

Digital rank-and-file: party activists' perceptions and use of the Internet

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Abstract

Political parties are in a phase of transition in advanced industrial democracy. A declining, socially restricted membership, decreasing levels of activism, and a shift towards more individualistic modes of political engagement threaten the secular role the party have played in modern democracy. The development of the Internet in a period of organisational change for parties has meant that it quickly became intertwined with debates about reviving representative political organisations. New Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), including the Internet, in fact provide novel and important opportunities and challenges to political parties. Existing research has focused on the use of ICTs as transformational of electoral campaigns, on the structure and functions of national and federal party sites, and on the impact of ICTs on the internal structure and decision-making of the parties. Much less attention has been devoted to intra-party dynamics, the rank-and-file, and how the introduction of ICTs has altered the relation between party activists, on the one hand, and party elites, ordinary members and the wider public on the other. Yet party activists constitute the life and blood of party organisation, both in (increasingly frequent) times of elections, and between elections. A change in the way party activists communicate and organise *politically*, primed by the use of ICTs, might help or hinder the re-structuration of parties in turbulent times. Using data from an online survey of party activists in the UK (N = 4770), this paper asks questions about the perception and use of ICTs by party activist, ICTs potential for participation and engagement of rank-and-file, the penetration of the Internet in pre-existing political careers and patterns of organisational behaviour. Generally, and most importantly, the paper asks which role ICTs are playing in the re-structuration of political parties, seen from the privileged perspective of the insiders.

Party change: from constellations to monads?

Political parties are in a phase of transition in advanced industrial democracies. A declining, socially restricted membership, decreasing levels of activism, and a shift towards more individualistic modes of political engagement (Dalton & Watterberg, 2000), threaten the *linkage* role parties have played in modern democracy (Lawson, 1980). Within political democracy, political parties fulfil a range of functions which link the polity to the citizens: parties allow for the controlled selection of elites; the training and incorporation of cadres and sub-elites; the articulation of interests around programmatic platforms; the aggregation of interests in quasi-stable coalitions; ultimately, the allocation of political values according to socially negotiated preferences (Kircheimer, 1966; see also Ware, 1996 for a comprehensive review of party functions).¹ On the one hand, parties are participatory representative organisations, as they serve to coalesce citizens' interest and opinions around shared programmatic platforms, hence to allocate social values through the representative system for temporally fixed mandates. This process of dual 'penetration' where 'members of one polity serve as participants in the political processes of another [and] share with those in the penetrated polity the authority to allocate its values' (Rosenau, 1969, cited in Clark, 2003, p. 7) both precedes and follows elections, creating diffuse support for parties-as-institutions and, in turn, fostering feelings of individual efficacy and overall trust in the political system, and political stability (Poguntke, 2002, pp. 18-21).² Inasmuch parties can claim to represent a range and variety of social positions, encompass a wide proportion of the public's views and allow for the expression of different voices within their institutional boundaries, they are also agents of democratisation. On the other hand, parties are complexly organised, changing institutions. Far from being reified and integrated monads, parties are better described as constellations of heterogeneous political interests, unified by the common aim of seeking and winning mandate. With Duverger, 'a party is not a community but a collection of communities, a union of small groups dispersed throughout the country ... and linked by co-ordinating institutions' (1990, p. 37). As such, parties solidify, or 'come together as one' only in times of institutional crises, in the presence of a menace for the survival of the organisation, most notably elections (Panebianco, 1988). The shape of these 'solidifications' is determined equally by circumstances internal and external to the party, most notably party system dynamics, organisational dynamics and wider societal change. These dynamics are commonly described by electoral competition models, institutional models and sociological explanatory models of party change (Ware, 1996). Historically, the development of integration / articulation functions and the institutionalisation of parties as organisations have tended to coincide. The *motus* of party institutionalisation, and the rise of the 'parliamentary' party, have largely coincided with the triumphal march of democracy in western industrial democracies, and the inclusion of previously disenfranchised social numbers in the political process (Rokkan, 1970). As Clark has

¹ More analytically, parties fulfil six primary (i.e. not derived) linkage functions: participatory, representative, clientelistic, recruitment, organisational, and electoral (Clark, 2003, p. 24).

² Conversely, parties have been held accountable for the recent wave of political distrust in western polities. Where parties and party elites falter, are involved in corruption, scandal or more simply mismanagement of the public thing, spirals of political cynicism and disaffection are ignited which reverberates onto the wider political system, of which declining voter turnout and political disaffections are but the symptoms.

noted, 'parties are involved in penetrative processes in two different political units, society and the state' (Clark, 2003, p. 24).

It comes as no surprise that the prospect of a change in party politics toward lesser citizen control, the increasing reliance on media professionals and a diminished potential for social integration – both at the top and the bottom of the party hierarchy – should generate widespread concern. Although the exact nature and proportions of party change, or even decline, are subject of ongoing debate, there is substantial consensus that the party is abandoning *aggregation* functions toward more electorally rewarding *articulation* functions (cf. Poguntke, 2002). According to David Easton, the latter identifies the process of identifying, representing and displaying individual and group preferences; the latter refers to capacity of political parties to coalesce, channel and ultimately convert the interests and opinions of social groupings into authoritatively allocated values. Parties, as part of the wider politica domain, have migrated over the last four decades from 'society' to 'state', from aggregation to articulation functions, as party structures have evolved from cadre to mass first; then catch-all and eventually electoral and cartel (Maor, 1997). Similarly, party political linkages, i.e. the set of relations amongst party elites, employees, party members and the general electorate experienced considerable change. In recent days, central party organisations yield considerably more power vis-à-vis party activists and branches, due to a numbers of concurrent reasons. First, this is due to the evolution of electoral strategies and the increasing prevalence of electorates (e.g. increased electioneering). Second, a changing ideological landscape makes party positioning along traditional cleavages increasingly less remunerative (Kircheimer, 1966), which in turn implies a move away from the 'ideologically loaded' local activists. Third, this is due to dynamics endogenous to party organisations, toward a more direct link between party and individual members (e.g. changing party rules and statutes). Fourth, the colonisation of state positions by parties cadres concede the leadership a greater degree of independence – both financial and organisational – from local activists (Katz & Mair, 1994). Fifth, leadership power is increased by a significant change in the media and communications landscape and the prevalence of mass electronic media, most notably television (e.g. Norris, 2000). That media campaigns cost vastly more than traditional canvass campaigns has thus helped the transformation of political parties from labour-intensive to capital-intensive organisations, where fund-raising is a crucial function. Finally, party membership levels and activism have declined over the last twenty / thirty years in a wide range of European countries. Four main trends of party membership can be identified:

1. Declining numbers – long term trends in liberal democracies from the 1960s point toward significant falls in the numbers of mainstream party members, even though some parties have occasionally bucked the trend over shorter periods (Dalton, 1988). Whilst parts of the original data on party numbers from the 1950s and 1960s is unreliable, hence, the declines maybe less drastic than the bare figures suggest, there is no doubt that party membership has fallen overall (Katz & Mair, 1994).
2. Socially restricted membership – the social base of party membership have become more restricted. Party members are increasingly middle class, with left of centre parties particularly dependent on professionals from the public

sector, notably teaching and higher education, with the under-representation of woman, younger voters and ethnic minorities.

