



Pemberton, H., & Wickham-Jones, M. (2015). Factionalism in the Parliamentary Labour Party and the 2015 leadership contest. *Renewal: A Journal of Social Democracy*, 23(3), 5-21.

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research](#)  
PDF-document

This is the author accepted manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via Lawrence & Wishart at <https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/renewal/23-3/factionalism-labour-leadership-contest>. Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

## **University of Bristol - Explore Bristol Research**

### **General rights**

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available:  
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/pure/about/ebr-terms>

# Factionalism in the Parliamentary Labour Party and the 2015 Leadership Contest

Hugh Pemberton, Historical Studies, University of Bristol and

Mark Wickham-Jones, SPAIS, University of Bristol

## Introduction

What do nominations for the posts of Labour leader and deputy leader tell us about the state of the party? Do they suggest the existence of different ideological and political groupings within Labour? Or is there a more general and diffuse distribution to endorsements? Under the Collins reforms to the party's structure, voted on and passed by a special conference in March 2014, those wishing to be candidates for either leadership post need to be publicly nominated by 15 per cent of Labour Members of Parliament (MPs) in the House of Commons (Collins, 2014). Any viable contender for the post needed to mobilise sufficient support to meet that threshold. In the case of the two 2015 contests, with a Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) of 232 MPs, the threshold was 35. By the time nominations closed for the leadership at 12.00 noon on Monday 15 June 2015, four candidates had made the final ballot: Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper, Jeremy Corbyn, and Liz Kendall. When nominations closed two days later for the deputy leadership, five aspirants had made it: Ben Bradshaw, Stella Creasy, Angela Eagle, Caroline Flint, and Tom Watson.

In this article, we examine nominations for the leadership and deputy leadership in 2015 to evaluate what they reveal about the state of the Labour party. In particular, we ask whether patterns in nominations reveal the existence of ideological divisions within the party. Do discrete factions exist within the PLP? By faction, we do not mean an organised structured grouping with a distinct internal institutional framework and rules of membership. Rather we see factions as clusters of MPs sharing a similar political and ideological outlook whilst acting, for the most part, in a collectively consistent manner. In the first part of the article

we look at how voting in the 2010 Labour leadership aligned with nominations for the two contests in 2015. We then go on to examine potential groupings between the supporters of the different candidates for the posts of leader and deputy. We compare and contrast the configuration of nominations between the two contests to determine whether particular groupings endorsed different candidates for each. Last, we consider the possible ideological basis of any clusters. We look at the roles that a close identification with Labour’s affiliated unions, including financial contributions to an MP’s constituency on the one hand, and the role of Progress, as an internal group within the party on the other may have had in shaping distinct and contrasting ideological orientations.

Table 1: Nominations for leader and deputy leader, Labour party, 2015			
Leader		Deputy leader	
	Nominations		nominations
Andy Burnham	68	Ben Bradshaw	37
Yvette Cooper	59	Stella Creasy	35
Jeremy Corbyn	36	Angela Eagle	38
Liz Kendall	41	Caroline Flint	43
		Tom Watson	62
Did not nominate	28	Did not nominate	17
Source: Labour party, 2015a			

### **The alignment between the 2010 Labour leadership contest and the 2015 leadership election**

Following the outcome of the 2015 general election, 165 Labour MPs who took part in the 2010 leadership contest remained in the House of Commons (alongside two colleagues who had not voted – Harriet Harman and Nick Brown). How did their nominations in 2015

compare to their first choice votes in 2010 and can we detect evidence that those nominations indicate that factionalism has become more significant since 2010?

Table 2: Final nominations for Labour party leader, June 2015, and first choice votes in 2010						
	DA	EB	AB	DM	EM	DNP
Andy Burnham	0	11	9	7	16	25
Yvette Cooper	0	15	0	13	12	18
Jeremy Corbyn	4 (4)	2 (1)	1 (1)	6 (1)	9 (5)	14
Liz Kendall	0	2	1	28	4	6
Did not nominate	0	2	0	17	6	2
Notes: figures in parentheses give Corbyn's support before the final 24 hours of nominations; DNP – did not participate (joined Commons since 2010); Cooper's figure do not include Nick Brown who did not vote as chief whip in 2010; Harriet Harman who did not vote in 2010 or nominate in 2015 is not included						
Source: Labour party, 2015a						

What do we learn from the nominations detailed in Table 2? Such endorsements are clearly an important public statement. However, they need interpreting with some care.

