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**University
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**Labour's demise and UKIP's rise:
What factors can explain the Labour
Party's recent decline in support,
while support for UKIP is on the
rise?**

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Abstract

The relationship between the Labour Party and the working class electorate may have once represented a coalition of strength, however, in recent years, Labour appears to be losing working class support. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) is gaining support, both in terms of membership and at an electoral level. While polls have highlighted Labour's recent loss in support, and UKIP's rise in support, there has been little research that links the two phenomenon together. This paper will highlight that it has been Labour's failing on key issues that has led people, mostly from the working class electorate, to look to new forms of political representation; the chief beneficiary being UKIP. While current research offers some insight on the subject, it appears too dependent on assumptions. This is why it is imperative that empirical evidence is presented, as a means of challenging current conceptions of why Labour is losing support, while support for UKIP is on the rise.

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Introduction

The Labour Party is currently witnessing an overall decline in its share of the vote, losing nearly five million votes between 1997 and 2010 (Goes, 2016: 44). Meanwhile, anti-political establishment (APE) parties appear to be gaining electoral support. APE parties are those that fight against the political status-quo, driving a wedge between traditional parties and the electorate (Abedi and Lundberg, 2009: 5). Arguably, the most popular of these are the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, and the Green Party, who all gained parliamentary seats in the 2015 general election. Most notably, the SNP's share of the vote "surged from 20 per cent to 50 per cent" (Webb, 2016: 65) between 2010 and 2015, and the 2015 general election saw UKIP "finishing in the top two places in more than a hundred constituencies" (Webb, 2016: 75).

The correlation between Labour's recent decline in support and APE parties' rise in support has been noted previously by researchers, particularly following the 2015 general election. While the rising popularity of APE parties affects all of Britain's major political parties, the advances UKIP are making in traditional Labour constituencies are among the most notable. The fact that UKIP, a right-wing populist party, are appealing to Labour voters, merits deeper investigation, considering Labour is deemed to be left of centre in their politics. It is evident that UKIP are managing to engage with these voters in a way that Labour is not, leading some critics to argue that "Labour's historic grip on political loyalty is now threatened by the rise of UKIP" (Hunt, 2016).

While previous research has acknowledged Labour's decline in support and UKIP's rise in support, few studies have gone

beyond speculating over this phenomenon. Previous work discusses, more generally, the demise of social democratic parties, like Labour, and the rise of APE parties, like UKIP, as being attributed to a sequential European pattern concerned with the decline of social democracy and the rise of anti-establishment populism. Additionally, there is the supposition that Labour's demise and UKIP's rise can be attributed to the changes in the electorate, with Labour struggling to accurately evaluate the needs of the working class electorate, and UKIP more adequately evaluating these needs. Some claim the electorate has retrospectively assessed Labour as being unequipped to deal with the most pertinent current issues, specifically immigration, and thus are opting for an un-tested alternative; in this case UKIP.

This research paper will present empirical evidence to investigate the factors surrounding Labour's recent loss in support and UKIP's rise in support. This paper finds that it is not Labour's neglect of the working class electorate that has lost them support, but Labour's neglect of key issues, specifically immigration, that has resulted in their recent decline in support. Through presenting and analysing key data, this paper details that while Labour failed to address issues like immigration, UKIP has managed to more adequately address these concerns. As this paper will highlight, this has resulted in many working class voters moving from Labour to UKIP, who they believe will better represent them. Conducting this research is critical in expanding the current knowledge in this field. Much of the current research presents reasons that *could* explain the phenomenon, and is less focussed on evidence that offers a more concrete explanation.

Engaging with the current literature on this subject will explore the reasons for Labour's decline in support, and UKIP's rise in

support, that have been set forth previously. This will, in turn, identify any key areas to examine further and will ultimately lay the foundations for this research paper, and the direction it will go in. Having examined previous scholars' opinions on the matter, this paper will employ qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the factors associated with this phenomenon. This will, ultimately, contribute to this field of research through providing a detailed analysis of the factors that can help explain Labour's loss in support and UKIP's rise in support.

Literature Review

The Crisis of Social Democracy

The 2015 general election is symbolic of the changing terrain of Britain's political landscape. One critic alleged it “underlined the fracturing of Labour’s electoral base” (Diamond, 2016: 20), referring to the swathes of individuals who withdrew support for the party, who “might once have been seen as Labour’s core vote” (Bale, 2016: 18). Labour’s decline in support did not just occur in England, and in fact the “the party’s vote haemorrhaged” (Diamond, 2016: 20) in Scotland too. While some scholars have outlined reasoning as being unique to the British political context, others have argued that Labour’s loss in support is a consequence of socio-political changes that have resulted in the decline of social democratic parties across Europe more broadly (Keating and McCrone, 2013: 2). For instance, they allege that “the erosion of social democracy reflects the ebbing of leftist values more generally” (Keating and McCrone, 2013: 2), thus suggesting the decline of social democracy is more of a natural decline that relates to a “shift in values and attitudes among the electorate” (Keating and McCrone, 2013: 2). Ultimately, the supposed “ebbing of leftist values” relates to the loss of support experienced by the Labour Party, since the party is generally viewed as being centre-left, and the most popular ‘left wing’ party in Britain.

Interestingly, the crisis of social democracy has also been proposed as a contributory factor to the rise of APE parties in Europe. The supposed crisis has allegedly sparked “the rise of new movements and parties” (Keating and McCrone, 2013: 6/7) across the UK, and while it is argued that “some have been to the left of social democracy...the most serious threat, however,

comes from the populist right” (Keating and McCrone, 2013: 6/7). One such ‘threat’ to British politics, could be said to be UKIP. Currently, UKIP “claims to be Britain’s fourth largest political party” (Clark, 2012: 110), gaining almost four million votes in the 2015 general election. Furthermore, UKIP’s success extends to European level elections and they “topped the European parliamentary elections of 2014 in the UK, gaining 27.5% per cent of the nationwide vote and 24 MEPs” (Webb, 2016: 72). A further investigation into the concept of APE parties will highlight UKIP’s significance in British politics.

APE Parties

There is a lack of literature that specifically cites the term ‘APE party’ directly and it is not widely used among academics. Moreover, there are conflicting opinions on whether such parties share an affinity with a particular side of the political spectrum. The ideas attached to the term, however, and the attempts to define it, largely raise similar points.

One attempt to define the term suggests three criteria: parties that act against the status-quo; parties that perceive themselves as a challenger to the main parties; and a party that asserts itself as the divide between main parties (Abedi and Lundberg, 2009: 5). Discussed in greater detail are four perspectives from which APE parties can be understood (Abedi, 2004: 5).

Firstly, Kirchheimer’s definition of the term emphasises “the notion of dichotomy between parties that are loyal to the political system and those that are not” (Abedi, 2004: 5). He distinguishes between the “loyal opposition” which disagrees with the incumbent party (or parties) over policy goals and accepts the constitutional order of a country, and the “opposition of principle” which does not accept the rules of the game as laid

down in a country's constitution" (Abedi, 2004: 5). Here, APE parties are parties that function on the basis of "opposition of principle"; thus different language is being used to describe the same phenomenon.

Similarly, Sartori's definition supposes that an APE party is an "anti-system party" to classify and identify all those parties that not only do not accept the legitimacy of the political order in their respective country but also actively engage in undermining it" (Abedi, 2004: 6).

Following on from Sartori's more simplistic definition of anti-system parties is Cappocia's understanding of APE parties. Cappocia describes the difference between mainstream and APE parties as being related to the extent to which a party is ideologically opposed to the democratic system, and the extent to which a party functions alongside the current regime, "regardless of that party's ideological stance regarding democracy" (Abedi, 2004: 6).

