Explaining support for the UK Independence Party at the 2009 European Parliament elections[1]

WORKING PAPER March 2011

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Abstract

The UK Independence Party (UKIP) achieved its best result in the 2009 European elections, beating the governing Labour Party into second place. Despite its recent success we still know relatively little about who votes for the party and how these supporters compare with those of UKIP's competitors. This paper analyses support for UKIP at the 2009 European elections first at the aggregate level, to understand the social and economic context in which the party performs best, and second at the individual level using a YouGov survey of over 32,000 voters, more than 4,000 of whom were UKIP supporters. We show that Euroscepticism is the biggest explanatory factor but that UKIP voters are also concerned about immigration and show dissatisfaction with and a lack of trust in the political system. Our findings add credence to the argument that views on European integration matter in voters' decisions at European elections and we show how the balance of attitudinal explanations of UKIP support makes its voters distinct from those voting for far right parties.

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Introduction

The UK Independence Party (UKIP) achieved its best ever result in the 2009 elections to the European Parliament, coming second and beating the governing Labour Party into third place. It won 16.5 per cent of the vote, a 0.3 point increase on its 2004 result, and saw 13 MEPs elected. As a 'hard' Eurosceptic party (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2008: 247-8) committed to withdrawal from the European Union (EU), UKIP has tapped into Eurosceptic sentiment in the British electorate and benefited from the unpopularity of the main parties.

The success of UKIP raises questions about the way in which voting at European contests has traditionally been understood, through the second-order elections model (Reif & Schmitt 1980) in which campaigns are based largely around national issues. An increasing amount of evidence suggests that attitudes to and party positions on European integration also have a part to play. Research on the 2004 and 1999 European contests shows that voters' attitudes to European integration affected the likelihood of switching support from one party to another compared with the previous national election, especially among more Eurosceptic voters (Hobolt *et al*. 2009). Intra-party divisions on European integration have been shown to reduce party support at European compared with national elections (Ferrara & Weishaupt 2004), and there is also evidence that parties with more extreme positions either for or against the EU do better at European compared with national contests (Hix & Marsh 2007). With its core policy of withdrawal from the EU, UKIP would appear to be well-placed to benefit from these effects, especially given the divisions within the Conservative and Labour parties on the issue.

We examine the political attitudes of UKIP supporters using a YouGov poll of over 32,000 voters carried out in the week before the European elections and which includes more than 4,000 self-declared UKIP supporters. Before doing so we analyse the social, demographic and geographical characteristics of UKIP's vote in the 2009 European elections at the local authority level, using data from the 2001 census. The next section provides a brief overview of the development of UKIP and its place in party competition on the right of the political spectrum in Britain. We then look at the limited work on explaining support for UKIP prior to 2009 before setting out our expectations about UKIP voters which are then tested using aggregate and individual-level data.

UKIP and party competition on the right

UKIP was formed in 1993 and has fielded candidates in general elections since 1997 and in European elections since 1994, with its first 3 MEPs elected in 1999. It was the third-placed party in the 2004 European election and second in 2009. General election performances have been much less impressive. Although it was the fourth-placed party in terms of nationwide share of the vote, UKIP polled only 3.1 per cent of the vote in 2010.

In common with many new or small parties, UKIP has suffered internal tensions, frequent changes of leadership and disputes about its direction (Abedi & Lundberg 2009; Usherwood 2008; Gardner 2006; Daniel 2005). The period between the 2004 and 2009 European elections brought a number of challenges. Robert Kilroy Silk, the charismatic star of UKIP's

2004 electoral surge, left the party after launching a failed leadership bid. Two MEPs, Ashley Moat and Tom Wise, were expelled from the party and subsequently jailed for fraud. In his first spell as leader (2006-9) Nigel Farage broadened UKIP's narrative by adopting a mix of centre-right (lower taxes), libertarian (opposition to identity cards) and authoritarian (a five-year freeze on immigration) policies.

The key parties with whom UKIP is in competition on the right of British politics are the centre-right Conservative Party and the far-right British National Party (BNP). UKIP is often crudely stereotyped as either the Eurosceptic Conservative right in exile or the 'BNP in blazers'. It has tried, not always successfully, to dissociate itself from the BNP and claims to be a libertarian, non-racist party (Farage 2010: 132). The UKIP leadership is highly critical of the Conservatives' 'soft' Eurosceptic position (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2008: 247-8) and urged Conservative supporters to 'lend us your votes' in 2009. But UKIP also offered not to field candidates in the 2010 general election if the Conservatives pledged to hold a referendum on EU membership in their first year in office. The Conservatives, meanwhile, have tended to dismiss UKIP, and attempted to lower the salience of the European issue. But the relative success of UKIP in 2009 suggests this strategy was not entirely successful. By examining the political attitudes of UKIP's supporters we can assess how much they were motivated by the party's core issue, hard Euroscepticism.

Understanding support for UKIP before 2009

Research on support for UKIP has been limited to date, in part because of the small numbers of UKIP voters in survey data. Nevertheless, a literature on support for smaller parties in the UK is beginning to develop due to the larger numbers of survey respondents in some data-sets including the YouGov European election study used in this paper and in other studies that stack data from monthly surveys. In particular use of these types of data has shed much light on support for the British National Party (BNP) (Ford and Goodwin 2010; Cutts *et al*. 2010) and includes research on support for UKIP at the individual level (Ford *et al*. 2011). In addition, aggregate analyses of UKIP support at previous EP and general elections have been carried out as part of larger studies. They show that UKIP has performed best in areas where there are large proportions of people aged over 65, fewer people with a degree and higher proportions of self-employed (Curtice *et al*. 2005). The party's best results have come in non-urban areas of southern England, especially coastal and rural areas (Curtice & Steed 2000: 249). These studies also examined the relationship between support for UKIP and other parties. In the 2004 European elections, UKIP did best in areas where the Conservatives had previously performed well (Curtice *et al*. 2005: 202).

