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Introduction: Degrees of separation

At the 2010 election, only 16% of ethnic minority voters supported the Conservatives. More than two thirds voted Labour¹. Not being white was the single best predictor that somebody would not vote Conservative.

The gulf between the Conservative Party and ethnic minorities is a well-known feature of British politics. It persists in spite of the Tories' efforts in recent years to reach beyond their core voters. Some would argue this means the Tories should end what is surely the fruitless quest for minority support. I disagree, for two reasons.

First, in narrow political terms, it is in the Conservative Party's electoral interests to address its huge deficit among these voters. As I noted in *Minority Verdict*, the average non-white population of the constituencies the Tories gained from Labour in 2010 was around 6 per cent. In the twenty of Labour's one hundred most vulnerable marginals that the Tories failed to win, the average non-white population was over 15 per cent. In the five of those that were in London, the average non-white population was 28 per cent. Bluntly, the Conservative Party's problem with ethnic minority voters is costing it seats.

Secondly, it is just not right that in contemporary Britain a large part of the population should feel that a mainstream party of government – which aspires to represent every part of society and govern in the whole country's interest – has nothing to say to them.

I decided to explore this problem in detail. I commissioned a poll to be conducted in the areas with the highest non-white populations; the 10,268 sample includes 3,201 respondents from ethnic and religious minorities, making it the biggest such survey ever conducted in Britain. In addition we conducted 20 focus groups, involving 30 hours of discussion with some 160 participants whose backgrounds were black African, black Caribbean, Muslim, Hindu or Sikh. I hope readers from these communities will find that the results reported here ring true. They may well also think the findings are so obvious and self-evident that they were hardly worth writing down. If so, let me say that for a party as seemingly unengaged with their lives as the Conservatives have traditionally been, writing these things down is all too necessary.

The political outlook of large numbers of ethnic minority voters is closely connected to class identity. This has been shaped by their communities' history and experience since arriving in Britain. Their parents or grandparents came to Britain to do working class jobs, lived in working class areas, and often joined unions, so Labour was their party. Most of our participants still thought of themselves as working class, including those with professional careers.

Labour had always been the party for people like them – a status it largely retained – but the Conservatives had always been for the better off middle classes. In common with large numbers of non-Conservative voters they did not think the Tories were for people like them, were not in touch with how they lived their lives, and did not share their values or priorities. This is the party's familiar brand problem, which I first discussed in *Smell The Coffee*, my analysis of the 2005 election.

However, by polling white voters alongside those from ethnic minorities, we demonstrated that the Conservative Party's unpopularity among black and Asian voters is not simply a matter of class and geography. There were sometimes strikingly different results between white and non-white voters living in the same area, and between different ethnic minority groups.

Among ethnic minority voters the Conservatives' brand problem exists in a more intense form. For many of our participants – by no means all, it is important to state – there was an extra barrier

¹ Ethnic Minority British Election Study, University of Oxford

between them and the Conservative Party directly related to their ethnic background. If Labour was the party that helped their families to establish themselves in Britain, had represented people who did their kind of work, and had passed laws to help ensure they were treated equally, the Conservatives, they felt, had been none the less on their presence in the first place. Enoch Powell was often mentioned in evidence, as was the notorious Smethwick election campaign of 1964 in which a poster appeared – not distributed by the Conservatives, but remembered as such – saying “if you want a n****r for a neighbour vote Labour”. The failure, on the Conservatives’ watch, properly to investigate the murder of Stephen Lawrence was also cited.

Most thought that if prejudice had been widespread in the party, then the Conservatives had changed in recent years, whether through principle or necessity. But significant numbers – which particularly included people from a black Caribbean background – felt the Tories remained indifferent or even hostile towards ethnic minorities. Many felt the Tories, and David Cameron in particular, had unfairly blamed ethnic minorities for last summer’s riots. There was a widespread view that Conservative policies, particularly when it came to deficit reduction, hit minority communities especially hard, and the Tories seemed at best unaware and at worst unconcerned about their impact. Whatever the motive for these policies, the tangible outcome they saw hit parts of society where many ethnic minority voters find themselves.

Ethnic minority voters are perhaps the only group to think that the Conservatives have lived up to their pre-election promise to toughen immigration laws. Some of our participants saw this as a good thing, and talked about the destabilising effect of recent high levels of migration, the contrast as they saw it between their parents’ and grandparents’ hard work and the resources available to new immigrants, or various scams that had been widely used to circumvent immigration laws but which were no longer possible. At the same time, they saw that since the government had no power to restrict migration from within the EU, in order to achieve its aim of reducing overall numbers greater controls were being placed on immigration from outside the Europe, most of which originated from Africa or South Asia. Since Australians did not seem to have much trouble getting in to the UK, this made the distinction between EU and non-EU immigration look like different treatment of white and non-white immigration.

We found that multiculturalism was unequivocally regarded as a good thing. There was no clear or consistent definition of the word – for many, it simply amounted to the technical term for the welcome presence in Britain of people like them. A speech that David Cameron made at last year’s Munich Security Conference, which was reported as criticising multiculturalism, was raised spontaneously by several participants, usually those from an Asian background. A thoughtful speech about the roots of extremism and the importance of cohesion had the effect of confirming, for some, suspicions about the Conservatives’ attitude to ethnic minority communities. Some assumed the speech was intended to reassure white Tory voters who were concerned about the effect of immigration on their national identity.

The fact that the Conservatives seem to have very few MPs or spokesmen from ethnic minorities was often mentioned as evidence that the party was not engaged in their communities. However, the issue was far from straightforward. Many of our participants could not imagine anyone from their background – culturally and, especially, economically – becoming a Tory candidate. This was particularly true of black voters. Their first reaction to seeing a black Conservative MP would often not be to think that the party must be for people like them after all, but to assume that to have become a Conservative MP the black person in question must be quite rich and posh, and therefore no more able to understand or represent them than any other Tory. More broadly, there was a suspicion that when parties give prominent positions to individuals from ethnic minorities, they often do so for presentational reasons and the individuals in question have little influence.

When a Conservative politician speaks to an ethnic minority audience, his theme will very often be the values he believes the Tories have in common with the relevant community. These are likely to

include a strong emphasis on family, community, enterprise (especially small business) and the desire to get on in life. These things will almost certainly be important to the community he is addressing. The problem is that what many in these communities mean when they think about these things may not necessarily match what they think the Conservative Party means when it thinks about them. Principled encouragement for family life and the institution of marriage, for example, is all very well – but our participants were more likely to think Labour had done more to support families, through tangible things like tax credits. On this score, the Tories now seemed to be eroding support for families, not strengthening it.

On the question of community – best summed up in David Cameron’s maxim that there is such a thing as society, it’s just not the same thing as the state – there was a perception that Tory values tended towards rugged and even selfish individualism, and that it was in fact Labour who, of all the parties, best embodied the principles of community that many minority voters tried to practise. This can be particularly frustrating for Conservatives who would argue that the philosophy these voters stand for has more in common with Tory tradition, from Burke’s little platoons to the Big Society, than it does with Labour’s statist approach. Nevertheless, Asian voters were twice as likely to say Labour shared their values as to say the Tories did; black voters were more than three times as likely.

There was rather more acceptance, certainly not universal, of the Conservatives as a party of enterprise and small business. Our analysis found that those voters for whom this is a priority are already the most open to the party – indeed the segment dominated by Hindus, Sikhs and some Jewish voters who work in the private sector was the least likely of any group in our poll, including white voters, to say they would never vote Conservative. On the question of getting on in life more generally, Labour were seen as far more committed to equal opportunity for all than were the Tories. This was partly connected to the indelible memory that when immigrants first came to Britain it was Labour who did most to help them establish themselves and make a go of things. Moreover, for ethnic minority voters the idea of getting on in life was inescapably tied to hard-won progress, over decades, in overcoming prejudice and discrimination. Here again, Labour had the better record in their eyes, not least because of the equality legislation introduced by successive Labour governments.

We analysed our poll results to find the other opinions most closely correlated with the statement “I would never vote Conservative” (which applied to between 19% and 45% of minority respondents, depending on their background). These constituted the biggest barriers between ethnic minority voters and the Conservative Party. Each had a different degree of significance for different groups, but overall the most important factors were the view that Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, that the Tories do not stand for fairness or share their values, that the party does not believe in equal opportunity for all, and that it is not on the side of ordinary people. From the Conservative Party’s point of view, the encouraging thing about this – to look on the optimistic side – is that these are not external factors over which it has no control. These are views which it is within the Tories’ power to change.

Despite the overall gloom, the research yielded some encouraging nuggets. More than half of ethnic minority respondents – including two thirds of Hindus and Sikhs – thought “the Conservative Party used to be hostile or indifferent to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, but the party is changing for the better”. Accordingly, David Cameron scored rather better on all measures than the Conservative Party as a whole. Asian voters were more likely to think the party “values and respects” people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds than that it “does not really care” about them. Fewer than one in ten minority voters thought the Tories were “actively hostile” towards them.

As I said at the outset, the Tories’ unpopularity among ethnic minority voters is a longstanding feature of British politics, and it will not be changed overnight, or even in time to make a big

difference at the next election. But it must change. In this study I have tried to set out the multifaceted nature of the problem. The answers need considerable thought and work, but some general ideas suggest themselves.

Many ethnic minority voters feel that, even if it has changed, the Conservative Party has in the past not been as warm towards them as it might have been. It would do no harm to acknowledge this perception, and even to agree that there is some truth behind it. The Tories, and indeed any organisation, must take care not to treat ethnic minority voters as an homogenous group, let alone one to be condescended to. Conservatives should continue to talk about the values of responsibility and enterprise, self-reliance and hard work, but in a way that connects its policies to an understanding of how people from these different backgrounds live their lives, their anxieties and aspirations. At the same time, the party needs to recognise that while these values are shared with the communities it needs to reach, many in these communities think that for the Tories, values end there: that Conservative principles do not seem to extend to the concern for others that often constitute an essential part of their own religious and cultural identity.

The Conservative Party will only succeed in this endeavour if it understands why it has failed in the past. Otherwise it will continue to be seen as a party of middle class white people which is only interested in talking to other middle class white people. As long as that situation persists, it cannot expect to attract new voters from ethnic minorities. At the moment, as far as they are concerned, the trouble with the Tories is that they keep themselves to themselves.

MAA
April 2012

Methodology

Quantitative

10,268 adults were interviewed by telephone between 24 October and 4 December 2011. All interviewees lived in the 1,165 Middle Layer Super Output Areas with the highest concentrations of black and minority ethnic residents according to census data. These areas account for 70% of the black and ethnic minority ethnic population of England and Wales. (There are 7,193 MLSOAs in England and Wales, with an average population of 7,200).

The composition of the sample by ethnic group was as follows:

WHITE/MIXED			ASIAN					BLACK			
Total	White	Mixed	Total	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other	Total	Caribbean	African	Other
6,596	6,216	380	2,100	901	700	299	200	1,101	499	500	102
64%	61%	4%	20%	9%	7%	3%	2%	11%	5%	5%	1%

The composition of the sample by religious group was as follows:

Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	Other	None
4,590	513	1,747	308	761	2,124
45%	5%	17%	3%	7%	21%

Qualitative

20 focus groups were conducted between 31 January and 1 March 2012, in London, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and Birmingham.

Separate groups were held comprising black African, black Caribbean, Hindu, Sikh, and Pakistani Muslim participants.

In each category, separate groups were conducted of older men (40+), younger men, older women and younger women.

Participants had voted at the 2010 general election. None was a member of a political party.

Throughout this report, verbatim quotes from focus groups are labelled according to the following key:

BC = Black Caribbean

BA = Black African

H = Hindu

S = Sikh

M = Muslim

1. Identifying the barriers

Between October and December 2011 we conducted a poll of more than 10,000 adults living in the areas with the highest concentrations of ethnic minority voters, according to census data. This approach allowed us to reach the largest possible sample of ethnic minority voters; the total included 3,201 people from black or Asian ethnic backgrounds. By polling white respondents alongside them we were able to determine whether minority voters' attitudes were simply typical of the largely urban, working class areas in which the research was taking place, or whether ethnic minority voters – or particular communities – were more likely to hold particular views.

The poll (the full results of which are detailed in the final chapter) asked a number of questions about politics, voting habits, issues and priorities, the attributes of the three main parties and leaders, and some more detailed questions about the Conservatives in particular. Crucially, it also asked which, if any, party they would never vote for.

