations. Whilst there are a wide variety of potential errors historians can make, the greatest errors are in limiting what interpretations of historical data can be made. Understanding former outlooks is key to historiographical research. Many modern researchers may believe they have an 'idea' of what certain periods in the past were like and so their analysis seeks to fit the accumulated historical data around these assumptions. It could also be the case that analysis uses a modern outlook to project the data into a form that makes sense to the modern interpretation. This criticism has been noted in the review of rail history (Section 2.6.3).

Foucault (1972) notes that there are 'monuments' or 'artefacts' from history that can be studied to reduce this risk and these are discourses. These occur in all sorts of discourses between historical actors. Discourse is responsible for either creating societal developments or discussing such changes, and thus can be analysed to understand why societal change occurs. Without discourse, awareness and salience of an idea will be non-existent and no change will take place (Section 3.2). It is not necessarily the case that a researcher will have access to all of a relevant discourse, as data can be lost with time. However, researchers can trace from important parts of the 'fossil record' of how discourse changed during the time.

Foucault (1972) also notes that discourses are constructed in a manner representative of interconnected 'systems', whereby each discourse itself represents a node. These nodes in turn influence the creation of new discourse nodes around them. It may be theorised that to study any given topic, a wide variety of discourses must be used, potentially a first data source and subsequent influencing nodes and discourses supporting the creation of that first discourse. Foucault's understanding of the construction of discourses in an interconnected web of interactions bears similarities to LTS theory, given such systems comprise interconnected 'webs' (Hughes, 1989). The two theories have been compared for the study of socio-technical changes (Sovacool & Hess, 2017).

## 4.3 Methodology

This section concerns how knowledge can be produced under the critical realist epistemological outlook. As critical realism does not restrict research methods, this section provides an assessment of a range of methods available and considers their application to this research (Zachariadis, et al., 2010). First, we consider qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Philosopher Francis Bacon put forward that qualitative methods can be argued to be the root, or 'start', of the thought process from which quantitative methods later emerge following an initial 'reasoning' with the philosophical questions at hand (Durant, 2009). This section outlines a rationale for qualitative analysis and some mixed methods analysis focusing on measuring changes in variables with time. It outlines a rationale for utilising the qualitative discourse theory. Discourses have been heavily linked in the literature with driving policy change (Sections 2.2 to 2.6 and 3.3 to 3.5). A review of discourse theory is presented.

### 4.3.1 Quantitative

First, we consider '**quantitative methods**'. These are derived from a system of thought proposed by philosopher Galileo that all of natural life could be quantified. Geels, et al. (2016b) note that quantitative methods seek to identify general laws and relations between variables. Quantitative methods can be a useful tool for understanding the nature of certain events or phenomena (Seale, 2004). They identify numerical patterns within social phenomena, using numerical trends as means for identifying an explanation, or an underlying cause behind such phenomena. There are many quantitative research options that utilise numerical analysis of quantified

data. According to Johnson, et al. (2016) these fall into two categories; descriptive analysis and inferential analysis.

**'Descriptive analysis'** methods identify individual numbers and patterns within the quantified data, such as mean, median, mode and ranges. There is scope to represent data points as fractions and percentages, or to identify frequencies of occurrence of data themes. Several referenced studies in Chapters 2 and 3 use this approach (Smith, et al., 2009; Nash, et al., 2016; Marsden & Reardon, 2017; Nash, et al., 2019; Nash & Smith, 2020; Marsden, et al., 2020). Descriptive analysis can be highly useful in demonstrating changes to overarching trends within datasets. It allows for a single set of variables to be represented and changes, such as over time, to be outlined. However, this approach risks being high level and masking more detailed trends hidden within datasets, though it can be highly useful when considering how change occurs over time or in differing scenarios. Under a critical realist outlook such statistics would be critically analysed and thus research would be dependent on further insights being derived from the data or context of the data. Many of the themes presented in Sections 2.2 to 2.6 rely on qualitative arguments supported by descriptive quantitative data, and as such there is potential to use this approach.

In comparison to descriptive analysis, inferential analysis methods show the relationships between multiple variables (Seale, 2004; Geels, et al., 2016b). A factor proven to be consistently relevant among variables may be attributed as a cause of a research phenomenon observed. There are three headline types of inferential analysis.

**'Correlation analysis'** approaches quantify the linear relationship between a pair of variables. This is a useful method to establish whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables, with a stronger relationship being identified numerically. This approach features rarely in policy literature but was used by Bogart (2016). Relationships can be positive or negative. However, this approach would not be suited to this research owing to the large number of potential variables linked to policy change in Chapter 3.

**'Regression analysis'** methods are statistical approaches that identify the relationship between a dependent variable and multiple independent variables. They seek to identify which independent variables in the experiment have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable. Many references in Chapters 2 and 3 use this approach, particularly econometric analysis into factors impacting rail industry costs, efficiency and

value (Preston, 2001; Smith, 2006; Wheat & Smith, 2015; Gillies-Smith & Wheat, 2016; Casullo, 2016; Gibbons, et al., 2018; Wheat, et al., 2018; Smith, et al., 2018). Crössmann & Mause (2015) utilise regression analysis to test quantifiable factor influences on rail subsidy between EU countries. Whilst this work is highly relevant, it is limited to economic factors and quantified political indicators, where the approach to quantification may be criticised. This is dependent on numerical representation of variables which does not align with many themes identified in Chapter 3. One key criticism would be applying quantified factors to represent the left/right political party economic positions, whereby party positions can change with time (as observed with the Labour party in the UK). Chapter 3 shows that factors may not be entirely representative through modern quantitative datasets, owing to hidden or behind the scenes influences on the political system (Section 3.5). Whilst timing is generally quantifiable, the time may be right for policies 'not known about' (Section 3.2) and thus quantification of right time without qualitative arguments presents risk. Regression analysis methods thus would not sufficiently expand existent knowledge on the research and would not fully account for all themes noted in Chapter 3.

**'Variance analysis'** is a study of forecasts using modelled scenarios versus observed outcomes. This approach can be particularly useful for historical analysis, by comparing observed outcomes following a key juncture with counter-factual scenarios where such a juncture had gone in another direction. This approach has been referenced in Section 2.7, particularly in research into forecast or scenario-comparative rail industry performance, value or efficiency (Evans, 2010; Armstrong & Preston, 2011; Smith & Wheat, 2012; Cowie & Loynes, 2012; Preston & Robins, 2013; Blainey, et al., 2015; Armstrong, et al., 2016; Preston, 2018b). Analysis is highly dependent on accurately capturing and forecasting relevant variables and combining those into an accurate model. However, variance analysis is generally most useful at considering how outcomes may have been different based on scenarios and thus does not align with identifying the reasons for changes or junctures occurring in the past. It is better suited to appraising or validating the historic appraisal of changes, such as policy implementation, or forecasting impacts of change.

As described above, there are many notable research publications within the topic of railway funding policy which use quantitative methods (Section 2.7). Such analysis is effective at forecasting or evaluating outcomes of policy decisions. It also understands issues of rail industry costs and efficiency and

outlining which variables within the rail industry may lead to future changes, such as in demand forecasting. Historic demand forecasts are often analysed through variance analysis to determine if other causative factors need to be included within future models. These approaches generally take a positivist outlook (Section 4.2). In seeking answers to policy design on the topic of how best to liberalise rail passenger services, Nash, et al. (2019) utilise a qualitative method and note the limits of quantitative methods for such purposes. Nash, et al. (2019) reflect on the vast canon of quantitative studies into rail funding and spending and note *"while previous studies permit a conclusion on whether market opening has been successful in reducing costs and increasing traffic, they do not shed light on the question of how to open the passenger market"* (Nash, et al., 2019, p. 12). For policy change research, quantitative methods would require numerical datasets for key themes likely to drive policy change which do not appear available for all themes discussed in Chapter 3. They can, however, be used for those themes that can be quantified. For the issue of why policy changes occur such methods are less suited as policy change may occur for reasons counter to recommendations of best performing policy solutions identified in analysis (Nyborg, 1998; Mouter, 2017). Marsden & Reardon (2017) outline that research within the field of transport policy often focuses primarily on questions concerning the outcomes of policies, rather than why such policy changes occurred. Research focusing on why policies change, such as Dudley & Richardson (2000) and Baumgartener, et al. (2009), has generally been qualitative.

### 4.3.2 Qualitative

Next, we have '**qualitative methods'**. This allows for conclusions to be drawn based on objective analysis of texts, discourse and actions as opposed to requiring categorised data to be identified in line with fixed parameters. It can delve into the question of why certain events or phenomena occur (Seale, 2004). The most common qualitative research methods are briefly discussed in this subsection.

Fairclough (2003) outlines that qualitative analysis research variables may be predefined or not. Wodak & Meyer (2001) outline there are two methodological schools of thought regarding this procedure:

- Inductive analysis: no initial prescriptive set of variables and to identify

    important qualitative themes whilst undertaking textual analysis of the

    dataset. Variables would be identified based on these themes and

coding would take place. This method is generally useful for open ended or meso-level research questions.

- Deductive analysis: to specify variables in advanced of analysing data. These can be defined during a Literature Review. This method is generally useful for prescriptive propositions and research in fields with extensive literature available.

**'Grounded theory'** is an inductive research method. It sets out that text can be coded into variables defined during the research process (Charmaz & Bryant, 2008). Glaser & Strauss (1967) described grounded theory and, arguably, significantly impacted the development of qualitative social research methods by diverging research methods away from an emerging hegemony towards the quantified analysis of survey results. Grounded theory first identifies texts and then codes themes within the texts as they appear to the researcher. This means little initial 'reasoning' is with the question at hand, rather the texts themselves are used alone to find meaning. Researchers may, however, identify an initial set of tentative codes based on a literature review, subsequently using the codes to compare, sort, and synthesize large amounts of data. The approach to sampling data is also different, as grounded theory seeks data based on the theoretical categories of research and an evolution of the data sample as trends from analysis emerge (Seale, 2004). Applications of grounded theory feature in the literature (Sodero, 2011), though are rarer than other methods. Grounded theory aligns with a constructivist epistemology as meaning is derived from what is written. Given this, and the extensive range of policy change themes identified within Chapter 3, this approach was not used.

**'Narrative analysis'** is a second inductive approach that seeks to interpret texts that have a common storied form, with texts selectively identified owing to their relevance to a story. It consists of a family of analysis methods. This approach focuses on the sequencing of events and documented sources, which separates narrative analysis from other approaches (Riessman, 2008). Narrative analysis is rooted in the theory of narratology (Tzvetan, 1969), which outlines that history, meaning and function are less important for analysis and rather identifying what common themes appear in narratives is key to developing understanding (Prince, 1995). Constructing narratives to explain phenomenon is a common method in the literature referenced in

Chapters 2 and 3 (Bowman, et al., 2013; Dudley, 2013; Smith, et al., 2014; Hebbert, 2014; Bowman, 2015; Bowman, et al., 2017). Narrative analysis may be highly useful at tracing the changing frames for a policy; however, it does not interrogate the meaning behind discourses and thus struggle with drivers. The approach to selecting only presupposed relevant sets of data risks missing key documents that had an unforeseen influence on any phenomenon being studied. It is a constructivist approach as narrative constructions are sought. Given the number of policy change theories noted in Chapter 3, omission is a considerable risk and so it was not used.

**'Content analysis'** is a deductive approach that identifies the presence of certain variables (words, themes, or concepts) within textual data through systematic coding (Johnson, et al., 2016). It initially identifies what themes are to be looked for within the text based on a literature review, and creates variables aligned to these (Julien, 2008). It then systematically codes themes within data against these variables, and lastly analyses the outcomes. Coded text can be either individual words or entire sentences and phrases. This allows headline themes and face-value meanings to be identified from data, and has been implemented in research referenced in Chapters 2 and 3 (Goodwin, 1999; Wilson, et al., 2007; Couch, et al., 2011; Tomaney & Marques, 2013; Preston, 2016; Benedetto, et al., 2017; Sovacool & Hess, 2017; Nash & Smith, 2020; Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021). Content analysis takes a face value interpretation of the text and thus is suitable for understanding stated positions on policy change. However, it can be critiqued on the basis that it would struggle to identify meanings behind political statements (Johnson, et al., 2016). This presents risk when considering the role of frames in rationalising policies (Section 3.3), or the role of vested interests in selectively presenting information to rationalise favoured policies (Section 3.5). As such, a more critical approach to analysis is needed.

**'Discourse theory'** is a deductive approach that builds on content analysis. It emerged following a flurry of work in the 1960's and 1970's developing de Saussure's linguistic theory. De Saussure outlined that language comprises a system of words and accompanying concepts that combine to present signs (Macdonell, 1991). Discourse theory is concerned with the study of text, narratives and various sources of communication to map changes in societal actions throughout time (Sovacool & Hess, 2017). Discourse theory *"attempts to unveil the 'thought collectives', 'regimes of truth', or 'grids of intelligibility' behind how people, or institutions, think and act."* (Sovacool &

Hess, 2017, p. 714). Norman Fairclough outlines that discourse theory assumes that discourse is an *"irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language"* (Fairclough, 2003, p. 2). Michel Foucault defined discourse as *"ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern"* (Weedon, 1987, p. 108).

Stengel (2016) argues that Foucault's work itself is rooted in the Enlightenment works of Emmanuel Kant. Foucault built on Kant's metaphysical separation of 'things as they appear to us' and 'things in themselves that cannot be known' through extension to the discursive dynamic. Sovacool & Hess (2017) outline the strengths and weaknesses of utilising discourse theory in a study of policy change and socio-technical systems. One key benefit is differentiating how organisations within a complex system may form localised linguistic themes and trends in their communication, enabling influence tracing. Hajer (1993) outlines how organisations and ideas may be tied together through shared discourses. This relates to a shared understanding of reality. Such an approach relates to many key themes outlined in Sections 3.3 to 3.5. A number of studies referenced in Chapters 2 and 3 apply discourse theory approaches (Nyborg, 1998; Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Sittle, 2004; Chaney, 2014; Shepherd & Pryke, 2014; Genus & Theobald, 2016; Mouter, 2017; Docherty, et al., 2018; Marsden & Docherty, 2021). Hajer (1993) notes an 'over focus' on discourses may lack relation to wider social and technological developments throughout study, unless these are explicitly accounted for by the researcher. Discourse theory may struggle to explain clear changes to a policy or system, getting trapped in the linguistic analysis aspect of studying discourses, and thus clear barriers need to be defined in order to prevent open ended interpretation (Sovacool & Hess, 2017). Given that the rail industry has been defined in Section 3.5 with many policy change themes identified in Chapter 3, this risk is minimised. Discourse theory was hence selected for this research.

### 4.3.3 Mixed Methods

A last consideration is **'mixed methods'**, which cover the quantified analysis of qualitative trends (Fairclough, 2003; Seale, 2004). Mixed methods

approaches can bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative analysis allowing for the numerical representation of qualitative themes. This may be through counts of the frequency of occurrences of textual themes with qualified properties. Mixed methods approaches provide the robustness in drawing conclusions from quantitative methods to be attained from qualitative data. This allows qualitative trend analysis across a variety of dimensions, such as time or data categories. Mixed methods analysis is generally complimentary to qualitative analysis given the meaning of the qualitative classifications remains a fundamental aspect to drawing conclusions. Thus, it should be considered an additional method within qualitative studies.

Tashakkori, et al. (2015) outline that integration of the research outputs between mixed methods and qualitative analysis is a unique consideration. Mixed methods analysis can be conducted sequentially, concurrently, or in a nested sequence between its qualitative and quantitative components (Bergman, 2011). Tashakkori, et al. (2015) outline that all qualitative approaches are valid and may be combined, ultimately depending on the requirements of the research. However, this does also mean that quantitative or qualitative methods need also be considered and evaluated under the methodological considerations with no unsuitable methods included within the mixed methods approach. Based on the information presented in this section, that allows for a descriptive analysis of qualitative themes emerging from discourse to be taken forward for this study. There is hence a clear role to play for mixed methods analysis in this research, particularly when considering the salience of rail (Section 3.3) or the quantum of lobbying activity with time (Section 3.4).

## 4.4 Methods – Critical Discourse Analysis and Mixed Methods Discourse Analysis

This section discusses the final method considerations for the selected methodologies. The approach must be consistent with critical realism (Section 4.2), discourse theory and mixed methods approaches (Section 4.3). This section sets out that there are a family of research methods under discourse theory that must be considered for their applicability to the specifics of this study. It outlines the suitability of CDA for this research. Lastly, it sets out how to combine CDA and mixed methods with MMDA selected.

## 4.4.1 Discourse Analysis

'Discourse analysis' is the family of research methods emerging from discourse theory and approaches range. Hindess & Hirst (1977) suggested taking account only of the internal sequence of meanings within discourses. They advocated keeping a separation between questions concerning the character of discourses and the process of production of a discourse. Althusser (1976) outlined that the subject is a product of the discourse and how contradictory processes in discourse production can shape the discourse itself. Foucault (1972) outlined that discourses are ways of speaking or writing about reality that are highly institutionalised.

Discourse theory has been linked with the epistemological outlooks of critical realism, constructivism, and postmodernism. Geels, et. al (2016b) link it to the epistemological approach of postmodernism, a view supported by Macdonell (1991) outlining that discourse theory's key underlying principal is a proposal that our daily activities, including speech, are shaped by societal structures of power. This has been disputed with Laclau noting discourse theory as a tool for analysis which may be applied to other epistemological approaches than postmodernism, a view supported by Bhaskar noting that underlying laws may be existent before being discussed (Laclau & Bhaskar, 1998). Bhaskar notes discourse theory as a methodology of studying text which is compatible with critical realism, that manipulated, counter factual, biased, or misleading discourses about 'absolute truths' are studied. Fairclough (2003) supports this stating his position as a reformulation discourse theory to align with critical realism. *"We can make a distinction between the 'potential' and the 'actual' – what is possible because of the nature (constraints and allowances) of social structures and practices, as opposed to what actually happens. Both need to be distinguished from the 'empirical', what we know about reality"* (Fairclough, 2003, p. 14).

This differentiation in epistemological alignment follows a diffusion of discourse theory into two analytical methods (Fairclough, 2003). First, **'Foucauldian discourse analysis'** (FDA), focuses on postmodernist social theoretical issues occurring at the time of discourse and pays less attention to discursive themes. Second, the critical realist **'critical discourse analysis'** (CDA) seeks to use linguistic analysis of texts, thus including considerations of the language and linguistic styles in discourses to inform conclusions drawn (Doulton & Brown, 2009).

## 4.4.2 Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

FDA views discourses as socially or culturally constructed knowledge that defines a subjects' understanding. It provides a focus on identifying power throughout societal structures. It views discourse as a means to excise power throughout social hierarchies, and through analysis markers of such regimes of power and control can be identified (Thomson, 2011). This is disputed with suggestions that FDA rather views power as an effect of *"sociohistoric processes in that knowledge underpinning a discourse can be used by proponents of that discourse both to claim authority and presence in certain settings and to exclude other possible discursive framings or ways of viewing those settings."* (Cheek, 2008, p. 536). There are many methods that comply with the principles of FDA in studying discursive data. However, as postmodernist and constructivist epistemologies were rejected (Section 4.2), the use of FDA for this research was not taken forward.

## 4.4.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is a method of discourse analysis focusing research into viewing discourse as a form of social practice and looking beyond the stated face-value meaning of texts (Fairclough, 2003; 2013; Van Dijk, 2005; Willig, 2014). It aligns with the critical realist outlook of reality, outlining that there is objective meaning behind discourses, and this may be subject to interpretation in the event of misrepresentation. Fairclough (2013) notes the field of CDA is at risk of diffusion due to vast quantities of research being undertaken, and notes three conditions that define the CDA method:

- Analysis must include a transdisciplinary analysis of relations between discourse and other elements of the social practices.

- It cannot simply be commentary on discourse alone, with systematic text analysis required.

- It cannot be descriptive alone and must also be normative, also encompassing identification of social practices and ways of writing them.

Fairclough (2003) states that social practices and structures are a part of reality and a distinction must be made between potential and actual; how things are perceived versus how they objectively are. Taking perspectives

on discourses may appear limiting but Fairclough argues that this does not mean discourses are unknowable. CDA aims to *"enhance our capacity to 'see' things in texts through to 'operationalizing' (putting to work) social theoretical perspectives and insights in textual analysis"* (Fairclough, 2003, p. 14). Fairclough (2013) notes CDA's capacity and suitability for 'full system' study, hence CDA is suited to a study of network industries and the policy change process. Fairclough (2013) argues that CDA is given a unique role to play in the analysis of neo-liberal economic policy decisions following the demise of 'ideology' since the 1980's. There are numerous guides to implementing CDA including Wodak & Meyer (2001), Fairclough (2003) and van Leeuwen (2008). Fairclough (2003) used the CDA method to study a number of policy change themes identified (Sections 3.2 and 3.4). That is not to say, however, that this is its sole usage and instead can also reflect on a broad variety of themes. CDA was utilised for this research with Fairclough's work drawn on in developing the approach.

### 4.4.4 Mixed Methods Discourse Analysis

CDA can be extended to cover quantified trend analysis in a mixed methods approach, noted as highly useful for research under the critical realist epistemology (Zachariadis, et al., 2010; Geels, et al., 2016b; Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2017). '**Mixed methods discourse analysis'** (MMDA) uses frameworks to identify quantifiable data within text and is noted by Fairclough (2003) as a means to quantify occurrences of discourse themes. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of researchers attempting to formulate frameworks for quantifiable CDA research (Talib & Fitzgerald, 2016; Remling, 2018; Mullet, 2018). Its use can be to highlight the growing or declining prevalence of certain themes throughout time, allowing conclusions concerning thematic changes. Critiques of MMDA state that the quantification of data may lead to assumptions concerning the meaning of such data in differing contexts. A benefit of qualitative analysis is the open-endedness of research, thus allowing for unexpected conclusions to be reached and research to identify future direction despite a 'null' research proposition. This is lost when effort is applied to quantify the qualitative, and thus researchers using MMDA must be willing to critique not just the performance of the data relative to the propositions but also the eventual suitability of the propositions themselves.

Chaney (2014) uses MMDA in a study of British rail policy analysing the salience of rail in political party manifestos by quantifying the number of occurrences of rail-oriented quasi-sentences over time. A quasi-sentence is

a statement concerning rail, whether delivered in one sentence or a string of sentences. Chaney (2014) drew conclusions over the rising political salience of rail both in terms of the number of times rail is mentioned within manifestos and in terms of the proportion of total manifesto quasi-sentences dedicated to rail policy, as shown in Figure 14. Elements of qualitative study come through Chaney's work within analysis of what those sentences are trying to achieve in discourses. Chaney (2014) notes Conservatives viewed rail as a business and tool to deliver economic growth, whilst Labour viewed rail as a means to deliver an equitable society.
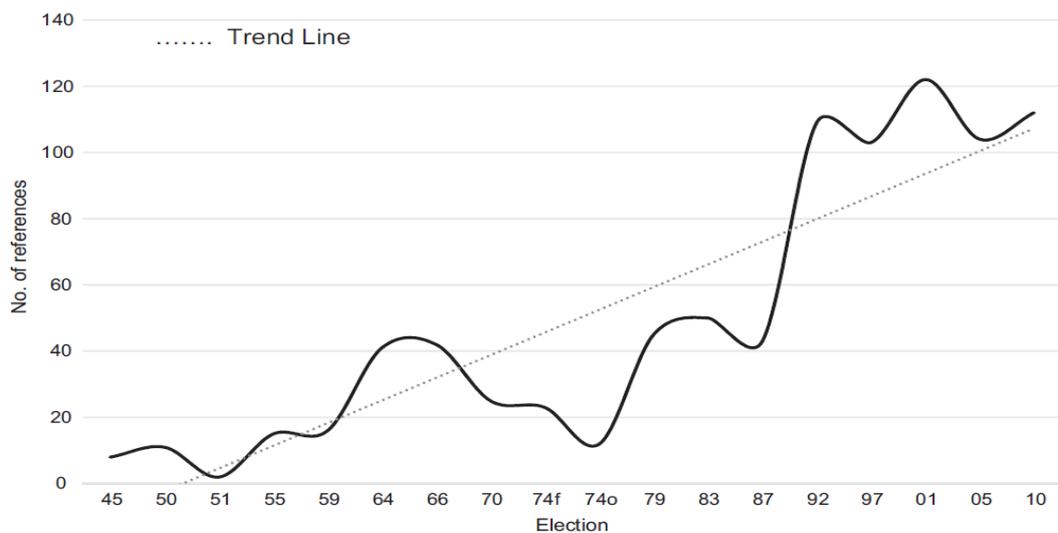


**Figure 14 Total number of quasi-sentences concerning rail featuring in Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat UK general election manifestos (Chaney, 2014)**

## 4.5 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of epistemological outlooks, methodologies, and methods with a narrowed focus at each stage. Section 4.2 outlines that there exist several ways to view the limits of human understanding. Whilst much work of policy evaluation can be considered positivist, for the issue of why policy decisions are made a degree of interpretation and subjectivism under the critical realist outlook is necessary. Section 4.3 outlines that qualitative and mixed methods approaches are suitable for policy change research, noted both in existing policy change studies (Dudley & Richardson, 2000) and in reflection on policy appraisal research done to date (Nash, et al., 2016). Discourse theory is noted as the most suitable methodology owing to a view of discourse as a means of transferring knowledge whilst accepting that the face value meaning of texts

requires some degree of interpretation. It aligns well with analysing policy change theories set out in Chapter 3. Section 4.4 selects CDA and MMDA as being the most relevant methods to study the research question and the propositions posed within this thesis. CDA allows for consideration of linguistics and a reflection on the historic context at the time of the discourses production. MMDA has already been applied to a study of rail's salience (Chaney, 2014) and can supplement CDA into Chapter 3 themes due to its ability to track quantified changes with time.

# Chapter 5
# Methodology – Data

## 5.1 Introduction

The methodology (the study of research methods) within this thesis is divided into two chapters, one concerning analysis methods (Chapter 4) and another concerning data collection methods (this chapter). This chapter sets out the rationales for choices made in developing a data method given the analysis methods selected in Chapter 4. Potential data collection methods are considered in light of their applicability and their suitability. This chapter does not present a detailed, duplicable step-by-step guide to research implementation, which is instead set out in Chapter 6. The framing of this chapter is based on Johnson, Reynolds and Mycoff's 'Political Science Research Methods' (Johnson, et al., 2016) and Clive Seale's 'Social Research Methods' (Seale, 2004). These works provide a comprehensive catalogue of research methods and methodological considerations for a study of political sciences, of which policy change can be considered a field.

Figure 15 details the methodological development, outlining considered methods and the selected approaches narrowing available options at each stage of development. Each section of this chapter aligns with a method development stage. Section 5.2 outlines the options for gathering datasets and a rationale for selecting existing historic data sets. Section 5.3 outlines a rationale for utilising House of Commons debate transcripts and discourses produced by rail policy advocates referenced within the House. Section 5.4 sets out how sampling was applied and the time period studied, and a rationale for a snapshot approach covering the 'before and after' of the policy change in question. Throughout the chapter, bold text denotes references to options in Figure 15.
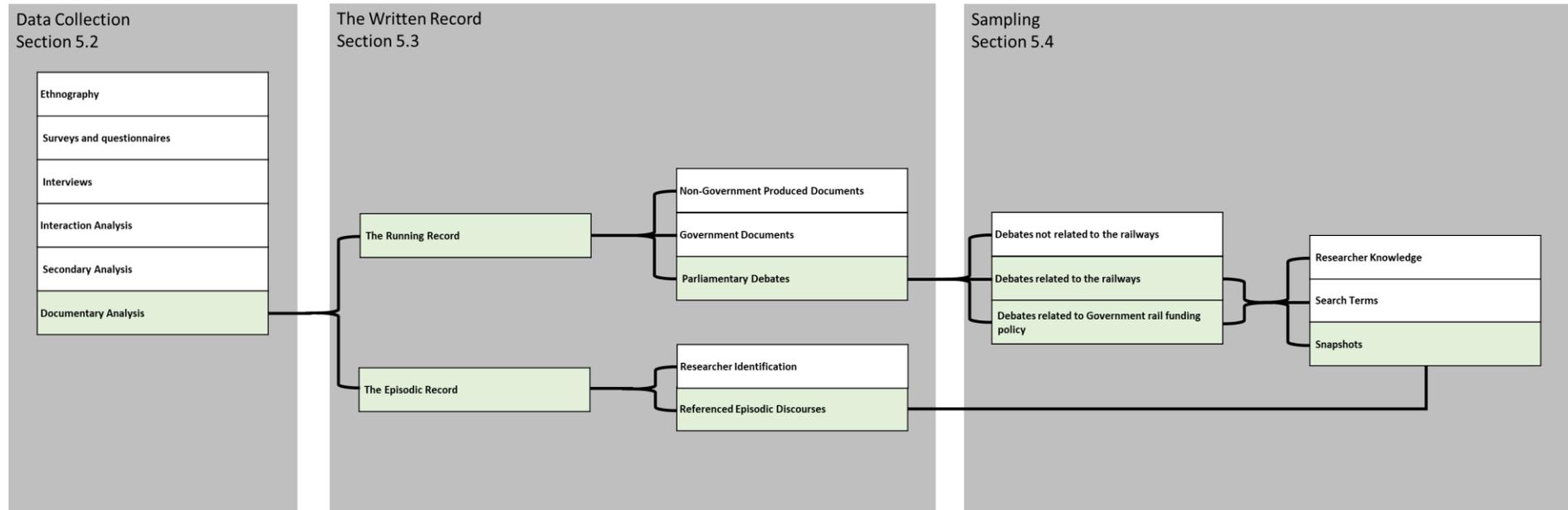
**Figure 15 Development of the data method (green indicates selected approaches)**

## 5.2 Data Collection

Identification of robust data is key to the performance of CDA and MMDA (Fairclough, 2003; Seale, 2004). This section critically reviews the options for sourcing data for an analysis of rail policy change. Options for collecting data have varying degrees of researcher participation in processes. This section rationalises using existing historic datasets thereby undertaking 'documentary analysis'. Johnson, et al. (2016) outlined that to select a valid data collection method, four factors concerning the data must be considered. First, the validity of information gained. Second, whether the collection of the data has an impact on the phenomenon being observed. Third, the population covered by the data, such as demographics or whether research participants are suitable for the study. Fourth, cost and availability of data.

Johnson, et al. (2016) suggest that there are broadly two methodologies of data collection, which forms the structure of this section. This differentiation is supported by Lundy (2008) for data collection to study historical events:

- Primary data, where data is observed and captured by the researcher.

- Secondary data, where data is used but not collected by the researcher.

### 5.2.1 Primary Data

Methods under the umbrella of primary data are described in this section. First is **'ethnography'**. Rooted in the study of cultures, ethnography sees a researcher utilise personal observation to collect data on social practices (Johnson, et al., 2016). Fetterman (2008) outlines that such a method implants a researcher into a field to observe social practices. This alone is enough reason as to why an ethnographic approach cannot be used for this research. Rail funding levels increased 20 years ago and as such the opportunity to observe policy development first-hand has passed. Equally, the likelihood of gaining 'fly on the wall' access to rail policy decision making practices across the industry would be incredibly unlikely and practically challenging. This is a risk for all political science studies (Johnson, et al., 2016) and no studies referenced in Chapters 2 and 3 used this approach. As such, ethnography was not used.

Second is **'surveys and questionnaires'** which are methods of gathering research data that involve the identification of individuals who undergo a

structured examination to collect data through prescribed questions. This requires the researcher to ask participants their thoughts or experiences on topics under study (Seale, 2004). Qualitative outputs may include listing pre-defined worded responses or requesting open narrative responses. Surveys and questionnaires are generally suited to the accumulation of datasets against a prescribed list of criteria that has already been deemed suitable to the research topic. Surveys are a common data collection method and appear in the literature referenced in Chapters 2 and 3 (Marsden & Reardon, 2017; Benedetto, et al., 2017; Marsden, et al., 2020). The prescriptive nature of surveys and questionnaires provides little opportunity for the researcher to explore unexpected themes emerging from the results, as generally only commentary on previously defined themes is sought (Johnson, et al., 2016). This limits the effectiveness of CDA (Section 4.4). Further, surveys and questionnaires generally have low response rates necessitating researchers to infer results from limited datasets (Johnson, et al., 2016; Slapin, et al., 2017). Surveys and questionnaires were not used for this research.

Third is **'interviews'**, which are structured conversations where a researcher asks a participant questions and the responses given constitute the data (Seale, 2004; Johnson, et al., 2016). Each interview would be expected to be more time intensive compared with questionnaires and surveys. Interviewing is a common data collection method in the papers referenced throughout Chapters 2 and 3 (Nyborg, 1998; Wilson, et al., 2007; Sodero, 2011; Smith, et al., 2014; Shepherd & Pryke, 2014; Mouter, 2017; Sovacool & Hess, 2017; Docherty, et al., 2018; Nash, et al., 2020; Marsden & Docherty, 2021). Interviewing is dependent on the nature of answers provided by research participants and hence can be criticised for the role human factors such as agency, limitations of memory or emotions distorting otherwise unbiased factual recollection of events may have on the reliability of results (Johnson, et al., 2016). There is a risk that questions are asked in a leading or limiting way, thus restricting the scope of the study to discover new themes or that too few or irrelevant interview participants are selected for participation (Seale, 2004). A risk noted is generating enough relevant participants (Johnson, et al., 2016). Participants with vested interests, or reputational risk, may be unwilling to be interviewed, or may present bias or incomplete responses. Given themes around elite projection, trade narratives and lobbying (Sections 3.4 and 3.5), this is a significant risk to identifying accurate data. *"The data may be biased by the questions and actions of the interviewer. Interviewees may give evasive or untruthful answers."* (Johnson, et al., 2016, p. 343). Given this, plus the broad

timescales for research there is a significant risk of memory distortion or relevant individuals not being available for research. As such, interviews were not selected.

Fourth, there are a variety of direct or indirect observation methods where researchers create an environment whereby events, or discourses, may be observed (Johnson, et al., 2016). This is called **'interaction analysis'** (Seale, 2004). A general approach is the creation of focus groups with interactions between members recorded and studied by the researcher in a passive non-interventionalist role (Flanders, 1970). The key benefit of interaction analysis is the removal of the 'guiding mind' of the researcher from setting the framework under which the data collation takes place, thus removing a core criticism of interviews, surveys or questionnaires (Seale, 2004). However, there may form a limited amount of relevant discourses for the study at hand due to the unstructured nature of data collection, as pressures on actors to delve into 'hidden' information cannot be applied by the researcher. There are no examples of this approach in the literature referenced in Chapters 2 and 3. For this study, as the phenomenon being studied stretches back so far, relevant individuals from the time of policy change may be unavailable or unwilling to participate. There is also the risk of incorrect memory of events. Further, as conversations could go off topic, and researchers are not supposed to intervene, there is a significant risk to generating relevant data. As such, this approach was not used.

### 5.2.2 Secondary Data

There are two main types of secondary data collection methods. First, is '**secondary analysis'** which sees primary data collected for other research experiments repurposed for a new research project (Long-Sutehall, et al., 2010). Such data can be highly cost effective, quick to obtain and relevant to research questions that expand on previous analysis. It is advantageous for access to sensitive data (Long-Sutehall, et al., 2010). It features in much quantitative research referenced in Chapters 2 and 3, with data obtained from rail industry sources (Smith, 2006; Cowie & Loynes, 2012; Preston & Robins, 2013; Crössmann & Mause, 2015; Casullo, 2016; Bogart, 2016; Wheat, et al., 2018; Smith, et al., 2018; Preston, 2018b; Nash, et al., 2019). However, for qualitative research this method presents risks particularly concerning the relevance of data generated for past studies. Given the lack of research into rail funding policy from a qualitative policy change perspective, noted in Section 2.7 and in Marsden & Reardon (2017) regarding transport policy, this approach was not taken forward.

Second, there is **'documentary analysis'** which describes the analysis of documents produced outside of the study being conducted, also known as the 'written record' (Johnson, et al., 2016). This approach is common in the literature referenced in Chapters 2 and 3 (Sittle, 2004; Bowman, et al., 2013; Dudley, 2013; Tomaney & Marques, 2013; Hebbert, 2014; Smith, et al., 2014; Chaney, 2014; Bowman, 2015; Bowman, et al., 2017; Reardon & Marsden, 2020). By suggesting the use of historically produced discourses, this method closer aligns with the historiographic concerns of Foucault (1972) (Section 4.2.3). Documentary analysis has potential benefits for the study of Government formulation of rail funding policy. It opens the possibility of using the existing extensive cannon of Government and policy maker discourses, such as House of Commons debates or Government White Papers, as datasets. It allows for the analysis of publicly available reports and lobbying material and helps circumvent problems associated with gaining research participants. The interactions of previous Ministers, policy makers and rail industry advocates with each other would be available, removing the risk of a limited participant pool. However, there could be no guarantee that the information available is sufficient and it is unlikely that 'covert' information could be detected. There are also conventions impacting speech protocols in certain arenas, such as parliamentary debates, and party-political issues potentially causing participants to hide their 'true views'. This can be accounted for through CDA. Party politics, time limits for debates and the need for Government to 'frame' its policies all present risks. These, however, are all noted concepts impacting policy change (Section 3.3) and impact all data collection methods. Unfortunately, no research method can guarantee the identification of information should information holders choose to keep it a secret. Given its applicability to the study of policy change as documents were produced 'at the time' (thus removing memory risk), the vast array of document sources available and the lengthy timescales of the topic for research, documentary analysis was selected.

## 5.3 The Written Record

This section selects documents from the written record to be analysed. Lundy (2008) notes *"diaries, photographs, art, literature, minutes of meetings, eyewitness accounts in newspapers or other official documents, court records, letters, maps"* and *"Government websites and collections"* as potential sources of written record data (Lundy, 2008, p. 398). There are

various examples in the literature of CDA applied to the written record. Newspapers (Munro, 2018), Manifestos (Chaney, 2014), House of Commons transcripts and industry reports (Reardon & Marsden, 2020) are common sources. This section outlines options available and provides a rationale for using House of Commons debates and discourses referenced within those to study Government rail funding policy change.

### 5.3.1 Types of Written Record

Johnson, et al (2016) note that the written record is divided into two categories:

- The episodic record.

- The running record.


The '**episodic record**' consists of materials not produced systematically over time, such as diaries, photographs, art, literature, memoires, temporary organisational records, brochures and ad-hoc reports (Johnson, et al., 2016). This data is particularly important given its high relevance to specific issues, however it can be significantly more challenging to identify and obtain (Johnson, et al., 2016). This is especially the case for private records. Genus and Theobald (2016) analysed items from the episodic record in a study of low carbon neighbourhood policy in Newcastle through a collation of existing project documentation. This included "*emails, reports produced within the project and beyond (such as university engagement strategy documents, research council literature, proposals for funding, and minutes of the eco-neighbourhoods steering group and other local authority and community organisation committee meetings)*" (Genus & Theobald, 2016, p. 787). Whilst this array of data appears useful, it is not clear how data sources were selected and why these were determined relevant. Should episodic discourses be utilised, it would be advantageous to ensure a systematised, duplicable approach to its collection.

Johnson, et a (2016) note the **'running record'** consists of materials produced systematically over time and there are various forms of running record documents. Johnson, et al (2016) note that organisations are more likely to produce running records than individuals, with Government organisations being the most common source of political documentation. How to select a series of documents from the running record becomes highly dependent on context. The United Nations, national Governments and local Government organisations all produce running records of certain types of

information. Government arm's length bodies and private companies also do so, particularly when regulations (such as annual reports) stipulate this.

Newspapers can be considered a part of either the running or the episodic record. This is owing to article topics often being non-systematic but the overall systematic production with time of the paper itself. Doulton & Brown (2009) utilised newspapers to study sentiments towards climate change, whilst Munro (2018) used CDA to analyse perceptions of house price growth across seven national UK newspapers. However, the use of newspapers appears to lack relevance here. Newspapers would not be a part of the rail industry unless their discourse had a direct impact on system development, which could not be proven from analysis of newspaper articles alone.

There are three advantages to the running record over the episodic record. First, the running record is generally more cost effective and quicker to access with Government documents generally being free to use. Second, it is often systematically available whereas the episodic record can require extensive searches in a variety of archives to identify, source and copy documents for analysis. Third, it captures a more extensive time period than the episodic record (Johnson, et al., 2016). However, a key criticism of the running record is that the researcher is unable to control the quality of data collection, though this also applies to the episodic record. Using both the running record and the episodic record also has advantages. The key shortfall of the episodic record is in its lack of systematic production, but its strength lies in delving to greater depths of the given issues. Hence, a combination may be the best way forward, as in Marsden & Reardon (2020). The running record may be utilised to undertake a systematic data collection over the time being studied, which is especially important for studies over several decades. The episodic record can be used to support analysis. As such, the running record was selected as the primary data collection methodology, with the episodic record drawn on in a secondary capacity.

## 5.3.2 The Running Record

There are three options given the research context for running record data:

- Non-Government produced documents.

- Government produced documents.

- Parliamentary debates.

**'Non-Government produced documents'** may consist of corporate reports from organisations or other systematically produced discourses from outside Government. It risks being of less relevance to the research given the source of rail funding under question being Government. There is a risk that the structural changes to the rail industry over the period in which subsidies increased means running records produced by organisations would be inconsistent. Railtrack, British Rail, regulatory organisations and TOCs have changed throughout and thus utilising corporate reports would not allow for a consistent reflection of change over time. This type of data was not selected.

**'Government produced documents'**, such as White Papers or consultation materials, are another option. Whilst there are clear advantages with regard to consistency and the ability to understand Government rationales for policies, there is a risk that context would be missed. This is a requirement of CDA (Section 4.4.3) and stems from only being able to analyse the Government's view on the rail industry. Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 all outline the role local/regional Governments, advocacies and industry may play in applying pressure to Government to stimulate policy change. Such pressures may be lost with a study of only the Government's view on rail. As such, this approach was not taken forward.

'**Parliamentary debates'** are a third option, stated by Whittaker (2018) as a means for understanding insights into how the political elite discursively construct and represent actor roles (Harmer, 2018). White (2015) highlights the role of scrutiny within the House of Commons by parliamentarians in requiring Government to justify its policy ideas or listen to alternatives. *"For government the purpose of debate is often to showcase the political argument or philosophy behind a particular policy or approach to an issue, or to test opinion on it. For the Opposition and backbenchers it provides an opportunity to demand an explanation of why a particular policy has been pursued, to identify weaknesses in the evidence base or formulation of a policy, or to provide new evidence or analysis"* (White, 2015, p. 18). Griffith (1974) states that the House of Commons has been criticised as lacking influence relative to Government circles. However, Griffith notes that during the policy or legislative development process many changes from Government's initial proposals are made to take account of criticisms raised during House of Commons debates. This demonstrates a link between House of Commons debates and policy formulation. Russell and Gover (2017) demonstrate that such a link continues into the new millennium. They note that whilst Government does start policy formulation and legislative

processes, there are a range of actors that influence such proposals during their development. These range from Ministers and civil servants who often take account of known parliamentarian sentiments, to external pressure groups such as advocates and industry groups. Select Committees are also considered highly influential (Russell & Gover, 2017), aligning with themes outlined in Sections 3.4 and 3.5. Russell & Gover note that not all formulation takes place within the House of Commons, but rather often backbench parliamentarians of the Government's party may seek to influence policy development behind the scenes.

