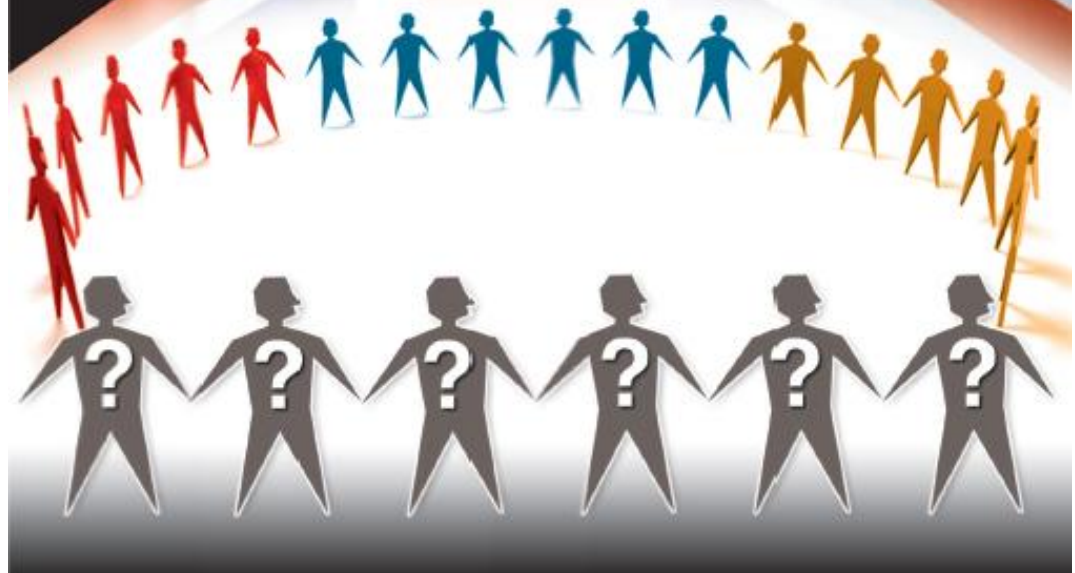


politically **angry** immigration focus
economically **neglected** cultural
culturally **traditional** political
immigration focused economic



About Nothing British

Nothing British was founded by James Bethell and Tim Montgomerie in March 2009 to help protect Britain's qualities of freedom, tolerance and fairness from the forces of extremism and racism sweeping Europe, represented by the British National Party, its surrogates and other neo-fascist splinter groups.

Our approach is to try to understand the causes of the anger and frustration which leads reasonable people to the popular nationalism that introduces intolerant and confrontational attitudes into the fabric of British society.

Through our news service at nothingbritish.com, seminars and publications, Nothing British seeks to analyse the policy failures that have led to these decisions and advocates brave solutions that sometimes challenge the liberal Establishment's orthodoxy.

And through our campaigning we oppose the BNP by appealing to Britain's inherently benign values and by mobilising traditional British institutions respected by the vast majority of this country.

James Bethell

James Bethell is Director of Nothing British.

James has worked as a journalist at The Sunday Times, was managing director of the Ministry of Sound and is currently Director of Westbourne, the communications company.

We would like to acknowledge Richard Smith who was responsible for both the original idea, the background thinking and financial support for this report.

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Key findings:-

1. Popular nationalism is a growing feature of British politics, taking voters from both Labour and Conservatives in significant measures, and threatening to undermine social cohesion.
2. Most voters supporting popular nationalist parties and attitudes do not consider themselves as extremists and would prefer to be engaged in the mainstream parties, if only they spoke to them about their issues.
3. The unequal effects of globalisation and the impact of government cuts have put concepts of “fairness” at the heart of British politics. Immigration is the pre-eminent issue that motivates these voters.
4. Whilst voters distrust politicians’ motives for raising the immigration issue, mainstream parties cannot continue to ignore the subject if they want to bring these voters back to the mainstream.
5. They must seek ways of addressing the issue with sensitivity, so as not feed those promoting prejudice, and plausibility. There are significant political opportunities for the party that achieves this.
6. Contrary to historic stereotypes, most (though not all) ANTIIs have become comfortable talking about immigration as a practical issue that affects their life, not as a surrogate for racial or religious prejudice.

1. Executive summary – the “ANTIs”

Popular nationalism is on the march in Europe. It is visible on the Continent through the electoral success of overtly nationalist parties like Germany's *National Democratic Party*, Sweden's *Democrats*, Italy's *Northern League*, France's *Front National*, Holland's *Freedom Party*, Norway's *Progress Party* and Switzerland's *People's Party*. This trend is frequently explained by the dislocating effects of economic globalisation, unprecedented levels of internal and external immigration, and the crisis of modern politics.

Less visible, but equally worrying, is the steady entrenchment of a similar style of popular nationalism in British politics. It is in part represented in the growing share of vote for the extreme British National Party (BNP) and the far more moderate (and respectable) UK Independence Party (UKIP): combined, they got 5% of the vote in the 2010 General Election and 23% in 2009's European election.

But it is also found in the hardening attitudes of a wider section of society, many of whom have given up voting. Nothing British conducted polling and focus group research to define the characteristics of a group of voters which can be described as the “ANTIs”:-

Politically angry. Suspicious of the modern political culture, dismissive of current political leaders, and furious that the system creates unfairness, particular in the distribution of jobs and welfare. The expenses scandal confirmed, rather than formed, their feelings.

