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'If You've Got Friends and Neighbours': Constituency Voting Patterns for the UK Labour Party Leader in 2010.

ABSTRACT. Most attention in British electoral studies has been paid to the pattern of voting for parties, with relatively little to that for individual candidates. In intra-party elections, however, candidates may perform better in some areas than others, illustrating V. O. Key's well-known 'friends and neighbours' effect. This paper explores whether that was so at the election for the leader of the UK Labour party in 2010, expecting each of the five candidates to perform better in their own constituency and its environs and also with those constituency parties whose MPs supported their candidature. The results are in line with the expectations, especially for one of the candidates who ran an explicitly geographical campaign.

Most analyses of British election results focus on the pattern of party votes. Some candidates get a 'personal vote' over-and-above what their party might otherwise receive there (Gaines, 1998) – incumbents seeking re-election as MPs for the first time tend to perform better than their longer-established colleagues (Wood and Norton, 1992; Curtice et al., 2005, 2010; Smith, 2013), for example.

One aspect of voting patterns rarely addressed in Britain relates to V. O. Key's (1949: see Taylor and Johnston, 1979, pp.274ff.) pioneering identification of 'friends and neighbours' voting. Some candidates, notably in intra-party contests, such as US primary elections, perform better in the area around their home than elsewhere within the district being contested, as a calculated promotion of local interests (see Brunk et al., 1988: see Johnston, 1972, 1973, on similar patterns in New Zealand, and a number of studies in Ireland – Parker, 1982, 1986; Gorecki and Marsh, 2012, 2014). Such contests are rare in Great Britain and possible tests of relevant hypotheses are generally precluded because of the paucity of relevant data. Arzheimer and Evans (2012, 2014) have uncovered friends-and-neighbours effects there, however. They show that: the shorter the distance between voters' homes and that of a candidate for their constituency at the 2010 British general election, the greater the probability that they voted for that candidate, *ceteris paribus*; and voters at the 2013 English local government elections were more likely to support candidates 'from here' rather than those 'from elsewhere'. In addition, an experimental study by Campbell and Cowley (2014) illustrated the importance electors place on having a local candidate to represent them as their constituency MP.

One British intra-party election in which 'friends and neighbours' voting patterns might appear is the 2010 election of the leader of the Labour party – for which the data are available (Labour party 2010). Following Labour's defeat at that year's general election Gordon Brown resigned and five candidates contested the election to replace him. This paper analyses their performance across Great Britain's 632 Parliamentary constituencies (Northern Ireland's 18 being excluded because there is no constituency-level Labour party organisation there).¹ We examine whether candidates drew support differentially across the national space, evaluating in particular the candidates' campaigning strategies.

1. Electing the Labour Leader

In 2010, Labour elected its leader through an electoral college, made up of three equally weighted parts, one for the party's MPs and MEPs, one for individual party members, and the last for its

¹ Individual membership of the Labour party – as opposed to constituency organisation – is possible: in the 2010 leadership contest, the votes of such members were grouped together as Northern Ireland.

affiliated trades unions and socialist societies. (For discussions of the contest see Bale, 2015; Dorey and Denham, 2011; Pemberton and Wickham-Jones, 2013; Jobson and Wickham-Jones, 2011. On the system's mechanics, see Quinn, 2004, and 2010, 64-82.) The relevant rules for the current analyses (available in detail in the party's 2008 rule book,² see also Kelly et. al, 2010) were:

- To contest the election, a candidate must be a sitting MP nominated by at least 12.5 per cent of the party's elected MPs;
- Individual Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) and affiliated organisations as well as MEPs could also nominate candidates (but these nominations played no formal part in the proceedings);
- Voting was by preferences – each MP, MEP, CLP member and member of an affiliated body rank ordered the candidates from 1 to n , where n is the number of candidates, although the electors need not rank all candidates. Counting followed the Single Transferable Vote mechanism.
- All votes were cast individually and apportioned to the relevant candidate (no votes were allocated in blocks either in unions or in CLPs).

In 2010, in contrast with earlier elections, Labour published to its members a full breakdown of voting by both its MPs and CLPs, giving the votes for each candidate and each CLP's overall membership. Although the electoral system had been in place since 1981, no comparable data are available from earlier contests (1983, 1988, 1992, 1994, and 2007). Until 1994 CLPs cast a single vote for their preferred candidate while in 2007 there was only a single nominee; the rules were changed in 2014 to 'one person one vote'. These 2010 data provide the basic material for our analysis of support for the five candidates (Diane Abbott, Ed Balls, Andy Burnham, David Miliband, and Ed Miliband) in the first two sections of the electoral college. (David Miliband obtained the highest vote in both of these, losing the leadership only because of the overwhelming vote amongst affiliated organisations for his brother Ed.) The number of first preference votes cast for each candidate in each of the 632 CLPs is converted into percentages to form the dependent variable in the following analysis.

2. 'Friends and Neighbours' Effects

'Friends and neighbours' voting suggests that candidates should do better in their 'home areas' for several reasons. We define 'home areas' here as the constituencies which candidates represented in the House of Commons in 2010, as well as the immediately neighbouring constituencies. Each candidate had only represented one constituency since being first elected, though Ed Balls' seat was substantially redrawn by boundary changes after 2005.

