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**NEIGHBORHOOD NATIVISM: THE ROLE OF CONTEXT AND LOCAL NEWS IN
THE UNEVEN RISE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM INDEPENDENCE PARTY**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

POLITICS

by

Aaron K. Cardoso

June 2021

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Abstract

Neighborhood Nativism: The Role of Contest and Local News in the Uneven Rise of the United Kingdom Independence Party

Aaron Cardoso

Employing mixed-methods and nested analysis, this dissertation explains variation in the United Kingdom Independence Party's (UKIP) results for the 2007, 2011, and 2015 local elections and is primarily engaged with ongoing debates in far right scholarship regarding the roles of economic and cultural grievances, as well as British debates about whether the rise of UKIP came at the expense of the Labour or Conservative Party. In its nested analysis, the dissertation combines a large-N statistical analysis of contextual determinants with a small-N media frame analysis and finally a single case study to fully explore explanations of variation in local election results. In broad terms, this dissertation argues that the electoral variation is explained, in large part, by a process of consolidation, which saw UKIP supplant rival far right parties as the primary electoral vehicle of the British far right and a second process of conversion, which saw UKIP benefit from an exodus of Conservative defectors that rapidly bolstered the party's electoral fortunes. While consolidation occurred because of the in-fighting of its primary rival the British National Party, conversion of Conservative supporters occurred because of the rising salience of immigration in British politics, the contested ownership of the immigration issue between the Conservatives and UKIP, and UKIP's ability to speak to the cultural grievances that Conservative Britons held regarding immigration. Aside from explaining part of the success of a party that played a key role in the events of the Brexit referendum, this dissertation also provides valuable insight into the Conservative Party under Boris Johnson given existing evidence suggesting that Johnson was successful in consolidating a majority of UKIP's former support after the referendum and that Johnson has adopted far right positions on issues critical to the British and European far right.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

It was not supposed to happen, yet it did. The emergence, persistence, influences, and ultimate success of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) is a story that, in many ways, should never have happened. While the party was formed in 1991 as the Anti-Federalist League, a small single issue party campaigning against the Maastricht Treaty and further integration of the United Kingdom into the European Union, the party had existed at the forgotten margins of British politics until 2004 when the party outperformed the Liberal Democrats, the “traditional” third party of British politics, in the European Parliamentary elections. UKIP was launched on an upward political trajectory after that election, increasing their vote share in national parliamentary elections, while also contesting and winning seats in local government. Fatefully, in 2013, then-Prime Minister David Cameron promised an In/Out referendum on the UK’s membership in the European Union under pressure from polls showing that Eurosceptic Conservative voters were increasingly attracted to UKIP’s promises of a referendum. The victory of “Leave” in the referendum has precipitated a major British political crisis, accelerated the fragmentation of the British party system, and resulted in the ignoble end of Prime Ministers Theresa May’s and David Cameron’s political careers.

There are three senses in which the story of UKIP should never have happened. First, the United Kingdom’s electoral system, single member district plurality (SMD-P), also known as first-past-the-post (FPTP), is very unfriendly to new parties. Duverger’s Law, a beloved albeit troubled “law” of political science, states that plurality electoral systems tend to produce two-party systems due to a variety of mechanical and psychological factors (Duverger 1954). While new parties can and do emerge under SMD-P, those parties usually replace an existing party. Such was the case with the British Labour Party in the 1920s, where the extension of universal male suffrage dramatically altered the calculus of electoral politics enough to catapult a party representing the working class to prominence and saw the displacement of the Liberal Party. Remarkably, UKIP rose at a time where there was already

a “traditional” third party in British politics, the Liberal Democrats, which was formed out of a merger with Labour party breakaways and the displaced Liberal Party. The emergence of a new party in a system designed to suppress third parties, at a time when there was an established third party that was already an exception to the two-party expectation was a situation that was never supposed to happen. While more recent research suggests that the psychological impact of SMD-P is weakening in the UK, whether due to the introduction of co-existing proportional electoral systems (Ponattu, 2018), or the emergence of new political cleavages (Ford & Jennings, 2020), the mechanical effect of SMD-P still retains its original strength.

A second sense in which UKIP should have never happened concerns it as a far right party. While the party had started as a single-issue party opposed to European integration, putting it outside the left-right dichotomy, the UKIP which rose to prominence in 2004 was a party staunchly opposed to immigration, placing them in the European far right party family. Historically the far right had been discredited by the defeat of fascism during World War II, and the United Kingdom was especially hostile for the growth of the far right given its leading role in World War II. While the far right had existed in the UK since the end of the war, these groups were exiled to the most remote political wilderness and had no hope of enjoying mainstream political success. With regards to plurality electoral systems, plurality systems are expected to conform to median voter logic, where parties compete for the median voter, and even the Liberal Democrats conformed to this logic as a third party. A far right party eschewing the center to seek voters on the right fringe was shocking. Finally, in terms of political culture, the British are traditionally thought to be moderate and deferential, supporting more moderate and incremental reforms as well as trusting political elites to govern the country (Almond & Verba, 1963), although this has been challenged to be the result of passivity and quiescence more than moderation and deference (Stronach & Martin, 2017). Enjoying one of the longest lasting and stable democracies in the contemporary period and operating in a political system known for respecting precedent and custom, British voters

are rarely expected to support a group of political firebrands promising a radical break from the status quo. It is important to remember that the leader representing perhaps the most significant break from the status quo, Margaret Thatcher, experienced numerous extended periods of low popular approval, several leadership crises, and was eventually ousted from office by her own party for, among a number of reasons, being an electoral liability (Wickham-Jones & Shell, 1991).

The third sense in which UKIP should never have happened is the victory of “Leave” in the Brexit referendum. Cameron had used referenda to great success, as seen with the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum, which he had signed in 2012, as well as the 2011 Alternative Vote referendum, which was the price for bringing the Liberal Democrats into a Conservative-led governing coalition. Both referendums resulted in victory for Cameron. Being able to use another referendum to retain Eurosceptic Conservative voters and put down the “fruitcakes, loonies, and closet racists” as Cameron had once described UKIP, seemed to be a political masterstroke. The idea of an In/Out referendum on European Union membership had been around in British politics since the Maastricht Treaty was signed, having taken inspiration from the 1992 Danish referendum on the European Union. James Goldsmith had founded the Referendum Party in 1994 to campaign for such a referendum and John Major’s second term as Prime Minister had been plagued by the “Maastricht Rebels” which imperiled the slim Conservative majority with dreams of referendum. Thus, Cameron gambled on a referendum, and although his previous two referendum gambles had paid off, no gambler wins every bet. Despite Cameron campaigning for “Remain”, the British public elected to “Leave” by a slim majority.

And yet UKIP did ultimately succeed and while the party has largely collapsed and all-but-disappeared from the political scene today, it is a disappearance resulting from its core mission being completed: The United Kingdom has left the European Union. UKIP’s success came about, despite an electoral system hostile to third parties, because of UKIP edging out other, often older, far right parties such as the British National Party and the National Front.

Displacing already existing far right parties would have never given UKIP enough of a vote share to pressure the Conservative Party though. In addition to consolidating the British far right, UKIP was the beneficiary of large numbers of defections from mainstream political parties, with the Conservatives being the biggest and most regular source of defecting voters. These dual streams of support, from consolidation and defection, led to the rapid growth of the party's vote share, and a ballooning vote share provided the leverage necessary to form an effective pressure party, continually pressuring and prodding Cameron's Conservative Party into more anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic policies.

However, the rapid growth of UKIP means that the specific determinants of UKIP's electoral support change quickly over time, often between elections. This ultimately means that there is no one explanation for the question of where UKIP drew its strength. An answer to this question of where will necessarily need to be supplemented with a question of when. While the particulars of UKIP support change quickly over time, one thing that can be said is that the growth of UKIP's support in quantity occurred alongside a change of support in complexity. Rather than drawing support increasingly heavily from a single factor, such as locales with high crime rates, UKIP's support base broadened to incorporate numerous factors, which may be unevenly present in a single place.

The Value of Studying UKIP

While answering this question is aimed towards the community of scholars concerned with explaining both the anomalous rise and success of UKIP in a country and political system that would seem to be inhospitable for such a party as well as the emergence and growth of far right parties more generally, it can also speak to broader communities. Scholars of the European far right, populism, or Euroscepticism would be interested in an explanation of UKIP's electoral support as UKIP represents all three of these political tendencies. Scholars of political geography would be interested in geographic variation of political support, and scholars of local politics will be interested in what factors drive voters towards extreme politics in a political arena often considered less important than national

politics. Finally, this study delves deeply into local media in explaining the UKIP phenomenon and while a great deal of existing media research on the far right has focused on how media has either accommodated or hindered the far right's emergence and institutionalization, this study goes one step beyond this by analyzing the relationship between media news coverage, the politics of immigration, and the consequences both hold for far right success or failure, making this dissertation valuable for scholars of media or political communication and for comparativists interested in far right or immigration politics. Additionally, this study will interest comparativists interested in a meso-level approach to political science, as this study weaves between individual-level and national-level approaches that have so far dominated the study of far right parties.

Brexit has greatly destabilized British politics. Understanding why voters opted for Brexit requires understanding the appeal of UKIP. This dissertation aims to do just that. Motivated by the question "What explains the geographic variation in support for UKIP?" much of the existing research on this question has focused on the individual characteristics of UKIP voters like the demographic characteristics of UKIP voters, such as being white, older, and having low levels of education, or looking at individual attitudinal characteristics, such as opposition to diversity or support for harsher penalties for criminals. As a result, when prior research examined geographic variation in UKIP support, towns or cities were viewed as mere aggregations of individual characteristics where a particular area supports UKIP because it has many individuals with characteristics favorable to the party. While this approach reveals much in the study of UKIP, it also treats geography as playing no role in shaping support, except as a container for individuals to inhabit. While the character of an area is connected to the sort of people who reside within it, the characteristics or contextual factors of a town or city help to shape the people who reside in it. This study aims to interrogate what role those contextual factors play in explaining the geographic variation in UKIP support.

Much of the fear regarding the far right or UKIP in British politics relates to national politics, such as the need to retain Conservative voters ahead of a general election, or a national referendum, like with Brexit. However, the importance of local politics is often overlooked. That the key to national electoral success is local is something understood by all major parties. Pattie and Johnston (2010) have noted that the Conservatives, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats have all focused their electoral strategies on targeting key constituencies and investing party resources into developing local campaigns to build parliamentary majorities. Cutts et al. (2012) have also argued that a critical factor in the Conservative victory in the 2010 General Election lies in the Conservative strategy of cooperating with, funding, and building up local party branches. With resources and cooperation flowing in from the national party, local parties were able to better execute local campaigns and train more effective activist bases. These local parties help to provide the infrastructure necessary for vote mobilization when general election campaigns occur and profile building for candidates. Indeed, these authors note that “continuous campaigning” is becoming the norm at the local level (Cutts et al., 2012, p. 373).

While the mechanical effect of SMD-P forges a path to national office that runs through local campaigns, there are also psychological factors that push towards a two party system with which all third parties need to contend. Perhaps the most important is the spoiler effect and a voter's fear that a vote for a third party will be a wasted vote. Since plurality systems have a high effective electoral threshold, there is hesitation in casting a vote for a candidate or party that is unlikely to garner a plurality of votes and encourages voters to support a more “credible” candidate. One type of election where the psychological deterrence towards third party voting is relaxed is in what are called second-order elections. In these elections, voters perceive the consequences of the election as less serious and thus the cost of “wasting” a vote is lower. Traditionally in European politics, local elections and European Parliament elections are understood to be second-order, and national elections are considered first-order (Reif & Schmitt, 1980, pp. 8-9). Good performance in local elections

helps to bridge the “credibility gap” that hinders third parties in plurality systems (Cutts, 2014), making local elections doubly important for a fringe third party like UKIP. European Union elections are also a particularly suitable venue for the emergence of new parties, due to the proportional representation electoral rules that are favorable for smaller or minor parties. This dissertation identifies the emergence of UKIP to the 2004 European Union elections and begins its media analysis at that point.

It is reasonable to suspect that success in second-order elections can help far right parties succeed in first-order elections. This is the case with the emergence of UKIP, where success in the 2004 European Parliamentary election led to national recognition of the party, the success of the Brexit Party in the 2019 European Parliamentary election led to a national electoral threat to the Conservative Party, and outside the UK, Thierry Baudet’s Forum for Democracy as a new far right party after Dutch local elections. Careful attention must be paid to the success of far right parties in local elections since it is victory in second-order elections that can help these parties make the jump from obscure political outsiders to relevant political players. This is especially true in light of the recognition in British politics that local success breeds national success.

It has been recognized that empirical reality, including the case of the United Kingdom, poses no small amount of trouble for the compelling logic of Duverger (Dunleavy & Diwakar, 2013). Theoretically, this relationship between second-order and first-order elections can help to explain minor exceptions to Duverger’s Law, if not full challenges. Not only can supranational (European Parliamentary) second-order elections result in an increase in the number of parties competing in plurality elections, but so can subnational (local) second-order elections, through the bridging of the “credibility gap”. While this dissertation does not address European Parliamentary elections, its focus on explaining variation in far right support at the local level can help to shed light on apparent violations of Duverger’s Law while at the same time being more generally applicable outside the European Union, as

subnational second-order elections are far more common than supranational second-order elections.

In addition to the value of local politics for national elections, local events, characteristics, or policies may have an independent effect on xenophobia and far right support. Two approaches to studying immigration and ethnic conflict, realistic conflict theory and the contact hypothesis, argue that it is competition for scarce resources or lack of intergroup contact respectively, which drives ethnic conflict and prejudice towards immigrants. Local governments can affect the growth of xenophobia and the appeal of the far right by adopting policies that conform to either of these approaches. For example, Rafaela Dancygier argues in *Immigration and Conflict in Europe* (2010) that anti-immigrant violence in London was driven in part by competition between natives and immigrants over dwindling stocks of public housing. The housing policies adopted by local governments in London either inflamed or suppressed this conflict through its management of public housing.

Finally, the study of UKIP and local politics can speak to the relationship between various far right parties and their own local politics. While far right parties are diverse across national borders, they do comprise a party family with some commonality between them. Increasing support for the far right across much of Europe simultaneously suggests that some drivers of far right support are common across far right parties. Exploring how local contextual factors influenced UKIP's electoral support can shed new light on the study of other far right parties, especially when considering the importance of local government in different European countries. The UK is the paradigmatic example of a centralized unitary government with local governments relatively weak and dependent on the political center for resources and policy competence. In decentralized unitary governments (ex. Sweden) or federal systems (ex. Germany), control of local government is hugely influential in and of itself through either access to more plentiful resources or through protected spheres of policy competence. Understanding the far right in a local setting is valuable regardless of the power of local government but imperative in those countries where local government is powerful.

Methods Preview

The central research question of this dissertation is what factors explain geographic variation in local electoral support for the United Kingdom Independence Party. This study employs mixed-methods research, combining standard statistical analysis and regression techniques with archival research of local English newspapers. First, a broad statistical analysis is conducted for the 2007, 2011, and 2015 local elections that tests the significance of a set of local contextual variables for UKIP's vote share in English localities. These three elections comprise approximately 85% of the local elections that occurred between UKIP's breakthrough in the 2004 European Parliament elections and its peak in 2015 before its decline after the victory of "Leave" in the EU referendum and feature the same set of local authorities at three points in time. Selecting these three years allows us to capture most local authority elections at multiple points in time while keeping the number of election years studied to a minimum – making an efficient trade-off between breadth and parsimony. After selecting nine English local authorities as research sites, this study employs Tobit regression to test the impact of media-derived variables on UKIP support in local elections. Finally, this study delves into the rich detail of these variables in a case study of one local authority, Boston, to better ground the abstract contextual and media variables in the lived political experience of these towns.

This research chooses a small group of nine local authorities on the grounds of high values in key characteristics that scholars have found to correlate with support for UKIP. Despite these correlates of UKIP support, actual support varies greatly within the group. For example, UKIP was only able to win approximately 5% of the vote in Babergh in 2015 while in the same year they received approximately 27% in Boston. It is this sort of geographic variation in the UKIP vote that this study seeks to interrogate. It is the local or council elections in these local authorities in 2007, 2011 and 2015 that are of primary interest.

While selection criteria for research sites were driven by individual characteristics of residents of these sites, the first set of variables examined in this study are contextual and

include: crime rate, unemployment rate, Conservative Party performance in the previous election, foreign-born population, the share of the population that is aged 65 or more, the share of the population without educational qualifications as well as the population share with university degrees, with each variable being measured at the level of the local authority. This data is drawn from official government statistics and is tested quantitatively. Each of these variables have been found to be significant for far right electoral success, either broadly in the European context or for UKIP in particular, although in the case of existing scholarship regarding UKIP, much of the research has focused on the party's success at the national level. High crime rates have been found to increase support for anti-immigrant parties (Dinas & Spanje, 2011) and even exposure to crime reporting in the media has exhibited a similar effect (Burscher et al., 2015). Unemployment (Vlandas & Halikiopoulou, 2019) and fear of unemployment (Ford et al., 2012) have also been found to increase support for far right parties. UKIP has been found to perform very well among the elderly, as well as those with lower levels of education, and conversely, UKIP enjoys little support among the highly educated (Ford & Goodwin, 2014). While UKIP does draw political defectors from numerous political parties, as well as non-voters, research on inter-election vote switching has found the Conservative Party to be the largest source of UKIP defections, making previous Conservative performance a potentially important variable for UKIP's success (Evans & Mellon, 2016). Lastly, there is little consensus on the relationship between foreign-born populations and far right support. One argument is that higher foreign-born populations represent a higher demand for resources and thus more competition between natives and immigrants (e.g., Olzak, 1992/2013). This competition motivates anti-immigrant sentiment which channels into politics as support for far right parties. Another argument is that a larger foreign-born population represents a higher chance and more consistent opportunities for inter-group contact and this contact will tend to reduce tensions and conflicts between groups (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998).

The second set of variables is media-related and is drawn from local newspapers. This study chooses a single paid circulation, as opposed to free circulation, local newspaper in each of the nine research sites. News reporting, opinion pieces, editorials, and letters are included if they are on the topic of immigration. Each of these documents is coded regarding how it frames immigration, its valence or tone, as well as the time of publication, with all documents coming from the 2004-2015 period. Archival research was conducted in two manners. For much of the latter part of the period under study here, a key word search was carried out in several newspaper databases. For materials that have yet to be digitized, each paper was read on microfilm in-person at the British Library. This archival research is used to produce variables ranging from the quantity of documents, the valence of immigration reporting, to the frame employed in reporting on immigration. The frames coded in this study include security, economic, and cultural, with the addition of specific coding for crime framing as a subset of the broader security frame. Further specification is not pursued due to concerns with the size of data subsets. The analysis of media reporting of immigration in terms of security, economic, and cultural frames is commonplace among media scholars (Eberl et al., 2018; Meeusen & Jacobs, 2017; Caviedes, 2015; Hellwig & Sinno, 2016) and the coding strategy used in this dissertation, based on identifying an article's central topic as a frame in combination with valence, is also commonplace (Eberl et al., 2018). Where this dissertation makes unique contributions is in first helping to fill a noted scarcity of scholarship connecting media framing to far right party success (Golder, 2016; Mudde, 2016) and in the specific study of how media framing may have helped or hindered UKIP's success.

Studying the effect of local media, with local newspapers as one facet of local media, represents a unique opportunity in the study of the far right and, with UKIP as an anti-immigrant and populist party, both anti-immigrant and populist politics. First, local newspapers through their geographically limited circulation and narrow focus on the local politics of their area provide an almost-natural support for sub-national analysis. National media's wholly national distribution prevents easy isolation of the influence that media exerts

on far right parties in different parts of the same country and thus reference to national media sources struggle to answer questions about the disparate successes of far right parties within a single country. Second, official Office of Communications (Ofcom) studies have shown that while the influence of print news media has waned in the face of new competition from the internet as well as social media, these same reports suggest that in the context of local information, and local politics, local newspapers are still among the most relied upon and trusted sources of information (Ofcom, 2015). Thus, while there may seem to be a certain anachronism to the study of newspapers in the age of social media, such a focus on print media is theoretically appropriate in the context of local politics, the focus of this dissertation. In addition, specific to existing research on UKIP which finds their supporters to be disproportionately old, print media in general has a disproportionately older audience making local newspapers doubly appropriate for the study of UKIP's success in local elections.

Despite the theoretical suitability of studying local newspapers as an insight into far right parties, the role of local media has largely been overlooked, especially in relation to UKIP. While there has been increasing attention paid to the relationship between far right parties and the media, this attention has almost exclusively been on national media. For comparativists, this research on national media has facilitated cross-national comparison and single country case studies, but little in terms of sub-national variation owing to the nature of national media. For UKIP in particular, very little existing research has emphasized the role of the media and what does exist is contradictory and the relatively short lifespan of UKIP as a party has done little to facilitate this sort of research. Furthermore, existing research on UKIP and the media has focused on whether the media had facilitated or hampered UKIP's *national* rise to prominence with nothing to say regarding the establishment of UKIP's *local* presence. Additionally, Deacon and Wring's (2016) research on UKIP and the national media found that the national media largely adopted a policy of "active containment" regarding UKIP and one way around this containment at the national level, for researchers, is to look to local media where such policies may either not exist or be weakly enforced. This importance of this

point is reinforced by Cutts' (2014) finding that local success in the UK facilitates national success. While it may be the case that national media attempted to actively contain UKIP, local media may have allowed UKIP to circumvent this containment and build support at the local level that allowed UKIP to exert political pressure on the Conservative Party at the national level. This political pressure is best exemplified with Cameron's referendum call in response to the threat of UKIP splitting the vote on the right ahead of the 2015 General Election (Tournier-Sol, 2015), and the resignation of Theresa May the day after the Conservative's disastrous performance in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections, and her replacement with the more staunchly Eurosceptic Boris Johnson.

Argument

This work argues, based on weaving together findings regarding both contextual determinants and the effects of local media on UKIP's local vote share, that no single set of factors best explains the geographic variation in UKIP's local support, that instead their support evolved over time and scholars as well as analysts must be cautious of not just who supports UKIP or where that support is located, but when is that support given as well. Between 2004 and 2015 UKIP support grew extremely rapidly, peaking in 2015, such that the geographic profile of UKIP support is unstable, with the results of different election years being determined by distinct sets of factors. UKIP's growth is fueled by two different but complementary processes. First is a process of consolidation, which saw UKIP eventually supplant other far right parties as the primary electoral vehicle of the British far right. The second is a process of conversion, which saw the defection of mainstream party voters, largely Conservatives, to UKIP. One important feature of the evolution of UKIP's support is that the party's support grew broader, rather than deeper, with an increasing number of factors determining the UKIP vote share, rather than an increasingly large percentage of a narrow range of factors. Thus, the evolution of UKIP's support over time is a story of an increasingly complex base of support.

That no single set of variables best explains a set of three different local elections is not a problematic result for this dissertation. No single story fully explains the growth of UKIP's support and changes in the geographic variation of that support, a fact that highlights the importance of temporality in the study of far right parties. This is especially the case for UKIP between 2004 and 2015, which saw the party emerge as a fringe and niche single issue party after the European Parliamentary elections and transform into the third largest party in the UK by vote share, and exert tremendous pressure onto David Cameron's Conservative Party, with many believing that it was the electoral threat posed by UKIP that prompted Cameron's ill-fated call for referendum. This period represents a period of enormous transformation for UKIP, both in terms of change and growth, and even for the British party system which saw incredible instability; expecting the same factors that drove UKIP support in 2007 to be the same that drove that support in 2015 is to believe that the party and the party system between 2007 and 2015 changed little.

Research finding that education is an important voter characteristic is confirmed here at the local authority level for the 2015 election. As shown by Goodwin and Milazzo (2015), individual education level has two effects on UKIP support, with the party receiving very little support from the highly educated and much higher levels of support from those with low levels of education. This dissertation finds that the size of the high and low education population shares in a local authority produce the same effects, where local authorities with more university graduates see lower UKIP vote shares while local authorities of larger populations with no qualifications return higher UKIP vote shares.

A local authority's crime rate also helps to explain the vote share UKIP received in the 2015 local election. In this case, higher crime rates lead to more support for UKIP. An important caveat, given the party's nature as an anti-immigrant party, is that this crime rate is the total crime rate in a local authority, without distinction between who commits the crime, who is victimized, or what crime was committed. While the role of crime in creating grievance-based support for UKIP is largely overlooked in the debate over the sources of UKIP support,

which have tended to focus on economic and cultural grievances, this finding is largely in agreement with surveys of UKIP voters. The British Social Attitudes Survey (#32) (2015) finds that UKIP voters deviate strongly from the British mainstream when it comes to issues of criminal punishment. For example, 75% of UKIP voters support the re-introduction of the death penalty (as opposed to 48% of the British population) and 89% of UKIP voters believe criminals should receive harsher sentences (opposed to 73% of the overall population). This dissertation argues that UKIP benefits from crime through two mechanisms. First, crime has been disproportionately associated with immigrants in the UK (and even beyond the UK), and thus rising crime rates are likely to worsen attitudes towards immigrants and benefit an anti-immigrant party like UKIP. Second, UKIP highly emphasized the collusion and corruption of mainstream parties in its rhetoric and put itself forward as a strong anti-establishment party. This rhetoric positioned UKIP as an “obvious” vehicle for voters to express their dissatisfaction with the traditional parties in the UK and rising crime rates provide an effective stimulus for voter discontent.

The strength of the local Conservative Party is a critical factor in explaining variation in UKIP’s electoral results. This follows from the fact that the single greatest source of UKIP voters is defectors from the Conservative Party. As such, this dissertation looks to the electoral performance, as vote share, of the Conservative Party in the previous local election as a determinant of UKIP’s vote share. Voters from every other party are technically potential defectors but since the greatest source of defectors is the Conservative Party, UKIP gains most from where there are more Conservative voters. This logic is also seen in reverse after UKIP’s collapse in the aftermath of the Leave victory; in the 2017 General Election, nearly half of 2015 UKIP voters voted for the Conservatives while 30% of 2015 UKIP voters did not vote at all, with much of the remaining 20% split between Labour and UKIP (Ipsos Mori, 2017, How Britain Voted).

Media analysis of local newspapers in nine local authorities is used to supplement the broader contextual analysis. The best explanatory model finds that between 2011 and

2015, two frames were influential for UKIP's local vote share: the cultural and security frames. The cultural frame provided a net benefit to UKIP while the security frame provided a net detriment to the party. Further analysis of these two frames finds that it was pro-immigrant culture framing that bolsters UKIP while the anti-immigrant equivalent was insignificant. For the security frame, further analysis shows that it is not security framing broadly, but a much smaller sub-frame involving border control and immigration policy which is significant for UKIP. Deeper analysis of this border control sub-frame reveals that pro-immigrant border control-framed reporting is detrimental for UKIP, while the anti-immigrant equivalent is beneficial. However, across all nine local authorities, the border control sub-frame is a net-loss for UKIP's vote share, but this ultimately varies across local authorities depending on the area's balance of pro- and anti-immigrant border control reporting.

Furthermore, this dissertation finds that the quantity of immigration reporting is much more significant for far right support than the timing and valence of immigration reporting. In other words, the amount of news items is more important than whether those news items are pro- or anti-immigrant or precisely when the reporting occurs. That quantity matters but valence less so suggests that voters, at least in local elections, are not having their attitudes towards immigrants shaped by the local newspaper's coverage, but that their pre-existing attitudes or dispositions are being activated by newspaper coverage. In short, the newspapers are unlikely to be converting immigration supporters into immigration opponents but raising the salience of the immigration "issue" for immigration opponents. Facing an increasingly pressing immigration issue, opponents opt to manifest their latent opposition with a vote for UKIP.

The argument, and the findings it is based on, matter greatly for one enduring debate in the study of far right parties revolving around the grievances that mobilize demand for far right parties, thus driving electoral support for these parties. Existing debate on the topic of grievance-based demand has coalesced around cultural versus economic origins for these grievances. While this study finds stronger evidence for cultural origins, it also provides

evidence that a third type of grievance, related to security, has been largely overlooked. From the analysis of contextual determinants, it becomes apparent that this security-based grievance is not inherently connected to immigration *per se* because the local crime rate tested in this study is general and not specific to immigrant perpetrators. This has enormous implications for policy in addressing anti-immigrant xenophobia by allowing security-enhancing reform to serve “double-duty” in both enhancing citizen security but also diminishing security-based xenophobia. Beyond these merits in themselves, improvements to citizen security also have wide bipartisan appeal, allowing these sorts of reforms to sidestep the bitter politics of economic redistribution, widely seen as necessary to address economic grievances, or cultural integration or restriction, seen as necessary to address cultural grievances.

This dissertation also contributes to the literature on the European far right by responding to the calls of scholars like Matt Golder (2016) for more scholarly attention to the so-called “stages of success” of far right parties and theoretical expectations that there are significantly different dynamics underlying far right breakthrough and post-breakthrough institutionalization. This dissertation argues that this post-breakthrough institutionalization can itself be an unstable process and scholars must be sensitive to the growth and decay of far right parties, even after an electoral breakthrough. Sensitivity to the temporal dimension of far right parties cautions against treating even a single far right party as an inherently stable unit across time as well as cautioning against the treatment of two different far right parties at different “stages of success” as inherently similar objects.

Finally, this dissertation weighs in on a specifically British debate. This debate has revolved around the question of whether the rise of UKIP came at the electoral expense of the Conservative or the Labour Party. Arguments that Labour “paid the price” for UKIP’s success often look at the socio-demographic profiles of UKIP voters while arguments that it was the Tories who suffered because of UKIP tend to look towards reported defection rates among voters. This dissertation unequivocally supports the position that it was the

Conservatives who were most negatively affected by UKIP's success and further, that the collapse of UKIP and its half-hearted revival as the Brexit Party may play no small part in the apparent dominance of Boris Johnson's Conservative Party in 2020.

Plan of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 reviews prominent and influential literature on this topic that constitutes the foundation of this work. Both the question, geographic variation in UKIP support, and the method, through analysis of contextual and media factors, necessitates combining an eclectic range of literature to lay the foundation of this dissertation. This range is predominantly centered on existing explanations for the success of the far right in Europe, with special attention to the success of UKIP in the UK. In addition, research literature on immigration as well as in the role of media and political communication and the racialization of immigrants in news media is incorporated as well.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology and methods of the dissertation. Methodologically, this chapter explains and justifies some of the choices made in the research, like the focus on UKIP, the use of sub-national comparison, or the use of archival research. In the methods section, technical specifications are given for the study. This ranges from explanation of how the dependent variable was coded to how various independent variables were selected and operationalized. As the most work and time-intensive aspect of this study has been the collection, coding, and analysis of an original data set comprised of newspaper articles gathered during archival research, a substantial portion of chapter 3 is dedicated to explaining the creation process of this original data set. The primary goal of this chapter is to assist scholars in research replication, either to confirm the conclusions this study reaches or facilitate comparative study.

Chapter 4 provides an overview and descriptive statistics of the original newspaper data set created for this dissertation. Given that this data set encapsulates more than a combined century of newspaper publication, more than 10,000 newspaper issues, and thousands of documents of interest for the study, many elements of the data set are unused

in the analysis in the dissertation, largely because they are either irrelevant or found to be insignificant in explaining UKIP's local success. This description of the data will discuss some of these elements of the data, such that an individual who is not a student of politics may still derive useful insights from this study, particularly if one is interested in how various local newspapers report on immigration.

Chapter 5 engages in hypothesis testing of contextual determinants through statistical analysis. Building on some of the existing research presented in Chapter 2, numerous hypotheses are tested using the independent variables explained in Chapter 3. Using Tobit regression, I find that determinants of UKIP vote share are largely unstable across election years. As 2015 represents some of the highest levels of UKIP support, the results of this election are privileged. In 2015, the local education profile, crime rate, and the strength of local Conservatives significantly determined UKIP's vote share. 2015 also represents the year where the models tested in this research make the largest impact versus a baseline control model, while the model's impact in explaining the 2007 and 2011 elections is weaker.

Chapter 6 tests several hypotheses regarding the relationship between media and support for UKIP in the 2015 election. In terms of method, this chapter largely replicates the approach of chapter 5 but with nine local authority cases and using variables drawn from the research's original newspaper-based data set. While the contextual analysis is notable in its instability, the media analysis displays much more stability with a similar set of media variables affecting the UKIP vote share throughout the period under study. Most prominent of these is the amount of coverage devoted to culture-framed immigration reporting, although border control-framed reporting also plays a role in determining the UKIP vote share.

Chapter 7 is the dissertation's case study of Boston, Lincolnshire. Boston is a crucial case for any explanation of UKIP's success. Across numerous types of elections, Boston has shown substantial support for UKIP. It had the highest support for Brexit in the 2016 referendum as well as having one of the highest vote shares in the 2015 Parliamentary

elections. UKIP has also had strong showings in European Parliament elections as well as considerable success in local politics. Beyond election results, Boston has many factors that are expected to increase support for far right parties: it has a substantial agricultural sector, which has in turn led the town to play host to a growing significant foreign-born population with nearly a quarter of the local population born outside the country in 2015. Further, the area has been noted as being economically deprived, a largely overlooked farming town as well known for its high crime rate as it is for cabbage and salad greens. In terms of media, Boston's newspaper devotes substantial attention to crime, and the most common portrayal of immigrants in the paper is as a criminal, with a peak of over 90% of immigration related articles in a single year focusing on crimes committed by its foreign-born residents.

In the concluding chapter, I review the main empirical and theoretical findings of this dissertation and place these findings into context with the findings of other scholars of the far right. In addition to interpreting the meaning of these findings for the story of UKIP, and the British far right going forward, I also try to interpret what these findings may mean for the broader study of the European far right. In addition, this chapter discusses the importance of studying what has become a largely defunct political party that played a crucial role in a pivotal moment for British politics. Finally, I finish with suggestions of potential avenues for expansion on these findings. While this dissertation aims to reveal the contextual and media factors driving support for the far right in local politics, it is also hoped that this dissertation can help to sketch out one of the major political forces that may have contributed to one of the most transformative moments in recent British political history.

Key Terms

The use of the term *populism* has exploded since the 2016 Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump, but the term is often misused, especially in popular discourse. Its use is rarely positive, and the definition has become so badly muddled that it often merely signals the speaker's disapproval rather than anything of substance regarding populism. This dissertation hews to the academic definition of populism, provided by Cas Mudde. Populism

is a thin-centered ideology that separates society into the “pure people” and the “corrupt elite” and argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people (Mudde, 2004). Populism’s thin-centered nature means that “in the wild” it combines with other ideologies, thus providing the source for the eclectic ideology commonly noted with populists. As such, populist parties can be parties of the left or right and can change their ideological content radically while remaining a populist party. In the UK, UKIP is widely considered to be a populist party and this study agrees, especially for the period under study in this dissertation. An important note here is that due to the thinness of populism, UKIP is both a far right and a populist party. A more precise definition of *far right* will be provided, at length, in the literature review.

Another key term for this study is *euroscepticism*. Euroscepticism in a broad context refers to opposition and criticism of the European Union and European integration. Importantly, euroscepticism does not usually include criticism or discontent with specific policies of the EU but is more fundamentally connected to the structure or process of the EU or of European integration. For example, one who is critical of the way the EU regulates greenhouse gas emissions through the Emissions Trading System would not usually be identified as a Eurosceptic, whereas someone who believes the EU is an undemocratic institution would be considered a eurosceptic. Euroscepticism comes in two varieties: soft and hard. Soft euroscepticism is opposition to the EU as it currently stands and believes that reform is possible to address these issues. Hard euroscepticism is a fundamental opposition to the core idea of the European integration with a belief that reform is impossible or that the very existence of the EU is a problem. The UK is widely polled as being one of the most eurosceptic countries in the EU, usually alongside Greece since the 2008 financial crisis. UKIP is a hard eurosceptic party, a label the party wears proudly.

An essential term in the study of a far right party is *immigrant*. The term itself is replete with connotations depending on who uses it and its context. In this study, the term will be used to refer to those individuals who were not born in their current country of residence;

essentially, those residing in the United Kingdom but born elsewhere. This is divorced from any consideration of ethnicity, race, or religion. While many discussions of immigration in the UK focus on Muslim or South Asian immigrants, in this study most immigrants residing in the research sites migrate from Eastern Europe. Like *immigrant*, the term *native* in this study is only used to refer to those who were born in the UK without regard to other characteristics.

Local authority is the term used throughout this dissertation to refer to the various permutations of local government in the UK and is used interchangeably with local government. Local authorities are separated into either unitary authorities or a split authority. Split authorities are those with a lower and higher tier of local government with borough, district, and city councils composing the lower tier and county councils forming the higher tier. These tiers are divided with respect to policy competencies. Unitary authorities combine those two tiers into a single local government. This study focuses on the lower tier of split authorities, the borough or district councils, and unitary authorities. The term *council* or *council government* is sometimes used in lieu of local authority or local government. County councils are ignored in this study because county councils are usually a shared upper tier of local government with numerous lower tier councils below them. Thus, many lower councils share the same county council, complicating comparisons across councils. Electorally, seats in county councils are filled in separate elections with their own districts but because some of our lower councils share the same county council, it becomes difficult to compare the electoral success of UKIP in these situations. This is doubly true when county council districts cut through or combine parts of lower councils into a single district.

While national parliamentary elections use the classic SMD-P electoral system, local authorities use a plurality system, but with varying district magnitudes with one, two or three seats being the most common. Each voter is allocated votes equal to the number of seats to be filled in their district. Voters are not allowed to engage in “bullet voting” or “plump voting”, where voters can allocate more than one of their votes to a single candidate. The seat

winners are those candidates who receive the highest number of votes. For example, in a two-seat district, the two candidates with the most votes will fill those seats.

This mix of district magnitudes within a plurality system means that single member districts operate as common SMD-P elections while multi-seat districts operate as multiple non-transferable vote (MNTV) elections. An additional oddity is that the size of elected chambers in local government is high. For example, the council government of Santa Cruz, California, population approximately 64,000, is composed of seven elected councilors. The local government of Boston, Lincolnshire, population also approximately 64,000, is composed of 30 elected councilors. This size is small in this study as well, with the local authority of King's Lynn and West Norfolk's government having 62 councilors. The twin issues of having many districts and districts of varying sizes means that even the main two parties have difficulties contesting every single seat, either under-filling the slate in a multi-member district, or leaving some districts uncontested entirely. This is even more so the case for third parties. Accounting for this resulted in the introduction of percentage of seats contested as a control variable and will be further discussed in chapter 3.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter provides a brief review of the literature this dissertation builds upon and is composed of three major components. Before diving into any of these components is a review of the definitions and terminology used in discussing the far right. While the far right is well-studied by numerous scholars, there has also been a veritable “war of words” over how we talk about the far right, ranging from their name to what characteristics unify the parties into a family. The first major component reviews the explanations of the success of far right parties throughout Europe, with a focus on the British far right as the most relevant. The second major component looks at the role of the media for the far right, looking at how the media provides opportunities as well as shapes the voting population that the far right courts. The final major component of the literature review devotes attention to immigration, both to explain the basic characteristics of the main immigrant targets of UKIP - Eastern Europeans - and to non-media explanations of xenophobia. While each component is a distinct field in themselves, there is also substantial overlap between all three, which is where this dissertation finds itself.

