

Runnymede Report on Race and Immigration

This is Still About Us

Why Ethnic Minorities See
Immigration Differently

Runnymede: Intelligence for a Multi-ethnic Britain

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Executive Summary

This research addresses the attitudes of Black and minority ethnic people in Britain on immigration. Many of our findings are shared with the wider population, but the history of immigration and indeed empire continues to cast a long shadow, even if our respondents only occasionally framed things in such terms.

Our key message is indicated by this report's title: that many Black and minority ethnic people still feel that discussions about immigration are *about them*, but that their views about the topic are not effectively or proportionally represented in British public or policy debates about immigration. We do not argue that all BME people hold the same views about immigration or are all pro-immigration, but that they are more likely to see its benefits, and to feel personally anxious or even threatened by some aspects of public debate.

Furthermore, probably because of their personal experience of immigration, BME Britons are more likely to focus on the decision-making processes of the immigration system itself, with many expressing frustration with visa, citizenship, family reunification, and other immigration policies and procedures.

We agree with those who suggest the current immigration policy target of 'tens of thousands' needs better evidence for how it might be achieved. As with so much previous research, we found a very high level of distrust of politicians about immigration policy, not least for making promises they do not and cannot fulfil.

A final key message is that government's existing integration and race equality policies are far too weak and need not only further resources, but a clearer and more coherent strategy. We agree with those suggesting more targeted support and resources for those areas undergoing the greatest population change due to migration, but we also suggest reforming the test, fees and criteria for citizenship.

Key findings

1. Immigration more positive than negative:

As with the wider population, Black and minority ethnic people see some positives and some negatives for immigration to Britain. However, they are more likely to see the positives, particularly in terms of economic and cultural contributions to British life.

2. Benefits – Recognition of pressure on public services, but concern about rights too:

Where BME people are concerned about levels of immigration, this is more likely to focus on the fairness of benefits, or the pressure on social welfare policies. At the same time, some participants felt 'fairness' arguments about access to school places and maternity services could imply that they and their British-born children have fewer rights to access public services, or that they increasingly have to 'prove' they are actually British and entitled to access public services and benefits.

3. Discomfort with arguments about too much cultural change:

Ethnic minorities and recent migrants are less comfortable with or more put off by pace-of-change arguments or indeed any suggestion that 'things aren't recognisable around here anymore'. This suggests a difference between 'economic' and 'cultural' arguments about immigration, and we found this even among 'apolitical' participants.

4. Immigration debate can negatively affect BME people, including those who are British-born:

Almost all of our participants agreed that the immigration debate was about them, even those who are born in Britain. Longer-term settled migrants and indeed their adult children will consider themselves to be the immigrants or migrants at the centre of the immigration debate when it arises. There was anxiety as well as anger about the nature of the immigration debate and policy, with some mentioning the 'Go Home' vans and the wider 'hostile environment' policy agenda.

5. Variation in opinion between different groups:

There is some difference between how minority ethnic and migrant groups understand the positives and benefits of migration. Long-settled migrants often feel they have had a difficult time in Britain, or at least following their initial arrival; they then may see or think that newer migrants have had better or easier experiences, i.e. in terms of access to benefits or navigating the system more successfully. Many long-term settled, overseas-born people will consider themselves British, *not* migrants. In some sense this allows them to effectively endorse what they see as the British anti-immigrant norm, but in other ways they explicitly recognise that anti-immigrant sentiments harm them too, whatever their own views about the levels and benefits of more recent immigration.

- 6. Unfairness and arbitrariness in the immigration system:** Even when people generally agree with more restrictionist policies, or with UKIP's 2015 manifesto discussion on 'fairness', *at an individual level* they are likely to highlight what they view as unfair or arbitrary within the immigration system. Perceptions of unfairness and personal experiences of arbitrariness in their dealings with the immigration system include: the citizenship test and its associated costs (£1005 for naturalisation plus £80 ceremony); and family visa policies that include the lack of clarity around changes in UK Border Agency policy, Home Office responses to immigration queries, continuous visa fee rises, lack of control within, and confusion about, the immigration system in general.
- 7. Ambivalence about the benefits of Europe:** Many Black and minority ethnic people are ambivalent about the benefits of the European Union. They appear less likely to take advantage of free movement; i.e. very few move about for work and (arguably) feel less 'solidarity' or 'shared identity' with others in Europe. Some view Europe in explicitly ethnic or racial terms, identifying 'Fortress Europe' as a way of keeping out non-white immigrants while allowing significant levels of European migration.
- 8. But more latently pro-EU because of concerns about nativism:** At a time when people are concerned about nativist views, being pro-Europe aligns with a wider protection from discrimination, even if they don't avail themselves of EU membership's more obvious benefits. People may also be pro-Europe because it represents a wider internationalism. However, the younger British-born are more likely to take a holiday, e.g. to Spain, and to consider working/studying in Europe.

Recommendations

1. Black and minority ethnic people and migrants must be included more regularly in policy debates and policy thinking on migration. There are reasonable discussions about the benefits and costs of immigration, but such discussions need to recognise that Black and minority ethnic people are often negatively affected both by immigration discourse and policy (for example 'Go Home' vans and landlord checks). The benefits of immigration should be framed in terms of cultural and social contribution, not just in terms of economic cost-benefit calculations. In the coming debate on the European referendum, BME voices and attitudes need much more prominence.
2. While the government talks about the importance of integration, it has no national strategy or resources earmarked for delivering on integration. In developing an integration strategy, policy must also include how 'settled' communities can adapt to newer populations as well as seeking to provide information and support for migrants. An integration strategy should also combat discrimination and systemic inequalities between migrants and non-migrants, as well as between ethnic minorities and white British people, including in the labour market.
3. As part of the above integration strategy, immigrants should be provided with a 'handbook' of information about British life, including their rights and responsibilities, and how to access public services and benefits to which they are entitled, rather than the information currently given which is geared specifically to passing the 'Life in the UK' test. Citizenship fees should be reduced from the current figure of well over £1000 (over 3 weeks of the living wage). The test, and expressions of policy on 'British values', should also be reformed to make them more consistent with a focus on recognised values such as democracy, non-discrimination and equality, and away from cultural, aesthetic or dietary practices and preferences.
4. Migrants continue to feel that the immigration system is slow and arbitrary in its decision-making. Decisions should be made more quickly, but rights of appeal should not be weakened. Furthermore, a reassessment of family migration policy is necessary given its disproportionate impact on minority ethnic families, particularly women, and of very young infants separated from their families. We support the ongoing campaigns on these issues by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and the Migrant Rights Network.

5. Politicians should not make promises about immigration unless they have evidence these can be delivered, especially given the low levels of public trust on this issue. We therefore support the call from the Institute of Directors and British Future for a review of how the government could plausibly deliver on its target of 'tens of thousands' of immigrants, or indeed on any migration policy.
6. The requirement that migrants learn English must be matched by both resource and opportunity. ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) course supply remains too minimal and reform of the Adult Skills Budget has reduced and in some cases removed access for new migrants. This should be improved to encourage integration and improve labour market and social outcomes for migrants and their children, including via welfare reforms such as universal credit where appropriate.
7. Data on where migrants move should be more effectively assessed to determine where additional resources are required. However, these data should be supplemented by wider data on, e.g., number of births, which are not only about perceptions of the number of migrants and their impact on public services, but on objective uptake and change over time of key public services. Local authorities should also be supported in developing better forecasting of demand for health services and education, and not only in terms of the number of likely migrants.

1. Introduction

History and political wisdom agree that the British public are deeply sceptical about immigration. Yet in the summer of 2015 history and political wisdom were seemingly turned on their heads as the British public voiced their opinion that the country should accept more migrants, including those from a non-Christian non-European conflict, and those who might be unable to contribute economically to the country's bottom line.

Such was the strength of this opinion that the government performed a partial U-turn on its decision to reject Syrian refugees, and instead declared it would take 4000 refugees a year from Syria. However partial this victory in policy terms, it suggests that the discussion on migration is not nearly as toxic or solely driven by economic cost-benefit calculations as sometimes assumed, and that, with political leadership and the right message, there may be a majority of Britons who are more or less 'pro-immigration'.

As we found in this research, one such group are Black and minority ethnic people living in Britain, including those born here. In saying such individuals could be viewed as 'pro-immigration' we don't claim to have found that all of them (or even a majority) are happy with the amount of migration or all of its consequences, or indeed with the fairness of public benefits perceived to flow to migrants. Rather, we have found an instinctive concern with anti-immigration rhetoric and policy, not simply because of the financial impact on their families (though these are undoubtedly keenly felt), but because of the real psychological impact on their sense of identity and security, and because they are genuinely worried about the wider social consequences, especially in housing and in the labour market. So while many BME Britons are only part of the large minority or perhaps majority concerned about what our policy and debate on migration says about what values define us as a country, they are a minority for whom that question isn't just political or policy driven, but in some senses existential.

This is perhaps unsurprising when just over half (52%) of the 7.9 million Black and minority ethnic people living in the UK were born overseas. Overseas-born BME people are also just over half (54%) of the 7.5 million people born overseas (see Table 1, overleaf). In fact, the proportion of Black and minority ethnic people living in the UK but born in the pre-accession European countries (i.e. those born

mainly in 'western Europe') is actually *higher* than the number of Black and minority ethnic people born in UK (7.8%). So even in the case of 'Europeans', a higher proportion are non-white than among the British-born population.

Immigration is now (as of November 2015) considered the most important issue in British public debate. While the economy or other issues may in time regain the top position, immigration is likely to remain among the most important issues for the foreseeable future.

Immigration is not only the top issue for the wider public, it's also one where public confidence in Britain's political leadership is low, even among those in favour of migration. Politicians, academics, journalists and businesses have all been criticised for the way they do – or don't – speak about immigration, with the result that many now feel it's actually talked about too much (Katwala and Ballinger, 2015).

If immigration is talked about too much generally, until recently we haven't distinguished enough between the different sorts of attitudes among and within the British population. This report surveys the experience of a particular salient group: Black and minority ethnic people living in Britain. In short, we asked: what are the views of BME people on immigration and do these differ from the views of white British people? Below we explain our methodology, but it's worth explaining why we chose this focus.

Historically, race and immigration have been connected policy agendas, and sometimes viewed as addressing almost the same set of issues. Runnymede's own regular publication was called 'Race and Immigration' from our founding in 1968 to around 1992, while many early race equality activists were not only immigrants themselves but also involved in wider political struggles in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.

It wasn't only activists or academics that linked race and immigration. Politicians and the public also connected the issues, with the first Race Relations Act passed 50 years ago counterbalanced by Commonwealth Immigrants Acts in 1962 and 1968¹ that placed limits on further immigration. In the words of policymakers at the time, good race relations required tight immigration controls, a message taken up by both Labour and Conservative governments.²

As James Callaghan put it:

Our best hope of developing in these Islands a multi-racial society free of strife lies in striking the right balance between the number of Commonwealth citizens we can allow in and our ability to ensure them, once here, a fair deal not only in tangible matters like jobs, housing and other social services, but, more intangibly, against racial prejudice. If we have to restrict immigration now for good reasons, as I think we must, the imminent [1968] Race Relations Bill will be a timely factor in helping us to show that we are aiming at a fair balance all round. Conversely, I believe that the reception of the Race Relations Bill will be prejudiced in many minds, and support for it weakened, if people think that the numbers entering are unlimited or unreasonably high'. (cited in Hansen, 2000: 161–162)

This perspective is now mainstream, and not only because it's in the interest of restrictionist politicians responding to a sceptical British public (who were even more sceptical of non-white immigration in the 1960s). Since the 1950s there has been a considerable growth of first the children and now the grandchildren and even great-grandchildren of minority ethnic migrants (imagine a person born in 1930 in Trinidad whose child was born in 1958 in London; grandchild in 1987; and now great-grandchild in 2015). To call such individuals '2nd (or 3rd) generation migrants' or 'of migrant origin' is not only sociologically dubious, it is often viewed as insulting, or indeed as a denial that non-white people can be fully or equally British.

One way that ethnic minorities are sometimes deemed to be equally British is, in fact, in terms of their attitudes to immigration. While there are some surveys that test this question (whose findings we outline below), for this research we aimed to test BME people's attitudes in a more conversational setting in focus groups. We sought to determine their attitudes, but also why they held these attitudes, if there were any distinctive aspects of those views, and what they thought government could or should do about it.

Before outlining our evidence, it's worth highlighting a certain ambiguity in our research: this is that some, but not all, of our interviewees were migrants themselves. In much public and policy debate on migration we don't hear enough from immigrants themselves. Indeed the very term 'migrant' is felt to be pejorative and it is hardly surprising that many of our participants seemed uncomfortable about using the word as a self-affirming aspect of their identity.

Table 1. Migrant population, by ethnicity

Migrant total (England and Wales)	7,505,010
Of which non-white	4,069,942
Percentage of migrants who are non-white	54.2%

Source: 2011 Census

Table 2. Black and minority ethnic population, by place of birth

Black and minority ethnic population (England and Wales)	7,866,517
Of which born overseas	4,069,942
Percentage of non-white people who were born overseas	51.7%

Source: 2011 Census

Yet, as Table 2 shows, in Britain today just over half (4.1 out of 7.9 million) of all BME people are themselves migrants, or 'overseas-born'. A slightly higher proportion of our focus groups were overseas born, primarily because the under-18 BME population (who we did not interview) is much more likely to be British-born. As Table 3, there is some variation in the proportion of each ethnic group born overseas, but for most over half were born overseas, with the younger 'Mixed' group the only exception.

Table 3. Ethnic group, proportion born in the UK

Ethnic group	Born in UK
White British	98%
White Irish	33%
Other White	16%
Mixed/Multiple	80%
Asian British	42%
Black British	47%
Other ethnic group	30%

Source: 2011 Census

However, for reasons we've already suggested, many of our interviewees did *not* self-describe as 'migrants'. Not all people are motivated by 'stigma' arguments against self-affirming migrant status; rather, many *positively* self-affirm a British identity, especially those who have British citizenship, and those who have lived here for several decades. In general, our focus groups were slightly biased in favour of longer-term settled populations, whose views and identity were perhaps more similar to those of their British-born children than to more recent migrants.

Our aims in writing this report are to understand BME people's attitudes to and experiences of immigration;

to determine if certain ‘framing’ or ‘messaging’ around immigration is more resonant among these groups; and to offer policy recommendations for responding to these findings. Following a short methodology chapter, in chapter three we outline the wider background and evidence for this report. The fourth, and longest, chapter documents the evidence from our focus groups, arranged by themes. Finally, we present our key findings and recommendations, which we have also reproduced in the executive summary.