3. Declining levels of activism – declining levels of engagement amongst party activists, particularly election campaigning. Local party organisations find it increasingly difficult to recruiting candidates for local elections (Fisher, 2000). Others have noted the rise of the so called “cheque book member”, who pay their membership fees and receive party information though they take no active part in party life (Jordan & Maloney, 1997; Whiteley & Seyd, 1998).
4. Shifts towards individual modes of participation – members in many parties have gained more individual participatory rights, notably in terms of leadership and candidate selection within parties (Katz & Mair, 1994). In parties of all ideological persuasions, there have been moves towards more direct forms of democracy away from the traditional representative style of internal party democracy.³

All these trends point to the re-focusing of parties on increasing *articulation* function through the electoral process, and a move away from functions of *aggregation*, which are increasingly delegated to collateral, ‘civil society’ organisations (Poguntke, 2002), and other informal loci of the political system (Putnam, 2000). However, the picture of elite dominated, empty-shell parties with crumbling infrastructure should not be over emphasised, especially in the UK. Several studies have indicated that party members still make a difference (Whiteley & Seyd, 1998; Whiteley, Seyd, & Richardson, 1994). The importance of local campaigning and healthy levels of party activism are often important in winning marginal constituencies in the UK (Denver & Hands, 1997). As party campaigns have become more professional, some have suggested that parties are using a restricted membership base more efficiently, by gaining the same benefits from fewer members (Scarrow, 2000). From a grassroots perspective, individual rights have not clearly led to a more docile membership. In recent years, UK Labour Party members have rejected the official party line in the selection of the party’s mayoral candidate for London, the leader of the Welsh Assembly and the election of dissenting voices to the National Executive Committee (NEC). More recently, they have sonorously voiced they disagreement with Britain’s participation to the second Iraq War.

New ICTs and party change

The development of the Internet in a period of organisational change for parties has meant that it quickly become intertwined with debates about reviving representative political organisations. Parties have increasingly used computer technology since the 1980s both for internal organisational purposes and for communicating with members and voters (Smith, 1998). The wide-scale expansion of the WWW and email in mid

³ Though party members have undoubtedly gained individual rights, this has not necessarily improved elite accountability. Firstly, the process and agenda of membership rights is still largely driven top-down by party leadership. Secondly, party elites have generally supported and used individual rights and direct democracy methods to bolster their own legitimacy and to bypass party activists. Hence, the collective elements of participation – the role of activist networks and constituency parties – which might have challenged elites have been eroded in favour of a more plebicistery style of intra-party democracy (Katz & Mair, 1995).

1990s has provided further opportunities and challenges for parties to both modernise their organisation and to make internal democratic reforms. In a seminal work on Scottish political parties, Smith and Webster applied the heuristic scheme developed by Abramson and his colleagues in their work on teledemocracy (Abramson, Arterton, & Orren, 1988) in order to assess ICTs and party change (Smith & Webster, 1995). They distinguish five main characteristics of ICTs of special value to party politics: ICTs do increase the amount of information available; accelerate the processes of gathering, distributing and storing information; enable information targeting by the information sender; encourage decentralisation; and enable interaction between sender and receiver. Back in 1995, ICTs was found to increase the amount and timeliness of information stored and processed by parties, thanks to the use of databases, office automation applications and e-mail communications (cf. Wring & Horrocks, 2000). Also, ICTs were found to be functional in furthering the reach of the party by direct mailing, and allowing more direct contact between party officials / representatives and party members / wider public (pp. 1228-30). Interestingly, Smith and Webster's typology further distinguished between internal and external uses of ICTs, although they do not fully explore the distinction. These two terms identify, 'those initiatives used within the party and those between the party and external actors' (Smith & Webster, 1995, p. 1228). One might correctly say that the external, inter-party importance of new media for parties comprises potential for internal coordination, increased media relations, computing and desktop publishing and the more efficient conduct of electoral campaigns. In terms of internal, or intra-party importance of new media for parties consists of improved organisation and communication, enhanced discursive democracy and the possibility of internal electronic voting and polls (Nixon & Johansson, 1999). More analytically, Gibson and Ward have identified and surveyed six main reasons why British parties have adopted ICTs. Three of these reasons can be defined as 'external': 1) information dissemination, 2) campaigning and electioneering, and 3) party competition. The remaining three reasons are 'internal': 4) networking and organisational linkage, 5) participation and interactivity and 6) resource generation and recruitment (Gibson & Ward, 1998, 2000a).

There are thus two broad aspects of the advent of new media for party change. Firstly, new media has important implications for inter-party competition, that is the mostly electoral struggle for the capture and articulation of voter preferences around programmatic platforms, discussed above. Secondly, new media holds a potential for a renaissance of the declining aggregation of interests within the party, and the development of more robust intra-party democracy. To date, existing research on the impact of new media on political parties has focused on 'external' functions: the use of ICTs as transformational of electoral campaigns, on the structure and functions of national and federal party sites, and on the impact of ICTs on party communication efficiency. Norris detected four core areas of interest (Norris, 2001a, p. 2): the type of parties which are currently online, ICTs impact on party competition; the consequences of digital parties for civic engagement (participation opportunities on offer), and what explains the rise of digital parties. In a recent review, Gibson and colleagues grouped studies of parties and elections in two main areas:

- (1) parties' style of campaigning, and particularly how the Internet relates to broader shifts towards more professionalized techniques;
- (2) inter-party competition, particularly the degree to which smaller parties use the Web to raise their public profile and gain greater media exposure. (Gibson, Margolis, Resnick, & Ward, 2003, p. 48)