In London, the BNP and UKIP draw support from a sub-set of voters with similar attitudes and characteristics (Borisyuk *et al*. 2007; John & Margetts 2009). Borisyuk *et al*. (2007) examined data aggregated at the ward level for the 2004 European elections in London. They found greater support for both parties where the proportion of UK-born residents was higher and lower support for both where educational attainment was higher, but UKIP drew support from more affluent areas than the BNP. Using opinion poll evidence from the 2004 EP and London elections, John and Margetts (2009) found the biggest correlation with people who 'like' UKIP was with those who 'like' the BNP. Some caution is required, however, because UKIP does worse in London than many English regions, and highlighted the issue of immigration there because the European elections coincided with those for the London Mayor and Assembly.

Explanations of the UKIP vote

When looking to existing literature for possible explanations of UKIP's support it is important to note the characteristics of the party in a comparative context. UKIP is unusual in that it was born solely from Euroscepticism and, although it has sought to move beyond being a single-issue party, hard Euroscepticism remains central to its ideology and identity. In most other cases of parties with a Eurosceptic stance, Euroscepticism is part of a set of ideological positions, or results from strategic decisions taken by the party leadership but is not these parties' *raison d'être*. Soft and, less frequently, hard Euroscepticism is emerging in several party families from communist and green to conservative, populist radical right, far right and agrarian. In the 2009 European elections, the Eurosceptic parties that made gains often came from the populist radical right – e.g. the Dutch Freedom Party or the True Finns – or the far right (e.g. the BNP). Another single-issue Eurosceptic party, the Referendum Party, emerged in Britain in the 1990s and won some support from ex-Conservative voters before disbanding after the death of Sir James Goldsmith (McAllister & Studlar 2000). Libertas, founded by Declan Ganley who led the 'no' campaign in the first Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, fielded candidates in 14 Member States in 2009, but saw only one candidate elected. Research on the Danish People's Movement against the EU and the June Movement – single-issue Eurosceptic groups whose key personnel often come from the centre-left – provides useful pointers for understanding UKIP's support (de Vreese & Tobiasen 2007).

Research on the populist radical right (Mudde 2007) and the radical or far right (Norris 2005) is also of some utility to understanding UKIP given its populist and anti-immigration messages, but is not readily applicable because UKIP does not belong to either party family. Examining public opinion on the EU offers another avenue, but 'high levels of public Euroscepticism do not necessarily translate into high levels of support for parties expressing hard Euroscepticism' (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2002: 32). The expectations set out below therefore draw on the research on support for UKIP in earlier contests, on support for non-mainstream parties on the right and on attitudes to European integration.

Social, demographic and geographic factors

UKIP has been most successful in southern England and parts of the Midlands, particularly in rural and coastal areas, but has performed less well in Scotland and in northern English cities. This pattern of support is similar to that of the Conservatives, but differs from that for the BNP which has performed better than UKIP in industrial northern England. UKIP's stronger than average performances in rural England may be due to negative views of the EU's Common Agricultural and Common Fisheries policies. McLaren's (2006: 40-3) analysis of support for European integration shows that voters most frequently perceive farmers to be among its losers. If this applies in the UK, then UKIP should do better in areas where higher proportions are employed in agriculture and fisheries.

Research on attitudes to the EU has found that younger voters are more likely to favour the integration process than others (McLaren 2006: 102-4; Clements 2009: 62). Aggregate analysis of UKIP's performance at the 2004 European elections showed the party performing better in areas with larger numbers of older people (Curtice *et al*. 2005: 196). So we would expect UKIP support to be higher among older than younger voters.

Class has become a less important predictor of support for mainstream parties. People in higher social grades are more favourable towards the EU, as are those with university degrees (Clements 2009: 67) so we may expect these groups to be less likely to support UKIP. But studies of the BNP have found that UKIP out-performs the far right party in more affluent areas (Borisyuk *et al*. 2007). We assess this by comparing support for UKIP with that of the BNP at the aggregate and individual levels.

Attitudinal explanations

UKIP performs significantly better in European than in general elections. The closed list system of proportional representation (PR) used for European elections makes it easier for a smaller party to win seats than does the simple plurality system used for Westminster elections. European elections are also widely regarded as second-order elections in which voters perceive there to be less at stake than in first-order contests that determine the composition of the national government (Reif & Schmitt 1980). Support for smaller parties is expected to be higher and that for governing parties lower than at first-order elections. The use of PR may mean that voters vote sincerely for UKIP in European elections, but are less likely to do so in contests conducted under simple plurality. The second-order model suggests, however, that some voters may make an insincere or protest vote for UKIP, a party that they would not normally support, in order to register a message of discontent (Marsh 1998).

