

Racial integration, ethnic diversity, and prejudice: empirical evidence from a study of the British National Party

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Does contact with ethnic minorities exacerbate or lower the racial prejudice of whites? To provide empirical evidence on this question, I examine the recruitment of members by the British National Party (BNP), which has a long history of supplying hate-creating stories about ethnic minorities. I find that the BNP recruits fewer white members from communities in which: (i) whites interact more frequently with nonwhites, (ii) whites are exposed to greater racial diversity within the nonwhite population, and (iii) there are more mixed-race offspring from white and nonwhite parents. Further tests suggest that these results are not attributable to self-segregation or economic conditions. Overall, there is compelling evidence that contact with ethnic minorities reduces the racial prejudice of whites.

JEL classifications: D72, J15, J61, R23.

1. Introduction

There is considerable evidence that racial diversity seriously undermines the extent of social cohesion. People are less trusting of persons who are ethnically different and individuals generally prefer to interact with people who belong to the same ethnic group (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2000; Glaeser *et al.*, 2000; Alesina *et al.*, 2004). Research on racial attitudes in the United States has further shown that whites are more likely to provide racially hostile responses to survey questions if they live in predominantly nonwhite neighbourhoods (Giles and Evans, 1986; Fossett and Kiecolt, 1989; Glaser, 1994; Taylor, 1998).

Glaeser (2005), however, presents a somewhat more optimistic view about the impact of racial diversity. In his theoretical model, far-right politicians attempt to foster negative racial attitudes among whites by supplying them with stories that depict ethnic minorities in a negative light. Such stories are influential even when they are untrue because it is costly for people to find out whether the stories are mere propaganda. An important insight from the model is that rational individuals

are more receptive to hostile messages when they are less well informed about minority out-groups and thus do not know the truth. According to Glaeser (2005), racial integration and ethnic mixing could deter the spread of hatred because it helps to ensure that people are correctly informed. According to this positive view, the whites who live in racially diverse neighbourhoods should be better informed about their nonwhite neighbours and therefore more likely to reject the hatred purveyed by far-right politicians.

The British National Party (BNP) is the major far-right political party in Britain and its history is littered with numerous hate-creating messages about ethnic minorities. In 2008, the party's database of members was briefly leaked onto the internet by a senior official following an internal spat. Subsequently the BNP leader confirmed to the media that the database was genuine and that it contained the addresses of all party members. Using this previously hidden information, I explore whether whites are more likely to belong to the BNP when they live in neighbourhoods that are exposed to less ethnic diversity. My analysis focuses exclusively on the propensity of white people to join the BNP because the party's constitution at the time of the leak prohibited the recruitment of nonwhite members. Given the arguments in Glaeser (2005), I expect that whites are more likely to sign up to the party when they have less social contact with heterogeneous ethnic groups because, in this situation, whites are less well informed and so they are more likely to accept the BNP's hate-creating stories.

The results from three sets of tests all point towards whites signing up to the party when they are less well informed about nonwhites. First, the rate of BNP membership within the white population is significantly higher in areas where there are fewer nonwhite inhabitants per hectare. Consistent with the racial integration hypothesis, this suggests that whites are more likely to belong to the party if they do not regularly come into contact with nonwhites. An alternative interpretation of this result is that racially intolerant whites are averse to living in areas that are heavily populated by nonwhites, while racially tolerant whites are more willing to live in enclaves that are predominantly nonwhite. A supplementary test, however, fails to support this alternative explanation based upon self-segregation. Specifically, the rates of BNP membership are not higher in neighbourhoods that are whiter than their surrounding districts. This runs counter to the argument that BNP members self-segregate into areas that are predominantly white.

Second, I test whether the degree of ethnic diversity within the nonwhite population affects the rate at which whites belong to the BNP. For example, there would be less diversity within a given area if all the nonwhite inhabitants are Asian. The whites living in such an area would have less opportunity to interact with and become informed about Blacks. Likewise, if all of the nonwhites are Black, the whites are denied the prospect of mixing with Asians. Given Glaeser's (2005) arguments about the informational benefits of racial diversity, I expect that whites are less inclined to belong to the party if they come into contact with several foreign

cultures rather than just one.¹ Consistent with this argument, I find that racial diversity within the nonwhite population is strongly and negatively associated with the propensity of whites to belong to the BNP.

The third main finding that provides support for the positive view of racial integration is that whites are less likely to be members of the party if they live among more nonwhites who are of mixed-race. The presence of mixed-race people within a community naturally requires the existence of sexual relations between white and nonwhite parents and is therefore a fairly direct indicator of inter-racial contact. My finding that this type of contact is negatively associated with white membership of the BNP further suggests that racial integration helps to reduce the extent of intolerance.

It is important to rule out two alternative explanations for this third finding. First, there is a reverse causality issue because white BNP members are unlikely to mate with nonwhites and therefore areas with high BNP membership would naturally tend to produce fewer mixed-race offspring. I demonstrate that this problem of ‘missing’ mixed-race children arising from the preference of BNP members to have white mates does not explain the results. A second alternative explanation is that racial hatred depends on the darkness of skin colour rather than the extent of mixing between whites and nonwhites. It could be that whites are less racially prejudiced against nonwhites whose skins are lighter and this could explain why whites are less likely to belong to the BNP when they live among nonwhites who are mostly mixed-race. Additional findings, however, fail to support this alternative interpretation. In particular, blacks have the darkest skin colour of the different nonwhite groups but I do not find that whites are significantly more likely to belong to the BNP when they live in areas where the nonwhite population is mostly black. Therefore, the attitudes of whites towards the skin colours of different nonwhite groups does not explain why BNP membership rates are abnormally low in areas where there are more mixed-race people.