In exploring support for 'local candidates', Bowler et al. (1993) suggest, in addition to personal support for a 'home town boy', spatially decomposing the 'friends and neighbours' effect by focusing on voters' information sources. In the candidates' home constituencies it is very likely that members will know them personally: many, especially activists, will meet candidates regularly, if not frequently, at CLP events – hence the 'friends' effect'. (The average CLP membership in 2010 was 279, with a standard deviation of 137.) Beyond the constituency, the 'neighbours' effect' comes into play. Fewer members of neighbouring CLPs will know the candidate from a nearby constituency personally, but will almost certainly know about her/him through local media, which usually covers several constituencies.³ In addition, Labour MPs (if they have one) and CLP officials will likely know the leadership candidate and provide further information. This will be set alongside more generally-available knowledge about all candidates through the national media (all five in the 2010 contest

² Available at http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~tquinn/leadership_election_rules.htm.

³ The *Salisbury Journal*, for example, regularly publishes articles by not only the city's MP but those for two neighbouring seats.

had well-established profiles) and through candidates' campaigning messages to party members. If some voters rely more on locally-generated information, then a 'neighbours' effect' should appear.

We anticipate 'friends and neighbours' patterns for a number of reasons, therefore. First, CLPs would probably both nominate their own MP and provide them with substantial support in the poll out of loyalty to their representatives, whom they know well (Key, 1949, 40). Secondly, candidates will probably perform better in neighbouring constituencies than elsewhere because party members there are more likely either to have had direct contact with, or to know of, them and their reputations through local information (Key, 1949, 38; Taylor and Johnston, 1979, 275).

Thirdly, candidates might be expected to perform better in the region containing their own constituency because voters might prefer a candidate who knows and is likely to advance the local area and its interests. The latter is more likely to be the case for candidates who are firmly embedded in their region's culture as opposed to those from elsewhere in the country who won nomination for a constituency there without any prior links. In his pioneering discussion of 'friends and neighbours', V. O. Key referred to what he considered to be 'a more or less totally irrelevant appeal – back the hometown boy' (Key, 1949, 41; see Taylor and Johnston, 1979, 275-6, on the 1976 contest for leadership of the UK Liberal party). Key also noted that localism might hide an organised sectional interest concentrated in a particular region (1949, 90-91, 132.) Fourthly, candidates might campaign specifically to attract support from their home region, emphasising their roots and a particular geographic policy orientation. (For an example, see Taylor and Johnston, 1979, 284-285.) Taken together, the last two reasons suggest that a local candidate who campaigns as such might perform better there than opponents.

3. Labour Leadership Candidates and their Localities

Two candidates, Diane Abbott and Andy Burnham, had relatively strong local bases (Table 1 provides biographical information about all five nominees). Abbott was born and attended school in London before graduating from Cambridge University. She worked in London, was elected to Westminster City Council in 1982, and was returned as MP for the north London seat of Hackney North and Stoke Newington in 1987. Alongside this local base, however, some profiles emphasised her roots as the daughter of Jamaican immigrants (BBC, 2012; Prince 2010, 8).

Born in Liverpool and educated near Warrington, Burnham also studied at Cambridge University and worked in London. He returned to the Northwest to be selected in March 2001 for Leigh (Oliver, 2001). In 2010, Burnham remembered his selection: 'I lived back at home with my mum and dad⁴, and basically worked on it for a year' (Labour Uncut, 2010). Promising 'an authentic voice from my home area', Burnham told the House of Commons in his maiden speech, 'I joined the Labour party at the age of 15 to fight for a better deal for the working people of Leigh among whom I grew up' (*Hansard*, 4 July 2001, cols 334-335). Burnham identified with a number of regional causes, most notably that of the Liverpool football supporters killed in the 1989 Hillsborough stadium tragedy (Hernon, 2009, 1).

The remaining three candidates had shallow constituency roots. The head of the Downing Street Policy Unit between 1997 and 2001, David Miliband was selected for South Shields in the North-East just before the June 2001 general election. Ed Miliband was selected quite late in the next parliamentary cycle; chosen as candidate for Doncaster North at the end of March 2005, he entered Parliament that June. Neither had any previous connection with their constituencies. The closest David could come to a link in his maiden speech in the House of Commons was noting that, after 1945, his grandfather had been denied entry to the UK by the Labour Home Secretary and MP for

⁴ They lived in the nearby village of Culceth.

South Shields, J. Chuter Ede (*Hansard*, 25 June 2001, col. 466). Ed simply told the Commons in his maiden speech that ‘my roots do not lie in Doncaster. I am the son of two immigrants’ (*Hansard*, 23 May 2005, col. 487). Between 1972 and 1977 the Milibands’ father, Ralph, had been a Professor of Politics at the University of Leeds and both attended local schools there. But they were mainly educated in London before going to Oxford University (David subsequently studied at MIT and Ed at the LSE), after which they worked in London, mostly in one capacity or another for Labour.