We analysed the poll data in detail to identify different segments of voters within the overall sample according to their likelihood of saying they would never vote Conservative. This has revealed which types of voter are the most (and least) hostile to the Tories and the underlying opinions that drive those attitudes.

Segmentation exercise 1: White and non-white voters

In our first segmentation exercise we looked separately at white and non-white respondents (see Tree 1, following page). Within each group, we identified which of eight factors were the strongest predictors of their likelihood to say that they would never vote Conservative: age, gender, work sector, highest level of education attained, ethnicity, social class, religion and (for ethnic minorities) the generation in which their family settled in the UK.

Just over a third of white respondents (34.65%) said they would never vote Conservative. Perhaps surprisingly, of the eight factors we studied, the best predictor was religion: just 28.73% of the mainly Christian group of white respondents said they would never vote Tory, compared to 43.18% of those of another or no religion.

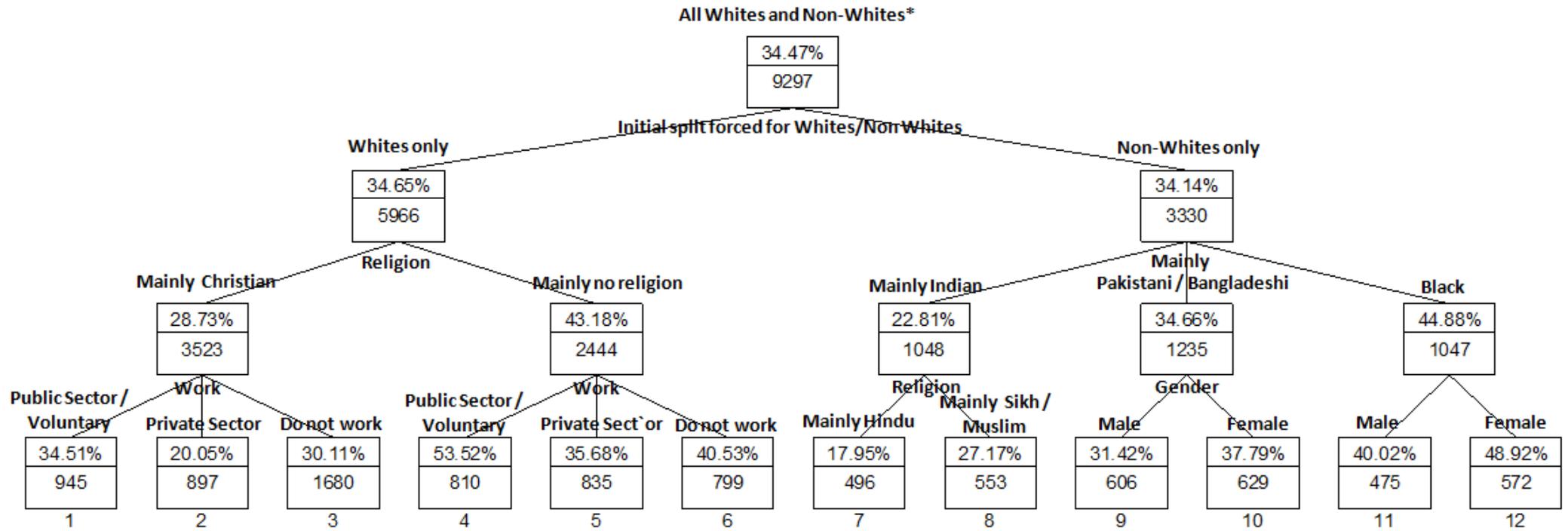
The next best predictor among white respondents was work sector. Those in the public or voluntary sector were much more likely to be hostile to the Conservatives than those who do not work (which includes retired people and non-working mothers, not just the unemployed), and those employed in the private sector, who were the least hostile of all. More than half (53.52%) of white non-Christian respondents who work in the public or voluntary sector said they would never vote Conservative, compared to just 20.05% of the mainly Christian group employed in the public sector.

Among non-white respondents, a similar proportion (34.14%) said they would never vote Tory as among white voters. The best predictor within this group was ethnicity. Close to half of black respondents (44.88%) said they would never vote Conservative, compared to 34.66% of respondents of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, and 22.81% of those of mainly Indian origin.

For Indian voters, religion was the strongest predictor of hostility to the Tories. Only 17.95% of this group who identified themselves as Christian or Hindu said they would never vote Conservative, compared to 27.17% of the mainly Muslim and Sikh segment.

Among the other non-white ethnic groups, the next best predictor was gender. Less than a third (31.42%) of men from a Pakistani or Bangladeshi background said they would never vote Conservative, compared to 37.79% of women. Among black respondents, 40.02% of men said they would never vote Tory, compared to nearly half (48.92%) of women.

Tree 1: White and Non-White voters



* Mixed race, Chinese, Other race and those not eligible to vote excluded from sample

The percentage in the top section of each box is the proportion who say they would never vote Conservative. The number in the bottom section of each box is the number of voters in that group, out of a total sample of 9,297.

Segmentation exercise 2: All voters

The next segmentation exercise looked at all voters polled – without artificially separating white from non-white voters – and identified which of the eight factors proved the strongest predictors of hostility to the Conservatives among respondents as a whole (see Tree 2, following page).

Religion was the single most powerful predictor of a respondent's likelihood of saying they would never vote Conservative. The group dominated by those with no religion were by some way the most likely to say they would never vote Conservative: 43.64% of them said this, compared to 35.15% of Muslims, 31.54% of Christians and 22.57% of Hindus, Jews and Sikhs.

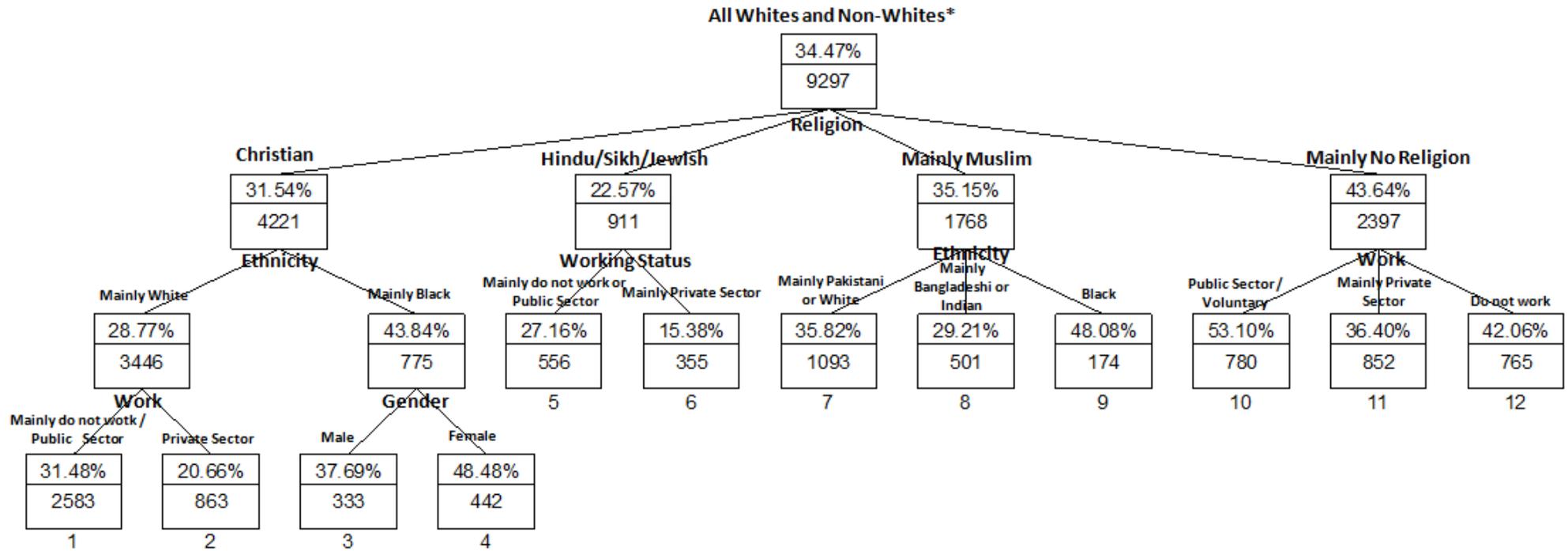
Among Christians, the biggest predictor of hostility to the Tories was ethnicity (43.84% of mainly black Christians said they would never vote Conservative, compared to 28.77% of mainly white Christians). Among the first group, gender was the next best predictor, with 48.48% of women hostile to the party compared to 37.69% of men. Among the second, work sector was the biggest splitter: 31.48% of those in the public or voluntary sectors, or not working, said they would never vote Conservative, compared to just 20.66% of those employed in the private sector.

For Hindu, Jewish and Sikh voters (of whom half were Hindu, 30% Sikh and 20% Jewish), work sector was the best predictor of hostility to the Conservatives. 27.16% of public sector, voluntary sector and non-working respondents in this group said they would never vote Tory, compared to just 15.38% of those in the private sector. Indeed, it is worth noting that in this exercise, looking at the eight demographic factors listed above, Hindus, Jews and Sikhs working in the private sector were the least hostile to the Conservative Party of any group, including private sector white Christians.

Black voters within the predominantly Muslim segment were rather more likely to say they would never vote Conservative than other Muslim groups.

In the segment dominated by those with no religion, work sector was the strongest predictor of hostility. More than half (53.10%) of this group said they would never vote Conservative, compared to 42.06% of those who do not work and 36.40% of those employed in the private sector.

Tree 2: All voters



* Mixed race, Chinese, Other race and those not eligible to vote excluded from sample

The percentage in the top section of each box is the proportion who say they would never vote Conservative. The number in the bottom section of each box is the number of voters in that group, out of a total sample of 9,297.

‘I would never vote Conservative’ – most important drivers

Further analysis was conducted to identify the factors that lay behind the statement “I would never vote Conservative”. Using Correlated Component Regression analysis we looked at respondents’ answers to all the questions in the poll to isolate the views most often associated with a declaration that those respondents would never vote Tory. The analysis also showed how these factors varied between different kinds of voter.

White and non-white voters

As in the segmentation exercise, we looked first at whether white voters saying they would never vote Conservative were driven by different factors from non-white voters saying the same thing.

For white voters, the view that it is not true to say the Conservative Party’s heart is in the right place accounted for 14% of what made them more likely to say they would never vote Conservative – the biggest single factor for them. Next, in equal importance, were the view that the Tories do not stand for fairness, are actively hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and do not share their values. Notably, the view that people who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different backgrounds (and therefore constituted a group they did not wish to join) was a more important repelling factor for white voters than the perception that Conservative politicians themselves do so.

WHITE VOTERS: Drivers of saying ‘I would never vote Conservative’		Importance
1	FALSE – The Conservative Party’s heart is in the right place	14%
2	FALSE – The Conservative Party stands for fairness	9%
3	The Conservative Party is actively hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	9%
4	FALSE – The Conservative Party shares my values	9%
5	TRUE – The Labour Party shares my values	8%
6	AGREE – People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	8%
7	AGREE – Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	6%
8	FALSE – The Conservative Party is competent and capable	6%
9	FALSE – The Conservative Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	6%
10	FALSE – The Conservative Party believes in equal opportunity for all	4%
11	TRUE – The Labour Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	4%
12	AGREE – Conservative politicians look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	3%
13	AGREE – The Labour Party stands for fairness	3%
14	AGREE – The Labour Party’s heart is in the right place	3%
15	The NHS is one of the three most important issues facing Britain	3%
16	The environment is one of the three most important issues facing Britain	2%
17	I vote for the same party as my father did/does	2%
	Statements about the Conservative Party	74%
	Statements about the Labour Party	18%

Predicts 80% of cases

Overall, nearly three quarters of what made white voters more likely to say they would never vote Tory comprised negative perceptions of the Conservative Party; less than a fifth was due to positive views about Labour. Agreement that the Labour Party shares their values was the fifth most important driver for white voters saying they would never vote Conservative.

For non-white voters who said they would never vote Tory, the single most important factor was the view that Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. This confirmed a finding from the groups that the practical consequences of policies such as changes to tax credits or Education Maintenance Allowance, as well as broader perceptions about whether the party stands for fairness or shares their values (the second and third factors for non-white voters), informed the attitudes of minority voters towards the Conservative Party and their likelihood of voting for it.