Each of the three main parts of the literature review contribute in their own way to some later portion of the dissertation. From existing explanations of far right success, this dissertation derives many of the contextual determinants as well as the hypotheses that will be tested to explain geographic variation in UKIP’s vote share. This dissertation also works to bridge the divide between explanations for the rise of the far right that are split between demand-side and supply-side explanations. The contextual determinants used in chapter five include both demand-side and supply-side variables. Prior research on the sources of UKIP’s electoral success have also been used as selection criteria for the nine local authorities used in the media analysis in chapter 6. The literature reviewed here examines UKIP as well as other European far right parties, although more weight is lent to existing research on UKIP as these constitute some of the existing debates with which this dissertation engages.

The media literature reviewed here also contributes to the rest of the dissertation in several ways. Firstly, it introduces some core theoretical elements employed in chapter six's media analysis, such as the media's agenda-setting function, issue salience, and issue ownership, alongside other concepts such as frames and valence. In introducing prior research on the relationship between the media and far right parties, the dissertation is placed in continuation with existing studies that have asked similar questions for different countries, parties, and times. With regards to UKIP specifically, this dissertation contributes to a key unresolved debate on whether the media has helped or hindered UKIP's electoral success. A further purpose of the media literature is to present existing research from which this dissertation's own media analysis draws in formulating its own hypotheses involving how the media may have influenced UKIP's electoral results. Finally, some gaps in the study of the media and far right parties are presented which help to motivate this dissertation's work.

The final part of the literature incorporates a set of immigration literature that helps to determine some of the methodological choices made in this dissertation as well as contributing to both the contextual and media analyses. Methodologically, existing research on immigration, particularly on anti-immigration attitudes, partially drives the dissertation's focus on local authorities, rather than higher levels of governments. Given that common theories on the tension-easing benefits of native-immigrant contact, or on the tension-causing consequences of native-immigrant competition rely on some degree of contact between these communities, this dissertation trains its focus at the local level. Additionally, this section also supports the inclusion of Conservative Party vote shares, crime rates, and the size of local immigrant communities in the contextual analysis, as well as hypotheses to be tested in the media analysis regarding media framing, anti-immigrant attitudes, and their relationship to UKIP's electoral results.

Defining the Far Right

Unlike other party families, there is little consensus on the name given or characteristics that unify the far right as a party family. Attempts to find the common ground

of the far right have often focused on ideology and cross-national linkages between parties, both inside and outside European Parliament. Efforts to define the party family ideologically have borne little fruit, however. In a now-classic piece, Mudde (1996) finds that across 26 definitions given by scholars of the far right, 58 different ideological features are identified with far right parties, a number which has only grown as the far right has expanded in terms of the number of parties and party programs since 1996. The tendency to try to identify the far right party family on the basis of ideological characteristics is, in part, responsible for the plethora of names given to the far right, with *populist*, *extremist*, *radical*, *nationalist*, *anti-immigrant*, *anti-system*, and more recently *alt-right*, being just some examples of the terminological inflation surrounding the naming of the far right.

More recently, Golder (2016) finds that four ideological features have become common in defining the far right: radicalism, extremism, nationalism, and populism, with radicalism and extremism being mutually exclusive within the far right party family. Radicalism here references the tendency to critique existing institutions without fundamentally attacking democracy, while extremism is when this critique extends into attacks on democracy itself and endorsement of authoritarianism. The nationalism of the far right aims to secure the nation-state, with far right parties differing in how they compose their ideal of the nation (Mudde, 2007). This commitment to the ideal of the nation-state often veers into outright nativism when far right parties endorse policies to limit non-nationals within national borders, endorse policies to assimilate foreign nationals, or in the most extreme cases, deport them. Finally, in Mudde's (2004) famous definition, populism is a thin-centered ideology that understands society as divided between the "pure people" and the "corrupt elite" and believes that politics should reflect the will of the people. Populism forms the bridge between radicalism/extremism and nationalism, with elite corruption used to justify the need for radical systemic reform, and the "pure people" being understood primarily in national terms. Far right parties and politicians often claim to represent the "man-in-the-street" as well as "common sense".

Other methods have been used to define the far right, but often have critical failures or oversights that make them less attractive than an ideological definition. Defining the far right parties by their transnational linkages to other far right parties has a tendency to exclude either very new or relatively (electorally) unsuccessful far right parties who either fail to win seats in European Parliament or struggle to build transnational linkages. Defining the party family in terms of their spatial location (Norris, 2004) also carries some inherent flaws. Relying on popular surveys of party spatial position, surveys of either the general population or of far right voters themselves, can lead to incoherent results as voters can take very limited and mixed approaches to interpreting party positions. Expert surveys, samples of political scientists familiar with a country, effectively leave the question unanswered as there is no interrogation of how the party is defined.

One potentially fruitful way to approach defining the far right is based on policy positions. One advantage of a policy-based definition is that far right parties themselves have electoral incentives to articulate clear policy positions to try to win voters at the ballot box, while these parties have incentives to downplay or distort their ideological features in order to distance themselves from negative ideological connotations. Ivarsflaten (2008) finds that the only policy stance that unites Europe's successful far right parties, defined as winning 5% or more of the vote in a national election is opposition to immigration. Ennser (2010) finds that the far right party family is relatively homogenous on three issues: immigration, the environment, and the European Union, with the party family favoring less immigration, weaker environmental protections, and less authority for the European Union, with immigration being the most homogenous position for the party family. In addition, while ideological definitions emphasize the heterogeneity of the far right, the far right party family's combination of stances on immigration, the environment, and the European Union sets them neatly apart from Europe's other party families into a reasonably homogenous group. Ivarsflaten's and Ennser's definitions of the far right are ultimately compatible and those with

which this dissertation is most in agreement. However, there are also more sociologically inclined voter-centered definitions one may find compelling.

Voter Base

One can also define the far right in terms of what social groups tend to disproportionately support these parties. Kriesi et al. (2006) argue that the far right is the party of the so-called “losers of globalization”, the segment of the population that has seen their economic fortunes either stagnate or fall as the contemporary economy becomes increasingly high tech and globalized. These voters tend to be older, working class, with less education, and lower incomes. Empirical investigation of the “losers of globalization” hypothesis reveals that across ten of the most major far right parties in Europe, no particular trait in the hypothesis is universal, with low education being true for eight of the ten cases (Rooduijn, 2018). Similar investigation finds that while low education is common among far right voters, particular cultural attitudes are more common among far right voters (van Elsas, 2017).

A UK-specific version of the “losers of globalization” hypothesis is commonly cited in explanations of UKIP voters and is known as the “left behind” hypothesis (Ford & Goodwin, 2014a). The left behind hypothesis states that the primary supporters of UKIP are economically, socially, and politically marginalized voters who have been under-represented in British politics prior to the emergence of UKIP. They are economically “left behind” because the twin forces of de-industrialization and globalization have harmed them economically with little benefit. They are socially left behind because they hold “traditional” social attitudes and values that were once hegemonic but have been challenged by more progressive and multicultural attitudes. They are politically left behind because the convergence of left and right towards the median voter and the well-educated professional class has left this group without a party willing to champion their interests. As a result, the left behind have jumped at the chance represented by UKIP to return to the “old days” of the United Kingdom.

Like the “losers” hypothesis, the far right is sometimes presented as the party of the marginalized or alienated (Gidron & Hall, 2017). In this view, far right voters are those people in society who feel alienated: they describe themselves as a stranger in their own country, where society places little value or grants little respect to them, or they express low trust in their society. It is also argued that feelings of social alienation are exacerbated by income and educational inequality is growing rapidly, and thus it can appear that these factors drive far right support. Far right parties may be particularly apt to connecting with marginalized voters because of the far right’s tendency to engage in populism, with the appeal of speaking for the “common man” and the far right’s tendency to attack immigrants, which may elevate the status of the marginalized at immigrants’ expense. Finally, the radical or extreme nature of far right parties may appeal to the socially alienated because it holds the potential to drastically upend or reshape social life – an attractive proposal of one who feels as if they occupy the bottom of the social order.

Explaining the Far Right

More than anything else, explanations of the success of the far right have been the most prominent and most common research on the far right. This is understandable; the far right is seen as the contemporary inheritors of the fascist legacy and to see a dead political ideology gaining supporters and some electoral success is deeply confusing and/or distressing. The far right also tends to represent a strong anti-system stance, either in its radical or extreme variation, and thus to see a vibrant far right party within a country is to know that some significant fraction of that country’s population harbors a deep sense of systemic rejection. Finally, in a period of increased human mobility, where societies are increasingly multicultural and diversity is increasingly valued for its own sake as a social benefit, the far right represents a segment of society who emphatically reject such values, prizing homogeneity instead.

This section of the literature review will detail existing explanations of the rise and success of far right parties, largely in the last 20 to 30 years. A classic division is employed in

approaching this literature – that of demand-side and supply-side explanations. Demand-side explanations focus on explaining why voters opt to vote for far right parties, or why citizens join far right parties and engage in politics on the fringes of society. Supply-side explanations focus on the factors that either facilitate or hinder efforts to organize far right parties, the electoral institutions that determine the translation of votes into political representation or the internal characteristics of far right parties themselves. While this dissertation focuses more heavily on demand-side explanations to explain UKIP's local election results, it does heed Golder's (2016) call for more research to incorporate both demand- and supply-side conditions and so draws upon both sets of literature to fashion hypotheses.

Demand-side Explanations

Without a doubt, the most common explanations of far right success are economic explanations. This is likely true for scholars, non-scholarly elite sources such as the media or politicians, as well as popular audiences. While economic explanations are the most commonly offered explanation of far right support, the most commonly investigated of these is competition over scarce jobs – otherwise stated, the most common economic explanation of far right support posits a vote for the far right as the result of unemployment.

The far right's opposition to immigration means that the far right will restrict migrant access to the labor market, as commonly seen with asylum seekers, or will support restrictions on immigration. Both policies curtail access to the labor market for migrants and resolve job competition in natives' favor. This relationship of higher unemployment rates leading to higher support for a far right party has been found to hold in multiple cases without condition or qualification (Stockemer, 2017; Rooduijn, 2015; Rydgren & Ruth, 2011; Kestila & Soderlund, 2007; Jackman & Volpert, 1996). Such a finding is actually relieving; policy and institutional mechanisms for reducing unemployment are well-tested, with much of policy under post-war Keynesianism focused on ensuring employment and as a result, governments can be seen to be able to exert influence over the degree of support a far right party can muster by deciding how much to pay to “buy down” unemployment.

Others have found positive relationships between unemployment and far right support but only under particular conditions or with qualification. Vlandas and Halikiopoulou (2019) as well as Arzheimer (2009) find that the welfare state helps to mitigate the relationship between unemployment and far right support, specifically the amount of unemployment insurance available for the unemployed. Rydgren and Ruth (2013) find that unemployment is conditional on the “halo effect”, with natives living adjacent to neighborhoods with more immigrants tending to support the far right in response to unemployment. Kestila and Soderlund (2007) find that the electoral context of a particular election can determine whether unemployment “matters” for the far right, with unemployment driving support in some election years but not in others. Jesuit et al. (2009) find that the relationship between unemployment and far right support is mitigated by social capital; when social capital is high, the influence unemployment exerts on far right support is reduced. Finally, Golder (2003) finds that unemployment only increases support for the far right when immigration is also high; when immigrant share of the population is low, high unemployment will not win the far right further support and so it is not unemployment *per se* that matters but the interaction between unemployment and immigration.

While many scholars have found unemployment to increase far right vote support in particular countries, and others have found no relationship between the two (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2002), a third group found a negative relationship between unemployment and the far right; high unemployment results in less support for a far right party. Golder (2016) provides three potential explanations of this negative relationship. First, far right parties heavily emphasize the issue of immigration with less emphasis on the economy, thus when economic conditions worsen and unemployment increases, voters flock to parties who more strongly emphasize their economic agenda. Second, far right parties seldom govern, and when they do, they tend to do so as junior partners in a coalition, thus when unemployment increases, voters hedge their bets by casting their support for a more experienced party with a proven track record of economic management. Third, many far right parties rely on a cross-

class coalition of both working class and small business or self-employed voters. When economic conditions worsen and unemployment increases, the increased salience of the economy pulls this cross-class coalition apart as each side prioritizes economic policy for their own benefit and far right parties cannot articulate an agenda that retains the support of both. Empirically, some scholars have found that a negative relationship holds between the far right and unemployment (Knigge, 1998; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006). So, while the balance of evidence between positive relationship, no relationship, and a negative relationship is more firmly tilted towards a positive relationship, there is some theoretical and empirical expectation that no or even a negative relationship might hold.

Research on the economic determinants of UKIP support suggests that economic hardship has no relation to UKIP's support or even diminishes it. Cutts et al. (2017) find no relationship between unemployment and UKIP support in two models, and a negative relationship in a third model. Ford et al. (2012) finds that after accounting for attitudes, UKIP support is bolstered by those who expect their economic fortunes to decline in the future, but the party does worse with the poor. That the poor are less likely to support UKIP is reiterated in other studies, and it is the middle class that disproportionately supports UKIP (Whitaker & Lynch, 2011). Evans & Mellon's empirical analysis of the UKIP vote supports this; while noting that the party is supported by a cross-class coalition, it is traditional middle-class groups like lower professionals, small business owners, and the self-employed that most support UKIP (Evans & Mellon, 2016; Mellon & Evans, 2016). Existing research results in expectations that, for UKIP, indicators of economic hardship such as the unemployment rate will not boost UKIP's support or may diminish it.

While demand-side explanations of far right support based on economics are common, a less common topic of study is crime or security-based demand side explanations. These arguments state that because the natives have a tendency to link criminality to immigrants, higher levels of crime have the effect of increasing far right support. Smith (2010) finds this to be the case in 18 European countries between 1970 and 2005. He finds that

higher rates of crime do increase support for far right parties and that stronger association between immigration and crime also increases support for far right parties. Rydgren (2008) also finds that associations between immigrants and criminality mobilize far right voters. Dinas and van Spanje (2011) find that the immigrant-criminality association, as well as high crime rates drives support for the far right, but only among voters who already are “tough on crime”. In a meta-analysis of twelve studies of the relationship between crime and far right support, Amengay and Stockemer (2019) find that nearly two-thirds of various tested crime relationships show a positive relationship with far right support, with the remaining one-third showing no relationship and a negative relationship never being found. Despite crime being consistently shown to increase support for the far right, it remains a seldomly tested relationship, with economic, immigration, and institutional factors being far more common in scholarly explanations.

There has been very little research on how crime affects support for UKIP. This is not surprising, given that the broader study of how crime affects the far right is less common than research on the economy, social attitudes, or demographic characteristics. Ford and Goodwin (2014a) find that UKIP receives only a small increase in support from those who feel that mainstream parties are “too soft on crime”. The British Social Attitudes survey (#32) (2015) does find an interesting connection between UKIP and crime. UKIP voters hold incredibly harsh views on crime and strongly favor “tough on crime” policies. This manifests as 89% of UKIP voters favoring increasing the sentences given to those convicted of crimes, where the average support among Britons is only 73%. More surprisingly is that 75% of UKIP voters favor re-instituting the death penalty as a criminal sentence while only 48% of Britons support the same. While criminal justice is traditionally seen as a strong issue for the Conservative Party, there does appear to be a relationship between UKIP voters and crime.

While unemployment and crime rates are contextual demand-side explanations of far right support, others attempt to explain far right support by reference to individual-level variables. Explanations derived from socio-demographic characteristics are among the most

common individual-level variables. These arguments state that the appeal of far right parties is not uniform across a population, but much higher for certain segments of the population based on individual characteristics. Level of education is one commonly studied socio-demographic and university graduates are regularly found to have less support for the far right parties (van Wijk et al., 2019; Rydgren & Ruth, 2011; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Schmuck & Matthes, 2015; Kessler & Freeman, 2005). However, at least for Norway, the effect of education is reversed, with graduates being more supportive of the Norwegian Progress Party (Stockemer, 2017). Age has also been found to correlate with far right voting, with both young and old voters having increased support of the far right, with one possible reason being that the elderly are more dependent on the welfare state, which is perceived to be threatened by immigration, and the young are new entrants into the labor market, where they face more competition from immigrants (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Kessler & Freeman, 2005). The far right is commonly found to have a large gender gap, with males being much more favorable towards the far right in comparison to females (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Kessler & Freeman, 2005). Finally, with reference to one of Lipset and Rokkan's "classic cleavages", rural voters are usually seen as particularly strong supporters of the far right (Stockemer, 2017).

Ford and Goodwin's idea of the economically left behind, mentioned earlier in this chapter, focuses on working class voters, but this characterization has been strongly challenged. Further elaboration on the politically left behind will be discussed later in this section but consists largely of staunch Conservatives left politically isolated after the Conservative Party's moderation under Cameron. The socially left behind are composed of a particular mixture of demographic characteristics. First among these is age; the left behind voter, the core supporter of UKIP, is old and UKIP draws little support among the young. Old voters are socially left behind because they had come of age in an era where existing social values and attitudes were significantly different from the mainstream today, particularly in terms of multiculturalism as well as progressive values such as support for sexual and gender

equality, for example. Numerous scholars have confirmed that age is positively correlated to UKIP support (Ford & Goodwin, 2014b; Kaufmann, 2017; Gest et al., 2018; Cutts et al., 2017; Whitaker & Lynch, 2011; Geddes, 2014), although there is at least one finding of no relationship between age and UKIP support (Webb & Bale, 2014). From this, the theoretical expectation is that areas with high shares of pensioners will see high levels of UKIP support and areas with large young voter populations will see lower levels of support.

The second characteristic common among the socially left behind is low education. While education is often critical to social mobility and thus the economic dimension of education cannot be overstated, what is most important for the socially left behind is the association between education and social values. University graduates are often disproportionately cosmopolitan and progressive in comparison to non-graduates. The UKIP voter's low education means that they are often bastions of values considered parochial and intolerant. Far from being university graduates, in terms of education UKIP performs best among those who left school at 16 and thus have no educational qualifications. Like age, this relationship has been confirmed in numerous studies (Ford & Goodwin, 2014b; Kaufmann, 2017; Gest et al., 2018; Cutts et al., 2017; Whitaker & Lynch, 2011; Geddes, 2014; Gruber & Bale, 2014; Kawalerowicz, 2017). Thus, the theoretical expectation is that areas with significant populations of voters with no qualifications would have higher levels of support for UKIP, while areas with high numbers of graduates have low levels of support.

Last is that the expected UKIP voter is White British. It is only to be expected that a party centered in opposition to immigration and the European Union would have little ethnic diversity in its voter base. Indeed, UKIP has one of the least diverse voter bases, even in comparison to the Conservative Party (Ford & Goodwin, 2014a). Geddes (2014) and Kaufmann (2017) note that because UKIP's voter base is almost entirely White British, the party performs best in areas with less diversity. Gest et al. (2018) argue that more than just being a result of prominent anti-immigrant politics, UKIP is driven by a deeper reliance on whiteness with the authors arguing that it is the deterioration of the symbolic and cultural

value of whiteness itself that has driven support for UKIP, with voters reacting to what they call “nostalgic deprivation” with increased radicalization. More attention will be paid to the relationship between UKIP and immigration later in this section.

Individual attitudes constitute a second form of individual-level demand-side explanations for far right support. The first attitudinal explanation is attitude towards immigration or immigrants themselves, unsurprising given the centrality of immigration for far right parties. Research on the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and support for far right parties is positive, with higher levels of individual anti-immigrant attitudes leading to more support for far right parties (van der Brug et al., 2000; Kessler & Freeman, 2005). Given that far right parties are in agreement on immigration, are strongly associated with the issue and how immigration as an issue is often “owned” by far right parties, it should be no surprise that an individual holding an anti-immigrant attitude would be much more likely to support a far right party. Kessler & Freeman (2005) also finds that individual political dissatisfaction is a predictor of far right support, but not to such an extent that it can be labeled a “protest vote” (van der Brug et al., 2000). The role of attitudes is still present even when they are not explicitly held. Bos et al. (2018) find that implicit association tests can be used to predict individual far right voting behavior, a useful result when far right parties are highly controversial and heavily stigmatized.

Anti-immigrant attitudes have been well-studied in research on UKIP voters and UKIP’s success. UKIP originated as an anti-European Union party in the aftermath of the Maastricht Treaty and originally did not emphasize the issue of immigration. However, UKIP’s electoral fortunes increased markedly after adopting immigration as a core issue, essentially becoming like other European far right parties and tapping into already existing anti-immigrant attitudes in the British public (Ford & Goodwin, 2014). That individuals with anti-immigrant attitudes disproportionately support UKIP is unchallenged (Webb & Bale, 2014; Gruber & Bale, 2014; Whitaker & Lynch, 2011; Clarke et al., 2016). Furthermore, there is also research that suggests that although the twin issues of immigration and the European Union

have largely defined UKIP, it is the staunch opponents of immigration that have come to be the core UKIP voter (Ford et al., 2012).

As mentioned previously, the far right is uniformly opposed to immigration and has come to be identified with this opposition by voters and the media. As a result, the far right has established “ownership” of the immigration issue and voters primarily motivated by opposition to immigration flock to support these parties. A common explanation for the success of the far right is an increasing number of immigrants living within Europe. The final section of this literature review will look at possible explanations for why individuals oppose immigration, but explanations of far right success are often agnostic on the cause of opposition when investigating the relationship between the number of immigrants entering a country, and the success of a far right party.

A number of scholars have found a positive relationship between the number of immigrants within a country and the level of electoral support for far right parties, although the overall findings are more mixed. For some, this relationship is straightforward; higher levels of foreign-born populations lead to increases in support for far right parties (Podobnik et al., 2017; Halla et al., 2017; Knigge, 1998; Rooduijn, 2015; Werts et al., 2012; Golder, 2003; Stockemer, 2017). Despite these findings, this relationship only appears in some times and places. In Norway, Kestila & Soderlund (2007) find that support for the Norwegian Progress Party has only occasionally been positively correlated with the immigrant share of the population, with elections in some years seeing no relationship between the two at all. Furthermore, while the relationship may hold at some times and places, it is sometimes found that far right support only increases with particular immigrant groups, rather than all immigrants (Lubbers et al., 2002). While Kestila and Soderlund find that time matters, and Lubbers et al. find that immigrant groups matter, Arzheimer (2009) finds that place also matters, with country-level effects found to influence the relationship between immigration and far right support. Thus, while a number of studies suggest a positive relationship, it is

important to remember that this is seldom universal, and the finding may be limited by the author's case selection, or by time, place, or migrant group restrictions.

Arzheimer (2009) finds numerous qualifications on immigration-based support, beyond country-level factors ranging from institutional variables related to the electoral system, to unemployment, to the strength of a country's welfare state. Social capital also plays a role in mediating the relationship between immigration and the far right, where high levels of immigration translate to higher support for the far right only when levels of social capital are low (Jesuit et al., 2009). Attitudes towards immigrants can also affect support for far right parties, where the attitudes serve to mediate the immigrant share of the population (van der Brug et al., 2000; Kessler & Freeman, 2005). Dinas and van Spanje (2011) find that immigration only benefits the far right when it coincides with high levels of crime at the local level. Others have noted that the objective levels of immigration may be less relevant than more subjective interpretations of immigration. The salience of immigration has been found to be a better explanation for far right support, which is an issue that will receive more attention later when reviewing literature on the media and the far right (Dennison, 2020; Dennison & Geddes, 2019). Finally, some argue that the subjective perception of immigration matters far more than objective levels of immigration, with citizens being liable to distorted perceptions involving immigrants without their countries (Werts et al., 2012; Stockemer, 2016).

Meta-analysis of studies of immigration and far right support suggests that the positive relationship is only the case in 38% of tests (Amengay & Stockemer, 2019). In approximately 47% of cases, no relationship is found between immigration and far right electoral support and in the remaining 15% of cases, there is a negative relationship. Weber (2015) provides an example where such a negative relationship can be seen. In this study, Weber finds that while increasing immigration leads to increasing far right support at the *national* level, support for the far right actually falls at the *sub-national* level where immigration is occurring with much of the increase in support occurring in areas with fewer immigrants. Arzheimer and Carter (2006) and Stockemer (2017) provide examples where no

relationship is found in a cross-national study of seven European countries, instead finding that several supply-side factors better explain far right support in Arzheimer and Carter's case and immigration perceptions rather than immigration for Stockemer.

For UKIP, areas with large numbers of immigrants have tended to have lower levels of support for the party. Kaufmann (2017) finds that the level of immigrants in an area is negatively related to UKIP support between 2009 and 2014, the entire tested range of years. In looking at voting intentions, Geddes (2014) notes that the top 15 constituencies for UKIP support all had below-national average levels of foreign-born populations. Turning to 2015 Parliamentary election results, Evans et al. (2019) find that the most cosmopolitan area of the UK, London, is largely devoid of UKIP support and mapping UKIP support and immigrant distribution reveals the maps to largely be inversions of each other. Clearly, there appears to be a consensus that high levels of local immigrant populations do not bode well for UKIP's electoral fortunes.

In an earlier study, Kaufmann (2014) finds that the sample size of the immigrant population in an area does not adequately explain the level of support far right parties receive in those areas, both in the context of UKIP and the British National Party. Instead, Kaufmann argues that it is the rate of change of the immigrant population that is crucial for explaining far right support. Areas which receive large numbers of immigrants, relative to their populations, in very short amounts of time are more likely to express support for the far right in particular, and support for immigration restriction more generally, than in areas that receive an equal number of immigrants in longer periods of time.

Supply Side Explanations

Admittedly, this dissertation pays far more attention to demand-side explanations than the supply-side. While demand-side factors are those that influence a voter's level of support for a far right party, supply-side factors influence the party's ability to compete. Supply side factors are divided into two major categories, internal supply side factors – the characteristics of the party itself such as its ideology, organizational structure, or leadership,

and external supply side which focus on factors such as electoral institutions, party competition, or the media. This dissertation engages with two external supply side factors: party competition and the media, the latter of which is covered in the next section of this literature review. Both party competition and media, or perhaps more accurately the media environment, comprise a part of a country's political opportunity structure with regard to the emergence and performance of far right parties. Characteristics of the media environment, such as the number or partisan alignment of media outlets for example, can fundamentally alter a far right party's strategies and as an actor, media outlets are faced with the issue of how to cope with far right parties much in the same manner as political parties (Golder, 2016).

The most common party competition for the far right is between itself and their mainstream right-wing or conservative counterparts. Generally, these are the parties most spatially proximate to them, as well as their most likely coalition partners. In attitudinal and socio-demographic terms, there is often significant overlap between the voter bases of both parties. The most classic argument regarding far right and mainstream right competition is that mainstream right moderation opens "political space" (Kitschelt & McGann, 1997) or a niche (Rydgren, 2005) for the emergence of a far right party. In this way, mainstream right moderation leaves a whole set of positions on major issues, such as immigration, unrepresented and the corresponding voters in need of a party to support.

Empirical testing of the political space argument has resulted in mixed results. Abedi (2002) finds that more ideological convergence among mainstream parties increases support for the far right. Arzheimer and Carter (2006) find that left-right grand coalitions result in higher levels of support for far right parties, but also find that the far right does better with less ideological distance between itself and mainstream right parties, as a result of far right normalization. Bale (2003) finds a similar result as well, attributing some far right success to mainstream right parties legitimizing them and their issues through cooperation and ideological proximity. This "mainstreaming" is supported by Dahlstrom and Sundell (2012),

who find that restrictive mainstream right *and* left immigration policy helps to increase far right electoral success by “breaking the taboo” on support for anti-immigrant policies. Lubbers et al. (2002) find no relationship between the amount of political space available and far right success.

Supply-side explanations for UKIP have gravitated towards debate about political space and political competition between the Conservative Party and UKIP. Like Kitschelt and McGann (1997) and Abedi (2002), research on UKIP has suggested that UKIP benefits from a moderating Conservative Party, exactly the path chosen by Cameron after his election as leader of the Conservatives at the end of 2005 (Whitaker & Lynch, 2011; Webb & Bale, 2014; Ford & Goodwin, 2014a; Ford & Goodwin, 2014b). Scholars have linked the tendency of Conservative voters to defect to UKIP because of moderation on immigration (Evans & Mellon, 2016) or on the European Union (Ford et al., 2012). Like the “mainstreaming” argument, Gruber and Bale argue that Conservative immigration discourse and policy helped to introduce strong anti-immigrant views into the political mainstream during the William Hague ('97-'01) and Michael Howard ('03-'05) leadership periods (Gruber & Bale, 2014). Finally, in line with Arzheimer and Carter's (2006) finding that left-right coalitions have emboldened support for the far right, numerous scholars of UKIP and British politics have identified the 2010 Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition as a tremendous boost for UKIP's electoral fortunes, with socially conservative Tory voters balking at their party's cooperation with a socially liberal party (Webb & Bale, 2014; Clarke et al., 2016; Ford & Goodwin, 2014b; Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017).

Existing research on vote-switching and political defection finds that UKIP voters and second-preference UKIP voters overwhelmingly hail from the Conservative Party (Mellon & Evans, 2016; Evans & Mellon, 2016). Tracking voter choice and intention in 2005, 2010, and 2014 shows that in each case, Conservatives are the most likely to defect to UKIP, and while a significant number of working-class Britons do support UKIP, many of these particular voters were previous Labour defectors, having left the Labour Party for other parties before

eventually supporting UKIP (Evans & Mellon, 2016). In terms of second-party preference, about three Conservatives list UKIP as a second preference for every Labour voter who does the same. Inversely, more than two UKIP voters list the Conservatives as a second preference for every one that has Labour as a second preference (Mellon & Evans, 2016). Incorporating party competition between the Conservative Party and UKIP is vital to understanding variations in UKIP's electoral support.

Media

The second set of literature this dissertation focuses on the role of the media. The literature examined here questions the relationship between the far right and the media, between the British media and UKIP, and how it may affect anti-immigrant attitudes among natives as well as racializing immigrants. This section discussing literature on the media will attempt to disentangle some of the major ways in which the media helps and hinders the far right across Europe and the UK.

The concepts of agenda-setting and issue-ownership are critical for this dissertation's media analysis. As mentioned in chapter 1, media valence in immigration reporting was found to be a minor part of local newspapers' impact on UKIP's local election result. Instead, the quantity of reporting, as well as the frames employed influenced UKIP support not by changing the minds of voters on these issues but by increasing the perceived importance of the immigration issue and exemplifying the media's capacity to set the political agenda. Issue ownership plays into this by helping to explain why certain parties benefit from the increased importance of a particular issue in the minds of voters and the 2015 election cycle was particularly important for UKIP as it occurred shortly after UKIP had overtaken the Conservative Party in terms of voter trust on managing immigration, and thus where UKIP could most benefit from greater importance placed on the issue of immigration.

For the far right party family in general, it is generally agreed that the quantity of coverage of both their own party and immigration has tended to increase their own electoral success, and thus this dissertation focuses much of its media analysis on the quantity of

reporting on immigration. What is less commonly agreed upon is whether positive or negative coverage plays a significant role in conditioning far right support; to test this, the valence of media coverage is included. For UKIP, there has been very little dedicated research regarding its relationship to the media and what does exist does not even agree on whether the media has been an overall positive or negative factor for UKIP.

Theories of Media: Framing, Agenda-setting, and Issue-Ownership

The relationship between the news mass media and the far right has been understudied in comparison to the relationship between the far right and immigrant populations or individual attitudes. Numerous scholars have highlighted the relatively sparse attention the media has received in studies of the far right (Mudde, 2016; Burscher et al., 2015; Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Sheets et al., 2016; Vliegenthart et al., 2012; Berning et al., 2019). This is somewhat surprising given the central role the media is recognized as playing in politics writ large; the media has been called both the “fourth estate” and the “fourth branch of government.” The importance of the media is firmly established through the liberal insistence on freedom of the press, which has been enshrined in the constitutions of many liberal democracies. Beyond serving as a primary point-of-access for the public to follow the day-to-day business of politics, the media is often understood as an independent political actor, rather than an unbiased observer. This political agency can be seen in how a media outlet might “wear its colors” and specifically define itself by its political position – as can most easily be seen in self-described socialist newspapers such as *The Morning Star* in the United Kingdom. This open partisanship can also appear in the political endorsements that various media outlets may engage in the run-up to an election in the form of candidate or party endorsements.

While media outlets sometimes embrace their political agency through open partisanship, this is far from the only way in which the media may exercise its agency. One less-obvious way is through issue framing and frame effects. A frame is a “schema of interpretation” (Goffman, 1974). Frames are used by individuals to interpret the world they

live in and more importantly, to interpret specific objects or events (Benford & Snow, 2000). The process of interpretation is also a figuratively destructive process, with framing simplifying, highlighting, or prioritizing certain aspects at the expense of others. While individuals are involved in framing, of particular importance is the ways in which the media engages in framing. The media in framing theory is seen as an actor engaged in helping to shape, rather than reflect, the world. Perhaps the most infamous recent example of media framing occurred during Hurricane Katrina. In this case, a photograph of white residents wading through deep water noted that they were “finding” food, while a similar image of black residents noted that they had “looted” food, and provides a clear example of how the media, through framing, criminalized the actions of blacks during a natural disaster while overlooking the similar actions of whites (Sommers et al., 2006).

Another way that the media influences politics is the agenda-setting effect and is closely related to issue ownership theory. Agenda-setting is the ability of the media to influence what topics or issues are considered important by individuals and, in the context of elections, voters (Dunway et al., 2010). The media is not a neutral or objective reflection of the world, but an actor who actively constructs a particular interpretation of the world. One way of studying this is to evaluate how much coverage media outlets devote to certain issues, with the idea being that the more the media covers a particular topic, the more likely voters are to consider that issue to be a “major issue” or urgent. The media may not change the policy preferences of individual voters, but it may influence what issues determine voting decisions (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). Agenda-setting enters the study of politics, in the context of elections and partisan competition, in the form of issue salience and issue-ownership theory.

Issue-ownership theory has come to occupy a prominent position in the study of elections as well as in interpreting competition between parties within the last 15 years (Lefevere et al., 2015). At its core, issue-ownership theory argues that political parties “own” particular issues: that a particular party is most able, or holds the most expertise in

addressing an issue. This ownership does not rest on some objective fact, but on voter perception of the relationship between parties and issues. Voter perception *may* consider objective measurements, but perceptions are not bound to them. The far right commonly owns the issue of immigration, and it is expected that the far right will benefit when immigration is a more salient issue for voters. Such ownership is recognized when other parties speak critically or adopt similar policies to those supported by far right parties. This can be seen recently with the Danish Social Democrats adopting provisions to limit immigrants' access to the Danish welfare state or with Macron's support for immigration quotas.

Agenda-setting theory combines with issue-ownership theory to produce new hypotheses and theoretical expectations in the electoral struggle. Parties are believed to protect and cultivate the set of issues which voters identify their party as being apt to handle. Parties which own issues try to steer the course of politics towards these issues. For example, as left or center-left parties are often seen to own the issue of healthcare, especially in welfare states with robust public healthcare systems, left or center-left parties believe and are expected to benefit when there is increasing concern with the issue of healthcare. Since the media is believed to be able to set the political agenda through their coverage of certain issues, political parties aim to influence the issue coverage of media outlets because political parties aim to benefit when an issue they are considered to own figures prominently in the public imagination. With regards to the far right, this issue would be immigration.

The trio of agenda-setting, issue salience, and issue ownership composes the main explanation of the media analysis undertaken in this dissertation, which aims to explain geographic variation in UKIP support in local authority elections. In this case, the agenda-setting function of the media is performed via their news coverage of immigration. The media's reporting on immigration then enhances the salience of immigration as an issue in the minds of voters, who attach higher importance to the "immigration debate" because of repeated exposure to what the media presents as news. A consequence of this higher

saliency is an increased weight lent to political party and candidates' positions on immigration when a voter decides for whom to vote in an upcoming election. Issue ownership helps to determine which party will stand to benefit from the increased saliency of an issue (Belanger & Meguid, 2008, p. 479). Establishing ownership of the immigration issue is critical for a far right party, especially a new one. If the saliency of immigration increases drastically, whether via media coverage of the issue itself, or some real-world event that is then filtered through the media to voters, a far right party may see minimal to no benefit if some other party – whether a rival far right, or a mainstream conservative party, “owns” the issue in the voters’ eyes. Alternatively, if a far right party has won the trust of voters to “handle” immigration, we would then expect to see increased voter support with increased immigration saliency, which leads back to media reporting of immigration with the agenda-setting function.

Issue saliency, of immigration particularly, ends up being the crucial piece of the puzzle. Without high saliency, the immigration issue will provide minimal electoral benefit for a far right party, even if they are perceived as owning the issue. Issue ownership is perhaps less critical because even if a particular far right party does not “own” the issue, high saliency will still benefit whichever party does own the issue. This point, that issue saliency is critical for the growth and success of far right parties has been found to be the case in other country cases. Walgrave and De Swert (2004) find that media coverage of immigration, in Belgium, was co-responsible for the increased electoral growth of Vlaams Blok through the 1990s. Walgrave and De Swert also emphasize that this increase in vote share occurred despite a *cordon sanitaire* of Vlaams Blok by rival political parties and national media. This finding is repeated by Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2007) who find that media reporting on immigration in the Netherlands increased the vote share of anti-immigrant parties between 1990 and 2002.

More recently, Dennison & Geddes (2019) find, in a cross-national European study, that the growth of numerous European far right parties is best explained by the increasing saliency of immigration throughout the continent. Critically, they also find that the idea of

growth in support for far right parties being fueled by increasing anti-immigrant sentiment is Europe is false, and that instead, anti-immigrant sentiment is stable or falling throughout Europe. Expanding on this, Dennison (2020) finds that immigration is the only issue whose salience consistently leads to increases of support for far right parties throughout Europe, and that the salience of immigration is only partially explained by the actual levels of immigration within a country, leaving a role to be played by the media and its agenda-setting function.

An important question raised in this discussion of issue salience is how to measure it. The most traditional measure involves using a survey to ask a sample of voters either what they perceive to be the most important problem or issue at that moment (Wlezien, 2005, p. 555). While this measurement provides a simple elegance, it has attracted two major criticisms. First, is that the measurement combines the distinct questions of how important a particular issue may be and the question of whether said issue is a problem (Wlezien, 2005, pp. 575-576). The most important consequence of the conflation of issue and problem is that respondents may present a different answer or set of answers based on whether they feel that a particular issue constitutes a problem or not. The second criticism is that the most important problem survey question is often ambiguous as to whether the respondent's answer constitutes what they feel is the most important issue or problem in their personal view, or what they feel is the most important problem from the point of view of their country, although Johns finds that the latter is more common (Johns, 2010, p. 144, p. 155).

Both criticisms are sound but can be addressed. Miller (2007) claims that the most important problem wording cues respondents to think in terms of things that need to be fixed (Miller, 2007, p. 693), or in other words, to exclude those issues in which the respondent favors the status quo or is otherwise satisfied. In an experimental setting, Mill finds that asking respondents about the most important problem does exert a significant effect on survey responses, but a most important issue wording does not (Miller, 2007, p. 702). Thus, the consequences of the first criticism can be avoided by adopting the most important issue

wording. The second criticism is simpler to avoid – adopt a survey question wording that explicitly asks respondents to answer from either or preferably both points of views: personally, and from the point of view of the country. As long as a survey uses the most important issue wording and asks respondents to answer the question from either personal or national perspective, the major criticism of deriving issue salience from surveys can be resolved.