A protest vote is a rejection of all mainstream parties, rather than a positive endorsement of the party that the elector opts for. He or she is registering discontent rather than voting to influence policy or express an ideological affiliation with a party. We would thus expect protest voters in European elections to exhibit high levels of dissatisfaction with the major parties and low levels of trust in the political system. But parties are not passive actors. UKIP has tried to bolster its support by exploiting and mobilising popular discontent with the major parties and the EU. Although not an exclusively populist party, UKIP has strong populist features, as do many other Eurosceptic parties (Taggart 2004). UKIP's anti-establishment narrative highlights the alleged gulf between the political elite and the people on issues such as European integration, immigration and climate change (Abedi & Lundberg 2009). In 2009, revelations about the expenses claimed by MPs provided an opportunity for anti-establishment parties to capitalize on low levels of trust in politicians. The MPs' expenses scandal increased the pool of potential protest voters and gave UKIP's populist rhetoric greater resonance. But it also shifted the agenda away from UKIP's core issue of Europe and exposed the party to criticism of the conduct of some of its MEPs. Nevertheless, we expect that support for UKIP will be higher among voters dissatisfied with mainstream parties and the political system.

UKIP was not the only party in the 2009 European elections in the UK advocating withdrawal from the EU, but the party's relative longevity and past electoral success established it as the main vehicle for hard Euroscepticism. UKIP's 2009 European elections campaign was built around a simple message, 'Say No to European Union'. For the BNP, immigration was the dominant issue and the Socialist Labour Party depicted the EU as a 'capitalist club'. The Conservatives demanded a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty and said that they 'would not let matters rest there' if it had been fully ratified before they entered office. But Europe did not figure prominently in the Conservatives' European campaign.

As noted earlier, recent research has cast doubt on the second-order elections model by showing that the issue of European integration goes some way to explaining the outcomes of European elections. Mainstream parties, particularly those in government, suffer defections among their Eurosceptic supporters, particularly if there is hostile media coverage of the EU during the campaign (Hobolt *et al.* 2009). Evidence from Denmark suggests that Eurosceptic attitudes help explain support for anti-integrationist movements and parties at European elections (de Vreese & Tobiasen 2007: 103). In the British case, Rallings and Thrasher (2005) show that UKIP benefits to some degree from split-ticket voting, performing better in European than in local elections when the two are held concurrently. Furthermore, research on national elections has shown that the more important the issue of Europe is to a party and the more extreme its position, the higher the extent of EU issue voting for that party (de Vries 2010). If EU issue voting is significant, we would expect UKIP supporters to regard Europe as an important political issue, to have strong Eurosceptic views and to use their vote in the European elections to express them.

Immigration has been an issue of concern to UKIP members and voters for some time, its supporters ranking it as the most important issue facing the country during the 2004 European elections campaign (John & Margetts 2009: 498). In 2009 UKIP proposed a five-year freeze on immigration and highlighted the issue in a party election broadcast. The policy was incorporated into the party's populist Eurosceptic narrative, with UKIP criticising the political elite for ignoring popular concerns about levels of immigration and claiming that the UK could not control immigration effectively while a member of the EU. We also know that in the Danish context, attitudes to immigration go some way to explaining support for Eurosceptic parties (de Vreese & Tobiasen 2007: 103). So we expect that UKIP support will be higher among voters concerned about immigration.

The development of a broader policy platform raises questions about party competition between UKIP and its closest ideological rivals. Previous research revealed that much of UKIP's support came from former Conservative voters (Curtice *et al.* 2005: 202). Conservative voters have become more Eurosceptic since the early 1990s whereas Labour voters have become more pro-European (Evans & Butt 2007). Labour had promised to hold a referendum on the EU Constitution but refused to hold one on the Lisbon Treaty. The 2009 European elections offered Labour voters an opportunity to express their dissatisfaction with their party's European policy and/or register a protest vote at a time when the Brown government was particularly unpopular. We thus expect that much, but by no means all, of UKIP's support in 2009 came from those on the centre right.

The supply of parties
UKIP's support may be affected not only by the demands of voters, based on their political attitudes, but also by the supply of parties taking a hard Eurosceptic or populist stance. UKIP was one of several parties advocating withdrawal from the EU at the 2009 European elections. Of the others adopting this position, the BNP, No2EU and the Socialist Labour Party stood in all regions of Great Britain. But three other parties, the English Democrats, Libertas and the United Kingdom First Party stood only in some regions. Given this variation we expect UKIP to perform less well when there is a higher supply of alternative parties advocating UK withdrawal from the EU. This is on the basis that UKIP's vote might be split among several parties taking this position. We test these contentions at the aggregate level in the next section.

Assessing support for UKIP at the 2009 European elections using aggregate data

UKIP's highest shares of the vote in the 2009 European elections came in South West England and the West Midlands. Its vote share fell by almost 10 percentage points in the East Midlands – a reflection of the effect of Kilroy Silk's candidacy in 2004. The party came fourth in Wales and won its first seat there, but slipped to fifth place in London and polled only 5 per cent of the vote in Scotland.

To discover the key characteristics of those geographical areas in which UKIP did best at the 2009 European elections, we look firstly at UKIP's support in relation to that for other parties using correlations of party vote shares (Table 1). Election results are measured at lower-tier council levels for England and parliamentary constituencies in Wales. They are taken from the House of Commons' Library Research Paper on the 2009 European Elections (House of Commons Library 2009). We find a positive correlation between UKIP and BNP support (0.15), albeit one which is considerably smaller than that found in earlier studies of London (Borisyuk *et al*. 2007). In line with previous research we find that UKIP does well in areas where the Conservatives also do well. The correlation between these two parties is the highest of the positive correlations with UKIP vote share. UKIP support is negatively correlated with that for Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens. BNP vote shares are positively correlated with those for Labour, as we would expect (Ford and Goodwin 2010).