Harmer (2018) uses CDA to analyse House of Commons debates on British overseas territories, sourcing debates from Hansard records. Hansard is an online depository of transcripts of all parliamentary debates which enables effective data collation. Siren & Hedegaard Sørensen (2015) analyse Danish speed limit policy between 1900 and 2010 through parliamentary debate discourses, demonstrating its benefit in consistently studying a lengthy historical time period. Reardon & Marsden (2020) utilise parliamentary debate transcripts and 'episodic' industry reports over a 30-year period to analyse the depoliticisation of UK transport policy. Aydın-Düzgit (2014), in a study of European foreign policy, use parliamentary debates and 'episodic' political declarations/foreign policy documents to study the Government policy formulation process. As such, there exists clear benefit to using parliamentary debates in a study of rail policy change.

There are several types of parliamentary debate in the UK democratic context: House of Commons, House of Lords and Westminster Hall or other arena debates. House of Commons debates have already been discussed as relevant to outlining the influences and processes in policy development (Griffith, 1974; Russell & Gover, 2017). House of Lords debates were not selected for the scope of this research as they are not as relevant as the House of Common's when studying policy decision making and implementation (White, 2015; Harmer, 2018). The House of Lords generally follows discussions from the Commons and has no power to create original Government decisions or to run Government, though on occasion members of the House of Lords are Ministers. The decision not to include House of Lords debates is due to the scope of the research. Any decisions made by House of Lords Ministers will still be discussed in the House of Commons and thus is covered by the research focusing on House of Commons debates. Debates occurring in Westminster Hall and other parliamentary arenas were also considered of lower relevance to policy formulation relative

to House of Commons debates. Westminster Hall debates are often of lower national importance and the Government generally sends fewer representatives to attend, thus minimising the ability of a researcher to gain insights into Government decision making and sentiment towards policy changes. This research hence utilised House of Commons debates due to the significant catalogue of data to study (Harmer, 2018) and the link with policy rationales (Russell & Gover, 2017).

### 5.3.3 The Episodic Record

Section 5.3.1 considered the potential benefit in using the episodic record to supplement analysis into the running record. Taking account of episodic discourses, whether they emerge from select committees, advocacy groups, industry, or other sources, helps extend the 'policy formulation' forum datasets. There are two options for identifying episodic discourses.

One option would be manual **'researcher identification'** of material referenced within a literature review of rail policy formulation, similar to other research (Genus & Theobald, 2016). Whilst this would likely uncover some key publications, such as Government reviews leading to industry and policy changes, this would run the risk of relying on existing research to identify episodic discourses and thus would not necessarily identify all relevant discourses.

A second option aligns with the role of the House of Commons in both the Government policy formulation context (White, 2015; Russell & Gover, 2017) and as the rail industry's key legislator and identifies **'referenced episodic discourses'** in House of Commons debates. The benefit being references by parliamentarians in relevant debates are an indicator of influence from the discourse itself. This aligns with the concept of intertextuality (Section 3.4). As a minimum, such references would be used to justify policy rationales expressed by parliamentarians. Episodic discourses identified through references would hence be pertinent to the research question and propositions regarding lobbying and policy formulation. It would also yield the advantage of demonstrating discourses and meanings which have not been recorded and made available to the public, such as parliamentarian conversations with industry figures.

However, there are assumptions here that must be considered. The House of Commons is a public forum and whilst literature suggests policy rationales are justified there (White, 2015; Russell & Gover, 2017), it would be unlikely that all advocate-policymaker interactions will be referenced publicly

(Hughes, 1998). More covert lobbying would unlikely be referenced. There is also a risk that discourses within the House of Commons and referenced episodic discourses do not necessarily reflect what is occurring 'outside' of the House. However, whilst that means we cannot know for sure the full extent of why policy changes were made, it provides an understanding of the nature and direction of rationales occurring at the time of policy implementation. Whether or not the most influential discourses are detected, the outcomes from such analysis would identify the changing nature of the Government and rail industry relationship. This allows for a rationalised view of 'behind the scenes' activities from analysing the discourses. Ultimately, no research could detect truly covert reasons for policy choices (such as bribes, favours for friends etc). Given this approach to sourcing episodic discourses could yield benefit to the research, it was taken forward and episodic discourses referenced in debates were collected.

## 5.4 Sampling

This section considered sampling. In all research methods, sampling is an important consideration (Seale, 2004). Sampling concerns how the vast array of potentially available data for study is filtered down into a deliverable yet still robust analysis. Failure to define a sensible means towards sampling could lead to a methodological approach which creates error due to poor manageability or systematic error. Given the vast catalogue of potential discourses for study under these research approaches, it is important to select a consistent, representative, and sufficiently sized data sample. Mullet (2018) notes that CDA due to its complexity should not be attempted on vast datasets. This section sets out two considerations to deliver a reasonable research sample, first the relevance of House of Commons debates and second the time dynamic.

### 5.4.1 Relevance of Each Debate

There are three tiers of relevance to House of Commons debates. **'Debates not related to railways'** were discarded owing to a lack of relevance. One argument against this might be that general Government sentiment towards infrastructure spending, or other priorities including economic growth or social inclusivity, can have knock-on impacts for rail policy (KPMG, 2018). However, such sentiments would likely also feature in rail debates. There is also a risk of excessive sampling by creating a 'too broad' classification for which debates are relevant to the railways. **'Debates related to railways'** were considered more relevant for research, however, were not specifically

related to the topic of rail funding in all instances. As such, there would be too many debates to allow for a reliable and detailed CDA to be applied. MMDA, owing to its more systematic application, was applied to these debates thus allowing for an analysis of trend changes across all rail debates with time. **'Debates related to Government rail funding policy'** were considered fully relevant and thus were selected for both MMDA and CDA. How debates were classified is set out in Chapter 6.

A similar issue exists with the referenced episodic discourses, which may vary substantially in length owing to the nature of a discourse. As such, to ensure consistent sample sizes, the abstract or introduction of each was selected for coding rather than the full discourse. This ensured deliverable research and helped each discourse source to be consistently reflected on relative to others. It also provided the key themes and messages, rather than using other aspects of the discourse.

### 5.4.2 Timing

This section sets out how the time dynamic was considered. In Chapter 2, notable increases in Government funding can be seen in Figure 5 from 2000/01 which is considered to be the start of the research phenomenon. The real price ten-year average Government funding levels subsequent to this date are four times greater than the ten-year average prior. A ramping up of additional funding can be observed between 2000/01 and 2003/04 after which a 'new norm' was in place (ORR, 2021a). To cover the before and after, this research opted for a study period that covers ten years prior, ten years during and ten years following the establishment of a 'new norm' for Government funding levels. Three decades, 1990 to 2020, form the time period of research. There are several ways to consider the time dynamic of this research to factor the 30-year study period into a more deliverable quantum of data for research.

One option would be to individually select House of Commons debates based on **'researcher knowledge'**. This would yield risk toward researcher knowledge bias and would not account for Foucault (1972) suggesting that researchers today would be at risk of not looking fully into historical monuments systematically. This approach has not been used.

**'Search terms'** involves studying each year in a continuous fashion focusing on data emerging from searches. Utilised by Harmer (2018), this yields the benefit of providing a continuous picture of policy evolution but requires the identification of debates based on terms. Harmer (2018) used two search

terms, "overseas territories" and "crown territories", to return 1139 spoken contribution results from parliamentary records and subsequently undertook a CDA on the results to identify parliamentary sentiment. Whilst this research demonstrates the use of Hansard and CDA in political studies, it could be criticised for using only two search terms to source data. It also does not account for the full content and context of a debate, a necessity of CDA (Section 4.4.3).

A third option cuts time into **'snapshots'**. Lovell (2015) used this approach to study the British rail industry throughout the course of privatisation, which covered ten-year snapshots before and after policy change. Reardon & Marsden (2020) utilised a snapshot approach in their study of House of Commons debates on transport policy. This approach accounts for criticisms of continuous analysis as it does not allow for an understanding policy changes in progress to diffuse results. This method of sampling reduces data and hence allows for deliverability, yet still covers the full study period. For rail, it also helps to establish industry structural snapshots as rail finds itself in a near constant state of review (Nelson, 2019). This research utilised this approach and applied a snapshot every fifth year. Five-year snapshots allow for effective definition of the industry for comparison with the other study windows. With UK General Elections occurring roughly every 4-5 years this also aligns with the snapshot periods used by Chaney (2014). The years selected were 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018. These are referred to as the 'study windows' within the overall 'study period' (1990 – 2020). These years were selected to cover funding discussions in advance of rail control period changes. The selection of these study windows captures two study windows before (1993, 1998), two during (2003, 2008) and two after (2013, 2018) policy change. For each study window, the first six calendar months (01 January – 30 June) were selected from which parliamentary debates were collected. This helped ensure manageability of the research. The first six calendar months were used in lieu of using alternative time periods such as parliamentary 'sessions'. A parliamentary session is a legislative session, usually covering a year, in which parliamentarians can debate, amend, and pass laws. However, sessions can vary in length and thus not provide for a consistent sample size proportional to the overall business of Government. They generally cover a lengthier time window than necessary for this study. In addition, sessions also switched from being Autumn-Autumn to being Spring-Spring after 2010, which means the study would have inconsistencies. Fixed time periods were used for the snapshots, which limits these to specific date ranges as per previous

methods (Chaney, 2014; Lovell, 2015; Harmer, 2018). The years' first six months were selected to cover the change in financial years in April, thus increasing the chances of debates on the financial status of the rail industry.

## 5.5 Summary

This chapter reviewed methodology for collecting data. Section 5.2 outlined primary and secondary methods and the use of documentary analysis was selected. The running record of House of Commons debate transcripts, which provide an insight into the influences and power struggles taking place at the heart of Government (Griffith, 1974; Russell & Gover, 2017), was selected as the main data source. To consider advocacy and delve into the specifics of advocate views on policies, referenced episodic discourses within House of Commons debates were also analysed. Section 5.4 outlined an approach to sampling, with House of Commons debates selected according to their relevance. A time period of 30 years covering before, during and after the change in rail funding policy was selected, leaving 1990 to 2020 as the study period. A snapshot approach was selected to ensure deliverability whilst providing analysis of the full time period. This led to the selection of six, six-month, study windows in 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018.

# Chapter 6
# Method

## 6.1 Introduction

The research method is described in this chapter and follows methodology choices in Chapters 4 and 5. The method comprises four stages, which align with the sections of this chapter and are shown diagrammatically in Figure 16 with data collection (green) and analysis (blue) stages. White boxes show examples of how various discourse may be mapped with time and that referenced episodic discourses may appear in multiple study windows.
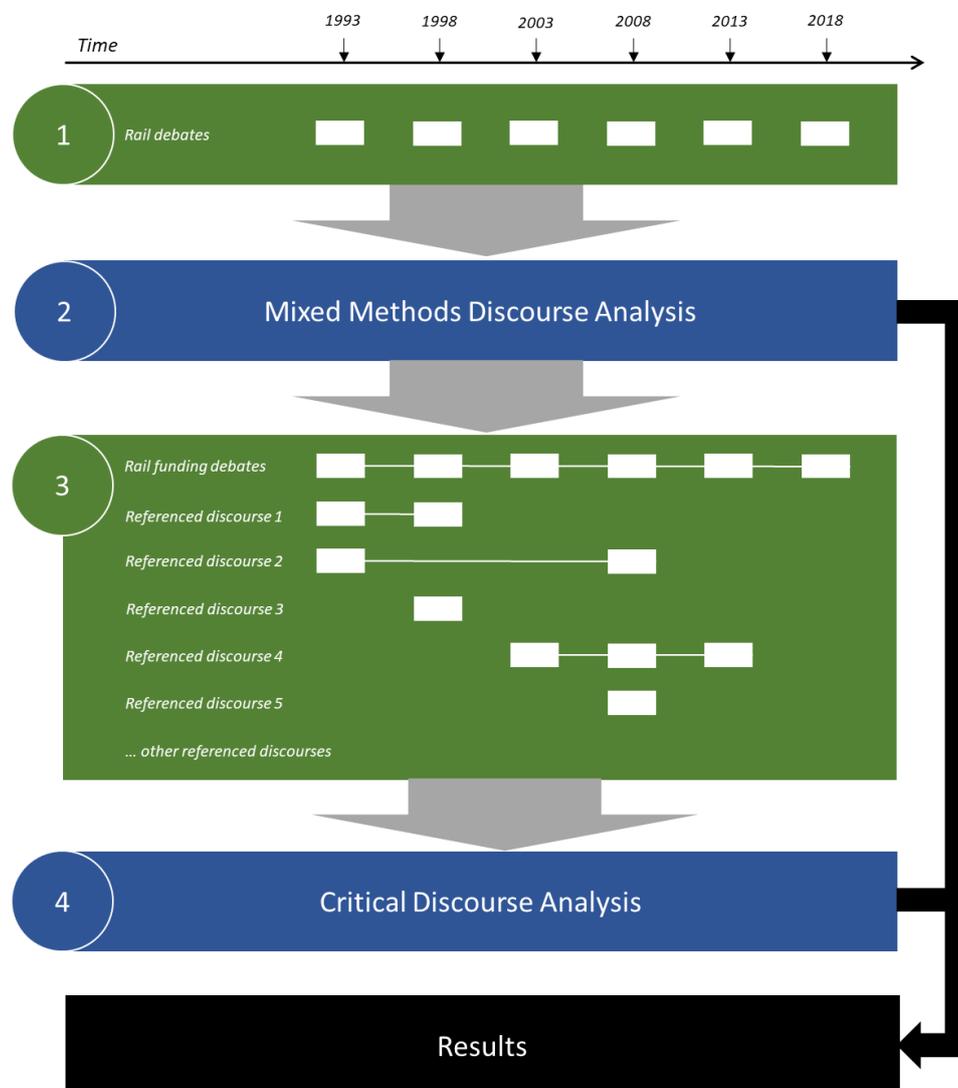


**Figure 16 A framework for MMDA and CDA of policy changes**

Section 6.2 describes how debate transcripts were collected and processed into a legible format, setting out how debates relevant to rail were identified.

Section 6.3 describes MMDA of the rail debates, the classification of debates concerned with rail funding and identification of industry actors and referenced episodic discourses. Section 6.4 describes the collection of referenced episodic discourses. Section 6.5 describes the CDA and variables (nodal sets) used with both House of Commons rail funding debates and referenced discourses analysed. The variables were based on key themes identified in the literature on policy change in Chapter 3. Section 6.6 provides a summary of this chapter and considers research ethics.

## 6.2 (Stage 1) House of Commons Debate Data Collection

Stage 1 involves the identification and collation of House of Commons debates on rail in the six study windows (Section 5.4). A step by step approach is depicted in Figure 17 with each step explained for duplicability. Steps A and B are discussed first, followed by Steps 1-4, with further detail, equations, and coding in Appendix A, A.1. Files used are available online[1].
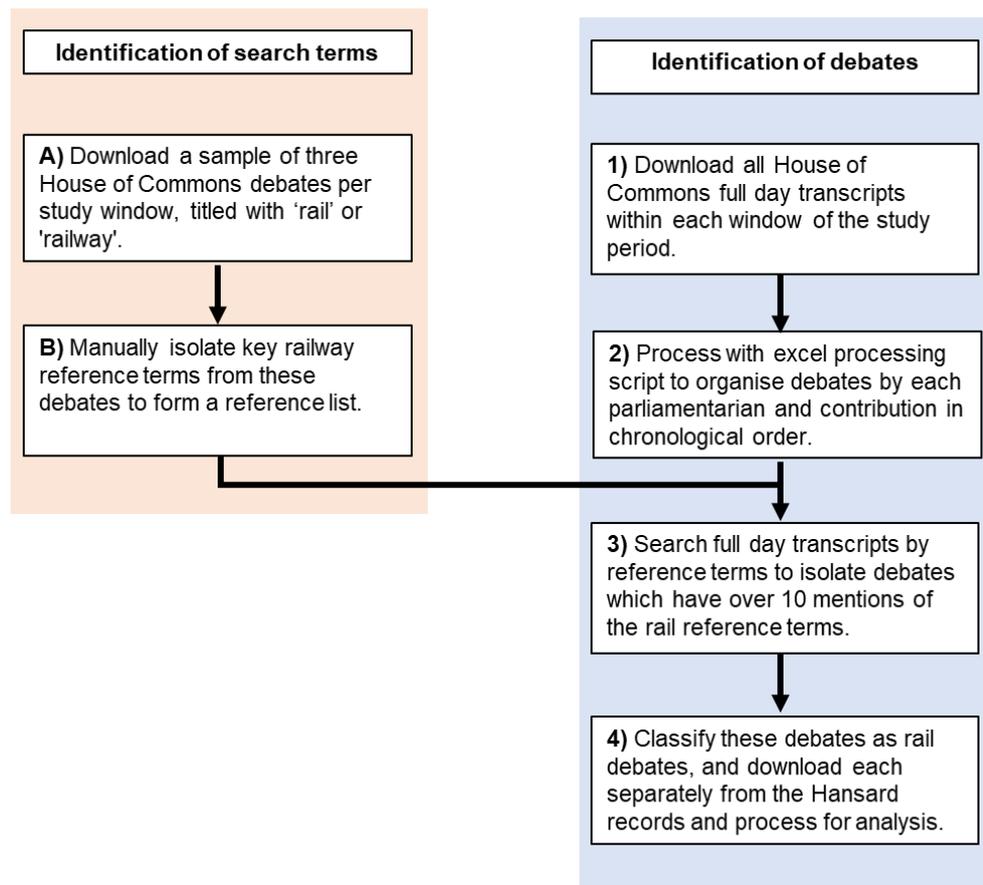


**Figure 17 Method of data collation of debates on rail**

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[1] https://github.com/JackSThompson/Research.git.

### 6.2.1 Steps A & B

Steps A and B were used to form a list of terms used throughout the study period to describe rail. It is important to consider changing terms throughout, as phrases such as 'Railtrack' or 'Network SouthEast' may only be used in some study windows. Thus, to avoid phrases in each window being missed, the steps below were taken to formulate a robust list of reference terms used between 1993 and 2018. This is set out in Appendix A, Table 22.

Step A identified three debates per study window which were focused on rail, exemplified using the term 'rail' or 'railway' in their title. Debates consisted of no less than ten individual parliamentarian contributions to ensure enough discourse may be used to create a substantial reference list. The first three debates meeting these criteria in each study window were used. The selection of random debates was rejected to support duplicability.

Step B undertook analysis into the first two debates from each study window through Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS), 'NVivo', to identify terms. A minimum of 7 characters was applied to avoid issues with Excel's Trim() function returning nested terms later. After processing in QDAS, the list was exported to a blank Microsoft Excel 'XLSX' file for coded outputs to be tidied and duplicates removed. The reference list was compared with the remaining third debate from each study window. No additional reference terms were identified so the list was considered sufficiently encompassing.

### 6.2.2 Steps 1-4

Steps 1-4 sourced and processed all House of Commons debate transcripts within the study windows, utilising the reference list to identify debates relevant to rail. Each step is detailed below.

Step 1 downloaded the full transcripts of all House of Common's full day sittings within each study window, saved with a YYYYMMDD identifier title in a local repository. These were accessed via the Hansard online repository and were saved in HTML format.

Step 2 imported the downloaded data into Microsoft Excel XLSX format with one Excel tab per transcript. This was completed by using a Visual Basic (VB) coded algorithm. Once imported, data was processed through another VB script to clean the data so that each parliamentarian contribution was listed alongside the name of its contributor in sequential order. The output of this step was to have a single XLSX file that contained only key debate information including date, contributors, and contributions.

Step 3 utilised the reference search list from Steps A and B to search the dataset from Step 2 to identify debates discussing rail. It calculated the sum of the total number of occurrences of each reference term within each days' debates. In total there were 557 House of Commons sittings within the study windows and 418 where at least one parliamentarian used a railway reference term at some point. Detail is shown in Appendix A, Figure 30.

Step 4 identified all sittings with an above average number of contributions (8 or more). It then looked into these sittings, identifying individual debates and classified the debates these 'clusters' of reference terms occurred in as related to rail policy discussions. The use of only a few reference terms was not sufficient to warrant an assumption that there was a debate that day that focused on rail. In several sittings there was more than one rail debate. The individual debates were then sourced again from Hansard and processed through Steps 1 & 2 to create a legible dataset for study.

This exercise identified 88 House of Commons debates within the study windows primarily discussing rail policy. These debates are identified by name and a 'YYYYMMDD' format identifier code in Appendix A, Table 26.

## 6.3 (Stage 2) Mixed Methods Discourse Analysis

In Stage 2, MMDA was used to provide three analysis results:

- Classification of debates as related to rail funding specifically.

- Identification of referenced rail industry organisations.

- Identification of referenced episodic discourses.


To undertake MMDA QDAS was used. All 88 debates identified in Stage 1 were loaded into the database, separated by year. QDAS is able to code textual themes as they appear and then analyse the full log of themes following the completion of the coding exercise to determine trends.

### 6.3.1 Classification of Government Rail Funding Debates

Identifying which debates were relevant to the topic of Government rail funding would enable results to show the changing issue salience of rail funding policy and provide a dataset for CDA in Stage 4. CDA must be directed toward the most relevant discourses (Section 5.4). This classification could mean, for example, a debate on whether or not to pay for a rail scheme was considered a debate relevant to 'Government funding for

rail' while a debate on an infrastructure manager undertaking maintenance late at night would not be classified as relevant. However, it is acknowledged that there is no perfect way of doing this, as most issues can be traced back to a question of 'who pays for changes?', whether that's a timetabling improvement, rolling stock upgrades, or law changes. There was also the issue of non-Government funding, such as private funding, which prompted discussion on funding policy but not always related to Government funding. Two criterion for this categorisation are set out in Table 3.

**Table 3 Classification of House of Commons debates as related to rail or rail funding by criteria**

| Criteria 1 | Regular references made to the issue of Government funding for the rail industry in contributions made by parliamentarians. |
|---|---|
| Criteria 2 | A response from Ministers detailing Government's position. |

The debate transcripts were analysed in Excel with countifs() and sumifs() formulae used to analyse the changing quantum of debate on each topic to show changing issue salience. These results are presented in Section 7.2.1.

## 6.3.2 Rail Industry Organisations

The next part of the MMDA was to identify rail industry organisations referenced in the 88-rail focused House of Commons debates identified. A series of nodes were created in QDAS and each individual reference to an organisation was coded. This was done to quantify advocates and industry organisations referenced in debates. Table 4 sets out how organisations were categorised, with further detail in Appendix A, A.2, Table 27.

**Table 4 Frequency of reference to rail industry organisations by category of organisation**

| Node | Sub-Nodes |
|---|---|
| Governments | Europe; UK; National; Regional / Combined; Local. |
| Law | |
| Local Transport Authority | |
| Media | |
| Operator | Infrastructure Manager; Integrated Operator; Train Operating Company; Freight Operating Company. |
| Other | Property Development; Other. |
| Promoter | Local Partnerships; Research; Special Interest Group; Trade Group. |
| Regulator | |
| Supplier | Consultancies; Contractors; Manufacturers; Investors. |
| Trade Unions | |

This coding was not just limited to organisations in existence during that study window but also included defunct and proposed organisations. Once referenced organisations were coded, the outputs were exported into Excel for data processing and cleaning. Processing took the form of utilising countifs() and sumifs() formulae to create a series of tables that demonstrated the changing nature of rail industry actor references and those organisation types over time. The results are presented in Section 7.2.2.

### 6.3.3 Rail Industry Episodic Discourses

The final part of the MMDA was to identify episodic discourses referenced within the 88 House of Commons rail debates. These show some interactions taking place between rail advocates and Government and provide episodic discourses for CDA. Episodic discourse could include:

- Publicly available or non-publicly available reports.

- Direct communication (conversations, letters etc.).

- Indirect communication (press releases etc.).


Each quote containing reference to a discourse source was coded in QDAS to a variable for that year and then imported into Excel. Data surrounding each quote was then identified and recorded, shedding light on the actor and contextual details. This ensured alignment with the principles of CDA (Section 4.4). Categorisations are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5 Frequency of reference to episodic discourses and discourse production data**

| Node | Sub-Nodes |
|---|---|
| Located | Yes; No; Not Expected. |
| Type | Book; Email; Green Paper; Legislation; Letter; Manifesto; Newspaper; Petition; Press Release; Report; Statement; TV; Website; White Paper. |
| Title | |
| Date | |
| Author / Author Role | Executive; Journalist; Politician; Academic; Political Party; Public Servant; Constituent; N/A. |
| Commissioner / Commissioner Role | Executive; Journalist; Politician; Academic; Political Party; Public Servant; Constituent; N/A. |
| Referencing parliamentarian details | Date; Name; Political Party. |

Categorisation was done on a manual basis by searching for this data online. Information was collected in an Excel table with each reference marked as a single line item and subsequent details recorded in columns aligning with the above. Processing took place to find numerical trends. Data was assessed in a variety of ways using Excel functions to show the changing nature of discourse source origins with time. The tables in Microsoft Excel were sense checked to ensure no anomalies, such as mis-categorisation, were present. Results are shown in Section 7.2.3.

## 6.4 (Stage 3) Episodic Discourse Data Collection

Stage 3 was a data collection exercise. The data identified throughout Stage 2 was utilised to create two new data repositories. One included House of Commons debates on Government funding for rail, and the other referenced episodic discourses. The former of these had already been collected and imported into QDAS software and categorised in Stage 2. Collating referenced episodic discourses was more challenging as Hansard and other parliamentary libraries do not have to retain copies of referenced discourse materials, so a structured sourcing of such data from a single place was not possible. This is a noted risk with episodic discourse collection (Section 5.3). Another consideration was the environmental context of this research. The COVID-19 pandemic struck during this part of the data collection process resulting in physical and in-person data sourcing to be a less viable option for the foreseeable future. As such, in-person data collection options such as using the National Archives were not possible. However, whilst this did present an issue, a significant number of referenced episodic discourses could be identified from online sources and using the University Library.

Not all referenced discourses would be expected to be available, even with in-person visits to archives and repositories. Older discourses naturally are less likely to be available, owing to a loss of data with time. This does induce some risk of systematic error, though this can be partially corrected through analysis of parliamentary debates into the context of these discourses. CDA helps to identify the meaning and purpose of the discourse. Spoken word references would not be available by any data collection method. As such, there were three categories assigned to referenced episodic discourses:

- Identified: discourse located in full.

- Not identified: availability of discourse expected but source not found.

- Not public: discourse not expected to be available.

Figure 18 shows that the number of episodic discourses referenced in rail funding debates increased during the study period. It also shows that despite the restrictions most discourses were able to be sourced other than those from 1993, owing to the age of those sources. Figure 19 shows the same data as a proportion of study window totals. A full list of episodic discourses identified for CDA is shown in Appendix A, A.3, Table 28, alongside an identifier code and title. Of the 320 referenced discourses, 197 were identified, 32 were not identified and 91 would not have been possible to source due to their form or type (such as conversations).
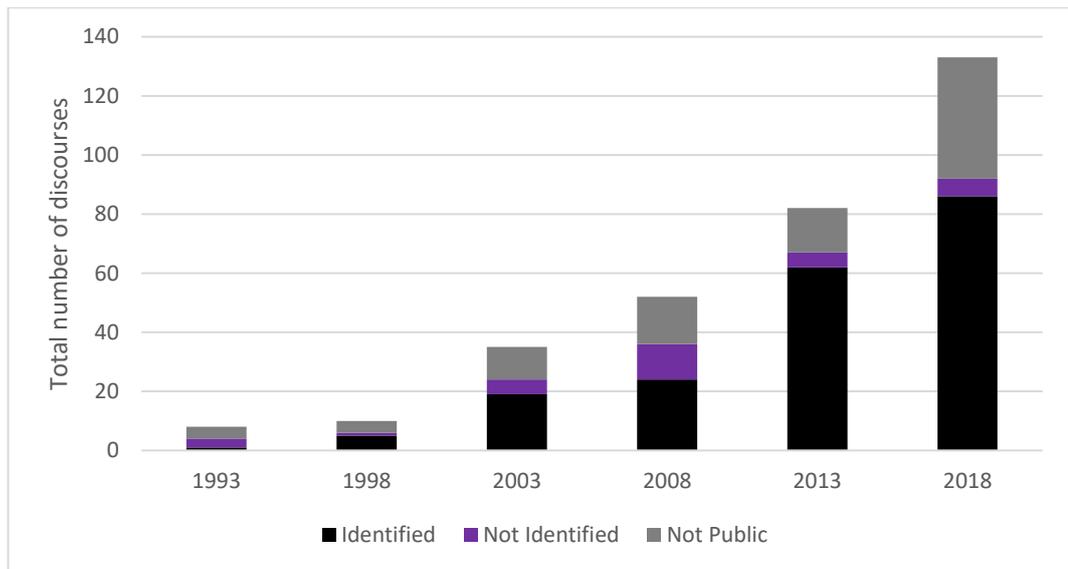


**Figure 18 Discourses that were referenced in rail funding debates**
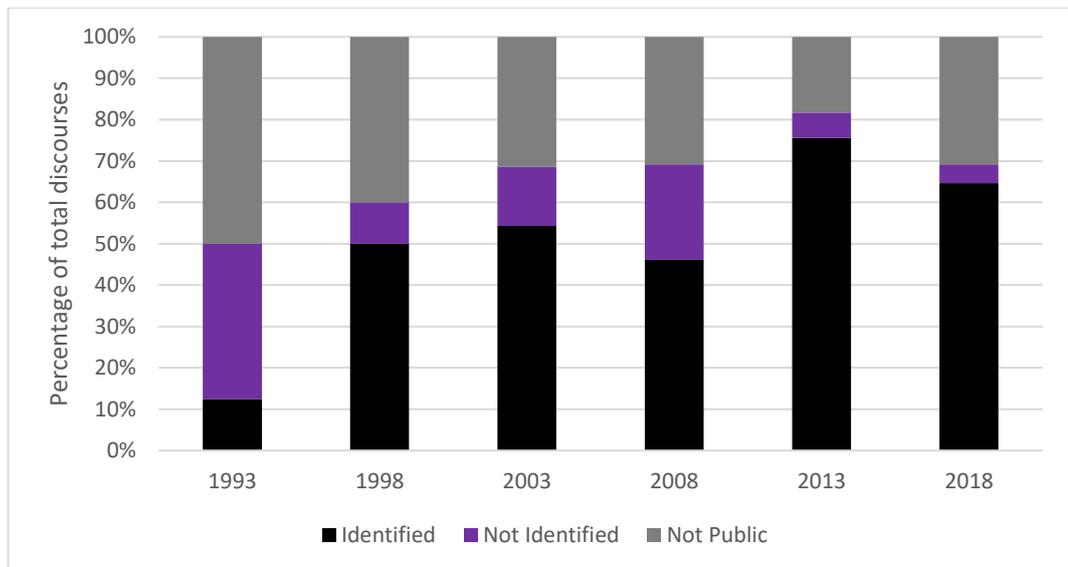


**Figure 19 Proportion of total discourses identified**

Overall, between 50% and 80% of the discourses referenced in each study window were identified and sourced, except for 1993 when just a single

discourse could be sourced. There were three other discourses that should have been possible to source in this year, a Green Paper on road user charging and two British Rail optioneering reports on the CTRL. It is unlikely any of these would have concerned an attempt at lobbying or an attempt to influence Government policy in a pro-rail funding manner and would likely be technocratic by nature, thus the loss of these is not a major concern for the outputs relative to Propositions 3 and 4. In all other study windows, between 10% and 20% of the total discourses referenced could not be identified and sourced despite expectedly being publicly available. 'Not public' discourses comprised c.50% of discourse references in 1993, reducing to c.20% to 30% at the end of the study period.

## 6.5 (Stage 4) Critical Discourse Analysis

The final stage of the research method was to undertake CDA on the House of Commons rail funding debates and referenced episodic discourses. Data analysis occurred in QDAS by coding against pre-defined variables (nodal sets) based on the themes outlined in Chapter 3. These variables were divided into four sub-groups aligning with the sections of Chapter 3:

- Timing: two sets of variables concerning policy timing and the level of commitment toward pro-rail funding policy (Section 3.2) and supplementing MMDA into the salience of rail (Section 6.3).

- Ideas and interests: four sets of variables analysing perceptions of funding rail, the perceived value of rail funding, party-political priorities based on manifesto pledges and geography (Section 3.3).

- Lobbying: two sets of variables concerning intertextuality and how rationales were legitimised (Section 3.4), supplementing MMDA into rail organisation and episodic discourse references (Section 6.3).

- Industry & power transfer: three sets of variables conducting analysis into the historic 'essential requirements' of privatisation, rail system appraisal objectives and the types of spend (Section 3.5).

Coding against the variables could not be done in isolation by the researcher, as this would present significant interpretive risk. Training, joint coding sessions and post-coding evaluation steps were conducted to seek feedback on how text was being interpreted and to align the researcher's interpretations with those of more experienced researchers and other PGRs. Three QDAS training sessions were attended prior to the analysis to ensure the researcher has a robust knowledge of such programmes.

Subsequently, three main practices were conducted to aid in duplicability. First, a session was held on the 29th of April 2020 where several short House of Commons debates were coded against the variables by the researcher and the lead PGR supervisor. This aligned researcher interpretation with interpretations of text by a more experienced practitioner in CDA. Second, a workshop was attended on the 5th of November 2020 between 3 PGR students and 5 PGR supervisors at the University. Examples of CDA coded text were discussed to align coding practices with feedback. Third, for each of the 11 sets of variables outlined in this section, two documents (one for House of Commons debates and one for referenced episodic discourses) were produced and each discussed and shared with the PGR supervision team. These documents contained all coded references by variable coded to, and detailed interpretations of the findings. This allowed the supervision team to spot check coding and ensure findings were supported. A summary of the over 3,000 pages of coded text created in this process makes up the CDA results in Section 7.3. Indicative quotes showing the themes outlined in the results are included. Given wordcount limits, it is not possible to present all coded text, so quotes are indicative but will not be able to fully demonstrate all results presented.

CDA took place between April 2020 and November 2021 with intermittent reviews. In addition to the main checks outlined above, informal testing of coding took place with another PGR researcher at points throughout. The variables are detailed over the remainder of this section.

## 6.5.1 Timing

This section outlines two sets of variables concerning policy timing themes (Section 3.2) supplementing MMDA into the salience of rail. Table 6 outlines variables used to understand perceptions of time, enabling a reflection on the role of timing in policy change (Section 3.2.1).

**Table 6 Variables covering references to the perceptions of the
timeliness of a policy idea**

| Variable | Description |
|---|---|
| Early | Sentiment that a rail investment doesn't need to be made yet. |
| Right Time | Sentiment that a rail investment should now be made. |
| Overdue | Sentiment that a rail investment should have been delivered already and is urgently required. |
| Obsolete | Sentiment that a rail investment is no longer required. |

Table 7 outlines variables used to understand the level of commitment made at various stages in the policy development cycle (Fairclough, 2003). This helps identify whether commitment to rail funding policies was being made with changing intent throughout the study period (Section 3.2.3).

**Table 7 Variables covering the level of commitment displayed on the
provision of Government funding to the rail industry**

| Variable | Truth/Commitment | Description |
|---|---|---|
| High | Certainly/Required | Sentiment rail funding is needed due to either a desire for it to occur or a requirement. |
| Medium | Probably/Supposed | Sentiment rail funding will likely increase but there is no sentiment that it must happen. |
| Low | Possibly/Allowed | Sentiment rail funding could increase, but no commitment that it either will happen or is likely to. |

## 6.5.2 Ideas and Interests

This section sets out four sets of variables analysing a potential pro-rail funding hegemony (Section 3.3). Table 8 outlines variables used to understand sentiment towards Government rail funding overall.

**Table 8 Variables covering hegemony in discourses**

| Variable | Description |
|---|---|
| Desirable | A sentiment that rail funding, or additional rail funding, is a policy Government should be pursuing. |
| Undesirable | A sentiment that rail funding, or additional rail funding, is not a policy the Government should be pursuing. |

Table 9 outlines variables used to understand perceptions of value for money sentiment. This helps to differentiate how some discourses may perceive rail policies under certain frames (Section 3.3.1).

**Table 9 Variables covering perceived value for money for rail funding**

| Variable | Description |
|----------|-------------|
| Waste | Sentiment that money is wasted on rail spend. |
| Low | Sentiment that rail spend is poor value for money. |
| Medium | Sentiment that rail spend is adequate. |
| High | Sentiment that rail spend is valuable. |

The third set of variables was divided into six subsets, shown in Table 10. These tested the rationales used insofar that they align the case for funding the rail system with Government priorities at the time (Section 3.3.2). This enabled CDA to reflect on how party positions on the concept of increasing Government funding for rail have changed with time and to reflect on how each party justifies its position. Government priorities for each of the study windows were obtained from the Government's party manifesto used at the last election before the study window. In 2013, a coalition list of priorities was used. Full tables are in Appendix A, A.4.

**Table 10 Sets of variables covering the political (manifesto) priorities of the Government at the previous election**

| Year | Appendix A Table | Source |
|------|------------------|--------|
| 1993 | Table 29 | (Conservative Party, 1992) |
| 1998 | Table 30 | (Labour Party, 1997) |
| 2003 | Table 31 | (Labour Party, 2001) |
| 2008 | Table 32 | (Labour Party, 2005) |
| 2013 | Table 33 | (HM Government, 2010) |
| 2018 | Table 34 | (Conservative Party, 2017) |

The fourth set of variables reflect a view that the Westminster political system has strong geographic link (Section 3.3.3). The variables outlined within Table 11 track references to the granularity of geographies. This demonstrates the importance of national vs local policy frames and specific geographies referenced could later be reflected on.

**Table 11 Variables covering references to geography**

| Variable | Description |
|----------|-------------|
| UK | Arguments made regarding UK-wide priorities. |
| National | Arguments made regarding the four nations of the UK. |
| Regional | Arguments made regarding regional priorities. |
| Local | Arguments made regarding local priorities. |

### 6.5.3 Lobbying

Two sets of variables to analyse lobbying themes (Section 3.4) and expanding on MMDA analysis into referenced organisations and episodic discourses. The first identified the likelihood of public lobbying impacting policy rationales (Section 3.4.5), with variables analysing intertextuality. These are shown in Table 12, which includes three of the four Fairclough (2003) attribution levels. 'Assumptions' are excluded as only referenced discourses were required for this exercise.

**Table 12 Variables covering references to episodic discourses**

| Dialogical | Variable | Description |
|---|---|---|
| High | Attributed Quote | A discourse quoted precisely, with clear reference to the source enabling the quote to be easily validated. |
| Med / High | Modalized Assertion | Clear reference to a discourse source and portrayal of exact meaning, but a lack of direct quotation. |
| Med / Low | Non-Modalized Assertion | Reference to a discourse source but without clear portrayal of meaning. |

The second variables reflect legitimisations in policy rationales (Section 3.4.5). Legitimisations can demonstrate a reliance on external authorities and an alignment of Government rationales with those produced by the pro-rail advocacy over time. The types of legitimisation are shown in Table 13.

**Table 13 Variables covering legitimisations for decisions impacting the provision of Government funding to the rail industry**

| Variable | Description |
|---|---|
| Authorization | Legitimisation through reference to authority; 'something will happen because someone / something has decided it should'. |
| Rationalization | Legitimisation through the perceived utility of this 'something' occurring, usually the benefits or prevention of disbenefits associated with its implementation. |
| Moral Evaluation | Legitimisation on the basis of values; 'something should happen because it will help achieve a given moral objective for society'. |
| Mythopoesis | Legitimisation through narrative; 'something should happen because another political party did not fix this issue'. |

### 6.5.4 Industry & Power Transfer

Three sets of variables covered themes from Section 3.5. First, Table 14 identifies variables relating to sentiment towards different types of rail industry spending (Section 3.5.1).

**Table 14 Variables covering references to types of railway spend**

| Variable | Description |
|---|---|
| Contracted Services | Money spent on contracted services from suppliers, such as Carillion, but excluding TOCs. |
| Fares | Fares policy, particularly concerning the relationship between Government subsidy or policy to reduce or increase fares. |
| Government Administration | Government's administrative costs, such as the cost of running a franchising competition. |
| Infrastructure Enhancements | Infrastructure enhancement schemes, whereby money spent will achieve an improvement to output. |
| Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal | Maintenance and renewal schemes, whereby money spent will maintain the existing rail network from deterioration. |
| Leakage | Money leaving the rail industry, such as through shareholder dividends. |
| New Lines | The construction of new lines. |
| Operational Expenditure | Operational expenditure, including the cost of operating the rail network or the net cost (operational cost minus revenue) of rail operations. This includes frontline / operational staff costs. |
| Rolling Stock | The procurement of new rolling stock. |
| Safety | Funding allocations towards improving the safety of the railway system. |
| Training | Training programmes for railway staff. |
| Dismissal of Alternatives | Contributions dismissing alternative policy proposals relative to the current status quo. |

Second, the DoT set out six 'essential requirements' Government wanted privatisation to achieve (DoT, 1992) (Section 3.5.2). These are outlined in Table 15 and data was coded against these variables to identify sentiments towards these objectives.

**Table 15 Variables covering references to the essential requirements for the privatisation of British Rail (DoT, 1992)**

| Variable | Description |
|---|---|
| Safety | Maintaining existing safety standards. |
| Quality of Service | Improvements to passenger and freight services. |
| Essential Passenger Services | Continued provision of subsidised regional and commuter services. |
| Network Benefits | Maintaining through ticketing and a national timetable. |
| Opportunities for Employees | Ensure the transfer of established workforce into the private sector and provide opportunities for them to take a stake in their industry. |
| Environmental Benefits | Maintaining the existing high environmental standards. |

Whilst these objectives were defined at one point in time, changes to objectives for the railway over time were also captured. The variables in Table 16 were defined using official guidance (Section 3.5.2). The 1993 Cost Benefit Analysis (COBA) (DfT, 2002) criteria were used as implemented for rail in the Central London Rail Study (DoT, 1989). This is considered reliable as this study was produced in partnership between the Government and British Rail, London Underground and London Regional Transport. The 1998-2008 factors were derived from the Government's New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) and were obtained from the New Deal for Transport White Paper (DETR, 1997). The 2013-2018 factors were obtained from the TAG Appraisal Summary Table component (DfT, 2013). Each study window was coded depending on the appraisal criteria in place at the time.