Like issue salience, there is also a question of how to measure issue ownership. There are largely two approaches to this issue. The first is to measure how often parties take the initiative to raise certain issues, whether in party communications, campaign materials, press conferences, or in crafted legislation, with the idea being that those parties focusing on certain issues more than their rivals can be said to own that issue (Walgrave et al., 2015, p. 785). This is the preferred method for the study of parties, party systems, and party families. The second approach is to survey voters and present a question related to issue ownership to them. This question usually takes the form or some variant of “which party do you believe is best able to handle such-and-such issue”. This second form, a voter survey, is the approach favored in the research of voting behavior and is thus the preferred method in this dissertation (Walgrave et. al, 2015, p. 786)

One issue with surveying voters on issue ownership is that it often mixes two different types of issue ownership. The first type, and the one most directly tapped in the normal survey question wording, relates to party competence -which party has the best ability to handle an issue (Stubager & Slothuus, 2013, p. 570). However, a second type that voters often provide as a response relates to the association between a party and an issue and is related to how much attention a party devotes to a particular issue (Walgrave et al., 2012, p. 772). While many surveys do not explicitly separate out these two issues, existing research finds that respondents’ answers to these issue ownership questions are only weakly correlated, suggesting that issue competence and issue association are mostly separate (Walgrave et al., 2012, p. 779). A second issue with competence issue ownership is that

voter responses usually channel a voter's own partisan identification and policy attitudes (Stubager & Slothuus, 2013, p. 584). This is completely reasonable; a voter who favors a more open immigration system, for example, has little reason to find a conservative or far-right party to be the "best" at managing immigration, given that these two parties are likely to support immigration restriction in some form. While this may not be the case for those without strong partisan leanings or an ambivalent attitude on some issues, the fact that many voters are already predisposed to identifying issue competence with certain parties provide ample reason to supplement surveys of issue competence with surveys of issue associations. A voter may not find a far right party to be the best party for handling immigration, due to their own partisan or policy commitments, but they should still identify that immigration is an important issue to a far right party, for example.

Far Right and the Media

There has been only limited research on the link between media and the far right, with some valuable insights. The most common and agreed upon finding is that the amount of media coverage the far right receives tend to increase their support (Hopmann et al., 2010; Bos et al., 2017; Muis, 2015; Koopmans & Muis, 2009; Spanje & Azrout, 2019; Bos et al., 2011; Berning et al., 2019; Vliegenthart et al., 2012). Given that many far right parties are young, the media's role in drawing attention to these right parties is critical. The visibility afforded by media coverage is a necessary, though insufficient, condition for far right success. It has also been found that the visibility of far right leaders also tends to increase support for the far right among voters. A charismatic and media-savvy leader can thus be a tremendous asset for a young and growing far right party, especially in a time where politics is increasingly perceived as personalized. A few scholars have noted some conditionality on the relationship between leader visibility and support (Bos et al., 2017; Muis, 2015).

While the visibility of a far right party tends to increase their support in elections, the question of the impact of sympathetic or hostile media coverage complicates the simple relationship. While it is popularly assumed that "any publicity is good publicity" for the far

right, a common finding is that critical and challenging coverage of the far right diminishes far right support (Bos et al., 2011; Muis, 2015; Spanje & Azrout, 2019). Thus, positive effects of media coverage of the far right can be counteracted when it challenges far right policies, frames their policies as extreme, or frames far right parties as un-democratic. As one may expect, sympathetic or laudatory coverage of the far right increases their electoral support (Koopmans & Muis, 2009; Bos et al., 2011). That critical media coverage undermines the far right is not a consensus, however, with some research suggesting that critical coverage in the media has no effect on far right support (Koopmans & Muis, 2009; Hopmann et al., 2010).

There have been investigations of how media coverage of political issues, media content, affects the far right with the most analyzed being immigration-related content. The general finding is that more immigration-related media content results in an increase in support for the far right. This relationship is largely confirmed (Walgrave & De Swert, 2004; Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Sheets et al., 2016; Burscher et al., 2015; Bos et al., 2017) but not universal (Koopmans & Muis, 2009; Berning et al., 2019). Media reporting of crime has also been implicated in the electoral success of the far right, with more media reporting of crime leading to an increase in the success of far right parties (Walgrave & De Swert, 2004; Burscher et al., 2015). This is especially relevant for this study because comparative studies of various news mediums suggests that print newspapers dedicate more coverage to crime reporting than other forms of media (Schildkraut, 2017). Less commonly studied has been media content that expressed political cynicism, which was found to increase support for far right parties, who also often present themselves as anti-politics parties (Sheets et al., 2016) or populist parties (Hameleers et al., 2017) and media content focused on unemployment, which was not found to increase far right support (Koopmans & Muis, 2009).

While research on the relationship between media outlets and the far right is limited, research on the relationship between UKIP and the British media is even more limited. In part, this is due to the relatively limited timespan that UKIP was both active and well known in

comparison to older far right parties. In addition, the UK has often been a negative case for the far right; although some form of the far right has been present in the UK since at least 1966 with the emergence of the National Front, the far right has been incredibly marginal to British politics before the present – struggling to win a few percentage points of vote share and occasionally winning a seat in local government. The difficulties posed by the relative lack of attention paid to the UK and thus UKIP and the British media is compounded by what little scholarship does exist being contradictory and no clear agreement being present.

Deacon and Wring (2016) find that media coverage of UKIP has done little to increase their electoral share. In fact, the authors characterize the media's treatment of UKIP as "active containment," where the little media coverage UKIP does receive is generally harshly critical – characterizing the party as both racist and incompetent. Further, contrary to studies finding that media coverage increases far right success, Deacon and Wring argue that UKIP's success has increased their media coverage. More simply, the British media had largely ignored UKIP until the party became too popular to ignore. A possible reason offered to explain this is that media outlets that would be receptive to a far right party in other countries, namely right-wing media outlets, are more-or-less aligned with the Conservative Party and interpret UKIP as a threat to Conservative electoral fortunes.

However, Murphy and Devine (2018) tell a different tale regarding UKIP and the British media. Contrary to Deacon and Wring, Murphy and Devine find that increases in media coverage of UKIP resulted in increases of popular support for UKIP independent of prior UKIP support – that media coverage of UKIP does increase UKIP's support. Against arguments from journalists that defend coverage of UKIP because of public interest in the party, the authors argue that numerous increases in UKIP support have no connection to popular support for the party. Worse still, the argument is made that when increasing coverage of UKIP is warranted on the grounds of increasing public interest, that public interest may largely be the result of previous reporting of the party. Thus, media decision-

making involving UKIP coverage is caught in something of a feedback loop where increasing coverage increases UKIP support which further justifies even more coverage.

What little research has been done on the relationship between UKIP and the British media, two radically different results have emerged. One result finding that UKIP's media coverage is largely suppressed, only rising when the reality of public support has forced media outlets to cover the party. Another result has found that UKIP's coverage often has no relationship at all to public support, and that media coverage itself acts to increase their support and may result in a feedback loop that continues to elevate media coverage of the party. Further study is necessary on this topic.

There has been almost no scholarship that investigates immigration-related coverage and UKIP. Given the two-party system in the UK, the Conservative Party has traditionally owned the issue of immigration. Dennison and Goodwin (2015) find that then-Prime Minister David Cameron's coalition government with the Liberal Democrats and a sharp increase in the number of European migrants after 2010 drastically eroded the public's trust in the Conservatives to manage immigration. According to the authors and YouGov issue tracking, UKIP was able to surpass the Conservatives as the "best party to handle immigration" in 2014, although the convergence between UKIP and the Conservatives began in 2010. This coincides with an increase in immigration as the "most important issue", also tracked by YouGov, and sees immigration surpass the economy which had surpassed immigration previously in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Thus 2014 saw a "perfect storm" where the Conservatives lost their ownership of immigration at a time when Britons were deeply concerned with immigration. However, Dennison and Goodwin's analysis stops here and while it is generally believed that parties benefit from public prominence of their owned issues, little empirical work has been done to investigate whether UKIP has benefitted from coverage of immigration, which reveals a gap in the literature this dissertation aims to fill.

Analysis of policy platforms suggests a similar displacement occurred between the Conservatives and UKIP. Akin to arguments about the presence of unfilled electoral niches

(Eatwell, 2000; Rydgren, 2005), Bale argues that the “niche” of anti-immigration politics was effectively filled by the Conservatives between the defeat of John Major, and election of William Hague as leader of the Conservative Party in 1997 until David Cameron’s election in 2005. During this period, the Conservatives in opposition articulated a hard anti-immigrant position, in the context of an asylum “crisis” in the late 90s and early 2000s and won the anti-immigrant vote. This meant that the Conservative Party also effectively occupied the “niche” of anti-immigration in the media environment and public discourse. The election of Cameron as leader of the Conservatives saw the party moderate many of its stances, to shake the infamous “Nasty Party” label given by Theresa May. This moderation vacated many of the staunch anti-immigrant positions of previous Conservative leaders, but not without legitimizing the anti-immigrant politics that Farage’s UKIP would later adopt and normalizing anti-immigration in the political mainstream. The vacating of the anti-immigration electoral niche and the normalizing of anti-immigration discourse can be said to have set the stage for the rise of UKIP. Thus, while it may have taken a number of years for strong anti-immigrant voters to become disillusioned with moderate Tory policy, the story of UKIP’s relationship to far right anti-immigrant politics can be said to begin with Cameron’s leadership.

Media and Immigration Attitudes

If immigration has increasingly become a central political issue in various European countries, then the reporting of immigration by the media is equally central. Agenda-setting theory suggests that the centrality of immigration to European politics is, at least partly, the result of the media’s agenda-setting function (McLaren et al., 2018). If one were to summarize the stance and tone of immigration as reported in the media, the answer can only be negative (Eberl et al., 2018). While positive reporting does exist, especially in the context of asylum seekers and refugees often portrayed as victims of forces beyond their control (Van Gorp, 2005), immigration is generally seen as a “problem” or “challenge” for Europe to cope with and manage. A common portrayal of immigrants in media is that of the criminal or delinquent (Eberl et al., 2018). In these portrayals, immigrants are prone to lawbreaking and

are disproportionately likely to be criminal, and the arrival or increase in numbers of immigrants results in rising crime. This sort of media portrayal is becoming increasingly common (Harris & Gruenewald, 2019).

A concerning consequence of this framing lies in the popular attitudes directed towards immigrants as a result. Studies of the effects of media framing on immigration attitudes suggests that while positive framing leads to more positive attitudes towards immigrants, negative framing tended to result in a host of negative attitudes – more support for immigration reduction, more xenophobic prejudice, and less belief in the integration of immigrants into the host society (Costello & Hodson, 2011; Florack et al., 2003). The media even indirectly stimulates prejudicial attitudes. One study finds that news consumption was positively associated with negative perceptions of the economy, which in turn was positively associated with anti-Muslim attitudes in the Netherlands (Jacobs et al., 2019). Importantly for this study, it was found that higher levels of knowledge and education can reduce the effects of media framing on attitudes towards immigrants (Schemer, 2012). The media analysis of this dissertation provides ample opportunity to examine evidence for whether local media helps to shape individual attitudes towards immigrants. This is especially the case with the valence of reporting; whether positive or pro-immigrant reporting will diminish anti-immigrant prejudice as evidenced in lower support for UKIP come election time.

The effect of media framing on anti-immigration attitudes varies depending on the level of immigration within the society, where higher levels of immigration magnify the media effects of immigration framing (Boomgaarden & Vliegthart, 2009). While levels of immigration can condition the effect of media framing, the public perception about the scale of immigration is also produced, in part, by media coverage; the general public's perception of how many immigrants there are, as well as if this immigration is a "problem" is the result of prior media coverage (Blinder & Jeannet, 2018). Media talk of "floods" of immigrants or a general "crisis" of immigration is likely to ratchet up anti-immigrant prejudice.

Anti-immigrant xenophobia and racism are entangled enough to warrant some consideration of the link between media and racism. While some immigrants to the UK would already be considered racial “Others” even prior to immigrating to the UK, with Africans, Asians or South Asians being considered racially distinct whether they reside in the UK or elsewhere, most of the immigrants that have entered the UK after 2004, and the most common immigrant group studied in the media analysis of this dissertation, are Eastern Europeans. The accession of much of Eastern Europe to the European Union in 2004 has resulted in many Eastern Europeans migrating to Western Europe for education and employment opportunities. While many would consider Eastern Europeans to be white, the arrival of Eastern Europeans in the UK after accession has resulted in the racialization of Eastern Europeans into a racial “Other.” In a broad overview of British racism, Cole has noted this “xeno-racism” as a one of numerous forms of “non-color-coded racism” in the UK (Cole, 2009). While British immigration policy has generally seen Eastern Europeans as white, with this group commonly falling under “non-British white” in official statistics, the British media has invoked cultural difference as a form of cultural racism (Fox et al., 2012).

However, one critical issue for this dissertation is whether or how media framing will impact UKIP’s election results. While it is sometimes found to be the case that exposure to specific immigration frames employed by the media may alter people’s perceptions or attitudes regarding immigrants, whether this further results in changes in political behavior is another question. Existing literature is pessimistic on the issue. Williamson (2020), in an experiment attempting to reduce negative perceptions regarding Muslim-Americans with exposure to more accurate and positive information, found that even when experimental subjects did change their attitudes towards Muslims, they rarely changed their policy positions or partisan attachments. In a similar vein, Bailey et al (2016) argue that attempted persuasion during political campaigns, particularly from canvassing, at best have no impact on vote decisions and at worst may cause a backlash against the candidate attempting to persuade. Lecheler et al. (2009) find that the effects of framing are strongest when the

perceived importance of an issue is low, but when an issue is perceived as important by voters, the effect of frames is negated. Most relevant for this dissertation, Bechtel et al. (2015) find that during a referendum on immigration in Switzerland, Swiss voters became more supportive of their favored political party regardless of the type of framing they were exposed to and that this effect was strongest among those identifying with anti-immigrant parties. This research is very similar to the discussion above of agenda-setting and issue salience.

Immigration

The third and final set of literature this dissertation builds upon is immigration literature and this literature focuses on what causes British natives to oppose immigration or, in essence, what causes anti-immigrant attitudes? The media literature locates one possible explanation: negative framing of immigrants in the media perpetuates harmful stereotypes, like association with criminality, which results in anti-immigrant prejudice and opposition to immigration among natives. This section of literature will cover some of the non-media explanations for anti-immigrant attitudes.

Anti-Immigrant Attitudes

The most classic explanation for opposition to immigration lies in realistic conflict theory (Olzak, 1992). This theory states that hostile attitudes stem from competition between ethnic groups for scarce resources. Writ large, this sort of perspective links xenophobia to economic motivations. The first economic resource that is often considered when linking the economy to immigration is employment. The link between (un)employment and immigration is qualified. Anti-immigration attitudes resulting from *personal* unemployment receives only sparse support, but research connecting anti-immigration attitudes to *societal* unemployment impacts receives much more support; natives often come to oppose immigration not when it is bad for their own pocketbooks but when they believe it to negatively affect their fellow natives as well (Turper, 2017; McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Schneider, 2008; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010). Other scholars find that links between xenophobia and employment are

conditioned on other factors, such as the national origin of an immigrant group (Sniderman et al., 2004; Hellwig & Sinno, 2017), or on the native sector of employment (Dancygier & Donnelly, 2013). Finally, Aksoy (2011) finds that anti-immigrant attitudes tend to result from concerns with unemployment only when unemployment is already considered to be high, but the connection between unemployment and attitudes is broken when unemployment is already low. Other economic considerations have received less scholarly attention. Dancygier (2010) finds that conflict over housing motivated opposition to immigration while Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008) find that perceived costs of immigration, in terms of tax burden or social service expenditure, in addition to employment helps to explain anti-immigrant attitudes in part. For the UK, Johnson and Rodger (2015) find that perceptions of the relative health of the economy did not explain anti-immigrant attitudes.

The contact hypothesis provides a contrary logic to competition theory. If competition theory posits that immigrant populations spark xenophobia because of competition for resources, then contact hypothesis argues that the co-presence, or contact, between natives and immigrants reduces xenophobia through fostering understanding and tolerance (Pettigrew, 1998). While the original hypothesis (Allport, 1954) stipulated numerous conditions under which contact would generate tolerance, later research finds that such conditions, while increasing the effect, were unnecessary (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Two mechanisms that link contact with lower prejudice are uncertainty reduction and threat reduction (Pettigrew, 2007; Thomsen, 2012). Taking contact hypothesis into account alongside competition hypothesis results in contradictory expectations for levels of immigration and anti-immigrant attitudes. Competition theory would suggest that high levels of immigration would result in higher levels of competition and thus more prejudice. Contact hypothesis suggests the opposite, with higher levels of immigration creating more opportunities for native-immigrant contact that would reduce prejudice and promote tolerance.

A third explanation for anti-immigrant attitudes among natives identifies elite political cues as well as elite opinion and discourse as the cause. The most apparent case is in partisanship. The idea is that the opinions of natives regarding immigration is taken from the arguments and opinions of legislators and policymakers; when groups of elites articulate more anti-immigrant opinions or policies, for example by problematizing immigration, then natives will tend to increase their antipathy for immigrants (McLaren, 2001). Alternatively, self-identified partisans are believed to be particularly susceptible to co-partisan elite opinions. Thus, when a partisan is exposed to anti-immigrant views from an elite co-partisan, such as their party leader or their political representative, they will tend to incorporate this belief into their own set of beliefs (Johnson & Rodger, 2015; Zaller, 1990; Zaller, 1992). For this dissertation, the prior mentioned association between Conservative Party identification and later support for UKIP may be linked, as the Conservative Party between 1997 and 2005 largely pre-empted what would become UKIP's stance on immigration.

A fourth explanation for xenophobia relates to public anxieties about crime. We have already discussed in the review of media literature that the news media strongly links immigrants with crime and criminality. So, as this argument goes, higher levels of crime, or more concern over crime, triggers an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes as natives have linked the issues of crime and immigration (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). Like concerns with unemployment, research suggests that linked crime-immigration concerns affect immigrants unequally, with Eastern Europeans being especially linked to criminality in the UK (Hellwig & Sinno, 2017). There is some disagreement about whether the mere perception of higher crime (Fitzgerald et al., 2012) or objective crime rates (Hiatt, 2007), has a larger role in explaining the link between crime and immigration. McLaren & Johnson (2007) find that the British public is clearly deeply concerned about immigrant criminality and this concern explains British hostility to immigration but emphasizes that the British public vastly overestimates the amount of crime committed by immigrants and thus public intervention to correct these misconceptions may diminish crime-based hostility. Turper (2017) finds that

individual concern with personal victimization by immigrant crime explains little of xenophobic prejudice, but concern with societal crime rates because of immigration was strongly linked to anti-immigrant attitudes. As such, in terms of this dissertation, a contextual explanation of UKIP support should test crime as a possible explanation for far right support.

A more basic question is whether the presence of immigrants serves to increase anti-immigrant attitudes. Findings on the number of immigrants, usually expressed as a share of the total population, and anti-immigrant attitudes are mixed. Sub-national study of Sweden suggests that the portion of non-Western immigrants within a district helps to explain anti-immigrant attitudes (Valdez, 2014). Study of the United States suggests that immigrant share is a necessary but insufficient condition to generate increases in anti-immigrant attitudes, but exogenous shocks or shifts in elite discourse can trigger rapid growth (Hopkins, 2010). Another finding suggests that the perceived size of the immigrant population matters more than the actual size of that population (Hooghe & de Vroome, 2015). Partisanship also acts to moderate the effect of immigrant population size on anti-immigrant attitudes, particularly among Conservatives (Karreth et al., 2015). Other research complicates this simple relationship. Weber (2015) finds that increasing shares of immigrants in the *national* population increases prejudice, but an increasing share of immigrants in a *regional* population decreases prejudice within that region. Finally, xenophobic reaction can vary between immigrant groups, where study of the UK suggests that the presence of blacks at the neighborhood level in the UK decreases residents' prejudice, but presence of Muslim South Asians increases residential prejudice. As a result, depending on approach and situation, there are theoretical expectations that immigrant shares may serve to either increase or decrease anti-immigrant attitudes.

Each of these explanations contributes to the design of the dissertation's study in its own way. While realistic conflict theory and the contact hypothesis disagree sharply on the relationship between diversity and proximity, both are largely in agreement on the importance of micro-level interactions and help to motivate this dissertation's focus on the local authority

level in its contextual and media analyses. With regard to partisanship and anti-immigrant views, this dissertation incorporates Conservative Party performance into its analysis because, as mentioned earlier, the Conservative Party moderated its own anti-immigrant position under the leadership of David Cameron and may have helped to normalize anti-immigration in the political mainstream. A concern with crime and perceptions of immigrant criminality is included in both the contextual analysis, which focuses on local authority crime rates, and in the media analysis which looks at the quantity and valence of crime reporting as a sub-frame of the broader security frame, all of which is likely connected to perceptions of criminality.

Chapter 3 – Research Methods

This chapter examines the methodological choices of this study. Attention is given to providing as much detail as possible such that the study could be reproduced in full if desired. I first introduce the general characteristics of my study, touching on the types of analysis, data employed and key variables of interest. Next, I explain case selection and criteria for inclusion. I then describe the measurement and coding of the dependent variable. Following the dependent variable, the measurement and coding of the independent variables will be examined, with additional consideration given to the dataset created for this study.

A Subnational Comparative Study

Narrowly constructed, the research question for this study is “What factors explain variation in the success or failure of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in local council elections in the UK”. More broadly constructed, this study is simultaneously asking “What factors explain the variations in the electoral fortunes of far right parties”. As discussed in the previous chapter, many scholars have studied the far right by cross-national comparison or by investigating the individual-level characteristics of far right voters. Less common is the approach taken here, to compare far right electoral results across subnational units within a single country. This subnational approach neatly fits between the micro-level of research comparing individual voters, and the macro-level of research comparing countries.

A subnational approach offers numerous benefits. First, it allows one to supplement individual characteristic or demographic research with contextual variables to broaden the range of examined variables. While communities are obviously composed by their individual membership, individuals are also deeply influenced by their community membership. As such, a singular focus on the individual misses an entire range of influences arising from community membership (List & Spiekermann, 2013, p. 631). Furthermore, explaining far right support solely on the basis of individual characteristics can overestimate far right support, mainly because the population of individuals with characteristics similar to far right supporters

is much larger than the population of those who support the far right. Research on the extent of “latent” support for the far right suggests that latent supporters far outnumber “manifest” supporters (John & Margetts, 2009). What is necessary in this situation is to determine when these latent supporters are activated and become manifest supporters. A subnational study focused on contextual factors of far right support can help to shed light on those “triggers” of far right support.

One of the most important features of a subnational approach is the ability to explain the geographic variation in support for the far right. Far right support in elections is not distributed uniformly or randomly. In most European countries, there are particular regions or provinces that have exceptionally high levels of far right support. While the reason this variation exists may differ between countries, this variation itself is quite common. Studies that try to explain or compare across countries without attention to the subnational units of those countries are disadvantaged in their explanations. A lack of scholarly attention to the geography of far right support is an oft-recognized gap in the field (Georgiadou et al., 2018; Golder, 2016).

There is also logic in studying the far right from a subnational perspective, with respect to the one issue that unites the far right: hostility to immigration. Broadly speaking, realistic conflict theory and the contact hypothesis, while sharply divergent in their theoretical expectations for increased diversity, both rely on a degree of proximity and interaction between different groups. Observing inter-ethnic competition or contact is a phenomenon that is most visible to scholars when viewed in a subnational, especially local, environment. This provides further value to a subnational approach, given the centrality of immigration to the far right but also to studies of the far right.

A subnational comparative approach also has several advantages in relation to a cross-national comparative approach. First, it greatly simplifies the comparison being made in numerous ways. Different countries carry their own histories and cultures, and it is very likely that history and culture play some role in the variable strengths of far right parties. A

subnational approach allows for some measure of control to be exercised over historical and cultural variation simply because two subnational units within one country are more likely to share history and culture than two countries on the same continent (Snyder, 2001, p. 96).

The comparison is also simplified regarding variation in political institutions. While there may be institutional variation between subnational units, these units at least share national institutional homogeneity and subnational variation is likely to be more subdued in comparison to cross-national institutional variation (Eaton, 2020, pp. 152-153).

A cross-national approach is also inherently a cross-party approach, as no single far right party runs for office in multiple countries. A cross-national approach thus assumes some level of comparability between far right parties in different countries. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, scholarship finds that beyond a small core of policy agreement the far right party family shares little in common. A subnational approach within a single country allows for deeper insight into the factors of a particular far right party's support without foreclosing the possibility that those factors may also have a similar impact for another far right party. In this way, a subnational single country approach can contribute to more generalizable theory and hypothesis-building, as new explanations for far right support found in one country may still travel to shed new light on the far right elsewhere.

Space, Time, and Factors

Broadly considered, this research employs a nested approach (Lieberman, 2005) to leverage the advantages provided by large-N statistical methods and small-N archival research. The large-N analysis allows for this dissertation to engage in confirmatory testing of existing research on both UKIP and the more general European far right literature applied to the case of UKIP. The small-N analysis supplements the large-N analysis by allowing for in-depth study of variables that are often either impossible or difficult to operationalize for use in statistical analysis to help improve the explanation of UKIP's local successes and failures. In all, three steps are taken in this approach, a first large-N analysis with 271 cases, a smaller-N

analysis with nine cases, and a smallest-N analysis with one case, or a single-case case study.

In this subnational comparative study, the research employs a cross-sectional research design. 271 local governments, usually known as local authorities, are the subnational units used as the basis of the cross-sectional contextual variable analysis. These 271 local authorities represent approximately 85% of local authorities in England, excluding the 32 upper tier local governments. These local authorities were chosen with two criteria in mind. First, these are the local authorities that held elections in 2007, 2011, and 2015, and the reason for choosing these three elections will be discussed later in this section. Second, these 271 local authorities are ones that did not significantly alter their boundaries since 2003, which helps to ensure that the local authorities examined in this study are relatively stable as subnational units.

A smaller set of nine local authorities of the 271 total local authorities is chosen for a more in-depth analysis of media variables. While the criteria of case selection will be covered in more detail later in this chapter, the brief logic for inclusion in this study were local authorities that exhibited characteristics that would be expected to make these places bastions of support for the far right. In Seawright and Gerring's (2008) terminology, all nine cases in this media study are "extreme" cases in that relevant characteristics of the units are above average for the UK. These local authorities are ones in which pre-existing conditions are favorable for the cultivation of UKIP support but despite this, support for UKIP varies substantially among these cases. These nine local authorities represent the entire population of local authorities with these "extreme" characteristics.

The period under study in this work runs from Jan 1st 2004 to May 7th 2015. 2004 was chosen as the beginning point of the study because that year represents the emergence of UKIP as a "serious" political party because of its electoral success in the 2004 European Parliament election. UKIP more than doubled its vote share in this election, from 6.5% in the 1999 election to 15.6% in 2004 while quadrupling the number of seats it won in European

Parliament, from 3 to 12. It also outperformed the Liberal Democrats in this election, the “traditional” third party in British politics. May 7th 2015 is chosen as the end date as this is the date of the 2015 local elections. This is also the final set of local elections for most local authorities in the country prior to Brexit.

Statistical analysis is only conducted on media coverage between May 6th 2011 and May 7th 2015. While the results of the archival research are still presented in chapter 4, it is only between 2011 and 2015 that there are theoretical expectations that the local media’s coverage of immigration would have primarily benefitted UKIP, rather than other parties, primarily the Conservative Party. This is a result of the fact that it is only in 2014 that UKIP can be considered to have wrested ownership of the immigration issue from the Conservative Party, who has traditionally owned that issue. In earlier periods, where the issue was owned by the Conservative Party, it is likely that the media’s coverage of immigration, the exercise of the agenda-setting function of media that presented immigration as an important issue to voters, and the increase in the salience of immigration that followed would have provided more benefit for the Conservatives than for UKIP.

Issue salience is determined in this dissertation by reference to the British pollster YouGov’s “Issue-importance” index and British pollster Ipsos Mori’s “Most Important Issue” index. Both pollsters are well-established in British political surveying and election forecasting. Recognizing the challenges with issue salience polling as discussed in Chapter 2, both pollsters employ a most important issue wording, avoiding the more questionable most important problem wording that implicitly cues certain responses. In addition, YouGov surveys both most important issues facing the country, as well as the most important issue facing one’s self personally. The consideration of both measures helps to avoid potential problems with large discrepancies in responses between both questions.

Issue ownership is determined by reference to YouGov’s “Trust-in-party” index, which asks respondents which party they believe would best handle each issue, including immigration and asylum policy. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, using survey

questions that tap into respondents' views of party competence on an issue are likely to channel the respondent's own partisan commitments and personal views on the issue. This dissertation supplements YouGov's survey which is primarily focused on issue competence with the British Election Survey, which includes survey questions related to issue-association, to get a broader picture of how voters connect issues and parties.

Archives, Newspapers, and Statistics

Archival research is one of the primary research methods of this dissertation, both qualitative and quantitative. The analyzed texts are composed of the various articles, editorials, opinion pieces, and letters printed in nine local, mostly weekly, newspapers in each of the sub-sample's local authorities between 2004 and 2015. This collection of texts is drawn from two sources: archived materials kept by the British Library in London and electronic records stored in a number of databases. The primary criteria for inclusion are that each newspaper text is principally concerned with the topic of immigration. Each text is sorted and labeled into several different categories, depending on its time of publication, valence, and framing of immigrants. Quantitatively, this categorization produces figures that are analyzed statistically. Qualitatively, these texts are used to construct what may be called the local "media environment" or the "discursive opportunity structure" (Koopmans & Statham, 1999) as it relates to immigration which may help to explain why UKIP may find more support in some locales as compared to others.

There are a number of factors that make local newspapers valuable for trying to explain variations in far right success. First, there is only a minor body of research on the relationship between the far right and media and, in general, the role of the media has been under-studied (Mudde, 2016). Second, new and minor parties can receive a significant boost from favorable media coverage, not just of their party but of the sort of issues that the party targets in their campaigning. This is especially the case when these parties are smaller or less organized than their established competition, and lacking in monetary or other resources (Ellinas, 2010). Third, local newspapers tend to target a geographically restricted and small

audience, often a town and its surrounding area or a small collection of towns, which maps onto existing local authorities and their local councils very well, while broadcast media like television or radio tend to conform less well to geographic boundaries. Fourth, since these papers tend to be geographically restricted, they tend to highlight the impact of political events or trends for their area. National media tend to present or analyze events from a national perspective, or from the perspective of large cities, which loses some of the fine granularity that a local newspaper features.

While archival research on local newspapers in the study of far right success holds many advantages, there is a crucial limitation. Print newspapers are a form of media with declining readership and thus impact, with respect to other forms of media. According to the British Office of Communications (Ofcom), television has long dominated as the news format of choice in the UK. However, internet news consumption only surpassed print news consumption in 2014, at the tail end of the period of this study (Ofcom, 2015). When it comes to local news consumption, print newspapers were second to television in terms of overall consumption, beating out internet, radio, and word of mouth in popularity. Finally, preferred media technology varies significantly with age – with print newspapers being more popular with older audiences, which serves this study well as existing literature on UKIP commonly finds that the party appeals more to older voters.

In addition to archival research drawing on local newspapers, this dissertation uses official government statistics to construct the non-media related contextual variables. These contextual factors cover a wide range, from data on crime and the foreign-born population of local authorities to data on unemployment and age structure. This data is used both to test several hypotheses regarding electoral variation across the full 271 local authority sample. Beyond official government statistics, this dissertation also refers to mainstream opinion polls and surveys of British voters, to highlight and emphasize certain points.

Finally, the quantitative data generated from the archival research and drawn from British government statistics is tested through separate statistical analyses, in particular

regression analysis. This allows for some insight to be gained on the significance and impact of media and non-media contextual factors for UKIP's local success. This is especially important as the archival research of local newspapers resulted in thousands of articles from these nine newspapers, from a variety of perspectives employing a few different frames and valences. The conclusions drawn from these statistical analyses are then used to help guide a case study of Boston, Lincolnshire. The case study allows for the relationship between local media, social and economic context to be explored in more depth than possible in a broad statistical analysis.

Case Selection

The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) is chosen as the representative party of the British far right due to their successes between 2004 and 2015. While the British National Party (BNP) can be said to be another, longer running, far right party in British politics, the BNP never attained the level of political success that UKIP reached and by the end of this period had largely been replaced by UKIP as the dominant far right party in the country. The BNP has also had great difficulty in disassociating itself with fascism, an act at which most European far-right parties have been successful. UKIP has been chosen over Nigel Farage's new party, the Brexit Party, in part due to the Brexit Party's age, being a party founded in 2019 to contest the unexpected European Parliament elections but also, more importantly, because the results of the Brexit referendum have drastically altered the political situation in the entire country.

The smaller set of nine local authorities were selected on the following five criteria, explained in more detail below, each reflecting common factors believed to be important in explaining UKIP support. First, the cases were only selected from amongst English local authorities. Second, cases were selected if the local authority populations fell within a certain range on foreign-born share of population. Third, each local authority had to have an average age higher than the combined English. Fourth, all selected local authorities had higher than average shares of the population who had no educational qualifications. Finally, each

selected case had an above-average share of its local workforce employed in agriculture and fishing.

The logic of this smaller-N case selection is driven by a model-building logic. Overall, while the large-N analysis produces some significant results, the results are largely unsatisfactory. Smaller and smallest-N work is undertaken to dive deeper into the far right phenomenon in England. An “off-the-line” (Lieberman 2005, p. 446), above-the-line in fact, and deliberate case selection strategy is used in the nested analysis. Selecting cases above-the-line in terms of independent variables, predicts that UKIP’s results should be uniformly exceptional; a small group of cases where everything is advantageous for the party’s outcomes according to the “standard model” tested in the large-N analysis. Instead, we see that while some cases in this sample are indeed exceptionally good for the party, a few are quite poor and this stark variation in the dependent variable suggests some excluded variable is at play here.

Case selection is restricted to English local authorities for the relatively simple reason that between 2004 and 2015, UKIP largely focused their electoral contestation on this region. While the party did contest a limited number of seats outside of England, these contests were sporadic and seldom numbered beyond a handful of seats. The regional politics of these regions are also substantially different in comparison to English politics, especially with very distinct party systems. Theoretically, scholars have often interpreted UKIP as a nationalist party, both of British nationalism and English nationalism. It should come as no surprise that the party made few inroads into party systems with powerful and competing nationalist and separatist parties.

All cases were selected with attention paid to the share of the local population that was born outside the United Kingdom. Both scholars and non-scholars alike hold powerful intuitions that there is some sort of relationship between the emergence and growth of far right parties and increasing immigration. The previous chapter detailed some of the existing research on the relationship between the far right and immigration. Despite the voluminous

research on the topic there is significant disagreement on the exact nature of this relationship. While some scholars point to cases like Sweden or Germany, where the foreign-born population surged after the Syrian refugee crisis and the far right surged in both of these countries afterwards (the Sweden Democrats and the Alternative for Germany, respectively) to argue that increasing foreign-born shares drive far right support, other scholars argue the opposite, pointing to numerous Eastern European countries where far right support is growing and foreign-born populations are both tiny and stable. As the precise nature of the relationship is under debate, whether high or low shares of foreign-born populations increase far right support, this study only selects local authorities where this population is approximately around the English average.

Data regarding the foreign-born share of the population in local authorities is drawn from the Annual Population Survey (APS). The advantage of the APS as opposed to the census is that the survey occurs on a rolling 12-month basis rather than once a decade like the census, which allows us to track the changing share of the foreign-born population over the entire time period, rather than 2011 when the census was taken during the research period. The cases themselves were selected if the foreign-born share of the local population was between 5.04% and 14.66%. This range represents half of a standard deviation from the English average of 9.85% for the research period. The average was taken for the entire period rather than for any particular year in the period because an examination of APS data reveals that the foreign-born population of local authorities can fluctuate quite dramatically in as little as a year.

The third selection criterion is average age. Local authorities were only included in this study if the average age within the local authority exceeded the English average median age of 39.15 years. This age was taken from the average of the 2004-2015 median ages in England and was collected from the Office of National Statistics population estimates. This was done because one of the most consistent findings in the study of individual-level characteristics is that UKIP voters tend to both be older, and that likelihood of supporting

UKIP increases with age in a linear fashion (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2015, Evans & Mellon, 2016a; Ford & Goodwin, 2016; Mellon & Evans, 2016). UKIP support tends to rise rapidly beginning at 36 years of age and peak for pensioners, which nearly matches with the median age of 39 and the selection above this figure (Johnston et al., 2018). While other scholarly research is largely consistent in the connection between age and UKIP support, it is still unclear as to why older voters tend to support UKIP more than young voters, especially as far right parties in other European countries sometimes draw their strongest support among the young.

It has been consistently found that those with less education are more likely to support UKIP in elections and inversely, individuals with higher levels of education tend to shun the party (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2015; Evans & Mellon, 2016a; Ford & Goodwin, 2016; Mellon & Evans, 2016; Johnston et al., 2018). For case selection, only those local authorities where the share of individuals with no qualifications is higher than the English average were selected. This figure is 22.45% of the population aged 16 and above and this figure is taken from the 2011 census. This figure is used, despite being only a single year in the period, because the Annual Population Survey is primarily interested in the qualifications of the 16-64 working population. However, the exclusion of pensioners is counterproductive for this study as pensioners are strong supporters of UKIP and that failing to account for this population would underestimate levels of UKIP support.

The final selection criterion is the size of the local workforce employed in agriculture and fishing. Theoretically, scholars can expect a relationship between these economic sectors and UKIP support as farmers and fishermen have often directed their ire at the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy, both of which have been felt to disadvantage British farmers and fishers vis-à-vis their European counterparts. In agriculture, there is even some lingering resentment with regards to the EU's export restrictions on the British beef industry in the wake of the mad cow crisis in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Nigel Farage and UKIP had also expressed support and concern for

both industries in their politicking, perhaps best encapsulated in Farage dumping dead fish into the River Thames in protest of stalled Brexit negotiations in 2018. Geographically, a glance at an electoral map of UKIP results shows that many “hot spots” for UKIP are in coastal towns as well as in the East Midlands and East of England, two areas with large agricultural sectors. Whitaker and Lynch (2011) have found agricultural and fishing employment to positively factor into UKIP support.

This study draws on sectoral employment data from the 2011 Census. While the Annual Population Survey is available, an issue with this data is that the agricultural employment is quite limited; many of the annual values between 2004 and 2015 are censored or suppressed due to being either statistically unreliable or disclosive. While the Census only contains one year, that one year is well positioned in the period of the study and contains complete information. As a result, only those local authorities where more than 1.24% of the workforce is employed in the relevant sectors are included in this study. Aside from measuring the size of these workforces, this criterion also serves well as a proxy for rural local authorities, another factor that is believed to play a role in increasing UKIP’s electoral appeal (Whitaker & Lynch, 2011; Brooks, 2019).

The result of applying this entire set of selection criteria to the 317 local authorities in England leaves only 9 local authorities: Babergh, Boston, Breckland, Dover, Fenland, King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, North Lincolnshire, Rother and South Holland. Regionally, we have two in the South East (Dover, Rother), two in the East Midlands (Boston, South Holland), one in Yorkshire and the Humber (North Lincolnshire), and the remaining four in the East of England (Babergh, Breckland, Fenland, and King’s Lynn and West Norfolk). While theoretical expectation is that UKIP will perform well in each of these areas, the reality of the situation is that UKIP performance varies substantially between each of these locations. By way of example, looking at the 2015 local elections where UKIP saw its best results, UKIP received 12.8% of the vote, nationally in local elections. In the best case of these nine local authorities,

Table 3.1 UKIP election results in local and European Parliament elections.