[Table 1 about here]

To assess the effects of the socio-economic and demographic context on UKIP's vote share, we use a range of variables from the 2001 census at the local authority level,[2] as well as data on migration. We have included measures of age, social class (based on occupation type), employment profile, education, economic affluence (owner occupiers), deprivation (unemployment), ethnicity and minority religious affiliation. The data on migration are National Insurance number allocations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK in the financial year 2008-09.[3] Many of these variables are highly correlated with each other so we carried out a principal components factor analysis in an attempt to find the underlying structure of the data. The analysis generated four factors with an Eigenvalue of greater than one (see Table 2), which together account for 81 per cent of the variance in the demographic variables.

[Table 2 about here]

We label the first factor 'professionals', as the proportions of occupational groups 1-3 and of those having a degree or higher qualification load highly positively on this, whereas unemployment is strongly negative as are manufacturing and lower occupational groups. The second factor captures those we label 'economically deprived', comprising young people, those from ethnic minorities, migrants, Muslims and the unemployed. The variable measuring the proportion of owner-occupiers loads highly on factor three as does that measuring rates of self-employment. Along with a strong negative loading for those in the 18-24 age group, this factor represents those owning their own homes, and, most likely, small businesses, given the low loading of occupational categories 1-3 where those running large companies are represented. The fourth factor taps into rural characteristics and older populations with over-65s and agriculture and fisheries loading positively, and manufacturing negatively.

We also generated a variable measuring the number of political parties in each region, other than UKIP, the BNP, No2EU and the Socialist Labour Party (all of which stood in all the regions we analyse), that clearly favour withdrawal from the EU[4] to assess whether a greater supply of these parties reduces the support for UKIP.

To test the impact of these factors on the share of the vote won by UKIP, we carry out a regression analysis of vote share at local authority level. Our dependent variable violates some of the assumptions required for ordinary least squares (OLS) regression as it is bounded by 0 and 100, and because vote shares for parties in each unit are not independent of each other – a higher vote share for one party leads to a lower vote share for others. To overcome these problems, we use Tomz *et al*'s (2002) seemingly unrelated regression technique for assessing multiparty electoral data.[5] Using this approach, we transform the dependent variables such that they become unbounded. This is done by finding the natural log of each party's vote share as a ratio of that of the reference party (in our case UKIP). For instance, the ratio of Conservative to UKIP vote share would be calculated as follows:

$$\underline{\hspace{4cm}}$$

J-1 dependent variables are calculated, where J is the number of parties in the election. Vote shares for the following parties were used: Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, UKIP, Greens, the BNP and others. When interpreting the results, a negative coefficient indicates a positive relationship between UKIP's vote share and an independent variable. This is because the dependent variable measures the ratio of, for example, the Conservative vote to that of UKIP. As UKIP do better relative to the Conservatives (and the denominator in the equation gets bigger), the dependent variable becomes smaller. Tomz *et al*'s (2002: 68) technique addresses the problem of a lack of independence among the vote shares by using seemingly unrelated regression, an approach designed for a series of regressions in which the errors are correlated.

Results

Table 3 shows the results for those regressions that are of particular interest in this context, including comparisons between support for UKIP and that for the Conservatives, Labour and the BNP.[6]

[Table 3 about here]

The positive coefficients for the first three factors indicate that Conservatives do better than UKIP across a range of demographic characteristics. Regarding the age of voters UKIP have an advantage over the Labour and the BNP in areas where there are more rural and older voters. In terms of the class basis of UKIP support, where there are higher proportions of professionals (factor 1) and more owner occupiers (factor 3), UKIP does worse than the Conservatives but better than Labour and the BNP. This again ties in with the finding that UKIP performs better than the BNP in more affluent areas. Correspondingly, UKIP does less well than the BNP and Labour in areas with larger numbers of the economically deprived – young and unemployed people, those from ethnic minorities and migrants.[7] We also find evidence of the effect of the supply of Eurosceptic parties on UKIP's support. The party performs worse against the Conservatives when there are more hard Eurosceptic parties standing in a region. This suggests that a greater supply of parties taking this line has the

expected effect of spreading more thinly the votes of those wanting the UK to withdraw from the EU. We assess how well these findings hold up at the individual level in the next section where we are also able to test a wider range of predictors of UKIP support.

Analysing UKIP support at the individual level

We use the results of a large-scale survey conducted by YouGov in the week prior to the 2009 European elections in Great Britain to examine the factors associated with support for UKIP at the individual level. There were 32,268 respondents to the survey including, after weighting the data, 4,252 UKIP voters (Kellner 2009). Most previous surveys have produced very small numbers of respondents stating an intention to vote for UKIP, so the YouGov survey data offer the best opportunity so far to analyse the motivations of UKIP supporters at the individual level.

Two dependent variables are used. First, support for UKIP in the 2009 European election is compared with that for all other parties with a dichotomous variable which we analyse using binary logistic regression. Second, given our concern to understand how UKIP fares in comparison to other parties we use multinomial logistic regression with a categorical dependent variable measuring vote intention. This approach sheds more light on the dynamics of multi-party competition than a binary model (Whitten and Palmer 1996). It is also consistent with the approach to comparing party performance taken in our aggregate-level multivariate analysis.

Among our independent variables, dummies are included for each of the regions used in Great Britain for European elections, with London as the reference category. Age is measured in bands, with 18-24 as the reference category. Social class is measured according to occupation type with responses grouped into five categories. We also control for whether respondents are male or female.

