

# **RACE RELATIONS 2006: A RESEARCH STUDY**

This project was commissioned from Ipsos MORI by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) in 2006.

Website: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com>

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Copyright © Commission for Racial Equality 2007  
St Dunstan's House  
201-211 Borough High Street  
London SE1 1GZ  
Published March 2007

---

# Contents

---

Introduction	1
Summary & implications	4
1. Living in Britain	11
2. How immigration is shaping Britain	17
3. Defining identity	25
4. Prejudice and discrimination	37
5. Integration and Race Relations	45
6. Political extremism	55
7. Awareness and attitudes towards the CRE and the CEHR	58

## Appendices

Interpretation of the data

Social grade definition

Topline findings

Discussion Guide

# Introduction

---

The research presented in this report looked at the feelings, attitudes and opinions of people living in Britain today in relation to culture, identity and race relations. It is intended that the findings of this study will contribute to the ever-developing debates around equality, diversity and integration in Britain. The research was conducted by the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, on behalf of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).

## Context

This research is particularly salient in the current social and political climate. Much has changed since MORI conducted our first survey on race relation issues for the CRE in 2002 and the findings of the 2006 research reflect people's awareness and perceptions of recent events and debates which have put diversity and integration high up the political agenda. Since 2002, the issues are no longer just about race relations, but are related to an increased focus on the drivers of extremism, the benefits and disadvantages of multiculturalism, UK foreign policy, involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, immigration from EU accession states, the politicisation of religion and the need to prevent terrorism. As a result of these changes, the CRE's own focus has also shifted and there is much more of a concentration on integration-related issues than there has been in previous years.

There are also a number of specific events which took place during the fieldwork period which are likely to have impacted on responses. For example, during the week prior to the qualitative research Jack Straw, ex-Foreign Secretary and MP for Blackburn, received much press coverage for comments he made relating to Muslim women 'wearing the veil' in his surgeries with constituents. In the days following this, Ruth Kelly, Tony Blair and Trevor Phillips also made public statements about this issue. Earlier in the summer, a month prior to the quantitative fieldwork, an alleged terror plot involving planes and liquid explosives was averted at London's Heathrow airport took place, and on 7 July 2005 (following fieldwork for the 2005 wave of research) four bombs were set off on London public transport.

## Methodology

The research includes both a quantitative and a qualitative element: a representative quantitative study of 1,068 British adults aged 15 years and over, with another 223 ethnic minority 'booster' interviews conducted across England; and a qualitative study comprising four discussion groups in England and Scotland. The quantitative studies provided statistically robust data to measure the strength of opinion on the issues of equality, diversity and cohesion. The qualitative discussion groups then provided information on the reasons underlying these opinions.

Fieldwork for the general public survey was conducted between 28 September and 3 October 2006 and ethnic boost interviews took place between 15 and 20 November 2006. The boost survey included 223 respondents of black ethnicity (black African and black Caribbean) or Asian ethnicity (Asian Pakistani, Asian Bangladeshi and Asian Indian). Data from both the general public and the ethnic minority samples was weighted to the known national profiles.

The discussion groups for the qualitative study were conducted using topic guides which were agreed with the research commissioners and are appended. The groups were held between 10 and 12 October 2006, and comprised the people shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: The composition of the discussion groups**

<b>Group</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Location</b>	London	London	Birmingham	Edinburgh
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Mixed ethnicity (At least 2 Asian, 2 black, 2 mixed race, 2 white)	black	Asian	white
<b>Social Class</b>	ABC1	BC1C2	BC1C2	C2DE
<b>Gender</b>	Even split male/female	Even split male/female	Even split male/female	Even split male/female
<b>Age</b>	20-50 years	20-50 years	20-50 years	20-50 years

This research builds on previous waves of qualitative and quantitative research conducted by Ipsos MORI on similar topics on behalf of the CRE in 2002 and 2005 and is informed by other publicly available information and the CRE’s own research, as well as ongoing public and policy debates.

