A Revolt on The Right?

The social and political attitudes of UKIP supporters

The last five years of coalition government has been marked by an unprecedented rise in support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). This paper looks at the extent to which the views of UKIP supporters are distinctive from those of the rest of the public, looking not only at those issues such as Europe and immigration on which the party has focused, but also those such as inequality about which it has said rather less.

Conservative on social issues

UKIP supporters are relatively conservative on many social issues.

- Three-quarters (75%) back the death penalty, whereas only around half (48%) the general population now do so.
- Twice as many UKIP supporters agree (46%) as disagree (23%) that people who want to have children should get married.

Distrustful of government

UKIP supporters are deeply distrustful of government though they follow politics at least as much as anyone else.

- 70% of UKIP supporters believe they do not have any say in what the government does, well above the 44% figure among the public as a whole.
- Over half (57%) say they talk about politics 'often' or 'sometimes', slightly more than the 50% of the general public that do so.

Concerned about inequality

UKIP supporters are just as likely to be concerned about inequality as Labour supporters – but are not sure they want government to do anything about it.

- Around three-quarters (76%) of UKIP supporters feel that ordinary people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth – much the same as the 72% of Labour supporters that do so.
- However, only 40% of UKIP supporters believe that the government should redistribute income to the less well-off, rather less than the 52% of Labour supporters that do so.

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Introduction

One of the most remarkable developments during the lifetime of the 2010-15 Parliament has been the emergence of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) as a significant political force. The party had performed creditably in the 2004 and 2009 European elections, winning between 16% and 17% of the vote on both occasions, but it had never succeeded in securing the election of more than a handful of local councillors and in a general election had never managed to win more than 3% of the vote (which it achieved in 2010). However, its fortunes began to rise during the course of 2012, and by the time local elections were held in England in May 2013 it was able to win a significant number of seats. Twelve months later it not only repeated that feat but also topped the poll in the 2014 European elections, with 29% of the vote. Subsequently, it persuaded two Conservative MPs to defect to the party and successfully defend their seats in parliamentary by-elections. Between them these successes have meant that, in England at least, the party has been posing the most significant independent fourth-party challenge in post-war British politics.

Our aim in this paper is not to try and provide an explanation of why UKIP has been so successful (on which see Ford and Goodwin, 2013). Rather, it is to paint a picture of the social and political attitudes of UKIP supporters, and in particular to identify the ways in which those attitudes are distinctive. While such an exercise may be thought to help us understand what has attracted voters to the party, our more immediate purpose is to help us understand the kind of Britain UKIP supporters would like to see – and for which the party can thus be expected to press during the general election and beyond.

At first glance, the task of characterising UKIP's support should be an easy one. The party's raison d'être is, of course, to hold a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union (EU) with a view to persuading voters that they should vote to leave. The party has linked this with a concern about immigration, following on from the high levels of inward migration that Britain experienced in the first decade of the 21st century (Vargas-Silva, 2014), thanks not least to the 'freedom of movement' provisions of the EU. So we would anticipate that the party's supporters will be strongly anti-European, and anti-immigration. Meanwhile, hostility to immigration might also, perhaps, be indicative of a wider reluctance to accept social change and the position of minorities, and thus be accompanied by a broader social conservatism about such issues as gay marriage, multiculturalism and the role of women in society (Henningham, 1995; Rojas, 2013).

But where do the party's supporters stand on other issues? One of the preoccupations of British politics in recent years has been a concern that voters are becoming increasingly disenchanted about the country's political process (Curtice, 2011; Hansard Society, 2014). Voters are apparently less willing to trust their political representatives, less likely to think that the political system is willing and able to respond to their wishes and needs, and consequently feel less motivation and duty to go the polls. Indeed, it is a topic

that British Social Attitudes itself has addressed regularly in recent reports (Lee and Young, 2013). In the light of this, we might wonder whether, given that it is a party that lies outside of the 'Westminster establishment' (and presents itself as such), UKIP has managed to attract some of Britain's more disenchanted and disconnected voters (Norris, 2005; Ford and Goodwin, 2013).