**Table 16 Variables covering Government objectives for the railways as measured through factors considered during scheme appraisal**

| Year | Variable | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1993 *COBA* | Benefits | Journey time savings, crowding relief, benefit for road users, revenue. |
| | Costs | Costs (with the objective being to minimise costs) include: capital cost, rolling stock cost, operating cost. |
| 1998, 2003 & 2008 *NATA* | Economy | Improved economic performance arising from investment into transport schemes. NATA outlines that this is mostly measured due to journey time benefit. |
| | Environment | Air quality, noise, emissions, land, wildlife, the countryside, the built environment and cultural heritage as well as the effects on people and their health. |
| | Safety | Reduced rates of accidents and heightened security. |
| | Accessibility | Reducing severance and improving access to transport. |
| | Integration | Integration with other Government priorities, real estate development and transport interchanges. |
| 2013 & 2018 *TAG* | Economy | Business user and transport provider journey times, reliability on business users, regeneration, wider economic impacts. |
| | Environmental | Noise, air quality, emissions, landscape, townscape, historic environment, biodiversity, water environment. |
| | Social | Commuting and other user journey times, reliability on commuters and other users, physical activity, journey quality, accidents, security, access to services, affordability, severance, option, and non-use values. |
| | Public Accounts | Reduce impact on transport budget, indirect tax benefit. |

### 6.5.5 Alternatives Considered

Other sets of variables were considered but not taken forward due to their lack of relevance to the research question. As CDA is applicable to many fields of qualitative research it would not be expected that any and all variables in the literature could be used for each research project and so only the most relevant, based on links with Chapter 3, have been utilised. Remling (2017) proposed a framework based on the theory of logics developed by Glynos & Howarth (2007), which was considered suitable and worthwhile for this analysis but not taken forward on the basis that all key themes were covered elsewhere in the variables defined. However, as coding progressed an addition was made to fully account for one variable that did not appear elsewhere, this being the 'dismissal of alternatives' added to Table 14. This acted as a key sense check that sufficient relevant themes had been covered. Fairclough (2003) outlines other potential variables that were not taken forward, including: genre chains, types of communication method, speech clauses, representation of social actors and modality of statements. These were not taken forward on the basis that a critical link to the research question and propositions could not be identified based on the information presented in Chapter 3, as was the case with the variables used. Those variables are suitable for other social research.

## 6.6 Summary & Research Ethics

This section comprises two parts. First, a summary of Sections 6.2-6.5. Second, a consideration of research ethics in light of the research project.

### 6.6.1 Summary

This chapter describes the approach used towards studying the research question and evaluating the propositions posed. The method consists of a four-stage data collection and analysis exercise, utilising both MMDA and CDA techniques to provide robust results. The method first collated House of Commons debate transcripts and utilised a data collation exercise to ensure that all debates relevant to the topic of rail were identified in the six study windows. MMDA identified rail's salience in the data, the changing nature references to the rail industry and the role of referenced episodic discourses in the House of Commons debates. Descriptive analysis was conducted in Excel on these outputs to reflect on the propositions. Data was categorised in accordance with whether it met the criteria of being related to 'Government rail funding'. Rail funding debates and referenced episodic

discourses were collated through a second data collection exercise. CDA took place in QDAS with data coded to eleven sets of variables described in Section 6.5. The results of the MMDA and CDA are set out in Chapter 7.

## 6.6.2 Research Ethics

Adhering to high ethical standards is of fundamental importance to research reputation and academic freedom, whilst also enhancing the quality of the research and helping prevent risk to participants. *'The University of Leeds Research Ethics Policy'* outlines fundamental ethical considerations for research which are considered here (University of Leeds, 2019).

First is research design. Avoiding duplication of existing research was addressed through the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3 to understand work done to date and outline a gap. The methodology (Chapters 4 and 5) rationalises that the method developed was appropriate.

Second, the conduct of research. Research must be conducted honestly and openly, with integrity. To support in this, a wide dataset was created (Sections 6.3 and 6.5) and can be provided on request to support the results presented in Chapter 7. Coding used for this research has been made available online and data categorisations are provided for transparency (Sections 6.2 and 6.4). This research was funded by the researcher minimising conflict of interest risk.

Third, risks and benefits. The risks of this research were minimal owing to an absence of fieldwork. There were no financial implications beyond tuition payments and workload could be managed throughout the programme.

Fourth, participants. The methodology utilised secondary, publicly available datasets and so no ethical risks associated with primary data collection featured as all data was written record. No other participants were involved in this research, other than during the workshops (Section 6.5). This research was conducted independently by the PGR with support from the supervision team.

# Chapter 7
# Results

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results derived from this research. These results are broken down as per the method stages outlined in Chapter 6. Whilst the variables outlined in Chapter 6 aligned with corresponding aspects of the Literature Review in Chapter 3, results are presented by research method to support an open interpretation. Potential cross-linkages between themes in Chapter 3 may need to be identified. The results are presented in a greater level of detail where relevant and interesting outputs were identified regarding the research question and propositions under review. Other results, which were of less interest, are presented in coarser general level of detail with a reflection as to why these findings have been deemed less relevant. Section 7.2 presents results from the MMDA (Section 6.3) and Section 7.3 presents results from the CDA (Section 6.5).

## 7.2 Mixed Methods Discourse Analysis

This section presents results obtained from the MMDA outlined in Section 6.3. Section 7.2.1 outlines findings that confirm rail has generally being increasing in issue-salience over the study period, in line with findings by Chaney (2014), although 1993 represented an outlier owing to four legal debates concerning privatisation. Rail funding was also noted to have consistently increased in salience during the study period. Section 7.2.2 outlines the changing nature of rail advocacy, with more references to private sector actors and a greater diversity of actor types referenced. Section 7.2.3 outlines parliamentarians' increasing tendency to reference episodic discourses in their substantiation of policy rationales and a growing role of the private sector and local government in producing discourses.

### 7.2.1 Salience

All House of Commons debates on rail were analysed in order to classify them as either relating to 'Government rail funding policy' or 'other rail debates' (Section 6.3.1). Figure 20 shows the total word count of debates on rail funding policy and other rail issues summed to show the overall total word count of debates on rail. The wordcount of each debate excluded

clearly irrelevant sections as occurred in many 'oral answers to questions' debates where questions on other policy issues were disregarded. Figure 21 shows this data normalised to the total wordcount of all House of Commons debates within each study window.
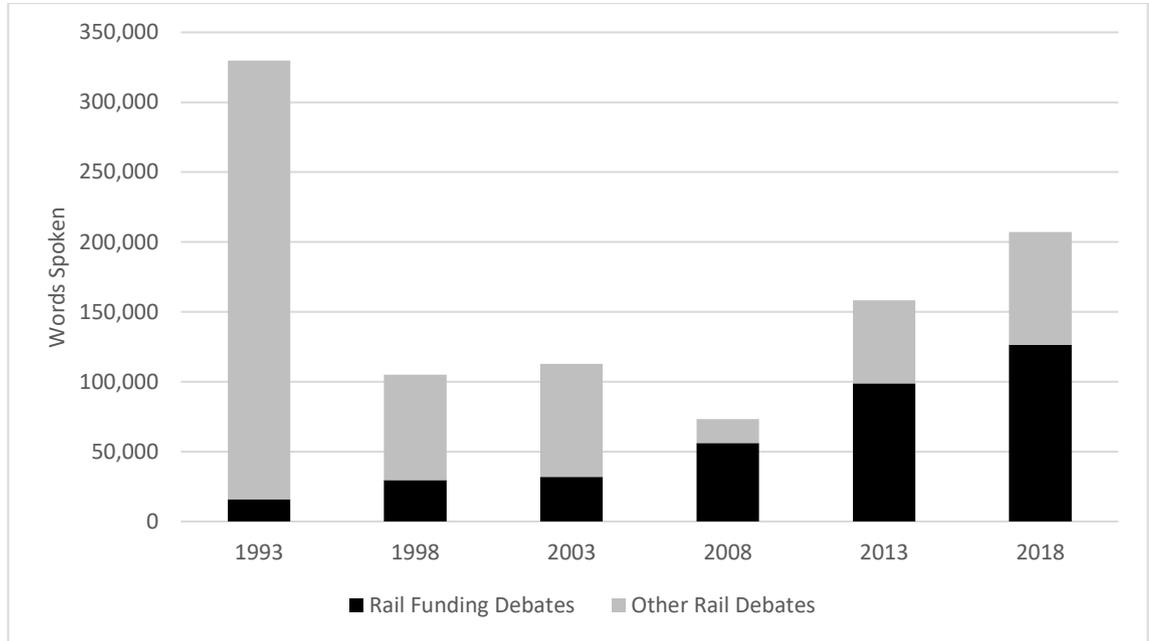


**Figure 20 The total wordcount of House of Commons debates in each study window focused on rail funding or other rail matters**
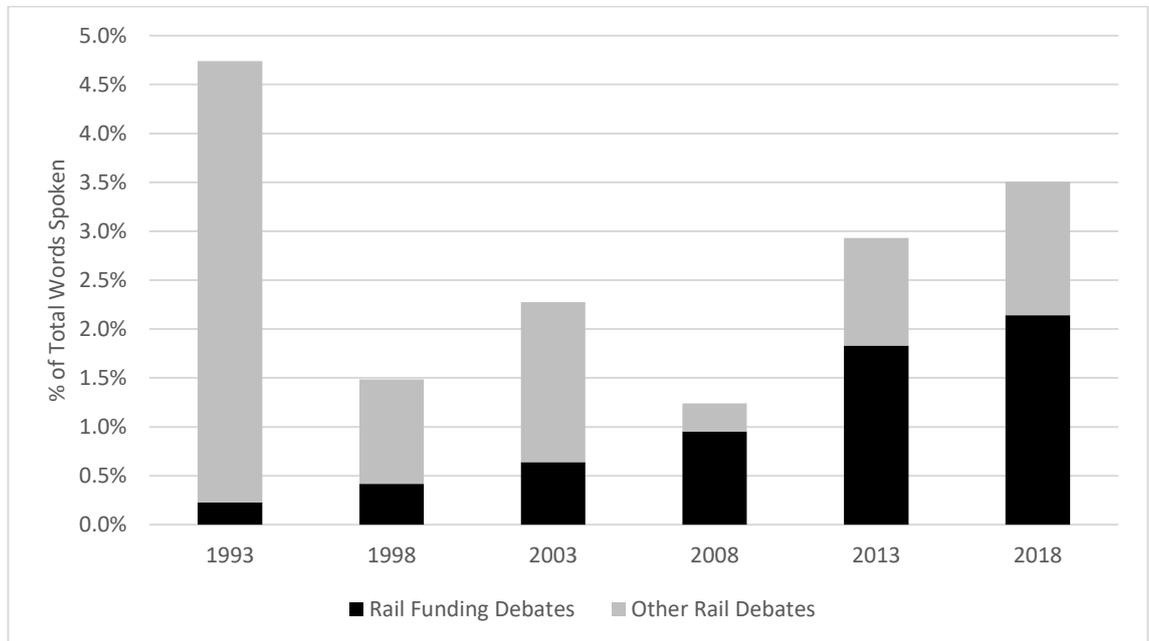


**Figure 21 The proportion of all House of Commons debates in each study window focused on rail funding or other rail matters**

The quantity of debate on rail increased from 2008, though this postdates the increases in Government funding that occurred from 2001 onwards (DfT, 2018a). 1993 is an outlier with bills related to privatisation accounting for

much debate, though other rail discussions were also salient within this study window. Many of these discussions were around the poor performance of British Rail with limited discussion on additional funding as a solution. 2008 does not fully align with the trend of growth possibly with parliamentary time being occupied by the recession. Salience increased across the study period for debates specifically concerned with the issue of 'rail funding' in both absolute terms (800% in Figure 20) and proportionally to total debates (1,000% in Figure 21), whilst other rail related topics have varied in salience. What is curious is linking this in with the salience of rail in 1993, even adjusting for the privatisation bills. The data shows rail has often been highly salient, however rail funding was not discussed as much. The privatisation of rail may be responsible for the lower overall salience seen in 1998 as reduced Government involvement was intended (Harris, 2016), though an overall rising trend is seen subsequently. The growth of rail funding salience in 2008 supports a view that rail squeezed other policies from the agenda.

## 7.2.2 Rail Industry Organisations

Within rail debates there were 12,785 references to 510 unique organisations within the rail industry. Within rail funding debates, 4,501 references occurred, which can be seen in Table 17 that depicts the distribution and frequency of these references. The total references increased with time in absolute terms, although remained broadly consistent proportionate to the length of rail funding debates, though 1993 was an outlier. The same trends were observed in references in all rail debates.

**Table 17 Reference to organisation types in House of Commons debates on rail funding**

| Organisation References | 1993 | 1998 | 2003 | 2008 | 2013 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Governments | 118 | 174 | 225 | 307 | 608 | 716 |
| Law | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Local Transport Authority | 3 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 19 | 24 |
| Media | 0 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 11 | 15 |
| Operator | 190 | 210 | 65 | 407 | 356 | 656 |
| Other | 11 | 5 | 9 | 11 | 10 | 15 |
| Promoter | 1 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 19 | 48 |
| Regulator | 1 | 4 | 2 | 80 | 12 | 8 |
| Supplier | 24 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 51 |
| Trade Unions | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 8 |
| Total | 353 | 409 | 320 | 746 | 1057 | 1541 |

Not all organisation types would be expected to seek to influence Government funding policy (Sections 3.4 and 3.5). The data shows that in the earlier years of the study window, many references were to Government organisations and the nationalised operator. This would be expected as rail was initially a nationalised industry, with only some private contractors and manufacturers. 'Promoter' and 'Media' organisation types increased their references substantially over the study period, though in totality these remained trivial compared with 'Operators' and 'Government'. The 'Regulator' group saw a substantive increase in 2008 due to debate concerning the role of the regulator in rail funding allocation, though, the presence of such a debate could be associated with regulatory capture (Section 3.5). 'Local Transport Operator' references increased considerably in 2013 and 2018, with several references to new bodies, such as Transport for the North, as devolution policies took effect (Section 3.3). 'Operator' and 'Government' organisations accounted for the majority of references in each year, but it is worth noting that most operators became private from 1998 and the nature of these references may have changed in accordance.

Table 18 shows the top 10 most frequently referenced organisations within rail funding debates in each study window. The top 10 in each year depict a reduction in concentration when considered as a percentage of rail references, from 87% of all references in 1993 and 1998 to 65% in 2018, thus implying a broader range of actors in later years. Overall, except for manufacturer ABB in 1993, all existent and majority private sector organisations within the table are operators of either passenger services or infrastructure. This demonstrates the close relationship between Government and specific private segments of the rail system post privatisation, perhaps resulting from Government entering into contractual arrangements with these operators. However, the presence of ABB in 1993 implies that privatised parts of the industry were able to attain political salience before privatisation. While individual events, such as poor operator performance or contractual disputes, could explain some of these debates it remains the case that Government consistently took a leading role in the rail industry and actively engaged with such issues. However, such issues are not always necessarily linked with funding. After privatisation, Government lost its ability to conduct rail industry affairs through a single delivery organisation and its relationship with a complex array of private operators became an unavoidable reality. None the less, the table quite clearly shows that whilst through privatisation Government attempted to reduce its role in the industry (DoT, 1992), it has remained a dominant actor.

**Table 18 Top 10 most referenced organisations in funding debates**

| 1993 | 1998 | 2003 | 2008 | 2013 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| British Rail 150 | UK Govt (Present) 103 | UK Govt (Present) 114 | **Network Rail 271** | UK Govt (Present) 271 | UK Govt (Present) 343 |
| UK Govt (Present) 62 | **LCR 98** | SRA 61 | UK Govt (Present) 236 | Directly Operated Rail 156 | DfT 145 |
| European Community 27 | **Eurostar 43** | **Network Rail 19** | ORR / Rail Regulator 79 | DfT 84 | Network Rail 135 |
| Network SouthEast 17 | UK Govt (1979-1997) 40 | DfT 16 | Railtrack 34 | EU 66 | **Virgin Trains 99** |
| **ABB 14** | **Railtrack 37** | Railtrack 10 | DfT 33 | **Network Rail 49** | **Govia 65** |
| DfT 10 | British Rail 11 | Other Govt Departments 10 | **Eurostar 23** | HS2 Ltd 35 | **Stagecoach Group 49** |
| Railtrack 7 | HM Treasury 9 | **Virgin Trains 7** | **First Group 22** | UK Govt (1997-2010) 33 | British Rail 46 |
| Parliament Committee 7 | **Eurotunnel 6** | **First Group 7** | **LCR 13** | Parliament Committee 32 | **Arriva 44** |
| InterCity 7 | **National Express 5** | UK Govt (1979-1997) 6 | **Virgin Trains 12** | HM Treasury 29 | Directly Operated Rail 43 |
| RMT Trade Union 4 | DETR 4 | Environment Agency 6 | **Stagecoach Group 9** | **National Express 26** | HS2 Ltd 39 |

| Key: | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| British Rail | UK Govt (Present) | | Network Rail | Most referenced organisations in any given window. | |
| **Bold** | | | | Existent majority private organisation | |

What is clear from these outputs is that Government has struggled to step away from the issue of rail, regardless of the post-privatisation structure. The debate over rail, and growth in salience, has continued contrary to the initial policy intent of privatisation. There is an increase in the range of actors featuring in debates on funding. This may be indicative of a regime arguing for self-reinforcing change with trade narratives (Section 3.4).

## 7.2.3 Referenced Episodic Discourses

Referenced episodic discourses were identified in all rail debates. Below are two examples of such references.

*"David Gillan, the director of the Railway Industry Association, has said that his*

*members are "staring annihilation in the face."" – Conservative, Mr Adley, 1993*

*"So how is it that 200 years later a report from the Institute for Public Policy*

*Research finds that it takes longer to get from Liverpool to Hull than it does to get*

*from London to Paris?" – Labour, Ms Nandy, 2018*

Within all rail debates there were 933 references to episodic discourses originating from outside of the House of Commons, with 320 occurring in debates focused specifically on rail funding, shown in Table 19. The number of rail funding references grew by 1,663% over the study period, twice as much as the growth in debate wordcounts. This indicates an increasing tendency by parliamentarians to substantiate contributions with references to knowledge developed elsewhere whilst legitimising policy rationales.

**Table 19 Number of episodic discourse references in rail debates**

| Discourses Referenced | 1993 | 1998 | 2003 | 2008 | 2013 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All rail debates | 283 | 99 | 113 | 66 | 172 | 200 |
| Rail funding debates | 8 | 10 | 35 | 52 | 82 | 133 |

Figure 22 shows the total number of episodic discourses referenced in all rail debates, broken down by the role of the authoring organisation. Figure 23 shows the same for rail funding debates. The data within these figures has been divided by the wordcount of rail debates multiplied by the wordcount of all House of Commons debates in each window. This is intended to account for the changing context and ensure that the findings do not reflect that increasing references to episodic discourses could be a product of more time spent discussing rail funding, which is an observation of this research. Whilst Figure 22 shows a consistent overall trend, Figure 23 shows that discourse references in rail funding debates increased substantially from 2003 proportional to debate lengths. This alignment with general rail funding trends is interesting, as it shows that when the topic of rail funding was prevalent more references to external discourses were made. But this was not true of non-rail funding debates.
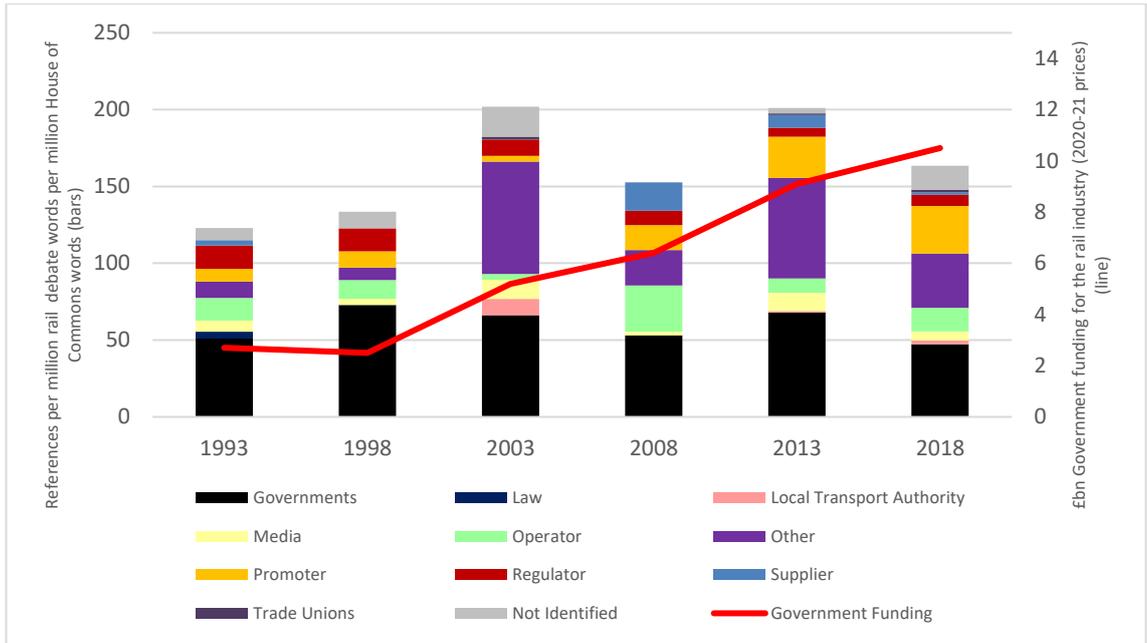
**Figure 22 Number of references to episodic discourses made by parliamentarians in rail debates by study window, divided by the total length of both rail funding debates and House of Commons debates, by author of referenced discourse source**
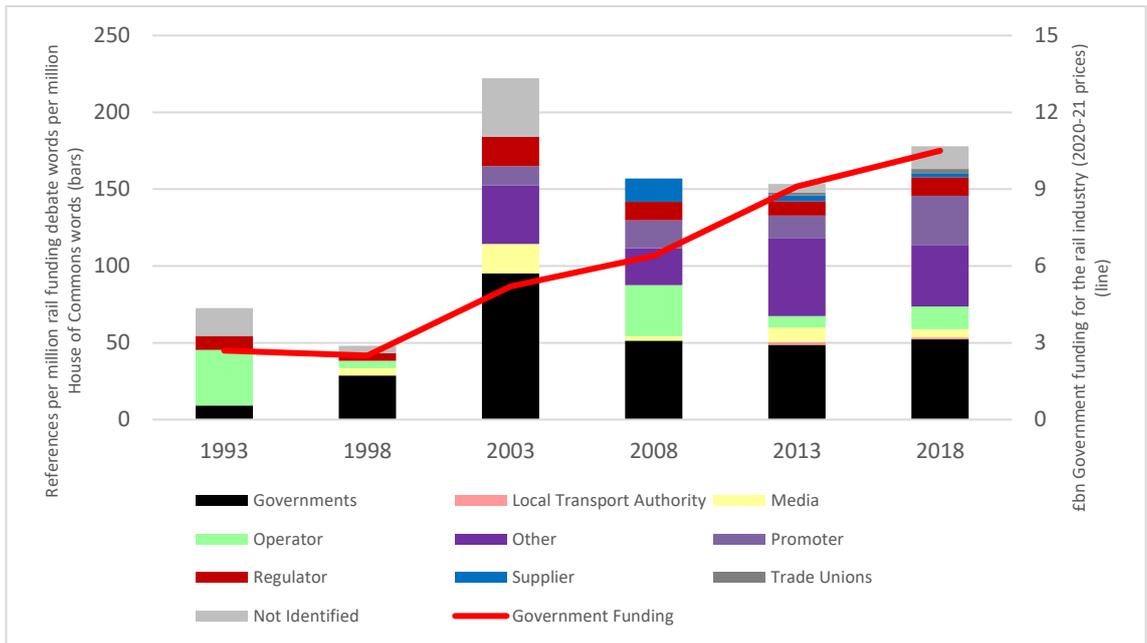


**Figure 23 Number of references to episodic discourses made by parliamentarians in rail funding debates by study window, divided by the total length of both rail funding debates and House of Commons debates, by author of referenced discourse source**

It can be seen in Figure 23 that in 1993 episodic discourses were predominantly authored by 'Government' organisations or 'Operators' (primarily Government owned British Rail). There is a reduction in the number of 'Operators' authoring discourses in 1998 and an increase in

'Government', leaving state authored episodic discourses broadly consistent and limited authorship from the private sources in these years. However, it would not be expected that the impact of privatisation would be fully observable in this year given there would not have been sufficient time for new industry actors to mature their practices and potentially form coalitions. In 2003 the role of Government reduced to roughly half of total references, 'Media' plays its greatest proportional role in this year coupled with the appearance of 'Promoters' and 'Other' organisation types. From 2008 onwards 'Operators', now private, comprised a high number of references, as did 'Other' and 'Promoter' organisation types. This supports suggestions of a growth in lobbying due to the range of actors introduced into the policy debate forum following industry changes. The 'Regulator' organisation type plays a relatively consistent role throughout all years. Interestingly, there is little by way of reference to discourses produced by devolved transport bodies, such as Transport for London or PTEs, throughout the study period indicating a limited capability to influence debates concerning rail funding through direct discursive references. However, from 2008 there was increases in the number of referenced discourses authored by local partnerships and local / regional government organisations throughout indicating a role in devolved decision making in promoting rail.

The introduction of the 'Other' author type in 2003 poses some questions, and when broken down in 2003 and 2008 this author type was predominantly (100% and 87% respectively) attributed to individuals authoring 'independent' reviews on behalf of Government, generally political or public servant figures. In 2013 and 2018 the majority (c.66%) of these independent reviews were authored by long standing figures from the private sector, indicating that individuals with a high potential for vested interests or connections within the private sector began authoring episodic discourses on behalf of Government. Examples include the McNulty (2011), Brown (2013) and Laidlaw (2012) reviews, and in 2008 The Eddington Transport Study (Eddington, 2006). These authors have histories within manufacturers, TOCs and ROSCOs within the rail industry and is a notable growth in potential influence for the private sector. This supports a view that trade narratives may be occurring within the rail system (Bowman, et al., 2013; Bowman, 2015) and yielding significant influence not just on Government but across the House of Commons. It also supports notions that individuals embedded from industry may significantly impact Government policy development (Hughes, 1998).

The results in Figure 23 demonstrate that Government organisations were broadly consistent in their production of referenced episodic discourses in the House of Commons, when including the nationalised British Rail. However, since the delivery and maturity of privatisation, there has been a growth in references to episodic discourses produced by the private sector which is a new phenomenon and noted in all study windows since 2003. This demonstrates the changing nature of influences on parliamentarian rationales within the UK's key legislative and policy debate chamber. It is worth noting that whilst parliamentarians may be demonstrating these links through their contributions, this does not definitively prove an influence on Government policy but rather demonstrates the changing nature of pressure that was being applied to Government which could impact Government policy development (Russell & Gover, 2017).

## 7.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

This section describes the outcomes from CDA into House of Commons rail funding debates and discourses referenced within those. The findings from each set of variables are described and will be reflected on in light of the literature review, research question and propositions. Quotes are used to demonstrate examples of the results (Section 6.5). As demonstrated, a number of themes were considered useful to the research question, whilst others were not. Changes to hegemony and an emerging perception that rail funding was 'overdue' began in 2003, whilst a clear change in geographic sentiments appeared to follow the implementation of devolution. Less useful was the way Government referenced its own objectives, manifesto commitments and historic rationales for privatisation due to a lack of consistent referencing. Perceptions of the value for money of rail funding were consistent over time.

### 7.3.1 Policy Timing

There were some highly useful findings from testing sentiments towards the timeliness of rail funding. In 1993, the majority of sentiment expressions suggested it was the 'right time' to fund rail, albeit these were primarily from back benchers and Opposition. All of the sentiments that expressed that it was too 'early' to increase funding for rail originated from Government. This indicates a strong division of belief between Government and other parliamentarians in terms of whether additional rail funding could be delayed.

*"I recognise that the east coast investment took place ahead of the west coast main*

*line and I recognise the need to upgrade the infrastructure and rolling stock.*

*However, I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman that there is a lack of political will.*

*Investment is currently at record levels, but we must establish priorities." Secretary*

*of State, Mr. MacGregor, 1993.*

In 1998 there was a significant change from Government, through a drastic reduction in the use of delay tactics in response to spending proponents. It is not too surprising that there was so much support for funding the rail system at this point in time, given that the majority of debates concerned the CTRL refinancing. This led to much of the 'right time' to invest sentiment. There was also a significant feeling that the CTRL was 'overdue' because France had already completed its equivalent, the LGV Nord. There was limited differentiation between party lines and the CTRL had cross-party support. This is surprising given the Conservatives had favoured a privately funded project, but perhaps could not row back from their support for the scheme's benefits previously stated.

*"Many people have been embarrassed to travel through France at high speed, only*

*to trundle across Kent at a gentlemanly speed." Conservative, Mr. Ottaway, 1998.*

In 2003, the sentiments progressed further with a split in headline salience between 'right time' to fund rail and that funding was 'overdue'. Government, Labour and Liberal Democrat backbench parliamentarians were responsible for a significant degree of the sentiment that rail funding was 'overdue' due to a lack of historic investment by the former Conservative Government. It demonstrates that Government policy was to provide substantial funding for the rail system above historic averages, due to the view that historic averages were too low and some degree of 'making up for it' was needed. However, this narrative would then lead one to expect that funding rates would reduce once the backlog of work was completed.

*"I would be the first to acknowledge that the two key reasons why we have the*

*current problem are underinvestment for many decades, which is recognised by the*

*Government's investment, and the botched privatisation of our railways under the*

*previous Conservative Administration." Labour, Mr. Foster, 2003.*

A few Conservative parliamentarians shared the view that rail funding was needed, however did not justify this on the basis of historic under funding but rather the benefit of investment into schemes. There appeared to be cross-party support that the time was right to fund the rail system, however justifications varied. It shows the alignment of a variety of policy narratives around this time leading to policy hegemony toward funding the rail system.

In 2008, most references suggested it was the 'right time' for funding the rail system but most originated from Government. The Opposition were not particularly vocal in their support for it being the 'right time' to fund the rail system, however they did not criticise the policy much either. Results show a change in narrative from previous study windows. There was no longer a clear belief that funding had to be allocated to make up for underfunding in previous years, perhaps unsurprisingly as subsidies had been significantly above previous historic averages for several years since the increase from 2001. 2008 was the first window where many parliamentarians, particularly Ministers, believed it was the 'right time' to fund the rail system in terms of an investment in capacity enhancement schemes, this being due to the increasing ridership observed and thus to derive user benefit. Sentiments viewed it as too 'early' to build high speed rail.

*"… the ultimate answer is investment in capacity. We are committed to an extra £10 billion of investment up to 2014, which will deliver 1,300 extra carriages and allow people to get on the train and travel in comfort." Secretary of State, Ms Kelly, 2008.*

However, it is interesting to note that this justification may not have been consistent across transport modes; a major road capacity enhancement programme could also have been justified on these grounds as road traffic was suggested to have increased in these debates as well. As shown in Figure 6 rail funding increased dramatically over this time whilst national road funding did not, indicating that there may have been a bias toward rail.

In 2013, the majority of sentiments stated it was the 'right time' for funding the rail system, whilst a small number suggested funding was 'overdue' particularly in relation to high-speed rail. The view on high-speed rail was justified on the basis that improvements to the rail network, and the benefit to the UK economy, were needed urgently and that construction should be completed quicker to deliver benefits. This was perhaps unsurprising given the difficult economic conditions of the time, but it does demonstrate that

high-speed rail was seen as a growth agenda project, contrary to the negative CTRL framing in 1993 after the 1992 recession.

*"Investing in transport infrastructure is not a choice. To create jobs and to rebalance our economy we need better roads, better airports and better trains—and High Speed 2 is a central part of that …" Secretary of State, Mr. McLoughlin, 2013.*

Ministers rarely used delay tactics when responding to calls for un-funded schemes, with Ministers highlighting that investment was being made in other schemes. Government expressed a view that rail investment (as opposed to other funding types) was 'overdue' as much funding was wasted on inefficient spending during the previous Labour Government years.

In 2018, the sentiments expressed yielded a similar profile to 2013. There was a view that HS2 was 'overdue' due to not enough historic funding in the existing transport network. It was interesting to see criticism of the previous Labour Government by the Conservative Government for having not funded rail sufficiently as headline funding rates were broadly similar over the course of these Governments, and Labour had used a similar argument in relation to the previous Conservative Government. This suggests an overriding counter-factual narrative.

*"I will take no lessons from the party that did nothing for transport in the south-west over a long period. This Government are doing things that Labour never did— dualling the A303, providing brand-new trains, and resignalling in Cornwall to increase the number of rail services. The hon. Gentleman should be embarrassed about his party's record." Secretary of State, Mr. Grayling, 2018.*

Referenced episodic discourses broadly aligned with backbench sentiment over the whole study period. As a headline, sentiments towards the timing of policies shifted from a view that it was the 'right time' for rail funding proposals early on in the study period, to proposals being 'overdue' later. This was particularly true for discourses from non-central Government organisations and consultancies.

*"The UK's record of investment into infrastructure is mixed; in the South West we strongly believe a new approach is needed. Other countries are using different ways to invest and deliver their infrastructure, successfully: on time and on budget.*

*We want to work with Government, Network Rail, train operating companies and*

*private sector partners to explore new avenues and bring benefits to the South*

*West as soon as possible." (Peninsula Rail Task Force, 2016, p. 3), 2018.*

Regulators and independent reviews commissioned by Government would also argue that it was the 'right time' for their policies or recommendations to come forward. However, by this stage it may be theorised the Government was already stating a need to deliver such recommendations, as exemplified in the 2013 and 2018 House of Commons debates. These reports may have been to attempt to keep pressure on Government to follow through with earlier commitments. We observe Government driving discourses while simultaneously being held to their commitments by advocacies.

In summary, there appears to have been consistent cross-party sentiment in the House of Commons and rail advocacy groups that it was the 'right time' to fund the rail system for the full study period. In 1993 this view was not shared by the Government who sought to delay rail funding by stating that it was too 'early' to bring forward spend. Why the Government did not support rail funding as 'right time' in 1993 remains the key question. By 1998, the Government had changed and then consistently held a narrative that it was the 'right time' or that funding was 'overdue' through to 2018. The specifics varied, with clear partisan lines throughout. There were also a few examples of schemes being declared as too 'early' in one window by the Government and then 'overdue' in a later window by a new Government, indicating that schemes may be partisan by nature. There is also evidence of fluctuation in priorities, with the types of scheme that are seemed as the 'right time' to fund in each window varying based on their objectives. In particular, there was a view in the early 2000's that funding to maintain the network was overdue which was a new sentiment compared to the 1990's. This took up the majority of the rail budget, as shown in Figure 8 in Section 2.7, throughout this time period. In 2013 and 2018, the same 'overdue' sentiment was used to rationalise enhancements owing to a perception that not enough had been done during the renewals focus in the early 2000's.This shows that individual rail initiatives need alignment with wider policy narratives at the time, but that the perception of rail by parliamentarians appears adaptable to prevailing narratives from 1998.

## 7.3.2 Level of Commitment

There were some highly useful findings with regard to the levels of commitment towards rail funding expressed throughout. In 1993, there was a roughly equal usage of commitment sentiments ('high', 'medium' and 'low') in debates. A trend of 'high' commitment from Government was expressed towards schemes established in policy, particularly capital funding schemes, whilst being questioned by the Opposition.

*"…My hon. Friend has long been concerned in particular about resignalling on the*

*Great Eastern line, as others of my hon. Friends have been in relation to*

*resignalling on the London-Tilbury-Southend line. I confirm that, following a review*

*of the interdepartmental financing round settlement for British Rail, resignalling work*

*on both lines will immediately continue." Minister, Mr. Freeman, 1993.*

However, there was very little commitment expressed by Government to schemes outside of its agenda, with responses generally being a clear dismissal or a very 'low' level of commitment to evaluate the scheme in future. There was not a clear unified position and individual parliamentarians varied greatly in their opinions.

*"… the Government, on behalf of the taxpayer, provide £1,000 million a year in*

*subsidies to British Rail to run socially necessary services. If she believes that fare*

*increases should be moderated or that fares should be reduced, that would mean*

*the taxpayer having to provide more money for subsidies to British Rail and a*

*bigger burden on the taxpayer. The difference between the Opposition and the*

*Government is that we believe that railway passengers should meet as much of the*

*cost of providing the service as possible and that socially necessary services*

*should be subsidised rather than the passenger." Minister, Mr. Freeman, 1993.*

Overall, this implied that Government held agenda setting power in 1993, as it was not regularly pushed to endorse spending proposals outside its plans. When it was, Government dismissed or offered limited commitment towards other plans. There was a lack of coherent advocacy towards other policies.

In 1998, there remained a broadly even spread of sentiment expressions albeit with some growth in the 'high' category. There were generally 'low'

levels of commitment expressed by Government in debates on the CTRL prior to confirmation of a funding package, potentially owing to ongoing negotiations with private sector scheme developers and a desire not to compromise negotiations.

*"It has always been the desire of my hon. Friend and many of us to see those fast links go further than London. That should be the intention of any modern transport system. Again, I must ask that I am allowed to wait and see what I have got— whether the company can do a further deal…" Secretary of State, Mr. Prescott, 1998.*

There was, however, a 'high' level of commitment expressed from some backbench parliamentarians who were in favour of the link being built, stating that the benefits derived from it were necessary.

*"…The country needs the high-speed rail link, and it needs it to be built in its entirety—a 17-minute reduction in journey time for the first phase is not a sufficient benefit…" Liberal Democrat, Mr. Brake, 1998.*

'High' levels of commitment were expressed by Government towards the CTRL after announcing a funding deal. This implies that Government was generally in command of its agenda. There was limited push from the Opposition to gain more commitment to rail projects, perhaps owing to a retained Conservative ideology that the private sector should deliver rail infrastructure. Episodic discourses referenced within Parliament rarely applied pressure to Government by committing to rail funding schemes and ideas. However, the lack of referenced discourses in 1993 and 1998 makes it hard to discern exactly what pressures were applied to Government during that time, if any. It is reasonable to conclude that there was less pressure then than later in the study period owing to the fewer referenced discourses and general lack of rail funding salience.

In 2003, sentiment expressions moved towards higher levels of commitment being present in Parliament. 'High' levels of commitment were expressed by Government towards rail policies that required funding, but only where those policies were within the agenda of Government.

*"…However, we are dealing with record under-investment over nearly 20 years of Conservative rule, which will take time to turn around. Investment in our rail*

*services is being doubled over the next few years. That will continue for the rest of*

*the decade and we shall see improvements on the London to south-west Wales line*

*that will benefit my hon. Friend and me." Minister, Mr. Hain, 2003.*

However, there was a clear mix of responses to proposals from backbenchers for policies that were outside of the Government's agenda. In certain instances, Ministers acknowledged and accepted the case for new policies and in others they dismissed them. There was a rough demarcation on this divide: new proposals in line with the Government's overall agenda and objectives which at the time were reliability and capacity improvement on the existing network, were welcomed and were offered some level of commitment to investigate. In contrast, proposals that varied from the Government's overall agenda, such as opening new lines, were dismissed.

*"The Strategic Rail Authority has set out its current plans for the development of the*

*rail network in its strategic plan, which was published in January. Those do not*

*include reopening the Skipton to Colne line or opening the Skipton to Grassington*

*line for passenger services." Minister, Mr. Jamieson, 2003.*

In 2008, there was a substantial growth in the total number of references and a continuation of the trends seen with most sentiments being towards 'high' levels of commitment. It was rare to observe 'low' levels of commitment towards rail policies. Generally, 'high' levels of commitment were expressed by Government and Opposition towards rail enhancement and infrastructure schemes.

*"Since 2004, my colleagues and I have constantly prompted the Government to*

*address this issue. The key to it is Clapham Junction, because of the size of the*

*viaduct going in. Thus, it is not just about the circulation at Waterloo; it is also about*

*investing at Clapham Junction in order properly to give commuter access to the five*

*now-vacated lines." Conservative, Mr. Taylor, 2008.*

'High' levels of commitment were expressed by parliamentarians when asking questions to the Government about niche rail funding policies, such as local infrastructure enhancements. These policies were often framed as urgent and thus in need of immediate commitment. Government generally responded by either fully committing or committing to evaluate schemes. A

mixed level of commitment towards operational expenditure was also prominent with some support for certain policies but also some push back.

*"… which is why before Christmas I asked Network Rail whether it might carry out a full feasibility study to find out whether a radical project around Manchester would enhance rail services…" Secretary of State, Ms. Kelly, 2008.*

In 2008, results appeared to show a general loss of Government power as Government did not appear able to distance itself from committing to rail funding proposals. However, it did delay them as was the case with new high-speed lines when pressured by backbenchers. In episodic discourses between 2003 and 2008, it appeared that industry organisations, such as the SRA and Network Rail (despite their Government links), were pushing for commitment to rail policies more than other industry actors.

*"The SRA's strategy is to engage with local and regional stakeholders, and the PTEs in particular, to review options for the specification and development of local and regional services. Many of these have remained largely unchanged for decades, while travel markets have in some cases moved on. Service options will be examined together, under the aegis of the SRA's Capacity Utilisation Programme (CUP). This will include a statement, to be published early in 2003, of the requirements for longer-distance passenger and freight services." (SRA, 2003, p. 12), 2003.*

However, it was primarily Government itself with its use of targets and its clear statements of how to achieve those through investment, that pushed rail funding policy up the agenda throughout the Labour years.

*"The Government is committing significant investment now. And the long-term ambition is for a railway that: • Can handle double today's level of freight and passenger traffic; • Is even safer, more reliable and more efficient than now; • Can cater for a more diverse, affluent and demanding population; and • Has reduced its own carbon footprint and improved its broader environmental performance." (DfT, 2007, p. 7), 2008.*

In 2013, 'high' levels of commitment were expressed in debates on HS2 by both Government and the Opposition. Many parliamentarians pushed for earlier commitment to certain aspects of HS2, whilst Government responded stating its outright commitment to HS2 but not committing to these elements.

*"This Government will have achieved far more in five years to build high-speed rail in this country than the previous Government did in 13. All I would say is that we are still on target to meet our aims by the end of this year. As to its progress once it is before Parliament, I really cannot say any more at this stage." Secretary of State, Mr McLoughlin, 2013.*

'High' levels of commitment were also commonplace from Opposition and backbench parliamentarians towards niche rail schemes. Government would generally respond either with commitment to assess the case or a 'medium' level of commitment to continue discussions. 'Low' levels of commitment and scheme dismissal were rare. This demonstrated that Government appeared willing to consider a wide variety of rail schemes, and that there was a general view among parliamentarians that rail funding was a good thing.