Notes

1. Hugh Gaitskell, then leader of the Labour opposition, called the act ‘cruel and brutal anti-colour legislation’ but following Gaitskell’s death the 1964 election – notably the racist campaign that successfully overturned Labour’s prospective Foreign Secretary Patrick Gordon Walker’s majority in Smethwick – the Labour party quickly changed its position. The 1968 Act passed by the then Labour government was even more restrictionist than the 1962 Act (in particular limiting the rights of Kenyan Asians), with Home Secretary James Callaghan claiming anyone opposed was a ‘sentimental jackass’ and that the bill was necessary to prevent a deterioration of race relations (see Hansen, 2000: 161ff).
2. In addition to Callaghan’s position cited in note 1, see also the diaries of Richard Crossman (a member of Wilson’s Cabinet), who claimed immigration might be Labour’s ‘greatest potential vote loser’ if Labour were ‘seen to be permitting a flood of immigrants to come in and blight the central areas of our cities’ (Crossman, 1975, *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, vol 1). It is important to note the alternative position taken by other Cabinet Members, notably Roy Jenkins, who pushed through the more effective 1976 Race Relations Act, and that a number of Conservative MPs voted against the 1968 Act, including Michael Heseltine and Iain McLeod. Runnymede’s co-founder Anthony Lester, and later an advisor to Jenkins, also successfully challenged the 1968 Act before the European Commission on Human Rights, whose negative decision the government simply ignored.

2. Methodology

This research comprised two main elements: a series of focus groups, and a desk-based review of relevant literature. The focus groups were intended to capture a range of non-White British views about immigration, with a greater emphasis on longer-term, non-white British people. We include our focus group questions and materials in the Appendix.

In total we held 7 focus groups involving 65 people, 42 of whom were women with 23 men. The focus groups were conducted as follows:

- Birmingham** (before May election): a mixture of younger, British-born and older overseas-born Black and minority ethnic participants
- Waltham Cross** (before May election): mainly older, British-born or long-term-settled Black and minority ethnic participants
- Southwark** (after May election): older retired long-term-settled Black and minority ethnic participants
- Oldham** (after May election): male British Muslim group (Pakistani and Bangladeshi, mixture of UK and overseas born)
- Oldham** (after May election): female British Muslim group (Pakistani and Bangladeshi, mixture of UK and overseas born)
- Acton** (after May election): young and middle-aged white minority ethnic groups, including some recent migrants
- Harrow** (after May election): participants of Indian and Bangladeshi descent (all overseas born)

The groups were mixed in age with 16 respondents aged below 35, 22 aged between 35 and 50, and 21 aged 50 and over and a further 6 who chose not to disclose their ages. The oldest group (where the youngest participant was aged 67) was the

one held in Southwark, in South East London and the youngest (where no participant was over 50 years old) was held in Oldham. The majority of our participants were born outside of the UK – 44 were born abroad and these were a mixture of settled (23) and newer migrants (9 of these).¹ Among our sample were 17% retired people, and these participants had lived in the UK for a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of 60.

2.1 Area and ethnic group breakdown

The locations were selected on the basis of the types of minority ethnic and migrant communities to be found within them in order to collect the views of a broad mix of settled minority ethnic communities (from across the Caribbean, Africa, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) as well as new migrants (in the case of the Acton group a combination of those born in Armenia, Iraq, Romania and Iran) (see Table 4).

The areas in which we conducted focus groups varied in the extent to which different ethnic groups experience locally based inequalities. Oldham, for example, features highly in certain measures for ethnic inequality in comparison to the other areas visited. Overall, Oldham has the 4th highest rates of inequality for minority ethnic groups across England and Wales' 348 local authorities/districts overall, across the areas of education, housing and employment (Finney and Lymperopoulou, 2014). It also features highly specifically for employment and health (3rd highest levels of inequalities for both indicators). Five out of the seven areas in which focus groups were held also fare less well on specific indicators for minority ethnic groups: Birmingham for employment (4th) and health (20th), Southwark for housing (7th) and employment (14th), and Ealing also for housing (18th). Both Harrow and Broxbourne, areas with very different ethnic group

Table 4. Ethnic breakdown of the authorities/boroughs in which focus groups were held (%)

	White British	Minority	White Irish	White Other	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other (5 cat)
Birmingham	53	47	2	3	4	27	9	2
Broxbourne	81	19	1	8	2	2	4	1
Ealing	30	70	3	15	4	30	11	6
Harrow	31	69	3	8	4	43	8	3
Oldham	76	24	1	1	2	19	1	0
Southwark	40	60	2	12	6	9	27	3

profiles include less prominent indicators of inequality for their minority ethnic residents. They do, however, as with areas more broadly, feature difficulties for very specific BME communities: Harrow for example includes high percentages of minority ethnic households that are overcrowded, with this affecting Black and White Other (29% of households in both groups) in particular. Broxbourne, despite including the smallest minority ethnic population out of all the areas visited, and with only 4% of its population defined as Black, features high overcrowding for these residents (22.6%).

Overall, 46 of our participants were born outside the UK (Table 5), with the majority coming from India, Bangladesh and Jamaica. Nineteen of our participants were born in the UK, one of whom was White British. The majority of this group were of Pakistani heritage (7), followed by those of Black Caribbean and/or Black British heritage (5). A further three defined themselves as being of Bangladeshi or British Bengali heritage, followed by three who defined themselves as Asian or Asian British (Table 6).

Table 5. Breakdown of country of birth for focus group participants

Area	Number
UK	19
Caribbean ¹	10
India	9
Bangladesh	6
Africa ²	5
Pakistan	4
Middle East ³	2
Central Asia/Caucasus ⁴	6
Europe ⁵	2
Hong Kong	1

¹Countries of birth included Jamaica, Trinidad, Dominica.

²Countries of birth included Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa.

³Participants were from Iran and Iraq.

⁴Participants were from Armenia and Georgia.

⁵Participants were from Cyprus and Romania.

Table 6. Ethnic breakdown of focus group participants born in the UK

Ethnic Group	Number
Pakistani	7
Black Caribbean	5
Bangladeshi	3
Asian British	3
White British	1

Note: We have employed Census categories here.

2.2 Methods

As mentioned previously the bulk of the research was based on the collection of qualitative data from focus group discussion. The basis of this research was the testing of political messaging together with popular

discourse on the subject of immigration. Using five quotes taken from election manifestos published by the main political parties as a proxy for political messaging, each focus group was asked a series of questions based on the following issues:

- Public concern and numbers
- Control and fairness
- Contribution
- Integration and English language
- Europe

Participants were also asked to comment freely on a number of images ranging from those showing meetings between senior politicians and members of particular minority ethnic groups, to those of famous/celebrity migrants. We include the quotes used as well as indicating the rationale for the choice of quotes in the Appendix to this report, with an additional Annex available on our website that includes relevant Election Manifesto extracts.

In coding our research findings, we used Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014) to develop a series of themes emerging directly out of the qualitative data. From an initial list of 24 codes, we produced the following nine themes which we also explore in detail in chapter four:

- The role of immigration in the voting behaviour of BME and migrant groups
- The focus of the discourse on immigration: who are the immigrants?
- What is the immigration debate?
- Opinions on the notion of control and fairness
- Opinions on the notion of contribution
- Integration and the English language
- Pace of change
- Integration and Britishness
- What should government address?

Notes

1. 'Settled here' refers to those who have been in the UK for more than 5 years, while 'newer migrants' refers to those living in the UK for 5 years or less. There are an additional 7 people who it is clear from their testimonies have been in the UK for a long time but did not disclose a number.

3. Background: Immigration and Race in Britain

While Britain has long been a country of migration, the scope, scale and direction of that migration has varied considerably. Roman, Viking and Norman French migration is generally understood in Britain, not least for their impact on our form of governance and political culture, while the mercantilist and then imperial expansion involved further people migrating to Britain, including relatively large non-white populations (Fryer, 1984).

These migrations are important for understanding our history, and are also the wider background to Britain's experience of migration. While we agree that this history is inadequately taught or discussed in British classrooms and media, this longer history is not the immediate background for this research. In this chapter we note where participants referenced the longer history of migration, but the discussions were mainly focused on more contemporary issues, including policy and political discussions of immigration and, of course, public opinion. While we recognise the long-standing concerns about and criticisms of public opinion polling methodologies, particularly on race and immigration (e.g. Burnett, 2011), not all of this evidence derives from polling. In summarizing evidence on public opinion on immigration, we also explore whether attitudes vary by ethnicity, and so put our research findings in chapter four in a wider context.

3.1 Public opinion

The subject of immigration has been an issue in Britain for several years and appears to have increased in prominence recently. The August 2015 Ipsos Mori survey found that: 'half (50%) the public mention immigration as among the most important issues facing Britain. For a third (32%) it is the single most important issue facing the country. This measurement ... represents the highest level of concern we have ever recorded about immigration – surpassing the 46% recorded in December 2007, as the migrant camps in Calais continue to dominate sections of the media.'

These findings represent a significant increase even compared to March 2015 when our first focus groups were conducted. For example, an Ipsos Mori poll in January 2015 found that the issue considered second priority approaching the 2015 General

Election (after healthcare/NHS/hospitals at number one) was asylum and immigration. This puts it ahead of the economy; and the longer-term trend is that the British public has significant concerns about immigration. British Social Attitudes research from 2013 found that:

- 77% of people in Britain wanted immigration reduced 'a little' or 'a lot' (63% in 1995)
- 56% wanted it reduced by a large amount (39% in 1995)
- 47% think immigration has been bad for the economy; 31% think it has been good
- 45% think immigration has been bad for the culture of Britain; 35% think it has been good

Anxiety is such that the number of people who want immigration reduced is higher than the number of people who think it has been negative. Similarly, in a 2013 poll of 20,000 carried out by Lord Ashcroft (Ashcroft, 2013), findings showed that:

- 48% said "controlling immigration" was a top three issue (top 2 were jobs and the economy)
- 27% said one of their main concerns was migrants taking jobs from British workers or pushing down wages

Public opinion is not uniform. Those in managerial and professional jobs, and those in the top quartile for income, were most likely to say the economic impact and the cultural impact of immigration have been good, and were the least likely to support a reduction in immigration numbers. Similar patterns exist for people with degrees compared to those with GCSEs or no qualifications (NatCen, 2013).

The public also typically overestimate what proportion of the UK population is foreign born. The official estimate is around 13% but the average guess from the public is 21%. The degree of overestimation also correlates with the intention to vote: UKIP voters estimate 25% of the UK's population are immigrants, while Liberal Democrat and Green supporters estimate around 16% of people in the UK are immigrants (Ipsos Mori, 2015).

Neither is the concern over immigration geographically uniform. Research conducted by the Migration Observatory found that while the public

may view migration as harmful to Britain, few people think it has harmed their own neighbourhood. London has high numbers of migrants, yet surveys in London are much less likely to support a reduction in migration than those conducted amongst the general population, and this finding includes White British Londoners. The level of public concern about immigration is not necessarily related to the number of immigrants in the local area, and people generally express more concern about the effects of immigration on the UK as a whole than they do about their local area (Blinder, 2015).

Research by IPPR found support for immigrants who come to Britain and bring skills that we need, those who want to invest in Britain, international students, and a preference for immigrants who come, learn English, settle in the UK, and become British citizens over those who come and go. IPPR found this last sentiment was stronger among the unemployed and those seeking work than those in full-time work or education (IPPR, 2014).

Integration has an important effect on people's attitudes to immigration. The public see the record of previous communities integrating as an indicator of what will happen in the future. British Future (Katwala et al., 2014) found 83% approval for the statement:

To belong to our shared society, everyone must speak our language, obey our laws and pay their taxes – so that everyone who plays by the rules counts as equally British, and should be able to reach their potential.

They also found greater support, 63% of respondents, for migrants who stay, settle, and integrate, compared to 37% who prefer migrants to work and then return home. These findings are also consistent with the above-mentioned IPPR research, who have more recently suggested that migrants should be automatically opted into a path towards British citizenship (Griffith and Halej, 2015), a policy we think has strong merits.

There was a considerable amount of opinion polling in the lead-up to the General Election in May 2015. When looking at voting intention, some polls asked about issues of importance to the electorate. In their March 2015 poll ComRes asked what the most important thing would be when deciding who to vote for: 88% of those intending to vote UKIP said immigration was one of their top three, compared to 45% of Conservative voters and 21% of Labour voters. There were also general differences in attitudes to immigration:

- It was slightly more important to women (35%) than men (33%)
- It was generally less important among the young (20% of 18-24 year olds) than among the old (52% of the over 65s)
- It was less important to the middle class (AB 33% and C1 28%) and more important to the working class (C2 42% and DE 44%), and
- It was more important to those who are white (40%) compared to those who are non-white (26%)

Older people consistently support greater controls on immigration. Lord Ashcroft (Ashcroft, 2013) found support for a non-EU limit on immigration was running at the level of 85% among those aged over 65 compared to 57% for those aged 18–24. The IPPR also found concern to be highest among older people and those in lower socio-economic groups (IPPR, 2014).

It is not always easy to gauge the views of ethnic minorities among these polls. Where surveys do record the ethnicity of the respondent, the samples tend to be very small. And then, the samples are so small that they tend to be taken as a single group. Some separate respondents into the larger Commonwealth groups: Indian, Pakistani, Caribbean and West African. Little is known about the views of smaller minorities such as the Chinese.

However, as indicated above in the ComRes poll, where data is available, minority populations can be shown to have different priorities. In the August 2015 Ipsos Mori poll, while 53% of white respondents mentioned immigration as a top issue, only 29% of ethnic minorities did so (on a sample size of 128 minority ethnic respondents). And ethnic minorities are three times less likely to say immigration is the *most* important issue facing the country: in this same poll, less than one in eight (12%) ethnic minorities agreed, compared to over one in three (35%) white people.

In the ComRes March 2015 poll before the 2015 general election, non-white voters placed more importance than white voters on issues like housing (28% to 23%) and education (21% to 16%) and slightly less on the economy (50% to 54%).

The Ethnic Minority British Election Survey (Heath et al., 2013) was the largest study of minority ethnic voting behaviour ever conducted in Britain, involving 2787 people from the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi,

Black Caribbean and Black African communities. It provided the much quoted figure of 68% of ethnic minorities voting Labour, compared to 31% of the white British polled (Heath and Khan, 2012). This was not uniform across all ethnic minorities. For example, the highest score disapproving of the war on terror was among those of Pakistani heritage, and 25% of Pakistanis voted Liberal Democrat – compared to 23% of the broader UK population. On immigration matters, EMBES found identifiable differences. Most minority ethnic respondents were more favourable than the White British population to letting asylum-seekers stay in Britain. However, Indian voters were less supportive than the White British population, and all other ethnic groups: the range was from 34% for Indian respondents to 74% Black African respondents; with the White British figure being 39% agreeing asylum-seekers shouldn't be sent home. In other words, EMBES did not find a shared minority ethnic position on other questions relating to immigration though it did find some issues were relatively more important to minorities than to the white British majority, particularly unemployment.

Commenting on the EMBES results, Anthony Heath concluded: 'On topics like immigration there are large differences between the different minorities, with Indians being notable for their lack of support for high rates of immigration' (Heath, 2015). Heath also makes the point that migrants tend to positively select – they have drive and ambition. They commonly pass on this desire to succeed, especially in education, to their children. This heightened aspiration tends to apply more to non-EU migrants than EU migrants, the latter having fewer barriers to grapple with, less far to travel and an easier option to return if the dream goes sour.

