



# Exploring the Roots of BNP Support

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## Summary

The British National Party (BNP) frequently suggests that it attracts support because it is the only party to take into account communities' 'real' experiences of immigration. ippr has explored whether or not this is the case by looking at the roots of BNP support across 149 local authorities. We conducted regression-based analysis to see whether or not high levels of immigration do raise communities' support for the BNP, or if other variables – such as political disengagement – are important.

Our findings suggest that areas that have higher levels of recent immigration than others are not more likely to vote for the BNP. In fact, the more immigration an area has experienced, the lower its support for the far right. It seems that direct contact with migrants dissuades people from supporting the BNP. For example, of the 10 local authorities in which the BNP gained most support in the 2009 European elections, nine had lower than average immigration (with Barking and Dagenham the only anomaly).

Rather, the evidence points to political and socio-economic exclusion as drivers of BNP support. In particular, areas with low average levels of qualifications (which can mean people struggle in today's flexible, knowledge-based economy), low levels of social cohesion, and low levels of voter turnout (indicating political disenchantment) are the ones that show more BNP support.

We therefore urge mainstream politicians to strongly resist the notion that people have been driven into the arms of the BNP by the harm immigration is causing to their communities. Instead, they must focus on building strong communities and strong education systems, and on rebuilding trust and confidence in democratic politics, so that marginalised people do not feel so disconnected. This should enable them to both better serve the interests of these communities, and undercut support for the BNP.

## Introduction

The 2010 general and local elections look likely to be memorable for a whole host of reasons, including – dismally – the possibility that the British National Party BNP will gain its first ever Member of Parliament. Though this remains a distant<sup>1</sup> possibility, it does seem feasible that the BNP could take Barking and Dagenham Council, where it is already the second largest party, holding 12 seats. Nationally, too, it continues to gain in strength. This year will see them field their largest ever number of candidates.

This prospect is damaging for British politics and society; while the BNP's leader Nick Griffin has done what he can to try to make the party look respectable, a quick review of its policies show it remains nothing of the sort. A flagship policy on crime? *Every household to have a gun*<sup>2</sup>. Its approach to international development? *Let them sort it out for themselves, it's got nothing to do with us*<sup>3</sup>.

While these policies may attract contempt and ridicule in many quarters, this does not mean that those opposed to the BNP's views can be complacent. To stop the party from gaining stronger footholds in our political institutions it is vital to explore why they are gaining support. We can't counter the party, or propose what could be done to meet the needs of this group of voters, without understanding what it is about the BNP that leads people to vote for it. These voters evidently feel that, at present, the major political parties do not represent them.

Ask the BNP why people support them and they will point to one issue in particular – immigration. 'Opposing mass immigration' is the policy they give most prominence to<sup>4</sup>, and 'a halt to the immigration invasion' is one of their three main manifesto commitments (alongside getting out of Afghanistan and 'ending the global warming conspiracy'). Indeed, in the BNP's view, 'unrestricted, uncontrolled immigration is leading to higher crime rates, demand for more housing, severe extra strain on the environment, traffic congestion, longer hospital waiting lists, lower educational standards, higher income taxes, lower wages, higher unemployment, loss of British identity, a breakdown in community spirit, more restrictive policing, higher council taxes, a shortage of council homes, higher levels of stress and unhappiness and a more atomised society'<sup>5</sup>.

So why, if immigration's effects are as problematic as all this, do policies not already reflect the great harm it causes? What possible reason could there be for not clamping down hard? According to the party, the answer lies in the disconnect between the 'liberal elite', who have imposed these policies on the country and 'ordinary' British communities<sup>6</sup> with lived experience of immigration. Nick Griffin argues that in many working and lower middle class areas, immigration 'brings in so many different peoples...that they totally swamp the existing people... destroying communities'<sup>7</sup>. As a result, he says, the 'native' population vote for the BNP. He suggests the 'political elite' continue to turn a blind eye because it doesn't affect their own lives and social circles<sup>8</sup>.

