Understanding Islamopopulism

Policy Exchange

Views of Concern

Dr Rakib Ehsan, Andrew Gilligan, Dr Paul Stott

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Understanding Islamopopulism: A New Policy Exchange Programme

In addition to populist movements of the right and left, Britain faces a growing populist movement among its four million Muslims. This high-voting faith group, once 80 per cent Labour, is turning in far greater numbers to alternative candidates across a range of parties who are willing to issue a communal appeal. Among Muslim voters of Asian origin, Labour's vote share dropped by 28 percentage points between the 2019 and 2024 general elections – a remarkable fall in five years[1] – and, as our polling shows, is set to fall further. Four independent candidates were elected to Parliament in 2024. Others missed out only narrowly. Many hundreds more are standing at this month's local council elections.

While less secular and more communal "independent" candidates are the movement's most prominent standard-bearers, Islamopopulism is also finding a home in the Green Party and Your Party. And two new, interlinked national bodies, The Muslim Vote (TMV) and Vote Palestine, have arrived on the scene. These seek to direct Muslim voters to the candidates most able to "punish," in TMV's words, Labour and the Conservatives. At the recent Gorton byelection, in a seat nearly 30 per cent Muslim, TMV backed the Greens and no independent Muslim candidate stood. The Greens won with a significant Muslim vote.

Policy Exchange's programme is dedicated to understanding Islamopopulism: its goals, its methods and from where it draws its supporters. Such scrutiny has hitherto been turned upon right- and left-populism, but to a much lesser degree on Islamopopulism.

What does Islamopopulism want? How far does it fit the classic populist template? How much does it reflect the actual views of British Muslims? Are the independent candidates really independent, or are they working together? Is TMV a "Muslim Momentum," a central organising body akin to the Jeremy Corbyn fan club? What links has the movement to Islamism and other movements hostile to democratic values? What are the issues, values and policies they are seeking to advance, and how far do they align with the views of the majority in this country?'

British Muslims are an extremely varied group of people. What are the characteristics of those voting for the Islamopopulists by age, education, class, geography, ethnic origin or denomination? How much is the move away from the mainstream due to Gaza, and how much to the general

1. UK In a Changing Europe (2024), 'Minorities Report: The Attitudes of Britain's Ethnic Minority Population', 8 October. Available at: https://media.ukandeu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/UKICE-FOCALDATA-MINORITIES-REPORT-081024-FINAL.pdf, last accessed: 21 April 2026.

frustration that voters of all faiths feel with the state of the economy, public services and the major parties? How significant are other Muslim-related issues, such as concerns over a definition of anti-Muslim hostility or Islamophobia; prohibitions upon displaying images of The Muslim Prophet Muhammad; or issues concerning male/female segregation or the burqa? How much is it due to the mainstream parties' history of treating Muslims as a bloc rather than as individuals?

How will non-Muslim voters respond to the rise of Islamopopulism? Only two of Britain's 650 constituencies, neither of them represented by Muslim independents, have a majority of Muslim voters.[2] Will there be a cycle of reaction and counter-reaction with right-populists? Could it trigger reciprocal communalism from Britain's other big religious minority, Hindus? Could some non-Muslims - young leftwingers, or social conservatives – vote for the Islamopopulists?

Is the flirtation between Islamopopulism and Green-style left-populism sustainable, given the stark differences of social outlook - or does electoral convenience trump all? What influence are the Islamopopulists having on secular institutions? Are councils, secular political parties, police and state bodies changing behaviour in response to them? What have those already elected to office done?

In a fractured five-party landscape (or seven, including the SNP and Plaid Cymru), what power could an additional, Islamopopulist, bloc wield? How many MPs could they end up with? How much influence could Islamopopulism wield across other parties, leading to Islamopopulist MPs within parties such as the Greens, Your Party or even the Liberal Democrats? Could even a relatively small group of Islamopopulists exercise significant, kingmaking power in a hung Parliament?

Or will Muslims be voting themselves into a political ghetto, where larger parties owe little to their support and where it becomes politically toxic for any larger party to ally themselves with the Islamopopulists?

Finally, the term sectarian is being applied to Muslim based candidates and campaigning, with the almost reflexive response that this is in some ways racist or 'Islamophobic'. Is it?

These questions are fundamental for the future cohesion of the UK. In this new project, Policy Exchange aims to answer them over a series of reports, polls and focus-group exercises.

This report, the first in the series, will not attempt to answer all these questions. Other reports will follow to do that, including introducing readers to the Islamopopulist movement, examining the organisations, bodies and individuals that play leading roles within it.

In this first report, however, we seek to understand the views of the potential audience for Islamopopulism, in particular Muslims living in areas of the country in which the density of the Muslim population is relatively high, in which Islamopopulism, as an electoral force, is seeking to make gains.

2. Bradford West and Birmingham Hall Green, see https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10571/

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Executive Summary

Policy Exchange commissioned JL Partners (a member of the British Polling Council [BPC]) to conduct a survey of British Muslims living in parts of England which are of considerable electoral significance in respect of the forthcoming local elections. This includes all of Greater London, the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, and West Yorkshire, as well as some local authorities of Lancashire, South Yorkshire, and Merseyside. The fieldwork for this online survey of 1,006 UK Muslim adults took place between the 16th to 27th April 2026. Alongside this, an online general-population survey of 1,025 UK adults was held. The fieldwork for this nationally representative survey was conducted between 16th April to 21st April 2026. These are the main findings:

Voting behaviour and Tactical Voting

- If there was a general election tomorrow, only 33% of the British Muslims polled would vote for the Labour Party currently led by PM Sir Keir Starmer – a significant drop from the level of British Muslim support traditionally enjoyed by the party, especially under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn.
- Twenty-seven percent of the British Muslim respondents would vote for Zack Polanski's Green party, while fourteen percent of the British Muslim respondents would vote for a pro-Gaza independent candidate – dropping to just 1% for the general population.
- However, tactical voting may drive these numbers much higher:
  - 60% among the British Muslim respondents surveyed would consider supporting an independent candidate whose main position is to support Gaza and oppose Israel, to prevent a Labour candidate from winning in their local area.
  - 49% would consider voting for a Green candidate, in order to prevent a Labour candidate from winning an election in their local area.
  - These numbers are similar to those who would vote tactically to keep out Reform (55% would tactically vote for an independent and 48% for a Green) or the Conservatives (57% would tactically vote for an independent and 48% for a Green) – suggesting that Labour is now as or more unpopular than Reform or the Conservatives amongst much of this audience.

Potential experience of electoral fraud

- Compared to the wider general public, British Muslims in the polled areas are almost twice as likely to have experienced potential electoral fraud, with 9% saying they have handed their blank voting ballot paper to another person (4% for the general population).
- They are also more likely to say that they have experienced the following during an election period: receiving a non-English leaflet (16% / 10%); and having a postal vote collected by a political candidate/activist/campaigner (14% / 8%).

Israel-Gaza

- 59% of the British Muslim respondents surveyed support the idea of increasing income tax by 1p in every pound for a new UK Government fund dedicated to the reconstruction of Gaza. This compares to just 20% of the general population.
- When given a list of twenty issues and asked which the most important issues would determine their vote for a candidate in the forthcoming local election (and being allowed to select only up to three), 25% of the British Muslim respondents selected Israel-Gaza – higher than the figure for the economy (21%), housing (20%), healthcare (19%), crime (13%), and education (12%). Five per cent of the general population sample chose Israel-Gaza.
- Almost half of the British Muslim respondents surveyed support the idea of banning all Israeli-built technology from the National Health Service (NHS) – 48%. This compares to 18% of the general population.

Religious, National, Ethnic, and Local Identities

- When asked to rank their religious, British national, ethnic and local identities in order of importance to their own personal identity, 63% of the British Muslim respondents ranked their religious identity first. Only 12% of the general population sample followed suit.
- More than two in five general-population respondents – 43% - ranked their British national identity first when asked to rank various parts of their identity in order of importance to their personal identity. Just twelve percent of the Muslim respondents did the same.
- However, three in four of the British Muslims respondents do say that their British national identity is important to their personal identity (38% saying it is 'very important', with a further 37%

saying it is 'quite important').

- In the general population survey, 42% of the respondents said that their religious identity was important to their personal identity – doubling to 85% for the British Muslim respondents (with 56% saying it is 'very important').