In other words, attention has focused primarily on the 1) *inter-party*, 2) production, and 3) top-down aspects of the phenomenon, 4) mainly in times of elections. In this perspective, new ICTs enable different political actors differentially, either levelling or further tilting the political playing field, respectively in favour of minor and main parties (Margolis, Resnick, & Wolfe, 1999; Gibson & Ward, 2000b). To date, the question is still open whether new media does reinforce established political interests (Margolis & Resnick, 2000; Davis, 1999); help minor, non institutional parties gain visibility (Auty & Nicholas, 1998; Copsey, 2003); or give voice to a plurality of different party positions, across a range of countries (Norris, 2001b). Some argued that new media are eroding traditional representative organisations, such as parties, by creating additional channels of direct communication between government and the governed (Budge, 1996). Overall, it might be fair to say that new media has favoured, to some extent even accelerated inter-party pluralism (Bimber, 1998); however, it has failed to attract the critical mass required to sustain claims of inter-party levelling, even though sizeable numbers can be reached in exceptional circumstances (Boogers & Voerman, 2002a). As Norris has argued,

party websites are likely to have greater impact on pluralism than on directly widening participation among disaffected groups, because these resources mainly reach citizens drawn from social and political groups which are already most likely to be politically active, interested, and engaged. (Norris, 2001b, p. 9)

The importance of ICTs for political parties takes a far more interesting, somewhat paradoxical shape when discussed in relation with intra-party dynamics, that is the linkage processes of aggregation of preferences and interests discussed above. To date, much less attention has been devoted to the ‘internal’ side of the party organisational spectrum, i.e. the importance of new media for intra-party, aggregation functions. Limited research data has been gathered on the use of new media by the party rank-and-file (e.g. Cross, 1998; Pedersen & Saglie, 2003; Ward, Lusoli, & Gibson, 2003), party sub-groups and activists (Gibson & Ward, 1999), party site visitors (Boogers & Voerman, 2002a, 2002b), and the general electorate (SDA, 2001; Gibson, Lusoli, & Ward, 2002a; Hindman, 2002; Stromer-Galley & Foot, 2002).

Research questions

This work aims at filling the gap on the impact of new media on intra-party, aggregation functions of political parties. We address here questions about the perception and use of ICTs by party members, ICTs potential for participation and engagement of rank-and-file, the penetration of the Internet in pre-existing political careers and patterns of organisational behaviour. It has been argued elsewhere that, at individual level, new media hold the potential to both *widen* and *deepen* citizen participation, in different institutional contexts such as parties, pressure group and the wider polity (Gibson, Lusoli, & Ward, 2002b; Ward, Lusoli et al., 2003; Lusoli & Ward, 2003). As applied to the party organisational milieu, ICTs might:

- **Widening participation:** increasing party numbers and broadening the membership profile. At one level, the Internet can be used for recruitment purposes to increase and maintain membership numbers. From a rational choice perspective, the Internet lowers the cost barriers to participation for individuals from more marginal and excluded groups. Political activity such as information gathering,

joining organisations or directly contacting political institutions and organisations could become far easier and quicker (Bonchek, 1995). New media could also be employed to recruit new members from sections of the community that are less attracted through the traditional media, and less likely to join political parties, such as younger voters who have wider access to ICTs via educational establishments (Owen, 2003).

- Deepening participation: providing increased in depth channels for member to member and member to elites communication. It has been suggested that the Internet could increase participation rates and deepen the quality of the participatory experience for members and activists (Pedersen, 2001). Email provides members with an additional, interactive and faster mechanism to voice their opinions on party policy and organisation. Individual members could be encouraged to advance their informed views directly to party elites, based on online policy information/documents provided by the party. Similarly, party leaders could engage in debate and question sessions with ordinary members. Parties across Europe have already experimented with online discussion and online ballots and many now operate intranets and extranets which are accessed via subscription by party members and staff (Löfgren, 2000; Ward, Gibson, & Nixon, 2003). The Internet also offers opportunities to increase intra-party participation as individual members and party groups, such as constituency parties, can develop their own independent patterns of participation and activity, build links between geographically disparate groups of members and generate social and political capital, publish their views to national audiences without central party assistance/interference (Gibson & Ward, 1999).

Here, four research questions are drawn from the debate on the changing nature of parties presented above, and addressed in the context of ICT use by party membership:

- *Widening 1: Increasing numbers*
ICTs widen party membership in numerical terms
- *Widening 2: Diverse membership*
ICTs expand the social characteristics of party membership
- *Deepening 1: Increasing levels of activism*
ICTs increase members' party activism
- *Deepening 2: Individualisation of the political link*
ICTs favour more interactive intra-party politics

In assessing the participatory potential of ICTs within a party framework, we undertook an online survey of the UK Labour Party (LP) and Liberal Democrat (LD) members. In general, questions were asked in three main areas (questionnaire in Appendix A). We first asked about the demographic composition and patterns of Internet use of LP and LD online membership, as compared to the wider UK user population. Then, we investigated the political profile and online political behaviours of members. Finally, in reporting party online connected-ness we wanted to understand more specifically whether ICTs deepen and widen membership

participation.⁴ As was noted above, a change in the way party activists communicate and organise politically, primed by the use of ICTs, might help or hinder the re-structuration of parties in turbulent times. The more general question we address is how the introduction of ICTs has altered the relation between party activists, on the one hand, and party elites, ordinary members and the wider public on the other. Ultimately, and more generally, do ICTs favour the *aggregation* or the *articulation* of political interest?

Methodology

An online questionnaire was used to collect information about LD and LP members' online behaviour and party participation and activism. The Labour Party and the Liberal Democratic Party have both been at the forefront of UK politics in terms of understanding and adoption of ICTs (Gibson & Ward, 2000a; Painter & Wardle, 2001). Briefly, one might say that ICTs were a normal thing to enter into for both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. In both cases, a mix of party political culture, historical opportunity and personal interest of the leadership explains the early uptake of ICTs respective to other UK parties (Ward, Lusoli et al., 2003).⁵ The questionnaire included twenty core questions, plus seven additional questions on demographics, divided in four main sections: Internet use, off-line political behaviours and attitudes, Internet political use and Internet use for party activities. The questionnaire was agreed with the LD web manager and LP online campaigns manager, and was endorsed by the parties. The survey was administered online, using a single HTML questionnaire, PHP form scripts and a javascript verification mechanism. The tool was active for three weeks, from February, 26 to March, 18 2002 (LD), and between 2nd and 16th of April 2003 (LP). Procedurally, a 'cover' email was sent by the party HQs to the party e-mailing list subscribers, with a hyperlink to the online questionnaire. The LD list included approximately 9,000 party members. The e-mail generated 2230 submissions. The LP list was 39,000 strong (the list is not limited to party members), and generated 3122 responses. The questionnaires were screened for genuine duplicates by crossing IP and Host data, and date-time stamp (submission of questionnaire) plus a battery of 10 randomly selected variables. In the case of the LP survey, we counted the responses of members only, leaving out supporters and members of the public. After the screening, 2116 (LD) and 2639 (LP) unique questionnaires were analysed using SPSS. Thus, the response rate was approximately 23% for the LD, and 10 % for the LP, both comparatively high for online surveys.