<i>NON-WHITE VOTERS: Drivers of saying 'I would never vote Conservative'</i>		Importance
1	AGREE – Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	12%
2	FALSE – The Conservative Party stands for fairness	11%
3	FALSE – The Conservative Party shares my values	9%
4	AGREE – Conservative politicians look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	9%
5	FALSE – The Conservative Party's heart is in the right place	8%
6	FALSE – The Conservative Party is competent and capable	6%
7	AGREE – People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	6%
8	TRUE – The Labour Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	6%
9	The Conservative Party is actively hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	5%
10	FALSE – The Conservative Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	5%
11	TRUE – The Labour Party shares my values	5%
12	FALSE – The Conservative Party believes in equal opportunity for all	5%
13	TRUE – The Labour Party stands for fairness	5%
14	TRUE – I vote for the same party as my father did/does	5%
15	TRUE – The Labour Party's heart is in the right place	3%
<i>Statements about the Conservative Party</i>		76%
<i>Statements about the Labour Party</i>		19%

Predicts 72% of cases

The perception that Conservative politicians look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds was a bigger factor for non-white voters than the idea that Conservative voters probably do so – the reverse of the position for white voters. As with white voters, though, three quarters of what made them more likely to say they would never vote Tory was concerned with the Conservative Party itself, rather than Labour. Four statements about the Labour Party were drivers for both sets of voters: that it is in touch with the concerns of people like them, that it shares their values, that it stands for fairness, and that its heart is in the right place.

Most important drivers: Hindu

This analysis also identified how drivers of hostility towards the Conservative Party differed between different minority voter groups, as well as between white and non-white respondents. For Hindu voters, the most important factors were similar to those of non-white respondents as a whole – though their views of Labour played a more important role overall.

HINDU: Drivers of saying 'I would never vote Conservative'		Importance	
1	FALSE – The Conservative Party stands for fairness	12%	
2	AGREE – Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	10%	
3	FALSE – The Conservative Party's heart is in the right place	9%	
4	FALSE – The Conservative Party believes in equal opportunity for all	8%	
5	FALSE – The Conservative Party shares my values	7%	
6	FALSE – The Conservative Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	6%	
7	FALSE – The Conservative Party understands minorities	6%	
8	TRUE – The Labour Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	6%	
9	FALSE – The Conservative Party is honest and principled	6%	
10	FALSE – The Conservative Party is competent and capable	6%	
11	The Conservative Party is actively hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	5%	
12	TRUE – The Labour Party shares my values	5%	
13	TRUE – The Labour Party is on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off	4%	
14	TRUE – The Labour Party's heart is in the right place	4%	
15	TRUE – The Labour Party stands for fairness	4%	
16	TRUE – The Liberal Democrats are honest and principled	3%	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Predicts 85% of cases</div>		Statements about the Conservative Party	75%
		Statements about the Labour Party	23%

Most important drivers: Sikh

Views about the Labour Party were an even less important factor for Sikh voters who said they would never vote Conservative than for non-white voters as a whole. The perception that the Conservatives do not seem to have any members or voters from different ethnic or religious backgrounds was a more important factor for Sikh respondents than for any other group.

SIKH: Drivers of saying 'I would never vote Conservative'		Importance
1	FALSE – The Conservative party is honest and principled	15%
2	TRUE – Conservative politicians look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	11%
3	FALSE – The Conservative Party is competent and capable	11%
4	AGREE – Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	11%
5	AGREE – People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	10%
6	FALSE – The Conservative Party shares my values	9%
7	AGREE – Conservatives do not seem to have members or spokesmen from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	8%
8	FALSE – The Conservative Party's heart is in the right place	7%
9	FALSE – The Conservative Party is on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off	6%
10	The economy and jobs is one of the three most important issues facing Britain	4%
11	TRUE - The Labour Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	4%
12	Work in the public or voluntary sector	3%
		Statements about the Conservative Party
Predicts 75% of cases		88%
		Statements about the Labour Party
		4%

Most important drivers: Muslim

A perception that the Conservative Party does not stand for fairness, is actively hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and that its policies have shown this to be the case were the strongest factors for Muslims who say they would never vote Tory.

MUSLIM: Drivers of saying 'I would never vote Conservative'		Importance
1	FALSE – The Conservative Party stands for fairness	19%
2	The Conservative Party is actively hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	13%
3	TRUE – Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	10%
4	FALSE – The Conservative Party's heart is in the right place	8%
5	TRUE – People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	8%
6	FALSE – The Conservative Party shares my values	7%
7	FALSE – The Conservative Party is honest and principled	7%
8	FALSE – The Conservative Party is on the side of ordinary people, not just the well off	6%
9	FALSE – The Conservative Party is competent and capable	5%
10	TRUE – The Labour Party is clear about what it stands for	5%
11	TRUE – The Labour Party is competent and capable	5%
12	TRUE – The Labour Party is honest and principled	4%
13	I vote for the same party as my father did/does	2%
		Statements about the Conservative Party
		83%
		Statements about the Labour Party
		14%

Predicts 68% of cases

Most important drivers: Black African background

Voters from a black African background who said they would never vote Conservative were overwhelmingly driven by their views of the Conservative Party rather than Labour. The perception that the Tories did not share their values was considerably more important for these voters than for any other group.

<i>BLACK AFRICAN BACKGROUND: Drivers of saying 'I would never vote Conservative'</i>		Importance	
1	FALSE – The Conservative Party shares my values	13%	
2	FALSE – The Conservative Party stands for fairness	12%	
3	FALSE – The Conservative Party believes in equal opportunity for all	9%	
4	FALSE – The Conservative Party is honest and principled	9%	
5	AGREE – Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	8%	
6	AGREE – Conservative politicians look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	8%	
7	FALSE – The Conservative Party understands minorities	8%	
8	FALSE – The Conservative party is competent and capable	7%	
9	AGREE – People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	7%	
10	FALSE – The Conservative Party's heart is in the right place	6%	
11	FALSE – The Conservative Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	6%	
12	AGREE – Conservatives do not seem to have any members or spokesmen from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	5%	
13	TRUE – The Labour Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	2%	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Predicts 64% of cases</div>		<i>Statements about the Conservative Party</i>	98%
		<i>Statements about the Labour Party</i>	2%

Most important drivers: Black Caribbean background

Respondents from a black Caribbean background were more driven than those from a black African background by their views of the effects of Conservative policies. There was also a more powerful view that the party is actively hostile to, and that both its politicians and voters look down upon, people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

BLACK CARIBBEAN BACKGROUND: Drivers of saying 'I would never vote Conservative'		Importance	
1	AGREE – Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	12%	
2	AGREE – Conservative politicians look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	11%	
3	The Conservative Party is actively hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	9%	
4	AGREE – People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	8%	
5	FALSE – The Conservative Party understands minorities	7%	
6	FALSE – The Conservative Party believes in equal opportunity for all	6%	
7	FALSE – The Conservative Party's heart is in the right place	6%	
8	FALSE – The Conservative Party shares my values	6%	
9	FALSE – The Conservative Party stands for fairness	6%	
10	AGREE – Conservatives do not seem to have any members or spokesmen from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	6%	
11	FALSE – The Conservative Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	5%	
12	FALSE – The Conservative Party is on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off	5%	
13	FALSE – The Conservative Party is competent and capable	4%	
14	I vote for the same party as my father did/does	2%	
15	TRUE – The Labour Party is on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off	2%	
16	Gender – female	2%	
17	TRUE – The Labour Party understands minorities	2%	
18	TRUE – The Labour Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	2%	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Predicts 68% of cases</div>		Statements about the Conservative Party	90%
		Statements about the Labour Party	6%

Most important drivers by group

This table brings together the information from the five previous tables, showing the relative importance of the main factors for different ethnic and religious groups.

	HINDU	SIKH	MUSLIM	BLACK AFRICAN	BLACK CARIBBEAN
AGREE – Conservative policies have shown they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	10%	11%	10%	8%	12%
FALSE – Conservative Party stands for fairness	12%		19%	12%	6%
FALSE – Conservative Party shares my values	7%	9%	7%	13%	6%
FALSE – Conservative Party's heart is in the right place	9%	7%	8%	6%	6%
FALSE – Conservative Party is honest and principled	6%	15%	7%	9%	
FALSE – Conservative Party is competent and capable	6%	11%	5%	7%	4%
AGREE – People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds		10%	8%	7%	8%
AGREE – Conservative politicians probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds		11%		8%	11%
Conservative Party is actively hostile towards people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	5%		13%		9%
FALSE – Conservative Party believes in equal opportunity for all	8%			9%	6%
FALSE – Conservative Party understands minorities	6%			8%	7%
AGREE – Conservatives do not seem to have members or spokesmen from different ethnic and religious backgrounds		8%		5%	6%
FALSE – Conservative Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me	6%			6%	5%
FALSE – Conservative Party is on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off		6%	6%		5%
TRUE – Labour Party is in touch with the concerns of people like you	6%	4%		2%	2%
TRUE – Labour Party is on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off	4%				2%
TRUE – Labour Party shares my values	5%				
TRUE – Labour Party is clear about what it stands for			5%		
TRUE – Labour Party is competent and capable			5%		
TRUE – I vote for the same party as my father did/does			2%		2%
TRUE – The Labour Party is honest and principled			4%		
Economy & jobs is one of the three most important issues facing Britain		4%			
TRUE – Labour Party's heart is in the right place	4%				
TRUE – Labour Party stands for fairness	4%				
TRUE – The Liberal Democrats are honest and principled	3%				
Work in the public or voluntary sector		3%			
Gender – female					2%
TRUE – Labour Party understands minorities					2%

2. “I would never vote Conservative because...”

In our poll, 35% of white voters, and between 19% and 45% of minority respondents depending on background, said they would never vote Conservative. As described above, analysis of the poll results allowed us to identify the other attitudes that lay behind this statement, and how these varied between different kinds of voter.

It was notable that age, social grade and how many generations their family had been in Britain were not factors for those who said they would never vote Conservative; the biggest drivers were all attitudinal. The most important of these all concerned the Conservative Party itself: there was something, or several things, that put them off the Tories; saying they would never vote Conservative was not just a statement of loyalty to Labour or another party.

The qualitative and polling evidence provide further context to these attitudinal drivers, which are listed in the table above (Most Important Drivers By Group).

“Conservative policies have shown they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds”.

Agreement with this statement was an important driver among voters in all minority groups who said they would never vote Conservative. Overall, around half of ethnic minority voters thought the statement was true, and it was the single most important factor for voters from a black Caribbean background who said they would never vote Tory. Usually people saw this hostility in economic terms. Many said they had been hit by changes to tax credits or Education Maintenance Allowance, felt vulnerable in their jobs, or had seen what they regarded as changes for the worse in public services they used.

While these things did not amount to direct discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or religion, they seemed to show, at best, an indifference on the part of the government to the practical consequences of policy decisions that had a disproportionate effect on people from ethnic and religious minorities. It did not escape them that while they were losing benefits or allowances because their modest incomes were not sufficiently modest to qualify for them, concessions seemed likely to be made on proposals to remove Child Benefit from families where someone earned over £40,000. [See Chapter Four, point 4.6]

Immigration policy also fell into this category for a number of participants. The issue was seldom the first to be raised as evidence of Conservative hostility to minority communities, but it did play a part. By and large, participants in these groups were as forceful as any others in their view that new immigrants to Britain should work, support themselves and contribute to the country, just as their parents and grandparents had done. However, unlike voters more widely, they tended to think that the coalition’s immigration policies were significantly tougher than those of the last government, sometimes unfairly so. This impression was due in part to the combination of the government’s aim of reducing the overall level of immigration, while being unable to restrict migrants from within the EU – meaning that non-white migrants seemed to face more barriers to entering Britain than white ones. [See point 4.14]

FALSE – “The Conservative Party stands for fairness”.

FALSE – “The Conservative Party shares my values”.

FALSE – “The Conservative Party’s heart is in the right place”.

Disagreement with the idea that the Conservative Party stands for fairness was a significant factor among most groups, and the single most important among Hindu and Muslim participants. In the poll, 33% of Asian and just 20% of black respondents said they thought the Conservatives stood for fairness, compared to 66% and 78% respectively who said the same for Labour. As with the perception that Conservative policies demonstrated hostility to minorities, to many participants fairness was about the nuts and bolts of their finances, particularly if they were to some degree dependent on the welfare system or whose families had been so in the past. This reflects the well-documented view among large numbers of voters that the Conservatives represent the rich, and not those who struggle to make ends meet.