Economically neglected. Deeply pessimistic about future economic prospects for themselves and their families, and fearful about their precarious social position. Many have seen their jobs transferred off-shore or taken by better-trained, harder-working immigrants.

Socially traditional. Uncomfortable with metropolitan cultural liberalism, proud of Britain's heritage and concerned that our national identity has been diluted.

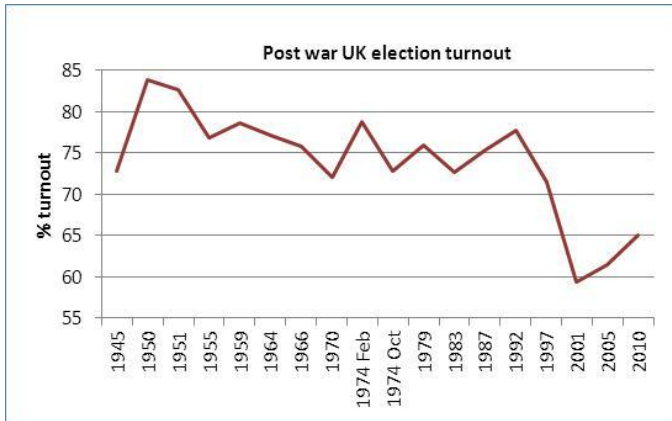
Immigration focused. This issue encapsulates the practical hardships they face with employment and welfare, the sense of betrayal by the political classes (particularly the Labour government), and their fears for Britain's changing culture.

What can mainstream politicians do to bring these voters back?

Our research suggested these voters are not stereotypical racists – a minority exhibited political views based on race or religion, but most lived and worked contently in mixed conditions. Nor are they irretrievably captured by parties like UKIP and BNP. Their votes should be in play. But their suspicions of the political class are so entrenched that they cannot be bought by hollow promises, a change of tone or by “talking about” key issues.

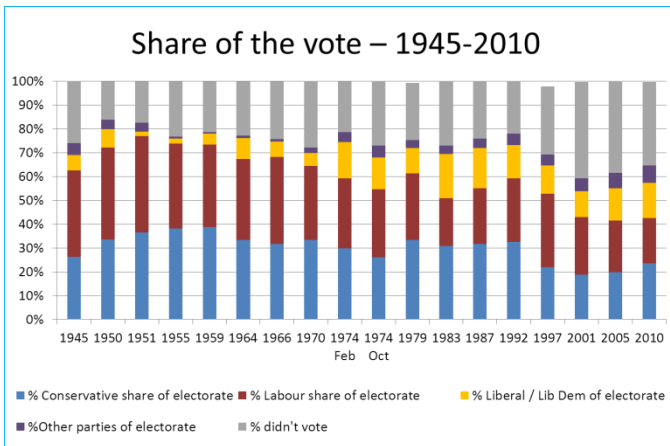
The challenge to Britain's mainstream politicians is to deliver results in the key areas. An immigration system that people feel confident about. A welfare system that is tangibly fair. And decent jobs for people who have been left behind by globalisation.

A party that can deliver plausible promises will re-write the electoral map. The alternative is the further growth of popular nationalist politics, poisoning the British debate.



Source: BBC election archive.

Between 1945 and 1992 turnout in UK general elections fluctuated around 77% - dropping to as low as 72% in 1970 and reaching as high as 83.9% in 1950. Since 1992 however, turnout has dropped to historically unseen levels, hitting a trough of 59.4% in 2001 and only mildly recovering to 65.5% in 2010.¹



Source: BBC election archive

2. Project objective

One of the defining characteristics of modern British politics is the fracturing of the hold that the main parties have over the electorate. Votes for the main three parties have dropped as people turn towards fringe parties or stop voting altogether (see chart opposite).

There has been a growth in anger and apathy in British politics. Politics looks very different to how it did twenty years ago. But despite this, and despite the prospect of this anger and apathy increasing, we know relatively little about who has dropped out of mainstream politics and why. While there has been a great deal of speculation, and some considerable quality analysis, no one has gone direct to source and asked people why they drifted away.

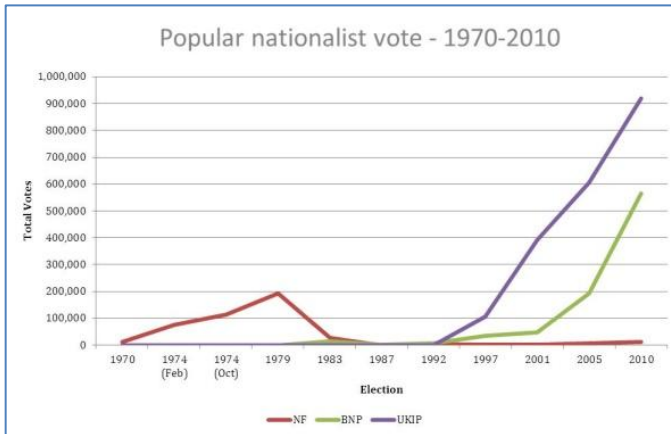
Nothing British, the independent campaign against the BNP, was founded back in 2009 to try to work out why people were drifting away from mainstream politics generally and to the BNP specifically. In this short document we look at the scale of the breakdown in mainstream politics and the reasons why people have drifted towards fringe parties. In doing so we focus on the motivations behind BNP and UKIP voters' decisions.

