

# **Black and Minority Ethnic Survey**

**Research Study Conducted for  
The Electoral Commission**

The  
Electoral  
Commission

**May – July 2005**



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# Background and Methodology

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This report presents the findings of quantitative research study of Black and Minority Ethnic<sup>1</sup> communities conducted by the MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of the Electoral Commission.

## Research Objectives

The key aim of the research was to collect new insights into the perspectives of Britain's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities on attitudes towards the 2005 General Election and attitudes to voting and politics more generally.

Specifically, the research explored:

- Interest in politics and national issues;
- Attitudes towards the 2005 General Election;
- Whether and how people voted
- Barriers and motivators to voting
- The election campaign
- Involvement in the community.

This study provides supplementary data to the British Election Study (which does not include enough BME respondents to allow detailed analysis of voting behaviour and attitudes among BME communities) and will be used to provide an evidence base to inform the Commission's statutory report on the 2005 election.

## Sampling and methodology

The sampling for this study was done in two stages. This was to ensure that the views both of BME adults living in areas of high BME penetration and those living in areas with low BME penetration were captured.

Our analysis of 2001 Census data shows that around 77% of the BME population in Britain lives in Output Areas<sup>2</sup> (OA) where at least 10% of the population within the OA is from a BME group. Therefore, 75% of our sample was drawn from high penetration OAs and the remaining 25% was drawn in low penetration areas from the sampling frame used in MORI's Omnibus surveys, which are based on ward-sized sampling points.

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the definition Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) refers to people who do not define themselves as being White using the 2001 Census definitions. For a full definition see the Appendices.

<sup>2</sup> The smallest unit for which Census data from the 2001 Census is published.

In total 1,220 interviews were achieved with BME adults aged 18 and over. This comprised 968 interviews in the high penetration areas and 252 interviews in the low penetration areas. All interviews were conducted face to face in respondents' homes between 6<sup>th</sup> May - 4<sup>th</sup> July 2005.

In both the high and low penetration samples, the parliamentary constituency of Staffordshire South was excluded as no voting for the general election took place on May 5<sup>th</sup> due to the death of one of the candidates.

### **High penetration sample**

For the interviews in the high penetration areas, a random location quota sampling methodology was used and the sample frame was based on OAs. All OAs with less than 10% BME population were excluded and sampling points were randomly selected from the remainder with probability proportionate to BME population size, controlling for socio-demographic composition. In total 180 sampling points (OAs) were selected. Within each OA a list of addresses was selected, which was taken from the small user PAF – the Postal Address File. For each sampling point demographic quotas were set to reflect the BME population within each OA. In this case, quotas were set on gender, age, ethnicity and work status, based on updated 2001 Census data. Targets were also set for each ethnic group to ensure a minimum of 150 interviews were achieved with each group. These being:

Black African

Black Caribbean

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Mixed Race/Other

The targets were set to allow for statistical comparisons between the different ethnic groups.

### **Low penetration sample**

For the low penetration sample, the MORI Omnibus sampling points with less than a 10% BME population were selected. (The MORI Omnibus is conducted in 210 sampling points, each in a different parliamentary constituency and each consisting of between 3,500 and 8,000 households; most consist of a single census ward, but two or more wards may be combined in areas where ward populations are small, and very large wards are split into two sampling points.) In total 150 sampling points were selected, where the ethnic minority proportion of the population at the 2001 Census ranged from 0.7% to 9.5%. The survey was not conducted as part of the Omnibus; in each sampling point interviews were

asked to achieve two interviews with BME residents in addition to their Omnibus interviews. Similar to the methodology for the high penetration areas, interviewers were given a list of addresses taken from PAF and quotas were set on gender, age, ethnicity and work status according to the profile of the BME population within the low penetration areas. In total 252 interviews were achieved through this method which were conducted over four waves of the MORI Omnibus.

## **Weighting**

The data are weighted according to age, gender, ethnicity, work status and high/low penetration according to the population profile of BMEs in Britain using updated 2001 Census data.

## **Presentation and interpretation of data**

It should be remembered at all times that a sample and not the entire population of BME residents has been interviewed. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. Please refer to the appendices of this report where further information about sampling tolerances is given.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the volume an asterisk (\*) denotes any value of less than half a per cent but greater than zero.

In the report and computer tables, reference is made to “net” figures. This represents the balance of opinion on attitudinal questions, and provides a particularly useful means of comparing the results for a number of variables.

In the case of a “net agree” figure, this represents the percentage agree on a particular issue, less the percentage who disagree. For example, if 40% agree with a statement and 25% disagree, the “net agree” figure is +15 points.

## **Acknowledgements**

MORI would like to thank Katy Knock and Ben Marshall at Electoral Commission for her help in conducting this survey, as well as the 1,220 members of the public who took part.

## **Publication of the data**

As with all our studies, findings from this survey are subject to our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any press release or publication of the findings of this survey requires the advance approval of MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

# Introduction

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Turnout at the 2005 general election seems to have been lower among Black and ethnic minority citizens than among White Britons. (Although 59% of respondents in the survey said that they had voted, bearing in mind the invariable tendency of post-election surveys to inflate turnout, this equates to a turnout considerably lower than the national turnout of 61%, quite possibly 50% or lower. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the sample includes foreign citizens, not all of whom would have been eligible to vote even had they wished to do so.)

Turnout was higher among those from the main Asian national-origin groups (i.e. Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) than among the main Black groups (African and Caribbean). Lower still, however, was turnout among the Mixed-race group and “others”.

One feature of any representative survey of British ethnic minorities is that religion and ethnicity are too closely linked within the target group to be entirely disentangled. For instance, some 95% of Pakistanis and 98% of Bangladeshis interviewed identified themselves as Muslims, whilst 95% of Sikhs are Indian; it therefore becomes impossible in many cases to statistically distinguish between the two effects. Nevertheless, it seems clear that, despite the prominence of the government’s policy on Iraq both in media coverage and party campaigning during the election, religion (and specifically Islam) was not a factor in BME turnout; nor, for that matter, were attitudes to the Iraq policy as such.

Turnout was lowest among the young, as was the case with the electorate in general, but unlike the national picture it appears that among BMEs this “young” group includes not only 18-24 year olds but 25-34 year olds, whose turnout was just as low. The disconnection or alienation of youth, if this is the reason for low turnout, appears to have spread further among BMEs than among White people.

Less in line with expectations from the voting behaviour of the rest of the population, however, was turnout by social class. While ABs were, as would be expected, the most likely to vote, turnout among DEs was almost as high. This appears to be a new departure – when asked not about the 2005 election but about their past turnout at all the general elections in which they have been eligible to vote, the normal pattern of steadily declining propensity to vote by social class reasserts itself.

We can find a similarly anomalous pattern in 2005 if we look at declared interest in the election: although this was highest among graduates (again as would be expected), there was no difference interest between those with A levels, those who had only GCSEs or the equivalent, and those who had left school with no qualifications whatsoever. While, lacking an established benchmark for interest in an election among this group we cannot state for certain whether interest was higher than would be expected among the less educated or lower than expected among the A level and GCSE groups, the combination of other factors suggests

that the former was the case. If we examine turnout by education, we find that *even of those registered to vote*, turnout was highest among those with no qualifications. Furthermore, graduates were least likely and those with more qualifications most likely to be registered in the first place, though this no doubt partly reflects that it is easier for foreign passport holders (who are therefore, if the passport is not a Commonwealth one, not eligible to vote) to get permission to live and work in Britain the higher their educational qualifications. (Those with degrees who are not registered are much more likely to cite ineligibility as the reason than are other respondents.)

Something, therefore, seems to have unusually energised the least affluent and least well educated ethnic minority voters in 2005. Quite likely it was an effect operating within these communities during the election. It may be relevant that while the level of leaflets delivered to these voters (or at least remembered as having been delivered) seems to have been lower than the average across the country – for no immediately apparent reason, since the figures are uncorrelated with constituency marginality – the level of personal canvassing reached the national average. Possibly this indicates a level of co-operation between the ethnic minority communities and the political parties. Certainly, the canvassing in person seems to have been effective since turnout was significantly higher among those who said they had been visited by a party representative than those who had not.

The comparatively low turnout of BMEs does not seem to be driven by scepticism about the value of voting as such. Members of ethnic minorities are *more* positive about the efficacy of voting than the British population as a whole. Indeed, we also find that there is a big difference in attitudes within the BME group between those born in the UK and those born elsewhere: only 40% of those born in Britain agree that voting makes a difference, yet 54% of those born elsewhere think it does. Is this evidence of a corrosive effect of our national culture on attitudes to the democratic system? It certainly throws a depressing light on British elections, though not necessarily reflecting anything distinctive to the BME communities except that enough of them are first generation immigrants to view us from the detached perspective of someone who has lived somewhere else as well.

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# The 2005 General Election

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## Turnout

Three-fifths, 59%, of the BMEs interviewed in the survey (71% of those who said they were registered to vote) claim to have voted in the 2005 general election<sup>3</sup>. While this might suggest that turnout was similar among BMEs to that in the rest of the population (61% of the registered electorate and a similar proportion of the adult population once allowance for dead names and double-counting in the register is made), it is important not to forget that post-election surveys generally produce an “overclaim” – significantly more of a representative sample will claim to have voted than turnout figures would imply is the case – and there is no reason to suppose that a survey of BMEs will be any different. In MORI’s post-election national survey, 72% said that they had voted, and preliminary results from the British Election Study indicated a similar figure. A claimed turnout of 59% by BMEs, therefore, indicates a significantly lower real turnout than that by White voters, quite possibly around the 47% figure that MORI projected from certainty of voting responses collected during the election campaign.

It should be taken into account, of course, that this figure is not adjusted for eligibility. Significantly higher numbers of BME adults living in Britain than of White adults may be ineligible to vote by reason of nationality; on the other hand turnout among registered voters is also a misleading statistic, since disengagement may be a significant reason for non-registration.

There were significant differences in claimed turnout between the different ethnic groups in the survey, over and above the differences in levels of registration. Three-quarters of all Bangladeshis (76%), 70% of Pakistanis and 67% of Indians said that they voted, while the figures fell to 61% for Caribbeans and 54% for Africans. Much lower still, though, were turnout rates among “other” ethnic minorities (46%) and among those of mixed race (just 40%); in the latter case, however, this may partly reflect that the mixed race group has a much younger age profile than do the other ethnic groups, and turnout was very much lower among the young than among the middle-aged and old across the board.

Overall among BMEs, claimed turnout was lower among 18-24 year olds (48%) and 25-34 year olds (48%) than among 35-54 year olds (63%) and those aged 55-and-over (79%). While voting was also lower among the young in the population as a whole, in that case there was a marked difference between 18-24 year olds and 25-34 year olds, the latter being (according to MORI’s election aggregate) a third more likely to have voted (49% to 37%). Among BMEs there was

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<sup>3</sup> The General Election Aggregate is MORI’s “best guess” of the voting behaviour of the entire electorate, based on 18,000 interviews conducted during the election campaign, and judging turnout by answers to a certainty of voting question. It is weighted to the final result and turnout of the election at regional level.

apparently no difference, the non-voting malaise having infected a wider generation.

There was no difference in claimed turnout between those born in the UK (58%) and those born elsewhere (59%), nor much by gender (men 57%, women 60%) and surprisingly no systematic difference by class. (It was lowest among C1s, 53%, but almost as high among DEs, 60%, as for ABs, 65%.) While it was very much lower than average among third-generation residents (46%), this simply reflects that that group consists disproportionately of the young.

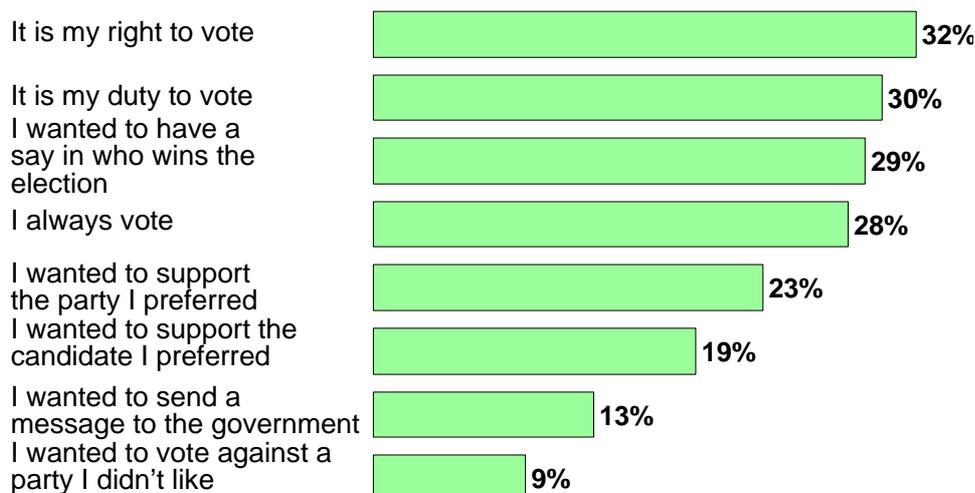
## Reasons for voting

Respondents cite a disparate selection of reasons why they chose to vote on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Chief amongst these is the fact they have the *right* to vote (32%), or that they consider it a *duty* to do so (30%). Notably, the most popular instrumental reasons for voting appear to be ‘positive’, focussed upon engagement (wanting to have a say in the political process, or support a preferred candidate or party, or who wins the election); rather than ‘negative’ (for example, wanting to send a message to the government – 13% - or voting against a disliked party – 9%).

Attitudes to voting are also to a degree differentiated by ethnic group. In particular, those of mixed background are the most likely to mention seeing voting as a duty (42%), whilst Africans are the least likely to do so (25%). In terms of more ‘negative’ reasons for voting, Muslims are the group most likely to have voted against a party that did not like (14%), and are also the group most likely to want to send a message to the government with their vote (17%).

## Reasons for voting

Q15 *People have different reasons for voting in general elections. Which of the statements on this card come closest to your reason(s) for voting in the general election that was held on May 5<sup>th</sup>?*



Base: All those who voted (740 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

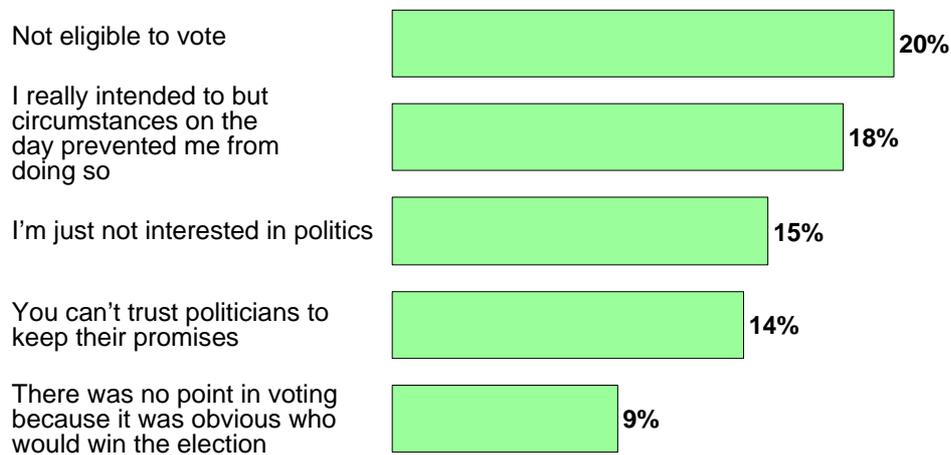
These ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ reasons must of course be interpreted in light of the political circumstances of the campaign and the party loyalties to which they applied. Labour voters were considerably more likely than Conservatives or Liberal Democrats (26% against 15% and 16%) to say they voted to “support the party I preferred”, and conversely the opposition parties – Liberal Democrats (22%) but also Conservatives (17%) - drew much more of their support from voters who “wanted to vote against a party I didn’t like” than did Labour (6%), as well as naturally being the beneficiaries of the votes of those who “wanted to send a message to the government”, such messages rarely being approving ones.