But is he right? Is growing support for the BNP linked to increased immigration and the impacts this has on the communities immigrants move to? Is immigration driving people into

1. For example, Labour is currently 1:8 to win Barking (according to Ladbrokes), with the BNP trailing at 5:1. See <http://sports.ladbrokes.com/en-gb/Politics/2010-UK-General-ElectionPolitics/2010-UK-General-Election-t110000405?dispSortId=205>

2. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/BNP\\_uk\\_manifesto.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/BNP_uk_manifesto.pdf)

3. <http://bnp.org.uk/policies/foreign-affairs/>

4. For example, the first story on their website (correct when checked on April 8) is headed 'Immigration – BNP is the only party voters can trust.'

5. <http://bnp.org.uk/policies/immigration/>

6. [www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jun/07/european-elections-manchester-liverpool](http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jun/07/european-elections-manchester-liverpool)

7. [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/transcript-of-ithe-iosi-interview-with-nick-griffin-1704933.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/transcript-of-ithe-iosi-interview-with-nick-griffin-1704933.html)

8. [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/transcript-of-ithe-iosi-interview-with-nick-griffin-1704933.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/transcript-of-ithe-iosi-interview-with-nick-griffin-1704933.html)

the arms of the BNP? Or are there alternative explanations – particularly socio-economic and political exclusion?

Some leading politicians strongly back this alternative explanation. For example, John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, has stressed his belief that most of the people who voted for the BNP in the 2009 EU elections did so not because of immigration or race, but because they felt ignored and excluded. Denham said mainstream politicians have ‘got to make it very clear that we want to hear what those voters are saying’<sup>9</sup>. Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, has made similar points: ‘We should not dismiss the reasons why people have voted for the BNP – the anger, the frustration, the sense of alienation, the sense of powerlessness. We must listen to that and must react to that’<sup>10</sup>.

Where people see few prospects for themselves and their children and when they believe that they cannot change things through mainstream politics, then they may vote BNP as an act of protest. In this view failures of the ‘political elite’ also have a role, but it is not their failure in any particular policy area (such as their approach to immigration) that is the problem, but their detachment from the lives and interests of this group of voters.

Below we go on to investigate the competing claims about the BNP’s support using econometric analysis.

### Resilience

This paper builds on innovative research that ippr has been conducting on resilience. Resilience is usually thought of in terms of security (for example, response to terror attacks) or the environment (for example, in relation to climate change). But it is clear that other kinds of shocks also affect British society, shocks such as the financial crisis, rising unemployment and the MPs’ expenses scandal. ippr has been examining how our society, economy and political systems can cope with these shocks, and whether or not they are able to respond, recover and adapt.

Specifically, we have explored whether it is possible to define and measure *social resilience* (see for example Maguire and Hagan 2007 for background discussions of this concept). We define social resilience as the ability of communities to withstand and adapt in response to shocks. Our research suggests that there are four ‘domains’ to social resilience: (i) economic, (ii) political, (iii) community, and (iv) individual. Strength in each of these areas means that a community has access to the resources it needs to help respond to disruption and stress.

We have been able to construct an index that measures variables in each of these domains in English ‘top-tier’ local authorities (county councils, metropolitan borough councils and unitary authorities)<sup>11</sup>. This spatial scale was chosen because a broad range of data on economic, social and political well-being is available at this ‘level’ – though not all indicators are, meaning that the ones chosen for the index were selected both for theoretical and practical data availability reasons<sup>12</sup>. Combining these variables allows us to compare resilience across local authorities in the UK. Table 1 below sets out the variables used in the index.

9. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8088381.stm>

10. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8088381.stm>

11. At present there are 152 top tier local authorities in England. The City of London and the Isles of Scilly have been excluded from our analysis due to small sample sizes (both have small resident populations).

12. While using local authorities as our unit of analysis strengthens the work because of the relatively strong data availability at this level, the downside is that local authorities cover relatively large areas, meaning that there is very significant variation within them. Different patterns may become evident therefore if we look at smaller areas, like neighbourhoods or wards, and it would be useful to conduct follow-up analysis at this more local level.