Some may wonder why we have examined BNP and UKIP voters together. We do so only because these are the two most important non-mainstream parties in England. To be clear, we do not view them as being one and the same. While all parties have their eccentric representatives and unpleasant supporters, we view UKIP as being a wholly credible and respectable organisation. The BNP on the other hand is an unpleasant and racist party which we hope to see defeated wherever it fights elections.

That said, there is no getting away from the fact that people are driven to support both UKIP and the BNP because they are angry with the state of mainstream politics and the choices that are available to them. While the parties are different, and while their voters are different, they have anger and frustration in common.

This project was driven by one question above all: what do fringe party voters actually think? We conducted a major opinion research project to find this out. This came in two parts:

- (a) a poll of BNP and UKIP voters with a separate nationally representative sample to allow us to compare and contrast their answers;
- (b) a set of 10 focus groups across the country with a mix of mainstream and non-mainstream voters as well as those who do not vote.



Source: “Explaining the rise of popular nationalism” – Chatham House presentation – Dr Matthew Goodwin.

Popular nationalist vote in European Elections, 1994-2009				
European Parliament	UKIP	BNP/NF	Total	Seats
1994	150,251 (1.0%)	12,469 (0.1%)	162,720 (1.1%)	0
1999	696,057 (7.0%)	102,647 (1.13%)	798,704 (8.13%)	3
2004	2,650,768 (16.1%)	808,200 (4.9%)	3,458,968 (21.0%)	12
2009	2,498,226 (16.5%)	943,598 (6.2%)	3,441,824 (22.7%)	15

Source: BBC Election Archive

3. The emergence of Britain's popular nationalist voting block

Between 1992 and 2010 the Conservatives lost 3.3 million votes or a 9% share of the total electorate. There are a variety of explanations for where these votes have gone. Some, no doubt, switched either to Labour, the Liberal Democrats or UKIP. Some people stopped voting altogether. Probably the biggest decline is due to the deaths of elderly Conservative voters, have failed to be fully replaced by a new young cohort.

At the same time Labour went from 11.5 million in 1992 to 13.5 million votes in 1997, but by 2010 had fallen back down to 8.6 million, a sum loss of 3 million votes or an 8% loss of share in the electorate. Across that time the Lib Dems only increased their share of the electorate from 13.8% to 15%.

Over the same period – 1992 to 2010 – when turnout was dropping, the number of people voting for fringe parties increased significantly. Between 1992 and 2010, UKIP gained a 2% share or 920,000 votes and the BNP a 1.2 % share and 560,000 votes.

Of the minor parties, the most impressive performance in 2010 was that of UKIP, according to commentators like Professor John Curtice.¹

On average UKIP secured 2.5 per cent of the vote in the 557 seats it fought. At the same time, although Nick Griffin failed to win a seat in Barking, overall the BNP also had its most successful general election ever. The party fought a record 336 seats, over 200 more than in 2005. Although, at 3.8 per cent, its average vote share was down on the equivalent figure for 2005 (4.3 per cent), the party's average vote in those seats it had also fought in 2005 was 5.3 per cent, an increase on its performance five years previously.

In other words, the outcome of the 2010 election constitutes clear evidence of this longer-term trend towards a more fractured electorate, and the emergence of a solid popular nationalist voting block.

Academics attribute the rise of popular extremism to one of, or a mixture of, three models:-²

Losers of modernisation. The dislocating effects of globalisation creating feelings of insecurity, alienation and resentment amongst vulnerable groups.

Ethnic threat. The combination of value conflicts and economic competition between newly settled communities and native populations.

Mainstream party convergence. The loss of ideological competition and avoidance of divisive issues creating sense of disenfranchisement amongst sections of the public.

But the qualitative and quantitative evidence of voter attitudes is in short supply.

¹ "The New Politics? 2010 General Election in retrospect" – Political Insight.

² "Explaining the rise of popular nationalism" – Chatham House presentation - Dr Matthew Goodwin.

4. Methodology

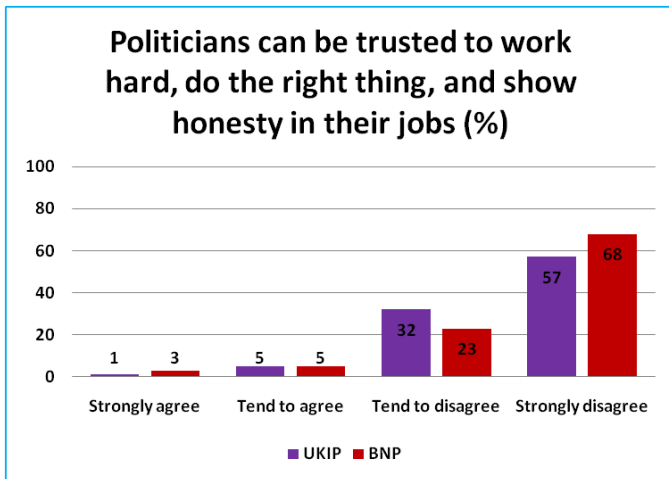
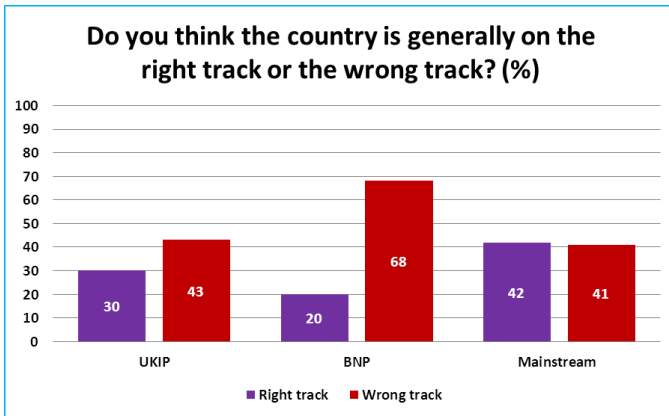
Nothing British ran an extensive opinion research programme to probe the attitudes of people who had drifted away from mainstream politics, either by choosing to vote for one of the fringe parties or by choosing not to vote at all. In order to give us the best possible feel for the motivations of these people, we conducted both quantitative and qualitative research.