The 2013 British Social Attitudes survey (see NatCen 2013) asked questions about immigration and had sufficient numbers to compare findings based on whether respondents were born in Britain, were first-generation immigrants or their second-generation children (see Table 7).

Analysing these findings, Rob Ford found majorities among white and BME respondents for 'at least some reduction in migration levels' – with only somewhat less agreement among those born overseas. This reinforces the view that there is a broad public agreement that the current level of immigration is too high.

However, there are some differences in detail between white British and minority ethnic views. Nearly 80% of white Britons say they want migrant numbers reduced, and 56% want the number reduced a lot. Ethnic minorities are more divided: only 29% want to see a large reduction, 25% a small reduction, and 40% are either happy with the current level or want it increased.

One reason why people want to see immigration reduced is because they are ambivalent or even negative about its effects in Britain. The British Social Attitudes survey asks questions regarding both the economic and cultural impact of migration, and the findings show significant variation by ethnic group as well as by place of birth, as outlined in Table 8.

Ethnic minorities, born here or abroad, are much more likely to say immigration has had a positive cultural impact (net rating of +33 to +39), while white people born in Britain generally have the opposite view: that the cultural impact of immigration has been negative (net rating -23).

Table 7. Attitudes to immigration, by migration and family migration history

	Immigration to Britain should ...		
	be increased	remain the same	be reduced
Respondent & parents born in GB	3	14	82
1st and 2nd gen migrant	8	31	60
	Economic impact of immigration		
	Bad (0–4)	Neither (5)	Good (6–10)
Respondent & parents born in GB	53	19	27
1st and 2nd gen migrant	26	25	48
	Cultural impact of immigration		
	Undermined (1–4)	Neither (5)	Enriched (6–10)
Respondent & parents born in GB	51	18	30
1st and 2nd gen migrant	24	22	52

Source: NatCen (2013).

White British-born people are again much more likely to say immigration has had a negative economic impact (a net negative rating of -33). On the economic impact, ethnic minorities born in Britain are only somewhat more likely (net rating +8) to say it has had a positive impact, with whites born abroad more positive (net +24) and ethnic minorities born abroad very positive (net +46) about the economic impact. It is possible that some of the negative economic

impact recorded by British-born ethnic minorities reflects concerns about labour market inequality and discrimination, but these are significant differences in opinion by ethnicity and place of birth.

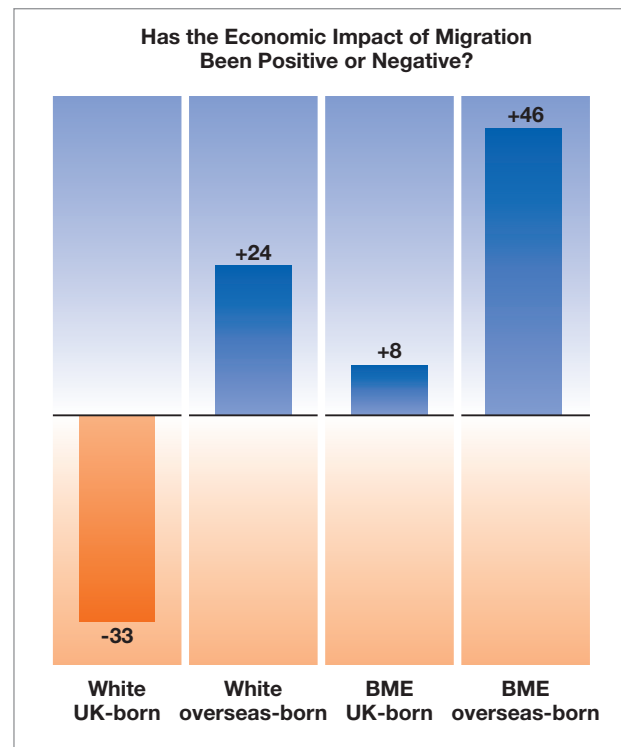
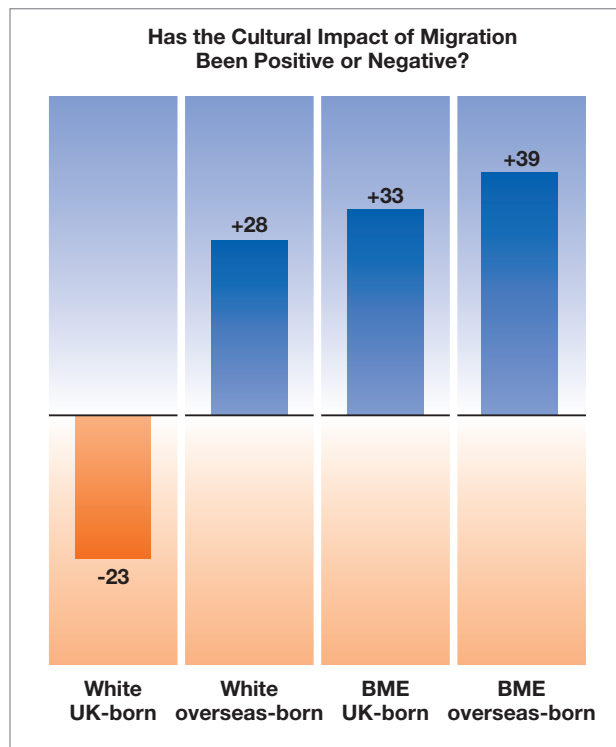
According to Robert Ford:

There are several reasons to suspect that they [ethnic minorities] may hold more positive views. Many are migrants themselves, or the children

Table 8. Views on the economic and cultural impact of immigration, by ethnicity and place of birth

Views of immigration impacts	Whites born in Britain	EMs born in Britain	Whites born abroad	EMs born abroad
Economic impact:	%	%	%	%
Very good	3	7	5	19
Good	21	38	45	43
Neither good nor bad	18	18	23	20
Bad	34	17	19	12
Very bad	23	19	7	4
Net rating (good–bad)	-33	+8	+24	+46
Cultural impact:	%	%	%	%
Very good	6	18	17	16
Good	24	36	38	41
Neither good nor bad	16	25	16	25
Bad	29	13	17	14
Very bad	24	8	10	4
Net rating (good–bad)	-23	+33	+28	+39
Weighted base	2,792	175	155	189
Unweighted base	2,835	132	160	184

Source: Ford (2014)



of migrants, an experience which may make them more positively inclined to newer migrants seeking to settle here. Prejudice also plays a role in hostility to immigrants, and Britain's minorities may be less likely to harbour negative feelings towards 'foreigners' in general and more likely to have felt the sting of prejudice themselves. Finally, research suggests that a big source of opposition to migration is the perception that migrants threaten national identity and national culture. Minorities with distinct ethnic and cultural traditions should be less concerned about such change. (Ford, 2014)

Below we further discuss this general distinction between the 'cultural' and 'economic' effects of migration as it was regularly raised by our research participants even if they didn't use this precise terminology.

Settled migrants may live in the parts of the country where subsequent migrants also end up living. Settled minority communities often live in areas of deprivation, low employment, poor housing stock, and high usage of relevant public services. New migrants, searching for cheap housing, may arrive and compete with the settled community for scarce resources. Furthermore, research has shown that where immigration does impact upon wages, it is on low-skill jobs (Ruhs and Vargas-Silva, 2015). Again this can create competition between the new and established migrant communities if they have similar skillsets and share similar barriers to higher skilled work.

The different perception of migration as positive or negative can be seen between the UK-born white population, which sees it as both an economic negative and a threat to British identity, and those who see migration as a function of the modern world. 'This divide is one of generation, education, class and values, splitting younger, middle class, socially liberal university graduates from older, working class, socially conservative voters who left school with few qualifications' (Ford, 2014).

In May 2013, the influential Conservative peer Lord Ashcroft (Ashcroft, 2013) commissioned a poll that contacted over 20,000 people (online) specifically on immigration. He divided the respondents to his poll into seven categories:

- Universal Hostility (16% of the population)
- Cultural Concerns (16%)
- Competing for Jobs (14%)
- Fight for Entitlements (12%)

- Comfortable Pragmatists (22%)
- Urban Harmony (9%)
- Militantly Multicultural (10%)

Urban Harmony, perhaps unsurprisingly, were the most ethnically diverse group. Ashcroft's research suggests they did not see any overriding advantages or costs to immigration. They did not prioritise restrictions or immigration controls ahead of the economy, jobs and the NHS. They were more than twice as likely as the general public to have no concerns about immigration but were *more likely* than the general public to say that they are paid less, found it harder to find work, denied access to housing or other services because of immigration. The Urban Harmony group see the main benefits of immigration as being its contribution to British culture and life. They did see immigration as creating a more dynamic and prosperous economy, but they did not see it just through the economic lens, giving the second highest response to the statement 'People who have moved here from outside the UK have made my area a better place to live'.¹

At the same time, the majority in the Urban Harmony group support most of the government's immigration policies, and they are significantly more likely to know that they have been implemented. This could possibly suggest they have personal experience of those policies.

Lord Ashcroft also asked for views on the 'Go home or face arrest' van campaign. He found that 42% of the Urban Harmony think the Go Home vans were racist, yet 67% support it, and 40% think it will be effective in persuading illegal immigrants to leave the UK. (This compared to only 17% of all groups who thought it would be effective.) Compare this with the Competing for Jobs group, who generally think the costs of immigration outweigh benefits, and 90% of whom support the Go Home vans.

3.2 Numbers and confusion

There are different views on why recently the public has expressed such strong concerns about immigration. Immigrants are often blamed during economic difficulties, particularly if there is high unemployment (Storm, 2015). The increase in numbers is seen to put pressure upon resources, public services and community cohesion.

The pace of the change in an area is also often highlighted as heightening concerns about immigration (Sachrajda and Griffith, 2014). Any sign

or belief that limited resources are being diverted to the new arrivals at the expense of the established communities, that the character of an area may alter, or that the new arrivals are not integrating with the British way of life, can create tension.

However, there is plenty of evidence that some concerns, while real, are based on confusion and a degree of misinformation. As discussed in the British Future report *How to Talk about Immigration* (Katwala et al. 2014) the two basic positions – pro-immigration and anti-immigration – sometimes appear to be talking about two different subjects. British Future suggest that public opinion is not as toxic as it is sometimes portrayed, but rather the public just do not trust politicians on immigration.

Turning to the actual numbers of migrants, it is now widely understood that net migration is in the hundreds and not tens of thousands. This number is not only affected by migration policy but by international economic and geopolitical conditions as well as the number of British emigrants leaving the UK each year.

In breaking down the numbers and reasons why people come to the UK, an immediate problem is that EU migrants do not have to declare a reason to enter the UK. By far the main routes for non-EU migrants to gain access to the UK are through work or study. There are smaller numbers for family reasons and for asylum claims. Table 9 shows the numbers coming in through each route in the year ending March 2015.

Table 9. Number of immigrants to the UK by route

Route	Number
Work	290,000
Study	188,000
Family	83,000
Asylum	25,771

ONS figures for the year end up to August 2015; except for Asylum applications which are dated 2014 (Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, August 2015).

It is not clear if the public and politicians are talking about the same thing when they talk about immigration. Official statistics, those used by the Government and people working in immigration, use the following:

A long-term international migrant is a person who moves from their country of usual residence for a period of at least 12 months.

Surveys repeatedly show that this is not necessarily what the general public think of as a migrant. The

public do not see foreign students as immigrants, but they qualify under the definition as long as they do a course of longer duration than twelve months. Conversely, some people consider the children born in Britain of foreign born parents to be migrants when they clearly do not fit the ONS definition (or so self-identify).

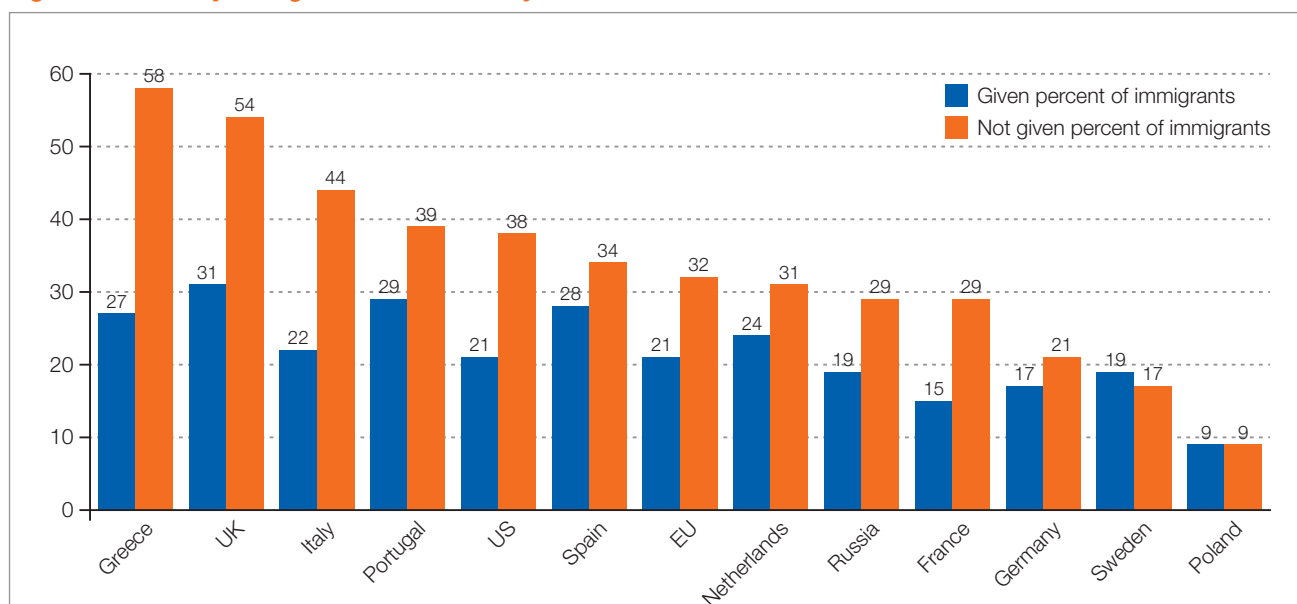
Studies have shown how the public generally overestimate asylum numbers. A Migration Observatory/Ipsos Mori survey in 2011 asked the question ‘When you think about immigrants coming to and living in Britain, which of these groups would you normally think about?’, and were given four options: work, study, family and asylum. The highest response, at 60%, was asylum. Only about 4% of immigration to the UK is due to asylum. Less than 30% gave the answer ‘to study’, when immigration for study is the second biggest route in (see Blinder, 2015).

Compared to other countries, the UK stands out in various ways on its attitudes to immigration. A recent comparison between 13 countries, including the UK, nine other European countries, the US, Russia and Turkey (Transatlantic Trends, 2014) found UK respondents registering among the highest level of concern about immigration, and the only country where a majority no longer agreed that legal immigrants should remain permanently, and where the majority *didn't* agree migration brought cultural benefits. Perhaps unsurprisingly, only in Turkey did more respondents (55%) agree that immigration was a threat to national culture, with 46% agreeing in the UK compared to around 31% in Europe generally.

