

The political psychology of UKIP: Personality factors, authoritarianism and support for right-wing populist parties in Britain.

Roland Kappe
University College London

r.kappe@ucl.ac.uk

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Abstract:

This study investigates psychological factors that help explain why some people are more likely to support a right-wing populist party.

Based on existing literature from political science and psychology, the paper argues that some of the 'big five' personality factors are relevant for political attitudes and behaviour. Specifically, in line with recent work on the relationship between personality factors and attitudes on immigration (e.g. Akrami et al 2010, Dinesen et al 2014), openness to experience and agreeableness can be expected to affect views on immigration, and in turn support for right-wing populist parties. A distinct but related research programme (Feldman 2003, Dunn 2015), stresses the importance of an authoritarian value system for right-wing party support, and this paper investigates the role of both personality factors and authoritarianism in the British political context.

The analysis uses data from the 2015 British Election Study, and shows that openness to experience, agreeableness, and authoritarian values are strongly associated with more negative views on immigration and minorities, and ultimately support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

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1. Introduction

Why do some voters support right wing populist parties? Many European democracies have recently experienced the emergence of new right wing populist parties (Norris 2005, Mudde 2007). The importance of issues such as opposition to immigration, the specific institutional and party system contexts, and the demographic characteristics of their supporters have featured prominently in political science research on the topic (Lubbers et al 2002, Golder 2003, Norris 2005, Mudde 2007).

At the same time, individual personality differences have seen renewed interest in political science. Personality dispositions have been linked to political attitudes, ideology and participation (Mondak and Halperin 2008, Gerber et al 2010, Gerber et al 2011).

This study argues that individual personality dispositions can help our understanding of voters' support for right wing populist parties. Specifically, the focus will be on the relationship between the so called 'big five' personality traits, i.e. openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability on the one hand; and authoritarian values, views on immigration and minorities, and support for right wing populist parties on the other hand.

The empirical test of these theoretical links focuses on the British electorate. Britain has seen one of the latest surges of right wing populist party voting: the emergence of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) as a major party in the 2009 and 2014 European elections, and in the build-up to the 2015 general election (Ford and Goodwin 2014). This makes it particularly relevant to investigate whether the research program on personality traits can add to our understanding of support for right wing populist parties here. The empirical analysis uses survey data from the 2015 British Election Study. The results show that two of the 'big five' personality traits, openness to experience and agreeableness, as well as authoritarian values, predict both negative attitudes towards minorities and immigration, as well as general support and intention to vote for UKIP.

The contribution of this paper is twofold: Firstly, the goal is to combine the literature that tries to explain the electoral successes of right wing populist parties in Europe with research on the relationship between personality dispositions and political attitudes and behaviour; specifically, by providing both a theoretical account, as well as an empirical case of how stable personality traits, such as agreeableness and openness to experience, as well as authoritarian values explain support for right wing populist parties.

Secondly, and more specifically, the literature on British politics has scrutinised the electoral support for right wing populist parties such as UKIP mainly through the lenses of changes in the broader political context, and - on the individual level - demographic characteristics such as education and class, as well as attitudes on political issues. This paper seeks to add an additional and complementary perspective: individual psychological characteristics, specifically dispositional traits and values, which add to our understanding of what factors explain support for UKIP.

The theory section briefly reviews the recent literature on the relationship between the ‘big five’ personality traits, i.e. openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism, and political orientations and political behaviour. The paper then outlines how these general ideas lend themselves to help our understanding of support for right wing populist parties.

The main hypothesis here is the relationship between individual personality characteristics in terms of openness to experience, agreeableness and support for authoritarian values, and attitudes on minorities and immigration, which then ultimately explain support for right wing populist parties.

This relationship is tested empirically using data from the 2015 British Election Study. The results show that personality dispositions and values provide a powerful predictor of support for right wing populist parties above and beyond demographic and situational factors.

2. Theory

From the 1990s onwards, many European democracies have experienced the emergence of right wing populist parties. These parties have positioned themselves to the right of the more established conservative or Christian democratic parties, and are often characterised by a strong anti-immigration stance (Norris 2005, Mudde 2007). Ivarsflaten (2008) shows that this anti-immigration stance is the unifying factor for the success of right wing populist parties across Europe.

In general, there are two complementary and interactive types of explanation for right wing populist party success. One type are national or local level contextual factors, such as characteristics of the parties themselves, the party system or more general ‘political opportunity structures’ (Knigge 1998, Arzheimer and Carter 2006), the impact of immigration and unemployment (Lubbers et al 2002, Ivarsflaten 2008), and underlying institutional characteristics (Golder 2003). The other set of explanatory factors are individual characteristics – demographics, such as age, gender, educational attainment, class, as well as specific political attitudes and party identification (Norris 2005, Mudde 2007). Surprisingly, relatively little attention has been paid to psychological correlates of support for right wing populist parties (for an exception, see Dunn 2015).

