Defeat of the People's Army?

The 2015 British General Election and the UK Independence Party (UKIP)

Abstract

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The 2015 general election in Britain saw a major attempt by a relatively new party - the UK Independence Party (UKIP) - to secure elected representation. While UKIP received nearly four million votes, the party left the 2015 general election with just one Member of Parliament. Our evidence, drawn from analysis of British Election survey data and in-depth qualitative interviews with activists, suggests that UKIP's campaign was a major factor in its inability to translate widespread support into elected representation. While the party pursued a targeted campaign, this had only a modest impact on its own vote. UKIP's lack of resources, inexperience and inability to operationalize highly effective, targeted local campaigns severely hamstrung the party and prevented it from converting support into MPs at Westminster.

1. Introduction

One of the enduring realities of political life in a single member plurality system is that third parties are highly susceptible to being 'squeezed' by established parties (Duverger, 1964; Butler, 1963; Lijphart, 1984; Riker, 1982). Under such a system, challenger parties often only make incremental progress by exploiting context specific factors and favourable electoral situations (Curtice and Steed 1982). As past research on British politics has shown, a key part of this progression is often to target resources efficiently to avoid a geographical spread of electoral support and limit the number of wasted votes. This is often achieved by establishing recognition and perceptions of electoral credibility at the local level, through concerted and continuous activism (Cutts 2006; 2014). The rise of the Liberal Democrats, prior to the party joining a governing coalition after the 2010 general election, demonstrates how a highly targeted and focussed campaign strategy can offset perceptions of a 'credibility gap', providing third parties with a platform for electoral success (Russell and Fieldhouse 2005; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2009; Whiteley et al. 2006).

Following the 2010 general election, however, the Liberal Democrats experienced a substantial decline in support. During the first seven months of coalition government, their average level of support in opinion polls slumped from 23 per cent to 8 per cent (Cutts and Russell, 2015). By the spring of 2013, the third party mantle in England and Wales was assumed by the UK Independence Party (UKIP). Led by Nigel Farage, who framed his revolt as a 'People's Army', the populist radical right party was soon the third most popular party in the polls and then won the 2014 European Parliament elections, polling 27.5 per cent of the vote. Shortly afterwards, UKIP attracted two defecting Conservative Party MPs who at parliamentary by-elections in Clacton and Rochester and Strood were subsequently re-elected as UKIP MPs. Ahead of the 2015 general election, UKIP specifically sought to emulate the

intensive campaign model of the Liberal Democrats, predicting that a targeted seat campaign would help it secure at least forty seats in the House of Commons.

UKIP's electoral performance at the 2015 general election was certainly impressive. The party won more than 3.8 million votes or 12.8 per cent of the vote. It polled at least 10 per cent of the vote in 450 seats and over 30 per cent in eight of them, delivering the most impressive result for an independent new party since the rise of the Labour Party in the 1920s. However, in terms of elected representation, UKIP's campaign was a failure. While UKIP finished second in 120 constituencies – 114 of which were in England – the party left the general election with just one MP, representing the constituency of Clacton in Essex that had already been won at a parliamentary by-election during the autumn of 2014.[i] How effective, then, was this election campaign and might it help to explain UKIP's lack of success at the 2015 general election?

In this article, we analyse data from the 2015 British Election Study (BES) alongside in-depth qualitative interviews with UKIP activists to explore the effects of UKIP's campaign. We argue that, shaped by its origins as a non-electoral pressure group, UKIP's campaign was consistently undermined by a lack of resource, professionalism and experience. Though Farage would prove to be an electoral asset, his party's supply-side weaknesses restricted its ability to convert sympathizers in the face of the other parties' more professional and intensive campaigns. Our data reveal two key findings that support this assertion. First, when we compare patterns campaign contact across parties, we find that, with the exception of its primary target seats, UKIP's campaign contact was both less frequently and less nuanced than the campaign efforts of its primary competitors. Second, we find that UKIP's campaign contact was less likely to translate in to support for the party. Taken together, these two findings support the idea that UKIP's campaign weakness undermined the party's electoral success in 2015. Consequently, UKIP was unable to capitalize fully on earlier gains at second-order local and

European Parliament elections. In our conclusions, we re-state the importance of intensive local campaigning for third parties in majoritarian systems and stress how activism is similarly vital for radical right parties if they are to breakthrough ceiling effects and convert potential support into votes at the ballot box, and ultimately seats in Parliament.

2. Campaigns and Electoral Support

For more than thirty years, the literature on party campaigns has been awash with studies that refute the claim that local campaigns yield only negligible effects on electoral performance (Butler and Kavanagh, 1992; 1997). There is now a large body of research that shows how campaigns can assume a decisive role in affecting electoral outcomes. The more effort that is expended on an election campaign the greater the electoral return (Pattie and Johnston, 2009; Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2009; Fisher and Denver, 2008). While campaigning techniques for the targeting of voters have become more sophisticated (Johnston et al., 2012; Fisher, Cutts and Fieldhouse 2011), traditional offline methods such as doorstep canvassing, leafleting and holding public meetings remain central to party efforts to socialise and mobilize voters. The changing nature of constituency campaigns is most evident in the way in which they are increasingly coordinated from the centre, often in collaboration with the local party (Fisher and Denver, 2008; Fisher et al., 2011). Rather than restrict this activity to the immediate campaign period of an election, local parties, especially in marginal constituencies, are often active locally in the four to six month period before the official campaign begins (Johnston et al., 2012). Some are active throughout the entire electoral cycle in a quest to establish and maintain support until polling day (Cutts 2006; Cutts et al., 2012). Intensive local campaigns have also been shown to produce broader ‘spillover effects’ (Cutts and Webber, 2010) and to be more effective depending on whether a party has relied more on personalised methods to contact

voters than impersonal tools. In summary, parties have become more professional and rational in how they target resources to achieve maximum electoral returns.

These effects underscore the importance of campaigns for third and challenger parties, especially those that have to overcome the psychological and mechanical hurdles that exist in a simple plurality system (Duverger, 1964; Norris, 1997). Such parties are especially dependent on campaigns to cultivate the concentrated support that is required to overcome first-past-the-post, establish a profile and personal vote for their lesser known candidates, and sustain contact with voters that is required to project an image of electoral credibility (Russell and Fieldhouse, 2005; Cutts, 2014). Grassroots campaigns also help to recruit local activists, strengthening party infrastructure and enabling parties to target their local resources more effectively. For these reasons, campaigns are also especially important for radical right parties that are often stigmatized in society and have to overcome entrenched social norms that discourage citizens from supporting parties that are associated with racism or xenophobia (Blinder, Ford and Ivarsflaten, 2013; Klandermans and Mayer, 2005). Forging and sustaining close relations with voters could help more ideologically radical parties counter these effects, extending their appeal beyond political protestors. Yet while such observations underscore the importance of a targeted and intensive strategy that identifies and mobilizes sympathizers while avoiding supporters of other parties, there is also a noticeable lack of research on the effects of smaller and radical right party campaigns at national elections.

3. Electoral Context of the 2015 British General Election

The 2015 general election was held after five years of coalition government, a period that also saw a rapid decline in public support for the Liberal Democrats, the junior coalition partner. The general election, widely predicted to produce another hung parliament, was also held amid an issue agenda that was favourable to the insurgent radical right UKIP. Like other populist

radical right parties (Rydgren, 2012), UKIP attracted rising support from working-class or self-employed white men who had few qualifications and felt intensely anxious about immigration, disapproved of Britain's EU membership and felt dissatisfied with established parties (Ford and Goodwin 2014). Its support was strongest in more economically deprived and predominantly white communities in Eastern England where average levels of education are low (see Figure 1). Rising levels of net migration into Britain combined with the failure of David Cameron's Conservative government to fulfil its pledge of reducing annual net migration to the 'tens of thousands', and a lingering financial crisis, put the economy and immigration as the two most salient issues.[ii]

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Aiming to build on its past success at second-order local and European Parliament elections, and the capture of two parliamentary constituencies in the autumn of 2014, UKIP announced that at the 2015 general election it would adopt a target seat strategy. Internally the party had decided to concentrate its scarce resources in thirty-two 'key seats'. The target strategy was influenced by the Liberal Democrats, although unlike the traditional third party UKIP had originated as a non-electoral pressure group. In path dependent fashion, UKIP's origins meant that the party had little experience of electoral politics, constituency campaigns or success in a majoritarian system. Between its formation in 1993 and 2010 the party had focused almost exclusively on second-order European Parliament elections, never polling above 3.1 per cent of the national vote at general elections. During the same period, UKIP contested thirty-five parliamentary by-elections but averaged only 2.6 per cent of the vote, surpassing the 5 per cent threshold in only four.