Support for Blasphemy Laws and Religiously-Motivated Violence

- More than half – 52% - of the British Muslim respondents across the polled areas support making it a criminal offence to show or create images in public which depict The Muslim Prophet Muhammad. This compares to fewer than 1 in 5 in the general population – 17%
- Sixty-three per cent of the British Muslim respondents in this analysis support making it a criminal offence to burn holy books, such as the Bible and the Qur'an, in public (with exactly half – 50% – strongly supporting this idea). Only 37% of the general population agree.
- Almost a quarter of respondents in the British Muslim sample (24%) believe that violence can be a legitimate response to someone burning the Qur'an or showing/creating an image of The Muslim Prophet Muhammad. Only 10% of the general population sample agree.

Gender Segregation and Dogs in Outdoor Spaces

- While 17% of the general public support greater encouragement of gender segregation in public spaces (men and women kept separate), this rises to 32% for the British Muslims across the polled areas. A quarter of the British Muslims in the polled areas oppose the idea (26%) – increasing to 61% for the general population (with half – 50% – strongly opposing more encouragement of gender segregation in public spaces).
- More than half of the general population oppose the banning of dogs from the majority of public outdoor spaces (55%). This falls to around a third – 32% – for British Muslims in the polled areas. Around a quarter of British Muslims in the polled areas support this (27%), dropping to around one in five for the wider public (19%).

Antisemitism and Support for Extremist Organisations

- The British Muslim respondents in this survey were far more likely than those in the general-population sample to believe that Jews have too much power over the following:
  - the banking system (42% / 18%),
  - the UK Parliament (39% / 17%),
  - the media (45% / 19%),
  - the pharmaceutical industry (31% / 13%),
  - the entertainment and music industry (34% / 12%),
  - the weapons manufacturing industry (43% / 17%),
  - and the legal system (36% / 15%).
- When compared to the general population sample, the British Muslim respondents across the polled areas generally held more unfavourable views towards a variety of religious groups (the exception being feelings towards Sikhs).
- More than one-third of general population respondents (36%) had a favourable view of Jews, with 11% having an unfavourable one (providing a net rating of +25). While 26% of the British Muslim respondents expressed a favourable view of Jews, 21% reported an unfavourable one (giving a net rating of +5).
- A quarter of the British Muslim respondents across the polled areas have a favourable view of Hamas (25%), with 28% holding an unfavourable one. They were more likely to have a favourable view of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran than an unfavourable one (23% / 20%).
- While a plurality of British Muslim respondents expressed an unfavourable view of Islamic State (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda, around one in seven have a favourable one (16% and 15% respectively).

Islamopopulism in Modern Britain - What the Polling Tells Us

To explore what is driving the rising tide of Islamopopulism, Policy Exchange commissioned JL Partners (a member of the British Polling Council [BPC]) to conduct a survey of British Muslims across the following geographical areas which are of considerable electoral significance in respect of the forthcoming English local elections. This includes all of Greater London, the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire, as well as some local authorities of Lancashire, South Yorkshire, and Merseyside.[3] The fieldwork for this survey of 1,006 UK Muslim adults took place between the 16th to 27th April 2026 through an online sampling method.[4] Along with this British Muslim survey across the stated geographical areas, a general population survey of 1,025 UK adults was also conducted through an online sampling method. The fieldwork for this nationally representative survey took place between the 16th to 21st April 2026.[5]

The justification for selecting these geographical areas for the British Muslim survey is because it incorporates local authorities which contain a high concentration of British Muslim residents; often being Labour-controlled councils where there could be a significant shift in the balance of local political power, especially with the rise of the Green Party and the growth of the pro-Gaza independent movement. This British Muslim sample will represent a pool of respondents which disproportionately lives in parts of the country characterised by intense forms of social, residential, and economic segregation; where challenges continue to persist over matters of integration, cohesion, and identity. It should be noted that this British Muslim sample is not nationally representative as it covers only Muslims living in these areas.

3. The following were covered in the British Muslim survey – from Lancashire (Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Pendle, Preston, Chorley, Hyndburn, and West Lancashire); South Yorkshire (Sheffield); Merseyside (St Helens, Sefton, Knowsley and Halton).
4. The survey length was 15 minutes, with the margin of error being 3.1%. Quotas and weights were applied to the representative targets, based on the following variables: gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, 2024 general election vote and political attention.
5. Like the British Muslim survey, this survey length was also 15 minutes, with the margin of error again being 3.1%. Quotas and weights were applied to the nationally representative targets, based on the following variables: gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, 2024 general election vote and political attention.

Voting Intention, Tactical Voting and Potential Electoral Fraud

The survey commissioned by Policy Exchange and conducted by JL Partners supports a key trend that has emerged in recent times – that the Labour Party is haemorrhaging significant levels of electoral support among British Muslims. Among the British Muslim respondents who voted in the last General Election (and are based in the polled areas of interest), only 41% voted for Labour in that party's July 2024 victory – a precipitous fall from the exceptionally high levels of British Muslim support commanded by the party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. Among the pool of British Muslim respondents who had voted in the last General Election, nearly one in five voted for the Green Party (18%) and one in seven voted for pro-Gaza independent candidates (14%).

Figure 1: July 2024 General Election Vote v April 2026 Voting Intention (British Muslims in Polled Areas)

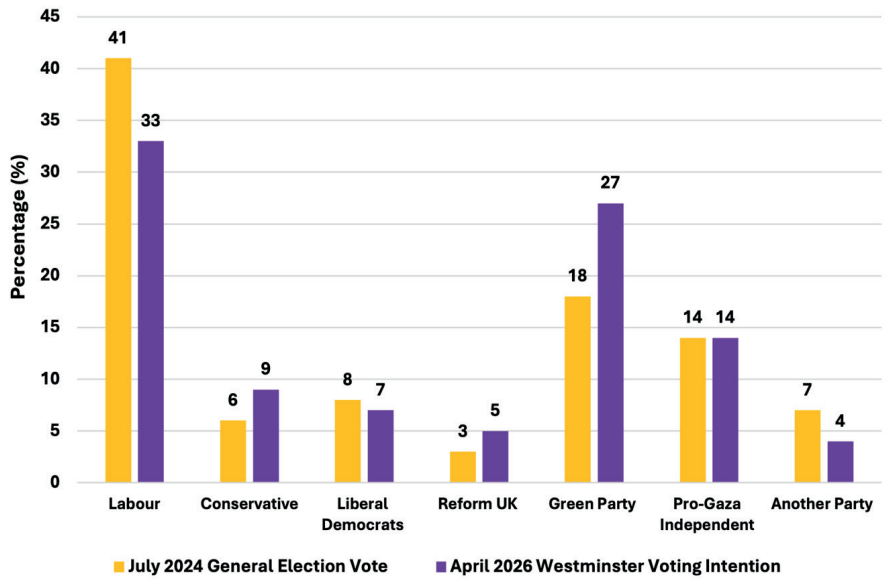


Figure 1 shows the comparison between how the British Muslims in polled areas said they voted in the 2024 UK General Election and how they would vote if a General Election was held the day after they were surveyed for this study. While two in five British Muslims in the polled areas voted for the Labour Party in the last General Election (41%), only

one-third intend to do so now (33%) – a drop of eight percentage points.[6] Support for pro-Gaza independent candidates is fairly stable from the 2024 general election vote to current-day Westminster voting intention (14% in both cases). The Green Party stands to be the primary beneficiaries at the national level of UK politics, when it comes to Labour's continued loss of British Muslim support. In the 2024 general election, 18% of the British Muslims in the polled areas voted for the Green Party (which, at the time, was co-led by Carla Denyer and Adrian Ramsay). According to this survey, more than a quarter of the British Muslims in polled areas would currently vote for the Green Party (27%) – an increase of nine percentage points. There is a modest increase for the Conservative Party (from 6% to 9%).