**Table 1. Resilience measures**

<b>Resilience domain</b>	<b>Indicator<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Economic	Unemployment (International Labor Organisation [ILO] measure)	People who are employed have – on average – access to more resources than those who are unemployed. Evidence suggests that they are wealthier, happier and more self confident, and have more social contacts and networks than the unemployed. These are all resources that people can draw on in a time of shock or crisis.
Economic	Business Survival Rate (Survival rates for businesses five years after start-up)	The collapse of the financial sector and resulting recession has placed severe stress on businesses. Those areas with high levels of business survival show resilience to the shock of recession.
Political	Voter turn-out at national elections (Turnout in 2005 general elections)	High voter turnout demonstrates that people are willing to participate in society and use official channels to solve problems. Low voter turnout suggests people are disenchanted with the political system and may feel alienated.
Political	Feeling able to influence local decision making (% of people who feel able to influence local decision making)	If people feel that they are empowered to change things at the local level, they are more likely to be able to come together to respond to a crisis. They are also more likely to use established processes and institutions to effect change in their locality, rather than more divisive means.
Community	Social cohesion (% of people who agree that their area is one where people from different backgrounds get along)	Cohesion is the ‘glue’ that binds society together. In the face of external shocks (such as recession and high unemployment) areas with low levels of cohesion are more likely to experience social unrest. Tolerance, respect and positive interactions mean communities can adapt and support change, rather than breaking up under pressure.
Community	Crime (Crimes per 1000 of the population)	Areas with high levels of crime demonstrate social breakdown in response to tough circumstances. Crime can also lead to fear and distrust, which in turn damage a community’s ability to work together and adapt to other external shocks.
Individual	Health (% of people reporting their health as good or very good)	Good health forms the basis of individual wellbeing. When people feel healthy and ‘well’ they will be more capable of confronting challenges. Good health is also the building block of people’s ability to work with and relate to others, both of which are key to resilience.
Individual	Qualifications	High qualifications and skills mean an individual is better able to adapt to changing economic circumstances. This is particularly important in a globalised, knowledge economy which favours those with flexible skills. Qualifications and skills are also associated with the personal ability to respond to social challenges.

13. For further details on the indicators please see the annex, p.10.

### Is immigration driving people into the arms of the BNP?

The approach we have taken, as detailed above, gives us a way to test the competing theses as to whether or not immigration and/or elements of socio-economic and political exclusion explain BNP support. Plotting resilience<sup>14</sup> against BNP support in the 2009 European election<sup>15</sup> suggests that the more resilient a community is, the less likely it is to vote BNP: see Figure 1. Examples of the most resilient communities include Richmond-upon-Thames (ranked first nationally), Wokingham (2) and North Yorkshire (8) – all of which had below average votes for the BNP in 2009. In fact, all the top 10 most resilient communities in the UK cast fewer votes for the BNP than the average UK local authority at the 2009 European elections.