In Britain, Ford and Goodwin (2014) provide an encompassing study of the rise of UKIP. They sketch the development of UKIP as a serious contender in the British party system, covering the institutional and contextual background. Their study also provides a detailed analysis of the ‘social roots’ of UKIP support, showing the effects of class, gender, education, ethnicity and age. UKIP supporters tend to be older, white, working class males with little education. This also resonates with their previous analysis of BNP supporters (Ford and Goodwin 2010), and is in line with findings from the broader literature on right wing populist parties (Norris 2005, Arzheimer 2009).

This body of work illuminates important aspects of right wing populist party support. The main argument of this paper, however, is that above and beyond these findings on context, demographics and attitudes, individual personality dispositions can add to our understanding of support for right wing populist parties. The basic idea is that certain personality traits make some people more receptive to the ideas and (e.g. anti-immigrant) rhetoric that characterises right wing populist parties.

A large body of research from psychology suggests that there are aspects of personality that are formed early in life, or have a genetic component, or both, and are therefore relatively stable over time (Costa and McCrae 1992). One of the main conceptual models is the notion of the so-called 'Big Five' personality traits (Tupes and Christal 1961, Costa and McCrae 1992, John and Srivastava 1999). It suggests that individuals vary on five dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability (or its reverse, neuroticism):

Openness to experience captures an individual's orientation towards experiencing new things, the depth and complexity of one's mental life, originality, with closed-minded, conventional and uncreative as adjectives characterising the other end of the spectrum.

Conscientiousness relates to diligence and impulse control, with conscientious, dependable and self-disciplined describing one end of the spectrum, and disorganized, careless the other end.

Extraversion captures an individual's behaviour towards others, an extroverted, enthusiastic, self-assured personality versus a more introverted, reserved and quiet personality.

Agreeableness is the display of pro-social emotion, empathy, altruism and trust, versus an antagonistic, critical, cold and quarrelsome disposition. Agreeable people tend to be perceived as friendly, sympathetic and warm.

Neuroticism relates to emotional volatility and the display of negative emotion. Individuals are anxious and easily upset, with emotional stability and calmness characterising the other end of the spectrum. (For more details and measurement, see John and Srivastava 1999, Gosling et al 2003).

These five personality traits explain a range of behaviours across a variety of different domains (John and Srivastava 1999), and the potential relevance of these personality traits for explaining political behaviour has of course not gone unnoticed. Mondak and Halperin (2008) show that all of the big five traits can be related to a whole range of political attitudes and behaviour, including ideology, political participation and trust. Gerber et al (2010) develop the link between personality and both economic and social dimensions of ideology further. They argue that the magnitude of the effects of e.g. openness to experience on political ideology is similar to well established sociological predictors like income or education. Gerber et al (2011) provide a review of this literature.

The key argument of this paper is that these personality differences are especially well suited to explain individual level support for right wing populist parties. The argument relies on the body of work that established a link between personality traits, and prejudice and anti-immigrant sentiment

(Akrami et al 2010, Flynn 2005, Gallego and Pardos-Prado 2014, Dinesen et al 2014). In short, people who are more closed minded and less agreeable may be more prone to hold negative attitudes about minorities and immigrants, which in turn would make them receptive to political messages that are congruent with these attitudes.

Which of the 'big five' personality dispositions are most relevant for this line of reasoning? In other words, what is the mechanism that links some of these general personality traits to political attitudes and behaviour?

Openness to experience is related to creativity, rejection of convention, and seeking out and enjoying new experiences. How does openness to experience (or its opposite, closed-mindedness) relate to attitudes on immigration and support for right wing parties? Firstly, people who are generally open minded may generally view immigration as an opportunity rather than as a threat (and the data below support this view). Secondly, they may also be more inclined to seek out new experiences, which - all else equal - makes personal contact and experiences with non-native people more likely. In its simplest form this may take the form of enjoying trying out new foods and ethnic cuisines, and an increased interaction with immigrants, which reduces prejudice (Kaufmann and Harris 2015). Thirdly, those seeking new experiences may be more likely to move to areas of the country where these experiential opportunities are plentiful, which in turn will lead to greater personal exposure to immigrants (Kaufmann and Harris 2015). Fourthly, from a social network perspective, homophily and network effects may reinforce all of these mechanisms. In sum, one would expect openness to experience to lead to more positive attitudes towards immigration, and more open individuals to be less likely to support right wing populist parties.

This leads to the first hypothesis which proposes that on the individual level, attitudes towards immigration and support for right wing populist parties can in part be explained by underlying personality characteristics, specifically:

Hypothesis 1: People who score high on openness to experience hold more positive attitudes towards immigration, and are less likely to support a right wing populist party.

The next dimension, agreeableness, is the display of pro-social emotion, and related to empathy, altruism and trust. People with a high score on this dimension tend to be, firstly, more empathetic with other people in general, and this would include minority groups and immigrants. Secondly, the altruistic orientation - or kindness towards others - may make them more inclined to support policies and parties that also embody these characteristics. This leads to the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: People who score high on agreeableness hold more positive attitudes towards immigration, and are less likely to support a right wing populist party.

The arguments for the other ‘big five’ traits appear less clear cut. Conscientiousness relates to diligence, organisation and self-discipline. In the U.S. context, conscientiousness has been found to be related to more conservative ideology (Gerber et al 2010). While the orientation towards order and structure may be related to political views, it is less clear how exactly this would drive attitudes on minorities, immigrants and right wing populist parties.