⁴ This paper is not *stricto sensu* comparative in that it does not seek to systematically contrast the two political parties. Such endeavour, which would require us to take into account and control for, among other things, online party strategies and inter-party competition, falls beyond the limited space of this papers, and is pursued elsewhere (Gibson, Lusoli, & Ward, 2004). Rather, we seek here to identify and match regularities and patterns in the ways members of different parties perceive and employ ICTs, in their transactions with both their party and other party members, in order to answer the more general questions on ICTs and party change set in the introduction.

⁵ This paper does not address the question of the provision of participation opportunities. The Internet strategies of political parties and their implications for party evolution have been discussed elsewhere.

Survey Results

Internet use and online political connectedness

The survey then asked a range of questions concerning general Internet use, online political connectedness, the levels of members' activity within the party, as well as more specific questions regarding online political behaviour and preference for using online versus off-line communication methods. Before we move to answer our core question, we present here a brief overview on the use of the Net by our respondents. The survey revealed that UK party members are heavy Internet users, more so than the average UK Internet user. 70% of our respondents use the Internet daily compared with just 32% of general UK population.⁶ The difference is greater at work, where party members are 2.5 times more likely than UK users to use the Net daily, and 1.7 times more likely to use it at all. At home, the disparity is less pronounced, although significant (respectively 1.6 and 1.3 times).⁷ Respondents also report very high levels of online political connectedness, defined here as the use of the Internet to 'get political information or keep in touch with political life' (Appendix A, Q3). The results for other political institutions – local councils, government departments and the Parliament – are comparatively high, visited on average by one in two members at least a few times a month, although daily usage is still limited. Surprisingly, pressure groups and TU/Professional association are significantly less popular, as three members in five have never been in touch online. Political news are also very popular with online members, as more than half of the respondents gets online news, with the BBC site being particularly popular with members of both parties. Although political news score lower than other online alternatives, members tend to consult online news sources more frequently: 28% daily and another 11 % at least once a week. The difference between LD and LP members as regards online political connectedness are significant for all categories of political sites, with a significant average difference in access of 15 %. The most popular political site is understandably members own party site (91 % LP, 77 % LD) with respectively 32% and 19 % visiting it at least once a week. This points to a higher frequency of visits by LP members to their party site as compared to LD members, which is further confirms the use of other political websites. Party site visitors rated it quite highly overall, scoring on average 3.7 (SD = 0.7) on a 1-5 scale, where five stands for very good. Members who do not use the site were asked why they had not done so. The most important response is lack of time, rated by one in five members as very important, followed by a preference for the use of traditional media (one in ten), and the lack of awareness of the site (one in six, one in three for the LD). The cost of using the Internet is considered somewhat important by one member in four, while the lack of Internet access at work is a marginal reason for not accessing the party site. In summary then, non-use is better described by personal reason than access barriers such as opportunity, cost and visibility).

⁶ Compared with data provided by Gibson et al, 2002.

⁷ Partly, this might be due to the self-selecting nature of our sample, as the respondents were subscribers to party e-mailing lists, which requires at least a basic understanding of ICTs. However, the differences reported remain significant even where controlling for the usual predictors of frequency of Internet use – young age, male gender, and higher education – which are more widely prevalent in our sample than in the UK user population. Data from a postal survey of Labour only party members confirm the interpretation that party members are more active online than the average Internet user (Lusoli, Ward, & Gibson, 2003).

Diversifying and increasing the membership base

The data gathered allowed us to compare online respondents' socio-demographic profiles with similar data from previous of LD and LP members' surveys. The two parties showed remarkably similar socio-demographic patterns. The most apparent finding is that the online participants tend to be younger than general membership (table 1). In comparison to age, however, both the educational and gender profiles point to an unequal representation of members in cyberspace. On the one hand, between 7 % and 10 % of our online survey is currently in full time education, against one in fifty for membership as a whole. Moreover, 67% (LD) and 57 % (LP) of online members have an University degree, respectively 25 % and 13 % more than general party membership. In part, the over-representation of students is a reflection of their free access to the Internet via educational institutions.

[table 1 about here]

The gender distribution is even more skewed. The members online were overwhelmingly male, about three in four, whereas the overall membership enjoys a more balanced gender distribution. Our study thus confirm other surveys of political Internet users which suggest a significant male bias (Bimber, 1998, 2001; Gibson et al., 2002a). From this perspective, the Internet seems to be the playground of the young, educated male. Even as the digital divide has diminished over the last few years, the gender divide remains in the political web-sphere.⁸ At the moment, therefore, the Internet has the capacity to attract to the party a wider audience in terms of age profile than the traditional party activists, although a more affluent one.⁹

We found convincing evidence that the Internet is an increasingly important recruitment tool. Around 39% of LD respondents claim that its use led them to join the party, vis-à-vis 28 % of the LP.¹⁰ These figure refer to lay members (non office-holders) who joined in the last five years, reporting that the Web was a factor in their recruitment, both via traditional routes and directly on the party website. In fact, 14% of LD and 10 % of LP online joiners report the party website as an important factor for their decision to join, yet they did not join directly on the site. However, a considerable number – 53 % on party average – reported having joined the party online, but consider the Internet as a non-important factor i.e. they would have joined anyhow. This perhaps suggests that whilst the content of party websites may have some impact on recruitment, websites may have more use as simply a replacement method of joining for those already predisposed to membership.