This background profoundly shaped the 2015 general election campaign. UKIP's decision to contest three parliamentary by-elections during the autumn of 2014 delayed the launch of its target seat strategy, with seats not finalised until the start of the general election

long campaign in December 2014.[iii] Where did UKIP target? As shown in Table 1, most of UKIP's target seats were held by the Conservative Party and located in eastern and southern England where the challenger party had polled strongly at second-order local and European elections. While Farage talked publicly about targeting Labour's northern and typically working-class constituencies, only eight of UKIP's target seats were held by Labour. Nor did UKIP always target marginal seats. In several cases, the incumbent MP had won more than 45 per cent of the vote in 2010, and in twenty, the incumbent party held a majority of at least ten points. Other target seats, such as North West Cambridgeshire, were not the older, working-class, less well-educated and heavily white seats where UKIP tended to poll strongly. Several target seats were chosen not because of objective criteria but patronage. In an interview with as UKIP's head of candidates, he explained that 'some seats were clearly not chosen based on our chances but a desire to keep people happy'. At the start of the short campaign – the end of March 2015 – the party reduced its thirty-two target seats to a shorter list of ten 'top targets', largely in response to the results of internal polls and resource constraints. These ten seats received much of the remaining funds: several direct mail shots, as well as postal surveys for twenty thousand voters in each seat; a billboard campaign and visits from Nigel Farage that were intended to draw attention to the local UKIP candidate. The party also undertook extensive telephone canvassing across target seats attempting to identify fifteen thousand 'pledges' (i.e., people who pledged to vote for the party) in each seat.

[Insert Table 1 here]

4. Internal Weaknesses and Growing Pains

To what extent was UKIPs campaign strategy undermined by its internal weaknesses and its failures on the ground? Evidence from interviews with activists who overview the 2015 general election campaign suggest this was a major issue. According to UKIP's campaign director, the

party's candidates in target seats had little experience of constituency campaigns, often returning from canvassing voters with useless information (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015). As he explained, 'It was bizarre. Some even used their own cryptic codes like 0, 1, 2 or stars and symbols. They simply had no training in how to campaign. Even though some were elected councillors, they had never done proper grassroots work. They often won their seats because of UKIP's name not their campaigning skills'. Therefore, the party struggled to gather the data that is required for a target seat campaign, reducing its ability to identify possible switchers and even mobilise those who were attracted to the party. The internal weakness was not lost on UKIP's chairman who recognised the limitations of the party's ground campaign but largely traced the constraint to the rapid expansion of the party. 'The big growing up piece is getting candidates to understand that if you can't do the get out the vote at the end of the process then you cannot get into the mix. You have to have data. We were trying to catch up with data functions that the Liberal Democrats and others had been doing for generations'. Resources were also scarce. Several constituency campaigns lacked local party infrastructure, a problem raised during one interview with a party candidate: 'I am in a target seat but I don't even have a branch. How am I supposed to get thousands of pledges?'

Such problems at the local level were mirrored in the central operation. The onset of professionalised campaigning, the micro-managing of local efforts, use of big data and the integral role of experienced consultants and strategists now means that the central operation is often a crucial element of electoral campaigns. Yet while UKIP's competitors centrally managed and carefully monitored campaign activity and data gathered in target seats, as the election approached its central operation became wafer-thin and was directed by only a handful of activists. During the campaign, most of the party's senior officials vacated the central headquarters to stand themselves as parliamentary candidates. In stark contrast to the well-resourced central operations of the established parties, a UKIP senior campaign official

explained how 'there were one or two people but most were not experienced and had not put a campaign together before' (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015). It was a ghost ship. It was overwhelming. Many times, I would say, "How the hell are we achieving this?" Maintaining a double-figure poll rating felt miraculous…It was Rorke's Drift every single day'.

The campaign effort was also undermined by other internal weaknesses. Infighting over the strategy meant that UKIP's messaging was not finalised until the end of March 2015, less than three months from polling day. Senior activists were divided between those who wanted the campaign to target non-traditional and 'softer' issues, such as demanding reform of the banking and energy markets and clamping down on corporate tax avoidance, and others who wanted a sustained and heavy focus on UKIP's traditional issues of immigration and the EU (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015). This factionalism further delayed the campaign, which in the end focussed on a core-vote strategy. Party literature and pledge cards called on the electorate to reject the EU, control national borders, invest an additional £3 billion into the National Health Service (NHS), reduce the amount spent on foreign aid, and remove minimum-wage earners from taxation. At various points during the campaign Farage sought to underscore the core-vote strategy, suggesting after terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015 that 'a fifth column' was living in Western societies and then, during the leaders debates, that non-British nationals with HIV should not have access to the NHS (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015). UKIP sought to organise its message around a 'positive' slogan, 'Believe in Britain', though both the party and its leader were frequently portrayed as xenophobic or racist. There were also regular outbreaks of infighting that owed more to personality disputes than strategy. Farage did not talk with his Director of Communications for much of the campaign (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015). Toward polling day, and as several published polls suggested that UKIP's prospects looked increasingly bleak, most of the activists and remaining resources were diverted to the

Kent seat of South Thanet, where Nigel Farage unsuccessfully campaigned to win election to the House of Commons.

In summary, the qualitative evidence from interviews with senior UKIP figures suggests that a lack of electoral professionalism, grassroots infrastructure and local campaign know-how to deliver targeted and intensive campaigns was an important factor in the party's eventual failure to increase its elected representation. Given the weaknesses of UKIP's campaign, the party would have been at a disadvantage vis-a-vis its competitors, which were more experienced and organised. Thus, we expect that UKIP's campaign would have been less effective than the campaigns the other major parties competing in 2015. In the next section, we draw on individual-level survey data to test this argument in a more robust manner, investigating the intensity and impact of UKIP's 2015 general election campaign.

5. Examining Party Contact

In order to examine the impact of UKIP's campaign, and those of the other parties, we use the pre-election, campaign and post-election waves of the 2015 British Election Study (BES) Internet panel. The sample includes all 630 parliamentary constituencies, with an average of around 50 respondents in each constituency, and a weighted total sample size of 26,123 respondents.[iv] In addition to being asked whether they were contacted by a party in each of the three waves, respondents were also asked about the ways in which they were contacted – by telephone, letter/leaflet, visited at home, contacted in the street, email, SMS or through other ways.[v] Who did UKIP contact and how intensive was its campaign compared to the other parties? Was the party more reliant on impersonal methods or was its much-hyped 'People's Army' more likely to deliver personal contact on the doorstep to get the message across?

The premise of this paper is that if UKIP had run an effective campaign as the Conservatives and Labour then we should obtain contact rates and regression coefficients for

UKIP that are at least similar to both those established British parties. Our expectation, given the campaign literature on third parties and right wing parties in Britain (Cutts, 2006; 2014; Cutts and Goodwin, 2014; Fieldhouse et al., 2006), is that for UKIP to be successful it needed to out-perform these established parties on the ground, particularly in its primary target seats. Of course, it is plausible that Conservative and Labour campaigners in these seats would know better than UKIP who and who not to bother contacting. And, as such, there could be selection bias with the established parties being far more efficient and effective at mobilising their voters and contacting those who lean towards their parties than the ones who are less likely to support them. But since the 1990s, both Labour and the Conservatives have become more rational in their campaign tactics and targeting, pouring resources into key marginal seats and somewhat neglecting safer constituencies (Fisher et al., 2011; Fisher and Denver, 2008). In these marginal seats, both parties employ a joined up strategy or nationally coordinated local campaigning with different tools and individual targeting used to mobilise and persuade voters to support them. By contrast, safer constituencies have been somewhat 'left to their own devices' and with declining members (Fisher et al., 2014) and fewer national resources provided over successive elections, the capacity to run intensive campaigns and collate detailed voting information through doorstep and telephone canvassing about local voters has diminished.

A cursory glance of the 2010 survey of electoral agents' data, which provides first-hand accounts of constituency based campaigning, starkly illustrates these trends. Of those Conservative incumbent seats with a lead of 10 per cent or more over their second placed opponent, 31 per cent did no doorstep canvassing in 2010 and 62 per cent did no telephone canvassing. Indeed in these safe Conservative seats, only 18 per cent doorstep canvassed 50 per cent or more of the constituency at the 2010 General Election. And, there are similar findings for Labour. In Labour safe incumbent seats, 38 per cent did no doorstep canvassing, just over 50 per cent did no telephone canvassing and less than 10 per cent doorstep canvassed

50 per cent or more of the seat in 2010. If we contrast this with similar data from the 1992 survey of electoral agents' we find that only 6 per cent of Conservative and 23 per cent of Labour incumbent safe seats did no doorstep canvassing while 63.4 per cent of Conservative safe seats had 50 per cent of more of the constituency canvassed compared to 27 per cent of Labour.

Put simply, in Conservative and Labour safe seats, there has been a marked decline in local canvassing and therefore less personal contact with voters and subsequently much less information collated about the voting preferences of electors over time. Established parties are increasingly less likely to know exactly where there vote is and have up-to-date or previous information about whether an individual is undecided or leaning one way or another. As the literature on third parties in Britain suggests (Cutts, 2006; 2014), this makes them extremely vulnerable to a concerted effort from a party who has built support locally through local election success. In 2015, the majority of UKIP primary target seats were far from marginal. Either Labour or the Conservatives had a majority over the second place party in 2010 of 13 per cent or more in seven of the ten seats (and more than 20 per cent in three seats) targeted by the party. Across the secondary UKIP targets, a further seven seats were constituencies where either the Conservatives or Labour were defending a 2010 majority in excess of 20 per cent. Since 2013 UKIP has won more than 300 local council seats, many of which were in the party's top targets (Rotherham; Great Yarmouth, Thanet, Dudley, Thurrock, Hartlepool to name but a few). So in these seats, where active local representatives are present, our expectation is that the party will have up-to-date registers and records of individual voting preferences at least or possibly to a greater extent than its main opponents. As such, in UKIP targets, we would expect UKIP contact rates to mirror or potentially be much higher than its political counterparts.

Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents reporting contact from the four main parties during the three waves.[vi] Given that UKIP's support is considerably lower in Scotland,

we report the amount of party contact in Great Britain and England and Wales. As expected, the percentage contacted by UKIP was higher in England and Wales but the difference was not substantial. The highest percentage of recorded party contact occurred in the post-election survey, which reflects the more intense campaign activity in the month before the election. Just under one-fifth of respondents reported being contacted by at least one party in the six-month period from mid-October 2014 to March 2015. This is a crucial period for the main parties, particularly in target seats, given that campaigns focus on identifying potential voters and building a core base. Across the three successive campaign waves, an increasing proportion of respondents were contacted by all the main parties. Labour was the most active in all three waves, although in England and Wales there was little difference in the contact rates of Labour and the Conservatives.

UKIP, however, lagged well behind the main parties in each wave. Data from the post-election panel survey suggests that Labour contacted nearly twice as many respondents than UKIP while the Liberal Democrats, who ran a defensive and restrictive target strategy, also contacted more respondents than their new competitor. UKIP's failure to sustain its campaign activity after the 2014 European Parliament elections is clearly visible and reflects the internal weaknesses discussed above. In the six months prior to the general election campaign period both the Conservatives and Labour contacted in excess of three times more respondents than UKIP. Moreover, while UKIP increased its activity as the election drew nearer, the party had neither the money nor manpower that would otherwise be required to maintain an active campaign across a large number of seats. UKIP's lack of electoral experience and local infrastructure in key areas exacerbated this supply-side problem, depriving the party of the foresight and strength to deliver more active grassroots campaigns. The party was thus unable to outmanoeuvre the main parties. Across successive waves an increasing proportion of respondents who were contacted by UKIP were also contacted by the Conservatives or Labour,

peaking at 88 per cent and 87 per cent respectively in the post-election wave, reflecting the competitiveness of the seats in which UKIP was targeting its limited resources.

[Insert Table 2 here]

During the official campaign period, most respondents reported being contacted by leaflets, either locally delivered or directly through the mail (see Table 3). Data from the post-election panel wave suggests almost 38 per cent of respondents received a leaflet from Labour compared to around 35 per cent from the Conservatives. Even though fewer respondents received a leaflet from UKIP or the Liberal Democrats, it still proved to be the favoured source of contact for both parties. Across the campaign and post-election waves, more than 90 per cent of voters who were contacted by UKIP or the Liberal Democrats were done so through leaflets or other printed mail. The data shows some evidence of Labour's push to contact more people on the doorstep, with 10 per cent in the post-election wave stating that they were contacted in this way. Even so, it was not appreciably larger than the equivalent figure for the Conservative Party. Yet when it comes to UKIP we find little evidence to suggest that the 'People's Army' did much beyond contacting local voters through leaflets and other printed material. UKIP contacted fewer people on the doorstep, telephone or through street stalls than the other three parties. If the 'People's Army' was active locally then it was delivering leaflets and other mail rather than engaging with telephoning voters or talking with them face-to-face.

[Insert Table 3 here]

Was UKIP's campaign intensity appreciably higher in its target seats where the party would average 24 per cent of the vote, ten points higher than its average across England and Wales? Here we contrast party contact in the thirty-two seats that the party initially planned to target in the aftermath of the 2014 European Parliament elections and including the 'top ten' target seats which the party pinpointed as its best opportunities for success (see Table 4). There are stark differences in the contact rates across the successive waves in the target seats

compared to all other seats. In its top ten target seats, the percentage of respondents contacted by UKIP in the six months prior to the general election campaign was more than seven times larger than across all seats. Indeed, UKIP's contact rates in its top ten target seats were considerably higher than the Conservatives and Labour. This contrasts sharply to the contact rates seen across UKIP's longer-list of target seats and across all seats. Here, the percentage of respondents contacted by each party is similar, with the Conservatives actually recording the highest contact rates. The data suggest that, despite its delayed campaign, in the six months prior to the general election UKIP did campaign intensively, directing its limited resource and effort in its top ten target seats. Data from the two campaign waves also show slight disparities in the percentage of voters contacted in all of UKIP's target seats and the top ten target seats. In the latter, UKIP contact rates are comparable to both the Conservatives and Labour, with each party contacting nearly 50 per cent of respondents. Across all targets, the percentage contacted by UKIP is around 11 per cent lower while both the Conservatives and Labour recorded higher contact rates.

[Insert Table 4 here]

While UKIP had higher contact rates in its top ten target seats our evidence also suggests that the party employed a wider variety of methods to contact voters in these seats. Data from the post-election wave suggests that, in the top ten target seats, 98 per cent of people who were contacted by UKIP received locally delivered leaflets or direct mail. While this was the main source of contact there is strong evidence that many respondents were contacted by the party on more than one occasion and through different methods. In contrast to all seats, in its top ten targets UKIP activists spoke to more respondents on the doorstep and in the street than the Conservatives or Labour. The use of email to mobilise core supporters and telephone canvassing was also appreciably higher in UKIP's top target seats and were not far behind the two main parties. As the general election approached, therefore, the descriptive evidence

reveals how UKIP was pursuing a two-tier target strategy. The party's limited money and manpower was focussed tightly on its ten primary targets as it sought to match the efforts of the main parties. In these seats the party remained dependent on printed literature but also contacted more people face-to-face than in other non-top target seats.

[Insert Table 5 here]

Our evidence suggests that UKIP contacted voters more than once and in a variety of ways; the hallmark of an intensive local constituency campaign. Put simply the party was placing its electoral hopes on clinching a handful of these primary target seats. Whereas UKIP's campaign effort in its secondary list of target seats was largely sustained across successive campaign waves the contact rates were not as high and lagged behind the main parties. Yet even in their primary targets, there was little difference in post-election contact rates between UKIP and its main competitors. But how does UKIPs post-election contact rate compare with the intensity of Labour and Conservative campaigns in their key target seats? Given that Labour and Conservative targets include seats that each party was seeking to gain and defend, Table 6 shows the post-election contact rates along with those contacted by leaflets and doorstep canvassing in each party's top ten most marginal seats they were defending and their top ten offensive targets. In all cases, Labour and Conservative contact rates were considerably higher than UKIPs post-election contact rate in their primary target seats. Where both parties were seeking to gain seats, it was around 12 per cent higher and only in those constituencies where the Conservatives were defending did the difference fall to 8 per cent. The contact rates for doorstep canvassing were similar for the Conservatives and UKIP but Labour used the tool to a much greater extent than its competitors reflecting the party's strategy of seeking more face-to-face conversations with the electorate. Of course, a note of caution must be made about these figures. It is perfectly reasonable to expect Labour and the Conservatives to know – from previous campaigns with up-to-date and longstanding canvass data – where their identifiers are

and therefore record higher contact rates in these seats. UKIP, even in their primary targets, are unlikely to have comparable prior data. Nonetheless, it is unlikely this fully explains the disparity. In simple terms, these findings complement earlier qualitative evidence that UKIP, unlike its main competitors, lacked the local operation and general capacity to reach voters in large enough numbers where it mattered most.

[Insert Table 6 here]

6. Modelling Party Contact

Were the respondents contacted by UKIP individuals who already identified with the party and/or intended to vote for it at the general election? Is there evidence that the party was also attracting other party supporters? And were these electors concentrated in UKIP's key target seats or were they located in Conservative or Labour-held seats? To assess the impact of UKIPs targeted strategy more systematically in Table 7 we report two multilevel logistic regressions.[vii] The first model compares individuals who received any type of UKIP contact with those who were not contacted, based on their response in the post-election wave. The second model examines respondents who only reported being contacted face-to-face on the doorstep by UKIP. Here the aim was to determine whether face-to-face contact was primarily reserved for mobilising existing supporters and party identifiers rather than persuading other voters to support the party. Parties are increasingly active prior to the 'official campaign' in order to identify their core supporters and potential identifiers so that they can mobilise such partisans in the final weeks and on polling day. To take account of this the independent variables in both models include whether the individual is a UKIP or other party identifier and respondents' voting intentions pre-campaign. Other predictors include the type of seat, which allows us to explore whether UKIP contact across Labour or Conservative-held seats, as well as more marginal constituencies. Both first and second tier Ukip target seats are included with the

expectation that contact, and particularly doorstep canvassing, is likely to be more intensive in these constituencies than non-targets.[viii]

[Insert Table 7 here]