	Local 2007	Local 2011	Local 2015	EU 2004	EU 2009	EU 2014			
	Result	SC%	Result	SC%	Result	Result			
Babergh	3.7% (5 th)	25.6%	3.9% (5 th)	32.6%	5.5% (6 th)	23.6%	24.9% (2 nd)	23.8% (2 nd)	35% (1 st)
Boston	5.7% (5 th)	25.0%	9.1% (4 th)	25.0%	34.1% (1 st)	60.0%	37.6% (1 st)	25.2% (2 nd)	51.6% (1 st)
Breckland	1.2% (6 th)	1.9%	5.6% (5 th)	13.0%	22.5% (2 nd)	36.7%	25.5% (2 nd)	24.8% (2 nd)	42.2% (1 st)
Dover	1.4% (5 th)	6.7%	0%	0%	18.6% (3 rd)	60.0%	19.5% (3 rd)	19.4% (2 nd)	39.3% (1 st)
Fenland	0%	0%	1.3% (6 th)	10.0%	14.6% (2 nd)	35.9%	22.6% (2 nd)	24.6% (2 nd)	47.3% (1 st)
King's Lynn	3.3% (5 th)	4.8%	0.3% (6 th)	1.6%	22.1% (2 nd)	43.6%	21.2% (2 nd)	21% (2 nd)	41.6% (1 st)
North Lincoln- Shire	0%	0%	0.9% (6 th)	2.3%	15% (3 rd)	34.9%	17.2% (3 rd)	21.4% (2 nd)	36.2% (1 st)
Rother	0%	0%	0%	0%	13.2% (4 th)	31.6%	25.5% (2 nd)	23.3% (2 nd)	39.1% (1 st)
South Holland	1.6% (5 th)	2.7%	1.80% (5 th)	2.7%	20.8% (3 rd)	29.7%	30% (2 nd)	24.1% (2 nd)	48.5% (1 st)

UKIP received 34.1% of the vote (Boston) and 5.5% in the worst case (Babergh). Table 3.1 details the local and European Parliament electoral results for UKIP in each local authority alongside the percentage of seats contested (SC%) and the party's placing in each local election under study in this dissertation.

Table 3.2 Local Authority seats and wards, by election year

	Local 2007		Local 2011		Local 2015	
	Seats	Wards	Seats	Wards	Seats	Wards
Babergh	43	27	43	27	43	27
Boston	32	18	32	18	30	15
Breckland	54	36	54	36	49	27
Dover	45	21	45	21	45	21
Fenland	40	27	40	27	39	24
King's Lynn	62	42	62	42	62	42
North Lincolnshire	43	17	43	17	43	17
Rother	38	20	38	20	38	20
South Holland	37	18	37	18	37	18

Dependent Variable

There are numerous ways that electoral results can be operationalized and compared. The operationalization chosen here is to look at the percentage share of the vote that UKIP, as a party, receives in the entire local authority, as opposed to an operationalization that focuses on UKIP candidates' seat results. This focus on local authorities is more in line with the independent variables, which are measured at the level of the local authority. However, there is a potential downside; UKIP's local authority results will be heavily influenced by the number of seats they contend within that local authority. Even if UKIP were to perform very well in each ward election, if the party competes for only a few of the wards, their final result at the local authority election is likely to be low. To account for this reality, a control variable is used in both the large sample contextual analysis and small sample media analysis. This control variable measures the percentage of the seats contested in a local authority by UKIP in that election.

Vote share as a percentage is chosen instead of another common way to measure electoral success: the number or percentage of seats won. While the number or percentage of seats won is a simple way to measure electoral success, and ultimately parties aim to win

seats in elections, measuring electoral success in this way would be less effective. As a third party in a non-proportional system, UKIP is deeply disadvantaged by the electoral system with their share of seats almost always lower than their share of the vote, so measuring in this way would understate UKIP's success and influence. Further, the ability to win vote share and "spoil" the election, in a non-proportional system, for one of the major parties is itself a powerful political resource beyond winning seats. Practically speaking, as a relatively young party that had only truly emerged on the political scene in 2004, UKIP simply won too few seats in too few locations to meaningfully compare, especially in the 2007 and 2011 local elections. It was only in 2015 when UKIP was able to win a considerable number of seats, although it was still a small share of the total seats available. Looking at vote share provides a more effective measure for comparison across local authorities and across elections. UKIP's success in winning seats in 2015 does mark this election as one of particular interest, however.

Independent Variables: Government Data

The first independent variable, foreign-born population, is measured as the percentage of the population in the local authority that was born outside the United Kingdom. All individuals born within the country are counted as native, even if their parents were foreign born and, importantly, this measurement is not measuring ethnic or racial diversity. While many associate immigration with ethnic or racial diversity, a majority of the immigration into the UK at this time was primarily European and primarily white. Further, while the BNP and UKIP after Brexit have focused their rhetoric on Muslim immigrants, UKIP prior to Brexit was primarily focused on immigrants from the late-accession countries in the European Union. The data for this measurement is drawn from the Annual Population Survey (APS) and three separate figures are taken, one for each of the local elections. Since the local elections occurred in May of 2007, 2011, and 2015, the date for the figures is December of the previous year, approximately six months before the election date. This figure is chosen

simply because it has higher quality available data than at other points of the year, while still being proximate to the election date.

The second independent variable is the crime rate in each local authority. This rate is based on 12 month rolling data that is updated quarterly. As a result, this study uses a 12-month rolling that begins on April 1st and ends on March 31st of the following year. Since the three local elections of interest are in 2007, 2011, and 2015, the time periods employed here are April 1st of the previous year and March 31st of the election year. Using this slightly irregular period allows for data that is as close as possible to the election date without going past it. The data is taken from the Office of National Statistics and is composed of crimes reported to local police forces. Population data is then used from the APS to calculate the crime rate per 1,000 persons. As a final note regarding the crime rate, this variable looks at all crime committed in a local authority, regardless of who is the victim or the perpetrator of the crime.

The next independent variable is the unemployment rate. This is the standard familiar rate, looking at jobless individuals between the ages of 16 and 64 as a share of the entire working age population. No special attention is paid to different sectoral unemployment rates. These figures are taken from the Annual Population Survey and are collected for the 12-month period ending in December, for data availability reasons similar to the foreign-born population data. Higher levels of unemployment are expected to increase the vote share of UKIP.

The fourth set of variables is the age profile of the local authorities. This study operationalizes two variables based on age: the 16–34-year-old share of the total population and the 65 or older share of the total population. These two variables reflect existing research suggesting that UKIP performs very well with old age pensioners while having very low support among voters below the age of 35. These figures are taken from the Annual Population Survey for the 12-month period ending in December of the year before election year, like the unemployment rate and foreign-born share of the population figures. UKIP's

vote share is expected to increase with larger pensioner populations and shrink with larger under-35 populations.

The fifth set of variables is the education profile of the local authorities. This study operationalizes two education profile variables for local authorities: the share of the local population that are university graduates and the share of the local population that has no educational qualifications. Like age, UKIP has often been found to perform very well with those without qualifications while performing poorly with university graduates. These figures are taken from the APS for the 12-month period ending in December of the year before election year, similar to the age variables. UKIP's vote share is expected to benefit from larger population shares without qualification and be disadvantaged by large populations of university graduates.

The penultimate contextual variable is the strength of the local Conservative Party. Conservative Party strength is operationalized as the percentage of the local authority vote the Conservative Party received in the *previous* local authority election. Given that this is focused on the previous election, these figures are taken from the 2003, 2007, and 2011 local elections. Since prior research suggests that the plurality of UKIP's voters are defectors from the Conservative Party, it is believed that local authorities that have had large relative quantities of Conservative voters simply have more potential defectors available for UKIP which can potentially be captured in the next local election. The previous election is used for this variable because coding this variable with the Conservative vote share in the same election as the dependent variable results in an independent variable that is strongly collinear with the dependent variable. It is expected that UKIP would perform better in a given election if the Conservative Party had received a higher share of the vote in that same local authority in the previous election.

The final contextual variable in this dissertation is the change in the size of the foreign-born population of local authorities. This variable is a variant of the foreign-born population as a percentage of the local authority population looking at how the foreign-born

population has changed (negatively or positively) over a length of time. This dissertation operationalizes this variable by comparison between foreign-born populations at the same time points that the above variable employs, noting the foreign-born population preceding a local election but continues by calculating the change since the previous point in time expressed as a percentage. For example, a local authority which sees its foreign-born population increased from 1000 to 2000 between 2003 and 2007 will be noted as having a change of 100%, while another local authority that sees its population shrink from 1000 to 800 will be listed with a -20% change.

Independent Variables: Newspapers

The set of media variables is all based on archival research of local newspapers to produce an original dataset. This dataset is used to produce numerous independent variables, focused on the quantity, framing, and valence of newspaper documents. All of the newspaper documents gathered are from between January 1st 2004 to May 7th 2015 and are gathered from either archival material in the British Library or pieced together from three electronic news databases: Factiva, ProQuest, and Nexis Uni. Since these newspapers are small local newspapers, electronic access was inconsistent, necessitating this eclectic data collection. Finally, most of the newspapers were weekly papers with one paper being a daily until 2011, after which it became a weekly. Queries in electronic databases were done via keyword, with a selection of keywords that were found to commonly appear in the archival material. In fear of potentially missing viable newspaper documents, this search was broad, covering general terms (ex. foreign) and more specific terms (ex. Polish). The full list of search terms includes 23 keywords. After this broad search strategy, all individual documents were reviewed by the researcher manually to weed out false positives¹.

¹ Full Keywords: Iraq/Iraqi, Afghanistan/Afghani, Poland/Polish, China/Chinese, Latvia/Latvian, Immigrant, Migrant, Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Eastern Europe(an), Asia/Asian, Estonia/Estonian, Lithuania/Lithuanian, Foreign, Portugal/Portuguese, Russia/Russian, Bangladesh/Bangladeshi, Vietnam/Vietnamese, South African/African

When it comes to newspapers, case selection was limited. As the local authorities are relatively small, and the scope of geographic coverage for each newspaper is relatively limited, there are few newspapers in each local authority. There were a set of priorities when it came to newspaper selection. First, the newspapers had to be local, preferably published from inside the local authority. This is important because in addition to national newspapers, there are also regional newspapers in the various regions of the UK and some cover multiple local authority cases. Second, the newspaper had to have the widest possible distribution within the local authority, with as little coverage area outside the local authority as possible, especially when two local authority cases border each other. Third, only paid newspapers were selected although a free publication is used due to lack of a widely distributed paid publication. It is believed that paid publications deliver higher quality news coverage, and it is likely that readers engage with paid publications more deeply than free ones as they elect to spend their own money on acquiring them (Bakker, 2008). Finally, each newspaper had to be available for the entire time period under study.

Newspaper document selection followed a similar set of conditions. First, any non-advertisement published in the newspaper could be selected, ranging from articles, briefs, editorials, opinion pieces, or letters to the editor. All selected documents explicitly addressed immigration or immigrants. Selection did not exclude any category of immigrants; documents include legal or illegal immigrants, EU, and non-EU immigrants, as well as asylum seekers. Migrants who are not foreign-born were not included – mainly with respect to the Roma or Romani, or Travelers as they are often called in the British media. Most importantly, documents had to explicitly reference the immigrant status or nationality of individuals to be included. For example, a news article that specifically referenced a person as an immigrant or referenced their country of birth would be included. Articles that referenced neither point but involved a person with a name that would be perceived as being foreign were not included.

The coding of individual newspaper documents occurs across three steps: the time of publication for the document, the valence of the document, and the framing of immigration

within the document. While every document is coded with the day of its publication, these dates are collected into various groups. As there are three elections in this period, the first coding scheme places documents into first, second, or third with the first being from January 1st 2004 to May 3rd 2007. The second period extends from May 4th 2007 to May 5th 2011 and the third period runs from May 6th 2011 to May 7th 2015. The end date for each period is the period's election-day. Chapter 6 only analyzes the relationship between media coverage in the third period and UKIP's electoral results. However, chapter 4 provides a lengthy description of the collected media coverage across all three time periods to help contextualize the third period's media coverage.

The second step of the coding is based around the valence of the document. At its core, this measure codes for whether the document is anti-immigrant. However, it is sometimes difficult to identify an anti-immigrant document, so this study uses harm as a basis for identifying anti-immigrant documents. In practice, documents that ascribe some sort of harm, negative consequence, damage, or transgression to immigration in general, or an explicitly identified immigrant individual are coded as anti-immigrant documents. The framing of immigrants as dangerous "others" is central to the electoral appeal of far right parties. Beyond the far right, public debate and discussion relating to immigration often turns on whether immigrants are a positive or negative force for their host countries, or whether they on the whole benefit or harm the countries that receive them, making harm a particularly salient quality in this case.

If a document does not identify any specific harm or doesn't identify immigration or immigrants as the source of harm, this study codes that document as a pro-immigrant document, although it may be more accurate to say that it is not anti-immigrant. Importantly, this coding looks at harm in a multifaceted way. Harm in these cases may be physical, as one might expect, but may also be economic or cultural. It is expected that newspapers that publish more anti-immigrant documents will increase support for UKIP.

The final step in coding media documents focuses on framing. This study adopts the security, economic, and cultural frames as coding categories, a trio often used in frame analysis of immigration (Eberl et al., 2018). This selection of frame categories nicely balances breadth and parsimony. Security, economic, and cultural arguments cover a broad swath of public immigration discourse while the use of just three categories helps to limit the analytic complexity of immigration discourse. This is especially important when considering the source material, weekly newspapers, and the first and second steps of the coding, which when combined create the risk of creating code categories with few observations.

The security category captures documents that emphasize immigration in relation to a variety of safety concerns. This concern is primarily physical, to person or property, and may take the form of immigrants posing a threat to the safety of natives, or inversely the threat that natives pose to immigrants, through hate crimes for example. Less commonly, some of these documents frame immigrants as threats to their own safety, often in the context of suicide, accidents, or various forms of self-destructive behavior, like substance abuse or addiction. Beyond narrowly conceived physical threat, the security category also includes documents that focus on crime or law-breaking more generally, either caused by immigrants or targeted at immigrants. Further, documents that frame immigrants as unlawful intruders, undocumented immigrants for example, also fall into this category alongside other concerns with border security in relation to immigration.

The economic category includes those newspaper documents that emphasize the relationship between immigration and the economy. What form this relationship takes can vary widely. Economic documents can range from those that focus on the role migrants play in the local economy, filling crucial labor shortages, or the perceived costs of migrant employment, like native youth unemployment. Stories may emphasize the tax or welfare contributions of immigration, or the demand immigrants place on existing social services. More benignly, some of these documents discuss the entrepreneurial activities of immigrants, for example new businesses started or shops opened by immigrants, unsurprising for a local

newspaper. Documents coded as economic also include any story that features money or expenditures prominently as well as the provision of any social services, such as healthcare or education for example.

Finally, the cultural category is those documents that highlight the non-economic and non-security behaviors, values, customs, and practices of immigrants. Cultural documents may include discussion of religious differences. Conflict over language, whether demands for linguistic integration or provision of multilingual services by local government, figure prominently within this category. Documents discussing immigrant integration, what should be done for or expected of immigrants, or commentary on government integration policy are also common. Another example of culture-framed documents is discussion of diversity, multicultural events, as well as allegations of racism or discrimination. Reported confrontations between natives and immigrants that involve a xenophobic or racialized element, hate speech for example, are included in this category if the newspaper does not report any sort of criminal charges resulting from the confrontation, something that happened quite often given that the UK has established “incitement to ethnic or racial hatred” as a criminal offence since 1976.

Given its prevalence, a special sub-category of the security frame is examined, called the crime frame. These documents combine discussion of immigrants or immigration with issues of criminality, although illegal immigration is not coded as a crime in this study. The crime coding includes when immigrants are believed to be the perpetrator of crime as well as when they are the victim of crime. Included crimes range from very serious offenses, such as homicide, sexual assault, or hate crimes to more “mundane” crimes such as driving offenses, driving without insurance for example. Beyond reporting on crimes that occur within a local authority, this category also includes commentary, editorials, opinion pieces, and letters that debate and discuss proposed linkages between immigration as a whole and the prevalence of crime. It is important to emphasize that only newspaper documents discussing crime and

immigration are included here. Official statistics relating to crime are discussed earlier in this chapter and coded separately.

Further clarification of frame coding may be beneficial for some readers. For example, a newspaper opinion piece arguing that high levels of immigration create unemployment among natives that results in increasing crime would be coded as an instance of the economic frame. This is for two reasons. First, the only direct causal relationship put forward involving immigrants would be between immigration and unemployment. Second, and equally important, is that neither the perpetrator nor victim of any potential crime, in this opinion piece, is an immigrant, even hypothetically or in the abstract. A second example may be some sort of news report stating that the British government is accepting more asylum seekers fleeing violence in a war-torn region. This sort of reporting would be coded as an instance of the security frame, since immigrants in this case, as asylum seekers, have been directly connected with violence, enacted against them, and the UK as providing physical safety and refuge. As a final example, a news brief informing the community that a local Chinese immigrant organization is organizing a lunar new year celebration open to the public would be coded as an instance of the culture frame, since the specific practice of how the new year is marked and celebrated is culturally specific.

Discussion of existing literature in the previous chapter cast doubt on the size of frame effects in this case. Namely, that the effect of frames appears to be limited when voters perceive the issue to be important, or salient. Since immigration was perceived to be one of the most important issues during most of the period under study in this dissertation, there is understandably little expectation that frames exhibit powerful behavior-shaping effects. Other research found that even when information exposure could influence individual perceptions, this shift in attitudes did not always extend to changing their political behavior. Instead, what this dissertation intends with frame testing is not that frames influence anti-immigrant attitudes, or even directly influence partisan attachments but that local media helps to exercise an agenda-setting effect that increases the salience of immigration and bolsters

support for UKIP when it was the issue owner of immigration in the 2015 election. In this case, frames interact with issue salience because the choice of frame alters the connection between immigration and other issues, especially issues where UKIP may not be considered strong.

The economic frame of immigration provides an example. When a newspaper frames local immigration as an economic issue, they may act to increase the perceived importance of immigration, which may help UKIP, but this particular use of framing may also increase the salience of the economy, an issue where UKIP does not enjoy the confidence of voters vis-à-vis mainstream parties. Thus, a voter exposed to a news report that frames immigration as an economic issue may opt instead to support a party they trust to manage the economy. The same may also be true with the crime sub-frame. An anti-immigrant crime-framed news item may increase the importance of firm immigration controls or instead may push voters to support parties they trust to competently manage the issue of policing, as well as criminal sentencing reform. Ultimately, rather than influencing voter perceptions or attitudes regarding immigration, frames in this case may interact with issue salience and issue ownership.

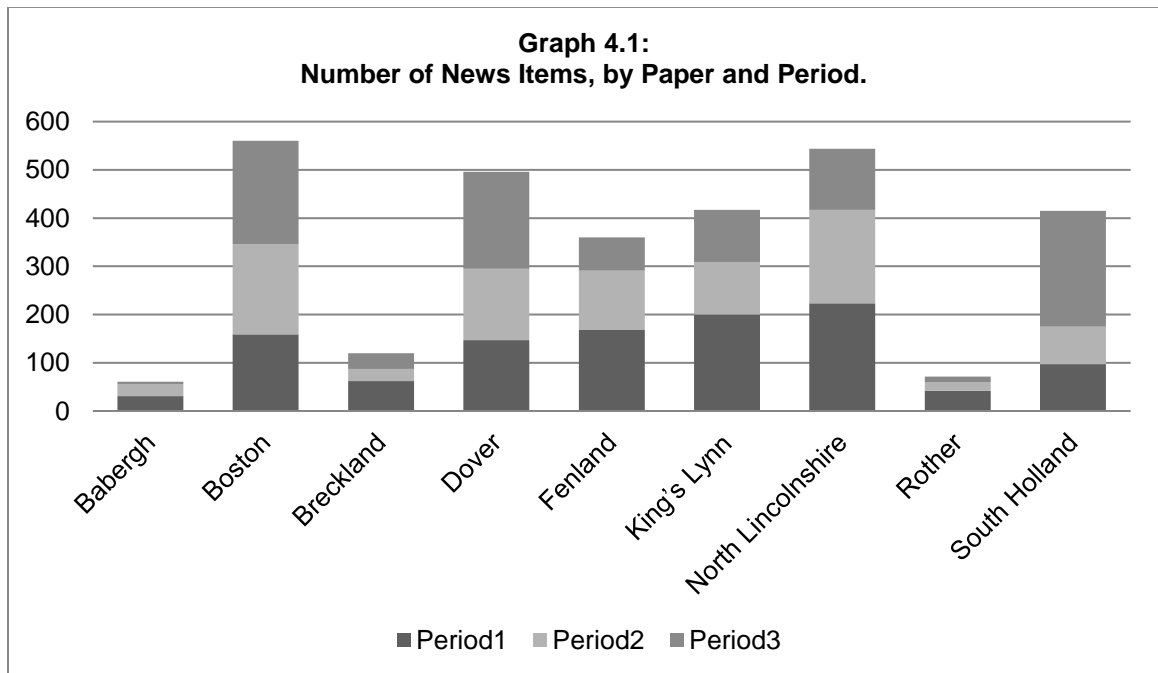
One important methodological caveat in relation to how this dissertation employs local newspaper coverage of immigration is that the statistical analysis used here does not strictly prove that the media directly cause increases in UKIP's local vote share. At the standards commonly used in media studies that aim to empirically demonstrate causality, proving causality in this study is simply impossible. This is because the use of experimental methods and panel surveys is commonly used to demonstrate causality for media content, but as this dissertation is analyzing media coverage that is, at this point, years old, experiments or panel surveys to prove that this media coverage increased the local vote of a now functionally defunct political party is simply not feasible.

However, as discussed in the literature review, numerous scholars have demonstrated the general causal relationship that this study is relying upon. For example, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) find that news coverage of immigration increased vote

intention for far right parties. Burscher et al. (2015) find that across eleven different European countries, including the UK, panel surveys find that exposure to immigration-related news increased the electoral support of twelve different far right parties. This relationship between media coverage and vote choice is not limited to immigration, with van Spanje and de Vreese (2014) finding that votes for eurosceptic political parties were influenced by how news media covered the European Union. While this dissertation does not, and essentially cannot, prove strict direct causality, the causal relationship between media coverage and vote choice, and particularly immigration news coverage and anti-immigrant vote choice is well supported in the literature.

Chapter 4 – Descriptive Statistics

This chapter aims to describe and explain the newspaper document data collected and analyzed in this dissertation. Crucially, the non-media data in this dissertation is largely available from public sources and should be easily accessible for the reader. While chapter 3 detailed the collection and coding of newspaper data to facilitate re-production, much of this data will be inaccessible to most readers without manual collection in British archives and thus warrants dedicated attention here. In addition to presenting the original data, there are also several interesting occurrences in this data that suggest possible connections between local media and local UKIP electoral support. This chapter will analyze the media dataset through three analytic lenses: the quantity, framing, and valence of newspaper documents. The data presented here is used to create the media variables used in chapter 6 to test various hypotheses aimed at explaining the geographic variations in UKIP support.



The newspaper dataset is comprised of 3,044 documents taken from approximately 8000 issues of nine newspapers. Immigration documents were published at a rate of approximately one document per 2.63 issues, although the actual rate of immigration

document publication is much more irregular, with many newspapers dedicating sporadic coverage to immigration with periods of intense coverage, often spurred by an event. These events may have been issues of national importance, such as the 7/7/2005 bombings in London, or local issues, such as a drug bust involving foreign nationals.

There is significant geographic variation in the quantities of immigration documents. The average number of documents across these nine newspapers is approximately 338, although three newspapers fell far short. One important caveat is that North Lincolnshire's paper, the *Scunthorpe Telegraph*, was a daily (excluding Sunday) paper until November 2011, after which it became a weekly paper. King's Lynn and West Norfolk's paper, the *Lynn News*, was a twice-weekly paper for the entire period studied. Since these two papers publish at least twice as often as the other seven papers, it is expected that they would publish more immigration documents than the others. However, despite being a weekly newspaper, the *Boston Standard* printed more immigration documents than the *Scunthorpe Telegraph* despite the *Telegraph* printing approximately four times as many issues as the *Standard*. The *Lynn News*, despite publishing twice as often as all the weekly newspapers, only barely has the third most immigration documents, with two more documents than South Holland's *Spalding Guardian*, a weekly paper. Those familiar with British politics may be aware that in addition to being one of the strongest areas of support for UKIP in 2015, Boston also had the highest support for "Leave" in the 2016 referendum.

While all three periods² are relatively similar in terms of the quantity of documents, it is the first period, where UKIP was weakest, that has the highest total number of news items.

² The end date for each period is that period's election day. Precise dates for each period are: January 1st 2004 to May 3rd 2007, May 4th 2007 to May 5th 2011, and May 6th 2011 to May 7th 2015 for the first, second, and third periods respectively.

Table 4.1 Studied newspaper basic information.									
Newspapers	Bexhill-on-Sea Observer	Boston Standard Times	Dereham and Fakenham	Dover Express	Fenland Citizen	Lynn News	Scunthorpe Telegraph	Spalding Guardian	Suffolk Free Press
Local Authority	Babergh	Boston	Breckland	Dover	Fenland	King's Lynn	North Lincolnshire	South Holland	Rother
Founded	1896	1912	1880	1858	1845	1841	1937	1847	1855
Owner	Johnston Press	Johnston Press	Archant Ltd.	*	Johnston Press	Johnston Press	**	Johnston Press	Johnston Press

*Trinity Mirror (2004-2007), Daily Mail and General Trust (2007-2013), Local World (2013-2015).

** Daily Mail and General Trust (2004-2013), Local World (2013-2015).

Table 4.2 Studied newspaper available circulation data.

	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15
Circulation												
Bexhill Observer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**	**	**	**	**
Boston Standard	15237	15043	13614	12116	17849	12049	12049	9412	-	8773	7684	-
Dereham and Fakenham Times	8277	8408	8589	8466	-	8141	8141	6859	6851	6913	6913	5772
Dover Express	10413	10391	9804	9813	10330	9470	9470	21497	21193	20946	20946	5388
Fenland Citizen	38961	39780	41060	41193	39075	41075	41075	40242	-	40170	36175	-
Lynn News	52535	53635	52166	51141	50083	48609	48609	41566	40249	31257	-	-
Scunthorpe Telegraph	23309	22623	22623	20822	24740	20568	20568	17253	16084	15678	18286	16117
Spalding Guardian	17026	17262	16281	15559	-	14849	14849	13458	12977	12546	12546	-
Suffolk Free Press	10355	10526	10401	9911	9500	9596	9596	8187	7937	7882	7882	-

*Figures reflect newspaper circulation only.

** Data no longer available due to combination with sister newspapers.

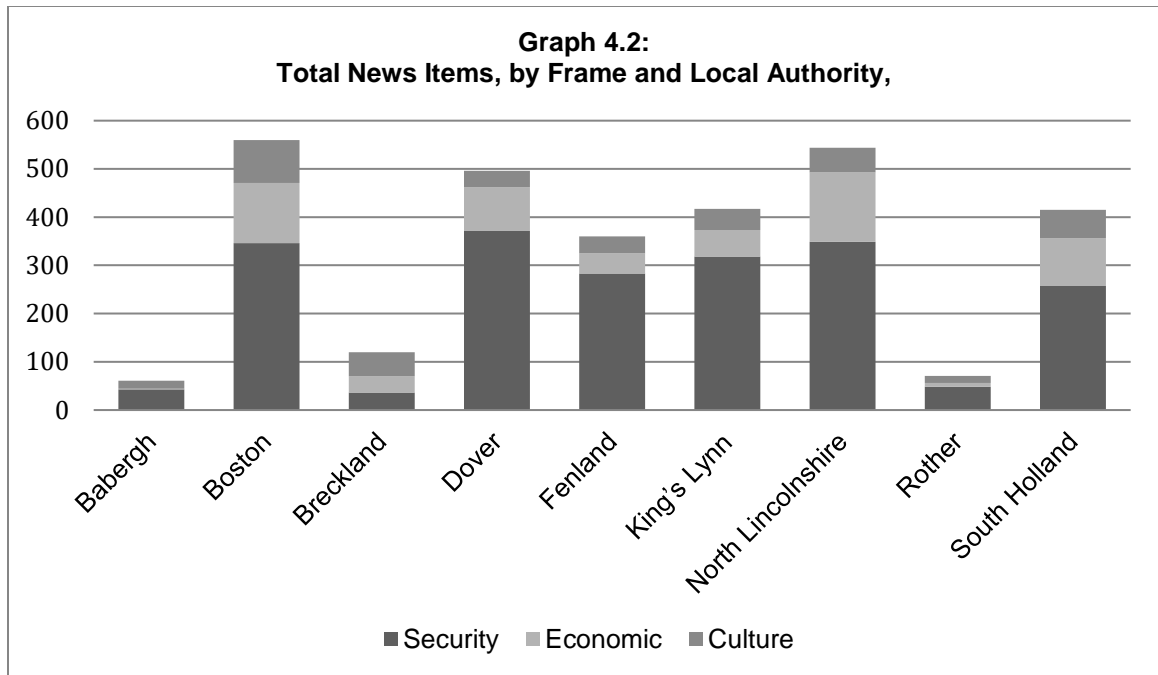
All data taken from Willings Press Guide: United Kingdom

Within this period, the amount of coverage devoted to immigration varies quite widely between the areas, ranging between 31 and 223 documents per local authority. With an average of 126 documents per local authority in this period, we can see that very few of the newspapers are close to this average and the distribution of documents is quite bipolar. The distribution is top-heavy, with five of the nine areas being far above the average here. The immigration issue was complex in the first period, especially in the earlier half (2004-2005). In 2004 the European Union was enlarged with the admission of 10 primarily Eastern European countries and Blair had decided to place no transitional restrictions of migration from these countries. 2004 was also, arguably, the last year of the so-called “asylum crisis” that began in 1998. During this time, the Conservatives, led by Michael Howard, had made immigration restriction the centerpiece of their campaign and the 2005 election saw the Tories promise an “Australian-style” immigration system, a policy commitment that would later become a central plank in UKIP’s proposed immigration policy. Furthermore, according to Ipsos Mori’s “Issue” index, the salience of immigration saw a drastic increase beginning in 2000 and continuing until the Great Recession in 2008, where immigration salience would be significantly reduced until 2013. Variation in this first period may, in part, be due to variations in the foreign-born population, with Breckland having the lowest foreign-born population and Babergh having the 7th lowest. Rother is in the middle in terms of foreign-born population in the first period, while South Holland is the true anomaly with the highest foreign-born population, but a below-average number of immigration-related news items. Importantly, in this period, all local authorities are below the UK national average for foreign-born population.

The second period exhibits a similarly wide range of total documents as seen in the first period. Rother has the lowest number of documents with 18 and North Lincolnshire the most with 194. Considering concerns with comparing a daily newspaper with a weekly newspaper, Boston’s paper is weekly, like Rother, and is only slightly behind North Lincolnshire with 187 documents. Beyond the range, Boston and North Lincolnshire stand out with their high document totals. To help illustrate how much coverage was being devoted to

immigration, as a weekly paper, the *Boston Standard* published an immigration related news story almost once per issue for the entire four-year period. While the *Scunthorpe Telegraph* had slightly more documents, it was also a daily for this entire period resulting in relatively less dense coverage of immigration.

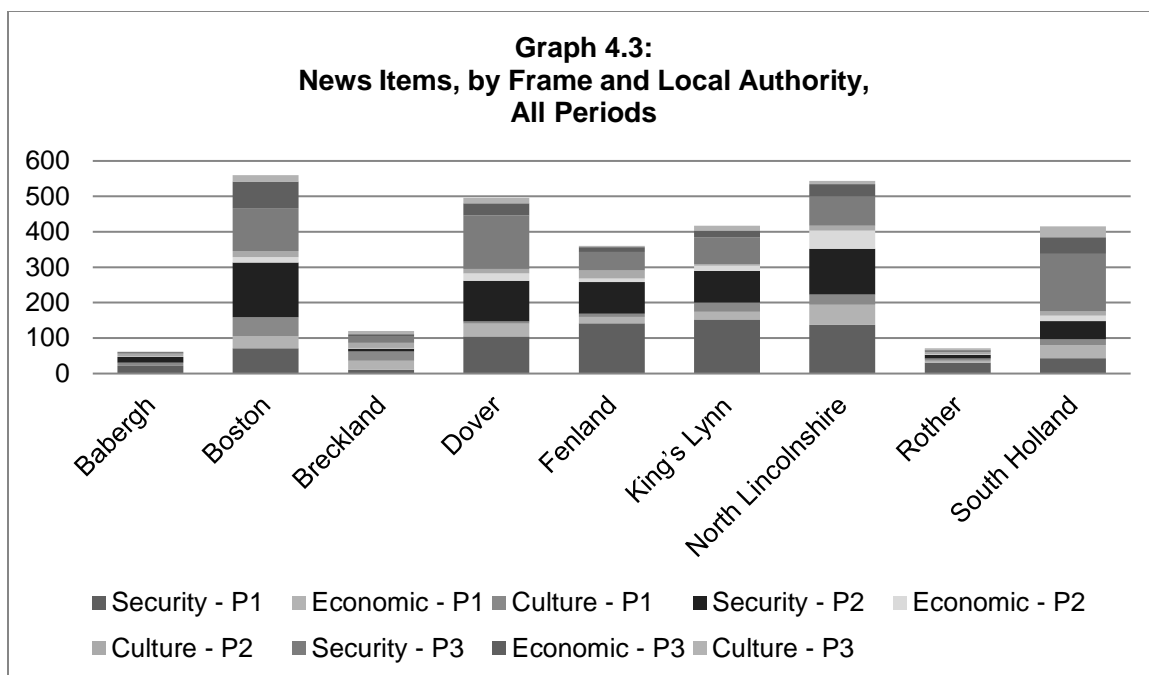
The third period is the most polarized period, with four newspapers publishing less than 100 documents, two of these printing less than a dozen news items, and three newspapers publishing more than 200. The three papers with more than 200 documents are all weekly papers and were printing immigration documents at a rate of approximately once per issue. Of note, the *Scunthorpe Telegraph*, which had switched to a weekly format from its previous daily format for almost this entire period and with its number of documents decreasing given the lower print frequency, published more documents in relation to that lower print frequency. A final point of interest concerns South Holland, which had published a below-average number of documents in the first two periods, but rapidly increased its total documents to become the most prolific newspaper in this period. This change in South Holland, in the *Spalding Guardian*, coincides with the paper getting a new Editor named Jeremy Ransome who would remain as the paper's editor for the rest of the studied period.



The security category vastly outnumbers the economic and culture categories with more than two thirds of all documents, across all periods and areas, employing the security frame. Insofar as media either reflects or shapes the concerns of ordinary voters, the common dichotomous view on whether economic or cultural issues motivate increased far right support may be missing a large part of the story by overlooking security concerns. Furthermore, the security frame dominates in each of the three time periods by multiple folds, and the security category is the most prevalent in each of the areas except for Breckland. Looking at the combined periods and areas, the security category is foremost in 25 of the possible 27 combinations, with the remaining two period-areas being the first and second periods in Breckland again. Interestingly, Caviedes' (2015) study of media framing for immigration, which analyzed the *Daily Telegraph*, a center-right national newspaper, found that while the security frame was present, it was less common than economic framing while the study excluded culture-framing. This dramatic difference between a national newspaper and these local newspapers suggests that the way immigration is reported in local newspapers differs sharply from how it is reported in national papers. The dominance of the

security frame is not altogether unsurprising in this case though, as the reporting of crime is included in this frame and existing research finds that print newspapers dedicate more coverage to crime than other forms of media (Schildkraut, 2017).

Across each of the periods, the security frame comprises 63%-73% of the total, the economic frame 15%-23%, and the culture frame 10%-16%. However, there is substantial geographic variation in frame usage. The prevalence of the security frame varied between 31% and 79%, although if Breckland is omitted as an outlier, variation is reduced to between 62% and 79%. While security is most prevalent, except for Breckland, geographic variation in economic and culture framing is high. A few local authorities were nearly evenly split between economic and culture framing, such as Fenland (12% and 10% respectively) or King's Lynn and West Norfolk (13% and 11% respectively). Other areas were more focused on either economic or culture framing. Areas that exemplify the economic-frame focus are Dover (18% and 7%), North Lincolnshire (26% and 9%), and South Holland (24% and 14%). The culture-frame focus is present in Babergh (2% and 28%) as well as Rother (11% and 21%). Breckland is balanced across each of the three frames with culture, followed by security then economic the most employed (41%, 31%, and 28%).



The security frame was weakest in the first period, but while the frame is weakest in this period, it still represents approximately 63% of total documents. Two-thirds of newspapers have most documents using the security frame, and two of the remaining three newspapers have a plurality using the security frame. Furthermore, five of the nine papers employ the security frame in two-thirds or more of their documents. Breckland is an anomaly in this period, with about 18% of its document employing the security frame, far below the next lowest paper at 44%. Finally, the economic and culture frames vary sharply in their usage across area, with the economic frame use ranging from 0% to 40% and culture frame use varying from 13% to 42%.

Table 4.3 News items, by frame and local authority, period one.

	Babergh	Boston	Breckland	Dover	Fenland	King's Lynn	North Lincolnshire	Rother	South Holland	Total
Security	22	71	11	105	142	153	137	31	43	715
Economic	0	34	25	36	18	21	57	5	37	233
Culture	9	54	26	6	9	26	29	6	17	182
Total	31	159	62	147	169	200	223	42	97	1130

Table 4.4 News items, by frame and local authority, period two.

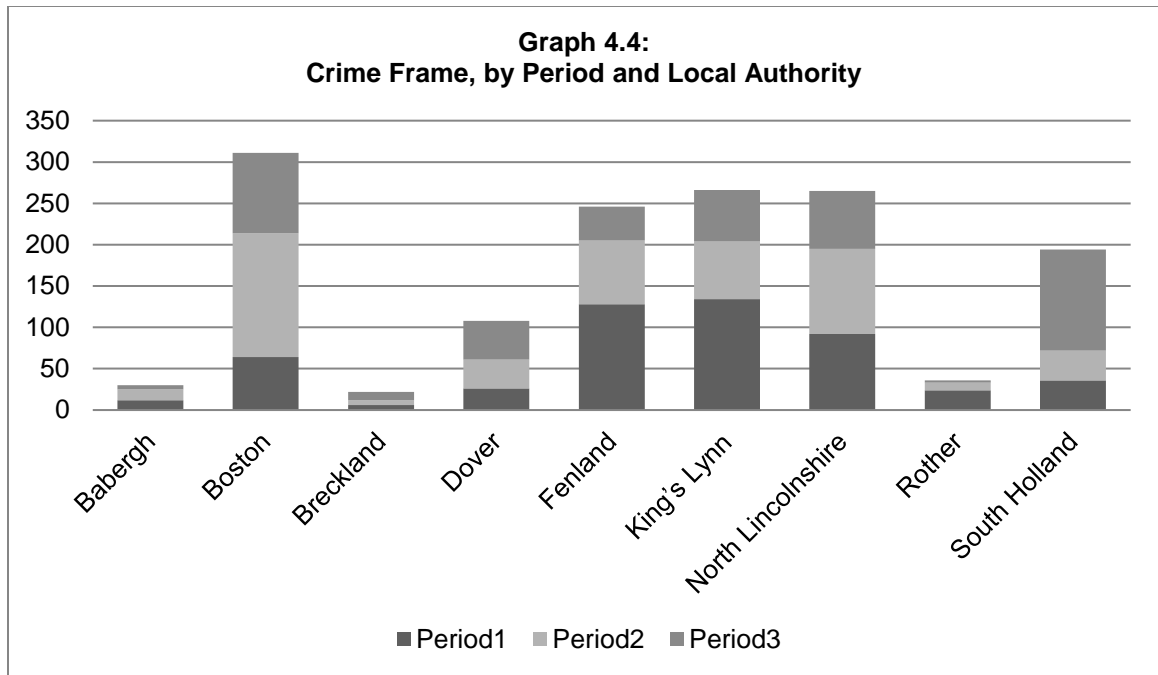
	Babergh	Boston	Breckland	Dover	Fenland	King's Lynn	North Lincolnshire	Rother	South Holland	Total
Security	16	154	8	115	89	90	129	11	51	663
Economic	1	16	2	21	10	14	52	2	15	133
Culture	8	17	15	12	23	5	13	5	12	110
Total	61	560	120	496	360	417	544	71	415	906

The second period is the high point of the security frame, where this frame is used in a staggering 73% of all documents, in contrast to the first period where the security frame is at its relative low point. The security frame was used in a majority of documents in eight of the nine newspapers and in six papers it constituted two-thirds or more of their documents. The *East Dereham Times* in Breckland was again anomalous, with just less than a third of its documents using the security frame; instead, the culture frame appeared in 60% of its documents. Except for Breckland, the economic and culture frames were largely like the first period, with ranges from .04% to 26% for economic frames and 5% to 46% for the culture frame. Interestingly, the *Boston Standard* was one of the three that did not employ the security frame in most of their immigration documents in the first period, but the second period saw the *Standard's* use of the security frame increase to 82% of documents; making Boston the only case where the use of the security frame nearly doubled between time periods.