Even less clear are the theoretical cases for the extraversion – introversion and emotional stability – neuroticism dimensions. Ultimately this is an empirical question, and measures of all of the ‘big five’ traits are included in the analyses below.

Authoritarianism

While the literature on the effect of ‘big five’ personality differences on political attitudes is relatively recent, there is already a long-standing body of work on one specific personality characteristic that can explain anti-immigrant sentiment and support for right wing populist parties: authoritarianism.

Conceived by Adorno et al (1950) to explain the support for the Nazi regime in Germany, the basic idea of “The Authoritarian Personality” is that individual differences (psychological adaptations) explain why some people will be drawn to support a fascist regime. Developed further by Altemeyer (1981) and more recently Feldman (2003), the basic mechanism posits that some people find it hard to cope with diversity in its most general sense, and develop an aversion to diversity and ambiguity, which in turn leads to intolerant and punitive attitudes.

The theoretical clarity of a link between authoritarianism and support for right wing populist parties is not quite borne out by recent empirical work, which has shown somewhat mixed results in a study of Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland (Dunn 2015). Nevertheless, based on this body of work, the effect of authoritarian values on anti-immigrant sentiment and support for right wing populist parties will be tested as well:

Hypothesis 3: People who hold authoritarian values, exhibit more negative attitudes towards immigration, and are more likely to support a right wing populist party.

3. Data and Methods

The hypotheses are tested using data from the 2015 British Election Study (Fieldhouse et al 2015). The panel component of the British Election Study (BES) provides data on demographics, and a variety of political survey items at different time points in the build-up to the 2015 general election, and is collected by YouGov using a nationally representative internet panel. The data used here stem from Wave 4 of the BES panel, with fieldwork in March 2015. The survey contains responses from 31,323 participants. Survey weights are used to ensure calculated quantities of interest reflect a nationally representative sample. All variable descriptions and questions are based on the BES Wave 4 Codebook.¹

In a first step, the analysis below shows the relationship between personality characteristics and four attitudes towards minorities and immigration. These are measured using the following questions:

- *“Please say whether you think these things have gone too far or have not gone far enough in Britain: Attempts to give equal opportunities to ethnic minorities”* (5 point scale, *“not gone nearly far enough - gone much too far”*)
- *“Do you think immigration is good or bad for Britain's economy?”* (7 point scale, *“bad - good”*, reversed)
- *“And do you think that immigration undermines or enriches Britain's cultural life?”* (7 point scale, *“undermines-enriches”*, reversed)
- *“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Immigrants are a burden on the welfare state.”* (7 point scale, *“Strongly disagree - Strongly agree”*, reversed)

In a second step, the analysis focuses on support for right wing populist parties. The main dependent variable, ‘Support for UKIP’, can be operationalised in different ways. The study mainly focuses on an attitudinal measure of like or dislike for UKIP (*“How much do you like or dislike each of the following parties?”* (0-10 scale, *“strongly dislike – strongly like”*), but alternative operationalisations, namely ‘UKIP vote intention’, and ‘probability to vote for UKIP’ are explored below.

Personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) are measured using the Ten-Item-Personality-Inventory (TIPI), and are scaled from 0-10 (Gosling et al 2003).

Authoritarian values are measured using a simple additive index² of the following five items:

¹ British Election Study 2015 Wave 4 Codebook:

http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/custom/uploads/2015/05/BES_Wave4_2015-150514.pdf

² The inter-item reliability of the authoritarianism scale is high (Cronbach's alpha = 0.8005). An alternative approach using principal component analysis and extraction of the first dimension yields virtually identical results. The correlation between the latent measure and the additive scale is extremely high ($r = 0.9948$), so the simpler additive measure is used throughout the analysis.

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (5 point scale)

- Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values*
- For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence*
- Schools should teach children to obey authority*
- Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards*
- People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences”*

Finally, the BES data contain a range of demographic information on respondents' age, gender, income, education, ethnicity and location.

4. Results

To test the hypotheses outlined above, the first question is whether personality dispositions and authoritarianism can help predict (negative) attitudes towards immigration, immigrants and minorities. Specifically, one would expect openness to experience and agreeableness to be associated with more positive attitudes, and authoritarianism with negative attitudes.

Table 1 presents estimation results of ordered logit models of four attitudes towards minorities and immigration. These models include the 'big five' personality dispositions, authoritarianism, a battery of demographic characteristics, as well as the respondent's vote choice in the previous (2010) general election.

Model 1 uses 'equal opportunities to ethnic minorities have gone too far' as the dependent variable. The results show that of the personality characteristics, agreeableness and openness to experience reduce negative views, while authoritarianism is associated with a more negative view. Effects of demographic factors are generally as expected.

This pattern is generally mirrored by the models of the three attitudes on immigration ("Immigration bad for economy", "undermines Britain's cultural life", "burden on the welfare state"). As hypothesised, agreeableness and openness to experience generally lead to more positive views on immigration, while authoritarianism is associated with more negative views.

