



NESTLÉ FAMILY MONITOR

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICS

*The Nestlé Family Monitor is a series
of research studies into family life
in Britain undertaken on behalf of
Nestlé UK by MORI*



great clubs for young people

*This report has been
produced especially for
the Make Space Campaign
which is being supported by
the Nestlé Trust and run by
Kids' Clubs Network.*

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FOREWORD



The last issue of the Nestlé Family Monitor was devoted to research into the out-of-school needs of young people. Kids' Clubs Network, supported by the Nestlé Trust, launched a new campaign called Make Space in response to the research findings and I am delighted to report that there are already nearly 300 member clubs.

One of the frustrations of 11-18 year olds is that they don't believe that society is listening and responding to their needs. This Nestlé Family Monitor study, 'Young People's Attitudes Towards Politics', clearly reflects this problem.

Some of the outcome is positive. For example, many young people are already involved in their local community and more would welcome the opportunity to participate.

The team at MORI under Dr Roger Mortimore has uncovered a wealth of information on what young people think of and want from our politicians. What issues especially concern them, how they intend to vote, their thoughts on the voting process and the voting age.

The views of young people as expressed in this important study will receive an airing at a special forum at the first Make Space conference which will be held later in the year. Meanwhile, I hope that you will find 'Young People's Attitudes Towards Politics' as fascinating and instructive a read as I do.

Alastair Sykes
Chairman and Chief Executive
Nestlé UK Ltd.





COMMENTARY

DR ROGER MORTIMORE, MORI SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Many who worry about the health of democracy in Britain are much exercised about low electoral turnouts and the alienation from the political system this may represent. Turnout is lowest among the youngest age groups, and they show the highest degree of disconnection from the democratic process.

This detailed study of English and Welsh pupils in the last few years before they become old enough to vote, discovering how they view politics, politicians and political issues, and how they form these views, is therefore exploring a subject of considerable importance, and one which is rarely researched. It comes, too, just as citizenship lessons have been introduced into the National Curriculum but before they have had a chance to effect any real change in the culture or the level of knowledge of young people; the findings will act both as a benchmark from which future progress can be judged and an indication of the scale of the task that is faced.

Among the many fascinating findings from the survey, we have discovered:

- All but 14% of young people have participated in some form of community activities in the past year; 50% have taken part in fundraising or collecting money for charity, the most frequent. But only 2% have ever helped a political party. Girls are significantly more likely to get involved than boys, except where the activity has a political aspect. (Page 9.)
- Half the pupils say it is unimportant to them who wins the next General Election. (Page 28.) On the other hand, the majority agree that 'The way people vote makes a difference to the way the country is run' and over two in five disagree with the statement 'I don't think voting is very important'. (Page 31.)
- Just one in ten young people say that they are absolutely certain that they would vote if there was a General Election tomorrow (assuming they were old enough to vote); 7% are absolutely certain that they would not vote. (Page 33.) Around half (47%) of those not certain to vote say they might not vote because they are "just not interested in politics". (Pages 33-34.) Only 46% of the young agree that "I feel it will be my duty to vote when I'm old enough", and just 18% agree strongly. (Page 31.)
- Among those who named a party for which they would vote, 34% say they would vote Labour, while 21% would vote Conservative, 14% Liberal Democrat, and 31% for one of the various smaller parties. Of those who will be eligible to vote at the next Election, 39% would currently vote Labour, 27% Conservative, 19% Liberal Democrat and 15% for other parties. (Page 47.)
- Asylum seekers are rated the single most important issue facing Britain by 14% of young people, putting the issue second in rank behind war and conflict (named by 25% in a survey conducted during and shortly after the war in Iraq). Those who say that asylum seekers are the most important issue are disproportionately likely to support the British



National Party, which has the support of 9% of all those who declared a voting intention. One in five, 22%, of those who say they would not vote at all also named asylum as the single most important issue. (Pages 22-24.)

- Of the 18 issues in the list from which the pupils chose, the least frequently selected as important was the European Union/Euro/Single European Currency: only one in five think this is an important issue. (Page 22.)
- Two-thirds of those with two Conservative parents would vote Conservative, and almost as many with two Labour parents would vote Labour. Very few young people would vote for a party supported by neither of their parents: just one in twenty or fewer in the case of each of three major parties. Three-quarters of those who say they think that neither of their parents would vote also say they themselves would not vote, and another 10% of these do not know how they would vote. (Pages 48-50.)
- While a majority say they know at least “a little” about the Labour party, only two in five say the same for the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats. (Pages 38-39.) One in five young people agree that none of the political parties have policies or ideas they like, but a quarter disagree, and more than half take neither side. (Page 31.)
- While nine in ten (91%) correctly identified a photograph Tony Blair, only a quarter (25%) recognised Iain Duncan Smith and only 18% Charles Kennedy. (Page 42-43.) Around half say they have at least heard of prominent cabinet ministers, such as Jack Straw, Gordon Brown, and David Blunkett, but only George W. Bush has a recognition factor close to Tony Blair’s, 84%. The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, rings a bell with only 21%. Only 29% have heard of David Trimble, 25% of Gerry Adams and 20% of Ian Paisley. (Pages 43-45.)
- A quarter (26%) do not admire any of the politicians listed – double the 13% who say that they admire Tony Blair, who in turn beats all the other politicians on offer. (Page 44.)
- Three in five young people feel the voting age should be reduced, while only a quarter would keep it at 18 (25%). Among those who are already 17 or over, though, more than half feel the voting age should remain 18. (Pages 36-37.)
- Most young people trust doctors, teachers and scientists, but two-thirds (64%) say they would not trust a journalist to tell them the truth and half would not trust “a celebrity”, and two in five young people would not trust government ministers or “politicians in general” to tell them the truth. Only one in eight (12%) would trust the “ordinary man or woman in the street” to tell them the truth: they have learned the lesson not to trust strangers. (Pages 16-19.)
- The Sun is the most-read daily newspaper among young people, followed by The Mirror and The Daily Mail. Just 15% had not read a daily paper in the last week. (Page 26.) More surprisingly, The Sunday Times is the most read Sunday paper among young people, with 23% saying they had read it in the last month, outstripping even The News of the World. (Pages 26-27.)



- Boys prefer the sports pages, while girls would rather read the entertainment sections. Girls also prefer the film and television pages, and news about celebrities. They are also more interested in the problem pages and the health and fashion sections, and in reading their horoscopes. By contrast, very few (only 6% of young people) say they usually read the political pages. (Page 27.)

What do we learn from this? It is no surprise to find from the survey that the political attitudes that people take into adulthood begin to be defined while they are still at secondary school. Most of the youngest group in the survey, aged 11-12, know little about politics, have not thought a great deal about political issues, and have not been involved in political activities. As they grow older this changes, until we find in the 17-year-olds attitudes not dissimilar to those found among 18-24 year olds in surveys of adults. Of course, opinions formed in childhood are unlikely to remain unchanged through adult life, but they define the starting point as young adults first gain the franchise. Perhaps more importantly, their attitudes to the political system, the political parties and the importance of voting will affect their behaviour and their interaction with the political world, and that will shape their subsequent experiences and changes in attitudes as they age and gain more knowledge of the world. If, for example, they reach the age of 18 with the conviction that political parties are worthless and that politicians are out-of-touch with the problems of the real world, they will be less receptive to what politicians and parties have to say, which in turn will make it harder to change their attitudes on other matters.

Valuable as citizenship lessons may eventually prove, it is important to recognise how comparatively minor a role schools seem to play in the political education of our children at the moment. Teachers come low on the list of those the young rely on for information about important issues facing Britain; the media, though distrusted by many young people, and family and friends are the primary sources. Voting intentions are still largely inherited from parents, forty years after Butler and Stokes first proved it was so; but these days, that includes inheriting the intention not to vote, a corrosive development.

Only one pupil in eight is sure that he or she would vote in a general election tomorrow if old enough; although three in five can say which party they would vote for if they did, the rest don't know or have decided they would not vote at all.

This low political engagement is not caused by "apathy". The vast majority take part in some form of community activity, whether campaigning or fundraising for charities, helping with school events, or more explicitly political actions such as signing a petition or joining a protest.

Nor is there any strong sense that young people are alienated because the adults' political agenda is different from their own. Most of the issues which they consider most important are also of high salience to adults, and although one of the more frequent descriptions that they apply to the main political parties is that they do not "listen to young people like me", in every case there are other negative attributes which even more feel are true. The traditional rebelliousness of youth is only a minor factor in the way the young view politics today.



Of course, the young know much less about politics and the people involved in it than adults do; that is inevitable to some extent, and gradually remedying that is the whole point of political education. But it is fair to ask if this ignorance is greater than it ought to be. When less than half of 17-year olds can recognise a photograph of the Leader of the Opposition, have they been educated adequately to enable them to take up the responsibilities and privileges of adulthood? Every one of them will have a vote at the next General Election, though few may use it.

Lack of knowledge is not the only problem; indeed, it may be a symptom. The more the young people feel they know, the more they accept a negative image of the political parties. But it may not be just the parties, but “politics” that has an image problem, and low knowledge follows from lack of interest in politics or from distrust of politics and politicians. More than a third of young people say they are not interested in “Learning about the issues that will help me decide how to vote when I turn 18 years old”. Two in five would not trust government ministers or politicians in general to tell them the truth. Worse, this cynicism is even more widespread among older pupils: among those who will be eligible to vote in a General Election in 2005, more than half distrust government ministers and politicians in general.

Yet the news is not all bad. Many of the young still keep open minds, feel they do not know enough and want to know more; if the young continue to equate not knowing very much with not knowing enough, there is hope yet. The cynicism and disconnection that one finds in many adults are not as widespread among pupils as might have been feared: although one in five young people agree that none of the political parties have policies or ideas they like, a quarter disagree, and more than half take neither side. Furthermore, although more than half think it is not important to them personally who wins the next election, the majority feel that the way people vote does make a difference to the way the country is run, and only one in five agree “I don’t think voting is important”. Their lack of enthusiasm may, therefore, be no more than a reaction to short-term factors and the current political scene, while the fundamental democratic values are still taking root.

But one value which has not taken root with today’s pupils, though it remains almost universal in their grandparents’ generation, is that voting is a civic duty. Less than half of the young agree that “I feel it will be my duty to vote when I’m old enough”. This is not unique to today’s schoolchildren; many of the younger generation of voters feel the same way. Over the last few years an evolution in one of the most fundamental of political values has begun to take place. No doubt democracy will survive the replacement of the assumption that voting is a duty with one that voting is a right which need not be exercised; but it will, perhaps, be democracy in a rather different form.

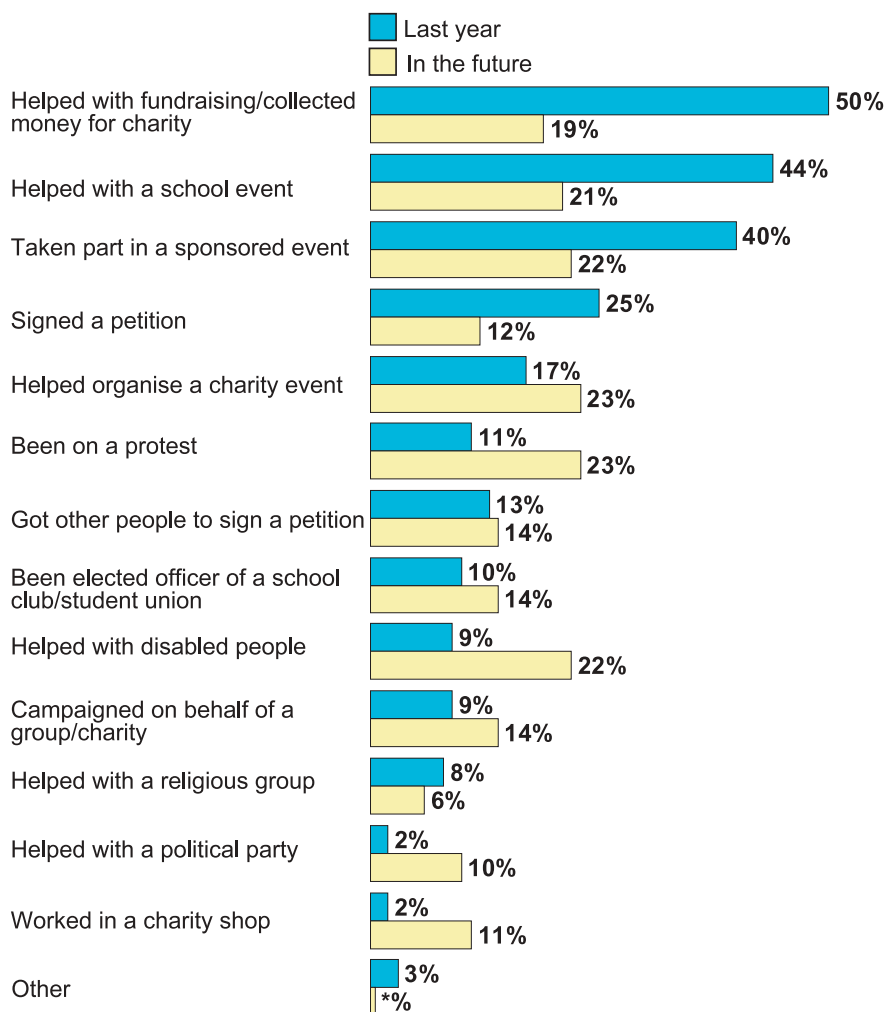
Our way of life still depends, a century-and-a-half after Lincoln coined the phrase, on “government of the people, by the people, for the people”. But that puts an onus on the people, as well as on the government. These survey findings may cause doubts whether we – parents, schools, the media and perhaps above all the politicians themselves – are preparing our young people well enough for these responsibilities.



Forms of Community Participation

Q Which, if any, of these things have you done in the last year?

Q And, which, if any, of the following would you be interested in doing in the future?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914) , March-May 2003 Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI



LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The vast majority of young people are actively involved in their local community, with fundraising the most popular form of participation. Findings indicate that gender, school type, media consumption and engagement with politics are all closely associated with participation.

The level of participation among young people is at odds with what parents think their children do. Findings indicate that young people are more willing to get involved in their local community than their parents often give them credit for.

Notably, a significant minority have participated in a protest, and would be interested in doing so in the future. This contrasts sharply with the small minority who would be interested in helping with a political party.

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Young people were shown a list of activities which involved them participating in their local community or in communal activities at school, and were asked which they had done in the past year, and which they would be interested in doing in the future.

Most young people care about the world in which they live and are prepared to devote energy to doing something about it – or, at the very least, will join in when their friends do. The vast majority take part in some form of communal activity: just 14% admit to not having participated in any of the activities on our list in the past year. The activity which young people report participating in most frequently is fundraising and collecting money for charity, which half say they have done in the last year. This is followed by school events and sponsored events – both mentioned by around two in five young people (see chart on facing page).

A significant percentage of young people are also participating in more political forms of activity. A quarter say they have signed a petition, 13% have got other people to sign a petition and one in ten say they have been on a protest. All these types of political involvement, though, are essentially single-issue activities; very few young people – just 2% – say they have helped with a political party; their political concerns have not, in most cases, pointed them towards participation in the political system on a broader basis.

It could be argued that the timing of the survey may have exaggerated the political involvement and awareness of young people: the survey was conducted at and shortly after the time of the invasion of Iraq, amid a climate of anti-war protest, with involvement among young people on a scale not seen in Britain before. It is likely that these factors are influencing perceptions here. The question is whether the war sparked a level of political interest in young people that will endure. The degree to which young people involved themselves in the issue of the war points towards a pre-existing level of political awareness: it could not have provoked such involvement in the first place if young people did not already care about the issues involved and have clearly defined ideas of what was right and what was wrong. It may therefore be that, although the Iraq war was an



issue of unusual salience for the young and therefore more revealing of their underlying attitudes than the more routine topics of political debate, these findings offer a more illustrative picture of the way the young view political participation than would have emerged if the survey had been conducted before the Iraq issue became prominent.

It is quite likely the case that the numbers saying they have signed a petition, got others to do so or taken part in a protest are higher than they would have been a year or so ago, simply because many of the young may have done so for the first time over the Iraq situation; but many of the other issues on which the young feel strongest may spawn fewer protests or petitions. Participation is always easiest if the organisation is handled by somebody else, and this is probably particularly true in the case of young people who may mostly be reliant on adults to initiate political activities, however enthusiastically they will subsequently participate in them. Low political participation among the young may owe much more to the lack of opportunities to participate on issues that they consider of importance than any failure to appreciate the value or efficacy of participation.

HOW WOULD YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FUTURE?