On numbers, this research (see Figure 1) found the UK to be second (to Greece) in agreeing there are too many immigrants in the country, with over half (54%) agreeing when not knowing the true percentage of immigrants in the country. When given the actual number, many fewer people in the UK agreed with the statement, down to 31%. This finding might be interpreted as offering the possibility that the UK would be more pro-immigration if they actually knew the numbers. On the other hand, in this study the UK actually becomes the country most concerned about immigration once they are given the actual percent of immigrants. Furthermore, it may not be straightforward to alter public attitudes permanently through better understanding of the data, and the relatively large gap between UK attitudes, dependent on knowledge of actual numbers of immigrants, contrasts with Germany and Sweden in particular (also Poland, Spain and the Netherlands).

This lack of connection between the reality of migrant numbers and what the British people think

Figure 1. Too Many Immigrants in Our Country



Source: Transatlantic Trends (2014).

about those numbers has clear implications for proposing or designing any sort of changes to the immigration system. A misunderstanding of the numbers immigrating for different reasons leads to confusion as to which categories should be limited in some way. A YouGov survey for the Sun newspaper found 71% of respondents said immigration had been bad for Britain. It then asked who should be allowed in, and there was a favourable response for continued immigration in four categories: rich people who invest in Britain, international students who pay, highly skilled people looking for highly paid jobs, and people coming to work in the NHS. The public want immigration to be reduced and at the same time they want continued immigration in the main routes that cause net migration to be as high as it is (Kellner, 2015).

3.3 Race, immigration and politics

There has been a long-running debate in Britain about whether we feel able to talk about immigration. White people have said they feel unable to talk about immigration for fear of accusations of racism. At the same time, many ethnic minorities hear the word immigration and wait for the next words to be 'Go Home'. This is important, particularly during a General Election campaign. What happened in Smethwick in 1964, when the Labour candidate was subjected to clearly racist campaign literature, is still part of a collective memory (Economist, 2013). Reflecting more generally on this period, Shamit Saggat has recently suggested:

The bulk of south Asian, African and Caribbean origin Britons trace their British roots to a time in the mid to late twentieth century. This is when either they, or their parents, or their grandparents, made the trek to Britain as permanent settlers. Britain was a rather different country then: it was awash with strong anti-immigrant public sentiment, early prospects for the newcomers were challenging at best, their potential contribution to society was scarcely noticed, and the country's major political parties reacted with indifference or arrogance. (Saggat, 2015)

So, within this context, what do the settled minority ethnic communities in Britain think about immigration? Does the fact that they, or their parents, or their grandparents, took the decision to migrate and went through the experience alter how they view current migrants? To what extent do they think the debate about immigration is really about race? And if it is about race, does that affect their attitude to the newer immigrants from Europe, who happen to be white? This report now turns to the evidence we found from our focus groups, before outlining in our conclusion our key findings and recommendations, which we have also reproduced in the executive summary.

Notes

1. Compare the response of the Urban Harmony group with how British Future describe 25% of the population – as the Migration liberals: generally young, live in urban areas, and university educated.

4. Minority ethnic perceptions of immigration

If I'm here, it's not fair for me to say you're not allowed to come. (Southwark participant, female, born in Jamaica, in UK for 56 years, 81)

Nine broad themes were generated from discussions with both EU and non-EU recent migrants as well as settled minority ethnic and migrant communities, taking in subjects as wide-ranging as visa costs, integration and the importance of speaking English. The views of participants on a range of issues were mixed, but with regard to the notion of contribution, there were clear differences between those who were settled and those more recently arrived, both in relation to financial contribution to the economy as well as broader societal and cultural contribution. General themes are listed below but in summary it is clear that the views of migrant and minority ethnic groups on the subject of immigration are inextricably linked to their own ethnic, cultural and migrant backgrounds. It does not follow from this, however, that their views on all the issues ranging from access to public services in the UK to employment differ *dramatically* from those expressed by White British groups. They do, nevertheless, hold similar views on what the current debate around immigration has at its core – everyone we consulted, regardless of length of time between migration to the UK or indeed relationship to migration (i.e. 1st or 2nd generation), regarded themselves as the main target for any discussion about immigration. It is therefore worth noting that this shared opinion is likely to provide a broad context for their views on the range of issues explored in this study, and on this basis their views can be said to differ from those of White British groups who have lived in the UK for generations. Furthermore, the views of the 65 individuals we consulted for this research cannot simplistically be divided into those that were pro- or anti-immigration. While there was a broad acceptance of the positive aspects of immigration, including recognition of the impact that immigration has had on their own presence in the UK, and indeed a much wider critical view on political messaging, these participants recognised the need both for transparency and consistency to create a system that promoted equality *above* fairness.

Themes

- The role of immigration in the voting behaviour of BME and migrant groups
- The focus of the discourse on immigration: who are the immigrants?
- What is the immigration debate?
- Opinions on the notion of control and fairness
- Opinions on the notion of contribution
- Integration and the English language
- Pace of change
- Integration and Britishness
- What should government address?

4.1 Immigration and voting

The extent to which immigration was an issue of concern that affected the way our participants voted in the last general election was *not* clear-cut. The majority of participants in each focus group noted that it was not of concern when voting, seeing instead a range of other issues including employment (particularly among voters in the 35–50 bracket and specifically with regard to improving employment opportunities for children or younger siblings), education, the NHS, pensions and general support for the poor as more important. These views applied across the spectrum of new migrants and settled British citizens, and tally with recent ComRes (2015) research on voting intention among those from minority ethnic groups. From among those noting their lack of concern around immigration as a voting issue, individuals from settled Black communities related their view from the perspective of their own ethnic backgrounds:

Don't forget that those who can vote are those who are already settled and are part of the system. So those who are bothered about immigration, none of us are at the moment, although we are mindful. I'm mindful of other loved ones and others going through it but if you're settled and you've got your stay then this may not be on[e of] your priorities.

(Broxbourne focus group participant, female, 53, born in Ghana, long term settled)

The idea of being bothered about immigration made me laugh! I'm from Birmingham. It's never been

a concern of mine. I can't imagine caring about someone else being born in a different place to me.

(Birmingham focus group participant, female, 23, Black British, born in UK)

Those from White migrant backgrounds referred more directly to the issue of global migration as a reason for not considering immigration as an important voting issue:

I can understand why some people in Britain are concerned but it's not an issue for me. It's because they don't understand how the world is and somehow they think they're immune from people moving. People have always moved and people get used to a certain way and they don't want to change.

(Acton focus group participant, male, born in Cyprus, long term settled)

However, political party public messaging on immigration did in fact affect some voting decisions, with individuals noting that they would either choose parties which were positive on immigration or actively avoid those perceived as negative:

I voted the other way – I thought 'these guys have got too much focus on immigration and that's not genuine'.

Yes in a way we do vote for immigration, because we vote for the party that helps immigrants. Are they going to make it easier for my brother's wife to come into the country or are they going to make it harder for us to get my uncle over or my father

(Oldham focus group participants, male, born in UK, 34 and 42 respectively)

Immigration would only be a [voting] issue in a negative sense, so if there was a party being negative about immigration I definitely wouldn't vote for them.

(Birmingham focus group participant, male, born in UK, Asian British, 34)

While others saw it as an important issue in view of the impact that policy change on immigration could have on them personally as migrants:

When I voted, Miliband said that he would bring back PSW – post work study and that would be good for students after university. Conservatives had already said it was not going to be possible

(Harrow focus group participant, male, born in India, in UK for 5 years)

It was [important] for me because of the change in the law, the £18,000 [threshold]. How can people earn that much on a low wage?'

(Oldham participant, female, born in Pakistan, in UK for 42 years, 46)

Out of the 65 participants we consulted, 3 did feel immigration was a concern and while not all of these individuals tied their opinion explicitly to voting behaviour, some of their views reflect the economic rather than cultural argument highlighted elsewhere in this report.

I think the British public does have a right to be concerned about immigration because there are many migrants [and] ghettos of segregation, so I think there are issues that should be discussed, however, without pointing out specific groups.

(Acton participant, female, born in Armenia, in UK for 20 years, 62)

In terms of housing, people are concerned that they're on the housing list for ages and yet they see people who have come into the area and all of a sudden have got comfortable housing. And they feel a little bit aggrieved that they have contributed both to the national and the local economy but yet those who have come here and seemingly haven't contributed are fast tracked.

(Birmingham focus group participant, male, born in the UK, Caribbean descent, 56)

I think immigration is important. I think they mentioned having similar procedures as Australia and I don't see anything wrong with that because people coming should have some level of what they're going to contribute.

(Bromley participant, female, born in Jamaica)

4.2 Who are the immigrants now?

This general point around contribution resonated with many long-term-settled older groups and was raised frequently by those who had either been born in the Caribbean or Africa or were older British-born, second-generation individuals. It was part of a broader issue raised about the extent to which discourses of immigration constructed particular images of 'good and bad migrants', forcing those with migration histories to define themselves positively against a more negative other. What this point also raised, however, is the notion that despite the current immigration narrative focused on controlling EU migration, many of the

participants we spoke to, both British-born and those born elsewhere, felt that they were the target of immigration discourse. Nine of our participants had been residing in the UK for 5 years or less, and it would not be unreasonable to expect these feelings to be experienced by those who were recent migrants to the UK, particularly those who had recently sought citizenship or had joined as students. Instead we found individuals who had come to the UK either as children and had lived all their teenage and adult lives in England, or as adults and were now close to retirement or already retired, and feeling as though they were still regarded as immigrants.

When you're talking about immigrants, you're talking about people from Africa [and the] Caribbean because if you're from other parts of Europe, you have no control, you just enter as you like. It's (immigration debate) about people who are not from Europe.

(Southwark participant, male, born in Jamaica, long-term-settled, 76)

I think they're talking about everybody from other countries, like me and [her].

(Southwark participant, female, born in Jamaica, 84; referring to fellow female participant, born in Trinidad, in UK for approx. 30 years, 80)

You're just seen as a black woman and if you're a black woman it's possible that you came and you weren't born here. I think that most of the politicians, when they're talking at the moment they're talking about EU immigration. I'd like to say that we're tucked in a corner and they're not talking about us but I know that's not true.

(Broxbourne participant, female, born in Trinidad, long-term-settled, 66)

And for those born in the UK:

Actually even though I'm born here and I don't have that experience of coming from another country to here, I have experience as a child of immigrants or migrants. Some places you go to and you would see a certain attitude. As a young woman growing up and looking for jobs, I went to a job out of London and when I walked in there was quiet. And I was born here. So why should that happen?

(Broxbourne participant, female, born in UK, Caribbean, 53)

Historically when you say immigration you think 'us'. And now when you think about immigration they're talking about European people. And still I get confused [because] the default position in my head is me, us.

(Oldham participant, male, born in UK, Pakistani, 34)

It is us really. Even at Eid weekend there was a big fight – these two boys were eating in one of the cafes and a woman said 'go back to your own country'. They said, 'go back to my own country? I was born here'.

(Oldham participant, male, born in UK, Pakistani, 35)

These quotes reveal the close relationship that exists between race and immigration for minority ethnic groups, and indeed between racism and immigration. Both those from settled minority ethnic groups and more recent BME migrants noted that ongoing discourses of immigration presented an almost monolithic image of the immigrant or migrant.

The local lay British people cannot differentiate between a professional migrant or an illegal migrant. Anyone who is of a different colour, different accent has 'come here to take our jobs'.

(Broxbourne participant, male, born in Ghana, in UK 25 years, 58)

I've got a valid visa I've got a degree but still I find it difficult to find a job, why? Because no matter what grade I've got no matter what my background is, they will compare me [and say] 'oh there are some illegal people over here as well' so they will count me in that way.

(Harrow participant, male, born in India, in UK 4 years, 24)

Not only, in the opinion of some of the younger participants, did the current immigration discourse enable racist views to be aired openly by politicians and within the press, but it also reduced minority ethnic Britons back to their original migrant status, regardless of the length of time they had lived in the UK, or indeed for others, that they had studied, and paid, for their citizenship.

We can trace it back to the 50s when we had the major waves of migration. Maybe we're harking back to those days. Maybe there's a sense that 'we say what we want to say whoever we are. We're tired of being walked over.

(Birmingham participant, female, born in the UK, African Caribbean, 41)

The debate on immigration is like a cover for another debate on race and racism. It's a way to talk about being anti whatever group you're against [and] that group is usually of colour or [speak] a different language. [It's] having a way to express

some anger about other groups that are perceived as being racially different.

(Birmingham participant, female, born in the UK, Black British, 23)

There was also the feeling, specifically among the Muslim participants, that the convergence of other policy issues together with immigration, made them feel particularly targeted:

For me it's how it's conflated. There are genuine issues and there are non-genuine issues and it's all conflated into one. And it's dead easy then to swing your argument any way you want with Joe Public. The worst thing is the timing, the immigration issue and the extremism issue and it's all conflated into one thing. So when you talk about immigration, you're talking about us, even though you're talking about a European problem.

(Oldham participant, male, born in Bangladesh, in UK for 34 years, 38)

It was only our oldest participants, the individuals born in various parts of the Caribbean and all over the age of 76, who felt that the most recent discourse around immigration was not *always* about them.

They aren't talking about us. Because of the overcrowding and people coming now as a drain on the state, if they don't get jobs ... they haven't paid in and they're just coming in to be a burden on the state. We've been working and giving our contributions, it's the people who are coming and using the country for the facilities.

(Southwark participant, female, born in Trinidad, 80)

We discuss this issue of 'contribution' further below, but it is worth noting that it was only discussed with regard to financial contribution. Cultural contribution – food, traditions, language – did not feature in the debate. Whilst this was clearly built around specific forms of political messaging, opportunities to discuss broader types, forms and levels of contribution were not taken.

Newer migrants, however, recognised that those arriving from the EU appeared to be providing the most political concern. However, recognition of the restrictions on controlling EU immigration among all groups meant that, for some, the real targets of the debate were those from outside of the EU:

They [politicians] talk about non whites because they can't do anything about Europeans.

(Harrow female participant, born in India, in UK for 5 years, 39)

Race has something [to do] with it because you've got the EU, but they don't have the same rules as other ethnic minority immigrants.

The immigration rules don't apply to the EU. I went through the immigration system and I was proper dragged through it. For someone who's been through it and worked and then you've got kids as well, it's really hard.

(Oldham female participants, all born in the UK, Pakistani and British Bengali respectively)

As this section has shown, the relationship of those with either an immediate or historic migration identity to current debates around immigration is complex. With many living in areas with both traditional and newer migrant settlement patterns, much mixing within communities had occurred. This, together with some realisation of the broad links to be drawn across groups, certainly among younger participants, regardless of migrant status and some older settled groups, generated a particular critical view of the way immigration had been talked about both publicly and politically. It is to these responses that we will now turn.

4.3 What is the debate about?

As noted in our methodology section, we presented participants with a series of political messages on immigration, before and after the 2015 election, as well as discussing well-known migrants to the UK. Participants, however, also constructed their own picture of the debate, referring to messages that had left a lasting impact (both positive and negative) either on them personally or their broader perceptions about the value and/or usefulness of the way it had been discussed.