**Figure 1:**  
Resilience score and BNP support

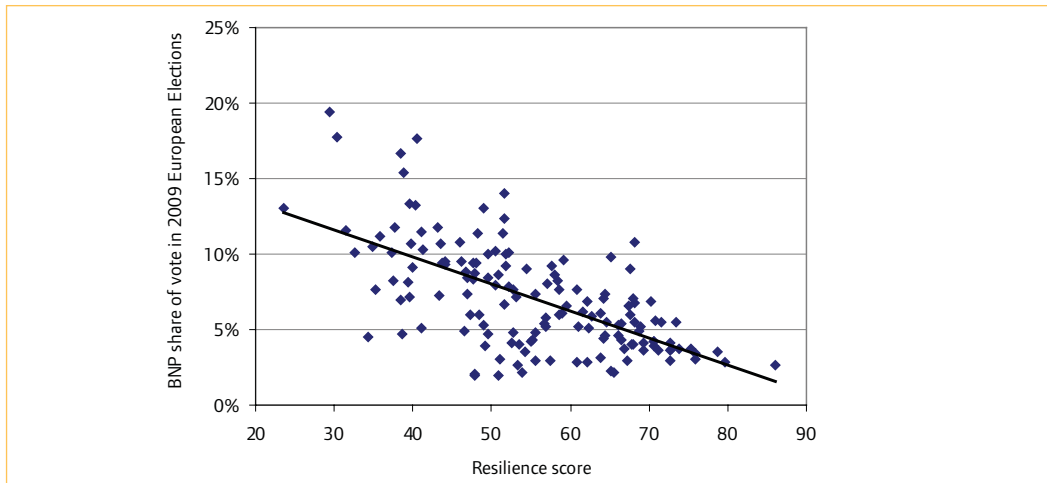
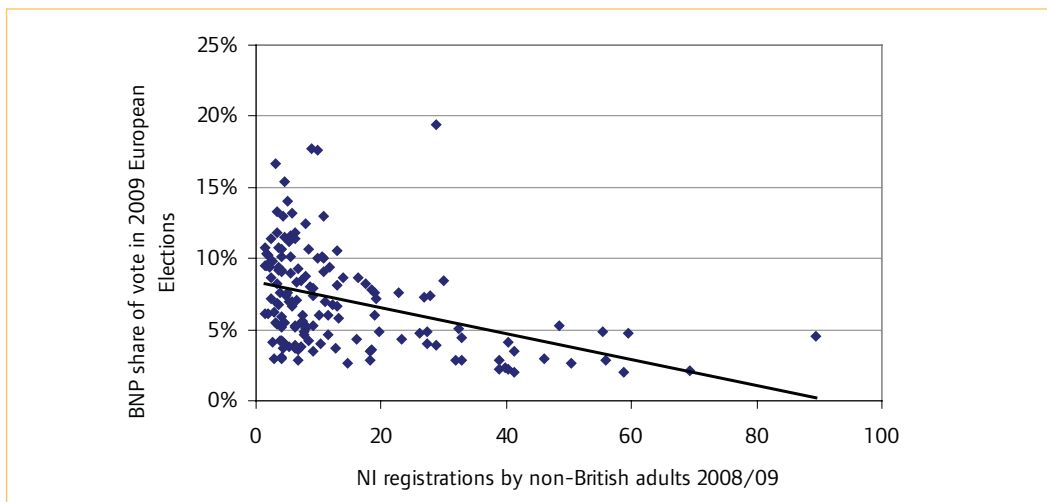


Figure 2 shows the relationship between immigration (measured using new National Insurance registrations by people who are not British residents in 2008/9<sup>16</sup>) and support for the BNP. The result shows that immigration to an area appears to be negatively related to support for the BNP – or, in other words, the more immigration an area had in 2008/9, the less likely its people were to vote BNP.

**Figure 2:**  
Migration in 2008/9 and BNP support



14. When the resilience indicators have been used in analysis (here and in the econometric work below) they have been standardised, so that each variable is measured on a scale of 0 – 1. Scores for crime and unemployment have been inverted (subtracted from one) so that a low score for both indicators indicates problematic outcomes (a high level of crime and unemployment).

15. The fact that we are using data for the European election should be noted, as it seems likely that there will be some differences between these results and voting patterns in the General Election. The European election is conducted using proportional representation, which tends to increase votes for smaller parties, and the last election took place at a time when disillusionment with mainstream politics seemed particularly high (with the recession at its worst and just after the expenses crisis).

16. This data is used as it is the only data on immigration available at a local authority level. No UK data source provides a completely accurate and timely measure of migration, and as such this data has some flaws. However, it is of good enough quality to be listed by the Audit Commission as one of the best migration data sources available. See [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/crossingborders/data/pages/nationaldata.aspx](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/crossingborders/data/pages/nationaldata.aspx)

This result is very striking, and it appears to stand up to closer scrutiny. While the local authority that cast the most votes for the BNP – Barking and Dagenham – had significantly higher levels of immigration than the national average, this is an anomaly. Every other local authority in the top 10 for BNP votes had lower than average immigration. This includes, for example, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurrock and Barnsley (ranked 2, 3 and 4 respectively). In contrast, the three local areas with the lowest levels of resilience in the country (Sandwell, Barking and Dagenham and Stoke-on-Trent) are all found in the top 10 for BNP votes.

To examine this in a more rigorous way we conducted a regression-based analysis. Linear regression modelling enables us to look at the relative importance of difference factors in explaining support for the BNP, holding all other factors constant. The model encompasses all the elements of the resilience index described earlier, plus several measures of migration, a measure of the non-white population in an area (with race another aspect of the BNP's policies that should be considered, distinct from immigration), and regional indicators, which allow us to see whether particular regions of the UK are witnessing specific trends. The results of this model are set out in Table 2.