To my knowledge, this is the first study to examine why people belong to a party that emits hate-creating stories about ethnic minorities. Some studies attempt to gauge the extent of racial prejudice by relying on respondents’ answers to survey questions (e.g., Dustman and Preston, 2001). However, there is good reason to be sceptical about the survey data because there is often a big difference between how people say they behave and how they actually behave. Survey data are especially unreliable when it is costless for the respondent to be untruthful and when the questions involve stigmatizing behaviour such as racial prejudice. Instead of relying on survey information, this study utilizes data on individuals’ decisions to belong to a racially-prejudiced political party. The leaking of the membership database was

¹The Ouseley report—commissioned following racial rioting in England during the summer of 2001—concluded that greater racial integration was needed in order to increase interconnectedness and promote tolerance. The report cited the area of Barkerend as a role model as it is a culturally diverse location with Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, African-Caribbean, and white European families living together.

completely unexpected and so this provides an ideal opportunity to investigate behaviour that would normally be hidden.

Some studies measure the support for far-right parties using voting data (e.g., Whiteley, 1979). In contrast, this study focuses on party membership for three reasons. First, there would be a severe censorship problem with analysing the voting data because the BNP contests only a handful of selected constituencies. Political parties in Britain are required to pay a deposit on behalf of each candidate and the deposit is refunded only if the candidate polls at least 5% of the vote. Consequently, small parties like the BNP do not field candidates in the majority of communities where there is a negligible chance of retaining the deposit. This censorship problem does not affect my analysis because the membership database covers the entire country rather than a small number of contested constituencies.

Second, some people vote for radical right-wing parties as an expression of their dissatisfaction with mainstream politics (e.g., Mayer and Perrineau, 1992). Whereas electoral results can be affected by such floating protest voters, the national database reveals where there is deeply-held support for the party.

Finally, a study of the party's membership provides insights that cannot be observed from the voting data. Small niche parties have incentives to moderate their policies in order to become more appealing to the electorate but such moderation can provoke bitter internal divisions. Thus, a small political party can pay a heavy price for policy changes that bring it more votes. Consistent with this perspective, the political science literature finds that small niche parties emphasize political ideology rather than the number of votes (e.g., Kitschelt, 1994). Because their policies are largely driven by the ideological preferences of party members, these small parties are much less likely to change their policies in response to voter opinion than are the mainstream parties (Adams *et al.*, 2006). Keeping party members happy is particularly important for the BNP because the radical right in Britain has a long history of internecine fighting and fragmentation (Sykes, 2005; Copsey, 2008). Given that the BNP's policies are influenced more by its members than by the electorate, it is important to investigate why people sign up to the party.² Moreover, there is evidence linking the party's activities within a community to racially motivated attacks against ethnic minorities (next section) so it is important to understand the factors that drive whites to sign up to the party.

The remainder of the paper is as follows. Section 2 provides a brief history of the BNP and reviews the related academic literature. Section 3 discusses the variables that are expected to explain party membership. Section 4 describes the data including an explanation of how the party's national database is matched with census records. Section 5 reports the main results and Section 6 concludes.

²The BNP's emphasis on ideology is illustrated by the following comment from its founder, John Tyndall: 'I do not believe that the survival of the white man will be found through the crest of political respectability because I believe that respectability today means one thing, it means your preparedness to be a lackey of the establishment . . . I don't want respectability if that is what respectability means, preparedness to surrender my own race, to hell with respectability if that is what it is' (Copsey, 2008, p.20).

2. The politics of racial hatred

2.1 The BNP

The BNP has a long history of issuing inflammatory comments and misleading statements about ethnic minorities, all of which help to foment racial hatred. The party was founded in 1982 by John Tyndall, who had previously been involved in the British far-right movement for many years. On the anniversary of Hitler's birthday (20 April 1962), Tyndall had formed a neo-Nazi action group called the National Socialist Movement (NSM). At its inaugural rally Tyndall declared: 'in our democratic society the Jew is like a poisonous maggot feeding off a body in an advanced state of decay' (Sykes, 2005, p.100). This comment resulted in a short prison term for insulting words likely to cause a breach of the peace. The media also published photographs of Tyndall and his co-conspirators wearing Nazi uniforms.

During another imprisonment in 1966 for illegal possession of firearms, Tyndall wrote the 'Six Principles of Nationalism' in which he changed direction by appealing for unity among the far-right in order to achieve democratic success at the ballot box. In the following year, the National Front (NF) emerged from a coalition of extreme-right groups and quickly became the largest far-right political party in Britain. Tyndall became leader of the NF in 1972 and was very active in publishing stories that portrayed negative stereotypical images of nonwhites. For example, his newspaper falsely claimed that blacks have smaller brains (Copsey, 2008).

Tyndall resigned from the NF in 1979 following a series of poor electoral results but three years later he formed a rival political organization, the British National Party. The BNP's objectives were identical to those articulated by the NF, with both parties supporting the compulsory repatriation of nonwhites:

... immigration into Britain by non-Europeans ... should be terminated forthwith, and we should organize a massive programme of repatriation and resettlement overseas of those peoples of non-European origin already resident in this country. (Principles and Policies of the British National Party, 1982)

Mixed-race individuals are viewed by the party as being nonwhite and so would also be subject to this policy of repatriation, even if they were born in Britain (Copsey, 2008).

Tyndall instituted a sound organizational structure for the BNP with a regional network of branches, a party headquarters, regular publications, and a major program of activities. However, the BNP and NF were competing for the same far right vote and each party performed poorly in the national elections of 1983. Afterwards, the NF party changed ideological direction by becoming radically opposed to capitalism, a departure that caused some NF supporters to defect to the BNP. Tyndall instead maintained unity within the BNP by focusing on the issue of race. He observed:

... the more ideological baggage the movement carries, the more there is to disagree, argue and fight over ... A few very basic principles rooted in the primacy of Race and Nationality are sufficient; more than these are superfluous. (Copsey, 2008, p.35)

With the NF in disarray, the BNP was the country's main extreme-right party by the beginning of the 1990s. To consolidate its advantage, it launched a program of national activities including provocative demonstrations in areas populated by nonwhites. These included an infamous 'Rights for Whites' campaign, which portrayed the indigenous white population as receiving less preferential treatment. The increased growth in party activities raised concerns about safety, so the BNP created an internal security group named Combat 18 (C18), with the numbers one and eight chosen to correspond with Adolf Hitler's initials (1 = A; 8 = H). C18 was openly aggressive. For example, it declared at one meeting that a race war must be started within a short time, with the ultimate objective being to:

... ship all nonwhites back to Africa, Asia or Arabia, alive or in body bags ... To execute all white race mixers ... To execute all Jews who have actively helped to damage the white race and to put into camps the rest until we find a final solution for the eternal Jew (Lowles, 2001, p.53).