What follows is a list of the way participants both described and evaluated the immigration debate (i.e. its current manifestations, either in political messaging immediately before the election or via ongoing media discussion).² Across all ethnic groups and migrant statuses, participants noted that the immigration debate:

- **Ignores historical migration both to and away from the UK.**

I come from Cyprus, they had Iranians, Turks whatever other minorities there. In Romania there has been a long Armenian community. In Europe people have always come and they're accustomed to the fact that Europe is multicultural. In this country they accentuate all kinds of polarisations.

(Acton participant, male, born in Cyprus, in UK for 48 years)

Fittin Hill is a notoriously racist area in Oldham. There was a couple and we were talking about immigration and they said 'oh we're leaning towards UKIP'. So I went back to [the] post war era and said look we were very short on men because of the war and the industry was booming at that time and we didn't have the manpower to run the mills. And at that time we used immigration. My dad tells me they were that busy that you could walk out of one mill and the owner of the [next] mill would be standing on the street [saying] 'come on in, you can start now and we'll pay you 50p more than the other mill'. At that time it was ok for immigrants to come and help. The UK's only a tiny island, [so] how have we become one of the major players in the world?

(Oldham participant, male, born in the UK, 35)

- **Ignores the contributions to the UK economy by settled minority ethnic groups.**

Immigrants coming here to 'take' but they never talk about what immigrants 'give' and immigrants give a lot more than what they take. Especially [from] the Caribbean, Africa – those are the ones who built this country.

(Broxbourne participant, female, born in Jamaica, in UK for 25 years)

- **Ignores the contributions of newer migrants.**

They [have] come from nothing, and they come here and they become quite successful. They contribute to the community, they pay their taxes but there's a deliberate focus on the negative aspects of immigration. So the CEO of Canary Wharf is Romanian, did anyone ever mention that? No.

(Acton participant, female, born in Romania, in UK for 5 years, 28)

- **Ignores or simplifies the reasons migrants have for journeying to the UK.**

In Sweden we had interpreters and [more] help but we have other problems in Sweden really. It's more racist there. And here the British have more experience with refugees than other European countries. There is more tolerance here – this is my reason for coming. It's not for the money [benefits].

(Acton participant, male, born in Iraq, in UK for 8 months, 39)

- **Lacks transparency.**

This is the narrative. How many Eastern Europeans have come? How many are on benefits? How much are they contributing through taxes and work? We don't know – we've got our media going but we might be much better off than Germany.

(Oldham participant, male, born in Bangladesh, in UK for 34 years)

- **Promotes fear.**

This reminds me of the speech William Hague made a few years ago, opening his front door and thinking he was in a foreign land. On that day it was quite strange, I had actually felt really nervous to go out. It makes you feel that white people, when they're out because of all these debates, that they are just going to label everybody. And they're not worried.

(Birmingham participant, female, born in Hong Kong, in UK for 52 years)

[After] Charlie Hebdo I felt there was a mood shift. I remember the following day going out for a walk and feeling really nervous about it and then coming back and seeing the area that I live in and there was a chip shop [with] Britain First emblazoned all over it. I hadn't seen overtly racist graffiti like that for a long time and was wondering was this because of Paris? It's that anxiety of thinking 'where is this [debate] going'?

(Birmingham participant, female, born in UK, African Caribbean, 41)

None of the participants we consulted described the immigration debate or political messages about it as 'welcoming'. Indeed one recent migrant from India noted 'I feel I am not wanted here. The debate has gone from bad to worse.' However, there are some who with regard to the proposed policy on increasing controls, for example, regarded some messaging positively. And it's to that topic we now turn for a discussion of messaging.

4.4 Control and fairness

The response to political messaging on control and fairness was very mixed, more so than the other messages discussed with respondents. We asked participants to discuss the following quote:

Our economy and our society benefit from the talent and investment of people who come here including university students coming to study. But the system needs to be controlled and managed so that it is fair. Low-skilled migration has been

too high and needs to come down. We need much stronger action to stop illegal immigration.

Largely, all participants agreed that some controls on immigration were necessary, with a small number disagreeing across all discussion groups. On fairness, however, responses were broadly critical with the comment ‘fairness for whom?’ mentioned several times in different locations (notably Birmingham, Acton and Oldham). While participants referred to the necessity for controls, there was less agreement on the ways this could be achieved, with at least one participant ambivalent about the extent to which an increased focus on control would have affected the ability of her parents to settle in the UK and indeed for her to have been born here. Such ambivalences ran through many responses to the messages presented.

4.4.1 Control

The majority of participants in Harrow believed that any policy to control immigration should be targeted at reducing illegal immigration. Some of this related to the impact illegal immigration had on their own identities as new migrants, particularly those who had recently gained citizenship or were still attempting to secure it. For others, and based on their own experiences as students or having worked professionally with them, misuse of student visa rules was a source of concern. A recent change in the rules for employment while engaged in study if born overseas³ had created confusion. These changes were informed by policy plans to curb the enrolment of overseas students at non-recognised institutions in order to further cut migrant numbers, but as a result there was a mixture of anger over student misuse of the system as well as recognition that restrictions placed students in financial difficulty:

Students come here to study but they are working and earning more money, maybe that's what they [politicians] mean when they say it has to be controlled. I think it should be controlled. I work in a college and we have international students, we used to really chase them up for attendance, but they were working. So it should be controlled because if they have come here to study then they should study but if they have come to make money or [are] working ...

(Harrow participant, female, born in India, in UK for almost 5 years, 49)

Many people abuse the system in a bad way. They come here and they say 'oh we are studying, but they're not studying so there should be more control around that.

(Acton participant, female, born in Armenia, UK for 40 years)

They [the rules] are changing so frequently that the students are in fear of the rules. They cannot even focus on study.

(Harrow participant, female, born in India, UK for 5 years, 39)

For others, the notion of control was a broader statement about the loss of control of UK borders, an opinion not dissimilar to those described by British Future as being part of the ‘Anxious Middle’ (see also Lowles and Painter, 2011):

I absolutely agree with that statement. We can look at it like it's an opportunity but we have to manage and control it, that's obvious. We can't just open the floodgates and let everybody come in.

(Oldham participant, born in Bangladesh, in UK for 35 years)

Others felt that distrust had arisen largely because attempts to control immigration were inconsistent – rules were not applied equally, hence the development of a system which continued to fail to meet targets:

You need something that people will understand because at the moment you've got people saying I don't know how that person got in, how that person got in. You create a system, you make it as transparent as you can but to my mind not having anything is leaving it to the politicians to segment us as a population.

(Birmingham participant, female, born in the UK, 52)

There was some belief, however, that controlling immigration was nothing short of a target-meeting exercise with quite personal ramifications for those from minority ethnic backgrounds:

I think the problem is that they've [the government] said that they're going to get immigration down to the tens of thousands and now they've set themselves this target and it's chopping and changing everywhere you can. I give this example of this old man from Cloudsfield. He's here, all his kids have come through the immigration route, him and wife are elderly and they've got no one to care for them over there [in Pakistan]. The government said we're not going to throw you out because you're quite old but if you do go back we're not going to let you back in. Now this old man has said that's my home land, that's where I was born, that's where I was raised, that's where I grew up, that's where my

parents were. Before I die I want to go back and visit that land. It did make me angry.

(Oldham participant, male, born in UK, Pakistani, 35)

Clearly, however, participants recognised that this particular political message created a dichotomy between types of migrant – those that are highly skilled, sometimes wealthy and clearly welcome, and lower-skilled migrants, less welcome and in need of heightened surveillance:

I think the government do a lot of cherry picking. I was a radiographer for a few years and I met a lot of doctors learning procedures from the British NHS. The government of Bangladesh or the African government would pay for their education but once they'd qualified, the British NHS said to them, do you fancy working for us and we'll give you £60,000 a year? I spoke to a doctor and he said 'I'm staying here because in Bangladesh I'm going to be earning £5,000 a year whereas here I'll be earning £60,000'. They can't brain drain countries when they want but then when it becomes overloaded, say 'hold on a minute, we don't want you guys'.

(Oldham participant, male, born in the UK, Pakistani, 42)

The low-skilled point also masks the low-paid employment that many migrants, both EU and non EU, were reliant on. While this links quite clearly to any discussion about the lack of contribution migrants are perceived to make to the economy and the topping up of low wages with welfare benefits, the suggestion of making this aspect of migration tougher to deter low-skilled workers from travelling to the UK was not lost on some of the newer migrants in our sample.

[The Government a]re happy with the high skilled migrants but not the low skilled. [People are] not ready to do the menial jobs. There's a tension there – why don't you address the issue of getting your low skilled British workers to do the menial jobs that low paid or underpaid migrants are doing?

(Acton participant, female, born in Romania, UK for 5 years, 28)

[The Government] needs to remove [the] blindfold and target the cheap labour in all the areas where they employ people for £2 an hour. The minimum wage is £6.70. If you go to Wembley, every shop will have people earning £2 an hour. [There's] a lot of companies they should be targeting.

(Harrow participant, female, born in India, in UK for 12 years, 33)

4.4.2 Fairness

The discussion of fairness took place alongside that of control, but covered a range of other related issues pertaining to the concept in its broadest sense. Fairness was looked at critically by the majority of participants, with reference made to the necessity for consistency if fairness in the system is to be sought, together with a wider discussion about the plight of individuals fleeing poverty, war, etc. On this latter point a blending of the discussion surrounding asylum-seeking and migration often occurred, but again, this reflected both the currency of the ongoing imagery surrounding tragedies and loss of life in the Mediterranean as well as personal experiences of the asylum-seeking process.

Fairness suggested, to the majority of individuals we consulted, a particular starting-point for a discussion about immigration – one that either did not include them personally or created a hierarchy of migrant groups based on wealth, class and skill:

I think [fairness] has something to do with the economy and what the British public wants. I think it has to be fair to the people who have come in once you've allowed them to come in.

(Acton participant, female, born in Romania, in UK for 5 years, 28)

Obviously it has to be fair for both sides, fair for the immigrant and fair for society. Fairness implies some sort of equality.

(Acton participant, male, born in Cyprus, in UK for 48 years, 60)

A fair system would be a non-racist system – a system that doesn't define people from South Asian [backgrounds] as being negative and poverty stricken so they're coming in to sponge off the country and doesn't say that immigrants from Australia are brilliant and should come here. Dealing with each immigrant as an individual rather than a statistic.

(Oldham participant, female, born in the UK, Pakistani, 40)

For me this fair is not about keeping out the footballers and the bankers. To me this is about the low skilled, the most people in need because I don't see anybody saying we need a quota on merchant bankers coming into the country. They don't mean everybody because it's about talent and investment, so when they talk about fair I know who they mean. It's those other groups you really don't want to come in and you're controlling those groups.

(Birmingham participant, female, born in the UK, 52, Black Caribbean)

I have a fundamental problem with when you hear white English people saying I've left school I'm going travelling and while I'm travelling, I'll take a gap year and to fund it I'll take jobs here and there. There's nothing in their brain that says oh have I got a right to do that? Am I welcome in that country? Natalie Bennett⁴ said she came here as a student and loved it so much she stayed. Would a Chinese student be able to stay because they love it? No, they wouldn't and then they finish and then they're booted out.

(Birmingham female participant, born in Hong Kong, in UK for 52 years, 53)

This notion that fairness only seemed to be applicable with regard to particular groups of migrants, was a fairly consistent point of contention among the participants. The linking of the words control and fairness in the quote above was problematical for this reason, with fairness itself raising more criticism than the use of the word control alone. Indeed participants in Birmingham, Broxbourne and Oldham were particularly critical of the way the concept was used in immigration policy discourse, with those in Birmingham reflecting on it as a broad concept situated in a discussion that was already unequal:

I think the challenge for the 'system' is for people to agree on the concept of fairness, because no matter what system you have, fairness and equality are not the same thing and people presume that those words are interchangeable and they're not. So what might seem fair is that everyone has to wait the same amount of time to get access to x, y, z. Actually equality may be [that] someone gets it sooner because their need is greater ...

(Birmingham participant, female, born in the UK, Black British, 23)

For those commenting on the issue of fairness elsewhere, particularly in Broxbourne and Oldham, the difficulty with the concept of fairness related to their own experience of the immigration system as one in which decisions appeared to be made arbitrarily and continuous policy changes led to confusion over immigration rules:

I know of a case where they applied for asylum as a family unit. The mother and three brothers were granted but the other brother was not. They were a family unit under the same application. It got to court and the judge said, 'Ok this is a family unit, how then one is not granted while the rest of the

family [is]?' There are certain cases where it is fair, rules are there and guidelines are there.

(Broxbourne participant, male, born in Ghana, in UK for 25 years, 58)

It depends on the individual working in there [Home Office]. I can send off the same documents as you. You get through, I don't.

(Broxbourne female participant, born in Jamaica, in UK for 25 years)

They change the rules every now and then so by the time you think you're ready to apply for something the rule has already changed. You have to be very aware. For immigration, naturalisation, there are exams one has to do. Now the rule is after the 5th November one exam, so people who have done it who might want to apply next year, their certificates are void.

When I applied, discretionary leave was in human rights, now it's not in human rights! Inconsistency – you don't know what to do, you're stuck.

(Harrow participants, female, born in India)

4.5 Contribution

The subject of contribution to the UK generated the greatest level of discussion across all locations and was prompted by the following political quote:

We will negotiate new rules with the EU, so that people will have to be earning here for a number of years before they can claim benefits, including the tax credits that top up low wages. Instead of something-for-nothing, we will build a system based on the principle of something-for-something.

As previously mentioned, there are differences in the way this term was used by settled communities and newer migrants, with older participants referring to their length of financial contribution to the UK in comparison to a perceived lower level engaged in by newer groups. Older Caribbean and African participants were more likely than others to raise the issue of contribution in this way, often doing so as a way of providing a broader context for any discussion on immigration, but also in an apparent attempt to justify their place as historical migrants in the UK.

Contribution also, however, referred to welfare – those able to receive support from the UK have earned this right through the payment of taxes and contribution to the economy and society overall. This was a divisive topic and is often placed at the heart of ongoing media and political debate about

immigration, a factor not lost on the participants in this study. This issue also raised most starkly the distinction between EU and non-EU migrants:

EU migrants [a]re not all coming over to claim benefits. It's in the politicians' interest to get us all hating each other

(Oldham participant, female, born in the UK, 35)

The agreement here is that migrants don't come here to claim benefits. I know many people who have come here recently and they've not come here because there's a welfare system, they've come here to work, but the problem is, where is the work?

(Oldham participant, male, born in the UK, 35)

All participants agreed that a consistently applied system with regard to welfare receipt, including for White British-born individuals, would be the fairest. There was some feeling, however, that the focus on access to welfare, in a similar way to health tourism, was accusatory and negative, which according to one participant in Oldham 'closed down the debate':

The benefit debate is misguided and it's what we've created. I don't even think it's a relevant debate because if 95% of people say we've come here for a better life ... in the news we hear about bodies found on rooftops, bodies found on top of a train. Why are people risking [this]? Look at the people in Calais, why are they risking that? It's like the terrorism debate – we don't look at the root causes we're just looking at what happens here. Risking limb and life to get to here or anywhere else in Europe. Why would you do that, risk your wife, your children, your parents? And people are dying stranded at sea. We're not asking that question.