Lastly, Smith's approach to APE parties alleges that there are two questions that determine an APE party from a mainstream party: "are a party's goals compatible with the existing regime and its attendant structures?" and "do its adherents pursue course of action that is acceptable to others, most important including the political authorities?" (Abedi, 2004: 6).

Some scholars have gone beyond defining APE parties in terms of how they interact with mainstream political structures, and instead allege that APE parties, by nature, have a particular positioning on the political spectrum. The belief that "anti-political-establishment actors show a clear 'elective affinity' with right-wing parties" (Schedler, 1996: 302), contrasts with the idea that it is radical left parties that are on the rise (Goes, 2016: 30).

These attempts to define APE parties focus mostly on where they stand in relation to the mainstream parties and ingrained political structures, and suggest connotations of a slightly aggressive opposition. Although this aids an understanding of the term APE, the connotations of revolt and ‘anti-systemness’ makes it difficult to apply to the British political landscape, because it is more moderate parties like the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Greens that make up the majority of APE parties. UKIP represent an example of a political party in Britain that appears to adopt a more aggressive stance towards the establishment, using right-wing populism to mobilise its anti-establishment rhetoric.

Applying these definitions to the British political landscape highlights that the Labour Party surely falls into the establishment party category as a party that situates themselves within the existing political structure; *not* the opposers of the system they exist within. Thus, taking into account that APE parties are required to oppose existing structures in order to be defined as such, it can therefore be argued that APE parties are somewhat of a threat to Labour.

It does appear, however, too restrictive to speak of Labour’s loss in support, and UKIP’s rise in support, as being the sole result of a sequential European political pattern. Other critics assert that it is reasons unique to the British electorate that has seen Labour lose support, while UKIP has gained support.

Changes in the electorate

Some researchers have suggested that the reason the Labour Party has began to steadily lose support is due to the “drastic reduction of the industrial working class” as well as “a decline of trade unions” (Goes, 2016: 24). Labour largely depends on the support it gets from trade unions, and has historically depended

on the working class vote to gain power in office. As Pulzer claimed in 1967, when Britain's industrial sector was particularly prominent, "class is the basis of British party politics" (Pulzer, 1967: 102). Pulzer argues that "people in manual occupations – however defined – are, in the majority, Labour; those who are not are, in the majority, Conservative" (Pulzer, 1967: 106). However, the idea the size of the working class electorate is in decline, is contrasted with the fact that "the size of the electorate has been rising" (Field, 2014: 53). This suggests the decline of Britain's industrial society has resulted in a growing population which is becoming more bourgeois, with fewer distinctions between the classes. This not only suggests that Pulzer's theory lacks modern-day applicability, but it also highlights that Labour could "no longer win elections by appealing to these workers alone" (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 113). Labour needed to show "that it had left behind what now seemed to be a narrow conception of political representation" (Diamond and Kenny, 2011: 165), and it attempted to do so through the creation of New Labour, under Tony Blair. New Labour tried to address the concerns of the wider electorate through a Middle England approach; "a specific and narrow segment of the market deemed to be key" (Avril, 2016: 11).

However, the idea that Labour sparked its own "abandonment of Labour's traditional working class vote" (Roberts, 2014: 3) is felt strongly by many in Britain. The critique that has surrounded Labour because of this perceived abandonment (Taylor and Upchurch, 2009: 184) is representative of what many traditional Labour members feel: Labour is becoming too like the Conservatives (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 270). Many feel as though Labour abandoned their left-wing values through pursuing a middle path, and "more than half of the membership felt Blair was right-wing" (Clark, 2012: 73), thus producing "weakened ties to its "natural" constituency" (Avril, 2016: 12).

While New Labour was created on the basis that the party would no longer be able to gain enough electoral support from the working class alone, it is suggested that Labour misjudged the strength of feeling from their working class voters, leaving many feeling abandoned, and “left-behind” (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 122). New Labour supposedly opened up an “ideological gap between Labour members and Labour voters” (Avril, 2016: 9), resulting in many working class voters feeling alienated and as though their “concerns have been written out of political debate” (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 270).

Ultimately, this alienation has allegedly resulted in Labour now losing support from the working class, who are “hostile to the kind of society they perceive Labour is now in business to promote” (Field, 2014: 56). The apparently weakened relationship between Labour and the working class electorate has resulted in a situation whereby the “working-class voters no longer [saw] Labour as a party sensitive to their concerns, but as part of the problem” (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 132/133).

Issue-based reasoning

An apparent contribution to this alleged disconnection between Labour and the working class is the idea that Labour has failed to deliver on key issues that the electorate proclaim to be concerned about. Labour’s approach to key issues has been argued to have contributed to their recent loss in support.

The Economy

Labour’s approach to issues such as the economy and immigration are suggested, by many scholars, as reasons for Labour’s electoral decline in support, particularly from the working class electorate. On the issue of austerity “Labour

appeared evasive” (Kenny, 2016: 89) and apparently even appeared to “embrace austerity” (Goes, 2016: 31). Labour’s relationship with the working class was apparently placed under even more strain as a result of Labour’s handling of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), when it was “forced to implement cuts in public spending” (Goes, 2016: 19). The cuts were viewed by many as a “fundamental betrayal” (Roberts, 2014: 3) that sparked a “crisis of trust” (Roberts, 2014: 3) between the party and the electorate. The decisions Labour made during the GFC allegedly resulted in the party being “blamed [them] for the recession”, thus losing “their credibility as efficient and safe managers of the economy” (Goes, 2016: 19).

Immigration

Additionally, the apparent “emergence of immigration as an important popular concern” (Goes, 2016: 147), appears to have been neglected by the Labour Party. Research alleges that New Labour were “too starry-eyed about the benefits of globalisation” (Goes, 2016: 158), neglecting concerns about immigration felt “most strongly by the left behind coalition of older, less skilled and white workers” (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 125). When Miliband assumed the position of Labour leader, he “promised that under Labour, immigration would be ‘controlled and managed’” (Goes, 2016: 158). However, Labour’s approach to immigration is criticised for being too balanced, thus creating a “confused message” (Goes, 2016: 184). Ultimately, it is alleged that “Labour’s neglect of immigration as a legitimate concern had a direct impact on the popularity of the party” (Goes, 2016: 148). The loss in support that Labour is allegedly experiencing, particularly from working class voters, is thus linked to Labour’s apparent neglect of the needs of “left behind voters” who “are more likely to think immigration should be

reduced ‘a lot’” (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 122). These voters may therefore look elsewhere to cast their vote.

The idea that Labour is losing votes due to its failure to address key issues, suggests that voting is based in what Clarke et al labels “valence reasoning” (Clarke et al, 2009: 52). In contrast to Pulzer’s suggestion, valence reasoning “asserts that people support the party best able to deliver on issues they care about” (Clarke et al, 2009: 31). Clarke et al writes that while issues like the economy have traditionally remained the top priorities to voters, in recent years “these concerns have been joined by (not displaced by) a set of issues involving crime, immigration and terrorism” (Clarke et al, 2009: 46). In the valence model of voting, voters apparently “make retrospective evaluations” (Clarke et al, 2009: 50) of a party’s performance. Often is the case that certain parties can be “said to ‘own’ certain issues” (Clarke et al, 2009: 152), and thus when a party is seen to have failed to adequately deliver on important issues, a vacuum is created and other parties may strive to claim ownership. It could be argued UKIP is making an effort to claim ownership over the issue of immigration, while Labour has been retrospectively assessed as being incompetent in dealing with the issue, hence the party is losing support, while UKIP is gaining support.