4.1 *Quantitative research*

The quantitative research came in the form of a major poll with YouGov, conducted at the end of September 2010. The poll sample was split in two. Firstly, we polled a sample of 1,000 people who vote either for UKIP or the BNP. Secondly, in order to get a better sense of the differences and similarities between these voters and those currently voting for mainstream parties, we polled a second, nationally representative sample of 2,000 voters to test their general attitudes to politics and to those issues that the non-mainstream voters find most interesting. The full tables of the poll are available with www.nothingbritish.com.

4.2 *Qualitative research*

The qualitative research came in the form of 10 focus groups, held across the country over the summer. We held two groups of BNP voters in Rotherham, and two groups of UKIP voters in Staines (part of the heavily-UKIP-supporting Spelthorne constituency). We also held two groups of non-voters in work in Stoke and two of non-voters who do not work and who rely on benefits in London. Finally, in order to compare these groups' views with the mainstream, we held two groups of voters who vote for one of the three main parties, in the mainstream constituency of North West Leicestershire.



5. Politically angry

If you could sum it up BNP and UKIP voters in one word, it would be “angry”.

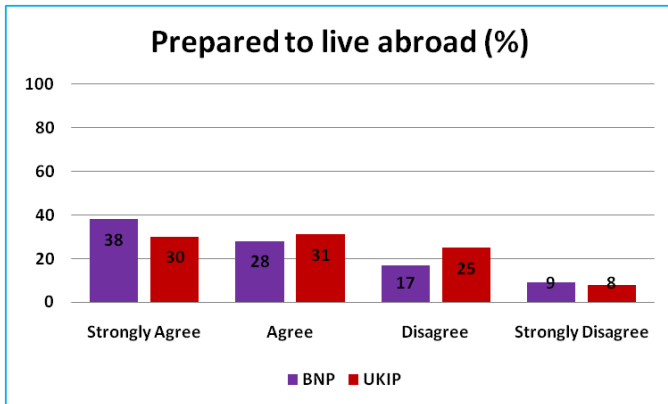
In our poll of these voters, and in the focus groups that gave us the chance to hold more detailed conversations with them, we found that these fringe party voters were often *intensely* political. They did not care about party politics in the way that MPs and journalists do, but they thought hard and knew a lot about the issues they cared about and which affected them.

Of all the people we spoke to across the country in our research, the UKIP and BNP voters were some of the best informed in the sense that they read newspapers – reading both the news stories and the columnists – and followed the news closely on TV and radio. Unlike the non-voters, who got annoyed enough to really engage on politics only when you pushed them, the BNP and UKIP voters had a “world view” which came out immediately without being asked.

This anger came out throughout the poll we conducted, and was reflected in part by their pessimism about the future of Britain. For example, while mainstream voters were pretty evenly divided as to whether they thought Britain was on the right or wrong track, BNP voters thought Britain was on the wrong track by 68-20 percent, and UKIP voters by 43-40 per cent.

Another defining characteristic about these fringe voters is, inevitably, a complete loss of trust in the political process. By 90-7 per cent, they disagree with the statement that “British politicians can be trusted to work hard, do the right thing, and show honesty in their jobs”.

That said, our focus group research showed that there was no sense in which the expenses scandal specifically had made an impact on people’s decision to vote for these fringe parties. When asked if expenses made them more likely to vote BNP or UKIP – who had made a great deal of this issue (remember UKIP’s “sod the lot” poster) – they said no. The collapse in trust in the political class had occurred long before and was caused by being let down on *policy issues* – things like rising immigration, perceptions about rising crime, and a sense that Britain was losing power to bodies like the EU.



6. Economically neglected

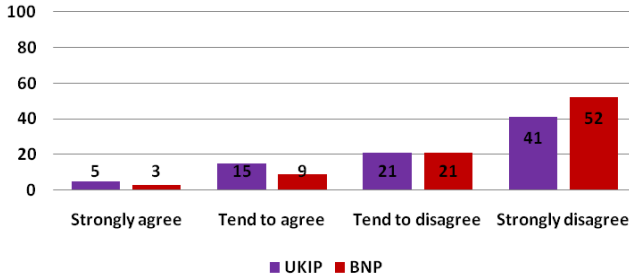
As we saw previously, BNP and UKIP voters are more pessimistic about the future of the country. Many of these voters are so depressed with the state of Britain that they would consider emigrating if they were able to. While there is clearly a big gap between saying that you would like to emigrate if you could and actually doing so, by 61-33, UKIP voters agreed with the statement that "I have lost faith in Britain and would like to live abroad." BNP voters agreed by 66-26 per cent.