For those in close-knit religious communities, the question of fairness concerned personal identity and ethos at least as much as financial practicality. Regarding community, compassion, co-operation and neighbourliness as an indispensable part of how they lived, they were inclined to vote for a party that they felt valued these things too. For most, this was the Labour Party. To them the Conservatives represented a more rugged, individualistic approach to life than the one in which they were raised. [See point 4.3]

FALSE – “The Conservative Party believes in equal opportunity for all”.

FALSE – “The Conservative Party is on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off”.

Our participants largely doubted that the Conservatives had any real commitment to social mobility and helping people get on in life – or at least not people like them. This was particularly true of black voters, only 29% of whom in our poll thought the Conservatives believed in equal opportunity for all, though 83% of them thought Labour did.

This was connected to a strong working class identity among many ethnic minority, especially black, participants, even when they were firmly middle class in occupational terms. It also reflected what for many voters is the indelible memory that when their communities first came to Britain it was Labour, not the Conservatives, who did most to help them establish themselves and make a go of things. [See point 4.1]. (Hindu respondents, however, were more likely than white respondents to agree that the Tories were both “on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off”, and, by some way, that they “believe in equal opportunity for all”. Both groups were still much more likely to think both statements true of Labour).

For many ethnic minority voters, the idea of opportunity and getting on in life was inescapably tied to hard-won progress, over decades, in overcoming prejudice and discrimination. Here again, Labour has a better record in their eyes, having introduced the Race Relations Acts and other similar legislation. Whether or not they think the Conservatives did much to oppose these laws, they know it was Labour’s initiative that brought them into being.

AGREE – “People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds”.

AGREE – “Conservative politicians probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds”.

“The Conservative Party is actively hostile towards people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds”.

For ethnic and religious minority respondents who said they would never vote Conservative, the idea that Tory voters probably look down on them was at least as important a factor as the idea that Tory politicians do. (This perception was also a very powerful driver for white voters who said they would never vote for the party). More than half of the minority sample in our poll, including two thirds of black respondents, agreed with both statements.

Most participants in the groups thought that Britain was at least a tolerant and accepting place (if sometimes not much more than that) for them to live and practise their faith. Several Muslims – and a number of Hindus and Sikhs – said they had suffered more abuse or hostility since September 11, 2001. Generally, participants did not feel they experienced direct prejudice on a regular basis. However, when participants were asked which of the three main parties people probably vote for who have unfriendly attitudes to minority voters, the Conservative Party was nearly always the answer.

The poll found that only around one in ten minority voters thought the Conservative Party was “actively hostile” to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds (and fewer still thought this of David Cameron); they were much more likely to think that the party “does not really care” about people from these backgrounds (the most frequent choice among black voters) or “values and respects” them (the most frequent choice among Asian respondents). Not surprisingly, believing the Conservative Party was actively hostile to people like them made minority respondents rather more likely to say they would never vote for it.

A variety of evidence for Conservative hostility or indifference towards minority voters was cited in the groups. These included perceived indifference about the effect of particular policies, particularly the cuts [see point 4.6], lack of engagement [4.8], individual incidents that might betray underlying attitudes [4.9], seeming to blame minority communities for the 2011 riots [4.11], and David Cameron’s 2011 speech on multiculturalism [4.10].

FALSE – “The Conservative Party understands minorities”.

FALSE – “The Conservative Party is in touch with the concerns of people like me”.

AGREE – “The Conservative Party does not seem to have any members or spokesmen from different ethnic and religious backgrounds”.

Across the board, participants in our groups felt that the Conservative Party was detached from their neighbourhoods and communities, neither visible nor engaged with their concerns. Conservative representatives were reported to be less likely to attend cultural or religious festivals or events, even when invited, than those of other parties who did so routinely. Consequently, the Tories could not understand their lives or, by implication, represent them effectively. Four times as many black respondents said Labour “understands minorities” (80%) as thought it true of the Tories (20%). Asian voters were only just over twice as likely to think the statement true of Labour (76%, compared to 36% for the Conservatives).

Most participants could not think of a single Conservative figure from an ethnic minority. This mattered to some people – not all; it was noted that many Labour MPs representing large minority

populations were white – but was more a consequence of the party’s detachment than its cause. This meant that more visible minority Conservative candidates would not in itself reassure them. For one thing, several participants confessed that their first thought on seeing a minority Conservative candidate would be: “token”. But even for the less cynical, the candidate in question would have to get over the barrier of being a Tory, which for many voters puts them automatically into a different social category. If the MP for Windsor is black, they say, great – but don’t imagine a prosperous Tory in one of the richest seats in England can relate to me just because we’re the same colour.

For some people, the perception that people from ethnic minorities only seemed to become Tories once they were rich reinforced, rather than eased, their reservations about voting Conservative.

TRUE – “Labour is in touch with the concerns of people like you”.

TRUE – “Labour is on the side of ordinary people, not just the well off”.

For ethnic minority voters who say they would never vote Conservative, these statements are the most important factors that concern Labour rather than the Tories themselves. The fact that the Conservative Party scores badly and lags behind Labour on these measures among voters as a whole is well documented. What our polling has revealed is the extent of Labour’s lead among minority voters compared to white voters.

Just 30% of white voters said the Conservative Party was “in touch with the concerns of people like you”; Labour did rather better on 45%, a lead of 15 points. Among Asian voters, though, Labour led by 37 points on this measure (65% to 28%), and among black voters by 59 points (75% to 16%).

Labour led by 37 points among white voters on being “on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off” (62% to 25%). The proportion of Asian voters saying this was true of the Tories was exactly the same as that of white voters, but 69% said it was true of Labour. Among black voters, the Labour lead was considerably higher: 77% said Labour were on the side of ordinary people; just 16% said it was true of the Conservatives.

3. Being in Britain

H = Hindu. M = Muslim. S = Sikh. BA = Black African. BC = Black Caribbean.

- 3.1 The prevailing view among focus group participants from all backgrounds was that **Britain was a good place in which to be a member of an ethnic or religious minority**. Most felt this was true in absolute terms – indeed some said they had never had any problems at all as a result of their background – and even more thought it true compared to other countries. Overwhelmingly, people felt things had improved for minorities in Britain over the last 20 or 30 years as attitudes had changed. Muslim and Sikh participants in particular said they valued the freedom Britain offered, especially the freedom to practise their religion.

“When we first came, it was ‘no blacks, no Irish, no dogs’. I asked my brother, what does this mean? We have got English people in Kenya, our neighbours, and we ate at the same table.” [H]

“North London now is like wonderland compared to East London back in the day.” [BC]

“I think, compared to some other countries in Europe or America, Britain is still a far, far better place in terms of tolerance. This is a society where you can come in and people will accept you.” [BA]

“Indians have always been respected in Britain. I haven’t experienced any negative thing.” [H]

“We’ve got freedom at least. There’s no restriction on praying, or wearing what we like and what we do. They really respect your religion. Overall it’s the best country.” [M]

“It’s better to be a Muslim here. We have more freedom here. I used to live in France myself. It is a thousand times better here.” [M]

“I think we’re more aware now of each other’s cultures. I work with English people and if they don’t know something, they’ll just come and ask you, whereas at one time they didn’t. They used to be scared of you, but now they do approach you.” [M]

Some things have been cut “but it’s nice living in a country where they give you something. Where we originate from, you don’t get jack. So we should thank our lucky stars.” [H]

“Before, British people never used to like the smell of curry. Now they’re licking our plates.” [H]

- 3.2 Several spontaneously mentioned **equality legislation** as a reason why life for minorities had improved. A number of participants said that, as well as being beneficial in its own right in terms of curbing abuse and discrimination, such legislation was an encouraging sign that the country respected them. There was a feeling that new laws had led public opinion rather than followed it – equality legislation was one of the reasons why public attitudes (or at least behaviour) towards minorities had changed.

“I have Kirpan here – it’s a dagger, basically. I work at Manchester Airport, there’s a written rule, I can wear it. As a passenger I cannot take it, but as an employee I can, as a Sikh. So that is one of the very respectful things which I feel, which is not there in a lot of other countries.” [S]

“Why do I think it’s got better? The laws of the country have changed. Twenty odd years ago, if you were to go for a position, say a manager’s job, you wouldn’t be seen”. [M]

“There was a time when Sikhs were not accepted in terms of driving a motorbike because of the helmet issue, joining the police force and also children were not allowed in school with a turban”. [S]

- 3.3 Younger Asian participants, many of whom were the first generation of their family to be born in the UK, were particularly likely to stress that they **felt British** – indeed for most it was inconceivable that they could think of themselves as anything else. Having a close connection with another country through their family did not mean they considered it ‘home’.

“They’ve pushed diversity a lot. Sometimes it can be quite confusing for people like us, born and bred. My father was born here because my granddad was a British Army doctor during the war. There is mixed race marriage, and I’m probably the only pure Indian left in my generation of my family now, because everyone has married English, Canadian, Americans. If I’m not British, then where do I go looking for myself?” [S]

“We go to India on a regular basis. You feel at home when you come back to Manchester or London or wherever you are. India now, to us, is a holiday place, or a pilgrimage place, but it’s not home.” [S]

“I do feel British, yes, because I’ve lived here forty years. One day I’ll probably say I want to go back to Pakistan because I come from there. Our young generation, they don’t want to go back. I have been told by my children, that’s your country, not mine. They are more British than us. The younger generation don’t have a ‘back home’.” [M]

“I think when we were growing up we were definitely Asian and everybody knew we were Asian. Kids nowadays, they don’t put themselves in that category. They haven’t lost their identity. When they’re at an Indian wedding, for instance, when they’ve gone to the temple, they know they’re Indian, but when they’re with their friends or whatever they’re just one of the crowd.” [S]

3.4 Sikhs and Hindus in particular spontaneously said they disliked the tendency to “put people in boxes” in the name of **diversity**.

“If you take a country like Canada, they’re all first Canadians and then they respect their own faiths. However, over here in the last few years, we’ve just pushed diversity so much that it’s become a problem by itself.” [S]

“I have my identity in that I come from Sikh roots but you can’t over-diversify and start putting people in boxes. I think that’s where the problem arises.” [S]

“I think rather than focusing on diversity and this culture and that culture, put us all into one, and just focus on understanding each other.” [S]

3.5 A number of Sikh and Hindu participants said they **supported India at cricket**, but England at football. They were puzzled by the idea that sport should be a test of allegiance, let alone that national loyalty demanded they cheer for a particular team.

“Some of my friends ask me who I support at cricket, and I say India, so they ask, ‘who do you support in football?’ England. ‘But why don’t you support India?’ Because they’re rubbish.” [S]

“I always follow India at cricket, and my dad used to play cricket when he was back in India, and I probably got it more from him. I will still be for England when they play, but predominantly it’s India. I am British. I think of England as my home, and India as my roots. And that’s where the sporting side comes in.” [S]

“It’s the same as me supporting Liverpool even though I live in Leeds.” [S]

“When India plays England it’s like fun. It’s like a friendly”. [S]

3.6 Some participants – certainly not a majority – said they did not feel British, or that even if they did, they **did not feel that British people in general accepted them as being British**, or assumed they were foreign. Muslims and those from a black Caribbean background were the most likely to say this. Some Muslims said the fact they believed in something in itself set them apart from most British people.

“I feel like, yes, I am part of the British culture, I was born in Britain, grew up in Britain, lived here all my life, but I’m not accepted to be British by white people. I’m not accepted. A good example of this – I’ve been asked the question, ‘where are you from?’ I said North London. ‘No, what country are you from?’ I was born here. ‘Where are your parents from?’ Jamaica. ‘What’s it like in Jamaica?’ I don’t know, I’ve never been. Examples keep going on and on. You go into a room somewhere, you’ll go into a situation and you’ll get the looks even if you don’t get the comments. People don’t have to talk to you, looks are enough. You can tell.” [BC]

“Personally speaking, I don’t think I am really totally British. The British I think would never totally accept me.” [M]

“As Muslims we practise and we like to go into our beliefs. But the other thing is the English don’t want to go into their beliefs. They believe in football. They don’t believe in anything.” [M]

“Black people are synonymous with no education, criminal, and all the rest of the negative things, automatically, to this day.” [BC]

“I’ve never felt like I’ve been accepted. And I was born here.” [BC]

“I do feel British to a certain degree, but I know that when I walk down the street the first thing a person will see about me is the colour of my skin.” [H]

- 3.7 The groups said that straightforward racial abuse and blatant discrimination had sharply declined (though it had not disappeared altogether). However, a common theme throughout the groups was that **prejudice still existed, it just took a more subtle or indirect form**. Examples given – not all of which were universally accepted by any means – included a belief that minorities still suffered injustices or a lack of economic opportunity compared to others; that they were less prominent than they should be in football and entertainment; that racial stereotypes persisted; that crime was treated differently according to who the victim was; and a feeling that society would prefer that ethnic minority communities in Britain would stay living where they were and not move out. Again, black and Muslim participants were the most likely to make these points.