## Reasons for not voting

A lack of eligibility is the most common reason for not voting, cited by one in five respondents (20%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, lack of eligibility is more commonly cited by respondents born outside the UK (29%), and by those not registered to vote (51%). Some 18% of respondents intended to vote but were prevented by circumstances from doing so on the day – a response which varies somewhat between ethnicity, with Pakistanis are the group most likely to be prevented from voting on the day (38% claim this is the case), as compared to 15% of Indians and 19% of Caribbeans. Overall, 15% claim they didn’t vote as they’re just not interested in politics, and 14% don’t trust politicians to keep their promises.

## Reasons for not voting [top 5]

Q17 *People have different reasons for not voting in general elections. Which of these statements comes closest to your reason(s) for not voting in the general election which was held on May 5<sup>th</sup>?*



Base: All those who did not vote (445 aged 18+, 5<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Reasons for not voting also tend to differ quite strongly depending on whether respondents have registered to vote or not – as the table below shows. In particular, over half (51%) of those not registered to vote claimed ineligibility as their main reason for not voting – as compared with only 2% of those who are

registered<sup>4</sup>. Of those respondents who *did* register to vote, the fact that circumstances prevented them from voting on the day is the most popular reason for not voting (25%), while one in five (20%) claim to just not be interested in politics. By contrast, a lack of interest in politics was only cited by 8% of those unregistered respondents who did not vote.

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**People have different reasons for not voting in general elections. Which of these statement comes closest to the reason(s) for not voting in the general election which was held on May 5<sup>th</sup>?**

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	Registered to vote	Not registered to vote
<i>Base: All those who did not vote (445)</i>		
	%	%
I really intended to but circumstances on the day prevented me from doing so	25	6
I'm just not interested in politics	20	8
You can't trust politicians to keep their promises	19	4
There was no point in voting because it was obvious who was going to win the election	13	2
Not eligible to vote	2	51

*Source: MORI*

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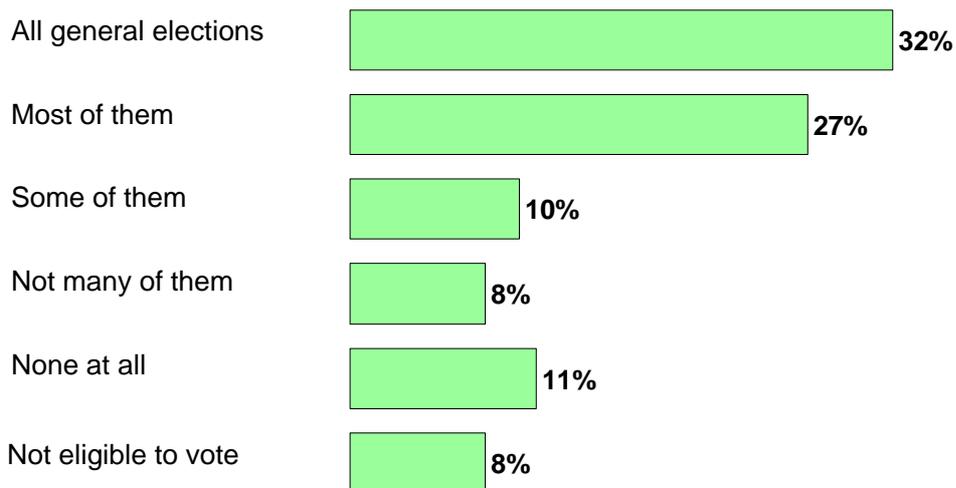
<sup>4</sup> EU citizens could register to vote in local and European elections, but are not eligible to vote in general elections.

## Past frequency of voting

Overall, around a third of respondents (32%) claim that they have voted in *all* general elections at which they were eligible, and a further 27% claim to have voted in *most* of them.

## Regularity of voting

Q18 Since you have been eligible to vote in general elections, have you voted in...



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Reflecting overall interest in politics discussed above, respondents in higher social grades are more likely to vote in all elections (38% of class AB, as compared to 29% of groups DE), whilst Conservative supporters are more likely to vote in every election (63%) than either Labour or Liberal Democrat supporters (53% and 59% respectively) – something which again mirrors national trends.

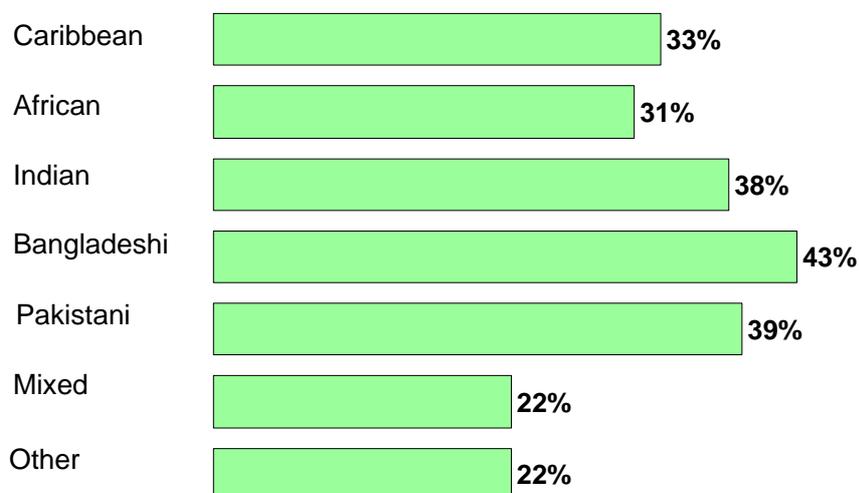
This makes it increasingly curious that claimed turnout at the 2005 election does not follow the same pattern – especially as this lays to rest any suspicion that the explanation might be differential overclaim. (It makes no sense to suppose that a group would systematically overstate its turnout at the 2005 election yet not make similar claims about past elections, unless this election was in some way different from those in the past – in which case there is no need to disbelieve the claims in the first place.)

Of course, the prominence of the Iraq War as an election issue would explain this unusual behaviour were it confined to (or even especially prominent among) Muslims, but this does not seem to have been the case. (Indeed, turnout of registered voters in 2005 was slightly higher among supporters of the War than among its opponents.) Nor is there any sign that the rise of immigration and asylum onto the election agenda provoked a general ethnic minority backlash.

Interestingly, reported regularity of voting varies quite significantly between different ethnic groups. Bangladeshis are the ethnic group most likely to state that they have voted in *all* general elections (43%), whilst respondents from mixed ethnic backgrounds are the least likely to vote (22%). The pattern in these respects strongly resembles that of 2005 turnout, implying that if anything was unusual about 2005 it was not a factor that had a differential impact by ethnic minority group.

## Regularity of voting by ethnic group

Q18 Since you have been eligible to vote in general elections, have you voted in...all general elections?



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

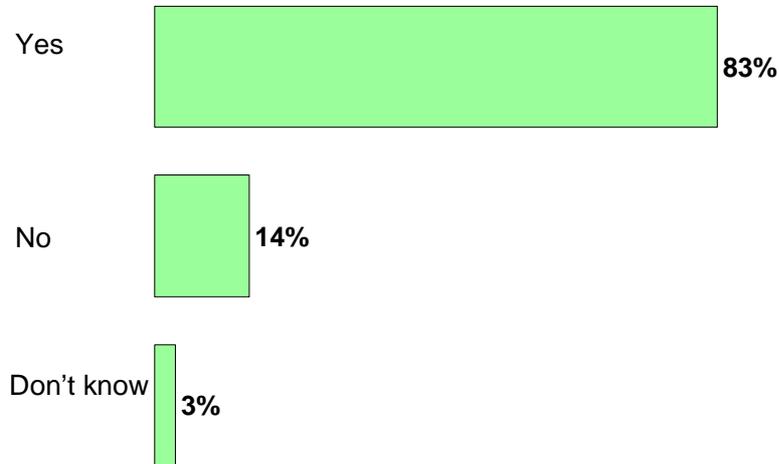
## Registering to vote

Those not already registered to vote could not, of course, take part in the election regardless of their attitudes towards it. A little over eight in ten (83%) of BME respondents in total claim to be registered to vote in the UK, whilst 14% are not registered and 3% do not know. There are, however, a number of significant differences between subgroups in levels of registration. Reflecting MORI's 2004/2005 work looking at voter registration for the Electoral Commission<sup>5</sup>, age is a significant factor in registration levels, with only 75% of 18-24 year olds registered to vote, as compared to 95% of those aged 55 and above. Location also plays a factor, with the Midlands and Wales reporting the highest level of registration amongst Black and minority ethnic respondents (91%), as compared to 76% who claim to be registered in Scotland and the North.

<sup>5</sup> *Public Opinion Research: Winter 04/05* MORI, for the Electoral Commission.

## Voter registration amongst BMEs

Q10 As far as you know, is your name on the electoral register, that is, the official list of people entitled to vote, either at this address or somewhere else?



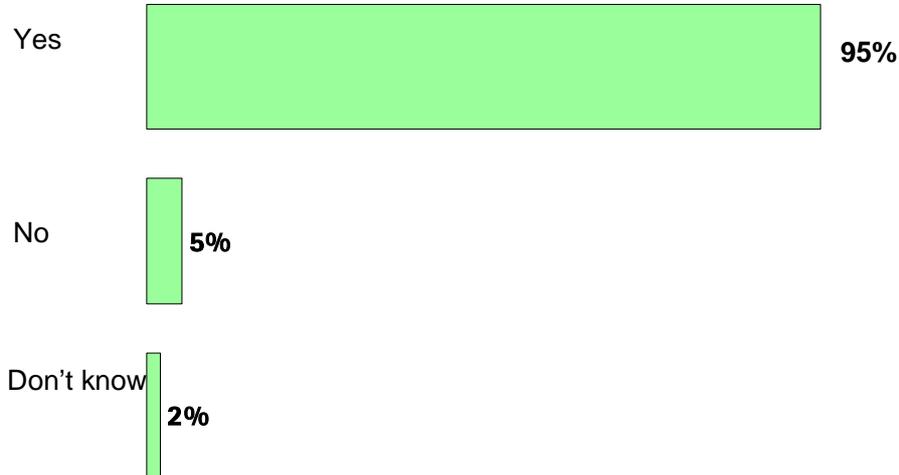
Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Overall rates of registration claimed amongst BME respondents are considerably lower than in the population as a whole, as the chart below shows – three times as many respondents in the BME survey said that they were not registered as in the earlier national survey. It should be noted, however, that the way in which the question is phrased varies between the two surveys, and also that one survey was pre-election (when those unaware that they were not registered might not have had occasion to find out) and the other post-election, so any comparisons should be made with caution.

## Voter registration amongst the overall population

As far as you are aware, are you registered to vote in the UK?



Base: All respondents (5,956 GB aged 18+, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004 – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2005)

Source: MORI

Overall rates of registration are also higher in areas with a BME penetration of greater than one in ten (86%) than in areas where the penetration of BMEs is less than 10% (72%). This finding is somewhat surprising, given that these areas of ethnic minority concentration are disproportionately deprived and/or inner city areas, where registration has always been lower. Furthermore, one would expect respondents in higher social groups and with a higher level of education to have a greater propensity to register to vote (nationally, 94% of those in class ABC1 are registered, as compared with 92% in social groups C2DE<sup>6</sup>), yet there is no significant difference in claimed registration among BMEs by class, and it is actually higher among those with no educational qualifications (89%) than among graduates (80%).

One possible explanation for this could be the important role that being part of an active ethnic community plays in encouraging people to vote and to register to be able to do so; it must be a powerful effect indeed to neutralise the normal social class and educational differences. Overall, though those living in areas with lower levels of BME penetration tend to come from higher social groups, they are also less likely to agree that their local area is one where people from different backgrounds get on well together (76% agree this is the case, as compared to 81% of respondents from areas with a penetration rate of greater than 10%). It may be that ethnic minority Britons living in overwhelmingly White areas feel an exceptional level of exclusion and disengagement, and that this militates against their taking place in the political process.

Moreover, rates of registration vary not only between BME groups and the population as a whole, but also *between* different BME groups, as the table below

<sup>6</sup> Data from *Public Opinion Research 04/05*, MORI/The Electoral Commission, 5,870 GB adults aged 18+, 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2004 – 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2005.

shows. It is worth noting that these levels of registration show a similar but less marked pattern to the turnout figures: those groups least likely to be registered are also least likely to have voted in 2005, *even if registered*.

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### Voter registration

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***As far as you know, is your name on the electoral register, that is, the official list of people entitled to vote, either at this address or somewhere else?***

	Yes	No	Don't know
Caribbean	89	9	2
African	76	21	3
Indian	88	8	2
Pakistani	93	5	2
Bangladeshi	94	4	2
Mixed	76	20	3
Other	69	27	5

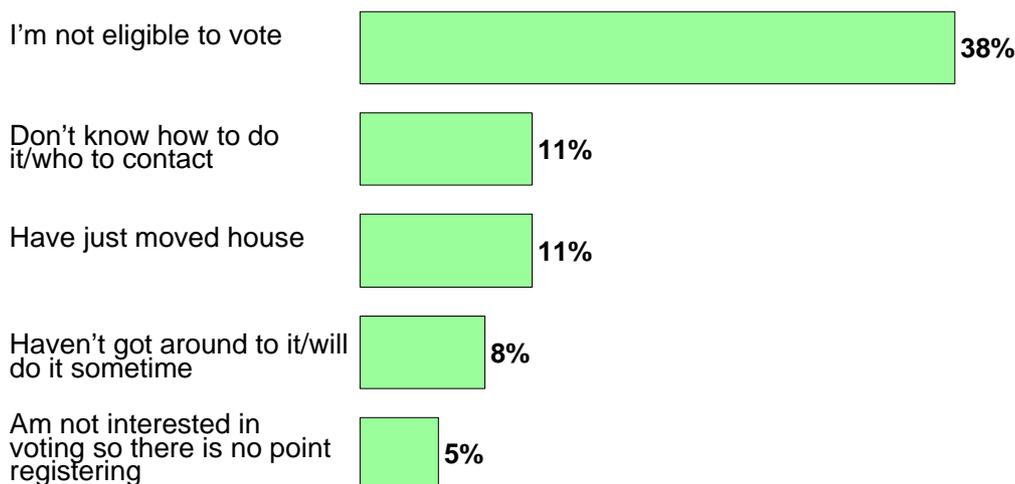
*Source: MORI 1,220 GB BME adults, 16+, 6<sup>th</sup> May – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2005*

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In terms of voter registration, the most common reason for not registering is a lack of eligibility. Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents born outside of the UK are more likely to cite this as a reason for not registering (47%) than those born in the country (8% of whom cite lack of eligibility).