The top activity in which young people would like to participate in, in the future is a protest. Over one in five (23%) say they would like to take part in a protest in the future. Is this because these young people now have a taste for protesting or because they feel it is the only way to get their voice heard? It is interesting that enthusiasm for active protest does not seem to have been dampened by the failure of the anti-war demonstrations (thought to be the biggest public demonstrations ever in Britain) to deflect the government from its course or prevent the war.

It is, perhaps unsurprisingly, the more politically aware young people who see most value in such activism. Those who say it is important to them who wins the next General Election are significantly more interested (31%) in taking part in future protests than average.

Almost as many young people express an interest in several of the other activities on the list: 23% would be interested in helping out at a charity event, 22% in taking part in a sponsored event, 22% in helping a disabled person and 21% in taking part in a school event.

While it does, of course, involve much less commitment to express such aspirations than actually to fulfil them, it is instructive to note in which activities the young feel they can admit a lack of interest. Helping with a religious group was the least popular, with only 6% interested in doing this in the future. A higher number, but still just 10%, would be interested in helping with a political party. This is less than half the number willing to participate in a protest: as will become clearer in our discussion of attitudes to politics and political parties, many young people do not convert their belief in particular political aims into active support for a political party that might help to achieve those aims.

HOW WELL DO PARENTS UNDERSTAND THEIR CHILDREN?

The level of participation claimed by the young is considerably higher than was reported by parents of their own children in the 2000 Nestlé Family Monitor study of charitable giving and volunteering¹. In that survey, around half (48%) of the parents interviewed said that their children had

¹ Source: Nestlé Family Monitor Number 10 (2000)/MORI: 'Charitable Giving and Volunteering'. Methodology: Face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative quota sample of 504 adults aged 16+ from across Britain, interviewed between 23 September and 8 October 2000. Note: A slightly different list to that used in the current study was shown, and parents were asked about children aged 16 or under.



not participated in the past year in any of the activities listed. This might be taken to indicate that there has been a sudden increase in young people's participation in the last three years, perhaps fuelled by the issue of Iraq, but the size of the discrepancy in the figures makes this unlikely, especially as there is a similar difference in activities unlikely to be affected in this way: for example, a quarter (26%) of parents in the 2000 study said that their child had helped at a school event during the past year. This compares with 44% of young people in the current survey.

Part of the explanation is probably that many parents are simply unaware of all the activities in which their children had been involved. This may be because the young person had participated in some activities and did not want their parents to know – which might apply particularly to the more political activities such as joining a protest – or, perhaps equally likely, because they participated at school and did not mention it to their parents. According to parents interviewed in 2000, just 1% of their children had signed a petition and none had been on a protest, improbably low figures even before the Iraq issue.

In another Nestlé Family Monitor survey in 2002², three in ten young people said that they would like the opportunity to be able to help others in the community, and two in ten parents thought that given the opportunity, their child would like to help others in the community. This latter finding suggests that young people are more willing to give active help than perhaps their parents would give them credit for.

The remaining explanation, of course, is that some young people may exaggerate their degree of involvement, especially if they feel they have evaded a social or moral pressure to participate. Such a phenomenon is familiar enough from surveys of adults, especially when measuring participation in activities which most feel that they should embrace but which fewer actually do. In the case of voting at local elections, for example, surveys generally find that a significantly higher proportion of the public claim to have voted than can be seen to be the case from the actual turnout. The methodology used for the Nestlé survey (self-completion questionnaires, with the young respondents assured that nobody would know an individual's responses) ought to have minimised the social pressure to exaggerate. But in any case, the mere presence of such social pressure, especially if it stems from peer pressure rather than the desire to impress adults, is in itself a healthy sign of positive attitudes among the young towards community participation. Only among the minority 14% of the young who say they have done none of these activities in the past year, and the similar 14% who have no interest in doing so in the future, are there signs of the "apathy" which is so often assumed to be rife among this age group.

WHAT FACTORS ARE LINKED TO PARTICIPATION?

Gender: Gender is a key driver of participation, with a significantly higher percentage of girls than boys participating in their local community in the past year, particularly in charitable events. Girls are more likely to have collected money for charity, organised a charity event and taken part in a school event or a sponsored event. But the difference is much less marked where more political activities are concerned: there is no significant difference between boys and girls in the numbers saying they have been on a protest, signed a petition or got other people to sign a petition. In the case of helping a political party, more boys than girls in the sample said they

² Source: Nestlé Family Monitor Number 15 (2002)/MORI: 'Make Space for Young People: An examination of what 11-18 year olds do with their time when they are out of school and their views on the new concept of Make Space Clubs'. Methodology: Self-completion questionnaires completed in class by 605 secondary school pupils across England aged 11-18 years, and a postal survey with 298 of their parents. Fieldwork was conducted between 10 June and 12 July 2002.



had done so, although the difference was not big enough to be statistically significant.

Family: Although not examined in this study, in the earlier Nestlé Family Monitor study of 'Charitable Giving and Volunteering' (2000) it was found that the influence of the family on whether a young person does voluntary work is profound. Family influence was more powerful than clubs, the media or charities themselves. Taken in conjunction with the clear family influence on political persuasion (discussed in a later section), it seems probable that family influence (and perhaps example) will be a key driving factor. Since this in its turn will be affected by the nature of the family unit, and by parental, social and cultural values, it is probable that some factors not measured in this survey – notably social class – are likely to be powerful predictors of involvement.

School type: The type of school a young person attends also influences the way in which he/she engages with his/her local community. Pupils studying at independent schools for example, are significantly more likely than state pupils to have collected money for charity, and helped with a school event or charity event. This may stem from any of several causes: it may reflect the fact that independent schools have devoted more energy to explicit citizenship education (a factor that the new National Curriculum citizenship lessons should correct in the near future); it probably reflects their greater ability to support out-of-school activities, or to extend the period which can be regarded as "in school", an important consideration as many of the activities may be organised in or through the school; finally, it may simply reflect differences in the pupil intake – independent school pupils are more likely to be from middle class families, and socio-political participation at all ages tends to be higher among middle class than working class groups.

FE college pupils are more likely to have taken part in political activities – such as going on a protest, signing a petition and encouraging others to do so – than those at other types of school. However, this is partly related to age rather than to institution type as such.

Media consumption: There is a strong correlation between frequency of reading newspapers and participation in community activities. Indeed, one in five (18%) young people who never read papers or do not read them very often have not participated in their local community in the past year; this compares with 11% of those who say they read newspapers very or fairly often.

Does this imply that reading newspapers also increases young people's political awareness and interest in political issues? Maybe, but it could equally work in the other direction – we would expect those who are more politically aware, for various reasons, to be particularly likely to be interested in reading newspapers. Indeed on the face of it, taking into account the low degree of trust that the young have in journalists and the low priority they give to political news among the various elements of newspaper content (both discussed below), it is tempting to conclude that newspapers are unlikely to make a difference. On the other hand, newspapers are – notwithstanding any doubts about trusting the journalists – a vital source of information about issues facing Britain, with 69% of young people saying they get information from newspapers, a figure exceeded only by the number being informed by television news. Because the survey can offer no evidence as to which factors cause which



others, we cannot say directly which causes which, or if they are both independently caused by a third factor such as family background.

On further investigation, it turns out that differences in community participation are even more striking when young people are classified by their frequency of reading books – over half (53%) of those who never read books in their leisure time have not participated in their local community, compared with just 9% who read books at least weekly. This suggests that other underlying factors are causes both of frequency of reading (whether books or newspapers) and of socio-political participation; the more generally literate (in the broadest sense) are also more likely to participate.

This is probably strongly connected to the factors already discussed. Family background is likely to have just as strong an influence on reading habits as on other out-of-school activities. Type of school probably also has an effect, with greater support for reading liable to be available in independent schools (for example, through better library provision and perhaps provision of newspapers for pupils in common rooms or other communal areas).

Engagement with politics: There is evidence to suggest that the politically most disengaged are least likely to participate in local community activities. Around one in six (17%) of those young people who say that it is not very or not at all important to them who wins the next General Election say they have not participated in their local community in the past year. This compares with 8% who say it is very or fairly important to them who wins the next General Election.

Taken with the other evidence this might suggest that there is an apathetic hard core of pupils with low involvement in any direction – reading little, taking no part in communal activities (political or otherwise) at their school or with their age group, and having no interest in politics or political issues. This might be no particular surprise, but nevertheless would represent a degree of failure in the educational system.

On investigation, however, this does not prove to be the case – only a very small group of young people, 3% of the total, said they rarely read a book or newspaper and had not participated in any of the listed socio-political activities. These were more likely to be boys than girls, and were most frequently in the youngest (11-12) age group. They were not distinctive by their parents' work status or by ethnic group, although without exception they were in the state rather than the private sector. Far from there being a substantial "underclass" of children being left out of the benefits of education, there seems to be simply a small scattering of younger children, not belonging to any particular group or class, most of whom will increase their participation and/or their reading as they grow older. We found this reassuring, and perhaps pleasantly surprising.

KEY DRIVERS ANALYSIS – GOING ON A PROTEST

One difficulty of analysing the survey data is that so many of the different factors that might affect a young person's participation in the local community in general – and their participation in protests in particular – tend to coincide.

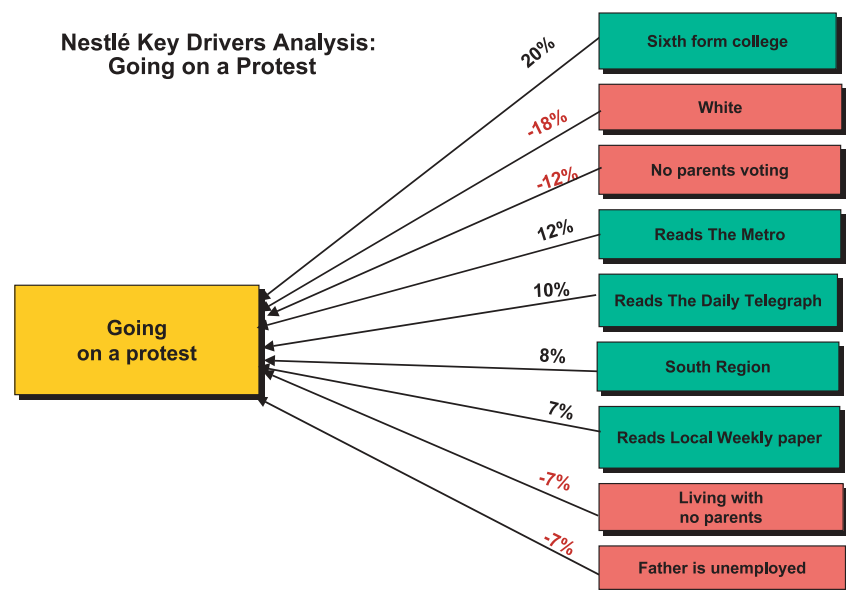
Fortunately it is possible to disentangle the various factors using a statistical technique called multi-variate regression, which identifies the



“key drivers” behind different answers or attitudes. Strictly speaking, it doesn’t prove that one is the cause of the other (and particularly in this survey, there may be other factors such as family background which were not measured but which are really the primary causes of all the findings), but it does find which attitudes or demographic variables are most closely associated with each other, after controlling for correlation with other factors.

The key drivers analysis of going on a protest is highly revealing, showing some important effects which would not have been obvious purely from the computer tabulations. The strongest driver of going on a protest – the factor that correlates most closely with it, when all other factors are held constant, is attending a sixth form college: sixth form college pupils are more likely to go on a protest, and this factor alone accounts for a 20% of all the variation in attitudes which the survey can explain. Sixth form college pupils are of course, taken entirely from the upper age groups in the survey, and without using regression analysis it might appear that it is simply older pupils who are more likely to have gone on a protest; but the key drivers analysis finds that it is the school type, not the age of the pupils, that is the decisive factor.

Next in importance is ethnicity: white pupils are significantly less likely to go on a protest than BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) pupils. The diagram shows the remaining key drivers uncovered those with a positive percentage figure being associated with greater likelihood of protesting, and those with a negative figure the reverse (see chart below).



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

Some of the factors uncovered may be surrogates for others not measured in the survey, particularly the opportunity to take part in a protest – for example, circulation of the Metro is confined to major cities, where organised protests are more likely to take place and the biggest recent protest and demonstration (indeed Britain’s biggest ever) was the Iraq war protest in London, naturally more accessible to those in the South.



It is on the face of it a little startling that readership of The Daily Telegraph should be so strong a predictor of protesting, given that newspaper's political stance. But this is merely a reminder that protest is by no means confined to the left of the political spectrum: The Daily Telegraph was Fleet Street's strongest supporter of the Countryside marches, and many of the young people who say they have been on a protest may have been on one of those, rather than the Iraq demos.

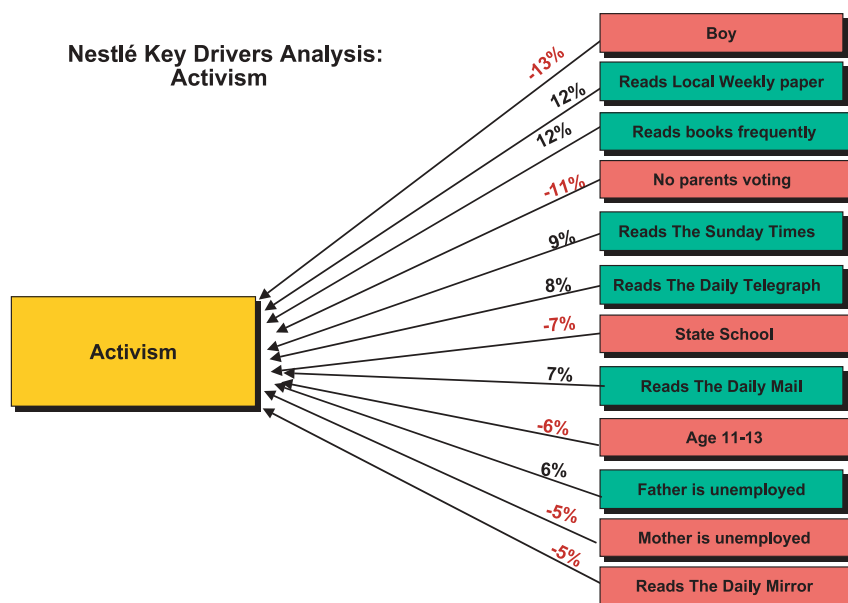
It should be emphasised that the key drivers analysis cannot explain differences in attitudes entirely: indeed, in this case, only 12% of the variation in going on a protest can be shown to correlate with other factors measured in the survey. As would be expected, other unmeasured or unmeasurable factors play their part as well. But of those factors which the survey was able to test, these are the ones that seem to be most significant.

KEY DRIVERS ANALYSIS - ACTIVISM

We can use the same technique to analyse activism and participation in the local community more generally, predicting the number of activities from the list in which young people were involved.

The strongest driver of participation in the local community is gender, with girls significantly more likely to get involved than boys. As the chart below shows, readership of both books and local papers are also key drivers. However, it isn't necessarily the case that one caused the other: other underlying attitudes or family background may be the primary cause of both activism and readership.

Having said that, a notable 21% of the variation in activism can be explained by this model.



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI



TRUST IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

Young people are more inclined to trust their parents, doctors and teachers, as well as the police, judges and scientists. However, they are much less likely to trust journalists, politicians or celebrities to tell the truth.

They are generally distrustful of 'the ordinary man or woman in the street', showing that years of being told not to talk to strangers has borne fruit.

WHO DO YOUNG PEOPLE TRUST?

Young people were shown a list of different types of people and asked who they would or would not trust to tell them the truth.

Consistent with MORI's adult veracity index, doctors come top (86%) as the type of person young people are most likely to trust – ranking ahead of even their parents (82%). Teachers also score fairly highly (70%) – although as the survey was completed in classroom sessions in schools, the figure should perhaps be viewed with slight caution! As many as one in eight (12%) said they would not trust teachers.

Other authority figures with whom young people are probably less frequently in contact also receive high trust ratings. Three-quarters would trust a policeman to tell them the truth and seven in ten would trust a judge. Around seven in ten would trust a scientist to tell them the truth. Religious leaders fare marginally less well than these more authoritative figures: around three in five say they would trust a priest/clergyman to tell them the truth – rising to 70% among the oldest age group (17+).

Those over the age of 16 are significantly more likely than young people generally to trust both their teacher and a scientist to tell them the truth (82% and 72% respectively).

The types of people who are most widely trusted by young people fall into two clear categories – those with whom they are frequently in contact and whose word they have no doubt often had to trust in the past (parents, teachers, doctors and perhaps the police and priests) and those who are probably more remote but of whom young people have formed an impression of reliability (judges, scientists and professors); if they have ever had to decide whether one of these latter groups was telling the truth or not, it has probably been on the basis of second-hand or media reports of what has been said, rather than by personal contact.