Table 1: Personality and negative attitudes towards minorities and immigration

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Equal. minorities gone too far	Immig. bad for economy	Immig. undermines cultural life	Immig. burden welfare state
Personality: Agreeableness	-0.073*** (0.013)	-0.024* (0.012)	-0.048*** (0.012)	-0.016 (0.013)
Personality: Conscientiousness	0.023 (0.012)	0.034** (0.011)	0.041*** (0.011)	0.031* (0.012)
Personality: Extraversion	-0.009 (0.009)	-0.009 (0.008)	-0.015 (0.009)	0.013 (0.009)
Personality: Neuroticism	-0.011 (0.011)	0.035*** (0.009)	0.031** (0.010)	0.041*** (0.010)
Personality: Openness to experience	-0.047*** (0.012)	-0.053*** (0.012)	-0.038** (0.012)	-0.042*** (0.012)
Authoritarianism	0.202*** (0.006)	0.208*** (0.006)	0.201*** (0.006)	0.279*** (0.007)
White	0.671*** (0.099)	0.924*** (0.082)	0.801*** (0.084)	0.497*** (0.085)
Male	0.191*** (0.040)	-0.244*** (0.041)	0.036 (0.040)	-0.208*** (0.042)
Age	0.008*** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.004** (0.002)	-0.005** (0.001)
Income	0.008 (0.006)	-0.024*** (0.006)	-0.013* (0.006)	-0.013* (0.006)
Education: years of schooling: 15 (baseline 20+)	0.329*** (0.076)	0.755*** (0.075)	0.676*** (0.075)	0.718*** (0.071)
16	0.385*** (0.055)	0.633*** (0.053)	0.479*** (0.054)	0.628*** (0.054)
17-18	0.211*** (0.054)	0.333*** (0.051)	0.248*** (0.050)	0.276*** (0.052)
19	0.163 (0.097)	0.129 (0.084)	0.131 (0.086)	0.323*** (0.091)
current student	-0.093 (0.141)	-0.262 (0.149)	0.010 (0.139)	-0.288* (0.136)
Vote in 2010: Conservative (baseline did not vote)	0.177* (0.074)	-0.071 (0.069)	0.121 (0.068)	0.130 (0.067)
Vote in 2010: Labour	-0.489*** (0.078)	-0.555*** (0.070)	-0.527*** (0.071)	-0.454*** (0.068)
Vote in 2010: Lib Dem	-0.350*** (0.075)	-0.619*** (0.074)	-0.548*** (0.070)	-0.501*** (0.070)
Vote in 2010: SNP	-0.135 (0.147)	-0.661*** (0.138)	-0.530*** (0.123)	-0.482*** (0.111)
Vote in 2010: Plaid Cymru	-0.079 (0.235)	0.100 (0.194)	-0.027 (0.217)	0.045 (0.180)
Vote in 2010: BNP	1.008*** (0.207)	1.405*** (0.232)	1.519*** (0.203)	0.972*** (0.268)
Vote in 2010: Greens	-0.344* (0.172)	-0.519** (0.192)	-0.601*** (0.181)	-0.500** (0.172)
Vote in 2010: Respect	0.327 (2.425)	-0.798* (0.399)	-0.364 (0.577)	-1.237* (0.555)
Vote in 2010: UKIP	0.698*** (0.123)	0.588*** (0.102)	0.824*** (0.114)	0.719*** (0.127)
Vote in 2010: Others	-0.224 (0.235)	-0.052 (0.162)	0.110 (0.184)	-0.107 (0.227)
N	16500	16594	16726	16825
AIC	37882.904	51790.857	52721.178	40050.139
expected % correctly predicted	33.03	21.53	22.13	31.98
expected prop. reduction in error	8.70	7.34	8.08	13.25
McKelvey and Zavoina R ²	0.27	0.31	0.29	0.38

