The Ipsos MORI report: immigration and cohesion

Pamela Bremner

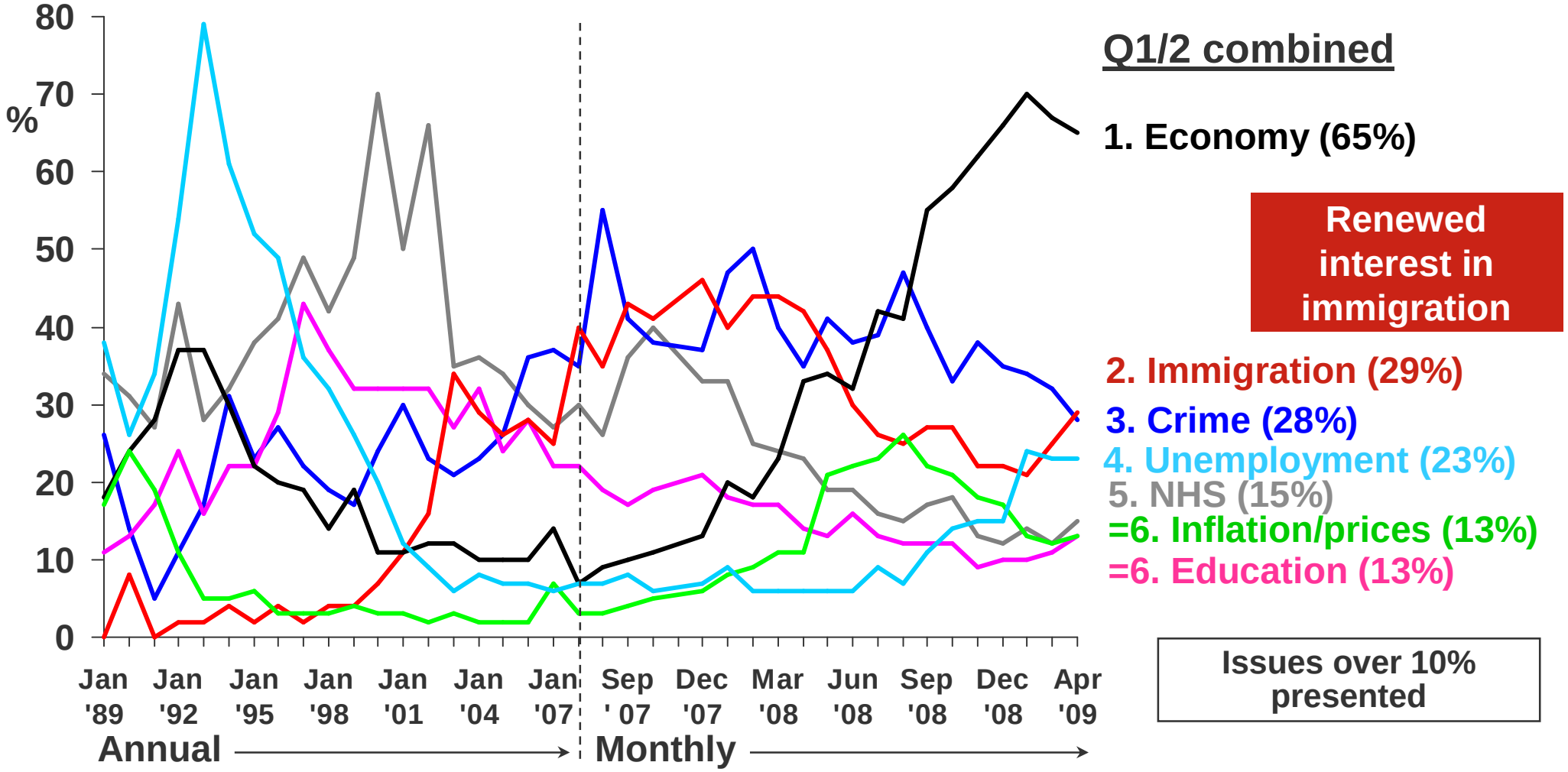
19th May 2009

Ipsos MORI

Is immigration an issue?

Concern about the economy has spiralled to its highest level for two decades

Q. What would you say is the most important issue facing Britain today?
Q. What do you see as other important issues facing Britain today?