A C18 magazine contained information on bomb making, together with lists of targets, and the exhortation: 'Now you have the technology, bomb the bastards' (Lowles, 2001, p.117). Such comments were embarrassing and the party was humiliated when the media reported damaging stories about C18. C18 was disbanded in 1996, but the party had already lost a lot of public support. Following poor results in the local elections of 1999, Tyndall was replaced as leader by Nick Griffin, who launched a series of initiatives aimed at improving the morale of members and the party's public image.

While Griffin has continued to press for an immediate end to further immigration, he chose to jettison the policy of compulsory repatriation in favour of voluntary repatriation through a system of financial incentives. Any nonwhites who choose not to accept these incentives and leave the country will be regarded as permanent guests rather than citizens, and will face a continual effort to convince them to leave (Copsey, 2008). Under Griffin, the party continues to publish stories that are designed to foment white anger, including alleged crimes by immigrants, positive discrimination against whites, and money that the government is supposedly wasting on overseas aid. In the party's 'Voice of Freedom' newspaper these stories are reported in a special section titled 'News to make your blood boil!'. The party's in-house magazine *Identity* performs a similar function. For example the March 2008 issue contained a story titled 'Thank Allah for Little Girls?' which claimed that gangs of Muslim men are preying on indigenous young white girls and grooming them for under-age sex.

There is a strong historical link between the BNP's presence within an area and violent racially-motivated attacks. The BNP first established its headquarters in Welling in 1991 and the following year saw cases of racist violence in the immediate locality increase by 61%, including four cases of racially-aggravated murder. Following the party's first by-election victory in Tower Hamlets, the number of reported racist incidents in the borough increased by 300% in a period of just 12 months (Copsey, 2008). The BNP's 'Rights for Whites' campaign was initiated in

the mainly nonwhite community of Tower Hamlets and coincided with attacks by known BNP members on Bangladeshi restaurants in the area.

The party's association with racial discord has continued under Griffin's leadership. When racial riots occurred in the north of England during 2001, the party's magazine *Identity* revealed a map with flames indicating towns where BNP-instigated rioting had already taken place and those where the party was still working on it. Information collated by the anti-fascist organization, 'Searchlight', reveals that at least 12 BNP members were convicted of race-related crimes between March 2005 and October 2008. Tony Lecomber—once described as the second most powerful man in the BNP—has five criminal convictions under the Explosives Act, and a three-year prison sentence for unlawful wounding of a Jewish school teacher who he saw trying to remove a BNP sticker at a train station (Copsey, 2008).

2.2 Empirical evidence on racial prejudice

Firth (1981) is one of the first studies to test for racial discrimination using a controlled experimental approach. His research design involved submitting applications to job advertisements, with the bogus applicants representing different nationalities but having identical qualifications and work experience. Firth (1981) found evidence of significant racial discrimination in British labour markets. Another approach to testing for the presence of racial discrimination is to apply regression analysis to published data on wages (e.g., Stewart, 1983; Blackaby *et al.*, 1994, 1998). The evidence reveals that nonwhites are paid approximately 10% less than whites in Britain. However, it is controversial whether this wage differential is caused by racial discrimination. An alternative explanation is that wages reflect unobserved differences in productivity between whites and nonwhites.

Szymanski (2000) proposes a test for racial discrimination using data on professional soccer teams where productivity is measured through the team's on-field performance. After controlling for players' wages, he finds that teams with an above-average proportion of nonwhite players achieve greater success. His results suggest that soccer clubs with a below-average proportion of nonwhite players are willing to accept worse results in order to indulge their taste for racial discrimination.

Rather than test for the presence of racial discrimination, this study examines why whites sign up to a political party that has racially hostile views. I rely on membership data from the BNP's own national database, which was posted on the internet in November 2008 identifying the names and addresses of every member. The leak occurred despite the fact that the party had taken safeguards to conceal the identities of its members. Specifically, the national database was accessible only to high-ranking officials and local party organizers were provided with just regional lists that required password access. In an interview with the BBC, Griffin stated that he knew the identity of the person who had released the secret database, describing

him as a senior hardliner who had left in 2007 because he did not like the direction in which the party was heading. Griffin confirmed that the list was genuine and that it contained confidential membership data that had been stored at some point between November 30 and December 2 2007.

3. Variables description

3.1 The dependent variable

The BNP's constitution prohibits nonwhite people from belonging to the party so I scale the number of members by the total number of white inhabitants within a given community. The dependent variable (*BNP Ratio*) equals the number of BNP members per thousand white people. The party members and their addresses are identified from the leaked database. These addresses are merged with data from the Census which contains demographic variables for communities across England, Wales, and Scotland. While the BNP database provides the member's full postcode (e.g., CV3 5NE), the Census is aggregated to exclude the last two digits (e.g., CV3 5..) in order to preserve the anonymity of respondents. When merging the datasets, I sum the number of BNP members living within each abbreviated postcode (e.g., CV3 5..) and so the unit of observation in my study is the same as in the Census.

The following subsections discuss the variables that will be used to explain the rate at which white people sign up to the BNP.

3.2 Nonwhite population density

Racial hostility flourishes when people have no reason to disbelieve the negative rumors and stereotypes propagated by hateful politicians. When people have the means to find out the truth, they are less likely to be persuaded by the stories conveyed by extremists. Social interaction between different ethnic groups can make people better informed about each other, thereby reducing the rate at which whites sign up to the BNP.

Since the BNP recruits only white members, I focus on the interaction that whites have with nonwhites. Specifically, I use a proxy for the probability that a white person will come into contact with a nonwhite person living in the same community. This probability is an increasing function of the number of nonwhite inhabitants and a decreasing function of the geographical size of the area. I therefore measure the contact that whites have with nonwhites by calculating the number of nonwhite inhabitants per hectare (*Nonwhite Density*). I expect that whites are better informed and are therefore less likely to join the BNP when they live in communities that are densely populated by nonwhites, translating into a negative coefficient on the *Nonwhite Density* variable. To ensure that *Nonwhite Density* is not simply picking up an effect of crowded living conditions, I also control for *Population Density* which equals the total number of inhabitants per hectare.