Dissatisfaction with mainstream parties is measured using questions in which voters were asked for their views on the Conservatives and Labour. We use a dummy variable for respondents agreeing that 'the Conservative Party used to care about the concerns of people like me, but doesn't nowadays'. We do the same for an equivalent question about Labour. To assess levels of dissatisfaction with the political system more broadly, we use measures that tap into populist sentiments. We ran a principal components factor analysis on variables measuring trust in politicians and views on the differences between the main parties (see Appendix for questions and factor loadings). This produced one factor, which we label 'populism', on which higher scores indicate lower levels of trust in politicians and the main parties.

Eurosceptic attitudes are assessed with scores derived from a factor analysis of a batch of relevant questions on the benefits of membership and its effects (see the Appendix for questions and factor loadings). This produced a single factor on which higher values indicate greater Euroscepticism. We included dummy variables for respondents who cited 'Europe / the European Union' as among the most important issues facing the country and for a question in which respondents were asked whether immigration policies should be decided either by the EU as a whole or by each country on its own. The effect of reasons for voting in the European elections on support for UKIP is tested using a dummy variable for respondents

stating that they will vote to express their views 'on Britain's relations with the European Union'.

Attitudes to immigration are measured using scores from a factor analysis of relevant questions that ascertain views on the effects of immigration and whether it should be halted (see the Appendix for questions and factor loadings). A single factor emerged on which higher values indicate greater concern about immigration.

Finally, to assess the left-right location of UKIP voters we use a question asking respondents to place themselves on a scale from 1 (very left wing) to 7 (very right wing). Dummy variables for each position are included with 'very right-wing' as the reference category.

Results

Table 4 shows the results of the binary logistic regression and the multinomial logistic regression for comparisons between UKIP, the Conservatives, Labour and the BNP.[8] Considering first the results for regions in the binary model we find UKIP does better in the Midlands, South East and South West and worse in Scotland and the North East when compared with the reference category of London. The party does better in the South West than in London when compared with the Conservatives, Labour and the BNP. This makes sense given this is the region in which the party did best in 2009. The finding extends to the South East, where UKIP finished second, with the exception of comparison with the Conservatives.

[Table 4 about here]

Looking at the socio-demographic variables, we find that men are more likely to vote UKIP than women. This finding holds in the multinomial regressions when we compare UKIP with the Conservatives. By contrast, men are less likely to support UKIP than the BNP when other factors are taken into account. Evidently the effect of being female works more strongly on reducing the BNP vote than that for UKIP when the two are compared. In the binary model we find that age has no effect. But the multinomial analysis shows that age does matter when we compare UKIP with Conservative and BNP voters. Here older voters are more likely to support UKIP in line with our expectations. Our findings on the effects of being a professional in the multinomial regressions are partly consistent with those at the aggregate level – voters in these occupations are more likely to support UKIP when compared with Labour. We find statistically less certain evidence of the same relationship when UKIP is compared with the BNP, as the coefficient is significant only at the p<0.1 level (p=0.06). Beyond this there are no other effects of occupation. UKIP's support has a distinct class basis only insofar as it gains over Labour and the BNP among professionals.

As for attitudes to parties and the political system, we find perceptions that Labour and the Conservatives 'no longer care' are associated with a greater probability of supporting UKIP compared with the other parties in the binary model. The finding holds when comparing the probability of supporting UKIP over the Conservatives. In the comparison with Labour we find an effect only for those agreeing that Labour used to care but no longer does. But these variables have no statistically significant effect on the chances of choosing UKIP over the BNP. This is unsurprising given they measure attitudes to the two biggest parties. The results regarding populist sentiment – low levels of trust in MPs and a belief that there are few differences between the main parties – show that higher levels of agreement with these views

are associated with greater likelihood of voting UKIP. This applies in the binary model and in comparisons with the Conservatives and Labour in the multinomial regression. However, such is the strength of this variable in explaining support for the BNP that UKIP lose out to the far-right party on this set of attitudes.

Higher scores on our Euroscepticism factor are associated with a greater probability of voting UKIP in the binary model, and in comparison with the Conservatives, Labour and the BNP. Furthermore, citing 'Europe/the European Union' as one of the most important issues facing the country is also associated with a greater chance of voting UKIP in all the models except for the comparison with the BNP. A belief that immigration policy should be decided by each country rather than the EU is associated with a greater probability of supporting UKIP in the binary model, and in comparison with Labour and the Conservatives in the multinomial model. It has no statistically discernable effect when UKIP supporters are compared with those of the BNP.

Electors who intend to use their vote to express views on Britain's relations with the EU are more likely to support UKIP in all the models presented here. This finding challenges the second-order elections model by suggesting that those supporting UKIP were motivated by issues related not only to the first-order context (national elections) but also to the second-order arena (the EU).

The different measures of attitudes to immigration in the YouGov survey allow us to pick out those specific views on this issue that lead to support for UKIP. UKIP supporters clearly do care about immigration. It was their most frequently-chosen response for the most important issues facing the country, with 'Europe' fourth on the list – although UKIP voters were more likely to mention 'Europe' than supporters of other parties. In a multivariate context, support for the party is higher among voters concerned about immigration, as is clear from the positive coefficient in the binary regression for the immigration factor. But the coefficients for the same variable in the multinomial regression show that Labour and the BNP perform better than UKIP among those with anti-immigration attitudes on deportation, halting immigration, and its economic and other benefits. There is no statistically discernable difference between UKIP and the Conservatives on this variable. So while a concern with immigration goes some way to explaining UKIP's support, the party appears to lose out the BNP on this but gain over the Conservatives and Labour on the question of whether immigration policy should be made at the EU level. This suggests the party's policy of linking immigration to EU membership has struck a chord with some voters. These differences between UKIP supporters and others on immigration are supported by the survey's finding that around 62 per cent of UKIP supporters held a 'fairly negative' or 'very negative' view of the BNP.