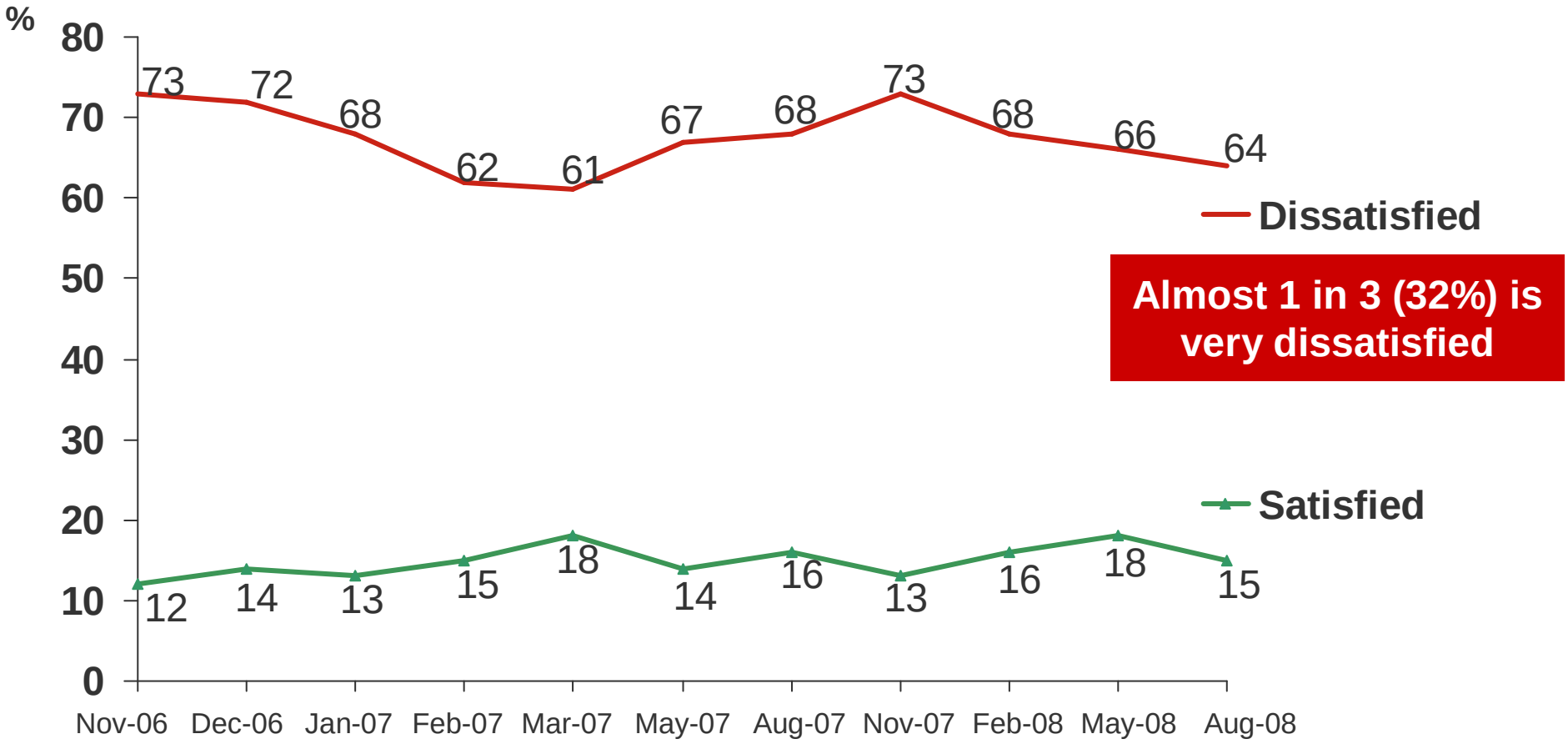


Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor Long Term Trends, Base c.1,000 British adults aged 18+ years
http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/the-most-important-issues-facing-britain-today.ashx

The public is unhappy with how government is dealing with immigration

Q. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way government is dealing with immigration and asylum?