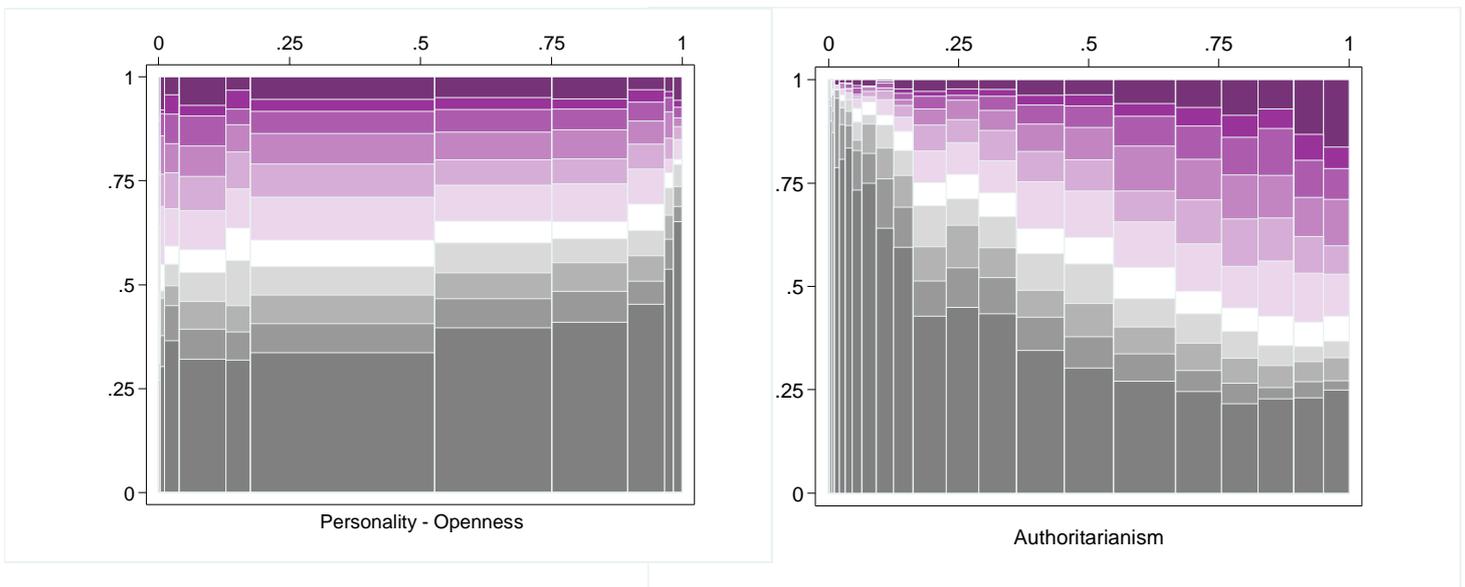
Estimation results from ordered logit models with the following dependent variables: (1) Equal opportunities for ethnic minorities have gone too far. (2) Do you think immigration is good or bad for Britain's economy? (3) Do you think that immigration undermines or enriches Britain's cultural life? (4) Agree/Disagree: Immigrants are a burden on the welfare state. Standard errors in parentheses, significance levels * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Goodness-of-fit statistics (expected % correctly predicted and expected proportional reduction in error) based on Herron (1999) as implemented by Lawrence (2009). Pseudo R² based on McKelvey and Zavoina (1975), as cited in Long and Freese (2014:110).

The next step, then, is to look at the relationship between personality and support for UKIP.

Figure 1 shows mosaic plots of openness to experience and authoritarianism and support for UKIP. The plots show the proportions of respondents falling into the different categories of like/dislike for UKIP relative to their score on the openness to experience measure. There are relatively few people with very low openness to experience, and this is where UKIP support is highest. As one moves to higher scores on openness to experience, the distribution of responses shifts, with fewer and people supporting UKIP. Among those scoring highest, UKIP support is lowest.

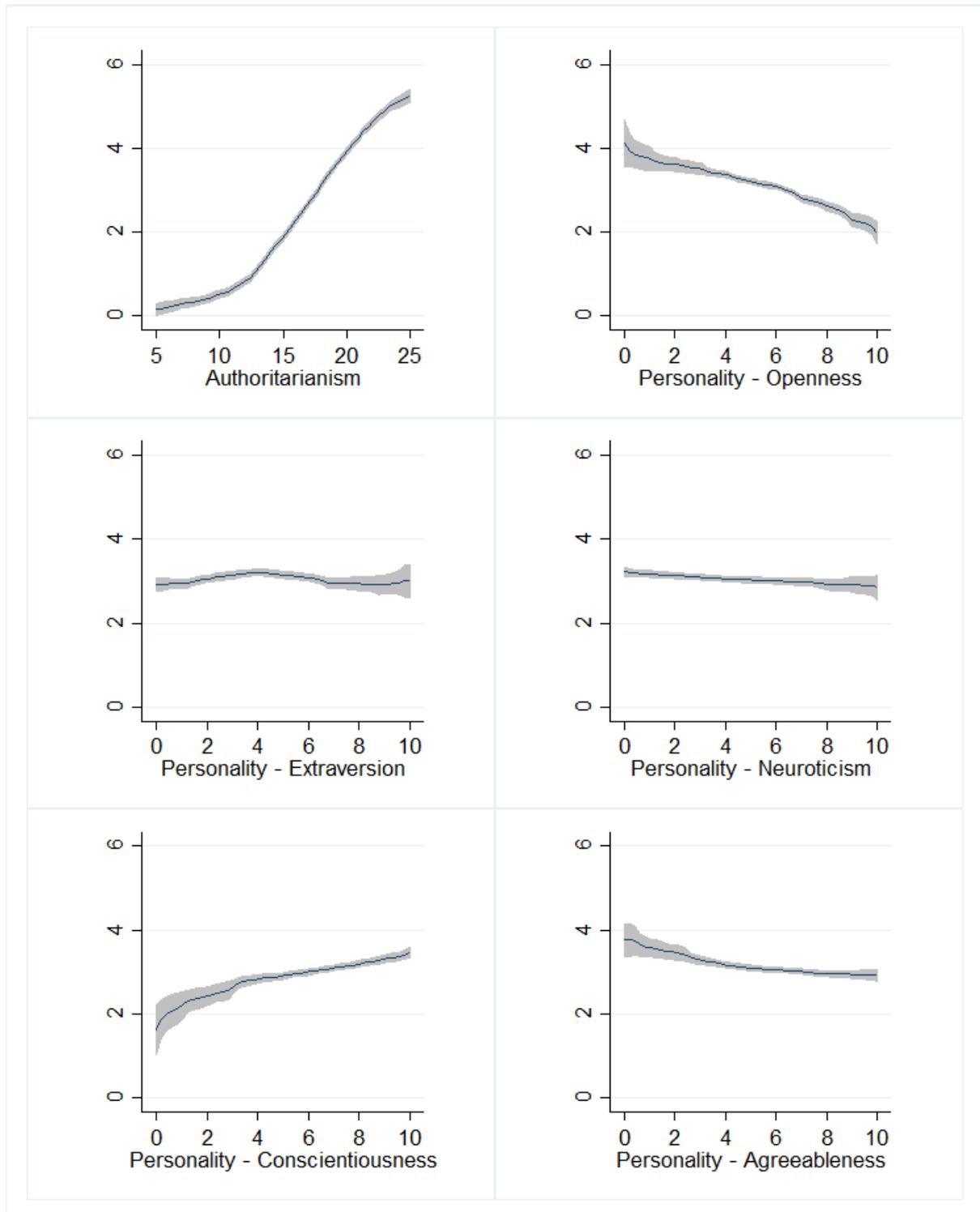
The reverse is true for authoritarianism. It's easy to see that, - just looking at the raw data - as people hold more authoritarian values, a larger and larger proportion holds favourable views of UKIP.