Nominations need not reflect direct ideological alignment (MPs might support a colleague for personal reasons). In particular, some of the support offered to Jeremy Corbyn, standing on an anti-austerity ticket needs to be assessed with caution. A late and rather reluctant entrant to the contest, joining the other aspirants on 3 June 2015, Corbyn struggled to meet the 35 MPs threshold and did so only a few moments before nominations closed: manifestly a number of those supporting him did so to assist him in making the ballot and not because they endorsed his political position. Nominations had opened on Tuesday, 9 June but by Friday 12 June, four days later, Corbyn had less than half the number needed: the remaining endorsements, many coming on the Monday morning immediately before nominations closed at noon, 15 June, may be artificial. (However, in contrast to the 2010 contest, MPs

were not allowed to revoke a nomination and reallocate it unless the nominee formally withdrew from the contest: Labour Party, 2015b, clause B14.)

Noting these broad points, a number of details are worth noting from Table 2. First, the importance of David Miliband's supporters for Liz Kendall's 2015 campaign is manifest. Nearly seventy per cent of all of those nominating Kendall (returning MPs and new entrants alike) had voted for David as their first choice candidate in 2010 and if we restrict the analysis to those who had voted in the earlier contest, the proportion was higher still at around 75 per cent.

Second, support for the other candidates in 2015 appears to be more diffuse amongst those who had expressed their opinion in 2010. Only 11 MPs survived who had given Andy Burnham their first choice in 2010: he held on to nine of them in nominations for 2015. But Burnham also picked up support from those who voted for Ed Balls and Ed Miliband as their first preferences in 2010. Clearly Burnham's position has been transformed from that of a rather weak 'also ran' campaigning largely on the basis of his local roots in 2010 to that of frontrunner by 2015 (see discussion in R. J. Johnston et al, 2015a). Relatively few of David Miliband's advocates endorsed Burnham five years later.

Third, the biggest group backing Cooper's campaign came from those who had voted for Ed Balls, her husband, as first choice in 2010. At 80 per cent, a bigger proportion of Ball's supporters remained in the Commons than with the other 2010 candidates (though, not of course, the candidate himself). Nearly half of these, 15 out of 32, backed Cooper. She also picked up support from those who had backed David and Ed Miliband as well as Ed Balls.

Fourth, discounting Jeremy Corbyn's nominations from the last day or so, the picture of support for him is as follows. All of those remaining MPs who voted for Abbott as first choice in 2010 nominated him (just four in total). He picked up a further five who voted for Ed Miliband, alongside one each one who voted for Ed Balls, Andy Burnham and David Miliband.

The overall pattern thus suggests a degree of ideological consistency. In 2010 a YouGov *Sunday Times* poll asked the party members to place the then Labour leadership candidates on a left right scale running from 100 (very left wing politics) to 0 (centre) and onto a 100 (very right wing politics). The members placed Abbott at -66, and David Miliband at -2. Between these outliers, they put Burnham at -32, Ed Miliband at -31 and Balls at -28 (see Quinn, 2012, 74-75). Tony Blair was located at +9. Labour affiliated trade unionists gave a similar distribution though Ed Miliband and Balls shared a position at -23. At the time of writing, the 2015 campaign lacks such polling data to locate candidates in terms of their ideological position. However, at the start of the contest, press commentators and others were quick to define Kendall as a moderniser on the right of the party: that is, in some way or other, as a Blairite candidate (see, for example, Merrick, 2015; LabourList, 2015a and Chakelian, 2015a). They identified Burnham as a candidate on the left of the party, one able to attract support from Labour's trade union affiliates. They suggested that Cooper located herself as a more centrist candidate in ideological terms. Jeremy Corbyn entered the contest explicitly as an anti-austerity candidate adopting a strong, left wing line against any further cuts in public spending and claiming to be 'standing to give Labour party members a voice' (LabourList, 2015b).