The profile of the web-led joiners further supports the idea that the net is attracting and actively enrolling an audience which is slightly different from the traditional party membership. Results from a logistic regression model (table 2) uncover the factors affecting web joining behaviour. First, it appears that the LD are more successful than the LP at attracting new members to the party through their website. This might partly

⁸ Whiteley and Seyd (1999) argue that this might also be due to the skewed demographics of party activists as compared to due-paying only members, as online members are quite active. Both Internet use and political profile of online members are examined below.

⁹ Caution in comparing different sources of data is advisable on methodological grounds. Younger people are generally under-represented in postal surveys (as they are difficult to reach) and possibly over-represented in online surveys, as they spend more time online and, in the case of students, access is free.

¹⁰ Both figures were calculated over lay members (not party officials) who have joined within the last five years.

depend on the tool we have used, i.e. different nature of the party e-mailing lists: the LD list is aimed more at its core membership, including new recruits, whilst the LP list transcends the boundaries of party membership, aimed at the wider community of party supporters.¹¹ However, this is certainly a reflection of different party strategies as regards online recruitment, and confirm the proven capacity of the Liberal Democrats to reach and mobilize members effectively, which was evident over the last two National elections (Whiteley & Seyd, 1998).

[table 2 about here]

Surprisingly, traditional demographics and SES indicators (gender, income and formal education, including student status), do not have a significant influence on the recruitment potential of the Net. Similarly, respondents with different levels of political interest (high vs. low) and political views (left, centre and right) are equally likely to join via the web. This is interesting, since it implies that the Net is neither the tool of the 'converted', nor the tool of the politically 'agnostic', and is not sensitive to party ideology (cf. Ward, Lusoli et al., 2003). In relation to SES indicators, use of the web does not seem to interact with education, income and occupation, thus ruling out one-step reinforcement hypotheses. If reinforcement effects exist, they have to be looked for more accurately, both at the bottom and at the top of the digital pyramid: i.e. the issues of access and high-intensity participation. Conversely, age, traditional media habits, existing levels of activism and frequency of exposure to the party site all have a strong and significant relations with online joining behaviour. In fact, the most important control factor is length of membership: the more recent the party recruit, the more probable the Internet has had an impact in her decision to join. Partly, this might reflect the wider availability of ICTs across social strata in recent times, and the increased prevalence of parties, government and politics in general, on the Internet (Pew, 2003). Partly though this might also depend on a party learning curve as regards the use of ICTs for recruitment purposes, from initial lows (Auty & Nicholas, 1998) to more thoughtful and effective strategies, as ICTs are integrated in the fabric of party organisation (Painter & Wardle, 2001). Second, the more frequent exposure to the party site increase the likelihood of public and supporters alike to become members. It shall also be noted that the effect of the Internet might balance a lack of propensity to use other technologies, for instance the phone, to keep in touch with the party.¹² Third, young people and people with low levels of party activism are slightly more likely to have joined online than their older, more active counterparts. On party average, a two point decrease in the offline participations scale corresponds to a 13 % increase in the probability of joining, while being below 35 years of age increases the probability of joining online by 22 % .¹³ In summary, those who reported the web as essential factor for them joining are significantly younger, Internet literate, substantially less engaged in party politics than other members who have been members for the same time.

¹¹ Despite the fact that the results presented here are *ceteris paribus*, and based on lay members only who have joined in the last five years.

¹² Letter writing and fax machine also had small but significant zero-order correlation with the dependent, but turned insignificant *ceteris paribus*.

¹³ The party activity scale (8 points, $\alpha = .75$) includes all measures of offline party activism except donating money to the party (see Appendix A). Both factor and scaling analysis confirmed that 'donate' is a relatively autonomous mode of engagement. The activism scale yielded analogous reliability results for both parties.

Patterns of membership participation: interactivity and mobilisation?

We then moved to the second of our questions, about the potential of ICTs to increase party members' modes and dimensions of party activism. We begun by profiling party members according to their offline political attitudes and behaviours. The survey returns a clear political profile party members: long-term supporters, with medium levels of party activity (higher for LP), with a keen interest in politics. Respondents were predominantly political activists (21 % LP and 13 % LD) or very interested in politics (58 % and 51 %). Overall, LP respondents claim significantly higher levels of political interest ($\gamma = -0.3$ sig. $p. < 0.001$). Additionally, as was noted above, one in three members holds an official position in the party. According to the Labour Party results, which offered a comprehensive overview of party officials, we found 19 between MPs, MEPs and MSPs, 460 councillors, 840 members holding a local party position, 49 party employees, and some 220 members otherwise involved in official roles within the party (researchers, some 70 MPs' staff, other local positions). The type of activity by lay members does also vary a great deal. As expected, relatively passive, individual forms of engagement are the most popular (table 3).

[table 3 about here]

Reading party literature is the most common activity, followed by donating money. Interpersonal collective activities – campaigning, meet with other members and talk to friends and colleagues – follow closely, with more than two in five members engaged. Overall, eight in ten members engage in at least one activity, almost 60% of the members engage in at least three, and between 3% and 5 % of respondents are 'super-activists', engaging in all or all but one of the activities surveyed. A further T-test of party activity scales confirmed that LP members are slightly but significantly more active than LD members. Finally, we found that respondents are long-term party supporters. On average, about half of the respondents report to have joined the party 6 years ago or more. Comments received on this item show that a number of LD respondents are very long term members (20, 30 and even 40 years), founding members and former members of both Liberals Democrats and previously the SDP. As concerns Labour, 22 % of respondents have been party members for more than 20 years. Finally, it must be noted that consistently more LD members (34 %) than LP members (14 %) have joined within the last year or so. To see how this translated in online party participation we asked respondents three main questions: how useful they found different features on the party website;¹⁴ whether the use of the site or e-mail form the party led them to engage in a range of party activities; finally, how comfortable they felt using ICTs rather than traditional media for a range of party activities (respectively Q7, Q10 and Q8).

Information on party policy is by far the most frequently accessed feature (around four in five), and was averagely scored 4.3 (LD) and 3.8 (LP) in terms of usefulness. Other information features – current events and party structure – are as well very popular, more than two thirds of the membership had accessed them, and found them useful (circa $\mu = 3.7$ for both parties).