Figure 1: Openness and authoritarianism, and attitude towards UKIP



An alternative method to visualise these basic relationships, is using a local polynomial regression smoother (Cleveland 1979). Figure 2 shows the bivariate relationships between the 'big five' personality characteristics, authoritarianism, and support for UKIP. Authoritarianism, as well as openness to experience, and – perhaps – agreeableness and conscientiousness appear to be associated with UKIP support. There is no apparent relationship with extraversion and neuroticism.

Figure 2: Personality characteristics and attitude towards UKIP



Do these simple relationships hold once demographic characteristics and other contextual factors are taken into account?

One of the goals of this paper is to show that personality differences add to the existing explanations for right wing populist party support. In order to assess this, Table 2 presents a battery of models that show the effects of different predictors of UKIP support. Model 5 starts with a simple baseline model that includes relevant demographic characteristics (Ford and Goodwin 2014:303), and Models (6) through (8) add personality characteristics and authoritarianism. Openness to experience, agreeableness, and authoritarianism remain strong predictors of UKIP support.

Looking at a variety of measures of goodness of fit, namely the AIC, the ‘expected percent correctly predicted’ and ‘expected proportional reduction in error’, and the McKelvey and Zavoina (1975) Pseudo R², it can be seen that the inclusion of personality characteristics increases the predictive power of the model of UKIP support considerably.

Models (9) and (10) repeat this step while including constituency level fixed effects in order to remove as much contextual variance as possible. Openness to experience, agreeableness, and authoritarianism remain strong predictors of UKIP support, and increases the predictive power of the model considerably, even controlling for local, constituency level, contextual variation.

While due to the possibility of strategic voting considerations, the ten point ‘support for UKIP’ measure is the preferred operationalisation to capture the attitude towards a right wing populist party, the BES of course also includes a simpler vote choice question, as well as an item to gauge the ‘probability to vote UKIP’. Table 3 provides estimation results for (11) a simple logit model predicting ‘vote for UKIP’, (12) a multinomial logit model of vote choice for all major parties, (detailed results are in the appendix), and (13) an operationalisation using ‘probability to vote UKIP’. The results are qualitatively similar to the findings from the previous tables. Openness to experience, agreeableness, and authoritarianism are all significant predictors of UKIP support.