3.3 Nonwhite diversity

The benefits stemming from racial integration are likely to be richer if whites are exposed to multiple foreign cultures within the nonwhite population. If the nonwhite population is more homogeneous, then the whites living in that community are exposed to fewer foreign cultures and so racial misunderstandings are more likely to persist. For example, if the nonwhite population is mostly black, then the whites living there have less opportunity to mix with Asians. I expect that whites are better informed about foreigners in general if they are exposed to a more diverse set of ethnic groups. And, in this situation, I expect that whites are less likely to accept the stories that the BNP promulgates about different ethnic groups.

The Census provides a breakdown of nonwhites into five groups: (i) Mixed-race, (ii) Black, (iii) Asian, (iv) Chinese, and (v) other nonwhite. I construct a *Nonwhite Diversity* variable that captures the extent to which the nonwhite population is spread across these five groups. Specifically, the *Nonwhite Diversity* variable equals— $[(Mixed / Nonwhite)^2 + (Black / Nonwhite)^2 + (Asian / Nonwhite)^2 + (Chinese / Nonwhite)^2 + (Other Nonwhite / Nonwhite)^2]$, where the numerators capture the number of nonwhites in each of the five sub-groups, while the denominator (*Nonwhite*) is the total number of nonwhites. This measure is simply the Herfindahl index of concentration multiplied by minus one, such that higher values of *Nonwhite Diversity* imply a more diverse nonwhite population. If exposure to multiple foreign cultures is associated with whites being less inclined to belong to the BNP, I expect to find a negative coefficient on *Nonwhite Diversity*.

3.4 Mixed-race relationships

Of the five nonwhite groups, the mixed-race people are of particular interest because they provide *prima facie* evidence of mixing between whites and nonwhites. Such mixing is indicative of greater racial integration within the community and according to the integration hypothesis this would mean that the whites living there are less likely to belong to the BNP. To test this, I construct a variable (*Mixed Ratio*) that equals the number of mixed-race people divided by the total number of nonwhite people. To the extent that nonwhites are integrated into the white community through inter-racial relationships, I expect that the rate of BNP membership is lower in areas where the *Mixed Ratio* is high.

There is, however, an alternative explanation for a negative coefficient on the *Mixed Ratio* that does not rely on the idea that mixed-race relationships promote interracial harmony. There is survey evidence from the United States that whites are more hostile to blacks than to Latinos and Asian Americans (Link and Oldendick, 1996), suggesting that white racial animosity could be a function of the darkness of skin colour. Since mixed-race people generally have a lighter colour than other nonwhites, this would result in a lower rate of BNP membership in areas where mixed-race people account for a high proportion of the nonwhite population. To test this alternative explanation based on skin colour, I separately examine the black group since they are darker than other nonwhite groups. The variable *Black Ratio*

equals the number of black people divided by the total number of nonwhite people. If whites are more likely to join the BNP when the nonwhites in their communities have darker skins, I expect to find a significant positive coefficient on the *Black Ratio*.

It is important to recognize that BNP members are unlikely to mate with nonwhites and consequently would not produce mixed-race offspring. To control for this, I use the following formula to estimate how many mixed-race people are 'missing' within the area due to the presence of BNP members:

$$Miss = \frac{Mixed}{(White + Nonwhite - BNP\ members)} \times BNP\ members,$$

where *Miss* is the number of missing mixed-race people, *Mixed* is the observed number of mixed-race people, *White + Nonwhite* is the total population, and *BNP members* is the number of party members. The ratio [*Mixed* / (*White + Nonwhite - BNP members*)] represents the ratio of mixed-race individuals to the population of non-BNP members. This ratio is then multiplied by the number of BNP members to calculate an estimate of how many additional mixed-race people there would be if the members' attitudes towards mating with nonwhites were the same as the attitudes of non-BNP members.

Next, I calculate an adjusted mixed-race ratio (*Adj. Mixed Ratio*) which is the adjusted number of mixed-race people (observed plus missing) divided by the adjusted number of nonwhites:

$$Adj.\ Mixed\ Ratio = \frac{Mixed + Miss}{Nonwhites + Miss}.$$

I similarly calculate an adjusted black ratio (*Adj. Black Ratio*) by scaling the observed number of blacks by the adjusted number of nonwhites, which includes the missing mixed-race people.

To the extent that BNP members directly contribute towards producing fewer mixed-race offspring, the coefficient on the unadjusted *Mixed Ratio* variable will be biased in a negative direction. That is, the *Mixed Ratio* coefficient will be more negative than the *Adj. Mixed Ratio* coefficient. In practice, however, the magnitude of the bias is likely to be extremely small because the observed number of mixed-race people is far larger than the number of BNP members (refer to Table 2). Because there are relatively few BNP members, there are also few missing mixed-race offspring. Therefore, for all practical purposes, the results are likely to be similar whether I use the *Mixed Ratio* or the *Adj. Mixed Ratio*.

3.5 Education

I test whether the BNP recruits fewer members from communities that are better educated. The *Educated Ratio* equals the number of adults whose highest qualification attained is at level one, divided by the total number of adults. Level one means between one and five O-level passes; or between one and five CSE/GCSE

passes; or NVQ level 1; or Foundation GNVQ. If education makes people better informed, then they are less likely to accept false or misleading stories conveying racial hatred. I therefore predict a negative association between the *Educated Ratio* and BNP membership.

3.6 Economic prosperity

Some authors posit that racial animosity reflects a self-interested response to the economic threat that foreigners pose for the indigenous population (e.g., Falk *et al.*, 2011). Individuals with low economic status, such as the unemployed may be more racially hostile and therefore more likely to join the BNP. Likewise, people may be less prejudiced if they are sufficiently wealthy that they can afford to live in their own private homes rather than rented accommodation or public housing.