The third period represents a middle ground between the first and second periods in terms of the prevalence of the security frame. The security frame comprised most documents across every newspaper, something that did not occur in either of the earlier periods. The security frame was also employed in more than two-thirds of documents in five newspapers, less than the second period and the same as the first. There was relatively little variation in the use of the security frame, with most newspapers falling between 55% to 75% usage. The economic and culture frames saw much more variation, between 9% to 35% and 4% to 36% respectively, like the earlier periods.

Table 4.5 News items, by frame and local authority, period three.

	Babergh	Boston	Breckland	Dover	Fenland	King's Lynn	North Lincolnshire	Rother	South Holland	Total
Security	5	121	17	151	52	75	83	6	163	673
Economic	0	75	7	34	14	20	35	1	47	233
Culture	0	18	9	16	3	13	9	4	30	102
Total	5	214	33	201	69	108	127	11	240	1008



The crime sub-frame dominates the security frame. While not every crime-framed document involves an immigrant criminal, most of these documents do. Over time, the relative share of crime documents peaked in the second period but was at its lowest point in the third period. Geographic variation in the crime sub-frame is extreme. Seven of the nine newspapers employ the crime sub-frame in 70% or more of their security-framed news stories. Dover's paper, the *Dover Express*, is the exception in this case, with less than a third of its security frame documents using the crime sub-frame. As one may expect, much of Dover's security frame involves border security, befitting its position as the "gateway to Europe". Boston stands out for its extremely high usage of the crime sub-frame, making up 90% of all security stories.

The examination of the combination of area and period totals for the crime sub-frame yields an unsurprising result. In the 27 period-areas, three periods in nine areas, the crime sub-frame comprised most of the security frame in 24 of them, with Dover being the sole exception in this case. Furthermore, 20 of the 29 areas employ the crime sub-frame in more

than two-thirds of their security documents, helping to show how widespread this sub-frame is in its use. Since this sub-frame is so ubiquitous, the statistical analysis undertaken in chapter 6 will test the crime sub-frame as the only one of its kind. Crime will also be given special attention in the case study in chapter 7.

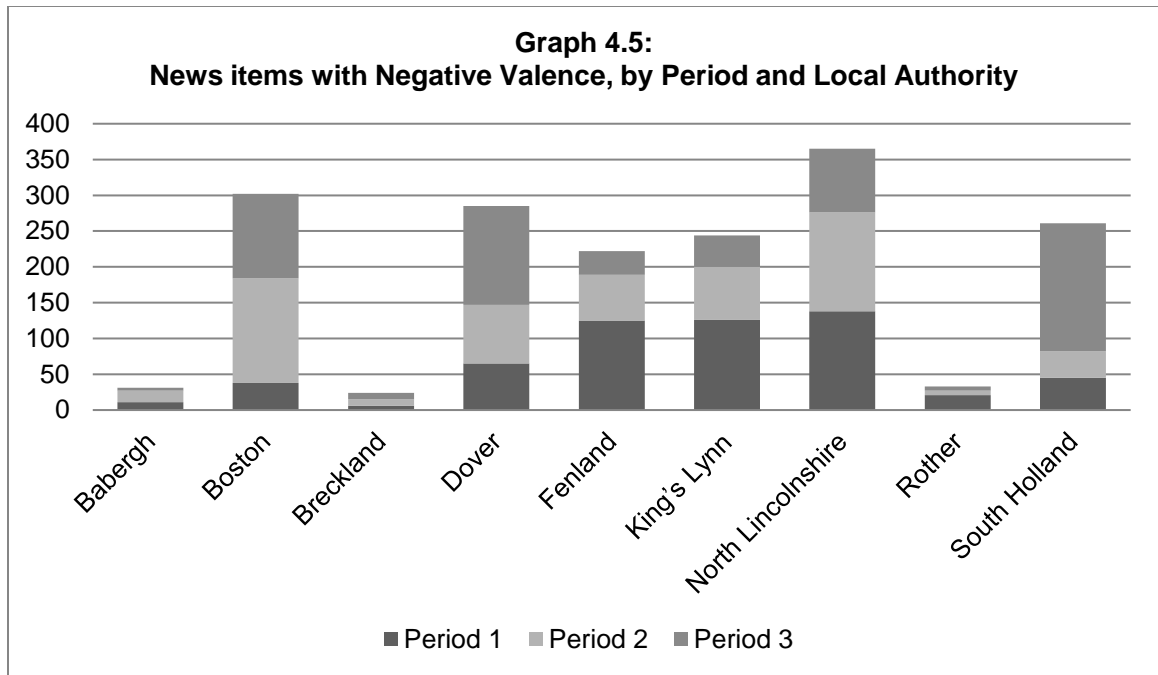
Much of the crime frame usage encountered in this study is what could be called “mundane” crime; while serious crimes do occasionally occur, like murder or sexual assault, much of the crimes reported in these papers instead involve offenses like drunk-driving, motor vehicle offenses, petty theft, or public intoxication. The mundanity of the crime reporting in these papers belies its importance. For most local authorities, the security frame dominates media coverage of immigration, and the security frame is dominated by the crime sub-frame. As such, much of the mediated information the residents of these local authorities are receiving about local immigration is connected to criminality. If a resident has few or no immigrant acquaintances or friends, the local newspaper’s reporting might be the only exposure they receive to their local authority’s immigrant community. A trip across the Atlantic helps to illustrate this, with Trump 2015 campaign announcement speech, where he infamously claimed of Mexican immigrants: “They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people”. While each of these towns do not necessarily have a “local Trump” articulating this sort of rhetoric, the way these newspapers have largely chosen to talk about immigration means they do not necessarily need one. One extreme case comes from the *Dover Express* in the local authority of Dover, one of the newspapers studied here, which ran an editorial referring to asylum seekers and “illegal immigrants” as “the backdraft of a nation’s human sewage” (*Dover Express*, October 1, 1998).

The dominance of the security frame and the crime sub-frame within that is likely the most important finding in this chapter. While previous research has found that economic framing is more common in national papers, this chapter finds that the security frame is much more common than either the economic or culture frames, and the crime sub-frame is the

most common within the security frame, within local newspapers. Given the high prevalence of the crime sub-frame, there is reason to suspect that the common association between immigrants and crime among the public may be reinforced and maybe even created by the heavy usage of the crime sub-frame. We can see from the data presented here that the most common portrayal of immigrants in most of these papers through most of these periods is in the context of crime and the exposure that residents of these local authorities receive of their local immigrant communities is defined by criminality.

While it will be covered in more depth in the next chapter's hypothesis testing, this dissertation proposes two mechanisms to link the incidence of crime with the level of support UKIP receives in a local authority: one of these builds on UKIP's identity as an anti-immigrant party, and the other builds on UKIP's nature as a populist party. First, as discussed in the literature review, one explanation for individual opposition to immigration and support for anti-immigrant parties arises from the attitudes those individuals hold regarding immigrants. In combination with the British media's historical and still-present tendency to dramatize the criminality of perceived outsiders, local newspapers' reporting of crime in connection with immigrants worsens the attitudes individuals hold towards immigrants and these more hostile attitudes result in individuals searching for and supporting a party which promises immigration restrictions, like UKIP.

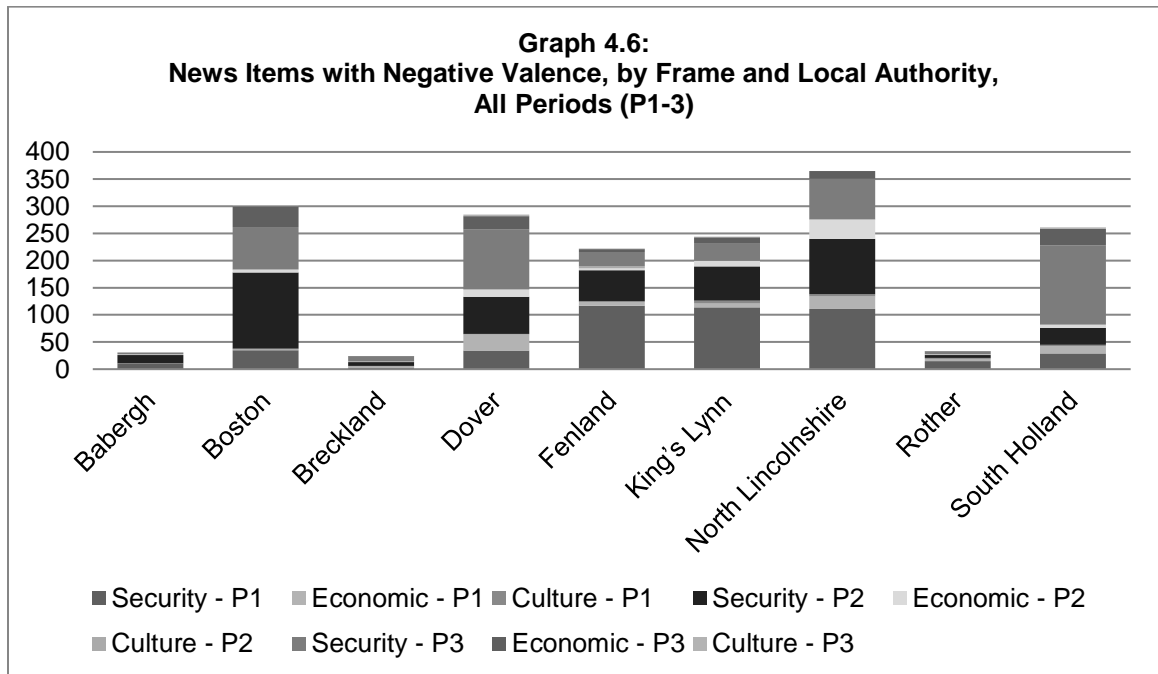
The second mechanism linking crime and UKIP support relates to UKIP as a populist party. For this mechanism, higher rates of crime result in a loss of support for the current party or coalition governing the town. Since UKIP has been a vocal critic of the main three parties in the UK, and even referred to them as "Lib-Lab-Con" to emphasize the collusion and lack of discrepancy between them, UKIP is well positioned to pick up the votes of angry voters looking for an alternative to traditional parties or wishing to express their discontent at the ballot box.



In terms of valence, 1767 (58%) documents were classified as anti-immigrant and 1277 (42%) articles classified as pro-immigrant. Since research sites were chosen on the expectation that they would be particularly favorable for the far right, it is perhaps unsurprising that overall, local media coverage of immigrants tended to be more negative than positive. If there is a relationship between local media coverage and local UKIP support, we would expect to see more negative coverage, in line with the anti-immigrant views of UKIP. What may be surprising to some is that local newspaper reporting of immigration isn't more anti-immigrant than it was found to be, especially in light of the expectation that these areas are particularly favorable for far right support.

A few things are apparent from the valence of documents per area. First, most newspapers tended towards a negative valence on immigration reporting with only two areas, Breckland and Rother, contrary to this trend. This is likely due to the exercise of editorial discretion, as the ownership of these two newspapers is not unique and while Breckland does have the lowest level of foreign-born population at the time, it is not significantly lower, and Rother is firmly in the middle in foreign-born population. Second, there is a tendency for those

newspapers with lower quantities of documents to be less negative, with the three lowest document totals corresponding to the three least anti-immigrant newspapers. This is not perfectly mirrored with the most anti-immigrant newspapers, with Boston being only a bit above average and only one of the three most prolific newspapers, Scunthorpe, among the three most hostile to immigration. Lastly, Breckland's newspaper, *The Dereham Times*, has an unusually low amount of anti-immigrant pieces and is an obvious outlier with only 20% of its documents being classified as anti-immigrant. The next lowest newspaper is Rother's *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer*, which more than doubles that figure with 46% negative valence.



While the first period had the most documents, it was also nearly even in terms of valence with some interesting features. First, the range is tremendous in this period, from a low of less than 10% to a high of nearly 74% negative. Furthermore, we can see that only three of the nine areas have most anti-immigrant documents, and these areas are so strongly negative that it makes the entire period slightly anti-immigrant. Second, there is an association between quantity and valence of coverage, with the three highest numbers of documents also being the three most negative sets of documents. Lastly, Boston is an

Table 4.6 News items with negative valence, by frame and local authority, period one.

	Babergh	Boston	Breckland	Dover	Fenland	King's Lynn	North Lincolnshire	Rother	South Holland	Total
Security	10	35	3	34	117	114	111	15	29	468
Economic	0	1	2	30	7	7	23	4	13	87
Culture	1	2	1	1	1	5	4	2	3	20
Total	11	38	6	65	125	126	138	21	45	575

interesting case considering its support for UKIP in 2015, and its support for Brexit in 2016. Boston has the second lowest level of anti-immigrant documents with less than a quarter of documents coded this way. This does not pose a significant problem though, as UKIP was a new political force after their 2004 European election performance and the Conservative Party's moderation on the immigration issue only began with Cameron's leadership at the end of 2005. Later periods see both a growth in the negative valence immigration reporting and UKIP support.

The second period data inverts the first period, with most newspapers publishing a high percent of anti-immigrant pieces and the remaining papers publishing few negative documents and pulling the average down. Only three newspapers published more positive than negative pieces in this period but even the lowest share of negative documents in this period was one third, unlike the first period where the lowest was less than 10%. Boston catches the eye again with a tremendous increase in anti-immigrant documents between the first and second period, jumping from less than a quarter of documents in the earlier period to more than three-quarters in the second period. Seven of the nine newspapers had become more anti-immigrant over the two periods. Another point to note here is that a full third of the newspaper had published more than two anti-immigrant documents for each pro-immigrant document they printed, to give a sense of just how common the negative valence immigration reporting was in this period.

Table 4.7 News items with negative valence, by frame and local authority, period two.

	Bebergh	Boston	Breckland	Dover	Fenland	King's Lynn	North Lincolnshire	Rother	South Holland	Total
Security	15	140	7	68	57	63	102	5	31	488
Economic	1	5	0	14	4	10	35	1	6	76
Culture	0	1	2	0	3	1	1	0	0	8
Total	16	146	9	82	64	74	138	6	37	572

Table 4.8 News items with negative valence, by frame and local authority, period three.

	Babergh	Boston	Beckland	Dover	Fenland	King's Lynn	North Lincolnshire	Rother	South Holland	Total
Security	4	78	8	110	27	32	75	5	146	485
Economic	0	38	1	25	5	11	14	1	30	125
Culture	0	2	0	3	1	1	0	0	3	10
Total	4	118	9	138	33	44	89	6	179	620

The third period largely continues from period two although not quite as hostile to immigration. The *Suffolk Free Press* (Babergh) is the first time we have seen a paper with 80% or more of their documents coded as anti-immigrant but given that this is 80% of a set of 5, it is likely not worth putting too much weight on this number. Three newspapers had a minority of anti-immigrant documents and four papers were strongly negative with more than two-thirds of their documents being anti-immigrant. One interesting feature to note here is that Fenland, which had the most hostile coverage in the first period and had most of the negative coverage in the second period, only had a minority of negative coverage in the final period. South Holland, which had a minority of negative documents in the first two periods, became one of the most anti-immigrant newspapers in the third period. Boston, which became strongly negative in the second period, moderated itself in the final period while remaining majority anti-immigrant.

Drawing on this valence data, an interesting consideration relates to national partisan control; the first and second periods occur in the context of a national Labour government while the third period sees a national Tory-led coalition. With this in mind, we can see the substantial increase in anti-immigrant documents between the first and second periods, from 50% to 63%, as evidence against the idea that national partisan control restrains or stimulates a certain valence of media coverage in local papers. Importantly, Cameron's leadership of the Tories saw a moderation of the Conservative Party line on immigration, as Theresa May famously called for the Tories to stop being the "nasty party". An increasingly moderate Conservative Party in addition to continued Labour Party government should underline the evidence against an association between national politics and local newspaper immigration valence. We can also see that the valence of immigration reporting can change drastically within a single newspaper over time, exemplified by several newspapers. Chapter 6 will test the relationship between the way these local newspapers reported on immigration, in terms of the quantity, framing, and valence of that reporting and

the level of success UKIP was able to achieve in these local authorities across three local elections.

The information gleaned from the descriptive statistics helps to both justify some of the methodological choices detailed in the previous chapter, as well as to focus our attention on certain factors for further study. A great deal of scholarly and public debate on the far right has often homed in on a false dichotomy between economic and cultural factors as explanations of far right growth. The descriptions laid out in this chapter highlight the tremendous amount of space that security issues occupy in media reports of immigrants. More particularly, crime was found to be the single most common frame used in connection with immigrants and such a finding encourages us to look further at both the reporting of crime in local newspapers and in actual crime rates at the local authority as explanations for UKIP success.

The quantity of reporting also reveals some interesting facts for further consideration. Despite the characteristics shared by the local authorities here, as detailed in the previous chapter, the level of reporting on immigrants or immigration varied strongly, presenting a valuable opportunity to test whether this variation in the quantity of reporting may represent the link between the media and UKIP support. Across time, variation in the level of reporting did not differ as strongly, and importantly, does not seem to follow as similar trend as UKIP support. This provides some contrary evidence to claims that the amount of attention the media devoted to immigration was in some way driven by the increasing popularity and political relevance of UKIP.

Finally, with regards to valence, we can see that a vast majority of negative valence news items, anti-immigrant, or immigration-critical reporting, is concentrated within the security frame, followed distantly by the economic framing. Reporting of immigration through the lens of culture tends to shy away from negative valence, perhaps due to concerns with being perceived as culturally insensitive or prejudiced. Valence can also range widely with

some regions having much more intensely negative reporting than others, providing ample variation to further test the relationship between reporting valence and UKIP support.

Chapter 5 - Contextual Model Testing

This chapter aims to test a considerable variety of hypotheses regarding UKIP's electoral success, drawn from the research of scholars and largely expounded upon in chapter 2. Despite popular anxiety, far right parties appear to be entrenching themselves across a variety of European countries and while past concerns have often revolved around "defeating" the far right and expunging their presence from mainstream politics, the resilience of the far right has shifted existing concerns towards thoughts of tolerance or coexistence with these parties (Gruber & Bale, 2014). Even in the UK, which has seen UKIP largely replaced by the Brexit Party and where the Brexit referendum has overshadowed the rise of the far right, the recent success of Boris Johnson suggests that the British far right may have come to a sort of cooperative understanding with the Conservative Party. This creates an environment ripe for the entrenchment of the far right and elevates the need for an explanation of UKIP's electoral success.

Hypothesis testing takes the form of statistical regression techniques relying on data previously discussed in chapter 3, where the dependent variable – UKIP vote share – and various contextual variables were explained. In terms of trajectory, this chapter will begin by establishing a baseline model composed solely of the control variable, the number of seats UKIP contested in that local authority as a percentage of the total number of seats available in that election. After creating a baseline model, hypotheses will be presented and explained with reference to available literature regarding far right and particularly UKIP electoral results. After presenting and explaining the hypotheses, they will be tested in relation to three separate dependent variables: UKIP vote share at the 2007, 2011, and 2015 local authority elections. This makes the hypothesis testing a cross-sectional analysis and means that we allow for UKIP's electoral results to be explained by different factors, or the same factor at different strengths, in each of the elections, allowing for the possibility that UKIP support is not stable or fixed and may shift and evolve over time. Finally, the results of this model

testing are compared with the explanatory strength of the baseline model to determine which best explains variations in UKIP support at the local authority level using McFadden's pseudo r-squared values.

The Baseline

This study grapples with an important factor in the study of far right success, especially in the case of UKIP; as a challenger party outside mainstream politics, UKIP did not actually challenge every seat it possibly could. For a variety of reasons, likely relating to the organizational weakness and dysfunction of UKIP, UKIP only challenged a fraction of available seats in local as well as national elections. In this case, an interpretation of their election results without attempting to account for this absence will show that UKIP does very poorly in many seats, receiving none of the vote. However, looking only at manifest support likely misrepresents the true amount of support for UKIP by overlooking the latent support UKIP enjoys in the UK. This latent support would become manifest support if the party challenged more available seats. That some nonzero number of voters would cast their ballots for UKIP if the party were to contest the elections those voters participated in is a relatively safe assumption and drives this study's use of Tobit regression techniques and treats zeroes in the dependent variable as censored data rather than "true" zeroes that represent no actual support.

The use of Tobit regression only addresses one of the problems raised by UKIP's failure to contest every available seat. As the dependent variable is coded at the level of local authorities, Tobit copes with local authorities where UKIP did not run in the local election. However, elections within local authorities are composed of numerous districts containing a certain number of seats each. In many cases, UKIP only contested a fraction of the districts in that local authority. Thus, while looking at local authority results, UKIP will have some nonzero results, which will not be treated as censored data, but UKIP's failing to contest all districts will mean that a portion of the electorate in that local authority could not actually vote for the party in that election, placing a very real limitation on the amount of support the party

could gather. While this would complete the story if every local authority fully employed single member district plurality elections, this is not the case and thus creates a further complication. While some local authorities do fit this mold and allocate only one seat to each district, a great number of other local authorities employ multi-member seats with a plurality system, effectively being multiple nontransferable vote systems. This means that some districts indeed have magnitudes equal to one while others have magnitudes greater than one and problematically, UKIP sometimes only contested less than the full number of seats in a district, meaning that even within a district, limitations were placed on voter support where voters could not allocate multiple votes to a particular candidate. For example, in a district that elected three seats, but with only one UKIP candidate, a UKIP voter could cast one vote for the UKIP candidate and then two other votes for candidates from other parties, effectively only capturing one-third of their voters' support.

A seats contested variable is employed as a control to address the problem of significant variation in the number of seats UKIP contests. As mentioned earlier, this variable is created by looking at the number of seats UKIP *does* contest within a local authority as a percentage of the number of seats that could be contested in that election. It is important that the denominator in this case is the number of possible contested seats rather than the total number of seats in the local council as some local authorities only elect a portion of their council in each election and fills the other portions in subsequent elections. This combination, using Tobit regression and including the percentage of seats contested within a local authority, addresses both issues with seats that UKIP does not challenge in each election. Tobit regression treats entire local authorities where UKIP did not contest even a single seat as a censored variable and the seats contested independent variable accounts for districts or seats within a local authority that could not possibly receive a UKIP vote because no candidate is there to receive those voters.

An example where this control is necessary may be helpful in demonstrating the value of the seats contested control variable. In the 2007 local elections, there were 100 out

of 271 English local authorities where UKIP ran zero candidates. In a local authority, South Kesteven, UKIP received 1.42% of the vote while only contesting 1.72% of seats, the lowest of any contested local authorities. On the other end of the spectrum, UKIP contested 100% of available seats in the local authority of Newcastle-under-Lyme and received 17.41% of the vote. While it is possible that contextual features of Newcastle-under-Lyme were more favorable for UKIP than in South Kesteven, it is also possible that the difference between the two is entirely due to the vast discrepancy in contested seats; that UKIP performed better in the latter merely because it actually “showed up” to this election. The value of Tobit regression in the case of the 2007 election is in addressing those 100 local authorities with no UKIP candidates, which cannot be dropped as that would constitute selection on the dependent variable, but leaving these cases untreated would vastly distort the results of the contextual variables on UKIP vote share.

Table 5.1 Baseline model testing, by election year.

	2007	2011	2015
Seats Contested	.136***	.121***	.144***
Log-Likelihood	-461.813	-502.701	-820.922
McFadden's Pseudo R2	0.169	0.189	0.087

* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001

Unsurprisingly, the 2007, 2011, and 2015 baseline models, looking only at the relationship between the percentage of seats contested and UKIP's vote share in that election, all find the seats contested control variable to be highly significant as well as positive. This is theoretically unsurprising and uninteresting as contesting seats is a precondition for receiving any vote share at all and anything less than full participation is likely leaving some portion of the electorate without the option of supporting UKIP when they would like to and thus it is to be expected that contesting more elections is generally associated with increased vote shares. In terms of pseudo r-squared values, it is interesting to note that the baseline model is a better explanation of the 2007 and 2011 elections, compared to the 2015 election. This suggests that variation in the dependent variable for 2015 is being driven by more than just the percentage of seats contested in local elections

and that merely “showing up” was not as important in 2015 as it was in earlier elections. That more appears to be going on in the 2015 election helps to justify the choice in the next chapter to pursue media analysis for 2015 to uncover more of the factors driving variations in UKIP support during this election.

Contextual Independent Variables

The contextual variables cover a range of different factors that are commonly believed to drive far right, especially UKIP, vote-switching and mobilization as discussed in chapter 2. The contextual variables to be tested here are crime rates, violent crime rates, theft rates, percentage of the local authority population that is foreign-born, unemployment, education, age, and local Conservative strength. Hypotheses related to each contextual variable will be given, as well as a brief description of the logic and expected influence of the variable on UKIP vote share.

Hypothesis 1a: Local authorities with higher rates of crime will have higher levels of electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

There are two proposed mechanisms connecting crime rates to UKIP support. First, crime has historically related to foreigners in the UK, as an expression of xenophobia, in no small part due to the historical tendency of media in the country to exaggerate and dramatize the criminality of perceived outsiders (Fox et al., 2012). This has gone together with prejudicial and racist associations in the country between non-Anglo-Saxon and non-white peoples with criminality. As was shown in chapter 4 with the dominance of the crime sub-frame in local newspaper reporting of immigrants, this connection between crime and immigrants, especially non-Anglo/non-white immigrants, can reasonably be said to still be present to some degree. While the variable tested here is not specifically a measure of crimes committed by the foreign-born, there is some expectation that crime in general will tend to focus blame on immigrant communities. Two high-profile examples, in both the USA and the UK, of this sort of association between migrants and crime, even in the absence of specific cases or evidence would be Trump’s infamous announcement speech, associating

Mexican immigrants with violence, drugs, and rape, as well as Nigel Farage's numerous allegations that the accession of Eastern European countries into the European Union "opened the UK's door" to Eastern European criminal cartels and organized crime.

A second proposed mechanism linking crime and UKIP support follows from UKIP's status as a populist party rather than an anti-immigrant party. The logic here is relatively simple. UKIP had often touted itself as an "outsider" party, especially composed of non-professional politicians or "ordinary people", fighting a corrupt and collusive political establishment on behalf of the people. Insofar as high crime rates can be perceived as a failure of local government, through poor policy and inadequate policing, UKIP would be well positioned to benefit from dissatisfaction expressed at the local level. The idea here is that high levels of crime would upset local voters enough to seek to "punish" established parties who had overseen local government and that those votes would be channeled to UKIP as a prominent populist party. This relationship may also be present because, as previously mentioned, concern with crime rates and the severity of punishment for criminals is a common highly salient political issue and high crime rates may fuel the perception that established politicians are disregarding the concerns of voters, playing into UKIP's branding as a populist party.

Hypothesis 1b: Local authorities with higher rates of violent crime will have higher levels of electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypothesis 1c: Local authorities with higher rates of criminal theft will have higher levels of electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Both hypotheses are specifications of hypothesis 1a. While they follow the same mechanisms as hypothesis 1a, it is feasible that violent crimes and thefts may trigger similar reactions, but perhaps more strongly or more reliably. Since the nature of violent crimes and theft tend to be high impact crimes and be viewed as more serious than a crime such as driving an unregistered vehicle, for example, it may be the case that local authorities where these two types of crime are more common may see higher levels of support for UKIP even if

the overall crime rate is lower. Since the crime rate tested in hypothesis 1a includes violent crimes and theft, hypotheses 1b and 1c will be tested separately but in an otherwise identical manner.

Hypothesis 2a: Higher percentages of local foreign-born populations, as a share of the local authority population, will increase electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypothesis 2b: Higher rates of growth in a local foreign-born population, as a share of the local authority population, will increase electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

The argument that higher levels of immigration lead to a nativist backlash is perhaps one of the oldest and most common arguments made regarding the far right. There is also an intuitive appeal to the argument when pointing out that an increasingly prominent far right seems to have risen in the aftermath of increasingly high levels of immigration. The link between immigration and nativist backlash, in our case here expressed as support at the ballot box for a far right party, can occur through two separate mechanisms. The first is through issue salience. In this case, voters may have already had pre-existing sentiments against immigration or at least were not supportive of immigration, but since the inflows of immigrants were kept at low levels, the issue was not seen as pressing or noteworthy and the issue of immigration was pushed to the background while more pressing concerns became “issues of the day”. However, when levels of immigration increase, voters do not become anti-immigrant or nativist, since they already had these views, but are more likely to seek to express these views in the ballot box as the issue has increased in importance. Thus, these voters look for a party whose own position is close to their own with regards to immigration and support the far right. Hypothesis 2b, about rates of growth of foreign-born populations, relies on issue salience as well to explain increases in support for far right parties like UKIP. Larger growth rates in foreign-born populations will increase the salience of immigration as a pressing issue and increase demands from voters for regulation of flows of immigration, particularly for restrictions on the movement of immigrants into the community. As the literature review cites Kaufmann (2014) specifically for the relationship between growth rates

of foreign-born populations and far right support, it is worth noting that issue salience is the mechanism cited in this study as well.

The second mechanism linking higher levels of immigration to nativist backlash is competition. In this view, conflict between immigrants and natives motivates a turn towards support for more restrictive immigration policy and the parties or politicians who offer it. These conflicts may be cultural, as a clash of differing beliefs or social practices may offend or irritate one population or the other. Other forms of conflict take the form of competitions, most prominently over economic resources, such as jobs, wages, houses, or social spending, or less prominently over intangible social goods such as status or prestige. A key difference between this and issue salience relates to anti-immigrant sentiment itself. A conflict-based mechanism for anti-immigrant sentiment directly places immigrants into the process of generating the sentiment, as a situation without immigrants cannot generate conflicts between the two populations, while the issue salience mechanism does not say that immigrants play any part in generating anti-immigrant sentiment, but their presence may activate pre-existing or latent nativism.

Hypothesis 3: Higher levels of local unemployment increases electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

The third hypothesis is related to the competition-driven mechanism of the second hypothesis. In this scenario, local authorities with higher levels of unemployment see increased support for UKIP because local natives, especially the unemployed, react harshly to influxes of foreign jobseekers. This is especially the case in the UK, where the vast majority of the foreign born are voluntary and legal migrants enjoying access to the country's job market, whereas asylum seekers are restricted from employment in numerous ways and thus are less likely to impact the employment prospects of natives. This is doubly true for the local authorities in this study, where much of the local foreign-born population originate in European Union countries and thus enjoy the most unrestricted access to the labor market in comparison to non-EU immigrants and asylum seekers.

Golder (2003) critiqued prior research on far right electoral success in their analysis, or lack thereof, of the interaction between unemployment and immigration. The logic of the interaction is that both immigration and unemployment moderate the other; the electoral benefit of immigration for the far right is likely to be diminished if unemployment is low but that benefit might become very high if unemployment is correspondingly high. Inversely, the role unemployment may play for the far right might be significantly different depending on whether immigration is high or low. To account for this potential interaction between immigration and unemployment, an interaction term is included in the model as both the foreign-born population share, and the local unemployment rate are being tested.

Hypothesis 4: Local authorities with stronger prior local support for the Conservative Party will see higher levels of support for UKIP.

As discussed in chapter 2, while UKIP received some of its support from previous Labour voters, usually ranging from a fourth to a third, most of their support is believed to come from Conservative defectors. Intuitively, such a relationship is appealing as one would expect there to be significant competition between a right and far-right party for right-wing voters, especially for voters whose personal ideological beliefs place them between the two parties on the ideological spectrum. Hypothesis 4 hinges on this relationship between the Conservatives and UKIP and in particular on the strength of the local Conservative Party, with the clearest measure of strength being actual election results. To do this, a variable was created that records the share of the total vote the Conservative Party received in the previous local election. The idea here is that a local Conservative Party with a higher share of the vote represents a larger pool of potential defectors for UKIP. If the Conservative Party received a high vote share in the previous local election, then UKIP will have a larger share of local voters that could potentially defect in the upcoming election. However, where the Conservatives are very weak, where they receive a very small vote share, there will be fewer potential defectors given the propensity of UKIP to collect votes from former Conservatives, rather than former Labour or Liberal Democrat voters.

Hypothesis 5a: Higher percentages of residents with no education qualifications, as a share of the local authority population, will increase electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypothesis 5b: Higher percentages of university graduates, as a share of the local authority population, will decrease electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypotheses 5a and 5b build on what has largely become a consensus position in the scholarship on UKIP and is even starting to appear in the major political competition between the Labour and Conservative parties. That low levels of education in a constituency, in this case a local authority, bolsters UKIP support and high levels of education, holding a university diploma in this case, hurts UKIP support and is largely taken for granted. There are two reasons that this relationship is a hypothesis rather than a control, however. First, while education has been found to be so important for UKIP, the relationship between education and far right support has not always been found to operate in this way in other countries with other far right parties. Thus, we should guard against the possibility that the relationship may not hold. More importantly, much of the scholarship on UKIP has looked at UKIP's performance in national Parliamentary elections, the first-order election in the UK, or in European Parliamentary elections, a second-order election in which UKIP has done very well. Thus, we should be guarded against the possibility that the commonly found relationship between UKIP and education may not exist at the level of local elections.

Second, this study looks at three separate local elections: the 2007, 2011, and 2015 local elections, as a cross-sectional study. Kestila and Soderlund (2007) perform a similar cross-sectional study of the Norwegian Progress Party and find that some determinants of the Progress Party's electoral support fluctuate between elections, with some variables being significant in one election while insignificant in the next. Testing an established fact about UKIP's support, such as the relationship involving education, as a set of cross-sections allows a similar finding to emerge, if it exists. In a more theoretical sense, this design and the inclusion of accepted wisdom as hypotheses rather than controls allows for the possibility that, despite its relatively short age and brief prominence, UKIP's support was fluid rather

than fixed – that in the same way it is generally accepted that the support base of major parties evolves over the party's lifetime, UKIP's support between 2007 and 2015 may have similarly evolved, with previously significant determinants becoming less significant and with other factors helping to drive their support.

Hypothesis 6a: Higher percentages of residents age 65 or older, as a share of the local authority population, will increase electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypothesis 6b: Higher percentages of residents between and including 18 to 34, as a share of the local authority population, will decrease electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

The relationship between age and UKIP support, with older voters being far more likely to support the party than young voters, is essentially as well-established as the one between education and UKIP support. The reasons for its inclusion as a hypothesis rather than control are the same as with education. First, this relationship is not universal to far right parties and thus should not be assumed to hold and more importantly, this relationship may not hold in local elections even if it does hold in European or national elections. Second, the relationship between age and UKIP support may not be stable, only being or becoming significant in a particular election and not in others.

Both age and education, taken together, can be said to represent Robert Ford and Matthew Goodwin's "left-behind" hypothesis that was discussed in some detail in chapter 2. To briefly recap, the left-behind hypothesis argues that UKIP has emerged as a result and bolstered by the so-called "left-behind" population in the UK. This population has been left behind politically, socially, and economically. Politically, the convergence of the Labour Party under Blair and the Conservatives under Cameron and arguably John Major towards the political center left these voters without a party to represent their views. Socially, this population holds "traditional" social views that have become increasingly marginal in a society that has rapidly become multicultural, tolerant, and progressive. Economically, this population has largely been excluded from the economic benefits brought about by globalization and the

increasing demand for a high education professional workforce. In terms of age, older Britons would have come of age, in an era of, and internalized, “traditional” social views and to have been in older industries more likely to have been hit by the deindustrialization and other economic consequences of globalization. In terms of education, less educated Britons are likely to not have the necessary qualifications to be strongly competitive in the workforce as well as not having gone through the university socialization process that promotes the “cosmopolitan” values that have become increasingly widespread.

By way of summary, this set of hypotheses leaves us with eleven independent variables, one dependent variable, and one control variable. The dependent variable is the percent of the vote UKIP received in a particular local election at the local authority level. The control variable, introduced in the baseline model, is the number of candidates UKIP ran out of the number of seats available in that election in a local authority, expressed as a percentage. Our independent variables test for the eleven preceding hypotheses and encompass the foreign-born population and its growth rates, university graduates and the less educated, the 18-34 and 65+ populations, the percent share of the vote the Conservative Party received in the previous local election, the unemployment rate, and the crime rate. All these independent variables are measured at the level of the local authority. The crime independent variable also has two sub-independent variables, the violent crime rate and the theft rate, which are also measured at the local authority level. The testing of violent crime and theft will occur in place of the crime rate, giving us two models: a crime rate model and a violent crime and theft model.

Table 5.2 UKIP Vote Share, contextual variable model results, by election year.

	2007		2011		2015	
Seats Contested	.137***	.137***	.122***	.122***	-.14***	.141***
Previous Tory Vote	0.19	.023	0.37*	.035*	.127***	.108***
Unemployment	.176	.169	-.011	-.012	-.147	-.031
Foreign Born*	2.268	2.374	-2.227*	-2.294*	-2.415	-2.728
Unemployment						
%Degrees	0.18	.018	-.045	-.047	-.278***	-.296***
%No Qualifications	-0.15	-.021	.031	.036	.242*	.225*
%Foreign Born	-.125*	-.137*	.019	.023	-.046	.004
%65+	.113	.115	.108*	.086	.125	.109
%16-34 years old	.056	.042	.022	.019	-.089	-.073
Crime Rate	.013		.003		.066**	
Violent Crime Rate		.047		.01		.085
Theft Rate		.001		.024		.001
%Foreign Born	-.004	-0.004	.004	.002	.206	.196
Change						
Censored	100	100	76	76	3	3
Observations						
Uncensored	171	171	195	195	268	268
Observations						
McFadden's	0.308	0.308	0.319	0.338	.288	.291
Pseudo R2						
Log-Likelihood	-	-	-	-	-	-
	382.742	385.191	421.982	410.439	660.369	657.217

* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001

The results of hypothesis testing for the 2007 local election are relatively simple. While the control variable, seats contested, is highly significant and positive, the only other significant variable is foreign-born population share. The relationship between foreign-born populations in a local authority is negatively related to UKIP's vote share in that local authority's election. Thus, hypothesis 2a is significant but inverted. Hypothesis 2b is never found to be significant in any of the models. The education related variables, looking at percent of population with either university diplomas or without any education qualifications have reversed signs in 2007, with more diplomas leading to more UKIP support and less qualifications leading to less support, but is not statistically significant. While these reversed signs may be spurious, they may also represent UKIP's status as a relatively little-known political party in 2007, perhaps best exemplified by the few inclusions of the party in voting intention polls held by major pollsters. In such a situation, support for UKIP would only follow

from a certain level of political knowledge, more present among the Britons with more education.

