



Elevation Networks Report

Ethnic Diversity within Parliamentary Candidates across the UK

Knowledge & Innovation Team

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I. Introduction

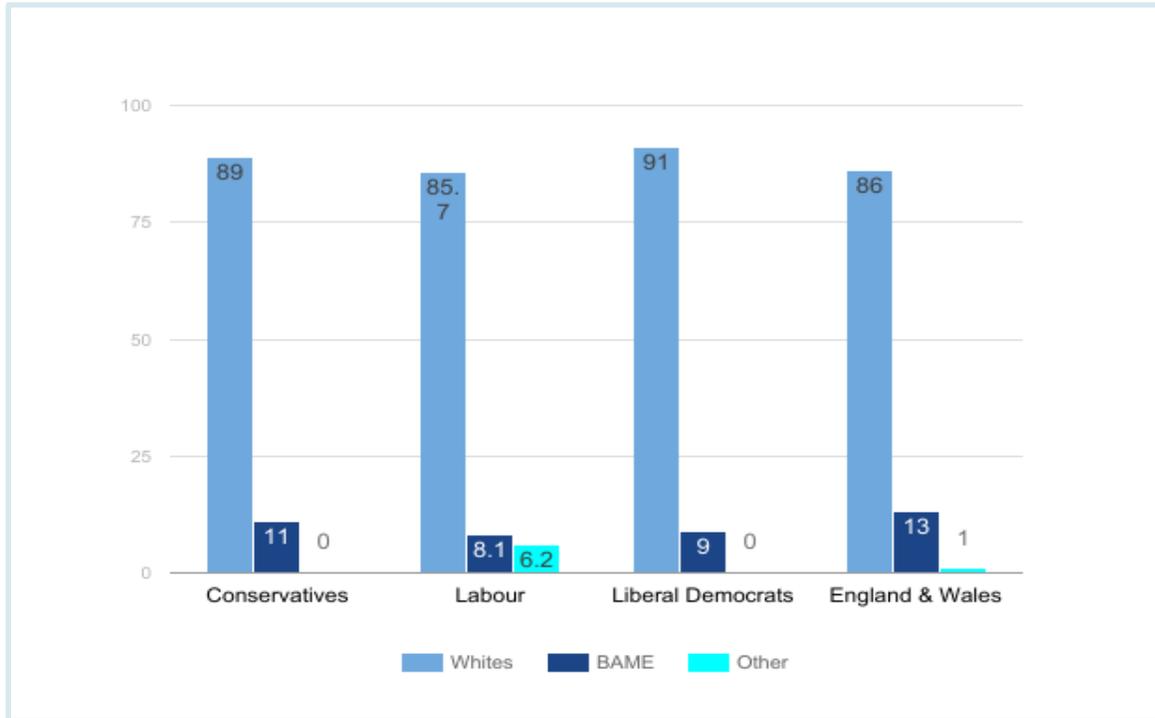
Ethnic diversity is a topic of interest to most political parties in the UK. This reports sets out a comparison in terms of ethnicity and gender between electoral candidates from the Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Democrats. Moreover, recent key findings from each of the aforementioned parties are presented to determine the progress that was made in recent years.

Additionally, the statistics are compared against the national average and future trends are examined. The breakdown by ethnicity within Greater London is also presented. A series of suggestions and recommendations are set out for the purpose of enhancing diversity within UK political parties and providing a realistic demographic representation within such institutions.



II. Headline Figures

Electoral Candidates 2015 by Ethnicity



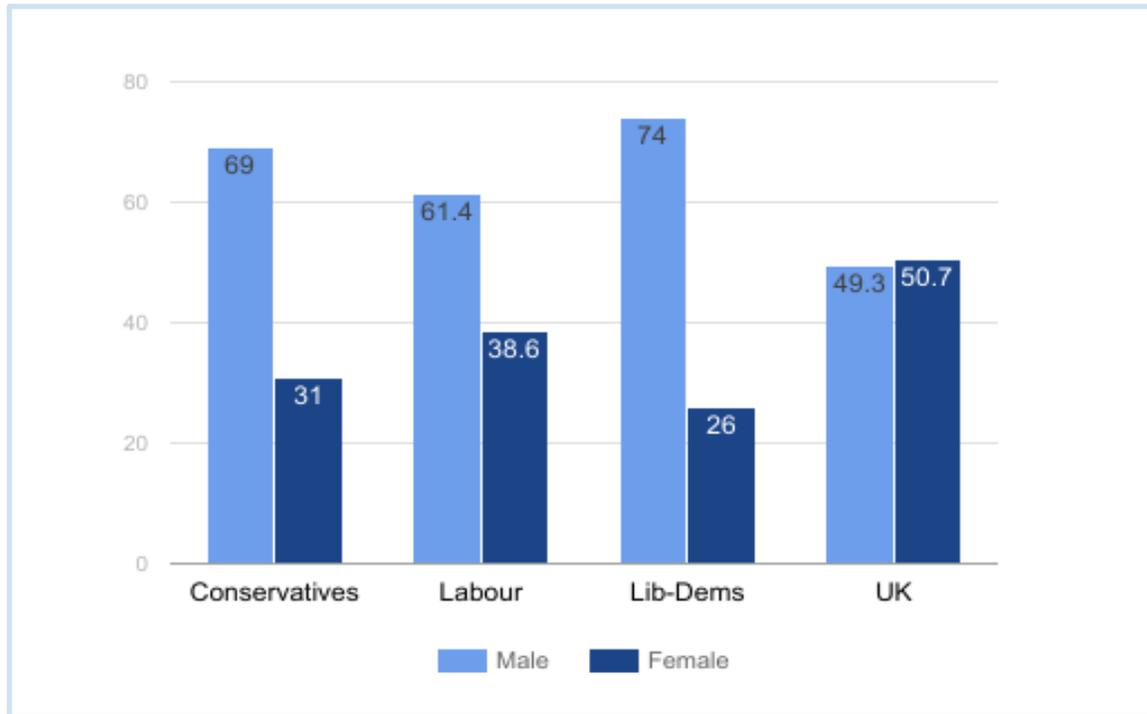
All major political parties have taken steps to ensure the BAME community is represented fairly. However, the Conservative Party fares best in terms of ethnic diversity with only 2% short of the national average. Since 2015, the Conservative Party has made efforts to broaden the BAME representation amongst electoral candidates.