The UKIP appeal

The idea that voters are moving from Labour to UKIP, partially due to the issue of immigration, is further suggested by critics who allege that many of the people who felt “adversely affected by the economic globalisation” and Labour’s handling of immigration, “sought refuge in the xenophobic but reassuring policies of the populist right” (Goes, 2016: 185). Ultimately, this has led to UKIP making significant leaps in “large swathes of its [Labour’s] heartland territory” (Roberts, 2014: 2). Critics allege

that it is UKIP's ability to channel the anger from those "who have lost faith in traditional politics" (Ford and Sobolewska, 2016: 239), while also tending to people's "anxiety about immigration" that has witnessed "the dramatic rise in support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)" (Ford and Sobolewska, 2016: 221). Some critics go further and allege that UKIP "has actively courted working-class voters, including 'Old Labour' supporters" (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 146), many of whom feel "alienated by New Labour and is choosing UKIP" (Field, 2014: 55), as an alternative. Labour's apparent failure to address the issues close to their core-vote is argued to have resulted in the party losing support, while UKIP is gaining support.

Previous research has suggested that Labour's loss in support and UKIP's rise in support is due to Labour's abandonment of its core vote, and subsequent failure to adequately address the ideological gap they created, through ignoring the chief concerns of disillusioned voters. The literature suggests that these voters have moved to UKIP, who they believe will better represent them. Despite this, there is limited literature that goes further than merely suggesting these reasons. It is clear that Labour's failure to address specific issues close to the electorate *could* help to explain Labour's loss in support and UKIP's rise in support, but there is an element of uncertainty around this. This research paper will go a step further than just identifying potential problem areas. Conducting this research will ultimately aim to contribute to the academic discussion, thus challenging current assumptions about Labour's demise and UKIP's rise.

Hypotheses

Having outlined the relevant literature, several key points have become evident that will allow the hypotheses to be constructed. The general point appears to be that Labour's loss in support is connected to UKIP's rise in support, and thus the following hypotheses have been constructed to explore this:

H1: The Labour Party is increasingly losing support from the working class electorate.

H2: Working class voters are very concerned about the issue of immigration.

H3: The Labour Party has not adequately addressed the issue of immigration.

H4: Many working class voters are moving from Labour to UKIP, who they believe will better represent them.

Methodology

This research project will adopt three methods of research: secondary data analysis, quantitative content analysis, and qualitative content analysis. The secondary data analysis constitutes the first phase of research, and the content analyses constitute the second phase of research. Suitable conclusions will be drawn through a cross comparison of the findings from phase one and phase two. This comparison will seek to further investigate why Labour is losing support, while UKIP is gaining support.

The first phase of research will comprise of a secondary data analysis of opinion polls. Secondary data “typically covers a broad sample of individuals” that are “generally representative of some broader population” (Vartanian, 2010: 9). Opinion polls from YouGov, ICM, and Ipsos Mori, three leading market research firms, will provide the relevant data to be examined in this research project. The polling is presented as a series of figures/percentages in response to a set question or statement. In some cases, this analysis will take the form of tables, line graphs, and bar charts, but it will mostly involve selecting the most contextually relevant data and applying it to the research question.

There is of course the possibility that this leaves the secondary data open to manipulation, with the researcher displaying a bias in selecting data that better answers the research question, while perhaps neglecting data that may challenge the research question. However, it is necessary to be selective in terms of the information that is presented, because large-scale polling can often cover a broad range of issues that might not necessarily bear any significance to the research. Utilising secondary data for analysis is beneficial in the sense that it allows the researcher

to examine data that would otherwise have been impractical to gather as a primary source. The length of time it would have taken to gather information as a primary source would have been unfeasible. Thus, using secondary data minimises potential costs and time. The availability of this data online is essential for the study because it allows a larger sample size to be analysed (Lewis et al, 2012). Furthermore, secondary data from trusted pollsters tends to be “policy-relevant” (Vartanian, 2010: 14), which is particularly important for this research project. Ultimately, this method of research aims to “resolve complexity by summarising and compressing data to identify their essential characteristics” (Pierce, 2008: 183). This will lay the foundations for phase two of the research.

This project’s second phase of research will combine both quantitative and qualitative content analysis, using the Labour Party’s 2015 general election manifesto and UKIP’s 2015 general election manifesto. Content analysis, dubbed “text mining” (Pierce, 2008: 263), aims to draw conclusions from data “by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1969: 14). Content analysis can be particularly useful when comparing and analysing “the policies of political parties” (Burnham et al, 2008: 262).

Quantitative content analysis is more commonly used than qualitative content analysis (Pierce, 2008: 266) because of its “claims to objectivity” (Pierce, 2008: 264) and it being less open to interpretation. Quantitative content analysis “counts the incidence and frequency of words” (Pierce, 2008: 266), thus revealing the prominence of particular topics. This will essentially allow for the respective manifestos to be compared and contrasted in terms of their content and the the prominence they assign to particular topics. The quantitative content analyses of the manifestos will be calculated using the ‘command’ +

‘find’ function on a computer, which details the number of times a subject/phrase/word is mentioned. This will be carried out for Tables 2, 3, 5, 7, and 9. The manifestos are available online. Issues that have been attributed for Labour’s rise and UKIP’s demise, as laid out by previous scholars; as well as issues highlighted by the public through opinion polls as being particularly important, will be emphasised in this section of the research.

Having established the relevant areas for further investigation, this paper will employ a qualitative approach to content analysis, which “can be used to compare different perspectives on the same topic by different speakers” (Pierce, 2008: 264). This will take the form of word-association tables, which entails “a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analyzed” (Bryman, 2004: 392) in order for the reader to clearly consider the key points. Pierce, 2008, used qualitative content analysis to compare world leaders’ interpretation of the word ‘democracy’. He evidenced this in a table, in which the world leader acted as the heading and the associated words were listed underneath. Qualitative content analysis will be used to compare the manner in which some of the issues above were discussed in Labour and UKIP’s manifestos. This will be measured by examining the descriptive words surrounding the issue at hand. For instance, in a sentence taken from Labour’s 2015 manifesto, where it is stated “we will enforce immigration rules humanely and effectively” (Labour Party Manifesto, 2015), the key words here would be ‘enforce’, ‘humanely’, ‘effectively’, because they all seek to describe the manner in which Labour intends to deal with this policy area. This will be calculated using the ‘command’ + ‘find’ function on a computer, and then noting the descriptive and/or appropriate associated terms. This method is used for Tables 6 and 10.

There are some weaknesses of using content analysis. One flaw of a quantitative content analysis is that it does not take into account context when counting the frequency of words or phrases. This can result in the data disproportionately assigning attention to a particular topic, when in reality that topic may have only been mentioned a limited number of times in the context of the research project. Moreover, in terms of counting the incidences of particular words or phrases, “the key words used by political elites...do not necessarily express what may be their greatest concerns” (Pierce, 2008: 266). Political manifestos can often utilise language that acts “to conceal or divert attention from real policy concerns” (Pierce, 2008: 266). As a result of this, it is argued that such methods are too interpretive, which can skew the end results and consequent conclusions that are drawn. However, this is why a mixed approach to content analysis is being used in this research project. A mixed approach ensures that the weaknesses of one method are outweighed by the strengths of another method, and has become more common for researchers in recent years (Kara, 2012: 114). Overall, this particular research design has been chosen because it follows a logical pattern that seeks to highlight the root concerns of the research question and hypotheses.

Chapter 1 - The Labour Party and the Working Class

Having critically examined previous scholars' work on the Labour Party and the electorate, it is clear that the relationship between Labour and its 'core vote' – the working class – is increasingly fragile. As outlined by Ford and Goodwin, many of the working class electorate feel abandoned by Labour, and no longer feel as though the party represents them. This chapter will present evidence to further investigate the strength of feeling that the working class have towards the Labour Party, thus seeking to support or dispute H1.