The results for overall contact in Model 1 confirm that voters in UKIP's primary and secondary target seats were significantly more likely to be contacted than respondents residing in seats that were not targeted. Respondents in primary UKIP target seats were more than twelve times more likely to be canvassed face-to-face on the doorstep than respondents who lived elsewhere, suggesting that the party was delivering more personalised forms of contact in these top targets (see Table 7 Model 2). Prior to the 2015 general election, however, there is evidence that UKIP adopted a less professional 'scatter gun' approach to its targeting of the electorate. Both those who intended to vote for UKIP and those who intended to support one of the other parties were targeted by the party. Part of the explanation reflects the complex party battles on the ground. Prior to the 2015 general election, when UKIP was experiencing its initial wave of popularity and electoral success, the party tended to be more active across different types of seats, perhaps hoping that a broader section of the electorate was available. Alternatively, this perhaps reflects the weakness of the party campaign on the ground. Unlike their main competitors, most UKIP constituency parties, even possible targets, would not have contained full canvass and validated vote histories of registered electors. One of the goals of the pre-campaign would have been to blanket contact electors in the constituency to gauge support and 'fly the party flag'. Interestingly, there is some evidence that UKIP used impersonalised methods – predominantly direct mail and local leaflets – to contact those who intended to vote for others. Evidence from Model 2 suggests that only those who intended to vote for UKIP received a personal canvass from the party's constituency teams. However, it is clear that UKIP used the 'short campaign' period to mobilise predominantly their own identifiers although our models suggest that both UKIP and Conservative identifiers were significantly more likely to be doorstep canvassed.

Electors living in Labour-held seats – ultra-safe, safe and marginal constituencies – were significantly less likely to be contacted when compared against the reference category of Conservative ultra-safe seats. UKIP was particularly active in marginal seats held by the Conservatives. Being contacted by the party, including doorstep canvassing, was more prevalent in Conservative-held seats than Labour-held seats, reinforcing earlier qualitative evidence that UKIP lacked the resources – both money and manpower – and arguably the will from the centre to compete with Labour on the ground in its northern heartlands.

7. Did UKIP's campaign matter in the 2015 General Election?

Did UKIP's targeted campaign influence voters to support the party? And was public support for the self-anointed 'People's Army' strongest in its top target seats? To address these questions we return to waves 4 and 6 from the BES panel[ix] and test these and other relationships after controlling for known explanations of party choice – party identification, ratings of party leaders, issue salience, left-right placement, and key socio-demographic predictors.[x] Logistic regression is used to contrast voting for Ukip against other parties.[xi]

Table 8 reports the results of three logistic regression models that examine the effects of UKIP contact and targeting on party support, and after controlling for individual socio-demographic variables and established predictors of party choice. As in the previous models, party contact is a dichotomous variable – whether a respondent was contacted by a particular party or not. UKIP target seats are again divided into two tiers based on the qualitative data obtained from the campaign. Model 1 contains socio-demographic predictors, party contact variables and the two UKIP target status variables.[xii] Model 2 includes the established drivers of party support. We also take account of the socio-demographic status of the constituency given that one might expect UKIP support to vary according to the characteristics of people who live there. The inclusion of twelve socio-economic variables derived from the 2011 census

represents established social cleavages.[xiii] The final model includes all these variables as well as a prior intention to vote for UKIP from the pre-campaign wave of the BES. It is included to both combat endogeneity and to gauge the key predictors of party choice during the campaign by accounting for their influences at the start. We report a number of model fit statistics - R^2, Log Likelihood and Akaike Information Criterion – at different stages of the modelling process to assess improvements in the model (or not) following the introduction of additional predictors.

[Insert Table 8 here]

Model 1 examines the impact of UKIP's campaign, as well as other party campaigns once controlling for individual characteristics. Consistent with the literature, UKIP's supporters at the 2015 general election were predominantly male, lower educated and from older age cohorts. There is some evidence that UKIP's campaign mattered. Respondents contacted by the party were significantly more likely to vote for UKIP while contact from their opponents significantly reduced the likelihood of individuals voting UKIP. Farage and his party also benefitted significantly in their top ten target seats but not in the longer list of secondary targets. The magnitudes of the coefficients in these logit models are difficult to interpret. To ease interpretation, we estimate the discrete change on the probability for each of the values averaged across the observed values.[xiv] These average marginal effects (AMEs) are graphically illustrated in Figure 2. On average, the probability of voting UKIP if you were contacted by UKIP is twelve percentage points higher than not being contacted. Moreover, for individuals living in UKIP's top ten target seats the probability of voting for the party at the 2015 general election is on average four percentage points higher than for those living in non-target seats. Being contacted by the other parties also had significant effects. On average, if contacted by the Conservatives or Labour when compared with the base category, an individual is less likely to vote UKIP by four and seven percentage points respectively. While Liberal Democrat and

Nationalist contact, on average, reduces the probability of an individual voting for the party by three and eight percentage points. The probabilities of the remaining socio-economic variables are not that impressive with the exception of gender and education. The AME for male is three percent; on average, the probability of men voting for UKIP is three percentage points higher than women. Whereas full time students and individuals with undergraduate or postgraduate degrees are six per cent less likely than those in full or part time employment and those with no qualifications to vote UKIP.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

But does UKIP's campaign still matter when the key drivers of party support and attitudes to salient issues are included in the model? The results in Table 2 suggest that both UKIP contact and targeting remain significant predictors of the party's support, helping to drive its support at the 2015 general election. In relative terms, however, campaigns by other parties also continue to diminish any substantial effects, suggesting that UKIP struggled to make gains when competing against the established and more electorally experienced parties. As expected, core UKIP identifiers – those who advocate leaving the EU and rate immigration as the most important issue at the election – were significantly more likely to vote for UKIP. Individual feelings toward the party leaders also matter. Respondents who felt positively about David Cameron and/or Ed Miliband were significantly less likely to vote for UKIP. By contrast, during the general election Farage was loved and loathed in equal measure. Those who felt strongly positive toward the UKIP leader were certainly more likely to vote for his party, suggesting that for a not insignificant section of the electorate Farage was a 'vote winner' for UKIP. Interestingly, there is also evidence that UKIP garnered support from individuals living in both urban deprived and affluent areas suggesting that the party had relatively broad appeal among different sections of the electorate.

Clearly, any attempt to estimate the effectiveness of UKIP's campaign to both attract the supporters of other parties and mobilise existing supporters is complicated by the role of longer-term influences on voting behaviour. The use of panel data from the BES can help in this regard as one can specify models of UKIP support that contain a lagged endogenous dependent variable to account for the drivers of vote choice before the campaign began. Model 3 presents a logistic regression that estimates the effects of the campaigns and drivers of party choice after controlling for pre-campaign vote intention. Figure 3 shows the Average marginal effects (AMEs) of the statistically significant variables from Model 3. The results suggest that UKIP's campaign still mattered after controlling for other predictors of party support although the effects are minor and largely offset by other parties' campaigns. On average, the probability of voting UKIP if you were contacted by UKIP is two percentage points higher than not being contacted. Similar probabilities are recorded for Conservative and Nationalist campaign efforts during the short campaign in reducing UKIP's support. However, Labour activism had no significant impact on the UKIP vote. While for those individuals living in UKIP's top ten target seats the probability of voting for the party in 2015 is on average three percentage points higher than for those living in non-target seats. Farage also proved to be an effective electoral weapon for UKIP. On average, each additional voter who strongly liked Nigel Farage leads to an increase in the probability of voting UKIP of two percentage points. Despite controversial statements during the leadership debates and his personal battle to win the constituency of South Thanet it is evident that Farage did have a strong positive impact on his party's support. There is also some evidence that the activation of UKIP partisanship mattered but the effects are somewhat offset by the activation of Conservative, Labour, Nationalist and Green party identification, which significantly reduced the probability of voting for UKIP. The party also garnered support for its stance on leaving the EU and immigration. On average, the probability of voting UKIP was two percentage points higher for those who favoured leaving the EU than

those who wanted to stay. Similar probabilities were recorded for those who thought immigration was the most important issue.

[Insert Figure 3 here]

Our results suggest that while Farage and the party's stance on leaving the EU proved to be key drivers of UKIP support in the 'short' campaign, party activism proved to exert only modest effects on its vote when faced against the campaign activities of its rivals, particularly the Conservatives and the Nationalists. And even though there is some evidence that UKIP's campaign was perhaps more effective in activating existing predispositions (on average, the probability of voting UKIP if the individual had a prior intention before the 'short campaign' to vote for the party is nine percentage points higher than those who didn't intend to vote for UKIP) the effectiveness of the campaign in converting and mobilising voters in the final four weeks appears to be completely offset by the campaign effort of its political opponents. The most plausible explanation for this disparity is the internal constraints outlined above, namely UKIP's origins as a non-electoral pressure group, its lack of money and manpower during the campaign and poor strategic choices.