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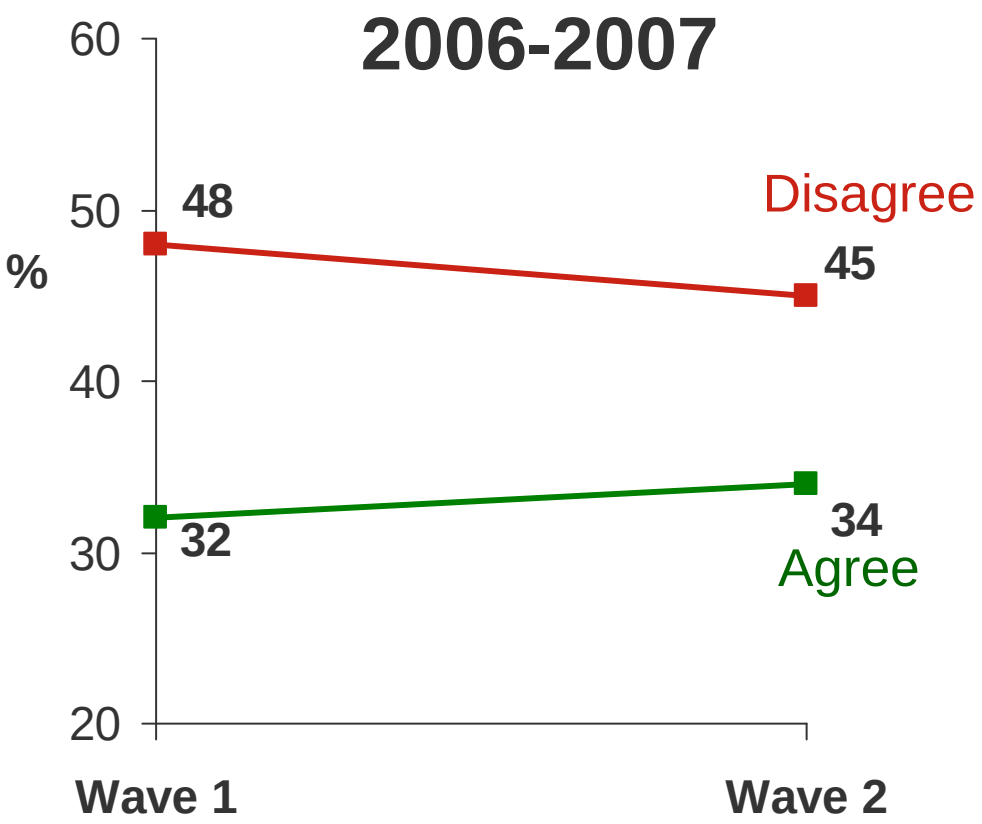
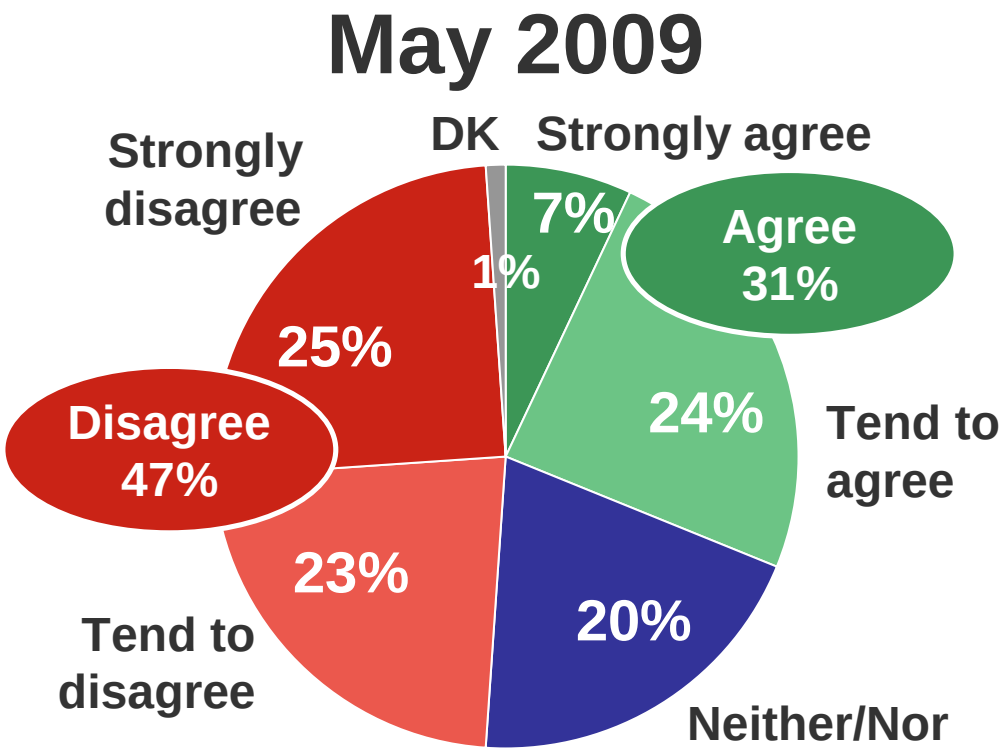
Source: Ipsos MORI, Nov 2006 – Aug 2008, c.900 respondents aged 16+ in England and Wales