This pessimism about the state of the country was also a major feature of the focus groups, other than the mainstream groups. A number of younger people in the BNP and UKIP groups said they were actively looking into the possibility of moving abroad, or that their parents were encouraging them to go. A number of older voters said they regretted not taking the chance to go when they were younger.

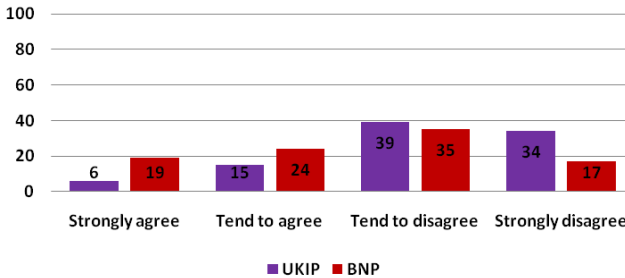
While many BNP and UKIP voters were concerned about the future of Britain as a country – its country and heritage – much of their pessimism about Britain was a feeling that they did not have much of an economic future. In other words they did not feel secure in their jobs or confident that they would earn good money in the longer term. This was particularly strongly felt in the BNP focus groups in Rotherham, where many people talked specifically and in detail about how they had seen their wages drop because of immigration (a number worked in the construction industry), but was also a feature in the UKIP groups too.

Many of these voters clearly feel powerless in the face of globalisation, seeing only the negative effects it has on their lives.

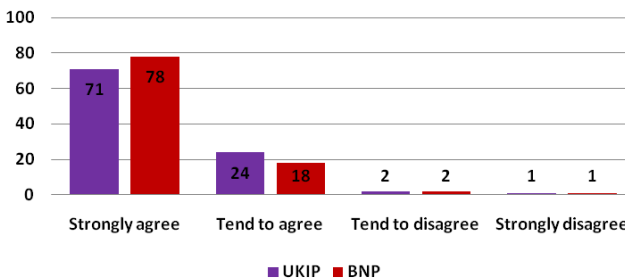
The Government should do more to recognise gay marriage



People of different races shouldn't live together (%)



Standards of behaviour have declined in the last decade



7. Socially traditional

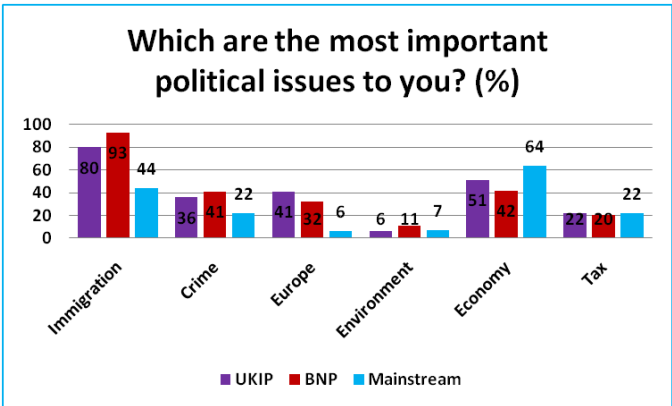
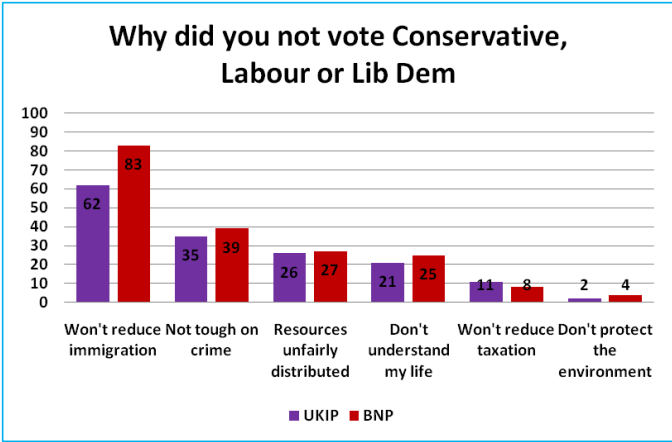
Perhaps unsurprisingly, another strong feature about these fringe voters is that they are also more socially conservative than mainstream voters.

For example, by 74-22 per cent, UKIP and BNP voters agree that “standards of behaviour in Britain have declined in the last decade”. By 66-17, UKIP and BNP voters disagree that the Government should do more to recognise gay marriage. Furthermore, by 66-26 they agree that “young people these days have too much freedom”, and by 74-20 per cent they disagree that the Government should consider legalising recreational drugs like cocaine and ecstasy.

UKIP and the BNP are fundamentally different parties and their respective activist bases are not the same. UKIP activists tend to be old-fashioned, former Conservatives; BNP activists are extreme, racist, and a number have had convictions for serious offences. However, their voters do have some characteristics in common, namely, a generally negative outlook on politics – both in terms of where Britain is at the moment, and where it is going.

7.1 *Are they racists?*

When asked if they agreed with the statement that it was “just wrong for people from different racial backgrounds to live together”, only 6 per cent of UKIP voters strongly agreed with this statement and only 15 per cent said they tended to agree. 19 per cent of BNP voters strongly agreed and 24 per cent tended to agree. Only 3 per cent of voters from the nationally representative sample strongly agreed, with a further 6 per cent tended to agree. Clearly the numbers of BNP voters citing race as an issue is not insignificant, and this is a concern, but it is significantly lower than real world concerns.