Table 9 presents the findings of equivalent logistic regression vote models for the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats, comparing these against the UKIP results in Table 8 (Model 3). Here we only report the coefficients and the average marginal effects for the campaign variables and prior vote intention. As noted previously when comparing contact rates, cross-party contact differences in probabilities are likely to be sensitive to levels of baseline support and that the major parties are more likely to know where their identifiers are. But even though some caution must be applied, the results seem to back up earlier qualitative and quantitative evidence. Prior voting intention has a weaker impact for UKIP than it does for any of its counterparts. For instance, on average, activating existing predispositions increases the probability of voting Conservative by thirteen percentage points, Labour by fourteen

percentage points and the Liberal Democrats by eleven points. To win its key target seats UKIP needed to covert voters during the campaign rather than just rely on activating those who stated previously that they would vote for them. Just mobilising the latter would not be enough to win parliamentary seats. While UKIP's campaign effects were significant, the effects were modest. Their influence was also weaker than the other three parties, with Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat contact during the campaign, on average, increasing the probability of an individual voting for these parties by seven, five and seven percentage points, respectively. Almost as telling was how ineffective UKIP's campaign was at reducing its opponents support. Whereas Labour, Liberal Democrats and the Nationalists reduced the likelihood of voting Conservative, and the Liberal Democrats partially offset the effect of Labour's campaign on its vote, UKIP's campaigning had no significant impact. It only mildly dampened the Liberal Democrat vote, along with the Conservatives and Labour.

[Insert Table 9 here]

8. Conclusions

UKIP entered the 2015 British general election with high hopes. After strong performances at second-order elections, notably winning the most votes and seats at the European Parliament elections in 2014, and then defeating or closely challenging the two main parties at several parliamentary by-elections, UKIP had risen to become the third most popular party. Seen in a comparative lens its emergence also mirrors the broader rise of the populist radical right. But unlike UKIP's counterparts in other European democracies, for third and challenger parties in a plurality system the task of converting votes into seats is a formidable challenge. Success necessitates targeted and efficient constituency campaigns that include sustained contact with voters and data-driven voter mobilization tactics.

Of course, it is plausible that Conservative and Labour campaigners in key target seats would know better than UKIP who and who not to bother contacting. Perhaps we are setting the bar much too high for UKIP in expecting similar or even greater contact rates than the established parties. But while we cannot completely rule out some selection bias, given the campaign literature on third and right wing parties, first-hand accounts from the survey of electoral agents, evidence of how established parties have neglected 'long term' stronghold seats which are exactly the type of seats targeted by UKIP, and the growing local UKIP base in these seats since 2013, it is clearly a reasonable expectation for UKIP contact rates and campaign effects to mirror or potentially be much higher than its political opponents. Moreover, while it is important to remember that some of our findings are based on cross-sectional data at one point in time, the use of the panel design (before and after the election) allows us to make more valid causal inferences about campaign effects and changes in behaviour at the individual level (Allison, 2009). And when combined with first-hand qualitative accounts, it is clear that our findings are both authoritative and robust.

In this article, our analysis of quantitative and qualitative data reveals how the self-anointed 'People's Army' fell short of these requirements and consequently failed to translate support into seats. Shaped by its origins as a non-electoral pressure group, UKIP lacked the electoral professionalism, grassroots party infrastructure and experienced candidates that are integral to delivering effective constituency campaigns. The party was thus left vulnerable to the heavy artillery of the established parties, as reflected in the fact that across the country it was consistently the least active of the larger parties. Even in its primary target seats, UKIP was only able to match the activism of the main parties during the actual campaign period. Any support garnered from intense campaigning in the party's primary target seats and elsewhere was relatively modest, particularly when compared against the established parties.

Our comparison of prior vote intention underscored how UKIP was less effective in activating existing predispositions than its counterparts. Perhaps this was less vital given that UKIP needed to convert people who were not predisposed to support the party if it was to win seats in the House of Commons. However, the modest campaign effects after accounting for prior vote suggest that the party was unable to achieve this objective. UKIP's problems were compounded by the fact that its campaigning had little, if any, significant effect on reducing the likelihood of individuals voting Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat. Shaped by its origins and struggling under the weight of internal weaknesses, the party's inability to mount effective constituency campaigns proved to be its Achilles heel.

While the 2015 general election was a missed opportunity for UKIP, from a campaign perspective it came too soon. The intensity of the campaign in the primary targets tells an important story. UKIP's comparatively high contact rates earlier on reveals how the party had started to position itself where, potentially, it could challenge local incumbents. However, as the campaign intensified the party's internal weaknesses were increasingly exposed while the two main parties, with their superior resources and infrastructure were able to keep the insurgent at bay, minimizing its ability to convert votes into seats.

Since the general election, these weaknesses have continued to undermine the party's electoral growth, notably at a parliamentary by-election in the northern Labour-held seat of Oldham West and Royton, where UKIP finished in a distant second place, nearly forty points behind the Labour candidate. Looking ahead, however, local canvassing and voting records from the 2015 general election, combined with a stronger understanding of where its voters are located geographically, may facilitate UKIP's campaigns to come, provided that the party remains focused on developing electoral professionalism. As with the Liberal Democrats, establishing elected representation in local government will also be important for generating continued activism, experienced activists and perceptions of local credibility. Yet, at the same

time, there are reasons to be sceptical about UKIP's future. Whereas a Europe-wide refugee crisis and referendum on Britain's EU membership present opportunities for the radical right, as does the ongoing salience of the immigration issue, UKIP has continued to suffer from infighting and financial problems that represent significant hurdles to future growth.

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Ukip's Target Seats

Name	Region	Incumbent	Majority
Top Targets			
Boston and Skegness	East Midlands	Conservative	28.8*
Great Grimsby	Yorkshire	Labour	2.2*
Hartlepool	North East	Labour	14.4
Rotherham	Yorkshire and Humber	Labour	27.9
Castle Point	East of England	Conservative	16.9
Dudley North	West Midlands	Labour	1.7*
South Thanet	South East	Conservative	16.6*
Heywood and Middleton	North West	Labour	12.9
Thurrock	East of England	Conservative	0.2
Rochester and Strood	South East	Conservative	20.8
Other Targets			
Clacton	East of England	Conservative	28.0
Great Yarmouth	East of England	Conservative	9.9
Wentworth and Dearne	Yorkshire and Humber	Labour	33.1
Plymouth, Moor View	South West	Labour	3.8
North West Norfolk	East of England	Conservative	31.0
Cannock Chase	West Midlands	Conservative	7.0*
St Austell and Newquay	South West	Lib Dem	2.8
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	South East	Conservative	25.5
North Thanet	South East	Conservative	31.2
Camborne and Redruth	South West	Conservative	0.2
Torbay	South West	Lib Dem	8.3
Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	South East	Conservative	27.9
South Basildon and East Thurrock	East of England	Conservative	12.9
Dover	South East	Conservative	10.5
Wyre Forest	West Midlands	Conservative	5.2
North Devon	South West	Lib Dem	11.3
Delyn	Wales	Labour	6.1
Forest of Dean	South West	Conservative	22.7
Folkestone and Hythe	South East	Conservative	19.2
Basildon and Billericay	East of England	Conservative	29.7
Eastleigh	South East	Lib Dem	7.2
North West Cambridgeshire	East of England	Conservative	28.6

Notes. * Sitting MP retiring ahead of 2015 election.

Table 2: Party Contact: GB; England and Wales

Parties (GB)	Pre-Campaign	Campaign	Post-Campaign
UKIP	5.1	14.8	21.8
Conservatives	17.6	28.7	38.3
Labour	19.3	31.3	42.6
Liberal Democrats	8.6	18.3	25.1
UKIP & Conservatives	3.0	11.9	19.2
UKIP & Labour	2.4	11.3	18.9
Parties (England & Wales)	Pre-Campaign	Campaign	Post-Campaign
UKIP	5.5	15.8	23.1
Conservatives	18.2	29.9	39.0
Labour	18.9	30.7	41.9
Liberal Democrats	8.7	18.5	25.2
UKIP & Conservatives	3.3	12.7	20.3
UKIP & Labour	2.6	12.0	20.0

Notes. Weighted by Pre, Campaign and Post Sample Weight

Table 3: Type of Contact (GB)

Parties	Campaign				Post-Campaign			
(GB)	UKIP	Cons	Lab	LD	UKIP	Cons	Lab	LD
Telephone	0.1	1.0	1.5	0.9	0.2	2.1	3.4	1.3
Leaflet	14.2	26.0	27.4	17.0	20.9	34.4	37.9	23.1
Doorstep Canvass	0.5	3.5	4.9	1.8	1.1	6.5	10.0	3.0
Street	0.5	1.0	1.3	0.5	0.8	1.7	2.8	0.9
E-mail	0.8	5.3	5.8	2.4	1.3	8.5	8.5	3.9
SMS	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.9	1.0	0.4
Other	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.6	0.3
Parties	Campaign				Post-Campaign			
(England & Wales)	UKIP	Cons	Lab	LD	UKIP	Cons	Lab	LD
Telephone	0.1	1.1	1.4	0.9	0.2	2.1	3.2	1.2
Leaflet	15.1	26.7	26.8	17.1	22.1	34.8	37.2	23.1
Doorstep Canvass	0.6	3.7	5.1	2.0	1.2	6.8	10.1	3.1
Street	0.5	1.0	1.3	0.5	0.8	1.8	2.8	0.9
E-mail	0.8	5.7	6.0	2.5	1.4	8.8	8.6	4.0
SMS	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.1	1.0	1.0	0.4
Other	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.6	0.3