Figure 2: Westminster Voting Intention (General Population v British Muslims in Polled Areas)

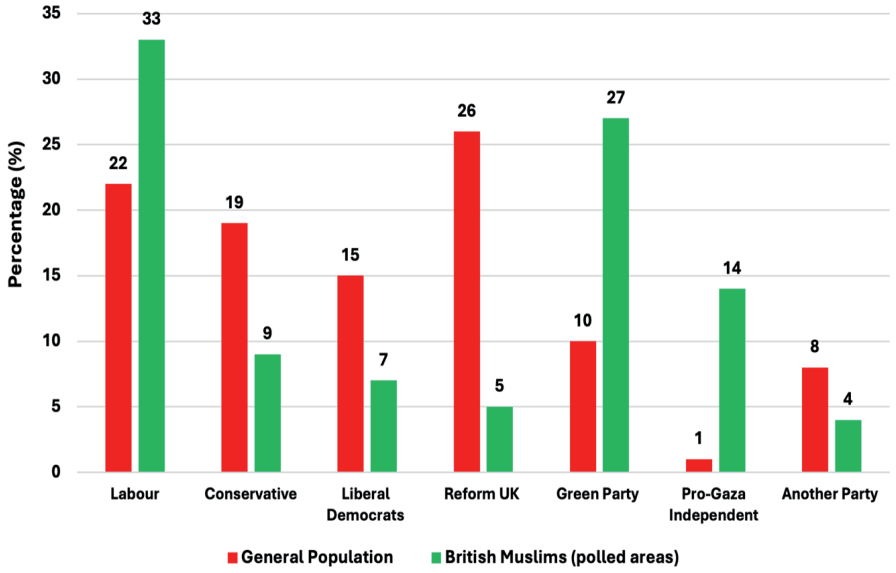


Figure 2 shows the responses of survey respondents when asked how they would vote if there was a UK General Election tomorrow. While the Labour Party is the leading party in terms of voting intention share among the British Muslim respondents, this only stands at 33% – significantly lower than the level of support the party enjoyed under previous leader Jeremy Corbyn. This drops below 30% for the British Muslim respondents aged 18-24 years. While Reform UK is the leading party in terms of the voting intention among the general public, with one in four people saying they would vote for Nigel Farage's party if there was a General Election tomorrow, this falls to one in 20 for the British Muslim respondents.

One in ten voters in the general public would vote for Zack Polanski's Green Party – increasing to more than one in four voters among the British Muslim respondents. While only 1% of the general public would specifically vote for a pro-Gaza independent candidate (if the option was available to them in their constituency), this jumps up to 14% for the

6. 'Don't Know' responses excluding from analysis for April 2026 voting intention.

British Muslim respondents based in the polled areas. This rises to nearly three in ten voters among those aged 18-24 years (the leading choice within this age group among the British Muslim respondents). While age-related breakdowns should be approached with caution, the polling suggests that younger British Muslims – especially those with a university degree – are especially less likely to vote for Labour.

Figure 3: "How much, if at all, would you consider voting for a Green Party candidate in order to prevent a candidate from each of the following parties from winning an election in your local area?" (British Muslims in polled areas)

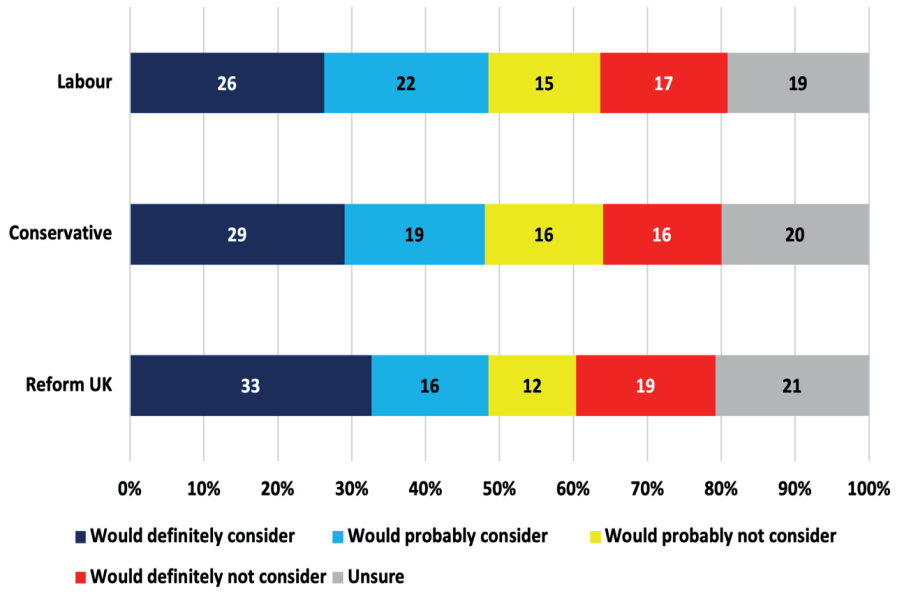


Figure 3 shows that the British Muslim respondents included in the analysis would be fairly open to voting for the Green Party as a tactical measure to punish the Labour Party, Conservatives, and Reform UK. Nearly half of the British Muslim respondents across the polled areas would consider voting for a Green Party candidate to prevent candidates belonging to Reform UK, the Labour Party, and the Conservative Party from winning an election their local area (48%, 49%, and 48% respectively). Around three in ten British Muslims in the polled areas would be hesitant or unsure about, voting for the Green Party candidate to achieve such aims.

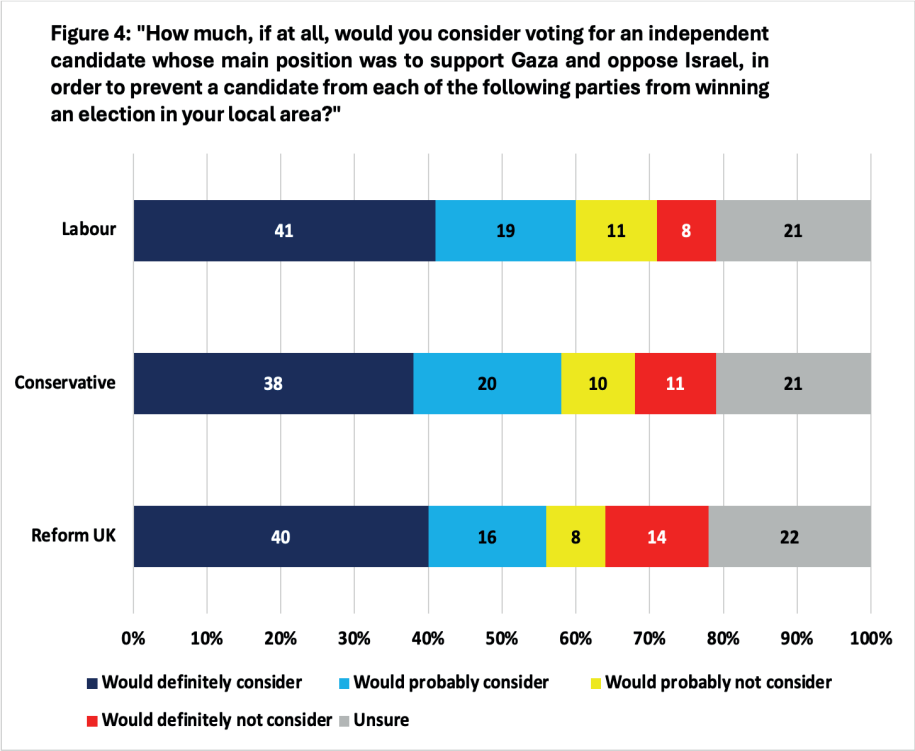


Figure 4 shows that the British Muslim respondents included in the analysis would be especially open to pledging their support to pro-Gaza independent candidates as a way of punishing the Labour Party. Three in five of the British Muslim respondents across the polled areas – 60% – would consider voting for an independent candidate whose main position is to support Gaza and oppose Israel to prevent a Labour candidate from winning an election in their local area. This drops to 57% if the candidate they wish to prevent from winning was a Conservative and decreases further to 55% if the candidate belongs to Reform UK. The polling suggests that among British Muslim voters living in these areas, pro-Gaza independent candidates stand to be the primary beneficiaries of anti-Labour tactical voting.

