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Party activism in the populist radical right: The case of the UK Independence Party

Paul Whiteley

Erik Larsen

Matthew Goodwin

Harold Clarke

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Abstract

Recent decades have seen an upsurge of interest in populist radical right (PRR) parties. Yet despite a large body of research on PRR voters, there are few studies of the internal life of these parties. In particular, there is a dearth of research about why people are active in them. This paper uses data from a unique large-scale survey of United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) members to investigate if drivers of voting support for these parties are also important for explaining party activism. Analyses show that traditional models of party activism are important for understanding engagement in UKIP, but macro-level forces captured in an expanded relative deprivation model also stimulate participation in the party. That said, macro-level forces are not the dominant driver of activism.

Key words: populism, UKIP, party activism, radical right, party member survey

Since Klaus von Beyme's (1988) influential edited volume on right-wing extremism, the past three decades have witnessed an explosion of research on populist radical right (PRR) parties. Unsurprisingly, following the rise of parties like the Front National in France, the 'Freedom Parties' in Austria and the Netherlands, the Danish People's Party in Denmark and the League in Italy, the PRR has become the most studied party family in the Western world.

The resulting literature has mainly focused on four research questions: who votes for PRR parties (e.g. Lubbers and Coenders 2017); how to explain the considerable cross-national variation in levels of support (e.g. Golder 2003; Norris 2005); the policy and government effects of PRR parties (e.g. Akkerman 2012; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015; Careja et al. 2016; Minkenberg 2001); and the impact of PRR parties on inter-party competition (Akkerman, de Lange & Rooduijn 2016; Bale et al. 2010; Wagner and Meyer 2017).

The rising tide of electoral support for PRR parties in European democracies shows that electorates have changed their attitudes to these parties in recent years. They have become 'respectable' in a way which was not true in the past. This raises the question about the extent to which factors which motivate people to vote for PRR parties also encourage them to join and be active in these parties. We know that distrust of existing political and economic elites, feelings of being left behind by economic neglect, changing social values, and perceived threats to cultural identities are powerful drivers of electoral support for these parties (see Ford and Goodwin, 2014, Lubbers and Coenders 2017; Rydgren 2018; Spierings and Zaslove 2017). But to what extent are these factors also important drivers of party membership and activism?

Though the literature on PRR parties has grown rapidly, there are significant omissions in the research particularly in relation to understanding their internal organization, membership and rates of activism. Noteworthy exceptions to this include regional studies of party sympathizers (Ivaldi 1996), small-scale surveys of mid-level party elites (Ignazi and Colette 1992), studies of the contextual predictors of membership (Biggs and Knauss 2012; Goodwin, Ford and Cutts 2013), and

qualitative and ethnographic studies of activists (e.g. Blee 2007; Busher 2015; Goodwin 2011; Klandermans and Mayer 2005). But such work has left important questions unanswered, such as who becomes active in these parties and why?

The lack of attention to this question is significant given that activists help to drive the parties forward. They are as important to populist radical right parties as they are to more traditional parties, since they play key roles in organising, campaigning for, and funding these parties as well as acting more generally as 'ambassadors in the community' (Scarrow, 1996). These activities help to reduce the stigma associated with these parties in the wider electorate (e.g. Art 2011; Dinas et al. 2016; Ellinas and Lamprianou 2017).

The lack of research on active recruits also contrasts sharply with a general renaissance of scholarly interest in mainstream party activism which has taken place in recent years (e.g. Bale et al. 2019; Van Biezen et al. 2012; Webb and Bale 2014; Whiteley 2011). PRR parties are also interesting because they appear to have reversed a long established trend of declining party membership and activism in many contemporary democratic countries (Whiteley, 2011, Van Biezen et al. 2012). The evidence suggests that membership and activism has been growing in parties such as the National Front in France, the Freedom Party in Austria, the League in Italy and in our case study UKIP in the United Kingdom[1]. In short, despite calls for more work on their internal organization (Goodwin 2006), we still know very little about populist radical right parties' most committed supporters.

The resurgence of membership and activism in PRR parties raises an important question regarding whether well-established explanatory models of intra-party participation apply to them, or if there is a need to modify these models (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Scarrow 2015; Gauja, 2015). In this paper, we address this question by drawing on a unique large-scale membership survey of a PRR party, which includes multiple measures of activism and allows us to better explore and understand

[1] In 1990 the National Front in France had 50,000 members and by 2006 it had 75,000. The Freedom party in Austria had 42,413 members in 1990 and by 2014 it had 50,000. The Lega Nord (renamed the 'League') in Italy had 112,400 members in 1992 and 182,502 in 2010. See the Members and Activists in Political Parties (MAPP) database on party membership *https://www.projectmapp*

the determinants of involvement in these parties. We focus on the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which emerged as a successful PRR party in Western Europe after 2010 and played a key role in mobilizing the 2016 vote for Brexit in the EU referendum in Britain (Clarke et al. 2017; Heath and Goodwin 2016). To our knowledge, this is the first PRR membership survey of its kind.

Importantly, the survey was conducted when the party was at its peak, providing a comprehensive dataset to test competing theories of differential activism within a populist radical right party. Compared to other surveys on party members, we have a sufficient number of respondents with varying levels and types of involvement to investigate the different theories in question. This allows us to test the extent to which traditional explanations of party activism apply to the populist radical right while at the same time examining if there are unique drivers of activism in this party family.