[Figure 1 about here]

The measures of voters' position on the left-right scale produce interesting results. Figure 1 shows the distribution of voter self-placement for Conservative, UKIP and BNP supporters in the survey data. More than half of UKIP supporters place themselves either in the 'centre' or 'slightly right of centre', as do Conservatives. This supports our view that UKIP is a party of the centre right. However, UKIP also enjoys some support from those who place themselves 'slightly left of centre'. By contrast, support for the BNP is more spread over the categories from the centre to the far right. In our binary logistic regression we find, when taking other

factors into account, that UKIP voters are more likely to be anywhere from 'slightly left of centre' to 'fairly right-wing', in comparison with the base category of 'very right-wing'. When the extremes are pitted against each other, UKIP voters are more likely to be 'very right-wing' than 'very left-wing' – as we would expect if UKIP attracts greater support from those on the right than the left. The results of the multinomial regression show UKIP gaining over the BNP in the centre and those 'slightly right' or 'slightly left of centre' compared with voters who are 'very right-wing'. UKIP loses out to Labour on the left of the spectrum and gains on the centre right. These findings are consistent with UKIP doing well among voters on the centre right, but the party also performs better than the Conservatives among voters on the left suggesting, in line with the descriptive statistics, that UKIP support includes a left-of-centre element.

[Table 5 about here]

To look at the latter point in more detail and to get a sense of the size of the effects of political attitudes and social and demographic variables, we calculated the change in predicted probability of voting for UKIP when moving from the minimum to maximum value of our independent variables (Table 5), using the binary logistic regression model from Table 4.[9] This shows that political attitudes are much more important than social and geographical factors in driving support for UKIP. The Euroscepticism factor has the biggest effect with a move from the lowest to highest value increasing the chance of supporting UKIP by about 26 percentage points. Other political attitudes including voting to express views on Britain's relations with the EU and our populism factor have substantively significant effects. The results also point to the relative importance of location on the centre right and disillusion with the Conservative Party. Among the political location variables, being 'slightly right of centre' has the largest effect in comparison with being 'very right-wing'. In addition, the substantive effect of believing the Conservatives used to care but no longer do is larger than that for Labour.

Conclusions

Euroscepticism is central to UKIP's identity and electoral fortunes, being the main driver of support for the party at the 2009 European elections. UKIP voters are distinctive from those in other right-wing parties in that they tend to be older than Conservative and BNP voters, more likely to be male than those supporting the Conservatives and more likely to be female than those voting for the BNP. Their highly Eurosceptic attitudes, even when compared with the hard Eurosceptic BNP, and a concern about the level at which immigration policy is made add to this profile. The party draws support primarily from voters in the centre and on the centre right who wish to register their concerns about Britain's relationship with the EU. However, UKIP should not be dismissed as a single-issue party. The party leadership's efforts to broaden its policy platform and extend its appeal are both sensible and necessary, particularly given the lower salience of the EU issue in general elections. Their focus on immigration and populist anti-establishment narrative both resonate with UKIP supporters, who are concerned about immigration and, in many cases, dissatisfied with the Conservatives and dislike the BNP. But our analysis also suggests that UKIP could do more to tap into the support of female Eurosceptics and those younger voters who are dissatisfied with the mainstream parties.

Our findings add credence to the argument that views on European integration matter in voters' decisions at European elections, in contrast to the second-order model. Furthermore, the importance of attitudes to European integration and immigration in explaining UKIP's support has broad similarities with findings for the Danish Eurosceptic movements. But the far greater effects of Euroscepticism on support for UKIP compared with views on immigration make its supporters distinct from those voting for radical right and far right parties.

UKIP appears well-placed to benefit from potential dissatisfaction with the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government among centre-right voters, particularly at the 2014 European elections. The Conservatives' soft Eurosceptic policies were diluted in the coalition agreement, and dissent from Eurosceptic MPs and MEPs would make it difficult for the Conservatives to run an effective soft Eurosceptic campaign and mobilize its Eurosceptic supporters.

There is space in Britain's emerging multi-party system for a centre-right, populist Eurosceptic party such as UKIP. But in developing its policy platform beyond withdrawal from the EU, UKIP has to respond to the positions adopted by its rivals on the centre-right and the far-right. Under Nigel Farage, UKIP has adopted a number of policies discarded or rejected by the Conservatives in order to attract centre-right voters, but affording these a high profile may limit the party's appeal to those ex-Labour voters it attracted during Labour's years in office. In his brief spell as leader (2009-10), Lord Pearson of Rannoch, added a populist radical right element to UKIP's narrative by warning of Islamic extremism and proposing a ban on wearing the burqa in some public places. This may have appealed to those who feel strongly about immigration yet regard the BNP as political pariahs, but it risks contaminating the UKIP brand by associating it with far-right extremism, undermining the party's efforts to improve its image, and repelling those attracted to UKIP by its libertarianism. The extent to which UKIP is able to build on its current position and to take advantage of Eurosceptic voters unhappy with the coalition government's approach to the EU, must be the subject of further research.

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[1] This research is funded by a Leverhulme Research Project Grant (reference F/00 212/AD). We are grateful to Joe Twyman of YouGov for making the polling data available to us. Thanks also go to Elisabeth Carter, Ben Clements and Andrew Geddes for comments and suggestions. We are grateful to Gemma Loomes for her invaluable research assistance.