An alternative view is that people have a taste for discrimination that is rooted in ignorance rather than poverty, causing racial prejudice to occur even in situations where there is no direct economic threat (Donohue and Levitt, 2001; Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Abrams *et al.*, 2007; Price and Wolfers, 2007). The BNP leader has stated that the party's fundamental objection to nonwhites is not competition for jobs and public housing but instead 'their very presence in such numbers will inevitably transform our society, changing Britain and the British peoples into something which is not British' (Sykes, 2005, p.136).

To determine whether party membership is associated with economic conditions, I investigate whether the areas with a strong BNP presence have high unemployment. The *Unemployed Ratio* variable equals the number of unemployed adults divided by the total number of adults. The BNP claims that the authorities discriminate in their housing decisions against whites, highlighting concerns that nonwhites are receiving preferential treatment and are able to jump the queue for public housing. Such stories are more likely to resonate with people who lack the wealth needed to purchase their own homes. I measure this using the *Home Owner Ratio*, which is the number of households living in their own private homes, divided by the total number of households.

3.7 National pride

Although the BNP has become synonymous with racial intolerance it also appeals to people who have a strong sense of national pride. Such individuals might not necessarily harbour bigoted sentiments towards ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, national pride is generally rooted in ignorance about other nations and cultures. For as George Bernard Shaw has remarked: 'Patriotism is your conviction that this country is superior to all others because you were born in it'.

Britain offers a unique setting in which to test the effect of national pride because two of the constituent nations (Scotland and Wales) have nationalist parties that hold moderate views on race and immigration. Moreover, many people born in Scotland (Wales) see themselves as Scottish (Welsh) first and British second

whereas the English are more likely to regard themselves as British (Heath *et al.*, 1999). I therefore expect that English people are more likely to join the BNP due to a sense of national pride. The Scottish and Welsh feel less British and they have the option of joining the Scottish and Welsh national parties that are not racially prejudiced. Therefore, to the extent that national pride motivates people to join the BNP, I expect that the Scottish and Welsh are less likely to join. I test this using the variable *English Ratio*, which equals the number of people born in England, divided by the number of people born in England, Scotland, or Wales. I expect to find a positive relation between the *English Ratio* and BNP membership.

3.8 Religiosity

Finally, I control for the religiosity of a given community but I refrain from predicting whether religion makes people more or less racially tolerant. On the one hand, religious people may be more socially integrated into their communities due to their interactions at the local church, mosque, or synagogue. This could promote greater understanding and diffuse racial problems leading to a lower rate of BNP membership. On the other hand, religion can be divisive and a source of intolerance along racial lines. The *Religious Ratio* equals the number of people who state that they have a religion, divided by the total number of people.

4. Data description

The unit of observation corresponds to the level of reporting in the Census, which aggregates postcodes to exclude the last two digits (e.g., CV3 5..). This yields 8,601 communities covering England, Scotland, and Wales. The total number of people in the Census equals 56.6 million and there are 12,460 BNP members. Because the Census aggregates postcodes to exclude the last two digits, this is the level at which we define the neighbourhood. Each variable is measured at the neighbourhood level (e.g., CV3 5..). A complete list of the variables and their definitions is provided in Table 1.

Panel A of Table 2 provides descriptive statistics on the numbers of BNP members and white residents within the 8,601 communities. The mean (median) number of *BNP members* is 1.449 (1.000) and ranges from zero at the lowest percentile to nine at the top percentile. The mean value of *BNP Ratio* is just 0.236, which means there are just over two BNP members per 10,000 white inhabitants in the average community. Panel B reports descriptive statistics on the ethnic composition of nonwhites. The mean (median) number of nonwhite people is 536 (126). Of these, 31.1% are mixed-race, 14.7% are black, 34.8% are Asian, 11.3% are Chinese, while 8.1% are in the 'other nonwhite' category.

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics for the independent variables. The *Nonwhite Density* variable measures the number of nonwhites per hectare and is a proxy for the rate at which whites come into contact with nonwhites. Its mean is 0.004 compared with a median of just 0.0003, which reflects that a

Table 1 Variable names and definitions

Variables	Definitions
BNP members	Number of British National Party members.
White (000)	Number of white people (thousands).
BNP ratio	BNP members divided by White (000).
Nonwhite	Number of nonwhite people.
Mixed	Number of mixed-race people (white and black Caribbean, white and black African, white and Asian, or other mixed parentage).
Black	Number of black people (Caribbean, African, or other black).
Asian	Number of Asian people (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or other non-Chinese Asian).
Chinese	Number of Chinese people.
Other nonwhite	Number of other nonwhite people.
Mixed ratio	Mixed divided by nonwhite.
Black ratio	Black divided by nonwhite.
Asian ratio	Asian divided by nonwhite.
Chinese ratio	Chinese divided by nonwhite.
Other ratio	Other nonwhite divided by nonwhite.
Nonwhite density	Number of nonwhite people per hectare.
Population density	Total number of people per hectare.
Nonwhite diversity	$[(Mixed / Nonwhite)^2 + (Black / Nonwhite)^2 + (Asian / Nonwhite)^2 + (Chinese / Nonwhite)^2 + (Other Nonwhite / Nonwhite)^2]$.
Educated ratio	Number of adults with education level one or higher, divided by the total number of adults.
Unemployed ratio	Number of unemployed adults, divided by the total number of adults.
Home owner ratio	Number of households living in their own private homes, divided by the total number of households.
English ratio	Number of people born in England, divided by the number of people born in England, Scotland, or Wales.
Religious ratio	Number of people who state that they have a religion, divided by the total number of people.

Note. Each variable is measured at the neighbourhood level (e.g., CV3 5..).

relatively small number of communities are heavily populated by nonwhites. The *Nonwhite Diversity* variable captures the extent to which the nonwhite population is spread across different ethnic groups. The lowest value is -1.000 reflecting the presence of just one ethnic group. The largest value of *Nonwhite Diversity* is -0.218 which indicates the presence of multiple ethnic groups that are of approximately equal size.