Ed Balls was born in Norwich and received his secondary education in Nottingham before going to Oxford and Harvard universities. Thereafter he was based in London: working for Gordon Brown, eventually becoming Chief Economic Adviser to the Treasury. Like the Milibands, he had no roots in his constituency, Normanton (redrawn as Morley and Outwood following boundary changes in 2007). When finally selected for the seat in June 2004 Balls’ only local connection was the proximity of his wife’s, Yvette Cooper’s, neighbouring constituency (Pontefract and Castleford).

4. Local Identity and Campaigning in the Labour Leadership Contest

Burnham not only had the strongest local background, he also ran a campaign emphasising his roots and offering an explicit regional dimension. He criticised ‘the London Dinner party circuit’ (Smith, 2010) and developed a distinct identity: ‘the establishment isn’t necessarily helping me... Even the Labour party establishment. My connection is with the grassroots, ordinary members’ (Labour Uncut, 2010). Having announced his candidature in Manchester, Burnham launched his campaign in Leigh, stating that ‘he was brought up in the area he now represents’ (Burnham, 2010a; Burnham, 2010c). Based in Manchester, Burnham’s was the only campaign run from outside London. (Table 2 provides information about each campaign’s organisation; see Kelly et al., 2010.)

Diane Abbott initiated her campaign in her London constituency. She characterised herself as a left-winger outside the established circle (the other four had all held office under both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown) but did not emphasise her local base: quite the contrary, she stated that ‘What I bring to the debate is partly my personal experiences, which are very different from those of the front-runners. My parents were immigrants from Jamaica’ (Abbott, 2010a). Although she mapped out a radical agenda, her campaign was relatively low key, with few speeches.

David Miliband formally launched his campaign from his South Shields constituency, having announced his candidacy six days earlier with an accompanying photo call outside the House of Commons (McSmith, 2010; Baldwin, 2010). Instigating his bid at a Fabian Society Conference in London on 15 May 2010, Ed Miliband made only the briefest reference to his constituency (Miliband, E., 2010a). Ed Balls launched his campaign in Gedling, a marginal seat close to Nottingham, although he also visited Basildon earlier on the same day (Balls, 2010a). (Gedling was a key marginal seat held by Vernon Coaker, a Balls ally. Its CLP did not nominate Balls, however, and he received only 16.5 per cent first preference votes in the members’ ballot there.)

In mapping out his campaign, Burnham drew an immediate contrast between his constituency and that of George Osborne, Conservative MP for Tatton, 25 miles away (Burnham, 2010b, 29 and 33). He referred to his grandmother’s and mother’s Liverpool roots as examples of the aspirational socialism at the heart of his bid, telling the interviewer ‘I’m absolutely very proud to have based my campaign in Manchester. It symbolises the change I would bring to the Labour party. I can’t say it strongly enough’ (Smith, 2010: see also Burnham, 2010d, 4-5). Another interviewer noted ‘it doesn’t take long for Andy Burnham to take politics back to his roots’ (Stevenson, 2010); Burnham told him, ‘I’ve never called myself the northern candidate – but I do talk from my experience, always’: ‘I represent my home seat of Leigh... so nobody parachuted me in’ – a possible dig at the lack of local connections enjoyed by both Milibands and Balls as MPs (*Labour Uncut*, 2010; see also Smith, 2010). Some commentators were unimpressed by the local dimension. One suggested ‘He’s too

comfortable with resorting to his back story as a catch-all answer to questions' (Ferguson, 2010). Blogger Hopi Sen was scathing: 'Andy's biggest problem is that he can't seem to shut up about his biggest asset', continuing 'He needs to persuade people that he's more than a boy from Leigh made good. His campaign mustn't be about his backstory but our future' (Sen, 2010).

None of the other candidates' campaigns placed much emphasis on a local dimension. Having mentioned Doncaster North at his launch, Ed Miliband did not refer directly to it again in any depth (Miliband, E, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d). David Miliband confined local issues to brief references such as his membership of the South Shields credit union (Miliband, D, 2010a); speaking at the launch of the South Durham Enterprise Agency in July, he emphasised a strategy for deficit reduction but put no weight on local issues (Miliband, D. 2010b). He developed a 'Movement for Change' to promote community organisation. Structured along the lines of London Citizens and inspired by similar American experiences, it was the basis of a large London rally at which he challenged David Cameron's Big Society concept (*The Journal*, 2010, Jobson and Wickham-Jones, 2010, 532). However, for all of the emphasis on community organisation, his was effectively a nationally-orientated campaign. Writing for *The Guardian*, Balls briefly mentioned his background ('I was born in Norwich. I grew up in the Midlands') and referred in passing to his Yorkshire seat (Balls, 2010b). But his main focus was on the economic crisis and austerity (Balls, 2010c, 2010d). Diane Abbott made little of her London base in a low-intensity campaign. Late in the contest, however, she shifted her narrative slightly, emphasising not her parents' immigrant origins but her father's working-class roots as part of an attack on Labour's middle-class orientation: 'I am the daughter of a sheet metal worker, who himself left school at 14' (Abbott, 2010b).