“It’s not the same as 20 or 30 years ago, because I probably couldn’t have found somewhere to live because they would say ‘no blacks, no dogs, no Irish’. So we’re past that in-your-face racism but, for instance, where are the British Asian football players? I haven’t seen a British Asian player in the Premier League ever. You can’t say there are none that have been good enough.” [BC]

“You will see it’s changed when you start watching *Coronation Street* and you stop seeing black people drinking at the bar at the back and never coming to the front and getting major roles.” [BC]

“The bottom line is that generally black people are still the poorest, or among the poor, they’ve got the worst housing, the worst social care, etc. What’s even worse, if you want more damning evidence, is that other ethnic minorities are even below black people now. You’ve got the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets. If you look at the figures, they’re in trouble.” [BC]

“There are a lot of injustices, as we know. I don’t know if, twenty years on, things are going to be any different to how they are now. Look at the Stephen Lawrence case, for instance. It took a long time to bring people to justice, although the evidence was so damning. I don’t know, I just have to ask the question, if that had been a white person...” [BC]

“Young black males are labelled as aggressive, unapproachable, they have attitude. People want to look at them and experiment and say, ‘is it because of this and that, why are they this way?’ And they’re not animals. They’re human beings, but the way they are being treated, that’s what they have to fight. They are fed up.” [BC]

“If you take the recent football racism issues, for example, there are a lot of people who would say ‘that was racist, we shun that, that’s horrible’. Those are the same people who would say ‘why are you letting these people come in and take our jobs?’ That’s a very racist statement.” [BA]

“There is grudging acceptance, and they let you go to a certain level, and we’ve got the schools and this and that, but for me it’s an appeasing thing. It’s to say to you, ‘we’ve got you these things, look, we’re on your side’. My understanding is that it’s containment of communities, especially Asian communities. If you give everybody what they want in a geographically defined area they’ll stay there – they’ve got the amenities, the schools, the facilities... They will stay there and not venture out.” [M]

“There is a ring of steel in Bradford. It’s one mile out of the city centre and there is a camera clocking every car that comes in and out of that area. All the crime happens in front of our eyes and we can report it day after day. As long as it’s in that ring of steel, they’re quite happy. Take it out of there and get a report of it happening, and bang.” [M]

"If you dress the right way, speak the right way, I think on the surface of course you are going to be treated with respect. But actually I've come across situations where you find out, 'OK, so this is how you really feel'. For example, in the workplace I find that black women have got this stereotype of being aggressive. If you express yourself eloquently and feel strongly about something, you're the one who's labelled to be aggressive whereas the other person who is expressing themselves in the same manner doesn't seem to get tarnished with the same brush." [BA]

"A colleague of mine who's white, English, she had an altercation with a lady on the tube who was being aggressive, argumentative, and she said 'I can deal with blackitude'. So I asked her, what does blackitude mean because I don't understand what her being black had to do with how she behaved towards you." [BA]

- 3.8 There was a wide spectrum of opinion on the extent to which black candidates or those from an Asian background faced **discrimination in the job market**. Some – mostly Hindus and Sikhs – felt that there were few if any remaining barriers of this kind, and that they or their children would compete on an equal basis with white candidates who had the same qualifications.

"I think anyone can get on. Maybe not the head of the Metropolitan Police yet, but it will come." [H]

"I think you can become here what you want to become. 80% is confidence; a bit of luck as well." [H]

- 3.9 However, several participants said they thought it was more complicated than that. Only a few thought there was outright discrimination on the basis of race or religion. A more widespread view was that while there was fairly equal access to lower level jobs, minority candidates had to **work significantly harder to achieve promotion** than white colleagues, who seemed to find it easier to reach senior positions.

"I've watched this happen first hand: we had a bunch of CVs and I overheard one of the managers saying 'all the Singhs and Mohammeds, take them off and then look at the bottom pile'." [M]

"How many times have we been for jobs, or you're phoned up for an interview, and then when they've met you face to face you can see it written, 'oh, you're black'. You know, they're just so taken aback with it." [BA]

"The company that I was working with, you have this set of people that work there and it's like a line, you don't cross that line, and after that line it's more the whites. And they'll never let you in, no matter how much you apply to go in there." [BA]

"It's very difficult to move ourselves up the ladder. Getting a higher position is a lot more difficult." [M]

"When I look at how the structure is in America, and there are so many prominent African-Americans in senior positions, executives, vice-presidents of big companies, and when you look over here there's nothing. And for me that's very disappointing and very concerning because that makes someone like me not want to work at it because I don't see a future where I can reach that sort of level in a company in this country." [BC]

"I think it's worse in the lower classes. But even at a professional level, to reach a managerial position, you've got to be exceptionally good. If you're exceptionally good at something you've got a chance to go up the ladder, but if you're similar to others..." [M]

"For me it depends on the company you work with. But you always have to work twice as hard as everybody else." [H]

- 3.10 Some participants had a wry view of the effect of **ethnicity quotas**, which several thought existed informally in large organisations in both the public and private sectors. Such a quota, they thought, would help minority candidates up to the point when the target was reached. After that, their chances would fall sharply; meanwhile those already in would have no more chance of promotion, or even less, than at any other organisation.

"I think I would stand more of a chance [of getting some jobs than a white applicant]. They have this thing where they need to be seen as obeying this equality thing. So I'd be a quota. I've seen it happen. Multinational companies, there is a quota by ethnic group, and if you are the only one for the job they will take you first before considering other people. The issue then is, when you do join the organisation and go for promotion, then I think you [as a white person] would stand a better chance than me, because they've satisfied their quota by having me in there already." [BA]

- 3.11 Muslim participants often complained that they were **portrayed unfairly by the media**, and stereotyped as terrorists. In particular, they felt that news reports specified an offender's religion if he was a Muslim, which does not happen in other cases. Some also said that media coverage of 9/11 led to an increase in tension, and that this recurred every September.

"Anything that goes wrong, it's a Muslim. You don't read a paper saying 'the paedophile is this', they don't write the religion down. But for the Muslims, if there's a bombing going on, it's Mohammed Terrorist." [M]

"It turned people very racist against the Asian community when 9/11 happened because of the media and everything. You were getting a lot of 'Muslims this, Muslims that' but it's slowly dying out." [M]

"Every year the same day comes, a week before 9/11. It's in the newspapers, it's sensationalised again and again. People just start coming and screaming and stuff." [M]

"Islam has been given a bad name through the media. Most of us would probably agree on that but it's up to Muslims to be good practising Muslims to show what Islam is about. If Muslims in general in this country or worldwide practised Islam and went on the principles of Islam and the prophets, then people would have a much better perception of Muslims." [M]

- 3.12 A complaint that was heard in several different groups was that **ethnic and religious minorities were "lumped together"** not only with each other – when there was plenty to distinguish them, as some were keen to emphasise – but with other groups with whom they had nothing in common other than that they were supposedly in need of special consideration.

"We're always lumped in – black, Asian, gays, whatever, we're always in that bracket, and because we're in that bracket we should all think the same. Well, actually, we don't. I don't." [BA]

"I don't think you can group them together. Each one is different. Each group has its own problems and political parties need to address each group, rather than just by putting all the ethnics together and all the whites together." [S]

"That's the worst thing – everyone gets labelled Asian. You've got the Muslims, you've got the Bangladeshis, you've got all sorts of people and they're completely contradicting cultures, so you can't actually label them." [S]

"I don't wear a turban, but I have to tell a lot of people the difference between cultures and names... You have to educate a lot of the communities about our values. You have to explain to other people who don't know about growing your hair, what the beard should be looking like. You have to educate them about what we believe, and what other minorities are. People think we're both the same, and there's a big difference." [S]

"I think people now realise there is a difference. I think they understand Hindus are hard working. You don't see many Hindus in prison, committing offences. They are educated. They pay their taxes." [H]

- 3.13 One consequence of the failure to distinguish between different ethnic and religious groups was the suspicion and even **abuse that a number of Hindus and (especially) Sikhs said they had suffered after 9/11.**

"The media always say 'Asian', they don't say which community or who they are. People are just classed as an Asian, rather than Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. A lot of male friends now will not profess themselves as Asian, they'll just say Indian, or British. That has been since 9/11. My brother is one of those people. He just doesn't want to be associated with Muslims. He doesn't wear a turban, and he's

been picked up so many times under the Terrorism Act, just to search. He's had enough of it, so he will only refer to himself as Indian now." [S]

"I'm quite lazy, I only shave when I go out. I remember after 9/11 I was coming home on a train, and I probably had four or five days' growth. There was a space next to me, a space opposite me, but people would not sit there and it was packed. My mum was telling me, make sure you shave! I felt really uncomfortable in that situation." [H]

"I had Sikh friends who had to stop wearing their turban and wear a baseball cap instead." [H]

"It's ignorance. I had a goatee for many years and I took it off as soon as this terrorism thing came along, because I go on the London tubes quite often, and more often than not I have a rucksack with me." [S]

- 3.14 Some also felt there were differences in the **extent to which different groups had integrated** into British society. Sikhs and Hindus often argued that the Muslim community was more inclined to keep itself separate, and to make demands of the British society or the authorities, sometimes – they felt – with the implied threat of aggression.

"I must say, Hindus don't ask for a lot. We don't ask for segregation, we don't ask for schools and all that kind of stuff. I think we're more into integrating and going with the rules and not separating ourselves. If that's how you are, why are you in this country?" [H]

"They have a mosque on every corner." [H]

"We have a shop!" [H]

"The trouble is, you've got to stop seeing yourself as Asian, haven't you? That's half the problem. A lot of guys come here and are not really bothered to mix. They're not bothered to do as the Romans do. They're still in little Pakistan or little India and they want to stay there." [H]

"I think Muslims distance themselves from everybody. I think everyone else will congregate and try and integrate and mix." [S]

"They want their own way at the end of the day." [H]

"The way they approach things is to scream and shout and throw a bomb, whereas we would go for a meeting." [H]

- 3.15 The concept of **multiculturalism** was universally regarded as a good thing, although there was no clear or consistent definition of the term. For some it was a direct synonym for integration. More often it simply meant people from different backgrounds and cultures living harmoniously together. At root, it amounted to the technical term for the welcome presence in Britain of people like them. However, some did feel that unnecessary and counterproductive decisions had been made by officials in the name of protecting cultural sensitivities, for example when it came to displaying the Union flag or cross of St George.

"I think multiculturalism is a good thing. Being segregated isn't a good thing." [BC]

"It means integration, sharing of schools and things". [S]

"It was council bosses or bosses at work who thought that on your behalf, probably counterproductively, that any kind of symbolism of English or British nationalism – in a good way, not a BNP way – or any kind of English history would somehow be offensive." [M]

4. Political perspectives

- 4.1 Participants in all groups spoke of an **historic allegiance to Labour** dating from the time their parents or grandparents arrived in Britain. For many, this was at least primarily, and sometimes exclusively, a matter of class and occupation rather than ethnicity: they had come to do working class jobs, lived in working class communities, and often joined unions. Most people in the groups still considered themselves working class, including those with professional careers. Most still also thought that Labour remained at heart the party for working class people, though several said they had only reluctantly voted Labour in 2010. In our poll, 55% of black voters and 43% of those from an Asian background said they identified with Labour; 4% and 7% respectively said they identified with the Conservatives.

“Labour is something I was born into. My dad would turn in his grave if I voted Tory.” [BC]

“For me it was just we always knew that Labour was working class and Conservative was middle class”. [S]

“When our parents came to the country they were working class people in unions, Labour was bred into the working class person. I have this value that I’m a working class person.” [M]

“It’s quite simple. Ethnic minorities tend to live in working class areas.” [H]

“Traditionally when Asians came here from both Africa and India predominantly, they ended up working in factories, and Labour through the union movement had direct links with them.” [H]

- 4.2 At the same time, there was a feeling that **Labour supported them** not just in class terms but as immigrants and members of an ethnic minority. From the time of their families’ arrival, the Labour Party was seen to be engaged in their communities, more positive than others about the idea of immigration, and more committed to promoting equality and opportunity for ethnic minorities, as demonstrated by legislation introduced by Labour governments. Again, these things were largely thought still to be true of the Labour Party today. Four fifths of black and three quarters of Asian voters said in the poll that Labour “understands minorities”, compared to 20% and 36% respectively who said the same of the Conservatives.