The table confirms that immigration (either measured in the previous full year, i.e. 2008/9, or examining the change in immigration flows to an area between 2002/3 and 2008/9) has a negative relationship with BNP votes. In other words, even when the influence of other factors is controlled for, the higher the level of immigration is to an area, the lower the BNP vote. This finding is fairly conclusive too, not only being shown using two different indicators of migration, but also being highly statistically significant, and holding steady in three slightly different iterations of the model (for example, some iterations included regional variables and others did not)<sup>17</sup>.

**Table 2: OLS<sup>[1]</sup> regression results for BNP vote**

	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Standard error
Intercept	0.182***	0.012
Health	-0.007	0.014
Qualifications	-0.042***	0.013
Crime	-0.011	0.010
Local influence	-0.003	0.012
2005 voter turnout	-0.022*	0.012
Business survival	0.003	0.011
Employment	0.006	0.014
Social cohesion	-0.099***	0.012
Percentage non-white	-0.095***	0.026
Migration change 2002/3 to 2008/9	-0.044***	0.017
In-migration 2008/9	-0.058***	0.020
Region (South East as reference category)		
East Midlands	0.020***	0.006
East of England	0.010*	0.006
London	0.029***	0.006
North East	0.013*	0.007
North West	0.005	0.006
South West	-0.007	0.006
West Midlands	0.028***	0.006
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.022***	0.006
Adjusted R2	0.826	
N	149	

\*p<0.10 \*\*p<0.05 \*\*\* p<0.01

[1] OLS= Ordinary Least Squares

17. Alternative versions of the model can be obtained by contacting the authors.

This finding, that immigration has a negative relationship with BNP votes, is important, as it appears to contradict the argument that immigration is to 'blame' for driving voters into the arms of the BNP. It suggests the opposite, in fact: that where people have experience of living with migrants they are less likely to vote for the BNP. This fits with the finding of previous research (for example, Caplan 2006, Lewis 2005) which suggests that, on the whole, the more interaction people have with migrant groups the less concerned about migration they are. Importantly, it also undercuts the BNP's own argument that it is attracting support because of the negative impacts that migration is having in local communities.

It is evident from polling that immigration is one of the top issues for many people in the UK (it remains among the top three issues of concern for people polled<sup>18</sup> – a position held for several years now). It is also clearly one of the mostly hotly debated questions in this General Election campaign. There is also evidence that in some places immigration does have some negative effects. However, where people have significant lived experiences of immigration, those experiences are not of a kind that drive them to vote for the BNP. In fact, living alongside migrants makes people less attracted to the BNP.

Looking at the effect of the other variables, and examining first the 'non-resilience' aspects of the model, we see that the percentage of non-white people in an area also has a negative relationship with the BNP vote, meaning that areas with larger numbers of non-white people are less likely to vote for the BNP. To some extent this may be explained by some of the same forces as the finding above – that where people live in mixed race communities they tend, on the whole, to be less agreeable to BNP arguments about the consequences of mixed communities. However, it may also be explained by the fact that relatively few ethnic minority people are likely to vote BNP, given the party's hostility towards them, reducing the BNP's potential vote pool in those areas accordingly<sup>19</sup>.

Many of the regional indicators also appear significant. This means that even when all the other variables are held constant – thereby discounting the effects of resilience, race and immigration – some regions still have significantly higher levels of BNP support than others. This is particularly striking because the two specific regions that had the strongest BNP support in 2009 (holding all other factors constant) were London and the West Midlands, which are those that the BNP is targeting the most heavily<sup>20</sup>. In some ways this result is unsurprising. Political parties know that pouring resources into an area can boost their vote. However, it remains noteworthy, as it is a reminder that support for the BNP isn't simply spontaneous, but that the party's campaigning may also be playing a role.