Notes. Weighted by Pre and Post Sample Weight

Table 4: Party Contact in UKIP Target Seats

Parties (GB)	Pre-Campaign	Campaign	Post-Campaign
UKIP All Targets (32)			
UKIP	23.3	30.5	37.6
Conservatives	25.0	36.9	45.3
Labour	20.5	33.3	42.0
UKIP Top Targets (10)			
UKIP	37.2	41.2	48.5
Conservatives	27.7	41.3	48.2
Labour	28.9	39.4	48.2
UKIP Other Targets (22)			
UKIP	17.4	26.4	33.1
Conservatives	23.8	35.2	44.0
Labour	17.0	31.0	39.4

Notes. Weighted by Pre and Post Sample Weight

Table 5: Type of Contact in UKIP Primary Target Seats

Parties (GB)	Post-Campaign		
	UKIP	Cons	Lab
Telephone	5.5	7.1	5.9
Leaflet	47.6	44.6	43.4
Doorstep Canvass	12.3	8.6	10.5
Street	2.7	2.4	1.7
E-mail	7.5	9.5	9.0
SMS	0	2.0	0.2
Other	0.4	1.0	0.4

Notes. Weighted by Post Sample Weight

Table 6: Type of Contact in Conservative and Labour Target Seats

Parties (GB)	Post-Campaign			
	Cons Defence	Cons Offensive	Lab Defence	Lab Offensive
Overall Contact	56.5	61.0	60.0	60.4
Leaflet	51.9	55.6	52.7	56.2
Doorstep Canvass	11.5	12.3	18.4	20.8

Notes. Weighted by Post Sample Weight

Table 7. Multilevel Logistic Model of UKIP Party Contact in the 2015 General Election

Variables	UKIP Overall Contact		UKIP Doorstep Canvassed	
	β	SE	β	SE
Constant	-1.74*	0.08	-5.59*	0.31
Intention to Vote (Base = No Intention)				
Vote UKIP	0.74*	0.07	0.98*	0.27
Vote Conservative	0.67*	0.07	0.28	0.29
Vote Labour	0.62*	0.07	0.48	0.29
Vote Liberal Democrats	0.76*	0.09	0.60	0.40
Vote Green	0.85*	0.09	0.70	0.40
Vote SNP	0.26	0.15	-0.97	1.13
Vote Other Party	0.80*	0.12	0.48	0.52
Party Identification (Base = No Party ID)				
UKIP	0.47*	0.08	1.48*	0.24
Conservative	-0.05	0.05	0.58*	0.23
Labour	0.01	0.05	0.20	0.24
Liberal Democrat	0.10	0.07	0.01	0.34
Green	0.19*	0.09	-0.82	0.64
SNP	-0.20	0.15	0.24	1.12
Other Party	0.33*	0.12	0.92*	0.44
UKIP Party Targeting (Base = Non-Target)				
Primary Target	1.18*	0.18	2.52*	0.36
Secondary Target	0.52*	0.12	1.02*	0.30
Seat Type (Base = Conservative Ultra-Safe)				
Conservative Safe Seat (10-20%)	0.07	0.08	0.11	0.24
Conservative Marginal (<10%)	0.23*	0.08	0.01	0.25
Labour Ultra Safe Seat	-0.89*	0.11	-1.27*	0.37
Labour Safe Seat	-0.53*	0.11	-1.03*	0.37
Labour Marginal	-0.24*	0.09	-0.73*	0.32
Liberal Democrat Held Seats	0.09	0.08	-0.03	0.28
All Other Seats	-0.58*	0.18	-0.68	0.70
Socio-Demographic Profile Constituency				
Factor 1: Affluent Suburbs	-0.09*	0.03	-0.15	0.11
Factor 2: Urban Deprived	0.10*	0.03	0.35*	0.11
Factor 3: University Seats	0.05*	0.02	-0.01	0.09
Random Component				
Random Effects Parameter	0.40*	0.02	0.86*	0.10
Model Fit Statistics				
Wald Chi-Square	668.21*		302.71*	
-Log Likelihood	-13,952.61		-1,505.53	
N	27,614		27,614	

Notes. * p <0.05**.** Weighted: Pre and Post sample weight. Model 1 = LR test vs. logistic regression: chibar2(01) = 218.98 Prob>=chibar2 = 0.0000; Model 2 = LR test vs. logistic regression: chibar2(01) = 48.65 Prob>=chibar2 = 0.0000

Table 8. Logistic Regression models of UKIP Voting in 2015 General Election

Variables	Model 1: UKIP 2015 Vote		Model 2:UKIP 2015 Vote		Model 3: UKIP 2015 Vote (Prior)	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Constant	-2.52*	0.16	-3.27*	0.39	-3.16*	0.43
Prior Intention to Vote UKIP	-		-		2.27*	0.09
UKIP Party Targets (Base = Non-Target)						
Primary Target	0.45*	0.18	0.80*	0.28	0.71*	0.32
Secondary Target	0.06	0.12	-0.06	0.18	-0.15	0.18
Party Contact (Base = No Contact)						
UKIP Contact	1.33*	0.09	0.61*	0.13	0.49*	0.14
Conservative Contact	-0.46*	0.08	-0.65*	0.12	-0.56*	0.13
Labour Contact	-0.75*	0.08	-0.25*	0.11	-0.14	0.12
Lib Dem Contact	-0.35*	0.09	-0.12	0.12	-0.21	0.13
Green Contact	-0.06	0.11	0.24	0.16	0.32	0.18
Nationalist Contact	-0.90*	0.13	-0.81*	0.21	-0.82*	0.21
Party Identification (Base = No Party ID)						
UKIP Party ID		-	1.55*	0.15	1.01*	0.19
Conservative Party ID		-	-0.88*	0.12	-0.65*	0.14
Labour Party ID		-	-1.38*	0.14	-1.31*	0.15
Lib Dem Party ID		-	-0.59*	0.19	-0.52*	0.21
Nationalist Party ID		-	-2.97*	0.43	-2.63*	0.48
Green Party ID		-	-1.45*	0.72	-1.58*	0.66
Party Leaders (Like/Dislike)						
Nigel Farage		-	0.51*	0.02	0.42*	0.02
David Cameron		-	-0.26*	0.02	-0.22*	0.02
Ed Miliband		-	-0.14*	0.02	-0.11*	0.02
Nick Clegg		-	-0.03	0.02	-0.01	0.02
Nicola Sturgeon		-	-0.00	0.01	-0.01	0.02
Natalie Bennett		-	0.00	0.02	-0.00	0.02
Most Important Issue (Base = All Others)						
Immigration		-	0.49*	0.09	0.25*	0.10
Other Predictors						
Austerity cuts have gone too far		-	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.06
Leave the European Union		-	1.07*	0.10	0.71*	0.11
Left-Right (Self)		-	-0.01	0.03	-0.03	0.03
Tactical Voting		-	-0.45*	0.18	-0.69*	0.20
Socio-Demographic Profile (Constituency)						
Affluent Suburbs		-	0.13*	0.05	0.11	0.06
Urban Deprived		-	0.13*	0.05	0.15*	0.06
University Seats		-	-0.00	0.05	-0.01	0.05
Socio-Economic Variables						
Male	0.31*	0.06	0.00	0.09	-0.13	0.09
Age						
Age	0.01*	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00
Home Ownership						
Home Owners	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09
Education (Base = No Qualifications)						
Secondary and Below	0.08	0.08	0.25	0.13	0.33*	0.14
A-levels	-0.28*	0.11	0.08	0.16	0.22	0.17
Post-Secondary Other Quals	-0.20*	0.10	0.09	0.15	0.22	0.16
Degree	-0.64*	0.11	0.07	0.16	0.16	0.17
DK/Missing Education	0.15	0.16	0.25	0.21	0.31	0.22
Working Status (Base = In Work)						
Retired	0.00	0.08	-0.10	0.11	-0.01	0.12
FT Student	-0.65*	0.27	-0.19	0.30	-0.08	0.32
Unemployed	-0.03	0.17	-0.40	0.26	-0.61*	0.29
Not in Paid Work	0.21*	0.09	0.08	0.14	0.04	0.15
Newspaper Readership (Base = None)						

Tabloid	0.18*	0.06	-0.19*	0.09	-0.13	0.10
Broadsheet	-0.53*	0.10	-0.24	0.14	-0.35*	0.15
All Regional/Local Newspapers	-0.43*	0.11	-0.21	0.16	-0.23	0.18
Model Fit Statistics						
Wald Chi-Square	785.51*		2562.35*		2880.59*	
McFadden R^2	0.08		0.53		0.59	
-Log Likelihood	-7727.05		-3953.84		-3440.04	
AIC	15502.11		7995.69		6970.09	
N	25650		25650		25650	

Notes. * Significant at $p < 0.05$ level**.** Data are weighted using the pre and post sample weight. We also interacted UKIP Contact*UKIP Primary Target (it was insignificant at 0.06 SE 0.64 – all other variables were unchanged by the introduction of the interaction). All non-voters are excluded from the logistic regression models.