There is, accordingly, some ideological consistency across Labour within these positions in how support has transferred from first choice voting in 2010 to nominations in 2015. The same point can be made by analysing how David and Ed Miliband's support divided up five years later: the biggest chunk of David's votes as noted went to Liz Kendall. Ed's support split largely between Burnham and Cooper. Relatively little of it went to Liz Kendall.

A last point concerns the 65 MPs who nominated for the first time in 2015 without having voted in the previous election. Liz Kendall did very weakly among this group, picking up only six supporters. By contrast, Jeremy Corbyn performed proportionately very well among new MPs, picking up six of his first 17 supporters from the 2015 intake. Mary Creagh, who withdrew as a candidate from the race on Friday, 12 June, also did well among this group.

When she pulled out she had only 10 nominations. Apart from her own, she had only one other nomination from someone who had played any part in the 2010 contest.

### **2010 votes and 2015 nominations for the deputy leadership**

As with the leadership, nominations for Labour’s deputy leader (see Table 3 below) need to be interpreted with care. Seven candidates declared their intention to run for the post. One, John Healey, pulled out a few days after nominations opened. On the morning that nominations closed only two of the six remaining candidates had met the threshold. At this point, one of the four, Rushinara Ali, withdrew to free up support for the others. With frantic lobbying, the remaining three all made it over the threshold, though none of them by much. As with Corbyn’s leadership bid, some nominations seemed unlikely to be indicative either of ideological alignment or of a broadly consistent political outlook. Diane Abbott, the left’s candidate for leader in 2010, nominated Stella Creasy, generally perceived as a being on the right of the party, as deputy. The nominations for the deputy leadership, however, may have been less manipulated than those for Corbyn for the leadership to the extent that some MPs may have waited until the last minute before nominating to see who would be the most viable of the remaining candidates .

	DA	EB	AB	DM	EM	DNP
Ben Bradshaw	0	5	2	12	12	6
Stella Creasy	1	1	0	12	4	17
Angela Eagle	2	7	2	7	8	11
Caroline Flint	0	1	4	23	9	6
Tom Watson	0	16	2	10	10	24
Did not nominate	1	2	1	7	4	1

Angela Eagle's nominations do not include Nick Brown, Chief Whip in 2010; Harriet Harman is not included.
---

Source: Labour party, 2015a
-----------------------------

Table 3 indicates some patterns of support within the PLP for those seeking the deputy leadership from those who had voted in 2010. Tom Watson received most nominations: he took a block of support from those who had voted for Ed Balls in 2010, but also received endorsements from the backers of both David and Ed Miliband. Angela Eagle also received a diffuse range of backing. Ben Bradshaw's nominations came mainly from David and Ed Miliband. Support for the remaining two candidates, Stella Creasy and Caroline Flint came largely from David Miliband.

How do these nominations map on to the candidates' ideological positions? As with the leadership, at the time of writing, no polls have been published regarding ideological alignment. Press commentators and blogs offer preliminary, if slightly basic, assessments of Angela Eagle and Tom Watson as being on the left of the party (the latter attracting support from the affiliated unions), while they locate Ben Bradshaw, Stella Creasy and Caroline Flint on the right (see, for example, Chakelian, 2015b; and LabourList, 2015c). Stella Creasy is one of only two MPs on the national committee of the Movement for Change, an organisation promoting community level interventions, founded as part of the David Miliband's 2010 leadership bid. The pattern of nominations for deputy leader is broadly consistent with such ideological characterisation. Watson picked up support from Ed Balls and Ed Miliband (though those that voted for David Miliband also nominated him). Eagle's support was broadly similar. In keeping with their apparent location toward the right of the party, Creasy and Flint both received strong support from erstwhile backers of David Miliband and relatively little from elsewhere. Bradshaw's backing came from David and Ed Miliband: given his apparent position on the party's right, the support for him coming from those that voted for Ed Miliband is perhaps surprising. An outgoing member of the Labour Cabinet in 2010,

he failed to gain a place in the shadow cabinet elections of October that year and subsequently remained on the backbenches for the remainder of the 2010-2015 parliament.

In sum, the two biggest correlations between first preference votes in 2010 and deputy leadership nominations in 2015 were for Flint from David Miliband’s backers and for Watson from Ed Ball’s supporters. The pattern is somewhat different for those who had not taken part in the 2010 contest. Watson and Creasy performed most strongly among this group; Flint was relatively weak, picking up only six of her 43 nominations.