Mixed-race individuals comprise 31.7% of all nonwhite inhabitants, as shown by the *Mixed Ratio* and *Adj. Mixed Ratio* variables. The descriptive statistics for these variables are very similar because there are relatively few 'missing' mixed-race individuals. That is, the average community has on average 78 mixed-race inhabitants but just 1.449 BNP members (refer to Table 2) and so any tendency for BNP members to mate with whites rather than nonwhites has little impact on the total number of mixed race people. This in turn implies that the *Mixed Ratio*

Table 2 BNP membership and the racial composition of 8,601 British communities

	Mean	Median	Std dev.	1 st percentile	99 th percentile
<i>Panel A: The rate of BNP membership among whites</i>					
BNP members	1.449	1.000	2.011	0.000	9.000
White (000)	6.031	5.810	3.197	0.268	14.297
BNP ratio	0.236	0.139	0.375	0.000	1.497
<i>Panel B: The racial profiles of the nonwhite population</i>					
Nonwhite	536	126	1,204	5	6,053
Mixed	78	40	103	0	498
Mixed ratio	0.311	0.298	0.173	0.000	0.842
Black	133	13	432	0	2,496
Black ratio	0.147	0.118	0.130	0.000	0.657
Asian	269	37	818	0	4,145
Asian ratio	0.348	0.322	0.203	0.000	0.913
Chinese	28	14	43	0	206
Chinese ratio	0.113	0.089	0.106	0.000	0.500
Other nonwhite	27	9	54	0	276
Other ratio	0.081	0.064	0.079	0.000	0.352

Note. See Table 1 for variable definitions. Each variable is measured at the neighbourhood level (e.g., CV3 5..).

Table 3 The demographic characteristics of 8,601 British communities

	Mean	Median	Std dev.	1 st percentile	99 th percentile
Nonwhite density	0.004	0.0003	0.010	0.000	0.054
Population density	0.025	0.016	0.029	0.000	0.136
Nonwhite diversity	-0.364	-0.320	0.142	-1.000	-0.218
Mixed ratio	0.311	0.298	0.173	0.000	0.842
Adj. mixed ratio	0.311	0.298	0.173	0.000	0.842
Black ratio	0.147	0.118	0.130	0.000	0.657
Adj. black ratio	0.142	0.115	0.132	0.000	0.657
Educated ratio	0.647	0.649	0.110	0.388	0.899
Unemployed ratio	0.034	0.029	0.019	0.012	0.098
Home owner ratio	0.590	0.616	0.166	0.136	0.907
English ratio	0.851	0.967	0.288	0.030	0.990
Religious ratio	0.841	0.854	0.066	0.624	0.949

Notes. *Adj. Mixed Ratio* = $\{Mixed + (Mixed \times BNP\ Members) / (White + Nonwhite - BNP\ members)\} / \{Nonwhites + (Mixed \times BNP\ Members) / (White + Nonwhite - BNP\ members)\}$. *Adj. Black Ratio* = $Black / \{Nonwhites + (Mixed \times BNP\ Members) / (White + Nonwhite - BNP\ members)\}$. See Table 1 for the definitions of the other variables. Each variable is measured at the neighbourhood level (e.g., CV3 5..).

and *Adj. Mixed Ratio* variables are virtually identical. Likewise, the *Black Ratio* and *Adj. Black Ratio* variables are very similar to each other.

There is significant variation in the proportion of people that are educated to level one or higher (*Educated Ratio*), ranging from just 38.8% at the bottom percentile to 89.9% at the highest percentile. The mean (median) value of the

Table 4 Determinants of the BNP's recruitment of white members (the dependent variable is *BNP Ratio*)

	Expected sign	Model 1 Coefft.	t-stat.	Model 2 Coefft.	t-stat.
Nonwhite density	—	-2.465	-3.41#	-2.488	-3.44#
Population density	?	-0.305	-1.33	-0.310	-1.34
Nonwhite diversity	—	-0.186	-3.58#	-0.188	-3.60#
Mixed ratio	—	-0.157	-4.16#		
Adj. mixed ratio	—			-0.156	-4.13#
Black ratio	?	0.064	1.07		
Adj. black ratio	?			0.072	1.19
Educated ratio	—	-0.660	-10.89#	-0.660	-10.87#
Unemployed ratio	+	-1.038	-2.08*	-1.038	-2.08*
Home owner ratio	—	-0.037	-0.72	-0.036	-0.70
English ratio	+	0.199	9.19#	0.196	8.71#
Religious ratio	?	-0.353	-3.60#	-0.353	-3.62#
Intercept	?	0.837	7.70#	0.837	7.80#
Observations			8601		8601
R ²			4.9%		4.9%

Notes. #(*) = statistically significant at the 1% (5%) level (two-tailed). *Adj. Mixed Ratio* = $\{Mixed + (Mixed \times BNP\ Members) / (White + Nonwhite - BNP\ members)\} / \{Nonwhites + (Mixed \times BNP\ Members) / (White + Nonwhite - BNP\ members)\}$. *Adj. Black Ratio* = $Black / \{Nonwhites + (Mixed \times BNP\ Members) / (White + Nonwhite - BNP\ members)\}$. See Table 1 for the definitions of the other variables. Each variable is measured at the neighbourhood level (e.g., CV3 5..).

Unemployed Ratio is 3.4% (2.9%) but there is considerable variation across communities, with the unemployment rate ranging from 1.2% to 9.8%. Similarly, there is substantial variation in private home ownership, which has a mean of 59.0%. The *English Ratio* reveals that 85.1% of British people are born in England compared with just 14.9% who are born in Scotland or Wales. Finally, most people state that they have a religion, with this variable ranging from 62.4% at the lowest percentile to 94.9% at the top percentile.

5. Empirical results

5.1 Racial integration and ethnic diversity

Table 4 presents the models that explain the rate at which whites belong to the BNP (the dependent variable is *BNP Ratio*). Model 1 includes the unadjusted *Mixed Ratio* and *Black Ratio* as independent variables, while model 2 uses the adjusted ratios. Predictably, the results are very similar in both models. Thus, the findings are not affected by any bias arising from the tendency of BNP members to mate with whites rather than nonwhites.