[table 4 about here]

More interactive features, such as feedback (e-mail, polls and surveys), links to other sites and online membership renewal attract a smaller, yet still sizeable, audience (36–40 %), and are rated above the average in terms of usefulness. Although accessed by

¹⁴ Usefulness is measured on a 0-6 scale, where 6 is 'very useful', 3 is 'neither useful nor useless' and 0 marks 'completely useless'.

only half of site visitors, the possibility of joining-renewing membership online is particularly appreciated by members of both parties ($\mu = 3.9$, $SD = 1.8$). Only online commercial services endorsed by the two parties score below the average in terms of usefulness (2.8) and are visited by far fewer site members, about 45 %. Finally, there are small but significant differences between the parties as to the usefulness of two online features. LD members find information on policy ($\eta = 0.14$, Spearman = 0.13 sig. $p. < 0.001$), and campaign resources ($\eta = 0.21$, Spearman = 0.20 sig. $p. < 0.001$) more useful than their LP counterparts. In the case of campaign information, LD also access the feature significantly more frequently.

Second, we asked whether use of the party site and e-mail communication from the party had led members to undertake a number of participatory activities, thus increasing their levels of activism. Overall, 39 % of party members have reacted in some way to party online stimuli, by engaging in on the activities in the table (table 5). However, results on individual indicators were very low, ranging from 2 to 14 per cent. Around 11 % claim e-mail let them to contact the party or other party members, while another 10 % claim e-mail was functional in getting them volunteer some time / work for the party. Figures for web activation are even smaller, the peak being contacting the party as a consequence of a site visit (9%).

[table 5 about here]

Both e-mail and the web have very little impact on the more 'institutional' party activities, such as attending branch meetings or rallies, around 5%. Overall, the data suggest that ICTs were of limited value in actively mobilising the membership. E-mails tend to induce a greater range of party activity, including: contacting other members; participating in specific campaigns; and volunteer some time or work, e-mail being slightly more useful as a tool to keep members engaged once they have joined rather than actively campaign on behalf of the party, therefore favouring aggregation rather than articulation functions. Yet again, the limited extent of mobilisation does not allow to draw firm conclusion on this point. However, there are then small and significant differences between the two parties as regards the response of their members to party e-mails. In general, LP members tend to attend local party meeting and contact party with views / comments as a consequence of e-mails from the party. Conversely, the LD are significantly more likely to engage in campaigning activity: contact other members, volunteer time / work, write to the media, and participate in specific campaign. It should be added that exploratory factor analysis showed no consistent patterns of web or e-mail activation. Web activation shows no patterns, while e-mail activation composes a relatively reliable additive scale ($\alpha = 0.73$, 7 items). Unlike web-joining behaviour, discussed above, the e-mail activation scale is unrelated to party affiliation. In order to understand which groups within the party were more susceptible to ICT activism, we used the e-mail activation scale, and regressed it on different demographic and Internet usage characteristics of the membership (table 6). Overall, we found that e-mails from the party increase the levels of activism of members who are already very active, and who visit the party site regularly.

[table 6 about here]

For LD members, there are additional factors which help predict, although less robustly, e-mail activation: the use of other electronic technologies to keep in touch with the party, being female members and using the web for political information (online connectedness, discussed above). Overall then, SES factors do not play any

relevant role, while the models are not exceptionally good at explaining e-mail activation.

Finally, we asked members to assess their preference for using ICTs rather than traditional media for a number of party activities. Overall, results display a high propensity of party members to employ ICTs rather than traditional means across a wide spectrum. Reflecting the data on usefulness of the party site, members prefer using ICTs to receive party information electronically than by post ($\mu = 5.0$, range 0–6). As well, members consistently prefer to contact the party by e-mail or on the site rather than using the telephone or paper mail ($\mu = 4.8$). Both views are widely held across the populations of both parties, as shown by the relatively low SD values – 1.7 for both. Consequently, it appears that bi-directional communication between party and members is best favoured by ICTs. The use of ICTs is also considered preferable for institutional activities such as voting and renewing membership. Although the possibility was not available to party members at the time of writing, respondents expressed an interest in voting online for elected officials ($\mu = 4.8$, $SD = 2.0$). Low levels of DK responses for these areas indicate a good understanding of the use of ICTs for institutional communication and intra-party, official and routine activities.

[table 7 about here]

Conversely, the results on interactive and member-to-member communication possibilities offered by the Internet are more controversial. First, although the mean of the results is above average, meaning at least equal comfort using ICTs vis-à-vis traditional technologies, the values are consistently lower than for the other areas of party activity. Second, DK levels are consistently higher in these areas suggesting a lack of awareness on the part of the respondents about more interactive uses of ICTs in a party setting. Overall, the results suggest an individual, member-to-party institutional relation is fostered via ICTs, rather than a more complex pattern of interaction of member-to member or collective member-to-elites. In comparative terms, there are no differences between the parties as to different forms of online communication, expect a higher propensity of LP to use new media across the whole spectrum of party functions.

Discussion and Conclusions: Widening and deepening – to what extent?

We posed two sets of question for this study. The first was specific: whether ICTs have an impact on the numeric size and composition of the party membership, levels of activism and the nature of members engagement with the party. The second was more general, about the role of ICTs in party change, and the influence of new media on *articulation* and *aggregation* functions of parties in democratic polities.

It is apparent from this study, that for a significant number of activists, ICTs are becoming part of their everyday lives. The new media is being normalised relatively quickly amongst the political active. Internet and email communication are increasing in popularity and are for a sizeable group of our respondents a preferred means of communication. In terms of party activity, interaction and internal democracy, ICTs impact seems less advantageous. From our evidence, the new media still have the potential to widen membership and assist them reach new groups, notably younger citizens, but whether parties will achieve this is down to their own recruitment strategies and wider social and political trends surrounding the relevance of political parties. It is doubtful that ICTs alone can reverse the long-term trend of declining

membership. Nor does it seem likely to radically alter the profile of party members or activists. Although we find evidence that parties can reach younger less engaged sympathisers, this was more than balanced by other demographic biases. The web still favours the middle-class male, even though he maybe slightly younger than the traditional political activist. Overall, ICTs may make it easier for predisposed supporters to become members and equally, the new media potentially make it easier for parties to market themselves to the already sympathetic but this is probably not enough to revive parties in terms of their membership. Even if new media does not radically increase numbers, can it enhance participation and activism of the existing membership? Overall, ICTs made only marginal differences to increasing activism. However, this general trend masked several important points. Firstly, increasing use of the new media is likely to disproportionately increase the more passive elements of membership activity (reading literature, paying subs etc.). The interactive and networking possibilities of the new media, which have excited the most attention, seem to be of least interest to members. Secondly, if new ICTs are to increase levels of activism, it is where the already active use it supplement and extend their range of participation. Hence, again there is potential for parties to get more out of their existing bases through ICT strategy. Thirdly, it is worth reiterating the differences between the Internet and e-mail. The Internet may allow parties to recruit new members but email is more important for tying members into the party organisation. Indeed, overall although the Internet attracts more media attention, email maybe of more importance in terms of the intra-party activities of political organisations.