(Oldham participant, male)

They might have a job and lose it after 8 months of coming into the country and in most northern towns we have high unemployment and they might genuinely be trying to find work. And what do we do then? Say to them thank you for coming but you can't get a job so now go off back to your own country?

(Oldham participant, male, born in the UK, 42)

I know a lot of students, their parents are paying a lot of money. They are not entitled to the working system, the loans. If you look at the Chinese who are here, their parents are paying a lot and they are not allowed to work so they will not be able to contribute their skills.

(Broxbourne participant, male, born in Ghana, in UK for 25 years, 58)

This issue generated either complete empathy between EU and non-EU migrants in discussion or widened divisions. Among those from the EU, a fair amount of anger was felt about the way popular and political discourse had portrayed them with regard to benefits.

In terms of cutting benefits for low wages, low wages do not exist because of migrants. They exist because the employers are not paying. I [do] think it is fair to contribute before you take something out. This implies that most of the people from the EU come here to claim benefits. Either they work or they claim benefits, which one is it? But they claim benefits for low wages, otherwise you become homeless.

(Acton participant, female, born in Romania, 28)

While some of the younger participants were particularly concerned about the status afforded to the able-bodied and wealthy within immigration discourse:

The immigration discourse is that you have to be excellent to be worth being in the UK. It presumes that you have to be able to contribute to society and if you can't then you don't belong here. But if you're a disabled person and you've migrated from France to England and you can't work are you saying that on the basis of them being unable to be economically valuable that they have no inherent value in this country?

(Birmingham participant, female, born in the UK, Black British, 23)

There was some discussion about immigration rules being more favourable to those migrating from within the EU in comparison to those who had travelled from outside it, with views more keenly felt among older Caribbean and African individuals and younger British born Pakistani or Bangladeshi participants who had struggled with spousal visas. This stood in contrast to views expressed by older White migrants who felt those migrating from outside the EU were treated more favourably within policy.

More broadly, however, the experiences of migrants and asylum-seekers and refugees were often conflated in order to develop an argument about contribution and fairness to the extent that it was not always clear who the 'migrant' was:

Some people can't put themselves in other people's places. Some people come over from suffering, they have no jobs they have no place. They're punished in their own countries, they have nowhere else to go.

(Southwark participant, female, born in Trinidad, In UK for approximately 30 years, 80)

It depends on the situation. If they come here because of some problem in their country how are they going to survive here?

(Acton participant, female, born in Armenia, in UK for 20 years, 62)

The conflation itself, however, was seen as a symptom of a broader problem relating to the way immigration was discussed as a political subject:

Really for us the issue is, how are we on a daily basis interacting with these people? Benefits doesn't come into it. If I'm on tax credit and I'm getting my tax credit, a million people are coming through and I'm still getting my tax credit it doesn't practically affect [me]. If someone says to me tomorrow or 5 years down the line, you're going to lose your tax credit because these people are coming in, then you start going 'ah' and that's the scaremongering. The scaremongering is conflating issues, but part of that feels like it's to do with Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, so as long as you've got a counter-issue going on you can detract somewhat from major events. A billion people are getting killed ... you're going to lose your benefits mate.

(Oldham participant, male, born in Bangladesh, in UK for 34 years)

The above statement raises a separate issue and one which was raised quite specifically by those who were migrants, either recently or had migrated some time ago – the relationship between immigration and integration. For some communities, particularly those speaking to us in Oldham and Harrow, the issue of integration was an immediate and thorny one. Both locations have high proportions of residents from South Asian backgrounds, with Oldham a subject of ongoing concerns around segregation following disturbances in 2001, and recent political interest in an upcoming by-election in Oldham West, scheduled for December 2015, for which UKIP is likely to campaign heavily.

4.6 Pace of change

One issue raised in polling on immigration has featured the 'pace of change' argument – numbers of migrants changing local populations with attendant pressures on local public services and resources. The participants we consulted were as aware of these arguments as White British individuals and their responses can be categorised in two ways.

First there were those who felt that patterns of new migrant settlement had impacted on local areas, with some attaching no value to this at all and others referring to broader local impact on schools and housing. Second, however, all participants, again regardless of length of time in the UK, or indeed whether they had been born in the UK, felt that the integration aspect of the immigration debate negatively referred to them. On the latter issue citizenship rules, segregation and overall definitions of what does and does not constitute Britishness were subjects creating some personal concern and often anxiety among new migrants as well as those from settled minority ethnic communities, both UK-born or born abroad.

Participants in Oldham were the most vocal on this issue, noting that immigration had indeed changed the areas in which they lived, both recently and over time. Waves of historical migration from Pakistan and Bangladesh had particularly affected local areas in ways that all were able to reflect on regardless of their ages

When I was a little kid there were more white faces. We live in pockets of our own communities where we feel comfortable and unfortunately white people have moved out.

(Oldham participant, female, born in the UK, British Bengali, 35)

We've had more issues because of these no-go areas. Fittin Hill is like a no-go area now and this is all after the race riots and everything. The tensions are worse

(Oldham participant, female, born in Pakistan, 40)
My neighbours are white. People are moving back in because I think the perceptions are changing about Oldham. There was always tolerance. It was more fear than anything. People are more worried about the EU migrants than us.

(Oldham participant, female, born in the UK, Bangladeshi, 40)

I remember when I went to school, you could not walk home. Forget kids, people's parents used to come out [shouting] 'Pakis go home, Pakis go home'. [We were] 14, 15. Count Hill School was predominantly white. But then what was the default position? They all went to schools that were predominantly Asian. So how do you stop that? This Waterhead academy is almost forced integration.

(Oldham participant, male, born in Bangladesh, in UK for 34 years, 38)

Waterhead Academy in Oldham, referred to here by the speaker above, was discussed a great deal on the issue of integration by participants. It results from a merging of two schools in Oldham – Counthill, referred to above, which had a predominantly White pupil population, and Breeze Hill with a large Asian, predominantly Muslim, population – in an attempt to address segregation in both schools. As a result, schools and integration featured heavily in discussions by and among the 18 Oldham residents we spoke to, as the school itself and the discourse which had prompted its development were regarded with a mix of cautious welcome and concern:

I can see the positive side of it. I watched them play cricket the other day against Bluecoat which is a totally all-white school and it was good to see Asian kids representing Waterhead Academy as well as the white kids and it wasn't the colour of the skin that mattered. It was the team kit representing. 5 years ago or 10 years ago they'd be in a 99.9% Asian school. When you look at them now meeting other kids from different backgrounds, they're checking each other out in a controlled environment, it takes away that stereotypical view of each other.

(Oldham participant, male, born in Bangladesh, in UK for 34 years, 38)

While these participants recognised how waves of immigration from Pakistan and Bangladesh had affected their areas with regard to tolerance, acceptance or, indeed as mentioned, rejection by White British families, a small number felt that new waves of migration were qualitatively different from those engaged in either by their parents or, among older individuals, themselves:

EU immigration is the issue at the moment. We have got a problem round where I live to be honest with you. I don't want to judge people but there doesn't seem to be many people who are working. Sometimes there are 20, 30 people living in a 2 bed roomed house

(Oldham participants, male: born in Bangladesh, in UK for 34 years; born in Pakistan, in UK for 20 years; respectively)

However, others recognised the discourse used by those worried about this pace of change and highlighted the similarities between it and the way their own parents were described by White British residents years before. As one participant had raised earlier in this section, the issue for those from minority ethnic backgrounds with regard to immigration is not necessarily the benefits or

the welfare support question, but what relates to integration:

When you talk about immigration a lot of people tend to focus on the Romanian community or people coming from abroad. They're seen as problematic particularly in the Huddershaw area and the schools that are struggling to meet their needs with language, etc., and I think this is like what we went through 30 or 40 years ago when we were at school. So there's a lack of acceptance about these new communities settling in the UK. And even the segregation where Polish or Romanian children are taught in small groups with language workers before they're integrated within classrooms, this is what happened when we were young.

(Oldham participant, female, born in the UK, British Bengali, 35)

It's almost like every two or three decades you will see the more established communities feel intimidated and this sort of narrative does develop. In terms of EU freedom of movement, you can't stop that but that's not to say that people from the other countries desperately want to come to Britain. If you look at the [Daily] Mail and the Express, just before the election where it says one million people waiting to come into Britain, that's not true. And the issue that we have with the Roma is that if you're going to let people in then you've got to integrate them in a manner that is acceptable to them and is acceptable to the settled indigenous communities here. All of these arguments about, they're not working, causing chaos, there's 20 in a house, our forefathers, 20 lived in a house! The issue for me here is that the authority doesn't have the package in place to integrate or smooth their path. Where are the jobs for these people to do?

(Oldham participant, male, born in Bangladesh, UK for 37 years, 45)

4.7 Integration and the English language

The majority of the participants felt that speaking English was necessary to enable settlement in the UK but were less convinced that other requirements for citizenship, including many questions in the UK Citizenship test itself, were necessary for Britishness. Learning English was regarded more, however, as a way to make life easier for migrants, particularly with accessing services and speaking with neighbours as well as reducing isolation and, for some, exploitation. There was less acceptance that learning English was essential to being British, though participants commented on it being useful for integration. Some

of the older participants, particularly those born in non-English-speaking countries, felt that the British as colonisers had never sought to learn the languages of the countries they had settled in, while also declining to integrate with indigenous groups. They were more cynical than newer migrants or younger participants about the necessity of learning English, or of its relationship to Britishness.

Others referred to the practical difficulties of accessing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses, due to poor availability:

The government talks about integration, last year they cut the adult skills budget. It's gone again by another 4%. They create all this narrative – 'immigration's a problem', but at the same time they're decimating what's in place to help people learn. Oldham College is probably going to drop the whole of the adult skills because the money's not there.

(Oldham participant, male, born in UK, Pakistani, 35)

4.8 Integration and Britishness

While accepting the use of learning English to settle and be part of society, participants were less able to agree on what else should constitute Britishness. Many participants not born in the UK could point to certain traditions or customs but also, in line with British Future's research, broader issues such as tolerance and respecting the rule of law:

Britishness is acceptance. I can go to the mosque 5 times a day. That's acceptance.

[It's] tolerance.

(Oldham participants, male, both born in the UK)

I don't think it should be imposed on anybody that you have to support the English football team or have fish and chips! That should be a personal choice.

When my colleagues go to the pub, I don't. But that's not the only place you can integrate.

(Oldham participants, female, both born in the UK)

All participants who were recent migrants were unanimous in their view that the Life in the UK Citizenship Test should not be the key to Britishness, largely due to the lack of practical information contained within it. For them, it was unfortunate that a failure to pass this test could prevent them from gaining citizenship in the UK:

There is nothing wrong with getting some general knowledge but that [Life in the United Kingdom] book is very high level. And this is not a very good way to teach someone about a country, like what happened so many years before, how is it going to affect my life? I want to know how do I cross the road. I want to know who is going to help me if I fall into problems. I really don't want to know what happened a thousand years ago, who was the king, how many times he got married!

(Harrow participant, female, born in India, in UK for 8 years)

Today [if] you ask me a question about life in the UK, I don't know anything! I just crammed it and I passed it, and it's over and done.

(Harrow participant, female, born in India, in UK for almost 5 years)

Others, however, felt that the implication that integration was key to Britishness not only placed the burden for integration on migrants themselves, but extended this burden to the second and third generations of those migrants also:

They keep saying people come here and they don't want to integrate. They keep to themselves. But they don't want to mix with us either.

(Broxbourne participant, female, born in Jamaica, in UK for 25 years)

When I went to uni my friends, all white, asked me where do you stay? And I said 'Harrow', and they said 'oh yeah, all Indians all Asians live there, we have never been into that area'. That's how they look at Harrow.

(Harrow participant, male, born in India, in UK for 4 years, 24)

What is that we're not doing? Our kids all support a football team, they're always watching football, cricket, they're doing a whole range of things out in society, so it's not that we're not doing anything,. We're contributing more now than we were 20 years ago. It's more like us not having a choice and people pushing us into corners saying you should be doing this and this. Why aren't they going to an estate like Fittin Hill which is predominantly White and saying 'what are you guys doing to celebrate British values and what are you contributing?' It's just sometimes I feel like we just get pushed in a little corner [with someone] say[ing] 'you 10 guys, what are you contributing?'

(Oldham participant, male, born in Bangladesh, in UK for 34 years, 38)

The participants in Oldham, given the historical public and political concern over the difficulties communities have experienced with mixing, were particularly concerned with the subject of integration which for them pointed to older patterns of immigration. Interestingly, despite much public discussion of segregation within Oldham schools and problems with both Asian and White parents, together with those in Bradford and Burnley, the other towns in which disturbances occurred in 2001, the residents we spoke to saw schools as ideal places for integration. They spoke of wanting their children to be educated in ethnically mixed schools, with many successfully making choices of school that enabled this to happen. Others, however, saw that choice was simply not exercised, particularly in areas like Oldham:

Unfortunately the area that I live in I am in the catchment area for the schools that my children go to and it's predominantly Asian and if I had a choice I would probably send them to a mixed school because it's the best for them, to become tolerant, to understand communities.

(Oldham participant, female, born in the UK, British Bengali, 35)

My son is going to secondary school and he's going to an area where there [are] not many Asians so I am a bit scared inside [and] my son he was a bit as well but [after] he went for the induction, he felt really comfortable. I did make him understand you know we're living in this country and we have to meet everyone and everyone is equal.

(Oldham participant, female, born in Pakistan, in UK for 13 years, 29)

There's a natural way of integrating. One platform is school, we come together formally and informally learn about each other and we come out the other end understanding each other. I have a good mix of friends and we interact – they go to pubs and I can't and we're ok with that. They do that when I'm not there. What the government has to do is replicate that. You can't send people to school but you have to think about replicating a mechanism such as school for everyone to come into and come out the other end understanding each other.

(Oldham participant, male, born in the UK, Pakistani, 34)

Ultimately immigration was seen as good for integration. As one participant suggested: 'the only way you will get along is if you have a neighbour of a different religion or from a different country'. There was concern that the requirement for migrants to

integrate, positioned as part of the conditions for access to the UK, was not matched by resources to aid this process. So while children were able to meet and mix in schools, opportunities for adults to do the same were not as plentiful, as one of the participants suggested earlier. And while some migrant adults were able to access the dwindling availability of English-language classes, providing training alongside this would help to counter increasing rates of unemployment among Bangladeshi and Pakistani individuals:

If we're asking for English courses there has to be employment at the end of the line for people coming here as well.

(Oldham participant, female, born in the UK, Pakistani, 32)

Migrants and organisations supporting them are well placed to assist with the processes of settlement and integration, but even those we spoke to with expertise in this area felt that there was a broader perception that this support exacerbated rather than addressed segregation:

None of us would actually be in this room now if these issues were not recognised by someone like me who had to go through integration the tough way and had to face bullying and everything else and then set up this group to help people integrate. That mutual support is important but it is not ghettoism. Involvement in the community is very important because it will help you integrate, they will show you around, they will show you what rights you have. I don't think government recognises the role that we play.