All five contenders made widespread use of emails, letters and leaflets (many undated and lacking titles) to communicate with party members, particularly once ballot papers were distributed in August. In an early message Burnham emphasised his local roots, suggesting that his traditional working class background was significant: 'I've never forgotten where I came from' (11 June). In a subsequent letter he linked his vision to his identity, one that 'has been forged by my own background' (no date).

The other candidates placed less weight on either their identity or local issues. Abbott stressed her left-wing credentials and distance from the outgoing Labour government, for which she claimed popular support: 'I am the only candidate who spoke against the war [in Iraq]' (18 September). Balls often referred to his economic expertise, quoting support for his arguments from across the United Kingdom (letter, 28 August). He did refer to his constituency in a letter to party members: he mentioned his 'childhood growing up in Norwich and Nottingham' but qualified that with a brief reference to being 'at home in Yorkshire' (no date). David Miliband's emails stressed a national agenda. He referred to his constituency as part of a discussion of the Movement for Change (24 August) and his literature showed him standing on the beach at South Shields. Similarly, Ed Miliband's literature specified the range of backing he enjoyed and focused on a national programme (6 September).

In general, therefore, the campaign was fought around the national positions that Labour should emphasise in opposition, and leadership potential; only one candidate stressed his local base. Nevertheless, as developed below, support for those five could vary across Great Britain, consistent with hypotheses developed from the 'friends and neighbours' literature.

5. 'Friends and Neighbours' Hypotheses

Two candidates had stronger local roots than the other three, therefore, and one, Burnham, explicitly orientated his campaign to a regional agenda. Our working hypotheses, therefore, are that all candidates should have performed better than their average across all 632 constituencies in the

constituencies that they represented – a ‘friends’ effect’ – but also in those adjacent to their base as well as in the wider region where those constituencies are located – a ‘neighbours’ effect’. Such outcomes are consistent with the loyalty and informational reasons mapped out above but Burnham and, possibly, Abbott should benefit most from such ‘friends and neighbours’ support because of their stronger local roots.

The first of four further hypotheses applies to all 632 constituency parties: those which nominated one of the candidates (not all did) were likely to give that individual more support in the ensuing poll than CLPs which nominated other candidates – irrespective of the constituency’s location.

The final three hypotheses relate to a CLP’s links with its Parliamentary representative and therefore apply only to the 257 constituencies with a Labour MP in late 2010. There would have been considerable interaction between local party members and their MP regarding the election, with each perhaps seeking to influence the other on which candidate to support. Resulting from this, individual members of a CLP should give greater than average support:

- To the candidate ranked first by its local member in the MPs’ ballot – an ‘MP effect’; and
- To a candidate ranked first in their local MP’s voting where he/she also ranked none of the other candidates – an indication of very strong support for that candidate alone. (A further possible variable was whether the MP nominated the candidate. However, initial exploratory regressions showed that this was highly collinear with whether the local MP ranked the candidate first – most who did also nominated the candidate. All seven MPs who placed Abbott first in the ballot also nominated her, for example, as did 20 of the 23 who placed Burnham first, so this additional variable was not included in the models reported here.⁵)

Further, the CLP members would give less support than average:

- To a candidate who was not ranked by the local MP, a further indicator of a belief that he/she was not a strong candidate for the leadership.

6. The Pattern of Voting

Table 3 shows the first-preference voting percentages for each of the five candidates across the 632 CLPs, for all seats and then, separately, for those with and without a Labour MP. For each, the first block of data gives five parameters of the frequency distribution: for example, Abbott got between 0.0 and 20.6 per cent of first-preference votes, with a median of 6.8 per cent and an inter-quartile range (the central half of all seats within the distribution) of 4.2 (from 4.8 to 9.0). The second block gives the mean percentage, its standard deviation, and the associated coefficient of variation – an alternative index of the degree of variation (the standard deviation as a percentage of the mean).

These data indicate wide variations in support for all candidates – both those who gained the majority of the first preference votes between them (David and Ed Miliband) and the three with much smaller shares overall eliminated at the first three stages of the STV process (Pemberton and Wickham-Jones, 2013 give more details). Abbott and Balls had the smallest ranges but the coefficients of variation show that support for Burnham, who performed less well than Balls overall, varied much more. The smaller coefficients of variation for the two Milibands show that their support was relatively uniform across the country but there was nevertheless a 62-point difference

⁵ Abbott and Burnham got more nominations from MPs than first places in the ballot, undoubtedly because some MPs nominated them to ensure they met the threshold requirement to be a candidate rather than because they were their first choice as leader. Only three of the thirteen MPs who nominated Burnham but did not vote for him as first choice were from the Northwest. However, we understand there was a strong push amongst Northwest region Labour MPs to ensure there was a local candidate on the ballot, influencing some nominations.

in the highest and lowest percentage voting for David Miliband and nearly a 65-point difference for Ed Miliband.

When the constituencies are subdivided into those with and without Labour MPs, the same general patterns emerge: Burnham had the widest variation in support and the Milibands the least. But on average there was less variation in support for all five candidates in the non-Labour than Labour seats. Is this because of the absence of Labour MPs as potential influences on the voting patterns there – compared to the seats where their presence might have been influential?