Table 2: Attitude towards UKIP

	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Personality: agreeableness		-0.070*** (0.016)		-0.086*** (0.017)		-0.063** (0.020)
Personality: conscientiousness		0.052*** (0.014)		-0.001 (0.016)		-0.014 (0.018)
Personality: extraversion		0.021 (0.012)		0.010 (0.013)		0.003 (0.015)
Personality: neuroticism		-0.015 (0.013)		-0.029* (0.014)		-0.020 (0.017)
Personality_openness		-0.097*** (0.017)		-0.063*** (0.018)		-0.048* (0.020)
Authoritarian			0.186*** (0.008)	0.186*** (0.008)		0.182*** (0.010)
White	0.194* (0.099)	0.165 (0.101)	0.240* (0.119)	0.211 (0.118)	0.242* (0.116)	0.322* (0.129)
Male	0.316*** (0.049)	0.262*** (0.053)	0.449*** (0.052)	0.360*** (0.055)	0.292*** (0.058)	0.372*** (0.063)
Age	0.003 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.003)
Income	0.007 (0.008)	0.001 (0.008)	0.009 (0.008)	0.007 (0.008)	-0.025** (0.009)	-0.021* (0.010)
Education: years of schooling: 15 (baseline 20+)	0.751*** (0.095)	0.719*** (0.095)	0.205* (0.098)	0.207* (0.098)	0.766*** (0.109)	0.272* (0.118)
16	0.827*** (0.073)	0.808*** (0.073)	0.335*** (0.074)	0.345*** (0.074)	0.793*** (0.083)	0.397*** (0.085)
17-18	0.532*** (0.069)	0.492*** (0.068)	0.200** (0.073)	0.195** (0.073)	0.377*** (0.079)	0.086 (0.083)
19	0.336* (0.131)	0.303* (0.126)	0.051 (0.140)	0.038 (0.135)	0.299* (0.142)	0.043 (0.151)
current student	-0.373** (0.135)	-0.375** (0.139)	-0.166 (0.149)	-0.165 (0.150)	-0.580** (0.220)	-0.296 (0.231)
Vote in 2010: Conservative (baseline did not vote)					0.726*** (0.103)	0.598*** (0.111)
Vote in 2010: Labour					-0.820*** (0.116)	-0.774*** (0.125)
Vote in 2010: Lib Dem					-0.605*** (0.112)	-0.375** (0.121)
Vote in 2010: SNP					-0.875*** (0.162)	-0.857*** (0.185)
Vote in 2010: Plaid Cymru					-0.608 (0.331)	-0.391 (0.359)
Vote in 2010: BNP					1.267*** (0.309)	0.890** (0.306)
Vote in 2010: Greens					-0.725 (0.389)	-0.466 (0.443)
Vote in 2010: Respect					-12.363*** (1.008)	-17.021*** (1.019)
Vote in 2010: UKIP					1.767*** (0.191)	1.674*** (0.197)
Vote in 2010: Others					-0.422 (0.335)	-0.249 (0.367)
Fixed Effects (Constituency)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
N	9330	9216	8663	8558	9032	8321
AIC	35115.29	34602.54	31667.91	31243.31	32659.63	28562.87
expected % correctly predicted	20.54	20.88	24.22	24.37	26.12	28.34
expected prop. reduction in error	0.03	0.57	5.12	5.42	7.01	10.35
McKelvey and Zavoina R ²	0.055	0.066	0.182	0.189	0.281	0.366

Estimation results from ordered logit models with DV: "And how much do you like or dislike each of the following parties? UKIP" (10 point scale). Standard errors in parentheses, significance levels * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Goodness-of-fit statistics (expected % correctly predicted and expected proportional reduction in error) based on Herron (1999) as implemented by Lawrence (2009). Pseudo R² based on McKelvey and Zavoina (1975), as cited in Long and Freese (2014:110).

Table 3: Vote for UKIP

	(11)	(12)	(13)
	Vote UKIP (logit)	Vote UKIP (mlogit)	Prob.Vote UKIP
Personality: agreeableness	-0.070*** (0.018)	-0.047** (0.016)	-0.086*** (0.015)
Personality: conscientiousness	0.003 (0.018)	-0.021 (0.016)	0.000 (0.015)
Personality: extraversion	-0.021 (0.015)	-0.034* (0.013)	0.011 (0.012)
Personality: neuroticism	-0.022 (0.016)	0.001 (0.014)	-0.022 (0.013)
Personality_openness	0.010 (0.019)	0.065*** (0.017)	-0.037* (0.016)
Authoritarian	0.163*** (0.010)	0.101*** (0.009)	0.189*** (0.008)
White	0.363** (0.134)	0.040 (0.120)	0.668*** (0.106)
Male	0.450*** (0.064)	0.444*** (0.059)	0.348*** (0.053)
Age	0.005 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Income	-0.057*** (0.010)	-0.085*** (0.009)	-0.032*** (0.008)
Education: years of schooling: 15 (baseline 20+)	0.773*** (0.109)	0.821*** (0.098)	0.569*** (0.095)
16	0.640*** (0.089)	0.680*** (0.080)	0.466*** (0.073)
17-18	0.315*** (0.092)	0.375*** (0.081)	0.246*** (0.072)
19	0.256 (0.152)	0.052 (0.142)	0.262* (0.117)
current student	-1.507*** (0.426)	-0.682* (0.311)	0.019 (0.198)
Vote in 2010: Conservative (baseline did not vote)	-0.486*** (0.110)	-1.106*** (0.096)	0.522*** (0.090)
Vote in 2010: Labour	-1.505*** (0.124)	0.388** (0.122)	-0.674*** (0.095)
Vote in 2010: Lib Dem	-0.550*** (0.119)	0.244* (0.112)	-0.409*** (0.097)
Vote in 2010: SNP	-1.289*** (0.372)	-0.329 (0.270)	-0.256 (0.226)
Vote in 2010: Plaid Cymru	-0.833* (0.379)	0.518 (0.359)	-0.514 (0.345)
Vote in 2010: BNP	1.309*** (0.261)	1.836*** (0.276)	2.481*** (0.272)
Vote in 2010: Greens	-0.540 (0.396)	0.302 (0.373)	-0.545 (0.362)
Vote in 2010: Respect	-15.979 (5011.304)	-13.595 (919.919)	0.175 (1.341)
Vote in 2010: UKIP	2.274*** (0.191)	2.232*** (0.176)	2.163*** (0.181)
Vote in 2010: Others	0.290 (0.316)	0.779** (0.293)	0.637* (0.292)
N	15332	17522	8411