The high level of trust in the police (76% trust the police to tell the truth and only 7% do not) is at odds with familiar stereotypes. The vast majority of young people have a positive rather than a negative image of the police – a finding which also applies to adults – but it should be noted that the survey was confined to young people still at school and thus excludes 16-18 year old early school leavers, perhaps the group most likely to clash more seriously with authority.



WHO DO YOUNG PEOPLE NOT TRUST?

At the other end of the scale, however, some groups are not trusted by most young people. The media receive the worst score.

Six in ten (64%) say they would not trust a journalist to tell them the truth and half would not trust a celebrity – with the figures rising to around seven in ten and six in ten respectively among those aged over 16.

Adults also tend to say that they distrust journalists, but are considerably more likely to trust television newsreaders (Sir Trevor McDonald has won several polls as the most trusted person on British television). While 66% of adults trust newsreaders, only 45% of young people do, perhaps because they are less in the habit of regularly watching the news bulletins.

Those in public office fare little better. Two in five young people would not trust government ministers or politicians in general to tell them the truth. Mistrust in government ministers rises to 60% among those who say they would vote Liberal Democrat if old enough to vote. Scepticism is also particularly high among those who will be eligible to vote in the next General Election: over half of this group would not trust a government minister or politicians in general to tell them the truth (53% and 56% respectively). These findings may help explain the sceptical attitudes towards voting and politics (see section on attitudes towards voting), and will surely be a cause for concern with decreasing levels of turnout at the elections. However, it is worth bearing in mind that this survey was conducted during and shortly after the invasion of Iraq and amid anti-war protests, which may well be a driver of attitudes here.

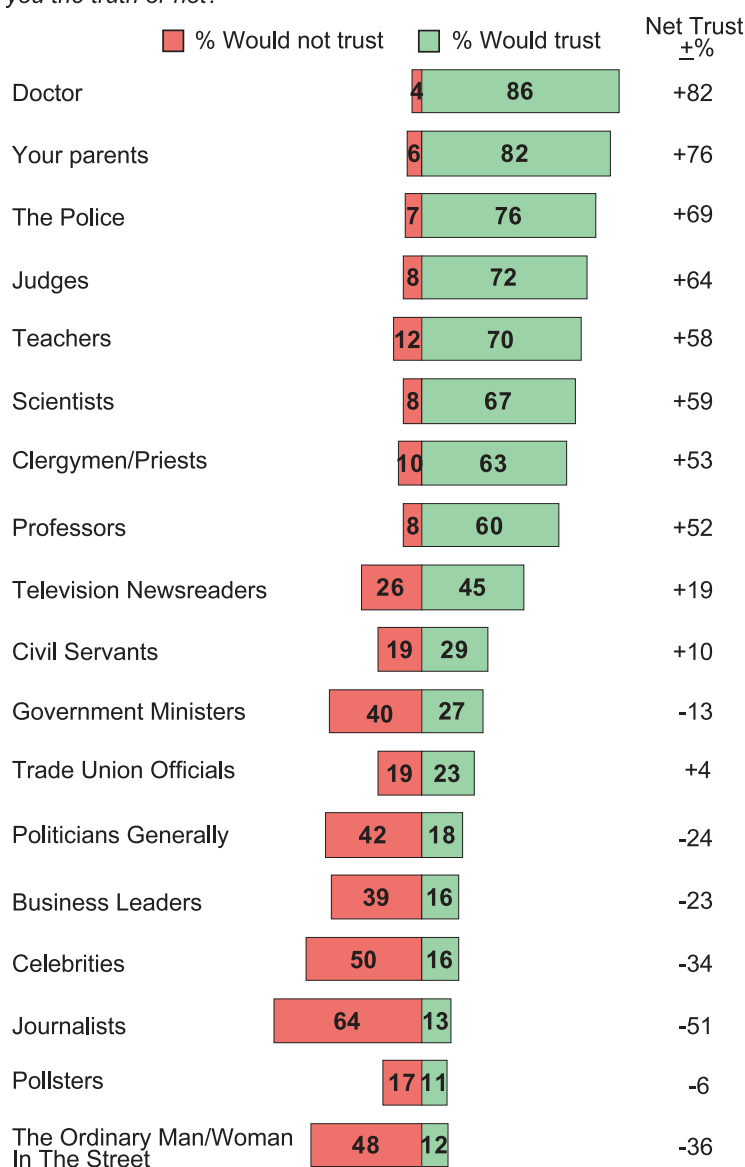
Perhaps more striking in the case of some other groups of public figures – civil servants, trade union officials and to a lesser extent business leaders – is the number of young people who expressed no opinion either way. For both civil servants and trade union officials, the balance of young people's attitudes was in their favour, but fewer than half could say whether they trusted them or not. In the case of business leaders, just over half the young people had an opinion, but it was a distrustful one by more than a two-to-one margin (39% to 16%). While young people's attitudes to civil servants may perhaps have no direct impact on their lives, their attitudes to union officials and business leaders – and by implication to the unions and businesses they run – are likely to be relevant to the employment decisions that many of them may have to make in the near future, and widespread hostility to the latter and indifference to the former among those at school should please neither.

The pattern of trust among young people mostly reflects the pattern among adults, but there is one striking exception: just under half (48%) would not trust the 'ordinary man or woman in the street' to tell them the truth. This compares with 32% of adults. Of course the young are persistently told that they should not trust 'strangers'. It is certainly the younger age groups – particularly young girls – that are least trusting of the ordinary man or woman in the street. Parents will perhaps be reassured that this message is getting through.



Trust in Public Figures

Q For each of the different types of people listed below, would you trust them to tell you the truth or not?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003 Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

BME GROUPS ARE LESS TRUSTING OF AUTHORITY FIGURES

Perhaps reflecting media coverage of the Macpherson report, white respondents are significantly more likely than young people from BME groups to trust the police (79% versus 56%) and judges (74% versus 61%) to tell them the truth. They are also significantly more trusting of doctors and government ministers than their BME counterparts (87% versus 76% and 28% versus 18% respectively).

However, white young people are less trusting of media figures. Around seven in ten (66%) would not trust a journalist to tell them the truth, compared with half of our BME respondents. Similarly, around three in ten (28%) white respondents would not trust television newsreaders to tell the truth, compared with 12% of those from a BME group.



(Is it relevant, perhaps, that the best-known and generally most widely trusted newsreader, Sir Trevor McDonald, is himself black and that ethnic minorities are generally better represented among TV newsreaders than among many of the other groups that the survey asked about?).

HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS COMPARE?

When compared with the figures for adults (taken from a previously published MORI survey conducted for the British Medical Association in February 2003³), the findings reveal that young people are much less distrustful than adults of some authority figures. For example, there is a 31 percentage point difference in the net trust levels of young people and adults where the police is concerned (see table overleaf). In this case not only are young people much less likely to distrust the Police, they are also more likely to trust them. In the case of both judges and scientists, around the same proportion of young people and adults say they trust them, but the remaining adults are more likely to say they would not trust them whereas among the young there are more 'don't knows'.

As highlighted in the following table, while young people are more trusting of these three groups than are adults, they are significantly less trusting of teachers, with a 21 percentage point difference in their net trust ratings.

However, and as already indicated, by far the biggest difference in opinion is in trusting the ordinary man or woman in the street. Young people are much more cautious, with a net score of -37 for young people and +21 for adults.

Adults on the other hand, are significantly less trusting of government ministers, though the difference in the net scores is exaggerated since considerably more of the young people expressed no opinion. For "politicians generally", just 18% of both young people and adults would trust them to tell the truth, but whereas almost all the rest of the adults (75%) said they distrusted politicians, far more of the young people still have an open mind on the matter – only 42% distrust politicians generally, while 40% didn't know or failed to answer the question. While politicians may draw some comfort from the fact that the young people are less likely to have (yet) absorbed the cynical attitudes of their elders, the knowledge that so many young people take too little interest in politics to have an opinion on the trustworthiness of politicians is not necessarily a positive sign.

The following table overleaf, compares the opinions of young people and adults. It shows, in bold, the net score given to each type of person (i.e. the percentage who would trust this type of person to tell them the truth minus the percentage who would not trust this person to tell them the truth).

³ Source: British Medical Association (2003)/MORI. Methodology: Face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative quota sample of 2,141 British adults aged 15+, interviewed between 6 and 10 February 2003. Questions were placed on MORI's weekly Omnibus Survey.



Q For each of the different types of people listed below, would you trust them to tell you the truth or not?

	Young people			Adults		
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	<i>Would trust %</i>	<i>Would not trust %</i>	<i>Net trust %</i>	<i>Would trust %</i>	<i>Would not trust %</i>	<i>Net trust %</i>
Doctors	86	4	+82	91	6	+85
Your parents	82	6	+76	N/a	N/a	N/a
The police	76	7	+69	64	26	+38
Judges	72	8	+64	72	19	+53
Scientists	67	8	+59	65	22	+43
Teachers	70	12	+58	87	8	+79
Professors	60	8	+52	74	11	+63
Clergymen/priests	63	10	+53	71	20	+51
Television newsreaders	45	26	+19	66	24	+42
Civil servants	29	19	+10	46	41	+5
Trade union officials	23	19	+4	33	53	-20
Pollsters	11	17	-6	46	34	+12
Government ministers	27	40	-13	20	73	-53
Business leaders	16	39	-23	28	60	-32
Politicians generally	18	42	-24	18	75	-57
Celebrities	16	50	-34	N/a	N/a	N/a
The ordinary man/woman in the street	12	48	-36	53	32	+21
Journalists	13	64	-51	18	75	-57

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/British Medical Association (2003)/MORI



ISSUES AND INFORMATION

Findings indicate that the invasion of Iraq has had an important impact on the attitudes and concerns of young people. Indeed, a quarter of young people view war and conflict as the single most important issue facing Britain today – ranking it the top issue of concern and a staggering 13 percentage points ahead of the next single most important issue. For British adults on the other hand, the NHS is the most important issue facing Britain today.

The issues of crime and drugs are also important for young people, and as research in 2002 showed, for their parents too.

Despite the current debate surrounding the Euro, the single currency is the least important issue for young people – although it holds more importance for young Tory supporters. The issue of asylum, on the other hand, is an issue of political importance among young people eligible to vote in the next General Election.

Despite the lack of trust that young people have in television newsreaders and journalists (as outlined in the last chapter), they are the main sources of information for young people about the issues facing Britain.

The Sun is the most commonly read daily paper and The Sunday Times the most popular Sunday paper. The sports and entertainment pages are the most popular sections for young people.

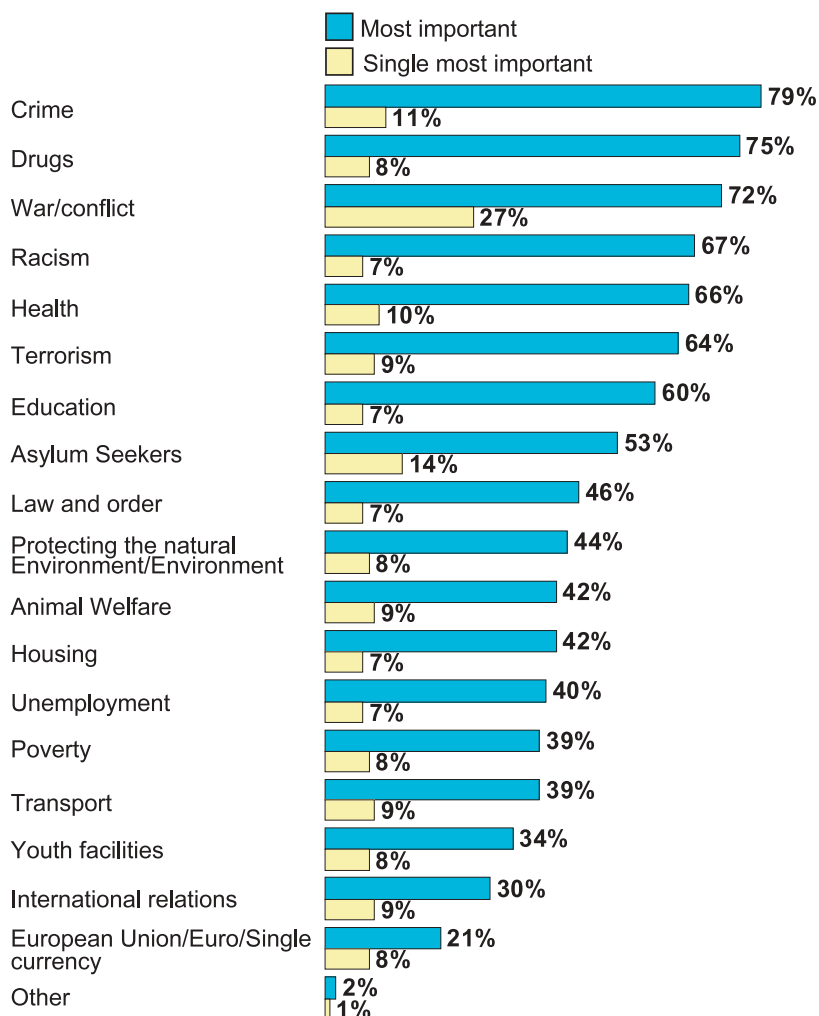
THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING BRITAIN TODAY

Young people were shown a list of issues and asked to tick all those that they consider to be important issues facing Britain today. They were then asked to tick the single most important issue. (See chart overleaf.)



Most Important Issues Facing Britain

- Q What do you see as the most important issues facing Britain today?
- Q And what do you think is the single most important issue facing Britain today?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003 Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/ MORI

WAR AND CONFLICT - SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Seven in ten young people rate war/conflict as one of the most important issues facing Britain today – a quarter see it as the single most important issue, ranking it first among the issues listed. Girls are more concerned than boys.

Similarly, over three in five see terrorism as one of the most important issues facing Britain today, with one in ten naming it as the single most important issue.

As already noted, the survey was conducted during and shortly after the war in Iraq, and reflects the concerns held by many young people at that time. These were concerns shared by adults – in MORI's end of March Political Monitor survey⁴, 64% of adults named defence, foreign affairs or international terrorism as one of the most important issues facing Britain, half as many again as named any other issue; however, the prominence

⁴ Source: MORI Political Monitor (2003)/MORI: 'Political Attitudes in Great Britain'. For the May Political Monitor, a representative quota sample of 1,793 adults aged 18+ from across Great Britain were interviewed face-to-face between 22 and 28 May 2003. Some questions are filtered on half of the sample (931 respondents). Similar sample sizes were used in the surveys in earlier months.



of the issue for adults fell away quickly, with only 26% selecting it as an important issue in April and 24% in May. The Political Monitor survey, however, measures unprompted answers rather than giving respondents a list of issues from which to choose, and it is probable that a higher number of adults would still be mentioning their concern about the international situation if a list-format were used. The views of young people, therefore, in a survey running from March to May, should not be seen as being out of line with those of their elders on this issue; but it is probably true that had the survey been conducted at any other period, far fewer of the young would have mentioned the importance of war and conflict.

CRIME AND DRUG ABUSE VIEWED AS AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

Eight in ten young people see crime as one of the most important issues facing Britain today. This is followed by three-quarters who say that the issue of drugs is one of the most important. This reflects findings from the 2002 Nestlé Family Monitor survey of young people and their parents, in which crime and drugs were also named as the most important issues facing Britain at that time.

Although a concern, these issues are less of a concern among the general adult population: the NHS has been the issue most often named by adults as one of the most important facing Britain in recent years, and headed the list of important issues in the May 2003 MORI Political Monitor. In this survey 39% of adults named the NHS as an important issue, 32% education, 27% race relations or immigration and 19% crime or law and order. Only 5% mentioned drug abuse. The percentages are not directly comparable with the survey of young people because of the difference in the methodology, but the relative ranking of different issues can legitimately be compared.

RACE AND ASYLUM ISSUES ARE ALSO IMPORTANT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Racism has moved up young people's agendas as being an important issue since the 2002 survey, with around two-thirds saying that it is one of the most important issues facing Britain today. The issue of asylum seekers has also increased in importance. It is rated the single most important issue facing Britain today by 14% of young people (exceeded in importance by the issue of war and conflict), and as one of the most important by 53%. Boys – particularly those living in the North and those attending independent schools are significantly more likely to see the asylum issue as important.

The issue of asylum seekers appears to have a significant impact on young people's political attitudes more generally. Indeed, more than three in five (63%) young people who are dissatisfied with the way that the government is running the country say that the issue of asylum is one of the most important issues facing Britain today. Around the same percentage (64%) of those eligible to vote in the next General Election⁵ say that it is an important issue.