In brief, analyses show that people who are active in the populist radical right are motivated by many of the same factors which explain activism in more traditional parties across the political spectrum. In this respect existing theories of party activism apply to UKIP much as they do to mainstream parties. That said, there are also distinctive factors which stimulate intra-party involvement in UKIP associated with the relative deprivation theory and which help to drive electoral support for the party. To the extent that UKIP is a representative case, the inference is that PRR parties differ from their mainstream rivals, but only to a limited extent.

Explaining Party Activism

Joining and becoming active in a political party is one form of political participation. Thus models which explain why people become actively engaged in politics are all potentially relevant for explaining differential types and levels of intra-party activity. Some of these relate to long-term social processes involving social class, family socialisation and community cohesion. The civic voluntarism and social capital models are examples since they both stress the importance of individual and community resources as major drivers of political participation (Verba et al., 1995;

Pattie et al. 2004). In the civic voluntarism model individual resources such as income, social status and education are important, whereas in the social capital model community resources such as voluntary activity and interpersonal trust are prominent (Putnam, 2000).

Populist radical right parties, however, often emerge as major players over relatively short time intervals. Although ideologically distinct parties like the Sweden Democrats and UK Independence Party have fairly lengthy histories, they have enjoyed quickly paced breakthroughs, suggesting that the accompanying rise in party membership and activism cannot be adequately explained by slow-moving social processes. For this reason, we focus on three theoretical models that have been developed to explain differential party activism and which are not subject to this criticism.

The first is the general incentives model, originally developed at the time of the first surveys of party members in Britain (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson, 1994; Whiteley, Seyd and Billinghurst, 2006). The model is based on the idea that there are incentives which motivate individuals to join and become active in a party organization. Perceptions of the costs and benefits of political action are at the centre of the theory, but it focuses on a wider range of incentives than narrowly defined cost/benefit calculations. The model also includes social-psychological variables relating to social norms and ideological beliefs which help to motivate individuals to get involved. It distinguishes between collective and selective benefits, where the former are 'public goods' which motivate members seeking to promote policies that apply to society as a whole, whereas the latter are 'private goods' such as individual political ambitions which are only relevant to those who get involved.[2] Since its inception the general incentives model has been

[2] The predictors of membership and activism in parties in the general incentives model are: (1) The perception of the probability that their participation in a party will achieve a desired collective outcome; (2) The respondent's desired collective outcomes, such as changes in policies if their party wins an election; (3) The assessment of the selective outcome benefits of activism; that is, material or career benefits; (4) assessment of the selective process benefits of activism or the intrinsic rewards associated with involvement in political action; (5) altruistic motivations for activism; (6) perception of social norms relating to activism, or a desire to conform to the expectations of significant others; (7) expressive or emotional motivations for activism, such as the strength of an attachment to a party or leader; (8) perception of the costs of activism (see Seyd and Whiteley, 1992).

employed to explain party membership and intra-organizational activism in various parties and countries (Gallagher & Marsh 2002; Spier & Klein 2015; Ridder et al 2015; Van Haute and Gauja, 2015; Poletti, Webb and Bale, 2018).

Also of interest is the mobilization model which focuses on social networks as mechanisms for recruiting individuals into politics. Simply put, some people become actively engaged because the opportunities for them to do so are greater than for others and because they are persuaded to get involved by 'significant others' in their families and social networks (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). Mobilization can be driven by social dynamics and social connections with peers and these have been shown to be important drivers of political action (e.g. Kahne and Bowyer 2018; Sinclair 2012; Kertzer and Zeitzoff 2017; Webb et al. 2019). Furthermore, active involvement in politics can be 'socially contagious', so that individuals with connections to an activist become more likely to be active themselves (Bond et al. 2012; Doherty and Schraeder 2018). For example, Fieldhouse and Cutts (2012) document that an individual's participation is influenced by whether other people in his/her household participate in politics.

Although these two models have their differences, they are generally united in contesting the idea that party activism is solely a response to 'top-down' elite-level mobilization. This is an important point given that much of the research on the radical right points to the importance of 'charismatic' leaders in winning support (e.g. Bos et al. 2011; De Lange and Art 2011; Eatwell 2018) or, increasingly, the role of mass media (Berning et al. 2018; Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007; Murphy and Devine 2018; Sheets et al. 2015). These studies suggest that 'macro-mobilization' could be important for recruiting party members and activists in PRR parties, alongside the more micro-level factors discussed earlier. A similar point can be made about relative deprivation theory which is the third of the models of political participation we examine. This model is distinctive since it

contains variables which are similar to those discussed in the literature on voting for PRR parties, and so we examine it next

Relative Deprivation and Party Activism in PRR Parties

Relative deprivation theory was originally introduced by Stouffer et al. (1949) and developed further by Runciman (1966). The theory is based on the proposition that individuals develop expectations about how economic, political and social systems should treat them, and at the same time judgements about how they are actually treated in practice. The more negative the comparison between what people expect and what they receive, the more likely they are to experience frustration and anger (Walker and Smith, 2002). These emotional responses are a 'potent, volatile, instigator of action' (Marcus et al., 2000: 26) and a stimulus to political involvement which can include becoming active in a party (Conover and Feldman, 1986; Marcus, 1988).

