

UK: Far right supporters - violence is largely inevitable

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Far right supporters in the UK believe violent conflict between different religious, racial and ethnic groups is largely inevitable, according to a new survey on political extremism.

From Voting to Violence? Far Right Extremism in Britain examines the beliefs of those identifying themselves as members of the British National Party, the English Defence League or the UK Independence Party. Examining a YouGov survey of 2,152 individuals, Dr. Matthew Goodwin, of The University of Nottingham's School of Politics and International Relations, and the University of Salford's Professor Jocelyn Evans found evidence that large numbers of BNP and UKIP supporters endorse the view that violence between different ethnic, racial and religious groups in Britain is largely inevitable, with much stronger agreement amongst the BNP group.

Within the BNP sample, the study also found evidence of support for armed conflict when defending the British way of life.

“It is current and former BNP members who are the most likely to think that violence may be needed to protect their group, and that inter-group [violence](#) is largely inevitable,” said Dr Goodwin. “In contrast, while significant numbers of supporters on the periphery of the extreme right adopt similar views, they are noticeably less extreme in their views than those who are at the core.”

Community anxiety

The study also examined responses to questions on Islam and immigration, finding that large majorities of BNP and UKIP supporters appear absolutely convinced that Islam poses a serious danger to the West.

“Both groups express high levels of anxiety over Islam and its religious institutions,” Dr. Goodwin added. “Both BNP and UKIP supporters would feel bothered by the presence of a mosque in their local community, but to a much higher degree among the BNP supporters.

“BNP supporters in our sample are overwhelmingly concerned about immigration and Muslims, almost to the exclusion of all other issues. Both BNP and UKIP supporters are considerably dissatisfied with the way democracy is functioning in Britain, and again BNP supporters are the least satisfied.”

The authors stress that the report is exploratory rather than a definitive assessment of far right views. Their intention is that this will lead to far bigger research project analysing the beliefs held by far right extremists.

“We want to examine whether these views, taken from a relatively small sample, are specific to the far right in Britain,” said Dr. Goodwin. “This would include a much larger national population and serve to strengthen the evidence base we have, which is currently weak compared to that on

religious extremism.”

More information: [Click here to download a copy of the report.](#)

Provided by University of Nottingham

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