In 2005, a nationally representative survey of 511 British adults aged 16 years and over was conducted between 12 March and 14 April. In addition to this, 543 ‘booster’ interviews were conducted among ethnic minority groups. This research was not published, however, results from this survey are drawn upon and clearly referenced throughout this report.

In 2002, a nationally representative survey of 822 British adults aged 16 years and over was conducted between 5 April and 1 May. In addition to this, 649 ‘booster’ interviews were conducted among ethnic minority groups. A series of 13 focus groups were also carried out across Britain between 8 and 16 April. A series of 13 focus groups across Britain were also carried out between 8 April and 16 April 2002. The summary of this research was published in 2002.<sup>1</sup> Results from the research are drawn upon and clearly referenced throughout this document.

## Presentation and interpretation of data

The percentage figures for the various sub-samples or groups generally need to differ by a certain number of percentage points for the difference to be considered statistically significant. This number will depend on the size of the sub-group sample and the % finding itself (as noted in the appendix).

Where an asterisk (\*) appears, it indicates a percentage of less than one, but greater than zero. Where percentages do not add up to 100%, this can be due to a variety of factors, such as the exclusion of ‘Don’t know’ or ‘Other’ responses, multiple responses or computer rounding. Where gaps appear in the figures showing the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with a statement (figure 3-6, 10 and 11), this space represents the proportion who replied ‘neither agree nor disagree’ or ‘no opinion/don’t know/not stated’. The gap in figure 14 represents the percentage who responded ‘made no difference’ or ‘don’t know’

<sup>1</sup> *The voice of Britain: A research study conducted for the CRE by MORI. Executive Summary*, CRE/ MORI, 2002 (<http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/moripoll.pdf>)

Reference to the ‘general public’ or ‘all respondents’ refers to answers from the general public sample of 1,068. Where relevant, a comparison will be made between white respondents (from the general public sample) and ethnic minority respondents (from both the general public sample and the booster interviews). In the tables, ‘General public’ refers to the answers from the general public sample of 1,068, and ‘Ethnic minority’ refers to the ethnic minority respondents from both the general public sample and the booster interviews.

When considering the qualitative findings it is important to note two of the key strengths of qualitative research: that it allows issues to be explored in detail; and that it enables researchers to test the strength of people’s opinion. However, it needs to be remembered that qualitative research is designed to be *illustrative* rather than *statistically representative* and therefore does not allow conclusions to be drawn about the extent to which views are held. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that we are dealing with perceptions rather than facts. More detail relating to the interpretation of qualitative information is included in the appendix.

### Publication of data

As CRE has engaged Ipsos MORI to provide an objective and representative programme of research, it is important to protect CRE’s interests by ensuring that the research is accurately reflected in any press release or publication of the findings. As part of our standard terms and conditions, the publication of the data in this report is therefore subject to the advance approval of Ipsos MORI. This would only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misinterpretation of the findings.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to place on record our thanks for the considerable input and support provided during the study from Jonathan Bamber at the CRE. We would also like to thank the people who took part in the survey and discussion groups.

# Summary & implications

---

## General attitudes to diversity and immigration

Data from international studies points to the British public being in some ways among the most positive in Europe when it comes to valuing diversity in general, but the least positive when it comes to immigration and the rights of immigrants.

The European Social Survey 2002/3<sup>2</sup> found that only a quarter of UK respondents (25%) wished to live in an area where *almost nobody* was of a race, colour or ethnic group different to themselves, compared with far higher proportions in countries like Greece (44%), Belgium (42%), Portugal (39%) and Denmark (37%). In fact, only Germany (22%) and Sweden (20%) were more positive than the UK on this measure. Similarly, the qualitative research for this project highlights that respondents felt diversity was among the key positive attributes of living in Britain today.