Table 9: Logistic Regression models of Party Campaigning during the 'Short Campaign Period' on Party Support in 2015 General Election

Variables	Ukip 2015 Vote			Conservative 2015 Vote			Labour 2015 Vote			Lib Dem 2015 Vote		
	β	SE	AMEs	β	SE	AMEs	β	SE	AMEs	β	SE	AMEs
Constant	-3.16*	0.43	-	-1.47*	0.42	-	-2.22*	0.34	-	-2.80*	0.36	-
Prior Intention to Vote	2.27*	0.09	0.09	2.03*	0.08	0.13	2.24*	0.08	0.14	2.45*	0.12	0.11
Party Contact												
UKIP Contact	0.49*	0.14	0.02	-0.06	0.11	x	0.02	0.10	x	-0.28*	0.12	-0.01
Conservative Contact	-0.56*	0.13	-0.02	1.03*	0.10	0.07	-0.15	0.10	x	-0.78*	0.13	-0.03
Labour Contact	-0.14	0.12	x	-0.48*	0.10	-0.03	0.78*	0.09	0.05	-0.51*	0.12	-0.02
Lib Dem Contact	-0.21	0.13	x	-0.53*	0.10	-0.03	-0.65*	0.11	-0.04	1.67*	0.12	0.07
Green Contact	0.32	0.18	x	-0.06	0.12	x	-0.31*	0.12	-0.02	-0.10	0.13	x
Nationalist Contact	-0.82*	0.21	-0.03	-1.25*	0.17	-0.08	-0.29*	0.13	-0.02	0.12	0.13	x
Model Fit												
McFadden R^2	0.59			0.66			0.66			0.49		
-Log Likelihood	-3440.04			-5496.23			-5571.23			-4110.00		
AIC	6970.09			11082.47			11232.47			8310.00		
N	25650			25650			25650			25650		

Notes. * Significant at $p < 0.05$ level**.** Data are weighted using the pre and post sample weight. All non-voters are excluded from the logistic regression models.

Figure 1: UKIP Share of the Vote 2014 European Parliament Elections

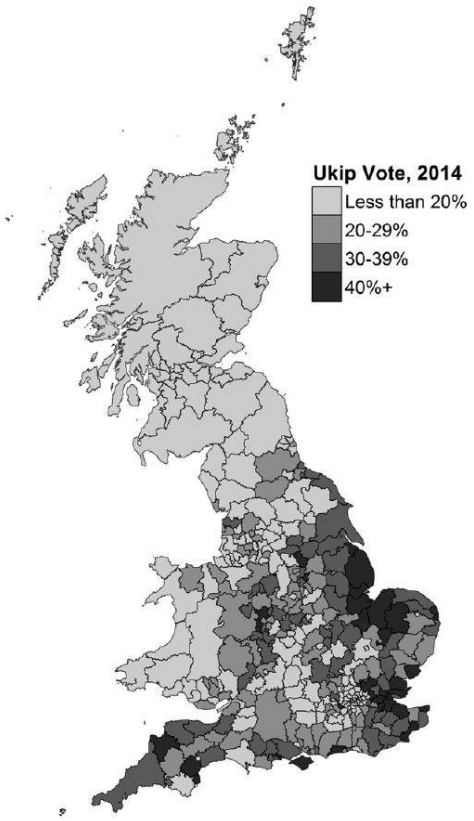
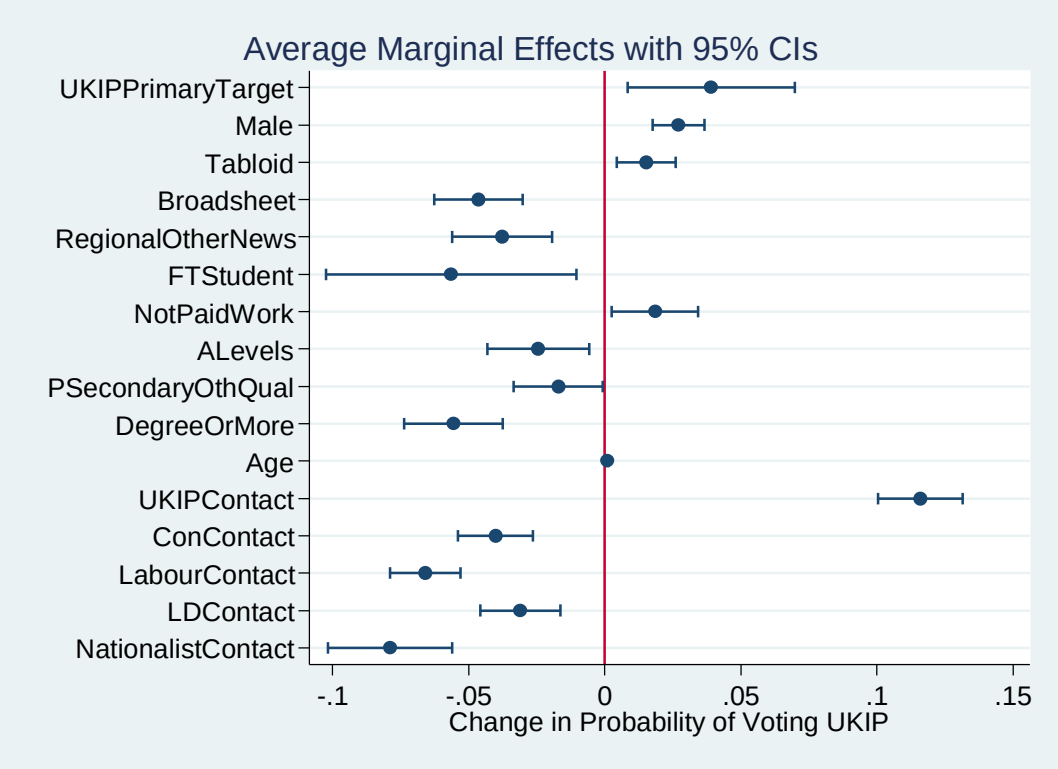
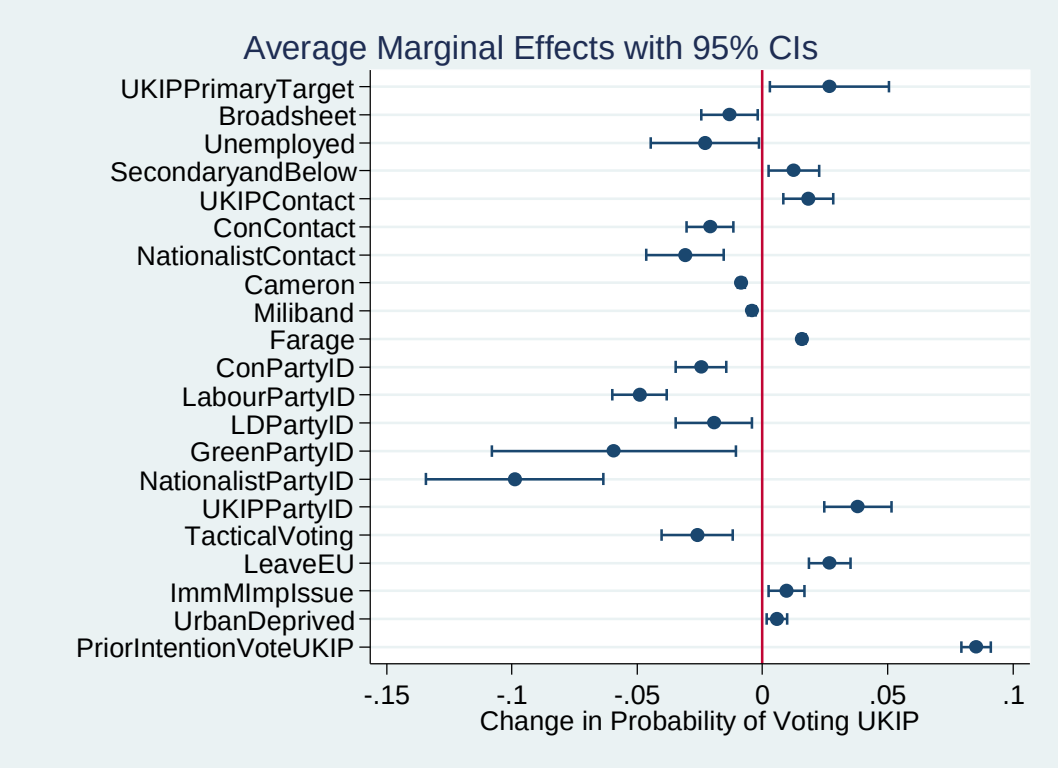


Figure 2. Average Marginal Effects: Probability of Voting UKIP in 2015 (Individual Socio-Demographics and Party Campaigning only)



Notes. Figures are calculated using the estimates from Model 1 in Table 8.