A report by Democratic Audit¹ shows that the Conservative Party has increased the number of BAME candidates by 14% or 48 individuals, more than any other political party. Dr Sobolewska suggests that the increase in BAME candidates is a ‘game changer’ in that it may constitute an advantage for Conservatives.

¹ Democratic Audit. (2017). *The Conservatives’ BME MPs may be game changers in the way we think about ethnic minority representation*. Retrieved 6 June 2017, from <https://goo.gl/roxOm2>

III. Headline Figures

Electoral Candidates 2015 by Gender

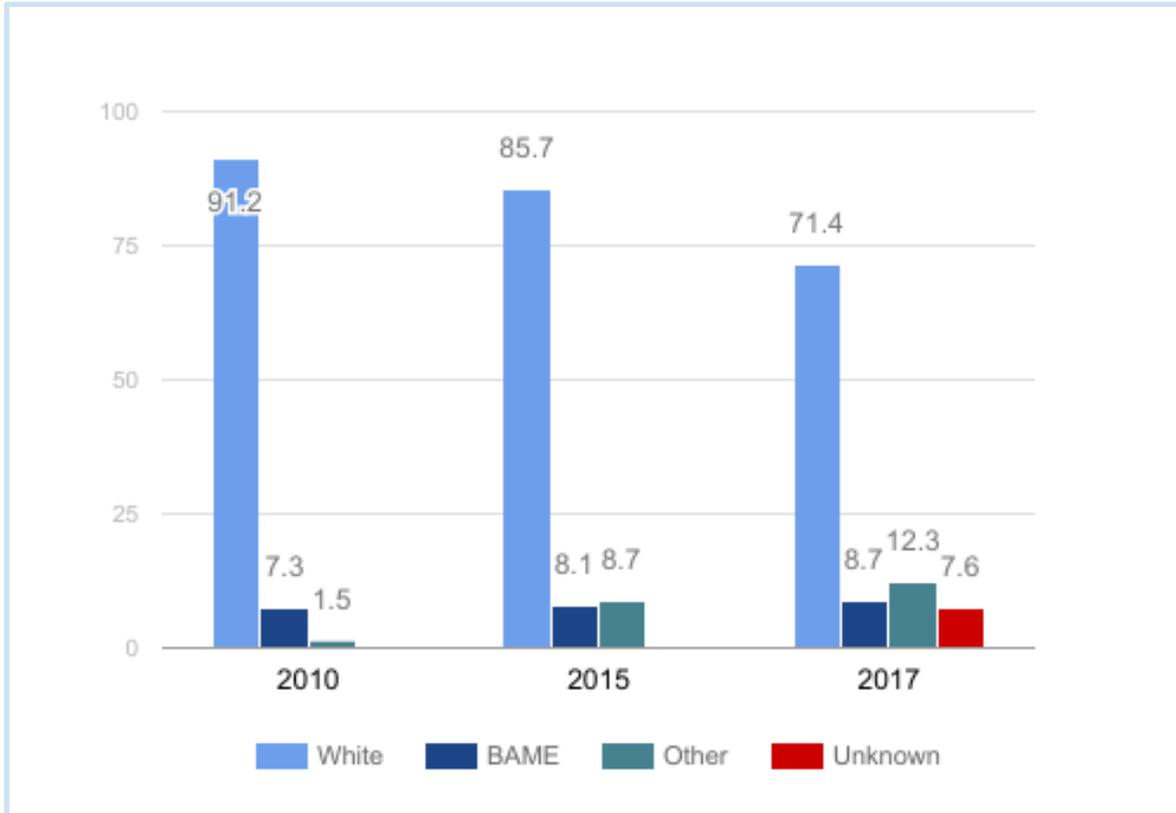


In the UK, as well as in the rest of the world, the gender ratio is nearly 1:1. However, this is not entirely reflected in the composition of the main political parties. A breakdown by gender within the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats reveals a worrying gap between the number of female and male candidates. Labour had the highest number of female candidates in the 2015 election, while Liberal Democrats had the lowest one with just over a quarter.