Each candidate's highest percentage of the first preference votes came, not surprisingly, in their home constituency, although in only two cases was the difference between this and the next highest figure substantial. Ed Miliband got 71.3 per cent in Doncaster North, for example, and 54.6 per cent in distant Midlothian; Burnham got 69.1 per cent in Leigh and 50.0 per cent in nearby Liverpool Walton. For Abbott, Balls and David Miliband respectively, the gaps between the highest and next percentage were just 2.7, 4.1 and 4.9 points. Three candidates got the majority of the first preference votes in their home constituencies – David Miliband (79.6 per cent), Ed Miliband (71.3 per cent) and Burnham (69.1 per cent) – but Balls got only 41.7 per cent and Abbott just 20.6 per cent: Balls was the leading candidate in Morley and Outwood, with David and Ed Miliband getting 23 and 26 per cent respectively; the Milibands both outvoted Abbott in Hackney North and Stoke Newington.

In terms of the wider locality, Burnham's support was the most concentrated regionally: of the 20 constituencies where he performed best, only two were outside the Northwest region: Hull East and Bracknell. His Roman Catholic background may account for some of his support in southwest Lancashire, traditionally an English Catholic stronghold, as well as his strong performance in Northern Ireland where he came second to David Miliband.⁶ Nineteen of Burnham's CLP nominations also came from within his home region, a much higher figure than for any other candidate: Balls had 17 nominations, only three of them from Yorkshire CLPs – including his own seat and his wife's; of Abbott's 20 nominations, only four were from London CLPs – including her own seat and one of its neighbours; Ed Miliband got 151 nominations, including 13 from Yorkshire (including three CLPs in Leeds, which are closer to Balls' seat than to Miliband's); and 14 of David Miliband's 165 nominations were from CLPs in the Northeast.

Apart from Burnham, no candidates had a clear local base in the distributions of CLPs that gave them their highest share of the first preference votes. Apart from her own seat, only five other London constituencies were among Abbott's top twenty supporters – all either neighbouring or close to Hackney North and Stoke Newington. Just three other Yorkshire CLPs apart from Doncaster North were in Ed Miliband's top twenty – as against eight in Scotland – and only three Northeast CLPs other than South Shields were among David Miliband's leading supporters (including Sedgefield, Tony Blair's former constituency). Only one other Yorkshire CLP – neighbouring his own – was in Balls' top twenty; he performed well in Norwich North (getting 26.4 per cent of the first preferences – though only 15.2 per cent in Norwich South).

Table 4 provides further evidence on variations in support. The first block of data shows the number of CLPs that nominated each candidate, ranging from twenty for Diane Abbott to 165 for David Miliband. Abbott got most of her support from CLPs in seats that did not return a Labour MP in 2010, whereas the reverse was the case for Balls. Burnham and David Miliband won support equally from seats with and without Labour MPs; Ed Miliband got greater support from the latter than the former category.

⁶ The single Northern Ireland Labour party branch is not included in the regression analyses below.

Turning to the voting for the leadership by Labour MPs the first row in the second block of Table 4 shows that seven placed Abbott first, compared to 105 for David Miliband. Fifty-seven MPs ranked one candidate only, most of them favouring either David or Ed Miliband; none rated Burnham so highly relative to the others that all of the others were unplaced. Finally, the bottom row in that block of the table shows that many MPs excluded one or more of the candidates from their rankings: fully 150 did not place Abbott, for example, and 48 acted similarly with regard to David Miliband's candidacy – by not ranking him they indicated a strong negative opinion of him as a potential party leader.

7. Statistical Analysis

Table 5 reports regression models that explored the impact of the two groups of potential influences on each candidate's performance. The dependent variables were their percentage share of each CLP's first preference votes.⁷ Three sets of regressions were run: the first included all 632 constituencies; the second only those with Labour MPs; and the third those without a Labour MP.

For the all-seats analyses (the first block) the goodness-of-fit (R^2) values vary substantially, being very low for Abbott, moderately large for three of the other candidates (accounting for between one-quarter and one-third of the variation), and high for Burnham; almost two-thirds of the variation in his performance is accounted for, a substantial outcome for a model based entirely on between-group averages.

All candidates performed much better in their home constituency than in the average constituency where none of the other independent variables applied – the latter is shown by the constant values. For example, Burnham on average won 7 per cent of the first preference votes, but (*ceteris paribus*) an additional 40.8 per cent in his home constituency.⁸ Balls, on the other hand, gained an additional benefit of only 5.8 points compared to his all-constituency average of 10.6; his main gains came in the two constituencies where he was the only candidate ranked by the incumbent MP (his own and an adjacent seat – represented by his wife).