This chapter will use the National Readership Survey (NRC) social grading system, the UK's chief system of demographic classification, when referring to the working class. According to the NRC social grading system, the working class refers to social grades C2 - skilled manual labour workers, D - semi-skilled manual labour workers, and E - casual or low grade workers (National Readership Survey). The public opinion polling examined in this chapter, uses this system of demographic classification when categorising their results.

Labour traditionally rank the highest amongst social grades C2DE. In recent years, however, the share of the C2DE vote has spread more evenly across other parties, with UKIP arising as a strong contender. For example, polling from March - May 2010, from Ipsos Mori, estimated that, in the 2010 general election, 29% of those in social grade C2 voted Labour, and 40% of those in social grades D and E voted Labour (Ipsos Mori, 2010). Unfortunately, this poll does not indicate the percentage of C2DE individuals who voted UKIP in 2010. However, a YouGov poll on voting intentions, carried out prior to the 2010 election, estimated that, of a weighted sample of 2915 C2DE individuals, 5% intended to vote UKIP (YouGov, 2010).

Polling from March - May 2015, from Ipsos Mori, saw Labour hold the percentage of individuals from C2DE voting for the party, but it witnessed UKIP arise strongly amongst social grades C2DE, taking 19% for C2 and 17% for D and E (Ipsos Mori, 2015). Despite the fact that YouGov's 2010 poll on voting intention can only be taken as an approximation of how C2DE individuals voted, it is important to note that UKIP's support from C2DE individuals appears to have risen significantly. The fact the vote amongst the C2DE category is becoming more dispersed is symbolic of the changing attitudes towards the main political parties. It is important to investigate this further in order to address H1.

This chapter will proceed in two phases. Firstly, public opinion towards Labour from individuals in social grades C2DE will be examined to establish whether the working class electorate feel generally more negative or positive towards Labour. This will seek to address H1, and will aim to evidence whether or not Labour is losing support from the working class electorate. The literature review suggests that Labour has seen a decline in support from the working class electorate, and thus chapter 1.2 is based on the successful proving of H1. Chapter 1.2 will seek to investigate whether or not Labour has attempted to directly reach out to working class voters in their 2015 manifesto. This will be explored through a content analysis of Labour's 2015 general election manifesto. Establishing this will ultimately allow the paper to proceed to chapter two, where reasons for Labour's decline in electoral support will be explored further.

Chapter 1.1 - Secondary Data Analysis of Public Opinion towards Labour

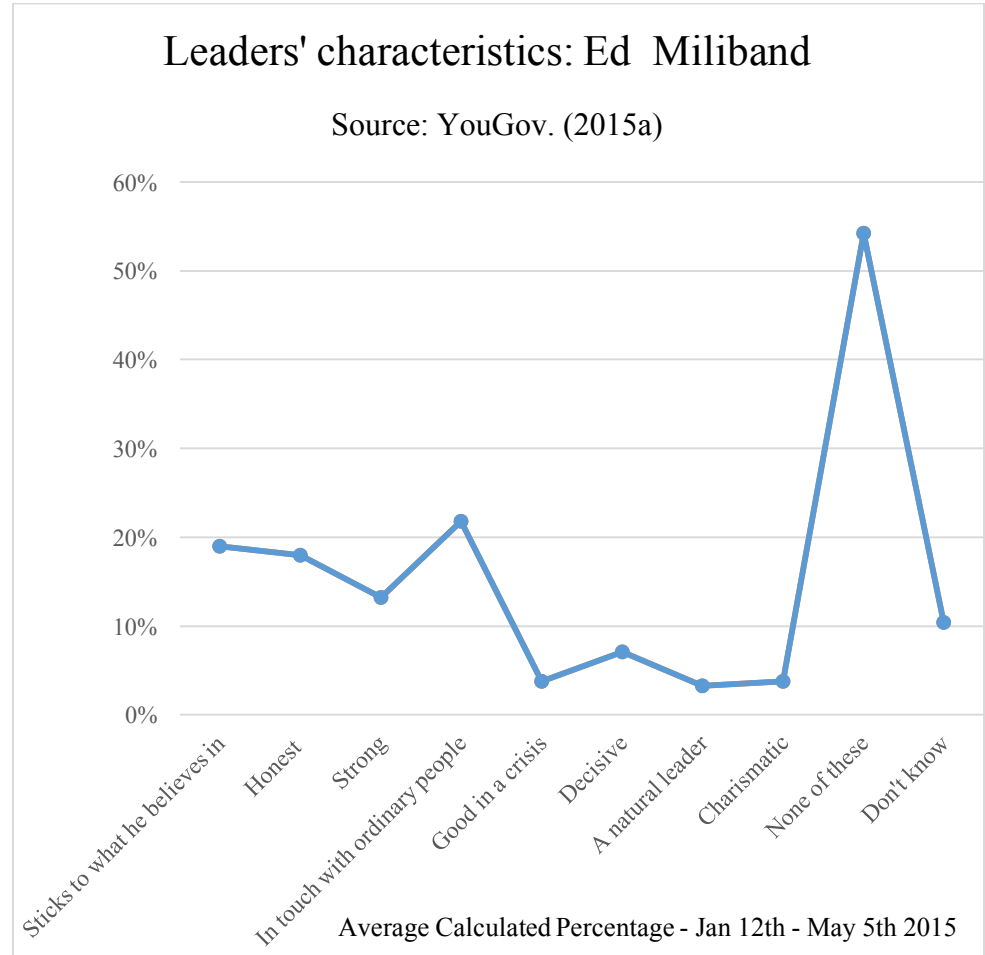
Public opinion towards the Labour Party has become increasingly negative in recent years, potentially as a result of the GFC, and Labour's perceived handling of it, as is proposed by Goes, 2016. Examining public opinion towards Labour will assess the strength of feeling from the working class towards Labour.

In a March 2015 ICM poll for the Guardian, individuals from social grades C2DE were asked "Thinking about Ed Miliband, would you say he... Understands people like me". Of the weighted sample of 210 individuals asked from social grade C2, 55% of respondents stated that Ed Miliband does not understand them. When the same question was posed to social grades D and E, out of a weighted sample of 230 individuals, 58% responded that Ed Miliband does not understand them (ICM, 2015). It is important to note that this poll focussed specifically on gathering public attitudes towards Ed Miliband, and thus the results of this poll cannot be taken to wholly reflect people's overall view of the Labour Party. However, this poll was undertaken two months before the 2015 general election and Miliband was Labour leader at the time. For this reason, despite the results not necessarily reflecting people's overall view of Labour, the results can be said to be reflective of the wider opinion of the party at the time. The results of this poll indicate that social grades D and E feel most strongly that Miliband does not understand them. Social grade C2 feels slightly less this way, however the percentage is still high.

The feeling of not being understood was evidenced further when in another poll, participants were asked to tick the characteristics

they believed best described Ed Miliband. The results have been inputted into a line graph, detailed below.

Table 1 – Leaders’ Characteristics



The graph indicates that only 21.8% of people felt Ed Miliband was ‘in touch with ordinary people’ (YouGov, 2015a). Despite this being the second largest percentage in the graph, it remains to be a relatively low percentage. Secondly, it is important to highlight that 54.25% of people felt like none of the characteristics represent Ed Miliband (YouGov 2015a). Although this does not necessarily mean people were unsupportive of the Labour Party as a whole, it is again reflective of the wider social attitudes to the party at the time of polling.

Attitudes towards the party as a whole were evidenced, when a 2015 YouGov poll, asked participants to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: “Labour have seriously lost touch with ordinary working people...”. Of the weighted sample of 888 individuals from social grades C2DE, 56% responded that they agreed; Labour have seriously lost touch with ordinary people (YouGov, 2015b). This correlates with Ford and Goodwin’s analysis of Labour, detailed in the literature review, where they state that working class people are increasingly viewing Labour as a party who is not attuned to their lives.