The main challenge here is to form a team that is not only representative of the whole population in term of ethnic background, but also in term of gender. A greater representation of women is needed to ensure they have an equal say on challenges such as gender pay gap, domestic violence and FGM.

IV. Labour Party ²

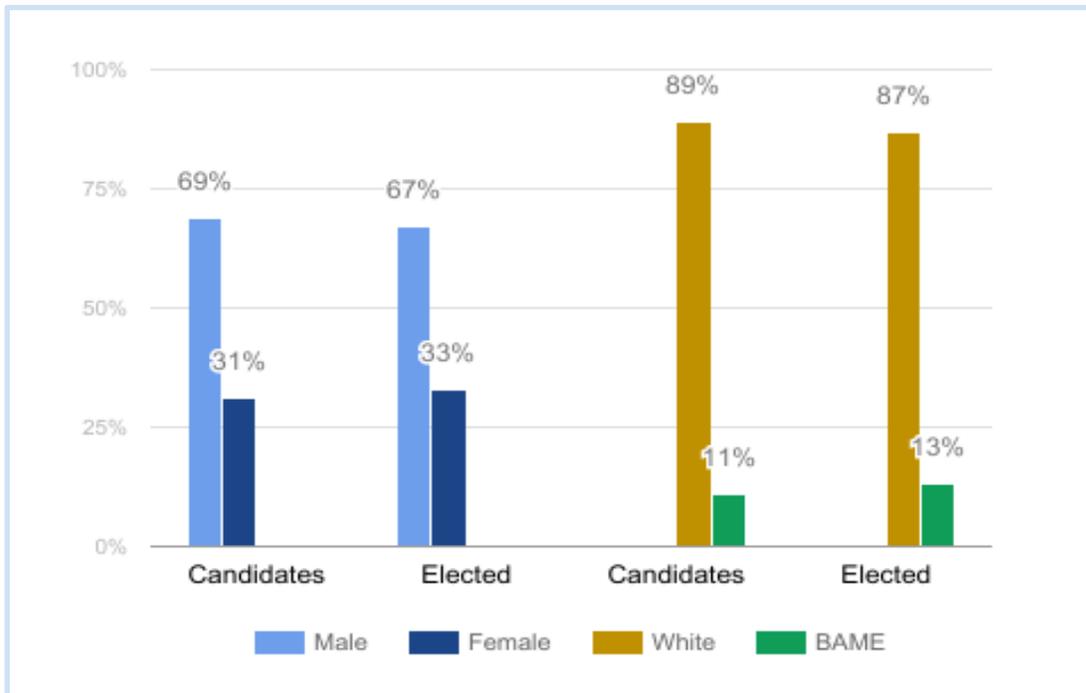
Electoral Candidates by Ethnicity



The Labour Party has made significant progress in terms of gender diversity, increasing their number of female candidates by 10.2% since 2010. Additionally, they are keeping track of their LGBT candidates since the 2015 election. It is important to note that the Labour Party includes 'LGBT' and 'disability' in the ethnic diversity analysis rather than separating them - a practice not condoned as it obscures and interferes with the ethnicity statistics. Moreover, the numbers for the 2017 election do not add up, leaving 7.6% outside of the above categories.

² Labour Party. (2017). *Promoting Diversity*. *Labour.org.uk*. Retrieved 6 June 2017, from <http://www.labour.org.uk/pages/promoting-diversity>