Both Balls – for the reason just enunciated – and Ed Miliband got no significant boost to their average performance in neighbouring constituencies and Balls was also the only candidate who failed to get above-average support across the wider region (Yorkshire, where Ed Miliband's constituency was also located). Burnham gained the largest boost in his home region – an average of 8.6 percentage points more first preferences across the whole of the Northwest region than

⁷ In many cases it is desirable to transform a percentage variable (usually to a logit form) before conducting regression analyses because these may 'predict' values outwith the range 0-100. That is unnecessary with the percentage data analysed here, however, because the independent variables are all binary; the regressions are the equivalent of analyses of variance, testing for significant differences between means and 'predicted' values outside the range 0-100 are extremely unlikely, if not impossible. (Inspection of the regression coefficients in Table 5 indicates that is certainly the case with these data.) Additionally, where the percentage data for a series of dependent variables sum to 100 (as here), the standard errors may be correlated and the statistical significance of the findings over-stated; an alternative procedure, such as seemingly-unrelated regression should then be deployed. The inter-correlations among the five dependent variables suggest no substantial problems, however. Just one correlation accounted for as much as one-third of the variation – the more votes David Miliband got the fewer for Ed Miliband – and none of the others accounted for more than 10 per cent of the variation. We have therefore used OLS regressions – whose output is much easier to interpret.

⁸ His actual percentage there was 69.1. In the regression equations part of this total is assigned to his region (there being collinearity between the two variables – his home constituency is necessarily in his home region – but the collinearity is not great as Leigh is just one of 75 in the constituencies in the Northwest region). Part, too, is assigned to the CLP Nominated variable, which is also slightly collinear with home constituency (all five candidates were nominated by their home CLPs).

elsewhere – although in relative terms, compared to her overall performance of 7 per cent shown by the constant value, Abbott gained a greater boost in London than either Miliband did in their regional bases. All five also performed better than average in seats where the CLP nominated them. Where there was strong local support for the candidate at the start of the contest that was carried through into the final voting five months later.

Turning to the final three variables relating to the local MP's vote,⁹ all but Abbott performed significantly better than average where they were placed first; Burnham was the major beneficiary of this support. Only Balls (as noted above) gained from significantly greater than average support in (the two) constituencies where he was the only ranked candidate. All but Abbott also performed significantly below average in seats where the local MP did not rank order them: where their local member thought the candidate not worthy of any support, local CLP members followed suit and gave them fewer votes than obtained elsewhere.

Table 5's second block of results refers to voting by those CLPs with a local MP with whom to discuss the candidates' merits. These regressions have a much better goodness-of-fit, with some R² values double those discussed above. Balls stands out again as different from the others, lacking significantly more support in constituencies neighbouring his own: he won 41.7 per cent of the first preferences in his home constituency and 37.6 per cent in neighbouring Normanton, Pontefract & Castleford, but over 30 per cent in only one other (Dudley North¹⁰) and his largest share in another Yorkshire constituency was 18 per cent, in Barnsley East. Neither Miliband got significantly more support in neighbouring constituencies to their own, with Burnham again getting the largest 'friends and neighbours' boost – in his home constituency, its neighbours, and the surrounding region. The Miliband brothers and Balls had relatively weak roots in their 'home' regions; basically they were not 'local candidates' and it showed.

Only one variable relating to the local MP's voting produced significant differences – for all five candidates. Where the local MP ranked the candidate first, he/she gained significantly more support from local party members.

Table 5's final block relates to the 374 seats with no Labour MP,¹¹ so only three independent variables are relevant – whether the seat was adjacent to the candidate's, whether it was in the same region, and whether the CLP nominated the candidate. Apart from Burnham, the R² coefficients are small; the pattern of voting was either largely random or reflected factors not identified in the model. The absence of a local MP suggests that no clear set of factors underpinned which candidates received much support from the majority of British Parliamentary constituencies (many of whose CLPs were relatively small compared to those with Labour MPs: Pemberton and Wickham-Jones, 2012), except that Burnham's explicitly regional campaign brought him clear benefits from CLPs without a Labour MP there.

⁹ In these analyses, a zero is entered for each of the final three variables in constituencies without a Labour MP – hence the further analyses splitting seats into those with and without a Labour MP.

¹⁰ The local CLP and MP (Ian Austin) both nominated him, and Austin placed him first in the MPs' ballot. Balls was nominated by eleven CLPs whose MP also supported him and went on to vote for him. Only three were in Yorkshire (one Balls', one Cooper's and Barnsley East, which does not border Normanton). By contrast, Burnham was nominated by a CLP whose MP also recommended him and went on to vote for him in 16 seats, 11 of which were in the Northwest. He also topped the ballot in eight of these, all in the Northwest.

¹¹ One constituency is omitted from the analyses. Barnsley Central was won by Labour at the 2010 general election but between then and the leadership contest voting its MP lost the Labour whip and did not vote then – hence there are 257 constituencies in the Labour seats only analyses and 374 in those of the 'other' seats, giving a total of 631 rather than the 632 that cover all of Great Britain.

8. Conclusions

An increasing body of research in British electoral behaviour shows that locally-varying factors – such as the amount candidates spend on their constituency campaigns, plus the number of potential supporters contacted by a party both before the official campaign begins and then again during that short period – influence how well a candidate performs, as also can a range of individual characteristics (both negative and positive). Uncovering the relative influence of such factors is not always straightforward in analyses using aggregate data because, as Gorecki and Marsh (2014) argue, of the likely correlation between any local effects and individuals' 'normal' voting behaviour (party choice, for example). This paper has avoided that possible complicating factor by studying the contest between five candidates for the Labour party leadership in 2010 in which their personal characteristics are paramount, as all of the voters are Labour party members. This allows us to make a substantial original contribution to appreciating the extent of local effects in the British context.