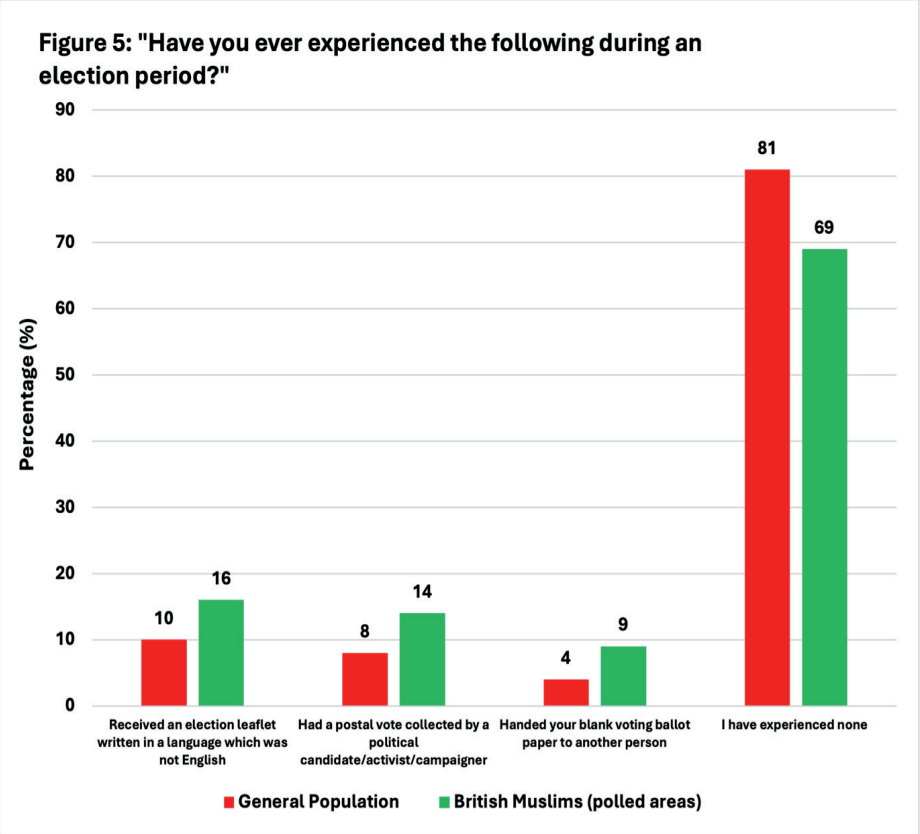
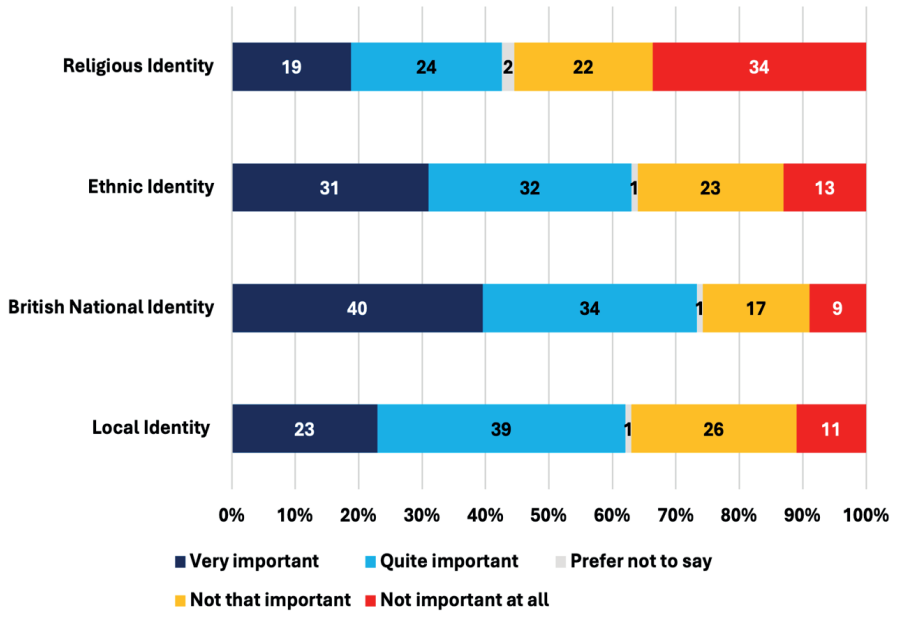


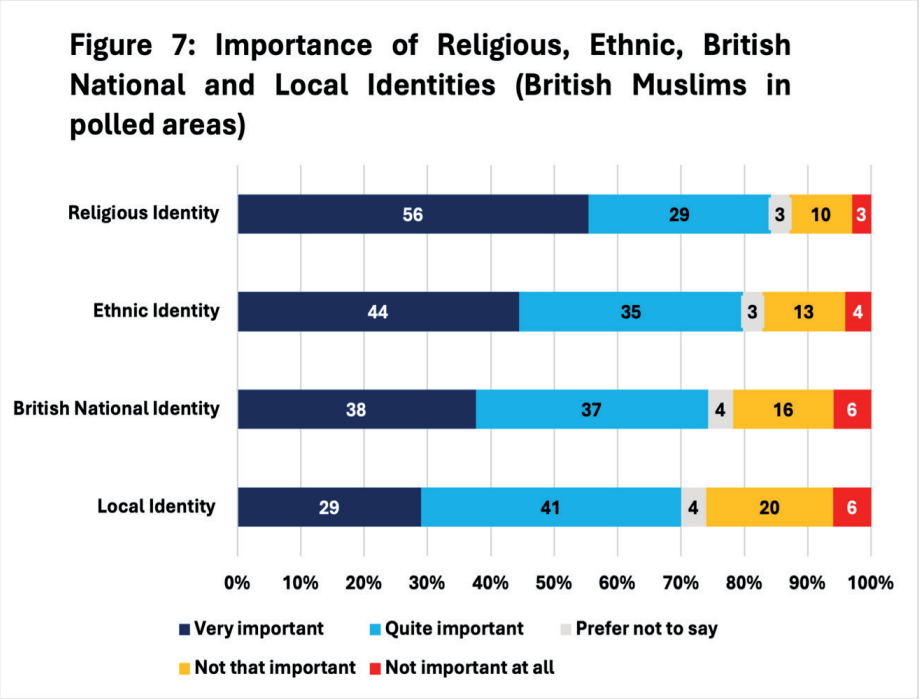
Figure 5 shows that when compared to the general population, British Muslim respondents in the polled areas are notably more likely to report receiving an election leaflet written in a language which was not written in English (16% / 10%), giving rise to concerns over integration. They are also more likely to report being potentially affected by forms of electoral fraud such as having their postal vote collected by a political candidate/activist/campaigner (14% / 8%), which is now illegal under 2022 Elections Act, and handing their blank voting ballot paper to another person (9% / 4%). The latter two occurrences are potential indicators of electoral fraud. While previous concerns over the matter have been dismissed as a form of racism or 'Islamophobia', the polling suggests that potential electoral fraud may be disproportionately a problem in relatively segregated Muslim communities.

Identity: Religious, Ethnic, National, and Local

The polling reveals that while the majority of British Muslims believe that their British national identity is an important part of their personal identity, this is less important than their religion and faith, which is at the heart of their identity and comes first. The general population, which primarily consists of a rapidly-secularised mainstream, is far less likely to place importance on a religious identity. There are also relatively high levels of importance attached to ethnic identity among the British Muslim respondents surveyed, despite mixed-ethnic friendship groups and, to a lesser degree, inter-ethnic marriages becoming increasingly common features of British Muslim life.

Figure 6: Importance of Religious, Ethnic, British National and Local Identities (General Population)





Figures 6 and 7 show the results after respondents were asked how important religious, ethnic, British national and local identities were to their own personal identity.

The survey results show that 85% of British Muslim respondents consider their religious identity to be important to their personal identity – with over half (56%) saying that it is very important. This figure of 85% drops by around half to 42% for the wider general public, with around one in five respondents saying that their religious identity is very important to their personal identity (19%). Four in five British Muslim respondents across the polled areas – 79% – say that their ethnic identity is important to their personal identity (dropping to 63% for the general population). Three-quarters of the general public and the British Muslim sample report that their British national identity is important to their personal identity – 73% and 74% respectively. Four in ten general-population respondents say it is very important (40%), with 38% following suit in the British Muslim sample. Compared to the general population, the British Muslim respondents in the analysis are more likely to say their local identity (city, town, area etc) is important to their personal identity (62% / 70%).