⁵ Based on the assumption that the next Election will be held on 1 May 2005.



Asylum is seen as an important issue by young people regardless of their voting intentions: 67% of those who would vote Labour, 65% of those who would vote Conservative, 60% of those who would vote Liberal Democrat and 61% of those who would vote for the British National Party chose asylum as one of the most important issues. Concern is lower among those who say they would not vote (55%) or do not know how they would vote (44%), but this simply reflects the lower level of political engagement among these groups, who were less likely to select any issues as important.

However, the position is different when young people select the single most important issue. Concern about asylum issues is clearly – as might be expected – a driver of support for the BNP: 32% of those who say they would vote for the BNP if they were old enough to vote name asylum as the single most important issue, compared to 13% of Tories, 11% of Labour supporters and 6% of Liberal Democrats. More worryingly, 22% of those who say they would not vote at all also named asylum as the single most important issue – while it may be that this group have already considered and rejected support for the BNP, it is also possible that they form a pool of potential future BNP support. Those who say they would not vote are those who, at present, reject the claims of all parties, and the failure of the parties to satisfy them on the issues that they feel important is likely to be an important factor in this; there is a clear danger that a significant number of young people may be pushed into the arms of the extremist parties by the perceived failure of the major parties to address their concerns over asylum.

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION OR HEALTH, HEALTH, HEALTH?

For adults the National Health Service is the most important issue facing Britain today, and education/schools rank third in importance.

For young people too, health ranks above education as an issue of importance – 66% and 60% respectively rate these issues as among the most important issues facing Britain today. The same is true when asked about the single most important issue – 10% mention health and 7% education. But the relative importance young people attach to these issues by comparison with other issues is considerably lower than for adults.

EUROPEAN UNION AND THE SINGLE CURRENCY ARE THE LEAST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Of the eighteen issues in the list from which the pupils chose, the least frequently selected as important was the European Union/Euro/Single Currency: just one in five see it as one of the most important issues facing Britain today, although the figure rises to three in ten among those intending to vote Conservative when eligible to vote.

For adults, European issues rarely top the agenda, but whenever stories about the EU or the Euro are prominent in the news the number naming it as an important issue tends to rise sharply – it is an issue that needs to be brought to the top-of-the-mind to feature strongly in the unprompted



issues poll, but enough adults think it important when they are reminded of it to justify the importance most politicians give it as an issue. It seems that this latent concern about Europe is not present among young people. It may be that the economic and constitutional issues such as the Euro and the EU are rather more technical in nature than most of the other issues on the list, and would therefore naturally be less accessible to the young – if this is the case, then they may come to share adults' interest in the European issue as they get older. On the other hand, it is noticeable that there is no difference in perceived importance of the Euro as an issue by age – a quarter of the 11-12 year olds selected it as important, just as did a quarter of the 17+ age group. This suggests it may not be an issue that the young initially have difficulty understanding, but simply one that most young people of any age have no interest in. If this is the case, those politicians in all parties who view the question of the Euro as being of overwhelming importance should perhaps be worried by the failure of the next generation of voters to agree with them.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ISSUES

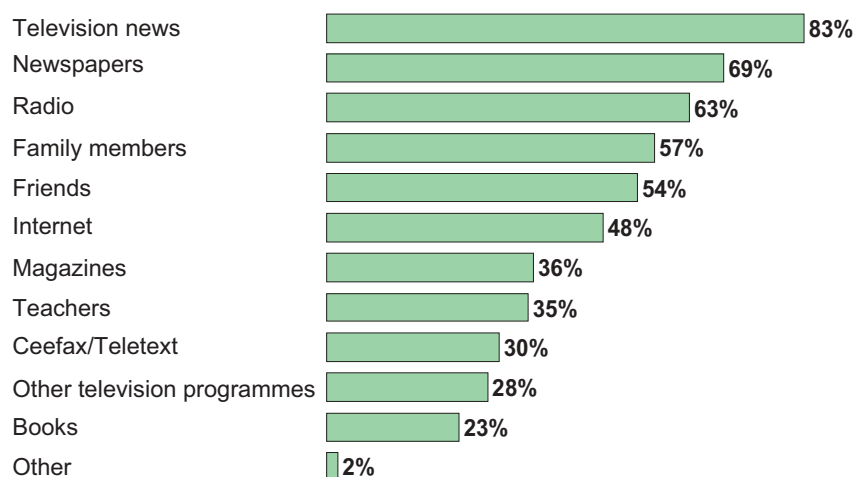
Television news is the main source of information by which young people find out about the issues facing Britain; in this, they are no different from adults. This is followed by newspapers and the radio. While the media serves as an important source of information for many young people, findings also indicate that young people do not necessarily believe everything that is presented to them by the media (see chapter on trust).

Over half also get information on the issues facing Britain from their family and friends (57% and 54% respectively).

The Internet is another popular source of information – with around half (48%) mentioning this medium. Stereotypically, boys are significantly more likely to use the Internet than girls (52% versus 43%). Girls on the other hand favour more traditional information sources – such as word-of-mouth and the print and broadcast media.

Sources of Information on Issues

Q From which, if any, of the following do you get information on issues facing Britain?



All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI



It is worth noting that barely a third feel they are being informed about the issues facing Britain by their teachers – even after the first six months of National Curriculum citizenship education. This is a worryingly low figure.

NEWSPAPER READERSHIP

As noted above, newspapers are an important information source for many young people. So which newspapers do young people prefer?

THE MOST POPULAR DAILY PAPERS

The tabloids win the paper war where young people are concerned, with The Sun being their most-read. Two in five young people interviewed had read The Sun in the past week, with the figure rising to 45% among boys. It is also a particular favourite among state school pupils (44%) and potential Labour voters (52%).

The Sun is followed by The Daily Mirror and The Daily Mail – both mentioned by around a quarter of young people. Again, state school pupils and Labour supporters favour The Daily Mirror, while independent school pupils are more likely to read The Daily Mail.

The Times ranks top among the broadsheet papers, with 16% of young people saying they had read it in the last week. It is closely followed by The Daily Telegraph. Both are more likely to be read by older and independent school pupils. The more politically interested are also more likely to read these papers.

It should be remembered, of course, that few young people will regularly buy their own newspaper. Except where newspapers are provided at schools or where they read them in other places such as public libraries or youth clubs, the newspapers that are available for them to read will normally be those in the family home: their “choice” of newspapers will therefore tend to be much constrained by their parents’ reading habits. As would be expected in these circumstances, the relative readership of daily newspapers by the young matches the readership pattern of adults fairly closely. (Among adults The Daily Telegraph is well ahead of The Times, but its readership is particularly concentrated among older age groups, and less so among those who will still have school-age children).

Just 15% had not read a paper in the last week – younger pupils and college students are less likely to have done so. Among the younger people this is likely to be due to lack of interest, for college students it is possibly down to a lack of time – because they are either studying or out with friends.

Weekly and evening local papers are also popular – mentioned by 21% and 16% respectively. The evening local is more likely to be read by young people living in the North and Midlands than young people in the South.

THE MOST POPULAR SUNDAY PAPERS

It is a different story where young people’s readership of the Sunday papers is concerned, however: a broadsheet paper ranks top. The Sunday Times is the most read Sunday paper among young people, with 23% saying they had read it in the last month. The paper is a particular favourite among independent pupils and (intending) Conservative voters.



This is followed by The Sunday Mirror, The News of the World, and The Mail On Sunday – all mentioned by just under one in five. State pupils prefer The Sunday Mirror and The News of the World, while independent pupils would rather read The Mail on Sunday. According to the findings, The News of the World is also equally popular with young Labour supporters.

However, the Sunday papers are less popular than the dailies among young people – a quarter had not read a Sunday newspaper in the last month.

It is interesting that young people's Sunday reading habits should diverge from those of adults so much more than in the case of daily newspapers. Almost as surprising as the high readership of The Sunday Times among young people is the low readership of The News of the World, Britain's highest selling newspaper and the most read among adults. It is possible that some of the young are reluctant to admit having read it, but there seems to be no reason why such an effect should apply to The News of the World and not to its daily stablemate, The Sun. Alternatively, it may be that for some reason it simply appeals less to the young than some of the other Sunday tabloids, though it is not clear why this should be the case.

THE MOST POPULAR SECTIONS

Young people like to read about sports and entertainment. Over half say that they generally read the sports and entertainment sections of the papers (55% and 54% respectively). Boys prefer the sports pages, while girls would rather read the entertainment sections.

Similarly, girls also prefer the film and television pages, and news about celebrities. Living up to stereotypes, they are also more interested in the problem pages and the health and fashion sections, and in reading their horoscopes.

The next most popular sections are the local news and the music pages – both mentioned by 51%, and both more popular with girls than boys. The local news is also something that older pupils are more likely to read.

The national news is read by around half (47%) and the international/world news by two in five (37%). Again, both of these sections are more likely to be read by older pupils.

By contrast, very few (only 6%) say they usually read the political pages, almost as few as read the business (5%) or financial (4%) pages of the newspapers. Despite many of them saying that the newspapers are an important source for their information about current issues, they are not reading those parts of the newspaper that would tell them how those issues relate to the political agenda and the political parties. Little wonder that there is a disconnection between the two. Readership of the political pages is much higher among older than younger pupils, though – 17% of those aged 17+ and 9% of those aged 15-16 say they read them, but only 3% of younger age groups. Political coverage is not generally written with young readers in mind, and it may simply be that it is too heavy going until young people reach a certain age.



ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICS AND VOTING

Findings highlight a 'political paradox' among young people. Young people recognise the importance of voting and believe that the way one votes makes a difference, yet do not have a sense of duty to vote and do not believe that it is important to them personally.

Just one in ten young people are absolutely certain they would vote if a General Election were held tomorrow (assuming they were old enough to vote). The main reason for not voting is lack of interest, although the fact that young people don't feel valued is also important. Lack of knowledge is a key reason for not voting, with around half agreeing that they do not know enough about the political parties or the people you vote for at elections. Similarly, one in five say they would not vote because they wouldn't know how to.

However, despite a general lack of interest and understanding among many young people, there is also a desire to learn more – particularly if this can help them decide how to vote when they turn 18 years old.

When asked about methods of voting, more modern means – such as text messaging and the Internet – are just as popular as the more traditional method of marking a ballot paper.

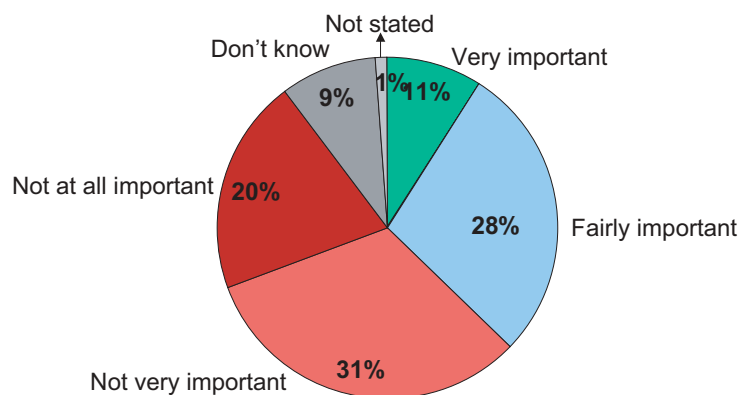
Reducing the voting age receives support among young people, with three in five wanting it to be lowered to the age of 16 years old.

PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF ELECTION OUTCOMES

Most young people are turned off by party politics and are uninterested in the outcome of elections. Around half (51%) of 11-18 year olds say it is unimportant to them who wins the next General Election – 20% say it is not at all important; only 39% feel it is "very" or "fairly" important.

Perceived Importance of Election Results

Q How important is it to you personally who wins that next General Election?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI



Of course, low political knowledge and understanding, from which lack of interest and engagement follow, are to some extent inevitable among the younger age groups. The facts of political life, like anything else, are something that have to be learned. Of those old enough to be eligible to vote in the next General Election, the figures are slightly better, with half saying it is personally important to them who wins the next General Election. By way of comparison, at the 2001 general election 66% of all adults said it was personally important to them who won, but only 53% of 18-24 year olds said the same⁶. There is therefore no evidence of any further decline in interest since 2001, and indeed assuming that (as is generally the case) interest in the outcome will rise somewhat once the next election is real rather than a theoretical future event, it may even be that at the next General Election the first-time-voter age group will be a little more likely to care about the outcome than in 2001. That said, the turnout in 2001 was a record low, and improvement is therefore certainly needed.

The type of school that one attends has a significant impact on political interest levels. Around half (47%) of independent school pupils say it is either very or fairly important to them who wins the next General Election, compared with just 36% of state school pupils. Many independent schools have, of course, made a point of formal or informal citizenship education for many years; with the introduction of citizenship lessons in state schools in September 2002, it will be interesting to see how views towards, and interest in, politics change. It should be recognised, however, that some difference in attitudes is, in any case, to be expected because of the different intake of independent and state schools: pupils in the former are more likely to come from middle-class families, who tend to be more politically active and interested. Furthermore, this implies that they are more likely to be Conservative rather than Labour – with a Labour government currently in office and widely seen to be suffering from “mid-term blues”, Conservative loyalties might, in any case, be expected to be stronger than Labour ones.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is no great difference in attitudes to the importance of elections by ethnic background: pupils from BME groups are a little more likely to say that election outcomes are important, but the difference is not statistically significant. More than half (54%) of white pupils say that it is not very or not at all important to them who wins the next General Election, substantially more than the 34% of pupils from BME groups who say the same, but this mostly corresponded to a higher number of BME pupils answering ‘don’t know’ or not completing the question at all, which in the context probably means much the same.

As highlighted earlier, frequency of newspaper readership correlates strongly with participation in the community. It is also an indicator of political interest, with 45% of those who say they read a newspaper very or fairly often agreeing that it is personally important to them who wins the next General Election. Again, it is a moot point whether reading the newspapers increases interest in party politics, or whether being interested in party politics makes one more likely to want to read the newspapers. Probably both are partly true, but other factors such as family background are likely to have a strong influence on both.

The type of newspaper read also seems to make a clear difference – around three in five of those who have read one of the broadsheet dailies (The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Telegraph or The Independent) think it is important who wins the election, while only two in five of those who have

⁶ Source: Times Election Poll, week 5 (2001)/MORI. Published in The Times on 7 June 2001. Methodology: Face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative quota sample of 1,967 adults registered to vote at 210 ward sampling points across Great Britain. Interviews conducted on 5 June 2001.



read The Daily Mirror and a third of those who have read The Sun feel the same. But while it would be tempting to suggest that the greater political content of the broadsheets might be responsible for stimulating political interest, it is equally true that those with little interest in politics are more likely to choose newspapers that give more prominence to other subjects. This argument may apply less to young people than to adults, since few young people will buy their own newspapers, and will in most cases tend to read whatever is available at home. On the other hand, broadsheet newspapers are more likely to be read by older pupils, whereas there is no age difference in readership of The Sun or The Mirror; this presumably reflects the fact that the tabloids are more accessible to younger readers in both content and presentation, and suggests that there is a degree of choice in readership being exercised – those young people whose parents read broadsheets may wait longer before acquiring the habit for themselves, but it seems quite likely that an existing interest in politics might often be the stimulus that eventually causes them to do so.

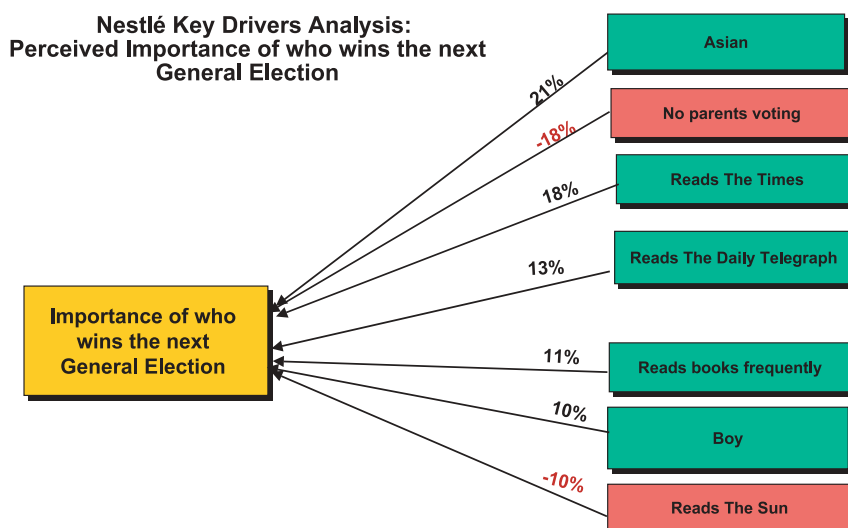
But the significance of newspaper readership as such is again thrown into doubt by the discovery that frequency of reading books turns out to be a much better discriminator of political interest than overall readership of newspapers: 43% of those who read books for leisure at least weekly, but just 5% of those who never do so, think the outcome of the next election will be important to them. This suggests that political engagement among the young may be a facet of a more general breadth of outlook, rather than being directly caused by any of their other habits.