The main point that can be deduced from this data is that the working class electorate feel very strongly that the Labour Party does not understand them. Labour’s inability to fully understand the working class electorate can be argued to have contributed to Labour’s loss in support in recent years. However, examining why there is an apparent disconnection between the working class electorate and the Labour Party will illuminate further factors associated with Labour’s decline in electoral support.

In order to explore this further, Labour’s 2015 general election manifesto will be analysed. This will determine the extent to which Labour has attempted to engage with the working class electorate, through directly addressing them. Determining this will establish whether Labour is losing support as a result of not directly addressing the working class in their manifesto, instead focussing on the middle-class electorate, as Avril, 2016, suggested in the literature review.

Chapter 1.2 - Content Analysis of Labour's 2015 Manifesto

Having explored working class attitudes towards Labour, it is now essential to relate this to the content of Labour's 2015 general election manifesto. Firstly, a quantitative content analysis was carried out on the manifesto, counting the instances of key words that are often associated with social grades C2DE. This was carried out with the intent of gaining a better impression of which sector of the electorate the manifesto was intended for. The results were only taken into account if they were contextually accurate for what was being measured. As Harrison, 2001, argues it is important to consider "the *context* in which words or phrases are provided" (Harrison, 2001: 115). For instance, the word 'working' was not counted if it was referring to a subject completely separate from the subject matter, e.g. the 'working machinery'. The results can be seen in Table 2, below.

Table 2 - Labour's 2015 Manifesto: Quantitative Content Analysis of Working Class

Keyword(s)	Frequency
Working	42
Working people	12
Ordinary	1
Working families	5
Working parents	2
Working life	3

Source: Labour Party Manifesto, 2015.

The analysis indicates that Labour does appear to have made reference to words that might be associated with the working class, a substantive amount. This suggests Labour’s manifesto is more directed towards the working class electorate. However, these results mean little when they are not compared to the level at which the manifesto attempted to appeal to other social grades. This becomes increasingly hard to measure, because the term ‘working class’ is more colloquially used than the term middle class. However, a quantitative content analysis will be used to count the instances in which Labour referred to the ‘private sector’ and ‘public sector’ in their manifesto. Both of these sectors are widely associated with what the NRS social grading system would consider ‘middle class’, and thus will provide a clearer image of the demographic the manifesto is intended for. The results can be seen in Table 3, below.

Table 3 - Labour’s 2015 Manifesto: Quantitative Content Analysis of Middle Class

Keyword(s)	Frequency
Private/Public Sector	7

Source: Labour Party Manifesto, 2015.

Comparing the findings from Tables 2 and 3, it appears as though, despite still attempting to engage with private and public sector workers, overall, Labour appears to place the greatest amount of emphasis on the working class. One explanation for Labour’s consistent referencing to the working class in their 2015 manifesto is that the party understood the need for a more leftist form of politics following the GFC. Labour attempted to show this through emphasising that the party was the “party of work” and that they “value working life” (Labour Party Manifesto, 2015). However, this means little unless the *concerns*

of the working class are addressed. Goes, 2016, suggests that this is where Labour have faltered. If Labour are making an effort to engage with working class voters, but the working class electorate are not responding to these efforts, then this suggests there may be other reasons for Labour losing support.

This chapter has presented evidence to support H1 – Labour is losing support from the working class electorate. This paper will proceed, in chapter two, by investigating why the working class electorate are becoming increasingly unsupportive of the Labour Party. This will be examined through exploring the concerns of the electorate, and assessing the extent to which Labour addressed these concerns.

Chapter 2 – Labour and the Immigration Issue

While chapter one evidenced that Labour appears to be losing support from the working class, it has been established that this is not because Labour did not address the working class in their 2015 manifesto. In order to address H2 and H3, both derived from the literature review, the next part of analysis will, firstly, examine polling data to establish the concerns of the electorate. The concerns of the electorate as a whole will be examined, in addition to the concerns of social grades C2DE and Labour voters. This will aim to address H2. Following on from this, Labour's 2015 general election manifesto will be analysed in order to establish whether or not Labour adequately addressed the concerns of the electorate, or whether they failed to address these concerns. This will provide further evidence in an effort to establish whether or not it has been Labour's failure to address key issues, like immigration, that can explain why Labour has steadily lost support from the working class electorate, thus addressing H3.

Chapter 2.1 - Secondary Data Analysis of Public Opinion on Key Issues

One YouGov poll, undertaken in April 2015, asked 1749 Great British adults "Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time? Please tick up to three". The results are broken down into the overall electorate, social grades C2DE, and people who intended to vote Labour. The results can be seen on page 27, in Table 4.

Table 4 - Issues Important to the Electorate: Labour

	1st most important issue	2nd most important issue	3rd most important issue.
Overall Electorate	Economy – 55%	Health – 50%	Immigration – 47%
Social grades C2DE	Immigration – 61%	Health – 46%	Economy – 45%
Labour voters	Health – 59%	Economy – 47%	Immigration – 36%

Note: This table combines the percentages from a 2015 YouGov public opinion poll that was carried out between April 27th and April 28th 2015. These figures are based on the weighted samples of 1749 Great British adults, all over 18. Source: YouGov. (2015c.)

From this data, a number of points can be deduced. Firstly, across the three demographics listed above - respondents, social grades C2DE, and Labour voters – health appears to have triumphed as the most pertinent issue, being the top concern for Labour voters and the second most important concern for C2DE respondents and the overall electorate. Furthermore, on the issue of immigration, C2DE respondents appear to be most concerned about this issue, and by the biggest margin of 14% between the top concern and second top concern. The economy also appears to be a pertinent issue, which is congruent with Clarke’s suggestion in the literature review, that the electorate consistently consider the economy an important issue. Having established the key concerns of the electorate, this will now be compared with data from Labour’s 2015 manifesto in order to assess the extent to which Labour addressed these issues.

Chapter 2.2 - Content Analysis of Labour's 2015 Manifesto

As detailed in the methodology section of this paper, a quantitative content analysis has been used to determine the frequency of key issues within Labour's 2015 general election manifesto. In Table 5, the findings from the quantitative content analysis of Labour's manifesto are detailed.

Table 5 - Labour's 2015 Manifesto: Quantitative Content Analysis of Immigration

Keyword(s)	Frequency
Immigration	8
Immigrants	0
Border	4
Health/NHS/Health services	57
Economy	33
Budget	28
Europe	25
The European Union/EU	17

Source: Labour Party Manifesto, 2015.

The quantitative content analysis of Labour's 2015 manifesto highlights that Labour placed the most emphasis on Health/NHS, mentioning the issue a total of 57 times throughout the

manifesto. Correlating this with the secondary data which highlights health as being the issue that Labour voters feel is the most important issue to them, then it can be argued that Labour has adequately addressed this concern. Furthermore, the secondary polling data revealed health as the secondary concern of both the overall electorate and the social grades C2DE, thus suggesting that Labour's emphasis on health throughout the manifesto appears to have responded to the concerns of these voters. Similarly, Labour has placed considerable emphasis on the economy and the nation's budget, mentioning them a combined total of 61 times. Moreover, the first page of Labour's manifesto is solely devoted to the economy and budget, this suggesting the issue to be a central concern for Labour. This, indeed, correlates with the overall electorate, who ranked the economy as being the main issue facing Britain. It also correlates with social grades C2DE, who ranked the economy the third most important issue facing Britain, whilst also correlating with the concerns of Labour voters, who also ranked the economy the second most important issue. On the issue of immigration, Labour mentioned the word 'immigration' a total of 8 times throughout its manifesto, 'immigrants' 0 times, and 'border' 4 times. Relating back to the secondary data, immigration was the issue that was ranked as the most important by social grades C2DE, thus suggesting that Labour has fallen short in adequately addressing this concern, for this part of the electorate. Labour's heavy focus on health and the economy and budget could be argued to have been assigned disproportionate emphasis, leaving the main concern of the social grades C2DE, on the periphery. On the issue of Europe/European Union, Labour mentioned this a combined total of 37 times, almost five times more than immigration was mentioned, despite Europe/EU not being a concern for the electorate, according to the secondary data. This again suggests that Labour may have placed disproportionate emphasis on certain issues, over others.