“We’ve been in the country since ’75, arriving from Kenya, and Labour was just deemed to be the party most supportive of the ethnic minorities.” [S]

“They allowed us grants, they allowed us equality and opportunity. They allowed us a voice, whether it’s wearing a turban, having a beard, whatever it is. They’ve supported us, listened to us. And a lot of our people have been councillors, Labour councillors, and supported us.” [S]

“The profession I’m in, don’t forget it was Tony Blair that invited the likes of me into the teaching profession, into the police profession. We need more ethnic minorities in these jobs”. [BC]

“Labour go to certain areas, and the leaders are spending a lot of time with the local ethnics, and that’s what they tend to portray. Whereas I don’t think the Tories really go out to these places. I think Labour’s more in touch with the social and cultural side. They are showing they are interested.” [S]

“Back in the day, it used to be Labour did a lot for the South Asian communities. It was mostly to do with working immigration. If we got married or wanted to call the family, it was a lot easier at that time.” [M]

- 4.3 **Values** also played an important part in their Labour allegiance for a number of voters. Even if they themselves were not reliant on the welfare state, they believed that Labour’s ethos and conception of community was closer to their own than those of the Conservatives. Sikh participants stressed this point particularly.

“Labour have values which are, I can’t use the word similar, but in my mind they are closest to the Sikh values. So the Sikh values are about helping the community. This thing about the Big Society, for instance, self help. Well, the Sikh community have been doing this for... this is one of the core values of the Sikh community. But Labour have empowered us to do that.” [S]

“If you strip everything down, Conservative values are about: you are physically well, you should be looking after yourself. The Sikh value is kind of in line with Labour, which is that we are here to help everyone. So, we have food kitchens, we feed the community. We have the riot squad! We were there to try and defend and help support our communities, regardless of race and gender. Whereas the Conservative value is, you’ve got to help yourself. Our value is, you’ve got to help everyone.” [S]

“If you’re self-employed and you’ve got a successful business, Conservatives are going to help you with tax relief and all that kind of business. Or you can vote Labour, who you know are going to make things difficult for you. They’re the ones who brought in the minimum wage, for instance, which I know a lot of Sikh businesses struggle with. Yet, they continue to vote Labour. Why is that?” [S]

“I would see Labour as a party that have people’s interests at heart. The Conservatives, funnily enough, do have the people’s interests at heart, but on another spectrum – their attitude is, if you fix the country, you fix the people. Whereas Labour think, if you fix the people, you fix the country. So Conservatives have this majority rule thing; ‘there will be casualties’. But Labour will be like, ‘you don’t need casualties, we want everyone to be happy and we can fix this’.” [BA]

4.4 Impressions of the Conservative Party were dominated by the familiar complaint that the **Tories were for the better off middle classes**, rather than people like themselves. As with their positive impressions of Labour, the most important elements of their view of the Conservatives concerned class, employment, public services, values, and the perceived ability (or inability) to relate to their situation. Only 16% of black voters said in the poll that the Conservatives were “on the side of ordinary people, not just the best off”, as did 25% of respondents from an Asian background; 77% and 69% respectively said the same was true of Labour.

“It’s obviously to do with society. Black society are often deemed lower class, and therefore they’re going to be the ones in the struggle, they’re going to be the ones who are affected. There are a lot of statistics out there to show that they’re the ones who earn the least. It’s unlikely you’ll find them at the top high-flying jobs, so they’re going to be looking for a government that are going to benefit them, and the Conservatives are not.” [BC]

“I believe the Conservative Party – without wishing to sound derogatory or offensive – is a party for the white middle class educated person”. [H]

“I’m in a union and they don’t help unions. I’m in the NHS and they cut the NHS. I work in the voluntary and public sector and at the end of the day the Conservatives have never helped people like me.” [BC]

“If [DC] went down to wherever, saw a young black boy who goes to an inner city school... you can’t relate to him when you’re a white man walking the street. How can you say ‘I understand what it’s like when the police are stopping you’.” [BC]

“For me, it’s just difficult for normal people to relate to people who are multimillionaires. There’s probably a multimillionaire running the country and other people in the Cabinet are also multimillionaires. It’s difficult to feel they’ve got a massive interest [in us].” [BC]

“It’s not just about ethnicity, I think it’s social class as well. You can’t truly represent people if you don’t know their struggle. I feel like a lot of them have come from Ivy League schools.” [BA]

“I remember the 80s recession, unemployment, 15% interest rates, the bungs with Al Fayed...” [H]

“If you look at rich Indians, they all tend to vote Tory.” [H]

“I just think they’re happy to split society. You’re either at one end or you’re at the other.” [BC]

“To be honest, this last general election is the closest I’ve ever been to voting Tory. But my mum is retired, and she has been quite seriously ill recently, and my view was that my mum was going to be more supported through Labour policies than she would be with the Tories.” [S]

“I just think the Conservatives are not for us, that’s all I can think about.” [BC]

- 4.5 However, for significant numbers there was also a **racial element to their view of the Conservatives**. Enoch Powell, the notorious Smethwick election campaign of 1964, and even the failure properly to investigate the murder of Stephen Lawrence were often mentioned as evidence of Tory hostility. In the poll, a majority of ethnic minority voters agreed both that Conservative politicians looked down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and that people who voted Conservative probably did so. Whether or not they thought racial prejudice remained a current feature of the Conservative Party – as a minority did, particularly from a black Caribbean background – it was, for these voters, part of the Tories’ history that inevitably influenced their overall view the party.

“Thatcher called Mandela a terrorist. How can I vote for someone like that? And if you look at election time, they always bring up immigration just before an election. And not only that – when it comes to Labour, you can put, say, a black or Asian candidate in most Labour seats, regardless of where it is. But you can’t put a black Conservative candidate in any seat. Look at John Taylor [in Cheltenham].” [BC]

“The Tories had a lot of racist policies so it was easy not to vote for them. They appeared to be a racist group. ‘If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour’. And if you go back to the rivers of blood speech, Enoch Powell, there was no-one in the Conservative Party denouncing him and saying this isn’t the way forward. What he said was widely accepted.” [BC]

“Stephen Lawrence. Who was in power with Stephen Lawrence? The police racism thing is just the end of the world, basically. It means that every other department has the potential to be institutionally racist as well, and that was only found out because the Lawrence family kept going on and on for 18 years. If they didn’t do that we wouldn’t know that the police were institutionally racist. We wouldn’t have proven it on paper.” [BC]

- 4.6 Many participants felt that the Conservatives may well not be actively prejudiced, but had displayed at best an **indifference to the effect of policies on ethnic minority voters** which stemmed from a failure to engage with or understand them. In their view, this in turn probably stemmed from a calculation by the party that it could do without their votes. A clear majority of black voters (61%) said Conservative policies had shown that they were hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

“I don’t think we were very high on their agenda. I don’t think they cared about it, because as a minority that’s a minority of votes. You want to focus on the majority of votes.” [S]

“Look at their policies now and the way they’re capping benefits. Now ethnic minorities will suffer more than any other group of people in this country by those changes. I can’t vote for that. If you look at an individual person defrauding the benefit system, I don’t agree with it, wrong is wrong. But they don’t take the same stance for someone who is defrauding the Exchequer by not paying their taxes, and it’s billions.” [BC]

“This policy that they’re planning about cutting the benefit, that is going to affect a lot of BME families who are traditionally larger. They’re doing things that I think are going to have adverse impacts. If he’s saying he’s interested in multicultural Britain, he’s got to recognise the position of a lot of black people in this country. We’re not going to inherit millions of pounds from our parents and grandparents. We’re struggling, and we want some help, and it’s not coming.” [BA]

“If a policy comes out because members of the Tory Party hate people of colour, so be it. If they don’t, so be it. The bottom line is they don’t care what happens to these people.” [BC]

- 4.7 There was some debate among participants over **how much, if at all, the Conservative Party had changed** in recent years, or since their parents or grandparents came to Britain. Most thought it had changed somewhat, whether through necessity or principle. For some, the evidence was that David Cameron had made an effort to reach out to minority communities and had made some notable appointments, including Sayeeda Warsi as party chairman. Others felt the important change was that their friends and families were now more likely to vote on other issues, principally economic, which made them more likely at least to consider the Tories. In the poll, just over half of ethnic minority voters overall – but two thirds of Hindus and Sikhs – agreed that the Conservatives used to be hostile or indifferent to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, but was changing for the better.

“Obviously we know all about the Conservatives back in the day, all that stuff with Enoch Powell, but I knew that was buried anyway. For them to be electable, they obviously had to ditch that.” [BA]

“Maybe back in those days it was more ‘this is not a party for the ethnic minorities’, but now nobody really looks at those issues. We are looking at the economy, how you can get jobs for people, how you can provide security, and at my church, I think about 60 or 70 per cent actually voted for the Conservatives.” [BA]

“With the multicultural country we’re living in, most types of people have got big businesses, and David Cameron always goes to them because he wants their vote. I think a lot of Asian people out there are going over to the Conservatives now.” [S]

“Labour were in power for a long time, so the Conservatives realised, ‘hold on, what’s going on?’ So they’ve gone through a lot of changes themselves. So in terms of ethnicity there isn’t much difference between them now. The Conservatives may have been backward but they have caught up.” [S]

“I think they have changed. I think, give them credit where it’s due. We’re talking about the 21st century Conservative Party, of course they have changed.” [S]

“The fact that David Cameron has gone out of his way to get Asian minorities into his Cabinet speaks volumes to me.” [H]

“Is he canvassing votes, or does he genuinely mean it? I don’t know what to think of them.” [H]

- 4.8 However, for a number of black and Muslim participants in particular, any apparent **change in the Conservatives had been cosmetic**. They cited the lack of minority Conservative MPs and party members, the view that the Conservatives do not actively engage with minority communities, and a feeling that whatever they may say, Tories as a whole do not really like people like them.

“They don’t support the working class at all, or BME communities. I know David Cameron talks about multiculturalism, but it’s not reflected in his party. I mean, how many black Conservative MPs are there?” [BA]

“It’s how they look at us. They always have, and do today. They will never change.” [BC]

“I could go to a Conservative meeting, and I could be sitting next to somebody who hates me.” [S]

“You never see him with any black people, do you? Has he got any black people in his Cabinet? There aren’t any. They certainly don’t stand out.” [BA]

“It’s alright for David Cameron to bring these policies out, but he doesn’t actually come into any communities, does he, and ask the community what they want, or what they want to do. He doesn’t do anything like that.” [BA]

“There’s a sense of separate identity. It’s not racism, it’s like, we’re better than you.” [H]

- 4.9 To illustrate their impressions, several participants recalled specific **incidents that seemed to betray underlying racist attitudes** in the Conservative Party. Not all were recent. Other

participants argued that they isolated incidents or silly mistakes, rather than being representative of Tory attitudes more generally.

“There’s always been an undertone of racism with them. The most recent one – the guy in the Nazi uniform. There’s one example of it.” [H]

“I used to work for a not-for-profit and they go to all the party conferences every year. At the Conservative conference they were talking about equality, changing the complexion of boards so they represent women and people from ethnic minorities, all the things you want to hear. You think, ‘great, strategy!’ One of my colleagues shared a cab with a Conservative politician on the way back to Manchester station and the driver was Asian, and the politician came out with something like, ‘oh these Asians don’t know their way around, do they? I wish we’d got a different cab’. I mean...” [BA]

“When we were growing up, we had where we lived a local Labour club and a local Conservative club and we used to go and drink in the Labour club. You wouldn’t go anywhere near the Conservative club because it was full of white people. The Conservative club was only up the road, but we’d never go there... They wouldn’t let any Asians in. Not blatantly, they just made excuses they were full. That’s the kind of thing that used to happen. That’s why the parents always voted Labour, because they were more secure.” [S]

- 4.10 Participants in several groups, particularly those from an Asian background, spontaneously mentioned **David Cameron’s 2011 speech at the Munich Security Conference**. Since they regarded multiculturalism as unequivocally a good thing, a speech that that was reported as criticising multiculturalism confirmed, for some, their suspicions about the Conservatives’ attitude to ethnic minority communities. Some assumed the speech was intended to reassure white Tory voters who were concerned about immigration and the losing their national identity. Very few knew any more about the speech, which had focused on the roots of extremism and the need for greater cohesion.