### Reasons for not registering to vote amongst BMEs: Unprompted [Top 5]

Q11 Are there any particular reasons why you are not registered to vote?



Base: All those not registered to vote (171 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

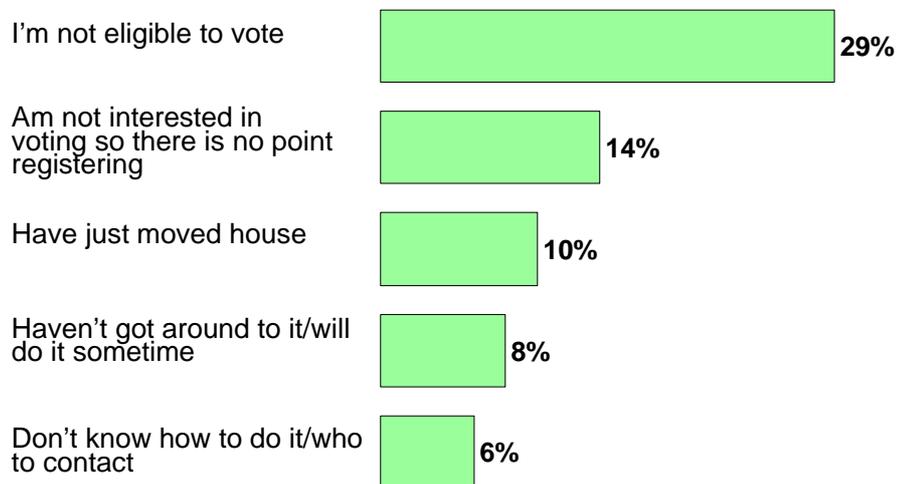
Source: MORI

Overall, some 67% of those who are not eligible to vote claimed it was because they are not a British national. These consist overwhelmingly of first-generation immigrants born outside the UK, and three-fifths classified their ethnic group as “other” rather than African, Caribbean or one of the three main Asian groups. It may well be therefore that the majority are indeed ineligible to register, though the 20% of this group whose ethnic group is Indian probably include significant numbers unaware that Commonwealth nationality is sufficient to claim the franchise.

Again, if we compare these results with similar work MORI completed for the Electoral Commission<sup>7</sup>, there are a number of differences between BME responses and those of the population as a whole. Perhaps unsurprisingly, lack of eligibility is less important as an issue amongst the general population (29%) – though it is still the most important reason cited. BME respondents are more likely to cite lack of knowledge of the registration process as a reason for not voting (11%); the general population by contrast is more likely to cite a lack of interest in voting (14%). Interest in politics also relates slightly to likelihood of registration, with some 80% of those who claim not to be interested registering, as compared to 85% of those who claim that they are interested.

### Reasons for not registering to vote amongst the overall population: Unprompted [Top 5]

Q11 Are there any particular reasons why you are not registered to vote?



Base: All those not registered to vote (171 GB aged 18+, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004 – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2005)

Source: MORI

<sup>7</sup> *Public Opinion Research: Winter 04/05* MORI, for the Electoral Commission.

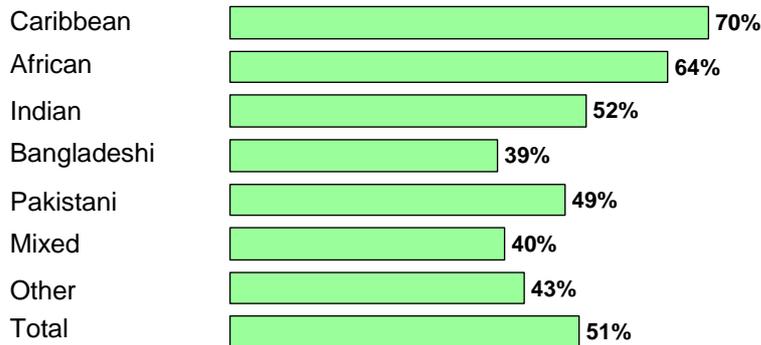
## Party support

Around three-quarters of ethnic minority adults are prepared to choose one of the political parties when asked “generally speaking” which they think of themselves as; the majority of these, half the entire sample (51%) say they think of themselves as Labour.

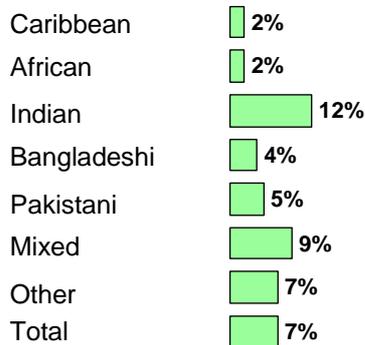
### Political Party Generally Supported

Q6 *Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat?*

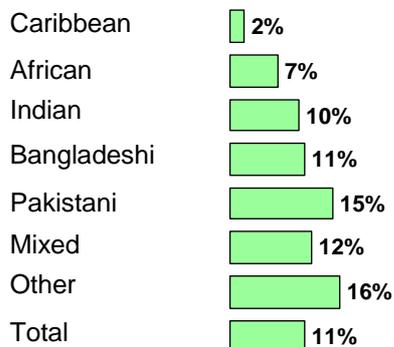
#### Labour



#### Conservative



#### Liberal Democrat



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

There are much lower levels of identification with the Liberal Democrats (11%) and Conservatives (7%). However, one in five (19%) said they identified with

none of the parties, and a further 9% either didn't know or declined to answer. A quarter of these admitted to feeling closer to one party than the others, again predominantly Labour. As the chart below shows, support for the different parties varies quite significantly according to ethnic background, with Caribbeans the group most likely to vote for the Labour party (70%), and Bangladeshis the least likely (39%). These differences are probably class-related rather than specifically ethnic or religious.

As would be expected, there is a strong correlation between identifying with one of the political parties and voting in the general election. Around two-thirds of those who said they identified with one of the major parties (70% of Conservatives, 67% of Labour and 64% of Liberal Democrats) said that they had voted on 5<sup>th</sup> May, and as far as can be judged from the small sample sizes much the same was true of those identifying with one of the minor parties. By contrast only 30% of those who identified with none of the parties and 38% of those who didn't know said they had turned out. (On the other hand 83% of those who refused to answer the party identity question voted, implying that refusal arises from "spiral of silence" motives among those who have a political identity rather than from any reluctance to admit a political identity; again this is not unexpected.)

The vast majority of those who declared a party identification voted for that party at the general election if they voted at all. It has been questioned in the past whether many voters in Britain draw any strong distinction between their permanent political identity and the temporary decision to vote for a particular party at a particular election, the distinction which makes the political identity question so useful to political scientists in some other countries, and there is certainly no more sign that this distinction is present among the BME voters in this survey than in the public more generally. If party identification were reasonably permanent, and taking into account the circumstances of the election and the appeals made by the various parties, we might have expected to see, for example, that a significantly higher number of Muslim Labour-identifiers voted for other parties than did Labour-identifiers of other religions. This was not the case – it seems likely that former supporters of Labour who switched to other parties at the 2005 general election changed not merely their vote but their self-identification.

As the table below shows, whilst there is a strong link between party identification and vote, there was nevertheless a small degree of cross-voting. It is noticeable that the pattern bears no resemblance to that which we might expect to find if the main reason for this were tactical voting – though this is understandable as very few BME voters live in constituencies where tactical voting would normally be useful.

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**Link between political party supported, and vote in 2005**

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**Party identified with:**

		Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
		%	%	%
<b>Party voted for:</b>	Conservative	57	1	2
	Labour	4	59	2
	Liberal Democrat	2	3	56
	Other/refused	7	4	4
	Did not vote	30	33	36

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*Source: MORI 1,220 GB BME adults, 16+, 6<sup>th</sup> May – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2005*

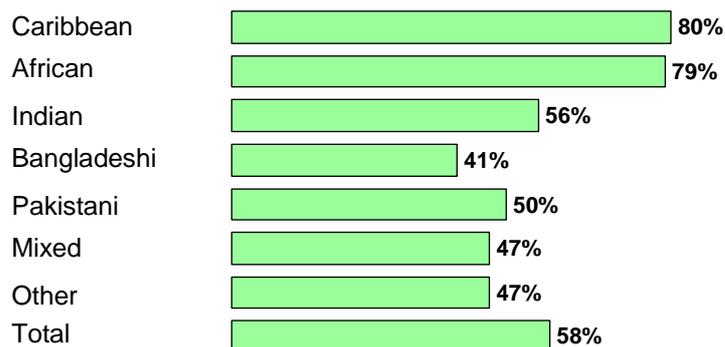
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As the charts below show, ethnic and religious factors also play a role in the way in which respondents voted on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Caribbeans are the most likely to vote for the Labour party (80%) for example, whilst Bangladeshis are the least likely to (41%).

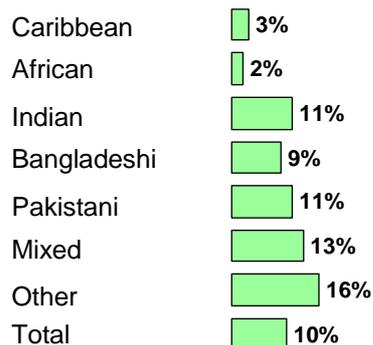
### Political Party Voted For

Q13 Which party did you vote for in the general election?

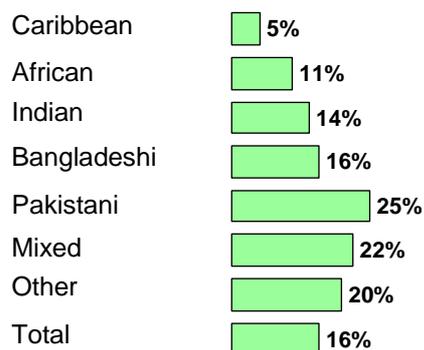
#### Labour



#### Conservative



#### Liberal Democrat



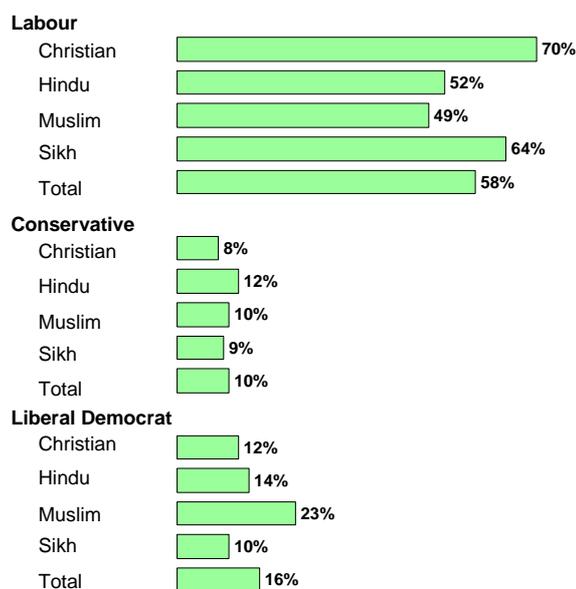
Base: All those who voted (740 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Similarly, religious factors also appear to have an impact upon voting patterns (though religious and ethnic factors are interlinked). Christians are the religious groups most likely to vote for the Labour party (70%), whilst Muslims are the group least likely to vote Labour (49%).

### Party supported by religion

Q13 Which party did you vote for in the general election?



Base: All those who voted (740 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Overall, BME voters are considerably more likely to support the Labour Party than is the population as a whole, which has of course always been the case. Some of the same socio-demographic factors which are predictors of party support among White voters also play a role in voting patterns of BME respondents; others, though, seem not to operate at all. In particular, social class has an influence on the way that people vote – some 47% of those in groups AB voted Labour, compared to 66% of those in groups DE. By comparison, 12% of ABs and 14% of C1s voted Conservative, compared to 8% of those in group C2, and 5% in groups DE.

Intriguingly, these class differences in voting behaviour are more marked amongst BME respondents than amongst the population overall, in which the class factor as a determinant of voting behaviour seems to have receded in importance over the past few elections. Comparing the findings from the BME survey with MORI's General Election Aggregate, we find that among all voters ABs were about one-and-a-half times as likely as DEs to vote Conservative; the ABs in the BME survey were two-and-a-half times as likely to do so as the DEs. This may indicate that the social and political factors and events which have weakened the class-vote link across the British public have not operated as strongly in the ethnic minority communities.

In contrast, age does not predict party support among BMEs in the same way which it does in the British electorate as a whole. For White voters, support for

the Conservatives has always been strongest amongst the oldest age groups and for Labour weakest. The MORI aggregate suggests that those aged 55+ voted 40% Conservative, 34% Labour and 20% Liberal Democrat while 18-24 year olds voted 38% Labour, 28% Conservative and 26% Liberal Democrat. Among BMEs a very different pattern emerges. There is no difference by age in support for the Conservatives (9% or 10% of those who voted in all age groups), but Labour support is 60% or over among those aged 35-and-over but only 50% in the 18-34 generation, the gap being explained by higher support for the Liberal Democrats among the young (falling from 24% among 18-24 year olds to only 10% among those aged 55+).

There is more than one possible explanation for this. It is possible that the Liberal Democrat appeal was simply more effective among the young – while this may be related to their deliberate targeting of students and to feelings about the Iraq War being stronger across this generation; it will be noted that the Lib Dem vote was higher among the young across the country, though the difference was less than among BMEs. It may also be that government policy has generated a particular opposition among ethnic minorities, and this is expressed to a more marked degree by the greater militancy of the young. On the other hand, the figures may demonstrate no more than a residual loyalty to Labour among older voters who feel a historical gratitude to the party which is less widespread among those whose political memories do not extend back so far.

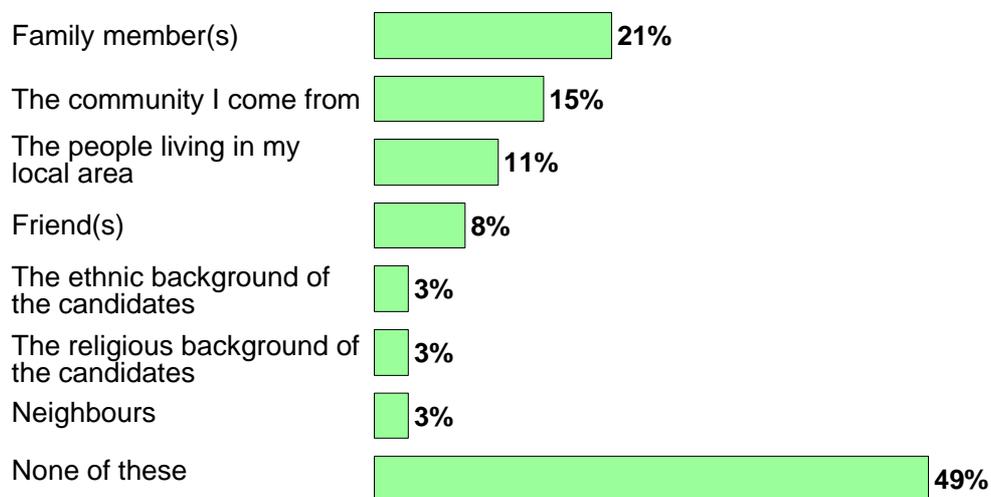
### **Influences on voting behaviour**

Half the voters (49%) deny having been influenced by any of the suggested sources. This figure increases with age – only a quarter of 18-24 year olds (24%) claim not to have been influenced in their voting behaviour, whilst 46% of 25-34 year olds, 52% of 35-54 year olds and 65% of those aged over 55 claim that this is the case.