Importantly, the measures of racial integration and ethnic diversity (*Nonwhite Density*, *Nonwhite Diversity*, *Mixed Ratio*, and *Adj. Mixed Ratio*) have the predicted

negative coefficients and they are all highly significant. The negative coefficients for the *Nonwhite Density* variable imply that whites are more likely to sign up to the party when they live in areas that are sparsely populated by nonwhites. My interpretation of this result is that the whites living in these areas interact less frequently with nonwhites and are therefore less well informed about ethnic minorities. The coefficient on the *Population Density* variable is small and statistically insignificant, indicating that this result is not driven by living in a densely populated area.

Further evidence supporting the positive benefits stemming from integration is provided by the *Nonwhite Diversity* variable, which has statistically significant negative coefficients. This variable reveals that the BNP recruits more white members from communities where one ethnic group accounts for the majority of nonwhites. The BNP has fewer members in areas where the nonwhite population is dispersed more equally between different ethnic cultures. Again, this is consistent with whites being better informed and therefore more likely to reject the BNP's hate-creating stories when they come into contact with multiple ethnic groups. For example, stories about blacks lacking intelligence or Muslims preying on young women are less likely to be accepted when whites come into contact with both cultures rather than just one.

I also find that whites are less likely to join the BNP if their communities have a higher incidence of mixed-race relationships. Importantly, this result is not confounded by the tendency of BNP members to avoid mating with nonwhites, since the results for *Mixed Ratio* and *Adj. Mixed Ratio* are nearly identical. I conclude that whites are less likely to join the BNP if their communities have a higher incidence of mixed race relationships. This finding is consistent with the argument that racial integration reduces hatred. However, it is also consistent with the explanation that a strong BNP presence poisons relations between whites and nonwhites and therefore deters mixed-race couples from forming (or remaining in that location).

Interestingly, the finding that whites are less likely to join the BNP in areas where there are more mixed-race people does not appear to be attributable to skin colour. Blacks have the darkest skin colour but the *Black Ratio* and *Adj. Black Ratio* coefficients are statistically insignificant and they are much smaller in magnitude than the coefficients on the mixed-race variables. Taken together, the significant (insignificant) results for *Adj. Mixed Ratio* (*Adj. Black Ratio*) suggest that social mixing between whites and nonwhites, as indicated by the presence of inter-racial relationships, is associated with fewer whites choosing to belong to the BNP.

To put these findings into an economic context, I use the coefficient estimates in model 2 to estimate what the total membership of the BNP would be at different values of the racial integration variables. When making these calculations I assume that the total number of whites in the denominator of the dependent variable remains unchanged and the values of all other independent variables are held constant at their observed levels. I estimate that the total number of BNP members would drop from 12,971 to just 5,970 (i.e., a fall of 54.0%) as the value of the *Nonwhite Density* variable increases from its first percentile value to the top percentile.

I perform similar calculations for the *Nonwhite Diversity* and *Adj. Mixed Ratio* variables as they increase from their bottom percentile values to the top percentile. As the *Nonwhite Diversity* variable increases over this range, the total number of BNP members is predicted to fall from 18,939 to 11,320, a drop of 40.2%. Likewise, BNP membership would fall by 45.3%, from 15,036 to 8,232, as the *Adj. Mixed Ratio* increases from its bottom percentile value to the top percentile. Overall, these results indicate that a lack of racial integration and infrequent white contact with ethnic minorities are important in explaining why whites sign up to the BNP.

5.2 Education and economic prosperity

I find a strong negative association between the *Educated Ratio* and the rate of BNP membership. That is, the BNP has fewer white members in communities that contain more highly educated residents. This is consistent with the argument that whites are less likely to accept the party's hate-creating stories when they are better educated.

To ensure that the results for education are not spuriously capturing the effects of economic prosperity, I control for unemployment and private home ownership. Whites that have a lowly economic status are more likely to be competing with nonwhites for jobs and housing. If such competition increases white support for the BNP, I expect that the party's members would come from areas that have high unemployment and less privately-owned housing. On the contrary, the significant negative coefficients for the *Unemployed Ratio* imply that the BNP has fewer recruits in areas that have high unemployment. The *Home Owner Ratio* has the predicted negative coefficients, but they are not statistically significant.

5.3 National pride and religion

As predicted, the *English Ratio* coefficients are positive and statistically significant. This suggests that a strong sense of identification with British nationality is an important driver of support for the BNP. Overall, it appears that BNP members harbour strong feelings of national identity and they are poorly informed about other ethnic groups. The BNP also has fewer members in areas that are more religious. Interestingly, untabulated tests reveal that the type of religion matters less than the existence of religion *per se*. Specifically, I add to models 1 and 2 variables that measure the fraction of religious people that state they are either Christian or Muslim. These additional religion variables are statistically insignificant, whereas the *Religious Ratio* retains highly significant negative coefficients. Thus, the presence of religion rather than the type of religion appears to matter.

5.4 Self-segregation

There are potential endogeneity problems in Table 4 because racially intolerant whites are more likely to belong to the BNP and, at the same time, they may avoid living in communities that are predominantly nonwhite. This is a potential

problem because the whites that live in areas heavily populated by nonwhites may be more tolerant and therefore less likely to belong to the BNP. Numerous studies have shown that whites self-select to dwell among other whites and nonwhites have a similar preference for living among people that share the same ethnicity (Parvin, 1975; Alesina *et al.*, 2004; Bayer *et al.*, 2007). To the extent that such preferences are driven by racial animosity or fear, it would be expected that support for the BNP is greatest in the communities to which whites flee.