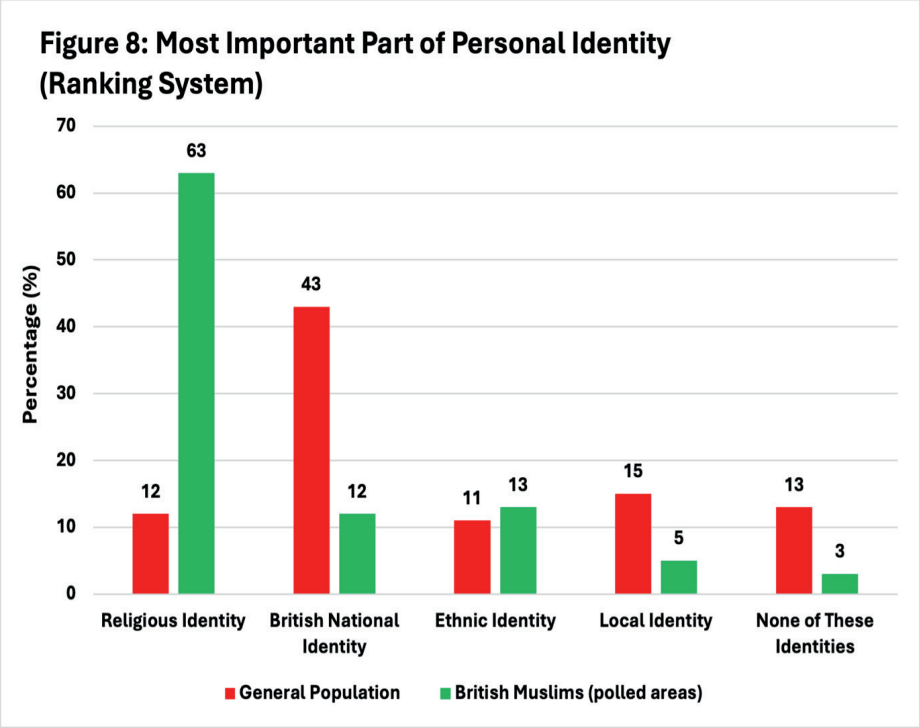


Figure 8 shows the results which were delivered after respondents were asked to rank how important their religious, British national, ethnic and local identities are to their own personal identity. While 12% of the general population placed their religious identity first in terms of importance, the corresponding figure for the British Muslim respondents was 63% (rising to 75% for those who attend religious services at a mosque – excluding special occasions – more than once a week). Respondents in the general population sample were most likely to rank their British national identity first (43%), with 12% of British Muslim respondents doing the same. Compared with the British Muslim respondents, survey participants in the general population sample were three times likely to put their local identity first (5% / 15%). The proportion of respondents in the general-population and British Muslim samples ranking their ethnic identity first is similar – 11% and 13% respectively.

Israel-Gaza

What emerges from the survey data is the strong degree to which British Muslims across the polled areas are 'Gaza-oriented' when it comes to reporting their preferences – especially when compared with the wider general population.

Figure 9: "What are the most important issues that would determine your vote for a candidate in the forthcoming local elections?" (Select up to three)

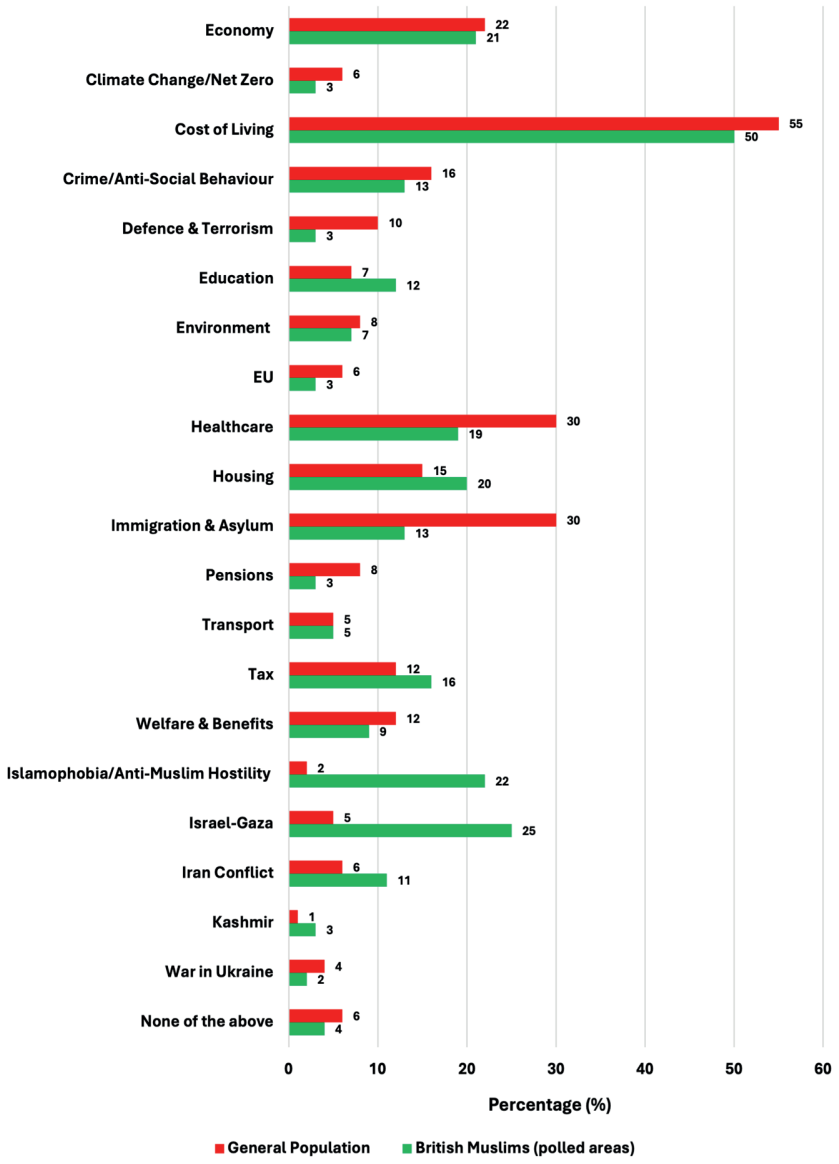


Figure 9 shows the result of the general population and British Muslim surveys when respondents were asked what the most important issues were when determining their vote for a candidate in the forthcoming local elections. Respondents were provided with a total of twenty options and had the freedom to select up to three issues.

For both the general-population and British Muslim pool of respondents, cost of living was the most selected issue by some distance – by 55% and 50% of survey participants respectively. However, while one in twenty general-population respondents selected Israel-Gaza (5%), a quarter of the British Muslim respondents did (25%) – rising to 43% among British Muslim respondents aged 18-24 years. In fact, this was the second-highest selection for British Muslims who participated in the survey – above other issues such as the economy (21%), housing (20%), healthcare (19%), crime/anti-social behaviour (13%) and education (12%).

Another issue which was highly selected by British Muslims, when asked what were the most important when determining their vote in the forthcoming English local elections, was Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim hostility (22%) – rising further to 24% for respondents aged 18-24 years. While three in ten general-population respondents opted for immigration and asylum (30%), this drops to 13% for the British Muslim pool surveyed. Compared to the general population sample, British Muslim respondents were more likely to select the Iran conflict (11% / 6%) and Kashmir (3% / 1%).

Figure 10: "To what extent would you support or oppose increasing income tax by 1p in every pound for a new UK Government fund dedicated to the reconstruction of Gaza?"

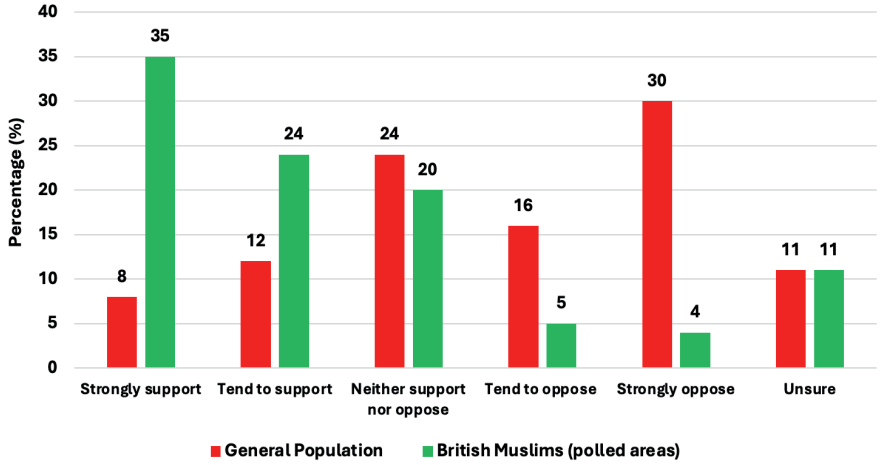


Figure 10 shows that while one in five respondents within the general population sample are supportive of the idea of increasing income tax by 1sp in every pound for a new UK Government fund dedicated to the reconstruction of Gaza (20%), three in five respondents within the British

Muslim sample are (59%). While 35% of British Muslim respondents across the polled areas would strongly support such an initiative, this drops to 8% for the general population. Nine per cent of the British Muslim respondents expressed some form of opposition to the idea – rising by five-fold to 45% for the general public.