[2] Census data are available at www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/census2001.asp.

[3] These migration data are available at http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/niall/index.php?page=nino_allocation

[4] These parties are the English Democrats, Libertas and the United Kingdom First Party.

[5] The Tomz *et al*. technique was implemented in Stata using Clarify (Tomz *et al*. 2001; King *et al*. 2000). We ran a Breusch-Pagan test which showed evidence against the null hypothesis of constant variance in the residuals following a standard OLS regression of UKIP vote shares. This provides further justification for using seemingly unrelated rather than ordinary least squares regressions with these data.

[6] Results of the other regressions are available from the authors on request.

[7] Migration is, however, a contributory factor in support for UKIP in some rural areas of Lincolnshire and eastern England that have with high proportions of migrant workers (e.g. Boston). But these constituencies also often have relatively high numbers of agricultural workers and elderly voters, and fewer professionals.

[8] Results for comparisons with other parties in the multinomial logistic regression are available from the authors on request.

[9] Predicted probabilities were calculated using SPost (Long & Freese 2005) for variables that were significant in the model. They are based on a male voter, aged 55-64, residing in the South West region, with other variables set to their mean or, for categorical variables, modal value.

Table 1 Correlations between party vote shares at the 2009 European elections in England and Wales

	UKIP vote	BNP vote	Conservative vote
BNP vote	0.15***	-	-
Conservative vote	0.35***	-0.38***	-
Labour vote	-0.56***	0.45***	-0.77***
Lib Dem vote	-0.15***	-0.41***	0.06
Green vote	-0.24***	-0.55***	0.14***

*** $p < 0.01$

Table 2 Factor analysis of social and demographic variables

Variable	Factor 1 Professionals	Factor 2 Economically deprived	Factor 3 Owner occupiers	Factor 4 Rural and older
Age 18-24	0.19	**0.37**	**-0.56**	-0.32
Age 65+	-0.21	**-0.42**	0.10	**0.70**
Occupational groups 1-3	**0.97**	0.11	0.10	-0.09
Occupational groups 4-7	**-0.78**	-0.11	0.03	0.34
Occupational groups 8-9	**-0.90**	-0.08	-0.17	-0.11
Degree or above	**0.94**	0.22	-0.10	-0.04
Owner-occupier	0.02	-0.14	**0.92**	-0.04
Unemployed	**-0.37**	**0.57**	**-0.52**	-0.15
Non-white	0.22	**0.92**	-0.09	-0.17
Muslim	0.08	**0.89**	-0.06	-0.17
Migration	0.25	**0.87**	-0.19	-0.05
Self-employed	**0.47**	-0.05	**0.60**	**0.53**
Agriculture and fishing	-0.06	-0.26	0.06	**0.79**
Manufacturing	**-0.68**	-0.25	0.12	**-0.44**

Notes: based on a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. Loadings above 0.35 are highlighted in bold.
Occupational groups 1-3 cover managers, senior officials, professional occupations and associate professional and technical occupations.
Occupational groups 4-7 include administrative, skilled trades, personal and customer services.
Occupational groups 8-9 cover plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations.

Table 3 Explaining UKIP vote shares at the local authority level in England at the 2009 European Parliament elections (seemingly unrelated regressions)

	Conservative: UKIP ratio		Labour: UKIP ratio		BNP: UKIP ratio	
Professionals	0.26***	(0.01)	-0.08***	(0.02)	-0.22***	(0.02)
Economically deprived	0.12***	(0.01)	0.40***	(0.02)	0.14***	(0.02)
Owner occupiers	0.09***	(0.02)	-0.45***	(0.03)	-0.14***	(0.03)
Rural and older	-0.02	(0.01)	-0.38***	(0.02)	-0.28***	(0.02)
Number of other hard Eurosceptic parties	0.06**	(0.02)	-0.16***	(0.05)	-0.03	(0.04)
Constant	0.12	(0.13)	0.53**	(0.27)	-0.93***	(0.21)
R^2	0.64		0.76		0.62	
n=325						

Note columns show regression coefficients with standard errors in brackets.

*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Table 4 Models of support for UKIP: binary and multinomial logistic regressions

	Binary logistic regression	Multinomial logistic regression		
	UKIP/all others	UKIP/Con	UKIP/Lab	UKIP/BNP
Region (reference: London)				
North East	-0.34**	-0.31	-1.22***	-0.20
North West	0.04	0.33***	-0.67***	-0.03
Yorkshire	0.14	0.36***	-0.26	0.02
East Midlands	0.23**	0.21	-0.18	0.21
West Midlands	0.25**	0.43***	-0.08	0.15
East of England	0.15	0.12	-0.01	0.33
South East	0.22**	0.16	0.37**	0.64***
South West	0.35***	0.41***	0.42***	0.59***
Wales	-0.23	0.00	-0.75***	0.25
Scotland	-0.96***	-0.21	-1.45***	-0.03
Male	0.29***	0.43***	0.12	-0.26**
Age (reference: 18-24)				
Age 65 or above	0.25	0.45**	-0.18	0.90***
Age 55-64	0.27	0.55***	-0.06	0.51
Age 45-54	0.24	0.50***	-0.08	0.33
Age 35-44	0.16	0.34	-0.01	0.10
Age 25-34	0.04	0.08	-0.14	0.13
Occupation (reference: semi or unskilled manual)				
Professional or manager	0.04	-0.13	0.41***	0.25
Clerical or sales	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.13
Skilled manual or supervisor	0.05	0.01	-0.04	-0.06
Dissatisfaction with political system and parties				
Populism factor	0.29***	0.63***	0.64***	-0.45***
Conservatives used to care but don't any more	0.49***	1.38***	0.16	0.01
Labour used to care but don't any more	0.32***	0.19***	1.78***	0.15
Euroscepticism				
Euroscepticism factor	0.92***	0.71***	1.36***	0.62***
Immigration should be decided by each country	0.57***	0.35**	0.63***	0.03
Most important issues: Europe/the EU	0.48***	0.55***	1.11***	-0.15
Voting to express views on Britain's relations with EU	1.11***	1.22***	0.89***	1.34***
Immigration factor	0.11***	0.00	-0.12**	-1.24***
Political position (reference: very right-wing)				
Very left-wing	-0.64**	0.51	-1.52***	-0.74**
Fairly left-wing	-0.17	1.84***	-1.05***	0.13
Slightly left of centre	0.25**	1.61***	-0.45***	0.58***
Centre	0.17**	0.22**	0.19	0.66***
Slightly right of centre	0.53***	-0.07	1.79***	0.64***
Fairly right-wing	0.45***	-0.09	1.84***	-0.04
Constant	-4.23***	-3.06***	-2.32***	0.75
N	23,017	23,017		
Wald χ^2 test	2795.49***	7833.42***		