*"…We are always being asked for extra services, but I assure him that I am well aware of the case for Lincoln, especially in the light of the important celebrations that will take place next year. I will certainly consider it, and will judge it in the context of all the other opportunities that we have, and requests that we receive, for the provision of extra services." Secretary of State, Mr McLoughlin, 2013.*

There were, however, mixed messages in debates on rail privatisation with the Opposition stating that it was committed to the idea that rail operators should pay profits back to the Government. There did appear to also be an assumption that all profit would be reinvested in rail. Government, meanwhile, demonstrated 'high' levels of commitment to the idea that its investments in rail generated like-for-like investments from private franchise holders, thus increasing total investment levels. This appeared similar to the logic used in the 10-year transport plan by the previous Labour Government (DETR, 2000), implying that such logic had crossed party lines.

In 2018, the proportional split between each sentiment type expressed remained similar to 2013. 'High' levels of commitment were expressed by

Government, Opposition, and many backbenchers for funding rail enhancements.

*"The Secretary of State will be aware that no money was spent in control period 5 on supporting enhancements to the rail infrastructure in north Wales. Having seen the unanimity in north Wales and in north-west England on Monday this week, does he not accept that our time has come for cross-border rail investment?" Labour, Mr. Lucas, 2018.*

*"…The hon. Gentleman will be aware, as the Member of Parliament for Wrexham, that we are now carrying out the study on how we deliver a proper service on the Wrexham to Bidston line. Under this Government, the time has certainly come for transport improvements." Secretary of State, Mr. Grayling, 2018.*

'High' levels of commitment were expressed by the Opposition toward rail nationalisation, with the Government defending privatisation based on the levels of private investment into the rail system, which it had previously argued was linked with its own investment. The Opposition often urged a commitment to change, even if not full nationalisation, which Government ignored rather than rejecting. CDA into episodic discourses outlined 2013 and 2018 as focusing on two major institution types. One, devolved and regional Governments, were producing discourses referenced in policy debates that included commitments and proposals for rail funding.

*"HS2 Connected: Getting the Midlands HS2 ready … Investing in complementary connectivity will spread the growth unlocked by HS2 across the Midlands and the country as a whole." (Midlands Connect, 2017, p. iv), 2018.*

Second, the role of consultancies and private sector actors. These actors authored Government reports and business case assessments for major rail policies. It's possible to note the involvement of consultancies in the production of local or regional plans as well, such as those mentioned above. These discourses grew in prominence throughout the study windows and offered 'high' commitment to rail funding throughout. The example below, published by HS2 Ltd, was written by KPMG.

*"Investment in HS2 will provide a step-change in transport connectivity, leading to*

*reductions in production costs and transport costs. Those areas experiencing the*

*biggest improvements in connectivity will most likely experience greater relative*

*improvements in their competitive position, stimulating a redistribution of production*

*between areas." (HS2 Ltd, 2013, p. 13), 2013 & 2018.*

In summary, early in the study period there was a roughly even split between the levels of commitment among parliamentarians towards rail funding policies. Government was able to stick to its own rail agenda and gradually, with time, saw that agenda move out of its control. Episodic discourses show private sector interests, both commissioned by Government or non-central Governments, being responsible for the creation of publicly available reports advocating rail funding policies and seeking commitment to them.

### 7.3.3 Hegemony

There were some key findings relating to sentiments towards the desirability of rail funding. In 1993, Government routinely suggested that funding the rail system was a 'desirable' policy and pointed to funded works across the rail system as proof of this. By historical standards, however, these schemes had low funding requirement. There were suggestions by Conservatives and the Government that the taxpayer should not bear the brunt of funding rail.

*"No. If the hon. Gentleman is talking about the two alternatives for the £150 million*

*rolling stock—the ICC 225s for the west coast main line and the Networkers—that*

*is a new order. If the hon. Gentleman has in mind the decision on the ICC 225 or*

*250, the 225 was chosen. That reflects the fact that there has been a substantial*

*decrease in British Rail's revenue as a result of the recession, which is probably*

*more to do with present rolling stock investment than anything else. But there are*

*also advantages in going for the ICC 225, because it has been impressed on me by*

*rolling stock manufacturers that long runs of existing locomotives can often be a*

*much more cost-effective way to deliver new orders." Secretary of State, Mr.*

*MacGregor, 1993.*

The Opposition appeared to avoid making 'desirable' or 'undesirable' sentiment expressions, instead questioning Government proposals for privatisation and promoting strategic planning.

*"Does the Secretary of State accept that all the work has been done and that the cost is known? All that is lacking is political will and Government resources. Is not the right hon. Gentleman concerned that the taxpayers' money invested in the east coast line will be highly attractive to a privatised railway, which will undermine the west coast line? Will the Secretary of State give an assurance that the strategic route from London to Scotland will be on the west coast line and that he will instruct the track authority to see that it is?" Labour, Mr. Prescott, 1993.*

At the start of the Labour Government in 1998 the sentiment that state support for rail was 'undesirable' continued, though this was particularly expressed in relation to private rail companies and the public private partnership model. The below quote relates to CTRL funding.

*"The agreement, which involves a commitment of £1.8 billion, was agreed by the Treasury of the previous Administration. The hon. Gentleman should not think that I am going to negotiate, or that there is any difference on the issue between the Treasury and me. We have said that we are not prepared to find £1.2 billion on top of the £1.8 billion that the previous Government negotiated, which we honour in the contract." Secretary of State, Mr. Prescott, 1998.*

In 2003, Government sentiment shifted towards outlining the value of rail funding. The Opposition also appeared to drop their longstanding ideological view against funding rail with taxpayer money, this being one potential enabler to the case for the policy changing with time. This highlighted that record investment was a hegemonic 'good thing', with little rationale behind this other than further partisanship.

*"I could not agree more. These issues are being addressed through the record investment that is going into improving our railways. …. If we got a Conservative Government back, they would cut rail investment by 20 per cent." Minister, Mr. Hain, 2003.*

In 2008, most 'desirable' sentiment expressions were made by Ministers. They outlined the benefits of funding programmes to deliver more capacity into the network and how this could achieve positive outcomes for passengers. Some backbench cross-party support for rail funding appeared.

*"Given the inevitable disruption to two of the four lines between Reading and Paddington resulting from Crossrail, will the Minister look urgently at the reinstatement of a three-mile loop on the Exeter-Waterloo line, and can he say when the work will start on the agreed route at Axminster?" Conservative, Mr. Swire, 2008.*

In 2013, there was a significant degree of 'desirable' sentiment expressions from Government, as with previous years though rationales evolved. Government would outline that spending money on rail investment was a positive thing due to the wider economic benefits. There was also strong cross-party backbench support for this, with many parliamentarians voicing their support for specific funding programmes.

*"At the moment, the value-cost ratio is reckoned to be 2.5. I also point out that the BCR tells us some things, but not everything. For instance, the BCR on the Jubilee line was a lot lower than that for High Speed 2. If the Jubilee line had not been developed, a lot of the development in Canary Wharf would never have taken place. The line brought a huge amount of investment into the area and the country. It is important that we are seen to be able to compete with other countries in the global race to attract businesses to this country…" Secretary of State, Mr McLoughlin, 2013.*

There was, however, sentiment from the Opposition that some funding was wasted and hence 'undesirable'. This was primarily concerned with opponents of rail privatisation who believed money spent on rail would be wasted as dividends or executive bonuses. Support for funding rail existed, but that under the privatised structure money was undesirably wasted. This criticised private profiteering in a subsidised industry during austerity.

*"Yes, we can speculate about who might take on the franchise, but it is incredibly profitable and I am sure there will be no shortage of takers. That money should be going into the Treasury at this time of austerity, however." Labour, Mr Morris, 2013*

In 2018, there continued to be a significant degree of 'desirable' sentiment expressed in contributions from Government and cross-party backbench support. Rationales ranged from capacity enhancement to jobs growth and economic benefits. There was a real lack of counter sentiment, unlike in early study windows. There was an increase in the regularity of statements made that funding rail was good without rationales. Opposition criticism of privatisation remained, though caveated with suggestions that rail should be well funded but nationalised.

*"…signalling is the responsibility of the public sector Network Rail, so there is a gentle suggestion that the hon. Lady's proposal may not be the all-encompassing panacea. What our signalling needs is what we are giving it, which is £20 billion of investment over the next four years to renew infrastructure that is old and, in many places, worn out. We are still dealing with the years of under-investment before this Government took office." Secretary of State, Chris Grayling, 2018*

CDA into referenced discourses identified similar trends. Little mention was given to rail funding early on, however industry actors such as the SRA and Network Rail played a leading role in championing rail funding as a policy from 1998. Later, Government reviews, such as the 'Brown Review', did not comment on the desirability of funding rail directly but did make recommendations likely to come at a cost to Government whilst Network Rail (particularly prior to reclassification as a nationalised body) were highly vocal that positive outcomes could be derived from rail funding.

*"These potential investments have not yet been subject to full appraisal but we believe it is important that they are progressed further over the next few years so that we can proceed if a strong business case is established. In some cases, these investments will be important in achieving further improvements in CP5 as well as CP4. Some of these investments could be funded from outperformance of other targets. More generally, however, we propose that these investments should be*

*treated as self-financing investments which can be added to the RAB during the*

*period..." (Network Rail, 2007, p. 9), 2008.*

Further, there is evidence that the introduction of consultancies into the transport industry also drove this sentiment, with all consultancy authored reports recommending funding rail schemes. 'Local Authorities' and 'Partnerships' played a leading role since their inception, as the various levels of devolved Governments were introduced between 1998 and 2018. Creation of a local, regional, or national body generally led to strategic plans or reports championing the need for rail schemes in that area. Newspapers, regulatory bodies, political parties and think tanks appeared to play less of a role in the establishment of this hegemony by often providing contradictory or unclear opinions on the overall desirability of rail funding.

*"For the South West, investment into the rail network will unlock a host of benefits,*

*generating an additional £7.2bn of GVA and £1.8bn of transport benefits in the*

*coming years, transforming the economy and our communities. With passenger*

*growth at 128%, we consistently outstrip industry forecasts and our potential is*

*growing. 75% of SW businesses stated that rail is vital to their business and that*

*reducing the journey time to London by 45 minutes would have a significant positive*

*impact on their productivity." (Peninsula Rail Task Force, 2016, p. 3), 2018.*

In summary, there was consistent sentiment expressed that funding the rail system was 'desirable' both from Government and backbenchers. However, the willingness of Government to support large funding programmes in 1993 and 1998 was limited, with some Government 'undesirability' clearly stated on grounds of saving money for the taxpayer. In opposition, Labour did little to support the case that it was 'desirable' to fund rail in 1993 and the Conservatives continued to support taxpayer savings in 1998. This appeared to be a position that had died out by 2003. Government support and limited backbench opposition allowed for hegemony to be established that suggested large funding programmes were 'desirable' with limited opposition to these. From this point, the 'desirable' sentiment was justified on a variety of grounds, ranging from passenger outcomes in 2003 and 2008, to wider economic outcomes in 2013 and 2018. A hegemony transitioned from both parties being 'against' the concept of high rail funding levels, to one where Labour supported this policy in 2003 and 2008 and, by 2013, the

Conservatives did also. It appears from episodic discourses that the initial positive sentiments were driven by Network Rail and the SRA and later continued to be by consultancies and devolved Governments. What was interesting was the lack of opposition to funding rail, other than opposition to specific schemes; reports authored by rail's competitors were not detected. Cars, meanwhile, were criticised heavily in pro-rail discourses.

### 7.3.4 Perceived Value for Money

Analysis into perceptions of the value for money of rail funding identified few relevant findings from House of Commons debates. There was a consistent state of diffusion across party lines preventing a unified justification for any value for money perception on funding the rail system apart from that rail was a 'high' value for money funding choice. There was no clear position in parliamentarians' views that rail was a 'waste', 'low' or 'medium' value for money throughout. The policy rationale for 'high' value for money existed throughout, though in 1993 and 1998 this was not expressed as clearly as in later years. Sentiment eventually incorporated an increasing number of cross-party narratives, such as economic benefit, user benefit and sporadic social benefit. Few of these narratives withered with time but were only met by new justifications. Such supportive themes were not explicitly analysed within this set of variables but have been analysed elsewhere.

Analysis into episodic discourses told a similar story. Discourses often championed rail, but rationales appeared diffuse. From the early 2000's, devolved/regional Governments and consultancies pushed the rationales for 'high' value for money sentiment. Subsequently in the study period, some criticism of specific rail schemes and policies, such as HS2 and franchising, were suggested by think tanks and vested interest groups but rail overall was seen as the solution to these problems; such as through investing in other schemes or restructuring. Almost all private sector discourses supported investment in rail, as did the majority of local Government and regional alliance discourses. As such, this analysis is not considered particularly useful to the aims of this research.

### 7.3.5 Manifesto Priorities

Analysis into manifesto priorities also did not provide any substantial information in relation to the research question posed within this thesis. This was due to a consistent lack of reference to manifesto commitments by parliamentarians, with only incidental linkages. Early in the study period there was little demonstration that parliamentarians felt rail could be a tool to

achieve wider policy priorities and this continued throughout. There were coincidental links, such as where rail funding was perceived to support the economy and the case for rail was made on economic grounds such as in 2013 and 2018, but there was no substantial change in pro-rail justifications with changes in Government to show alignment with rail advocacy narratives. Whilst links were demonstrated in some areas is likely this was coincidental given no consistency existed in changing manifesto priorities and changing pro-rail narratives were observed. Equally, CDA into episodic discourses demonstrated that manifesto priorities were not referenced to any consistent degree. There did not appear to be a clear link between rail industry advocate narratives and overriding political objectives. Despite some alignments, such as pro-economic narratives in 2013 and 2018, rail was not suggested to support other manifesto priorities, such as international development, crime reduction, education improvements, etc. The case for rail appeared to focus on what there was evidence it could do.

## 7.3.6 Geography

There were some highly interesting findings from analysis into geographic sentiments. In 1993, the geographic focus of parliamentarian contributions focused on the benefits derived from funding rail for their constituencies as opposed to wider regions, 'national' geographies, or the 'UK' as a whole.

> *"Is my hon. Friend aware that the thousands who commute from Chelmsford to*
>
> *Liverpool Street station each day simply want an efficient, well-run service, and*
>
> *does he believe that franchising will achieve that?" Conservative, Mr. Burns, 1993.*

This is perhaps expected given that at the time there were no combined authorities or devolved transport bodies that would be expected to make a 'regional' case for rail. The focus on 'local' case making for rail was almost entirely self-interested by the contributing parliamentarians who focus predominantly on the benefit to their own constituencies. There was, however, a surprising lack of 'UK' wide justifications, though this can perhaps be explained by the rules of the study. There were many references to the case for improving InterCity services across the UK's mainlines, though not tied into any specific benefit to the 'UK' or regions explicitly. Parliamentarians did not link such services with wider benefit for a region's population or economy. Such an outcome may make sense when considering the scale of rail networks as rail does not deliver significant local connectivity at a granular constituency sized geography; most constituencies

only have a handful of stations. Thus, there was no political body dependent on the regional connectivity that rail is more suited to provide, and thus no political voice from organisations aligned with rail as a transport mode. New stations can provide a benefit by connecting local areas to other places beyond the immediate local proximity. As such, discourse on new stations may be expected but did not appear either. The lack of sentiments that rail benefits the 'UK' as a whole may be due to a general lack of hegemony from parliamentarians on the benefits that rail can deliver, though they were clearly aware that there was some importance as national links were to be upgraded but no indication as to why.

In 1998, three of the four debates concerned the CTRL. As expected, 'UK' sentiments increased on 1993. There were no 'four nations' arguments and a lack of 'regional' arguments which is surprising given the formation and remit of the DETR in 1997. 'Local' arguments remained most salient.

*"Does my right hon. Friend share the anxiety that will be felt by my constituents,*

*particularly about the future of the Ebbsfleet station and about the number of jobs*

*and businesses and the future economic prosperity that ride on the project?"*

*Labour, Dr. Stoate, 1998.*

*"Will the right hon. Lady take particular note of yesterday's debate on the high-*

*speed rail link to the channel tunnel? May I remind her that the issue affects the*

*whole of the United Kingdom, and the north-west as we both know, and is not just a*

*Kent or east London matter?" Liberal Democrat, Mr. Stunell, 1998.*

In 2003, both 'UK' and 'local' arguments were the most salient, however 'regional' and 'national' arguments also appeared. The exact reasons behind justifying rail funding lacked focus, with Ministers outlining the benefit of higher transport funding across the 'UK' without specific examples. 'Local' arguments generally highlighted the benefit to local area economies and job markets from funding the rail system. However, there was a strong focus on London, the need for Crossrail and other 'local' and 'regional' investment across the city. Many of these arguments go beyond the bounds of constituencies and cover the benefit of funding London's rail system. It is interesting that this follows the creation of the GLA, and that these justifications were like those brought to the forefront for debates on 'local' benefits in 1998 from the CTRL. However, the general dominance of London

in national policy has been noted (Tomaney & Marques, 2013), though this trend was not observed in 1993 and 1998.

*"I will stick to Crossrail, for the time being at least. As I have said on many occasions, I have not the slightest doubt that we need to improve capacity on the railways running between the east and west of London … But let us be in no doubt that the east-west link is extremely important to the development not only of London but of the surrounding areas that will see substantial development in the years to come." Secretary of State, Mr. Darling, 2003.*

The 'national' sentiments suggested that devolved nations were underfunded and needed more funding for their rail systems to be treated fairly in comparison with the rest of the UK. This could be explained by the creation of a political organisation with a vested interest only in the levels of funding in such geographies, such as the devolved administrations.

*"The Secretary of State knows that the Strategic Rail Authority is looking to cut, under the new franchise for Wales, rail services in coalfield areas and the rest of Wales by 10 or 20 per cent. He has made much of the fact that we cannot get back out of Cardiff after hours, but what does he say about this huge reduction in services promised for Wales? With regard to the Strategic Rail Authority, will he insist that there cannot be any reduction in the funding for, or provision of, rail services in Wales?" Plaid Cymru, Mr. Thomas, 2003.*

In 2008, there remained a core focus on 'local' sentiments, however the other variables gained in salience once more. A dynamic emerged around new rail funding policies with 'local' and 'regional' sentiments being conceived locally, such as by Local Authorities. For example, the reopening of the Lewes-Uckfield line, the Midland Mainline upgrade and electrification, the Manchester hub, and Severn Tunnel enhancements were all locally/regionally conceived.

*"…I have argued for the reopening of the Lewes-Uckfield railway line. It is a no-brainer in economic, social and environmental terms. Network Rail is on board, as are all local councils led by all parties and MPs representing all three parties. The*

*Government, however, are largely being weak and unsupportive…" Liberal*

*Democrat, Mr Baker, 2008.*

A key change was that the Government did not support or analyse the case for these new schemes, as it had with the CTRL or the West Coast Mainline upgrade. Such expensive and locally/regionally conceived plans had not previously been lobbied for within the House of Commons to the same extent as in 2008. There was also the introduction of 'missing out' concerns, that additional funding must be allocated to ensure major enhancement schemes did not inadvertently disbenefit adjacent local communities by removing or changing their rail services for the worse in exchange for the scheme's overall purpose of wider benefit. An example of this may be local lobbying to retain inter-city stops at a small station when attempting to remove these stops to reduce journey times between major cities.

*"… the problem is that those who have suffered the most from the terrible debacle*

*on the west coast main line over the past few days are likely to benefit the least*

*when the work is finished. … Those of us with constituencies along the west coast*

*main line are all in the same position, because a terrible mess has been made of*

*improving the rail system so that people can get around the country. Even when the*

*disruption is over, people along the west coast main line will not see an*

*improvement in their rail service…" Conservative, Mr Wright, 2008.*

In 2013, a major increase in the salience of geographic arguments was noted compared with previous years with much of this growth being attributed to the rising case for investing in rail to benefit the whole of the 'UK'. 'UK' arguments became more salient than 'local', with 'national' and 'regional' lagging but still more regular than in previous years. There was a clear multi-layered benefit identified from HS2, with references for 'local', 'regional', 'national' (particularly covering Scotland) and 'UK'-wide benefit attributed to the scheme. This mostly focused on local economic benefits or housing construction, though with a clear view that the UK needed HS2 to catch up and compete with other countries. This narrative for the rail system as a driver of 'national' growth was relatively new. There were many 'national' sentiments HS2 debates, contrary to debates on the CTRL.

*"… the Chancellor of the Exchequer has set out far-reaching plans to provide the infrastructure that we need to compete in the global race. We need better roads, better airports, better ports, and better rail links too—an ambitious programme for all parts of our country, with HS2 an important part of that. A growing economy, a growing population and growing demand for transport, which have seen rail travel double in a decade, mean that we must act. HS2 will be the first new main rail line north of London for 120 years, linking at least eight of our 10 largest cities, and improving services for Scotland too. I am pleased that HS2 enjoys the broad backing of all the main parties…" Secretary of State, Mr McLoughlin, 2013.*

There was a clear reduction in the proportion of parliamentarians pushing only 'local' benefits to their constituency and were instead focusing on 'national' and 'regional' narratives, or benefits to other areas. This contrasts with the earlier study windows where 'local' benefit was of high importance. There was a loss of reference to the case for rail funding as a means to provide rail user outcomes (such as crowding relief or reliability), with most geographic benefits being tied to economic or housing outcomes. When parliamentarians raise niche or non-Government supported schemes, Government would point to nearby funding programmes and their benefit.

In 2018, proportionally fewer geographic arguments were made compared to 2013 with the most salient geographies being 'regional' and 'UK'. 'Local' arguments were about half as common as these, and 'national' arguments were less salient still. It is worth noting that while the 'UK' benefits were referenced across the House, there was a substantial quantum coming from 'key figures', such as Government and shadow Secretaries of State as well as former Secretaries of State, and the Chair of the Transport Select Committee. Interestingly, the same applied to 'national' sentiments by specific parliamentarians (such as arguments for more rail investment into Scotland by the SNP) which prompted responses from Government to set out how plans were good for the whole of the 'UK'. Economic rationales were based on geographic disaggregation, which is not always a necessity of GDP based economic growth for the 'UK' as a whole. It demonstrates the usage of a frame to achieve 'national' and 'regional' Government objectives. There was also a change in the tone used to justify 'regional' and 'national'

arguments from "we will benefit from this funding" to "we need this funding to avoid deterioration".

*"… In Crewe and Nantwich, there are almost 4,000 children living in poverty, and wages are below the UK average. In fact, 28% of workers are paid less than the living wage, which is worse than the average for the north-west … In many ways, it is getting worse. A report this month by IPPR North suggests that the attainment gap between the north and the rest of England has widened to 5% at NVQ4 level, setting the north up to be the worst affected by an adult skills crisis … A proper regional hub could take advantage of existing connectivity and extend the benefits of HS2 to millions of people in the north, including those in our often forgotten towns beyond the major cities." Labour, Ms Smith, 2018.*

'Regional' arguments occurred regularly with direct references to episodic discourses produced by advocates promoting rail schemes. Regional plans, such as the Northern Powerhouse, were more common relative to previous years and phrases such as these became common. There was a greater role for backbenchers in making 'regional' arguments, predominantly focused on the North, Midlands, and Southwest, though Government also clearly outlined benefits for these areas as well. 'Local' arguments were predominantly made by back-benchers. Overall, this shows a desire for Government to 'sell' rail funding to parliamentarians to counter the arguments made and shows that arguments for rail have evolved to all aspects of geography. It also shows that parliamentarians are stating that rail is a larger scale issue than their immediate constituency in direct contrast to earlier debates. Government used deflect narratives where 'local' interventions were sought by stating specific requests were not necessary as other funded schemes benefit those areas.

*"The difference that HS2 will make is that it will provide far more capacity and better connections across the whole country. Whether you are coming to London from Cumbria, Manchester, Liverpool or Birmingham, or travelling to points in between, there will be more capacity, faster trains and better connections between intermediate places…" Secretary of State, Mr Grayling, 2018.*

Episodic discourses also demonstrated the changing structure to the rail advocacy over the course of the study period. It showed that Government was the leading authority in pushing the devolution agenda in the early 2000's, while other organisations within the rail industry quickly accepted the role of local stakeholders despite little reference in earlier years.

*"In future, the SRA will act as the key linkage between the rail sector and local and regional stakeholders on forward planning – taking account of stakeholders' distinctive planning approaches and powers – thus reducing complexity and clarifying discussion on investment. Accordingly, the SRA is establishing an outward-facing regional planning team. The improved planning approach will be consistent with the Government's New Approach to Transport Appraisal (NATA). The SRA wants the improved planning approach to enhance its already-strong relationship with regional and local authorities, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), Transport for London (TfL) and the Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs)." (SRA, 2003, p. 12), 2003.*

Local stakeholders began producing reports and plans that outlined how investment into their rail schemes could deliver benefit to the 'UK' economy.

*"Whilst the Midlands economy is strong it is not reaching its full potential, with productivity below the national average. If we can improve transport connectivity between towns and cities within the Midlands and with key centres elsewhere, then we could boost economic growth to the benefit of both the Midlands and UK plc." (Midlands Connect, 2017, p. i), 2018.*

This culminated in what appeared to be arguments between regions and the Government over which regions were receiving the most funding, with calls for more funding for regions to help balance out the economy. This shows a clear power struggle between the tiers of Government (Section 3.3.3). Schemes such as HS2 were linked with 'UK' and 'local' significance. Once more, this could suggest that Government's was not able to walk away from investment commitments in later years.

In summary, there was a changing picture regarding the geographic focus of case making for funding rail in the House of Commons. Early in the study

period locally focused arguments were common but this transitioned to 'regional' and 'UK' wide benefits by the later study windows. This correlated with the introduction of devolved/regional Governments from 1998, which gradually increased salience for these arguments, and later from 2013 with the introduction of combined authorities in English regions. Government later begun deflecting criticism that not enough was being done for parliamentarians' constituencies by pointing towards other schemes being funded in similar geographies thereby highlighting the benefit of those schemes. This contrasts greatly with the earlier years of the study window where parliamentarians did not argue as to why rail funding could benefit their regional area. One key thing to note in all years, perhaps aligning with sentiment and shedding light on the geographical divide on investment, is the way in which parliamentarians throughout the study period have described funding benefits. There was an assumption that London is the centre for consideration, as phrases such as "it will result in quicker journeys to Manchester" were common and always refer to the London to Manchester journey. When talking about investment between other regional centres, the phrases are more specific; such as "it will result in reduced journey times between Manchester and Leeds". This implies that London has consistently been the dominant consideration, despite the devolution agenda.

### 7.3.7 Intertextuality

In rail funding debates there were 320 episodic references, with the number per year and by type of intertextuality shown in Table 20. Figure 24 shows this data normalised by the length of rail funding debates. This demonstrates a rising tendency and density of references to episodic discourses whilst debating rail funding policy.

**Table 20 Episodic discourses referenced by parliamentarians in debates on rail funding per study window**

| Discourses Referenced | 1993 | 1998 | 2003 | 2008 | 2013 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributed Quote | 0 | 3 | 9 | 16 | 25 | 33 |
| Modalized Assertion | 3 | 6 | 16 | 20 | 37 | 52 |
| Non-Modalized Assertion | 5 | 1 | 10 | 16 | 20 | 48 |
| Total | 8 | 10 | 35 | 52 | 82 | 133 |
| *Total Unique References* | *8* | *7* | *23* | *29* | *47* | *73* |
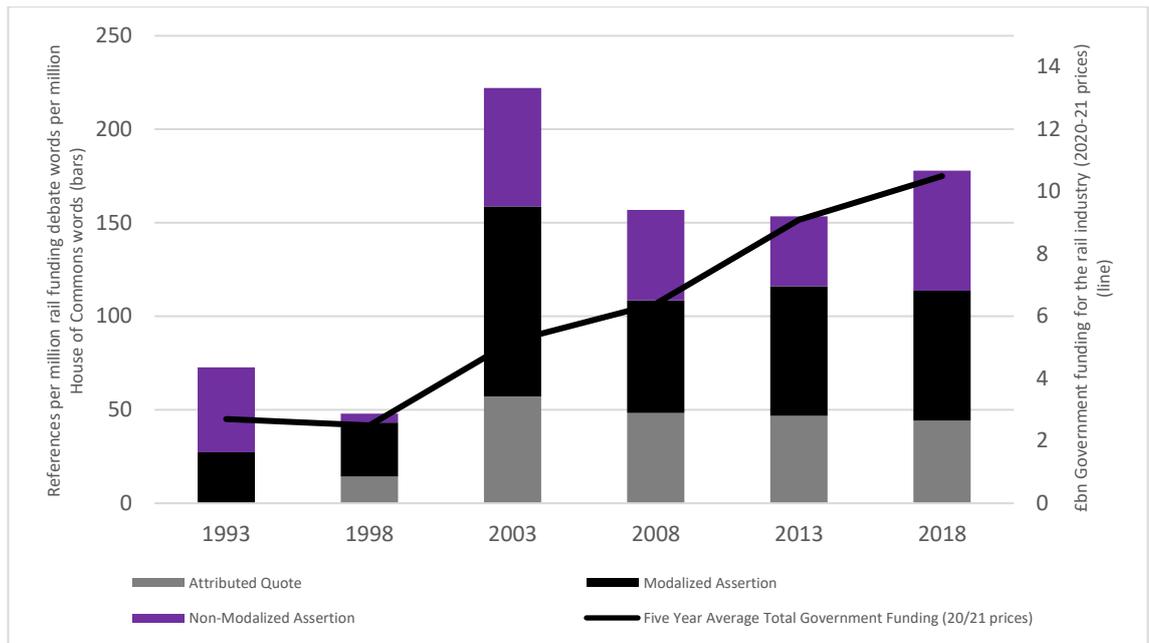
**Figure 24 Episodic discourses referenced by parliamentarians in debates on rail funding by study window, normalised by words spoken in that windows' debates**

In 1993, there were no attributed quotes made in Parliament suggesting a lack of willingness among parliamentarians to substantiate their contributions with exact quotations. Each referenced discourse was unique. Generally non-modalized assertions were the most common method of intertextuality whereby few details of the discourse source were provided to substantiate any given argument.

*"I can confirm that my right hon. Friend has received a report from British Rail on*

*the route for the channel tunnel rail link from Folkestone to King's Cross. It will be*

*for him to consider that report carefully". Minister, Mr Freeman, 1993.*

A similar utilisation of references occurred in 1998 and 2003, with limited details provided to support any given argument. Modalized assertions, which provide more detail than non-modalized assertions, occurred rarely but one instance is demonstrated below.

*"The National Audit Office report shows that the loss on the sale of rolling stock*

*almost exactly equals the missing money needed to complete the link right through*

*to north London." Liberal Democrat, Mr Stunnell, 1998.*

From 2008 onward, more detailed attributed quotes emerged as common within debates. Many of which appear to reference organisations with

potential vested interests in rail policy. However, that is not to say these vested interests were profit, but rather may simply be the utility of the rail system to that organisation. Further, quotations of Government commissioned external independent reviews were authored by individuals with significant private sector backgrounds, were routinely used and quoted to substantiate views in support of the status-quo rail franchising regime.

*"In a supporting letter from Mr Brown to the Transport Secretary, dated 31 December 2012, he wrote: "I have come to the conclusion that the franchising system is not broken, but, on the contrary, it has made a major contribution to Britain's increasingly successful rail network. There is no credible case for major structural change.""" Liberal Democrat, Mr Reid, 2013.*

Other trends were outlined from the CDA into referenced episodic discourses. A key headline was that the Government appeared to rarely utilise intertextuality in their references, however on occasion it would substantiate a view due to it having been recommended elsewhere.

*"Over 35 years ago, the Government of the day commissioned a study into the problems posed by road traffic. The resulting 'Buchanan report' predicted that traffic would increase dramatically, with profound consequences for the environment and the way life was lived. It has. We cannot say that we weren't warned." (DETR, 1997, p. 5), 1998.*

Regulators and parliamentary committees also referenced other discourses but generally were referencing the outcomes of interviews with stakeholders. Network Rail and other industry figures utilised intertextuality more often, both in relation to work done by the rail industry supply chain and in regard to Government policy.

*"The Eddington report, for example, highlighted the productivity and environmental importance of rail freight." (Network Rail, 2007, p. 10), 2008.*

Major projects, such as HS2, appeared more likely to generate intertextuality in reports, perhaps suggesting that a wide advocacy existed to support these projects. These advocacies, having produced much material and frequently referenced each other's, were driving forward the case for rail funding.

*"Separate analysis by KPMG suggests that HSR could deliver 25,000-42,000 new*

*jobs, contributing £17bn-£24bn per annum to the UK economy by 2040, generating*

*£6bn-£10bn per annum in tax revenues, or £87bn-£150bn NPV to the Exchequer.*

*However, this is an underestimate based on a limited view of what constitutes*

*additionality. We consider that job creation will be held back without the provision of*

*substantial additional rail capacity." (Volterra, 2011, p. 9), 2013.*

However, the use of intertextuality does appear to vary between discourse source style and purpose, and as such is not necessarily able to shed a significant degree of light on the propositions. Consultancy and private sector led discourses were consistently championing rail and referencing other discourses to substantiate views. Government would generally do the same later in the study period. This alone is not enough to support the research propositions but strengthens conclusions drawn elsewhere.

Additional discourses were referenced within the episodic discourses with this shown diagrammatically in Appendix B. This information shows that the growth of the advocacy narrative for rail has been exponential. It is not just the discourses that permeate House of Commons debates that inform rationales given by policy makers but also a vast web of discourses supporting these views. In early study windows, generally only a few Government conversations in turn would influence discourses and only a few of those would influence House of Commons rationales. However, by the later years a range of advocacies were directly and indirectly influencing House of Commons rationales. This is a clear indication of policy makers being influenced by evidence from outside discourse, or at least using evidence to rationalise views already held.

In summary, there are three key findings from this analysis. First, the propensity of parliamentarians to use external discourses to substantiate their views increased consistently throughout the study period. Whilst this would be expected, given the lengthier debates, the MMDA analysis suggested this increase exceeded the increase expected from longer debates. Second, there was a greater usage of 'attributed quotes' as each year progressed which implies a greater willingness of parliamentarians to provide details behind their discourses that were used to justify their opinions. This implies that discourses were considered more important to legitimise contributions. Third, there was also an increase in the unique

discourses referenced. More unique discourses were referenced as the years progressed, so it is reasonable to conclude that parliamentarians had access to and utilised more advocate produced discourses. This is a clear indicator of lobbying permeating House of Commons debate contributions and rising consistently throughout the study period. Certain episodic discourses, arguably those authored by organisations with potential for financial gain from rail funding, utilised greater levels of intertextuality.

### 7.3.8 Legitimisation

This analysis investigated the methods of legitimisation used by parliamentarians to substantiate their views on rail funding policy. There were four methods of legitimisation, detailed in Section 6.5.3. Utilising authority ('authorization') appeared common early and later in the study period. Utilising utility benefit ('rationalisation') appeared to follow arguments made to authority later on. Utilising a value system ('moral evaluation') did not appear particularly relevant throughout. Finally, utilising narrative ('mythopoesis') fluctuated throughout.

In 1993, there was a broadly even split between 'authorization', 'rationalisation' and 'mythopoesis'. Government primarily utilised 'authorisation' when discussing its plans for the railway by stating that either it or British Rail had already decided on priorities. In referenced episodic discourses there was little legitimisation of proposals.

*"This is a commercial matter for the board. The redundancies concern staff*

*positions where, judged by British Rail, loss is not expected to affect performance."*

*Minister, Mr. Freeman, 1993.*

In 1998, 'rationalisation' appeared most prominent in rail funding debates. The utility benefit derived from rail was outlined by parliamentarians for reasons such as regeneration or journey time reduction. This was clearly demonstrated by supportive contributions and represented a shift in thinking from parliamentarians from 1993 toward a belief that rail can achieve useful goals. Interestingly, Government only really began to rationalise the CTRL as a policy after confirming a funding package with the private developers of the link, suggesting that Government retained agenda setting power, as it did not attempt to rationalise immature or as of yet unsupported projects.

*"I am grateful for the hon. Lady's support. It is calculated that, as a regeneration*

*engine, the CTRL could create between 80,000 and 120,000 new jobs. When in*

*opposition, Labour endorsed the project and flagged up what were seen as flaws in*

*the business plan, to try to ensure its success…" Labour, Mr. Fitzpatrick, 1998.*

Interestingly, there was no use of 'authorization', which was particularly surprising given the regularity with which it was used by Government in 1993. This may have been due to an uncertainty over which organisations to rely on following privatisation, or a shift in Government's ability to place blame for any issues with any one given organisation. Referenced discourses show that Government, following the 1997 White Paper, similarly began rationalising its position in favour of public transport in terms of economic, user and environmental benefits.

*"For many people using a car is now no longer a choice but a necessity. Nowhere is*

*this clearer than in the rural communities with no daily bus service. For those who*

*rely on public transport it is all too often inadequate, suffering from declining*

*standards and services. And as motoring costs fell in real terms, bus and rail fares*

*have gone up." (DETR, 1997, p. 7), 1998.*

In 2003, there was a slight increase in total legitimisations in Parliament. Sentiments aligned with 1993, with all legitimisation types other than 'moral evaluation' appearing prominently. One notable increase, however, was the tendency of the Government to utilise 'mythopoesis' by legitimising rail funding on the grounds it had no choice and had to due to years of Conservative Government neglect of rail prior.

*"… recognises the importance of transport infrastructure to continued growth and*

*prosperity; welcomes the Government's commitment to a sustained improvement in*

*the transport system; acknowledges that it inherited a legacy of decades of under-*

*investment which continues to have severe adverse consequences for transport*

*performance; …" Secretary of State, Mr. Darling, 2003.*

Regarding decisions not taken or rejected, Government also utilised 'authorization'. The content of responses was broadly similar, by outlining that the SRA or Network Rail were responsible, in the same way that 1993 would have seen British Rail considered the responsible organisation.

*"The Government continue to support the development of Crossrail. We are now*

*evaluating proposals from the Strategic Rail Authority and Transport for London to*

*see whether they are financeable…" Secretary of State, Mr. Darling, 2003.*

In 2008, the most common legitimisation types were 'authorization' and 'rationalization', with others used sporadically. There was a large increase in legitimisations which is explained by parliamentarians substantiating their views on rail policies. 'Authorization' would occur particularly frequently with parliamentarians referencing organisations within the rail industry when attempting to promote changes towards other parts of the industry. The Government would use 'authorization' to defend its rail industry structure whilst the Opposition would use it to promote changes.

*"What action did the Government take immediately after the publication of the*

*Strategic Rail Authority report from Ove Arup in July 2005, which concluded by*

*recommending extra work in various directions to narrow the options for the future?"*

*Conservative, Mr. Chope, 2008.*

There was a significant use of 'rationalization' whereby many parliamentarians pushed for Government responses to niche rail policy and funding ideas. The schemes were often rationalized on their performance against certain deliverables and perceived utility to enhance aspects of people's lives. Government responded with 'authorization' by stating that it was Network Rail, the regulator or some other industry organisation that held responsibility to assess the merit of such policies.

*"The hon. Gentleman will be disappointed to be reminded once again that the*

*Department for Transport has no say over whether the Office of Rail Regulation*

*imposes a fine on Network Rail. That should be a matter for the independent rail*

*regulator…" Minister, Mr. Harris, 2008.*

In referenced episodic discourses, Government and its arm's length bodies, such as the SRA, rationalised the case for rail from the 2000's. Local interests also legitimised the case for rail on the basis of rationalisation by economic outputs. This trend strengthened in frequency and content throughout the remainder of the study period. This implies local interests did

not originally drive the case for rail but followed Government rationalisations and built the case locally, as Government discourse came first.

*"A transport revolution will have taken place with our bus, Metro, rail and road networks making it easy to move around the Black Country, into Birmingham and the rest of the City Region. Our manufacturing companies will be prospering, at the cutting edge of technological innovation but our high quality environment – not our industrial legacy – will dominate the urban landscape." (Black Country Consortium Limited, 2007, p. 6), 2008.*

In 2013, there was a broadly even split between 'rationalization' and 'authorization' in debates, with fewer 'mythopoesis' or 'moral evaluation' legitimisations. 'Rationalisation' in these debates was common within many contributions, whereby Government, Opposition and backbench parliamentarians all stated their support for HS2 based on economic growth, jobs, and regeneration.

*"…I encourage him to take a different branch on High Speed 1 and travel to Folkestone, as he will see that the investment in High Speed 1 is the biggest single advantage we have in promoting the east Kent regional growth area." Conservative, Mr Collins, 2013.*

There was a significant level of 'authorization' based on comments from devolved and local governments when justifying HS2, and it was common to justify policies towards the wider rail industry. Both Opposition and backbench parliamentarians utilised 'authorization' in pushing for niche improvements and schemes stating the benefits derived in studies and campaigns produced in respect to local authorities and business interests.

*"Since May 1996, 56 stations in England and Wales have been opened. Local authorities, passenger transport executives, devolved bodies and Transport for London lead on the planning and promotion of stations. We are aware of about 40 stations which are being considered for opening by these bodies in England and Wales." Secretary of State, Mr. McLoughlin, 2013.*

It was common for the Government to reference the previous Labour Government as a source of 'authorization' when it had similar rail policies.

*"We have had this argument before. As I have pointed out to the hon. Gentleman*

*and other Labour Members, we are following exactly the same policy as the*

*previous Government…" Secretary of State, Mr. McLoughlin, 2013.*

From 2013, referenced episodic discourse of various forms were adopting economic 'rationalisations' and using 'authorization' more frequently. This included discourses produced by Government, reviews conducted on its behalf, its agencies, and political figures. This implied influence from other discourses within the rail industry

*"Over a period of 2 months (from mid October to mid December) I have canvassed*

*views from a complete range of industry bodies – operators, suppliers, passenger*

*groups, the unions, investors, the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR), Government and*

*other authorities … I have also met Sam Laidlaw … I commissioned First Class*

*Partnerships to provide commercial advice and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP to act*

*as financial advisers, with Norton Rose LLP providing legal advice and IBI Group*

*programme management advice." (Brown, 2013, p. 10), 2013 & 2018.*

Consultancies drove the rail case relatively consistently from 2013 using 'authorization' from other consultancy reports and rationalisation on economic grounds. Other interest groups referenced (such as political parties, media and think tanks) generally did not follow a set pattern.

In 2018, the use of 'rationalization' and 'authorization' remained dominant and the use of 'mythopoesis' increased. 'Authorization' was used by Opposition referencing episodic discourses to justify their stance on rail nationalisation. Government referenced its own commissioned reviews to counter criticism.

*"On Monday, The Times newspaper said: "The transport secretary's decision to*

*award lucrative contracts to an ailing Carillion is only the latest worrying*

*misjudgment to come to light."" Labour, Mr. McDonald, 2018.*

Local Authorities and Network Rail were routinely referenced by Government 'authorization' where it made commitments to work with such organisations

to evaluate the case for rail enhancement proposals. This aligned with the need for Government to respond to requests for niche projects.