All five candidates in that intra-party contest, to a greater or lesser extent, got more support from members of CLPs in their home base, in its neighbouring constituencies, and in their wider 'home region' – with the effect diminishing with increasing distance; to varying degrees they gained greater than average support from their friends and neighbours. This was especially the case with one of the candidates – Andy Burnham – who specifically ran a geographical campaign focused on his home region;¹² in national terms he was an 'also ran' in the contest, but the strong regional focus of his campaign suggests the extent to which local support could be mobilised (although – following Gorecki and Marsh's argument – part of his strong regional effect may be a consequence of particular attitudes towards the Labour party there rather than his high-profile local campaign: it is always possible to over-emphasise localism effects where there are possible confounding factors). In addition, all five candidates performed better in constituencies with a Labour MP who supported their candidature. Again, geography mattered – but not very much in the majority of constituencies without Labour representation in the House of Commons, where, with one exception, the 'friends and neighbours' element to the voting pattern was much slighter.

All candidates benefited from a loyalty effect in their home constituency from their 'friends', therefore. Outside that, Burnham seems to have been most successful in generating a 'neighbours' effect' as well – a reflection both of his local roots and his campaign's orientation toward local identity, which both apparently yielded electoral dividends. The other four did little to focus their campaigns in their 'home areas', but gleaned above-average support in those constituencies whose MPs were among their supporters. Burnham drew on support from both friends and neighbours; the other four – all very much London-focused in their political careers – got much more from friends than from neighbours.

¹² Burnham stood for the leadership again after the 2015 general election defeat. An early analysis of the MPs who endorsed his candidacy (<http://labourlist.org/2015/06/whos-backing-who-and-who-did-endorsers-vote-to-be-leader-in-2010/> - accessed 4 June 2015) reveals that 21 of the 52 represented a Northwest constituency (almost all from the metropolitan counties of Greater Manchester and Merseyside): he gained support from only two of Labour's 45 Greater London MPs. Of the two other front-runners, 13 of Yvette Cooper's endorsements came from MPs who supported her husband, Ed Balls, at the previous contest; like him, she gained little support from within her 'home region' – Yorkshire and the Humber – with endorsements from only 5 of the region's MPs. Finally, Liz Kendall (who represented Leicester West in the East Midlands, and was only elected for the first time in 2010) had endorsements then from 32 MPs. Her 'home region' elected 13 other MPs in 2015 but she gained an endorsement from only one of them, as against eight from London – Burnham and Cooper together gained only 10.

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Table 1. Biographical information regarding the five candidates for the Labour party leadership in 2010

	Diane Abbott	Ed Balls	Andy Burnham	David Miliband	Ed Miliband
Birthplace	London	Norwich	Liverpool	London	London
Early Life	London	Nottingham	Warrington	London/ Leeds/ London	London/ Leeds/ London
Secondary School	Harrow Girls Grammar, London (Independent)	Nottingham High (Independent)	St Aelred's (RC) High, Newton-le-Willows (State)	Haverstock, London (State)	Haverstock, London (State)
University	Cambridge	Oxford/ Harvard	Cambridge	Oxford/ MIT	Oxford/ LSE
Pre-Parliamentary Career Location	London	London	London	London	London
Constituency	Hackney & Stoke Newington (London)	Morley & Outwood (Yorkshire)	Leigh (Northwest)	South Shields (Northeast)	Doncaster North (Yorkshire)

Table 2. The Labour leadership candidates' campaigns

	Diane Abbott	Ed Balls	Andy Burnham	David Miliband	Ed Miliband
Announcement of candidacy: format	Interview on <i>Today</i> programme	Meeting with local party members: in Netherfield, Notts.	<i>Daily Mirror</i> article/speech Manchester	House of Commons photocall	Doncaster North CLP meeting
Date of Announcement	20 May	19 May	20 May	12 May	14 May
Launch location	BSix Sixth Form College, Hackney	Sure Start Centre, Netherfield, Notts.	Leigh Sports Village, Leigh	Customs House, South Shields	Fabian Society conference, London
CLP launch location	Hackney & Stoke Newington	Gedling	Leigh	South Shields	Holborn & St Pancras
Launch date	28 May	19 May	26 May	17 May	15 May
Campaign base	London	London	Manchester	London	London

Source: Kelly et al., 2010; Channel 4 News (2010)

Table 3. The frequency distribution of the percentage of the constituency party members' first preference votes for each candidate.