The analysis, for the most part, highlighted that the issues that were noted as being most important to the electorate were given the most attention in the manifesto. However, the interest lies in instances where the issues that have been highlighted to be of importance to the electorate has *not* been adequately emphasised in the manifesto. This appears to have happened most under the issue of immigration. Despite immigration being one of the top three concerns of the Labour voting electorate, in addition to being the chief concern of social grades C2DE, Labour's 'core vote', the issue was largely neglected by the Labour Party. This relates back to the first chapter regarding the working class feeling as though Labour does not understand them. Labour failed to recognise immigration as being a key concern of the working class electorate, and therefore responded inadequately.

Although Table 5 has highlighted the issues that Labour has placed the most or least emphasis on in its election manifesto, it is important to establish the manner in which the issue is being discussed. Establishing this will address the potential weakness of quantitative content analysis, in that it can sometimes make a particular issue or word appear more important, due to high frequency, but neglects the context in which it was discussed, which may or may not be relevant to the research question and hypotheses. The results are detailed in a Table 6, on page 31.

Table 6 - Labour's 2015 Manifesto: Qualitative Content Analysis of Immigration

<p>Immigration –</p> <p>Controls Contribution Important Economic Social Controlled Fair Rules High Anxiety Action Illegal Stop Enforce Humanely Effectively System Asylum Reforms Manage</p>	<p>Border –</p> <p>Secure Strength Stability Stronger Peace More staff</p>
--	--

Source: Labour Party Manifesto, 2015.

Examining the language used in reference to the issue of immigration allows for a more coherent understanding of how Labour has dealt with the issue. The words associated with Labour's dealing of the issue of immigration denote a slightly more positive stance, with words like 'contribution', 'important', and 'fair' standing out, suggesting a more open attitude to immigration, on the whole. The table suggests that Labour is promoting a more balanced approach to immigration that seeks to reform the system, as opposed to an outright rejection of the current system. This can be seen through the use of words like 'humanely', 'effectively', 'reforms', 'controlled', 'action'. All these words denote a sense of ensuring a stronger system that

reflects a softer approach to immigration, rather than a hard line approach. With Labour's reference to border, the idea that a softer approach is being taken is evidenced further. Words like 'secure', 'peace', 'stability' all appear to contribute to this softer approach to immigration. Considering that immigration was proclaimed to be the most important issue for C2DE respondents, and in the top three most important issues for Labour voters and the overall electorate, Labour's soft approach seems insufficient in fully addressing this concern. Labour's problem in addressing the issue of immigration is that while they recognised UKIP as direct competitors over gaining support from the 'left behind' voters, Labour was also competing with more progressive parties for voters, who they risked alienating further through taking a harsh stance on immigration. As Ford and Sobolewska state, the issue for Labour was that "appearing tough on immigration has short-term appeal...but does long term harm" (Ford and Sobolewska, 2016: 243). Labour had to consider this when devising their approach to immigration. The result, however, appeared too balanced, or as Goes states 'confused'.

This chapter firstly provided suitable evidence to support H2 – the working class electorate are very concerned about immigration. This chapter has extended this further by providing sufficient evidence to suggest that the Labour Party has failed to adequately address these concerns about immigration, thus addressing H3. This provides further reasoning for why the Labour Party is losing significant support from the working class electorate. Despite immigration being the top concern of C2DE respondents, Labour failed to adequately address this concern in their manifesto. It is clear these voters are becoming increasingly unsupportive of the Labour Party, partially because of Labour's failure to address key issues, however, evidence has not yet been put forth to highlight where these voters are going. Chapter three

will attempt to address H4 – many working class voters are moving to UKIP – through highlighting that, because of Labour’s handling of issues like immigration, many of these working class voters have looked towards other forms of political representation.

Chapter 3 – The Labour to UKIP Voter Shift

Thus far, it is evident that Labour has a problem in that it is increasingly losing support from the working class. Chapter two has highlighted that this is partially due to Labour's handling of the issue of immigration. However, it is not explicitly clear where these voters are going. While Roberts, 2014, suggests that many of these voters are leaving Labour for UKIP, Goes argues, "the Green Party, and in particular the SNP", have been "successful at winning centre-left voters" (Goes, 2016: 31) who may feel alienated by the Labour Party. However, this chapter will attempt to prove that UKIP has in fact been the chief beneficiary of voters who are disillusioned with the Labour Party and their handling of immigration, thus highlighting the reason for Labour's loss in support, and UKIP's rise in support.

Chapter three will combine secondary data analyses with mixed methods content analyses, in order to present sufficient evidence to prove H4 – that many working class voters are moving to UKIP, who they believe will better represent them. First, an analysis of secondary data will be presented, which highlights working class attitudes towards UKIP, compared with Labour. This has been carried out with the aim of highlighting that the working class electorate are increasingly more receptive to UKIP, over Labour. Similar to chapter one, the results of this will be paralleled with a quantitative analysis of UKIP's 2015 general election manifesto, in order to investigate the extent to which UKIP has addressed the working class electorate. Following on from this, a secondary data analysis will be carried out in order to highlight the main concerns of UKIP voters. Data from chapter one, regarding the concerns of C2DE respondents, will be reiterated here as a point of reference. The results of this will then be compared with a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of UKIP's 2015 general election manifesto, which will

aim to highlight how UKIP have approached immigration. The chapter will conclude with the presentation of further secondary data in order to assess whether UKIP have been successful in better addressing the concern of immigration, over Labour. This will be followed by the conclusion.

Chapter 3.1 – UKIP and the Working Class: An Analysis

Having evidenced working class attitudes towards the Labour Party in chapter one, it is important to compare these findings with data that highlights working class attitudes towards UKIP. As mentioned in chapter one, UKIP witnessed a significant increase in support from the C2DE electorate between the 2010 general election and the 2015 general election. This rise in support for UKIP is evidenced in public opinion polls from 2015.

One YouGov poll from April 2015 focusses on public opinion of the Labour Party and UKIP, breaking the results down into social grades. In social grades C2DE, a weighted sample of 720 individuals were asked “Thinking about the general election campaigns and promises from the main parties, do you think the following parties are being generally honest or dishonest?”. For Labour, the response indicated that more people in social grade C2DE believed Labour to be more dishonest (45%) than honest (29%) (YouGov, 2015d). Furthermore, when the same individuals were asked about UKIP, the response highlighted that people from social grade C2DE believe UKIP to be more honest than Labour, at 30%, versus Labour’s 29% (YouGov, 2015d). The results of this poll are reflective of the wider sense of disconnection between the Labour Party and the working class, and furthermore, they indicate that many individuals from these social grades consider UKIP to be the more trusted choice.

However, paralleling these results with the quantitative analysis of UKIP’s manifesto reveals an interesting facet of the debate. The words used for analysis are the same words that were quantified in Labour’s manifesto in chapter one, making the results easier to compare. The findings are detailed in Table 7, below.

Table 7 - UKIP’s 2015 Manifesto: Quantitative Content Analysis of Working Class

Keyword(s)	Frequency
Working	19
Working people	1
Ordinary	1
Working families	0
Working parents	1
Working life	0

Source: UKIP Manifesto, 2015.

The findings reveal that UKIP made reference to the working class electorate far less than Labour did. In fact, comparing the numbers on the table above, with the numbers presented in Table 2, reveals that Labour made reference to the working class electorate more than triple the number of times UKIP did, at 83 times, versus 22 times for UKIP. These findings are congruent with the idea that it is more a matter of the approach to key concerns, like immigration, that has resulted in working class voters moving from Labour to UKIP.