Finally, do the changes and trends identified actually alter the broader parameters of intra-party operations and party organisational change? Certainly, we would argue that the new media supports individual functions and activism more than collective activities at present. Whilst new ICTs may increase member-to member networking, as we have seen it is individual member to headquarters that perhaps more directly affected, this the articulation function discussed above. On this point, we found small but significant differences between the two parties. In the case of the Labour party, our results point towards *aggregation* rather than *articulation*. Labour Party members are more active politically, visit their party site and other political site more often than the LD; are more generalists in the feature they access on the party site (information); party members are hardly recruited online, rather online joining follow existing engagement. Equally, those who are reached and activated online are very much the same 'old hands' In addition, the Labour Party e-news list is very much integrated, almost designed around the party site the site, perhaps trying to create a sort of Labour members' 'community' on the site. In the case of the Liberal Democrats, data suggests *articulation* rather than *aggregation* of interests. Liberal Democrat members are less active politically, do not visit their party site very often, and keep in touch online with politics less than the PP members; they are more specialist as to the features they access on the party site: information on policy and campaign resources; they join the party consistently online, especially the young and previously politically inactive, in the last year or so. The Liberal Democrats list is more disconnected from the site, their members seem to be using the Internet in a more functional, productive way rather than building community. In general though, it is probably fair to say that the web and email connect the party member more directly to the party centrally than in their own locality. The geographic boundaries of party membership can be eroded. In short the increasing use of the new media in internal party affairs is likely to

enhance pre-existing trends towards individualisation and direct relationship between elites and members rather than reviving collective grassroots democracy.

Finally, a note of caution on the validity of the results presented here. Clearly our study cannot claim to be a representative sample of LD and LP members, nor would we claim that these parties are necessarily representative of all parties in the UK and, *a fortiori*, in other countries. Additional study of other parties and off-line members would provide an even fuller picture. Nevertheless, this online survey of over 4700 members of parties at the forefront of ICTs adoption and innovation provides evidence of the behaviour and attitudes of a sizeable number of activists. Moreover, given the lack of intra-party data on members and activists use of ICTs and the difficulties in gaining access to party members in the UK we would argue it represents a useful benchmark.

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Table 1. Socio-Demographics of LD and LP members.

		LD online	LD offline (a)	LP online	LP offline (a)
Gender	Male	74 %	55 %	72 %	65 %
	Female	26 %	45 %	28 %	35 %
Age (years)	≤ 25	14 %	2 %	11 %	2 %
	26 – 35	16 %	5 %	14 %	5 %
	36 – 45	17 % ^(b)	11 %	23 % ^(b)	19 %
	46 – 55	23 % ^(b)	23 %	21 % ^(b)	23 %
	56 – 65	20 % ^(b)	22 %	19 % ^(b)	21 %
	≥ 66	10 % ^(b)	37 %	12 % ^(b)	30 %
Formal education	No qualifications	1 %		5 %	17 %
	GCSE – O levels	7 %		11 %	15 %
	A levels	12 %		12 %	9 %
	Graduate (e.g. BA)	40 %		35 %	28 %
	Postgraduate (e.g. MA)	21 %	42 %	17 %	12 %
	PhD	7 %		5 %	4 %
	Other	12 % ^(c)		15 % ^(c)	14 %
Students	In FT education	10 %	2 %	7 %	2 %
Sample N		2116 ^(d)	4442	2639 ^(d)	413

a. The figures provided are computed from Whiteley and Seyd (1999) for the LD; for the LP, from a recent data from a postal membership survey (Lusoli, Ward, & Gibson, 2003).

b. As age categories were different, figures are based on normal approximation.

c. The figure includes people still in education.

d. Percentages reported are valid percentages, as DK and WRNS responses are omitted (about 4 % of the cases).

Table 2. Determinants of active web-join behaviour.

	LD		LP		Overall	
Party (Labour)					**	0.60
Frequency of party site access	***	1.55	***	1.46	***	1.50
Phone to contact	*		*	0.79	**	0.79
Young age (< 35 YO)		0.68			*	0.73
Length of membership	***		***		***	
1 – 6 month	***	7.80	***	4.72	***	5.78
1 year	***	6.68	***	2.71	***	4.42
Scale of party activity		0.89			*	0.91
Constant	***	0.10	***	0.11	***	0.14
N	610		584		1194	
Cases correctly classified	73.9 %		75.7 %		74.7 %	

Results reported are standardized log coefficients.

Only coefficients significant at $p < 0.10$ are reported.

* = sig. $p < 0.05$. ** = sig. $p < 0.01$, *** = sig. $p < 0.001$

Table 3. Members' involvement in party activities.

	LD	LP
Read party literature	65 %	59 %
Donate money	49 %	30 %
Talk to colleagues and friends about the party	35 %	42 %
Campaign for the party	30 %	36 %
Meet with other members	23 %	23 %
Attend fairs / social events	17 %	21 %
Attend rallies / political events	15 %	36 %
Volunteer clerical work	10 %	6 %
Visit party offices	5 %	10 %
N	1353	1417

Note: Results reported refer to non office-holders.

Table 4. Access to and usefulness of party site features.

	LP		LD	
	<i>Membership access</i>	<i>Mean (0-6) usefulness</i>	<i>Membership access</i>	<i>Mean (0-6) usefulness</i>
Information on policy	87	3.9	87	4.3
Information on current events	83	3.7	74	3.8
Information on party structure	75	3.4	66	3.7
Links to other sites	63	3.3	49	3.3
Information on online campaigns	59	3.3	67	3.9
Feedback (e-mail feedback, surveys, polls)	59	3.2	63	3.6
Membership application / renewal	51	3.9	56	4.0
Commercial services endorsed by the Party	50	2.9	40	2.7
Other	3	2.7	4	2.6
N	1417		1353	

Note: figures are based on lay members who have visited the party site.

Table 5. Activities led by party e-mail and WWW.