On the other hand, our surveys in both 2002 and 2005 found that three in five respondents believed that there were too many immigrants in Britain (61% and 59% respectively) and that respondents from ethnic minority groups were almost as likely to think that as white people (54% compared with 62% among the white population in 2005). Furthermore, according to the European Social Survey 2002/3, only one in nine respondents in the UK (11%) thought that people who came to live here should be given the same rights as everybody else, a far lower proportion than seen in other European countries.<sup>3</sup>

However, the picture is complex; it is not as simple as saying that the British public are positive about diversity but negative about immigration. The qualitative research shows that in many cases people seemed to conflate people from ethnic minorities (many of whom are of course born in Britain) with immigrants (many of whom who are not ethnic minorities). Concerns about immigration are likely to reflect over-estimations of the extent of immigration to Britain, as well as over-estimates of the proportion of immigrants who are from ethnic minority groups. This research found that people surveyed in the main quantitative survey thought that 22% of the British population were immigrants; the perceived proportion was even higher among ethnic minorities, who put the figure at 32%, four times higher than the actual proportion (8%).

These misperceptions of immigration are significant because they appear to be related to less positive views about ethnic diversity, and integration more generally. It is difficult to ascertain the causal direction of this relationship; that is, whether misperceptions about immigration cause people to be more negative about ethnic diversity, or vice versa. However, the fact that views on these issues are not independent suggests the value of a joint strategy to address concerns about both immigration and race relations.

Further, the qualitative research for this project, and research conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) for the CRE,<sup>4</sup> highlight the fact that people's explicit concerns relating to

---

<sup>2</sup> See the European Social Survey website (<http://ess.nsd.uib.no/>).

<sup>3</sup> This compares with Finland (31%), Portugal (25%), Greece (23%), Spain (23%) and Sweden (22%) where the proportions in favour of equal rights for immigrants were at least twice as high

<sup>4</sup> See *The reception and integration of new migrant communities*, CRE/ippr, forthcoming.

immigration are really more focused on worries about the impact of migration on public services, than anti-immigration sentiment *per se*.

## Recent changes in attitudes to diversity and immigration

Attitudes to diversity and immigration seem to have shifted in recent times. The Ipsos MORI Political Monitor shows that in 2006, for the first time, immigration and race relations were considered the *most important* issue facing this country<sup>5</sup> (by 25% of respondents), above the NHS, education, and defence, foreign affairs and international terrorism. This may reflect ongoing concerns about immigration from EU accession countries and the impact of immigration on public services and employment.

There also appears to have been a subtle but noticeable hardening of attitudes relating to migrants, ethnic minorities and integration and diversity issues. In 2002, we found that a fifth (19%) of people disagreed that it is a good thing for immigrants to maintain the lifestyle and culture of their country of origin; this had risen to a quarter (26%) by 2006. Similarly, while the majority of those surveyed disagreed with the position that to be truly British you have to be white (82%), the proportion who *strongly* disagreed fell from 63% in 2002 to 55% in 2006. The public were also more likely to require commitment from ethnic minorities, in order to consider them truly British, than they were in 2002. Interestingly, in most cases these shifts were apparent among ethnic minorities as well as white residents,<sup>6</sup> with one exception – the question of whether it is a good thing for immigrants to maintain the culture and lifestyle of their country of origin. In this case, attitudes among ethnic minorities moved in the opposite direction to views among white residents, with 37% of ethnic minorities strongly agreeing that it is a good thing for immigrants to maintain their culture, compared to 29% in 2002.

However, the research also highlights geographic variations within Britain. Respondents living in London and Scotland tended to be less concerned about immigration and race relations than those living elsewhere, and were less likely to have hardened attitudes.<sup>7</sup> Our qualitative work highlights the fact that, in London, this may to some extent reflect the greater ethnic diversity and higher levels of meaningful social interaction between people from different ethnic groups in the area.