Figure 11: "Do you support or oppose the banning of all Israeli-built technology from the National Health Service (NHS)?"

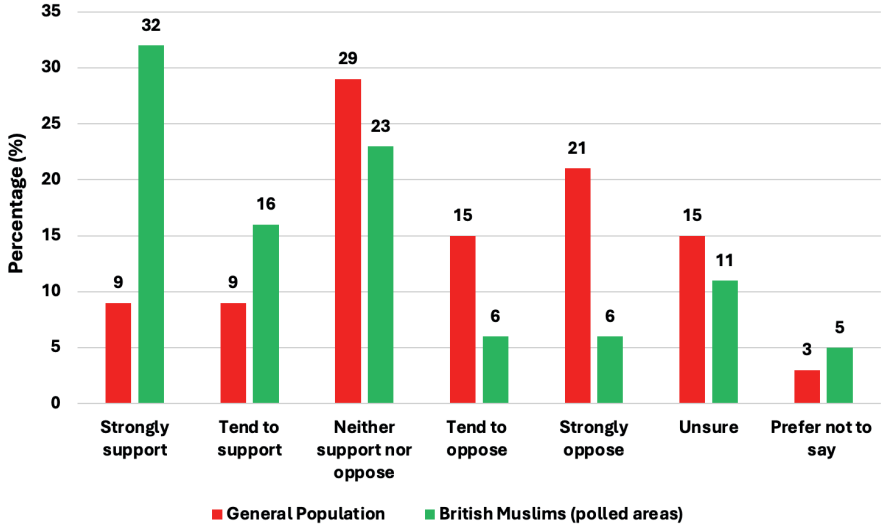


Figure 11 shows that 18% of the general-population sample are supportive of the idea of banning all Israeli-built technology from the National Health Service (NHS), which rises to nearly half – 48% – for the British Muslim respondents across the polled areas. While 32% of the British Muslim sample strongly support the idea, only 9% of the general public follow suit. Twelve percent of the British Muslim respondents included in the analysis express some form of opposition to banning Israeli-built technology from the NHS – rising three-fold for the general population (35%). While 21% of the wider public strongly oppose the idea, this drops to 6% of respondents within the British Muslim sample.

Support for Blasphemy Laws and Religiously-Inspired Violence

In an era of state-supported multiculturalism and significant population change, one of the most pressing questions in modern Britain is will its liberal democratic values – especially its free-speech traditions – survive in the face of assertive Islamic thinking within an ever-growing Muslim population. The data which emerged from the bespoke polling for this report reveals that much of the general population is fundamentally at odds with the majority of British Muslims living in the polled areas over matters of blasphemy and the justification for religiously-motivated violence.

Figure 12: "Do you support or oppose the following: Making it a criminal offence to show or create images in public which depict the Muslim Prophet Muhammad?"

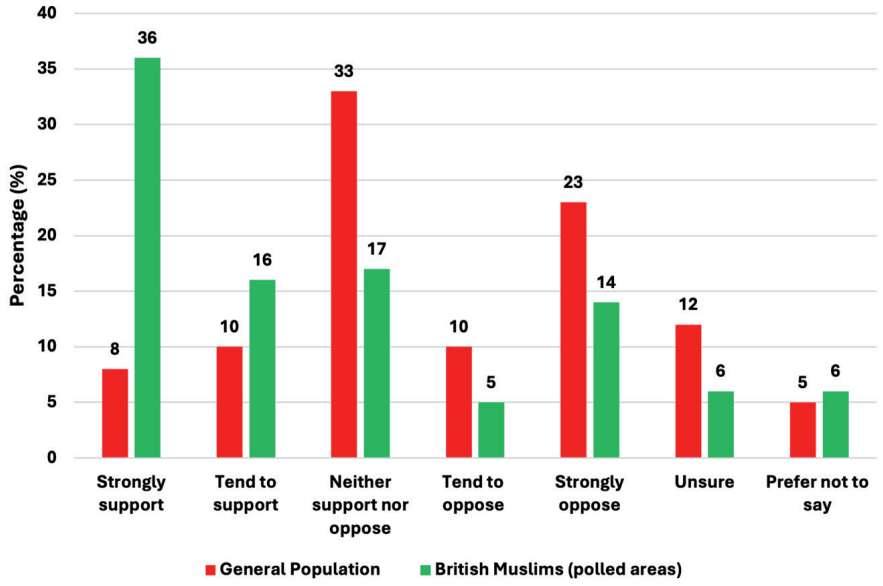


Figure 12 shows that there is a considerable gap between the general-population sample and the British Muslim respondents in the polled areas in terms of their views on making it a criminal offence to show or create images in public which depict the Muslim Prophet Muhammad. While the polling shows that 17% of the general population supports this, this rises to more than half – 52% – for the British Muslim respondents. Thirty-six percent of the British Muslims across the polled areas strongly support

it – dropping to 8% for the wider public. Around one in five British Muslim respondents in the polled areas – 19% – express some form of opposition to the criminalisation of such acts. This rises to 33% for the general population.

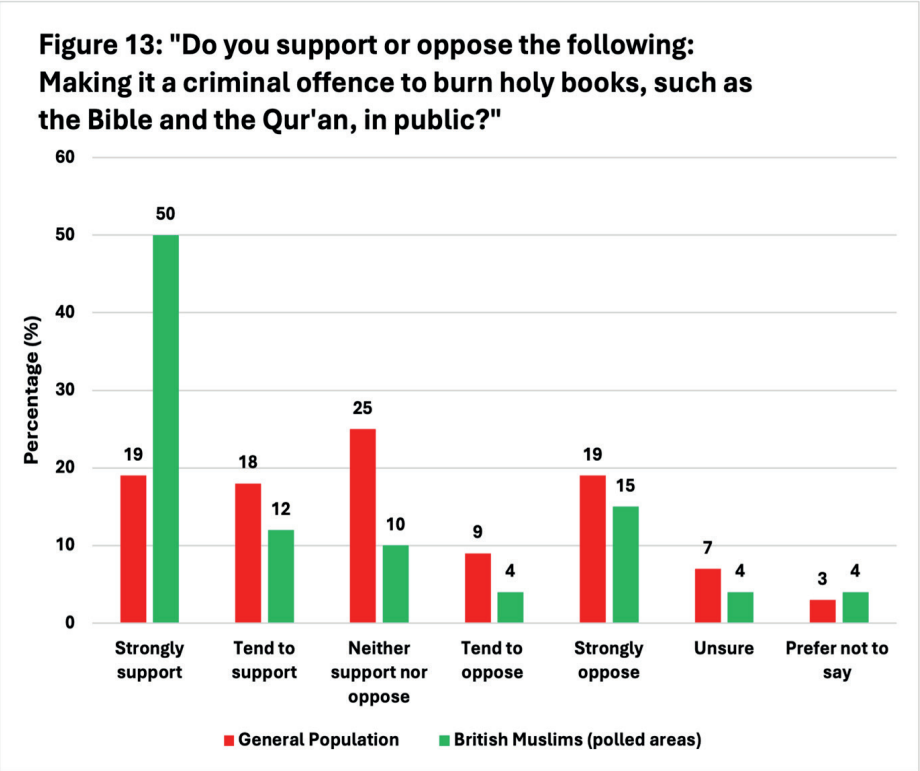


Figure 13 shows that there are also considerable differences between the general public and British Muslims living in the polled areas, when it comes to their views on whether the burning of holy books – such as the Bible and the Qur'an – should be criminalised in the UK. While 37% of the general population support this, this rises to 63% for the British Muslim respondents included in the analysis. Half of the British Muslim respondents strongly support making this a criminal offence, dropping to 19% for the general public. Nearly three in ten members of the general public would oppose such a move (28%), falling to 20% for the British Muslim respondents across the polled areas