	LD		LP	
	E-mail %	Web %	E-mail %	Web %
Contact other members	12.8	4.8	9.2	4.5
Volunteer some time / work	12.3	4.8	9.1	6.2
Participate in a specific campaign	10.7	5.9	6.6	4.7
Contact the party with views / comments	10.3	7.8	14.5	10.1
Write to the media	8.3	5.1	6.1	4.4
Attend a local branch meeting	7.7	2.3	11.6	4.2
Attend a rally or demonstration	4.8	2.4	5.3	3.9
N	1353	1038	1417	1298

Note: figures are percentage of membership. N are different for e-mail and the web as not all members have accessed their party site.

Table 6. Predictors of E-mail activation scale.

	LD	LP
Offline party activity scale (0-7)	*** .21	*** .19
Sex: female (dummy)	* .06	
Online political connectedness (0-36)	* .07	
Frequency of access to the Party website (0-5)	*** .13	* .06
Traditional media: fax (0-5)	** .07	
Traditional media: phone (0-5)	*** .14	
Constant	*** -.44	* .17
N	1325	1368
Model fit	6df, F = 47 *** R square = .18	4df, F=20 *** R square = .05

Results reported are standardized Beta coefficients.

* = sig. p. < 0.05. ** = sig. p. < 0.01, *** = sig. p < 0.001

Table 7. Comfort of using ICTs rather than traditional media for different party activities.

	LP			LD		
	<i>Mean (0-6)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>% DK</i>	<i>Mean (0-6)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>% DK</i>
Receive information	5.3	1.3	2	4.6	1.7	1
Vote to elect officials	5.1	1.6	3	4.4	2.0	4
Contact the party	5.0	1.5	4	4.5	1.7	2
Membership renewal	5.0	1.7	4	4.4	2.0	3
Join specific campaigns	4.3	1.9	8	3.8	1.9	6
Discuss issues	4.1	2.0	7	3.6	2.0	5
Meet other members	3.4	2.3	11	3.1	2.1	11
N		1417			1353	

Note: DK values are not computed.

APPENDIX A – Questions common to the LD and the LP questionnaires (skips are omitted)

Q1 How often, if ever, do you use the Internet (includes the web, e-mail and Intranets)?

OPTIONS: Many times a day, daily, every other day, once a week, once a month or less, never.

The web
E-mail
Intranet

Q2 Where do you use the Internet?

OPTIONS: Many times a day, daily, every other day, once a week, once a month or less, never.

At home
At work
In a free, public place (e.g. Library)
At an internet café (e.g. Easyeverything)

Q3 Have you ever visited any of the following websites to get political information or keep in touch with political life? If so, how often?

OPTIONS: Daily, every other day, once a week, a few times a month, once a month or less, once, never.

Parliament / Assemblies site
Government department site
Local council site
Trade union / professional association
Political party site (excluding own)
Pressure group site
News site
Other

Q4 Have you ever accessed the Party website? If so, how often?

OPTIONS: daily, a few times a week, a few times a month, once a month or less, not regularly, in relation with specific events, once, never

Q5 What are the reasons why you have never used the Party website?

OPTIONS: 0 = the reason is not important, 6 = the reason is very important.

I did not know the Party had a site
Lack of time
I prefer using traditional media
Cost of using the Internet at home
No internet access at work

Q6 What do you think of the overall quality of the national Party website?

OPTIONS: very good, good, average, poor, very poor.

Q7 How useful are the following services available on the party website?

OPTIONS: 0 = completely useless, 6 = very useful.

Information on current events
Information on policy
Information on party structure and elected officials
Campaign resources, training, tips
Commercial services e.g. shop, credit card etc
Online feedback e.g. email
Links to other sites
Membership application

Q8 Has use of the party websites or email information from the party (e.g. e-news) ever led you to undertake any of the following activities: (Please tick all those that apply)

Join the Party
Attend a local party meeting
Contact other members
Volunteer some time / work
Attend a rally or demonstration
Write to the media
Participate in a specific campaign
Contact the party with your views/comments
Other

Q9 What traditional means of communication do you use to keep / get in touch with the Party?

OPTIONS: never, did once, occasionally, often, on a regular basis.

Letter
Fax
Telephone
Face to face e.g. meetings, events, and visits

Q10 How comfortable do you feel / would you feel using the Internet/email rather than traditional means of communication for the following party activities?

OPTIONS: 0 means much less comfortable using the Internet/email, 6 means much more comfortable using the Internet/email.

Membership renewal
Receive party information or news
Meet other members
Join specific campaigns (receive resources, keep in touch)
Discuss issues
Vote for the NEC
Contact the party
Other

Q11 In political matters, people talk of "the left" and "the right." How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?

OPTIONS: 0 (left)-6 (right) scale, (+WRNS)

Q12 In general, I would define myself as:

OPTIONS: a political activist, very interested in politics, averagely interested in politics, not much interested in politics, not at all interested in politics (+ WRNS)

Q13 For how long have you been a member of the Party?

OPTIONS: 1 – 6 months, Approximately 1 year , 2 – 5 years, 6 years or more

Q14 How would you describe your involvement with the Party? (tick all those that apply)

- I hold an official position
- I meet with other members
- I volunteer clerical work for the party
- I attend party meetings /fora
- I attend social events
- I talk to friends and colleagues about the party
- I visit party offices / local offices
- I campaign for the party (deliver leaflets, etc)
- I read the party's literature
- I donate money to the party

Q15 Are you a member of any other political organisation – trade union, pressure group or other political group?

OPTIONS: Yes / No

Gender

OPTIONS: f / m

Age

OPTIONS: <18, 18-25, 26-35 , 36-49, 50-69, 70 +

Income

OPTIONS: < £ 5,000, £ 5,000 to £ 9,999, £ 10,000 to £ 14,999, £ 15,000 to £ 24,999, £ 25,000 to £ 34,999, £ 35,000 to £ 49,999, £ 50,000 + (+ WRNS)

Background

OPTIONS: White – Caucasian, Asian – Asian British, Black – Black British, Chinese, Mixed (specify), other (please specify), (+ WRNS)

Education

OPTIONS: . No Qualifications, GCSE – O levels, A levels, Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA), Master's degree (e.g. MA), PhD, Other, (+ WRNS)

Occupation

OPTIONS: Professional or higher technical work, Manager or Senior Administrator, Clerical, Sales or Services, Small Business Owner, Foreman or Supervisor of Other Workers, Skilled Manual Work, Semi-Skilled or Unskilled Manual Work, Student, Retired , Other, (+ WRNS)

Residence

OPTIONS: England, Wales, Scotland, Other.