Of those factors that *do* have an influence on voting behaviour, family members are the most commonly cited (21%). Again, the results here are quite strongly differentiated by age, with younger respondents citing family members as a relatively more important factor (38% of 18-24 year olds cite family members, as compared to 11% of those aged 55+). The importance of family members also varies by ethnic group, with Bangladeshis the most likely to cite family as an influence on the way they voted (30%), whilst Caribbeans and Africans the least likely to do so (both on 14%).

## Influence on voting patterns

Q16 Which two of the following, if any, do you think had an influence on the way you voted in the general election?



Base: All those who voted (740 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

The influence of “the community I come from” was higher among Africans (24%) than among other ethnic groups, and was for them the most frequently named influence. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the levels of community influence between the different religions.

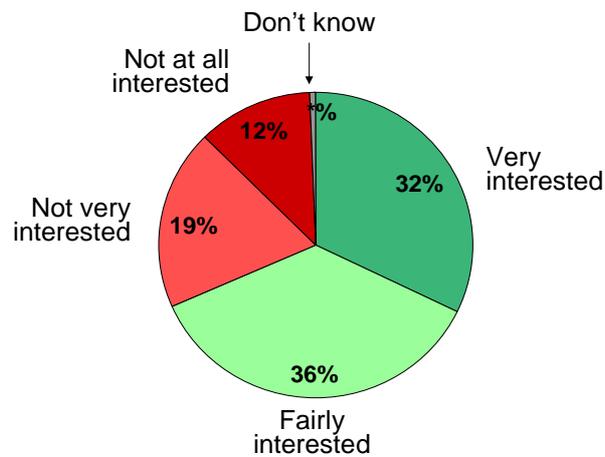
Both Pakistanis (19%) and those of mixed background (20%) were almost twice as likely as average to say they had been influenced by “the people living in my local area”; only 4% of Africans and 3% of the various “other” groups said the same. These figures may of course be greatly influenced by the nature of the areas where these voters live, the degree to which “the people living in my local area” may also be thought of as “the community I come from”, and other such factors, and are therefore difficult to interpret as offering any specifically ethnic insight.

## Interest in the election

Some two thirds of respondents (68%) say they were very or fairly interested in the 2005 general election campaign. As might be expected, age plays a role in the level of interest in the campaign, with 65% of those aged 18-24 displaying an interest, compared to three-quarters (74%) of those aged 55 or above.

## Interest in the 2005 general election campaign

Q9 How interested were you in the general election that was held on May 5<sup>th</sup> this year?



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Social class also appears to be a factor here, with those in the upper social groups (AB) significantly more interested (81%) than those in groups C1, C2 or DE (of whom 65% or 66% are interested), a pattern which – as discussed below – also applies to interest in politics. Third generation migrants (those not only born in the UK but whose parents were also) were significantly less interested: seven in ten first generation or second generation (70% and 69% respectively) respondents saying they had an interest in the campaign, as compared to 55% of third generation respondents. These results should be interpreted with caution as explaining attitudes, however, since first and second generation migrants are also more likely to come from social class AB (14% of first generation migrants are from class AB, as are 21% of second generation migrants) than are third generation migrants, 9% of whom are from group AB, and the age profile of course would also push in the same direction. Nevertheless, whatever the principal reason for the difference in interest levels, if the different generations have in any sense a different cultural outlook then the lower interest of third-generation immigrants in the election may affect the impact of the campaign.

Interest in the campaign varies only slightly between ethnic and religious groups – Africans are most likely to be interested in the campaign (74%), and those of a mixed background least likely to (60%). Differences in responses by religion are similarly small. However, whether or not respondents have a degree appears to have a quite a strong impact upon level of interest in the campaign: two-thirds.

(67%) of respondents with qualifications up to the level of GCSEs (or equivalent) were very or fairly interested in the campaign, as were 66% of those with no formal qualifications, and 62% of those with 'A' levels; by comparison, three-quarters of graduates (77%) were either very or fairly interested in the campaign.

While it is not unexpected to find an educational distinction, it is intriguing that the difference appears to be only between graduates and others, while levels of achievement at school are not a factor. The same is not true, for example, of interest in politics, which shows the usual graduated increase from 37% interest among those with no qualifications, to 46% of those with GCSEs and 56% of those with A Levels to 70% interest among graduates. Assuming that this finding is not replicated among the general public in the British Election Study, it would certainly bear further investigation.

## **Engagement with the campaign**

Overall, some 72% of respondents had some sort of contact with political parties prior to the election. By far the most common form of contact was via leaflets posted through front doors; two-thirds (65%) of respondents said they had had leaflets through their doors, whilst some one in five (21%) had someone call at their front door. Some 5% were contacted by someone from a political party on election day to see if they had voted, and 4% had someone telephone to check which way they might vote (a figure which, of course, will encompass both telephone canvassing and opinion polling).

This level of leafleting is considerably lower than the national experience (MORI's post-election survey found 89% saying they had had "political leaflets through your letterbox" during the past few weeks), and more so than can simply be explained by the disproportionate concentration of BME voters in safe constituencies, since the national rate of coverage includes high levels of leafleting even there. (In fact, there is no relationship with marginality within the BME survey: 65% of those living in safe seats received leaflets, and 71% in semi-safe seats, where the majority in 2001 was between 10% and 20%, yet only 61% of those in marginals had them.) More tellingly, there is no corresponding shortfall in personal canvassing, the 21% of BMEs who said someone from a political party had called at their front door exactly matching the 21% in MORI's national survey who had been "called on by a representative of a political party".

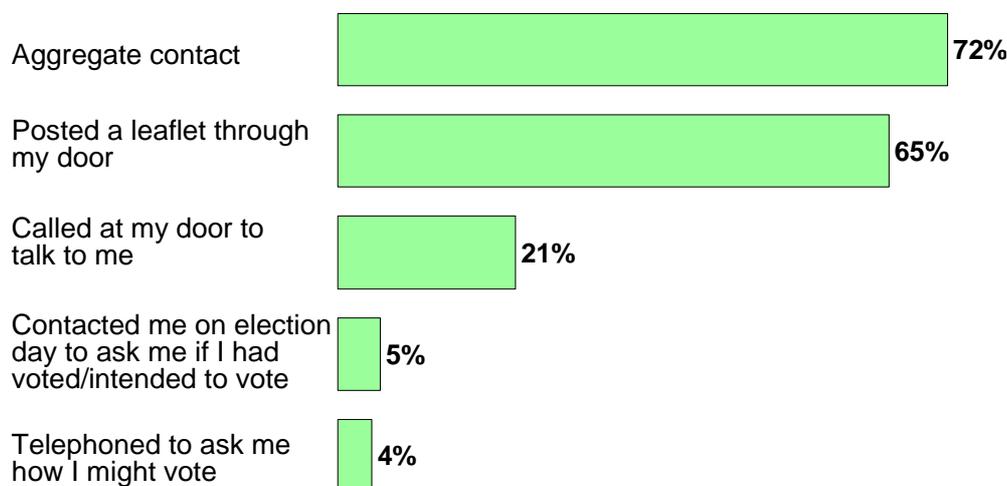
Assuming the apparent difference in leafleting is not simply an effect of the difference in question-wording between the two surveys (which comparison with data from the BES, when available, might confirm), it is quite a striking anomaly. It may indicate that areas with high concentration of BME voters are particularly likely to be treated by parties as "no go" areas, but this seems to be negated by the reported levels of leaflets being just as low – in fact fractionally lower – among respondents living in areas with low BME populations. Alternatively, it may be that just as many leaflets were in reality delivered to BME households, but that they were less likely to be reported in the survey – perhaps because they were more likely to have been forgotten, not read or ignored (perhaps especially by those for whom English is not a first language), or simply not circulated

between members of the household to the same extent that they would be by White voters. (There are no significant differences in reported levels of leafleting by gender or age, so there is no question of any group having been systematically less likely to be shown leaflets, but this would not preclude for example a greater tendency among BME families for the first person in a household to see a leaflet to throw it away without bothering to mention it to anybody else.)

Overall, respondents in the south of the country appear to have been more heavily targeted by parties, with 80% reporting some form of contact from a political party representative. In comparison, those in Scotland and the north of England are the least likely to have been targeted, with some 67% reporting some form of contact prior to the election. Unlike the delivery of leaflets, there was a slight difference in the level of personal canvassing by marginality (17% of those living in safe seats but 28% in semi-safe and 25% in marginals reported that a party representative had called to speak to them), while both telephone canvassing and election-day door knocking were much higher in marginals than elsewhere, as would be expected.

## Contact with political parties

Q21 Thinking about the General Election campaign, which of these, if any, applied to you? Someone from a political party...



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

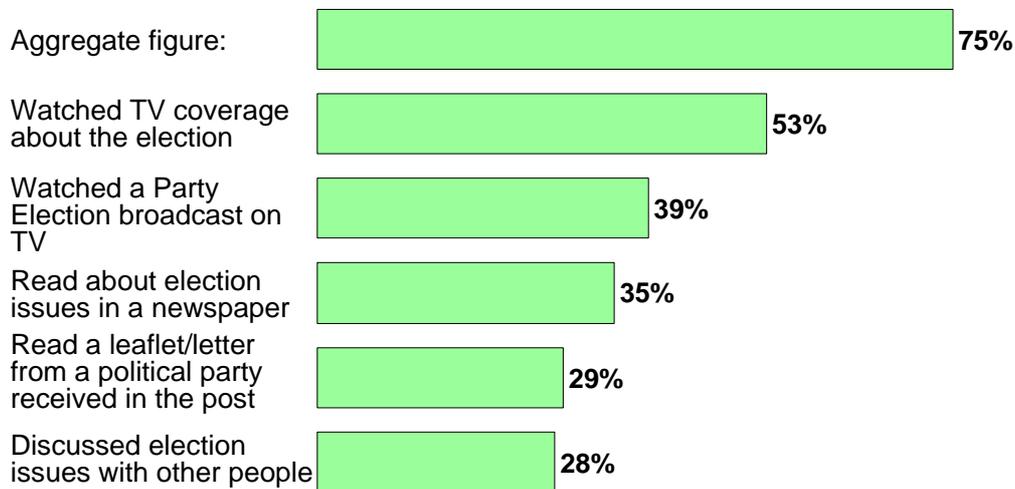
Source: MORI

Personal contact seems to be the most effective way of encouraging respondents to vote: some 59% of respondents overall said they voted, but 73% of those who had someone call at the door voted, as did 75% of those contacted on election day; while this will to some extent reflect the nature of the constituency and therefore a greater obvious purpose in voting, it may well also be that personal contact in itself is effective. Leaflets and telephone canvassing, by comparison, are a less effective way of encouraging turnout; some 60% of respondents who had a leaflet posted through the door voted, as did 65% of those telephoned to ask how they might vote.

In terms of those means of political engagement where the voter takes the initiative, the most election activity is to have watched news about the election on television (done by 53% of respondents), followed by viewing party political broadcasts (39%), and reading about the election in a newspaper (35%). Some 28% of respondents claim to have discussed election issues with other people. Overall, those of mixed background are the most likely to say they have actively engaged with the campaign, with some 83% claiming to have watched, read, or discussed the campaign. Bangladeshis, by contrast, are the least likely to have engaged in any of these ways, and the corresponding figure is 64%

## Personal political activity

Q21 Thinking about the General Election campaign, which of these, if any, applied to you? I did the following...



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

These figures show that, like the rest of the public, most BME voters take their election information moderated through the medium of journalism rather than direct from the parties. Even though more people received party leaflets than watched the television news, less than half of those chose to read them.

Notably, in contrast to the usual finding that older respondents tend to be more politically engaged (matched in this study, for example, by their greater interest in politics and much higher turnout), younger respondents were more likely overall to have taken an active interest in the campaign, with some 80% of 18-24 year olds reading, watching or discussing the campaign, as compared to 73% of those aged 55 and above. (This also explains the higher activism of the “mixed” ethnic group, which would otherwise sit oddly with their lower turnout and registration.)

So, paradoxically, campaign activity was higher among the young even though interest in the campaign was lower. Indeed, active involvement among 18-24 year olds was 15 percentage points higher than interest in the election campaign among the same group – 65% said they were at least “fairly interested” yet 80%

had indulged in at least one form of voluntary engagement. While this may owe something to hindsight (young people following the news and prepared to take an interest but feeling in retrospect that the election was not interesting after all), it is possible that it also again points to collective community involvement among the young, sufficient peer pressure operating to persuade them to follow events even if taking no particular interest themselves. It is perhaps worth noting as a comment on the effectiveness of the parties' election literature that reading leaflets was the only one of the activities measured which the young were significantly less likely to have done than their older counterparts. (This was not simply a rejection by the young of the parties' output as such, since they watched the party election broadcasts.)

## **Method of voting**

The vast majority of BME voters (87%) cast their votes in person, but 11% of those who voted (making up 6% of the total sample) choose to vote by post; 1% said they had voted by proxy. Choosing to vote by post varied to a certain degree by ethnic group – though the small base sizes here mean that such results should be viewed as indicative rather than representative:

Postal voting was highest among ABs, 15%, (to be expected, as they will tend to be better informed about administrative arrangements and more likely to take advantage of the available alternatives) but also among DEs, 12% (much less expected, and perhaps pointing to effective campaigning or organisation within communities to get the vote out).

Postal voting was also much higher among Labour (12%) and Liberal Democrat (13%) than Conservative (4%) voters. This, however, is probably simply a reflection that most of those BME voters who live in competitive constituencies, where the parties will take the trouble to organise and promote postal voting, are in constituencies here the main contenders in 2005 were Labour and the Liberal Democrats, and where the Conservatives would be unlikely to waste their energies. It does suggest, however, that party campaigning is probably a very significant factor in the uptake of postal votes among the BME communities.

Postal voting was also somewhat higher the less politically active the voter: 14% of those voters who have conducted 2 or fewer of the list of socio-political activities in the last few years, but only 10% of those who have conducted 5 or more, said they voted by post. It is conceivable that this simply reflects the greater desire of the less politically committed or less able to be active to vote by the most convenient means, and certainly implies that the availability of postal voting is (slightly) raising turnout among BMEs.