This raises an interesting question about whether there is a version of the relative deprivation model of political participation which applies to PRR parties and which takes into account the notion of 'macro-mobilization' arising from forces in society as a whole. If so, this could be quite important for recruiting members to PRR parties and also for explaining why they are growing in comparison with many mainstream parties. This idea reflects an important theme in the literature on support for radical right parties, namely that large numbers of individuals perceive of having been 'left behind' by macro-level developments in contemporary society and the economy.

Changes in contemporary capitalism engendered by globalisation, international migration and stagnating wages, particularly among low skilled workers, have created a situation in which large sections of the electorate have failed to share in the fruits of economic growth. Trade imbalances between western countries and Asia, particularly China, accompanied by the outsourcing of skilled manufacturing jobs and the movement of industries to low cost countries are important causes of growing inequality (Galbraith, 2012; Atkinson, 2015). These economic trends, coupled with the

trauma of the Great Recession have created serious political problems for the mainstream parties across the democratic world (Stiglitz, 2012).

These developments give rise to a syndrome of grievances based on the economic marginalisation of individuals, perceived threats from immigrants, refugees and ethnic- minority groups, and identity politics (Betz, 1994; Mudde, 2007; Oesch, 2008; Posner, 2010; Reich, 2016; Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Clarke, Goodwin and Whiteley, 2017). At the same time those encountering these adverse circumstances tend to share authoritarian or socially conservative values, which are often associated with low levels of formal education (Ford and Goodwin 2014; Oesch 2008; Rydgren 2012). So threat perceptions arising from adverse economic and cultural developments are reinforced by rapid changes in society which challenge traditional values (Stenner, 2004).

Gest et al. (2017), for example, argue that support for PRR movements in the US and UK is rooted in anxiety about the perceived discrepancy between current status of individuals and their past status. Similarly, Gidron and Hall (2017) contend that the appeal of populist radical right parties is especially strong among those with lower levels of subjective social status, and an accompanying belief that they are not being accorded the appropriate level of respect or esteem within the social order. From this perspective, becoming a PRR activist is part of a quest to regain social status that is perceived to have been lost by developments in the economy and society.

These different ideas fit within a relative deprivation model of activism, but it is essentially a micro-theory about individuals reacting to circumstances in their own lives (Runciman, 1966). In contrast, the 'left behind' thesis has its origins in broader macro-level developments in economy and society which have mobilised some people into political action. These dynamics are important since as the earlier discussion indicated most research on political participation focuses on the positive impact of individual resources on involvement, for example, in the civic voluntarism model (Verba,

Schlozman and Brady, 1995). In the case of relative deprivation theory, however, individual perceptions of a lack of resources are the motivational force.

If macro-level forces are important drivers of activism within populist right parties, a modified relative deprivation model of activism which takes these into account could have important explanatory power. In the next section we describe the research design and operationalization of variables used to test the general incentives, mobilization and the modified relative deprivation model of party activism.

Research Design and Data

A key challenge to the study of the populist right is to gather a sufficient number of observations to be able to examine systematic differences within the parties. UKIP is a desirable case for study because, at its peak, the party had a large number of members with varying levels and types of activity[3]. Accordingly, we conducted a full membership survey between December 2014 and January 2015, providing a unique opportunity to test the various models described above for one of the most successful PRR parties in Western Europe (Ford and Goodwin; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2016).[4]

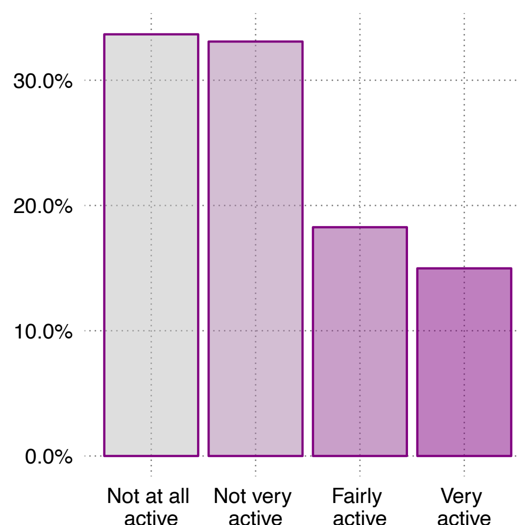
Although it was founded in 1993, UKIP did not have major electoral successes until the 2010-2015 Parliament when it shifted away from its origins as a single-issue movement opposed to Britain's membership of the European Union (EU) and added opposition to immigration and anti-establishment populism to its programme. UKIP won the 2014 European Parliament elections outright with 26.6 per cent of the vote, polled nearly 13 per cent of the national vote at the 2015 general election and then campaigned vigorously for Brexit during the 2016 referendum on Britain's EU membership (Clarke et al. 2017; Goodwin and Heath 2016). Support for the party subsequently collapsed in the 2017 general election as many former UKIP voters switched to the Conservative Party whose leader, Theresa May, had set out the case for a 'hard Brexit' in her Lancaster House speech in January 2017 (Whiteley et al. 2018).

[3] Details of the requirements for joining the party can be found on: https://join.ukip.org/joinonline.aspx?type=1/
[4] A legal agreement with the party prevented the researchers from releasing analyses of the data until 2017.