On balance, more people think immigration is bad than good for Britain

Immigration is good for Britain



Base: Adults aged 16+ in GB, 2006 Wave 1 (1,001); 2007 Wave 2 (1,011)



Base: Adults aged 16+ in GB, 2009 (2,036)

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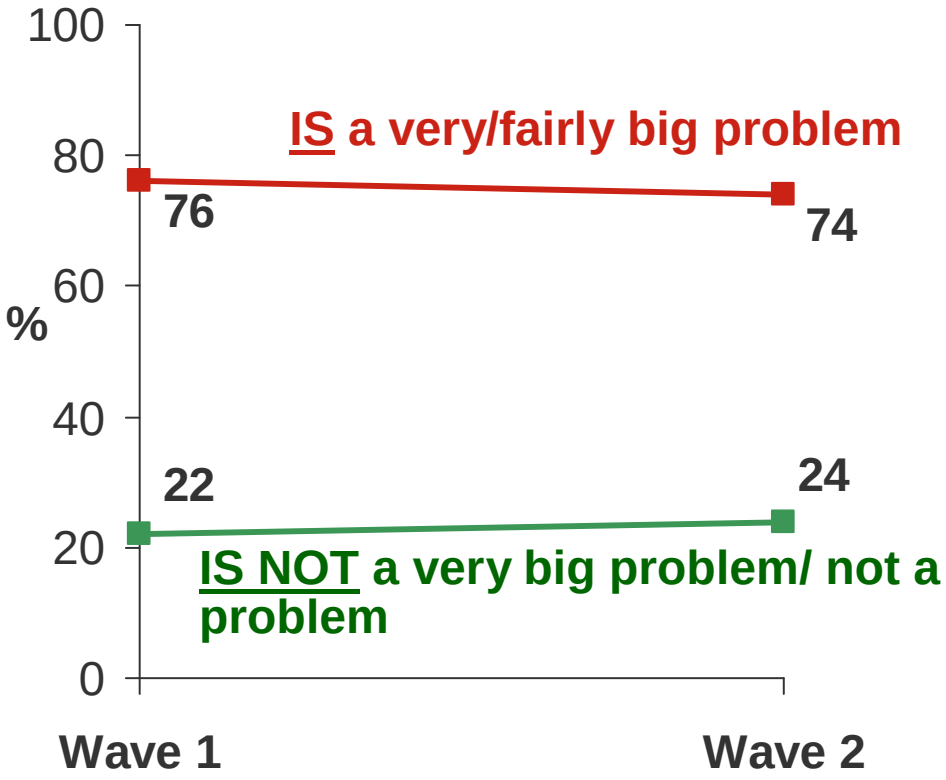
And the majority thinks immigration is a problem in Britain