8. Focused on immigration

There are, no doubt, many reasons why people vote for fringe parties like the BNP or UKIP. As we have seen above, for some it might be due to a real dislike of modern Britain with all that it brings with it. In addition, some might vote for the BNP (as opposed to UKIP) because they are racist. But, in explaining the increase in the number of people who vote for the BNP, but also UKIP, there is no getting away from the issue of immigration. Many people vote for these parties because they are opposed to the levels of immigration into Britain which have undeniably been very high in the last few years.

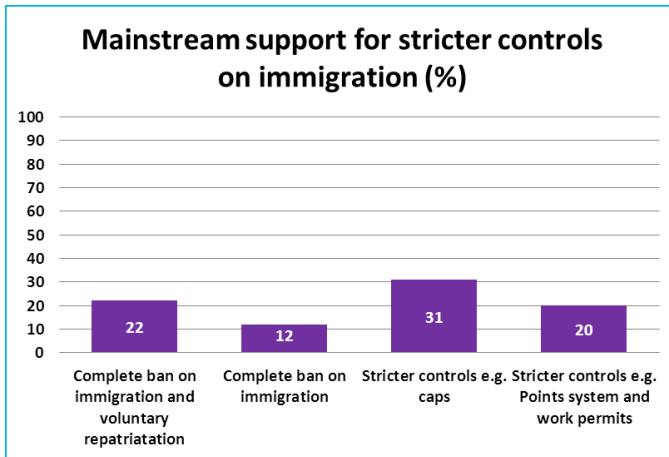
The poll showed that for both UKIP and BNP voters “immigration and asylum” is by far the most important issue in determining their vote. Surprisingly, perhaps, immigration is a higher priority for UKIP voters even than the issue of Europe, which comes in third. This was reflected in the focus groups we conducted. When asked why they voted UKIP, all of the participants said because UKIP was opposed to immigration. They were interested in the issue of Europe but they did not volunteer this as a key factor in deciding their vote.

One of the intriguing things from the focus groups, however, was the feeling that people are not necessarily voting for UKIP on immigration because they understand that free movement of labour across the EU leads to high levels of immigration. Many seem to vote UKIP simply because they think UKIP is opposed to immigration, which is a slightly different motivation. In other words, not everyone makes the intellectual leap that withdrawal from the EU would likely lead to a significant drop in immigration.

There are similarities and differences in the issues that mainstream and non-mainstream voters say are most important in deciding how they vote. Both groups put immigration and the economy in the top three – with non-mainstream voters putting immigration top, and mainstream voters putting it second. Mainstream voters, however, tend to put public services higher – for example, mainstream voters say health is the third most important issues for them, while non-mainstream voters put this eighth; mainstream voters put education seventh, while non-mainstream voters put it tenth.

Asked what the main issues were which explained why they did not vote for one of the mainstream parties at the last General Election, the non-mainstream voters overwhelmingly said it was because none of the parties were committed to reducing immigration (70 per cent). The next most popular reason was that none of the main parties was tough enough on crime (36 per cent), while the feeling that all the parties are the same was the next most popular (28 per cent).

Asked what issues would get them to vote for one of the three main parties again, the non-mainstream voters mainly raised the issues of immigration, Europe, and crime. 89 per cent said they would be more likely to vote for a party that promised to be tougher on immigration; 85 per cent said they would more likely to vote for a party that promised to take back powers from Europe; and 81 per cent said they would be more likely to vote for a party that promised to crack down on crime.



Both mainstream and non-mainstream voters said they wanted stricter controls on immigration, although the non-mainstream voters wanted particularly strict controls. Given a range of options about how they wanted immigration tightened, the non-mainstream voters' most popular choice (57 per cent) said, "there should be a complete ban on further immigration from the EU and the rest of the world, and the government should encourage immigrants already here to go back to their own countries." This was a less popular option with the mainstream voters, with 22 per cent agreeing with this statement. The mainstream voters' top choice was, "there should be much stricter controls on immigration into Britain, such as a cap on numbers coming from outside the EU", with 31 per cent agreeing with this statement.

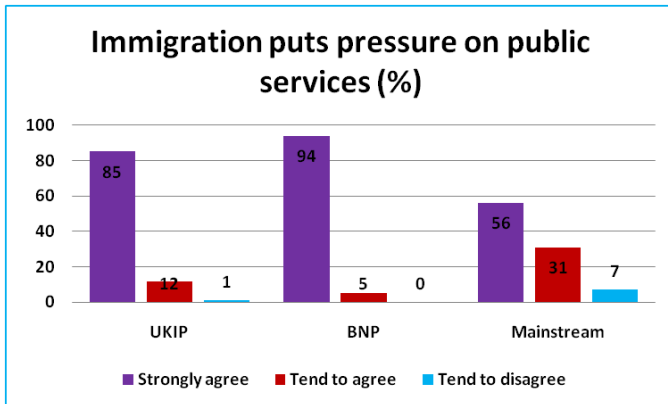
While the non-mainstream voters said they would be attracted back to the main parties if they committed themselves to being tougher on immigration, it obviously does not necessarily follow that this is a cost-free option. While the parties may attract votes from one part of the political spectrum, they may lose votes elsewhere.