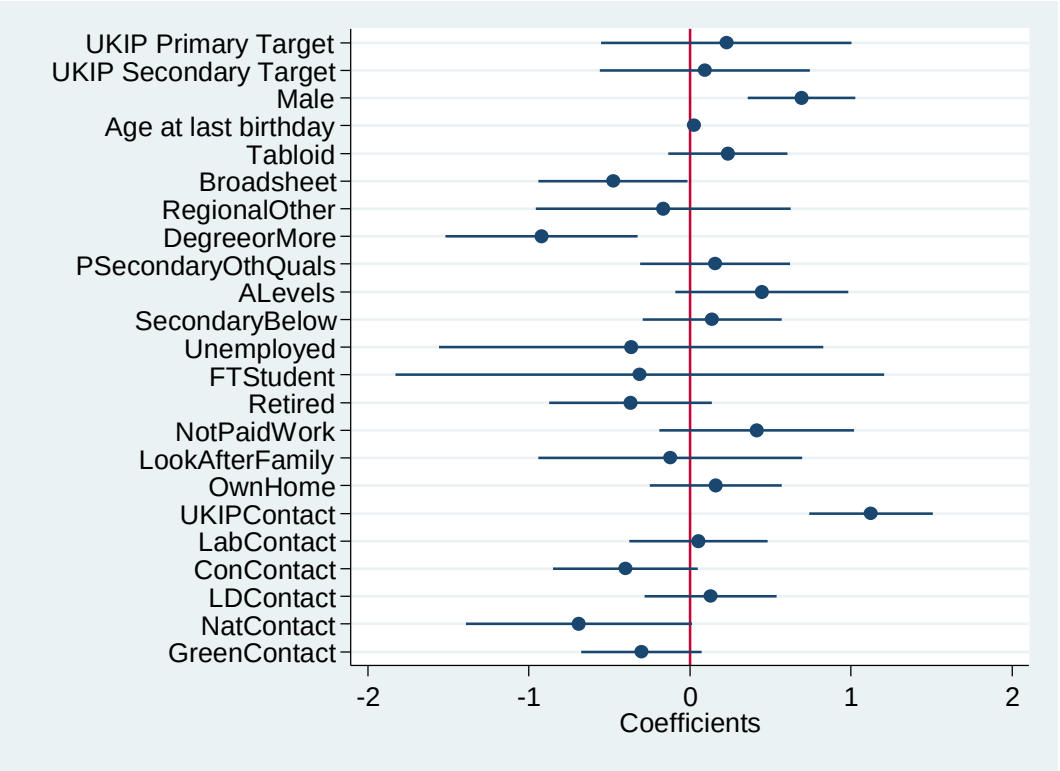
Figure 3. Average Marginal Effects: Probabilities of Voting UKIP in 2015 (Full Model)



Notes. Figures are calculated using the estimates from Model 3 in Table 8.

Appendix

Figure A1: Coefficient plot of Socio-demographic variables and Campaign effects on voting UKIP in 2015 using the Face to Face 2015 British Election Study



***Note – This model is the equivalent of Model 1 Table 8 (Panel Data) using Face to Face BES survey (same variables used).**

Table A2: Principal Components Analysis (PCA): 2011 Census Variables

Variables	Factor 1: Affluent Suburbs	Factor 2: Urban Deprived	Factor 3: University Seats
% Own Home	0.93	-	-
% Non-White	-0.79	-	-
% Semi-Routine & Routine Occupation	-	0.92	-
% Degree	-	-0.89	-
% Agriculture	0.51	-	-
% Manufacturing	-	0.75	-
% FT Students	-	-	0.66
% Unemployed	-0.76	-	-
% Retired	0.83	-	-
% Two Cars or More	0.90	-	-
% Working in Education	-	-	0.93
% Long Term Sick	-	0.81	-

Criteria = >0.50
Component 1 = Eigenvalue 4.61 (38.38% of the variance)
Component 2 = Eigenvalue 3.72 (31.02% of the variance)
Component 3 = Eigenvalue 1.00 (8.35% of the variance)

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Notes

[i] UKIP finished second in 120 seats, 76 of which were won by the Conservative Party and 44 by the Labour Party. 114 of these seats were in England and six were in Wales.

[ii] In the Ipsos-MORI Issues Tracker, for example, immigration was consistently ranked as the second most important issue among voters in January-May 2015.

[iii] UKIP contested parliamentary by-elections in Clacton and also Heywood and Middleton in early October 2014 and then Rochester and Strood in late November. The party captured Clacton and Rochester and Strood from the Conservative Party.

[iv] We use the Wave 4 (Pre-campaign), Wave 5 (Campaign) and Wave 6 (Post-Campaign) weight. We must use some caution when comparing contact rates across waves. Due to a technical error, the party contact questions were not included during the first weeks of the short campaign.

[v] As in previous British Election Studies, there were no questions in any of the surveys on the number of times a respondent had been contacted under any one mode.

[vi] We use BES panel data as opposed the BES face-to-face post-election survey because we can examine the change in contact rates over a longer period. It also has a larger sample size, a wider range of predictor variables for the modelling process (including prior intention to vote) and complete constituency coverage (samples of individuals within constituencies). Nonetheless, for brevity, it is important to note that contact rates were higher on the face-to-face post-election sample: UKIP overall contact rate = 34.9%; Labour contact 62.2%; Conservative contact 58.5% (all are weighted). On the panel, the Labour contact rate was roughly double that of UKIP across all seats – on the face to face it is roughly similar despite the higher overall contact rates for both parties.

[vii] Multi-level modelling is used because the respondents were sampled using a spatial design involving constituencies; two-level models are thus fitted, with respondents nested within constituencies. All models were derived in STATA using the xmelogit command.

[viii] We wished to control for the socio-demographic status of the constituency and statistically derived three factors to represent established cleavages. However, these were removed from the model due to high levels of collinearity with seat type.

[ix] In their recent book, Goodwin and Milazzo (2015) run logistic regressions on UKIP support but they do not use the post-election wave (BES Wave 6) - the book was written before that wave was released. Moreover the Goodwin and Milazzo (2015) models do not contain a number variables used in our models including UKIP target seat status and the lagged endogenous intention to vote variable from wave 4. Given the differences described above it is difficult to compare coefficients, but from their model Table C8, UKIP contact has a coefficient of 0.78 (the inverse of 2.11 odds) – our model in Table 8 model 2 (which is the most comparable as it does not contain prior vote intention), the coefficient is 0.61 – so there is actually little difference.

[x] The party identification variables are a set of 0-1 dummy variables for each party with non-identifiers as the base category. Prior intention to vote variables is constructed in the same way with no intention to vote for a party as the reference category. The inclusion of intention to vote variables means that the party leader items measure change between the two waves in the survey: the movement towards or against a leader during the campaign on party support. The most important issue variables measure the party, which is best at handling the immigration issue at the election. All party leadership variables are 0-1 dummy variables. The personal economic expectations variable is coded on a five point scale where 1 = Got a lot worse to 5 = Got a lot better. The tactical voting variable is a dichotomous variable (where 1 = voted tactically; 0 = not tactical).

[xi] We exclude non-voters from the models of voter choice (Whiteley et al., 2013). For brevity, we ran similar models including non-voters (where non-voters were included with other party supporters; and where they were a category in a multinomial logistic model) and there were no substantial differences in the findings. We also replicate the panel model 1 in Table 8 using the face-to-face survey. We can only replicate this model because a number of attitudinal and political variables included in subsequent models are not on the face-to-face survey. On the panel, UKIP contact is significant: 1.33* (0.09); on the face to face (with the same variables included), UKIP contact is significant: 1.12* (0.20) – full details of the model coefficients (in a coefficient plot) are available in the appendix (see Table A1). Clearly, the empirical findings from the BES face to face do not vary a great deal from our findings stated in Table 8 using the panel data.

[xii] Our socio-demographic variables include: age as a continuous variable and age squared; education (where no qualifications = base category); newspaper readership (where no newspaper is the base category); working status (where in work = base category) while gender (female = base category) and home ownership (do not own home = base category) are 0-1 dichotomous variables.

[xiii] Given collinearity among the twelve variables, a principal components factor analysis (PCA) was used to determine which linear components exist within the data. Three components identified clear patterns of within groups of variables and we interpreted these as: Component 1: Affluent Semi-Rural constituencies; Component 2: Urban Working Class seats and Component 3: University constituencies. Three components with eigenvalues

greater than one (based on the Kaiser criterion) were extracted (the choice of a three-component solution was also supported by inspection of a scree plot). The extracted components were subjected to Promax rotation to ensure ease of interpretation. The loadings from the pattern matrix and the definitions of the variables used in the PCA are provided in the Appendix (Table A2).

[xiv] A marginal effect measures the effect on the conditional mean of y of a change in one of the regressors. In linear model, the marginal effect equals the slope coefficient but in nonlinear models, this is not the case. Hence this has led to a number of methods for calculating marginal effects. We use average marginal effects (AMEs). To get the AME, the marginal effect is first calculated for each individual with their observed levels of covariates. These values are then averaged across all individuals.