However, even if we examine where UKIP supporters stand on this issue, we would still not know what their views are on what are often regarded as the central issues of British politics, taxation and spending. Do they think the government should spend more or tax less? Do they feel it should be trying to reduce economic inequality or not? How much help do they believe government should give to those who are out of work or unable to work? In short, are UKIP supporters in favour of lower taxation, tolerant of economic inequality and reluctant to see more spent on welfare - and thus can safely be characterised as being on the 'right' (Ford and Goodwin, 2013)? Or do they in fact want more spent on public services and on welfare and would like Britain to be a more economically equal society, sentiments that are more commonly regarded as synonymous with being on the left? This paper looks to see on which side of the fence most UKIP supporters are to be found on these issues that for the most part have not been among those that the party itself has been emphasising (Evans, 2014).

Identifying UKIP supporters

British Social Attitudes does not attempt to identify for which party its respondents are currently inclined to vote. Instead it asks a sequence of questions that are intended to capture the party with which they 'identify', that is to which they feel they 'belong' over the longer term. Respondents are first of all asked:

> *Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a supporter of any one political party?*

If respondents say they do not think of themselves as a party supporter they are then asked:

> *Do you think of yourself as a little closer to one political party than to the others?*

Those who say, 'Yes', in response to either of these questions are then asked which party they support or to which they feel closer. Only if respondents say that they neither support nor feel closer to a party are they asked the more straightforward question:

> *If there were a general election tomorrow, which political party do you think you would be most likely to support?*

Although intended primarily to be a measure of voters' longer-term partisan orientations, the answers that respondents give to this sequence of questions is not wholly immune to short-term changes in the popularity of the parties. This has certainly proven to be the case

so far as UKIP is concerned. Shortly after the 2010 general election only 1% emerged from this line of questioning as UKIP supporters, a figure that was unchanged twelve months later. Even in 2012 the proportion was still no more than 2%. But in 2013 it rose to 5% and in our most recent survey it stands at 8%. It is, indeed, thanks to this increase that we are able to paint a picture of the attitudes of UKIP supporters for the first time. All in all our 2014 survey identified 268 such respondents, nearly two-thirds of whom (62%) either declared themselves to be a UKIP supporter or said that they felt closer to that party than to others.

Social profile

UKIP supporters have quite a distinctive social profile. As Table 1 shows, UKIP support is more than twice as high among those aged 55 and over (12%) as it is among those who are less than 35 (5%). Equally, the party's support is twice as high among those in more working class occupations (11%) than it is among those in (typically) salaried managerial and professional positions (5%). There is also relative enthusiasm for UKIP among small employers and the self-employed (11%). The group among whom UKIP is least popular is graduates, only 3% of whom say that they support the party. In contrast support is around three times as high (11-12%) among those whose highest educational qualification is an O level or its equivalent.

UKIP supporters have quite a distinctive social profile.

Table 1. Social profile of UKIP support, 2014

	% UKIP	*Unweighted base*
Age		
Less than 34	5	*542*
35-54	8	*1020*
55 or over	12	*1308*
Social class		
Managerial & Professional	5	*1040*
Intermediate	9	*381*
Small employers	11	*304*
Supervisory	10	*234*
Routine & Semi-Routine	11	*810*
Educational Attainment		
Degree	3	*601*
Higher education below degree	10	*354*
A Level	7	*445*
O Level/GCSE 1-3	12	*543*
CSE/GCSE 4-6	12	*235*
None	11	*636*
All	8	*2878*

Such a profile is certainly consistent with our suggestion that UKIP supporters will emerge as relatively socially conservative, as a more socially conservative outlook is generally more common among older people (Park and Rhead, 2013). However, the fact that the party's support is higher among those in working class occupations and among those with fewer educational qualifications is the very opposite of what we would we anticipate if UKIP supporters are indeed on the right on social and economic issues, since such views are typically more common among those in more middle class occupations.