The next part of this chapter will proceed by presenting the relevant data to highlight the concerns of UKIP voters. Having analysed this data, UKIP’s 2015 manifesto will be quantitatively and qualitatively assessed in order to determine the adequacy of UKIP’s response to the concerns of the electorate. The aim of this is to establish whether or not UKIP appear to have been more successful than Labour on issues that the electorate deem as important.

Chapter 3.2 – UKIP and the Issue of Immigration

Having detailed the findings for Labour in chapter two, the same YouGov poll from April 2015, reveals the issues that are most pertinent to individuals who stated their intention to vote UKIP in the May 2015 election. This is detailed in Table 8, below.

Table 8 - Issues Important to the Electorate: UKIP

	1st most important issue	2nd most important issue	3rd most important issue
Overall Electorate	Economy – 55%	Health – 50%	Immigration – 47%
Social grades C2DE	Immigration – 61%	Health – 46%	Economy – 45%
UKIP voters	Immigration – 88%	Europe – 40%	Economy – 36%

See description for Table 4. Source: YouGov (2015c).

For UKIP voters, of which there was a weighted sample of 175 individuals, 88% stated that immigration was the most important issue, followed by Europe at 40%, and health at 36% (YouGov, 2015c). The fact that Europe ranks as the second most important

issue to UKIP voters is interesting, because the issue does not rank in the top three for the other electorate groups analysed.

These findings were correlated with the quantitative analysis of UKIP’s 2015 manifesto, in order to determine whether UKIP adequately addressed these concerns. The findings, are detailed in Table 9, below.

Table 9 - UKIP’s 2015 Manifesto: Quantitative Content Analysis of Immigration

Keyword(s)	Frequency
Immigration	36
Immigrants	9
Border	6
Health/NHS/Health services	98
Economy	9
Budget	11
Europe	4
The European Union/EU	124

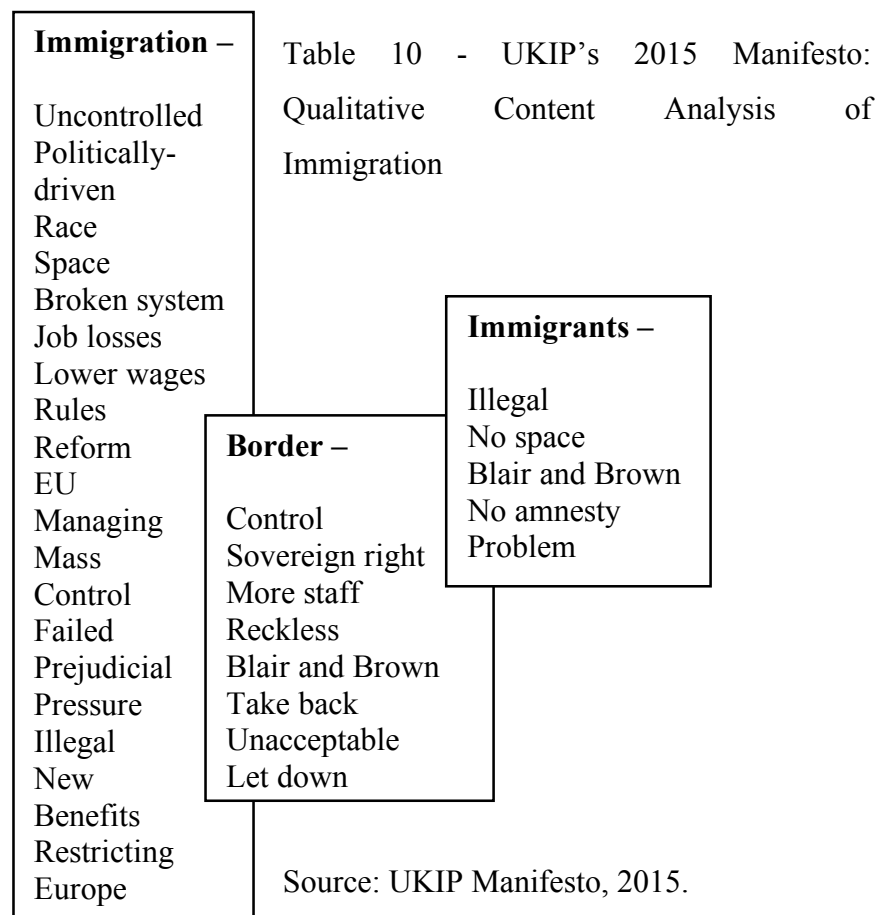
Source: UKIP Manifesto, 2015.

The table shows that on the issue of Health/NHS, UKIP mentioned the issue 98 times, around 40% more than Labour’s manifesto. The secondary data highlights that the issue of health is the second most important issue to the overall electorate, as well as being the second most important issue to social grades

C2DE. For this reason, it can be argued that UKIP appears to have placed adequate emphasis on the issue. However, the issue of health does not rank in the top three issues for UKIP voters at all, suggesting the level of emphasis that has been placed upon the issue is somewhat disproportionate to the chief concerns of the UKIP electorate. Health, however, was the top ranked issue for Labour voters, as was detailed in chapter one, suggesting that its inclusion of the issue could be correlated with UKIP's desire to appeal to those who are currently dissatisfied with the Labour Party, as Ford and Goodwin argue. In terms of the economy and budget, UKIP mentioned them a combined total of 20 times. That is around three times less than the number of times Labour mentioned the economy and budget. Considering that the economy ranked as the most important issue according to the overall electorate, the emphasis placed on the issue appears low. However, the economy is only the third most important concern of UKIP voters, and the third most important concern of social grades C2DE individuals, and thus it appears as though UKIP's decision to place a lesser emphasis on the economy correlates more with the electorate they are targeting with their manifesto. On the issue of immigration, UKIP mentioned the word 'immigration', nearly five times more than Labour at 36 times, the word 'immigrant' 9 times, and the word 'border' 6 times. Secondary data indicates that immigration is ranked as the most important issue for both those in the social category C2DE and UKIP voters. This suggests that UKIP's extensive referencing to the issue of immigration represents an attempt to address the concerns of these two groups of the electorate. UKIP mentioned Europe/European Union 7 times more than Labour. Europe ranked as the second most important concern for those voting UKIP, thus the referencing of Europe throughout the manifesto can be attributed to UKIP's desire to appeal to their electorate, as well as remaining true to the Eurosceptic nature of their party. While Labour failed to recognise immigration as being a key

concern of the working class electorate, UKIP appears to have recognised this as a key concern, and thus it can be argued that this may constitute a reason for working class voters moving from Labour to UKIP, thus accounting for Labour’s loss in overall support, and UKIP’s rise in overall support.

Further investigating the language used in reference to immigration reveals further evidence that suggests UKIP have more adequately addressed the issue of immigration. The findings from the qualitative analysis of UKIP’s 2015 general election manifesto are detailed below, in Table 10.