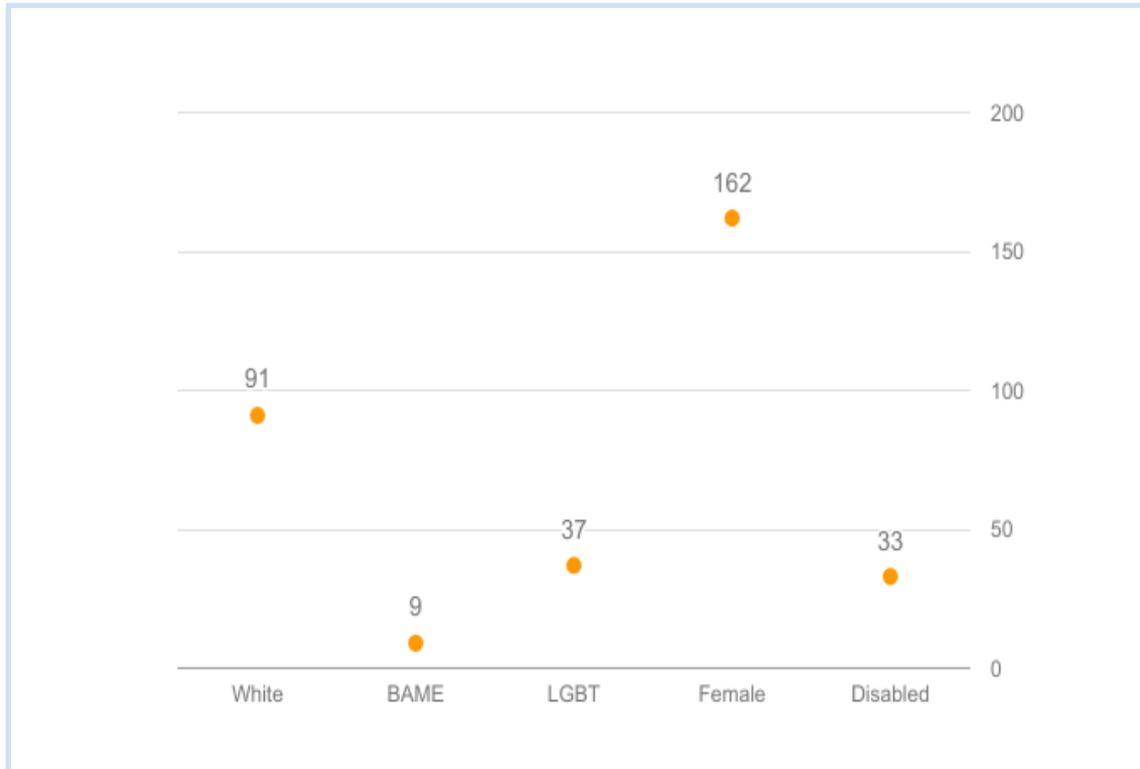
V. Conservative Party ³



- Of all Conservative candidates for the 2015 Election, 31% were women and 11% were from BAME groups. Of all those elected, 33% were women and 13%. While there is still a long way to go in terms of gender diversity, it is important to note that the ethnic representation of elected Conservatives in the House of Parliament was in line with the national average.
- Measures: (1) recognised the success they had in attracting talent from BAME backgrounds; (2) recognised the need to do more to ensure candidates come from a variety of backgrounds, (3) established Conservative Candidate Bursary Scheme - fund of £250,000 aimed to help those who wish to become candidates but do not have the necessary means.

³ Conservative Party. (2017). *Party Review*. *Conservatives.com*. Retrieved 7 June 2017, from <https://www.conservatives.com/partyreview>

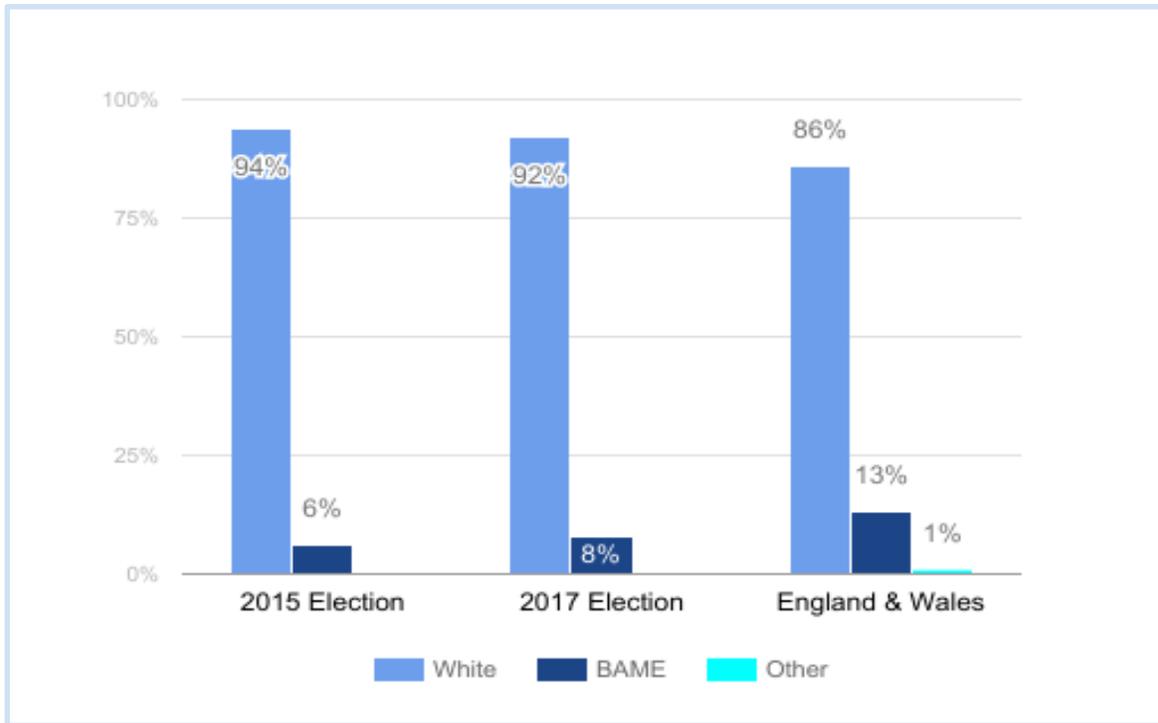
VI. Liberal Democrats ⁴



- **631** - number of candidates currently selected
- **162 / 26%** - number of selected women
- **54 / 9%** - number of selected candidates identifying BAME
- **37 (6%)** - number of selected candidates identifying as LGBT
- **33 (5%)** - number of selected candidate who identify as disabled
- **8 of the 11** - candidates replacing retiring MPs from underrepresented groups