There are at least three other ways in which the social profile of UKIP support is distinctive.[1] First, those who consider themselves to be English are nearly twice as likely as those who say that they are British to be supporters of the party (12% vs. 7%).[2] Those who regard themselves as primarily English rather than British have long been known to be more socially conservative and anti-European in their views (Curtice and Seyd, 2001). Given the association between these views and UKIP, this pattern is thus one that we might well anticipate. Second, hardly anyone who regards themselves as black or Asian supports the party – less than half a per cent do so, compared with 10% of those who say they are white. Consequently, no less than 98% of UKIP supporters declare themselves to be 'white'. Third, as Table 2 shows, support for the party is twice as high among those who say that they are 'really struggling' on their current income (12%) than it is among those who say that they are 'really comfortable' (6%). If UKIP is indeed a party fuelled by protest, the source of its supporters' discontent may in some cases be economic as well as social.

Table 2. UKIP support by feeling about household income

	% UKIP	*Unweighted base*
Income means respondent is ...		
Really comfortable	6	*303*
Quite comfortable	8	*1113*
Neither	8	*890*
Struggling	10	*461*
Really struggling	12	*105*

So having ascertained what kinds of people are and are not more likely to have been attracted to the party, we now turn to our principal task – that is, to examine the attitudes of UKIP supporters and to assess how distinctive they are. We begin by looking at the issues that have been most prominent in the party's campaigning, Europe and immigration. Next, we examine whether their views about immigration are part of a broader social conservatism. We then turn our attention to their views about politics and the political system before exploring some of those issues about which the party tends

1. Contrary to what we might expect from previous research on the social profile of UKIP support (Ford and Goodwin, 2013: 154-5), our survey does not reveal any significant difference between the propensity of men (9%) and women (8%) to declare themselves UKIP identifiers.
2. Based on 'forced choice' national identity, when people are asked to choose the national identity with which they identify most.

to talk less, such as the role of the state and the level of inequality in British society. Our principal measure of 'distinctiveness' is how different the views of UKIP supporters are from voters as a whole, although on occasion it will also be illuminating to compare their views with those of the supporters of one or more of the other parties.

The party's core issues: Europe and immigration

As explained in our paper on attitudes to Europe, in our most recent survey we asked our respondents two questions about their attitudes towards the European Union (EU) – whether they would vote to leave or stay in the EU and which of a set of five possible future relationships between Britain and the EU they would most prefer be put in place. As we would expect, those who support UKIP are markedly more likely to adopt an anti-European stance. Faced with the simple choice of remaining in or withdrawing from the EU, no less than 81% say they would prefer to withdraw, well above the 35% figure for the population as a whole. It is true that when faced with the possibility of staying in the EU but reducing its powers, 27% of UKIP supporters indicate that they would back that option. However, as many as 65% say their first preference is to leave the institution, compared with just 24% of the general population.

So far as attitudes to immigration are concerned, we do not have a direct measure in our most recent survey. We do have two questions that address one particular aspect of the immigration debate. These asked people for how long, if at all, they feel that migrants who are looking for work when they arrive in the UK should be able to claim welfare benefit on the same terms as a British citizen (also discussed in our paper[3] on attitudes to welfare in this collection). Over two-thirds (69%) of UKIP supporters feel that such migrants from outside the EU should not be able to access welfare benefits at all. This is markedly higher than among the population as a whole, only 40% of whom say non-EU migrants should not be able to claim out of work benefits. Equally, UKIP supporters are markedly more likely than the public as a whole to feel that EU migrants who are looking for work should not be able to access welfare benefits at all (51%, compared with 29% of the population as a whole).

However, our 2013 survey (which contains 181 UKIP identifiers) did ask a broader set of questions about immigration. In particular, respondents were asked to use a scale from 0 to 10 to say whether they felt immigration 'undermined' (0) or 'enriched' Britain's cultural life. A similar scale was used to ascertain whether people believed that immigration was 'extremely bad' (0) or 'extremely good' (10) for Britain's economy. As many as 73% of UKIP supporters in that year's survey gave themselves a score of between 0 and 4 on the first scale, while 75% did so on the second. The equivalent figures amongst the public as a whole were 45% and 47% respectively. In short, there is little doubt that UKIP supporters hold rather tough views so far as immigration is concerned (see also Ford and Goodwin, 2014).