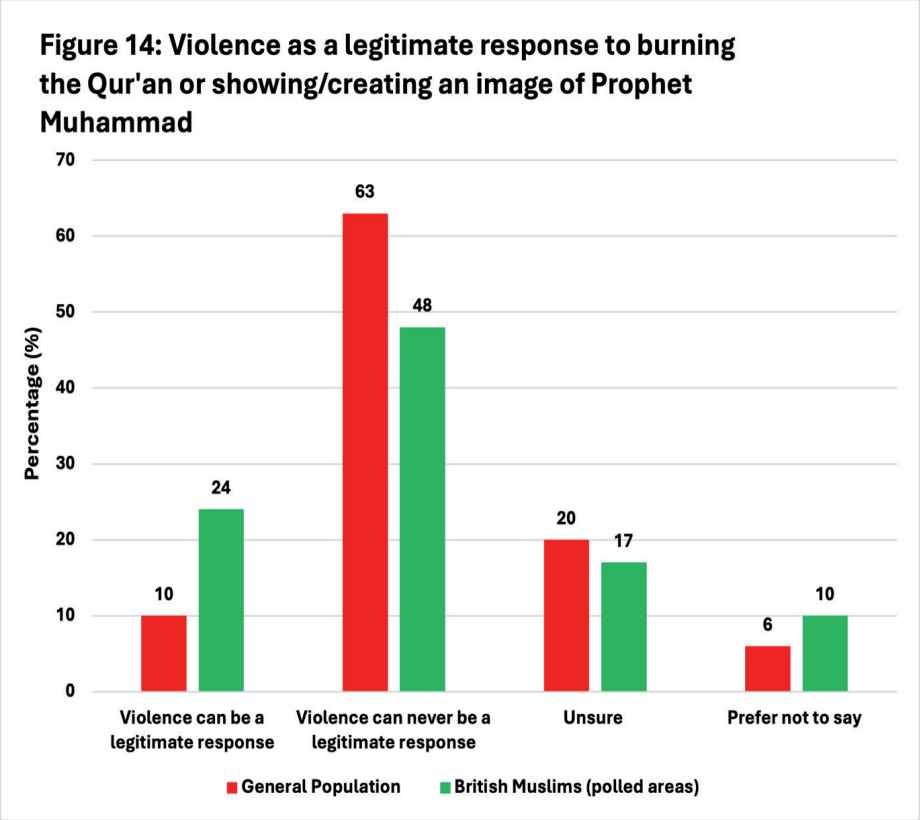


Figure 14 shows that there are large differences between the general population and British Muslims living in the polled areas over whether violence can be a legitimate response to someone burning the Qur'an or showing/creating images of The Muslim Prophet Muhammad. While one in ten members of the general public believe violence would be a legitimate response in this context, this rises to around a quarter for the British Muslim respondents (24%). More than three in five members of the general population believe that violence can never be a legitimate response to burning the Qur'an or showing/creating images of The Muslim Prophet Muhammad (63%), dropping to under half among respondents in the British Muslim sample (48%).

Gender Segregation and Banning of Dogs in Public Spaces

The degree of opposite-sex mixing and presence of dogs in public spaces are emerging points of social and cultural tension in modern Britain. So-called 'free mixing' between the sexes is frowned upon within more socially conservative elements of the British Muslim population. Free mixing, known as *ikhtilat*, refers to the unrestricted mingling of unrelated men and women in the same space, considered to be prohibited to maintain modesty and guard against forms of temptation (*fitnah*) which could lead to actions which could be perceived as immoral (*zina*). Dogs, which are the most popular pet choice in the UK, are viewed in certain Islamic circles as ritually impure (*najis*) - especially their saliva and wet fur. There is an ongoing debate whether public spaces could be more inclusive through the introduction of 'dog-free zones' or their wider banning from public spaces.

Figure 15: "Do you support or oppose more encouragement of gender segregation in public spaces?"

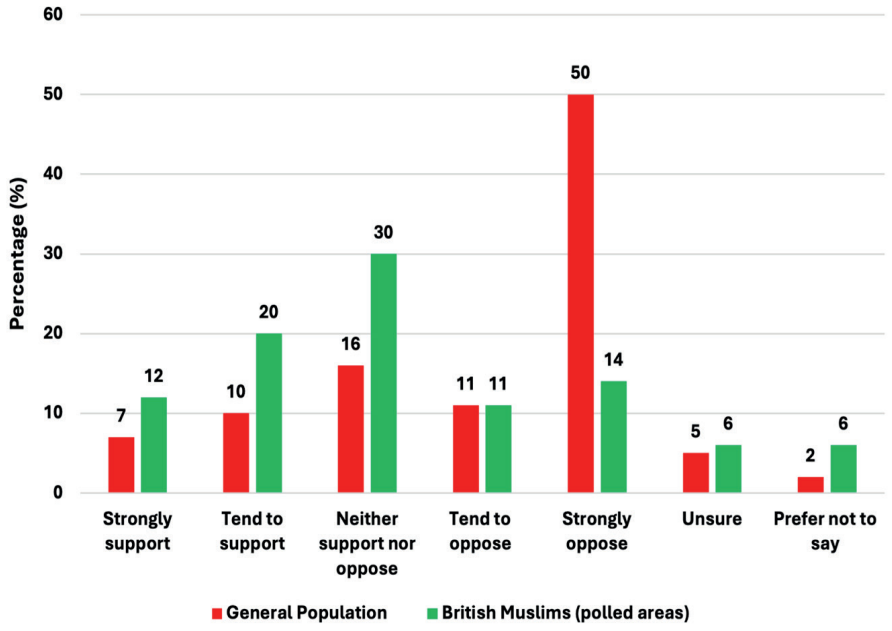


Figure 15 shows that there are significant differences between the general population and British Muslims in the polled areas, over whether gender segregation (males and females being kept separate) should be more strongly encouraged in public spaces in the UK. While 17% of the general-population sample express support this idea, this nearly doubles to 32% for the British Muslim respondents from the polled areas. Half of the general public – 50% - strongly oppose more encouragement of gender segregation in public spaces. This drops to 14% for British Muslim respondents from the polled areas.

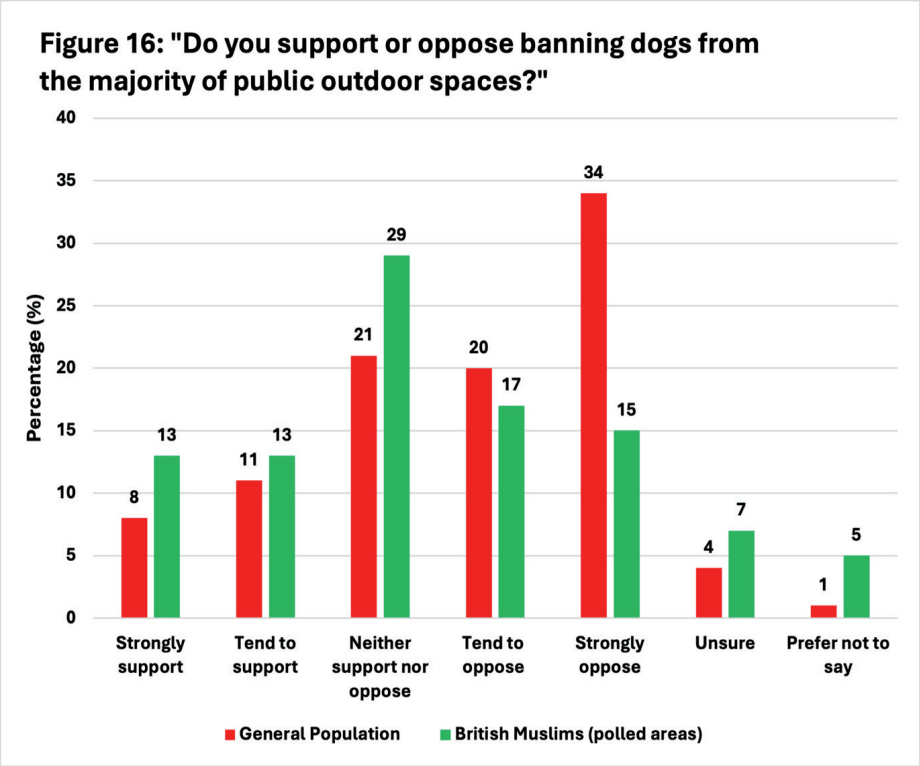


Figure 16 shows that the general population and the British Muslims in the polled areas are also notably different in terms of their views on whether dogs should be banned from the majority of public outdoor spaces. While 19% of the general-population sample express support for this idea, the figure rises to 27% for British Muslims in the polled areas. Nearly a third of British Muslims in the polled areas – 32% - say they are opposed to it. This jumps to more than half – 55% – for the wider general public (with 34% being strongly opposed to the banning of dogs from the majority of public outdoor spaces).