Q. Overall how much of a problem, if at all, do you think immigration is in Britain at the moment?

2006-2007



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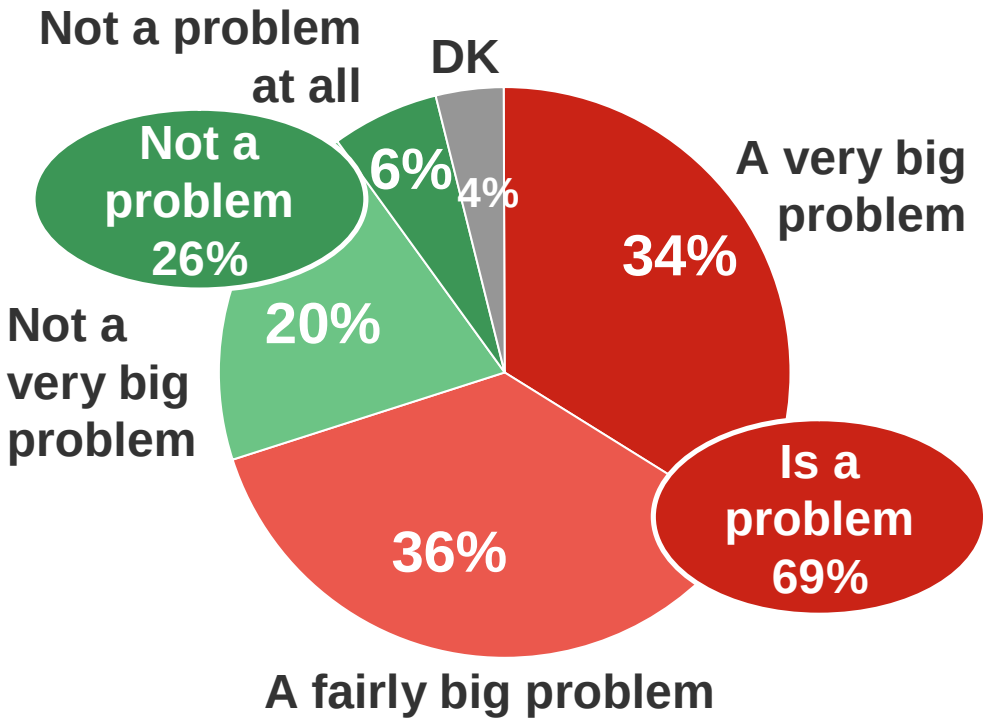
May 2009



Base: Adults aged 16+ in GB, 2009 (2,036)

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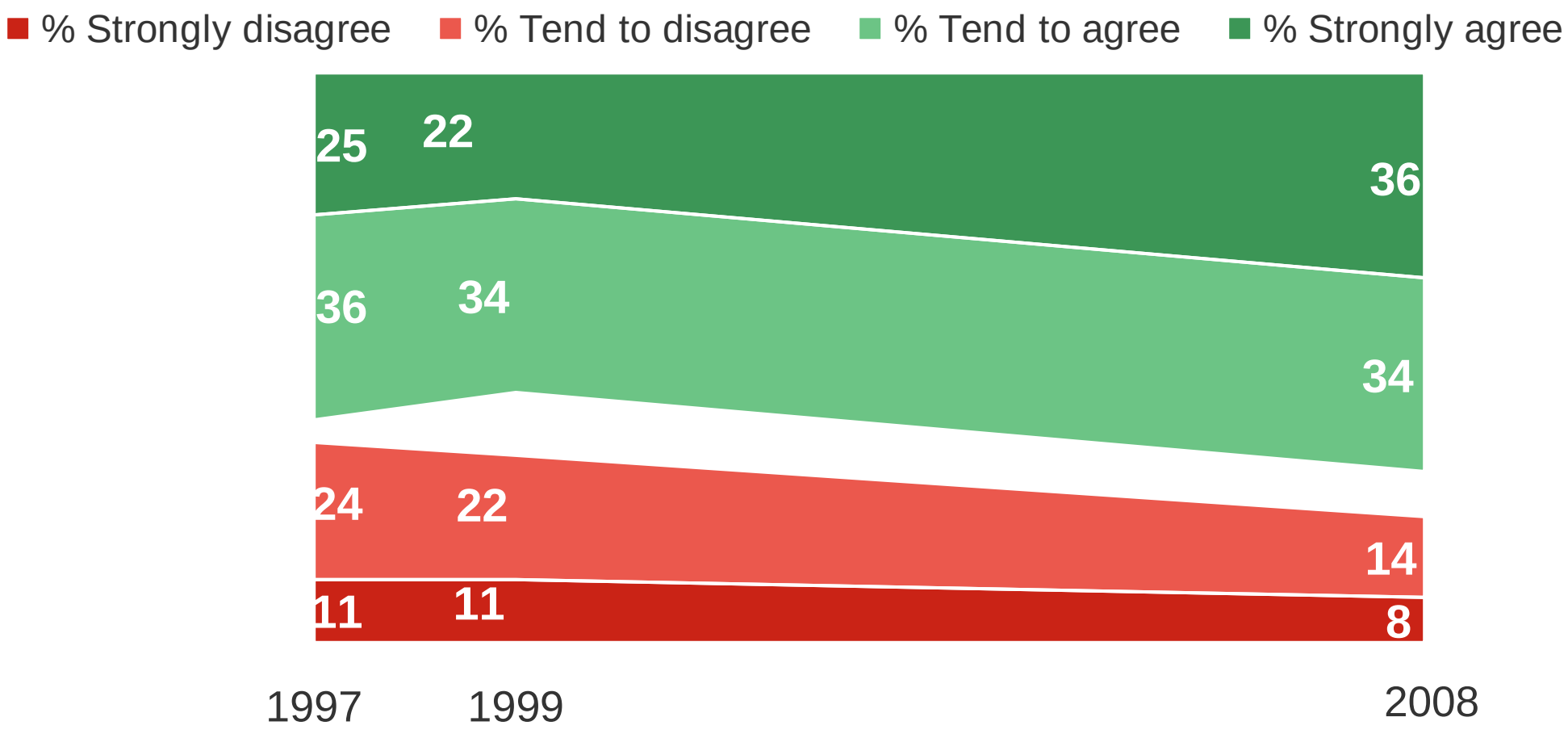
What underlies these views?