69% of UKIP supporters feel that jobseekers from outside the EU should not be able to access benefits.

3. http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/

Social conservatism

So far, so much as expected. We did not anticipate anything other than that UKIP supporters would be largely anti-EU and tough in their attitudes towards migrants. In fact, we might even be surprised that as many as 17% of them say that they would like Britain to remain part of the EU. That there is a section of its support that seemingly disagrees with a core element of the party's raison d'être suggests that there may well be other considerations and attitudes that persuade some people to support UKIP.

But how far are the attitudes that UKIP supporters adopt towards migrants part of a wider social conservatism that is reluctant to embrace social change and is unsympathetic to the position of minority groups? For instance, when the coalition government was pursuing legislation to allow same sex couples to marry, it was often argued that opposition to the proposal was one of the reasons why some former Conservative supporters were switching to UKIP - which at that stage expressed opposition to the idea (see, for example, Holden, 2013). However, subsequently the party has indicated that it would not seek to reverse the legislation. Our evidence suggests that in no longer opposing the change, UKIP may in fact be rather closer to the current views of its supporters than we might have anticipated.

It is true that UKIP supporters (48%) are less likely than the population as a whole (60%) to agree that 'gay men and lesbians should be allowed to get married if they want to'. Nevertheless, the 48% of UKIP supporters who do agree with allowing same sex marriage easily outnumber the 31% who are opposed. Moreover, despite the claim that Conservative supporters had defected to UKIP over the issue, the balance of opinion among UKIP supporters is now not very different from that among Tory supporters, 49% of whom support same sex marriage while 29% are opposed. Whatever may have been true at the time that the legislation was being passed, those who support UKIP no longer seem to be particularly or uniquely opposed to same sex marriage.

Opponents of same sex marriage often proclaimed their belief in the importance of marriage as an institution for procreation and for bringing up children, an importance that they feared same sex marriage would dilute. Yet UKIP supporters also emerge as no more likely than Conservative identifiers to express a belief in the importance of marriage as an environment for nurturing children. While twice as many UKIP supporters agree (46%) as disagree (23%) that 'people who want to have children ought to get married', this balance of opinion is much the same as that among Conservatives, 52% of whom agree and 23% disagree. Both groups are, however, more insistent on the desirability for marriage before children than is the general population, amongst whom the proportion who agree (37%) is almost matched by the proportion who disagree (35%). UKIP supporters are thus relatively more likely than the population as a whole to emphasise the importance of marriage, but in so doing are again not necessarily unique in their views.

Twice as many UKIP supporters agree (46%) as disagree (23%) that 'people who want to have children ought to get married.

75% of UKIP supporters agree with the death penalty for some crimes.

But if the social conservatism of UKIP supporters is perhaps more muted than we might have anticipated so far as the institution of marriage is concerned, it is rather more apparent when it comes to a set of items that British Social Attitudes asks its respondents every year, and which are intended to ascertain the relative importance that respondents place on social order as opposed to individual freedom.

Table 3 shows the proportion of UKIP supporters who agree with the five statements in question, together with the proportion of all respondents that do so. Most distinctive of all are the views of UKIP supporters on the death penalty. Three quarters (75%) agree that 'for some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence', a view with which nowadays only around half (48%) of the general population agrees.

This strong propensity to back a return to capital punishment, a policy stance that would contravene the human rights obligations the EU expects its members to fulfil, is allied with a wish among nearly nine in ten (89%) UKIP supporters to see 'stiffer sentences' passed on criminals in general - though given that nearly three-quarters (73%) of the public in general uphold that position too, UKIP supporters are not quite so distinctive in their views on the more general issue of sentencing policy as they are on the death penalty.