It does not appear that postal voting among BMEs was significantly inhibited by ignorance of the arrangements. Of those who said, correctly, that they believed it was true that "Any registered voter can obtain a postal vote if they want - by ringing their local council and asking for a postal vote", 8% voted by post and 54% voted in person; of those who believed the statement was false, 6% voted by post and 53% in person. (Turnout was much lower, though, among those who said they did not know whether or not the statement was true, which would in

any case tend to be a sign of lower political engagement generally; among this group 3% voted by post and 44% in person, the remaining 53% not voting.)

# Attitudes Towards Voting

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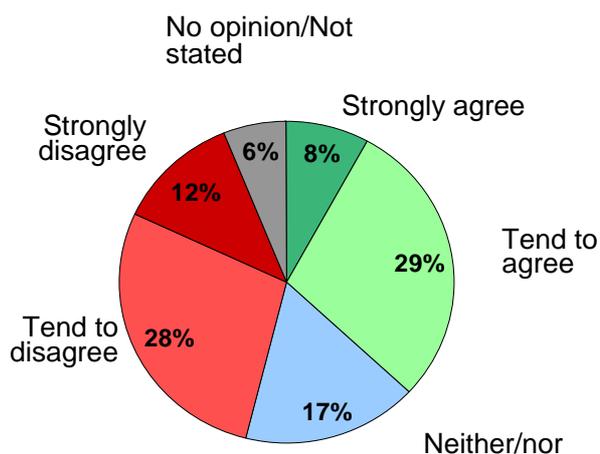
Respondents were asked to comment on the extent to which they agree or disagree with a number of attitudinal statements about voting and democracy. Some six in ten (61%) agree that they gain a sense of satisfaction when they vote, a figure which rises with age – half (50%) of 18-24 year olds agree that they get a sense of satisfaction, as compared to 78% of those aged over 55. Interestingly, this level of agreement is higher than was found among the general public – in the December 2003 MORI survey which was the basis of the Electoral Commission/Hansard Society *Audit of Political Engagement*, only 53% of British adults agreed “I get a sense of satisfaction when I vote”. However, that survey was not of course conducted immediately post-election, which may have an effect on responses.

The level of satisfaction with voting also varies with ethnicity – Pakistanis are most likely to express a sense of satisfaction (69%), whilst those of mixed background are significantly less likely to be satisfied than other ethnic groups (39% satisfied). Perhaps unsurprisingly, those with an interest in politics are also more likely to have a sense of satisfaction than those who do not (69% and 50% satisfied respectively), as are those who actually voted on May 5<sup>th</sup> - 79% of whom are satisfied, as compared to a 32% satisfaction rating amongst those who did not vote.

Opinion on whether people are too busy to vote is divided, with 37% agreeing that this is the case, and 40% disagreeing. This is an opinion which naturally enough is correlated to some extent with turnout: 53% of those who agree with the statement but 63% of those who disagree say they themselves voted on 5th May.

## Are people too busy to vote?

Q19 Please tell me whether you agree or disagree people are so busy that they don't have time to vote?



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

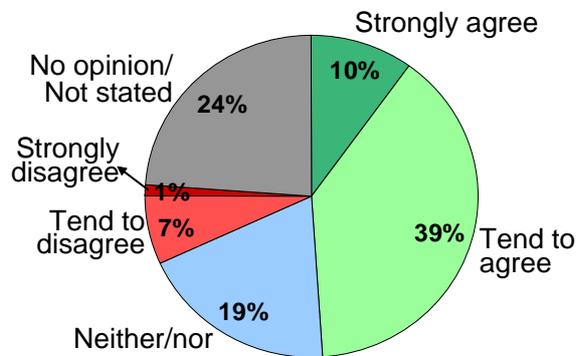
A similar pattern of attitudinal differentiation according to age is apparent within this question; older respondents are more likely to disagree (47% of respondents aged over 55 disagreed that people are too busy to vote, compared to 33% of 18-24 year olds). However, there is less variation by social class than in previous questions – 33% of those in class AB agree that people are too busy to vote, as do 36% of those in class DE. Notably, respondents who work part time are actually *more* likely to feel that they don't have the time to vote (47%) than those working full time (38%). (In some cases, of course, they will be working part-time in the first place because other commitments dictate it, so this is not necessarily surprising.)

There is little differentiation by ethnicity, with between 32% and 43% of all ethnic groups agreeing with the statement.

Half of respondents (49%) agree that most people in their area vote in general elections; less than one in ten (8%) disagree. A relatively high proportion, however, either do not agree or disagree with the statement (19%), or simply do not have an opinion (24%). Perceptions about voting behaviour in the local region are differentiated quite significantly by area – some 46% of respondents in London agree that “most people round here vote”, as do 58% of those living in the South, 51% in the Midlands and Wales, and 49% in the North and Scotland.

## Do most people round here vote?

Q19 Please tell me whether you agree or disagree most people around here usually vote in general elections



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

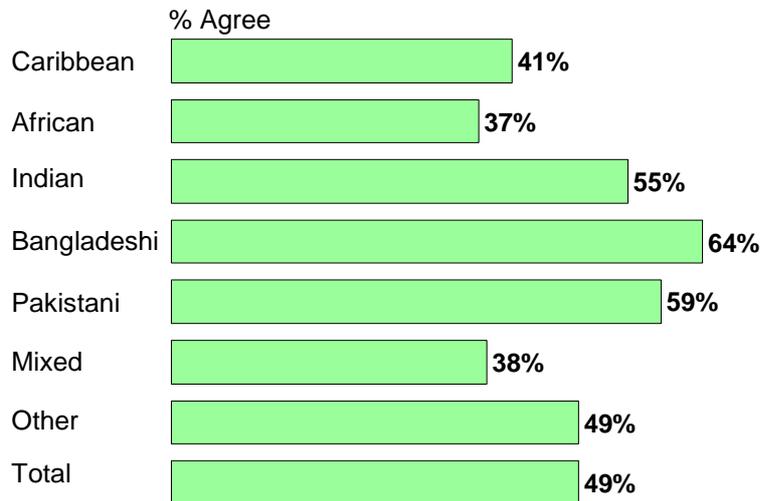
Source: MORI

Perceptions of the level of local turnout also appears to be differentiated by whether or not respondents voted on May 5<sup>th</sup>, with 54% of those who voted agreeing that most people in their area vote, as compared to 46% of those who were registered but did not vote. Whether this represents a rationalisation and justification of their own behaviour among non-voters, a genuine perception which accurate or not was a driver of voting behaviour in their case, or simply accurate reporting (since we would, after all, expect to find fewer who voted in areas where few did so) is unclear. (We cannot of course tell how tightly or loosely “around here” is interpreted by respondents, and actual turnout figures are not available to compare with responses below constituency level.)

Responses to this question also vary widely between ethnic groups, as the chart below shows. Nearly two thirds of Bangladeshis agree that most people vote in their local area, for example, as compared to 37% of Africans.

### Do most people round here vote?

Q19 Please tell me whether you agree or disagree most people around here usually vote in general elections



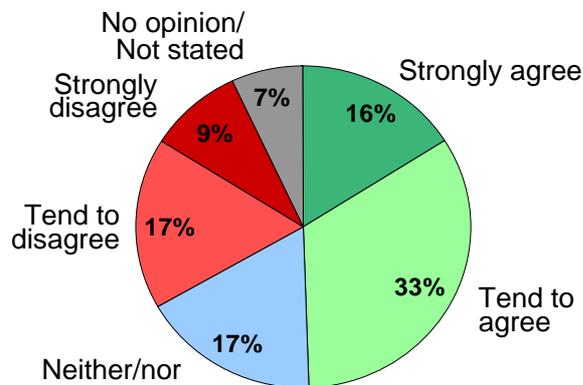
Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

When questioned about the extent to which they believe their vote can really make a difference, half (49%) of respondents agree that this is the case, and around a quarter (26%) disagree. Again, these BME respondents seem more optimistic about the efficacy of voting than do the general public – in December 2004, only 36% of all British adults agreed that “When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the country is run”.

## Can people change the way Britain is governed?

Q19 Please tell me whether you agree or disagree when people like me vote, they can really change the way that Britain is governed



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Reflecting the overall propensity to vote, older respondents are more likely to believe their vote can make a difference (62% of those aged 55+ believe this is the case, as compared to 43% of 18-24 year olds).

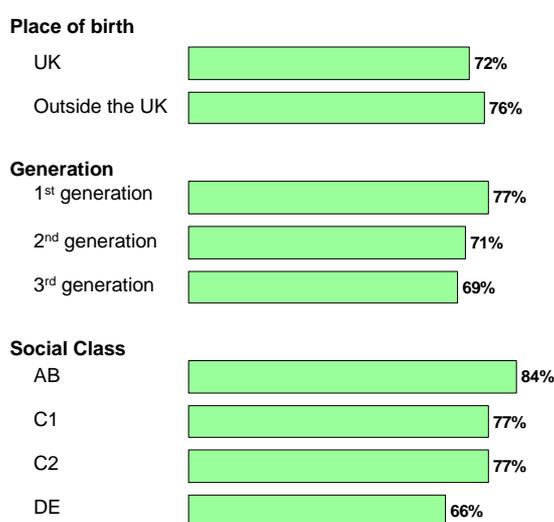
Notably, however, responses to this question are not strongly differentiated by social class: half (50%) of those in class AB agree that their vote can make a difference, as do 48% of those in class DE. This matches the pattern of 2005 turnout, though not the longer-term frequency of voting.

The length of time spent in the the UK *does* appear to have an impact, however. Only two in five (40%) of those born in the UK agree that their vote counts, as compared with 54% of those born outside the UK. The proportion that agree with the statement also falls with immigrant generation – 55% of first generation migrants believe their vote makes a difference, as compared with 41% of second generation immigrants and 38% in the third generation – but this probably expresses no more than the combination of foreign-born optimism with the cynicism of the young (who are of course predominant in the third generation).

Overall, some three quarters (74%) of respondents believe that democracy only works properly if people vote. As the chart below shows, these responses broadly follow the pattern established above; those born outside the UK, and first and second generation migrants, are more likely to believe that democracy only works if people vote. Responses are also differentiated here by social class; 84% of those in class AB believe that people have to vote if democracy is to work properly, as compared to two-thirds (66%) of those in group DE. There is little difference by age, though, the 55+ age group being only slightly more likely to agree than the rest.

## Does democracy only work if most people vote?

Q19 Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with democracy only works properly if most people vote



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

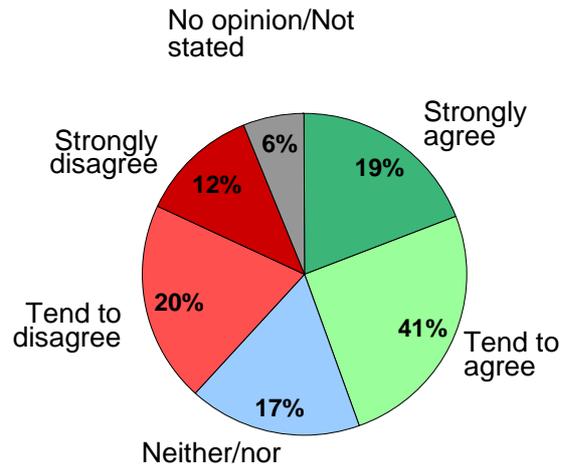
The level of contact with politicians, and the level of interest in politics, is also relevant here. 63% of those who have presented their views to a councillor or MP believe their vote makes a difference, compared with 48% of those who have not. Overall, the more politically active an individual is, the more likely they are to believe that their vote can make a difference. Hence, two thirds (65%) of those with five or more political activities on MORI's political activism scale believe that their vote can make a difference, 60% of those with three or four activities agree, whilst only around half (52%) of those with 0-2 activities believe this to be the case. But it is likelier, of course, that activism is primarily driven by a belief that it is worthwhile rather than vice-versa.

Finally, feelings about specific issues also appear to have an impact here; nearly two-thirds of those who approve of British policy in Iraq also believe that their vote makes a difference (62%); less than half of those who disagree with the policy (47%) believe this is the case. This may depend on the correlation between support for the policy on Iraq and for the political establishment, those who have seen a major policy they oppose implemented regardless of their opposition being more likely to believe in their own helplessness.

Respondents are more divided on whether they would feel guilty if they didn't vote. Around half (44%) agreed that they would feel guilt for not voting, as compared to a third (32%) who would not feel guilty.

## Do people feel guilty if they don't vote?

Q19 Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with I would feel very guilty if I didn't vote in a general election



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

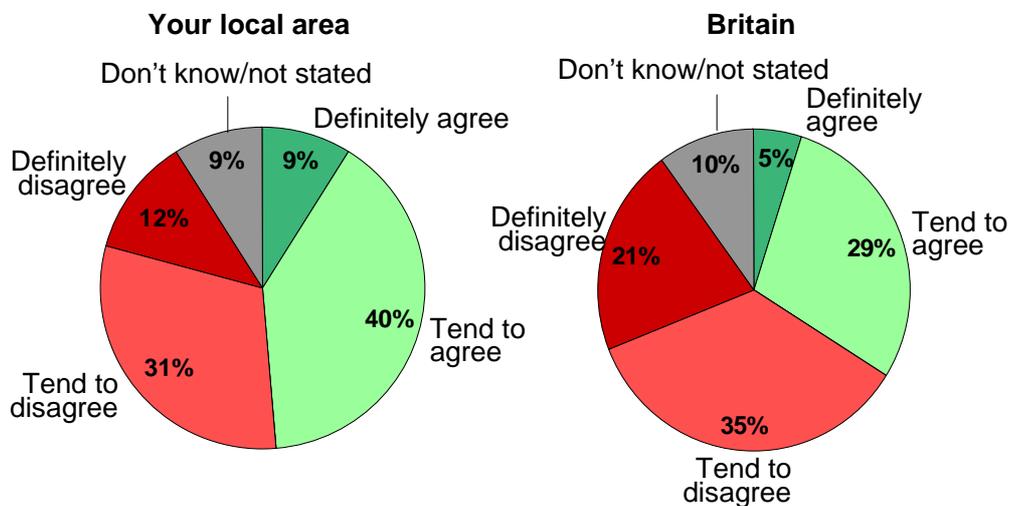
Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who feel guilty about not voting are also those most likely to have voted on May 5th; older respondents, and those who have moved to the UK most recently, are the groups most likely to agree with the statement.

In terms of the efficacy of voting, more people believe that they can have an influence over decisions affecting their local area (49% agree) than over Britain as a whole (34% agree). Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a link here with likelihood to vote. Respondents who voted on May 5<sup>th</sup> are more likely to believe that they can impact decisions affecting both their local area (55% of voters agree they can influence their local area, as compared to 44% of non-voters), and Britain as a whole (40% of voters believe this to be the case, as compared to 27% of non-voters). Social class also plays a role in efficacy here, with those in class AB more likely to believe they can influence their local area (56%) and Britain (40%), as compared to those in class DE, 44% of whom believe they can influence their local area, and 31% of whom believe they can influence Britain.