Antisemitism and Support for Extremist Organisations

There are elevated levels of antisemitism among the British Muslim respondents who live in the polled areas of interest. In this British Muslim survey, Jews are viewed the least favourably out of all faith groups – including atheists. There are significant differences between the general population and the British Muslims living in these areas when it comes to their perception of Jews and whether they have considerable power over key spheres of British life such as politics, media, and banking, with the British Muslim respondents being far more likely to believe that Jewish people are too powerful in general. There are also concerning levels of favourable feelings towards terrorist organisations which have been proscribed by the Home Office.

Table 1: Net favourability ratings towards different faith groups in the UK (General-Population and British Muslim respondents across polled areas)

	General Population	British Muslims (specific areas)
Christians	+49	+46
Hindus	+28	+17
Sikhs	+27	+32
Buddhists	+33	+22
Jews	+25	+5
Atheists	+32	+19

Table 1 shows that the British Muslim respondents across the polled areas have a relatively unfavourable view of a variety of faith groups, when compared to the wider general population. The gap is the widest when it comes to perceptions of Jews. In the general-population survey, 36% of respondents reported a favourable view of Jews, with 11% expressing an unfavourable view – providing a net favourability rating of +25. In the survey of British Muslim respondents, 26% expressed a favourable view of Jews, with 21% reporting an unfavourable view of Jews as a group – giving a net favourability rating of +5. When compared to their view of Jews, the respondents in this British Muslim sample have a relatively favourable view of atheists (net favourability rating of +19).

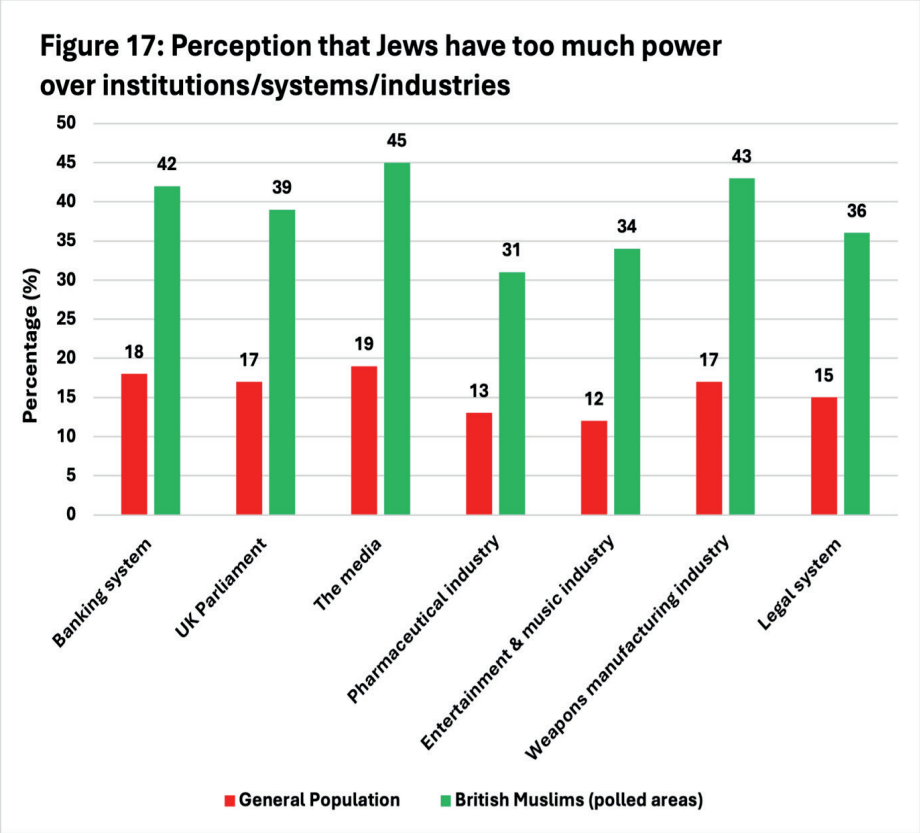


Figure 17 shows that when compared to the general-population sample, the British Muslim respondents in the analysis are significantly more likely to believe that Jewish people have too much power over the following in the UK: the banking system, legal system, the UK Parliament, and the media, as well as the pharmaceutical weapons manufacturing, entertainment and music industries. More than two in five British Muslim respondents believed that Jews had too much power over the media (45%), weapons manufacturing industry (43%) and the banking system (42%). In the British Muslim sample, exactly half of university graduates – 50% – believe Jews have too much power over the media. It is worth noting that the polling suggests that around one in five members of the general public believe Jews have too much power over the media and banking system (19% and 18% respectively).

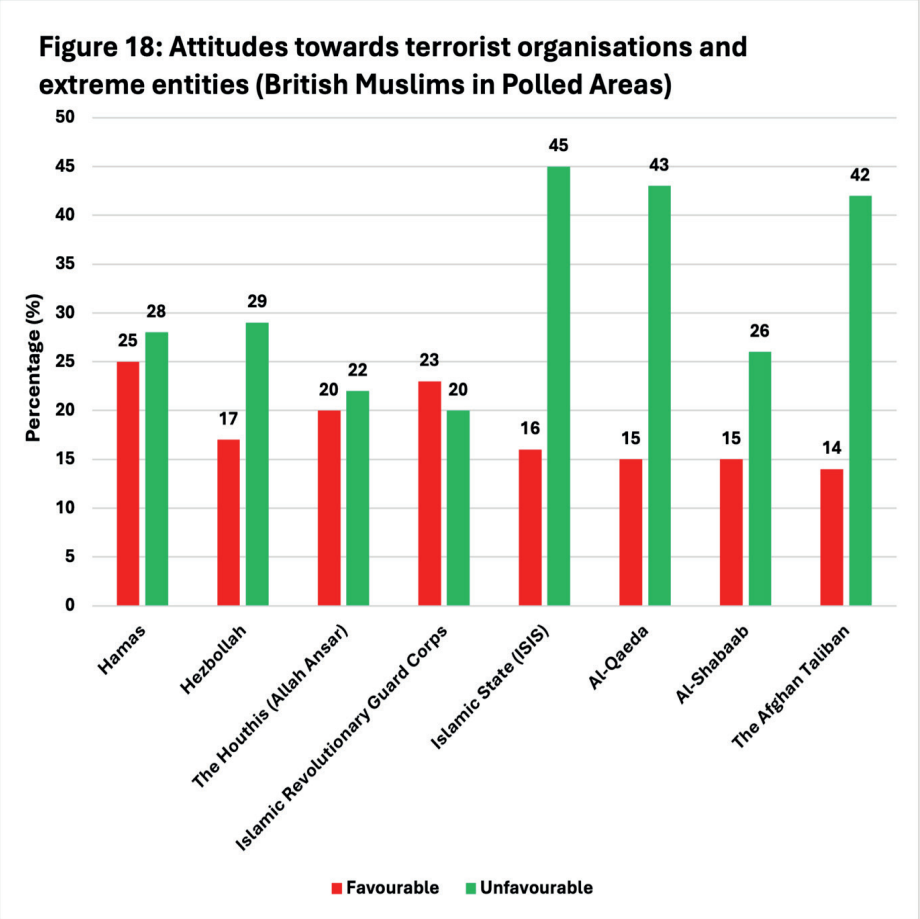


Figure 18 shows that there are concerning levels of favourable feelings towards proscribed terrorist organisations and extremist entities, among the British Muslims respondents surveyed. While 28% have an unfavourable view towards Hamas, a quarter – 25% – have a favourable one. In the analysis, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – which has the central responsibility of protecting the Shi'ite military-theocratic dictatorship in Iran – has a net favourability rating of +4. While the plurality of British Muslim respondents has an unfavourable view of Islamic State (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda, around one in seven have a favourable view of the two terrorist organisations (16% and 15% respectively).[7]

7. Low levels of favourability and unfavourability for certain organisations are due to higher percentages for neutral responses / being unsure.

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