### Clusters in 2015

Are there clusters within the nominations for leader and deputy leader in 2015? Did those who favoured a certain leadership contestant tend to favour a particular candidate for the post of deputy? We examine this material in Table 4 below.

	Bradshaw	Creasy	Eagle	Flint	Watson	No nomination
Burnham	6	7	14	16	24	1
Cooper	13	5	10	6	22	3
Kendall	4	12	4	18	2	1
Corbyn	10	7	8	0	10	1
No nomination	4	4	2	3	4	11

Source: Labour party, 2015a

The data in Table 4 indicate the wide range of different possible permutations for leader and deputy leader. Clearly nominations were diffused across the PLP. Of the twenty possible combinations, only one pairing receives no support at all: unsurprisingly so, in that it is the unlikely pairing of Jeremy Corbyn as leader with Caroline Flint as deputy. The three largest groupings are Burnham/Watson (10 per cent of the total), Cooper/Watson (9 per cent) and Kendall/Flint (8 per cent). These clusters of support can be noted taking each candidate for the post of deputy in turn.

Ben Bradshaw's support comes mainly from those backing Yvette Cooper and Jeremy Corbyn. Of the candidates in the deputy election, Bradshaw's base of nominations appears quite surprising. Identified as being on the right of the party, he did not attain much of the backing that had gone to Liz Kendall for the leadership. We discuss this point further below. It might be noted that much of the support he received from those who had backed Corbyn came from individuals who nominated both at the last minute. Bradshaw received 16 nominations in the last day or so before the lists closed. Six of the ten MPs who nominated both Corbyn and Bradshaw did so in the last 24 hours of this phase of each contest. Endorsements for Stella Creasy, as we might expect given her ideological outlook, come mainly from those backing Liz Kendall for the leadership. Again, consistent with their political positions, Angela Eagle attracted support from those who had endorsed Andy Burnham. The biggest group backing Caroline Flint came from Liz Kendall. Tom Watson had two large clusters of support, one that had backed Andy Burnham and one that had backed Yvette Cooper. Looking at the data, the degree of ideological consistency, especially on Labour's right is striking. Liz Kendall's support went to Creasy and Flint. Equally striking is the lack of support offered to Kendall/Watson, a combination preferred by only two MPs out of 232.

Focusing on support amongst the 2015 intake the biggest clusters are those for Cooper/Watson (13 per cent of the total), Burnham/Watson and Corbyn/Watson (both 11 per cent). What is perhaps most noteworthy about those MPs newly elected in 2015 is how little support Liz Kendall attracted from them – just three in total – and how much Tom

Watson received. The Kendall/Flint combination falls from 8 per cent of the PLP to just 2 per cent of the 2015 intake.

### **The ideological sources of factions within the PLP: the role of Labour's affiliated unions and Progress**

This analysis of nominations indicates factional clustering within the party but are there institutional characteristics to those factions that indicate an ideological underpinning to them? Much has been made in the press over the last five years or so of the arguments within Labour between the party's trade unions, most notably Unite, the largest affiliate, on the one hand, and Progress, an internal grouping, on the other. Founded in 1996, Progress is usually presented as an internal grouping within Labour, one loyal to Tony Blair's leadership. For a long period, it characterised itself as a New Labour pressure group. In 2014, it dropped the New Labour moniker and described itself as a mainstream grouping within the party. Jackie Ashley, *The Guardian* columnist described Progress as 'the inner bastion of Blairism', articulating a position based around free markets and centrist thinking (Ashley, 2012). Such an orientation brought Progress into conflict with Labour's affiliated unions such as Unite and the GMB. Blogging after the election defeat, Richard Angell, director of Progress defended Labour's link with the unions. At the same time, however, he criticised the internal structure of Unite and the authority it accorded Len McCluskey as general secretary, the union's threat to withdraw funding from Labour if it did not get its own way, and the idea that Labour MPs should be 'centrally chosen trade union officials, "rewarded" for their service with a safe seat' (Angell, 2015). His comments were typical of a long running feud. In 2012, Paul Kenny, general secretary of the GMB proposed that Labour should ban Progress (Wintour, 2012). Dave Prentis of Unison followed this up, suggesting it was 'a party within a party, funded by external interests' (Milmo, 2012). What bearing might such a disagreement have had on nominations for the two 2015 leadership contests?