Table 3. Support for authoritarian attitudes, UKIP supporters and all respondents

	UKIP supporters	All
% who agree that …		
People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences	89	73
Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values	87	66
Schools should teach children to obey authority	85	79
For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence	75	48
The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong	40	40
Unweighted base	*230*	*2376*

Meanwhile, a hallmark of a socially conservative outlook is often a feeling that 'traditional' values, whatever they may be, are not being upheld. That perspective is certainly in evidence among UKIP supporters. No less than 87% believe that 'young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values', well above the figure of two-thirds (66%) that pertains among the population as a whole.

However, the views of UKIP supporters are not particularly distinctive on all of the items in Table 3. Those who back the party are only six points more likely to agree that 'schools should teach children to obey authority', while when it comes to whether 'the law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong' the proportion of UKIP supporters that agree is no higher than among the public as a whole (40%). While UKIP supporters are keen for criminals to be punished more severely by the state, including the possibility

of invoking the death penalty, it appears that this is not allied with a particularly high regard for authority or the law. This perhaps suggests a certain suspicion among UKIP supporters about giving power to politicians and the government, so it is to attitudes towards the political system that we now turn.

Distrustful and disconnected?

We noted at the beginning of this paper that it is often suggested that one of the reasons for UKIP's popularity is that it has proven capable of appealing to views that, it is claimed, many people in Britain hold – that politicians are self-serving individuals who should not be trusted and that those in government are too remote from the needs and aspirations of ordinary voters.[4] Certainly, disenchantment with the existing political system has been found to be a hallmark of the supporters of many a 'radical right' political party elsewhere (Norris, 2005). So how far is such a perspective in evidence among UKIP supporters in Britain?

Table 4. Political trust and efficacy, UKIP supporters and all respondents

	UKIP supporters	Unweighted base	All	Unweighted base*
% trust a great deal/tend to trust				
UK Parliament	26	*183*	42	*1907*
The Government	20	*183*	40	*1907*
% agree				
People like me don't have any say about what the government does	70	*145*	44	*1580*
I don't think the government cares much what people like me think	79	*145*	53	*1580*

*The first two questions were asked to two-thirds of the sample and the second two were asked to two-thirds of those completing the self-completion section

There is little doubt that UKIP supporters tend to be less trusting of politicians and public sector institutions. As Table 4 shows, UKIP supporters are only half as likely as the public as a whole to say they tend to trust the UK government (20% vs. 40%), while they are also markedly less likely to trust the UK Parliament (26% vs. 42%).[5] In part, their views reflect the fact that their party is not in government. Even so, they are much less trusting in either institution than either supporters of the opposition Labour party or indeed those who do not support any party at all, both of whom are less trusting than those who identify with the current principal party of government, the Conservatives.[6] To this mood is allied a tendency to disbelieve

4. For a more general discussion of trends in public engagement and connection with politics, see Phillips and Simpson's paper in this collection. http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/
5. Respondents were invited to respond with one of four answers to say how much they trusted the UK Parliament: trust a great deal; tend to trust it; tend to distrust it; distrust it greatly. The same question was asked of 'the Government'.
6. Only 37% of Labour identifiers trust a great deal or tend to trust the government, while 42% trust Parliament. Amongst those who do not identify with any party the equivalent figures are 35% and 36% respectively. Amongst Conservative identifiers, in contrast, they are 54% and 53%.

that public sector institutions such as the BBC, the NHS and even the police are well run. Only 33% of UKIP supporters believe that the NHS is well run, 38% the BBC and 42% the police, well below the figures of 48%, 50% and 59% among the public as a whole.[7]

Of course we might wonder whether UKIP supporters are simply distrusting of and sceptical about any kind of institution. This, however, is not the case. While low (15%), the proportion who tend to trust the media is not significantly lower than it is among the public as a whole (16%). Similarly, the proportion who trust banks (51%) is much the same as it among the population as a whole (53%). In short, UKIP supporters appear to be particularly critical of the government and the public sector rather than of institutions in general.