Notably, however, the length of time spend in the UK plays less of a role here than with other attitudinal questions. 36% of first generation respondents agreeing they can influence Britain, and 31% of third generations believe this to be the case. Similarly around half (49%) of first generation migrant believe they can influence their local area – exactly the same figure as third generation respondents.

### Do people feel they can influence their local area, or Britain?

Q25 Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting . . .?



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

# Attitudes Towards Politics

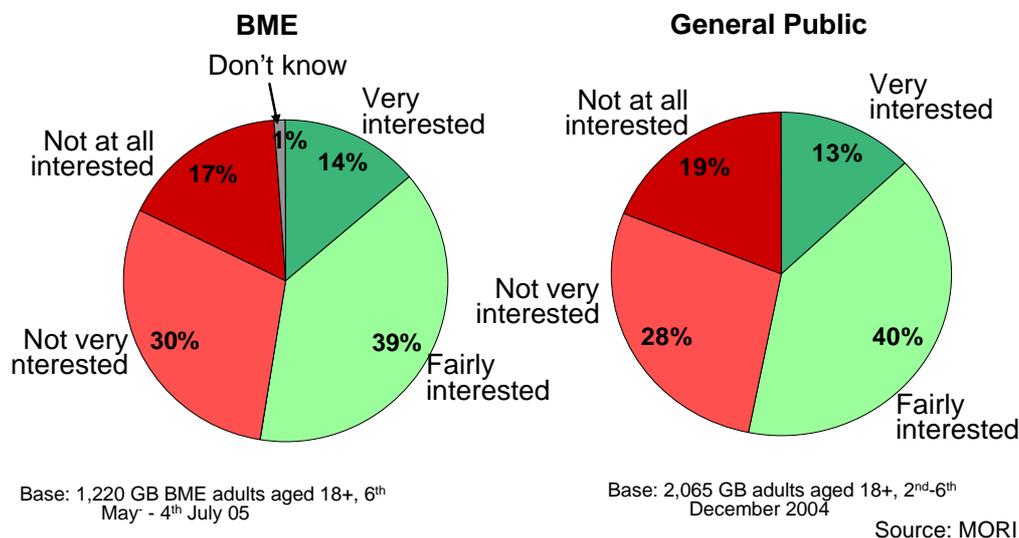
## Interest in politics and issues

Around half of BME citizens (53%) say they are either very or fairly interested in politics. They are more likely to express an interest in local issues than politics per se, with nearly three quarters (71%) claiming to be at least fairly interested in local issues, and the same proportion say they are interested in national issues. Interest in international issues is almost as high, 72%, and more are “very interested” in international issues (27%) than in either national (22%) or local issues (19%).

This level of interest in politics is very similar to that expressed by the general public in some recent surveys: in MORI’s survey for the Electoral Commission and the Hansard Society’s second Audit of Political Engagement, for example, conducted in December 2004, 53% of adults said they were interested in politics. (The figure was somewhat higher, 61%, in a MORI survey for the *Financial Times* during the election campaign; it is not entirely clear how quickly this increase in interest could be expected to fade post-election.)

## Interest in Politics – BMEs vs. the overall population

Q1 How interested would you say you are in politics?



The pattern of interest in issues, however, is significantly different: where the ethnic minorities express similar overall levels of interest in local, national and international issues, and are more likely to be “very interested” in international issues, the public as a whole in December 2004 was most interested in local issues (80%, higher than the 72% expressed by BMEs), marginally less interested in national issues (77%, again compared to 72%), and significantly less interested in international issues (65%, where the figure for BMEs is 70%). The number of

the general public “very interested” was also highest for local and lowest for international issues, the opposite of the BME findings.

Professed interest in politics does not vary significantly by religion or between the ethnic groups surveyed. Interest is, however, higher among men (57%) than women (48%), and there is a clear relationship between interest and social class: some 69% of those in class AB are very or fairly interested in politics, compared to 58% of those in class C1, 49% in C2, and 39% of those in social groups D and E. Both these patterns match those found regularly in surveys of the general public.

Rather unexpectedly, there are not significant differences in interest in politics by age. More than half of 18-24 year olds (54%) say they are at least “fairly interested”, as do 49% of 25-34 year olds, 55% of 35-54 year olds and 50% of those aged 55-and-over. This is in stark contrast to the consistent findings of surveys of the general public, in which interest in politics is significantly lower among the young. In a MORI survey for the Financial Times during the election (7-11 April), only 45% of 18-24 year olds expressed themselves interested in politics, compared with figures of 61% for all adults and 70% in the most interested age-band, 55-64 year olds. It seems, therefore, that young ethnic minority adults are *more* interested in politics than their white counterparts, though in older age groups the opposite is the case. Nevertheless, this pattern was not reflected in either interest in the 2005 election or in turnout, which in both cases were lower among the young.

On local issues, again, the differences in attitudes by ethnic or religious group to this question are not statistically significant. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the longer respondents have lived in the area the more likely they are to have an interest in local issues – some 57% of those who have lived in the area for a year or less are interested in the local issues, as compared to 77% of those who have lived in the area for a decade or more.

Interest in national issues follows a similar pattern, except that Bangladeshi respondents are less interested than other BME groups only around half (53%) claiming to be at least “fairly interested” compared to 72% across the whole BME group. As with an interest in politics, social class is also correlated with an interest in national issues, with some 85% of class AB claiming to have an interest, compared with six in ten (60%) of those in group DE.

Interest in international issues varies rather more by ethnic group. Some four in five Africans (79%) are very or fairly interested in international issues, for example, as compared to only a little over half of Bangladeshis (56%), and seven in ten Pakistanis (70%). There is also some variation by religion, with some three quarters of Christians surveyed (76%) claiming an interest in international issues, as compared with 68% of Hindus and Muslims, and around half of Sikhs (49%).

Respondents with a stated interest in politics also tend to be interested in local, national or international issues. This link is particularly apparent with national issues, with 92% of respondents interested in politics also claiming an interest in

national affairs (compared to 52% of those who do not claim an interest in politics). Similarly, nearly nine in ten (86%) of those who say they are interested in politics are also interested in local issues, and a similar proportion (87%) are interested in international issues.

Despite this, though, the link between interest in issues and (claiming to have) voted in the general election is more tenuous, though the link between voting and interest in politics is slightly stronger. Two-thirds (65%) of those who said they were interested in politics claimed to have voted, compared to 52% of those uninterested. Interest in local issues was about as good a predictor of turnout (63% of those interested and 49% of those uninterested voted), but for national issues (60% to 54%) and international issues (61% to 54%) the distinction was barely statistically significant.

Even more surprisingly, being “very interested” in any of the four categories was not a much better predictor of turnout. Those very interested in local issues or national issues were fractionally more likely to have voted than those only fairly interested (68% against 61% and 64% against 59% respectively), but there was no difference at all by interest in politics, and those very interested in international issues were actually marginally less likely to say they voted than those only fairly interested.

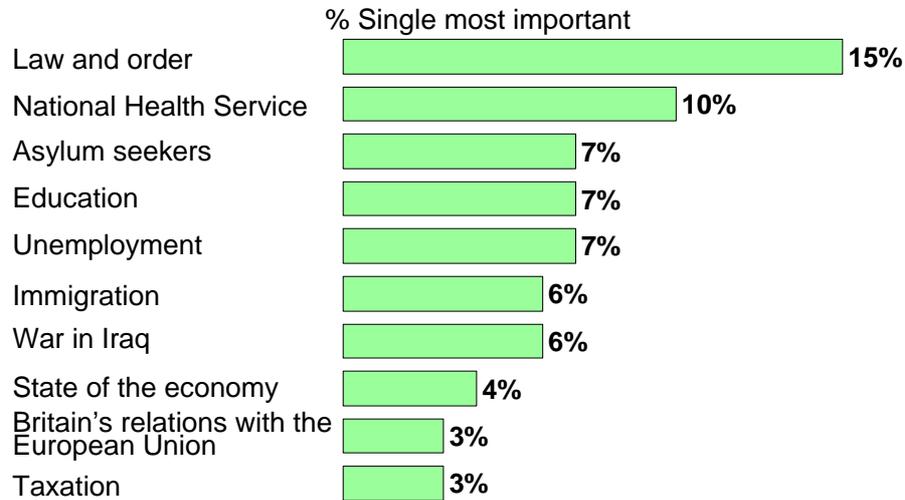
It seems we must conclude that interest either in politics or in issues at various levels is not acting as a strong driver of general election turnout among the BME communities, although there is naturally a very substantial overlap between them.

## **The most important issues facing Britain**

Law and order is considered the single most important issue facing Britain overall, mentioned by 15% of respondents, followed by the National Health Service, mentioned by one in ten. Asylum, education and unemployment were all mentioned by 7%, and immigration and the war in Iraq by 6%. It is notable that in response to this question, their major ‘top three’ issues – law and order, the NHS and education – all commonly feature in the overall public’s major concerns. In MORI’s May 2005 Political Monitor (overlapping in fieldwork period with the BME survey), some 18% of British adults named law and order as the single most important issue facing Britain and 12% chose the National Health Service, whilst 6% chose education system. The Political Monitor responses are coded slightly differently from those in the present survey, and 14% of responses fell within the combined “asylum, race relations or immigration” category, whereas 13% of BMEs chose either “asylum seekers” or “immigration”. It is fairly clear, therefore, that there is no significant difference in the issue agenda as seen by BMEs and as seen by the rest of the British public.

## The most important issue facing Britain

Q5 *Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about the issues and problems facing Britain today. As far as you're concerned, what is the single most important issue facing the country at the present time?*



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

There were no substantial differences in importance of issues between those who voted on 5th May and those who did not. Although levels of registration and turnout among BMEs may be considered disappointing, it at least does not appear that the result is to under-represent the voices of those holding particular concerns – there is no non-voting underclass among British BMEs with a distinctive agenda that is thereby not being addressed.

## Political 'quiz'

Respondents were asked to judge whether a number of statements about the politics and processes of voting are true or false. As the table below shows, people are more likely to answer correctly when answering questions about the actual *process* of voting, and less likely to be correct when answering queries about taxation and economics (on which there were almost as many false answers as true). Overall, the mean score for all respondents is 2.53 out of a possible five.

**Q20 Please tell me if you think the following statements are true or false. If you don't know please say so and we will skip to the next one.**

	True	False	Don't know/n ot stated	Correct answer
<i>Base: All BME respondents (1,220)</i>				
Polling stations close at 10.00 p.m. on election day	71	5	24	TRUE
The minimum voting age is 16	26	59	16	FALSE
The standard rate of income tax payable is 26p in the pound	25	24	51	FALSE
The chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible for setting interest rates in the UK	35	31	34	FALSE
Any registered voter can obtain a postal vote if they want – by ringing their local council and asking for a postal vote	69	7	24	TRUE

*Source: MORI*

The mean score also varies somewhat between ethnicities. Pakistanis score the most highly on the quiz overall, with a mean score of 2.68, followed by Indians (mean 2.63), then Caribbeans (mean 2.603). The ethnic group with the lowest overall score are Africans, with a mean score of 2.28 overall.

# Trust and Involvement in the Community

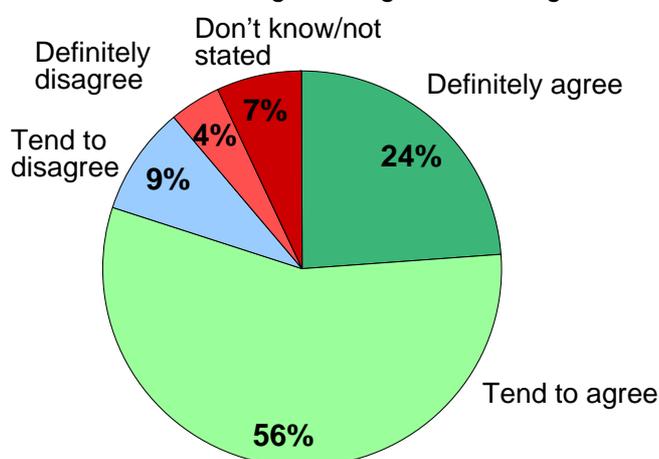
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## Community Cohesion

Eight in ten (80%) respondents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on. This relatively high figure is repeated across different ages – though those over 55 are more likely to agree (87%).

### Community cohesion

Q23 To what extent do you agree or disagree that this local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Responses to this question vary to a certain degree by ethnic group. Pakistanis are the most likely to agree that people in the local area get on (89%), whilst Africans are the least likely to believe that this is the case (74%). Variations can also be seen by religion, with Sikhs the most likely to agree that people get on (92%), and Christians (74%) and those with no religion (72%) the least likely to agree. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the length of time lived in the local area also has an impact here, with those who have lived for a longer period of time more likely to agree that people get on – some 85% of those who have lived in the same place for over a decade agree that this is the case, as compared to 72% of those who have lived in the area for a year or less.

Conversely, however, the length of time spent in the UK appears to influence the results in the *opposite* direction; 81% of first generation immigrants and 81% of those born outside the UK agree that people from different backgrounds get on well, compared to 78% of second, 74% of third generation migrants, and 77% of those born in the UK. (There is little difference in attitudes by age, so the

generational effect cannot be explained in this way; it may well be, however, that more recent immigrants have tended to gravitate towards more welcoming areas.) Moreover, respondents living in areas with a BME population of greater than 10% are *more* likely to believe that people from different backgrounds get on (81%), as compared to those living in areas where the BME population is less than one in ten (76%), perhaps implying that those living in areas where people from ethnic minorities are rare suffer more often from racial or cultural tension. On the other hand, Londoners are the least likely to agree that people from different backgrounds get on (77%), and respondents living in the Midlands and Wales are the most likely to agree (84%), even though London as a whole has much the highest concentration of the BME population. These results are broadly in line with the findings from the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey<sup>8</sup>, which reported that 79% of those living in London agreed that people from different areas get on well, as compared to a figure of 80% for Britain as a whole.

A similar pattern of results is manifest in responses to the question 'Do you agree or disagree that people in this local area pull together to improve the area?' Again, older respondents are more likely to agree that people *do* pull together to improve the area – some 69% agree with the statement, as compared with 48% of those in the 18-24 year old bracket. Responses also vary quite significantly between ethnic groups. Pakistanis are the group most likely to agree that people pull together (65%) (just as they are the group more likely to agree that people from different backgrounds get on), whilst those of mixed background are the least likely to agree (40%).

Responses are also differentiated by social class here; the higher the social grade of a respondent, the more likely they are to agree that people pull together. Some 61% of those in group AB agree that this is the case, compared to 54% of those in groups DE. The length of time that respondents have lived in the area is also a factor, and the longer a person has lived in their local area, the more likely they are to agree that local people pull together – 62% of those living in the same place for 10 years or more agree, as compared to 48% of those resident for less than a year. Notably, the residents of London are less likely than the rest of the country to believe that people pull together (52%), as compared to 62% for the Midlands, Wales and the South, and 60% for the North and Scotland.