Our UKIP membership survey was conducted during the peak period of the party's electoral success. After negotiating with the national leadership of the party which agreed to allow the researchers access to the membership database to conduct an online survey, the aim was to achieve a census of the membership rather than a sample[5]. In the event, the achieved sample size was very large (N=14,683) in comparison with earlier surveys of party members. Our interest in this paper is delineating and explaining levels and types of party activism and thus the survey of UKIP members asked a wide variety of questions (see Online Appendix).

To give a flavour of the items used to measure party activism, one question simply asked: 'Overall, how active are you in UKIP?' with respondents given four options: 'not at all active', 'not very active', 'fairly active', and 'very active'. Figure 1 shows that most of the respondents reported being active only to a limited extent. That said, slightly over one-sixth considered themselves to be 'fairly active' and another slightly smaller group said that they were 'very active'.

Figure 1. Self-Reported Levels of Activity in UKIP

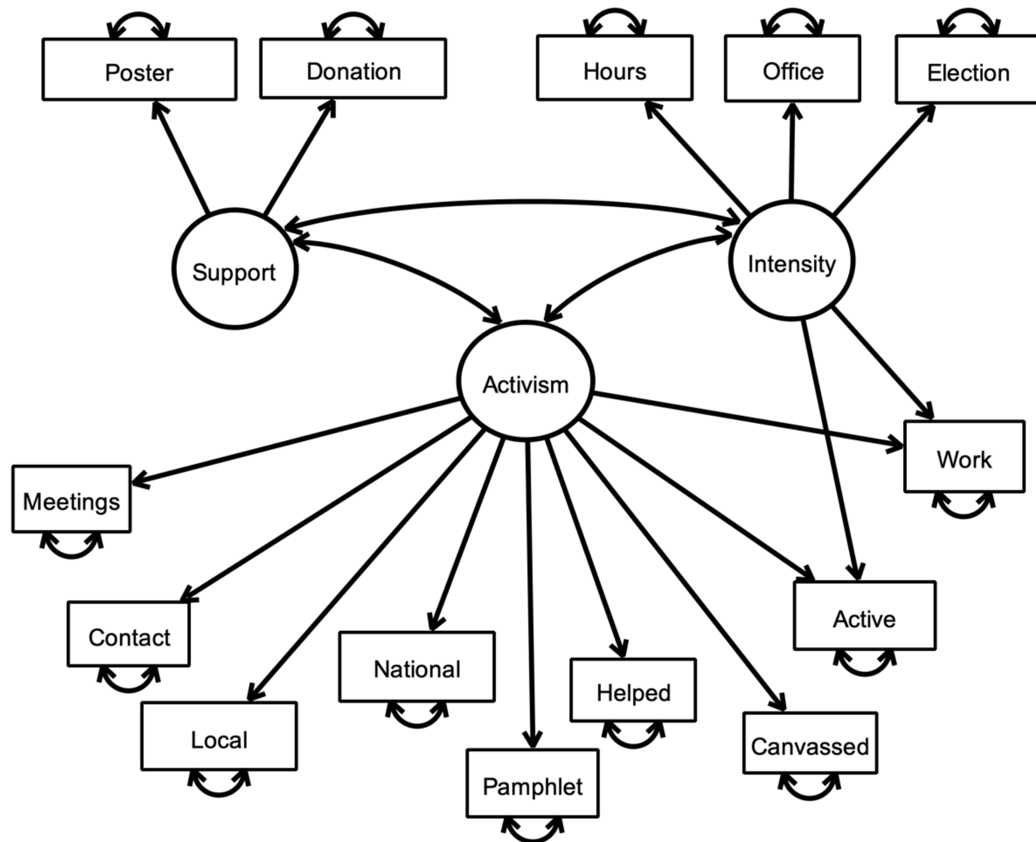


[5] An additional survey of the relatively small number of members who did not have access to the internet was also conducted by mail for validation purposes. No significant differences existed between the online and mail survey respondents.

In addition to the activism question, we employed several different measures of involvement. These were: hours spent on party work every week; hours spent on party work during the European Parliament election of 2014; participation in party conferences; seeking office as a UKIP candidate; displaying election posters; signing petitions supported by the party; donating money to the party; distributing election materials; participating in party meetings; helping out at party functions; and canvassing on behalf of the party and its candidates (see the Online Appendix). Although these measures are correlated with one another, there is a great degree of heterogeneity in the strength of the relationships. For example, the correlation (r) between helping at a UKIP party function and attended a UKIP meeting is 0.66, whereas the correlation between donating money to UKIP and signing a petition supported by the party is considerably weaker at 0.27.