Turning to the resilience indicators, it is clear that some matter much more than others. Some, such as crime, and unemployment, appear to have little effect on BNP votes one way or the other. This may seem surprising and warrant further investigation, though it also should be noted that previous work has produced similar results (for example, Kessler and Freeman 2004, who find that unemployment does not raise individuals' tendencies to vote for the far right). Three resilience indicators, however, do stand out as playing a role.

Firstly, qualifications. Areas where people have higher qualifications, on average, are less likely to vote for the BNP. This effect may work in several ways, but perhaps most important is the fact that people with higher qualifications have more options in the increasingly open, flexible and knowledge-based economy that we live in (Leitch 2006). While finding employment per se may not be central (as indicated by the finding that employment levels

18. See [www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/poll-March10-issues-topline.pdf](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/poll-March10-issues-topline.pdf)

19. The same argument does not apply to the immigration variables discussed above as many new migrants do not have the right to vote.

20. See <http://conservativehome.blogs.com/goldlist/2009/06/bnp-plan-general-election-campaign-in-labour-heartland-seats.html> for a list of BNP target seats. There are two each in London and the West Midlands respectively, more than in any other region.



do not affect votes for the BNP), the quality of work people can access may be critical. Where people have lower levels of qualifications they seem increasingly likely to struggle to find good quality work that pays a living wage, which could make them feel excluded and vulnerable. This fits with the findings of previous work (for example, John *et al* 2006) which suggests that it is not the poorest social classes who tend to vote for the BNP, but the lower middle class, who are most affected by social changes such as changing labour market structures.

Secondly, social cohesion appears to matter. Where people believe that the population of their area tend to get along, even if they come from different backgrounds, they are less likely to vote for the BNP. Though in some ways this verges on being tautological (it seems unlikely that many people who vote for the BNP will report high levels of social cohesion in their areas, and vice versa), it does indicate a potential policy lever. If the Government can find ways to build stronger, more socially cohesive communities, these increases in social cohesion should sap support from the BNP.

Thirdly, voter turnout in the 2005 general election is also negatively associated with voting for the BNP. In other words, the fewer people who turn out to vote, the higher the proportion of the population voting for the BNP. It seems likely that this is the result of two trends. First, when non-BNP voters fail to turn out, this makes it easier for the BNP to gain a higher proportion of the votes<sup>21</sup>. Mainstream parties getting the vote out is perhaps the simplest way in which the BNP's chances of electoral success can be minimised (and is a major tactic being used for example by the anti-BNP organisation Hope not Hate<sup>22</sup>).

However, a low voter turnout does not just affect the proportion of votes going to the BNP in a simple mathematical way, it is also indicative of a wider trend which likely gives succour to the party – disengagement with politics. Where people in an area have lost faith in politics some will disengage from the electoral process altogether, but others will turn to radical alternatives, such as the BNP<sup>23</sup>.

## Conclusions

Our analysis provides some strong evidence that recent immigration is not driving people to vote for the BNP. Rather, immigration to an area appears, on the whole, to make people less likely to vote for the far right.

This is not to deny that immigration is an issue of concern to the British population, or that it has some negative effects on the country; both these things are clearly true to some extent. However, in places where people have had significant direct contact with migrants, most are not concerned enough by immigration to vote for the BNP. This is in direct contradiction to the story being told by the party itself.

So what is behind the BNP's increasing vote share? This research suggests that socio-economic and political exclusion are the major factors at work. Specifically, people feel dejected and alienated in the following situations: in areas where there is a low average level of qualifications, and where many are likely to be struggling to find good quality work; where there is a lack of social cohesion and residents feel that people from different backgrounds don't get along; and where commitment to the mainstream political process is low. People in these communities are looking for alternatives to the mainstream political parties.

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21. It should be noted that the voter turnout statistics presented in the model are for the 2005 general election and the BNP support statistics are from the 2009 European election. We believe, however, that if an area has a low turnout at a general election it probably also has a low turnout at a European election, making this comparison valid.

22. See <http://action.hopenothate.org.uk/page/invite/youcanstopthis>

23. It may seem surprising in light of this finding that the 'local influence' factor does not have an effect, but the basic data here shows people across the country tend to respond very similarly to this question, making it a relatively poor indicator of political engagement. As a result we are not surprised to find that it has a relatively negligible impact on the results.