KEY DRIVERS ANALYSIS – IMPORTANCE OF WHO WINS THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION

Again, key drivers analysis helps make sense of the various factors linked to interest in elections. Pupils at independent schools tend to be more Conservative, to be more likely to read newspapers, and to be more likely to have parents who vote. These pupils are also more likely than average to consider elections important, but is that because of the newspapers they read, because of the type of school they go to, because of their own party politics or their parents' political activism? Or all of these? Key drivers analysis will tell us.

The strongest driver of thinking the election important – the factor that correlates most closely with it, when all other factors are held constant is being Asian: Asian pupils are more likely to think that the outcome of the next General Election is important, and this factor alone accounts for a fifth of all the variation in attitudes which the survey can explain. Next in importance comes whether the young people's parents vote: 18% of the discernible effect is caused by those who say neither of their parents would vote being less likely to think the election important.





Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

Readership of certain newspapers is an important indicator, but while Times or Telegraph readers seem to be driven towards thinking the election is important, Sun readers are driven towards thinking it is not. Little wonder, therefore, that there is no strong relationship with newspaper readership as such – it depends which newspaper! But even with this taken into account, frequency of reading books is also still a factor in its own right.

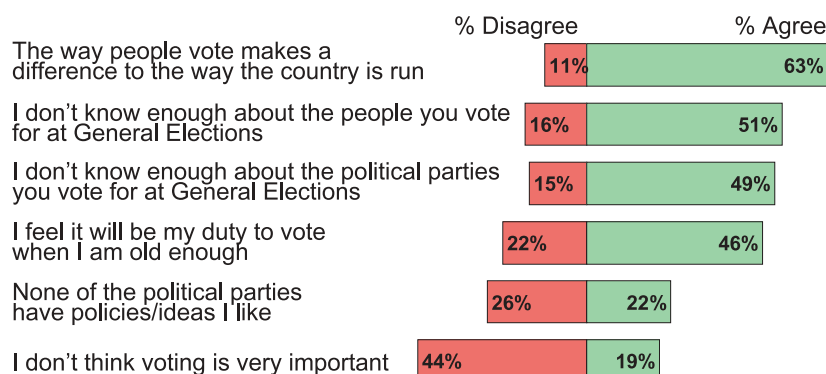
As noted elsewhere in the report, key drivers analysis cannot explain differences in attitudes entirely: in this case, only 11% of the variation in perceived importance of the election can be shown to correlate with other factors measured in the survey.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS VOTING

As a way of assessing attitudes towards politics and voting, young people were shown a list of statements and asked which they agree or disagree with each (see following chart).

Attitudes Towards Voting and Elections

Q Below are some things that young people have said about voting. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI



Findings suggest that there may be a 'political paradox' in the attitudes of young people. While many young people feel that voting is important, and recognise that the way one votes makes a difference, a significant minority do not equate politics and voting with the way they lead their everyday lives.

The majority (63%) of young people agree that 'The way people vote makes a difference to the way the country is run' and over two in five (44%) disagree with the statement 'I don't think voting is very important'. Yet as reported above, half do not believe that election outcomes are very important to them personally.

There is no necessary contradiction in accepting that voting is important while the outcome of the next election is not. One possibility is that the act of voting, participation in the democratic process and all that implies, is considered important in itself independent of the significance of who is elected. We would expect those who take this attitude to have a strong belief that voting is a civic duty rather than merely a right or privilege. Although this is a belief that is widespread among British voters, it is held considerably more strongly by older generations: at the 2001 general election, 65% of the adult public strongly agreed that "It is my duty to vote", but the figure fell from 84% among those aged 65 and over to 40% among 18-24 year olds⁷. It is not clear whether the difference in attitudes is a generational one (in which case belief in voting as a duty would be expected to continue to decline) or whether this is simply a belief which has always increased with age, in which case low levels of belief in voting as a duty among the young would be less alarming.

At any rate, among those still at school, the belief that voting is a duty is weaker still. Only 46% of the young agree that "I feel it will be my duty to vote when I'm old enough", and just 18% agree strongly. Support is a little stronger among those aged 17-and-over (57% agree, 23% agree strongly), but it should be remembered that those 17-and-over who have stayed at school are not likely to be representative of the whole of their age group, and are probably more likely than average to vote. While the figures for 15 and 16 year olds are a little higher than average, the difference is not statistically significant: it does not seem that children are much more likely to accept that there is a duty to vote as they get older. The difference may well, therefore, be a generational one, a permanent change in the values with which young Britons grow up; but it is possible that the introduction of citizenship lessons into the National Curriculum may address this change; at the moment, state pupils are less likely to believe that it will be their duty to vote than are independent school pupils.

An alternative explanation for disconnection between the importance of voting and the importance of the next election may arise from short-term factors, liable to change with the political situation. This is less comforting than the "duty to vote" scenario, but would still not imply any long-term threat to the health of the democratic system. If young people feel that, at the moment, there is little to choose between the main parties, but that nevertheless in other circumstances the difference might be far greater and therefore the election outcome of more significance, they might well agree that, in general terms, voting is important while the outcome of the next election is not. If this is the case, we might not expect them to vote while they can see little difference between the parties, but they would still remain politically aware and ready to exercise their franchise as soon as the circumstances of a particular election made it worth their while.

⁷ Source: Electoral Commission (2001)/MORI. Methodology: Telephone interviews with a representative quota sample of 1,801 adults aged 18+ across the United Kingdom, between 9 and 15 May 2001.



But this must be offset against the third possibility, that young people do not trace a connection between differences in how the country is run and the things that are important to them. This would be just as likely to lead them to express alienation from the political parties and what they have to offer, but in this case the judgement would be based on insufficient information backed up by a disinclination to find out. Once young people – or, for that matter, citizens of any age – come to the conclusion that “politics” is unimportant and irrelevant to them, they are likely to make their minds inaccessible to anything that politicians have to say, and become very hard to recapture for the democratic process. What we would hope to see among young people, therefore, is evidence of open minds and where there is lack of knowledge (inevitable, after all, in the young) at least a willingness to learn.

Findings certainly indicate that politics and voting is an area which young people feel that they do not know much about. Around half (51%) agree that they “don’t know enough about the people you vote for at General Elections” and a similar proportion (49%) admit that they “don’t know enough about the political parties you vote for at General Elections”. Girls are more likely to admit to a lack of knowledge than boys.

This lack of understanding is further illuminated in the next chapter, where it is shown that young people have, at best, a limited knowledge of the political parties and their leaders.

Disillusionment with the present state of politics is certainly present, but perhaps to a lesser extent than might be feared: one in five young people agree that none of the political parties have policies or ideas they like, but a quarter disagree, and more than half take neither side. If the young continue to equate not knowing very much with not knowing enough, there is hope yet.

A higher percentage of white young people than BME disagree with this statement (27% versus 15%) – lending support to the idea that there is a sense of alienation among many young people from BME groups. Further support for this comes from the finding that white pupils are more likely than their BME counterparts to agree that the way people vote makes a difference to the way the country is run (64% and 51% respectively).

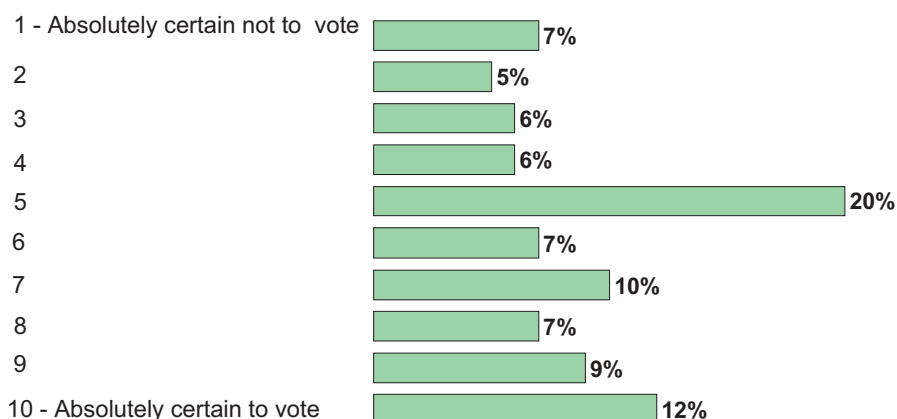
LIKELIHOOD OF VOTING IN AN ELECTION

Just one in eight (12%) young people say that they are absolutely certain that they would vote if there was a General Election tomorrow (assuming they were old enough to vote). This contrasts with 7% who are absolutely certain that they would not vote. Around three in ten don’t know either way – suggesting that this is a group whose interest needs to be ‘captured’.



Likelihood of Voting in an Election

Q If there was a General Election tomorrow how likely would you be to vote (assuming you were old enough to vote) on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you would be absolutely certain to vote and 1 means you would be absolutely certain not to vote?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

Boys are less inclined to vote than girls – one in ten (10%) boys say they are absolutely certain not to vote compared with 4% of girls.

As might be expected, those who attach less importance to who wins the next General Election are also less likely to vote. Five per cent of young people who say that it is not very or not at all important to them who wins the next General Election are certain to vote, compared with 25% who say it is important to them who wins.

Older pupils eligible to vote in the next General Election, and independent school pupils are more likely to vote. This raises the question of how the new Citizenship Education programme in state schools will impact on future voter turnout.

Findings again indicate that interest in politics is connected with newspaper readership. Indeed, around one in five (17%) of those young people who regularly read newspapers say they are certain to vote. This compares with just 7% of those who never read a newspaper, or do not read one very often.

REASONS FOR NOT VOTING

Young people's explanations of why they might not vote highlight the importance of capturing their interest if the issue of decreasing turnout is to be tackled. Indeed, around half (47%) of those not certain to vote say they might not vote because they are "just not interested in politics". This rises to 58% among those who think that it is not very or not at all important who wins the next General Election. It is striking that this finding is consistent among those certain not to vote in state and independent schools, despite the clear differences in attitudes to politics among the two groups of pupils revealed by the other questions in the survey; those who reject voting, whatever their background, seem to do so for similar reasons.

The study also reveals that many young people do not intend to vote because they do not feel valued by our political leaders. Just over one in five (23%) say they will not vote because "politicians don't care about people like me". And for young people, this applies to all political parties



– 17% say there is no point voting because “all political parties are the same”. Consequently, 16% also believe that politics does not make a difference to their lives.

VOTING INTENTION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Reasons for not voting differ with regard to the party that young people are most likely to support (although there is little difference in likelihood of voting as such by party). Indeed, of some concern to the current government will be the third (35%) of potential Labour voters who say they will not vote because they have “better things to do with their time”. This compares with just 17% of potential Conservative voters and 7% of Lib Dems.

The other political parties, however, will be less happy with the one in five (22%) young people currently dissatisfied with the way the government is running the country who say they will not vote because “all the political parties are the same”.

METHODS OF VOTING

Not only do young people need to be interested and feel valued, but they also need to know how to vote. One in five (19%) say they are certain they would not vote because they “wouldn’t know how to vote”. This suggests that there would be support among young people for Mr Hendry’s (Conservative Shadow Minister) idea of first time voters receiving a pack to help them understand how the UK’s political system works. He says “The pack would have an explanation, trying to be as lively as possible, about what each level of government does... There is a tremendous misunderstanding about who does what”. Girls are more likely to admit that they wouldn’t know how to vote than boys (24% versus 13%).

The findings also indicate that there would be support for making voting more convenient by using other means of registering a vote, such as the Internet or text message – although this may simply reflect familiarity, since many young people will have “voted” in these ways in polls or for reality TV shows, whereas few will have ever voted by secret ballot. A recent Electoral Commission report has suggested changing the law to ensure that parents are allowed to take their children into polling stations when they go to vote “to develop the habit of voting”⁸, and these findings will perhaps add weight to that recommendation. Greater familiarity with the existing system would surely encourage the young to vote.

Nevertheless, the issue of convenience, as such, is also a real one. Indeed, one in five (21%) young people say they are certain not to vote because they have better things to do with their time – rising to 26% among boys. Similarly, 6% say it is “not easy enough to vote”. Views on using different methods to vote were examined in the study, and are explored in the next few pages. But issues of convenience are, for the most part, issues of priorities – while it may be sensible to make it easier to vote, the real aim should be to increase the perceived importance of voting so that young people no longer feel that the other ways in which they might be spending their time are of greater value to them.

⁸ Source: Electoral Commission, Voting for Change: An Electoral Law Modernisation Programme (June 2003), p. 4.



Something of concern to all political parties is the decreasing turnout at elections – particularly among young people. This is set against a background of high numbers of young people voting for reality TV show contestants, such as the Big Brother housemates – a point that has not been missed by politicians or the media. Indeed, the Elections Minister, Yvette Cooper recently commented that politicians should learn from Big Brother and make it easier to vote – “Big Brother is an example of convenience voting”.

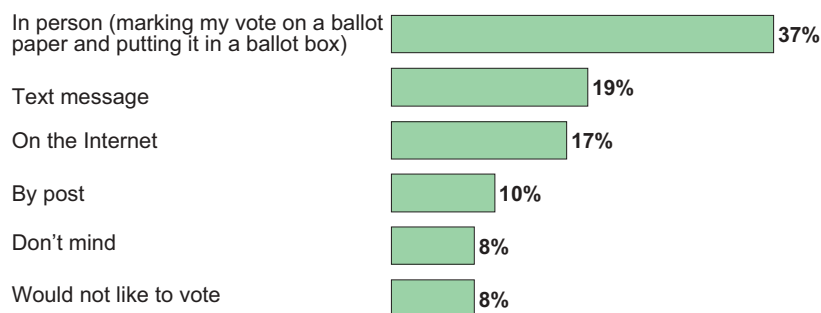
In fact, experiments with alternative forms of voting have already been conducted at some local elections, under the supervision of the Electoral Commission, with the hope that turnout might be increased. The Commission’s initial conclusions on the success of the pilot schemes conducted in 2003 are due to be published in July, but it already seems clear that (as was also found in previous years) the impact on turnout was minimal, except in the case of all-postal voting experiments (where polling stations are not used, and every elector is sent a ballot paper to be returned by post).

The issue of alternative methods of voting, and their convenience, was explored among the 11-18 year olds taking part in the current survey. The young people were asked in what way they would like to vote if there was a General Election tomorrow and they were old enough to vote. While around two in five (37%) would like to use the traditional voting method of marking a ballot paper in person, around the same proportion (32%) would be interested in using more contemporary forms of voting, such as text messaging (19%) or the Internet (17%). Boys are more interested than girls in using the Internet to vote.

Of particular interest will be the views of those eligible to vote in the next General Election. Among this group, 42% say they would like to vote in person compared with 19% who would like to vote via the Internet and 16% who would like to vote by text message.

Preferred Methods of Voting

Q *In what way, if any, would you like to vote if there was a General Election tomorrow?*



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

VOTING AGE

Reducing the voting age has been a long and frequently debated issue, and is something that young people themselves would support. Indeed, three in ten young people think that people should be able to vote in a General

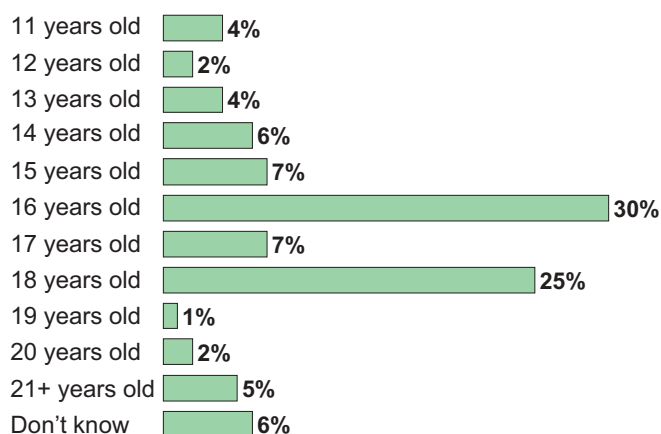


Election at the age of 16 years old (see chart below). This is higher than the percentage (25%) of young people who think that the voting age should remain at 18 years old.

Just 5% think the voting age should be raised to the age of 21 years old.