Large shift to strongly agreeing there are too many immigrants

There are too many immigrants in Britain



Base: 2,019 British adults 15+, 9 May-5 June 2008, self completion and online

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There is a hardening of attitudes driven by the under 30s and C1s

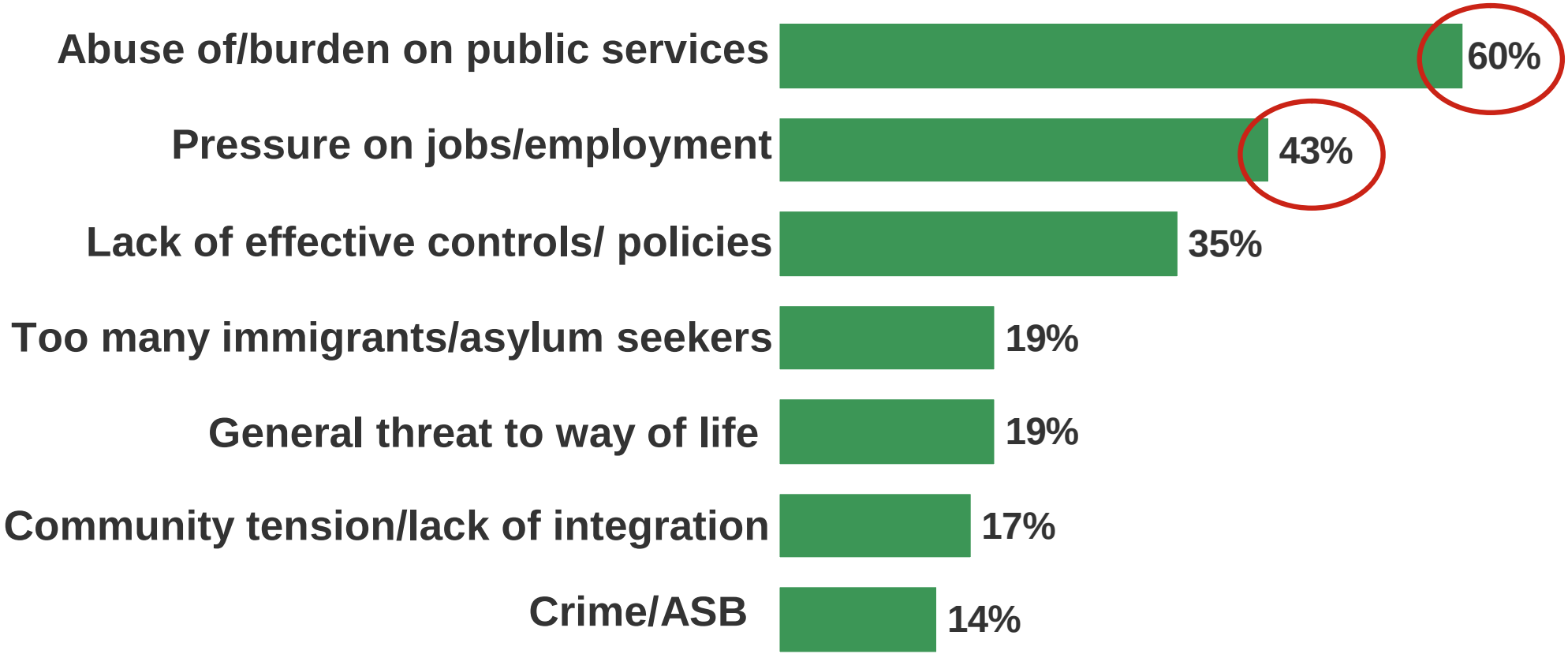
There are too many immigrants in Britain