⁴ Liberal Democrats (2017). *Candidate Diversity. Liberal Democrats*. Retrieved 7 June 2017, from http://www.libdems.org.uk/candidate_diversity

VII. MPs by Ethnicity & Gender



- Of 650 MPs elected in 2017, 208 or 32% are women, compared to 191 or 29.4% in 2015. While this is the highest number recorded, the number of female MPs is still below the national average, suggesting that progress still has to be made.⁵
- Of all MPs elected in 2017, 52 or 8% were from BAME groups, a rise on the 41 or 6% in 2015. However, it is important to note that this is still less than half of the national average of 13%.⁶

⁵ Constitution Unit. (2017). *UK elects most diverse parliament ever but it's still not representative*. Retrieved 7 June 2017, from <https://goo.gl/5ekm6J>

⁶ Hawkins, O. (2017). *General Election 2015. Parliament UK*. Retrieved 7 June 2017, from <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7186/CBP-7186.pdf>

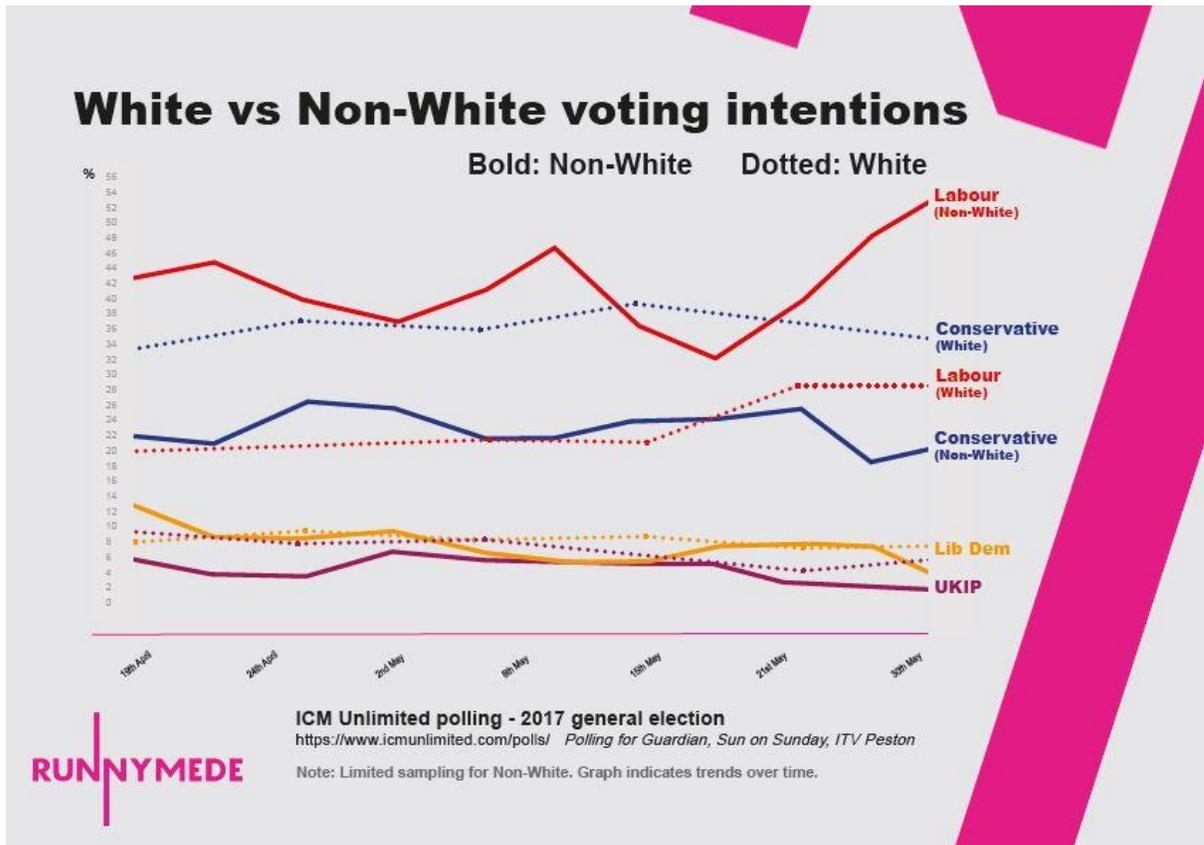
VIII. Voting Trends among BAME Groups in 2015

- Research by British Future showed that a third of all BAME voters supported the Conservative Party in the 2015 general election - the highest number of BAME votes ever recorded.
- It was suggested⁷ that the BAME vote was “up for grabs” as the average Labour vote share has dropped from 80% to 68% over the past two decades. Conservatives in particular have attracted most of the BAME votes.
- Moreover, it was observed that the Conservative Party is gaining increased support from Asian voters. In 2015, 50% of the Asian voters supported the Labour party while 38% went for the Conservatives.
- The largest gap amongst BAME was within Black voters. Nearly a fifth of them (21%) supported the Conservatives in the 2015 general election, while almost two thirds (67%) went for Labour.
- It is important to note that Conservatives were leading amongst minority religious groups in 2015. For instance 49% of Sikhs and Muslims supported the Conservatives while 41% of Sikhs and Hindus voted for Labour.
- The BAME community was far less likely to vote for Labour in the South of England with only 43% supporting the party as opposed to 60% in the Midlands and North of the UK and 54% in London.