Voting Age

Q People are able to vote in a General Election in Britain at 18 years of age. At what age do you think people should be able to vote in a General Election?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

However, attitudes to the correct voting age are very much dependent on respondents' own ages – those who are younger and will have longer to wait before they can vote are keener to see the voting age reduced. Among those who are already 17 or over, more than half feel the voting age should remain 18, while only 32% would reduce it; among 11 and 12 year olds, only 14% would leave the voting age at 18, while 69% would reduce it, and indeed 8% would like votes at 11. It may be that there is a direct element of self-interest in these attitudes, or at least a feeling among the younger pupils that they are being unduly deprived of the chance to vote; but it may also be that the older pupils, remembering their own opinions and knowledge when they were younger now feel that it was right that they should not have had the vote then – whatever they may have thought at the time!

SUPPORT FOR INITIATIVES AIMED AT YOUNG PEOPLE

Encouragingly, despite the general lack of interest in politics among young people, there is a desire to learn more and, for some, to get involved.

Half (51%) say they would be interested in learning about the issues “which will help me decide how to vote when I turn 18 years old”, although this is stronger (61%) among independent pupils than those attending state schools (49%), which may suggest that it is those from a background more supportive of political awareness or those who have already received some degree of citizenship education (formal or informal) who are most keen to find out more. If so, citizenship classes may have a disproportionately beneficial effect, not only beginning the educative process but stimulating the curiosity or desire for further knowledge.

There is slightly less interest in finding out about how the British political system works and in voting in a National Youth Parliament – both with interest levels of 43% among young people. Again, independent pupils are most interested as are older pupils and those who think it is important who wins the next General Election.



POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICIANS

Young people have, at best, a limited knowledge of Britain's political parties and their leaders. Independent school pupils are significantly more knowledgeable than their state counterparts.

Among young people the primary image of the main political parties is negative. Both of the major parties are viewed as promising anything to win votes, arguing among themselves and not listening to the views of young people. However, it is also clear that many young people do not know enough about politics to have developed an image of the main political parties.

From a list of politicians' names, Tony Blair is the most well known among young people. He is also the most admired politician among young people, although three in ten think that he is in need of a makeover!

KNOWLEDGE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Young people admit to having, at best, a limited knowledge of Britain's political parties. While a majority (58%) say they know "a lot" or at least "a little" about the Labour party, only two in five say the same for the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats. Knowledge of political parties increases with age, however, with 70% of those who will be eligible to vote at the next election knowing at least a little about the Labour Party and 60% about the Conservatives.

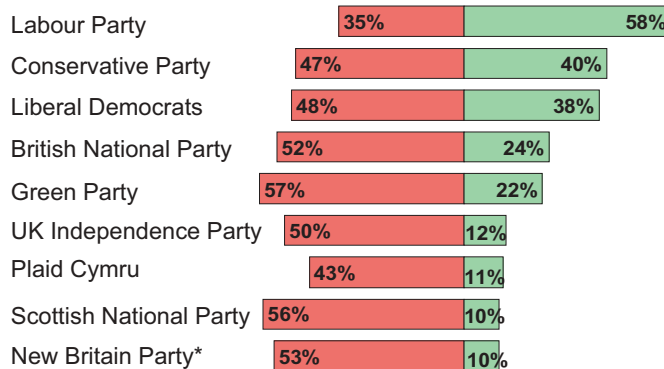
As might be expected, knowledge of Britain's minority parties is even poorer. Only around a quarter (24%) know at least a little about the BNP and about the Green Party, (22%) while only around one in ten (11%) feel familiar with Plaid Cymru, the Scottish National Party (10%) and the UK Independence Party (12%). To check how accurately our young respondents were assessing their knowledge of the parties, they were also asked how much they knew about the (non-existent) New Britain Party. Again, one in ten felt they knew at least a little, suggesting that real knowledge of the other parties scoring the same ratings might be fairly superficial. A quarter (27%) of young people admitted they had never heard of the SNP and two in five (41%) that they had never heard of Plaid Cymru (perhaps to be expected outside Scotland and Wales respectively), but 32% also said they had never heard of UKIP, a party with three British MEPs, no different from the 31% who admitted that they had never heard of the New Britain Party (which must have been true in 100% of cases, since it exists only in our imagination).



Knowledge of Political Parties

Q How much, if at all, would you say you know about each of the political parties listed below?

■ Don't know very much/nothing ■ Know at least a little



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

*False party included to test young people's reporting

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

PERCEPTIONS OF THE MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES

Young people were shown a list of descriptions and asked which, if any, of the main political parties each description fits. In the light of their admitted ignorance about the political parties, it is unsurprising to find that many young people feel themselves unable to describe the parties; but those that did feel able to do so demonstrated a fairly negative image, with critical descriptions chosen more frequently than laudatory ones. In particular, both the major parties were described most frequently as being prepared to promise anything to win votes, and both are widely seen (by those who have an opinion at all) as arguing among themselves and not listening to the views of young people.

THE LABOUR PARTY

Young people view the Labour Party as a party that “will promise anything to win votes” (28%) and where “the leader has too much control” (27%) – both these views are held by more than half of those who have any opinions at all of the party. It is also viewed by around a quarter as being a party whose members “argue between themselves” (25%) and which “does not listen to the views of young people like me” (23%). Perhaps just as importantly, only 11% thinks the party “keeps its promises”.

However, more positively, one in five describe the party as having “good policies and ideas”, and a similar proportion view it as “professional in its approach” (19%) and “understanding the problems facing Britain” (20%).

Only just over half the young people felt able to express any view of the Labour Party at all, though: 39% said they didn't know which if any of the descriptions applied and a further 7% did not complete the question. In contrast to the way in which Tony Blair is much better known than Iain Duncan Smith, there is little difference in the numbers feeling that they can describe the Labour and Conservative parties. Girls are considerably more likely than boys to say they don't know, and fewer younger pupils have an opinion than older pupils; those in the North were more likely to have an opinion than those in the Midlands or South.



Unsurprisingly, good and bad views of the party were closely linked with voting intention. Those young people who say they would vote Labour were much more likely to select positive descriptions (54% say Labour has good policies or ideas), and vice versa (49% of those who would vote Conservative and 51% who would vote Liberal Democrat say Labour will promise anything to win votes). Yet even among the party's young supporters, negative perceptions are widespread – a quarter of those who would vote for Labour nevertheless think the party will promise anything to win votes and that Labour argue between themselves, and three in ten that the leader has too much control. The impression is of grudging support for a party whose positives are seen as outweighing its negatives without expunging them. Labour may draw limited comfort from noting that much the same is true of the Conservatives.

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The Conservative party is primarily viewed among young people as being a party that “will promise anything to win votes” and “not listening to the views of young people” – both mentioned by 23%. This is followed by 21% who view it as being a party where the members “argue between themselves”.

However, the Conservative Party is significantly less likely than the Labour Party to be described by young people as being a party where the “leader has too much control” (only 12% think so, compared to 27% who think the same of Labour).

Another encouraging finding for the Conservative is that two in five of those who have an opinion (20% of all young people) would describe it as “understanding the problems facing Britain”, and as having “good policies and ideas”, about the same number who describe the Labour Party in this way. Indeed, its ratings are almost level with Labour on all the positive descriptions used in the image test – a much more positive image than adults tend to give the party, and suggesting that it is at least on equal terms with Labour in the battle for young people's loyalties.

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Charles Kennedy will be pleased to hear that the most frequent description applied by young people to his party is that it “understands the problems facing Britain”. The bad news is that only 16% think so, and the same percentage think it will promise anything to win votes. A somewhat higher number of young people (55%) expressed no opinion of the Liberal Democrats than of the two larger parties, and those that did tended to pick fewer of the descriptions from the list offered.

On a more positive note, one description – “is concerned about the people in real need in Britain” – was applied to the Liberal Democrats by as many young people (13%) as to either Labour or the Conservatives; since fewer were applying the other descriptions to the Lib Dems, this is a much stronger and more distinctive part of the party's image among the minority of young people who feel they know anything at all about it.



THE GREEN PARTY

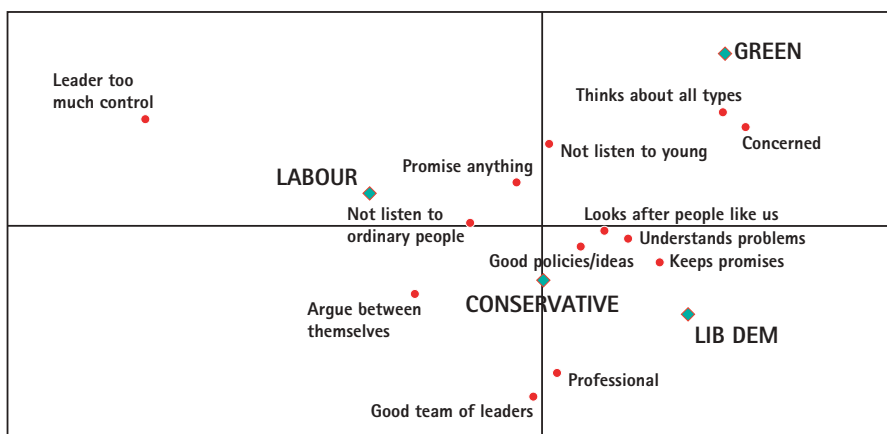
Barely a third of young people feel able to say what the Green Party is like. The most frequently attributed description among those that do is that it “does not listen to the views of young people” (12%). As with the other main political parties, it is also viewed as “promising anything to win votes” (12%).

However, one in ten (11%) describe it as “understanding the problems facing Britain”, and 10% feel that it is “concerned about the people in real need in Britain” and “thinks about all types of people”. Unlike the other three parties, four of the six most frequently selected attributes are positive ones, giving the party a strong image among the minority who have an opinion.

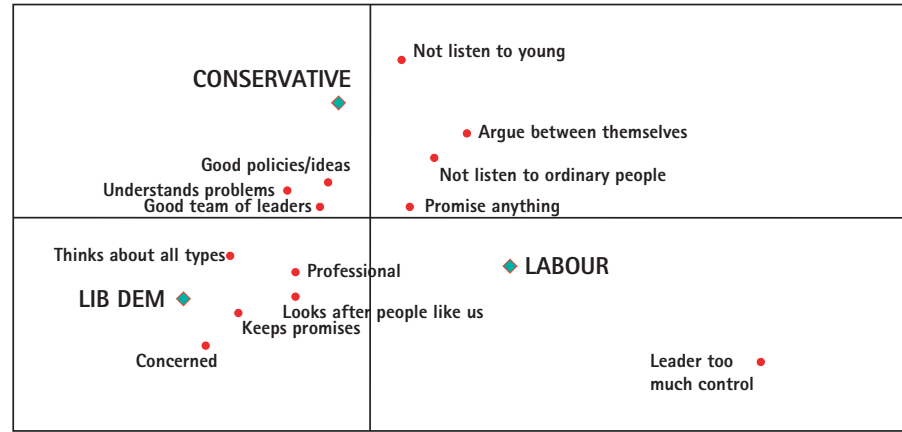
PARTY IMAGES COMPARED: PERCEPTUAL MAPPING

The perceptual map uses the statistical technique of correspondence analysis to combine the findings on young people’s opinions of the various political parties in graphical form. Broadly speaking, the closer to one of the parties a description appears on the perceptual map, the more it is seen as applying to that party, and the further away the less the description is seen as appropriate (see chart below).

The key point of the perceptual map is that it portrays not the absolute image of each party, but its image relative to the other parties. What is important is not simply whether many young people think that a description fits a given party, but also whether more or fewer think so than that it fits some other party – it is those factors that are most distinctive of each party’s image that stand out most strongly. The method also compensates for the fact that some parties are better known than others, so that each party is given equal prominence to discover what is distinctive in its image. For example, in the first perceptual map that follows, the Green Party is shown as more strongly fitting “thinks about all types of people” than other parties: in fact rather more respondents applied that description to the other three parties, but because fewer people applied any of the descriptions to the Greens than to the other parties, “thinks about all types of people” was a much higher proportion of the total descriptions of the Greens than of the Conservatives or Labour, and a little higher than for the Lib Dems.



Because perceptual mapping is a comparative technique, the results are strongly influenced by what is being compared. In the first perceptual map the Green Party has a distinctively different image from the other three, but this rather blurs some of the distinctions between those other three, and particularly between Conservative and Labour. A second map has therefore been prepared, omitting opinions of the Greens, to give a clearer picture of the relative image of the three major parties with regard to each other (see chart below).



From this map it can be seen that Labour and the Conservatives share a set of three negative images – “argue between themselves”, “do not listen to ordinary people” and “will promise anything to win votes”, which are seen as applying equally to them but far less to the Liberal Democrats. The Conservatives are also seen as most liable not to “listen to young people like me”, but are (marginally) the most likely of the parties to be seen as having good policies and ideas, to understand the problems facing Britain and to have a good team of leaders. The Liberal Democrats, though, have an image that is almost uniformly positive – they are concerned about those in real need, keep their promises, look after “people like us” and think about all types of people – or, at least, more so than the two larger parties.

The perceptual map makes clear what would otherwise not emerge from the figures, that Labour’s image among young people is in fact very weak. Although many of them apply positive descriptions to the party, these are much the same positive descriptions as are seen as applying to other parties among the smaller numbers who have opinions. All that really distinguishes Labour from the Tories, when they come to be compared, is that Labour is seen as being too much under its leader’s control while the Tories also share some positive attributes with the Lib Dems. Labour’s position is perhaps no worse than would be expected in the case of any governing party, but it is certainly not as good as might appear from a superficial look at the data.

RECOGNITION OF POLITICIANS

Limited knowledge of political parties is mirrored by a lack of familiarity with the main party leaders. Respondents were shown pictures of Tony Blair, Iain Duncan Smith, Charles Kennedy, and three celebrities from the entertainment world, and asked to name each. While more than nine in ten (91%) correctly identified Tony Blair, only a quarter (25%) recognised Iain Duncan Smith and only 18% Charles Kennedy. In comparison, 90% were able to identify Robbie Williams, 77% Tom Jones and 36% Boy George.



Young people attending independent schools are more knowledgeable than state pupils. Again, this may reflect pupils' backgrounds as much as any difference in schooling. Knowledge is particularly low among children from households without a parent in work, only 82% of whom recognised Tony Blair (compared to 95% of those where both parents have jobs); only 14% of them recognised Iain Duncan Smith (compared to 28% of those with two working parents). There can be no great surprise at this difference, which probably indicates generally lower political knowledge and engagement among those from deprived backgrounds, but it has potentially profound political implications: not only will those who may most need the help of government be least well-equipped to seek it, but these disadvantages may be perpetuated from generation to generation. The introduction of universal citizenship education into the National Curriculum, however, may be the step needed to break this cycle.

Curiously, recognition of Mr Duncan Smith is much higher in the North (41%) than in the Midlands (19%) or South (18%). It is also – more predictably – higher among older pupils: 48% of those aged 17+ and 40% of those aged 15–16 could put a name to his photograph, but only 9% of 11–12 year olds could do so. Though an age difference also exists in recognition of Tony Blair, it is much less dramatic – even among 11–12 year olds, 82% know who he is. The difference is probably not so much a statement about Mr Blair and Mr Duncan Smith as an illustration of the different degrees of exposure that a Prime Minister (who can seem almost ubiquitous) and an opposition leader (who is probably seen only in a political context) can expect among the young. The difference is much less marked among adults – despite Mr Duncan Smith's media portrayal as being an unusually anonymous party leader, half the adult public (51%) were able to name him when shown a photograph the month before he became party leader⁹.

Charles Kennedy achieves lower recognition still among the youngest group (only 4% of 11–12 year olds recognise his photograph), but at 38% his recognition among those aged 17-and-over is not too far behind that of Mr Duncan Smith. Those who say they would vote for the Liberal Democrats are significantly more likely to recognise Mr Kennedy (49%) than those who would vote Conservative (31%) or Labour (25%), though all three scores are higher than Mr Kennedy's 18% average. (Those who support no party are naturally those less interested in and less knowledgeable about politics.) But Iain Duncan Smith has no corresponding advantage among Conservative supporters – indeed, more of the Liberal Democrats in the sample (45%) than of the Tories (42%) could name him, though both outscored Labour supporters (32%); the differences are not statistically significant, however.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICIANS

Later in the questionnaire young people were shown a list of politicians and asked which, if any, they had heard of, which they most admire, and which they think is in most need of a make-over!

⁹ Source: Daily Mirror poll (2001)/MORI. Methodology: Face-to-face interviews with a representative quota sample of 1,031 British adults between 23 and 28 August 2001.



WHO HAVE YOUNG PEOPLE HEARD OF?