Meanwhile Table 4 also shows that UKIP supporters are less inclined than voters in general to think that the political system is willing and able to respond to their needs and aspirations. As many as 79% agree that the government does not 'care much what people like me think', compared with only just over half (53%) of the population in general. At the same time, UKIP supporters are much more likely to agree that 'people like me don't have any say about what the government does'. UKIP supporters are not just distrustful of government but feel largely disconnected from it.

Indeed the apparent disenchantment that UKIP supporters feel about the way that Britain is governed really becomes evident when they are asked to give the way that democracy works in the UK a mark out of ten. On average UKIP supporters give it a score of just over five (5.3), well below not only the score given by the population as a whole (6.3) but even that given by those who do not support any political party (5.8) (who by the standard of those who back any of the three main parties at Westminster are a relatively sceptical lot). In short, UKIP supporters appear to be well and truly 'fed up' with the way their country is being run.

Yet this does not mean that they feel unable and unwilling to get involved in politics. If anything, the opposite is the case. Nearly two in three (65%) reckon that they have a 'pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing Britain', compared with 55% of the public as a whole. Meanwhile as Table 5 shows, they are just as likely as anyone else to say they have an interest in politics and are at least as likely to follow politics in the media and to talk about it with friends. For example, as many as 36% say that they watch the TV news every day, if anything a little above the 29% figure for the public as a whole. Similarly 32% say that they 'often' or 'sometimes' try to persuade others of their point of view when they have a strong opinion, very similar to the 30% of the general population that claim to do so.

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7. Respondents to the self-completion questionnaire were presented with a list of institutions and asked, 'From what you know or have heard about each one, can you say whether, on the whole, you think it is well run or not well run'. Possible responses were: very well run; well run; not very well run; not at all well run.

Table 5. Reported levels of political activity, UKIP supporters and all respondents

	UKIP supporters	All
% very/fairly interested in politics	57	55
% often/sometimes:		
Talk about politics with friends, family or fellow workers	57	50
Try to persuade others of your views*	32	30
% Do at least once a day		
Use media to get political news	75	65
Watch political news on television	36	29
Read political content of a newspaper	21	21
Listen to political news on radio	21	18
Use internet to get political news	17	20
Unweighted base	*145*	*1580*

* The precise wording was 'When you hold a strong opinion about politics, how often do you try to persuade your friends, relatives or fellow workers to share your views?'

So, distrustful though they may be, UKIP supporters are not politically disengaged. Far from being people who are inclined to withdraw from the political process, UKIP supporters emerge as people with strong views that incline them to be critical of the way they are being governed, but who nevertheless are just as likely to talk about and follow politics as anyone else. But does their dissatisfaction extend to the levels of inequality in society? It is to that topic that we finally turn.

Left or right? Attitudes to economic inequality

In Table 6 we show how UKIP supporters respond when they are presented with a series of statements about how much economic inequality there is in British society and whether the government should attempt to reduce it. This series has been included in every British Social Attitudes survey since 1986 and, as Table 6 itself illustrates using our most recent survey, has consistently shown that Labour supporters are more likely than Conservative ones to agree that there is too much inequality, and to support the notion that the government should try to reduce it. What we now discover, however, is that UKIP supporters appear particularly concerned about inequality too.

Table 6. Attitudes to inequality by party identification

	UKIP supporters	Conservative supporters	Labour supporters	All
% agree				
There is one law for the rich and one for the poor	76	39	71	59
Ordinary people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth	76	41	72	60
Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance	72	41	60	53
Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers	62	39	63	53
Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well-off	40	22	52	39
Unweighted base	*230*	*653*	*684*	*2376*

Claims such as 'there is one law for the rich and one for the poor' and 'ordinary people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth' evidently resonate quite strongly with UKIP supporters. In both cases, around three-quarters (76%) of them say they agree with the statement, compared with only around three in five of the public as a whole. UKIP supporters are also more suspicious of the way that managers deal with their employees, and rather more inclined than voters in general to feel that big business favours owners at the expense of those who work for it.