(Acton participant, male, born in Cyprus, in UK for 48 years, 60)

4.9 What should government address?

Finally, we asked participants to make suggestions for change with regard to immigration and these recommendations are a mixture of broader opinions on debate change, for example with older settled community members of Caribbean and African heritage asking that more value be placed on the migrants already in the UK combined with requests for clarity, transparency and consistency, be this with regard to Home Office decision-making or criteria for access. More specifically, however, for migrants, both recent and settled, the suggestions made were drawn from personal experiences of the immigration system itself. Here we highlight a selection of their key recommendations.

- **The development of a transparent and clear immigration system**

Probably you need something like the Australian system but whatever system we have it has to be applied consistently. On principle I don't like the points system. If you want to maintain some sort of community cohesion, yes you need to educate people and help them to learn how to get along with each other, but you need a process that everyone understands.

(Birmingham participant, female, born in the UK, 52)

- **Developing policy that avoids populist responses**

[Government should] stop pandering to right wing and populist opinion and display enough integrity to have a genuine conversation about this.

Don't link immigration to a religion or a colour.

(Oldham participants, male)

- **Incorporating cultural definitions of family into immigration policy**

I belong to a family where my parents and my brother are British, and I am the only Indian. I am an international student, we fill in the forms and we send back as a child of British parents. I should have naturalisation as British. Just because I am over age it doesn't mean that I don't have any bonding with my parents or family. In our Asian culture, we stay together as a family, no matter how big the child is, even if he is married with his kids. There should be no limitation on age terms. They say after 18 you are independent and you don't have to live with your parents. In this country we have aged people, they are very lonely and there is no one to look after them. We, in our community, are brought up in such a way that we will look after our parents, but they are not allowing us to do that.

(Harrow participant, male, born in India, in UK for 5 years, 29)

My children are stateless. Me and my husband are British. I became British just last year. They still have to pass their [citizenship] exams. I'm British now, my husband is British, the father is not going to change, that's the son, what's the idea of waiting 5 years or 10 years? It's the same son, it's the same father. My children were stateless when they were born. I was Indian, my husband was British and they were born in Kenya, but still give them the right? But no you have to come and stay in the country for x number of years.

(Harrow participant, female, born in India, in UK for almost 5 years, 49)

- **Re-evaluating the cost of fees for application and reapplication/appeal**

She's a single parent and she can't afford the fees she has to pay. Every April the fees go up. Any application fees, everybody's got issues with the fees. She's fine now but the amount of money she has to pay as a single parent – she has to borrow money to become British. Just because she lost her husband. She's the main breadwinner. People have those sorts of issues.

(Harrow participant, female, born in Kenya, in UK for 42 years, 63)

I've got friends and family – they live here for a while and they reapply but when they reapply they turn them down. They apply again, they turn them down again. And they keep taking this money. Why keep taking the money? Tell them to go home then but don't take the money. You're taking six, seven hundred pounds, just for Home Office fees alone. And what they have to pay for lawyers, they keep taking their money.

(Bromley participant, female, born in Jamaica, in UK 15 years, 46)

- **Speedier responses to visa requests**

On the visa system, people who apply to stay here: answer them quickly, you can't have them waiting for 10 or 15 years in limbo. As a British person, you wouldn't stay in limbo for 15 years without seeing your family or going for a holiday. You wouldn't want to have to stay in the same place for 10 years. [We] wait for 10 years and then they lose [ou]r documents.

(Acton participant, male, born in Armenia, in UK for 10 years, 69)

What makes my blood boil is the backlog. The system discriminates. My wife has been here for over 25 years she doesn't have papers. [My son] was born here, he's not even considered British. He's not acknowledged in my country, he doesn't have documents in my country, he's not acknowledged in Jamaica but he is called an African Caribbean! The letters that they send from the Home Office are just cut and paste. Who is investigating the Home Office?

(Bromley participant, male, born in Ghana, in UK for 25 years)

When I got married, we went to the British Embassy and got the visa on the day. Now we have to pass an English test, and because of the terrorism threat, we have to send our forms off to Dubai. It can take up to 6 months or a year. We don't even speak to the British Consulate now, it's all just a waiting game, whereas before it was face to face on the day, took your forms and decided yes or no.

(Oldham participant, male, born in UK, Pakistani, 42)

Be more open and straightforward and say you're not allowed to stay here, finished, so that the person will know what to do and how to plan their life. Just lingering for years and years and people live with fear. There's a lot of fear in this country, they inject fear into people.

(Acton participant, female, born in Armenia, in UK for 20 years)

If you're taking up to 10 years to decide whether someone's immigration status is a yes they can stay or no they can't, controlled immigration is just a fallacy.

(Birmingham participant, female, born in UK, Black Caribbean)

- **Reassess family migration policy, take average minority ethnic incomes into consideration and prevent family separation**

Anyone on a minimum wage can't meet this immigration threshold of £18,600. It's ridiculous. You might as well say we're not letting anyone non-EU come in. You go through it the first time, two years later you have to go through the whole process again. I went through it a year ago and I'm readying myself to go through it again. Earning £18,000 I hardly saw my son when he was young, he was always in childcare because I had to meet that £18,600 threshold and now we have to go through the same process two years later. They should look at each case individually. If you're calling your spouse over and you're genuinely together for two years I think these restrictions should be loosened.

(Oldham participant, female, born in the UK, Pakistani, 35)

With my sister, it's been nearly three years. She's got the visa but her little baby, she's a 1-year-old now, she left her when she was three months old because she still couldn't get the visa. They applied many times, as much as they can and they've paid so much as well. The baby's father is British

but they're just making excuses for not giving the baby's visa. She's here and now she can't go back, she only can go for 1 week or 2 weeks and it's really hard. My sister she appealed so many times.

(Oldham participant, female, born in Pakistan, in UK for 13 years)

Notes

1. The Family Migration Rules 2012 introduced a minimum income requirement on those in the UK wishing to bring over their spouses and children from a country outside the EU. The sponsoring individual would need to be earning £18,600 or up to £24,000, approximately, if bringing over a spouse and children in order to demonstrate that neither they nor their spouse would be dependent financially on the state.
2. It is important to note that our focus groups occurred at a time when topical discussion was centred on the perilous journeys being made by thousands of migrants across the Mediterranean from countries including Libya. However, they occurred prior to the growing media attention centred on Syrian refugees since the latter part of August 2015.
3. From 3 August 2015, Tier 4 students taking courses in further education colleges are no longer able to work to support themselves, specifically if applying after this deadline.
4. Natalie Bennett is leader of the Green Party.

5. Conclusions

This study has explored the responses and opinions of minority ethnic and migrant groups to the subject of immigration, presenting the views of groups of individuals whose voices rarely feature in debate or discussion about policy areas which could have a direct impact on their lives. Our findings have shown that real differences exist in what minority ethnic and migrant individuals think about immigration in comparison to White British groups, and that while there are clear points of agreement between the latter and some of the long-term-settled British groups of minority ethnic background, their experiences of migration and/or of coming from a minority ethnic group influences their views on this topic.

Our national debate on immigration too often occurs (most notably during the recent election) without an attendant incorporation of the views of immigrants, migrants and/or those from minority ethnic groups. The views of the 65 participants we consulted both prior to and immediately after the General Election of May 2015 reveal anxieties about the impact that immigration discourse has had on them as member of minority groups, anger at the delays within and costs of the immigration system itself and broad calls for an increase in transparency and consistency around decision-making processes. There is a consensus among minority ethnic and migrant groups that immigration is good for the UK, that it provides economic benefit but also aids cohesion and integration rather than hampering it. Politically, however, there are a number of policy areas that require some attention if the views of minority ethnic and migrant groups are to be incorporated. Our recommendations have been gathered together within the executive summary at the beginning of this report, but, to reiterate their core content here, we observe that they may be broken down into a number of themes.

First is the question of inclusion, or as our title indicates: the feeling that the immigration debate is still about 'us', meaning not just migrants (no matter their citizenship status or years of residence), but also their Black and minority ethnic children. For any debate on migration to lay claim to being 'fair', it needs to incorporate these voices better (see also Migrant Voice, 2014).

Second, and somewhat related, is *how* we can or should talk about immigration, perhaps especially among pro-immigration speakers. Too often

migration is spoken about solely in economic terms, and the low number of white British people who agree about its cultural benefits is in strong contrast not only with the views of BME Britons, but also those of all our geographical neighbours and other comparative countries.

Third is that there are indeed concerns about the benefits system, and many Black and minority ethnic people do refer to pressures on public services. Here there is perhaps more variation among different BME groups who are after all becoming much more diverse than they were even a decade ago. Many BME people too are concerned about the 'fairness' of the welfare system, although some also interpret this to mean that it is often unfair that they have to consistently 'prove' they are (equally) British or that their children have equal entitlement to public services and benefits.

Another more general way to put this is that while BME people may often appear to hold similar opinions and attitudes on immigration to those of the white British majority, their experiences often mean that their reasons for holding those opinions differ. So, for example, there are concerns about the fairness of benefits for new migrants, but this is often framed by older migrants in terms of the unfairness of newer European migrants getting access to benefits that older Caribbean, African or Asian migrants didn't receive. There needs to be a much clearer positive affirmation that naturalised British citizens are equal to British-born citizens, not just in terms of rights but in terms of contributing to a national identity and to public debate, and in terms of access to benefits as well.

Fourth are issues related to the immigration system itself. Many participants recounted personal or family experiences of having been poorly treated within the immigration system, some having been kept waiting longer than a decade for a decision, and others having been separated from infants because of visa rules. Allied to these experiences is the notion that while there may be shared concerns around the economic impact of immigration, particularly in terms of public resources in local areas, most ethnic minorities and migrants are concerned and often worried about more 'cultural' arguments that question the contribution they, their parents and children have made and continue to make to life in the UK. This reflects concerns about the public discourse on immigration, and its effect

on the millions of migrants living here, as well as the millions of British-born BME residents.

Fifth, the government needs to revise its integration strategy and policy. This should be linked to work on discrimination in the labour market, and involve providing resources to those local areas undergoing rapid and extensive population change, and those wanting to sustain or improve their ESOL provision. More generally, discussion and policy-making on 'British values' should focus on recognised values, such as tolerance, democracy, non-discrimination and equality, and not on aesthetic or dietary preferences.

Sixth and last is the debate on Europe, which hasn't so far engaged Black and minority ethnic people. Issues including free movement, Britain's place in the world and access to benefits all vary in their impact on different minority ethnic and migrant groups, and there is an opportunity to expand the debate on the meaning and value of Britain's place in Europe in the run-up to the referendum due to take place in 2016.

In the past politicians were more open about race being central to the debate on migration. As British Future have reminded us, Rab Butler's 1961 cabinet memorandum on the first Commonwealth immigration controls would have been presented as colour-blind, but in fact had a racial motive: they were 'intended to and would in fact operate on coloured people almost exclusively' (quoted in Paul, 1997: 166). While we must of course recognise the important progress we have made in the intervening decades, our evidence suggests that many BME Britons are still concerned that the immigration debate is always really about them. What does this mean, not only for their participation in the immigration debate and policy-making, but more widely about their place in Britain and the future for their children?

Our recommendations therefore respond to our key findings, and are focused on what we believe can further progress the positive changes we've seen in Britain's treatment of Black and minority ethnic people across the past few decades. In the 800th anniversary year of the Magna Carta and the 50th anniversary year of the first Race Relations Act, we still haven't delivered on the promise of equal treatment for all of Britain's residents, but by changing our immigration debate, and the policies that flow from any such improved communication, we can also better promote race equality.

5.1 Key findings

1. Immigration more positive than negative:

As with the wider population, Black and minority ethnic people see some positives and some negatives for immigration to Britain. However they are more likely to see the positives, particularly in terms of economic and cultural contributions to British life.

2. Benefits – Recognition of pressure on public services, but concern about rights too:

Where BME people are concerned about levels of immigration, this is more likely to focus on the fairness of benefits, or the pressure on social welfare policies. At the same time, some participants felt 'fairness' arguments about access to school places and maternity services could imply that they and their British-born children have fewer rights to access public services, or that they increasingly have to 'prove' they are actually British and entitled to access public services and benefits.

3. Discomfort with arguments about too much cultural change:

Ethnic minorities and recent migrants are less comfortable with or more put off by pace-of-change arguments or indeed any suggestion that 'things aren't recognisable around here anymore'. This suggests a difference between 'economic' and 'cultural' arguments about immigration, and we found this even among 'apolitical' participants.

4. Immigration debate can negatively affect BME people, including those who are British-born:

Almost all of our participants agreed that the immigration debate was about them, even among those born in Britain. Longer-term settled migrants and indeed their adult children will consider themselves to be the immigrants or migrants at the centre of immigration debate when it arises. There was some anxiety as well as anger about the nature of the immigration debate and policy, with some mentioning the 'Go Home' vans and the wider 'hostile environment' policy agenda.

5. Variation in opinion between different groups:

There is some difference between how minority ethnic and migrant groups understand the positives and benefits of migration. Long-settled migrants often feel they have had a difficult time in Britain, or at least following their initial arrival; they then may see or think that newer migrants have had better or easier experiences, i.e. in terms of access to benefits or navigating the system more successfully. Many long-term-settled, overseas-born people will

consider themselves British and *not* migrants. In some sense this allows them to effectively endorse what they see as the British anti-immigrant norm, but in other ways they explicitly recognise that anti-immigrant sentiments harm them too, whatever their own views about the levels and benefits of more recent immigration.