The findings in Scotland are more interesting, as traditionally we tend to find that people living in more ethnically homogeneous areas with little experience of new migrants actually tend to be more negative, rather than more positive. One possible reason for the more positive attitude is the lower consumption of certain tabloid newspapers: Ipsos MORI analysis finds that readers of newspapers like the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express* and *Sun* are more likely to feel race relations and immigration are an important issue.<sup>8</sup> Whatever the reasons for the more positive attitudes towards immigration in Scotland, it does not appear to be an anomaly related to this research project; it is a trend which has

---

<sup>5</sup> See Ipsos MORI Political Monitor, October 2006 (aggregated data from January to September 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Two thirds (65%) of ethnic minorities strongly disagreed that to be truly British you had to be white, compared with 72% in 2002. Just under three quarters (74%) of white people and two thirds (68%) of people from ethnic minorities thought that people from ethnic minorities needed to demonstrate a real commitment to this country before they could be considered British compared with 69% among white people in 2002 and 51% among ethnic minorities.

<sup>7</sup> The Ipsos MORI Political Monitor (aggregated data from January to September 2006) found that just a fifth of people in London (22%) and Scotland (20%) felt immigration and race relations were a key concern compared with the average across Great Britain of 35%.

<sup>8</sup> See B. Duffy and L. Rowden, *You are what you read?*, Ipsos MORI, 2005.

also been observed in the ippr/CRE research<sup>9</sup> looking into the reception and integration of new migrant communities, and in the Ipsos MORI monthly Political Monitor.

## Ethnic and national identity

Respondents to the 2002 survey were more likely to identify themselves as British than English, Scottish or Welsh (45% compared to 39%). Britishness was felt by many participants in the discussion groups to be a more inclusive identity that could incorporate elements of ethnic minority culture, whereas Englishness, in particular, was felt to be equated with being white. However, the inclusiveness of the British identity was also felt to be part of its weakness. 'Britishness' was felt to be vague and there was no clear consensus about the values, institutions or behaviours constituting it. Despite this lack of clarity, most respondents supported the idea of citizenship classes for immigrants and agreed that new immigrants should be made to learn English. However, people usually justified this in practical and economic terms, rather than in terms of building a common sense of identity.

It is also important to note that there may be some element of political correctness at play when considering ethnic minorities and Britishness. As explored earlier, very few of those surveyed (10%) thought people had to be white to be truly British, but nearly three quarters (73%) of the general population thought that ethnic minority people needed to demonstrate a real commitment to this country before they could be considered British. The feeling, regardless of country of birth, appears to be that 'you don't have to be white to be British, but it helps'.

## Experiences and perceptions of discrimination, race relations and integration

Personal experiences of discrimination remained relatively static between 2002 and 2005 (12% of the general public as a whole, and 38% of ethnic minorities, experienced racial prejudice or discrimination in 2005, compared with 14% and 39% respectively in 2002) and this was also reflected in the National Citizenship Survey findings from 2001 to 2005.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the extent to which respondents thought that there were good relations between people of different ethnic groups in Britain,<sup>11</sup> and the extent to which people thought it was important to respect the rights of people from ethnic minorities<sup>12</sup> remained broadly on par with previous years.

However, when people were asked about their perceptions of *change* relating to issues of discrimination, racial prejudice and integration in this country the picture was more complex. In general, the qualitative research shows that respondents recognised that vast improvements had been made over the last 20 to 30 years relating to discrimination, largely as a result of legislation and education, but felt that more subtle forms of prejudice remained to be addressed. This ties in with notions of 'stealth racism' identified by the CRE in 2004.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, although white respondents felt that, on balance, there was more mixing between ethnic and religious groups than there had been five years previously (32% felt there was more, 23% felt there was less), the picture

---

<sup>9</sup> See *The reception and integration of new migrant communities*, CRE/ippr, forthcoming.

<sup>10</sup> See *2005 Citizenship Survey: Race and faith topic report*, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006 (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501046>).

<sup>11</sup> Three in five (61%) respondents thought that Britain was a place that had good relations between different types of people such as those from different ethnic backgrounds, compared with the same proportion in 2005 (61%) and 59% in 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Nearly four fifths (78%) of respondents thought it was important to respect the rights of minority groups, compared with 84% in 2005 and 78% in 2002.

<sup>13</sup> See *Annual Report 2004*, CRE, 2004.



























































































































