*"I have just received the proposals from Network Rail, and we are now reviewing them … We are looking at all the different options but, as I have said, electrification will be part of the programme." Secretary of State, Mr. Grayling, 2018.*

Parliamentary committees and Government institutions were referenced heavily in debates on cancelled electrification schemes. Schemes were generally rationalised on the basis of their deliverables, such as economic growth or enhanced service, with such information being commonly taken from referenced episodic discourses. Increased use of 'mythopoesis' in justifying party-political positions regarding privatisation or nationalisation emerged. Parliamentarians appeared willing to utilise logic chains, such as historic investment levels, previous positions of other parties or international comparison to justify their positions. 2018 demonstrated that Government faced significant challenge to its legitimisation patterns, however it was willing to counter challenges and rationalised views with its own 'authorizations' and 'rationalisations'. However, this did not mean the criticism and alternative proposals went away. Throughout the study window, the same questions were asked routinely with the same rationales given for positions stated. This contrasts greatly with 1993 and 1998 where the Government would dismiss alternatives firmly.

In summary, the overall picture is one of change since 'A New Deal for Transport' (DETR, 1997). Government led the way in rationalising rail, but then the case evolved through local interests and private sector interests over the next 10 years. 'Authorization' was dominant from the early 2000's, broadly aligning with the maturing of privatisation. Referenced reports, local stakeholder comments and previous statements by other politicians were all routinely used to justify often contradicting policy positions. Parliamentarians were hence clearly leaning on other actors to rationalise their opinions on rail policy rationales. Advocacies were referencing each other's work, all often saying the same thing to further strengthen their own arguments. A key theme is that in 1993, Government used authorisation toward British Rail to substantiate views and this could not occur in following study windows without risking authorising information from vested interests, even within rail.

## 7.3.9 Types of Spend

The analysis into sentiments towards certain types of spend demonstrated some interesting results. In 1993, parliamentarians expressed significant interest in 'rolling stock' procurement and investment. Government was implementing a £150m leasing scheme that was discussed at length by parliamentarians due to a competition for said funds between InterCity and Network Southeast. Some parliamentarians pushed for the fund to be doubled so both routes could receive new 'rolling stock', though this was rejected by Government. It was interesting that the wants of parliamentarians for their constituents, or passengers, were considered only after Government's funding levels were confirmed.

*"I am glad that the hon. Gentleman accepts that there has been substantial investment in the east coast main line: some £550 million. There has been substantial investment throughout British Rail. As the hon. Gentleman knows, that investment is currently running at record levels. However, not everything can be done at once. As I have said, in the context of its corporate plan, which will be coming to me fairly soon, BR is currently looking at resignalling work. The hon. Gentleman asked about rolling stock. The Government's contribution remains at record levels, but, inevitably, as a result of the recession, there has been a decline in revenue and British Rail decided that it was not prudent to proceed at this stage with work on the rolling stock, which is likely to cost about £350 million. It is considering its rolling stock strategy and will no doubt present proposals in due course." Secretary of State, Mr. MacGregor, 1993.*

Parliamentarians also demonstrated knowledge of signalling and track renewals in their area, whilst appearing to understand some level of technical detail. There was a clear indication that Government was supportive of allocating funding to what were considered investments and upgrades, but also that it wished to save money on operations. There was no clear stance from the Opposition toward either issue. 'New lines', such as the Channel Tunnel, were viewed by the Government under the banner of 'overall rail funding' rather than being separated from funding levels for the conventional network. Few schemes were pushed forward by backbenchers that were not pre-existing Government schemes, the only example being the

Heathrow Express tunnels. This implies that Government held power regarding agenda setting.

In 1993, episodic discourses emphasised that spending money to improve 'safety' was desirable, despite rail being a comparatively safe form of travel.

*"New regulatory controls and new arrangements within the railway industry will be needed if safety standards are to be maintained through the period of implementation of the Government's policy on liberalisation and privatisation, and afterwards into the future. It is considered that the recommendations in this report, if implemented, will provide the necessary assurances for the public and the workforce." (Health and Safety Commission, 1993, p. 11), 1993.*

In 1998, there was a significant focus on 'new lines' given that three of the four debates of the period were focused on the CTRL, so this was not unexpected. This implies that other railway matters were not of major salience during this study window, perhaps this removal of rail from the political agenda is a ramification of British Rail privatisation.

*"I am grateful for the hon. Lady's support. It is calculated that, as a regeneration engine, the CTRL could create between 80,000 and 120,000 new jobs. When in opposition, Labour endorsed the project and flagged up what were seen as flaws in the business plan, to try to ensure its success. We need to support the project now that Labour is in power because the reasons why we supported it then are as valid now, if not more so—even if that means more public resources and financing."*

*Labour, Mr. Fitzpatrick, 1998.*

There were few references to alternatives to the CTRL. One reference stated 'upgrading the existing network' as an alternative, but these were rare. This could imply that there was little desire to deviate from Government's proposal or little awareness of competing schemes. Other rail enhancement projects, such as Thameslink 2000, were sparsely mentioned, implying that Government held much of the agenda setting power similarly to 1993. What was interesting in this year, particularly relative to 1993, is the collapse in references to 'rolling stock' and 'infrastructure maintenance and renewal'. With franchises responsible for procuring new 'rolling stock' and Railtrack responsible for maintenance, this is perhaps understandable.

However, it does go to show that the privatised industry set up and associated division of Government and private sector responsibilities was broadly unquestioned in Parliament and was reflected in the salience of these issues among parliamentarians.

In 2003, infrastructure aspects of spend were the highest in salience overall. Government references to the construction of 'new lines' (the CTRL) viewed investment as a success story. This is peculiar given that it had not yet been delivered in full and thus not delivered its full benefit.

*"… in September this year, Britain's first new major railway for 100 years will open.*

*The channel tunnel rail link is an example of public and private money going in to*

*improve the railways." Secretary of State, Mr. Darling, 2003.*

Some further interest in 'new lines' beyond this did occur with some indication that backbench and primarily Labour parliamentarians were willing to press the Government towards delivering Crossrail. However, there was less success over other lines, such as Beeching line reopenings, which were not actively being considered by the Government with quick dismissals from Ministers. In terms of other 'infrastructure enhancements', references to the West Coast Mainline upgrade were made by Government, alongside some indication from parliamentarians that they supported local 'infrastructure enhancements' not yet funded by Government. This was the first indication of widespread lobbying for 'niche' enhancement schemes and, combined with the push for 'new lines', suggests that there was a clear growing interest from parliamentarians in rail spend outside of the Government's agenda. This shows the first indications of Government not fully controlling rail policy but responding to policy requests from parliamentarians.

*"My hon. Friend mentioned passing points, but he will be aware that Railtrack pulled*

*out a lot of track for passing points, and has closed a lot of platforms. Passing*

*points that were in existence 10 or 15 years ago are no longer there, but it would be*

*simple to put them back in as a priority." Liberal Democrat, Mr. Ross, 2003.*

*"In my own constituency, we have been waiting years for a simple solution to the*

*problem of a large gap between track and train at Freshford station. That has*

*recently been cut, despite many promises to solve the problem. We have proposed*

*simpler and cheaper solutions, but even those have been rejected." Labour, Mr.*

*Foster, 2003.*

*"I welcome the £2.5 million that the Assembly has allocated to improve railway*

*stations in Wales, but does the Secretary of State accept that if we want to improve*

*rail services we will have to attack the Reading blockage, the signalling problems at*

*Slough and the flooding in the Chipping Sodbury tunnel?" Labour, Ms. Lawrence,*

*2003.*

In addition, there was parliamentarian interest in 'operational expenditure' following the SRA announcing the removal of some train services. However, it is worth noting that the SRA was not reducing rail budgets but planning to deliver lower service levels for the same cost, with Government stating this was to improve other aspects of the journey like reliability and 'safety'. There was also evidence of specific debates being organised for parliamentarians, generally Opposition, to push questions concerning rail funding and the management of the rail system to Government, further showing signs of a reducing level of power for Government. There was little interest in 'infrastructure maintenance and renewals', which is surprising given this was a factor behind Government funding levels at this time.

In 2008, Government was clear that its priority for funding rail was spending money on capacity enhancements through 'rolling stock' and 'infrastructure enhancements'. Parliamentarians from both sides of the House lobbied for their local lines to be prioritised over others. Government stated headline 'rolling stock' procurement figures as a means to achieving capacity gain in response to criticism, however cross-party backbench parliamentarians often responded by stating that this was not enough, and additional 'rolling stock' was needed to address capacity issues. There were repeated calls for investment into 'infrastructure enhancement' projects and 'new lines', such as Crossrail. Backbenchers from both sides referenced frustration at the lack of commitment from Government to such schemes. Many of these projects were not supported, with Government setting out that these schemes were not being progressed and stating headline rail funding statistics as a rebuttal.

*"The Secretary of State will know that Network Rail has been carrying out feasibility*

*studies into two dual-tracking schemes—those between Swindon and Kemble and*

*between Oxford and Worcester. … Can the Secretary of State update me on those*

*schemes this afternoon?" Conservative, Mr Clifton-Brown, 2008.*

*"I will of course do that, but the fact of the matter is that these issues are for*

*Network Rail to deal with. We have committed the funding for a five-year period up*

*to 2014. Network Rail has put forward a business plan which is now being*

*scrutinised by the Office of Rail Regulation, and which involves investment in 1,300*

*new carriages, platform lengthening and increasing capacity …" Secretary of State,*

*Ms. Kelly, 2008.*

Such enhancements lobbying originated from both sides of the House and involved niche schemes. There were several references to conversations with industry representatives when justifying the schemes put forward. There was significant Opposition interest in the Government's management of Network Rail and repeated claims of inefficiency leading to higher 'operational expenditure'. This also included repeated criticism of Network Rail's executive bonus payments following overrunning engineering works. Government deferred its response to an investigation into these overruns and highlighted its recent successes with the West Coast Mainline upgrade. This definition of success is interesting given cost overruns and delays to the project. 'New lines' were pushed by backbenchers and Opposition, but Government deferred its assessment to the next Parliament.

*"It is 20 years since the electrification of the east coast main line, and the line is*

*now used practically to capacity. Atkins has produced a study saying that a new*

*high-speed east coast line would generate two and a half times its cost in economic*

*benefits. Will the Government look seriously at the case for more and faster trains*

*connecting Yorkshire and the north-east with London and the Eurostar services to*

*the continent?" Labour, Mr Bayley, 2008.*

In 2008, the emphasis on 'safety' seen in earlier episodic discourses had faded with only sporadic references after. 'Safety' had been driven by Government or regulator authored discourses, such as strategies or reports. From 2008 a new emphasis on promoting 'infrastructure enhancements' to deliver capacity emerged and continued until the end of the study period.

Once more this was generally led by Government and Local Authorities but with a significant number of consultancies supporting such messages.

*"But it would not be prudent to commit now to 'all-or-nothing' projects, such as network-wide electrification or a high-speed line, for which the longer-term benefits are currently uncertain and which could delay tackling the current strategic priorities such as capacity." (DfT, 2007, p. 9), 2008.*

In 2013, 'new lines' and 'infrastructure enhancements' became particularly salient relative to other types of spend. In a debate on HS2, Government stated that its justification for the scheme was capacity and that the benefits included journey time reductions as a by-product. The Opposition supported HS2 with little criticism, contrary to the Labour party's position in 2008, though its position did change before the 2010 General Election. Backbench parliamentarians were generally supportive as well, though some expressed concerns that HS2 would come at the expense of funding for 'infrastructure enhancements' on the existing network, which the Government denied stating high-level funding statistics.

*"… without HS2, the key rail and road routes connecting London to the midlands and the north will soon be overwhelmed. Even on moderate forecasts, the west coast main line, the nation's key rail corridor, will be full by the mid-2020s … I was just talking about the west coast main line—and that is despite £9 billion of improvements north of Rugby in recent years. That means investing in the current infrastructure and trying to improve it." Secretary of State, Mr McLoughlin, 2013.*

This shows a contrary recession response from Conservative Governments compared with 1993 and is especially surprising given post-2010 austerity. It indicates the establishment of the pro-rail hegemony. Negative backbench expressions towards HS2 often included proposals for alternative rail industry spending such as 'infrastructure enhancements' or alternative 'new lines'. Many questions were asked from the backbenches as cross-party parliamentarians sought to push the Government to support 'infrastructure enhancement' schemes local to their constituency, including new stations. Government did not appear to dismiss schemes it had not been planning, instead stating that local promoters should take the case to the Department. This implied the first instance of acceptance from Government that

'outsiders' may know best how to spend its own rail funding budget. There was some indication that the Government believed it was responsible for being convinced and deciding which rail enhancement schemes offered value for money, which was a development from the 2008 position where the Labour Government would defend its position on the basis of headline funding levels whilst being willing to reject or defer calls for niche schemes.

There was significant reflection on 'operational expenditure' by the Opposition, though from a perspective that cash extraction by Government from the rail industry through franchise premium payments was a good thing. The Opposition appeared supportive of the retention of a nationalised East Coast operator model on these grounds. In episodic discourses, criticism of franchising was common and linked with criticism of inefficient operations, which generally started around 2003 and continued throughout. The discourses did not agree as to why rail was inefficient with blame being aimed at privatisation and profit 'leakage', contractualisation or Network Rail with Network Rail also noting some instances of its own underperformance.

*"In some parts of the business, we were initially running ahead of the target rate of*

*improvement set at the last periodic review but, as expected, it has become*

*increasingly difficult to make continuing savings. Some of the savings were also*

*achieved through scope efficiencies which do not necessarily reduce the unit cost*

*of ongoing work…" (Network Rail, 2007, p. 5), 2008*

*"Within the current framework, much of the responsibility for costs is seen to rest*

*with Government, and industry has not taken the responsibility which it needs to*

*exercise for driving costs down. This may well be due to the extent to which*

*Government is involved in detail in the industry's affairs, and yet is not providing*

*sufficient clarity about what Government policy is, how different strands of policy fit*

*together, or how the different levels of policy, objectives strategies and*

*implementation are linked." (McNulty, 2011, p. 9), 2013.*

In 2018, salience was broadly similar to 2013 across all types of spending, with 'new lines' and 'infrastructure enhancements' dominating discussions, and routine references to 'operational expenditure' by the Opposition critical of the franchising model. Cross-party support remained for 'new lines', such

as HS2 and Crossrail. Opposition to these schemes generally comprised of backbench parliamentarians subject to local blight in their constituencies from the construction. Their contributions generally did not push against spending money on rail but that other 'new lines' or 'infrastructure enhancements' could deliver greater benefit. In episodic discourses, sentiments focused on the journey times and connectivity benefits of 'infrastructure enhancements' and 'new lines'. These sentiments emerged in non-Government publications in 2013 and 2018.

*"The need for HSR is fundamentally centred on both improved journey times and the need for additional capacity on the rail network and better connectivity between Core Cities: the West Coast Main Line (WCML), Midland Main Line (MML) and East Coast Main Line (ECML) are forecast to be at or approaching capacity in the 2020s and this will require a step change in capacity. Upgrading existing lines will not provide the step change in capacity required on the main lines and would be expensive and disruptive. Meanwhile, creating a new classic line represents poorer value for money than a new high speed line." (Volterra, 2011, p. 2), 2013.*

Government also led discourse with its support for 'new lines', prominent in 2013 and 2018, though there was a clear push from non-central Governments and consultancies to integrate plans for HS2 into local plans. There was significant lobbying from backbenchers from both sides of the House for rail schemes not yet supported or considered by Government, or for schemes that had even been previously cancelled. Government sometimes defended its record by stating high level funding statistics or references to 'new lines' programmes such as Crossrail or HS2. Other times, Government stated that it would continue to investigate the scheme. Only rarely did Government state outright that it did not want to progress a scheme in question. There was significant pressure on Government to un-pause electrification 'infrastructure enhancement' schemes from both sides of the House, with the Government responding that investment in new 'rolling stock' could achieve the same outcomes.

*"If that is the case and Ministers are concerned for the north, why has electrification between cities in the north been cancelled?" Labour, Sir Barron, 2018.*

*"As I have said many times in the House, we are delivering a process of modernisation on the midland main line that will transform journey times and deliver much improved rolling stock and brand-new trains much sooner. Our proposed model will deliver the improvements people want in the early 2020s, which is sooner than any other project would have done." Secretary of State, Mr Grayling, 2018.*

In contributions on 'operational expenditure' a key theme concerned the profitability of franchises and their ability to pay money back to Government. The Labour Opposition focused primarily on franchises not providing sufficient operational profit and how a state-run system would be more profitable, whilst the Government generally responded to this criticism by outlining public and private investment schemes in the railways. There was significant concern about 'leakages' from the Opposition, whereby profits for shareholders of private franchises were predominantly highlighted as a means to extract money from the rail industry that could have been reinvested in lower 'fares' or 'infrastructure enhancement' schemes.

*"the Government will step in and bail it out, kissing goodbye to the £2 billion that Virgin had previously agreed to pay. … What makes me want to weep is that he is giving yet more gifts to Richard Branson and Brian Souter. What is more, he is using our public money to fund his failure. Let us not forget that Virgin and Stagecoach are companies that extracted hundreds of millions of pounds in rigged compensation payments from taxpayers during the upgrade of the WCML between 2002 and 2006—£590 million to be precise." Labour, Mr McDonald, 2018.*

Government often deferred criticism for not committing to certain schemes, such as electrification, by stating how the Labour Party delivered and supported similar policies when it was in power previously. There was limited interest from the Opposition or backbenchers on the levels of funding for 'infrastructure maintenance and renewals', but repeated statements from Government suggested that their rail policy was working due to £20bn of maintenance in CP6.

In summary, there has been a major narrative change towards different types of rail industry spend. Early on, Government appeared to hold full

agenda-setting power regarding rail industry funding policy which is observed in House of Commons debates and episodic discourses. In the years following privatisation, there appeared to be a shift, partly owing to responsibilities for certain types of spending being transferred away from Government and partly due to backbench parliamentarians pushing for more niche rail enhancement and new line proposals. There was very limited interest during this time for the day to day running and maintenance of the railway. In 2013, Government appeared to accept its role as being one of listening to rail enhancement or new line proposals by various industry stakeholders, and then to assess the merit of each. In 2018, Government appeared to try to take back control over the rail funding agenda, though this was generally met with consistent backbench lobbying for specific or niche schemes and Opposition criticism over the whole rail industry structure. This also follows the reclassification of Network Rail debt in 2015, potentially indicating a further key reason for additional Government interest in controlling rail industry spending.

### 7.3.10 British Rail Privatisation 'Essential Requirements'

The essential requirements of British Rail privatisation (DoT, 1992) were the objectives the Government indicated it wanted privatisation to achieve. Analysis into these themes outlined limited insights into the research question and propositions. Analysis into rail funding debates shows that in 1993 these 'essential requirements' were only sporadically referenced during implementation of privatisation, with promises of improved 'quality of service' being the most salient topic. From 1998 to 2013 essential requirements were rarely referenced explicitly, with cross party support for privatisation being one possible explanation for this. In referenced discourses between 1998 and 2013, the same could be said about the relationship between sentiments and the 'essential requirements' being incidental alignments in references to improving the quality of rail services through upgrades. As such, there was little relevance of this between 1998 and 2013 due to a simple lack of challenge and a 'moving on' from the initial policy goals. In 2018, the story changed somewhat due to the loss of a pro-privatisation hegemony, however the majority of references were to 'quality of service' rather than the other essential requirements. Essential requirements, such as 'opportunities for employees', appeared somewhat forgotten about and thus the variables did not link with the themes other than incidentally. The headline is that the essential requirements were never evenly or consistently

referenced and were potentially forgotten about after privatisation had occurred, with other priorities driving the narrative.

### 7.3.11 Government Objectives for the Railway

Government appraisal criteria, as set out in COBA, NATA and TAG, were also not consistently referenced and did not appear to influence debates or referenced discourses. Some objectives were referenced more regularly than others. In 1993, there was some evidence that Government championed the idea that relatively lower funding levels were something to be proud of. COBA, with its focus on 'benefits' and 'costs', aligned with a significant parliamentary interest in cost reduction. Despite references to some objectives, there was no consistent view from parliamentarians of what objectives the rail system could achieve in 1993, and later in 1998.

The NATA years saw the appraisal criteria expanded significantly. parliamentarians and episodic discourses began to utilise the wider range of arguments in favour of rail funding policies. The salient rail objectives were much clearer; in 2003 and 2008 it was high quality service (including reliability, journey times and capacity) for passengers. In the TAG years, in 2013 it was about wider economic impacts and business travel and in 2018 it was both economic and user benefit. This was surprisingly consistent across parties. However, this appears an incidental occurrence relating to the changing contextual landscape and policy frames. Appraisal guidance factors were not referenced consistently, for example 'integration' was sparsely referenced in the NATA years and 'environmental' was sparsely referenced throughout. This analysis contradicts the idea that appraisal criteria drive discourses despite some discourse themes changing to align with appraisal changes, such as wider economic benefits, owing to the reduced salience of other criteria coupled with the contradictions present. However, the economic arguments appeared driven by the Eddington study, with many references citing Eddington rather than TAG (Eddington, 2006).

## 7.4 Summary

This chapter outlined the results presented based on the analysis methods used. Not all results appeared useful toward the research question, whilst others were highly relevant. This is reflected on and discussed in Chapter 8.

### 7.4.1 Mixed Methods Discourse Analysis

This analysis found that the salience of rail generally increased throughout the study period, except for in 1993 during privatisation when it was at its

highest. Rail funding salience increased consistently in the House of Commons. Government and British Rail were the most salient institutions until privatisation, after which Government remained salient and a greater diversity of institutions gained salience. Many references were made to new private sector organisations participating within the rail industry. The analysis also found that there was evidence of high salience of regulators in the early 2000's. This demonstrated that, contrary to the aims of privatisation, Government was unable to remove rail from its agenda with the opposite effect occurring. The propensity to reference episodic discourses increased throughout the study period. There was a clear juncture in and after 2003, whereby the frequency of references to episodic discourses per word spoken increased in rail funding debates. This coincided with rising rail funding levels and was not observed in other non-funding rail debates. Episodic discourses were also found to have been produced by a growing number of private sector organisations and individuals that held historic roles within the private sector since the 2003 window. Influence by private sector advocates towards House of Commons debates increased from 2003.

## 7.4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

The assessment of policy timing demonstrated the role of political narratives. In 1993, the use of delay tactics was common to push back against niche rail funding proposals. A consistent sentiment then emerged that rail funding was 'overdue' from 2003 to 2018, with both Labour and Conservative Governments putting forward a sentiment towards the Opposition that "you didn't fund rail in your term, so we now have to". In 2003 and 2008 there was a particular focus on 'overdue' maintenance whilst in 2013 and 2018 the focus switched to 'overdue' enhancements and new lines. The validity of this post-2010 is easy to question. Most referenced discourses produced by regulators or independent reviews of the rail system on behalf of Government suggested it was the 'right time' to fund recommendations. In 2008, 2013 and 2018, episodic discourses from devolved governments and consultancies generally expressed sentiment that rail funding was 'overdue' and applied pressure on Government to support spending proposals.

Early on Government was able to stick to its rail agenda and use delay tactics towards schemes it did not support. It appeared to lose control from 2008 and began accepting niche proposals that were put forward by backbenchers. These proposals were often informed by episodic discourses produced by devolved administrations, or local and regional authorities. Such episodic discourses were often referenced by backbenchers and

Opposition to hold the Government to account to its previous rail funding commitments, outlining the benefits lost if cancellation occurred. Referenced discourses outlined that during the New Labour years, Government committed to ambitious targets for rail outputs in its 1997 White Paper (DETR, 1997), 10 Year Plan (DETR, 2000) and its 2007 White Paper (DfT, 2007). In 2003, the SRA and Network Rail were also highly supportive of the pro-rail message, setting out that commitment to spending proposals could achieve Government objectives. Post 2008, it became consultancies and devolved Governments pushing for commitment to more rail funding. This means Government, SRA and Network Rail initially led agenda setting in favour of rail but appeared to lose power to cancel schemes.

A pro-rail hegemony was established over the course of the study period. The initial sentiment that 'additional Government rail funding was not supported' was replaced in 2003 and 2008 by Government sentiment that appeared to support funding rail to make up for under-investment by the previous Conservative Government, and then to grow capacity. In 2013 and 2018 under Conservative-led Governments, both Government and Opposition supported funding for enhancements due to a belief that it would generate economic benefit. The analysis of episodic discourses outlined further the role of lobbying in the creation of a pro-rail hegemony within the House of Commons. The analysis identified that pro-rail advocacy from the privatised industry, consultants and devolved Governments from 2003 were highly important in the development of the case for rail and the generation of much pro-rail sentiment, though the Labour Government had been supportive of public transport following the New Deal in 1997 (DETR, 1997). Importantly, there was no anti-rail advocacy in episodic discourses, as even discourses opposed to certain rail schemes often championed different rail schemes. Key findings from these variables are shown in Figure 25.

## Timing sentiment

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Too early to make headline rail funding decisions owing to upcoming privatisation | Right time to fund CTRL / overdue due to French success with LGV Nord | Rail funding overdue due to lack of historic maintenance works | Minister-led 'right time to invest in capacity' sentiment | Cross-party 'right time to invest in economically beneficial schemes' sentiment, with Ministerial sentiment funding was overdue due to waste in Labour years |

## Emergence of commitment

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Government owns funding choices and will only invest fixed amounts in schemes | Government owns funding choices but will invest more if needed to guarantee delivery | Government owns funding choices, supports niche schemes if they align with priorities (capacity) and rejects other niche schemes (new lines, electrification) | Government makes funding choices but fails to dismiss niche schemes where proposed, instead suggesting a case for funding the scheme is brought to Government |

## Emergence of pro-rail funding hegemony

Conservative position

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Relieve burden on the tax payer and shift burden to the fare payer | No clear position on rail funding policy | Emerging back bench support for rail funding but no front bench position | Government investment into rail considered desirable to achieve economic benefits |

Labour position

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Public-private partnerships as a means to achieve greater investment at lower cost to tax payer | Government funding to improve rail services considered desirable | Govt. investment into rail considered desirable to achieve economic benefits | Govt. investment into rail desirable but not if system privatised |

| 1993 | 1998 | 2003 | 2008 | 2013 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Figure 25 Key findings from CDA analysis into House of Commons rail funding debates concerning hegemony, commitment, and timing**

In the House of Commons, perceptions of value for money were of limited significance as most sentiments expressed considered rail 'high' value throughout. Episodic discourses show a differing trend. Discourses referenced early in the study period were generally technocratic and impartial, such as regulator reports. From 2003, there began to emerge a narrative within many discourses that rail was high value, particularly driven by non-central Government and consultancy. The private Network Rail also contributed to this but did so less in the 2018 window, after nationalisation.

The geographic analysis indicated a clear link between the development and delivery of the devolution agenda and the emergence of pro-rail narratives within debates. An initial focus from parliamentarians on the relationship between rail and their constituency transitioned towards a focus on 'national' and 'regional' benefits. This followed the creation of devolved bodies by the devolution acts, which drove the case for rail and produced referenced discourses. Early devolution acts, such as the Scotland Act (1998), Government of Wales Act (1998) and the Greater London Authority Act (1999) appeared to be followed by sentiments within the House of Commons in favour of funding rail in subsequent years, particularly within Wales and London with little other 'regional' focus. There was a significant increase in the pro-rail narrative emerging on the basis of English regions following the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act (2016) which was detected in the 2018 study window. The alignment appears relatively clear. There was also the emergence of a 'UK'-scale economic narrative from 2008, following the Eddington Transport Study (Eddington, 2006), successes on the CTRL and the emerging case for HS2. Throughout the evolution of geographic arguments, there was a clear strengthening of the case for rail, driven primarily by organisations not within central Government.

Results observed changes to the rationale for funding rail which could be related to the types of spend discussed. There was a general change from a sentiment of spending money to 'patch up the system' to 2003, including replacing old stock and the construction of the CTRL which was viewed as a 'missing piece' due to the earlier completion of the French equivalent. This overall sentiment shifted to one of 'expanding capability' from 2008 to 2018, first by 'rolling stock' procurement, then by 'infrastructure enhancements' and 'new lines' from 2013-2018. The reasons for funding rail hence changed significantly even though the category of spend could remain the same. This related to the geographic arguments, as the initial 'local' case for rail was made on the basis of a locale missing out on maintenance works or

replacement 'rolling stock', whilst later in the study period the 'regional' case for rail was made on the basis of 'regional' economic performance. Episodic discourses outlined an early emphasis on 'safety' which faded from 2008, potentially due to a wider success within the rail industry in attempts to reduce the number of train crashes with fatalities. It is curious that no significant reference into 'safety' occurred in House of Commons debates. This was followed by support for 'infrastructure enhancements' from 2008, which grew to include 'new lines' within 2013 in referenced episodic discourses. The cost of running the railway was also salient from 2003 with some debate over the efficiency of Network Rail and, following the loss of a pro-privatisation hegemony between 2013 and 2018, questions over the efficiency of the privatised structure with recommendations towards both nationalisation and further privatisation from think-tanks. Key findings are shown in Figure 26, with Figure 27 delving into greater detail over the salient reasons to fund rail in each study window.

The variables for analysing the legitimisation of views towards rail funding also demonstrated a clear change. In 1993, there was an inconsistent approach towards substantiating views until the consistent use of 'rationalisation' on the basis of information presented combined with 'authorisation' (from other episodic discourses) beginning in 2008. This demonstrated that sentiments were supported by discourses produced externally, and those sentiments were pro-rail funding. British Rail had been similarly relied on but arguably did not have a vested interest. Analysis into how such sources were referenced, by intertextuality, also indicated a growing cannon of discourses over the study period, resulting in permeation into Parliament, implying effective lobbying. Analysis into referenced discourses outlined that sentiment trends were broadly similar to those in House of Commons debates on rail funding. The establishment of a consistent tendency to rationalise the case for rail was led by the Labour Government and this eventually became overtaken by the rail industry and advocates who rationalised rail and authorised views with discourses produced by advocates from 2008. This tendency to reference other discourses indicates a clear pro-rail advocacy. This was borne out of Government policy, once more suggesting that Government initially supported the growth of rail as a 'good thing' but subsequently was held to account by a pro-rail advocacy and was required to fund the realisation of this ambition. Figure 28 shows how legitimisation headlines changed with time.
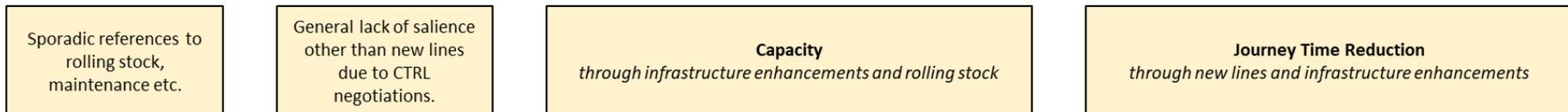
**Figure 26 Key findings on geographic sentiments, reasons to fund rail and types of spending discussed**
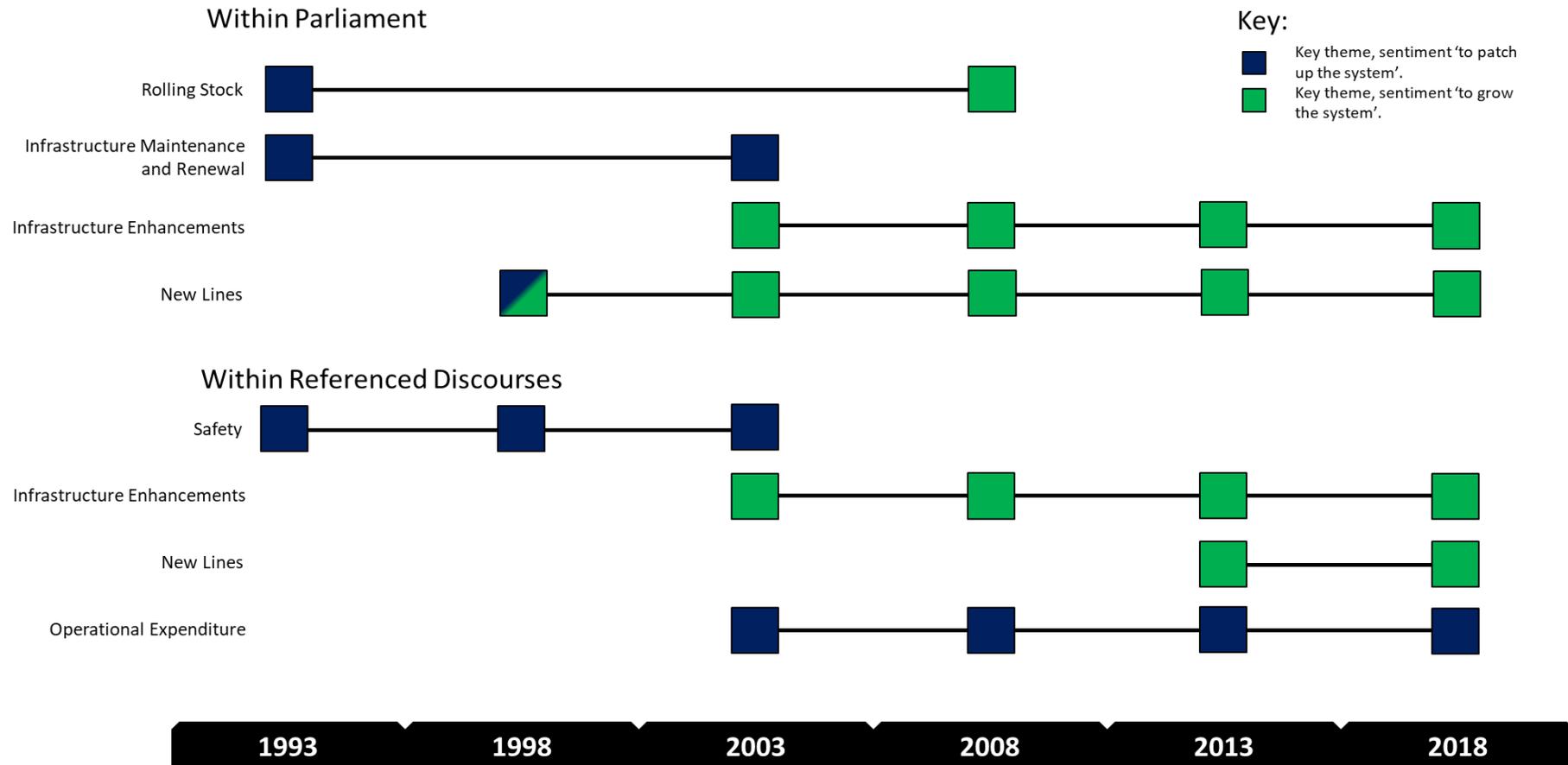
**Figure 27 Key findings on how themes aligned with 'patch and mend' or 'upgrade the system' concerns and types of spend**
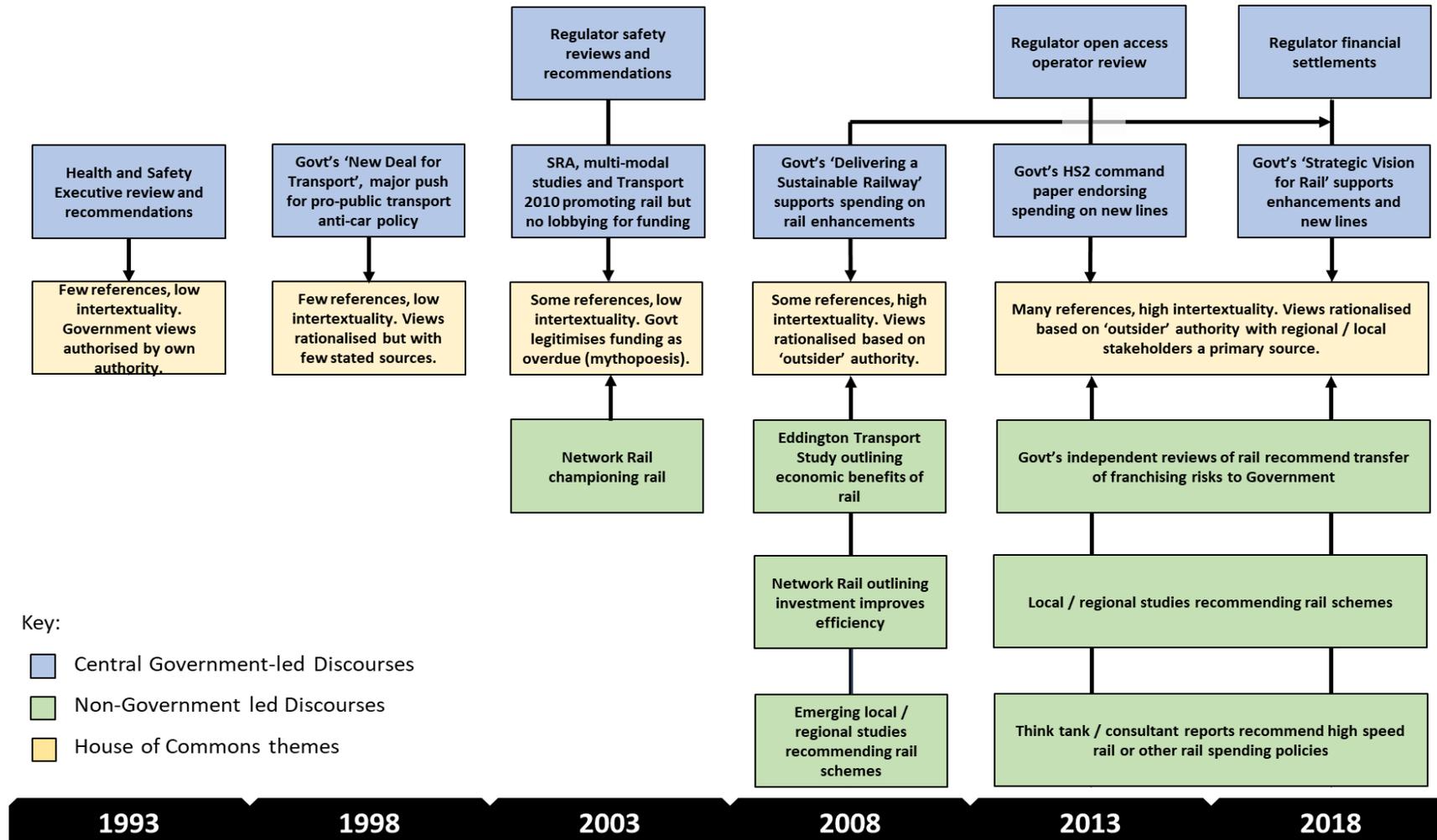
**Figure 28 High level alignment of intertextuality and headlines from referenced aligning with House of Commons themes**

Less relevant were the British Rail Privatisation 'Essential Requirements' (DoT, 1992) which were inconsistently referenced. Government objectives for the railway were also not relevant as no appraisal method (COBA, NATA or TAG) was consistently referenced across all the factors considered. Dominant wider considerations, such as the 'economy' post 2013, featured more prominently. Similarly, manifesto priorities were broadly irrelevant as there was not enough alignment between priorities and changes to the pro-rail narratives emerging in debates, though coincidental links appear.

# Chapter 8
# Discussion

## 8.1 Introduction

This chapter does two things; first it discusses the results within the context of the propositions of this thesis, and second it discusses the methodological choices made in Chapters 4 and 5. Sections 8.2 to 8.5 each focus on a proposition, with Section 8.6 discussing the methodology. This enables Chapter 9 to conclude by answering the research question and make recommendations for further research. To recap, the propositions were derived based on four themes commonly linked to policy change in the literature discussed in Chapter 3, and are:

- **Proposition 1:** Rail funding policy will have become a more politically salient topic amongst Government and policy makers.

- **Proposition 2:** The rationale for rail funding will have shifted towards a hegemony that rail is a worthwhile use of Government money.

- **Proposition 3:** Rail advocates will have undertaken a lobbying campaign aimed at promoting the allocation of higher Government funding levels for the rail industry.

- **Proposition 4:** There will have been a degree of power transfer from Government to the network of rail interests over rail funding policy development.

## 8.2 Proposition 1: Rail Funding Policy Will Have Become a More Politically Salient Topic Amongst Government and Policy Makers.

The first proposition outlines that policy change would be more likely should rail funding have become more politically salient (RePass, 1971; Robertson, 1976) (Section 3.2). The MMDA results (Section 7.2) demonstrate that such a change in salience is observed in House of Commons debates on rail,

which aligns with other findings (Chaney, 2014). There are caveats to note when comparing with the Chaney (2014) work such as this research considering words spoken, instead of quasi-sentence counts, although the results are similar. Rail was observed to be highly salient in 1993, reducing somewhat for the next two study windows and then regaining salience in 2008. This may be explained by the privatisation of rail holding an objective to reduce state intervention within the industry (Harris, 2016). However, by 2003 this reduced role for Government became unrealistic and was reversed, which prompted parliamentary salience to reach higher levels thereafter. This demonstrates that Governments were unable to remove rail from the parliamentary agenda, with a subsequent resurgence and the need for routine tinkering and intervention into the franchising system (Preston, 2016; Nelson, 2019). The rail industry has been reviewed and restructured a significant number of times since privatisation which is consistent with the long-term relationship between Government and the rail industry. From a parliamentary salience perspective, it would be reasonable to conclude that privatisation failed to remove or reduce rail from the political agenda, thus failing to achieve a key policy objective of the time. Whilst different in focus, it is interesting to reflect on parallels with the privatised energy market, where Government is necessarily increasingly drawn into the planning of the future energy mix and the response of the market to wholesale price spikes.

There are a variety of potential reasons for the increase in salience in rail. One noted outcome from the MMDA is that media influence theory, concerning a link between the media and political salience (Cerna, 2013), appears unrelated. The media was sparsely referenced in House of Commons debates, with more references to constituents, rail industry organisations or devolved authorities. Other changes such as rising demand for rail, particularly among higher income individuals and professionals (ITS, 2016), may instead have been a key driver but could not be fully explored within this thesis.

The issue of rail funding demonstrated a much clearer and consistent growth in salience across the study period. Despite the high salience of rail as a whole in 1993, salience of rail funding was low. It was clear that parliamentarians did not view funding increases as a solution to the rail problem, or at least were not considering it viable to deliver. Instead, many of these debates consisted of discussions around how reforms may help issues with rail. This was demonstrated by the cross-party Government sentiment in the 1990's that additional funding for rail should not come from

the taxpayer, with future policies such as privatisation (from the Conservative Government in 1993) and public-private partnerships (from the Labour Government in 1998) promising to deliver investment without state funding. This aligned with wider narratives at the time concerning an aspiration for a smaller the role of the state. With time, however, rail funding grew in prominence and eventually reached a point where the majority of rail debates were classified as being related to rail funding.