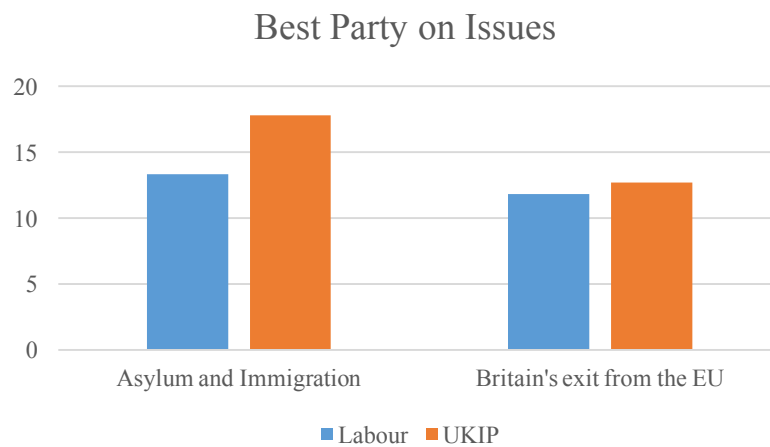
On the whole, the words associated with UKIP’s handling of immigration reflect a more negative stance that appears to reject the current system. Words like ‘uncontrolled’, ‘failed’, ‘broken

system', 'pressure', 'illegal' all suggest that UKIP is adopting an approach which appears to be channelling the anger felt towards the current system, in favour of a new and harsher stance on immigration. The words associated with border and immigrants, again, carry negative connotations, even making reference to Labour with the mention of 'Blair and Brown'.

The key differences between Labour's approach to immigration and UKIP's approach to immigration is that while Labour appears to be balanced on the issue, UKIP appears to have adopted a stricter and rejectionist stance. While Labour focuses on what could be, UKIP is focussing on what has been. Data indicates that the electorate are very concerned about immigration and thus, it could be argued that UKIP adopted a stance where they channelled the anger felt towards immigration to a greater extent than Labour. This has ultimately led to the working class electorate feeling as though Labour does not represent their concerns, resulting in many working class voters looking to UKIP for representation.

This is evidenced in a recent YouGov poll from 2016, when participants were asked who they felt were the best party on key issues. Table 11 details public opinion on the issue of immigration and Europe, in relation to Labour and UKIP. See Table 11, on page 42.

Table 11 - Best Parties on Issues



Note: The above table has taken figures from a 2016 YouGov poll, dated between the 25/07/2016 and the 05/12/2016. It has calculated the average percentage for each issue, and each party. Source: YouGov. (2016).

Table 11 shows that UKIP appears to have superseded Labour on the issue of immigration, in terms of trust. As stated in the literature review, Clarke et al argues that this could be grounded in voters basing their opinions in valence reasoning. With Labour, voters have the ability to retrospectively assess their competence on dealing with key issues. Voters do not have this ability with UKIP, who have never been in office.

However, UKIP's success appears to be rooted in the fact that the party successfully managed to link the issue of Europe with mass immigration. As detailed in the literature review, Ford and Goodwin discuss this when they state that "UKIP began fusing their hard Eurosceptic message with stronger nationalist, anti-elite and anti-immigration elements in the hope of taking votes from both Labour and working-class Tories" (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 108). Evidence presented in this chapter has revealed this. Polling data evidenced that the top issue for UKIP

voters was immigration. The second most important issue was Europe. Furthermore, the qualitative content analysis reveals further evidence that UKIP has successfully linked Europe with concerns about immigration. Words like the “EU” and “Europe” are highlighted as having been discussed in UKIP’s manifesto, in reference to immigration. This is proof that UKIP have managed to successfully fuse the concern of Europe with immigration, and now many “UKIP voters feel even more strongly about immigration than they do about the European Union” (Behr, 2013: 40).

UKIP’s more recent success is due to the fact that UKIP has managed to direct the anger felt towards the issue of immigration towards the Labour Party. This is evidenced through the qualitative analysis of UKIP’s manifesto, where the words “Blair and Brown” are repeatedly stated in association with the issue of immigration. This correlates with Ford and Goodwin’s statement that “the party won many recruits from Labour during the Blair and Brown governments” (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 169/170). While UKIP were directing the anger felt towards the issue of immigration to the Labour Party, Labour were perceived as being “soft on immigration” (Field, 2014: 56). This also helps to explain the regional dimension to UKIP’s success. UKIP is succeeding most in “traditional Labour heartlands in the north-east of England” (Goes, 2016: 148), and is having less success in areas like London. This is because rural working class communities view “immigration in a radically different manner” (Goes, 2016: 148) to people living in larger cities.

Ultimately, the data presented highlights that UKIP’s appeal lies in the fact they offer policies towards immigration that many working class voters believe represent their concerns to a greater extent than Labour’s policies. This is combined with UKIP linking these concerns about immigration to the Labour Party.

This has resulted in public opinion towards Labour from C2DE voters appearing more negatively, while public opinion towards UKIP from C2DE voters is more positive. Ultimately, this explains the movement of working class voters from Labour to UKIP, who they believe will better represent them, thus supporting H4.

Conclusion

This research paper began by outlining previous scholars' reasoning for the Labour Party's recent loss in support, and UKIP's rise in support. Some suggested that Labour's recent loss in support and UKIP's rise in support follows a European pattern that is seeing a large number of social democratic parties suffer. Others alleged that changes in the electorate, such as the decline of the working class, is the reason for Labour's share of the vote being in decline, while UKIP's rises. Lastly, the review of the literature also highlighted the issue of immigration, and Labour's apparent ill handling of it, as being the reason for their loss in support. UKIP, on the other hand, appear to have more adequately addressed this concern, thus attracting working class voters.

This research paper constructed hypotheses, based on the literature review, that sought to further address the factors surrounding Labour's loss in support and UKIP's rise in support. The paper sought to do this through a secondary data analysis of public opinion and a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of Labour and UKIP's 2015 general election manifestos. The findings raised a number of points for discussion, and were not all what was expected.

Through presenting empirical evidence, this research found that working class support for the Labour Party appears to be generally low. However, this study highlighted that Labour does appear to have made an effort to address the working class electorate in their 2015 manifesto, thus indicating that the reason the working class are becoming less supportive of Labour is more closely correlated with issue-based reasoning, discussed in the literature review. The study highlighted that immigration was the top concern of C2DE respondents. Considering this, this

research showed that Labour did not sufficiently address this issue in their 2015 manifesto, thus neglecting the concerns of working class voters. The study also analysed the manner in which Labour discussed immigration. Considering that data indicated that the working class are very concerned about the issue of immigration, Labour's approach in their 2015 manifesto appeared too soft and balanced. This highlights that the reason for Labour's loss in support is more down to their handling of the issue of immigration. Conversely, findings from chapter three found that UKIP more adequately addressed the issue of immigration, and as a result, UKIP polled higher in trust levels for immigration policy, and for C2DE individuals.

From carrying out this study, the problem for Labour is clear. When Miliband was elected Labour leader in 2010, he was faced with the challenge of “triangulating between Old and New Labour” (Bale, 2015: 130), in an attempt to “redefine what Labour stands for” (Clark, 2012: 84). The issue with Miliband's Labour was that it appeared too balanced. Miliband had the task of trying to ensure that Labour's policies on immigration possessed widespread appeal that would interest voters who had left the party for UKIP, while also appealing to voters who had shifted their alliance to more progressive parties, such as the Greens or the SNP. This meant that Labour's positioning on immigration, and who they were standing for in the electorate, seemed false and half-hearted. This was Labour's downfall. UKIP, on the other hand, were able to offer a concise anti-immigration stance, directing anger towards the issue at the Labour Party. The lack of political choice felt by individuals, in turn fuelled anti-establishment rhetoric and UKIP capitalised on this.

This research paper has been essential in challenging assumptions of Labour's electoral defeat in the 2015 general

election. While many may assume it was Labour's failure to connect with the working class electorate, it has to be understood that this was only a small part of the problem. The problem ultimately comes down to Labour's own identity crisis, in that the party itself does not appear to fully grasp who they are trying to appeal to. For future research projects on this topic, I would strongly suggest exploring Labour's own identity struggles. This research paper has made it clear that Labour has a lot of soul searching to do if it is to win back voters. Particularly with many UKIP voters where "their "heads" are Labour, but their "hearts" are often with the social values of the Conservatives" (Goes, 2016: 148), Labour must find a way to appeal to these voters. This will be the key for any future success for the Labour Party.

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