The analysis of the structure of intra-party activism proceeded by using an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the various activism variables to identify if there are distinctive latent variables underlying the measures and which of them were most strongly associated with the factors. These EFA results provided guidance for specifying a confirmatory factor analysis model (CFA) of the structure of various activities in UKIP (Acock, 2013). This CFA model has the advantage of estimating correlations between factors, unlike the exploratory analysis, allowing us to identify how closely related they are in practice. The relationships in the CFA model are shown in the path diagram in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Path Diagram of Relationships Between Measured Activism Variables and Three Latent Activism Factors



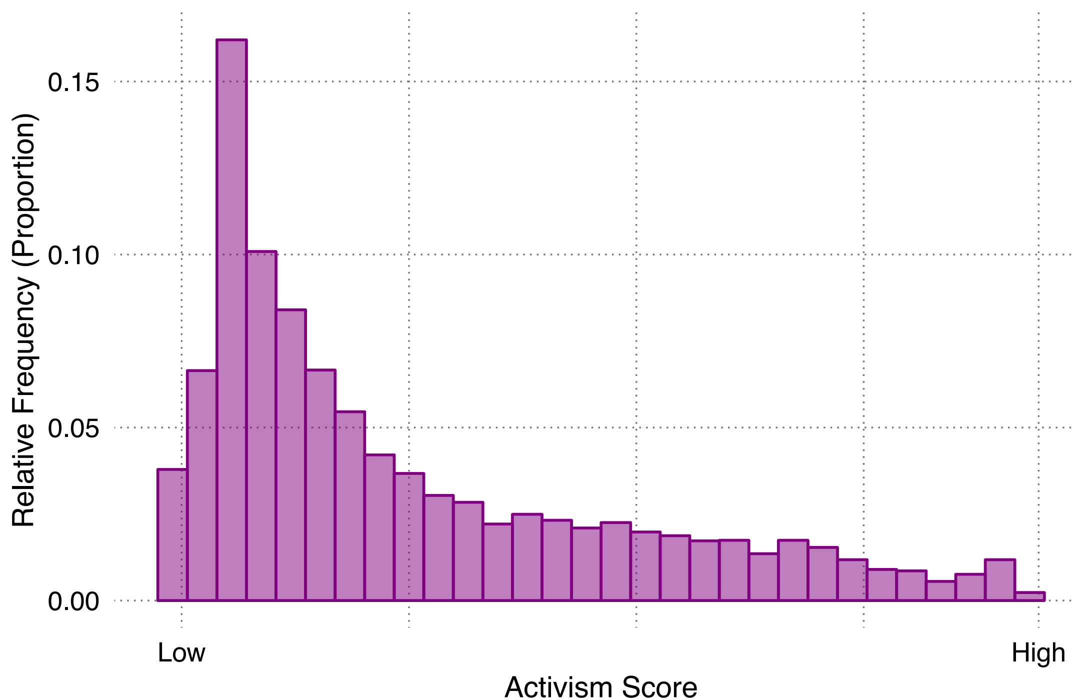
Note: observed activism variables are in rectangles and latent activism factors are in circles. Curved lines with double-headed arrows indicate error variances for observed activism variables; straight lines from latent factors to observed variables indicate factor loadings; curved lines between latent factors indicate inter-factor correlations.

Figure 2 indicates that there are three latent variables that structure the party activity variables[6]. These three factors relate to supporting the party without becoming very involved, being engaged in various 'face-to-face' activities for the party, and thirdly being intensely involved. Thus, the ‘Support’ factor identifies things like donating money and displaying election posters. The

[6] The observed variables are in boxes and the latent variables in ovals, the former including error terms (not shown)

'Activism' factor includes items like attending party meetings and conferences, canvassing at election times and spending time working for the party in inter-election periods. Finally the 'Intense Activism' factor refers to the work of a relatively small number of members who are very heavily involved on a continuous basis as candidates for local and national office and also as sitting local councillors. The latter work harder than ordinary members and activists, and so constitute the elite of the party membership. The CFA reveals strong correlations between the three latent variables suggesting that for purposes of analysis they can be combined into a single overarching activism scale[7]. Figure 3 shows the distribution of UKIP members' scores on the overall activism scale.

Figure 3. Distribution of Scores on Overall UKIP Activism Scale



Note: overall activism scale scores are calculated as sum of scores on three party activism factors.

[7] The correlation (r) between Support and Activism is .88, between Support and High Intensity Activism .86 and between Activism and High Intensity Activism is .82.

For the variables which operationalise the relative deprivation, mobilisation and general incentive models, we rely on standard questions used in previous studies (see Online Appendix). Table 1 provides descriptive statistics on the demographics and activism scales in the analysis[8]. It shows that UKIP members are predominantly male, middle-aged and have relatively modest incomes and comparatively low levels of education. Similar findings have emerged from earlier studies of the UKIP membership and also from studies of voting support for the party (Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Clarke et al. 2017).

Table 1 Selected Descriptive Statistics in the Modelling

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Median	Pctl(75)	Max
Activism Scale	12,114	-0.00	1.81	-1.93	-1.42	-0.70	1.06	5.34
Political Support	12,114	-0.00	0.43	-0.65	-0.36	-0.09	0.28	1.08
Political Activism	12,114	-0.00	0.70	-0.69	-0.60	-0.27	0.53	1.47
High Intensity Activism	12,114	0.00	0.77	-0.59	-0.55	-0.34	0.29	2.79
Male	12,114	0.84	0.37	0	1	1	1	1
Age	12,114	4.88	1.33	1	4	5	6	6
Income	12,114	3.14	1.78	1	2	3	4	8
Education	12,114	0.50	0.50	0	0	1	1	1

Note: See online appendix for details of codings.

Analysing Intra-Party Participation

We begin by studying relationships between explanatory variables in the three participation models and the combined activism scale. We sketch out the key variables in each of the models here, but more detailed definitions can be found in the online appendix. These analyses help us to understand which model provides the best account of broadly defined activism in UKIP.