The most salient reasons to fund rail discussed by parliamentarians were different from those identified in studies into what the rail funding has been spent on (Smith, 2006; Smith, et al., 2009; Preston & Robins, 2013). Reliability, safety, or environmental considerations were not particularly salient, whilst capacity and wider economic impacts were. In rail funding debates in 2003 and 2008 there was very little emphasis on safety relative to the number of discourses referenced within those debates (SRA, 2003; Network Rail, 2007). The growth in salience of rail funding was not tied to one specific reason and the total amount of funding was the main source of attention from parliamentarians.

## 8.3 Proposition 2: The Rationale for Rail Funding Will Have Shifted Towards a Hegemony that Rail is a Worthwhile Use of Government Money.

Political hegemony would be expected within House of Commons debates given two key characteristics of the rail funding question: first the substantial increase in the quantum of funding allocated since the turn of the millennium, and second the consistency that such funding levels have been maintained since (ORR, 2021a). Section 3.3 states hegemony being necessary for a policy to be delivered and to endure with time (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Cowan & Hultén, 1996; Dudley & Richardson, 2000; Wolmar, 2018). This research has demonstrated a case for the establishment of a pro-rail and pro-rail funding hegemony. This is within the House of Commons, Governments and Oppositions spanning the political spectrum, within local and devolved Government levels and within the rail advocacy.

### 8.3.1 Establishment of a Hegemony

The CDA results identified that Government funding for rail had cross-party opposition until the turn of the millennium. The Conservative Government of 1993 utilised delay tactics to avoid funding the rail system, pointing instead to a principle that the user of a service should pay for it and that investment

would be forthcoming after privatisation from the private sector. The Labour Government in 1998 recognised the benefits of rail, but overall, still outlined that state funding was undesirable and that funding should be obtained through public private partnerships. Backbench sentiment in favour of rail funding policies appeared to draw links with anticipated observations from diffusion theory (Shipan & Volden, 2008); that lessons learned from similar policies elsewhere (LGV Nord in France) were cited as pro-rail rationales. Governments of both major parties were unwilling to solve the railway dilemma with additional taxpayer funding and rather sought to propose reviews, restructures, or other private sector measures in order to solve issues with the rail system. However, with privatisation happening around this time and cross-party support for the privatised model continuing after its delivery, Government was not willing to reform the industry again so soon. Reforms had been a key feature in Government's avoidance of funding rail during the nationalised era, thus indicating a policy pathway.

Contrary to the aspirations and expectations of the 10 year transport plan (DETR, 2000), anticipated private funding did not come forward following the collapse of Railtrack. It is worth noting that other sources of private funding, such as TOCs, may have been deterred by this uncertainty thus stipulating a need for Government intervention. This would be to ensure delivery of the stated benefits derived from the rail network in the plan (DETR, 2000). Research shows TOC funding, when it did come forward, did not always deliver promised outcomes (Preston, 2016). Government endorsed rail funding policies from the 2003 window, perhaps as its only remaining option. The key change here was a shift in the discourses of Ministers from stating a desire to keep the rail funding burden off of the taxpayer to openly celebrating higher funding allocations. There were indications in referenced episodic discourses produced by Government, however, that higher state funding levels were seen as a temporary solution (DfT, 2007) and that other interventions would eventually support the rail system long term. There was also the issue of ideology, as Hebbert (2014) argues Labour Governments have been historically more willing to fund rail with taxpayer support. This contradicts other research (Crössmann & Mause, 2015), but was observed in this data around the initial increase from 2001. Backbenchers from major parties pushed many pro-rail sentiments in the early 2000's, contradicting previous research suggesting that backbenchers often follow party lines (Slapin, et al., 2017).

Increased rail funding has been theorised to be a direct result of the Hatfield crash by many commentators on rail (Wolmar, 2001; Harris, 2016), given the clear alignment in time. However, this fails to explain why such an event did not occur after crashes at Ladbroke Grove in 1999 or Clapham Junction in 1988, which were also highly politically salient. Instead, Hatfield may be viewed as one of the final pieces in aligning policy context, given it outlined failings of the whole network and triggered Railtrack to admit that it did not know the state of its assets. The regulatory model in place post-privatisation meant that Government had to re-enter the fray, with state funding being used to patch up the network and account for the regulators not requiring a sufficient degree of maintenance before the crash. It also followed the case for funding rail using private money being made by the same Government (DETR, 1997; 2000), but chances of this being fully delivered collapsing with Railtrack. The collapse of Railtrack meant planned maintenance and enhancements, funded by the private sector, were not able to come to fruition without Government support.

Government had no choice but to fund the rail industry without contradicting its previous policies or changing the regulatory regime. Such an intervention could have been a 'one-off' catch up investment, but instead, Government created a pro-rail funding narrative whereby it claimed that funding the rail system would achieve beneficial outcomes. Section 2.7 shows that research has suggested that the benefits of the privatised system had been offset by higher costs, which indicates a counter factual narrative by Government. If rail value for money was indeed worse during this time compared to the nationalised era, it would be expected that critiques of privatisation and the industry in general by parliamentarians would reflect this, but they provided opposite views. Government and Opposition backbenchers supported rail funding policies throughout the 2000's despite research noted in Section 2.7 suggesting rail was performing poorly on cost effectiveness grounds, thus suggesting some degree of policy capture owing to both parties supporting privatisation. Later, Cowie & Loynes (2012) would find that maintenance costs had returned to pre-privatisation levels and yet this still was not reflected in the House of Commons, though it was referenced by Network Rail (Network Rail, 2007). CDA revealed that throughout the whole study period, parliamentarians generally stated that rail was perceived as a high value for money policy irrespective of the real performance of the industry. This suggests the economic efficiency, or lack thereof, of the rail system did not impact the pro-rail funding hegemony during the early 2000's and was not a salient topic.

Preston (2016) highlights that there had been five phases of passenger rail franchising at the time of research. This shows that whilst Governments would not publicly state their opposition to privatisation, there was a clear discontent with the policy and a desire to see change. These smaller tweaks to the system are symptomatic of path dependence theory (Levi, 1997), with the cost of change being one factor that prevented policy reform. However, high system cost were already an issue during this time. This aligns with Section 3.5 and LTS theory in context of 'dynamic inertia', with an industry appearing to change but retaining the same fundamental characteristics.

### 8.3.2 Reinforcement – Economic Rationales

Following the early 2000's, when the initial jump in Government rail funding occurred, the higher funding levels were maintained through to the end of the study period. The Conservative-led coalition Government in 2010 also became supportive of high rail funding levels which demonstrates a party-political change in ideology. During Labour Government years, a handful of Conservative backbenchers had pushed for new rail funding policies, suggesting that the seeds were sown earlier. Furthermore, given the Conservative-led austerity spending cuts post 2010, rail was surprisingly one of a handful of industries not to receive high-level cuts, though other research has shown that across European countries rail funding is not correlated with Government debt (Crössmann & Mause, 2015). Previously, the rail industry's ability to gain policy support had been dependent on its ties to Government, leading to policy influences pre-nationalisation and a lacking of influence thereafter (Gourvish, 1980; 1986).

Worsley (2012) notes that GDP changes impact rail demand. The Conservative Government in 1993 blamed budget cuts to British Rail on a recession and resultant loss of demand whilst debating the issue in the House of Commons, thus in keeping with drivers of demand. Conservatives took an opposite approach from 2010, and rationalised funding rail due to its importance in supporting economic growth. This demonstrates a clear change in party-political positions with both Labour and Conservatives shifting to a pro-rail funding hegemony from the turn of the millennium. The findings of this analysis support previous work by Reardon & Marsden (2020) in identifying the role of economic narratives in the highly politicised transport policy developments of the 2010s.

What is curious is that both transitions to this party-political position were not established until parties were in Government. This echoes sentiment of a hollow-core driving policy (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). This would be

similar to Labour continuing to deliver Beeching cuts after taking Government in the mid 1960's, despite an election pledge to halt them immediately (Gourvish, 1986). The endorsement of rail funding by parties once entered into Government raises a question of choice, as this implies Government did not have many options to change rail. Rail is a significant commitment in regards to political effort and parliamentary time (Section 8.2), it was not a priority to change rail and so the on-going endorsement of rail continued. This criticism is valid because there was no clear Conservative party leadership support of rail funding during Labour years.

The rationales used by Government during the Conservative years were generally consistent; rail was a worthwhile use of funding due to wider economic benefits. Following the 'Eddington Transport Study' (Eddington, 2006), Government had emphasised the role of economic impacts in assessing transport schemes (DfT, 2013). This narrative was also pushed by numerous stakeholders, including local and devolved Governments, consultancies and private sector interest groups within episodic discourses analysed. This was a demonstration of a changing pro-rail narrative informed by stakeholder lobbying, influencing Government sentiments when rationalising policies that contradicted historic precedents for Conservative Governments. The theory of policy learning anticipates the development of policy supporting rationales over time (Cerna, 2013). Changing rationales have been noted as key to the continued support of mega-projects (Dimitriou, 2014) and a similar concept is noted here for rail funding policy. Rail policy rationalisation was being driven by non-Government figures (Section 7.3.7), a risk in network industries (Hughes, 1998).

## 8.3.4 A Consistent Blame Game

Party political critiques appeared consistent in a further, odd display of hegemony across rail. Conservative (1979-1997), Labour (1997-2010) and Conservative-led (2010-2019) Governments all accused previous Governments of under-funding and wasting rail budgets. This sentiment became much stronger from 2003 and remained consistently strong. This counteracts views that Governments utilise evidence-based policy rationales in the present era (Tomaney & Marques, 2013) and supports views that narratives are often counter-factual (Shaw, et al., 2006). Since 2010, Government critique of the previous Labour Government for not having spent enough on rail is not supported by the data (ORR, 2021a). Such criticism could be justified during 1997-2010, when Labour criticised earlier Conservative Governments. However, the 10 year transport plan never

intended for such public-sector led spending, focusing mostly on private sector funding (DETR, 2000), leading to criticism that this was never an intended policy position. In 2018, Labour made the same accusations of the Conservative Government's 8-year record despite this once more not being supported by the data. Hickson & Williams (2017) note that in an early 2000's interview, John Major defended privatisation on the grounds that successive governments had been unwilling to invest in the railways and that no change would be likely in the future. This was a representation of the previous hegemony against rail funding but did not hold going forwards. Cross-party support has been linked with policy change (Section 3.3), outlining that it helps to keep a policy option open for long enough to observe consistent delivery, and this was observed in the data.

Looking forward beyond the study period, it could be expected for the case for rail to be made on the basis of emerging wider contextual concerns as the pro-rail advocacy once more shifts the narrative of the benefits of rail to align with the new era. Rail is already being championed as a tool to achieve economic 'levelling up' in England, as outlined in Government's IRP (DfT, 2021b) and as a tool to achieve 'environmental' benefits (Transport Scotland, 2020; DfT, 2021a). The environmental case for rail is supported by academic research, though a caveat that adaption to the current network will be necessary to account for climate change (Armstrong & Preston, 2011). That said, rail does have to be considered in light of the somewhat small role it plays in generating modal shift versus modes such as buses and thus the environmental case for rail may be indicative of the pro-rail hegemony. This endurance of policy with time demonstrates why funding levels have been able to remain as high as they are and why they will continue to do so in the post-Covid era should there remain a pro-rail hegemony and adaptable policy frames to support rail. This aligns with theories on how policies endure; a paradigm shift would be necessary prior to a disruption of this policy (Schwanen, 2016).

### 8.3.4 Proposition 2 Summary

It can be observed that a pro-rail hegemony formed over the study period and was supported by a number of policy frames, which evolved with time. The case for rail appeared to be driven by an early, post-privatisation sentiment that private sector investment into the system would generate positive benefits. This did not happen as planned, and the collapse of Railtrack coupled with the lack of 'levers' Government had to reduce its funding provisions explains the initial rise in rail funding. The narrative for rail

changed to suit the wider contexts of the time as an initial focus on transport user benefit, such as reliability and capacity, was replaced following the recession of 2008 with a pro-economy narrative; a view that rail funding would generate wider economic benefits.

These narratives are shown in Figure 29, which covers the key dominant narratives and compares these against five year averages for Government funding for the rail industry. Five year averages are used in this diagram due to the use of six month snapshots taken five yearly for MMDA and CDA in this research, thus allowing the dominant narratives to be considered in light of longer term rail funding trends during each window. It is worth noting that other possible pressures may have existed but not come up as key indicators in House of Commons debates and referenced discourses. Some, such as pressures from the regulator to drive efficiency, were noted but were not as regularly demonstrated in discourses. The trend in Figure 29 bears a strong similarity to the MLP approach to tracking socio-technical changes, whereby numerous policy frames exist and some become dominant over time (Geels, 2002; 2004; Geels & Schot, 2007; Geels, et al., 2016a). This new hegemony was gradually reinforced and supports a view of policies requiring a degree of framing for innovation to occur (Tomaney & Marques, 2013). This also outlines how once a policy path is taken, substantial change is unlikely despite intent (DfT, 2007). Key to the identification of a hegemony is the absence of discourses against that policy. Throughout the study period, few referenced episodic discourses criticised rail and those that did criticised only certain rail schemes. Other rail schemes were promoted as alternatives. The lack of an opposition to rail was key to allowing this hegemony to form.

This research has demonstrated that rail lacked a consistent and supportive message in House of Commons debates and referenced episodic discourses, until the turn of the millennium. The history of rail shows this extends before 1993 (Gourvish, 1986; 2002). From 2000, the Labour Government promoted a new policy of high rail funding, with little criticism. Advocates followed and upon entering Government, Conservatives did also.
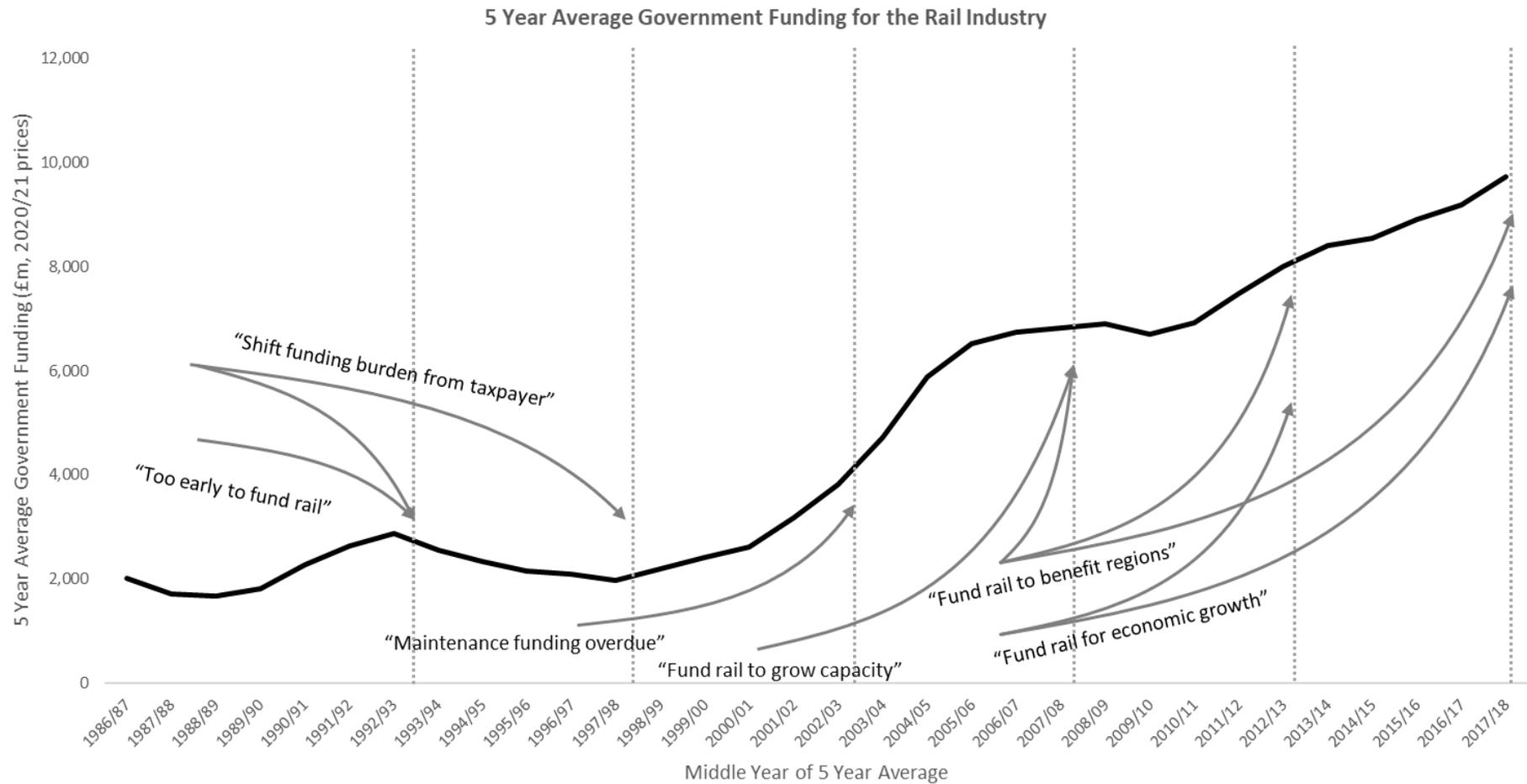
**Figure 29 Average Government funding for rail and dominant policy frames within each study window, with an indication on whether these are supportive or opposing rail funding policies. Snapshot windows indicated with dashed lines.**

## 8.4 Proposition 3: Rail Advocates Will Have Undertaken a Lobbying Campaign Aimed at Promoting the Allocation of Higher Government Funds for the Rail Industry.

A pro-rail lobbying campaign would be an expected outcome of privatisation given that lobbying and actor jostling for power and influence are outcomes of many significant industry restructures and changes (Baumgartener, et al., 2009). This can also lead to unexpected policy innovations. Equally, trade narratives would be an expected phenomenon (Bowman, et al., 2013; Bowman, 2015). This proposition would expect that lobbying activity from a pro-rail advocacy has increased since rail funding levels increased and a closer relationship between Government and private sector actors was established.

### 8.4.1 Identifying Lobbyist Material

Results from the MMDA into intertextuality suggested that this proposition is valid when using House of Commons debates as a proxy for Government policy choices (Section 5.3). Organisation references by parliamentarians were found over the course of the study window to increasingly come from a range of diverse private segments of the rail industry. In 1993, a private rolling stock manufacturer was one of the most highly referenced actors with few references to manufacturers after. This implies that private organisations have routinely sought to influence parliamentarians, however before privatisation there were few such actors. In 1998, there was practically no House of Commons debate on rail funding other than the public private partnership contracts for the CTRL, with Ward, et al. (2014) noting the role of lobbying in influencing policy development at this time and thus potentially triggering debate and salience (Section 8.2). With the creation of many private sector actors following privatisation and the maturing of the industry, it can be theorised that this led to much more recognition for the rail industry as demonstrated by the results.

### 8.4.2 Intertextuality

Over time there was a slight shift to higher degrees of intertextuality observed in House of Commons rail debates and a substantial increase in the frequency of references made by parliamentarians to referenced episodic discourses which supports a view that public lobbying campaigns were occurring. There was limited evidence of the role of structured stakeholder communication on influencing policy, contrary to Section 3.4.3

(Shepherd & Pryke, 2014). As predicted by grassroots theory (Stachowiak, 2013) local campaign groups were observed, such as the Kettering Rail User Group which received a degree of consistent recognition. Further, CDA shows that parliamentarians have shifted from using narrative to justify rail to using rationalisation and authorization to justify a policy position. Authorization techniques legitimise policies on the basis of information presented by another actor (Fairclough, 2003). The rationalisations given by parliamentarians did not generally align with their own manifesto priorities or with the Government's appraisal guidance but rather with rationales in referenced discourses. This suggests that research into salience in manifestos may not align with policy rationalisations outside election times (Chaney, 2014). This implies either a disregard for such matters or external agendas driving views. This finding is consistent with regime theory (Stone, 1989) which would suggest that Government would formulate policy collaboratively with public and private interests.

Through the study period there was a steady increase in parliamentarians relying on information presented by others which generally argued the case for rail, rather than utilising political principles and narrative. However, some political narrative remained, with almost all private versus nationalised industry structure debate based on political narratives, whether in 1993 or 2018. What was interesting to note is that whilst authority was used in 1993, in reference to British Rail, since 2003 it was almost exclusively used to promote rail funding policy suggestions. In 1993, it was generally to place the blame for issues with the rail system on British Rail, an example being Government claiming that British Rail was responsible for poor train service reliability irrespective of low Government funding allocations for operations.

Section 8.3 discussed the creation of a significant pro-rail advocacy but no similar creation of a group with a vested interest in pushing the case against rail funding, leading to a one-sided debate. Perhaps part of this would be rail's competition, namely roads, no longer having a substantial construction programme due to the 1997 White Paper (DETR, 1997) and so there was no vested interests in favour of roads, a key source of anti-rail sentiment during the Beeching cuts (Dudley & Richardson, 2000), being lost. Highway construction contractors had become so large that they also delivered rail works on behalf of the newly privatised Railtrack and so had no interest in the case against rail as they did in the 1960's and 1970's (Dudley & Richardson, 2000). British Rail had historically undertaken much of its own works in house.

### 8.4.3 Private Sector Advocacy and Trade Narratives

The MMDA analysis into referenced episodic discourses also supported the proposition. The number of references to Government-led institutions were broadly consistent, however from 2003 to 2018 with the maturing of privatisation, both funding levels and the density of references to episodic discourses in funding debates increased substantially. This is unique to funding debates versus general rail debates (Section 7.2.3) and additional references in part came from the private sector. Further, there is evidence of a slow but eventual change in Government commissioned episodic discourses having been written by individuals with a higher potentiality for private sector vested interests (Eddington, 2006; McNulty, 2011; Laidlaw, 2012; Brown, 2013). This change doesn't appear to be explainable purely by political party context, given the Government in 1993 did not create reviews of rail authored by the private sector but both Labour and Conservative Government's did from 2003.

Further to this, the analysis also observed numerous consultancy reports championing rail from 2008 onward. This counters an argument in Baumgartner, et al. (2009) that lobbyists wait for salience before promoting change, with evidence suggesting that lobbyists were actively driving salience through the production of discourses. Economic narratives were central to these publications, and such discourses routinely referenced other discourses produced by other private sector interest groups. This supports Hughes' notion of vested interests within an LTS influencing Government directly (Hughes, 1998) and supports theories concerning the establishment of trade narratives within the British rail policy formulation arena (Bowman, et al., 2013; Bowman, 2015). The CDA did observe that most pro-rail narratives in 2003 and 2008 referencing episodic discourses were sourced from Government or Network Rail authored discourses.

Crössmann & Mause (2015) noted that trade unions may also play an important role in lobbying for rail policies across the EU, however influences from such organisations appeared minimal. Whilst trade unions may have held significant influence on cost bases behind the scenes, such as in pay negotiations, there was little reflection of this in debates or episodic discourses. This is a surprise given the division of party-political ideologies in the House of Commons. A few referenced trade union authored discourses were identified, particularly in 2018, however there was no consistent referencing as observed with business and local government publications. This suggests that certain organisations within an industry may be more or

less influential depending on the direction of the political parties at any given time. This potentially explains why the privatised rail system, during the neo-liberal New Labour and Conservative Governments, could gain such traction in House of Commons debates. Had rail remained nationalised for these years a differing reality may have been observed in regard to industry and political links. The role of trade unions may, however, be reaching salience presently given the 2022 strikes and ongoing pay dispute, with higher pay likely to mean higher Government funding for rail. It would be interesting to note how House of Commons debates on rail in 2022 reflect this and whether discourse themes align with those identified in this study.

### 8.4.4 Devolved Government Advocacy

There was not just a private rail advocacy, but also a demonstration of devolved Government-led advocacy attempting to influence the UK Government. Section 3.3.3 noted this, with the absence of a GLA in the 1990's being linked with Crossrail's initial failure, and its creation in 1999 being linked with Crossrail's success in 2008 (Wolmar, 2018). Over the last 20 years, devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales and the creation of more city-mayors and combined authorities have all been products of a devolution agenda. This indicates a major contextual shift in the devolution landscape over the study period.

CDA demonstrated shifting geographic discourse from parliamentarians over time as sentiments increased in prominence, particularly from devolved nations and city regions. Further, whilst there may have been few discourses produced directly by devolved administrations and city regions, there were references to a number of discourses produced by local promoters or by private-sector consultancies that were appraising or analysing transport in a given geography recently subject to devolution.

In 1993, parliamentarians appeared to only focus on their immediate 'local' area. However, coinciding with the creation of devolved governments, CDA identified that parliamentarians began promoting rail funding policies within their regions and nations. They also criticised Government for funding rail schemes in other areas owing to a fear of 'losing out' (they were not opposed to rail funding overall). This was demonstrated in regards to many regions of the UK receiving devolved government systems, or combined authorities (Tallon, 2015). The link with the progression of the devolution agenda was strong. There was little discussion of wider geographic benefit in 1993 and 1998, much awareness of London and devolved nations in 2003 and 2008, and awareness of these plus combined authority 'regional' benefit

in 2013 and 2018. Effectively, the rationalisations in Parliament followed the establishment of these devolutionary bodies very closely, as did references to episodic discourses. This suggests a strong case for the development of devolved governments coinciding with parliamentarian lobbying for rail funding in those areas. It supports notions from One North (2014) that lobbying from local governments in the north was a feature, yet the debates observed significant lobbying from the West of England and Midlands as well. City regions would generally argue that funding rail enhancement schemes would benefit their local economy, tying in with the rationales discussed in Section 8.3. Section 7.3.6 noted a clear power struggle between the tiers of Government in terms of schemes such as HS2 that linked with national and local significance by local advocacies. Once more, this could suggest that Governments were not able to walk away from investment commitments in later years. This aligns with theories of multi-level governance where rescaling powers creates additional opportunities for leverage in higher levels of government (Hooghe & Marks, 2001).

### 8.4.5 Proposition 3 Summary

This proposition is highly complex as it is not easy to demonstrate lobbying in any study. Baumgartner, et al. (2009) note that often lobbyists will wait for the right moment to promote a policy, similar to the concept of policy windows (Kingdon, 1995), and that the right moment may be demonstrated by an issue being salient (RePass, 1971; Robertson, 1976). This, however, is not always the case, as Baumgartner, et al. (2009) noted that in an 'unsettled' policy landscape active lobbying would be expected. Post-privatisation rail may be considered unsettled owing to the number of changes observed to the system (Preston, 2016). Proposition 1 demonstrated rail funding became a salient issue from 2003, whilst Proposition 2 demonstrated a pro-rail hegemony formed across Government from 2003. This proposition argues that the pro-rail agenda would be driven by outside advocacies to Government.

CDA shows that parliamentarians have, since the turn of the millennium, utilised references to episodic discourses produced outside the House of Commons regularly in their rationales for supporting rail funding policies. These discourses were initially produced by Government, Network Rail, and the SRA, but from 2008 were more prominently produced by two key advocacy groups; private sector interests and devolved governments. The former of these could have been an unintended consequence of privatisation that would be expected by LTS theory (Mayntz, 1988; Hughes, 1989; 1998).

The later would likely be as a result of the various devolution acts, and supports findings that local authorities have a significant role to play in driving forward the case for rail projects (Wolmar, 2018). This research extends the later conclusion to headline rail funding policies rather than just specific projects.

## 8.5 Proposition 4: There Will Have Been a Degree of Power Transfer From Government to the Network of Rail Interests Over Rail Funding Policy Development.

This proposition looks to determine whether or not Government effectively held decision making power over rail funding levels throughout the study period. This proposition is based on the nature of transport as a hollow-core industry, it takes a driving force or 'elite projection' to change the direction of transport policy (Section 3.5). There may also have been capture of policy by industry. It is within the nature of network industries to seek to control Government policy making (Hughes, 1998).

### 8.5.1 An Industry Moved Afar

The types of spend referenced within House of Commons rail funding debates demonstrated a shift in power over decision making. In 1993 and 1998, parliamentarians appeared to be highly knowledgeable about the day to day technical workings of the rail system and were able to engage Government on the specifics of spending policies. Parliamentarians appeared to know when signalling maintenance or rolling stock replacements in their area were due and were able to push Government for these. This implied a close link between the rail industry and parliamentarians, with a likelihood that British Rail was transferring knowledge objectively to parliamentarians. CDA identified the technocratic nature of discourses between policy makers and the rail industry in the 1990's. Wolmar (2001) and Forsdike (2018) note that privatisation caused a loss in detailed technical knowledge from British Rail or Railtrack and hence it is unsurprising that with time parliamentarians appeared less knowledgeable as to what rail spend could buy. Instead, the focus was directed to headline funding levels or schemes promoted in referenced discourses. Public private partnership contracts during the Labour years may have led to lobbying from private partners, yet little was observed here.

Both Labour in the 10 year transport plan (DETR, 2000) and Conservative-led Governments since 2010 in the House of Commons have justified

funding the rail industry on the basis of a sentiment that every pound spent generated like-for-like investment from the private sector, leading to a higher value of output derived from Government funding. However, this has to be critically challenged. Rolling stock, for example, in 1993 was the Government's go-to for outlining its role in funding the rail industry, but since privatisation Government generally no longer directly funded procurement of new stock as this was done by TOCs. However, new stock, which is more expensive to lease than older stock, would lead to lower franchise premium payments from TOCs to Government (or higher subsidy the other way). Other operating cost reductions were not fully delivered (Preston, 2016). This echoed the eventual point of the Opposition in 2018, that any private investment delivered in a subsidised industry ultimately costs Government.

Furthermore, the maintenance and renewals parts of the rail budget became less open to political influence due to privatisation with the regulator advising Government of what it could buy from industry and at what price. This left Government with a primary concern for delivering infrastructure upgrades and new lines, which are more expensive spending types. CDA shows this shift in focus towards expansionist spending types from 2008, whether these were new lines or infrastructure enhancements. This loss of policy choices to demonstrate a commitment to rail in response to scrutiny from parliamentarians reduced the Government's power to rationalise its rail funding policies with lower cost options for funding, as occurred in the 1990s. Even safety, linked with the early rise in rail funding levels (Smith, 2006), did not feature prominently in policy debates as a salient type of spend though was salient in industry discourses (Network Rail, 2007; SRA, 2003). Hence it is highly curious as to why the House of Commons did not discuss the spending types observed by industry and the literature (Section 2.7) to be driving higher costs.

This echoes an idea of Government losing power over rail, resulting from the introduction of private organisations into the delivery and policy making realm (Hughes, 1998). Government, through the Railways Act (1993), transferred away its ability to control all rail funding levers and became beholden to the proposals of franchise bidders, infrastructure managers and regulators. With changes to the franchising system (Preston, 2016), many of which followed proposals by potential private sector interests, Government also transferred away its ability to fix the system leading to non-Government figures authoring reviews of the rail system on behalf of Government.

**8.5.2 Regulatory Capture**

Sittle (2004) noted that analysing discourse in public documents is one approach to determining regulatory capture. There is evidence to suggest, owing to extensive parliamentary debates on the topic and the role of the regulator, that Government obligations to ensure the continuation of rail services under the Railways Act (1974) prevented any major systems closures and reduced the levers available to Government. Unlike during the Beeching era, Government had legislated itself out of policy options to reduce 'buying the same for more' (Section 2.7.1) in an industry subject to rising inefficiency (Preston & Robins, 2013) unless it introduced primary legislation. Further, the Transport Act (2000) handed much decision making capability regarding rail policy and strategy over to the SRA, further reducing the levers available to Government to reduce costs.

*"(1) The Authority may enter into agreements or other arrangements— (a) for the purpose of securing the provision, improvement or development by others of any railway services or railway assets, or (b) for any other purpose relating to any railway or railway services. (2) Agreements or other arrangements entered into under this section may provide for the Authority — (a) to make grants or other payments or loans, (b) to give guarantees, or (c) to invest in bodies corporate," Transport Act (2000), Part IV, Chapter 1, 205-206. Powers concerning funding granted to the SRA.*

The following quotes show the level of concern over regulatory capture within rail by the Transport Select Committee in referenced episodic discourses, and Government accepting this view.

*"But the Government must take back into its own hands decisions about the sums which will be spent on the railway. This will correct the present absurd position in which the Government simply underwrites the Regulator's funding decisions. Economic regulation should be removed from functions which are properly those of Government." Transport Select Committee (Parliament, 2004).*

*"The Government agrees with this recommendation. Chapter 3 of the White Paper sets out proposals for the future role of Government. In particular, it sets out the*

*basis for a new relationship between the Department for Transport and the Office of*

*Rail Regulation. This new relationship will provide for an iterative process in the*

*context of regulatory reviews which will enable the Government to set the budget*

*and take the strategic decisions on the high level outputs to be delivered by the*

*industry." UK Government, (Parliament, 2004), referencing 'Delivering a*

*Sustainable Railway', (DfT, 2007).*

This means a capture of rail policy by legal frameworks was to blame for the initial rise in rail funding levels at the turn of the millennium. Early post-privatisation rail regulation would have been high risk with a powerful single person regulator (Smith, et al., 2018). Government, effectively, had to support rail owing to its inability to push back on rising industry costs and the SRA's policy choices. Against that, the SRA was an arm's length body of Government so effectively it would be other Government bodies (such as HM Treasury, Ministers or DETR) that were captured in this regard. This is important when considering the difference between Government (the Ministers), their Departments and the arm's length bodies. During 2003 and 2008, we can observe Labour openly celebrating their policy of high funding levels for the rail industry, contradictorily to their position in 1998 with no clear White Paper setting out an intended move to this policy. This implies such a change was not a deliberate Government decision.

*"In the wake of Railtrack's collapse it was taxpayers who stepped in to provide the*

*additional funding necessary to support the railway and put it back on course. It is*

*right that subsidy levels should now start to return to closer to the historic norm."*

*(DfT, 2007, p. 7).*

However, this is not the full explanation of higher funding levels. The maintenance of higher funding levels after action was taken against regulatory capture in the middle of the study window, such as through the abolition of the SRA in the Railways Act (2005), is a particularly interesting point of this proposition. It shows that regulatory capture, despite initially being an important driver, was 'fixed' later on and contrary to intent this did not lead to reduced funding for rail as an outcome. Benedetto, et al. (2017) found evidence of European (including UK) regulators operating independently from Government, established rail operators and individuals

since 2012 meaning regulatory capture would not be expected since. This is supported by this research with the main issues associated with regulation occurring in policy debates in 2003 and 2008.

### 8.5.3 Control

Following this initial period of policy capture, the rail narrative became driven by vested interests and advocacies, as explored previously. However, those advocacies were also highly vocal against Government plans to change or reduce rail funding levels later in the study period and results show a shift in sentiment from Government. In 1993 and 1998, Government controlled rail spending plans and would be willing to reject new proposals for rail funding policy ideas outright. Government also utilised a sentiment that it was too early to invest in niche rail schemes and funding policies which allowed a delay tactic to keep rail funding levels low. Government would readily state its willingness to keep rail funding low for the benefit of the taxpayer. In 2003 and 2008, this sentiment shifted to one where Government would deflect requests for additional funding from backbenchers and Opposition by stating its headline funding levels as justification that it was doing enough. At the same time, from 2003 rail funding was stated by all Governments and many backbenchers as overdue or right time, with overdue implying a race was being lost due to a failure to deliver the rail upgrades needed to achieve passenger and then economic objectives. This split between an overdue sentiment towards maintenance in 2003 and 2008, and an overdue sentiment towards enhancements and new lines in 2013 and 2018, showing the changing frames and rationales used with time. This change in discourse was symptomatic of a Government facing pressure from parliamentarians and rail advocates to fund the rail system with immediate effect, restricting the ability of Government to reject the policy. From 2013, Government also appeared to lose control of its agenda, moving instead to a view that its role was to assess the case for rail spending policies generated by the network of rail interest groups. This is a demonstration of a loss of Government power towards an active pro-rail lobbying campaign.

In 2018, this was further demonstrated by Government appearing to attempt to regain control of the rail agenda. This may have been due to Network Rail's reclassification as a public sector body, or due to general concern at the direction of travel of the rail industry. The publication of the 'Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline' (DfT, 2018b), set out the framework by which Government would develop rail spending proposals through assessment stage-gates. This aligns with literature suggesting that technocratic analysis

and appraisal may drive policy changes (Hoos, 1972; Hughes, 1998). However, this research suggests appraisal assessments and benefits do little to stimulate policy support in the House of Commons. Equally, benefit-cost ratios were sparsely referenced in the House of Commons, with any such reference appearing to use these ratios to rationalise already developed views (Section 3.5.2) (Nyborg, 1998; Mouter, 2017). This was also the case for appraisal criteria in general, which supported previous research (Docherty, et al., 2018). As such, it would be expected that the pipeline's stage-gates are unlikely to lead to approval of schemes on the basis of appraisal merit with the political salience of a scheme taking centre stage.

Further, there is scope to speculate that the 'Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail', the first reform of rail since privatisation, is a further exemplar of Government seeking to control the industry once more with the creation of a single accountable organisation (DfT, 2021a). Interestingly, this review is also being authored by an individual with a long standing history in the private sector. CDA showed that Government wanted more control of rail in 2018. This attempt to separate rail from Government via a delivery agency appears similar to a system which Gourvish (1986) noted in early British Railways days as being less able to influence Government policy. If true, what may be expected of the upcoming GBR era is reductions in headline funding levels from Government if the private advocacies are broken. The need for these changes further supports the notion of Government losing control of its agenda to a pro-rail advocacy in the franchising era.

## 8.5.5 Proposition 4 Summary

This section outlined that Government initially did not control rail funding levels during increases at the turn of the millennium. Power over this decision making had been legislated away, to the regulator and the SRA. Government did, however, legislate power (theoretically at least) back to itself in 2005. However, it then faced pressures from pro-rail advocates in the form of private sector interest groups and devolved government pressures. Through tracing levels of commitment, we can observe how Government was held to account by these advocates to deliver on its rail promises and thus did not hold the same degree of power as during the British Rail days. Government transitioned from viewing itself as in command of rail policy, to later having to substantiate its rail policy with funding, and finally to only considering the policy choices put forward by others.

## 8.6 Discussion of the Research Method

This section discusses the research method and reflects on how methodological choices may have impacted the conclusions obtained. Methodological choices made are broken down below and presented in six subsections that align with Sections 4.2 to 4.4, and 5.2 to 5.4 of the thesis, where those choices were rationalised. This thesis:

1. Took a critical realist view towards epistemology.

2. Considered methodologies and took qualitative (discourse theory) and mixed methods (descriptive analysis) approaches.

3. Used CDA and MMDA as the methods.

4. Used the documentary analysis, consisting of both documents from the running record and the episodic record.

5. Used House of Commons debate transcripts and referenced episodic discourses from those debates as the data.

6. Considered only relevant House of Commons debates (rail and rail funding) and took a snapshot approach to sampling.

### 8.6.1 Epistemology

This section discusses choices made in Section 4.2. This thesis drew on the approach of Bhaskar (1975) by utilising a critical realist outlook on reality. This was justified on the basis that there exists a real and observable phenomenon in rail funding policy (Chapter 2), coupled with a need to critically reflect on frames, rationales and actors involved in the policy change process (Chapter 3). Alternative outlooks including positivism, constructivism, and postmodernism were ruled out (Section 4.2.2).

Positivism assumes that policy makers are independent of the policy sub-system and could have provided a differing view by focusing primarily on the rationales for Government policies as written. Such an approach may first have identified the factors considered of importance to Government and traced changing narratives around these to draw conclusions over policy change causes. This would be similar to Chaney (2014)'s approach to using Government manifestos to trace salience and perceived uses of the rail

system. This may have enabled a greater depth of analysis to be conducted into White Papers and other Government documents over the full course of the study period by focussing less on pressures applied to Government. Given a rationale of privatisation was the 'know how' private companies would bring to rail, a positivist approach could potentially still reflect on the role of private sector lobbying. However, it is unlikely that Government would note power transfer themes until after it had accepted this issue. One such approach may be to start research with major Government policy changes, and then to trace back causative factors allowing these to be 'simulated' for future policy scenarios. This contrasts with critical realism in developing the story and event chains.

The use of a positivist approach would be criticised for not accounting for the views of Foucault (1972) that historiographic research may project current considerations into the past and thus neglect alternative considerations more prevalent at the time (Section 4.2.3). This is a major concern as research took place between 2017 and 2022 and the framing of rail rationales or the 'factors' considered influential may have changed substantially between the 1990s and the 2010s. However, despite this one recommendation for future research (R4, in Section 9.3.2) is a positivist study testing rail funding influences identified by Crössmann & Mause (2015) over time in the British context. This approach would seek to identify numerical correlations longitudinally over time between factors linked to rail subsidisation and Government rail funding rates in Britain. This is a remaining gap following this research. Such an approach could look to expand the Crössmann & Mause (2015) research by including factors identified through this study as relevant to rail subsidisation, such as the creation of multiple levels of Government, or the diversification of actors within an industry following restructure. Such an approach may expand understanding of the propositions and research question in this thesis by emphasising which factors are more statistically significant in explaining rail funding levels.

Constructivism, assuming policy development is a learning process, accounted for some themes in Chapter 3 (particularly concerning how actors drive policy frames) and may have helped explain changes to the privatised system with time. This could be interesting by providing more of a focus on following specific actors through time, leading to reform through the 2021 White Paper (DfT, 2021a). This focus on actors may have provided a more concrete link between the work of some lobbyists and Government policy change, although would have risked not fully accounting for changes to the

rail system. It is not quite as easy to see how postmodernist outlooks may have expanded the findings as it would not have properly accounted for the role of devolution, issue salience or timing in the research findings instead focusing on privatisation. Constructivism and postmodernism also would not have been able to facilitate quantitative study, which was useful in determining salience.

The critical realist outlook raised several questions; can we understand, from our current 'neoliberal' viewpoint, what might have been going on in a more social democratic era when reviewing the history of rail? A paradigm shift occurred in the 1980's which changed narratives on the role of the state entirely. The research method pivoted off of an assessment in the modern era in respect to the past. Whilst the research has sought to account for the concerns of Foucault (1972) by studying data produced throughout history, there is a concern that the research conclusions (that narratives drove the modern funding phenomenon) may in fact have been a narrative that existed previously without such effect. This is a limitation of studying only 1993 to 2018. Further research is recommended (R2, in Section 9.3.1).

## 8.6.2 Methodology

This section discusses choices made in Section 4.3. This research opted for a qualitative method combined with mixed methods. This was justified on the basis that many themes outlined in Chapter 3, regarding policy change, would not be possible to quantify in any meaningful sense. This research also already had a significant catalogue of rail policy appraisal and quantitative literature to draw on (Section 2.7).