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Table 5 Changes in predicted probabilities of voting for UKIP

Region (reference: London)	
North East	-2.0
East Midlands	1.7
West Midlands	1.8
South East	1.6
South West	2.0
Scotland	-4.3
Male	1.7
Dissatisfaction with political system and parties	
Populism factor	8.4
Conservatives used to care but not any more	4.0
Labour used to care but not any more	2.5
Euroscepticism	
Euroscepticism factor	25.5
Immigration decided by each country	3.0
Europe/the EU most important issue	3.9
Voting to express views on Britain's relations with EU	11.7
Immigration factor	2.5
Political position (reference: very right-wing)	
Very left-wing	-3.2
Slightly left of centre	1.8
Centre	1.0
Slightly right of centre	4.4
Fairly right-wing	3.6

Figure 1: Voters for UKIP, the Conservatives and BNP on the left-right spectrum
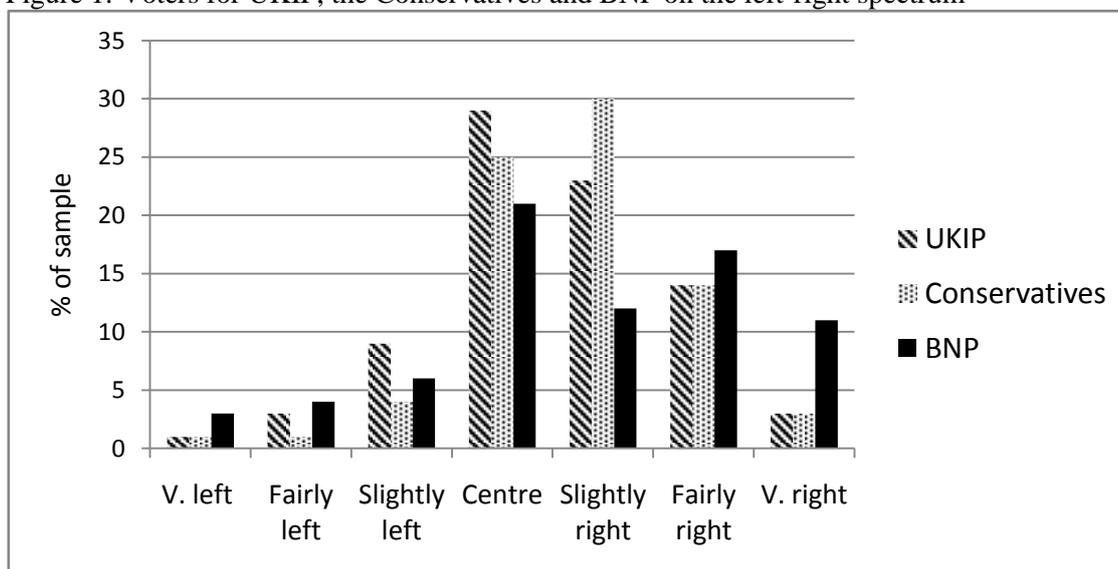
Appendix

Variable loadings on 'populism' factor

How much do you trust each of the following to tell the truth? Your local MP (1=trust a great deal, 4=do not trust at all)	0.75
There is no real difference these days between Britain's three main parties (1=disagree strongly, 5=agree strongly)	0.63
Most British politicians are personally corrupt (1=disagree strongly, 5=agree strongly)	0.80

Variable loadings on 'Euroscepticism' factor

The UK should withdraw completely from the European Union (1=disagree strongly, 5=agree strongly)	0.90
The existence of the EU promotes prosperity throughout Europe (1=agree strongly, 5=disagree strongly)	0.88
A great majority of the important decisions that affect our daily life are taken by the European Union, not by Britain's parliaments, assemblies or councils (1=completely untrue, 3=completely true)	0.75

Variable loadings on 'immigration' factor

Britain has benefited from the arrival in recent decades of people from many different countries and cultures	0.88
All further immigration to the UK should be halted (1=disagree strongly, 5=agree strongly)	0.87
Immigration in recent years has helped Britain's economy grow faster than it would have done (1=agree strongly, 5=disagree strongly)	0.86
The Government should encourage immigrants and their families to leave Britain (1=disagree strongly, 5=agree strongly)	0.82

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