Interestingly, a relatively high level of agreement that people from different backgrounds get on does not translate into a similarly high level of involvement in the local community. Four in ten respondents (40%) agree that they have a great deal or a fair amount of involvement in the local community, whilst 58% believe that they have not much involvement, or no involvement at all.

Responses here are less differentiated by the length of time spent in the UK than for other questions mentioned above, though the concentration of BME residents in the local area does appear to be a relevant factor, with those respondents living in areas with a BME population of greater than 10% actually

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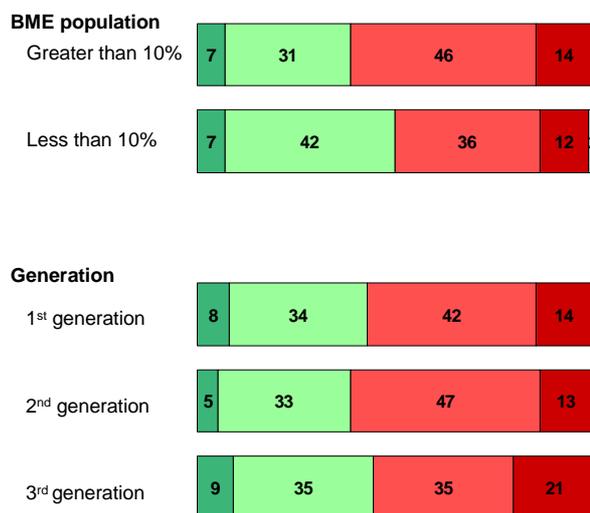
<sup>8</sup> 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey: People, families and communities, see: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors289.pdf>

less likely to agree that they feel involved in the local community, as compared to respondents living in areas where the population is less than 10%.

## Involvement in the local community

Q25 Overall, how involved do you feel in the local community? By local community I mean all the different people who live who in this area.

■ A great deal ■ A fairly amount ■ Not very much ■ Not at all ■ Don't know



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

## Trust

Recent research points to a decline in the amount of trust that the general public place in politicians. Members of parliament commonly feature near the bottom of the public's list of trustworthy professionals, and are commonly portrayed as self-interested, self-absorbed and more interested in personal gain than representing their constituents<sup>9</sup>.

The level of trust in politicians displayed by BME respondents is also relatively low; when asked to rate the trustworthiness of British politicians on a scale of zero (no trust) to ten (a great deal of trust), only 5% of respondents rated politicians with nine or ten, and the mean score for trust is 4. Overall, Indians are the group *most* likely to trust politicians – with a mean score of 4.4, whilst the minority group *least* likely to trust politicians are Pakistanis, with a mean of only 3.92. Reflecting positive attitudes in the political process discussed earlier, older respondents are more likely to have a higher level of trust in politicians relative to their younger counterparts – 18-24 year olds have a mean score of 3.88, as compared to a mean of 4.52 for those aged 55+. Notably, however, trust does not seem to mirror social class, with those in class DE registering the highest mean level of trust, at 4.25, and those in class C2 the lowest, at 3.97. Place of birth does appear to have a more direct correlation, however, with those respondents born outside the UK more likely to trust politicians (with a mean score of 4.40), compared to those born in the UK, with a mean of 3.60.

<sup>9</sup> See MORI/Electoral Commission (2004) *Enhancing Engagement: Parliament and the Public*.

MORI

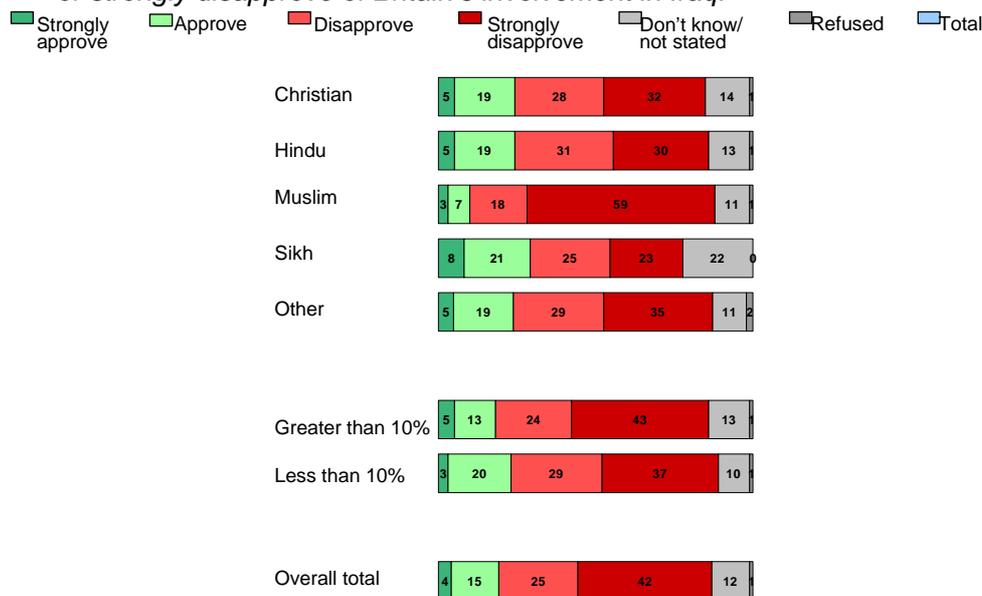
# Specific Political Issues

## Britain's involvement in Iraq

Overall, some two-thirds (67%) of respondents said they disapproved of British policy in Iraq. This figure compares to recent MORI research of the overall population, which suggested that ten percent of the electorate believe that the Labour party had the best policy on Iraq, as compared to 19% for the Conservatives and 39% who believed that the Liberal Democrats did<sup>10</sup>. As the charts below show, religion appears to have a significant impact on opinions of the conflict, with Muslims the group most opposed to the conflict – with only 10% in favour – whilst other groups have relatively similar levels of disapproval. Attitudes also vary by ethnicity (though ethnicity is clearly related to religion, as discussed above), with Bangladeshis (some 79% disapprove, and 63% *strongly* disapprove) and Pakistanis (79% disapproval rating) the groups most opposed to British involvement in Iraq.

### The Iraq Conflict

Q30 Please tell me whether you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of Britain's involvement in Iraq.



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

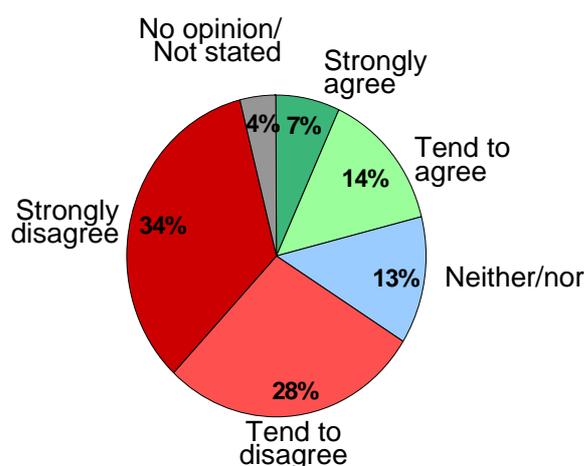
<sup>10</sup> MORI: *Evening Standard Election Research – Poll 1*, Base All who claim that the issue of Iraq is very important, 370 British adults, aged 18+, interviewed face to face, 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

## Attitudes to immigration

A little over six in ten (61%) respondents disagree with the proposition that ‘immigrants take jobs away from people born in Britain’, whilst two in ten agree with the statement (21%).

### Attitude to immigration

Q31 Please indicate where you agree or disagree that immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in Britain.



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Attitudes to the statement vary quite significantly by ethnicity. Whilst nearly eight in ten Africans (87%) disagree with the statement, less than six in ten (57%) Pakistanis disagree, as do 55% of Bangladeshis and 55% of Indian respondents. Social class also has a bearing here, with those social group AB *more* likely to disagree with the statement (67%) than those in groups DE - 58% of whom disagree with the statement. The level of education also has an impact upon responses here, with those educated to degree level more likely to disagree with the statement (71%), than those educated to GCSE or ‘A’ Level (62% and 60% respectively disagree), or those with no qualifications (54% agree). These findings are in line with MORI’s work for the Commission for Racial Equality. When asked to estimate the overall percentage of the British population from an ethnic minority, the overall average estimate is one in five (22.5%), some way higher than the true figure of 7%. BME graduates, however, are the subgroup with the most accurate estimate of the numbers – though at 14.69%, their estimation is still double the ‘true’ figure.

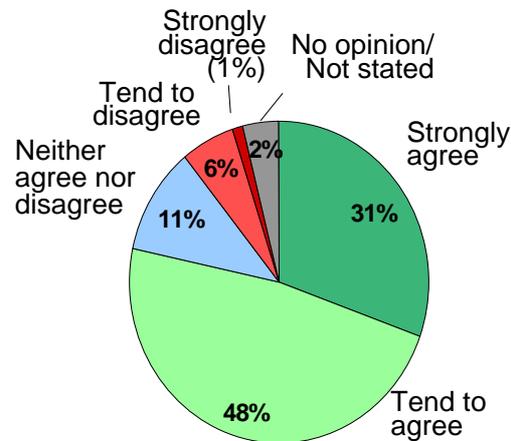
Notably, those respondents born outside the UK are more likely to agree with the statement (24%) than those born in the UK (20%). Reflecting the pattern commented on in relation to interest in the election campaign, there appears to be a divide in attitudes to immigration between those respondents with degrees, and those without. A quarter of those with GCSE or ‘A’ Level qualifications (24% and 23% respectively agree that immigrants take jobs from people born in

Britain, as do 25% of those with no formal qualifications. The level of agreement amongst those with degrees, however, is somewhat lower, at 15%. Differentiation in attitudes is also apparent according to the political party respondents voted for – a third (33%) of Conservative voters agree with the statement, as compared to 20% of Labour voters, and 21% of those who voted Liberal Democrat.

In terms of cultural influence, BME respondents are relatively positive about the influence that migrants have, with over three quarters (79%) agreeing that immigrants make Britain more open to new ideas and cultures. As with previous questions, there is differentiation here between those born inside the UK and those born abroad. Respondents born outside the UK are more positive about the impact of immigrants upon ideas and culture (82% agree migrants make Britain more open), as compared with those born in the UK (some 74% of whom agree with the statement). Responses are also slightly coloured by social class, with those class AB slightly more likely to agree with the statement (83%) than those in class C3 (78%) or DE (76%).

## Attitude to immigration

Q31 Please indicate where you agree or disagree that immigrants make Britain more open to new ideas and cultures



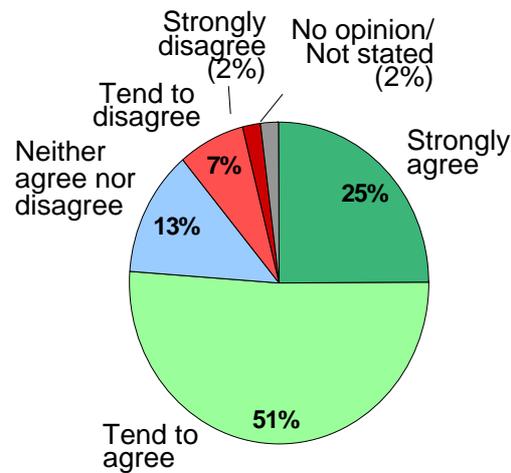
Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Three quarters of respondents (76%) agree that Britain is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. The overall level of agreement with the statement, however, is differentiated quite strongly by religion. Muslims are the most likely group to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well (83%), though Hindus (80%) and those with another religions affiliation (80%) are also likely to agree. By contrast seven in ten Christians and Sikhs (70%) tend to believe that people from different backgrounds get on well.

## Relations between people from different backgrounds

Q31 Please indicate where you agree or disagree that Britain is a place that had good relations between different types of people such as those from different backgrounds



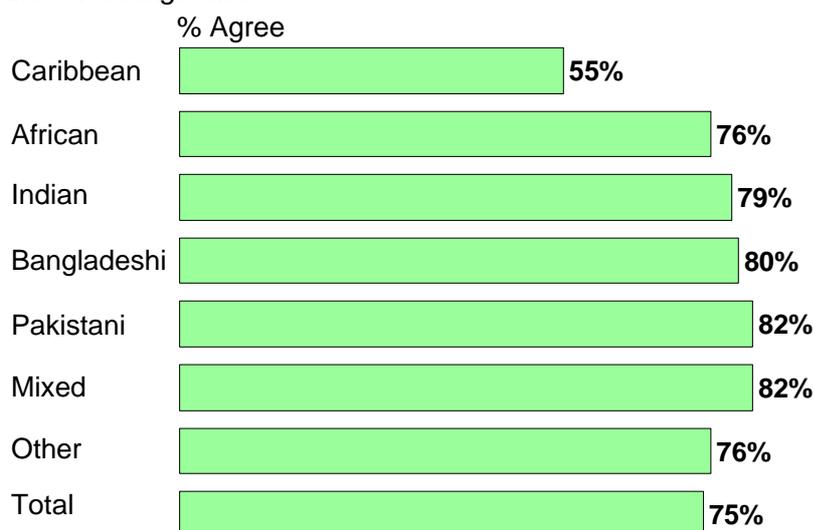
Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

If we compare the level of responses by ethnicity, it is striking that whilst most ethnicities vary in their responses by a relatively small amount (between 75% and 82%), Caribbeans differ by some 20 points, with a little over half (55%) agreeing that people from different backgrounds get on well.

### Relations between people from different backgrounds

Q31 Please indicate where you agree or disagree that Britain is a place that had good relations between different types of people such as those from different backgrounds



Base: All respondents (1,220 GB BMEs aged 18+, 6<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> July 2005)

Source: MORI

Finally, respondents who believe that Britain enjoys good relations between people from different backgrounds are, perhaps unsurprisingly, also more likely to believe that immigrants make Britain more open – some 83% agree with the statement, as compared to 60% of those who do not believe Britain has good relations between people from different backgrounds.

# Key Drivers Analysis

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## Introduction

We can take the analysis of the data deeper by conducting a regression analysis to identify the “key drivers” of some of the most important attitudes and behaviours measured in the survey. Regression is a technique that detects relationships between variables in a survey – in this case, for example, between interest in politics and the other demographic and attitudinal measurements - and can predict how one will be affected if others change.

The particular value of a key drivers analysis (KDA) is that it enables us to measure the effect of each factor with everything else being held constant, which is not possible simply by cross-tabulating percentages of responses. For example, in this survey the responses of members of the “mixed” ethnic group were different from those of other ethnic groups on a number of questions. But the “mixed” group are considerably younger on average than those of other ethnic groups. Are the differences in answers simply a function of age, or is the ethnic group a factor in itself? A key drivers analysis will tell us.

The standard technique for KDA is called ordinary least squares (OLS) multivariate linear regression. We conducted three such regressions, to identify the drivers of interest in politics (Q1 in the survey), interest in the election (Q9) and “trust in British politicians generally” (Q29) – the results for each of these three target variables (“dependent variables”) are illustrated in the charts below. All the remaining questions from the survey were tested as possible explanatory factors (“independent variables”): in each case only those variables that have a statistically significant effect on the target variable, independent of all other variables, are included.