The 2011 results are a bit more interesting than the 2007 results. Firstly, the foreign-born population variable is no longer significant, while the control variable is still highly significant and positive. In its place, the percent of the local authority that is aged 65 or older is significant alongside the vote share of the Conservative Party in the last local election. Both variables are also positive, providing support for hypotheses 4 and 6a. UKIP performs better, receiving a higher vote share, in those local authorities with more senior citizens as well as where the Conservatives performed well in the previous election. While the results are not significant, it is interesting to note that the young population and the unemployment rate have inverted signs in these results, contrary to the hypotheses.

The 2015 results are the most interesting. The control variable of percentage of seats contested within a local authority is still highly significant and positive, being the only stable variable in the model. Continuing from the 2011 results, the vote share percent that the Conservative Party received in the previous local election is both significant and positive, further supporting hypothesis 4. Beyond these two variables, all the results have changed. The senior citizen and young population variables are not significant and while the sign is unchanged for senior citizens, the size of the young population has a negative effect on UKIP support in 2015, unlike 2007 and 2011. The foreign-born population variable is also not significant but has an unchanged sign from earlier results. This election is the first where education plays a role in explaining UKIP's support. Local authorities having large populations with university diplomas have substantially less support for UKIP whereas local authorities with large populations without education qualifications have substantially more support for UKIP, confirming hypotheses 5a and 5b and a key aspect of the "left-behind" hypothesis that is commonly encountered in scholarship on UKIP. One important point to note here is that since 2015 has very few censored observations, we can expect these results to be the most robust in comparison to 2007 and 2011.

Lastly, this is the first election where the crime rate is a significant variable in explaining UKIP support, although the sign has been unchanged since the 2007 election, supporting hypothesis 1. While the effect size is small per unit increase of crime rate, the range of the crime rate varies in comparison to many of the other variables, which fall in a range of 0 to 100. The crime rate ranges from 25.43 to 111.21 crimes per 1,000 residents. Thus, while the individual impact of a single crime is small, the sheer quantity of crime, collectively, and the high floor of the range can exert a significant impact on UKIP's local support. In the first proposed mechanism connecting crime to UKIP support, the large impact of crime on UKIP support would benefit any party that could compellingly portray itself as an anti-immigration party. This is especially relevant in the aftermath of Brexit where UKIP has largely faded into the background of politics and the Boris Johnson-led Conservative government has asserted itself as committed to the reduction and regulation of immigration. The second proposed mechanism, that higher crime rates fuel dissatisfaction with local government, is not limited to far right or anti-immigrant parties and could benefit any party that centralizes a critique of the governing party and the political establishment.

Model Selection

The testing of contextual variables provides six different models to explain UKIP's local vote share, two for each election, with the main distinction between the two being whether the model includes the overall crime rate or the violent crime and theft rate. However, because the crime rate variable was statistically significant in the 2015 election and the violent crime and theft rate variables were never significant in any election, the three violent crime and theft rate models are discounted, leaving only three models. Comparison of each model's pseudo r-squared value with the equivalent value from the baseline will allow us to see how much each model improves over the baseline model. In addition, comparison can also be made between each model's r-squared value, as well as the difference between the model and its corresponding baseline.

Table 5.3 McFadden's Pseudo R2 values and differences, crime model, by election year.

	2007	2011	2015
Baseline	0.169	0.189	0.087
Crime	0.308	0.319	0.288
Difference	0.139	0.13	0.201

Across each of the three elections, the crime rate model presented in this chapter makes a substantial improvement over the baseline model. While the model makes a strong improvement over the baseline in all three elections, it is interesting to note that the level of improvement is similar for the 2007 and 2011 elections. However, the difference for the 2015 election suggests that the presented model makes a larger improvement over the baseline for this election. One way to interpret this is that merely “showing up” mattered the least for UKIP in 2015 in terms of explaining the geographic variation in UKIP support. When viewed from this perspective, it can be understood that in an election where the question of *where* UKIP stands for election matters relatively little for determining the amount of support UKIP receives, the total amount of variation that can be explained by additional variables increases. Where simple contestation explains more variation, in the 2007 and 2011 elections, there is relatively less variation ‘available’ that can be explained by other factors, and it should be less surprising that our model improvement for these elections is a bit lower. One interesting point to note is that pseudo r-squared value for the 2015 is the lowest and in this sense, it can be said that the 2015 crime model is the weakest of the three elections. However, we can also see that the 2015 crime rate model makes the largest improvement on its corresponding baseline model, and in this sense can be said to be the strongest model. This combination, the weakest model in terms of variation explained combined with the greatest improvement in variation explained provides good reason to delve further into factors that may explain variance in the 2015 election results.

Discussion

Most hypotheses received at least some support in this testing; although there was no variable beyond the control that was significant in every election, many variables were

significant in at least one election. However, this does not extend to hypothesis 3, which stated that higher levels of unemployment led to higher levels of UKIP support. Instead, the local unemployment rate was never statistically significant and did not even have a consistent sign, being both negatively and positively correlated with UKIP. This is perhaps not unsurprising; local government only has limited economic or immigration policy-making tools available to itself and most employment occurs in the private sector where local government also has limited influence. As such, it may be the case that voters are not primarily concerned with employment policy when deciding whom to vote for in local elections.

For the other hypotheses, the major takeaway is that of change and instability. UKIP's support was relatively straight forward in 2007, the party did well in areas with few immigrants, but compared to 2015, the party was remarkably small and would not have seemed to be of any electoral significance in local elections with only a significant European election result at this point. In the large sample of local elections analyzed here, UKIP only contested 12.1% of available seats and received an average vote share of 1.8%. Data from Rallings and Thrasher at the Election Centre, at the University of Plymouth, shows that the Green Party contested 13.6% of seats and received 3% of the vote on average.

Support for UKIP evolved in the 2011 local elections. Their support evolved from simply being negatively correlated with the foreign-born population to being explained in part by the size of the elderly population and the strength of the local Conservative Party. That UKIP's support was in part explained by the vote share of the Conservative Party in the previous local election is a crucial transformation. While David Cameron famously referred to UKIP as a party of "fruitcakes, loonies, and closet racists" in 2006, by drawing their support from the Conservatives UKIP had become an electoral threat to the Conservatives that would continue to the 2015 election. In terms of contestation and vote share, UKIP experienced minor growth, contesting 16.7% of seats in 2011 and receiving 2.5% of the vote on average. UKIP still had not outperformed the Green Party however, who contested 16.8% of seats and were rewarded with 3.6% of the vote in return.

The 2015 election was vastly different and should be given the most attention. UKIP had grown massively between the 2011 and 2015 elections. UKIP seat contestation increased from 16.7% in 2011 to 52% in 2015 and vote share exploded from 2.5% to 12.4%. Far beyond outperforming the Greens in these regards, UKIP had even outperformed the Liberal Democrats who contested 46% of seats and received 10.3% of the vote for it. UKIP's support had also grown in complexity. While the prior Conservative vote share still explained part of UKIP's support in local elections, education had become a crucial dividing line with local authorities with low levels of education showing significantly more support for UKIP than their high education counterparts where UKIP performed very poorly. Crime was also an important factor for UKIP, with local authorities where crime rates were higher providing more support for UKIP. This conforms to the British Values Survey which found that UKIP voters had exceptionally stiff attitudes with regards to criminal sentencing and very high levels of support for the death penalty.

The fact that previous Conservative vote share was significant and increased UKIP's electoral results in 2011 and 2015 supports what I have termed the process of conversion. This process of conversion refers to the "conversion" of mainstream party voters into far-right voters, particularly former Conservatives abandoning their previous partisan affiliation to cast their support for UKIP. The process of conversion was critical for UKIP's long-term success – not simply because winning more supporters and improving their electoral results is the expected route to success for any political party but because as a third party within an electoral system that encourages a two-party system, UKIP's path to success lay in pressuring and influencing the actions of the major parties. By causing the defection of Conservative voters to UKIP, UKIP could exert pressure on the Conservative party by splitting the right-wing vote and threaten Conservative prospects of victory in potentially tight races with the Conservative's main rival, Labour.

While at first glance, the instability of UKIP's contextual determinants may concern some readers, such instability should be unremarkable. The number of UKIP voters

increased drastically between 2007 and 2015, and in addition, the party continually contested new local authorities and new seats. Thus, it is unsurprising that influxes of new voters in new areas would introduce new variations requiring changing determinants to explain. Critically, this dissertation argues that UKIP grew, in part at least, because of dual processes of conversion and consolidation that saw UKIP win over the support of Conservative defectors and former supporters of rival far right parties. The contextual determinants here saw the importance of the previous Conservative vote for UKIP in 2011 and 2015. The process of consolidation of the far right also only truly began in 2011. In the 2007 local elections, UKIP received fewer total votes than the British National Party alone, although it did outperform the breakaway English Democrats Party (Rallings & Thrasher, 2007). In 2011, UKIP had already begun the process of eclipsing its far right rivals, with the English Democrats and the BNP only receiving approximately a third of the votes that UKIP received (Rallings & Thrasher, 2011). By 2015, UKIP's far right rivals had effectively vanished, running very few candidates, and failing to gather any appreciable number of votes.

With regards to McFadden's pseudo r-squared values, we can see that the models presented explain between approximately 29% to 32% of the observed variation, depending on the election year and represents a very good fit (McFadden 1977, 35). While this model does provide a good fit, our understanding of what drives geographic variations in UKIP's support can be further improved by deeper observation of media, a factor often considered critical to the success or failure of political parties and electoral campaign efforts. A strong motivation for this further analysis relates to the results for the 2015 election. While this election has the most significant factors, it is also the election year where the model returns the worst results in terms of variance explained. Given the importance of the 2015 election, this is wholly unsatisfying and necessitates an exploration of additional explanatory factors.

Moving forward onto a similar statistical analysis of local newspaper coverage and UKIP support and a case study of Boston, a local authority with exceptionally high levels of support for UKIP, the major takeaway from this analysis of contextual explanations of UKIP

success is instability. Indeed, while a simple economic explanation such as unemployment is one serious casualty at the end of this analysis, the idea of a stable set of factors that explains UKIP's explosive growth is the most grievous casualty. With the partial exception of the strength of the previous Conservative Party vote in the 2011 and 2015 elections, no factor consistently explains UKIP's local electoral support. It is probable that UKIP's explosive growth between 2004 and 2015 saw the population of party supporters rapidly expand, and particularly broaden to encompass a changing base of support. This also suggests that UKIP's electoral appeal did not just expand to encompass a larger population but also expanded in terms of the local authorities it appealed to alongside the types of people who were drawn to the party. Thus, UKIP transformed from a party of the white British, to a party of the old, to a party of the less educated. Importantly, local authorities can be *all* of these things, and the case of Boston is one such example, but the apparent stability between local authority and UKIP, that such-and-such place is a bastion of support for the party, can hide that the dynamics of support are changing.

Chapter 6 - Media Analysis

Until this point, we have looked only at the contextual factors, those mostly structural characteristics that inhere in a local authority, to explain variations in UKIP's local support. This chapter expands the focus from contextual factors to include an analysis of local media, in particular the ways in which local media covered immigration related news to see whether this reporting can help to explain variations in UKIP's local results. While this study has not interrogated individual level attitudes towards immigrants, the work of other scholars (van der Brug et al., 2000; Kessler & Freeman, 2005) has often found that far right supporters have disproportionately hostile views of immigrants and thus this chapter asks whether voters in a local news environment characterized by hostile anti-immigrant coverage might tend to support UKIP more than voters in less hostile or positive local news environments.

The effects of the media on UKIP are understudied and what little does exist is in complete disagreement on how the media influenced the party's success. Recall that Deacon and Wring (2016) find that UKIP's success occurred despite the media while Murphy and Devine (2018) attribute UKIP's success to outsized media coverage that steadily increased in a feedback loop. In terms of issue ownership, it is only in 2014 that polling suggests that UKIP became more trusted than other parties on immigration and can be said to have established ownership of that issue, although their ownership steadily increased prior to that point. Prior to 2014, the Conservatives comfortably owned the issue of immigration and Bale (2003) argues that the Tories occupied the staunch anti-immigrant position in British politics between 1997 and 2005 and was occupied by UKIP afterwards. Thus, we can theoretically expect that UKIP should benefit from more hostile immigration-related media coverage, as the position becomes more strongly associated with the far right party and there is decreasing policy competition with the Conservatives. It is important to note that while UKIP may have surpassed the Conservatives in voter trust in managing immigration, the Conservatives were never far behind UKIP on this issue. Further, while Cameron's leadership

moderated the party's stance on immigration, this moderation did not lead to the party becoming pro-immigration, just less extreme in its anti-immigration. While UKIP had overtaken the Tories on immigration among voters, and Cameron had pulled his party away from the anti-immigration extremes that characterized his predecessors, the issue was still a contentious one between the two parties.

This study of local media sacrificed breadth for depth, and this constitutes one significant methodological departure from the analysis conducted in chapter 5. While the previous chapter looked at contextual variables across nearly all English local authorities that held elections in 2007, 2011, and 2015, the level of engagement with local media pursued in this study makes the study of over 250 local newspapers simply infeasible. Instead, nine local authorities were chosen for media analysis between the years of 2011 and 2015. More detail regarding the selection criteria and its justification was discussed in chapter 3, but in short, these nine cases are "above the line" cases; local authorities that, based on existing research, should be favorable for UKIP's electoral success. Despite this, there is still remarkable variation in terms of local newspaper coverage of immigration, as chapter 4 highlighted. More importantly, there is also significant variation in terms of UKIP's electoral success and so, despite their apparent similarity, there is plenty of variation in need of explanation.

The limitation to the 2011-2015 period means that this chapter will only be looking to explain UKIP's results in the 2015 local elections. This choice is made for a few reasons. First, given that UKIP performed the best in that election, and managed to win several seats as well as place second in many more local authorities, this election is the most important to explain. Second, as mentioned above, polling indicates that UKIP surpassed the Conservatives on the immigration issue in 2014, which means between the 2007, 2011, and 2015 elections, only the 2015 election occurred under a UKIP-owned immigration issue. While UKIP likely benefited from immigration coverage in the media prior to 2014, we cannot be sure that the Conservatives did not benefit *more* given their ownership of the issue in this

period. Third, as we saw in the previous chapter, the 2015 election is the one, of the three, most in need of further explanation, where a contextual model does the least satisfactory job of explanation, justified a more exclusive focus. Fourth, while UKIP did not contest all nine of these local authorities in 2007 and 2011, they did contest all these local authorities in 2015, which allows us to employ more familiar and straightforward OLS regression techniques. Finally, practically speaking, the media analysis involves a great many ways of organizing the independent variables, combining quantity, frame, and valence in numerous ways, and cutting from three dependent variables, one for each election, to one, for just the 2015 election, is one way to manage the sometimes-overbearing complexity of the media variables.

Both YouGov and Ipsos Mori record spikes in the salience of immigration beginning in 2013. YouGov, which consistently has higher salience numbers on immigration, regularly reports majorities of Britons stating the immigration was one of the most important issues facing that country. Ipsos Mori's survey similarly find that approximately 20% of Britons thought immigration was an important issue in 2012, and this number spikes in 2013 to high 30% figures, where it remains until the 2015 election. More importantly regarding ownership, YouGov finds that the Conservatives lose ownership of immigration beginning in late-May of 2014, and in their April 2015 survey shows that 26% of Britons find UKIP best able to handle immigration vis-à-vis the Conservatives who 23% of Britons favored.

However, these competence questions are heavily influenced by partisanship and policy attitudes. British Election Survey data from March 2015 shows that UKIP is much more strongly associated with immigration in comparison to the Conservative Party, and perhaps more importantly, are much more associated with immigration restriction. Less than 40% of voters thought that immigration was an important issue to the Conservative Party, compared to 90% who thought that immigration was important to UKIP. Similarly, 80% of voters thought UKIP would try to reduce immigration numbers, while only 40% thought the same of the Conservative Party. Interestingly, 60% of voters thought UKIP would be successful in

reducing immigration numbers, while less than 20% of voters said the same for the Conservatives. The most telling evidence of how badly the Conservatives had lost ownership of immigration, particularly in terms of immigration restriction is that the British Election Survey found that 60% of voters assigned responsibility for what they perceived to be high levels of immigration in 2015 to the Conservative Party. Unsurprisingly, being held responsible for increasing levels of immigration completely undermined the credibility the Conservatives had on immigration and makes the fact that UKIP, a party that had never once been in government, was found to be more *competent* on immigration more understandable.

This chapter largely follows a similar format as chapter 5; with statistical testing following the introduction of a set of hypotheses. Hypotheses and testing are aggregated at the level of frames and in total. Analysis of the totals looks at all news items that are published by a particular newspaper within a certain period without reference to frames. Analysis at the level of frames disaggregates the total data by frame employed per news item. In addition to these two levels of analysis, testing is also conducted with regards to the valence of the news item, with one stream of testing paying no mind to whether the news item could be considered anti-immigrant or not and another stream of testing that accounts for the valence of each news item. Finally, given the attention devoted to crime up to this point, this chapter also tests the relationship between UKIP vote share and the use of the crime-frame within the existing dataset as a special subset of the security frame.

An implicit assumption of this media analysis is that the impact of a news item does not vary on the timing of that news item. Simply put, a news item released in June 2007 would have equal weight for a vote cast in May 2011 as a news item released in April 2011. Many would intuitively and reflexively find such a claim to be improbable. While it is likely that even distant news items have *some* relevance for an election, there is some expectation that the impact of “political factors” would diminish over time (Norpoth, 1996). Other studies have also found that the impact a particular factor may have on voter support fluctuates depending on its position in the election cycle – that the way a British voter decides which party to

support changes immediately before an election compared to after an election for example (Carey & Lebo, 2006). There is also evidence to suggest that while the media can both change the minds of its viewers as well as influence the perception of the importance of issues for voters, these effects are generally short term (Zucker, 1978; Watt Jr. & Van der Berg, 1981; Coleman et al., 2009). Finally, Lewis-Beck et al. (2004) produced a reasonably accurate UK general election forecast using a six-month lead time, noting that in the UK, as well as the USA and France, the six-month lead time tended to be more accurate than other lead times.

While there is disagreement over the exact time frames that are expected to most influence voters' political support, this study tests two separate lead times: three months and six months. Rather than assuming equal weight regardless of position in the election cycle, these time restrictions assume that the media coverage further than six months away from election day is relatively minimal, and instead tests whether the local newspapers' coverage within three to six months of the election most impacts UKIP support. This also dramatically reduces the number of news documents that comprise the dataset, as four years of reporting is reduced to, at most, six months of reporting. The testing of time leads shorter than three months is foregone for exactly this reason, as the time lead shrinks the number of data points drastically. This also prevents the disaggregation of data into smaller subsets as the number of data points is simply too low to draw reliable conclusions. Beyond the introduction of this time restriction, testing occurs in largely the same way as the testing without time restriction; we will first test the impact of total reporting, then valence, and finally frame effects.

The Baseline

The same baseline model that was used in the previous chapter, a univariate model consisting only of the percentage of the seats contested by UKIP in that year's local election, is employed again in this chapter for much the same reason it was used in the previous: to help determine how much explanatory power is being provided by the addition of the suite of media variables that are tested in this chapter. However, since the methods used in this

chapter differ from the previous, using OLS instead of Tobit, we can also use the more-familiar r-squared instead of McFadden's pseudo-r squared. While a baseline is not necessary for model selection when using the coefficient of determination, since they can just be compared as-is, comparison with the baseline can be still useful for getting a sense of how much *additional* explanatory power is provided by media variable, in comparison to just the percentage of seats contested. Results of the baseline model testing are provided in table 6.1 but will be repeated in future tables to facilitate quick comparison.

Table 6.1. Baseline model testing, 2015 election.

Baseline Model	2015
Seats Contested	.443*
Adjusted R ²	.448

* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001

At first glance, the baseline model seems particularly strong in this dataset of nine local authorities. However, this is unsurprising and unremarkable given that these nine cases were selected specifically because they scored highly in factors that the broader literature had found to positively influence support for UKIP. From this perspective, of course it would be the case that when other important factors are favorable, the amount of support UKIP could obtain in a local authority would be strongly dependent on how many seats they contested at election time. One interesting, albeit minor, point is that while the seats contested variable is still significant it is much less so than in the contextual models of the previous chapter. The job left for the rest of this chapter is to see how much the media environments of each local authority also impacted UKIP's support, and especially, how much a model that incorporates these variables adds to an explanation of UKIP's election results.

Media Variables

This section tests the media data in relation to UKIP's local electoral vote share at the highest level of aggregation. This level of aggregation focuses on the numerical totals of immigration-related reporting without any reference to the framing employed in any of the

pieces. One factor that is examined in the later part of this section is the newspaper documents' valence towards immigrants. Similar to the statistical analysis of contextual variables, this testing employs a cross-section for the 2015 local election for the nine selected cases.

Hypothesis 7a: Local Authorities with newspapers that publish more immigration-related documents will see increased electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypothesis 7b: Local Authorities with newspapers that publish more immigration-related documents three or six months before election-day will see increased electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

The logic of hypotheses 7a and 7b operate along the lines of “any news is good news”, which is to say, that any reporting on immigration provides a net benefit to UKIP. Similarly, this also means that what exactly the media reports on, and how they do so, in terms of valence or framing, is largely irrelevant. A mechanism for this hypothesis is issue salience. The more attention the media provides to immigration or immigrants, the more elevated the issue becomes in the public spotlight, i.e., that the issue of immigration will be increasingly important and for some voters, an increasingly important *problem*. More attention focused on immigration would indirectly benefit UKIP, as UKIP places immigration policy and especially opposition to immigration as a central plank in its party platform and by the 2015 election had overtaken the Conservative Party as the most trusted party on the issue among voters.

Table 6.2 News item quantity results, 2015 election.

	Baseline	Total	3m	6m
Seats Contested	.443*	.327	.405	.335
Total Items		.028	.178	.111
Adjusted R ²	.448	.443	.395	.397
* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001				

The results of testing the relationship between the total numbers of immigration-related articles published in the inter-election periods, as well as the three- and six-month periods preceding an election provide no support to hypotheses 7a and 7b. Despite the total

number of news documents never being statistically significant on its own, one interesting feature to note is that the variable is always positive. Thus, while not significant, the idea that higher levels of news coverage led to more UKIP vote share does find some minor support here. However, the adjusted coefficient of determination of the three models tested here actually perform worse than our baseline model and as such, these models provide little value in explaining UKIP support.

Hypothesis 7c: Local Authorities with newspapers that publish more anti-immigration documents will see increased electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypothesis 7d: Local Authorities with newspapers that publish more anti-immigration documents three or six month before election-day will see increased electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypotheses 7c and 7d build on 7a and 7b by adding the question of “how” into the analysis, arguing that not only “how much” the media reports on immigration matters, but also “how” they report on immigration in terms of valence. Beyond this, these two hypotheses are tested similarly to the previous two hypotheses. Since UKIP is an anti-immigration party, the hypothesized mechanism at play for this case is discursive consonance when the media reports with an anti-immigration stance and discursive dissonance when media reports with a pro-immigration stance. When the media adopts an anti-immigration stance in their reporting, this bolsters UKIP’s position, adding the prestige and legitimacy of a media outlet to what is a position adopted by a non-mainstream party. Conversely, when the media adopts a pro-immigration stance in their reporting, this undermines UKIP’s position in the local authority, directly contradicting and diminishing the appeal and position that UKIP adopts in the immigration debate.

Table 6.3 News item quantity and valence results, 2015 election.

	Baseline	Total	3m	6m
Seats Contested	.443*	.011	.341*	-.08
Total – Anti-Imm		-.042	-.571	-.286
Total- Pro-Imm		.28	3.195*	1.962
Adjusted R²	.448	.643	.767	.537

*= <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001

Testing of hypotheses 7c and 7d, which disaggregated the newspaper article totals employed in testing hypotheses 7a and 7b reveals our first positive results. Hypothesis 7c receives no support but hypothesis 7d receives partial support, although the signs are reversed from expectation. Our finding here is that pro-immigrant reporting that occurred three months prior to election day had a statistically significant and strongly positive effect in increasing support for UKIP in the 2015 local elections. Pro-immigrant reporting at the six month and total (2011-2015) interval were similarly positive but were not statistically significant. Anti-immigrant reporting was wholly negative in its relationship to UKIP vote shares but was not statistically significant at any time interval. One possible consideration to deal with this contrary finding is the possibility of voter backlash precipitated by the media's reporting of immigration; the case study of Boston and its paper, the *Boston Standard*, shows one such case where residents of Boston "revolted" against what was felt to be a sustained anti-immigrant news coverage that was alleged to incite racial hatred in the town. Another possible explanation here is that the media's valence has little impact on voting behavior *per se* but that certain valences amplify or diminish issue saliences differently. Ultimately, while the reversal of signs is interesting, the findings for anti-immigrant reporting being wholly statistically insignificant should temper any enthusiasm for delving too deeply into potential explanations.

The first bout of statistical analysis provides only partial answers as to the relationship between local media coverage of immigration and UKIP's success in cultivating electoral support in these areas. Of the four already tested hypotheses, only hypothesis 7d received any support, albeit with reversed signs. One interesting point to note here is that time interval appears to be quite crucial for the relationship between media and UKIP support, with only the three-month period showing any significant results. Beyond this, the testing of news item quantity by itself showed no effect on UKIP support, and when disaggregating the total news items by their pro- or anti-immigrant valence showed support

only in the case of pro-immigrant news items. The next section will disaggregate the media data further with respect to the three major frames in this study: security, economic, and cultural framing.

Frame Effects

This section introduces a set of hypotheses regarding the relationship between newspaper framing and UKIP's local electoral vote share, focusing on the security, economic, and culture frames. In the latter part of this section, this framing data is disaggregated by valence as well. Like the statistical analysis carried out in the last section, this testing employs a cross-section of the 2015 local election for the nine selected cases in addition to time-restricted analysis at the three- and six-month lead-ups to this election. One difference from the previous section is a methodological adjustment is made to accommodate the increasing number of variables that are created as the body of newspaper data is examined in increasing detail. This adjustment takes the form of testing disaggregated independent variables within a frame category, but without inclusion of other frame categories. In the context of the testing of frame effects, this takes the form of a regression model that incorporates pro- and anti-immigrant security-framed documents, for example, without simultaneously testing any economics or culture-framed documents. Testing of economics and culture-framed documents also takes place independently of the other categories.

Hypothesis 8a: Local authorities with local newspapers that publish more security, economics, or culture-framed immigration documents will have higher levels of support for UKIP.

Hypothesis 8b: Local authorities with local newspapers that publish more security, economics, or culture-framed immigration documents three or six month prior to election-day will have higher levels of support for UKIP.

Hypotheses 8a and 8b are refinements of hypotheses 7a and 7b. Regarding media variables, while hypotheses 7a and 7b sought to ask what influence the amount of reporting had on support for UKIP, these hypotheses introduce frame effects. The logic of the

relationship is the same as hypothesis 7a – issue salience. The more a media outlet reports on a particular topic, the more importance voters will attach to that issue and for those voters who see the issue as a problem, the more pressing and larger of a problem it will seem. Increasing the salience of immigration indirectly benefits UKIP because, as an anti-immigrant party, it highly prioritizes the issue in comparison to other issues.

Table 6.4 Frame effect results, 2015 election.

	Baseline	Total	3m	6m
Seats Contested	.443*	.417*	.514	.067
Security		-.164*	-.052	-.086
Economic		.185	-.972	.938
Culture		.909*	4.016	.165
Adjusted R²	.448	.876	.492	.490
* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001				

The result of the initial testing of frame effects and UKIP’s local vote share is mixed. Hypothesis 8b finds no support, and it appears that when considering frame effects, at least without the inclusion of valence, the three- and six-month lead-up to the election is not a critical time for frames. The next round of testing will disaggregate each frame by valence and allow further assessment of frame effects at the three- and six-month periods. Regarding hypothesis 8a, culture-framed reporting results fully supports the hypothesis while security-framed documents exhibit a reversed sign; security-framed documents seem to reduce UKIP’s vote share as the number of such documents increases. In addition, the coefficient of determination for hypothesis 8a is the strongest encountered thus far and nearly doubles the baseline, providing a net increase of .428.

Hypothesis 8c: Local authorities with local newspapers that publish more anti-immigrant security, economics, or culture-framed immigration documents will have higher levels of support for UKIP.

Hypothesis 8d: Local authorities with local newspapers that publish more anti-immigrant security, economics, or culture-framed immigration documents three or six months prior to election-day will have higher levels of support for UKIP.

Hypotheses 8c and 8d are refinements of hypotheses 7c and 7d. These hypotheses return valence to the analysis of how these newspapers report on immigration, in addition to the quantity and frame efforts in immigration reporting. These hypotheses further consider that while anti-immigrant publications are likely to be favorable to UKIP because it helps to support and legitimize their own arguments and platform regarding immigration, pro-immigrant publications are likely to erode their support because they contradict the sort of narrative that UKIP would like to disseminate among voters, as well as possibly undermining the arguments they use to support or justify anti-immigration policies.

Despite the wide variety of models tested, the results for the 2015 local election are encouraging. Without time restriction, only culture-framed documents are significant, although the signs are contrary to expectation. In the three-month period leading to election-day, pro-immigrant economics-framed documents are significant, although like culture-framed documents, the sign is opposite expectation. None of the six-month model were found to have any statistically significant variables. In terms of adjusted r-squared values, both the “total” culture frame model and the three-month economic model boast significant improvements over the baseline model of just the seats contested control variable.

The testing of frame effects, both with and without respect to valence, increased the complexity of the testing in comparison to testing without frame effects and the results mirror that complexity. While some models see variables display the expected effect for UKIP, it is often the case that the effect is reversed: positive when expected to be negative, or vice versa. This provides more support for the idea that the media’s role in shaping the views that voters hold regarding immigration is minimal and instead pushes us to more seriously consider the idea that the media’s primary role in the relationship between the issue of immigration, UKIP, and voters revolves instead around issue salience. However, given the varying effect sizes, it may be the case that not all frames are equally salient and certain frames and topics increase salience to different degrees in comparison to other frames.

Table 6.5 Frame effect and valence results, by time period, 2015 election.

	Baseline	Security			Economic			Culture		
		Total	3m	6m	Total	3m	6m	Total	3m	6m
Seats Contested	.443*	.308	.576*	.784	.264	.363*	.149	.493*	.328	.160
Pro-immigrant		.092	-4.135	-2.056	.374	4.077**	1.759	.843*	-1.682	-5.88
Anti-immigrant		.019	.589	.140	-.013	.004	.250	-4.013	10.875	7.445
Adjusted R ²	.448	.273	.474	.388	.541	.883	.705	.725	.629	-25.536

* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001

The interpretation that media coverage of immigration influences election outcomes by activating pre-existing dispositions towards immigrants by means of issue salience is bolstered by survey results from the UK and is important for two reasons. First, according to data aggregated by the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory, three different surveys find that British attitudes towards immigration are relatively stable during the period under study in the dissertation. For example, the British election survey finds that 76% of British people thought there were too many immigrants in the country in 1987, and this number was 71% in 2015. Asking a similar question, Ipsos Mori finds this same group varies between approximately 60-70% between 2000 and 2015. Asking specifically about immigrants from outside Europe, The European Social Survey finds approximately 50% of the British are opposed between 2002 and 2014. What is clear from this is that there is not much evidence to support the idea that the British public, writ large, suddenly changed their views on the desirability of immigration during the studied period.

One important related fact did change during this period though. This was the salience of immigration as an issue. Ipsos Mori's "Issues Index", where respondents are asked about the most important issues facing the country, finds that the period between 2008 and 2013 had unusually low immigration salience. This is completely unsurprising given the Great Recession, and indeed the salience of the economy similarly skyrockets during this period. However, the 2004-2008 and 2013-2015 are both periods of high immigration salience. This combination, that British immigration policy views are stable while the salience of immigration as an important issue fluctuates alongside the findings thus far suggests that the media is doing little to shape immigration views and instead influences the relative importance of immigration for voters.

Reporting on Crime and Support for UKIP

As was clear from chapter 4, where a detailed overview of the local newspaper data was presented, a large portion of the security-framed news items were news items that reported on incidents of crime. Much of the media's output that employed the crime frame

were stories specifically regarding the crimes committed by immigrants against natives or focused on immigrants as sources of crime. This is particularly concerning because the anti-immigrant rhetoric employed by Nigel Farage and UKIP often emphasized the supposedly high levels of criminality that existed among Eastern European immigrants with Farage often referencing “crime waves” or “foreign criminal gangs” originating from immigrant communities. Since such a large part of the security-frame was a more specific crime frame, this final round of variable testing will focus on the relationship between UKIP’s vote share in the 2015 local election and how, and how much, the local newspapers reported on crime involving immigrants. This relationship between higher levels of crime and UKIP’s support rests on the earlier-discussed association between UKIP support and support for harsher penalties for criminals as well as prevalent associations in the United Kingdom between immigrants and criminality and the shaping of anti-immigrant attitudes (Caviedes, 2015; Fox et al., 2012; Brown, 2010; Buonfino, 2004).

Hypothesis 11a: Local authorities with newspapers that publish more crime-framed documents will have higher levels of electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypothesis 11b: Local authorities with newspapers that publish more crime-framed documents in the three- or six-month periods before election-day will have higher levels of support for UKIP in local elections.

Table 6.6 Crime frame effect results, 2015 election.

	Baseline	2015		
		Total	3m	6m
Seats Contested	.443*	.361	.482*	.398
Crime		.078	1.002	.326
Adjusted R ²	.448	.554	.517	.550

* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001

One may recall that the results of the previous chapter’s statistical analysis of contextual determinants of UKIP’s vote share across approximately 300 English local authorities suggested that the local crime rate only explained UKIP’s support in the 2015 local election, while it was not significant in both 2007 and 2011. This result is not reproduced in

this initial bout of variable testing. Both hypotheses are rejected in full and in none of the time periods is the incidence of the crime-frame significantly related to UKIP's vote share. While nothing is significant in this case, it is at least encouraging to note that the signs do meet expectations in that the usage of the simple crime frame does appear to increase UKIP's vote share in each of the three time periods.

The final pair of hypotheses before completing the quantitative analysis of local news coverage of immigration regards the valence of the crime frame. Broadly speaking, pro-immigrant crime frame use tends to see immigrants as the victims of crimes while anti-immigrant crime-framed news items tend to see immigrants as the criminal actor. In terms of expectation, it is expected that pro-immigrant crime frames will arouse sympathy for immigrants, especially in the case of racial motivations. Inversely, news items about immigrants committing crime will tend to arouse opposition to immigration, with immigrants being dangerous elements within communities and lending credence to the sort of rhetoric UKIP and Nigel Farage often employed about immigration in the UK.

Hypothesis 11c: Local authorities with newspapers that publish more anti-immigrant crime-framed documents will have higher levels of electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

Hypothesis 11d: Local authorities with newspapers that publish more anti-immigrant crime-framed documents within the three- or six-month periods before election day will have higher levels of support for UKIP in local elections.

Table 6.7 Crime frame and valence effect results, by time period, 2015 election.

Crime Frame	Baseline	2015		
		Total	3m	6m
Seats Contested	.443*	.310	.508*	.329
Pro-Immigrant		.196	9.301	1.529
Anti-Immigrant		.062	1.210	.396
Adjusted R ²	.448	.509	.596	.308
* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001				

Results from testing the combination of the crime frame and valence repeats the same results as the crime frame without valence. Neither hypothesis 11c nor 11d find any support. Like the previous results, the coefficients display the hypothesized signs but their lack of significance discounts them from further consideration. Beyond these two points, none of the six crime models tested display any noteworthy improvement over the baseline model in terms of variance explained.

The Security Mystery

The results from the crime sub-frame testing leaves us with a mystery involving UKIP support and the security frame. This mystery is that according to prior testing, the security frame, without reference to valence, is both significant and negative for UKIP support, while crime sub-frame testing shows that the crime sub-frame is insignificant and positive for UKIP. While the difference in signs is curious, the real problem is that of significance. The reason this finding is mystifying is that chapter 4 showed that the crime sub-frame composes the bulk of the security frame – enough so that the crime sub-frame warranted dedicated testing itself. Thus, we are left to wonder what is going on with the non-crime portion of the security-framed news items that results in the security frame being both significant and negative.

Another common sub-frame within the security frame, although not as common as the crime sub-frame, is the border control sub-frame. The border control sub-frame frames immigration in terms of the permeability of the physical border of the country, but more commonly frames immigration in terms of who and how many people should be allowed access to the country, often in terms of whether Britons are obligated to accept immigrants and whether immigrants have the right to reside and live in the United Kingdom. Unsurprisingly, this sub-frame is very common in the local authority of Dover, which is the site of both the Channel Tunnel and the Dover Ferry service, both which are common access points for travel between Great Britain and the European continent. It is less common outside Dover, although the local authorities of Boston and neighboring South Holland have a notable

quantity of border control-framed news items. Additionally, the border control sub-frame tends to employ an anti-immigrant valence, denying or contesting obligations towards immigrants or the rights of immigrant to live within the country.

Since the purpose of this section is to try to resolve the above-mentioned mystery, testing of the border control sub-frame will be more limited than the full frames and the crime sub-frame. Since the security frame was only found to be significant for the entire period and not at the three- and six-month periods, only the full period will be tested. The hypothesis for this is:

Hypothesis 12a: Local authorities with newspapers that publish more border control-framed documents will have higher levels of electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

The border control sub-frame may, in fact, be the most appropriate sub-frame of the security frame in terms of UKIP support. This relates to issue salience and issue ownership. While UKIP surpassed the Conservative Party in terms of voter trust on the issue of immigration before the 2015 election, immigration is not the only issue. National polling showing that UKIP surpassed the Tories on immigration also showed that the Tories enjoyed a substantial advantage in terms of voter trust on law-and-order issues. The crime sub-frame uncomfortably blurs the boundaries between immigration and law-and-order and thus it is not immediately obvious that UKIP, as the most trusted party on immigration prior to the 2015 election, would be the one to most benefit from media coverage of immigrant crimes – the Conservative Party could also be considered a potential beneficiary since voters can easily understand crime committed by immigrants to be a law-and-order issue more than an immigration issue. The border control sub-frame, which mostly focused on immigrant access to the UK, is much more straightforwardly an immigration policy issue, without the messy blurring with law-and-order.

Table 6.8. Border Control Sub-frame by valence and local authority, period three.

	Babergh	Boston	Breckland	Dover	Fenland	King's Lynn	North Lincolnshire	Rother	South Holland	Total
Anti-immigrant	0	10	2	69	3	5	9	2	31	131
Pro-immigrant	0	2	0	21	1	1	0	0	1	26
Total	0	12	2	90	4	6	9	2	32	157

6.9 Frame effect results, border control sub-frame, 2015 election.

	Baseline	Total
Seats Contested	.443*	.616**
Border Control		-.209**
Economic		-.062
Culture		.675**
Adjusted R ²	.448	.932
* = <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001		

The results of testing frame effects, substituting the security frame with the border control sub-frame, are very encouraging. The culture frame is still significant and positive, and the border control sub-frame significant and negative, replicating the prior results. One difference involves coefficient size, where the border control sub-frame effect size increased, while the culture frame decreased. Finally, and critically, the coefficient of determination grew and as a result, this model is now the strongest in terms of variation explained.