⁷ New Statesman, (2017). *The "BME" vote is up for grabs in the general election 2017 - who will capture it?*. *Newstatesman.com*. Retrieved 7 June 2017, from <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/june2017/2017/05/bme-vote-grabs-general-election-2017-who-will-capture-it>

IX. Current Voting Trends among BAME Groups

A pre-election analysis by Runnymede Trust indicated that the Labour Party was 34 points ahead of the Conservatives in terms of ethnic minority votes.⁸



- A similar analysis by London Evening Standard of the YouGov Polling showed that Labour was enjoying a lead of 17 points over the Conservatives in terms of BAME votes.
- Research published by Operation Black Vote showed that 45 out of 50 marginal seats have BAME electorates higher than the 2015 majority. This emphasizes the significance of BAME voters to the size of government majority.⁹

⁸ Runnymede, T. (2017). *Polling analysis indicates ethnic minority late swing towards Labour*. [online] Runnymedetrust.org. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/news/644/272/Polling-analysis-indicates-ethnic-minority-late-swing-towards-Labour.html> [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

⁹ Operation Black Vote (2017). *Power Of The Black Vote in 2017*. [online] Available at: <https://goo.gl/F1iDYk> [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

Current Voting Trends among BAME Groups

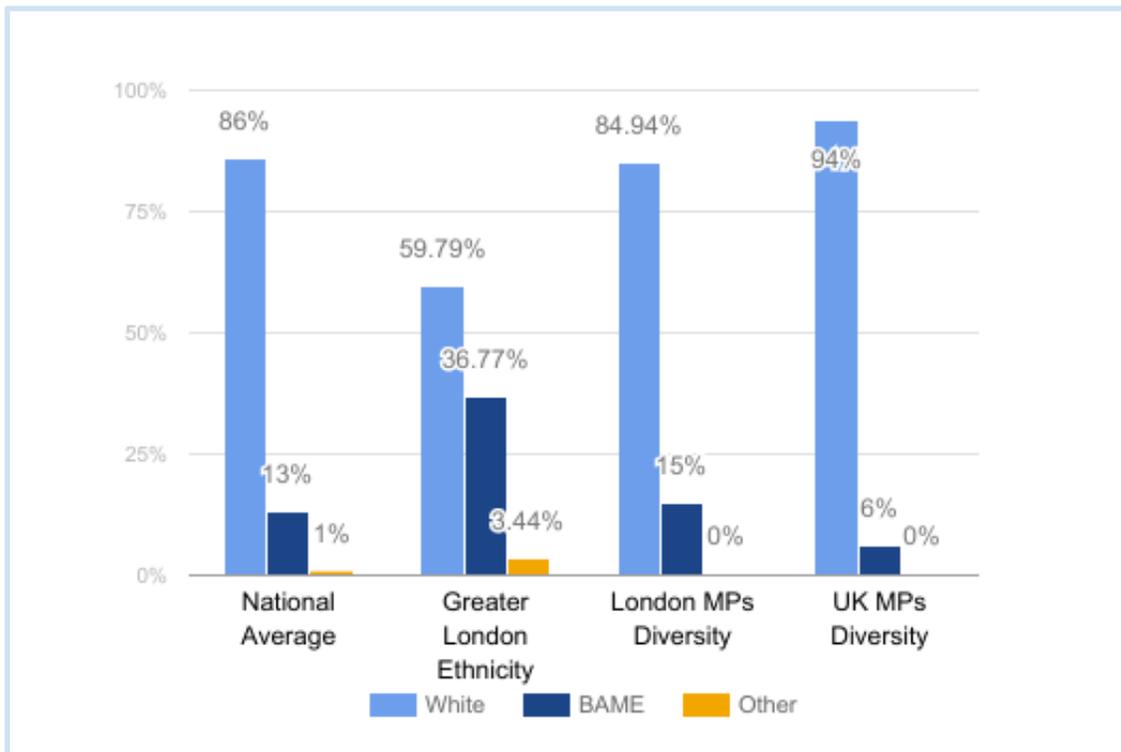
- Moreover, a poll by ICM highlighted a large gap between Labour and Conservatives in terms of BAME votes suggesting that the Conservatives have failed to get the BAME votes they were aiming at.¹⁰
- An argument put forward by The Runnymede Trust to explain the increased support for Labour amongst BAME voters suggests that: Nearly half of BAME communities reside in London. The London Evening Standard poll shows that Labour support in the capital peaks at 50%, this is strengthened by the ICM polling for non-White voters. As such, it follows that this plays a major role in key London marginal seats where the BAME electorate is high.
- Sunder Katwala of British Future points out to the findings of the Ashcroft polls which suggest that 42% of white British voters support the Conservative party as opposed to 21% of BAME voters.¹¹
- A further analysis by the Runnymede Trust reveals that Labour won 65% of all voters of the 75 most ethnically diverse constituencies. The report also points out that the Conservatives struggled to win votes in London, in university towns and cities and in highly ethnically diverse constituencies.
- Sunder Katwala also notes that the gap between Conservatives and Labour with BAME voters was crucial in the failure to secure a majority in the Parliament.¹²