8.1 On immigration, voters are mainly driven by the impact on their everyday lives

While some wrongly ignore the fact that immigration levels are crucial in explaining the growth in the number of people voting for anti-immigration parties, some people also wrongly assume that people are concerned about immigration primarily because of fears and prejudice surrounding ethnicity or "race". They argue, in other words, that people choose the BNP (and sometimes UKIP) because they are racist.

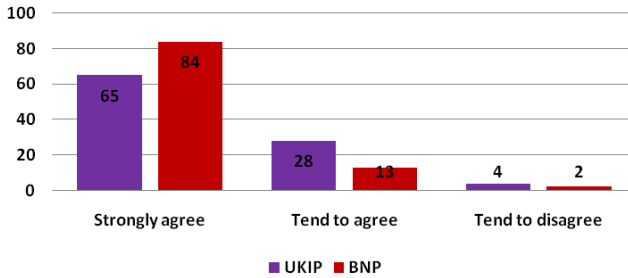
This research shows that this analysis is wide of the mark. Given a list of options for why they were concerned about immigration levels, BNP voters, and UKIP voters too, overwhelmingly pointed to issues which affected their everyday lives. The main reasons given by these fringe voters were the pressure it puts on our public services (97 per cent agreed), perceptions that immigrants seem to get better treatment from the Government than people born in the UK (94 per cent), that immigration is destroying the British way of life (91 per cent), and that immigration is driving down wages (86 per cent). Relatively few people (29 per cent) said that it was wrong for people from different racial backgrounds to live together. Again, this is not an insignificant number, but it suggests that racial prejudice is not the defining feature of people who vote for parties like the BNP.

These same "real world" reasons also dominated the focus groups with BNP and UKIP voters. BNP voters, based in Rotherham, were mainly concerned about the impact of immigration on public services (waiting lists longer than they should be because of immigration; many pupils in their children's class not having English as a first language, for example), and on the impact of immigration, particularly from Eastern Europe, on their wages. These concerns about the impact of public services were also a strong feature of the UKIP groups in Staines, just West of London.

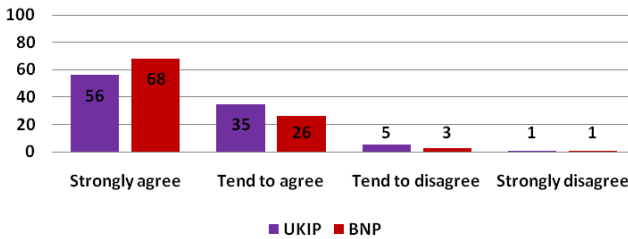


But, again, mainstream voters were not so different to the BNP and UKIP voters in their own concerns about immigration. 87 per cent agreed with that immigration puts pressure on public services, for example. In addition, 70 per cent agreed that immigrants seem to get better treatment from the Government, 59 per cent agreed that immigration is destroying the British way of life, and 59 per cent said immigration was driving down wages for ordinary working people.

Immigrants seem to get better treatment than people born here (%)



Britain is no longer a fair country that rewards its people based on merit (%)



9. Conclusion - there's no getting away from the issue of fairness...

One of the themes that emerged very strongly from all the research – without us actively looking for it – was *fairness*. This came out particularly strongly in the focus groups, but also showed itself throughout the poll – for fringe party voters as well as for mainstream voters.

Rightly or wrongly, many people are driven to the BNP particularly, and UKIP to a lesser extent, because of a strong sense of injustice. For example, a massive 97 per cent of BNP voters agree with the statement that “immigrants seem to get better treatment from the government than people who are born here.” 93 per cent of UKIP voters agree with this too. 64 per cent of BNP voters also agree with the statement that “I have been unfairly treated by the state because of the effects of mass immigration”, with 43 per cent of UKIP voters agreeing.

In the focus groups of BNP voters, many people were angry with what they saw as new immigrants receiving benefits they felt had not yet been earned. For example, people were annoyed that recent immigrants could use a welfare state that they had not paid into. A number of people claimed to know specific cases where a recent immigrant family had received preferential treatment for housing or medical care, while their family or friends had had to wait. There was just a general acceptance across the groups that this was true.

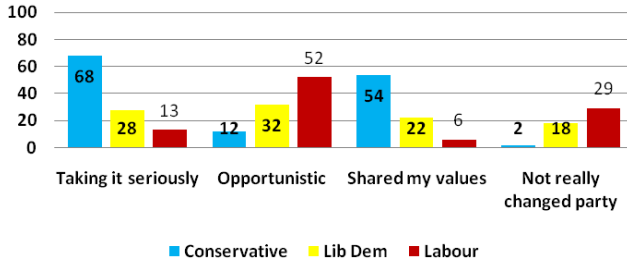
These concerns over fairness were not just reflected in concerns over immigration but over concerns about welfare too. While sometimes these issues were linked – in the sense that many people were annoyed that the welfare state seemed to reward recent immigrants unfairly – there was also a strong feeling simply that the welfare state rewarded people who did not work and that mainstream politicians were to blame for this situation.

The poll showed that BNP and UKIP voters were particularly angry about the way welfare works in Britain, concerns shared but with less intensity by mainstream voters. The numbers surrounding welfare were surprisingly strong: 93 per cent of UKIP and BNP voters agreed the welfare system seems to benefit those who have never paid in but doesn't help people who have worked hard; 89 per cent agreed that people who refuse to look for work should have their benefits stopped; and 88 per cent agreed that many people claiming benefits are milking the system.