“It doesn’t make me feel welcome, to come out with comments like that. He said it didn’t work, didn’t he?” [S]

“I read the speech as he’s supporting race segregation”. [S]

“Enoch Powell was a Conservative member and he wanted all the Asians, ethnic minorities, he wanted them out. That’s enough, he said, they shouldn’t come any more... The Tories are still a bit like that because hasn’t Cameron said that in his speech in Munich? He said he wanted a British culture and he wanted it back.” [M]

“There has been a move to embrace multiculturalism, but at the same time there has been a quiet majority of white people who are saying, actually we are forgetting who we are. And as a result of the backlash, that’s why I think he’s made this speech about multiculturalism. He’s realised that by going on about it, trying to work on one group in society, he has ignored this other group.” [H]

- 4.11 Several black participants felt that David Cameron and the Conservatives had unfairly **blamed the black community for the riots** last summer. They felt this was further evidence of prejudice on the part of the Tories, and was not the right way to go about solving the problems that existed.

“With the riots recently, the Conservatives used them – not just the Conservatives, the media too – but Cameron and others deemed it young people who were primarily black and thugs and hoodies, but when the statistics came out it showed it was a cross-section of Britain”. [BC]

“He was saying that part of the community is sick. That’s not a thing you should be hearing from the Prime Minister. If there’s a crisis you deal with it, you don’t cause more trouble.” [BA]

- 4.12 A few of the participants had **voted Conservative at the 2010 election**. The reasons included a need for change, welfare reform, stronger leadership with David Cameron, more support for

small businesses, crime policy, and a view that the Tories had a stronger view of Britain as a Christian country.

4.13 Participants expressed a wide range of views about **David Cameron**. Some, including those who had not voted Tory and had no fondness for the Conservative Party, thought he was proving a strong leader and doing a reasonable job in difficult circumstances. More often, they found him hard to relate to – or thought he would find it hard to relate to them – and were more concerned about the effects of the coalition’s cuts. In the poll, he outscored the Conservative Party as a whole on all positive attributes; respondents were much more likely to think he valued and respected people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and less likely to think he was hostile or indifferent to them, than the party generally. In contrast to the Prime Minister, **Ed Miliband** scored less well than his party in the poll. In the groups, very few had anything more positive to say about him than that he had “potential”. Much more often they thought him ineffective at best and very unlikely to win an election (though they would almost certainly continue to vote Labour). The prevailing view of **Nick Clegg** was that he was nice but weak, though some were fiercely scornful of his decision to join the Conservatives in coalition.

4.14 **Immigration policy** was rarely the first thing our participants cited as evidence of any residual prejudice in the Conservative Party. However, there was a widely held view, in contrast to that usually found in focus group discussions among voters in general, that the coalition had made immigration laws significantly tougher since the election. Many regarded this as a good thing, even if their own families or organisations had been affected, and some thought that if anything the rules should be even stricter. As well as concern about the overall numbers, some said that they or their parents or grandparents had had to work to establish themselves and integrate in a way that they felt current immigrants did not, and that newer arrivals seemed to have easier access to benefits than they or their families ever had. Some said they had been aware of immigration ruses such as “scam marriages”, which were now much less likely to succeed.

“If people look after themselves, support themselves, yes, I agree, they should be allowed to come and go. But if they can’t look after themselves and they’re going to be burden, then there should be some control. But there isn’t, in my opinion.” [S]

“Eastern Europeans are coming in, they’re not only getting jobs but they’re getting all these bloody benefits that we didn’t used to get. Before they get off the plane they’re given a cheque, money, a hotel, whatever.” [M]

“The main reason they won’t do anything about immigration is that it looks bad. England is too bothered about that. What’s that guy with the beard? The terrorist kind of guy? [Abu Qatada]. He should be out of the country, no questions asked. Put him on a plane and kick him out. Control it in the first place, and you won’t have a problem.” [S]

“It used to be as simple as handing in your paperwork and you knew you’d get your passport back in 14 to 16 days and you’ll have a visa on there, stamped with no issues. Now they are being a bit more cautious and they’re making sure that the person coming into the country has got some sort of common knowledge of where there coming to. My wife sat her English test in Pakistan. I think it’s good because there are so many people who have got scam marriages, bringing their relatives over just to get them a visa. Once the visa’s done, they get divorced and both families are happy.” [M]

“The Conservative Party have put a crackdown on immigration. They’re very stringent now.” [M]

“I think the government did well on immigration, and I’m proud of that. They say if people were to come from abroad they should be educated, so they bring something to the country.” [H]

4.15 Some argued that the **scale of immigration** in recent years risked undermining the integration and cohesion that they themselves had striven for.

"It's not only that, I've noticed in Bradford there's a Polish nightclub. A Polish nightclub open, and a couple of places they've got big shops. That's all within two or three years. They don't want to mix with any community, whether it's a white community or an Asian community. They keep themselves to themselves." [M]

"It's a sensitive issue. It can be perceived as being racist in a way, but I think it does need to be tightened. We've lived here, the Asian people that have been here for years, and are getting painted with the same brush." [S]

"I think the English are getting worried. The English have changed. They were much nicer before the mass immigration started, they were more caring. That's what my mum says and she was here a long time ago." [H]

- 4.16 Participants generally recognised that the government had no power to restrict migration from within the EU. At the same time, they saw that in order to regulate overall numbers, greater controls were being placed on **immigration from outside the EU**, most of which originated from Africa or South Asia. Meanwhile, Australians, New Zealanders and Americans did not seem to have much trouble getting in. Whatever the legal justification, then, the distinction between EU and non-EU immigration looked like, or at least coincided with, a distinction between white and non-white immigration.

"I think they do put up big barriers about immigration. I think you had massive migration from black and ethnic countries when Labour came into power and not when Conservatives were in power. And once again we're looking at doors closing in immigration and the status of things changing." [BC]

"I think they try to play on a certain fear. But I thought there were more white people coming from the EU, Australia and New Zealand, than so-called black." [BC]

"They're now screening everyone applying to become a doctor from a non-EU country for English speaking. I find that appalling because it's the people coming from EU countries who study and learn in their languages, and they're the ones who should be questioned for their English language." [BA]

"You've got the Eastern European countries coming in and when you talk about the sub-continent, India, Pakistan, there is discrimination there, it's much stricter. I think the perception is that it would be easier if you were from New Zealand or Australia or America." [M]

"If they pull the plug and it's transparent, then fair enough, but if they say 'it's EU countries because we're signatories', then it gets your back up when you see that certain people are still coming in, and will have access to funding and jobs and all the rest of it, and yet other people from other countries are stopped... Nobody ever talks about the Australians, for instance, as immigrants." [BA]

"Without a doubt, in terms of immigration policy, the Tories are much more stringent regarding people entering the UK. We bring people in on a six-monthly basis to look after our temples, teach our children the hymns and instruments. We've had three refusals from the Border Agency. We actually find it more difficult to bring religious workers in than we did two years ago." [S]

- 4.17 Between them, the groups could name only a handful of **ethnic minority politicians**. These were David Lammy, Diane Abbott, Bernie Grant, Chuka Umunna, Keith Vaz, Lord Darzi, Khalid Mahmood and Sayeeda Warsi. The groups were far from laudatory about any of them. A few did not regard this as particularly noteworthy or troubling ("maybe Hindus don't want to go into politics; maybe they just want to become an accountant or a pharmacist"). Muslim and black participants in particular, however, were more likely to feel that someone from their background would find it hard to break through in public life, and would soon encounter opposition if they started to succeed.

"I'm not surprised, because of the process. How do you get to be that? They've probably been through what some of us here have been through". [BC]

"Politically you've got quite a few, Sayeeda Warsi's the chair of the Conservative Party, but a lot of people are afraid of getting into a certain position because there's this emotion about a witch hunt

after them. Like this police doo-dah from London. The media comes out, they're after you, you've got to watch your back." [M]

- 4.18 The question of **whether more minorities in politics would be a good thing** was far from straightforward. For those who most strongly supported integration, the logic of their position was that it really did not matter what their representatives looked like ("I see myself as British. I was born here"). Others thought it would take more than a few more minority politicians to transform what they felt were deep-seated negative perceptions of their community ("I'll tell you who the most famous Muslim in the country is – Abu Qatada"). A very common fear was that, while more ethnic minority politicians would be a good thing in principle, they would be there only as tokens to suggest the party was inclusive and would not be free to say what they thought or exercise real power. Some also doubted that a politician ostensibly from the same background as them would really have shared their experiences. There was also the unavoidable problem that politicians from ethnic minorities are still politicians.

"I look at it like this as well: yes, you can put a black man up there, in body, but is he talking what he wants to talk, or is he talking what they want him to talk?" [BC]

"I think they're all branches of the same tree. Oxford, Cambridge; Philosophy, Politics and Economics students from well-off backgrounds, that just happened to have different schools of thought about politics and policies. I'm sure they all go to each others' barbecues." [BA]

"It's like in council boardrooms when there's not enough women, and they have to get some skirts in, and that wasn't by merit." [S]

"If you want to change something, you can't start from the top." [BA]

"[Sayeeda Warsi] is just to let people know, look, we have an Asian here in our party, and that's all it is. Then sending her round particular events where she is just going to look good for the party." [M]

- 4.19 These doubts would be all the more intense when it came to **Conservative ethnic minority candidates**. Since, in their view, Conservative politicians tended to be rich and posh, and to represent rich, posh areas, this would probably be the case whatever colour they were. They would either fit all the usual Tory stereotypes in all respects except their colour, or would be there mainly for presentational purposes.

"There is something about being black or being from an ethnic minority, and suddenly deciding that you're going to stand up and run for the Conservative Party. You'd have to have a backbone of steel to say 'I'm your man, I'm going to represent you as a Conservative candidate.' You'd have to be bringing some heavy ammunition to get black people interested." [BA]

"[John Taylor] is about as far away from the black community as it's possible to get. His life experiences were not typical of a person in the black community... For me, if you're in a position of power or influence as a black politician, because we come from such a unique group, being disadvantaged the way we have been throughout the world, for such a long period of time, it's incumbent on you to try and change things for me from within. You don't just go with the status quo, and that's what these people do." [BC]

"You may be a black person, and your colour may be black, but that doesn't mean you can identify with me." [BA]

"If it was Newcastle or somewhere, working class cities, that would be a massive difference. Having black MPs in Surrey and Windsor means absolutely nothing to me. They'll be out of touch if they're representing those areas. They'll be in a Conservative community, and they will have become part of that community and be comfortable, and they've got those views and vote Conservative, which is fine, but the issues they reflect are going to be different, compared to Leeds. Their experience is going to be a whole different ballgame." [BA]

"It's known as a coconut." [BC]

“I think what the Conservatives have done is create a falseness. They’ve offered Asian people a ticket to a seat, but with no voice. No vision, no voice, you’re just there as a paper candidate. They give you false hope and when they need to they can push you aside.” [M]

“My mum would always vote Labour. If I stood for the Tories she would still vote Labour”. [M]

5. Full poll results

10,268 adults were interviewed by telephone between 24 October and 4 December 2011. All interviewees lived in the 1,165 Middle Layer Super Output Areas with the highest concentrations of black and minority ethnic residents according to census data. These areas account for 70% of the black and minority ethnic population of England and Wales. (There are 7,193 MLSOAs in England & Wales, with an average population of 7,200).