The most important part of the security mystery is resolved with these results, and we can see that the prior significance of the security frame, despite the insignificance of the crime sub-frame, is driven primarily by the significance of the border sub-frame, even though it is a much more minor part of the security frame than the crime sub-frame. The more minor remaining mystery is why the border control sub-frame is negative for UKIP's vote share, especially considering the prior reasoning which notes that by the time of the 2015 election UKIP was the most trusted party on the issue of immigration and the border control sub-frame is much more straightforwardly part of the "immigration issue" while the crime sub-frame blurs the boundaries between the UKIP-owned immigration and Tory-owned law-and-order issues. Continuing our analysis of the border control sub-frame by incorporating valence, in the same manner as the rest of the chapter, helps resolve this secondary mystery. The hypothesis for this is:

Hypothesis 12b: Local authorities with newspapers that publish more anti-immigrant border control-framed documents will have higher levels of electoral support for UKIP in local elections.

This hypothesis relies on the same consonance and dissonance reasoning as discussed above. UKIP, as a staunch anti-immigrant party, benefits from a consonance between its own framing of immigration, and policy goals, and the media’s framing of immigration and when the two match, UKIP benefits from the recognition and legitimacy of the media. When the media adopts a dissonant valence, where the media adopts a pro-immigrant valence in this case, UKIP’s border control framing of immigration is undermined and its legitimacy is challenged.

Table 6.10 Border Control frame and valence effect results, 2015 election.

	Baseline	Total
Seats Contested	.443*	.786**
Pro-Immigrant		-1.904**
Anti-Immigrant		.339*
Adjusted R ²	.448	.875

*= <.05, ** = <.01, *** = <.001

The results here are also very encouraging and resolve the secondary security mystery. It is not simply the case that the border control sub-frame is unfavorable for UKIP. As hypothesis 12b states, anti-immigrant border control-framed news documents are beneficial for UKIP’s vote share, while pro-immigrant border control-framed documents are detrimental for UKIP. The reason the overall border-control subframe results in a loss of support for UKIP is that the effect of pro-immigrant articles in this case is much stronger than the beneficial effect of anti-immigrant articles. Despite the disparity in quantity between pro- and anti-immigrant border control news items, the overall effect of the pro-immigrant valence is stronger. An important note here is that, with reference to table 6.10, some local authorities had zero pro-immigrant border control articles and one, South Holland, had such a vast disparity that the overall effect would be positive for UKIP. In the other cases – Boston, Dover, Fenland, and King’s Lynn, the net effect would be negative for UKIP. With this, the perplexing security frame result in table 6.4 is wholly resolved.

Model Selection

The results of the testing of media variables in nine local authorities left six different models to potentially explain UKIP's local vote share in the 2015 election. The primary basis for comparison between these models, and the criterion for selection, is the level of improvement in the coefficient of determination on the baseline model that was presented at the beginning of the chapter. The use of adjusted R^2 instead of the simpler R^2 also allows us to penalize models that include more independent variables and thus the selection here, while primarily concerned with the improvement vis-à-vis the baseline model also puts some value on the parsimony of the model as well.

Table 6.11 Adjusted R^2 values and differences, 2015 election.

	Adjusted R^2	Difference	Std. Error
Baseline	.448		
Valence*Quantity-3m	.767	.319	3.8215
Frame	.876	.428	2.7916
Frame - Border Control	.932	.484	2.0697
Valence*Frame-Culture	.725	.277	4.1569
Valence * Frame – Border Control	.875	.427	2.8042
Valence*Frame-3m-Economic	.883	.435	2.7121

Each of the five models makes substantial improvements over the baseline model, although only in one model does the difference surpass the baseline's value. Three models, the frame, the frame-border control, and the three-month valence*economic frame models, clearly make the most substantial improvements. The frame model looks at the three frames without respect to the valence of the news documents, across the entire period between the 2011 and 2015 elections. This model finds that the security frame diminishes UKIP's support in the local authority, while cultural framing increases it. The second model, which is marginally stronger than the first, is economic framing, including valence, within the three-month period prior to the 2015 election. This model shows that pro-immigrant economic framing increases UKIP's local support, while anti-immigrant documents are insignificant. The strongest model is a variant of the first model that was tested to explain why the security frame was detrimental to UKIP's vote share despite theoretical expectations. This model finds

that culture framing benefits the party while border control-framed documents negatively impact UKIP's support. While these models identify different frames as being relevant to UKIP's local vote share, they both agree that a media analysis that incorporates frames provides the strongest explanation of variation in UKIP's vote share and thus we can say with some confidence that the overall framing of immigration between the 2011 and 2015 elections affected UKIP's local electoral success. In addition, since the variant frame and economic models identify significant frames at different time frames, there is ultimately no barrier to the compatibility of these two models. It can be said that in the long term, culture framing helps and border control framing hurts UKIP's electoral framing but in the short term of three-months prior to election, pro-immigrant economic framing provides a "last minute boost" to the party's vote shares.

While adjusted r-squared has been the primary method of comparison between the models table 6.13 also includes the standard error of the estimate (S) for each of models. While adjusted r-squared gives us information about the explanatory strength of each model, S presents data about the accuracy of each model, namely the size of the discrepancy between the model-predicted values and actual values of UKIP vote share. The S-values reinforce the prior assessments about each of the model, and it is important to note that the frame-border control model has a substantially lower error value than its two nearest competitors. From this, we can conclude that the frame-border control model, if we were to only choose a single model to explain UKIP vote share variation in these nine local authorities, is the best explanatory model, with advantages over rival explanations in both strength and accuracy.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis of local newspaper media variables has produced a few results, but several overarching conclusions can be drawn from this collection of data. First, time is critical for the analysis of media effects. Of the six potential models, two were limited to three months before election-day, including the second-strongest model. Practically

speaking, this suggests that others who would like to conduct similar media content analysis may get the best research returns from restricting data collection and analysis to the three or six months before an election. In general, the three-month period performed better than the six-month period, suggesting that three months may be the most effective time horizon. While only representing a third of the significant models, and thus an argument can be made for a longer time horizon when analyzing the electoral impacts of the media, a limitation of three months allows for a profitable exchange of depth for breadth; a shallower dive-in-time of news coverage allows for data to be collected from a wider range of sources. An expansion of cases also allows for more complex models to be tested with less risk and concern of over-determination.

Second, the local media's framing of immigration clearly appears to have some effect on UKIP's performance in local elections. In the 2015 elections, the media's framing of immigration with and without reference to valence effects, were significant. In 2015, all three frames were also significant, while security, and its border control sub-frame, were negative, and economics and culture were positive. An important note to conclude this discussion of frame effects is to note that while five of the six significant models involved frames, none of these models are truly incompatible with each other. The frame model without valence suggests that security and culture frames are significant in the longest time frame, the frame and valence models show that pro-immigrant culture and economic frames are significant. While pro-immigrant culture frames and the culture frame in general are both significant, they are also both positive for UKIP, allowing the pro-immigrant culture frame to be a further specification of the culture frame in-general. As discussed in chapter four, most news items employing the culture frame were also pro-immigrant and so this result should be not surprising. The border control frame model is in a similar position, functioning as a further specification of the frame model that includes the broad security frame. The border control-valence model further explains why the border control frame is ultimately detrimental to UKIP

- that despite their numerical inferiority, pro-immigrant border control reporting is ultimately much more impactful on UKIP's support than their anti-immigrant counterparts.

The fact that UKIP's vote share was positively and negatively impacted by media coverage, especially by the content of media coverage in terms of framing, helps to resolve the contradictory results of Deacon & Wring (2016) and Murphy & Devine (2018). Recall that Deacon and Wring argue that media coverage did not facilitate the growth of UKIP while Murphy and Devine argue that it did. The findings of this chapter support Murphy and Devine's position, albeit for different reasons. While Murphy and Devine look only to the quantity of coverage and argue that media outlets became trapped in a sort of feedback loop where the popularity of UKIP justified more coverage of the party, which drove more popularity that justified even further coverage, this chapter finds that not all issue coverage of immigration is equal, and that usage of certain frames increases or even occasionally decreases UKIP support.

Last and most surprising is the role which valence plays for UKIP's vote share. Four of the six significant models include valence, and one commonality between three of those four is that it is the pro-immigrant valence which is found to bolster UKIP's local vote share. Exactly why this is the case is not answered in this dissertation, but it does leave a lingering and much broader question of how anti-immigrant or nativist voters may react to pro-immigrant stances expressed by elites, whether political like elected officials, cultural such as news outlets, entertainment media, various artists, or select academics or economic such as prominent business leaders. Regardless of why some voters react negatively to pro-immigrant cultural portrayals, what is clear is that these voters do not take their political stances from these media outlets. Stated otherwise, the local news media does not appear capable of shifting the political opinions of its readers, at least on the issue of immigration and thus the most likely mechanism linking media and far right vote share is salience. This is supported by national-level surveys that find that there has been limited change in the pro- or anti-immigrant opinions of the British public writ large, but the perceived importance of

immigration vis-à-vis other issues can and did fluctuate strongly between 2004 and 2015, and the perceived importance of the issue going into the 2015 elections was very high.

Perhaps the largest takeaway from this chapter regards the viability of media analysis in combination with broad contextual analysis. While the previous chapter helped to establish that several local authority-level characteristics helped to explain variations in UKIP results across local authorities, every local authority in this chapter shared a number of characteristics that the scholarly community had found to be relevant in explaining UKIP's success. Despite these shared characteristics, there was still significant variation in UKIP's electoral results. Looking beyond local authority characteristics, we found, in chapter 4, that the way local newspapers reported on immigration sometimes differed strongly between these local authorities and some of the variance in UKIP's results can be attributed to these differences in media coverage.

Chapter 7 - Boston

The borough of Boston is in the county of Lincolnshire in the East Midlands. It is located on the eastern coast of England, on a bay called the Wash. The borough, like much of Lincolnshire, is predominantly rural and home to a population of approximately 65,000 in 2015, with the market town of Boston being the most populous settlement with a population of approximately 35,000. Economically, the borough boasts a significant agricultural industry; known for growing vegetables, salad greens, and flowers, its location on the Wash has also made it home to a longstanding shellfish industry. Historically, the town was the original home of the group of settlers known as the Pilgrims, who settled and named the much more well-known Boston in Massachusetts. This historical tie is preserved in a sister city relationship between each Boston, as well as numerous local landmarks: the Boston United Football club, who are known as the Pilgrims, and the local hospital named Pilgrim Hospital.

A more relevant historical fact for this study relates to the longstanding local MP who represented Boston in Parliament. Sir Richard Body represented Boston as a Conservative from 1966 until his retirement in 2001. While his long tenure itself is noteworthy, more important is that Body was a fervent eurosceptic. Not only did Body oppose the European Economic Community in the 1975 referendum, he also penned a number of books attacking the idea and operation of the European Community, and later, the European Union. He was especially vigorous in his criticism of the Common Agriculture Policy, on which he also wrote several books. Perhaps his most notorious period was under the John Major government, where he was one of several Tory rebels who plagued Major's Conservative government, particularly regarding the Maastricht Treaty and Europe, culminating in Body temporarily leaving the Conservative Party in protest of Major's government. In addition, Body's opposition to the European Union even saw him campaign in Denmark against the Danish ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, which failed in 1992 and succeeded at a second referendum in 1993. Finally, Body was a prolific contributor to the *Boston Standard* in the

1990s, where he regularly derided the evils of the European Union, identifying it as the source of Boston's agricultural and fishing woes. Through Body, Boston was well acquainted with Euroscepticism and continually re-elected him for nearly four decades. Perhaps most importantly for UKIP, after stepping down from his Parliamentary seat in 2001, Body left the Conservative Party and joined UKIP.

Boston's history with electing a vocal eurosceptic is only one of several reasons qualifying Boston for an in-depth case study in a larger study of local explanations for UKIP electoral support. Most prominently, Boston expressed the highest level of support for leaving the European Union in the 2016 referendum, with approximately 76% of the voting population electing to leave. In 2015, UKIP received 34% of the local election vote, narrowly beating the Conservatives as the largest party in local council, although still not winning most seats. Also, in 2015, the UKIP candidate in the parliamentary constituency of Boston and Skegness received 34% of the vote in a national election, among the best performances UKIP saw in the 2015 parliamentary election. In 2014, UKIP received most of the local authority's vote in the European Parliament elections, with the party getting about 52% of the vote. Further, while their 2011 and 2007 local electoral performances fell far short of their 2015 performance, the party had always performed well above their national average in the local authority. Nearly everything regarding Boston's electoral results since the 2004 political breakthrough of UKIP suggests that Boston is an important site of strength for the party during this period. Further, the descriptive analysis of each local authority's newspaper showed that the *Boston Standard* was highly unusual in its reporting on immigration, as discussed in chapter 4. This reporting was unusual in the sense that it was hostile to immigrants while having exceptionally high numbers of crime-framed news items and had some of the highest numbers of immigration-related reporting. For example, recall that the *Boston Standard* had published more immigration-related news items than the *Scunthorpe Telegraph* despite the *Telegraph* having been a daily paper while the *Standard* was a weekly. Finally, Boston's anti-immigrant sentiment appears to be a more recent phenomena, with

neither the National Front, in its heyday in the 1970s, nor the British National Party attempting to contest either local or parliamentary elections in the area until 2007 which saw a single BNP local election candidate, who was outperformed by a UKIP candidate for the same seat. While it is now known as the Brexit capital of the country, Boston became known for xenophobia after anti-immigrant riots in 2004. The apparent contemporaneous rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and support for UKIP helps make Boston a critical case for any explanation of UKIP support.

This chapter presents a case study of the Borough of Boston with the goal being to present a qualitative explanation for UKIP's success in the local authority. To merge the quantitative and qualitative analyses, particular attention will be paid to the factors that chapters 5 and 6 suggest best explain UKIP's local success. However, as in the case of former-MP Richard Body, analysis will not be limited to just those variables as sometimes particular idiosyncrasies can provide illumination on this issue. Finally, using the archived newspaper materials, this case study explores how the local media environment was constructed by the *Boston Standard* in Boston, and how media reporting combined with contextual factors, such as the share of the foreign-born population and the crime rate, to make Boston a particularly fertile ground for UKIP support to grow.

Boston in Context

Crime

Crime is one issue that Britons regularly rate as one of the most important or key political issues. In the year-to-year issue polling performed by major polling companies like YouGov or Ipsos Mori, crime usually ranks among the top issues, alongside other common top pollers such as immigration/asylum, the National Health Service, and in recent years, Europe/Brexit. Boston is a high crime and violent local authority. Publicly available crime statistics from the Office of National Statistics regularly places Boston in the upper half of local authorities in terms of recorded crime rates and in terms of "violence against the person" offenses. Of the nine local authorities studied in this dissertation, Boston generally fluctuates

between the second and third most violent local authority in this study. 2014-2015 was a particularly shameful year for the local authority as a number of national newspapers put the spotlight on Boston's violent crime problem where, basing a murder rate on a per-capita combination of homicides and attempted homicides, Boston was named the "most murderous" place in England (*The Independent*), the "murder capital" of Britain (*Telegraph*) and the *Daily Mail* referenced Boston's status as a "murder capital" alongside it having one of the fastest growing foreign-born populations in the UK, regardless of whether those homicides or attempted homicides involved the foreign-born at all. Boston's high crime rate should not be completely unsurprising, as the descriptive analysis of the *Boston Standard's* immigration reporting showed that it had unusually high amounts of crime-framed news documents.

Foreign-born Population

While research on the relationship between foreign-born populations and support for far right parties is mixed, Boston largely contradicts the idea that places with few immigrants support a far-right party like UKIP. While Boston had a lower-than-average foreign-born population between 2004 and 2007, compared to the 2001 census national average of 8.3% and 12.7% in the 2011 census, by 2008 its foreign-born population had jumped to approximately 16% of the local population. Perhaps owing to the nature of the agricultural economy, the size of the foreign-born population in Boston was not particularly stable, hitting a proportion of approximately 16% in 2008, and then falling to 12% in 2010 and by 2015, having peaked at almost 25%.

Who are the immigrants living in Boston? Evidence gleaned from the *Boston Standard* suggests that in the early period of this study, 2004-2007, these immigrants largely originated in Southern Europe, with the Portuguese being a particularly large component of the foreign-born population. The rapid increase that began in 2008 seems to largely be driven by "new" European Union countries, largely in Eastern Europe, that joined the EU in the 2004 and 2007 enlargements. The 2011 census data suggests that at that time, 70% of the

foreign-born in Boston had been born in a “new” EU country. Textual evidence from the local newspaper supports this as the second, 2007-2011, and third, 2011-2015, periods see the immigration-related news dominated by “new” EU nationalities.

One of the findings of the statistical analysis in chapter 5 is that the percent share of the foreign-born population decreased support for UKIP in the 2007 local election. This could be taken as evidence for the general notion of the “contact hypothesis”, that living and interacting within a diverse community decreases tension and prejudice between those communities. However, it is relevant to note that Boston had a below-average level of foreign-born residents until 2008, after the 2007 local election. Thus, while the share of the population that is foreign-born may have decreased support for UKIP in 2007, Boston did not have a particularly large foreign-born population at this time to significantly diminish the party’s support. In addition, while UKIP had an above average performance in Boston in 2007, this figure was still only 5.7%, quite small in absolute terms. During the time periods where Boston had an above-average foreign-born population share, 2008-2015, the size of the foreign-born population was not found to be statistically significantly related to UKIP support.

Partisanship

While the Conservative Party held Boston’s seat in Parliament for decades, the Conservatives have never been able to similarly dominate Boston’s local politics. In local council, the Conservative Party has almost never held most seats since 1973 except for a single term, from 2011 to 2015. While the parliamentary seat may be a safe Conservative seat, local council has been largely devoid of safe seats, with the town being a lively political competition between Labor, Tories, Liberal Democrats, local parties, and independent candidates. In fact, the only time any single party has controlled most seats in council aside from the Tory’s 2011-2015 was when a small local party called the Boston Bypass Independents controlled council from 2007-2011. Interestingly, while Labor did not control most seats in council, the local Labor Party did lead the governing coalition from 2003 to

2007, despite coming second to the Conservatives in the 2003 local elections. Thus, Boston can be said to be a scene of intense competition in local politics with no single party controlling local council for more than a single term and where new parties and non-established parties regularly compete and win seats and where the business of government has traditionally occurred in coalition.

The analysis of contextual determinants in chapter 5 found that the 2011 and 2015 local elections saw UKIP's vote share significantly correlated with the Conservative's vote share in the previous local election – the 2007 election for 2011 and the 2011 election for 2015. While the Conservatives have only once won a majority of council seats in Boston, the party has often performed well. In 2003 they received 40.4% of the vote and reached their highest point in the context of this study. 2007 saw the Conservatives win only 28.2% of the vote share which rose to 36% in 2011. When UKIP reached its peak in 2015 with 34.1%, the Tories were close behind with 33.5%. In line with Mellon and Evans (2016) finding that UKIP, in large part, was comprised of rebellious Tories voters, Boston would prove fertile soil for UKIP, as the area has had a strong Conservative presence throughout UKIP's history. After the collapse of UKIP because of their "victory" in the EU referendum in 2016, a number of UKIP local councilors who had won seats in government in 2015 would run and win again in 2019 as Conservatives.

Age

Over the period of this study, the average age in the United Kingdom increased from around 39 to 40 years, while the median changed similarly from nearly 38 to around 40 years. In both regards, Boston is an old local authority, with both measures hovering around 42-43 years of age throughout the period. A consensus in the study of UKIP voters is that UKIP support increases in a more-or-less linear fashion with age. As such, the measure used in this study is the percentage of the adult (16+) population that is 65 years of age or older, who should be some of the strongest supporters of UKIP. In this measure, Boston fluctuates from 20% to 26.8% between the 2007 and 2015 elections. However, in the nine local authority

data sets used in this study, Boston is the youngest local authority in terms of its 65+ population in each period. Some local authorities, like Rother, Babergh, and King's Lynn have 65+ populations that comprise more than 30% of their local authorities in 2015.

One way to interpret the relationship between Boston and age is to fully accept the consensus on the relationship between age and UKIP support, and say that while Boston may see slightly higher than average UKIP support due to its age demographics, it likely sees less support because of age demographics than other local authorities that have much older populations, and likely many more retired pensioners. It should also be noted that it was only in 2011 that there was found to be, in this study, a statistically significant relationship between age and UKIP vote share; Boston was the youngest local authority in the nine local authority data set and is below average in terms of the size of its 65+ population in the 2011 elections. As a result, it is likely that the relatively small size of its elderly population may be detrimental to UKIP's vote share in Boston. Thus, in explaining the relatively high level of support UKIP was able to win in Boston's local elections, we would need to look towards other factors to find the origin of the bulk of UKIP's support.

Education

Another common finding in the study of voter support for UKIP is that the less educated tend to vote for UKIP at a disproportionate rate. This dissertation's own statistical analysis in chapter 5 also finds this to be the case in 2015, where UKIP's vote share was highest. Nationally, most measures find that somewhere from 9% to 11% of the population have no educational qualifications but wide geographic disparity does exist in these figures. In comparison, Boston's level of education is quite bad and has worsened over the period of study. In 2007, approximately 13% of the population was without qualifications and this only increased to 22% in 2011 before falling to 17% in 2015. While age likely contributes only minimally to UKIP support in Boston, and the large foreign-born population likely diminishes UKIP support in local elections based on the results of this dissertation's analysis of contextual determinants of UKIP support (see table 5.2), it is very probable that the high

share of the population without qualifications is a substantial source of the UKIP vote in this local authority.

The *Boston Standard*: Immigrants in the News in Boston

The overall approach to the archival data taken from the local newspapers used through this study has been to first and foremost separate this data into three distinct periods, ranging from January 1st 2004 to May 3rd 2007, May 4th 2007 to May 5th 2011, and finally May 6th 2011 to May 7th 2015. For brevity, this dissertation has referred to these periods as first, second, and third periods and they correspond to the periods leading up to the 2007, 2011, and 2015 local elections. This qualitative analysis will keep this same periodization scheme when looking at Boston's local newspaper reporting, connecting news items with the election that ends that period.

While paying some attention to the results of the regression analysis of media variables in chapter 6, this case study will take a more holistic approach. This analysis of newspaper reporting will focus on distinct *events* and *changes* that occur in the immigration-related reporting in the *Boston Standard*. These events and changes in the immigration reporting are often obvious and distinct when looking at the total body of reporting. While a great deal of reporting addresses a particular issue and results in no follow-up or that issue is rarely if ever addressed again, there are occasional events or changes that result in a great flurry of news items clustered around a topic or theme. For example, an anti-immigrant riot may spur half a dozen news items immediately, to be joined by numerous letters from concerned citizens, a police response, a local government response, responses from partisan figures, and opinion and editorial columns weighing in on the event and then later news items explicitly referencing the event years later. An example of a change, which will be discussed later, is the creation of a new section of a newspaper dedicated to a specific topic that, by its nature, creates a great deal of reporting on a particular issue.

Thus, the analysis of newspaper publications that will be done for Boston will largely follow the events and changes that are evident in each period, rather than a naïve

assessment that treats every single news item as equally important when a more nuanced assessment can clearly see that some issues sometimes draw more attention than others. As such, events and changes should be understood as inflection points in the direction of the local immigration narrative. They are moments when immense change is possible in the local understanding of immigration, both in the country or the local authority. These inflection points can be where a shift in institutional or structural conditions may result in a shift in the amount or types of ways in which the newspaper covers immigration. An example that will be discussed later in this chapter is the addition of a section of the *Boston Standard* that was published in both English and Portuguese and specifically aimed to report on the issues and concerns of the local Portuguese community and as a result was generally more favorable towards that community.

The *Boston Standard* was founded in 1912 and has served Boston and its surrounding area with the *Standard's* key rival being the *Boston Target* founded in 1987. For the entire period under study in this dissertation, 2004 to 2015, the *Standard* was owned by Johnston Press, an existing company which expanded into the newspaper industry in the mid-19th century and would later come to own a tremendous number of newspapers, usually local and regional. While the paper publicly declares itself free of any partisan affiliation or ideological commitment, the paper, like Boston itself, has often leaned Conservative with one example of this being the paper's longstanding vocal opposition to the European Union, especially after the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Like most print newspapers, the *Standard* has seen its circulation and sales drop with the rise of digital news and social media. Table 7.1 below shows available circulation figures for the period studied.

7.1 Boston Standard Circulation (Yearly)											
2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
15237	15043	13614	12116	17849	12049	12049	9412	.	8773	7684	.
Figures reflect newspaper circulation only. All data taken from Willings Press Guide: United Kingdom											

The editorial staffing and turnover are a critical part of the story of the *Boston Standard* coverage of immigration in the local authority. From 2004 to 2007 the paper's editor was Julia Ogden and Pam Browne served as the paper's news desk editor. Both women left the paper in 2007, to be replaced by Gary Scattergood as editor and Stephen Stray as news desk editor. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, contemporaneous with this editorial turnover, the Standard radically shifted the valence of its immigration reporting, changing from a paper that was largely sympathetic to the local immigrant community to a notable hostility towards immigrants. In 2011, Stephen Stray would then become editor with Andrew Brookes serving as news editor. These two individuals would hold these positions until the end of this dissertation's period of study at the 2015 local election.

The First Period: 2004-2007

While the 2004 enlargement of the European Union would decisively transform the numbers and composition of migratory inflows into the European Union, Boston was already addressing the economic and cultural consequences of an earlier immigration influx. In early 2004, the local media's immigration reporting was primarily focused on Portuguese migrants. These Portuguese migrants were largely manual laborers in Boston, filling labor shortages in the local agricultural and food processing industries. Much of the early news coverage of immigration in 2004 focused on this fact and much of the *Standard's* news coverage focused on the economic benefits migration was having for the area, the need and ongoing efforts to teach Portuguese immigrants English, and the exploitatively low wages and terrible working conditions Portuguese workers suffered and efforts to address this through both government policy and unionization. June of 2004 would decisively change this with the eruption of a riot among Boston natives. The riot saw a small number of cars set alight, a few buildings were vandalized, and small-scale looting and arson had occurred. Perhaps the starkest event of the riot was scuffles between riot police and rioters which saw rioters throwing bricks and bottles at police.

The proximate cause of the riot was the defeat of England by France on June 13th in the 2004 European Cup and Boston was not the only town in the UK to see disturbances in the immediate aftermath. The riot had seen 11 people arrested immediately, a number which expanded to 25 over the course of the week. Police had cited racial tensions in causing the riot. The *Boston Standard* itself took a clear and unequivocal stance regarding the riot. The paper had declared June 13th to be “Black Sunday”, referred to the rioters as “idiots”, implied a connection between the riots and the British National Party, and the reporter who wrote the special report stated that the rioters were “the only minorities I wish weren’t here.” A second, smaller, riot occurred on June 24th, when the Portuguese and English football teams faced each other in the European Cup quarterfinals, which saw the Portuguese defeat the English team. A prepared local police force was able to largely contain the angry crowd, but scuffles still broke out between rioters and police, and small groups of Bostonians broke windows and otherwise vandalized the businesses and homes of Portuguese residents of the town.

The pair of riots that occurred in June in Boston formed the clear “center of gravity” for the local discourse surrounding immigration with more than a third of the news coverage dedicated either to the event itself or in response to the measures to address the causes and consequences of the riots. While the paper took a firm stance in opposition to the riots and to the perceived motivations of the rioters, the paper also called for more efforts to integrate recent immigrants to the area and publicized efforts by local government and various community groups to facilitate integration. If the riots were understood to be a problem of racial tension, “integration” was the solution. While there had been occasional references to issues such as language before this, this turn marked a dramatic departure from an issue which, before the riots, had largely been understood in economic terms. These riots would continue to shape the paper’s coverage of immigration in the years afterwards.

There are two issues in the 2004 reporting to flag before moving forward with the rest of the first period. First, the paper reported, on July 7th, on the results of a survey conducted of Boston residents on local opinions of immigration into the area. Notably, the survey period

ends before the riots that would go on to shape much of this period. As was reported in the paper, the survey found that locals were generally negative on immigration with the prevailing three opinions being that there were too many immigrants in the area, that immigration had increased crime and made the area unsafe, and that immigrants received “too many” benefits from the government. The interesting note here is that none of these complaints are focused on issues of culture *per se*, which makes the narrative published in the paper following the riots of cultural conflict to be surprising given empirical evidence to the contrary.

The second note of interest is that while issues of culture became the foreground of public debate regarding immigration in the *Boston Standard*, the background of this conversation was markedly different. After the riots, a small but notable amount of news coverage focused on the issue of housing shortages attributed to immigration as well as more general concerns regarding where to house the influx of immigrants. In this early period, this reporting on housing shortages was not entirely hostile to immigrants, with many of these stories highlighting the struggle of immigrants to find housing, high rates of homelessness among immigrants, and the Labour-Liberal Democratic council’s opposition to trailer housing to prevent the creation of “immigrant ghettos.”

While the *Boston Standard* would continue to highlight local efforts, both of government and of the community, to integrate local immigrants, 2005 saw a change in the structure of the paper itself. This change saw the introduction of “Portuguese News”, a monthly special released by the paper focusing specifically on issues of interest to the Portuguese community in Boston and published in a dual English-Portuguese language format. The introduction of this monthly special was specifically justified as a measure to help promote the integration between the Portuguese and native communities in the July 20th, 2005 issue of the *Standard*. This was done despite earlier pieces where the paper acknowledged mixed views and opposition to the idea of a Portuguese-focused format. This monthly release was not especially long-lived, ending later in the same year.

During the 2005 general election, the newspaper provided each of the standing candidates a short inclusion in the paper in which to provide a small “pitch” to the voters in the run-up to Election Day. An interesting characteristic to note in this coverage is how the Conservative and UKIP candidates advertised themselves. The Conservative candidate, Mark Simmonds, took issue with the Blair Labour government’s “lack of control” of immigration and the poor handling of border security and would go on to win this election. The UKIP candidate, Dick Horsnell, unlike his Conservative rival, argued that immigration “damaged the cohesion of the constituency” and ended his pitch by stating that he was committed to “get our country back”.

In addition to its cultural content, the paper also published, in 2005 and 2006, various “debunkings” of the “myths” of immigration, arguing that immigrants positively contributed to the economy, did not cause unemployment for natives, were net contributors to the welfare state rather than “spongers”, and denying that immigration contributed to a local housing crisis. Again, showing that the issue of housing, among other economic concerns, were a recognized background of immigration politics in the area, but was outshined by the quantity of reporting on cultural integration and language by the paper. The paper also commemorated the anniversary of the riots, noting that they served as a “wake-up call” to racial tensions in the town and noting that much “remained to be done” in this regard.

The statistical analysis of newspaper coverage and UKIP’s vote share in the previous chapter suggested that the use of culture as a frame for coverage involving immigration acted to benefit UKIP. This was the case regardless of whether the coverage was hostile or not. In fact, effect size found that coverage that was not considered hostile to immigrants led to larger increases in UKIP’s vote share. These conditions appear to be present here in Boston for that period, although it is important to note that media coverage of immigration provided only a weak explanation of UKIP support between 2004 and 2011. While the paper noted that popular sentiment was antagonistic towards immigrants on primarily issues of economics and crime, and took issue to debunk said concerns, the paper largely approached the issue of

immigration as a cultural issue. For the paper, the “real” issue with immigration in Boston was a question of integration and language. Statistical results from the previous chapter suggested that UKIP benefits from pro-immigrant culture framing, but even were this not the case, the *Standard’s* cultural campaign was ineffectual, due to the mismatch between what government polling suggested was driving local anti-immigrant sentiment, and the newspaper’s own approach to addressing the immigration issue of the town.

Parliamentary candidates in 2005 addressed immigration in the town in various ways. The Labour candidate applauded government efforts to crack down on immigrant labor exploitation, the Tory candidate pledged to pursue tough limits to the numbers of immigrants, strict border control and work permits as well as health checks for new immigrants. The UKIP candidate directly addressed the cultural frame of immigration by claiming that immigrants damage the “cohesion” of the town and “overwhelm us” and adopted “Get Back Our Country” as a slogan. UKIP did increase their vote share from 1.8% to 9.6% between the 2001 and 2005 Parliamentary elections, so this message seems to at least not alienate voters, if not resonate. The Conservative incumbent Mark Simmonds increased the Tory vote share from 42.9% to 46.2%, but more importantly increased his winning margin from 1.3% to 14.1%. Labour’s pro-immigrant economic message seemed to drive voters away, with Labour losing 9.5% of the vote in 2005 in comparison to 2001, while UKIP and the Conservatives gained a combined 11.1%.

Shifting the focus back to local elections, UKIP’s vote share grew dramatically between the 2003 and 2007 local elections in Boston, in relative terms. The 2003 election saw UKIP run two candidates of a possible 32 and receive 205 votes constituting 2.4% of the vote total. 2007 saw those numbers grow to eight candidates of 32 and receive 1137 votes comprising 5.7% of the vote share. UKIP’s average vote share across the rest of England was 0.4% in 2003 and 1.6% in 2007. So, while UKIP was disproportionately strong in Boston in both the 2003 and 2007 elections, the within-year differential between Boston and the

English average grew from 2% in 2003 to 4.1% in 2007. Seen in this way, while UKIP was growing throughout England, it was growing much faster in Boston.

The Second Period: 2007-2011

The second period begins the day after the 2007 local election, on May 4th. While a dramatic event, a pair of riots with little delay between them in 2004, shaped the local newspaper's coverage of immigration for much of the first period, a change in the structure of the newspaper, which occurred at the beginning of 2007, would powerfully shape newspaper coverage of immigration from 2007 until 2012, into the early part of the final 2011-2015 period. It appears that this change was only reversed after a public backlash and accusations from town residents that the newspaper was inciting racial hatred, which resulted in a Council Inquiry and a public hearing where the paper's editor was asked to testify before the council.

This structural change in the paper was the introduction of a new section titled "Court News". The Court News section was generally printed in the latter portion of the paper, after reported news stories and letters to the editor, and would generally be given one or two entire pages of the paper. As the name suggests, this section detailed the cases heard by and verdicts rendered by the local court. In terms of format, these reports would detail the name, oftentimes the street or neighborhood of the convicted, the crimes they had been charged with and the sentence that was handed down. These crimes could range from relatively serious, such as assault or domestic abuse cases, to minor, such as driving violations. Within the nine newspapers used in this study, a few them employed a similar section in their own papers. What made the *Standard's* "Court News" notable was that rather than employing a terse reporting style as was used in other papers, where each case was reported as essentially bullet points, the *Standard* used narrative prose instead, with each case receiving three to nine passages of text, resulting in a more detailed, emotional, and moralistic form of reporting. Also crucial in this case was that the paper would also, for immigrants, report the defendant's nationality, country of origin, or migrant status in these reports. Other newspapers in this study often limited their own equivalent of "Court News" to reporting

names and current residence. The *Boston Standard* alone published such detailed and sensationalist “Court News”. While many of the reports in Boston’s “Court News” also involved crimes committed by British natives, the style of reporting here allowed for immigrants to easily be singled out and the paper intentionally identified them.

This sudden introduction of “Court News” and the changes in the structure of the newspaper and the ways in which it affected the paper’s coverage of immigration likely stems from a change in editorial personnel at the *Boston Standard*. Namely, from at least 2004 to the end of 2006, Pam Browne was the Deputy Editor of the *Standard* and oversaw the paper’s news content. Beginning in 2007, former *Standard* reporter Stephen Stray was promoted into the position of Deputy Editor, re-titled to News Editor, and assumed editorial control of the newspaper’s new coverage. This timing coincides with the introduction of “Court News”. Stephen Stray would remain News Editor until July 2011, where he was promoted to Editor and Andrew Brookes replaced him as News Editor.

The introduction of “Court News” radically transformed the way this local newspaper reported on immigration. In the first period, approximately 40% of all immigrant-related news stories were about crime, and was split about evenly between those in which immigrants had committed a crime and those where they were the victims of crime, and a significant portion of this was in the reporting of the riots which saw natives loot, vandalize, and burn immigrant property. In the second period, this number had shot up to 80% of all immigration-related reporting, and 93% of crime reporting involved an immigrant criminal. In total, these anti-immigrant crime stories accounted for 75% of all immigration reporting in the second period.

This change in the format of the paper feels especially irresponsible given the release of survey results of a council-sponsored survey of the local authority in 2004. As was mentioned earlier, this survey had found that both immigrant crime and the economic impacts of immigration into the area were listed as areas of concern fueling anti-immigrant sentiment in the area. The paper had reported on this survey and in the following area had published three different reports “debunking” the economic “myths” of immigration, some of which the

paper had cited from this survey. Not only did the paper not engage in a similar prominent “debunking” of the aforementioned crime concerns, but “Court News” and the intentional identification of immigrants fed into this anti-immigrant sentiment.

The 2008 local by-elections provide a hint of what sort of impact this may have played for local politics. Coincidentally, 2008 was also the year with the most intense anti-immigrant crime reporting in the *Boston Standard* with nearly 91% of the total immigration reporting employing the anti-immigrant crime-frame. In numerical terms, this translates to 80 out of 88 news items. 2008 saw two by-elections, one in July and the other in November. The July by-election saw a British National Party candidate win 10.7% of the vote, in a ward that the BNP did not contest in 2007. In the second by-election, the same BNP candidate carried 42.6% of the vote, again where the BNP did not contest in 2007, and won the seat. As mentioned earlier, the BNP is a rival far right party, differentiated from UKIP by being even more strongly anti-immigrant, with a longstanding BNP policy having been mandatory repatriation of non-Anglo Saxons for example, and being an outright fascist party with ties to the British Union of Fascists and intellectual ties to Nazism.

While the shift from the first to the second period saw a dramatic transformation of the terms of the local immigration debate as seen through the *Boston Standard*, this period shift also saw a reconfiguration of the character of immigration. While the first period is centered on the Portuguese as an immigrant population, the second period was instead centered on the Eastern European as the “normal” immigrant and in particular, Polish immigrants. According to estimates from the Office of National Statistics, the local authority of Boston had four thousand residents born in the EU14, those countries who were EU members prior to the 2004 enlargement, which included Portugal, and only one thousand EU8-born residents, which were those countries who joined in the 2004 enlargement. Only four years later, in 2008, those numbers had shifted to one thousand residents from the EU14 and five thousand residents from the EU8. Thus, one of the cruel ironies of the efforts of government, civil society, and even local media figures to help integrate the Portuguese in

the area is revealed. While the 2004 riots sparked an effort to integrate a particular immigrant group into the local authority, that same immigrant group was being replaced by a different and new immigrant group, dooming the integration effort itself.

While the reporting of crime comprised 80% of immigration reporting in this period, the remaining 20% largely followed the patterns established in the first period. The paper devoted substantial attention, of the remaining 20% of news items, to immigrant integration efforts, focusing on issues as divergent as measures to promote inclusivity in the local school system, the bilingual printing of children's books, subsidized English language learning, and even citizenship ceremonies held for local immigrants who naturalized. The paper also continued to argue for the economic benefits of immigration for the local authority, both in terms of jobs and employment but also for contribution to the welfare system. Finally, the issue of housing still simmered in the background of the dominant crime reporting. Homeless immigrants were still an ongoing concern and the local government participated in a government funded program to voluntarily repatriate homeless immigrants back to their country of origin. The paper had also reported on incidents of gross overcrowding in housing rented to immigrants. While the paper argued for the vital role immigrants played in the local economy, growing homeless and the choice of repatriation as a solution is a resignation to the intractability of the issue of housing, a concern recognized even in the first period.