There are, of course, a number of ways in which members of the Parliamentary Labour Party might be involved in trade union activities. The three largest unions affiliated to Labour (Unite, Unison and the GMB), all reported as being at odds with Progress, have sponsored more than 50 meetings at the Labour conference over the last five years. Many such events focus on leading figures within the unions, although around twenty five current Labour MPs have spoken at these meetings. Care needs to be taken, however, aligning individuals directly with the union organising any meetings. Shadow ministers might wish to speak to their portfolio, others may participate on the basis of links with any group co-sponsoring a meeting. Union interests have varied widely including some foreign policy concerns (for example, Cuba or Palestine) but are often focused on economic matters. Some Labour MPs also blog as members of the Parliamentary Labour Party trade union group. Following the 2015 election two statements were published defending the role of organised labour within the party: ten MPs wrote to the *Guardian* in mid-May followed by a statement defending the union link published in the *New Statesman* at the end of that month (see respectively Burgon et al, 2015; Lavery et al, 2015).

Taking these activities together, we get a total of around 60 Labour MPs engaging in trade union activities, something like a quarter of the Parliamentary Labour Party. There is some overlap with those who have taken part in Progress events: around a quarter have done so, although only around six MPs appear to have been active at union events while being frequent participants within Progress (and some of these have spoken only once on the conference fringe at a union meeting). All four candidates for the leadership have spoken at the Labour conference on trade union platforms (Jeremy Corbyn on Cuba some years ago). Liz Kendall took part in a Unison meeting on social care (her frontbench portfolio); Caroline Flint, running for the deputy, participated in a discussion of local government (again linked to her portfolio) for the same union. Of the candidates for the deputy neither Ben Bradshaw nor Stella Creasy appear to have been involved in a union event.

Of those MPs that have such links to the three large affiliates, most nominated Corbyn (around one third) or Burnham (again, around a third) for the leadership. Eleven supported Cooper while six did not nominate. For the deputy, Watson got most nominations with twenty seven. Eagle received support from sixteen of these MPs. Six did not nominate and five plumped for Bradshaw. The candidate most associated with Progress, Liz Kendall got just two nominations from this group (her own and that of Alison McGovern). For the deputy contest, Creasy got two nominations and Flint three. Of course such figures must be read with care but they suggest an antipathy amongst MPs with trade union connections for the Kendall/Creasy/Flint candidatures.

Another means by which a trade union alignment within the PLP might be identified is through the financial contributions that organised labour might make to an MP's Constituency Labour Party, on the basis that a trade union will be more likely to support an MP who is of a similar ideological outlook. Plainly, the trade unions are an extremely significant source of finance for Labour. Between the start of 2011 and the 2015 general election they contributed over £45 million to the party, with nearly £6 million donated in the first quarter of 2015 alone as the Labour geared up for the forthcoming general election (Electoral Commission 2015). Is there any correlation between union finance provided at the constituency level between the 2010 and 2015 general elections and the nominations made during the 2015 leadership contest? Data on such contributions is made available by the Electoral Commission. It is not easy to work with, not least because many contributions are made to umbrella constituency committees, mainly in the major conurbations. For our purposes, however, donations recorded as made directly to the constituency are the significant factor, and these can be identified (see Table 5). Across all unions there is a small correlation evident between union donations to CLPs whose MP went on to nominate either Burnham or Corbyn. The latter CLPs received on average £5,657 and £5,934 respectively from trade unions between the 2010 general election and the end of March 2015 compared with £3564 and £4552 respectively for those whose MPs backed either Kendall or Cooper. There was little sign of any relationship in deputy leadership nominations, although unions tended to favour CLPs with MPs supporting Eagle and, perhaps more surprisingly, disfavour those whose MP backed Watson. It is also striking how little financial support has been

forthcoming on average for those constituencies whose MPs backed both Kendall and Flint (though Kendall and Watson, backed by only two, is also low).