The composition of the sample by ethnic group is as follows:

WHITE/MIXED			ASIAN					BLACK			
Total	White	Mixed	Total	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other	Total	Caribbean	African	Other
6,596	6,216	380	2,100	901	700	299	200	1,101	499	500	102
64%	61%	4%	20%	9%	7%	3%	2%	11%	5%	5%	1%

The composition of the sample by religious group is as follows:

Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	Other	None
4,590	513	1,747	308	761	2,124
45%	5%	17%	3%	7%	21%

1. Which party did you vote for in the general election in May last year?

I voted...	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Conservative	18%	23%	9%	15%	5%	24%	18%	12%	15%
Labour	29%	24%	30%	37%	42%	28%	35%	37%	41%
Lib Dem	13%	15%	14%	9%	6%	11%	7%	10%	8%
Another party	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%
Did not vote	29%	27%	39%	28%	37%	27%	27%	31%	27%
Refused/DK	8%	8%	6%	9%	7%	8%	12%	9%	7%

2. Are there any of the three biggest political parties that you would *never* vote for?

I'd never vote...	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
...Conservative	35%	35%	41%	29%	45%	32%	19%	35%	26%
...Lib Dem	22%	21%	21%	23%	26%	23%	19%	22%	29%
...Labour	15%	20%	12%	6%	5%	18%	6%	7%	5%
None	44%	41%	42%	52%	41%	43%	61%	48%	49%

3. Do you identify with a political party – that is, do you think of one party as consistently representing people like you, and you feel an affinity towards that party beyond the question of how you vote. If so, which one?

<i>I identify with...</i>	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Labour	32%	24%	35%	43%	55%	30%	38%	47%	46%
Conservative	11%	14%	6%	7%	4%	15%	9%	5%	9%
Lib Dem	4%	4%	2%	4%	2%	4%	2%	4%	3%
Another party	3%	4%	5%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%
None	44%	48%	45%	38%	32%	42%	43%	35%	36%

- 61% of those respondents saying they were of Black African origin said they identified with Labour. Pakistani (48%) and Bangladeshi respondents (49%) were more likely than Asian respondents as a whole to say they identified with Labour.

4. Have you generally voted for the party that your father votes for or voted for? Or have you sometimes voted differently from how your father voted, or have you always voted differently from him? [All respondents who voted at the 2010 election]

	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Same party as my father did/does	26%	24%	34%	28%	28%	28%	24%	28%	33%
Sometimes a different party	27%	29%	20%	28%	18%	26%	27%	26%	32%
Always a different party	23%	24%	20%	22%	22%	23%	23%	25%	13%
Don't know	23%	23%	26%	21%	32%	23%	26%	21%	21%

5. Which of the following issues do you think is the most important facing Britain? And which is the second most important? And which is the third most important?

% naming issue in top three	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Economy & jobs	70%	68%	68%	74%	75%	66%	76%	71%	74%
NHS	50%	49%	49%	50%	52%	49%	47%	51%	49%
Education	43%	38%	38%	51%	52%	38%	44%	57%	40%
Controlling immigration	34%	37%	37%	31%	24%	40%	39%	25%	41%
Crime	28%	23%	23%	33%	35%	28%	29%	36%	34%
Deficit & debt	25%	27%	27%	20%	19%	25%	26%	16%	21%
Cutting welfare dependency	13%	14%	14%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%	13%
Defence & Britain's security	13%	12%	13%	12%	14%	15%	10%	13%	10%
Environment	13%	14%	14%	10%	10%	10%	8%	11%	7%
Standing up for Britain's interests in Europe	11%	14%	14%	6%	7%	14%	7%	6%	9%

- White respondents were the least likely to name crime (23%) and education (38%) in the top three issues.
- Black African respondents were the least likely to name controlling immigration in their top three issues (20%).

6. Regardless of which party you would vote for, please say if you think each word or phrase is true of the Labour Party / the Conservative Party / the Liberal Democrats. [Split sample A]
7. Regardless of which party you would vote for, please say if you think each word or phrase is true of Ed Miliband / David Cameron / Nick Clegg. [Split sample B]

	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Shares my values									
Lab	51%	43%	57%	64%	72%	48%	60%	68%	59%
Miliband	39%	34%	39%	47%	53%	37%	46%	49%	47%
Con	29%	30%	20%	32%	19%	32%	40%	26%	26%
Cameron	29%	30%	27%	33%	19%	33%	38%	28%	38%
Lib Dem	31%	32%	22%	31%	31%	31%	32%	31%	30%
Clegg	28%	28%	29%	32%	26%	28%	33%	30%	35%
Competent & capable									
Lab	43%	34%	47%	59%	66%	41%	48%	64%	55%
Miliband	40%	35%	37%	51%	53%	38%	45%	52%	53%
Con	41%	41%	35%	45%	40%	43%	49%	41%	48%
Cameron	54%	55%	51%	57%	46%	56%	64%	52%	62%
Lib Dem	23%	22%	24%	24%	24%	24%	26%	22%	24%
Clegg	34%	34%	33%	37%	31%	35%	35%	37%	43%
Honest & principled									
Lab	43%	38%	42%	52%	60%	44%	45%	54%	47%
Miliband	51%	50%	49%	51%	54%	50%	51%	54%	52%
Con	30%	31%	21%	34%	25%	32%	35%	32%	30%
Cameron	44%	47%	42%	44%	32%	49%	51%	37%	47%
Lib Dem	30%	32%	23%	27%	25%	32%	29%	25%	25%
Clegg	36%	39%	40%	34%	26%	39%	36%	35%	34%
Their/his heart is in the right place									
Lab	60%	58%	59%	61%	76%	61%	59%	64%	61%
Miliband	60%	61%	57%	58%	64%	59%	59%	57%	59%
Con	38%	41%	26%	38%	30%	43%	44%	34%	35%
Cameron	50%	54%	44%	48%	35%	54%	59%	42%	50%
Lib Dem	47%	52%	41%	37%	37%	50%	42%	34%	35%
Clegg	49%	54%	45%	44%	40%	51%	49%	40%	48%

	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Understands minorities									
Lab	64%	58%	66%	76%	80%	61%	73%	76%	80%
Miliband	51%	46%	53%	59%	59%	48%	56%	61%	62%
Con	29%	29%	22%	36%	20%	30%	39%	32%	39%
Cameron	30%	29%	29%	41%	23%	31%	43%	35%	45%
Lib Dem	45%	48%	40%	44%	40%	45%	45%	42%	45%
Clegg	37%	37%	36%	43%	32%	38%	45%	40%	44%
Clear what they/he stands for									
Lab	52%	46%	57%	63%	69%	53%	59%	67%	61%
Miliband	47%	44%	47%	53%	55%	47%	53%	56%	47%
Con	51%	54%	49%	45%	45%	53%	51%	44%	50%
Cameron	54%	57%	50%	53%	43%	57%	59%	47%	53%
Lib Dem	28%	28%	28%	28%	28%	31%	34%	28%	25%
Clegg	30%	30%	31%	33%	27%	32%	325	33%	34%
They/he stands for fairness									
Lab	61%	56%	61%	66%	78%	59%	67%	68%	59%
Miliband	55%	54%	49%	58%	61%	55%	54%	58%	60%
Con	31%	33%	25%	33%	20%	34%	45%	27%	33%
Cameron	39%	41%	34%	42%	27%	43%	48%	36%	47%
Lib Dem	45%	50%	38%	37%	35%	47%	46%	33%	34%
Clegg	42%	45%	43%	39%	35%	45%	42%	36%	43%
On the side of ordinary people, not just the best off									
Lab	65%	62%	64%	69%	77%	64%	69%	70%	71%
Miliband	57%	56%	57%	56%	62%	57%	54%	59%	54%
Con	23%	25%	14%	25%	16%	27%	28%	21%	24%
Cameron	30%	32%	24%	31%	20%	33%	38%	29%	30%
Lib Dem	45%	49%	43%	41%	39%	45%	48%	39%	38%
Clegg	39%	42%	42%	37%	33%	42%	38%	35%	41%
In touch with concerns of people like you									
Lab	53%	45%	60%	65%	75%	51%	58%	70%	64%
Miliband	42%	37%	46%	49%	56%	40%	50%	51%	42%
Con	28%	30%	17%	28%	16%	30%	34%	24%	29%
Cameron	28%	30%	28%	29%	16%	31%	38%	24%	27%
Lib Dem	32%	33%	32%	30%	28%	33%	34%	28%	28%
Clegg	29%	30%	34%	29%	26%	31%	31%	27%	32%

	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Believes in equal opportunity for all									
Lab	69%	64%	71%	77%	83%	66%	72%	79%	78%
Miliband	61%	59%	61%	64%	68%	59%	62%	66%	63%
Con	35%	36%	29%	39%	29%	38%	47%	34%	42%
Cameron	40%	42%	39%	44%	26%	43%	49%	38%	49%
Lib Dem	52%	55%	42%	48%	47%	52%	54%	46%	55%
Clegg	49%	51%	49%	48%	40%	49%	48%	45%	55%

- Bangladeshi and Black African respondents were the most likely to say Labour “shares my values” (74% and 81%). Only 16% of Black Caribbean respondents said the Conservative Party “shares my values”.
- 85% of Bangladeshi and Black African respondents thought Labour “understands minorities”. Only 17% of Black Caribbean respondents thought the Conservative Party “understands minorities”.
- 80% of Bangladeshi respondents said Labour “stands for fairness”; 25% said this of the Conservatives. 81% of Black African respondents said Labour “stands for fairness”, compared to 19% who said it of the Conservatives.

8. You said you do not think the Conservative Party/David Cameron understands minorities. I am going to read out some things that people have said about the Conservatives and people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Please could you say in each case whether you agree or disagree with the statement?

% agreeing strongly or somewhat	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
The Conservative Party does not seem to have any members or spokesmen from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	50%	47%	59%	51%	56%	51%	49%	49%	48%
Conservative politicians look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, more than politicians from other parties do	52%	48%	59%	55%	69%	49%	51%	60%	47%
People who vote Conservative probably look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, more than people who vote for other parties do	57%	55%	58%	54%	66%	55%	51%	58%	50%
Conservative policies have shown that they are hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	42%	37%	49%	46%	61%	40%	41%	50%	37%
The Conservative Party used to be hostile or indifferent to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, but the party is changing for the better	55%	56%	53%	56%	51%	57%	65%	52%	66%

- 33% of Black Caribbean respondents agreed strongly that “the Conservatives do not seem to have any members or spokesmen from different ethnic and religious backgrounds”, compared to 13% of white respondents.
- 44% of black respondents agreed strongly that “Conservative politicians look down on people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds”, compared to 20% of white respondents.

9. Thinking about the Conservative Party today and how it sees people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, which of the following statements do you most agree with? [Split sample A]

10. Thinking about David Cameron and how he sees people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, which of the following statements do you most agree with? [Split sample B]

	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP				RELIGIOUS GROUP			
		White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
The Conservative Party today/DC values and respects people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	Party 49%	Party 53%	Party 34%	Party 47%	Party 35%	Party 53%	Party 51%	Party 44%	Party 48%
	DC 55%	DC 58%	DC 50%	DC 55%	DC 43%	DC 59%	DC 59%	DC 49%	DC 68%
The Conservative Party today/DC does not really care about people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	Party 39%	Party 37%	Party 49%	Party 38%	Party 49%	Party 37%	Party 32%	Party 41%	Party 37%
	DC 35%	DC 33%	DC 35%	DC 33%	DC 45%	DC 32%	DC 31%	DC 38%	DC 25%
The Conservative Party today/DC is actively hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds	Party 6%	Party 4%	Party 11%	Party 9%	Party 8%	Party 5%	Party 11%	Party 8%	Party 9%
	DC 4%	DC 3%	DC 6%	DC 7%	DC 5%	DC 3%	DC 6%	DC 8%	DC 4%

11. Can you think of any examples of the Conservative Party being hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds? [Split sample A – those saying they thought the Conservative Party was hostile at Q9]

Around one third of those saying they thought the Conservative Party was hostile were unable to give any examples. Specific complaints (rather than general impressions) highlighted.

1	Immigration policy is hostile to minorities
2	Party doesn't experience/engage with/understand minorities
3	For the rich/themselves
4	Specific incidents recalled
5	Party does not do anything for minorities (but sometimes claims to)
6	David Cameron's comments on multiculturalism
7	Response to 2011 riots showed party unfairly blamed minorities
8	Look down on people of different culture/make people feel different
9	Specific policies/cuts have hit minorities
10	Support for wars

12. Can you think of any examples of David Cameron being hostile to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds? [Split sample B – those saying they thought David Cameron was hostile at Q10]

Around one third of those saying they thought David Cameron was hostile were unable to give any examples. Specific complaints (rather than general impressions) highlighted.

1	Tone/doesn't seem to respect/looks down on minorities
2	Immigration policies
3	Too rich/middle class/Tories are for the rich not us
4	Foreign policy/support for wars
5	Doesn't engage with/listen to minorities/seems uneasy in their presence
6	Remarks about multiculturalism
7	Reaction to the 2011 riots
8	Specific incidents recalled