[8] Note that descriptive statistics for all variables appear in the appendix

To consider the micro-level indicators in the relative deprivation model first, they are based on two Likert indicators combined into a single scale: *'There is often a big gap between what people like yourself expect out of life and what you actually get'* and *'The Government generally treats people like yourself fairly'*. In addition another micro-level variable invites respondents to compare their own economic circumstances with those of the country as a whole. In this case if respondents feel that the country is doing well while they are doing badly, this captures perceptions of being 'left behind' in the face of increasing national prosperity.

Following the earlier discussion, we revise this micro-level relative deprivation model by adding a number of macro-level variables which relate to respondent attitudes to developments in the economy and society. Firstly, we include dissatisfaction with the state of democracy in Britain and also a measure of anti-elitist sentiments. The latter is measured with a battery of items including *'Economic inequality is a major problem in Britain'* and *'Corporate greed is a major problem in Britain'*. Secondly, there are three policy related items which may give rise to perceptions of deprivation. These relate to the state of the economy, dissatisfaction with immigration and of course dissatisfaction with the key issue of UK membership of the European Union.

The mobilization model includes a variable which measures the respondent's attention to politics, thereby capturing the idea of cognitive mobilisation. It also includes measures of the role of social networks in recruiting and retaining party members over time. The first of these is based on a question asking if they were recruited into the party via 'significant others' in their social networks as opposed to joining on their own initiative. The second captures the extent to which they see politics as a means of developing social contacts with like-minded people. This is captured by indicators such as *'Being an active party member is a good way to meet interesting people'* and *'Getting involved in party activities can be fun'*. The mobilisation model also includes a question about whether respondents were party members in the past, and also about their parent's involvement

in political parties when they were growing up. The latter is designed to identify any socialisation effects arising from their family background which might induce them to join a party such as UKIP.

The general incentives model focuses on perceptions of the costs and benefits of party membership and also includes measures of selective benefits such as the respondent's political ambitions. It separates out collective benefits from private benefits, by asking respondents to compare their affective feelings for UKIP in comparison with Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. The idea here is to capture the extent to which they are attached to the party as an organisation which can bring them policy success and benefits in comparison with its rivals. Other indicators include the role of social norms, perceptions of a sense of civic duty, and left-right ideology as mechanisms for stimulating activism in the party. The general incentives model also shares with the mobilisation model an indicator of the influence of other people in promoting people to join and be active in the party.

Table 2 Rival Models of the Overall Activism Rates of UKIP Party Members

	Micro Relative Deprivation	Revised Relative Deprivation	Mobilization	General Incentives
Age	0.02 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)	0.02^{*} (0.01)	0.25^{***} (0.01)
Male	-0.04 (0.04)	0.002 (0.04)	0.10^{**} (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)
Education	0.13^{***} (0.03)	0.13^{***} (0.03)	0.15^{***} (0.03)	0.13^{***} (0.03)
Income	-0.08^{***} (0.01)	-0.07^{***} (0.01)	-0.07^{***} (0.01)	-0.06^{***} (0.01)
Left Behind	0.10^{***} (0.01)	0.07^{***} (0.01)		
Micro Relative Deprivation	0.06^{***} (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)		
Democracy Dissatisfaction		0.01 (0.02)		
Anti-Elitist Perceptions		0.0002 (0.02)		
Economic Evaluations		-0.16^{***} (0.02)		
Dissatisfaction with the EU		0.41^{***} (0.04)		
Dissatisfaction with Immigration		0.06^{***} (0.02)		
Social Network Recruitment			0.95^{***} (0.06)	
Attention to Politics			0.19^{***} (0.01)	
Parents Politically Active			0.06^{***} (0.02)	
Party Member in Past			0.30^{***} (0.03)	
Evaluations of Farage			0.05^{***} (0.01)	
Evaluations of Farage Squared			0.01^{***} (0.001)	
Weighted Collective Benefits				0.002^{***} (0.0001)
Perception of Costs				-0.20^{***} (0.01)
Civic Duty				0.06^{***} (0.01)
Political Ambitions				0.62^{***} (0.02)
Social Norms				0.06^{***} (0.02)
Left-Right Ideology				0.15^{***} (0.04)
Ideology Squared				-0.02^{***} (0.003)
Social Network Motivations			0.39^{***} (0.02)	0.37^{***} (0.02)
Constant	-0.31^{**} (0.12)	-1.53^{***} (0.20)	-1.89^{***} (0.13)	-1.84^{***} (0.16)
AIC	48505.22	48304.47	47189.53	44763.09
Observations	12,114	12,114	12,114	12,114
R^2	0.02	0.04	0.12	0.28

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis. Smaller values of the AIC indicate a better model performance. * p<0.10 **p<0.05 *** p<0.01.

Table 2 contains the estimates of overall party activism scale using the different models in the analysis. The general incentives model is clearly the most successful in terms of goodness of fit with an R^2 statistic of 0.28 and also the smallest (best) AIC value[9]. All predictors in the model with the exception of the respondent's attitudes to immigration are statistically significant. Efficacy-discounted collective benefits have a positive impact on activism, while perceptions of the costs of activism have a negative impact. Equally, political ambitions, social norms relating to participation, social networks and perceptions that the respondent has a duty to get involved in politics all have positive impacts on activism. Similarly, individuals are more likely to be active the further to the right they are on the left-right ideological scale. However, the quadratic specification of this variable shows that the effect weakens as they move further to the right. Finally, education has a positive effect on activism, and income has a negative effect.