Some interesting expansions of quantitative analysis could be applied to policy change factors based on the Crössmann & Mause (2015) research, discussed above. Further, a quantitative approach could be used for this research by relying more on counts of themes emerging from text and mapping those changes with time. Methods, such as regression analysis, could have shown correlations in discursive themes when compared with Government funding rates towards various types of spend. Such research may be able to test the results of this thesis and apply numerical rigour in places with CDA cannot. This would have meant the full thesis using MMDA.

Within the realm of qualitative methods, a choice was made to select deductive approaches (such as discourse theory) over inductive approaches (such as grounded theory or narrative analysis). This was justified on the basis that the wide variety of themes outlined in Chapter 3 covered a

sufficient range of policy change theories to allow for a prescribed list of variables. There are two risks here. First, some relevant themes may have been missed if not contained within wider policy change literature. Second, this approach was not sufficiently flexible to allow for major modifications should new themes emerge. This research did not expand policy change theory, rather implementing theory to analyse the British rail funding case study. An analysis of policy change within the British rail context, using an approach such as grounded theory, may result in a host of other policy frames being identified. A grounded theory approach to studying rail policy may be more apt in developing policy change theory by noting those themes 'outside the box' that emerge from analysis. Given the age of a key reference in identifying themes in Chapter 3 (Dudley & Richardson, 2000), it appears timely for such a method to be implemented into a major policy change research project. Further research is recommended (R1, in Section 9.3.1).

### 8.6.3 Methods

This section discusses choices made in Section 4.4. The use of MMDA and CDA were selected rather than FDA alternatives. It is useful to reflect on whether CDA was completed in accordance with methodological principles. Fairclough (2003) noted three criteria necessary for CDA to be conducted (Section 4.4.3). The first, analysis of relations between discourse and social practices, can be exemplified from this research in its overarching linkage between the discursive themes outlined in Parliament and decisions taken regarding rail funding. The second point, systematic text analysis, is identifiable in the variables used for this study. The third point, normativity over descriptions alone, can be observed in this research considering discursive meaning beyond communicative protocols, such as parliamentarian ways of speaking, which may at face value hide true feelings and views. This research also agreed with Fairclough (2003) in noting that discourses can be knowable and conclusions may be drawn through the operationalization of views through textual analysis. This supports notions that CDA can be conducted within a critical realist outlook.

What difference would FDA have made? FDA is not a prescribed series of methods, but rather is an application of discourse analysis that focuses on identifying power structures through texts. This may enable greater analysis of Proposition 4, though would have given less consideration to contextual circumstances that featured in the analysis. Changes to the economy, for

example, may have been neglected. These did not specifically relate to Proposition 4 but were important in other propositions.

## 8.6.4 Data Collection

This section discusses choices made in Section 5.2. Methods of generating primary datasets (ethnography, surveys and questionnaires, interviews, and interaction analysis) and secondary analysis were rejected in favour of utilising a documentary analysis of the written record.

Ethnography would not have been possible owing to the research considering themes from the past, though an ethnographic study of policy formulation processes (particularly within rail) could present highly interesting insights into factors at play. Given a rail transformation is already ongoing at the time of writing, such research may have to wait for future policy changes to ensure the entire process can be reviewed. Ethnography would, however, give a genuine insight into the actual drivers for policy change without relying on proxies (such as House of Commons debates). Surveys and questionnaires, as well as interviews, were ruled out due to a risk of interviewee memory unreliability distorting the data gathered. This risk would be minimised for recent policy changes, and as such an interview based approach to researching policy change drivers could be useful following delivery of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail (DfT, 2021a). This would be particularly useful to help understand if the themes outlined through this study of parliamentary debates are consistent with interview outcomes. The potential advantage gained from having first person testimony on the nature of rationales for decision making would be highly valuable. It could be cross-compared with rationales presented in Parliament. Further research is recommended around ethnographic and interview based approaches (R3, in Section 9.3.2).

## 8.6.5 The Written Record

This section discusses choices made in Section 5.3. The two methodological choices made were; to study House of Commons debates as the key running record dataset, and to study episodic discourses referenced within House of Commons debates.

By using the running record a systematically produced dataset was guaranteed over the full study period, and this research found that to be highly advantageous. For an analysis relying solely on episodic discourses there is a significant risk of the loss of data with time, as noted in this research. Other running records, such as rail industry corporate reports, may

add insight into the drivers advocates have considered important over the study period. This could greatly strengthen our view of the rail advocacy and Government conflicts throughout this timeframe. Conducting systematic analysis of key advocate running reports, perhaps organisations with the highest revenues or references in Parliament as per Table 18, could lead to highly useful insights into the biggest players in the rail industry regarding their role and perspectives.

One issue with the choices made regarding episodic discourses was the lack of references to external discourses in earlier study windows. There was a clear systematic risk as older referenced discourses were less attainable for research. Whilst these did appear to only be technocratic reports produced by British Rail, it does go to show an issue with historic data collection. One further decision was also taken; to study only discourses referenced in House of Commons debates. Observing the eventual outcomes, the analysis into intertextuality, particularly in 2013 and 2018, suggests that studying the first tier of House of Commons references could be considered sufficient, though in the early study windows this does mean a significant lack of references. Consideration of additional discourses referenced in a systematic way would have been unrealistic for the research to be deliverable (Section 7.3.7). An approach using manual selection, rather than House of Commons referencing, may expand the datasets but would risk focusing on Government discourses and would risk missing advocacy from potentially niche areas of industry. Seeking information on which episodic discourses are relevant, perhaps through interviews with key figures, could have expanded the dataset and allowed more consistency with time. This would be beneficial to determine event chains, however, may not provide the same conclusions regarding quantum's of lobbying from this research.

### 8.6.6 Sampling

This section discusses choices made in Section 5.4 in which two choices were made; the use of only debates relevant to rail and rail funding, and the use of six-month snapshots of data from six study windows.

The first choice appeared reasonable, given the need for relevance. Applying CDA only to House of Commons debates on rail funding also ensured deliverability, whilst all rail policy debates would have yielded too large of a dataset. However, there is a caveat as now that core themes have been identified through this research, a smaller set of variables based around these themes may allow for CDA to analyse more extensive datasets, thus including all rail debates from the House of Commons. A

different analysis method, perhaps aligning with positivist research recommendations (Section 8.6.1), may have enabled a greater quantity of research data. Utilising computer led analysis through MMDA to identify textual trends which could show which textual themes change with time and how that relates to types of spend from a much larger dataset. Full episodic discourse referenced documents could also be used. This may highly strengthen research conclusions by 'plugging the gaps' from data limitations. Further research is recommended (R5, in Section 9.3.2).

Second, the use of snapshots. Shortening study windows would be unnecessary as this research was deliverable, while lengthier study windows may have risked creating an undeliverable quantity of research (though potentially could align with the above suggestion to enable this). Another change may be basing windows on parliamentary sitting timescales to create datasets between recesses to ensure all parliamentary business was captured. This would have helped capture all policy discussions from a certain era. Shorter snapshots may have risked conclusions being missed, as shown in Figure 25, Figure 26 and Figure 27, as discursive themes and pro-rail rationales changed between the five year windows. This does mean, however, that the research has risked not being sufficiently granular and perhaps shorter yet more frequent windows may have been more useful. This would be undeliverable manually over the thirty years studied; however, an additional window may have been added where key events occurred, such as 2001. This could have enhanced the conclusions, but equally may have risked tracing discourses around 'spikes' in narratives and thus miss the longer-term enduring narratives that sustain such policies.

## 8.6 Summary

This chapter has outlined how the research results have addressed the propositions. A summary of the information is presented in Table 21. The research question and cross-cutting sub-questions are reflected on and answered in Chapter 9. Overall, the picture is one of a policy pathway where high rates of rail funding were an unintended consequence of privatisation and geographic devolution. With time, Government went from being in control of rail to being held to a regulator's bill for a major renewals programme in the early 2000's. The promise of private funding had led Government to champion rail and after it appeared unable to walk away from the system or from privatisation. By 2008, once the regulatory regime had been changed and Government stated its clear intent to reduce rail funding

rates, advocacies appeared and lobbied the Government to deliver 'infrastructure enhancements' and 'new lines'. The narratives pushed by those advocacies permeated House of Commons debates and appeared to influence funding rates for the rail industry long term.

**Table 21 Summary of research findings and reflections on propositions**

| Proposition | Answer |
|---|---|
| Proposition 1: Rail funding policy will have become a more politically salient topic amongst Government and policy makers. | Rail funding was found to have become a more politically salient issue in House of Commons debates over the study period, suggesting privatisation did little to remove rail from the parliamentary agenda. However, salience varied across a number of issues with the benefit of rail being key against criticisms of inefficiency and high spend. |
| Proposition 2: The rationale for rail funding will have shifted towards a hegemony that rail is a worthwhile use of Government money. | Party political positions shifted from consistent opposition to higher rail funding, to Labour endorsing higher rail funding rates in 2003 and 2008. The Conservatives also endorsed higher rail funding in 2013 and 2018. In 1998, Government drove the case for rail on the basis of private-led funding. The emergence and evolution of pro-rail narratives was central to this, primarily that rail could achieve transport user benefits (2003, 2008) and later economic growth (2013, 2018). No anti-rail funding lobbying was observed. Further, as both Labour and Conservative policy was pro-privatisation by 1998, neither party appeared willing to reform rail after the regulator submitted a bill for overdue maintenance following the Hatfield crash. This initial Government support for rail based on private-funded improvements led to the need for Government to support rail with state funding following the collapse of Railtrack and the associated private funding. |
| Proposition 3: Rail advocates will have undertaken a lobbying campaign aimed at promoting the allocation of higher Government funding levels for the rail industry. | Growth in the number of non-Government produced episodic discourses was detected, with a substantial increase in tendency to reference such discourses from 2003. Two key pro-rail advocacies were identified; private industry advocates and devolved Governments. Each produced discourses outlining the benefit of rail to attain wider outcomes, with recommended schemes and policies often coming at cost to Government. |
| Proposition 4: There will have been a degree of power transfer from Government to the network of rail interests over rail funding policy development. | Government initially held control over rail budget setting processes and appeared willing to rule out rail policies it did not support. Post-privatisation industry structures led to a significant degree of regulatory involvement in rail budget setting which triggered the significant early increases in funding from 2001. Such increases were initially seen as temporary. However, longer term the pro-rail advocacy held Government to account for its rail policies, and Government appeared to lose its ability to rule out policies, instead accepting a role of 'listening' to the rail industry. |

# Chapter 9
# Conclusion

## 9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of this research. Section 9.2 sets out a summary of the key themes of the thesis, covering Chapters 2 to 8 and answers the research question directly based on the findings derived. Section 9.3 outlines recommendations for future research and policy recommendations.

## 9.2 Thesis Summary and Answering the Research Questions

This section is in three parts. First, it presents a summary of the thesis. Second, it answers the research questions, broken down by the overall research question and the sub-questions, in light of Chapter 8. Third, it assesses the relevance of the propositions in light of the research question.

### 9.2.1 Thesis Summary

Chapter 2 presented a review of rail history in Britain observing that from the outset and throughout rail's history there has been both government intervention and changing policy (Gourvish, 1980; 1986; 2002; 2008). Rail was privatised in the 1990's with a view to reducing and removing rail subsidy, only for the reverse to be observed as Government funding increased substantially from 2001 (ORR, 2021a). Academic research into rail industry costs and efficiency was presented, outlining how various industry models can impact efficiency. A gap was identified insofar as little research has been conducted in light of the increased rail funding levels from a policy change perspective. Chapter 3 presented theories concerning why policies change, noting; timing, ideas and interests, advocates and industry as core themes (Dudley & Richardson, 2000) and developed four research propositions. The role of discourse in driving change and the changing nature of rail interests were noted as cross-cutting themes. Chapters 4 and 5 developed the logic of the research method set out in Chapter 6. CDA and MMDA were used to study House of Commons debates on rail in 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018, and referenced episodic discourses from those debates. Chapter 7 outlined the results and Chapter 8 presented the discussion, framed around the research propositions.

## 9.2.2 Answering the Research Question

This section answers the research question and sub-questions. Answers are kept concise to focus on the most important conclusions. Some themes overlap, particularly between the main question and sub-questions. This would be expected given the sub-questions crosscut through all four propositions, which were determined to answer the main question.

*"Why have observed levels of UK Government funding to the British rail industry increased significantly over the past twenty years?"*

A policy pathway appeared that saw rail funding levels increase whilst Government control was restricted through a number of different mechanisms over time. First, it is important to note that prior to privatisation in 1997 Government controlled and could direct rail funding policy through its single rail delivery agent, British Rail, which as a state-run organisation did little to lobby Government for additional funding. During privatisation, Government handed a significant degree of power over to rail's regulators which engaged with industry to determine the financial framework under which the rail system operated. Government began to champion rail on the basis of the benefit accrued by private investment but following the collapse of Railtrack found itself stuck both with a major regulatory bill for overdue maintenance and a loss of private funding sources to support the attainment of its sustainable transport aspirations. Government footed the bill, viewing this as a temporary fix to catch up on overdue renewals. With time, however, two advocacies emerged pushing the case for additional funding for enhancements. First, private elements of the rail industry (the supply chain, consultancies, private operators) drove the case for rail investment on the basis of transport user and economic benefit narratives, with some direct influence over Government policy through embedding. Second, new Government organisations created through the rollout of devolution began championing rail for its ability to achieve regional development aspirations. These two advocacies often overlapped and worked to push the case for rail to parliamentarians. Government, being held to account, continued to fund the rail system with historically high funding rates and a cross-party consensus emerged that supported high rail funding rates.

Sub-question 1: *"How has the discourse on Government funding for rail changed over this timeframe?"*

The discourse on Government funding for rail changed substantially over the study period. First, the salience of rail funding and the time taken discussing

rail in the House of Commons consistently increased with time. Second, the general sentiment towards rail funding switched from a cross-party consensus that saving taxpayer money was desirable, through to believing rail funding was desirable if it came from private sources, and finally a cross-party consensus that a high Government rail funding rate was a good in itself. Third, Government appeared to lose its ability to reject niche spending proposals with time, shifting from ruling out unsupported proposals to viewing itself as an 'assessor' of the merits of proposals from advocates. Fourth, discourses emerging from the two rail advocacies did not align with Government's appraisal objectives, manifesto objectives or initial privatisation objectives. Instead, the case for rail was framed around the key issues of the time that rail could contribute to. Between 2003 and 2008 this was transport user benefit (decongestion, journey time improvements), and between 2013 and 2018 this was wider economic outcomes. Finally, the frequency and regularity of parliamentarians referencing discourses emerging from advocacies grew substantially throughout the study period, indicating lobbying influencing House of Commons rationales.

Sub-question 2: *"In what ways could the changing network of rail interests over this timeframe have contributed to Government funding increases?"*

The network of rail interests changed substantially over the study period, with three key types of advocacies emerging. First, a significant amount of power was handed to rail regulators over creating the financial framework under which the rail industry would operate. Government would no longer be able to direct the rail industry budgets without having to consider compromises as to what it was buying. Second, the privatised elements of the rail industry supply chain were instrumental in pushing the case for rail. This was achieved both through producing discourses and through Government's own independent reviews of the rail system, which were often authored by individuals with histories in private rail companies. Many policy recommendations would come at cost to Government. Third, the creation of new Government organisations through the devolution agenda created another pro-rail advocacy. There was alignment between the creation of devolved authorities and the rail spending proposals discussed in the House of Commons. Parliamentarians referenced discourses produced by pro-rail advocates on a more routine basis through the study period.

### 9.2.3 Relevance of the Propositions

The propositions of this research were based on a literature review of policy change theories in Chapter 3, and aligned generally with the four themes

identified by Dudley & Richardson (2000) with timing, ideas and interests, individuals and institutions considered. An amendment was made to combine 'individuals' and 'institutions' and to consider these as advocates, under the headlines of 'lobbying' and 'industry'. Each proposition was found to be relevant to the research question, and the research benefitted from the alterations made to the four themes. This enabled the identification of two pro-rail advocacies, one from inside the rail system and another external to it. The agency of specific individuals could still be considered and was found to be important given the embedding of individuals within Government reviews of rail. There is a risk that other themes relevant to the research question were not picked up as they did not have propositions of their own, however the nature of CDA allows for an interpretation of data during analysis to help identify unexpected themes, yet nothing significant was identified here. Given that these propositions were derived from a literature review of policy change theories and applied to this case study, it would be expected that each would be relevant, else changes to the policy change literature would be recommended. A future study with fewer propositions, utilising grounded theory (R1), may be useful in sense-checking theoretical themes. This would help develop policy change theory.

## 9.3 Recommendations

This research has highlighted a number of recommendations, both for future research and for practical policy formulation. This section is divided into two subsections each covering these recommendations.

### 9.3.1 Recommendations for Future Policy Research

This section focuses on recommendations for future policy research. It sets out numbered recommendations and describes the recommended research. It also cross references back to relevant sections of this thesis.

### Recommendation R1 (Sections 3.2-3.5, 8.6.2)

The first and most important future research recommendation relates to the themes linked to policy change in the literature in Chapter 3. This research utilised Dudley & Richardson's (2000) four key themes of policy change, however this research is now over 20 years old and it does not appear that a major study into the overall picture of transport policy change has been conducted since. As such, there is a risk these themes are now out of date or require update.

This research applied the four principals to a study of rail policy change leading to a prescribed set of propositions and variables. These may have been limiting. A policy change study covering all forms of transport, using a grounded theory approach, would help shed light on policy change theories in general and potentially identify new factors linked to policy change. This could update Dudley & Richardson's (2000) four key themes to the present day. Contextual social and technological developments may be the reason this research is needed. Grounded theory would be particularly useful, as major Government policy change documents could form the dataset and 'future datasets' and 'variables' discovered throughout the research. This would focus research only into what is relevant.

Such a research proposal would likely be a significant undertaking, and would need to either constitute a future PhD project or a long term project producing a number of papers from an experienced research professional.

**Recommendation R2 (Sections 2.4, 2.5, Chapter 3, 8.6.1)**

The second recommendation focuses on the long term picture of transport policy discourse. This research studied discourse on rail between 1993 to 2018. A major contextual shift occurred in the 1980's as neo-liberal policy was implemented into British Rail. Rail struggled to compete with roads for Government funding for a period in its history (Section 2.4 and 2.5). What is unclear is whether Government and stakeholders had differing discursive styles towards the rail industry before and after this shift. Research is needed to understand how changes to discourse on rail may have occurred throughout this period, leading to long term markers in our modern views towards the rail system. Further, a similar CDA of House of Commons debates on roads has not yet been conducted to identify the role of advocacy and the policy change themes noted in Chapter 3.

This recommendation suggests that further CDA into House of Commons debates on rail and road policy is conducted over the period from 1945-1999. This study is recommended to develop our knowledge of two key unknowns in this research. First, whether Government has changed its discourse style towards rail longer term without reform, or whether such changes can be attributed to industrial structure and lobbying changes. Second, how highways expansion became Government policy and to identify whether the policy pathway bears similarities to the one of rail funding presented in this thesis.

This research would be time intensive and likely would need to be broken down into a number of sub-projects. Dividing the research into rail and road would be preferable, with a paper from each. The context of policy change is well studied, particularly in Dudley & Richardson (2000), over this time scale. The research would hence focus on discursive themes within key discourses. The research could also compare findings from the House of Commons analysis with this other research. Similar themes could shed light on how network industries are able to generate favourable Government policy change. Particularly, the successes of some rail projects during 'managed decline' and the role of devolved planning authorities in those (Section 2.4) could be reflected on in light of the findings of this research.

### 9.3.2 Recommendations for Developing the Research Method

This section focuses on recommendations to develop the research method. It sets out numbered recommendations and describes the recommended research. It also cross references back to relevant sections of this thesis.

### Recommendation R3 (Sections 2.6.2, 5.2, 8.6.4)

This recommendation is urgent and time critical, and would likely offer the greatest contribution of recommendations for research methods. It outlines how other methods should be implemented to research the current (at time of writing) ongoing rail reform in real time. This research studied rail policy change but was limited in its study of a historic phenomenon occurring roughly 20 years prior to implementation of this research. This led to many methodological choices, such as the use of the written record as the dataset. Future research could utilise other methods to study rail policy change by focusing on more recent policy changes. Interview based data collection methods were ruled out owing to the timescales associated with this research and the risk of obtaining a reliable interview pool, and memory distortion. However, more recent timeframes for research would allow interviews to be more suitable. More recent rail policy changes should be studied, such as following delivery of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail (DfT, 2021a), with interview based techniques to determine if conclusions are similar.

The rail industry is widely considered to be at a critical juncture in its history owing to the COVID-19 associated loss in peak time demand due to changing work-life patterns (Marsden, 2020). Long term, rail may need new narratives to justify its existence and even its expansion. Such narratives, including levelling-up and the environment are already appearing in

Government white papers (DfT, 2021a; 2021b). Tracing these future narratives as they emerge would enable a research of rail policy development to be conducted in real time, fully accounting for the concerns of historical studies outlined by Foucault (1972). A real-time analysis of policy framing would enable comparative research from future historical points and may substantially expand our understanding of how looking into the past varies relative to studying events at the present. Further, plans could be set up in advance of any future rail policy changes. Once policy reform is implemented further changes within the context of the new paradigm are to be expected (Section 3.2). There is an opportunity presently to pre-empt these changes and establish more ambitious and time critical research methods to be implemented during the full process of those changes.

This leads to many options for rail policy change research. One, would be an interview based approach to studying the key drivers of policy change in implementing the 'Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail' (DfT, 2021a) by interviewing key industry and Government figures whilst rationales are accurately remembered. Themes of the interview could include the rail policy change themes of this research alongside other policy change works. Second, an ethnographic method could be used collate data around policy changes to upcoming changes following reform. Based on the information in this thesis, it could be assumed that GBR will be modified once issues with the upcoming industry reform are identified. This may be achieved by seconding a professional researcher into Government or civil service teams. Conclusions could shed light on the factors at play in rail policy development from a new perspective. This would help identify correlations or contradictions with this research method, whilst providing highly valuable and interesting insights to the policy change literature canon.

**Recommendation R4 (Sections 2.7, 8.6.2)**

This recommendation expands existing research over the themes and timescales of this research. This research used CDA and MMDA to reconstruct event chains leading to Government's increasing rail funding levels over a 30 year timeframe, based on key qualitative themes of policy change. There is a significant degree of research into rail industry costs and subsidy utilising quantitative methods and positivist epistemological outlooks. The work of Crössmann and Mause (2015) which quantified factors linked to rail policy subsidisation across Europe, is a key reference in this field. Similar factors of a quantifiable nature must also be tested in the

British rail context over time. This information would have been highly valuable in drawing conclusions to this research, for example did parliamentarians only regularly reference factors proven quantifiably to correlate with British rail funding levels over time? This would offer a useful complement to this research, insofar as any additional factors not identified using the qualitative approach could be considered for rail policy developments going forwards. It would allow for an exploration of counter factual narratives.

As such, a recommendation is for a research project to expand the Crössmann and Mause (2015) study into the British rail context, with a longitudinal focus over time. Regression analysis would also be the method. This would be at least covering this study period (1990 – 2020) and ideally covering the full duration since rail subsidies were introduced in the Transport Act (1968). This would likely culminate in a single research publication. Factors suggested to link with rail industry funding levels in this research, such as the number of devolved administrations or the size of the privatised rail industry, could be added to the Crössmann and Mause (2015) factors.

### Recommendation R5 (Sections 4.4, 5.4, 8.6)

This research is potentially less critical than others, but could add significant value. It would likely start a significant degree of debate on the topic of CDA. CDA must consider the full context of a discourse (Fairclough, 2003) (Section 4.4) but this added a significant research burden and thus constrained the sample size of data (Section 5.4). This research has outlined discursive themes considered relevant to the issue of rail funding policy change. Other research, such as Harmer (2018), has had to limit the dataset to enable CDA to be deliverable. It appears that automating sections of CDA methods could be beneficial for future research by reducing researcher burden. Development of more data intensive, computer-oriented research methods within the field of policy research is critical towards fully utilising technological developments available. Quantitative methods have been quick to adopt such technologies, such as simulations or modelling. However, data-analysis in qualitative methods can still be highly researcher intensive and lead to major assumptions early in methodological development. It is recommended that future research develops an approach to automating aspects of data identification and CDA to increase datasets.

Identifying policy change discursive themes more systematically should now be possible from a larger dataset. Future research could create computer-

coded algorithms to systematically analyse all House of Commons debate transcripts in the Hansard repository over a relevant timeframe to a research problem. These algorithms could detect discursive themes relevant to policy change, and thus isolate from debates the most relevant contributions and phrases with time. How those change would allow for a 'complete picture' of policy rationalisation to be created. The impact of the algorithms would first be tested against conclusions drawn in established policy change research, such as Dudley & Richardson (2000) or Baumgartener, et al. (2009). This would sense check the algorithms. Such a project would likely be highly ambitious and risk a major juncture within discourse analysis methods, as it could be argued that the principals of CDA cannot be delivered in an automated way (Fairclough, 2003). However, this research would test the benefits and costs of such methodological developments. It would likely be a major piece of research culminating in several research papers and an overarching book. Papers could; (a) development of the algorithm to gather and pre-process data, (b) development of the algorithm to detect discursive themes, (c) numerous case studies refining the approach against existent works. This should be developed by an experienced practitioner in CDA.

### 9.3.3 Recommendations for Policy

This section makes three recommendations for rail policy, emerging from this research. Relevant sections of the thesis are also identified.

**Recommendation P1 (Sections 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, Chapter 7, 8.4, 8.5, 9.2)**

*"Government should consider the role of the private sector within the British rail industry and the impact of devolutionary policies on advocacy and case making towards rail funding policies."*

The case for rail funding has been linked with the formation of two advocacies; privatised elements of the industry and devolved Government organisations. As such, pro-privatisation and pro-devolutionary policies are suggested to stimulate advocacy and apply pressure to Governments to fund rail systems. Conversely, nationalisation and centralisation would be expected to reduce pressure on central Governments to fund their rail systems. It is recommended that future devolutionary policies consider the role local advocates may play in pushing for additional funding for policies beneficial to their areas. Future rail industry restructures must consider how much advocacy is intended as an outcome and the impact this may have on industry budget setting processes.

For rail industry advocates, lobbying for rail policies is crucial to generating rail funding and salience. Equally important is the creation of tiers of Government with devolved responsibilities for transport. Lobbying against Government centralisation is thus key to creating advocacy coalitions that support and develop the case for rail. Their strategic planning and scheme development work also supports the rail industry supply chain, particularly concerning case-making and analysis.

**Recommendation P2 (Sections 3.1, Chapter 8, 9.2)**

*"Organisations seeking to promote rail ensure that rationales given in support of rail funding policies align with wider contextual circumstances rather than official appraisal criteria or Government manifesto objectives."*

Major shocks to the rail system, such as the COVID-19 pandemic which reduced rail demand to historic lows (Marsden, 2020; Marsden & Docherty, 2021), could be expected to undermine the case for rail. This research has outlined that contextual pro-rail narratives permeate more with parliamentarians than political or appraisal objectives. New policy frames are already emerging following COVID-19, including decarbonisation and 'levelling up' (DfT, 2021b), which may further extend the lifetime of the current policy of funding rail at historically high rates. As the wider context changes, so too must the case for rail evolve to ensure continued political support.

It is recommended that organisations seeking to promote rail ensure that rationales given in support of rail funding policies align with wider contextual circumstances. These must be politically salient issues likely to endure with time. Economic growth, in particular, was noted as highly important in this study. Shorter term political priorities, such as those within manifestos or White Papers, and transport appraisal objectives, appeared less salient among politicians. In the current context, this means focussing the case for rail on economy and economic divide is likely to yield dividends whilst in the immediate near future (as of mid-late 2022) the cost of living crisis and the role of rail subsidisation in providing affordable transport could present another opportunity. Equally, the case for rail on the basis of environmental benefit is likely to endure with time. Another key contextual issue likely to endure appeared relatively un-mentioned in episodic discourse; Brexit. This may be a further additional frame rail advocates may develop.

**Recommendation P3 (Sections 2.7, 3.5, 8.5)**

*"Independent regulatory bodies should continue to be utilised to accurately present to Governments the trade-offs associated with rail funding decisions to outline the true costs of reducing rail funding."*

The role of regulatory bodies in setting the financial framework of the rail industry was also linked with increased funding levels. This has been explored in literature (Section 2.7), but with this research outlining how discourse around regulators led to change. The reason for the link with funding levels is that Governments, when rail was not regulated in this manner at the start of the study period, could push the industry to deliver aspirations and savings without fully considering the long-term financial trade-offs.

As such, it is recommended that regulatory bodies are utilised to accurately present to Governments the trade-offs associated with rail funding decisions. This is currently the case in Great Britain, but would be recommended to continue to be following future rail reforms. This role for regulators helps prevent significant backlogs of network maintenance, through appropriate subsidisation for planned network usage, and leads to associated rail safety benefit. This is equally of benefit to Government, as major costly renewals programmes have been demonstrated by this research to lead to policy pathways whereby high rail funding levels generally remain following completion of maintenance backlogs. Equally, rail advocates may push for regulatory regimes to change in such a way as to increase the likelihood of regulatory capture being possible. This may occur by advocates recommending to Government (through consulting or embedding) regulatory reform that ultimately suits the rail industry. Higher degrees of regulation over the financial framework of the industry ultimately removes Government discretion to instruct spending cuts. Governments may be 'captured' by advocates via regulators to increase support for and implement rail funding policies. Thus, independent regulators are key for Government, even if they may prevent opportunities for short term funding cuts.

## 9.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined the final conclusions of this thesis. It indicated that the research question and sub-questions have been answered by the evaluation of the propositions. British rail funding increased from 2001 owing to a loss of Government power over its regulated rail industry financial

framework and policy capture owing to pro-public transport and pro-private investment policies (with private investment not being realised in line with expectations after the collapse of Railtrack). Once corrections to policy capture were in place, advocates created through the privatisation and devolutionary processes pushed Government to fund the rail system further, to help attain vested interest outcomes. It notes further research to develop the fields of policy studies and the methods used for this research. Finally, it makes three recommendations for policy based around the theme of rail funding and how noted factors in the British experience between 1993 and 2018 may be replicated or prevented in other circumstances.

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# Appendix A
# Supplementary Information for Chapter 6 Method

## A.1 Supplementary Information for Section 6.2

The following is a more detailed, step by step guide to the process outlined in Section 6.2. Files used are available online[1].

### A.1.1 Step A: Download Relevant Sample Debates

Step A identified three debates per study window focused on the railways, exemplified by the use of the term 'rail' or 'railway' in their title - this being considered a key reference, though sense-checking by the researcher was undertaking to ensure these debates could definitively be considered to be about rail policy. This approach effectively mirrored the approach used by Harmer (2018) to identify datasets, though for this purpose it would be used to identify a dataset which would create a more robust means of filtering the main datasets intended for MMDA and CDA.

These three 'rail' / 'railway' debates were selected to be sufficiently lengthy to allow for adequate sample sizes of parliamentarian contributions. This would ensure enough discourse may be used to create a substantial reference list. To achieve this, debates were selected that contained no less than ten individual parliamentarian contributions as this meant a sufficient sample size. The first three debates in each window in the study period meeting these criteria were used – whilst arbitrary, the selection of random debates was disregarded in favour of a more easily duplicable method. The nature of the first three debates in any period is likely, in any case, to be somewhat random.

### A.1.2 Step B: Identify Reference List

The purpose of Step B was to undertake discourse analysis into the eighteen reference term debates identified in Step A, so to identify a single multi-year list of rail industry reference terms. This list of reference terms would be the output of Step B and would then be used to identify which parliamentary debates could be defined as being focused on rail later in the data collation exercise.

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[1] https://github.com/JackSThompson/Research.git.

To begin, the first two debates in each study window were imported into QDAS software, which for this research NVivo was used throughout, and analysed using academic judgement where words considered typical of the rail industry (such as nouns or adjectives) were coded into a nodal set. To help guard against human error, every instance of a reference term was coded separately as this removed a requirement for the researcher to remember every word that had been coded previously which may have caused omissions.

Due to the intended use of this reference list as a basis for searching extensive Hansard records for occurrences of reference terms, a risk existed where a reference term that was too short or be a comprised of a series of letters which can be found within other non-rail related topics, would muddle search results. This was important because the 'Search()' function within Excel, which was used in Step 3 to identify which debates within the parliamentary transcripts are rail-oriented based on the reference list, would find the shorter term within longer terms. For example, the word 'Rail' sits within the word 'Frail', which may trigger debates on issues such as healthcare to be identified by the Excel 'Search()' function. For this reason, due care had to be paid to ensure reference terms weren't identified that would also relate to longer words not associated with the railways. A minimum character limit was applied to the identification of terms, with no reference term being shorter than 7 characters. This minimised the risk of false lookups occurring. Some reference terms would hence need to cover multiple words, such as the word 'rail' paired with common associated words either prior to it or after such as 'rail privatisation'.

Following processing in QDAS, the list was then exported to a blank Microsoft Excel 'XLSX' file for processing into a concise and legible dataset. The nature of using QDAS software is such that a 'data cleaning' exercise is often necessary to remove any punctuation adjacent to reference terms and to identify the root terminology. The data was also cleaned to remove duplicate words using a 'Trim()' Excel function, nested within a 'Proper()' function which removed such stray punctuation. This prevented coded terms such as 'train services' being considered separate to, for example, 'train services; "' as ultimately for this research the two are one and the same. In addition, words which fit inside other words were taken as a 'root' word, and the longer variations were deleted. The list produced from this analysis list is shown in Table 22.

**Table 22 Reference terms to describe rail identified in sample debates**

| Debates Selected (Titles) | Key Reference Words |
|---|---|
| 19930111 British Rail (Passenger Numbers) | British Rail; Rail Link; Commuter Trains; Crossrail; Delayed Trains; Express Trains; Fast Train; High Level Output Specification; High Speed 1; High Speed 2; High Speed 3; High Speed Rail; High-Speed Line; High-Speed Link; High-Speed Rail; High-Speed Trains; Inter-City Trains; Local Trains; Longer Trains; National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers; Network Rail; New Trains; Office of Rail and Road; Office of Rail Regulation; Office of The Rail Regulator; Overcrowded Trains; Passenger Rail; Public Sector Rail; Rail Accident; Rail Accident Investigation Branch; Rail Bosses; Rail Budget; Rail Capital Investment; Rail Chaos; Rail Companies; Rail Company; Rail Costs; Rail Crash; Rail Debates; Rail Engineers; Rail Environment; Rail Expansion; Rail Fare; Rail Franchise; Rail Franchising; Rail Freight; Rail Industry; Rail Infrastructure; Rail Investment; Rail Journeys; Rail Line; Rail Market; Rail Network; Rail Operations; Rail Operator; Rail Passenger; Rail Policy; Rail Privatisation; Rail Projects; Rail Regulator; Rail Review; Rail Route; Rail Schemes; Rail Sector; Rail Service; Rail Spending; Rail Staff; Rail Station; Rail Strike; Rail Structure; Rail System; Rail Terminus; Rail Tracks; Rail Transport; Rail Travel; Rail Upgrades; Rail User; Rail Utilisation Strategies; Railtrack; Railway; Rolling Stock; Strategic Rail Authority; Thameslink; Train Companies; Train Company; Train Fares; Train Fleet; Train Journey; Train Line; Train Operating Companies; Train Operating Company; Train Operator; Train Passengers; Train Pathways; Train Service; Train Station; Train Technologies; Travel by Rail. |
| 19930308 British Rail (Investment) | |
| 19980128 Channel Tunnel Rail Link | |
| 19980304 Channel Tunnel Rail Link | |
| 20030128 Power Supplies (Rail Network) | |
| 20030129 Rail Services (London And South-West) | |
| 20080108 Network Rail | |
| 20080117 Channel Tunnel Rail Link (Supplementary Provisions) Bill | |
| 20130117 Rail Fares | |
| 20130128 High Speed Rail | |
| 20180110 Rail Franchising | |
| 20180118 Passenger Rail Usage | |

To ensure that the list of reference words identified was sufficiently large and covered the full range of industry reference terms, a sense check took place. The reference list created using Step B was compared with the remaining six identified but not coded debates with one from each study period. These debates were analysed to check if any terms were found that had not already been picked up. The output was that no additional reference terms were identified. As such, the reference list created was sufficiently encompassing.

Alternative options for Step B were considered but deemed inadequate. One approach would have looked to identify a list of reference terms by finding a readily available store of rail reference terms online. However, this would have raised criticism that reference terms did not align with the way parliamentarians speak and reference railways, and there would need to be

a judgement call over how many episodic discourses were analysed to identify these lists. Also, should any pre-existing list be from a defined time period it may have omitted words which were relevant at one stage during the study period but not at the time of reference list creation.

Professional judgement may have also been used to identify the reference list, similar to the Harmer (2018) approach. This may have manifest itself by simply using terms known to the researcher from their own background knowledge. However, this option was also discarded due to its lack of potential duplicability and on account of the size of the rail industry and its numerous changes over the study period (Gourvish, 2008; Harris, 2016). This research would risk missing debates about even 'niche' areas of the industry where terms may have been rarer. As the House of Commons debates a range of issues and the Government is the actor funding the rail industry in line with the research question, this was considered to have been sufficiently captured in the approach outlined.

### A.1.3 Step 1: Download Full Transcripts

The data collation started by downloading the transcripts for every House of Commons sitting that fell within each study window. The first debate was accessed at "https://hansard.Parliament.uk/Commons/1993-01-11", with all subsequent debates accessible via the interactive calendar to the left of the page. Each page within the study period was opened to 'full transcript' and was downloaded as a HTML file from the Hansard online database. Each file was saved with the filename corresponding to the date of that sitting in YYYYMMDD format into a single folder on the researchers' computer. This was repeated for all sittings within the study windows with sitting dates being shown in green in the interactive calendar. This method is applicable to the Hansard website as of 2022, however should the website layout change then the navigation means may also change. However, the debates and the ability to download the full transcript in HTML formal should be retained in future developments of the website.

This method of accessing the full debate transcript data is reliable and time effective when compared with alternatives. An option to manually transcribe debates based on 'printed text' copies of the records, accessible physically in the Hansard library, would be significantly time consuming for this extent of data and risk human error in transcription process. Automating the download process was also discarded as error may have occurred given that sittings did not occur on all days, and for some days sittings officially

occurred but without debate, these being discarded through academic judgement.

## A.1.4 Step 2: Organise Transcripts

The purpose of Step 2 was to organise the raw dataset collated in Step 1 into legible data for analysis. Step 2 converted these multiple HTML sitting transcript files to a single XLSX Microsoft Excel File. This was completed by using a VB coded algorithm set up in a blank macro-enabled Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled "Step 2a Converter". The location of each file was entered into Column B2:Bx of Sheet 1, depending on the number of files. The algorithm opened each HTML file in Excel and selected all text. It then copied the text into a new tab that was named according to the YYYYMMDD filename for that specific debate. To enable the VB algorithm to do this, the full list of sittings in YYYYMMDD format was stored in a reference list within the spreadsheet so as to feed the algorithm with information covering the file names that the algorithm should look for in the master file, and what to name each tab in which the data is pasted. This reference list was created as each HTML file was downloaded from Hansard. 557 iterations were required to cover all debate transcripts within the study period identified for this research. To amend for other research samples, change the '558' figure to number of files plus 1. The VB algorithm used was as Equation 1.

### Equation 1: VB for collating transcripts

```
Sub CovertHTML()

    Dim strFName As String
    Dim i As Integer

    For i = 2 To 558

      Application.ScreenUpdating = False
      Application.DisplayAlerts = False
      m
      Dim shhtFName As String

      shhtFName = sheets("Sheet1").Cells(i, 1).Value

      Sheets.Add.Name = shhtFName

      strFName = sheets("Sheet1").Cells(i, 2).Value

      Workbooks.Open Filename:=strFName
```

```
    Range("A:A").Select
    Selection.Copy


        Workbooks("Converter.xlsm").Worksheets(shhtFName).Cells(1, 1).PasteSpecial
    Paste:=xlPasteValues


    Application.CutCopyMode = False


    Workbooks(shhtFName).Close


  Next i


 End Sub
```

The output was an XLSX file containing all House of Common's full-day transcripts with each day's transcript located in a worksheet named in that day's YYYYMMDD format. Next was to process the House of Commons sitting transcript Excel worksheet so as to organise them into a consistent legible format, by separating out each parliamentarian contribution and removing the 'noise' that has emerged within the transcripts due to their original download as HTML files. For example, at this stage each full-day transcript will include references to share buttons on the website. For this part of Step 2, a separate Excel file was used called "Step 2b Processor". All tabs produced by the first section of Step 2, as per the above processing in the "Step 2a Converter" file, were copied into the new file. The VB algorithm in Equation 2 was used, where 'i' varies based on the sample size.

### Equation 2: VB for processing transcripts

```
    Sub Run()


      Dim i As Integer


      For i = 10 To 566


        Application.ScreenUpdating = False
        Application.DisplayAlerts = False


        Dim strSheet As String
        strSheet = Sheets("Control").Cells(i, 14)
        Sheets(strSheet).Activate


        Sheets(strSheet).Columns(1).Copy Destination:=Sheets("HTML").Columns(1)


        Call Process
```

```
        Sheets("Export").Columns("A:A").Copy Destination:=Sheets(strSheet).Columns("B:B")
        Sheets("Export").Columns("B:B").Copy Destination:=Sheets(strSheet).Columns("C:C")
        Application.CutCopyMode = False


        Sheets("HTML").Range("A:A").Clear
        Sheets("Export").Range("A:B").Clear


      ActiveWorkbook.Save


    Next i


      ActiveWorkbook.Save


   End Sub
```

The algorithm shown above worked by using a reference list of all debate YYYYMMDD labels to draw each debate out of the sheet it had been saved within. It then runs this through a 'Process' macro, which uses several filters and built-in formula to remove any noise within the transcript. The process macro is not suitable to be recorded here, due to its excessive size. It could be easily duplicated, however, as it simply works by copying and pasting the debate through a number of tabs with pre-programmed formulae and filters. The workings of these tabs are such that each parliamentarian name would return a value in a column next to the column containing all HTML data. Each parliamentarian contribution would then return another value. All other cells would return blanks. These values were then pasted into the next tab and grouped, such that each line of contribution was grouped into a single paragraph after the last parliamentarian name reference. This cleaned data was then pasted back into the YYYYMMDD worksheet with two columns, one representing the parliamentarian providing a contribution and a second showing the contribution itself.

The 'Control' tab is one of two tabs the researcher will need. In Column N10:Nx, depending on the sample size, the YYYMMDD identifiers of the tabs created earlier in Step 2 must be input. This is where the model draws this data. The only other intervention the researcher needs is to use the 'Dashboard' tab to also enter these YYYMMDD identifiers, this time in column B:1 to x:1, depending on the sample size. The macro button in the Control tab will do the rest, leading to a dashboard as the output.