	DA	EB	AB	DM	EM
<i>All seats</i>					
Minimum	0	1.0	0	17.5	8.1
Lower Quartile	4.8	7.7	5.2	38.7	24.6
Median	6.8	10.1	7.2	43.4	28.7
Upper Quartile	9.0	12.8	10.4	48.3	33.7
Maximum	20.6	41.7	69.1	79.6	71.3
Mean	7.1	10.8	8.8	43.6	29.4
Standard Deviation	2.9	4.4	6.3	7.9	7.1
Coefficient of variation	40.8	40.7	71.6	18.1	24.1
<i>Labour-held seats</i>					
Minimum	1.0	1.0	0.7	17.5	8.1
Lower Quartile	4.0	6.7	5.2	37.6	23.3
Median	6.0	8.9	7.3	43.4	28.8
Upper Quartile	8.2	11.7	10.9	49.0	34.9
Maximum	20.6	41.7	69.1	79.6	71.3
Mean	6.4	9.9	9.9	43.9	29.4
Standard Deviation	3.0	5.1	8.6	9.7	8.4
Coefficient of Variation	46.9	51.5	86.9	22.1	28.6
<i>Other seats</i>					
Minimum	0	3.6	0	25.6	14.5
Lower Quartile	5.5	8.7	5.3	39.2	25.2
Median	7.3	10.7	7.1	43.4	28.7
Upper Quartile	9.4	13.7	10.1	47.8	33.3
Maximum	17.9	26.4	25.3	62.5	51.3
Mean	7.5	11.3	8.1	43.5	29.3
Standard Deviation	2.8	3.7	3.9	6.4	6.1
Coefficient of Variation	37.3	32.7	48.1	14.7	20.8

DA – Diane Abbott; EB – Ed Balls; A B – Andy Burnham; DM – David Miliband; ED – Ed Miliband.

Table 4. Electoral support for the five candidates by CLPs and MPs.

	DA	EB	AB	DM	EM
Nominated by the CLP					
Labour-held seats	5	13	23	80	63
Other seats	15	4	21	85	88
All seats	20	17	44	165	151
MP choice					
Ranked First by MP	7	40	23	105	78
Sole Candidate Ranked by MP	2	2	0	31	22
Not Ranked by MP	150	94	112	48	54

DA – Diane Abbott; EB – Ed Balls; A B – Andy Burnham; DM – David Miliband; ED – Ed Miliband.

Table 5. Regression analyses of each candidate's percentage share of the first preference votes. (Significant regression coefficients at the 0.05 level or better are shown in bold, with their standard errors in parentheses.)

	Abbott	Balls	Burnham	D Miliband	E Miliband
<i>All seats (631)</i>					
Constant	7.0 (0.1)	10.6 (0.2)	7.0 (0.2)	41.6 (0.3)	27.5 (0.3)
Candidate's					
Seat	11.8 (4.0)	5.8 (5.4)	40.8 (4.0)	23.9 (7.0)	27.5 (6.2)
Neighbours	4.9 (1.5)	1.7 (1.7)	11.0 (1.9)	6.4 (3.7)	2.6 (2.6)
Region	1.5 (0.4)	-0.3 (0.5)	8.6 (0.5)	5.4 (0.7)	3.1 (0.9)
CLP Nominated	1.7 (0.7)	8.1 (0.7)	5.2 (0.6)	4.5 (0.7)	4.4 (0.7)
Local MP's Vote for Candidate					
First	1.4 (1.3)	3.0 (0.7)	7.5 (0.9)	4.1 (0.9)	5.4 (0.9)
Sole Rank	-2.9 (3.1)	14.4 (4.1)	* *	2.0 (1.5)	1.9 (1.5)
Not Ranked	-1.1 (0.3)	-2.3 (0.4)	0.2 (0.4)	-3.9 (1.0)	-2.9 (0.9)
R ²	0.12	0.32	0.63	0.26	0.27
<i>Labour seats only (257)</i>					
Constant	5.9 (0.3)	8.8 (0.3)	6.2 (0.4)	38.7 (0.7)	25.7 (0.6)
Candidate's					
Seat	10.5 (4.0)	7.3 (4.8)	39.8 (4.7)	22.9 (7.5)	30.4 (6.4)
Neighbours	4.2 (1.5)	3.2 (1.7)	9.8 (2.2)	5.9 (4.1)	3.8 (3.3)
Region	2.3 (0.5)	0.1 (0.7)	10.7 (0.8)	5.7 (1.7)	3.1 (1.3)
CLP Nominated	3.0 (1.5)	8.6 (1.1)	4.3 (1.3)	6.3 (1.1)	5.2 (1.0)
Local MP's Vote for Candidate					
First	2.1 (1.3)	4.7 (0.7)	8.1 (1.3)	6.0 (1.2)	6.9 (1.1)
Sole Rank	-3.2 (3.0)	1.23 (3.7)	* *	2.0 (1.6)	1.8 (1.6)
Not Ranked	0.2 (0.3)	-0.5 (0.4)	0.8 (0.6)	-1.2 (1.3)	-1.2 (1.0)
R ²	0.24	0.61	0.73	0.44	0.45
<i>Other seats (374)</i>					
Constant	7.4 (1.5)	11.3 (0.2)	7.3 (0.2)	42.7 (0.4)	28.3 (0.4)
Candidate's					
Neighbours	* *	-0.4 (3.8)	* *	* *	0.4 (4.4)
Region	0.8 (0.5)	-0.2 (0.8)	6.4 (0.6)	6.9 (3.1)	3.7 (1.3)
CLP Nominated	1.3 (0.7)	6.9 (1.9)	5.4 (0.7)	2.9 (0.8)	3.6 (0.7)
R ²	0.01	0.03	0.31	0.04	0.08