Unsurprisingly, the most recognised name was Tony Blair, with around nine in ten (88%) young people saying they have heard of him. Almost as many have heard of George W. Bush (84%): with the war in Iraq dominating the news at the time of the survey, these names could hardly escape young people. But the name of Mr Bush's Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, rings a bell with only 21%.

The names of other cabinet ministers, such as Jack Straw, Gordon Brown, and David Blunkett are recognised by just over half.

While more young people recognised Iain Duncan Smith's photo than recognised Charles Kennedy's (see previous page), when shown their names in print, a higher percentage recall having heard of Charles Kennedy (61% versus 56%). However, a previous Conservative leader and Prime Minister – John Major – is recognised by more, with 66% of young people saying they had heard of him. Just over half (54%) have heard of William Hague.

The best-known female politician is also a Conservative. Around six in ten (57%) young people have heard of Ann Widdecombe – possibly because she has made recent appearances on popular TV, such as 'Celebrity Fit Club' and 'Louis Theroux meets Ann Widdecombe'. The next most-well known female politician is Clare Short – named by only a quarter (24%) despite her high profile at the time of the Iraq War.

The travails of Northern Ireland seem to have made little impact: only 29% have heard of David Trimble, 25% of Gerry Adams and 20% of Ian Paisley.

WHO DO YOUNG PEOPLE ADMIRE?

Politicians are little admired among young people. A quarter (26%) do not admire any of the politicians listed – a higher percentage by some margin than the most popular politician.

Tony Blair is the most admired politician among young people. Of those young people who have heard of Tony Blair, 13% say that they admire him. Unsurprisingly, Tony Blair is most admired by young Labour voters and least admired by young Conservative voters (36% and 6% respectively), although 14% of Liberal Democrats say that they admire Tony Blair.

One in ten young people admire George Bush – this is more likely to be White than BME pupils.

Clare Short is the most admired female politician, closely followed by Ann Widdecombe (3% and 2% respectively).

With regard to the other political leaders, a slightly higher percentage of young people admire Charles Kennedy than Iain Duncan Smith (4% and 3% respectively).

The pattern is distinctively different when age is taken into account, however: while Tony Blair is most admired in all age groups, among those aged 17+ the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, comes a clear second, chosen by 13%; on the other hand, in the two youngest age groups President Bush is in second place, admired by 11% of 11-12 year olds and 9% of 13-14 year olds.



WHO IS IN MOST NEED OF A MAKE-OVER ACCORDING TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

While Tony Blair is both well known and admired, he is (according to young people), also clearly in need of a make-over. Indeed, three in ten (31%) of those young people who have heard of Tony Blair say that he is in need of a make-over.

However, Tony Blair can find solace in the finding that young people consider a Conservative in more need of a make-over. Indeed, four in ten (39%) of those who have heard of Ann Widdecombe think that she needs a make-over. BME pupils are significantly more likely to think that she requires a make-over.

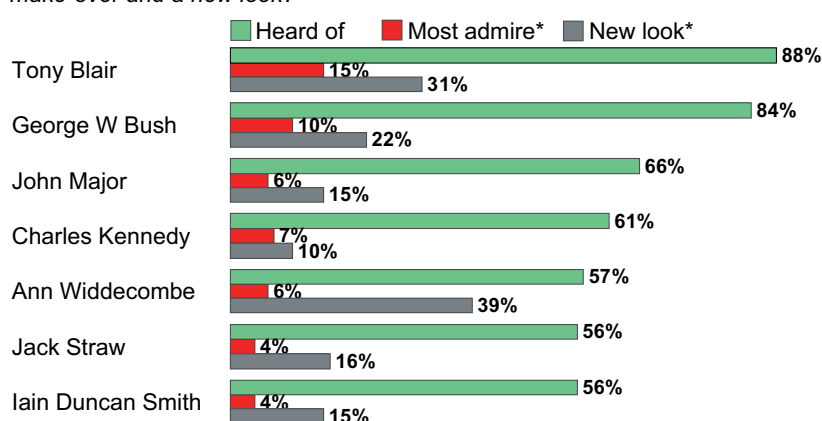
The leader of the Conservatives – Iain Duncan Smith – fares better, but less well than the Liberal Democrat leader – Charles Kennedy: 15% and 10% respectively think that these political leaders require a make-over. Boys are more likely to think that Iain Duncan Smith is in need of a make-over while Labour supporters are significantly more likely to think that Charles Kennedy needs a new look.

Previous Prime Ministers do not escape young people's style critique. Indeed, 15% of those who have heard of John Major think that he is in need of a make-over. This rises to 21% of Liberal Democrat supporters.

With regard to other cabinet ministers, Jack Straw is in most need of a make-over according to young people, with 16% saying that he needs a new look. However, Gordon Brown and David Blunkett are not far behind – both with 12% saying they need a new look.

Attitudes towards Politicians

- Q Which, if any, of the following politicians have you heard of?
- Q Which, if any, of the following politicians do you most admire?
- Q Which, if any, of the following politicians do you think is in most need of a make-over and a new look?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003
 * Based on all those who have heard of each politician

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI



VOTING

The lack of political understanding outlined in the last chapter is further emphasised by the two in five young people who say that they would not vote or do not know which party they would vote for if a General Election were held tomorrow.

As is the case for adults, Labour is the preferred political party among young people.

Findings suggest that political socialisation still has some part to play today – although this may not be as strong as in previous years and may not be a conscious decision among young people. Rather, young people say that the main reason they would vote for a political party is because they like its policies and ideas. For young people eligible to vote in the next General Election, party politics is particularly likely to be a deciding factor.

VOTING (AND NON-VOTING) INTENTIONS

Only just over half the young people in our sample express a voting intention: three in ten (31%) say they do not know which party they would vote for if there were a General Election tomorrow and they were old enough to vote, and a further one in ten (11%) say they would not vote, while 2% left the question uncompleted. The proportions saying they would not vote or failing to answer the question are very similar to those currently being found in voting intention polls among adults (in the MORI Political Monitor for May 2003¹⁰, 12% said they would not vote and 1% refused to answer), but the number of don't knows is very much higher. (Only 8% of adults said they were undecided how they would vote.)

This high number of don't knows among the young no doubt reflects lower knowledge of, and interest in politics, but also that many of the young have not yet had the chance to acquire loyalties to particular political parties. If either of these factors were the primary cause, however, we would expect to find the number of don't knows falling significantly with age, but in fact this is not the case: they make up 31% of 11-12 year olds, 30% of 13-14 year olds and 32% of 15-16 year olds; even among those aged 17+ (where we would expect the figure to be lower since the survey was only of pupils, and those leaving school at 16 are likely to be disproportionately unknowledgeable about politics), the number of don't knows was as high as 26%. Nor was there any age difference in the number saying that they would not vote.

While it is true that younger citizens are always less likely to vote, the contrast between the pupils and the 18-24 age group in the survey of adults is striking: whereas 31% of the pupils do not know how they would vote, only 12% of 18-24 year olds say the same. On the other hand, while only 11% of pupils say they would not vote at all, twice as many (23%) of the 18-24 year olds say the same. If anything, this difference is probably an underestimate, since the pupils completed written questionnaires which offered "would not vote" as a specific option, whereas in the survey of adults, respondents are not prompted with that option, and are recorded as "would not vote" only if they volunteer it as their response when asked to name the party they would vote for.

¹⁰ Source: MORI Political Monitor (2003)/MORI: 'Political Attitudes in Great Britain'. For the May Political Monitor, a representative quota sample of 1,793 adults aged 18+ from across Great Britain were interviewed face-to-face between 22 and 28 May 2003.



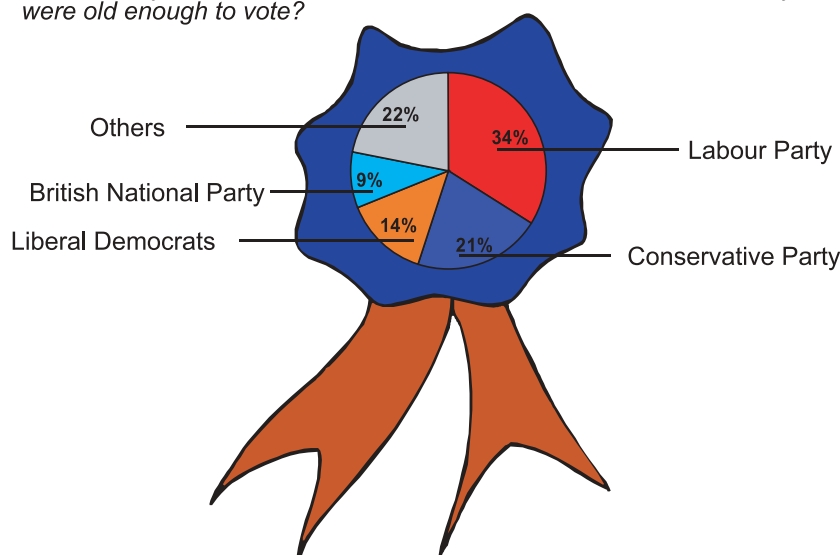
It seems probable that coming of voting age is a significant factor here. Many children, even if politically aware, have not yet put to themselves the question of how they will vote when the time comes; but among those who are old enough to vote (and most of whom will have had the opportunity to do so, at local if not yet General Elections), the vast majority have faced the question and come to a decision – but, disturbingly, for many that decision is not to vote at all. Unfortunately, there is little in our findings to suggest that the decisions of the coming generation are likely to be any different when the time comes.

Girls (36%) are more likely than boys (25%) to say they don't know how they will vote, and more young people in the South are "don't knows" than in the North or Midlands.

The number saying they would not vote at all is fairly uniform across all groups of pupils with one exception: young people from BME groups are twice as likely as average to say they wouldn't vote. Given the importance they attach to who wins the next General Election, this might be surprising, except that they are also less likely than average to agree that the way people vote makes a difference to the way the country is run. Does this reflect a sense of helplessness and feelings of alienation among ethnic minority communities? It may be that they identify themselves primarily with their own ethnic group rather than with the nation as a whole, and that this permanent awareness of being part of a minority group affects attitudes towards the voting process, which, of course is essentially about finding majorities. The implicit assumption would be that "votes by people like me don't make a difference, because I am always in the minority". This would naturally lead to a more general feeling of alienation and rejection of the democratic process as a solution to problems.

Voting Intention of Young People

Q How would you vote, if there were a General Election tomorrow and you were old enough to vote?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 naming a party (508), March-May 2003

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

¹¹ By convention, the findings from voting intention polls are normally reported in this way, excluding don't knows and those who would not vote from the percentage bases, since this allows for direct comparability with election results (which are almost invariably expressed in terms of percentages of those who voted, rather than of the total electorate).

Among those who named a party for which they would vote¹¹, Labour was the most popular: 34% say they would vote Labour if there was a General Election tomorrow and they were old enough to vote, while



21% would vote Conservative, 14% Liberal Democrat, and 31% for one of the various smaller parties. The numbers selecting the minor parties are of course far higher than is the case in polls of adults, and probably represents some degree of random selection or, at any rate, does not represent a solidly formed intention or party loyalty. Even so, there should be alarm that 9% of young people naming a party said that they would vote for the British National Party; but it may well be that some giving this answer have little idea what the party stands for (BNP support was much higher among the younger two age groups than among those aged 15 or over), and it might be noted that 4% said they would vote for the non-existent New Britain Party.

Support for the minor parties being so much higher than in polls of adults, the three main parties score correspondingly less well, but the general pattern – a comfortable lead for Labour over the Conservatives with the Lib Dems trailing in third place – is the same in the survey of young people as in most opinion polls over the past few years (in May 2003, 43% of adults expressing a voting intention said they would vote Labour, 28% Conservative and 22% Liberal Democrat¹²). Young people are of course different from adults in the context of their political decisions, since they do not have a context of their own past memories by which to judge the present political situation. (None of the pupils in the survey is old enough to have been very politically aware when there was last a Conservative government, now almost six years ago.) If anything, one would expect this to work to the disadvantage of the governing party: in the nature of things, governments tend to be more unpopular than popular most of the time, and the lack of any personal grievance against the opposition party from their own earlier periods of office should work in their favour. But what disillusionment there is among young people with the Labour Party seems to have channelled itself into support for the minor parties, or uncertainty which way they would vote, rather than increasing Conservative or Liberal Democrat support.

Support for the minor parties falls, and for the three main parties rises, with age – no doubt an effect of greater political knowledge and familiarity with the parties and their place in the political system. Of those who will be eligible to vote at the next Election, 39% would currently vote Labour, 27% Conservative, 19% Liberal Democrat and 15% for other parties.

POLITICAL SOCIALISATION?

“A child is very likely indeed to share the parents’ party preference”, Butler and Stokes concluded in their pioneering 1960s study ‘Political Change in Britain’¹³. That observation still rings true today. Indeed, the current survey shows that there is a strong correlation between parents’ and child’s voting intention, at least as the child reports it. As the chart opposite shows, young people’s overall assessments of how they think their parents will vote in the next General Election are closely aligned with what they say they would do themselves if they were old enough to vote.

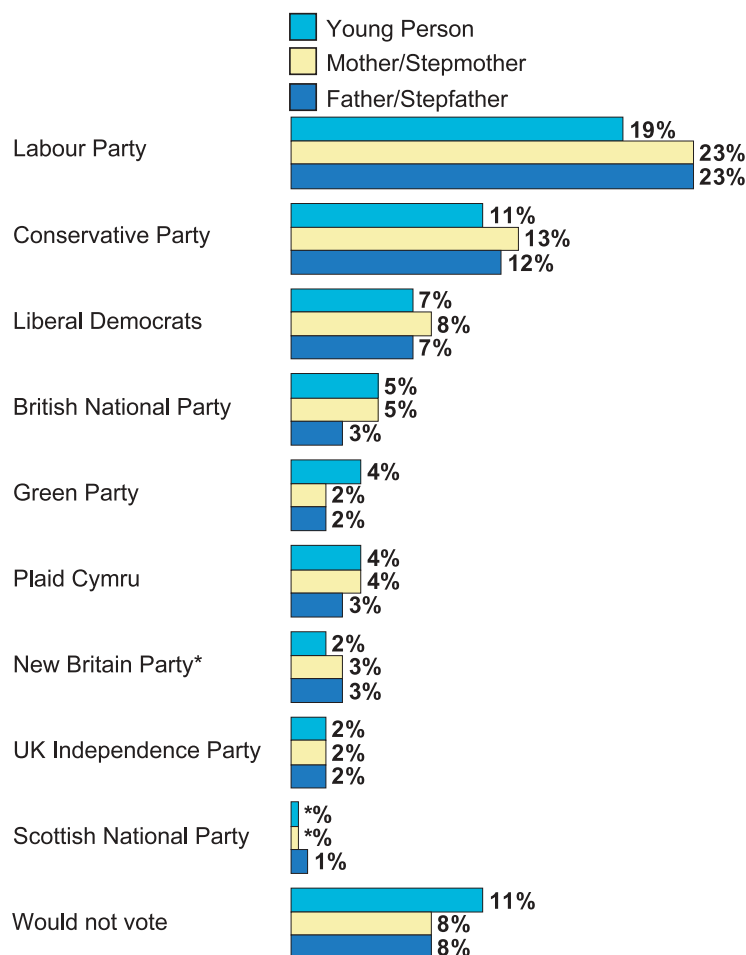
¹² Most opinion polls that are published these days are adjusted to give greater weight to the voting intentions of those who are most likely to vote, and this tends to narrow the gap between Labour and the Conservatives, but the lead in the unadjusted polls remains consistently wide. The adjusted figures in the May 2003 MORI Monitor were Labour 39%, Conservative 31% and Liberal Democrat 22%. With so few of the young people certain that they would vote, a similar adjustment to their survey figures would be inappropriate.

¹³ Butler, D.E., & Stokes, D. ‘Political Change in Britain’, Macmillan, London, 1974 (2nd edition).



Voting Intention

- Q How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow and you were old enough to vote?
- Q Which party do you think your mother/stepmother will vote for in the next General Election?
- Q Which party do you think your father/stepfather will vote for in the next General Election?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003

* False party included to test young people's reporting

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

Two-thirds of those with two Conservative parents would vote Conservative, and almost as many with two Labour parents would vote Labour¹⁴. Liberal Democrats seem to be much less effective at transmitting their political beliefs to their children – under half of those children say they, too, would vote Liberal Democrat. Almost a quarter, 24% of those who say both their parents would vote Liberal Democrat, do not know how they themselves would vote, whereas only 13% with two Labour parents are don't knows. Of those with two Conservative parents just 4% don't know how they would vote, but 16% say they would not vote at all (compared to 7% with two Labour and 9% with two Lib Dem parents).