An example of input text form, and the subsequent output of this is shown below. Table 23 shows the original HTML file when opened as an XLSX file following Step 1. Table 24 shows this same debate after cleaning by the processes outlined for Step 2. The removal of noise can be seen, and the debate is now organised in a means suitable for MMDA and CDA.

**Table 23 Example input of unprocessed House of Commons transcript data**

| | |
|---|---|
| Channel Tunnel | |
| | |
| | 1 |
| | |
| The edit just sent has not been saved. The following error was returned: | |
| This content has already been edited and is awaiting review. | |
| | |
| Dr. Kim Howells | |
| | |
| | |
| Share | |
| | |
| To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail to discuss rail links between Wales, the west of England and the channel tunnel. | |
| | |
| | |
| Share | |
| The edit just sent has not been saved. The following error was returned: | |
| This content has already been edited and is awaiting review. | |
| | |
| The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Roger Freeman) | |
| | |
| | |
| Share | |
| | |
| The Secretary of State and the chairman of British Rail meet regularly and channel tunnel services from the regions, including Wales and the west of England, are often discussed. | |
| | |
| | |
| Share | |
| The edit just sent has not been saved. The following error was returned: | |
| This content has already been edited and is awaiting review. | |
| | |
| Dr. Howells | |
| | |
| | |
| Share | |

| |
|---|
| Is the Minister aware that just before Christmas, Wales and the nation lost the Powell Duffryn wagon construction works in Cardiff and with it the expertise of a century's trading and the ability, among other things, to construct low-axle rail freight wagons which would have enabled areas such as south Wales and the west of England to trade directly with firms on the continent? Why does not the Minister recognise that the lack of orders from British Rail is doing incalculable damage to firms such as the one that used to operate in Cardiff? When will he do something to offer protection to the British rail industry? |
| |
| |
| Share |
| The edit just sent has not been saved. The following error was returned: |
| This content has already been edited and is awaiting review. |
| |

**Table 24 Example output of 'cleaned' House of Commons transcript**

| 19930111 | |
|---|---|
| **Contribution** | **Parliamentarian** |
| To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail to discuss rail links between Wales, the west of England and the channel tunnel. | MP - Dr. Kim Howells |
| The Secretary of State and the chairman of British Rail meet regularly and channel tunnel services from the regions, including Wales and the west of England, are often discussed. | MP - The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Roger Freeman) |
| Is the Minister aware that just before Christmas, Wales and the nation lost the Powell Duffryn wagon construction works in Cardiff and with it the expertise of a century's trading and the ability, among other things, to construct low-axle rail freight wagons which would have enabled areas such as south Wales and the west of England to trade directly with firms on the continent? Why does not the Minister recognise that the lack of orders from British Rail is doing incalculable damage to firms such as the one that used to operate in Cardiff? When will he do something to offer protection to the British rail industry? | MP - Dr. Howells |

## A.1.5 Step 3: Identify Debates Referencing Railway Terms

The purpose of Step 3 was to use the reference search list identified in Steps A and B to search the organised dataset created in Step 2 to identify rail debates. Step 3 used the reference term list to search all House of Commons sittings to calculate the sum of the total number of occurrences of each reference term. An Excel model was created to perform this function. The input to this model consisted of a pasted 'Dashboard' tab of the organised House of Commons transcripts, as in Table 24, covering each House of Commons sitting within the study period. This input was a single

Excel tab with each day's transcript appearing in a new column side by side. The parliamentarian contributions during that day were arranged in order row by row. A separate 'Lookups' tab covering the reference list of 98 reference terms.

'Processing sheets' were then created to process the House of Commons sitting data such that only parliamentarian contributions which used the rail reference terms were identified and counted. A 'Process' tab mirrored the dashboard, though instead of each cell containing data it instead contained the following formula.

$$= IF(SUMPRODUCT(-$$
$$- ISNUMBER(SEARCH(Lookups!\$L\$2:\$L\$99, Dashboard!B11))) > 0,1,"")$$

This formula pivoted off of the dashboard (B11 in this test) and lookup tables (in cells L2 – L99) and created a copy of the dashboard with each parliamentarian contribution replaced by the number '1' if it included any of the 98 reference terms. This allows for a sum of the number of parliamentarian contributions that refer to the railway reference terms to be calculated for each House of Commons sitting. The number of parliamentarian contributions referencing the reference terms identified in Step B is shown in Figure 30.

In total, there were 557 House of Commons sittings within the study period, and of these there were a total of 418 where at least one parliamentarian used a railway reference term at some point in the day's sitting. For this reason, the use of a single reference term alone cannot be considered sufficient to warrant an assumption that there was a debate that day focused on the rail.
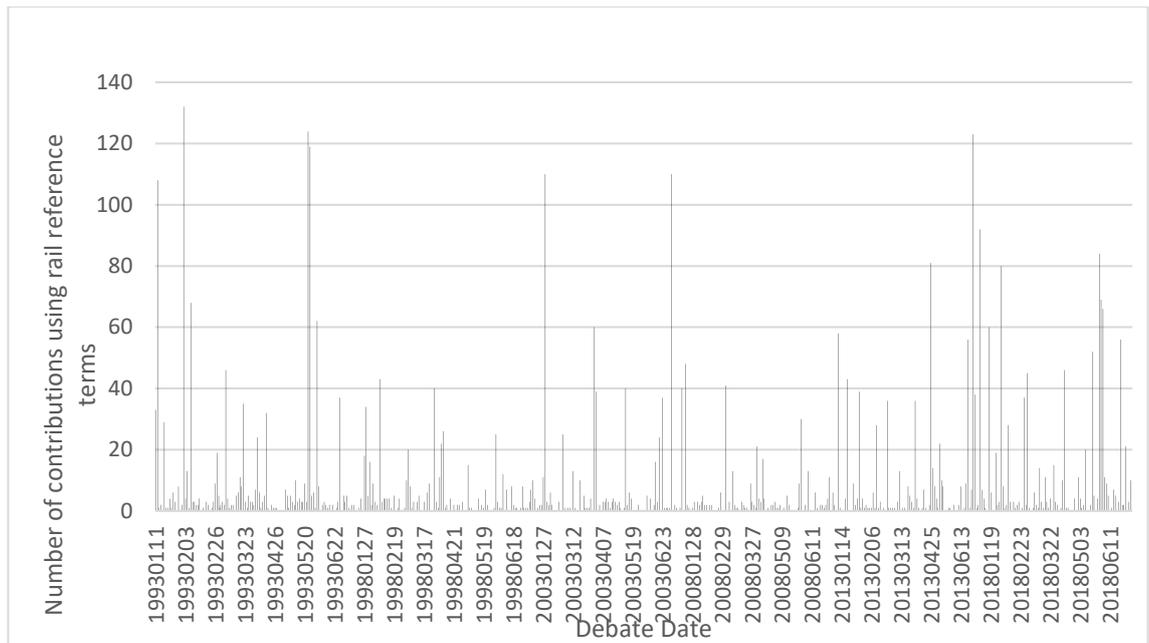
**Figure 30 Number of parliamentarian contributions using rail reference terms per sitting**

## A.1.6 Step 4: Rail Debate Transcripts

The purpose of Step 4 was to create a legible dataset of debates considered to be sufficiently focused on discussing rail. Following Step 3, the next step was to identify days in which a higher than average number of parliamentarian contributions include at least one reference term, as these can be considered the days when rail debates occurred. The total number of parliamentarian contributions using rail reference terms in the study period was calculated to be 4,345. The average per sitting was:

$$Sample\ Size\ Average$$
$$= \frac{Total\ Number\ of\ Contributions\ Referencing\ Rail\ Terms}{Total\ Number\ of\ Sittings}$$
$$= \frac{4345}{557} = 7.8$$

As such, each day with at least eight parliamentarians making a contribution using railway reference terms was selected and classified as containing a rail focused debate. All other days were discarded. In total, 108 House of Commons sittings were identified as meeting these criteria – nearly a fifth of the total. An analysis of the distribution of these debates is shown in Table 25, which shows no less than 12 and no more than 24 House of Commons full day sittings per study window. Whilst the data shows some variation between study windows, no window is significantly under or overrepresented.

**Table 25 Number of House of Commons sittings using rail reference terms 8 or more times**

| Year | Number of House of Commons Sittings identified |
|------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1993 | 22 |
| 1998 | 18 |
| 2003 | 12 |
| 2008 | 12 |
| 2013 | 20 |
| 2018 | 24 |

At this stage, only the full day transcripts had been identified and has not yet been reduced to cover and identify only the specific debate taking place within that day where a debate on rail took place. This was done by identifying those debates by analysing the distribution of parliamentarian contributions which reference railway terms throughout the full days' transcripts. A cluster of contributions using railway reference terms in close proximity would imply that a 'debate' was being had about railway matters, whilst sporadic one-off mentions of reference terms throughout the day would no yield benefit to this research in being taken forward for analysis. This was completed by identifying clusters of parliamentarian contributions that routinely pick up railway reference terms and removing reference to any individual 'outliers' occurring during debates related generally to other matters. This hence represents a second sift of the data to remove irrelevant debate transcripts. This analysis was completed manually using the dashboard layout in the Excel spreadsheets, similar to that identified in Table 24, for each of the 108 relevant House of Commons sittings. Conditional formatting was used to highlight each parliamentarian contribution which included a rail reference term so as to help ensure the accuracy of this manual processing.

The analysis of these 108 House of Commons sittings revealed that for 20 sittings, references were scattered sparsely and could not be deliberately made within the context of a wider debate on railway matters thus in keeping with contextual considerations under discourse analysis methods (Fairclough, 2003). These debates were discarded, leaving 88 debates which concerned rail. The dates of these sittings, and debate titles which triggered the references, are shown below. On a number of days more than one debate occurred. These debates made up the sample to be studied throughout the research in this thesis. The debates are shown in Table 26.

**Table 26 Classification of House of Commons rail debates**

| House of Commons Debate ID | Debate Title | Debate Length (Words) |
|---|---|---|
| **Debates concerning Government rail funding policy** | | |
| 19930111 | Oral Answers to Questions | 8818 |
| 19930308 | Oral Answers To Questions | 8603 |
| 19930419 | Oral Answers To Questions | 8752 |
| 19930628 | Oral Answers to Questions | 8826 |
| 19980128 b | Channel Tunnel Rail Link | 7311 |
| 19980304 | Channel Tunnel Rail Link | 11974 |
| 19980305 | Business Of The House | 5705 |
| 19980603 | Channel Tunnel Rail Link | 9245 |
| 20030115 a | Rail Services | 529 |
| 20030115 b | Rail Franchises | 160 |
| 20030312 b | Rail Services (Hassocks) | 3511 |
| 20030319 | Rail Services | 724 |
| 20030513 | Oral Answers To Questions | 9026 |
| 20030617 | Oral Answers To Questions | 9344 |
| 20030623 | Transport | 22631 |
| 20080108 | Network Rail | 29586 |
| 20080117 | Channel Tunnel Rail Link (Supplementary Provisions) Bill | 15042 |
| 20080122 | Oral Answers to Questions | 9102 |
| 20080304 | Oral Answers to Questions | 8881 |
| 20080603 | Oral Answers to Questions | 8869 |
| 20130128 | High Speed Rail | 11832 |
| 20130228 | Oral Answers to Questions | 9539 |
| 20130425 a | Oral Answers to Questions | 9676 |
| 20130425 b | Railways | 12239 |
| 20130620 | East Coast Main Line Franchise | 22086 |
| 20130626 | High Speed Rail (Preparation) Bill | 41082 |
| 20130627 | Oral Answers to Questions | 9016 |
| 20180110 | Rail Franchising | 25114 |
| 20180118 | Oral Answers to Questions | 10651 |
| 20180130 | High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill | 36523 |
| 20180205 | Rail Franchising | 8207 |
| 20180301 | Oral Answers to Questions | 10956 |
| 20180314 | Oral Answers to Questions | 10538 |
| 20180327 | Rail Announcement | 6502 |
| 20180502 | Oral Answers to Questions | 11184 |
| 20180523 | Transport Secretary: East Coast Franchise | 26030 |
| 20180524 a | Oral Answers to Questions | 11616 |
| **Debates concerning other rail matters** | | |
| 19930112 | Rail Privatisation | 53212 |
| 19930118 | Treaty on European Union | 101872 |
| 19930128 | Engagements | 1933 |
| 19930202 a | Railways Bill | 50908 |

| 19930202 b | Railways Bill Money | 5768 |
|---|---|---|
| 19930202 c | Railways Bill (Ways and Means) | 6326 |
| 19930204 | Roads (Investment) | 4851 |
| 19930208 | British Railways (No 4) Bill | 20719 |
| 19930301 | Valleys Line | 435 |
| 19980331 | Oral Answers to Questions | 7103 |
| 19930401 | Greater London and the South-East | 23560 |
| 19930322 | Channel Tunnel Rail Link | 9535 |
| 19930524 a | Oral Answers To Questions | 8393 |
| 19930524 b | Orders of the Day | 69195 |
| 19930525 | New Clause 12 | 64202 |
| 19930608 | Crossrail Bill (By Order) | 25148 |
| 19980128 a | Railway Noise | 4086 |
| 19980130 | Road Traffic Reduction (United Kingdom Targets) Bill | 36023 |
| 19980203 | Rail Freight | 335 |
| 19980209 | Railways | 24041 |
| 19980303 | Rail Passenger Satisfaction Surveys | 243 |
| 19980325 | Railway Regulation | 10665 |
| 19980330 | Rail Services (London-West Country) | 4498 |
| 19980401 | Train Operating Companies | 10687 |
| 19980505 a | Railtrack Communication Masts | 365 |
| 19980505 b | Rolling Stock | 569 |
| 19980609 a | Railways (Disabled Access) | 283 |
| 19980609 b | Rail Passenger Safety | 370 |
| 20030128 a | Oral Answers To Questions | 9134 |
| 20030128 b | Railways And Transport Safety Bill | 33938 |
| 20030304 | Oral Answers To Questions | 8757 |
| 20030312 a | Rail Services (Wilmslow) | 149 |
| 20030331 | Orders of the Day | 40647 |
| 20030401 | Oral Answers To Questions | 8791 |
| 20030619 | Rail Fares | 6885 |
| 20080402 | Heathrow | 24816 |
| 20080422 | Oral Answers to Questions | 8444 |
| 20080609 | Transport (Greater Manchester) | 6639 |
| 20130109 | Rising Cost of Transport | 20737 |
| 20130117 | Oral Answers to Questions | 9296 |
| 20130212 | Infrastructure | 25020 |
| 20130326 | Rail Franchising | 6049 |
| 20130514 | Cost of Living | 51975 |
| 20130516 | High Speed 2 | 378 |
| 20180124 | South-eastern Rail Franchise | 4076 |
| 20180227 | Department for Transport | 21128 |
| 20180419 | Oral Answers to Questions | 10089 |
| 20180516 | East Coast Main Line | 9708 |
| 20180524 b | Northern Rail Timetable Changes | 5025 |
| 20180604 | Rail Timetabling | 13894 |
| 20180619 | Confidence in the Secretary of State for Transport | 21366 |

The final requirement of Step 4 was to save each 'legible' full debate transcript as a separate file for future importation into QDAS software for processing through the research method outlined earlier in this chapter. This was completed by downloading the transcripts of debates identified in Table 26 from the Hansard records in a similar manner to that undertaken for the original data collection of full day transcripts. However, this time, only the relevant debate transcript was downloaded. This was done by identifying the debate title from Table 26 and using the Hansard record search to access that specific file. These debates were saved as HTML files in a new data repository so as to isolate them from the previous round of the data processing. These were then processed using the same process as Steps 1 and 2, so as to create 'legible' files. The method will not be detailed here again, as it is an exact duplicate of the method explained in Step 1 and 2, but simply pivoting off of a new dataset. These legible debates were then saved individually into a repository to be accessed during the next stages of the research methodology.

## A.2 Supplementary Information for Section 6.3

**Table 27 MMDA nodes for coding covering parliamentarian identifications of organisations within the rail industry**

| Node | Sub-Node | Explanation | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Governments | Europe | European Government institutions. | European Union, European Commission |
| | UK | UK Government institutions. | DfT |
| | National | Devolved national Government institutions. | Welsh Assembly, Scottish Government |
| | Regional / Combined | Regional Government institutions or combined authorities which sit above Local Authorities. | Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, GLA |
| | Local | Local Government institutions. | Plymouth City Council, Leicester City Council |
| Law | | Entities involved in the enforcement of the law and judiciary. | British Transport police, High Court |
| Local Transport Authority | | Local transport authorities with devolved powers over National Rail transport. | Transport for London, West Yorkshire passenger transport authority, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive |

| Media | | Media organisations. | the Railway Gazette, the Independent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Operator | Infrastructure Manager | Owners of National Rail infrastructure. | Network Rail |
| | Integrated Operator | Operators of both infrastructure and rail services | British Rail |
| | Train Operating Company | Passenger Train Operating Companies, including established TOCs, open access operators and franchise bidders. | Virgin Trains East Coast, Hull Trains, Stagecoach |
| | Freight Operating Company | Freight Operating Companies. | GB Rail Freight |
| Other | Property Development | Property developers | Trafalgar House |
| | Other | Organisations typically outside the national rail industry, often as examples. | British Telecom, British Airways |
| Promoter | Local Partnerships | Partnerships established with local agendas, such as LEPs. | Connecting Cornwall partnership, Rail North Partnership |
| | Research | Organisations primarily responsible for research. | National Rail Academy, Institute for Public Policy Research |
| | Special Interest Group | 'Special interest' groups, such as transport user groups. | Centre for Policy Studies, the Campaign for Better Transport, Visit Lincoln |
| | Trade Group | Rail industry trade groups. | Railway Industry Association, CBI |
| Regulator | | Regulatory entities. | Health and Safety Commission, ORR |
| Supplier | Consultancies | Consultancies. | Ove Arup |
| | Contractors | Construction firms. | Carillion, Kier |
| | Manufacturers | Manufacturers of rail industry supplies. | ABB, Bombardier |
| | Investors | Organisations who undertake investment activities, such as ROSCOs. | Porterbrook |
| Trade Unions | | Trade unions. | Transport and Salaried Staffs Association, RMT |

## A.3 Supplementary Information for Section 6.4

**Table 28 Referenced episodic discourses identified and identifier**

| Identifier | Discourse Title |
|---|---|
| 1993a | Ensuring Safety on Britain's Railways |
| 1998a | A New Deal for Transport Better for Everyone |
| 1998b | Privatisation of the Rolling Stock Leasing Companies |
| 2003a | The Strategic Plan |
| 2003b | Potters Bar derailment: report and recommendations |
| 2003c | Train Derailment At Potters Bar 10 May 2002 A Progress Report by the HSE Investigation Board to the end of June 2002 |
| 2003d | Multi Modal Studies |
| 2003e | Lawyers forced Blair to ditch plans to scrap Scots secretary |
| 2003f | Transport 2010 |
| 2003g | Lib Dems aim to get rid of 9 ministries |
| 2003h | New Waverley station to cost twice as much as Holyrood |
| 2003i | Labour Manifesto 2001 |
| 2003j | Making the Connections |
| 2003k | Tory money man aims to clear up Labour's mess |
| 2003l | Transport for People |
| 2008a | Fourth Special Report |
| 2008b | Network Rail Annual Report and Accounts 2007 |
| 2008c | Delivering a Sustainable Railway |
| 2008d | Network Rail Strategic Business Plan CP4 |
| 2008e | The Black Country Study |
| 2008f | The Evaluation of the Northern Way 2008-11 |
| 2008g | The Eddington Transport Study |
| 2008h | National Passenger Survey Autumn 2007 |
| 2008i | The Future of Air Transport |
| 2008j | High Speed Line Study |
| 2013a | HS2 Phase 2 Command Paper |
| 2013aa | The European Commissions 4th Railway Package Government Response to the Committees Twelfth Report of Session 2012-13 |
| 2013ab | Fourth railway package of 2016 |
| 2013ac | Are bus companies taking us for a ride |
| 2013b | Airports Commission Final Report |
| 2013c | Buckinghamshire's Mitigation Blueprint for HS2 |
| 2013d | The Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme |
| 2013e | Government argument for re-privatising East Coast rail line demolished by Adonis |
| 2013f | Laidlaw Enquiry |
| 2013g | This rail route deserves more than a cheap political gesture |
| 2013h | GB rail industry financial information 2013-14 |
| 2013i | Regulating Network Rail's Efficiency |
| 2013j | Realising the Potential of GB Rail |
| 2013k | Rail's second chance |
| 2013l | The InterCity East Coast Passenger Rail Franchise |
| 2013m | Rebuilding Rail |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2013n | On-rail competition Consultation on options for change in open access |
| 2013o | High Speed 2 A review of early programme preparation |
| 2013p | High Speed 2 The best we can do |
| 2013q | GMPP 2012 |
| 2013r | Understanding the transport infrastructure requirements to deliver growth in England's core cities |
| 2013s | HS2 Regional Economic Impacts |
| 2013t | Liberal-Democrat manifesto 2010 |
| 2013u | The Reshaping of British Railways - Part 1 Report |
| 2013v | Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan |
| 2013w | UKIP Manifesto 2010 |
| 2013x | The North East Independent Economic Review |
| 2013y | Commission Staff Working Document Executive Summary Of The Impact Assessment |
| 2013z | Definition of competent local authority |
| 2018a | Aims of rail franchising and what we expect from our delivery partners |
| 2018aa | Midlands Connect Strategy 2017 |
| 2018ab | Enhancements Delivery Plan Update |
| 2018ac | Investigation into the Department for Transports decision to cancel three rail electrification projects |
| 2018ad | Short-term Intercity East Coast train operator 2018 options report |
| 2018ae | East Coast Main Line Financial Statement 2014 |
| 2018af | Annual Report on Major Projects 2016 17 |
| 2018ag | 2018 periodic review final determination Scotland |
| 2018ah | Launch Briefing |
| 2018ai | Rail franchising in the UK |
| 2018aj | Rail timetable changes May 2018 |
| 2018ak | The Yorkshire Post says |
| 2018al | Ownership Matters |
| 2018b | The Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern rail franchise |
| 2018c | RMT Pay Bulletin |
| 2018d | House of Commons - Rail franchising - Transport Committee |
| 2018e | Gibb Report |
| 2018f | Realising the Potential of GB Rail |
| 2018g | The South West Peninsula Strategic Rail Blueprint |
| 2018h | Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review |
| 2018i | Passenger Experience Summary |
| 2018j | Grayling's Failings |
| 2018k | Annual Report and Accounts 2017-2018 |
| 2018l | Competition in Passenger Rail Services in Great Britain |
| 2018m | Accessibility Action Plan |
| 2018n | Railways Act 2005 statement of funds available 2017 |
| 2018o | Progress with preparations for High Speed 2 |
| 2018p | High Speed 2 Annual Report and Accounts |
| 2018q | HS2 Plus |
| 2018r | Future Transport Investment in the North |
| 2018s | Cities Outlook 2018 |
| 2018t | Accelerated Growth, Accelerating Opportunities |

| 2018u | HS2 Regional Economic Impacts |
|---|---|
| 2018v | Connecting people a strategic vision for rail |
| 2018w | West and Wales strategic rail prospectus |
| 2018x | The Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme |
| 2018y | Delivering a Sustainable Railway |
| 2018z | Chris Grayling How I plan to get transport back on track in North |

## A.4 Supplementary Information for Section 6.5

### Table 29 Variables covering 1992 Conservative manifesto priorities

| Year | Node | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1993 | Taking Responsibility for Britain | Britain's role in the world as a leader and wording to expand the 'Conservative supported' influences of the European Union. |
| | Wealth and Ownership | Economic management, including keeping inflation low, reducing taxes and continuing privatisation. |
| | Choice and The Charter | Expansion of the Citizens Charter. |
| | Opportunity for All | Expanding the number of students in higher education, expansion of adult training schemes and tighter union rules. |
| | Freedom Under Law | Additional policing, pledges on terrorism, drugs, 'sin' regulations and construction of new prisons. |
| | Responsibility for Others | Increased funding for the NHS, 'simplification' of the welfare state, tougher animal rights regulations. |
| | A Brighter Britain | Increase home ownership, rail privatisation, road expansion, creation of the Environment Agency. |
| | Towards the Millennium | Arts and sports funds for Millennium initiatives. |
| | A United Kingdom | Closer integration between England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. |

### Table 30 Variables covering 1997 Labour manifesto priorities

| Year | Node | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1998 | Education | Education will be our number one priority, and we will increase the share of national income spent on education as we decrease it on the bills of economic and social failure |
| | Taxation | There will be no increase in the basic or top rates of income tax |
| | Economy | We will provide stable economic growth with low inflation, and promote dynamic and competitive business and industry at home and abroad |
| | Boost Employment | We will get 250,000 young unemployed off benefit and into work |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Healthcare | We will rebuild the NHS, reducing spending on administration and increasing spending on patient care |
| | Crime | We will be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, and halve the time it takes persistent juvenile offenders to come to court |
| | Communities and the Welfare State | We will help build strong families and strong communities, and lay the foundations of a modern welfare state in pensions and community care |
| | Improve the environment and reduce transport congestion and pollution | We will safeguard our environment, and develop an integrated transport policy to fight congestion and pollution |
| | Running of Government and decentralisation | We will clean up politics, decentralise political power throughout the United Kingdom and put the funding of political parties on a proper and accountable basis |
| | Leadership within Europe | We will give Britain the leadership in Europe which Britain and Europe need |

### Table 31 Variables covering 2001 Labour manifesto priorities

| Year | Node | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 2003 | Prosperity for all | How we expand our economy and raise our living standards |
| | World-class public services | How investment and reform will improve public services |
| | A modern welfare state | How we help people into work and provide security for those who can't work |
| | Strong and safe communities | How we tackle crime and renew our society |
| | Britain strong in the world | How we make foreign policy work for Britain and the wider world |

### Table 32 Variables covering 2005 Labour manifesto priorities

| Year | Node | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 2008 | Economy: Rising prosperity in an opportunity society | Continuation of high employment and steady economic growth, sustainable development to guard against climate change |
| | Education: More children making the grade | Continued investment in education including improvement in school buildings |
| | Crime and security: Safe communities, secure borders | Continued reduction in ad-hoc crimes, but a new focus on organised crime |
| | Our NHS: Free to all, personal to each | Improvement to the quality of care and removal of any costs for the user for operations |
| | Older people: Secure today, prepared for the | Tackle pensioner poverty by providing |

| | future | additional money to poorer pensioners |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Families: Choice and support at work and at home | Helping parents balance work and family, with paid leave and expansion in childcare |
| | International policy: A stronger country in a secure, sustainable and just world | Acknowledgement of the role of globalisation to impact the UK and the need to reform Europe and fight terrorism |
| | Quality of life: Excellence for all | Improving the quality of life with specific mention to arts and culture |
| | Democracy: Power devolved, citizens empowered | Devolving more power to local authorities and reforming the House of Lords |

**Table 33 Variables covering 2010 Coalition priorities**

| Year | Node | Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2013 | Banking | Increasing regulation of the banking sector |
| | Business | Creating a fairer and more balanced economy |
| | Civil liberties | Restoring the rights of individuals |
| | Communities and local government | Decentralising politics |
| | Consumer protection | Enhancing consumer rights |
| | Crime and policing | Reform the criminal justice system |
| | Culture, Olympics, media, and sport | Using government funding to enhance culture in collaboration with private money |
| | Defence | Improving safety and enhancing the armed services |
| | Deficit reduction | Reducing the deficit through spending cuts |
| | Energy and climate change | Fighting climate change and growing the low carbon economy |
| | Environment, food and rural affairs | Improving the environment and helping the farming sector |
| | Equalities | Fighting discrimination and tackling social barriers and immobility |
| | Europe | Britain should play a leading role in the European Union |
| | Families and children | Encouraging family friendly initiatives and reducing premature sexualisation |
| | Foreign affairs | Working collaboratively with NATO, the Commonwealth and the United Nations |
| | Government transparency | Opening the doors of Government to improve the value of private sector procurement |
| | Immigration | Controlling non-EU immigration |

| | International development | Continuing to spend money on foreign aid, but with greater scrutiny over where it is spent |
| | Jobs and welfare | Training for those who want to move back into work, sanctions for those who turn down reasonable work |
| | Justice | Effective sentencing policies as well as overhauling the system of rehabilitation |
| | National security | Fighting terrorism |
| | NHS | Continuing free point of use for the NHS. Reducing Government micro-management |
| | Pensions and older people | Safeguarding key benefits and pensions, and taking action to make it easier for older people to work or volunteer. |
| | Political reform | A referendum on electoral reform much greater co-operation across party lines |
| | Public health | Promoting public health and encourage behaviour change to help people live healthier lives |
| | Schools | Improving the standards of classrooms and teaching |
| | Social action | Making it easier for communities to help one another |
| | Social care and disability | Reforming social care |
| | Taxation | Moving towards a simpler tax system |
| | Transport | Using transport to grow the economy and benefit the climate |
| | Universities and further education | Creating more university places and improving links with industry |

**Table 34 Variables covering 2017 Conservative manifesto priorities**

| Year | Node | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 2018 | A strong economy that works for everyone | Priorities to increase trade, effective regulation, innovation, transport and economic growth in towns and cities |
| | A strong and united nation in a changing world | Protecting the union, leaving the EU, increasing international trade, increasing armed forces spending and reforming criminal justice |
| | The world's great meritocracy | Improved education with more teachers, controlling immigration and cutting the cost of living |
| | A restored contract between the generations | Improving the NHS and care for the elderly, house building and reducing child poverty |
| | Prosperity and security in a digital age | A new digital charter |

# Appendix B
# Supplementary Information for Chapter 7 Results

**Figure 31 Discourses referenced in 1993 rail funding debates and discourses referenced within those sources**
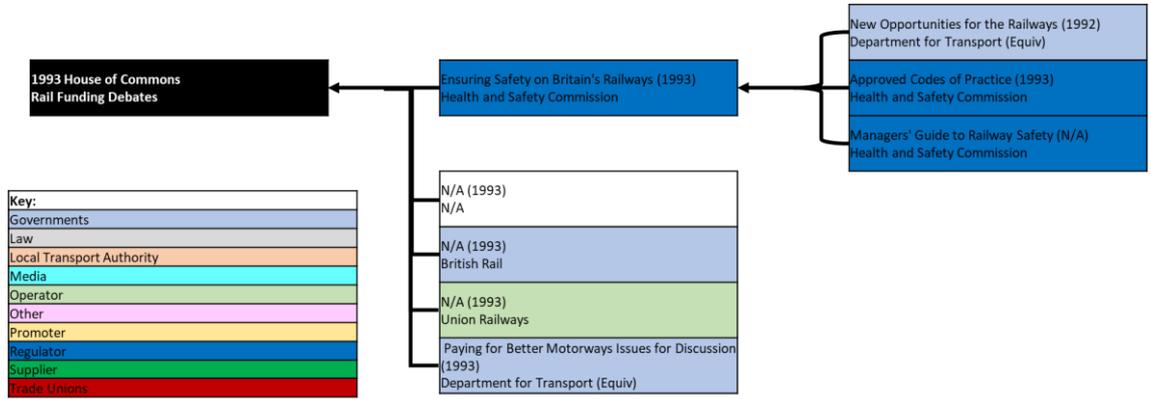


**Figure 32 Discourses referenced in 1998 rail funding debates and discourses referenced within those sources**
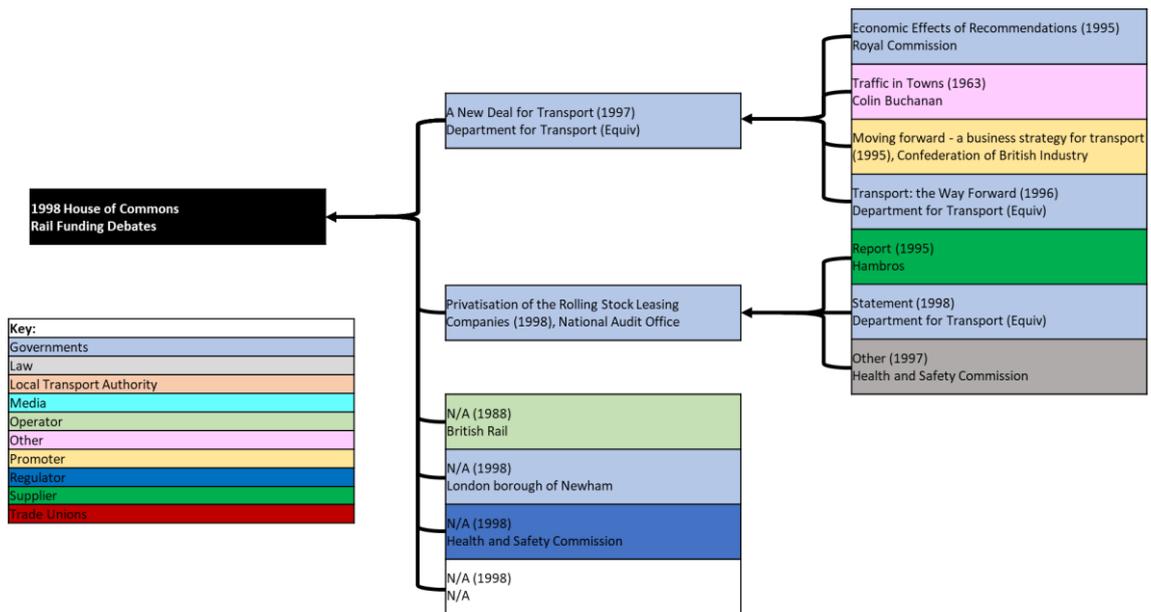
## Figure 33 Discourses referenced in 2003 rail funding debates and discourses referenced within those sources

**Key:**
- Governments
- Law
- Local Transport Authority
- Media
- Operator
- Other
- Promoter
- Regulator
- Supplier
- Trade Unions

**2003 House of Commons Rail Funding Debates**

- Multi Modal Studies (2003) — Parliamentary Committee
  - Transport 2010 (2000) — Department for Transport (Equiv)
  - A New Deal for Transport Better for Everyone (1997) — Department for Transport (Equiv)

- Lawyers forced Blair to ditch plans to scrap Scots secretary (2003) — James Cusick
  - Statement (2003) — Unknown Source
  - Statement (2003) — The General Council of the Bar
  - Statement (2003) — Lord Forsyth
  - Statement (2003) — David Whitton
  - Statement (2003) — Government Legal Department

- New Waverley station to cost twice as much as Holyrood (2003) — Richard Allan
  - Report (2003) — Unknown
  - Statement (2000) — Railtrack
  - Statement (2003) — Department for Transport (Equiv)

- Making the Connections (2003) — Social Exclusion Unit
  - Report (2003) — Social Exclusion Unit

- Tory money man aims to clear up Labour's mess (2002) — Howard Flight
  - Statement (2002) — Howard Flight

- Progressive Ilford (2002) — Redbridge Council
- N/A (2003) — N/A
- N/A (2003) — Environment Agency (Equiv)
- Multi-Modal Studies (2003) — Department for Transport (Equiv)
- N/A (2003) — Confederation of British Industry
- N/A (2003) — SRA
- N/A (2003) — British Chambers of Commerce
- N/A (2003) — Lord Falconer

## Figure 34 Discourses referenced in 2008 rail funding debates and discourses referenced within those sources

- 292 -
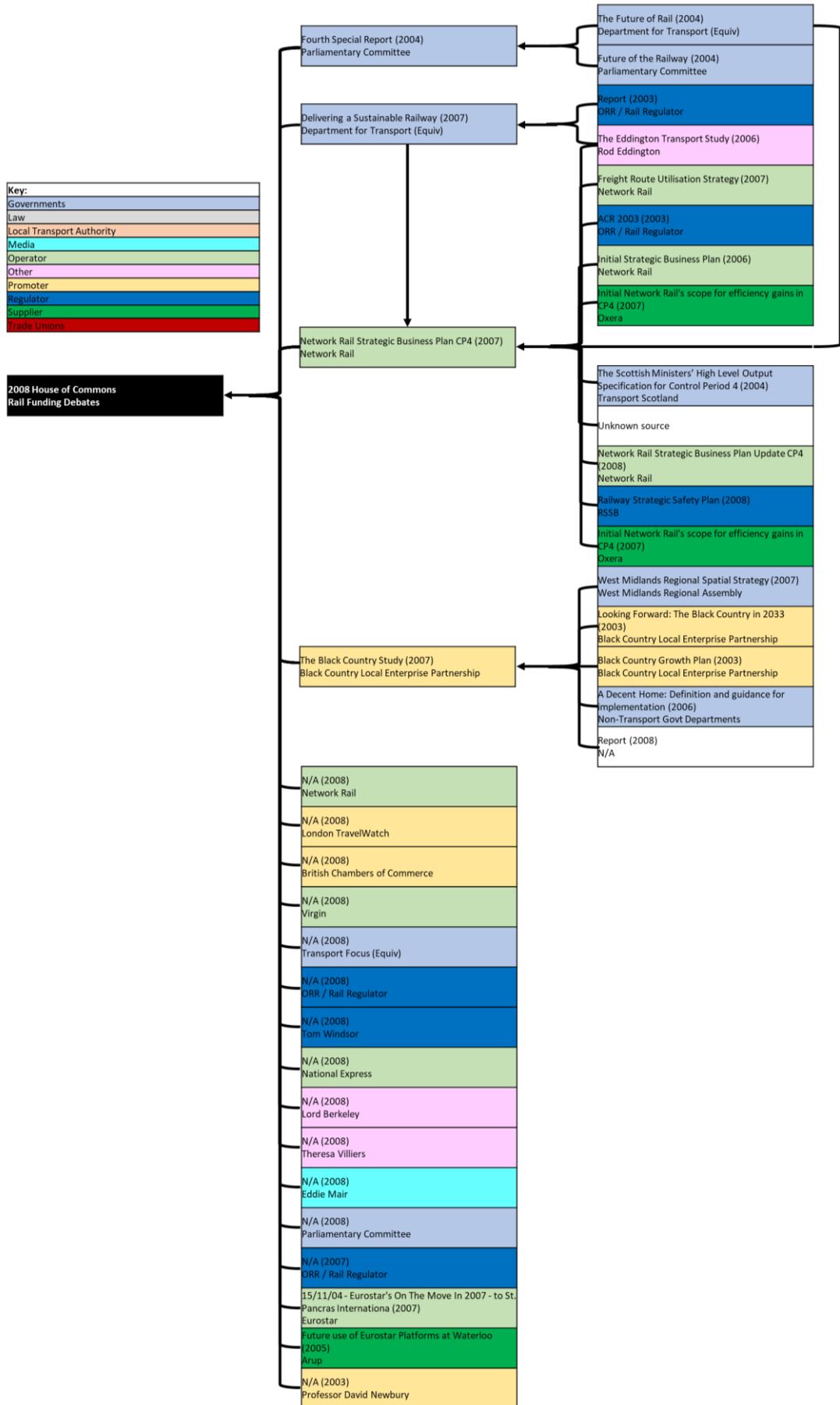
**Figure 35 Discourses referenced in 2013 rail funding debates and discourses referenced within those sources (2 pages)**

Rail Transport Forecasts: Core Cities and Oxford Economics (2011), Oxford Economics

The UKs Major Urban Areas (2011) Office for National Statistics

Our Cities, Our Future, Core Cities (2011) Oxford Economics

The Spatial Economy, Cities, Regions and International Trade (1999) Fujita, Krugman and Venables

Understanding the transport infrastructure requirements to deliver growth in Englands core cities (2011), Volterra

The Global Competitiveness Report 2010–2011 (2011), World Economic Forum

Avoiding the Infrastructure Crunch (2012) Association for Consultancy and Engineering

Delivering a 21st Century Infrastructure for Britain (2009), Policy Exchange

West Coast Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy, draft for consultation (2010), Network Rail

East Coast Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy (2008), Network Rail

East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy (2010) Network Rail

DfT Economic Case for HS2 The Y Network and London – West Midlands (2011), HS2 Ltd

Fast Forward – A HSR Strategy for Britain (2009) Greengauge 21

Capturing the benefits of HS2 on existing lines (2011), Greengauge 21

HS2 Regional Economic Impacts (2013) KPMG

Consequences for employment and economic growth (2010) KPMG

Delivering a Sustainable Railway (2007) Department for Transport (Equiv)

Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan (2013) Worcestershire county council

FINAL Strategic Environmental Assessment (2014) Worcestershire county council

Report (2013) Worcestershire county council

The North East Independent Economic Review (2013), North Eastern local enterprise partnership

North East Transport Plan 2021-2035 (2021) Transport North East

N/A (2013) Department for Transport (Equiv)

N/A (2013) Julian Sturdy

N/A (2013) Network Rail

N/A (2013) Richard Brown

N/A (2013) TUC

N/A (2013) N/A

N/A (2013) Alan Whitehouse

N/A (2013) Roger Ford

N/A (2013) Professor Mackie

N/A (2013) HS2 Ltd

N/A (2008) Centro

N/A (2013) Parliamentary Committee

N/A (2013) European Community / Union

N/A (2002) Arnold Weinstock

N/A (2013) German Government

# Figure 36 Discourses referenced in 2018 rail funding debates and discourses referenced within those sources (2 pages)

Progress with preparations for High Speed 2 (2016)
National Audit Office

Statement (2016)
Amyas Morse

High Speed 2: a review of early programme preparation (2013)
Parliamentary Committee

High Speed 2 Annual Report and Accounts (2018)
Parliamentary Committee

HS2 Ltd Redundancy Schemes (2016)
Department for Transport (Equiv)

Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General on the 2016-17 Accounts of High Speed Two (HS2) Limited (2017), National Audit Office

Future Transport Investment in the North (2018)
Institute for Public Policy Research

National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline 2017 (2017)
Infrastructure and Projects Authority (Equiv)

Chris Grayling How I plan to get transport back on track in North (2018)
Chris Grayling

Future Transport Investment in the North (2018)
Institute for Public Policy Research

N/A (2018)
Department for Transport (Equiv)

N/A (2017)
Department for Transport (Equiv)

N/A (2017)
First

N/A (2017)
N/A

N/A (2018)
Abellio

N/A (2018)
Arriva

N/A (2018)
N/A

N/A (2018)
Professor Mark Berry

N/A (2018)
Severn tunnel action group

N/A (2017)
National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers

N/A (2018)
Tom Forth

N/A (2018)
Constituent

N/A (2018)
Network Rail

N/A (N/A)
N/A

N/A (2018)
Country Land and Business Association

N/A (2018)
National Trust

N/A (2018)
Woodland Trust

N/A (2018)
Andrew Tyrie

N/A (2018)
HS2 Ltd

N/A (2017)
Chris Grayling

N/A (2018)
Michael Byng

N/A (2018)
High Speed UK

N/A (2018)
French Government

N/A (2018)
Iryana Terlecky

N/A (2016)
Office of Fair Trading

N/A (2018)
Lord Adonis

N/A (2018)
Channel 5

N/A (2018)Govia

N/A (2018)
University of Nottingham