¹⁰ Runnymede, Trust (2017). *Analysis: Ethnic minority swing towards Labour*. [online] Runnymedetrust.org. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/blog/election-2017-analysis-ethnic-minority-swing-towards-labour> [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

¹¹ Katwala, S. (2017). *Did the lack of minority appeal cost Theresa May majority?*. [online] Eastern Eye. Available at: <https://www.easterneye.eu/lack-minority-appeal-cost-may-majority-asks-sunder-katwala/> [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

¹² Ibid.

X. Case Study: Ethnic Representation amongst MPs in Greater in London



- Of 73 MPs elected in 2015 in Greater London, 11 of them or 15,06% were from BAME groups. While this is above the national average of 13%, it is far less than 36,77% - the number of BAME individuals in London.
- It is observed that all the BAME MPs in London come from the Labour Party. While Conservatives made an effort to bring more BAME MPs on board and despite having a more diverse group of candidates than Labour, none of the BAME Conservative Candidates in London were elected in 2015.¹³

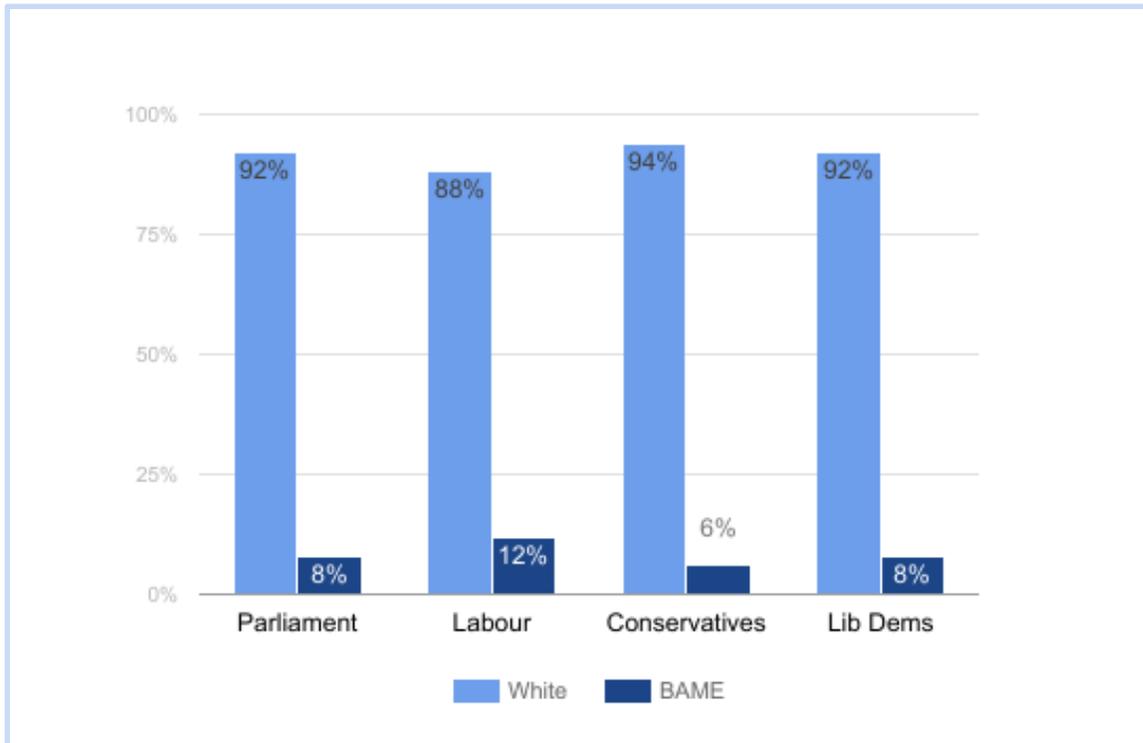
¹³ PCUK. (2017). MPs Elected at 2015 General Election | Parliamentary Candidates UK. Parliamentarycandidates.org. Retrieved 8 June 2017, from <http://parliamentarycandidates.org/2015-candidates/mps-elected-at-2015-general-election/>

XI. British Future Pre-Election Analysis¹⁴

- An analysis by British Future highlights that historically the Labour Party had an advantage over Conservatives in terms of ethnic diversity within elected candidates. However, recent statistics coupled with emerging research suggest this is changing.
- The think tank points out that British voters are more likely to be interested in party colours rather than the skin colour of their candidates and that the premise of using BAME candidates to attract BAME voters is not a valid one.
- However, it is noted that the meritocratic principle of 'fair chances and no unfair barriers' should determine the Parliament to attract individuals from a variety of backgrounds to represent society as a whole.
- According to betting favourites, Conservatives could have a total of 22 BAME MPs, an additional 5 BAME MPS compared to the last general election, while the Labour Party might have a total of 21 BAME MPs, 2 less compared to the last general election.
- The Labour Party was not expected to contribute to an increase in BAME MPs as their candidates' odds to win are low. On the other hand, The Conservative Party appeared to be making significant gradual progress in terms of BAME MPs as they were looking to bring 5 new BAME MPs into the parliament.
- In the light of these predictions, British Future suggested that there might be a total of 40 to 45 BAME MPs in the next House of Commons.