In fact, UKIP supporters are at least as likely to express each of these views as Labour supporters. For example, 71% of Labour supporters and 76% of UKIP supporters agree that 'there is one law for the rich and one for the poor', while 72% of Labour supporters and 76% of UKIP supporters feel that 'ordinary people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth'. It seems that on this central issue of political debate in Britain, UKIP supporters are far from being on the right.

However, there is in Table 6 one exception to the pattern of UKIP supporters having views that distinguish them from the public as a whole – they are no more likely than anyone else to feel that the government should attempt to redistribute income to the less well-off. Only two in five (40%) of UKIP supporters believe that it should, much the same as in the population as a whole (39%). While that still puts them on balance to the left of Conservative supporters, only 22% of whom support such redistribution, it means that they are not so keen on the idea as Labour supporters, among whom support stands at 52%.

So while many a UKIP supporter is apparently concerned about the level of economic inequality in Britain, this does not necessarily mean that they want the government to do something directly about it (by redistributing wealth). Perhaps their suspicion of government – shown in the previous section - means that some UKIP supporters at least draw back from regarding it as the institution that should be

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expected to solve the problem.[8] This may also help to explain why UKIP supporters appear to hold similar attitudes to the population as a whole on the balance between taxation and government spending - just over one in three UKIP supporters (36%) believe that if it has to choose, the government should increase taxation and spending on health, education and social benefits, almost identical to the proportion in the population as a whole (37%).

This, however, is not true of all aspects of government spending. Despite their high level of concern about inequality, UKIP supporters emerge as relatively unsympathetic to recipients of welfare and as particularly reluctant to endorse more spending on welfare benefits. For example, around a half of UKIP supporters (48% in each case) feel that 'many people who get social security don't really deserve any help' and that 'most people on the dole are fiddling in one way or the other'. In contrast, such views are expressed by only around a third (32% and 35% respectively) of the population as a whole. At the same time, only 19% of UKIP supporters agree that 'the government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes', lower than the 30% figure that pertains among the public as a whole.

Conclusions

In many respects the picture of UKIP support that we have uncovered is one that we might well have anticipated. Apart from being strongly anti-European and inclined towards tougher attitudes to immigrants, there is also a deep vein of social conservatism and distrust of government – albeit that social conservatism is not deep enough to ensure that a majority are now opposed to the introduction of same sex marriage. Certainly none of these findings suggest that there is any inaccuracy involved in characterising UKIP as a party of the 'radical right'.

However, UKIP support is also a phenomenon that is most common among those in working class occupations, a section of society where concerns about economic inequality are more common. And we have found that on this issue UKIP supporters are just as troubled about inequality as many a Labour voter, thereby in this instance seemingly putting them on the left of the political landscape. But this after all is a deeply critical and discontented set of voters, and perhaps we should not be surprised that this criticism and discontent extends to the issue of inequality too.

Yet we always have to remember the distrust with which UKIP supporters regard the state. The inclination that many a UKIP voter

8. Some (though given the sample sizes involved only indicative) support for this suggestion is to be found if we look at the relationship amongst UKIP supporters between the responses to the items in Table 6 and the degree to which people say they trust the government (as presented in Table 4 above). In most cases those UKIP supporters who say they do not trust the government are, if anything, more likely than those who do trust it to agree with the items in Table 6. For example, 78% of those who do not trust the government believe that there is 'one law for the rich and one for the poor', compared with 66% of those who do trust the government. However, in the case of whether the government should redistribute income this pattern is reversed. Only 40% of those who do not trust the government want it to redistribute income, compared with 51% of those that do trust the government.

has to deal with criminals more toughly does not extend to a belief that the law should always be upheld. And equally a concern about inequality does not necessarily translate into a wish to see the government try to do something about it. What perhaps characterises UKIP support above all is the feeling that government is one of Britain's problems rather than a potential source of solutions.

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