While the general incentives model is the most successful, it is clear that the relative deprivation and mobilisation models contribute to explaining overall activism as well. In the micro-relative deprivation model, indicators of the respondent feeling left behind by national prosperity and also the relative deprivation scale have statistically significant impacts on activism. These sources of individual feelings of deprivation act as stimuli to activism. Similarly, in common with the general incentives model, education has a positive impact on activism and income a negative impact. This finding itself can be a source of relative deprivation if individuals perceive a gap between their educational backgrounds and their incomes.

The revised relative deprivation model adds macro-level policy variables relating to the economy, immigration and UK membership of the European Union. It is clear that these national policy variables have an important impact on activism. Individuals who are optimistic about the state of the national economy are less likely to be active, so grievances over the national economy

[9] The general incentives model has many more variables than the other models and for this reason might be expected to be a better fit. The Aikaike Information Criteria (AIC) penalises models with larger numbers of variables and so provides a better measure of fit than the R^2 statistic

help to drive participation. In addition dissatisfaction with UK membership of the European Union and also with immigration into Britain serves to stimulate activism. On the other hand anti-elitist attitudes and dissatisfaction with the state of democracy in Britain have no effects. These findings suggest that concrete policy grievances at the macro-level drive activism, but rather more abstract ideas about the state of democracy and elite behaviour do not.

Turning next to the mobilisation model, this shows that members who pay more attention to politics were more likely to be active, which is not surprising. In addition, individuals who were persuaded joined the party by 'significant others' and were attracted by the desire to meet like-minded people were also more active. It is clear from these results that social networks mobilise individuals to be active. There is also evidence of family socialisation effects as well, since they were more likely to be active if their parents were involved in party politics when they were growing up. The same point can be made about respondents who had previously been a party member in the past which boosted their rates of activism in the party.

One of the most important factors in the mobilisation model is attitudes to Nigel Farage, the party leader at the time. This variable compares his popularity among members with that of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders. It shows that individuals who liked him a lot and at the same time disliked other leaders a lot were more likely to be active. Moreover the quadratic specification shows that as this gap grows wider the bigger the effect on activism. This variable captures how anti-elite sentiments arising from a distrust of conventional political leaders and attraction to their own leader have a direct effect on participation in UKIP.

Table 2 looks at the overall relationship between the different models and activism, but as the earlier discussion indicates we identified three different types of activism in the data. Accordingly, in the next section we examine how these models of participation combine to influence the different types of participation.

Modelling the Determinants of Types of Activism

The three types of participation in UKIP identified in Figure 2 were described as ‘Political Support’, ‘Political Activism’ and ‘High Intensity Activism’, each one describing successively higher levels of involvement in the grassroots party organisation. To shed further light on relationships we estimate the effects of a combination of all three models of activism on each of the activism scales. The results of this analysis appear in Table 3.

Table 3 Composite Models of the Dimensions of UKIP Party Activism

	Overall Activism	Political Support	Political Activism	High Intensity Activism
Age	0.22*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.003)	0.09*** (0.005)	0.07*** (0.01)
Male	0.07* (0.04)	0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
Education	0.09*** (0.03)	0.001 (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Income	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.01*** (0.002)	-0.03*** (0.003)	-0.03*** (0.004)
Left Behind	0.04*** (0.01)	0.01*** (0.002)	0.01*** (0.003)	0.02*** (0.003)
Micro Relative Deprivation	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.01*** (0.002)	-0.02*** (0.004)	-0.02*** (0.004)
Democracy Dissatisfaction	0.02 (0.02)	0.001 (0.004)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Anti-Elitist Perceptions	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.02*** (0.004)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
Economic Evaluations	-0.12*** (0.02)	-0.03*** (0.004)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
Dissatisfaction with the EU	0.32*** (0.03)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.12*** (0.01)
Dissatisfaction with Immigration	0.01 (0.02)	0.003 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Social Network Recruitment	0.85*** (0.05)	0.19*** (0.01)	0.36*** (0.02)	0.30*** (0.02)
Attention to Politics	0.05*** (0.01)	0.01*** (0.002)	0.02*** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.004)
Parents Politically Active	0.03 (0.02)	0.01** (0.004)	0.004 (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)
Party Member in Past	0.17*** (0.03)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)
Evaluations of Farage	0.02* (0.01)	0.003 (0.003)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01** (0.01)
Evaluations of Farage Squared	0.002* (0.001)	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.0004 (0.0004)	0.001 (0.0005)
Weighted Collective Benefits	0.002*** (0.0001)	0.0005*** (0.0000)	0.001*** (0.0000)	0.001*** (0.0000)
Perception of Costs	-0.19*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.004)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
Civic Duty	0.06*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.004)	0.01*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Political Ambitions	0.60*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.004)	0.23*** (0.01)	0.25*** (0.01)
Social Norms	0.05*** (0.02)	0.02*** (0.004)	0.01* (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Left-Right Ideology	0.16*** (0.04)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)
Ideology Squared	-0.02*** (0.003)	-0.003*** (0.001)	-0.01*** (0.001)	-0.01*** (0.001)
Social Network Motivations	0.37*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.004)	0.14*** (0.01)	0.15*** (0.01)
Constant	-3.06*** (0.23)	-0.84*** (0.06)	-1.09*** (0.09)	-1.13*** (0.10)
AIC	44216.65	10321.96	21684.84	23719.89
Observations	12,114	12,114	12,114	12,114
R^2	0.31	0.26	0.28	0.31