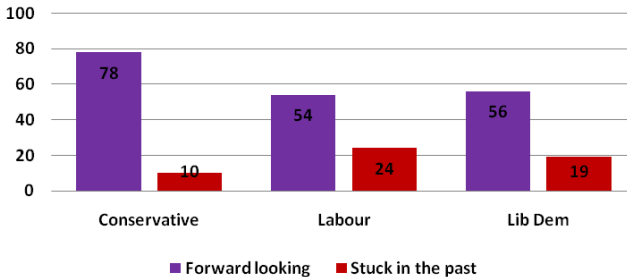
Finally, 94 per cent of BNP voters and 91 per cent of UKIP voters agreed with the statement that “Britain is no longer a fair country that rewards its people based on merit.”

It is unclear the extent to which the issue of fairness is being particularly strongly felt at a time of economic difficulty. When everyone is focused on possible job losses, the scale of the cuts and who they are affecting most, it is reasonable to assume that all these issues surrounding immigration, welfare, and fairness, have been brought into sharper focus. Economics could therefore be a crucial part of the story.

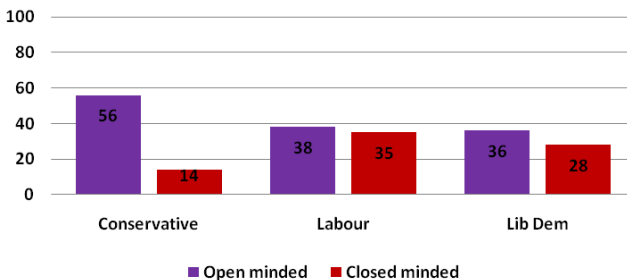
What would you think if David Cameron took a tougher line on immigration? (%)



Is limiting immigration forward looking? (%)



Is limiting immigration open minded? (%)



10. Recommendations

While this research project revealed the gulf between fringe party voters and mainstream voters and the depth of anger felt by many, the picture was not wholly depressing.

While the poll showed that many fringe party voters said they would not consider voting for example for Labour, the focus group research strongly indicated that most people would consider voting for one of the mainstream parties if they changed their policies – yes, partly on immigration, but also on issues that politicians are traditionally a little more comfortable dealing with like welfare.

Also, encouragingly, the focus group research revealed that many people who currently vote for the BNP feel uncomfortable about doing so, a finding supported by polling evidence that suggest policy positions lose their attraction once they are identified with the BNP.³ In the focus groups many were dismissive of the party's leadership and were uncomfortable with the party's reputation for racism and confrontation. The majority of those in the groups went out of their way to say they were opposed to racism and to anything which might intimidate ethnic minority communities.

And, when asked in the focus groups, the majority of BNP voters said that they would not rule out voting for one of the mainstream parties if they changed their policies. The same was true in the UKIP groups. The majority said that they would consider voting for one of the mainstream parties again – they did not define themselves as being fringe voters.

That said, despite a theoretical openness to moving back to mainstream politics, it will take more than just warm words from politicians to bring fringe voters back. The focus groups were clear that BNP and UKIP voters would not vote for the Conservatives again, for example, unless they saw concrete action on immigration and, to a lesser extent, Europe.

The poll also had some intriguing numbers on what people would think about senior politicians' motivations if they started discussing immigration and various other issues more often. This question, at the end of the nationally representative poll, asked what people would think of David Cameron and the Tories if they took a tougher line on immigration. While 34 per cent said they would think he was determined to deal with the problems facing the country, 34 per cent also said they would think he was just trying to get their vote. The differences between different parties' voters are particularly interesting. While just 12 per cent of Conservative voters would think that David Cameron was just saying it to get their vote, 52 per cent of Labour voters thought this would be his motivation.

The same was true for a Labour leader. Asked what they would think if an unnamed Labour leader pledged to take a tougher line on immigration (the poll was conducted before Ed Miliband was put in place as leader), 47 per cent of all people said they thought he would be saying it to get their vote and just 14 per cent thought it would be because he was determined to deal with the problems facing the country. Again, the differences

³ Poll by YouGov / SkyNews April 2006.

between different parties' voters was stark: while only 26 per cent of Labour voters thought that a Labour leader was just saying it to get their vote, 68 per cent of Tory voters said they would think that was the case.

Politicians therefore need to act on immigration – creating an immigration system that people actually have confidence in.

It is, however, crucial that politicians approach the issue of immigration with sensitivity. While this opinion research project was clear that all voters want to see politicians focus on immigration, the poll also showed there remains some nervousness about them doing so. In the poll we asked mainstream voters what they would think if party leaders began to for example put a limit on immigration. They were asked, for example, if they thought doing so would be forward or backward looking, close minded or open minded, extreme or moderate, and in touch or out of touch.

Overall, these mainstream voters tended to say they thought limiting immigration was a positive thing to do. However, a significant number of voters (particularly from left-leaning parties) voiced concerns. This is presumably a reflection on their concerns, expressed elsewhere, that politicians use immigration to secure voters. This suggests that it is therefore crucial not only that politicians are seen to act rather than just to use words, but also that politicians treat this issue with sensitivity and care. This is, in fact, where even those voting for anti-immigration parties want to be. If politicians are perceived to be insensitive and opportunistic they will not carry voters with them.