Perhaps more telling, though, is how very few young people would vote for a party supported by neither of their parents: just one in twenty or fewer in the case of each of three major parties.

¹⁴ By way of comparison, Butler and Stokes in the 1960s found that 75% of those with two conservative parents were conservative voters, and 81% with two Labour parents were Labour voters. But that was a survey of voting adults.



There are differences between the parties when only one of two parents vote, but the sub-sample sizes are very much smaller here, and not too much weight should be put on the conclusions. Mothers seem more effective than fathers in transmitting support for the Lib Dems (indeed, young people are as likely to vote Lib Dem if only their mother supports the party than if both parents do), whereas in the case of the Labour Party it is the father's loyalty that is more effective. For Conservatives, mothers and fathers are equally effective, but neither is as likely to influence their child as either a Labour father or Lib Dem mother – only the combined Conservative loyalty of both parents is sufficient to turn out a Conservative child.

Percentage of young people who would vote for the Conservative/Labour/Liberal Democrat Party when they believe that their parent(s) vote for the party.

	Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem
<i>Base: All young people living with two parents/step parents (873)</i>	%	%	%
Both parents vote for the party	67	62	44
Only mother votes for the party	27	26	42
Only father votes for the party	28	44	18

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

Even stronger than the inheritance of voting behaviour, though, is the inheritance of non-voting behaviour: 75% of those who say they think that neither of their parents would vote also say they themselves would not vote, and another 10% of these do not know how they would vote.

The evidence that transmission of party loyalties is still a vital factor in the formation of political opinions among the young seems strong, even if there has been a great weakening of the party loyalties that at the time Butler and Stokes were writing implied that these opinions once formed would be likely to remain unchanged for life.

FACTORS INFLUENCING VOTING BEHAVIOUR

The most frequently cited reason why a young person would vote for a political party is because they liked the parties' policies and ideas. This is mentioned by over half, including four in five who say it is the most important reason. There may be an element of young people choosing this option because it is what they think they should say, but it may also represent their aspirations – the way in which they hope they will base their decisions in the future.

Similarly, three in five would vote for a party because they liked the party leader, but more say they would vote because they felt it was time for a change (see chart opposite).

Many would also vote because they were 'turned off' by the other political parties. Indeed, three in ten say they would vote for a party if they did not like the other political parties or were put off by the policies of the other political parties. Similarly, around a quarter would vote for a party because they did not like the leader of the alternative parties.

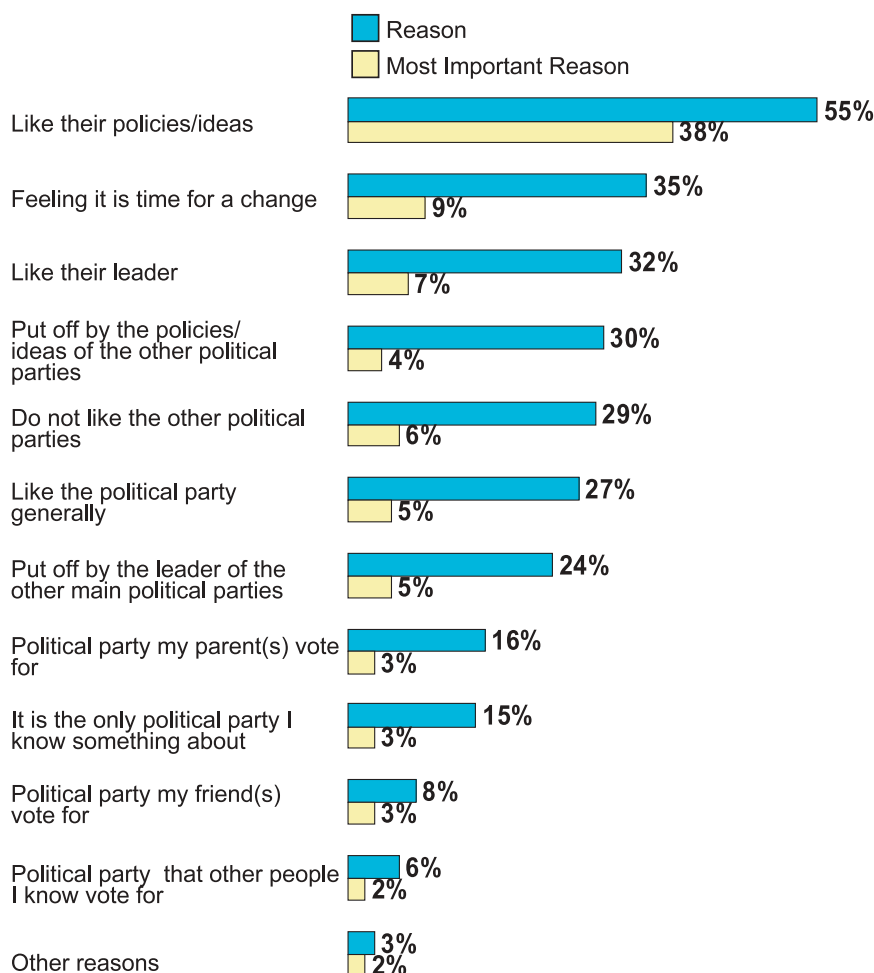


While young people are clearly influenced by the voting intention of their parents as highlighted above, this does not seem to be a conscious decision. Just 16% say they would vote for a political party because their parents voted for it.

Factors Influencing Voting Behaviour

Q Which, if any, of the reasons listed below might get you to vote for a political party when you are old enough (if you are not old enough already)?

Q What would be the most important reason?



Base: All young people aged 11-18 (914), March-May 2003 Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/ MORI

WHAT ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN THE NEXT ELECTION?

Those young people who will be eligible to vote in the next General Election are more likely to be thinking in terms of party politics. Indeed, seven in ten say they would vote for a political party because they liked its policies and ideas. Similarly, two in five say they would vote for a party if they were “put off by the policies and ideas of the other political parties”.



Unsurprisingly, two in five (40%) of those young people who say they are currently dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country say they would vote because they think it is time for a change. Conversely, 43% of those who are satisfied with the way the Government is running the country say they would vote for their chosen party because they like its leader.

REASONING DIFFERS BY VOTING INTENTION

Those voting Liberal Democrat are more likely to say they would vote for a party because they like its policies and/or its leader (90% and 52% respectively). Conservative voters, on the other hand, are more likely to vote this way because they think it is time for a change (50%) and because Tory is how their friends would vote (14%).

Family influence seems to be stronger where Labour is concerned: a quarter (26%) of intending Labour voters say they would vote for Labour because this is the party their parents vote for. This compares with just 12% of Liberal Democrat supporters.

SATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Reflecting the lack of political understanding among young people outlined previously, four in ten (42%) young people could not comment either way on whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the government is running the country. (By way of comparison, all but 10% of adults had an opinion on this question in May 2003.)¹⁵

Of those who did have an opinion, more are dissatisfied than satisfied, with 36% dissatisfied and 21% satisfied.

Unsurprisingly, Conservative and Liberal Democrat voters are most likely to be dissatisfied (45% and 42% respectively). However, what is more notable is that a quarter (25%) of Labour supporters are dissatisfied.

A further finding that will be of concern to the government is that half (47%) of those eligible to vote in the next General Election are dissatisfied with the way the government is running the country. However, it should be noted that the survey was conducted at a time when feelings and attitudes towards the Iraq invasion were running high, and it is quite likely that they are impacting on attitudes here.

¹⁵ Source: MORI Political Monitor (2003)/MORI: 'Political Attitudes in Great Britain'. For the May Political Monitor, a representative quota sample of 1,793 adults aged 18+ from across Great Britain were interviewed face-to-face between 22 and 28 May 2003.



METHODOLOGY

SAMPLING APPROACH

STAGE 1: SAMPLING SCHOOLS

A random sample of 238 schools and colleges was provided by the Schools Publishing Company. The sample comprised secondary state and independent schools and sixth form/FE colleges in England and Wales. The sampling universe included Local Education Authority (LEA), voluntary aided/controlled, foundation schools, independent schools, and sixth form/FE colleges in England and Wales, but excluded special schools. This sampling frame was stratified by Government Office Regions (GORs) and within each stratum, schools/colleges were selected proportional to the size of the school/colleges register, thus producing a nationally representative sample of schools/colleges.

The age groups included in the survey were 11-18 year olds in curriculum years 7 to 13.

STAGE 2: SELECTING SCHOOLS TO TAKE PART

A letter was sent by MORI to the headteachers of sampled schools and colleges, asking for their agreement to participate in the survey, explaining its importance, and stressing that MORI would endeavour to minimise inconvenience to the school/college.

A reply form was included with the letter. Headteachers were asked to indicate on the form whether their school/college would be willing to participate in the research. Schools/colleges who were unable to participate in the research were asked for their reason for not doing so. This information was used to calculate response rates. Schools/colleges that were willing to participate were asked to name a main point of contact with whom MORI would be able to arrange details of the research.

In addition, all schools/colleges willing to participate in the survey were asked to indicate how many pupils were on their school/college roll in order to help calculate the number of pupils to be selected.

All non-responses to the letter were followed-up by telephone calls by the research team in order to maximise response.

Once the schools/colleges had agreed to participate, the MORI team selected schools to take part – stratifying the sample by region and school type to ensure a representative sample was included. The MORI team then calculated the total number of pupils aged 11-18 years old in all of the selected schools/colleges, and proportionately calculated the number of pupils to be interviewed in each school, along with the sampling interval for each particular school.

This process was then repeated, so as to achieve a booster sample of 15-18 year olds in secondary schools and 6th form/FE colleges across England and Wales. Given that the survey included questions on voting and politics, the views of those eligible to vote in the next General Election were especially important (see later for how eligibility to vote was calculated). A booster was required to ensure a robust sample base size for meaningful statistical analysis.



STAGE 3: SAMPLING PUPILS

MORI interviewers made an appointment with schools/colleges to conduct the sampling visit and select pupils to participate in the research. Contacts at the schools/colleges were asked to arrange for registers, or up-to-date computer listings of pupils on their school/college rolls, to be made available (in adherence with the Data Protection Act, the names of those pupils selected to participate were not removed from the school/college premises).

The procedures for selecting the sample of pupils were as follows:

- the interviewer collected all school/college registers/listings;
- checks were made on the registers/listings to ensure that pupils who had left the school/college were not included, and that pupils who had moved class were only included once. Long-term absentees were included in the selection. Interviewers checked that pupils who have recently joined the school/college were also included;
- registers/listings were ordered by form/year (youngest through to oldest);
- a random number was provided to select a random start to enable the identification of the first pupil to be selected to the sample;
- a sampling interval was used to select the next pupil (i.e. every *nth* pupil), and so on until all registers/listings had been completed;
- where girls were listed separately from boys in the register (such as to cause the selection of more of one sex than the other), interviewers were asked to calculate half of the interval and one and a half of the interval, and use these new intervals alternately, when selecting the sample.

MORI interviewers were provided with full instructions and a verbal briefing, where necessary, prior to the sampling visit. For each school, a contact sheet was provided which contained the following data:

- school/college name, address, telephone number, fax number, and name of contact;
- school/college ID number and any additional notes on the school/college;
- lowest and highest curriculum year in the school/college pertinent to the study (i.e. between curriculum years 7-13);
- number of pupils in the pertinent year groups;
- number of pupils to be sampled;
- sampling interval; and
- whether or not the school/college was to take part in the booster survey.



CONDUCTING THE FIELDWORK

The survey was administered by means of self-completion sessions conducted in the participating schools/colleges.

Having selected pupils from the register, and with the help of a member of the school/college staff, the MORI interviewer arranged a convenient time and date for the self-completion session. The interviewer was as flexible as possible in the timing of this second visit to the school.

The MORI interviewer was present during the self-completion session to explain the survey to pupils selected to the sample, to reassure them about the confidentiality of the survey, to assist them in completing the questionnaire by clarifying question wording and routing instructions, and to collect completed questionnaires.

In all classroom sessions, teachers were requested to remain present throughout to assist with discipline and other issues, but not to participate in the conduct of the survey itself.

In classes where two or more pupils were absent during the self-completion session, follow-up visits were arranged to interview them, where possible within the constraints of the project timetable.

In total, 914 questionnaires were completed between 3rd March and 22nd May 2003. Response rates are shown below:

Response rates - by school type

	All	State	Independent	Sixth
		schools	schools	form colleges
Number contacted	238	142	56	40
Number (initially) agreeing to take part	58	26	21	6
<i>Response rate (%) – before selection process</i>	24%	18%	38%	15%
Number participating	33	20	9	4
<i>Unadjusted response rate (%)</i>	14%	14%	16%	10%

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI

WEIGHTING AND DATA PROCESSING

Data processing and analysis were carried out by MORI Data Services. The data were weighted to reflect the known profile of the sample population by gender within age, school type and area.

The design effect was calculated to assess the impact of weighting the data. It was found that weighting the data increased the confidence interval by $\pm 2\%$. This was taken into account when analysing and reporting upon the findings.



INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

A sample of the secondary school and college population has been interviewed, not the entire population. Consequently, all results are subject to sampling tolerances which means that we cannot assume that all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant. As a guide, figures from the main sample are subject to a margin of error of plus or minus six percentage points (taking into account the design effect).

One of the variables used to analyse the results is eligibility to vote at the next General Election. This was calculated by working out the latest date on which respondents would have to have been born in order to bring them to voting age, i.e. 18, by the best estimate of the time of the next General Election - projected to fall on 1st May 2005. Using this formula, young people who were born before 1st May 1987 were classified as eligible to vote, while those born after this date were classified as not eligible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is clear that schools and colleges are increasingly working under great pressure. They also receive numerous requests to participate in surveys such as this. Consequently, we wish to record our gratitude to the many schools/colleges that took part and we are indebted to all pupils and staff who made this survey possible. As a thank you, all schools and colleges participating were sent a donation of £100.

MORI would also like to thank John Martin at John Martin Communications for his help and involvement in the project.



SAMPLE COMPOSITION

The following table sets out the composition of the sample in detail.

<i>Sample Composition</i>				
	Unweighted		Weighted	
		%		%
Total Sample	914	100	914	100
Gender				
Male	456	50	464	51
Female	455	50	446	49
Age				
11/12	132	14	293	32
13/14	255	28	297	29
15/16	213	23	218	24
17+	311	34	102	11
Household composition				
Two parents/guardians in household	774	85	765	84
Single parent/guardian in household	125	14	133	15
Sibling in household	723	79	746	82
Ethnicity				
White	766	84	782	86
Non-white	134	15	117	13
Region				
North	263	29	250	27
Midlands	359	39	316	35
South	292	32	348	38
Work status of household				
Two parents work	496	54	480	53
One parent works	294	32	283	31
No parent works	124	14	151	17

Source: Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI





NESTLÉ FAMILY MONITOR

Nestlé Family Monitor number sixteen is part of a series of research studies into family life in Britain. Previous studies are:

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| Number one: | <i>Attitudes to Christmas (November 1997)</i> |
| Number two: | <i>A Study of the Family in Today's Society (February 1998)</i> |
| Number three: | <i>The School Summer Holiday – at home and going away (July 1998)</i> |
| Number four: | <i>Health Issues and the Family (January 1999)</i> |
| Number five: | <i>A Study of the Family in Today's Society (March 1999)</i> |
| Number six: | 1) <i>Aspects of Education in Britain Today</i>
2) <i>Reading and the Family</i>
3) <i>Art and the Family (June 1999)</i> |
| Number seven: | 1) <i>Teenage Pregnancy</i>
2) <i>School Meals (February 2000)</i> |
| Number eight: | <i>Mapping Britain's Moral Values (March 2000)</i> |
| Number nine: | 1) <i>Sport and the Family</i>
2) <i>Nutrition and Lifestyle of the over 50s (July 2000)</i> |
| Number ten: | <i>Charitable Giving and Volunteering (December 2000)</i> |
| Number eleven: | <i>Lifelong Learning (April 2001)</i> |
| Number twelve: | <i>Money in the Contemporary Family (July 2001)</i> |
| Number thirteen: | <i>Eating and Today's Lifestyle (December 2001)</i> |
| Number fourteen: | <i>Hard Times: A Study of Pensioner Poverty (June 2002)</i> |
| Number fifteen: | <i>Make Space for Young People (October 2002)</i> |

For further information on the Nestlé Family Monitor please contact Katie Griffiths on 020 8686 3333 or write to her at the address below or visit our website at www.nestlefamilymonitor.co.uk

For further information on the Make Space campaign, please contact the helpline at 020 7522 6960, visit the website at www.makespace.org.uk or e-mail information@makespace.org.uk



Good Food, Good Life