The first column in Table 3 contains the composite model estimates of the overall activism scale utilised in Table 2. It is clear that the goodness of fit (0.31) is higher than in the individual models in Table 2 and the AIC has improved, indicating that all three models make an independent contribution to explaining activism. Interestingly enough looking at the demographics in the composite model the educational effects have disappeared whereas age, income and to a lesser extent gender continue to have important effects on activism. This shows that in the most comprehensive specification of the activism model elderly white males on relative modest incomes are more likely to be active than members in general.

In the relative deprivation section of the composite model, perceptions of being left behind, economic evaluations and dissatisfaction with the European Union continue to be significant predictors of activism. However, anti-elitist attitudes have a negative impact on activism, which reinforces the earlier point that rather abstract ideas relating to corporate greed, inequality and the state of democracy in Britain do not appear to motivate UKIP members to be more active, even though many of them agree with the statements on which the scales were built.

As far as the mobilisation model is concerned all of the variables continue to be strong predictors in the composite model, except for evaluations of Nigel Farage which still has an effect, but it is linear rather than a quadratic. Thus the UKIP leader plays an important role in mobilising members to be active, alongside their connections to social networks and their past experience of party membership. The effect of parental involvement in party politics is no longer significant indicating that its effects are explained by other variables.

The general incentives section of the composite model is very similar to the individual version in Table 2. Thus activism is motivated by collective benefits and inhibited by perceptions of costs. A sense of civic duty, ambitions to be involved in politics, social norms and motivations arising from the process of politics itself all continue to have important effects. Finally party

members to the right of the political spectrum are more likely to be active than others, but the effects weaken as they move further to the right.

The remaining columns in Table 3 contain estimates of the political support, political activism and high-intensity activism scales and they are all very similar to the overall activism model. In every model age, income and gender are significant predictors of activism and support, but not education. In relation to the relative deprivation model, perceptions of being left behind continue to be significant predictors, although the coefficients suggest they are more important for activists than for supporters. The micro-relative deprivation scale has changed signs and has a negative impact on supporters and activists but does not appear to influence high intensity activists. This suggests that when controls for other variables are in place these rather abstract items have a tendency to demobilise some respondents. A similar point can be made about the anti-elite scale. The macro-policy variables are important in all three models but they tend to be stronger for activists than for supporters.

In the mobilisation model the effects tend to be stronger in the case of activists and high intensity activists than for supporters. This is true for the recruitment of members through their social networks, and also in relation to incentives to build a network of like-minded individuals after joining the party. In this regard past party membership remains a strong predictor in all three models, though not parental party activism. Nigel Farage continued to have an important effect on participation, but the UKIP leader had a bigger impact on supporters than he did on activists. This suggests that he was more important for recruiting new members than for encouraging existing members to become more active.

The general incentives model plays an important role in explaining participation in all three models. Not surprisingly, political ambition is more important for the activists than supporters, although some of them harbour political ambitions as well. In addition, while all are aware of the costs of participation they have a bigger deterrent effect among activists than for supporters. Finally

all three types of participant are influenced by a sense of civic duty, social norms regarding participation and the left-right ideology scale. As regards the latter, the effects of ideology are stronger for the activists and high-intensity activists than for the supporters. Finally, as we observed in connection with the mobilisation model the effects of social networks are all positive, but activists are more likely to be motivated by them than supporters, which is not surprising given that they interact much more closely with each other.

Conclusions

Findings from a survey of UKIP's membership conducted in late 2014 and early 2015 suggest that members of populist radical right parties, which are prominent in many EU member states, may have a lot in common with mainstream party members when it comes to understanding what motivates intra-party involvement. In UKIP's case, many of the factors used to explain mainstream activism—such as cognitive mobilisation and various incentives for involvement—are at work, bringing people in to join this populist radical right party and subsequently encouraging some of them to be active.

The findings confirm the validity of existing models of activism that have been tested on different party families in different countries in previous research, and the results do not suggest that PRR parties are fundamentally different from these others. Second, when we use the data to take context into account with additional control variables (e.g. when people decided to become a member of UKIP[10]) we find substantially identical results suggesting the findings are robust.

The present analyses point to the need for a more nuanced understanding of recruitment and activism in radical right parties. Elite mobilisation is an important factor in explaining participation in the grassroots but it is far from being the whole story. Although variables tapping such influences on participation did account for some variation in the models, they were not as crucial as we might

[10] See Online Appendix.

expect if the party members were simply motivated by a top-down mobilisation process driven by charismatic leaders.

This unique survey of UKIP members throws considerable light on the predictive power of alternative models of activism within the populist right. However, this advantage comes at the cost of generalizability and raises the question about the extent to which present findings apply to other populist parties in other countries. While future research will benefit from conducting similar large-scale surveys for such parties, we believe that results documented here will show a robust general pattern for the determinants of party activism within the populist right.

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