**Table 5: Nominations for leader and deputy leader by value of average union CLP contribution per nominator, 2010-15**

	Bradshaw	Creasy	Eagle	Flint	Watson	All
Burnham	£3,000	£5,480	£6,179	£6,129	£5,504	£5,567
Cooper	£6,566	£7,000	£3,715	£4,498	£3,109	£4,552
Kendall	£2,281	£4,881	£6,111	£2,756	£2,175	£3,564
Corbyn	£6,892	£4,609	£6,344	£0	£4,946	£5,934
All	£4,902.96	£4,691.22	£5,232.87	£4,061.80	£4,101.72	

Source: Electoral Commission, 2015

The data shown in Table 5, however, relate to all union contributions. If we restrict the analysis, as shown in Table 6, to Unite donations to Labour constituencies the preference of that union for Burnham and Corbyn for leader, and for Watson and Eagle for deputy leader is plain. Equally clear is what little financial support those MPs who have backed Kendall as well as Creasy have received from Unite. Of course correlation is not causation, and whilst there are variations in the average donations those averages are not high. Our purpose here is merely to demonstrate a potential relationship between unions and factionalism within the Parliamentary Labour Party. The clear alignment of Unite donations to MPs backing leadership candidates at different points on the Left of the party and the very marked lack of union backing for MPs backing Kendall is notable, with Cooper lying between the two. Likewise we can see a clear alignment between Unite and MPs backing Watson and Eagle for the deputy leadership, and a clear lack of engagement with MPs backing Creasy and to a lesser extent Flint and Bradshaw.

**Table 6: Nominations for leader and deputy leader by value of average Unite CLP contribution per nominator, 2010-15**

	Bradshaw	Creasy	Eagle	Flint	Watson	All
Burnham	£500	£1,000	£2,605	£1,156	£1,929	£1,702
Cooper	£577	£200	£980	£1,250	£1,227	£971
Kendall	£250	£217	£750	£254	£750	£309
Corbyn	£1,567	£521	£375	£0	£2,563	£1,415
All	£750.67	£407.14	£1,493.79	£710.93	£1,835.02	

What about Progress? In one sense, Progress is more open and pluralist than some of its critics have suggested. Looking at the readily accessible data on the Progress Web site coupled with additional material from Labour conferences it can be seen that a plethora of members of the PLP have participated in Progress activities over the last five years. Progress holds an annual gathering in London as well as a range of open events at the Labour conference each year. In addition to these set piece occasions it has organised political weekends, and regional conferences, alongside a range of themed seminars. Progress publishes a monthly magazine and periodic pamphlets: perhaps most significantly in this regard, in 2011, Robert Philpot, the then director of Progress, edited *The Purple Book*, a collection of essays addressing what kind of measures and general orientation Labour might adopt in order to win the next general election (Philpot, 2011).

Aggregating this data, we find that around 80 MPs, something like 35 per cent of PLP, have taken part in Progress events in the last five years. (Of those 80, around 15 have taken part in a union event: only one of the thirty two MPs who signed either of the statements defending the union link appears to have spoken at a Progress event.) On the face of it these MPs represent all sides in the current leadership contest: Liz Kendall has been especially active but Diane Abbott has spoken at a number of Progress meetings as has Andy Burnham, and Yvette Cooper (though not Jeremy Corbyn). Among the candidates for deputy, Ben Bradshaw, Stella Creasy, Angela Eagle and Caroline Flint have all taken part in Progress activities (Creasy and Flint have been especially active). Tom Watson does not appear to have done so at all.

A rather different picture emerges, however, if we look at the MPs most involved with Progress in terms of the extent of their participation alongside those that hold office within it. Taking MPs with more than five entries or activities on the Progress web-site over the last five years alongside a handful of office holders, we get a total of 28. Eight of these MPs did

not take part in the 2010 leadership contest. Of the remainder, sixteen out of twenty backed David as their first choice in 2010. Two chose Ed Miliband, one supported Balls and Andy Burnham voted, unsurprisingly, for Burnham. In the nomination stage of the 2015 contests, of the 28, over sixty per cent have backed Kendall (18 in total). Two did not nominate (candidates for the deputy leadership), three backed Cooper and five Burnham.