The BNP, according to our evidence, targets these communities, and it appears that the resulting combination of local people's exclusion and the BNP's alternative narrative drive up support for the party. The BNP's discussions of immigration may appeal to some of these voters, but this does not seem to be (on the whole) because of their own lived experiences. Rather, immigration may be acting as a visible symbol of rapid economic and social change which leaves some people feeling threatened and insecure.

So what does this mean for politics? Most politicians and commentators have used the narrative that exclusion, not immigration, seems to be at the root of why the BNP is attracting support; our research backs this up, with two primary implications.

Firstly, it should give mainstream politicians and commentators the confidence to resist even more strongly the notion that people have been driven into the arms of the BNP by the actual harm immigration is causing to their communities. Nick Griffin's suggestion that the mainstream is out of touch with on-the-ground realities of immigration and must introduce even tougher controls on immigration in order to regain public support is tendentious (though there may of course be other rationales for changing immigration policy).

Secondly, our research makes clear that mainstream politicians need to work harder to build strong communities and strong education systems, and to rebuild trust and confidence in democratic politics, so marginalised and vulnerable people do not feel so disconnected. Doing so should allow them to serve the interests of these communities more effectively, and, in the process, undercut support for the British National Party.

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### Annex: Data definitions and sources

Definitions in the context of this research, and data sources for each indicator, are as follows:

**Unemployment:** this indicator measures ILO (International Labor Organisation)

unemployment. A person is defined as unemployed under this measure if they are not in paid work but are available for and seeking paid work. Not everyone covered by this measure will be claiming an out-of-work benefit. Data is from the Labour Force Survey and covers the period July 2008 to June 2009. Available from Nomis

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp>

**Business survival rate:** measures the proportion of businesses which were operating in 2003 and which were still operating in 2008. Taken from the ONS Business Demography 2008 release, which is based on the Inter-Departmental Business Register operated by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

**Turnout:** the proportion of individuals named on the electoral register who voted in the 2005 General Election. Data is from the British Parliamentary Constituency Database 1992–2005, created by Pippa Norris at Harvard University and available at [www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Data/Data.htm](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Data/Data.htm). Note that data was provided at constituency level and transformed into local authority data by averaging turnout for all constituencies within a local authority boundary.

**Feeling able to influence local decision-making:** proportion of respondents who agree that they can influence decisions in their local area. Taken from the Place Survey 2008, a survey of perceptions and attitudes in local areas sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Available at [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/placesurvey2008update](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/placesurvey2008update)

**Social cohesion:** proportion of respondents who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. From the Place Survey 2008, as above.

**Crime:** recorded crime (seven key incident types) per 1,000 population, 2008/9. Available from the Home Office at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.html).

**Health:** proportion of respondents who say their health is ‘good’ or ‘very good’, from the Place Survey 2008.

**Qualifications:** the following method was used to develop a single score for qualifications:

(proportion of adults with no qualifications x 0) + (proportion of adults with level 1 qualifications x 1) + (proportion of adults with level 2 qualifications x 2) + (proportion of adults with level 3 qualifications x 3) + (proportion of adults with level 4 or above qualifications x 4).

Data was taken from the Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey 2008, available from Nomis, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp>.

**BNP share of vote:** proportion of individuals on the electoral register who voted for the BNP in the European Elections 2009. Taken from House of Commons Library Research Paper 09/53, available at [www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2009/rp09-053.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2009/rp09-053.pdf)

**Migration:** number of new NI registrations by non-British residents, per 1,000 population in 2008/9; and percentage change between 2002/3 and 2008/9.

**Region:** Government Office Region, of which there are nine in England.

**Non-white population:** taken from ONS Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (experimental), mid-2007. Available at [www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=14238](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=14238)

In all cases the local authority is the unit of analysis, so for each of the indicators above an average across the local authority is calculated. For example, the qualifications variable for a local authority would relate to the average level of qualifications obtained by individuals in that area.

All measures were standardised on a scale of 0 to 1, and employment and crime scores were subtracted from 1 so that all indicators can be interpreted as 1 = ‘best’ and 0 = ‘worst’.

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