6. **Unfairness and arbitrariness in the immigration system:** Even when people generally agree with more restrictionist policies, or with UKIP's 2015 manifesto discussion on 'fairness', *at an individual level* they are likely to highlight what they view as unfair or arbitrary within the immigration system. Perceptions of unfairness and personal experiences of arbitrariness in their dealings with the immigration system include: the citizenship test and its associated costs (£1005 for naturalisation plus £80 ceremony); and family visa policies that include the lack of clarity around changes in UK Border Agency policy, Home Office responses to immigration queries, continuous visa fee rises, lack of control within, and confusion about, the immigration system in general.
7. **Ambivalence about the benefits of Europe:** Many Black and minority ethnic people are ambivalent about the benefits of the European Union. They appear less likely to take advantage of free movement; i.e. very few move about for work and (arguably) feel less 'solidarity' or 'shared identity' with others in Europe. Some view Europe in explicitly ethnic or racial terms, identifying 'Fortress Europe' as a way of keeping out non-white immigrants while allowing significant levels of European migration.
8. **But more latently pro-EU because of concerns about nativism:** At a time when people are concerned about nativist views, being pro-Europe aligns with a wider protection from discrimination, even if they don't avail themselves of EU membership's more obvious benefits. People may also be pro-Europe because it represents a wider internationalism. However, the younger British-born are more likely to take a holiday, e.g. to Spain, and to consider working/studying in Europe.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Black and minority ethnic people and migrants must be included more regularly in policy debates and policy thinking on migration. There are reasonable discussions about the benefits and costs of immigration, but such discussions need to recognise that Black and minority ethnic people are often negatively affected both by immigration discourse and policy (for example 'Go Home' vans and landlord checks). The benefits of immigration should be framed in terms of cultural and social contribution, not just in terms of economic cost-benefit calculations. In the coming debate on the European referendum, BME voices and attitudes need much more prominence.
2. While the government talks about the importance of integration, it has no national strategy or resources ear-marked for delivering on integration. In developing an integration strategy, policy must also include how 'settled' communities can adapt to newer populations as well as seeking to provide information and support to migrants. An integration strategy should also combat discrimination and systemic inequalities between migrants and non-migrants, as well as between ethnic minorities and white British people, including in the labour market.
3. As part of the above integration strategy, immigrants should be provided with a 'handbook' of information about British life, including their rights and responsibilities, and how to access public services and benefits to which they are entitled, rather than the information currently given which is geared specifically to passing the 'Life in the UK' test. Citizenship fees should be reduced from the current figure of well over £1000 (representing 3 weeks of the living wage). The test, and policy on 'British values', should also be reformed to be more consistent with a focus on recognised values such as democracy, non-discrimination and equality, and away from cultural, aesthetic or dietary practices and preferences.
4. Migrants continue to feel that the immigration system is slow and arbitrary in its decision-making. Decisions should be made more quickly, but rights of appeal should not be weakened. Furthermore, a re-assessment of family migration policy is necessary given its disproportionate impact on minority ethnic families, particularly women, and of very young infants separated from their families. We support the ongoing campaigning on these issues by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and the Migrant Rights Network.

5. Politicians should not make promises about immigration unless they have evidence these can be delivered, especially given low levels of public trust on this issue. We therefore support the call from the Institute of Directors and British Future for a review into how the government could plausibly deliver on its target of 'tens of thousands' of immigrants, or indeed on any migration policy.
6. The requirement that migrants learn English must be matched by both resource and opportunity. ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) course supply remains minimal and reform of the Adult Skills Budget has reduced and in some cases removed access for new migrants.¹ This should be improved to encourage integration and better labour market and social outcomes for migrants and their children, including via welfare reforms such as universal credit where appropriate.
7. Data on where migrants move to should be more effectively assessed to determine where additional resources are required. However, these data should be supplemented by wider data on, e.g., number of births, which are not only about perceptions of the number of migrants and their impact on public services, but on objective uptake and change over time of key public services. Local authorities should also be supported in developing better forecasting of demand for health services and education, and not only in terms of the number of likely migrants

Notes

1. Action for ESOL and the University and College Union (UCU) have written widely and campaigned on the implications of cuts to the Adult Skills Budget for migrants..

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Appendix 1. Focus Group Materials and Rationale

Areas for consideration

These are the five main message areas we asked our focus groups to consider:

1. Immigration and voting
2. Control and fairness
3. Europe
4. Contribution
5. Integration and the English language

Below we outline the five quotes that we gave participants to address these themes. We gave these quotes to each participant on a single piece of paper and read them aloud one at a time. Each of these quotes was drawn directly from a political party manifesto for the 2015 General Election.

In most cases participants proceeded with an extensive conversation about the quote. To assist the researchers, we also prepared suggested questions, to help the group open up discussion of the key quotes especially if the conversation stalled. These also enabled us to address the wider issues around race and immigration previous research has uncovered.

Below we also provide a rationale for choosing each quote. Together these elements explain our focus group materials and rationale but only the direct quotes were given to focus group participants.

Message 1. Immigration and voting

Quote. *The British public has every right to be concerned. Surveys consistently show immigration as one of the top three issues for voters. [UKIP]*

Suggested questions

1. Opinion polls regularly show that immigration is one of the top three issues for the public in this election. What are the main issues for you in this election?
2. If immigration is a concern to you, can you tell us why?
 - a. Do you want, for example, to see a reduction in numbers?

- b. Is immigration important enough to influence how you might vote?

3. Do you think immigration has changed Britain as a country, for better or for worse?

- a. Do you think immigration has changed the area where you live for better or for worse?

- b. It has been suggested that immigration puts pressure on things like access to school places or social housing. Can you give us any examples of this?

Rationale

As our Background chapter outlines, immigration is indeed a top three issue in many surveys on immigration. In this sense, it might appear that this quote requires no further rationale.

However the reference to 'every right' may indicate a particular view that immigration has *not* been adequately addressed by politicians, despite its importance to the British public. For the focus group, we wanted to test how this reference to public opinion was understood by our participants, and to determine what their attitudes were. We also sought to understand their opinions about immigration in a bit more detail: why they might (or might not) be concerned, but also their views on why other people might be concerned. Finally, we sought to determine if any other issues were of greater importance, especially among those who disagreed that immigration was a top issue for them.

Message 2. Control and fairness

Quote. *Our economy and our society benefit from the talent and investment of people who come here, including university students coming to study. But the system needs to be controlled and managed so that it is fair. Low-skilled migration has been too high and needs to come down. We need much stronger action to stop illegal immigration. [Labour]*

Suggested questions

1. What are your thoughts about this quote?
 - a. What does 'control' in this quote mean to you? Do you agree with this?

- b. What does 'fair' mean to you? Fair for whom?
- 2. If we think about fairness with regard to people moving to work in different countries should British people be allowed to freely work and live abroad without there being any controls?
 - a. Should the same rules apply to those born abroad but coming to live and work here?
- 3. What are your thoughts about this quote?
 - a. What does 'control' in this quote mean to you? Do you agree with this?
 - b. What does 'fair' mean to you? Fair for whom?
- 4. If we think about fairness with regard to people moving to work in different countries should British people be allowed to freely work and live abroad without there being any controls?
 - a. Should the same rules apply to those born abroad but coming to live and work here?

Rationale

The word control is heavily used in the current political language of immigration. The parties know there is a lack of confidence in the system, and all want to suggest they will introduce measures to bring that confidence back. But explaining the detail is clunky, so the word 'control' is used to imply 'trust us, we'll sort it.' It is also useful as it can be interpreted different ways. At one extreme, control means *we're full-up, lift the drawbridge, stop immigration* and at the other it means *immigration is necessary and good, we want people to come here, there might be a little bit of paperwork, but they'll be treated fairly and given a chance.*

Stressing the need for fairness echoes the sense of a level playing field, and anything other than a level playing field implies discrimination. This is both a common theme in the broader discussion about British values, but also from ethnic minorities about how they wish to be treated in Britain. An ICM poll found a more positive response to statements around immigration that emphasised fairness, e.g. on low wages, for the migrant and the local worker, rather than one extolling the net positive input that immigration makes. What would be helpful is to know if ethnic minorities place a similar importance upon fairness when talking about immigration, and to what extent that is shaped by their own personal experience of migration. It would also be useful to explore if the concept of fairness, as applied to those immigrating to Britain, also applied to British people emigrating to live abroad, or indeed if the group found that ironic. The Green party manifesto pointed out that 5 million British citizens live abroad,

around 2 million of them in the EU, and that it is not uncommon for British people to have a family member who lives abroad.

The issue of low skilled migration is important in relation to fairness, because it is the weakest bit of the economic case, and free movement rules make it difficult to restrict the number of low skilled EU migrants. Working class people in areas with low skill/high unemployment say migrants come and work below minimum wage but they feel their concerns are ignored (and they risk being branded racist for saying it). This is aggravated because politicians cannot control EU migration, and appear to be unwilling to admit so. The UKIP manifesto reminds the voter *anyone telling you they can control immigration while supporting the UK's membership of the EU is not being honest.* Labour have not said they can control EU migration, but that they will stand up for those affected, e.g. they will introduce legislation to stop employers undercutting wages and ban recruitment agencies from hiring only from overseas.

Message 3. Europe

Quote. *Other political parties will promise to control immigration, but while they continue to support the UK's membership of the EU, they are not being honest with the electorate. Wholly unable to control EU migration, they can only reduce numbers by slamming the door in the face of people from around the rest of the world.* [UKIP]

Areas to pursue

1. When you hear politicians or people in the media talk about immigration, do you think they are talking about you even if you were born here? If so, why do you think that?
2. When you talk about immigrants, who are the people you are thinking of?
 - a. For example, do you distinguish between migrants from the EU and the Commonwealth?
3. What is your view of the argument that immigrants were treated as scapegoats in the past? Do you agree or disagree with this sentiment?
 - a. What about current immigrants – do you think the way they are treated (by politicians, the press, their neighbours or employers) the same or different?
4. Do you associate the debate about immigration with the debate about being in the EU or do you see these as different things?

Rationale

On 4 March 2015, Nigel Farage told BBC News: 'UKIP is putting forward a policy that will take immigration in Britain back to normal. Normal was from 1950 until the year 2000.' Since 2000, he argued, 'we have gone mad, we opened the doors to much of the world but in particular we opened up the doors to 10 former communist countries, and as a result of our EU membership we have absolutely zero control over the numbers who come'.

Settled ethnic communities started to migrate to Britain in numbers at a time when non-white people were rare. At the time, the immigration debate was synonymous with race. Modern migration still includes numbers from the Commonwealth but now augmented with large numbers from the EU. Present public anxiety about immigration has become more prominent with increase in migration from the EU, initially from the new A8 countries – e.g. Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, etc. – and latterly from southern European countries with relatively poor performing economies – e.g. Spain and Portugal. The last Labour government has apologised for how it handled the arrangements for free movement when the A8 countries joined. Other parties have said Labour allowed 'uncontrolled migration'.

In its conclusions on the political hot potato of immigration, the British Attitudes Survey found that in many areas of migration policy, constraints on current policy mean what can actually be done is more liberal than even the most pro-migration elements of the public would like. This generates widespread public discontent which is hard to address. For example, EU rules make it very hard for the government to restrict migrant numbers, or regulate migrant access to the welfare state, no matter how much the public want them to. The public perception of uncontrolled migration, large numbers, and the sense that the increase has happened too fast (the pace of change) is now associated with EU migration. Is immigration now synonymous with Europe? If so, has it lessened the association in the public's mind with race?

In addition, the children of Commonwealth migrants are very aware that they are visible among the general population. They are aware that a section of society will always consider them 'other' no matter what they do or achieve. There is an awareness that parts of white Britain will always see them as immigrants. This may not apply to the British-born children of white European immigrants.

Message 4. Contribution

Quote. *We will negotiate new rules with the EU, so that people will have to be earning here for a number of years before they can claim benefits, including the tax credits that top up low wages. Instead of something-for-nothing, we will build a system based on the principle of something-for-something.* [Conservatives]

Suggested questions

1. The quote refers to the principle of something for something rather than something for nothing, implying that migrants should work and pay tax before they can claim benefits. Do you agree or disagree that migrants should put in something first before being able to claim benefits?
 - a. Do you think this should be the same for all, if they're from Poland, Canada or India?
 - b. Do you think the same rule should apply for access to the NHS?
 - c. What impact do you think it will have on immigration numbers?
2. Would you support a higher number of migrants coming to Britain, as long as they worked and paid taxes?

Rationale

There is broad public support for benefits to go only to those who have already paid both tax and National Insurance. The British Social Attitudes survey found 24% of people thought it was the main motive for migration when it was offered on a list of possible options. They found 8% named it spontaneously even when it was *not* listed as an option to choose from. Research shows that migrants claim certain benefits at lower rates than the white British population. The UCL Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration found that between 2001 and 2011, European immigrants contributed more in taxes than they received in benefits, and that immigrants who arrived since 2000 were 43% less likely than natives to receive state benefits or tax credits. They were also 7% less likely to live in social housing.

Concerns about such 'benefit tourism' are strongly concentrated among those groups with the most negative views about migrants. Those with negative views of migration are more likely to think the motivation behind immigration is to claim benefits or asylum. The issue is complicated by EU rules on free movement meaning the UK cannot restrict or favour migrants according to their skills.

In contrast, the public are more supportive of migrants who come, work, pay tax, and settle. They are more supportive if the migrant brings particular skills that the country needs. The importance of the migrant contributing to the pot before taking out of the pot is pivotal. Bright Blue, a right-of-centre think tank, found that moderate conservative voters saw making a contribution 'as more important to them than restricting the total number of immigrants'. Restricting access to benefits was 'very important', more than tightening the number of non-EU migrants or withdrawing from the EU principle of free movement. This concern is addressed in several party manifestos:

- UKIP said pay tax and NI for 5 consecutive years before being able to claim
- Labour said wait 2 years before being able to claim
- Conservatives said no housing benefit for EU jobseekers, 4 years for tax credits + child benefit

Not all parties have detailed if the restrictions on access to benefits include all benefits, out- of-work benefits or in-work benefits.

Message 5. Integration and the English language

Quote. *Being able to speak English is a fundamental part of integrating into our society.*
[Conservatives]

Suggested questions

1. How important is being able to speak English for integration?
 - a. If you think migrants should learn English, who should provide and pay for the classes?
2. What does integration mean to you? And how important is it?
3. Apart from speaking English, what does a migrant have to do to become British?

Rationale

In their report, *How to Talk About Immigration*, British Future said the debate on immigration and the debate about integration are different. The current debate around immigration being largely concerned with recent EU migration from Eastern Europe, the debate on integration tended to focus on the extent to which some established communities have mixed in. These can become confused. Anxiety about immigration often relates to its perceived impact on British culture from outsiders, e.g. planning application for a mosque, irrespective of whether

those attending the mosque were born and bred here. British Future likened the concept of citizenship to membership of a club, and belonging to a club means abiding by its rules. So what are those rules? These tabulated responses are drawn from an Ipsos Mori poll carried out for British Future:

Which of the following, if any, would you say are the most important for being British?	
Respect for the right to free speech	50%
Respect for the rule of law	46%
Speaking English	41%
Treating men and women equally	38%
Respect for all ethnic backgrounds	29%
Respect for all faiths	26%
Being born here	26%
Voting in elections	21%
Being Christian	7%
Being white	6%
Other	1%

Other themes that British Future highlighted were fairness, contribution and 'putting in' – putting in reflecting both an economic input, but also an investment in society. They also highlighted the importance of attachment to symbols of identity. This could be the flag, or the monarch, wearing a poppy on Remembrance Sunday, being aware of British history, and also being aware of and participating in British traditions (Bhaji on the Beach! Bonfire Night!). Obviously, two white British-born people could differ in their views on the importance of these things, e.g. the monarchy. Fairness also makes it difficult for the British to hold the immigrant to a higher standard than their own.

In the 2011 census, about 2% or 3% of men and women between the ages of 5 to 50 did not have English as a first language. Above age 50 this percentage increases, particularly for women. And by age 80, the figures show about 9% of men and about 27% of women do not speak English as a first language.

6. And finally ...

In closing the focus groups, we wanted to give participants an opportunity to summarize their thoughts, but also to indicate anything else they think we missed.

1. If you had an invite to Downing Street in May, and the new Prime Minister said to you, 'You can change one thing about the immigration system', what would it be?
2. Are there any other issues regarding immigration that you would like to raise?

About the Authors

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