6. Conclusion

The main question guiding this study is why some voters support right wing populist parties. It argues that apart from standard explanations focusing on political context and institutions on the macro level, and demographic characteristics and concrete political attitudes on the micro level, individual personality characteristics are an important predictor of support for right wing populist parties. Based on existing literature from political science and psychology, this paper argues that some of the ‘big five’ personality factors are associated with individual voters’ views on political issues and voting behaviour. Specifically, in line with recent work on the relationship between personality factors and attitudes on immigration, openness to experience and agreeableness can be expected to affect views on immigration, and in turn support for right-wing populist parties. A distinct, but related research programme stresses the importance of an authoritarian value system for right-wing party support. This paper investigates the role of both personality factors and authoritarianism in the British political context. The analysis uses data from the 2015 British Election Study, and shows that openness to experience, agreeableness, and authoritarian values are strongly associated with more negative views on immigration and minorities on the one hand, and support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) on the other hand. These individual personality factors improve predictions of party support and vote intention above and beyond standard demographics, constituency characteristics, and even previous vote choice, and should be taken into account in models seeking to explain support for right wing populist parties.

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Table A1: Full results - vote choice model

(11) Multinomial logit, baseline: Conservative					
<i>Vote choice:</i>	Labour	LibDem	SNP	Other	UKIP
Personality: agreeableness	0.062*** (0.017)	0.015 (0.024)	0.070** (0.025)	0.068** (0.023)	-0.047** (0.016)
Personality: conscientiousness	-0.042** (0.016)	-0.023 (0.022)	-0.078** (0.024)	-0.051* (0.021)	-0.021 (0.016)
Personality: extraversion	-0.011 (0.013)	-0.036 (0.018)	-0.051** (0.020)	-0.028 (0.018)	-0.034* (0.013)
Personality: neuroticism	0.034* (0.014)	0.024 (0.020)	0.021 (0.021)	0.068*** (0.019)	0.001 (0.014)
Personality_openness	0.061*** (0.017)	0.058* (0.024)	0.170*** (0.026)	0.174*** (0.023)	0.065*** (0.017)
Authoritarian	-0.120*** (0.008)	-0.134*** (0.010)	-0.131*** (0.011)	-0.214*** (0.010)	0.101*** (0.009)
White	-0.278** (0.106)	-0.181 (0.148)	-0.360* (0.143)	-0.377** (0.130)	0.040 (0.120)
Male	-0.045 (0.058)	0.027 (0.082)	0.072 (0.088)	-0.124 (0.079)	0.444*** (0.059)
Age	-0.018*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.020*** (0.003)	-0.022*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.002)
Income	-0.084*** (0.009)	-0.050*** (0.012)	-0.062*** (0.013)	-0.114*** (0.011)	-0.085*** (0.009)
Education: years of schooling: 15 (baseline 20+)	0.375*** (0.105)	-0.526** (0.173)	0.405* (0.159)	0.067 (0.159)	0.821*** (0.098)
16	0.249** (0.080)	-0.417*** (0.120)	0.111 (0.124)	-0.073 (0.116)	0.680*** (0.080)
17-18	0.049 (0.077)	-0.202 (0.106)	0.008 (0.116)	-0.108 (0.106)	0.375*** (0.081)
19	-0.106 (0.135)	-0.216 (0.189)	-0.110 (0.208)	-0.202 (0.184)	0.052 (0.142)
current student	-0.368 (0.193)	-0.008 (0.250)	-0.031 (0.249)	-0.174 (0.214)	-0.682* (0.311)
Vote in 2010: Conservative (baseline did not vote)	-2.756*** (0.103)	-2.252*** (0.178)	-2.871*** (0.185)	-2.341*** (0.151)	-1.106*** (0.096)
Vote in 2010: Labour	2.491*** (0.102)	0.189 (0.190)	1.365*** (0.147)	0.705*** (0.146)	0.388** (0.122)
Vote in 2010: Lib Dem	0.676*** (0.096)	1.889*** (0.149)	0.345* (0.145)	0.906*** (0.128)	0.244* (0.112)
Vote in 2010: SNP	-0.059 (0.236)	-0.141 (0.411)	4.312*** (0.204)	-0.017 (0.333)	-0.329 (0.270)
Vote in 2010: Plaid Cymru	0.438 (0.341)	0.341 (0.538)	-1.404 (1.042)	3.199*** (0.308)	0.518 (0.359)
Vote in 2010: BNP	0.091 (0.355)	-0.894 (1.040)	-0.555 (0.760)	1.871*** (0.355)	1.836*** (0.276)
Vote in 2010: Greens	0.735* (0.298)	0.358 (0.473)	1.090** (0.364)	2.469*** (0.296)	0.302 (0.373)
Vote in 2010: Respect	-0.091 (1.298)	-13.940 (1889.911)	-14.275 (1625.208)	-0.221 (1.601)	-13.595 (919.919)
Vote in 2010: UKIP	-0.217 (0.230)	-0.849 (0.539)	-0.365 (0.401)	0.350 (0.303)	2.232*** (0.176)
Vote in 2010: Others	0.307 (0.288)	-0.629 (0.634)	0.446 (0.396)	1.125*** (0.320)	0.779** (0.293)
N	17522				