One general point to note in all three cases is that the explanatory power of the analysis is relatively low, between 25% and 30% - although a number of the factors measured in the survey clearly are relevant as drivers of political engagement and voting, it is also plain that there is much more going on that we have been unable to measure. Some of this, no doubt, involves political factors too localised to measure in a national survey; but it may also be that there are further key attitudes or demographic factors not being measured which would be relevant to gaining a greater understanding of the political behaviour of our respondents.

## Drivers of interest in politics

The table shows the drivers of interest in politics which are statistically significant. (The percentages indicate the proportion of all variation that is explained by the derived statistical model which can be attributed to each particular factor; the “+” and “-” signs indicate factors increasing and decreasing interest in politics respectively.) The most powerful positive drivers are being a graduate (though more strongly for those with a Bachelor’s degree than with a

Masters), and believing that “I would be seriously neglecting my duty as a citizen if I didn't vote”. None of the negative influences are nearly this strong. Readership of certain newspapers is a good predictor of interest or the lack of it, but in this case we are probably safe in assuming that it is respondents’ interests that dictate their choice of newspaper rather than vice-versa.

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***Q1 How interested are you in Politics?***

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<b>Positive predictors</b>		<b>Negative predictors</b>	
Has a degree (11%)	<b>Interest in Politics</b>	First generation migrant (born outside UK) (-4%)	
Would be seriously neglecting duty if didn't vote (10%)		Lived in area 2-3 years (-4%)	
Speaks English at home (5%)		No formal qualifications (-4%)	
Reads the Guardian (5%)		Reads the Sun (-4%)	
Male (5%)		Lived in area for less than 1 year (-3%)	
Wanted to send a message to the government (5%)		Vote influenced by ethnic candidates standing in constituency (-3%)	
Has a masters degree (5%)			
Feels sense of satisfaction when votes (5%)			
Agrees can influence decisions affecting Britain (4%)			
Law and Order is most important issue facing Britain (4%)			
Wanted to have a say in who wins the election (4%)			
Voting influenced by people living in local area (4%)			
Single adult under 60 (4%)			
Three generation household (3%)			
Lives in marginal seat (3%)			

*25% of variation of interest in Politics explained by model*

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In most demographic respects, the KDA confirms the conclusions suggested by the simpler analysis of attitudes by sub-groups: men take more interest than women, and neither religion nor ethnic group make a significant difference. Nor (surprisingly, perhaps) is there any difference by age. Educational achievement is a good predictor at both ends of the scale (graduates more interested, those with no qualifications less so than average), as would be expected; social class drops out once this is taken into account, which may indicate that it is a less useful

classification of ethnic minority Britons than of the population as a whole. It may well be that the differences in attitudinal mindset which are associated with class among white Britons have primarily historical roots, and have simply never been adopted to the same extent by the immigrant communities or their British-born descendants.

## Drivers of interest in the election

The drivers of interest in the election are somewhat different from those in politics, with a “sense of satisfaction in voting” being the most important, having twice the impact of duty as a citizen. Naturally enough, the specific desire to participate in this election is also relevant; perhaps surprisingly though, especially given the somewhat negative impression given by media coverage of the election, it is the positive reasons for voting (“I wanted to support the party I preferred” and “I wanted to support the party I preferred”) rather than negative reasons that engender interest.

### ***Q9 How interested were you in the general election that was held on May 5<sup>th</sup> this year?***

Positive predictors		Negative predictors	
Feel a sense of satisfaction when I vote (16%)			
Would seriously neglecting duty as a citizen if didn't vote (8%)			
Wanted to have a say in who wins the election (7%)			
Second generation migrant (7%)			
Democracy only works properly if people vote (7%)			
Would feel guilty if didn't vote in a general election (6%)			
Reads the Guardian (6%)	Interest in the general election held on May 5 <sup>th</sup> this year	People are so busy they don't have time to vote (-5%)	
Wanted to support the party preferred (6%)		Highest education qualification: 'A' Level (-5%)	
Social Class B (5%)			
Bachelor degree (5%)			
Social Class A (5%)			
Retired (5%)			
Single adult under 60 (4%)			
People living in local area influenced voting behaviour (4%)			

*30% of variation of interest in the General Election explained by model*

Social class is also a factor in this analysis, with social grades A and B showing a positive effect, but this must be taken in conjunction with the surprising negative effect of having A levels. These two factors naturally offset each other to some extent, so that it is the smaller group with A levels in classes C1 to DE who are least interested.

Of course it must be remembered that what is being measured here is the comparison between various groups – those with A levels are not uninterested by comparison with some objective yardstick, but by comparison with those of different educational attainment. It may well be that what is really happening here is not that the A level students are less interested than would be expected but that those who never reached the sixth form were more interested. Given that educational attainment is highly correlated with school standards, which can vary significantly even within local authorities, it may well be that the underlying driver here is geographical rather than educational as such, the election campaign having been more effective (which may mean simply more targeted) in areas with poor schools than with good ones. Remembering, too, that although the sample is representative of British ethnic minorities this by definition means that it is highly geographically concentrated, this is by no means implausible. At any rate, it seems to confirm the impression from the initial subgroup analysis that the pattern of interest in the election among BMEs was unusual in being higher at both ends of the socio-economic spectrum rather than steadily descending.

## **Drivers of trust in politicians**

While a good many different factors are related to trust in politicians, none particularly stand out as especially influential. Positive views of the electoral process (“I feel a sense of satisfaction when I vote” and “I would feel very guilty if I didn't vote in a general election”) are correlated with trust in politicians, but the causal link (if there is one) might flow in either direction or indeed both attitudes may reinforce each other. At the other end of the scale we find both specific issues which seem to indicate discontent with the government (unemployment and the Iraq War), and reasons for voting which would be driven by this (wanting to “send a message” to the government and wanting to vote against a party that was disliked. (It must be borne in mind that since BMEs are overwhelmingly habitual Labour voters, discontent with Labour government policy will equate to discontent with politicians of the party which they would normally support, and might be expected to be reflected in greater disillusionment with the system than if they found it naturally easy to express discontent with the government by voting for opposition parties.)

The factors isolated include the only religious effect to emerge in any of the four KDA analyses (Hindus being more likely than average to trust politicians), and, surprisingly, two categories which would normally be indicators of greater deprivation and associated with higher levels of alienation (renting from a housing association and having no educational qualifications) both emerge as positive drivers of trust. Conversely, mortgage holders are more distrustful than other groups.

**Q29 How much do you trust British politicians generally?**

Positive predictors		Negative predictors	
Feels a sense of satisfaction when they vote (8%)	<b>Trust in British politicians generally</b>	Wanted to vote against a party I didn't like (-5%)	
Retired (7%)		Wanted to send a message to the government (-5%)	
Would feel very guilty if I didn't vote in a general election (7%)		Buying home with help of mortgage or loan (-5%)	
Mixed ethnicity (5%)			
People in this local area pull together to improve the area? (5%)			
Election campaign gave enough information to make a good choice between the parties (5%)			
Age 25-34 (5%)			
Hindu (5%)			During the election campaign, the parties did not talk about any of the issues that matter to me (-4%)
Renting from housing association (4%)			Single most important issue facing the country at the present time: War in Iraq (-4%)
No formal qualifications (4%)			Single most important issue facing the country at the present time: Unemployment (-4%)
Democracy only works properly if most people vote (4%)			Live in the area for over 20 years (-4%)
Reads the Metro (4%)			
Lives in marginal seat (4%)			

*25% of variation of trust in British politicians explained by model*

**Drivers of turnout**

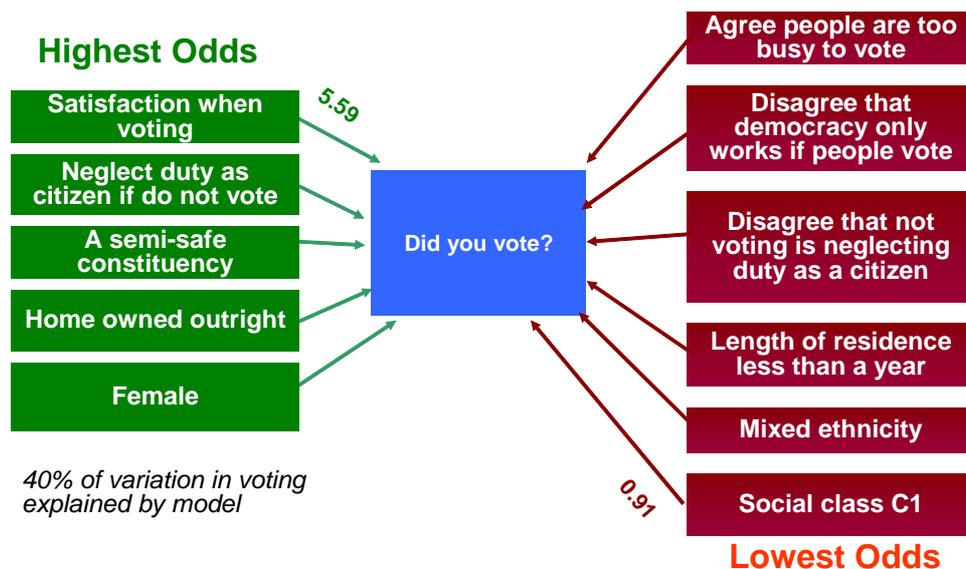
For discovering the drivers of turnout a slightly different statistical method must be used since multi-variate linear regression cannot be reliably applied to variables with only two possible values (i.e. in this case voted or did not vote). We therefore use Binary Logistic Regression; the statistics generated by this technique differ slightly from those in a linear regression, but the function in identifying the “key drivers” is the same. Again it must be stressed that while the technique finds the other variables in the survey that are most closely associated

with the variable under investigation, it can never *prove* a causal link, only show evidence that one might exist.

In this case the analysis is applied only to those respondents who said that they were registered to vote, and identifies the factors best predicting whether these respondents did or did not use their votes on 5 May. By restricting the analysis to those registered, we preclude any risk of distortion by the inclusion of those genuinely not entitled to vote. We also omit those who though eligible have voluntarily or by ignorance failed to register, which is likely to include the most disengaged members of the community; however, since failure to register is a relatively long-term phenomenon in the sense that the decisive action or failure to act must be definition have occurred before the announcement of the election, we therefore confine the scope of the analysis to factors that were specific to the 2005 election – whether the circumstances surrounding it and the campaign that was fought succeeded or failed in motivating those respondents who were able to claim a vote to do.

The analysis explains 40% of the variation in turnout. Were the analysis based on demographics, this would be quite a high figure; but given that the possible explanatory variables used included a number of attitudinal statements that one would expect to be closely related to a commitment to vote, it is perhaps lower than would be expected. Even given that an individual's turnout will always be affected to a degree by random factors as well as local political factors outside the scope of this survey, it is surprising that only 40% of the turnout is explicable.

### Key Driver Analysis – Did you vote on May 5<sup>th</sup>?



The most significant factors, both positive and negative, are attitudinal ones relating to the act of voting. The chart above illustrates this through an 'odds ratio'. This simply means that the odds of someone who feels a satisfaction when

voting to actually vote are 5.59 times higher than someone who doesn't feel this sense of satisfaction. There is also a small but detectable effect of higher turnout among those in "semi-safe" constituencies (where the majority in 2001 was between 10% and 20% of the vote) which is curious, and not immediately explicable by examining the list of the constituencies concerned.

As already hinted, in a KDA we can learn as much from which variables do not appear in the final output at all as from those that do, since their absence can in itself be a finding. The absence of any of the factors specific to the 2005 election from the list of factors driving turnout is case in point. Neither attitudes on Iraq nor on immigration or race relations in Britain were significantly related to turnout, nor were those thinking any particular issue of prime importance more likely to vote than those who did not. Religious persuasion had no effect, and the only ethnic effect was the lower turnout among the "mixed" group. (The analysis suggests that it was indeed ethnicity, rather than age, that accounts for the lower turnout of these respondents.)

## **General discussion**

One general point to note is the diversity of the selection of drivers thrown up by the four analyses. Only one factor appears as a driver in all four cases, agreement with the statement "I feel a sense of satisfaction when I vote", and which is the most powerful "explanatory" variable in three of the four. In a sense this is not explanatory at all, since this merely expresses an attitude which must to some extent be a consequence of the same factors that cause engagement and propensity to vote rather than an independent cause in itself. On the other hand, it is very instructive that it is this statement, rather than for example "Democracy only works properly if most people vote" or "I would be seriously neglecting my duty as a citizen if I didn't vote" which comes out so strongly.

We note by contrast that while believing that "I would be seriously neglecting my duty as a citizen if I didn't vote" predicts higher interest in politics, in the election and higher likelihood of turning out if registered, it does not encourage respondents to trust politicians.

It seems that among BME Britons, the personal satisfaction from voting is a stronger motivator than sense of duty or obligation to the community, and this has obvious implications for the best approach in any future attempts to encourage participation among this group.

# Appendices

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# Survey Details

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## Statistical Reliability

The respondents to the questionnaire are only samples of the total "population", so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the "true" values). For a random probability survey we can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the "true" values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the "95% confidence interval":

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Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
400 interviews	3	4	5
500 interviews	3	4	4
600 interviews	2	3	4
800 interviews	2	3	4
967 interviews	2	3	3
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
1,220 interviews	2	2	3

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For example, with a sample size of 1,063 where 50% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the "true" value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of  $\pm 3$  percentage points from the sample result.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be "real," or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one - i.e. if it is "statistically significant", we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume "95% confidence interval", the differences between the results of two separate groups must be greater than the values given in the table below:

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Size of samples compared	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 and 400	6	9	10
200 and 400	5	8	9
300 and 500	4	7	7
300 and 700	4	6	7
400 and 400	4	6	7
400 and 700	4	6	6
400 and 1,000	4	5	6
500 and 500	4	6	6
500 and 1,000	3	5	5
700 and 1,000	3	4	5
800 and 1,000	3	4	5

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## Guide to Social Class Definitions

The table below contains a brief list of social class definitions as used by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising. These groups are standard on all surveys carried out by MORI.

- A** Professionals such as doctors, surgeons, solicitors or dentists; chartered people like architects; fully qualified people with a large degree of responsibility such as senior editors, senior civil servants, town clerks, senior business executives and managers, and high ranking grades of the Services.
- B** People with very responsible jobs such as university lecturers, hospital matrons, heads of local government departments, middle management in business, qualified scientists, bank managers, police inspectors, and upper grades of the Services.
- C1** All others doing non-manual jobs; nurses, technicians, pharmacists, salesmen, publicans, people in clerical positions, police sergeants/constables, and middle ranks of the Services.
- C2** Skilled manual workers/craftsmen who have served apprenticeships; foremen, manual workers with special qualifications such as long distance lorry drivers, security officers, and lower grades of Services.
- D** Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, including labourers and mates of occupations in the C2 grade and people serving apprenticeships; machine minders, farm labourers, bus and railway conductors, laboratory assistants, postmen, door-to-door and van salesmen.
- E** Those on lowest levels of subsistence including pensioners, casual workers, and others with minimum levels of income

# Marked up Questionnaire

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