To test whether self-segregation is associated with BNP membership, I identify abnormal clusters of heavily populated white areas and I test whether such areas produce higher rates of BNP membership. Following Blau (1977) and Massey and Denton (1988), I define an ethnic group as being segregated if it is unevenly distributed across adjacent neighbourhoods. Suppose that Britain is partitioned geographically into K districts and J smaller neighbourhoods (where $J > K$). Then there is white segregation in neighbourhood j ($j = 1, \dots, J$) if the proportion of whites living in neighbourhood j is abnormally large relative to the proportion of whites living within the larger district k ($k = 1, \dots, K$). I partition Britain into districts and neighbourhoods using postcodes. For example, if the neighbourhood is represented by the abbreviated postcode CV3 5.. then the larger district is CV3. In this case, my measure of white segregation in CV3 5.. equals the ratio of whites to nonwhites in CV3 5.. minus the mean value of the same ratio in the larger district of CV3. A positive (negative) value for *White Cluster* would indicate that CV3 5.. is whiter (less white) than would be expected, given the racial demographics of the wider district. If self-segregation explains the geographical distribution of support for the BNP, I would expect a significant positive coefficient for the *White Cluster* variable.³

I add the *White Cluster* variable to Model 1 of Table 5. Opposite to the positive coefficient that is predicted by the self-segregation argument, the coefficient on *White Cluster* is found to be negative. That is, BNP members tend to live in communities that are *less* white than their immediate vicinities. This finding is contrary to the argument that BNP members systematically choose to avoid living among nonwhite people.

In model 2 of Table 5, I control for endogeneity in a community's demographic characteristics using an instrumental variable approach. Each independent variable is instrumented using its equivalent measure at the higher level of aggregation. For example, the value of *Nonwhite Density* in community CV3 5.. is instrumented using the value of *Nonwhite Density* in the larger surrounding district of CV3. As noted by Dustmann and Preston (2001) this approach yields consistent estimates

³ In an untabulated test, I construct an alternative measure of segregation using postcodes aggregated up by one level. For example, if a given neighbourhood is represented by the postcode CV3, then the alternative measure of *White Cluster* would equal the ratio of whites to nonwhites in CV3 minus the mean value of the same ratio in the district of CV (i.e., the entire city of Coventry). This alternative measure gives very similar results.

Table 5 Endogeneity between a community's BNP membership and its demographic characteristics

	Expected sign	Model 1 Coefft.	t-stat.		Model 2 Coefft.	t-stat.
Nonwhite density	—	−2.469	−3.41#	Nonwhite density _{iv}	−5.117	−3.62#
Population density	?	−0.305	−1.33	Population density _{iv}	−2.789	−1.66
Nonwhite diversity	—	−0.189	−3.55#	Nonwhite diversity _{iv}	−9.590	−2.07*
Mixed ratio	—	−0.154	−3.95#	Mixed ratio _{iv}	−0.955	−7.41#
Black ratio	?	0.065	1.09	Black ratio _{iv}	0.163	1.38
White cluster	+	−0.000	−0.53			
Educated ratio	—	−0.661	−10.91#	Educated ratio _{iv}	−7.363	−5.57#
Unemployed ratio	+	−1.054	−2.11*	Unemployed ratio _{iv}	−5.244	−2.37*
Home owner ratio	—	−0.037	−0.73	Home owner ratio _{iv}	−1.689	−1.71
English ratio	+	0.200	8.95#	English ratio _{iv}	0.892	5.76#
Religious ratio	?	−0.351	−3.56#	Religious ratio _{iv}	26.756	4.47#
Intercept	?	0.836	7.68#	Intercept	−20.225	−5.19#
Observations			8601			8601
R ²			4.9%			3.2%

Notes. #, (*) = statistically significant at the 1% (5%) level (two-tailed). In model 1, I test for endogeneity using the *White Cluster* variable, where *White Cluster* equals the *White Ratio* in a given area (i.e., *White* divided by *Nonwhite*) minus the mean value of *White Ratio* in areas adjacent to and including that area. For example, the value of *White Cluster* in community CV3 5.. is equal to the proportion of whites living in that neighbourhood divided by the proportion of whites in the larger district of CV3. In model 2, I control for endogeneity using an instrumental variable approach. Each independent variable is instrumented using its equivalent measure at the higher level of aggregation. For example, the value of *Nonwhite Density* in community CV3 5.. is instrumented using the value of *Nonwhite Density* in the larger district of CV3. _{iv}, Instrument Variable.

under the assumption that individuals are free to choose their neighbourhood (e.g., CV3 5..) but are unable to move outside of the larger district (e.g., CV3).

Table 5 shows that the coefficient signs and significance levels are similar in models 1 and 2 except that the *Religious Ratio*_{IV} variable loads positively in the IV model whereas *Religious Ratio* loads negatively in the OLS model. Although my main inferences are similar, there is high multicollinearity using the IV approach. The variance-inflation-factors (VIFs) range from 3.60 to 92.30 in Model 2 whereas they range from 1.13 to 3.08 in Model 1. Because most of the instruments in Model 2 have high VIFs, the results of the IV regression should be viewed with caution.

6. Discussion and policy implications

Exploiting the publication on the internet of the BNP's national database, this study has provided unique insights into the types of communities that produce strong support for the party. I have found that whites belong to the BNP when they lack regular contact with nonwhites or their contact is limited to one specific ethnic group. In addition, areas with high numbers of mixed-race inhabitants, whose

presence is an indicator of sexual relations between white and nonwhite couples, have abnormally low rates of BNP membership. Collectively, these results support the argument that whites are less likely to accept the BNP's hate-creating stories when they are better informed about ethnic out-groups.

Additional findings lend further credence to the argument that BNP support is founded on ignorance. The party's membership is drawn mainly from areas in which people are poorly educated, and this finding is not attributable to the economic conditions in which these people live. Moreover, a strong sense of national pride is important in explaining why whites belong to the BNP. To the extent that nationalism is attributable to ignorance about non-native cultures, the results strongly suggest that many people join the party because they are badly informed about foreigners.

Overall, the evidence of this study suggests that policies favouring the formation of racially integrated neighbourhoods would make it harder for right-wing political parties like the BNP to garner support from the white population. This finding is interesting because prior studies find that nonwhites are less likely to be assimilated into the white population when they live in racially mixed neighbourhoods. For example, Bisin *et al.* (2010) argue that racial mixing triggers more intense ethnic identities as minorities seek to preserve their distinct cultures. They conclude that integration policies may have perverse effects with ethnic minorities preferring to distance themselves from the larger white population. While this may be true of minority out-groups, the results of this study suggest that the opposite is true for the dominant in-group. In other words, whites appear to be more tolerant of ethnic minorities when they experience greater exposure to nonwhites.

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