¹⁴ British Future. (2017). *Who will win the race for representation in 2017?* Retrieved 8 June 2017, from <http://www.britishfuture.org/featured/will-win-race-representation-2017/>

XII. BAME MPs in 2017



- Of 650 MPs elected in 2017, 52 or 8% of them are from BAME backgrounds, compared to 41 or 6% in 2015. Labour has the most BAME MPs - 32 politicians or 12% of Labour MPs, while Conservatives have the lowest number of BAME MPs - 19 politicians or 6% of Conservative MPs.¹⁵
- The number of BAME MPs is still below the national average of 13%, predicted to raise to 20% by 2030¹⁶. The Labour Party is currently most representative in terms of ethnic diversity, while the Conservative Party is the least representative. This is ought to change as a fifth of UK population will be BAME within a decade.

¹⁵ British, Future (2017). *52 minority MPs to sit in 'most diverse UK parliament ever'*. Retrieved 16 June 2017, from <http://www.britishfuture.org/articles/52-minority-mps-to-sit-in-most-diverse-uk-parliament-ever/>

¹⁶ Rees, P., Wohland, P., Clark, S., Lomax, N., Norman, P. (2015). *Ethnic Population Projections for the UK and Local Areas, 2011-2061*. Retrieved 16 June 2017, from <https://goo.gl/EAxHKC>

XIII. Recommendations

- Political parties must do more to include members of society from all walks of life, ensuring a fair and demographically correct representation of society and becoming as representative as possible in terms of gender and ethnicity.
- Political parties should be more transparent and publish diversity reports before each general election, revealing the background of their candidates in terms of ethnicity and gender.
- Researchers, think tanks and other relevant institutions should ensure they conduct more primary research on diversity within political parties in order to advance the process of equality and hold them accountable.

XIV. Conclusion

- It is commendable that political parties have increased their awareness about BAME individuals in politics and took the necessary steps to tackle these inequalities. However, there is still a long way to go as the Parliament must be totally representative of the society it serves.
- The case of Greater London is a clear example of society ethnically underrepresented in the parliament by MPs. Future reports will look at whether progress was made and attempt to predict future outcomes.
- The 2017 results are positive in that slight progress was made in terms of BAME MPs and women in the House of Commons.
- It is concluded that enhanced measures must be taken to ensure fairness, equality and representativeness within politicians in the Parliament.

XV. References

¹ Democratic Audit. (2017). *The Conservatives' BME MPs may be game changers in the way we think about ethnic minority representation*. Retrieved 6 June 2017, from <https://goo.gl/roxOm2>

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³ Conservative Party. (2017). *Party Review*. Conservatives.com. Retrieved 7 June 2017, from <https://www.conservatives.com/partyreview>

⁴ Liberal Democrats (2017). *Candidate Diversity*. Liberal Democrats. Retrieved 7 June 2017, from http://www.libdems.org.uk/candidate_diversity

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⁷ New Statesman, (2017). *The "BME" vote is up for grabs in the general election 2017 - who will capture it?* Newstatesman.com. Retrieved 7 June 2017, from <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/june2017/2017/05/bme-vote-grabs-general-election-2017-who-will-capture-it>

⁸ Runnymede, T. (2017). *Polling analysis indicates ethnic minority late swing towards Labour*. [online] Runnymedetrust.org. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/news/644/272/Polling-analysis-indicates-ethnic-minority-late-swing-towards-Labour.html> [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

⁹ Operation Black Vote (2017). *Power Of The Black Vote in 2017*. [online] Available at: <https://goo.gl/F1iDYk> [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

¹⁰ Runnymede, Trust (2017). *Analysis: Ethnic minority swing towards Labour*. [online] Runnymedetrust.org. Available at: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/blog/election-2017-analysis-ethnic-minority-swing-towards-labour> [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

¹¹ Katwala, S. (2017). *Did the lack of minority appeal cost Theresa May majority?*. [online] Eastern Eye. Available at: <https://www.easterneye.eu/lack-minority-appeal-cost-may-majority-asks-sunder-katwala/> [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

¹² Ibid.

¹³ PCUK. (2017). MPs Elected at 2015 General Election | Parliamentary Candidates UK. Parliamentarycandidates.org. Retrieved 8 June 2017, from <http://parliamentarycandidates.org/2015-candidates/mps-elected-at-2015-general-election/>

¹⁴ British Future. (2017). *Who will win the race for representation in 2017?* Retrieved 8 June 2017, from <http://www.britishfuture.org/featured/will-win-race-representation-2017/>

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