For the deputy leadership, nominations among the leading members of Progress are more diffuse. Stella Creasy leads this group with eleven nominations, though at least one of these came late. Caroline Flint is second with seven, Watson received support from six MPs, with Eagle and Bradshaw getting two and one each respectively (all three coming late in the process). Of those that nominated Kendall as leader, all went on to back either Creasy or Flint with the exception of Kendall herself (who did not nominate) and Gloria De Piero and Nick Smith both of whom backed Tom Watson for deputy (they were the only members of the PLP to choose such a combination). The lack of backing from senior figures in Progress may reflect one reason why Bradshaw, although identified as being on the right of the party, struggled to get on the ballot. These active Progress members split their support between Creasy and Flint. Bradshaw, who has had relatively little involvement with Progress had to look elsewhere for nominations. Andy Burnham's participation in a relatively high number of Progress events looks slightly anomalous: a number of these contributions were at events directly related to his health portfolio in the shadow cabinet; some of the others were north-west based meetings.

## **Conclusions**

In this article we have examined nominations by Labour MPs for the party's leadership and deputy leadership in 2015. We have compared with these with the recorded first preference votes for the leadership in 2010 and we have looked for clusters across the endorsements for the elections in 2015. While we have focused on ideological issues, other analyses of such data would be possible. There is, for example, clearly a regional aspect to nominations:

Andy Burnham has garnered much support in his home North West while Yvette Cooper has picked up nominations from the Birmingham area (see R, J, Johnston et al, 2015b).

From the above discussion, we draw the following conclusions. First, we suggest that there is a broad degree of ideological consistency in the clusters that we have identified within the 2015 nominations. Nine MPs voted for Ed Balls in 2010 and then went on to nominate Cooper and Watson in 2015. Fourteen MPs voted for David Miliband and then endorsed Kendall and Flint while a further eight backed David Miliband and then went on to nominate Kendall and Creasy. In a PLP of 232, these are significant groupings. Our analysis of union donations to Constituency Labour Parties confirms the potential for an ideological divide within Labour as does our analysis of MPs activities within trade unions and within Progress. Although many commentators assume that the present ideological divisions within the PLP were clearly evident in the 2010 leadership contest, our analysis of factions amongst Labour MPs reveals a fundamental shift in the ideological landscape of the Parliamentary Labour Party since 2010. In fact it was not immediately apparent that the 2010 leadership election indicated an ideological schism within the party (Pemberton and Wickham-Jones 2013 see also Bale 2015; Hass and MacIntyre 2012). Many MPs at that time ranked both David and Ed Miliband high within their preference orderings (and at the same time that party members voted for David Miliband as leader many within London voted for Ken Livingstone as Mayoral candidate). Pragmatism rather than ideology appeared to shape such contests. Since 2010 the apparent schism between David and Ed Miliband appears to have hardened into a more fundamental division.

Second, although the 'hard' left's candidate, Jeremy Corbyn, struggled to make the necessary threshold to be on the ballot paper, he did attract support from the handful of MPs remaining in the Commons who had voted for Dianne Abbott in 2010 alongside a group of new members of the PLP. Although the Campaign Group of MPs, greatly reduced in size from what was once the case, is organised on loose lines, these nominations indicate the existence of a 'hard' left group, albeit small within the PLP. In May 2015, ten new MPs wrote to *The Guardian* calling for an alternative to austerity: seven went on to nominate Corbyn

(though three of these were delivered just before the deadline) and three backed Burnham (Burgon et al, 2015). Of those writing to the *New Statesman*, twelve backed Corbyn (Lavery et al, 2015).

Third, the pattern of support tracked from votes for David Miliband to nominations for Liz Kendall as leader and for Caroline Flint and Stella Creasy as deputy reveals a strong cluster on the ideological right of the PLP. The number of nominations does not indicate that such a grouping enjoys majority support among the PLP. It does suggest, however, that Labour is a factionalised party with an ideologically coherent minority grouping located on its right. Whether this grouping will continue to recruit new members in the future is uncertain. Indeed the candidates most associated with the party's right (Liz Kendall, Caroline Flint and perhaps even Stella Creasy) have not done well attracting support from new MPs. This may reflect the old adage that MPs become de-radicalised and shift to the centre over time, or it may be representative of a lasting realignment within the PLP.