The 2011 local election saw UKIP continue to build upon their 2007 performance. While UKIP ran 8 candidates of 32 in 2007 and received 1137 votes or 5.7% of the total, the party ran 8 candidates in 2011 out of a possible 32 but received 1875 votes or 9.1% of the total. While the seats UKIP challenged in 2011 changed in comparison to 2007, that the number of seats challenged did not change suggests that the level of support the party could draw from the area was increasing. In England, UKIP received 2.4% of the vote in the 2011 local elections and so UKIP in Boston over-performed this national average by 6.7 percentage points, compared to 4.1 percentage points in 2007 and 2 percentage points in 2003. UKIP's strength was growing faster in Boston than in England.

There is a second electoral dimension prominently at play in the 2011 local elections in Boston. While this work has largely focused on UKIP and seeks to explain UKIP's local success throughout England, a comparatively more alarming phenomenon is invisible in Boston if one is strictly focused on UKIP. As a continuation of the 2008 by-election that saw the extreme and even fascist BNP win a local election seat in Boston, the 2011 local election saw the English Democrats run 11 candidates in Boston with the result of winning two seats and 7.7% of the total vote share. The English Democrats Party had formed years earlier, in part, from a more extreme splinter of UKIP. One example of this extremism is that, in addition to supporting a British exit from the European Union, they also supported the secession of England from the United Kingdom. The party had received a large influx of supporters from a 2010 factional dispute in the BNP which resulted in a member exodus from the BNP. In fact, the 2008 BNP by-election winner was one of the two seat-winning candidates from the EDP. Thus, a narrow focus on UKIP shows that UKIP had grown considerably between 2007 and 2011. However, a broader focus on the far right shows that the far right vote share had grown explosively between 2007 and 2011. UKIP, the BNP, and the EDP received 7.1% of the vote in 2007 while UKIP and the EDP received 16.8% of the vote in 2011, more than doubling their vote share from the previous election. These votes for competing far right parties would likely have largely settled into UKIP otherwise, given that both the BNP and the EDP are even more far right than UKIP. This broader focus suggests that there are two related processes occurring concurrently: one of growth and a second of consolidation. The growth process can be seen as the conversion of non-far right voters into far right voters while the consolidation process can be seen as one where those far right voters are divided between fewer far right parties. This also helps provide an explanation for the relative weakness of the contextual and media models for the 2007 and 2011 local elections in comparison to the 2015 models. In 2007 and 2011, UKIP was merely a party of the British far right while in 2015 UKIP became *the* party of the British far right.

'DANGEROUS MAN' JAILED INDEFINITELY

Victim, 87, 'lost will to live' after robbery

AN INDEFINITE jail term has been handed to a man convicted of condemning a Boston war veteran to death after a robbery at his home.

Lincoln Crown Court was told how vulnerable Bill Lywood 'lost the will to live' after he was targeted by Dariusz Szopa, a Polish migrant living in Boston.

Mr Lywood, 87, of Riverside Park caravan site on Witham Bank East, had already been attacked and robbed once at his home, when Szopa pounced.

Judge John Milmo, QC, passed the indefinite sentence for public protection (IPP) and ordered him to serve nine years before being considered for parole.

When he is released he faces arrest under a European warrant and will be taken to Poland to answer extortion charges.

Szopa, who had previous convictions for robbery and rape in Poland, was told by the judge: "You are a dangerous man."

"This was a targeted robbery of an elderly man in his own home."



Victim - Bill Lywood. NA

After the robbery by Szopa, Mr Lywood never left hospital and died a month later from what a post-mortem revealed was broncho-pneumonia brought on by a chest infection.

But a pathologist claimed Mr Lywood's ordeal also contributed to his death - and a jury found Szopa, 31, guilty of the pensioner's manslaughter at an earlier hearing.

The court was told that on December 16 last year, Mr Lywood was attacked and robbed at his caravan.

After suffering multiple blows to his head he stayed in Pilgrim Hospital for several days before returning home.

Just two weeks later Szopa, of London Road, forced his way into the caravan and demanded: "Money, money, money."



GUILTY - Dariusz Szopa. NA

Gordon Aspden, prosecuting, said: "He grabbed hold of Mr Lywood and punched him at least once in the face. Mr Lywood was pleading for him to stop."

Szopa was caught red-handed by police when Mr Lywood activated a panic-alarm installed after the first raid. Yet Szopa claimed he was trying to help Mr Lywood after stumbling across a robbery carried out by someone else while taking a short-cut home.

Szopa was convicted of attempted robbery and manslaughter as a result of the incident on December 29, 2006.

Prosecutors claimed he knew Mr Szopa was a 'soft target' because he also carried out the December 16 raid, but he was cleared of that robbery.

Polish people praised for helping police

SENIOR investigating officer Det Chief Insp Andrew West said: "It was a despicable crime, and this is justice for Bill Lywood."

"In 27 years of policing I have not met many people who were as dangerous as Szopa. Mr Lywood lost the will to live after he was terrified by him."

Det Chief Insp West also thanked the people who helped bring Szopa to justice.

"During the investigation we received incredible support from people living in and around Boston, particularly from the Polish community," he added.

"I'd like to make it absolutely clear that Szopa's actions are certainly not representative of the local Polish community. There are many migrant communities living in harmony across the Boston area and Szopa's criminality is isolated from these peaceful, decent and law-abiding citizens."

"I would like to thank all those people, particularly from the Polish community, who came forward to assist us with our enquiries. These people have helped us tremendously, enabling us to gather evidence that proved important in piecing together Szopa's time in the UK."

Court News

£700 fine for banned driver caught at wheel

DRIVING while disqualified has cost Marcin Radzikowski more than £700.

The migrant worker could have faced imprisonment or a community order for the offence.

But solicitor John Storer argued the 27-year-old defendant was soon to be returning to his native Poland, and a fine would be a better solution.

Speaking at Boston Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, chairman of the bench Pat Walsh said: "The starting point for this offence is a high-level community

order or custody.

"However, we don't think that is appropriate in this case.

"With that in mind we are moving out of the range of sentencing and will deal with this with a fine."

Radzikowski – who was banned from driving for 18 months in January after being found drink-driving – had been spotted behind the wheel of a BMW along Broadfield Lane at 7pm on September 28, prosecutor Rebecca Ritson said.

"He was known as a banned driver," she added.

In defence, Mr Storer said his client had made a huge mistake.

"He was earning money by repairing cars for other eastern Europeans.

"He was working at a unit on Broadfield Lane and needed to get some tools from another unit.

"Foolishly, he chose to drive there. And even more foolishly, he'd just seen the police drive that way."

Mr Storer then pointed out that his client, who now works at

Mason Bros, was set to leave the country to spend a month back home in Poland.

He also intends to return there permanently next year.

He had previously pleaded guilty to driving while disqualified and to having no insurance.

Radzikowski was fined £700. He was also ordered to pay £60 costs and the £15 victim surcharge.

Radzikowski was also banned from driving for a further nine months, to run concurrently with his present ban.

Man pleads guilty to double assault on pregnant girlfriend

A MAN who admitted to twice assaulting his pregnant partner has been released on police bail – but ordered to stay away from his girlfriend.

Lithuanian national Raimond Guza appeared at Boston Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, where he changed his pleas to guilty for two charges of common assault.

In prosecution, Rebecca Ritson told how the 33-year-old defendant twice attacked Iolanta Lekaviciene.

She told how, on September 18, he fell into a rage after his partner refused to take him to the Asda



supermarket.

"She told the police: 'He rushed at me and assaulted me, punching me in the face,'" Miss Ritson said.

The prosecution then told the court about an incident on October 22, two days after District Judge Richard Blake had ordered Guza not to reside with Miss

Lekaviciene, who was four-and-a-half months pregnant at the time.

Miss Ritson continued: "She came back and found Mr Guza at the house.

"They were sleeping in different rooms, but twice he went to her room.

"The second time was in the early hours. He was angry because he couldn't find cigarettes.

"He hit her on the back of the head as she covered her face with her arms. He threw a cigarette lighter at her head."

The court was told how Guza had been drinking on both occasions.

In defence, John Storer told how the complainant had twice attempted to withdraw her statements against her partner.

He also pleaded that they be allowed to be together again, saying: "You can legislate for everything except human emotions.

"Like it or not, this couple will be back together."

Guza, who has spent the last month in custody, was released on bail. However, he must not contact his partner and must reside at a friend's address in Chapel Street.

He will return to court for sentencing on December 15.

Cat caused drink driver to crash into a brick wall, town court told

POLICE were alerted to the drink-driving of a Boston man after a cat caused him to crash, a court was told.

Pawel Sanko, 24, of Dock Terrace, pleaded guilty to several driving offences at Boston Magistrates' Court on Wednesday.

Prosecuting, Rebecca Ritson told the court that Sanko drove a dark green Renault Clio into a metal fence and small brick wall after swerving when something – possibly a cat – ran out in front of him.

The vehicle belonged to a friend,

and was being taken to be scrapped, she told the court.

Magistrates heard that police attended the scene, and saw that Sanko was unsteady on his feet.

He then gave a reading of 75 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath.

The reading was more than twice the legal limit.

Defending, Liz Harte said: "He fully accepts he was behaving with great stupidity.

"He has only been in the country for six months and was perhaps

unaware of the extremely serious nature of drink-driving."

Sanko was fined £200 for driving a vehicle without third party insurance, £50 for driving a vehicle otherwise than in accordance with a licence, and a further £200 for driving while under the influence of alcohol.

He was disqualified from driving for 20 months, and ordered to pay £60 costs, the £15 victim surcharge, and a £100 contribution towards repairs of the wall.

The Third Period: 2011-2015

As in the first and second periods, where news coverage was highly shaped by a pair of anti-immigrant riots and the addition of a new content section of the newspaper respectively, a dramatic event helped to transform the immigration coverage of the *Boston Standard*. As mentioned earlier, the incredibly high amount of news coverage devoted to immigrant criminals was ended by the beginning of 2013 due to a public backlash from concerned citizens in Boston. This public backlash took the form of an accusation against the newspaper of inciting racial hatred.

Where did such a backlash come from? This is an especially important question considering both the high quantity of immigration reporting as well as the particularly negative valence of this reporting. It is important to remember that this dissertation *does not* argue that news media drives political attitudes, particularly anti-immigrant or xenophobic attitudes or sentiment. Instead, the link posited here between the media, including its choice of framing and valence, and UKIP electoral results is the issue salience of immigration. Directing attention to issue salience provides two possible answers to the origin of this backlash.

First, YouGov issue-importance tracking for the beginning of 2013 finds that approximately half of Britons believed immigration to be an important issue facing the country. This fact helps reveal the first potential source of the backlash – those voters who did not think immigration was an important issue facing the country. Facing a surge in the quantity of immigration reporting, and particularly anti-immigrant crime reporting, this group would likely find this amount of attention unwarranted and disproportionate to the issue at hand and this reporting to be an incitement of racial hatred rather than responsible journalism in the public interest. The second group that could be the source of this backlash is located through attention to whom finds immigration to be an important issue. Namely, an issue-importance survey combined with a vote intention survey by YouGov in April 2015 found that approximately 25% of those who found immigration to be an important issue, or about 12% of Britons, intended to vote for the Labour or Liberal Democrat parties, two parties whose

immigration policy platform was much more pro-immigration. Thus, the second source of this backlash are those who think immigration is an important issue but hold pro-immigrant views and while the previous group may have been outraged by the quantity of reporting, the second group is more likely to have been outraged by the framing and valence of this reporting.

The *Boston Standard* was accused of inciting racial hatred and fanning the flames of anti-immigrant xenophobia within the local area. Specifically mentioned as a source of this anti-immigrant sentiment was the paper's reporting in "Court News" and the paper's use of nationality in that reporting. Accusers further alleged that the paper's heavy reporting of immigrant criminals in the paper fostered the perception that immigrants were disproportionately responsible for crime in the local authority. The editor of the newspaper was called to testify in front of the local council and defended the paper's coverage, arguing that discussions of nationality and immigration status were used in court and was a matter of public record and in the public interest. The editor of the paper, Stephen Stray, who had become News Editor in 2007 then Editor in 2011, also argued that this was an issue of freedom of the press and the paper reported no fabrications. Stray would remain editor of the *Standard* until 2017, after the third period of this study.

While it does not appear that legal action or sanction was taken against the *Boston Standard* beyond the council inquiry and the editor's public hearing on the issue of inciting racial hatred, the effect appears quite clear: the paper dramatically decreased the amount of coverage dedicated to immigrant criminals beginning in 2013. Throughout the third period, about 45% of immigration-related news items focused on crime with approximately 70% of that reporting being about crimes committed by immigrants. This share of crime reporting is like the first period's reporting where 40% of the total coverage was devoted to crime, although one important difference was that period was slightly more about crimes committed against immigrants while the third period was far more focused on crimes committed by immigrants.

While the amount of coverage devoted to crime may have returned to levels like 2004-2007, the valence of reporting did not. The first period's coverage was not extremely hostile to immigrants with less than a quarter of reporting identifying immigrants as the source of some sort of harm or detriment. The second period saw the high point of immigrant hostility with nearly 80% of reporting being anti-immigrant. The third period was closer to the second with a majority, 56%, of coverage being anti-immigrant. This leaves us with the question of where this anti-immigrant news coverage was coming from given the fall in crime reporting.

The answer lies in economic reporting. 2012, the year of the council inquiry, saw an explosive growth in the amount of news coverage devoted to the economic impact of immigration. In fact, the amount of coverage devoted to the economics of immigration was 50% higher in the third period than in the first two periods combined. Further, only 12% of economic reporting was anti-immigrant in the first two periods combined while most of the economic reporting in the third period was anti-immigrant. Gone were the days of the paper extolling the positive economic contributions of immigrants for Boston and were replaced with vocal concerns with the costs imposed on the area by Eastern European immigrants.

While the paper always had an undercurrent of reporting concerns with housing prices and shortages, the economic costs of immigration multiplied rapidly in the third period and the watchword of this newspaper coverage was "strain". Joining with the concern of "strains" put on local housing were now strains on the local education system, largely in response to the children of immigrants entering the school system. Further, while the paper had spent much of the first two periods proclaiming the economic benefits of immigration, the paper now printed stories claiming that immigrants were contributing to local unemployment. NHS services were also seen as straining under the weight of immigration, with a nod even given to demographic panic with a story of the local maternity ward being forced to cease accepting new mothers due, in part, to the high fertility rates of immigrants. Finally, numerous calls were made for additional funding from the central government to "cope" with the strains on local amenities and infrastructure. While earlier periods saw immigration as an almost

unmitigated economic good, the third period instead saw immigration as an almost unmitigated economic burden. This continued right up until the 2015 election which was both a local election and a general election. The local UKIP candidate in the general election pledged to require immigrants to purchase health insurance to receive medical care and to keep the NHS as the “national, not international” health service.

UKIP’s local electoral performance in 2015 was nothing short of spectacular. The party ran 18 candidates competing for 30 seats, less than two-thirds of the total, and saw 13 of those candidates win a seat. The party received 34.1% of the total vote and came in first place, edging out the Tories in vote share and equaling them in number of seats won. No other far right parties had run in Boston in this election and thus UKIP had fully consolidated the far-right vote in Boston. The 2015 local election represented a near-quadrupling of UKIP’s 2011 vote share and a “mere” doubling of the far right vote share in the same year. In England, UKIP averaged 12.8% of the local vote share in 2015 resulting in a percentage point difference between Boston and the English average of 21.3%. In absolute terms, this was, by far, the largest gap between Boston and the English average and thus can be said to be the largest over-performance for UKIP across the time periods studied here.

While outside the time range under study in this period, a number of these UKIP councilors would continue their political careers in local government even after the collapse of UKIP that occurred with the victory of Leave in the EU referendum and the resignation of Nigel Farage from the party. Six of UKIP’s 13 councilors would win re-election in 2019, with four of the six running as Tories, one as an independent and the last on the UKIP party label. This helps to demonstrate the close relationship that exists between UKIP and the Conservatives that was found and discussed in chapter 5. Having grown at the expense of the Conservatives in 2011 and 2015, these Tory defectors were “returning home” after the collapse of UKIP.

Conclusion

As shown, the media reporting of immigration in Boston can be oriented around three distinct events that roughly match with each local electoral period. The first period, 2004-2007, was strongly shaped by two anti-immigrant riots in 2004. The local newspaper responded with a flurry of news articles identifying “racial tension” as the cause of the violence and articulated a solution that focused almost entirely on integration, despite a contemporaneous local survey showing that residents were wary of immigrants because of a fear of crime and of negative economic impacts. While the *Boston Standard* would publish several articles detailing the economic benefits of immigration, the paper largely focused on political and civic efforts to integrate immigrants into the local area, including a short-lived bilingual publication aimed at the local Portuguese community. In addition, the newspaper’s coverage was relatively positive, with less than a quarter of immigration-related coverage being considered hostile.

2007 saw a change in the structure of the newspaper which involved the creation of a new regular section titled “Court News”. Drawing on recently decided local court cases, the *Standard* drastically increased the amount of crime reporting in each issue of the paper with a large amount of this reporting focused on immigrant criminals. The paper’s immigration reporting turned from relatively positive in the first period to extremely hostile in the second, with almost 80% of immigration news being anti-immigrant. Given the 2004 survey that found crime was a chief concern that locals had with immigrants, this new coverage of crime that dominated the paper’s immigration reporting was remarkably irresponsible, if the goal were to decrease racial tensions in the town. Beyond crime reporting, the paper continued to proclaim the economic benefits of immigration and to report on continuing efforts to integrate the newcomers. However, the far right electoral presence exploded. UKIP grew considerably but even more extreme far right parties grew even more, with the biologically racist and fascist BNP winning a by-election and the English nationalist English Democrats inheriting the BNP’s support later.

A public backlash that resulted in a council inquiry in 2012, early in the last period, ended the era of “Court News” and the proportion of immigration-related news that focused on crime fell back to levels consistent with the first period. However, most immigration reporting was still hostile, unlike the first period and the now-gone excessive crime reporting of the second period, the final period of this study saw a surge of anti-immigrant economic reporting. Where the paper had largely argued for the positive economic impact of immigration earlier, in the third period the paper published numerous items alleging “strains” caused by immigrants. This ranged from housing, which had always been an issue in the area, to new areas like the labor market, health services, the local school system, and even the welfare state; an area where the paper had vigorously denied a negative impact for years. Despite the surge of anti-immigrant economic reporting that saw slightly more than half of the area’s economic reporting adopt an anti-immigrant valence in the third period, three of the five economics-framed articles that were published three months prior to the 2015 election employed a positive valence. This is important because the media analysis in Chapter 6 found that economics reporting was only significant three months before the 2015 election and this was only found to be the case for pro-immigrant economics-framed news items.

For those interested in decreasing support for far right parties, the tragedy is that it seems likely that the *Boston Standard* fed into UKIP’s growth in 2015. Statistical analysis in chapter 6 suggests that pro-immigrant economic framing within three months of the 2015 election as well as culture framing in the entire 2011-2015 period increased UKIP’s vote share. UKIP’s electoral success in 2015 was tempered by usage of the border control sub-frame, but any decline arising from this sub-frame would only be partial in comparison to what UKIP gained from culture-framed and pro-immigrant economic-framed reporting. The overall effect of the *Boston Standard*’s reporting would have been a net positive for UKIP. While UKIP would likely grow regardless of the way the *Boston Standard* reported on immigration – contextual determinants were already favorable for them in Boston, and the party was growing throughout the country already showing some national-level influences – it is likely

that the *Boston Standard*, in its reporting of immigration, had a hand in building the local far right and turning Boston into the country's Brexit capital.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

This dissertation set out to explain the substantial levels of variation the United Kingdom Independence Party received in local elections. The answer to this question was approached from three methodological angles: a statistical analysis of contextual variables, a content analysis of local newspapers, and a case study of what has been called the Brexit capital, Boston. Each chapter also narrowed the focus of analysis: from statistical data covering most English local authorities, to a more detailed content analysis of nine local authority newspapers where prevailing explanations of UKIP's success predict high levels of UKIP support, and finally to a single local authority critical case study. The diversity of these approaches, in terms of method and research site, provides us with a multifaceted answer to the research question.

From the statistical analysis, we find the factors that best explain UKIP's variable success fluctuate between elections. Regardless of which factors had the most impact in which election, this fluctuation itself is theoretically important. Instability in the factors that contribute to support for UKIP is concealed by apparent stability at the geographic level, where a single locale exhibits particularly strong support for UKIP relative to other locales over time. However, it may be best to say that this occurs because local authorities represent combinations of many potential determinants and as the bases of UKIP support shifted over time, some local authorities continued to exhibit high levels of UKIP support but for changing reasons. Thus, there is no single story that explains why a particular place may be a UKIP stronghold and a story explaining UKIP's support is necessarily a changing one, with each election marking a different chapter. I attributed this instability in the determinants of UKIP support to the incredibly rapid growth that UKIP underwent between 2004 and 2015, between its emergence as a political force worthy of some consideration after the 2004 European Union elections and its peak in the 2015 general election as a serious threat to the governing Conservative Party. This "growth spurt" saw UKIP grow broader, rather than deeper, with an

increasing array of factors determining the UKIP vote share, rather than an increasingly large percentage of a narrow range of factors. Analysis of the case study suggests that this growth process is dual featured, a combination of a consolidation process which saw UKIP neutralize competing far right parties, and a conversion process where UKIP was able to “convert” mainstream party supporters, especially Tories, into UKIP voters.

In terms of contextual determinants of the UKIP vote, the model tested in this work finds the number of determinants increases over time with each election. 2007 is the simplest year, finding that the percentage of the local authority that is foreign-born is significant, but negatively correlated with UKIP vote share; thus, as the foreign-born population of a local authority increased, UKIP support fell. Inversely, UKIP could be expected to perform better in those local authorities with small foreign-born populations, or large native-born populations. In 2011, the ethnic-native composition of a local authority was no longer significant, instead replaced by the size of the elderly population in a local authority, seeing UKIP’s vote share grow in those places where this elderly population was high. Furthermore, numerous theorists of the far right posit a relationship between the mainstream right and the far right; UKIP began a predatory relationship with the Conservatives, seeing their vote share grow where the Tories had performed well in the previous local election. Finally, 2015 saw UKIP reach their peak and immigrant status and age were no longer significant determinants and instead education became a significant factor, with high levels of education resulting in lower vote shares and low levels of education resulting in high vote shares. Additionally, local crime rates were also significant and positive reflecting individual-level findings showing that UKIP voters tended to have some of the harshest views on crime and criminal sentencing. UKIP’s predatory relationship with the Conservatives continued in 2015, with UKIP performing better where the Tories performed well in 2011. The most sensible explanation for this change in the determinants of UKIP success relates to their shocking growth between 2007 and 2015. In 2007, UKIP received 182,459 votes and contested 12.8% of the UK’s wards. These numbers increased to 297,662 and 18.2% respectively in 2011. While the growth between

2007 and 2011 was considerable, it pales in comparison to the growth between 2011 and 2015. In 2015, UKIP received approximately 2.6 million votes and contested 58% of wards. Political parties are always seeking to expand their support among voters and UKIP's fourteen-fold increase between 2007 and 2015 brought a tremendous number of new voters from many wards that the party did not previously contest. It is thus unsurprising that a massive influx of new voters from previously uncontested local authorities would result in the shift in UKIP's electoral determinants.

The examination of media variables was attuned to the quantity, valence, and framing of immigration-related newspaper reporting between 2011 and 2015 and the media's reporting of immigration is clearly influential. First, framing is important, with the cultural and security frame, particularly a border control sub-frame of the security frame, being the most important, while the economic frame was of lesser importance. The culture frame was the most important in increasing UKIP's vote share, while the border control sub-frame was, overall, a detriment to the party. However, the specific outcome of the border control sub-frame is dependent on the balance between positive and negative valence within the frame. Second, timing matters, with the economic frame only showing significant results within three months of the 2015 election. Lastly, valence matters in helping to explain some of the results of the media analysis; whether the border control sub-frame is a net positive or negative for UKIP depends on the valence of that reporting and more nuanced analysis demonstrates that it is the pro-immigrant economic and culture frames that show their significant and positive results for UKIP. Despite this, the strongest and most accurate single model for explaining media effects on UKIP results does not incorporate valence at all, limiting the overall importance of valence.

The case study of Boston helps to illustrate the findings of the contextual and media analysis. Contextually, Boston is a disproportionately old and low education local authority, as well as being one with a strong and enduring Conservative political presence with high crime rates – all features that correlate with higher vote shares for UKIP. For media variables, the

Boston Standard seems to have been a perfect storm in favor of UKIP with high levels of culture-framed and economic-framed immigration reporting. Beyond this, the case study of Boston also suggests that the growth process for UKIP also included a consolidation process which saw UKIP eventually triumph over far right rivals like the British National Party and the English Democrats Party. As a critical case for the contextual and media explanations of UKIP's success, the case study of Boston lends considerable weight to the answers provided by this work. While history and the economic profile of the town, as an agricultural and fishing town with concerns about EU policy in these areas, both predisposed Boston towards supporting a Eurosceptic party, it was the combination of context and media that helped turn the town into the country's Brexit capital where UKIP's anti-immigration appeal could win strong support.

Contextually, Boston continually proved to have high levels of the factors that UKIP drew support from; whether it was a high population of white British voters, especially relative to urban Britain, to large populations of pensioners and even larger numbers of Conservatives, to a large population of less-educated voters and a small population of university graduates. These contextual factors would turn into the sources of UKIP strength, at different points in time. In terms of the media, Boston's ended up being, at best, ineffectual in slowing the growth of UKIP, and at worse it helped to bolster the party. This took the shape of the *Standard's* cultural coverage of immigration at a time when government-sponsored local polling suggested that much of the area's anti-immigrant sentiment was driven by economic concerns and fear of crime. When the newspaper changed its editor, the paper's coverage of immigration changed with it. The coverage after the editorial switch mostly focused on individual cases of immigrant criminality. A backlash in 2012 against this focus on immigrant criminality resulted in a shift in the paper's reporting towards more culture- and economic-framed coverage of immigration, but it was these two frames that often provided the most support for UKIP. Media coverage highlighting the cultural and economic

contributions of immigrants in the area may have inadvertently heightened the salience of immigration to a population that was at best wary of immigration already.

Research Contributions

There are two fields of study to which this dissertation has most pointedly made contributions to debates and open questions within those fields. First is in the study of the far right and particularly in the integration of what was ultimately a relatively short-lived far right party into a field where larger and more stable far right parties tend to be the subjects of research. Second, is in the study of British politics more generally, where the sudden emergence and rise to prominence of UKIP and its conclusion in Brexit marks an uncharacteristic period of political instability in a country known for its remarkable political stability and rejection of fringe politics.

Analysis of the electoral geography of the far right has been noted to be an under-researched topic and constitutes one contribution this dissertation makes to the field. One part of the problem of geography stems from the understandable desire to study the far right as a single party family, drawing scholars to analyze at the cross-national or European Union level. A second part of the problem of geography lies in the fact that as a party family the far right is primarily associated with immigration and Euroscepticism, issues whose competencies rest at the national or European level and thus local or regional level seem unrelated to the issues that animate scholarly research. Finally, there has been a marked tendency to try to understand far right voting as an individual-level phenomenon. Both trends, of broad cross-national study of the far right party family and the analysis of far right voting at the level of individuals has resulted in a dearth of attention to sub-national geography.

Despite the lack of scholarly attention, a glance at the sub-national distribution of far right support reveals both obvious and startling variation in levels of support. While some of this variation is doubtlessly the result of difference in the supply-side conditions of the far right, with one example being the number of seats contested in an area, such geographic variation persists even in national elections for a single seat, such as presidential elections in

France or Austria. Some regions or localities simply express more preference for the far right regardless of the supply-side. This work has helped to shed light on factors that appear to be driving this sort of variation in support for the far right in terms of both the contextual characteristics of place as well as the role of local media.

One enduring debate in the study of the far right is the relative importance of economic and cultural grievances. While many will readily admit that each have some role to play for the far right, there is still ongoing debate over which grievance is the primary cause of the surge in far right support across Europe, especially in the aftermath of the Great Recession and in the midst of increasing diversity in Europe and the refugee “crisis”. While this study finds some support for both, especially in the media analysis and case study, more support is lent to the argument that the surge in far right support is more strongly based in cultural grievances. This is because, based on the media analysis, the best media model finds a strong role for culture-framed news reporting while economic-framed news items are only significant in a limited window prior to the 2015 election. The outcome of this debate is of critical importance for policymakers, as efforts to reduce economic grievances will differ greatly from those to reduce cultural grievances and this may be the difference between successful or ineffectual interventions.

While the media analysis lends more credence to cultural rather than economic explanations of support for the far right, neither is ironclad in the contextual analysis. The “flagship” variables for each, foreign-born populations for culture and unemployment for economics, do not perform well in the study. In fact, it is only in 2007 that the foreign-born share of the population is significant, but this is negatively correlated with UKIP support, which contradicts one of the most basic hypotheses of the cultural grievances argument. Other determinants of the UKIP vote share, especially high and low education levels, are more ambiguous in their interpretation. For one, education level is a core component of socio-economic status and is usually strongly collinear with income level. Alternatively, university education is also a socialization process heavily associated with what are

sometimes called “cosmopolitan attitudes” and thus college graduates are often distinct from non-graduates in terms of values and attitudes, especially regarding diversity. The relationship between the previous election’s Conservative vote share and UKIP support is also ambiguous in terms of support for cultural or economic grievance-based explanations. Age can be counted as a minor point in favor of cultural grievances, since older age is associated with more conservative social views and age was a significant determinant for the 2011 local elections.

To this ongoing debate between culture and economy, this study introduces crime as an explanation of far right support alongside concerns with border control, or what could be called “security grievances”. The contextual analysis supports the idea that higher crime rates help to explain UKIP’s vote in 2015, near the peak of their success as a party. The media analysis finds that the news media’s reporting of border control and entry to the country tended to diminish UKIP support unless such reporting was very strongly anti-immigrant. The case study of Boston found that the local authority saw an explosion in support for the far right, not just UKIP but even more radical and extreme far right parties, at a time when changes in the local newspaper saw an increase in crime-framing, especially regarding immigrant criminals. While a small amount of scholarship has interrogated the relationship between crime and the far right, the perceived association between immigrants and crime often seen among the populace and in far right discourse makes the omission of the security dimension all the more baffling in the study of far right support. More than its contributions to the debate between economic and cultural explanations for far right success, this study advances the impact of crime as a factor in explaining the rise of the far right.

The careful attention paid to the temporal dimension marks another contribution this work makes to the study of the far right. Some scholars, Golder (2016) as one example, have noted a serious lack of attention to the so-called “stages of success” of far right parties, and existing research has hypothesized substantial differences between the breakthrough stage and the post-breakthrough institutionalization stage. This is doubtlessly important work, but

this dissertation suggests that the post-breakthrough stage is defined by the rapid transformation of the determinants of far right party success. Within this institutionalization phase, there are separate processes of conversion and consolidation. The conversion process is one in which voters for mainstream parties, or non-voters in general, are “converted” into supporters of the far right and the consolidation process where a far right party, UKIP in this case, effectively marginalizes competing far right parties in a struggle to be the electoral vehicle of the far right. This cautions efforts to compare far right parties cross-nationally, especially in the case of a comparison between an institutionalized party and an institutionalizing party. It also cautions against the treatment of a single far right party across time as a stable single unit of comparison, which is to say the treatment of 2007, 2011, and 2015 UKIP as a single unit whose variations are driven by a single set of determinants.

Finally, the role of the media in the rise of the far right has been under-analyzed and is the final contribution this dissertation makes to the study of the far right. While the relationship between far right parties and the media has been studied before, in terms of how media organizations cope with far right parties, i.e., whether to marginalize or accommodate the parties and their leaders, and there has been voluminous literature on how immigrants have been portrayed in news media, there has been relatively few studies linking the three together: news media, immigration reporting, and the consequences for the far right. This research suggests that there was a clear impact in the 2015 local elections, from the ways in which local newspapers decided to report on the issue of immigration. These impacts were sometimes contrary to the best intentions of these newspapers, such as the finding that positive valence culture-framed reporting of immigration results in an increased far right vote share and the *Boston Standard's* efforts to both report and promote immigrant integration.

Contributions to the study of the geography of the far right, voter grievances, the temporality of far right growth, and the relationship between media, far right parties, and immigration are as equally applicable in the British context as they are in the European context. However, the British case is a special one within the far right literature because

British political culture, history, and political institutions, especially the electoral and party system, were so hostile to the emergence, persistence and success of a far right party. The development of a politically influential far right party in adverse conditions like those present in the United Kingdom makes the case of UKIP especially important in understanding the far right.

There is a specifically British debate that this research speaks to revolving around the impact that the rise of UKIP had on the British party system. This debate asks which of the major parties, Labour or Conservative, “paid the price” of UKIP’s electoral success. Arguments that the rise of UKIP came at the expense of Labour focus on the socio-demographic profile of many UKIP voters, which are often white working class while arguments that UKIP’s rise disadvantaged the Conservatives looks at the defection rates of voters from other parties towards UKIP. Looking at contextual data, this study finds that UKIP’s vote share was larger in those areas where the Conservatives had previously performed well, which in combination with voter defection data suggests that the Tories paid a higher cost for UKIP’s political influence than Labour. Echoing the sentiments of Evans and Mellon, UKIP was indeed Labour’s “secret weapon” or as Matthew d’Ancona stated in a 2015 *Guardian* news article, “Nigel Farage looks like Ed Miliband’s best friend”. The post-EU referendum decline of UKIP and its half-hearted revival in the form of the Brexit Party may play no small part in explaining the strength of Boris Johnson and the Conservatives in 2021.

Research Importance

Given the post-referendum collapse of UKIP, one may ask what importance does understanding the determinants of their support have beyond the academy. It is important to note that the bases of UKIP support have not disappeared but have merely been channeled into mainstream parties or non-voting. If future political conditions replicate those between 2004 and 2015, it is not far-fetched to expect some resurgence of the far right. Alternatively, if the Boris Johnson government is not able to deliver on popular expectations of immigration restriction, or the Conservative Party moderates itself as it did under Cameron, we can

expect that former UKIP voters may be willing to abandon the Conservatives and support a far right alternative once again. As John and Margetts (2009) point out, there has been considerable latent support for the British far right; it just needs an opportunity to become manifest support.

If demand-side factors have merely gone dormant after the referendum, then supply-side conditions are still present for a revival of the far right. For one, the British National Party, English Democrats Party, and UKIP still exist, even if much reduced. Additionally, these existing far right parties have been joined by Nigel Farage's Brexit Party which still polls at approximately 2% nationally, like the BNP's performance in the 2010 general election and a bit lower than UKIP's 2010 performance. More importantly, Farage stated in his last press conference as a MEP that he and the Brexit Party would remain to "catch the ball" if the Conservatives "drop it again", once again underlining the relationship between the Brexit Party/UKIP that this dissertation has emphasized. If demand for far right parties were to increase, there are a number of options available to satisfy it, and as such the study of the British far right remains important.

If we look beyond far right supply and demand and instead at UKIP's political program, it will appear that rather than dormancy, UKIP has instead been absorbed into the political mainstream through the Conservative Party. In terms of personnel, we noted in the case study of Boston that several former UKIP councilors had become Conservative councilors. Policy-wise, the two most prominent policy goals of UKIP have become Conservative policy. First, an exit from the European Union, which Theresa May advanced despite her opposition prior to the referendum and Boris Johnson delivered. Second is a reform of the British immigration system towards an Australian-style points-based system, which Johnson has also implemented. If one recalls that the three policy areas that the European far right has tended to share – immigration, Euroscepticism, and pro-business environmental policy – one can see that the Conservatives have largely reproduced UKIP policy on the first two. With regards to environmental policy, it is perhaps telling that both

Farage and Johnson chose to skip a televised Channel 4 debate regarding climate change, which infamously saw melting blocks of ice placed on their empty podiums. Ultimately, in terms of core UKIP and far right policy, it is accurate to say that the Johnson government represents a far right government, highlighting the mainstream absorption of the far right into the existing party system. Understanding the recent past of the far right is a way to understand the present of British conservatism.

Direction for Future Research

One of the most striking factors in the statistical analysis is the importance of the percentage of seats contested within a local authority. Of course, on one level, this is obvious; competing for seats is a pre-condition to receiving any votes and potentially winning. Beyond this, however, what is striking is how badly UKIP performed in standing candidates and contesting seats and we are left wondering what UKIP's performance would have looked like if the party had filled every slate – if they were maximizing their vote shares. This raises questions about candidate recruitment and selection and particularly about the sorts of obstacles nascent political parties face in trying to cultivate the political entrepreneurs necessary to compete in elections. While this is a topic that has received attention with mainstream political parties, the topic should be approached specifically with the far right in mind, as many far right parties like UKIP also pride themselves on being anti-elitist, non-professional, and drawing political support for the less educated strata of society – all factors likely to present more unique challenges for a political party.

One of the advantages of sub-national comparative research is the ability to minimize institutional variation that would plague any cross-national comparisons. However, minimizing variation does not eliminate it and research of the far right in local British elections reveals that even at the level of local authorities there are still significant levels of institutional variation that could potentially explain electoral outcomes. First, there is electoral system variation at the local level within England; while many local authorities use MNTV, there are a number that use more traditional single member district plurality. The district magnitude

present within local authorities varies substantially and minor variation in district magnitude can see large variations in result. There is also variation in local party systems. While the major national parties often collect most of the vote share but, as second-order elections, local elections do see fair share of independent candidates and some local authorities have local parties that do not compete in national elections. Third, assembly sizes vary substantially between local authorities, introducing another possible source of institutional variation and potentially interacting with candidate recruitment in theoretically interesting ways.

The sub-local authority level, largely the ward-level, presents an opportunity for research, especially in the case of contextual variables. Looking at variation within local authorities allows for some of the institutional variation discussed above to be avoided while also allowing a more direct analysis of what makes the wards, some of which are quite small, to be more favorable for UKIP than others. Such research may allow insight into what sort of “on-the-ground” knowledge is being used by candidates and local parties to determine the viability of running candidates in certain wards and thus reveal some of the strategic logic of far right parties, especially far right parties that have not fully institutionalized and thus are still “learning the ropes”.

Finally, there is the issue of competition between far right parties. This is somewhat unsurprising; many countries do not have multiple politically relevant far right parties competing in elections and as a result much of the research on party competition and far right parties tends to focus on competition between the far right and the right, or sometimes between the far right and the left, but seldom on competition between far right parties. As far right parties become more popular and normalized within party systems – especially as the *cordon sanitaire* falls around Europe, there is an increasing likelihood that far right parties will fragment or multiply. The recent creation of the Forum for Democracy in the Netherlands in addition to the already existing Party for Freedom highlights the importance of competition within the far right to a better understanding of the European far right.

What has become increasingly clear from almost forty years of research into the European far right is that far right parties are remarkably strange. Unlike more mainstream social democratic or conservative parties which tend to be organized by a much “thicker” ideology and thus tend to be more continuous with both themselves and cross-national counterparts, far right parties are both ideologically thinner and more mutable. Even the same party over the course of a decade can see a remarkable transformation either ideologically or sociologically in terms of where these parties are drawing support. Even when these parties die, or nearly so, they may instead be absorbed as was the case with UKIP which saw much of its voter support absorbed into the Conservative Party after the 2016 referendum. Given the fact that scholars are still investigating this party family, now for some forty years, it seems safe to say that the mutability of the far right presents a problem for better understanding them; just when scholars feel as if we understand them, they transform, are absorbed, or reinvent themselves in some way, necessitating further research. What may be the safest conclusion to reach though is that despite the dream of “solving” the far right, they are not going away, and it is becoming increasingly clear that we are going to need to live with them.

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