Fourth, Andy Burnham appears to have relocated himself successfully as a candidate with strong support from those who voted for Ed Miliband in 2010. In such an orientation he has attracted considerable support from MPs backed by the trade unions and by Unite in particular.

None of this analysis is especially good news for the Labour party. One of the key tasks of whoever is elected leader in September 2015 will be to unite the party around an agreed strategy that bonds its different elements together at the same time as appealing to sufficient numbers within the electorate to win the next general election. On the basis of the groupings emerging in the patterns of nominations that is by no means a straightforward task. The candidates for the Labour leadership have articulated different ideological perspectives about how the party might best recover electorally and politically: these positions are indicative of different ideological alignments within the Parliamentary

Labour Party and of factions with an institutional presence that may make them tenacious. The post-new Labour contest is only just beginning.

## References

Angell, Richard, 'Progressives want to mend, not end, the link' LabourList, 26 May, available at: <http://labourlist.org/2015/05/progressives-want-to-mend-not-end-the-link/>

Ashley, Jackie (2015), 'The last thing Labour needs now is a settling of scores', *The Guardian*, 18 June, 24.

Bale, Tim (2015), *Five year mission* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Burgon, Richard, and nine other Labour MPs (2015), letter, *The Guardian*, 15 May.

Chakelian, Anoosh (2015a) 'Who are the MPs running to be Labour's next leader', *New Statesman*, 29 May, available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/05/who-are-mps-running-be-labours-next-leader>.

Chakelian, Anoosh, (2015b) 'Who are the MPs competing to become Labour's deputy leader?' *New Statesman*, 29 May, available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/05/who-are-mps-competing-become-labours-deputy-leader>.

Collins, Ray (2014), *The Collins Review into Labour Party Reform* (London, Labour party).

Electoral Commission (2015), donations and loans to major parties <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>, accessed 10 June.

Hasan, Mehdi and MacIntyre (2012), *Ed The Milibands and the making of a Labour leader* (London, Biteback)

Johnston, R. J, Pattie, Charles, Pemberton, Hugh and Wickham-Jones Mark (2015a), ' "If you've got friends and neighbours": Constituency voting patterns for the UK Labour Party leader in 2010', mimeo.

Johnston, R, J. et al (2015b), 'The Labour leadership and deputy leadership candidates: where are their support bases – does geography matter?', mimeo

LabourList (2015a), 'Who might stand for the Labour leadership', 9 May, available at: <http://labourlist.org/2015/05/who-might-stand-for-the-labour-leadership/>.

LabourList (2015), 'Jeremy Corbyn announces he's standing to be Labour leader', 3 June available at <http://labourlist.org/2015/06/jeremy-corbyn-announces-hes-standing-to-be-labour-leader>

LabourList (2015c), 'What do we know about the deputy leadership candidates', Labourlist, 17 June, available at: <http://labourlist.org/2015/06/what-do-we-know-about-the-deputy-leadership-candidates/>.

Labour party (2010), 'The Labour Party internal elections 2010', (London, Labour party).

Labour party (2015a), 'Labour's leadership contest', available at: <http://www.labour.org.uk/index.php/leadership>.

Labour party (2015b), 'Elections for Leader and Deputy Leader 2015 (London, Labour party).

Lavery, Ian (2015), 'Labour must defend the trade union link', *New Statesman*, 29 May, available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/05/labour-must-defend-trade-union-link>

Merrick, Jane (2015), 'Labour leadership: battlelines are drawn as members battle over party's ideology at first hustings of the contest', *The Independent*, 17 May, available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/generalelection/election-results-labour-battle-lines-are-drawn-as-members-battle-over-partys-ideology-in-leadership-hustings-10255767.html>.

Milmo, Dan (2012), 'Unison attacks "intolerable" Labour thinktank', *The Guardian*, 20 June.

Pemberton, Hugh and Wickham-Jones, Mark (2013), 'Brothers all? The operation of the electoral college in the 2010 Labour leadership', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 66 no 4, 2013, 708-731.

Philpot, Robert (ed.) (2011), *The Purple Book* (London: Biteback).

Quinn, Thomas (2012), *Electing and Ejecting Party Leader in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave).

Wintour, Patrick (2012), 'Union fights Blairite faction in "struggle for Labour's soul"', *The Guardian*, 16 June, 6.