	2008 % agree	1999 % agree	Change
15-29	**67**	44	+23pp
30-49	**67**	51	+16pp
50-64	**71**	64	+7pp
65+	**78**	69	+9pp
AB	**63**	48	+15pp
C1	**70**	47	+23pp
C2	**75**	60	+15pp
DE	**74**	65	+9pp

Base: 2,019 British adults 15+, 9 May-5 June 2008, self completion and online

The public is concerned about the burden on public services and the pressure on jobs

Q. You said that immigration in Britain is a very big/fairly big problem. Why do you say that?



Base: All who see immigration as a very or fairly big problem in Britain, May 2009

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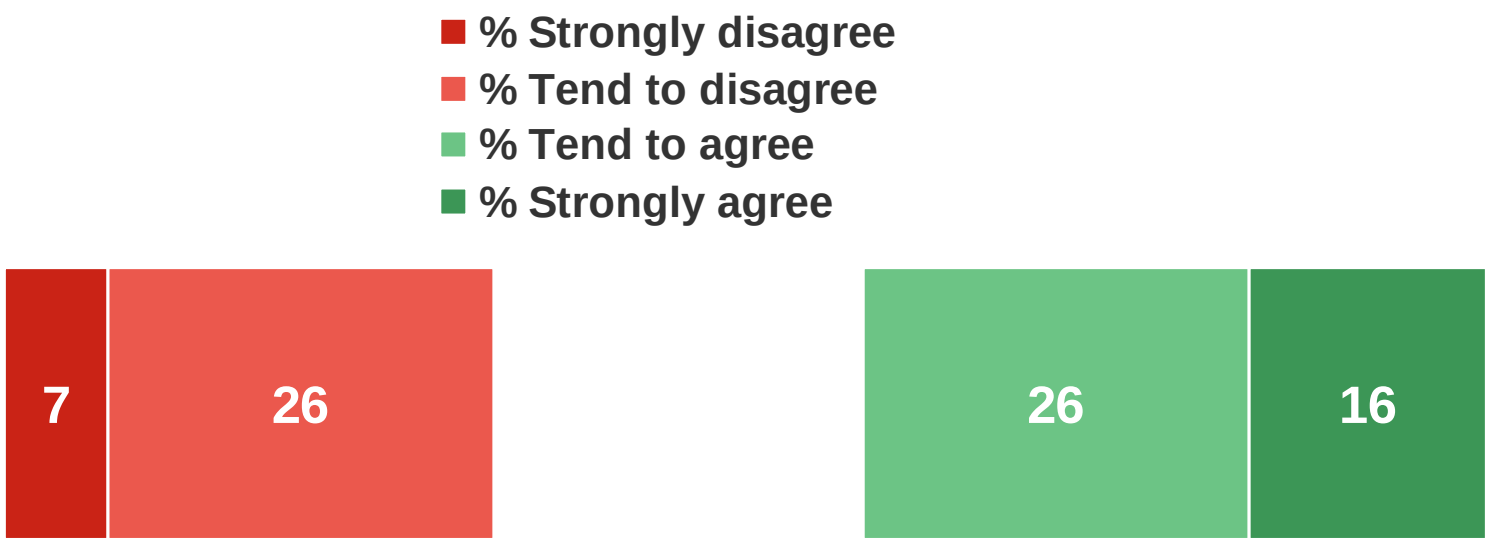
There is a sense that 'others' get unfair priority

Other people seem to get *unfair* priority over me when it comes to public services and state benefits



	% Agree
15-29	49
30-49	44
50-64	41
65+	35
AB	37
C1	39
C2	52
DE	46

Asylum seekers/refugees most likely to be seen to receive unfair priority (used to be lone parents)

Base: 2,019 British adults 15+, 9 May-5 June 2008, self completion and online

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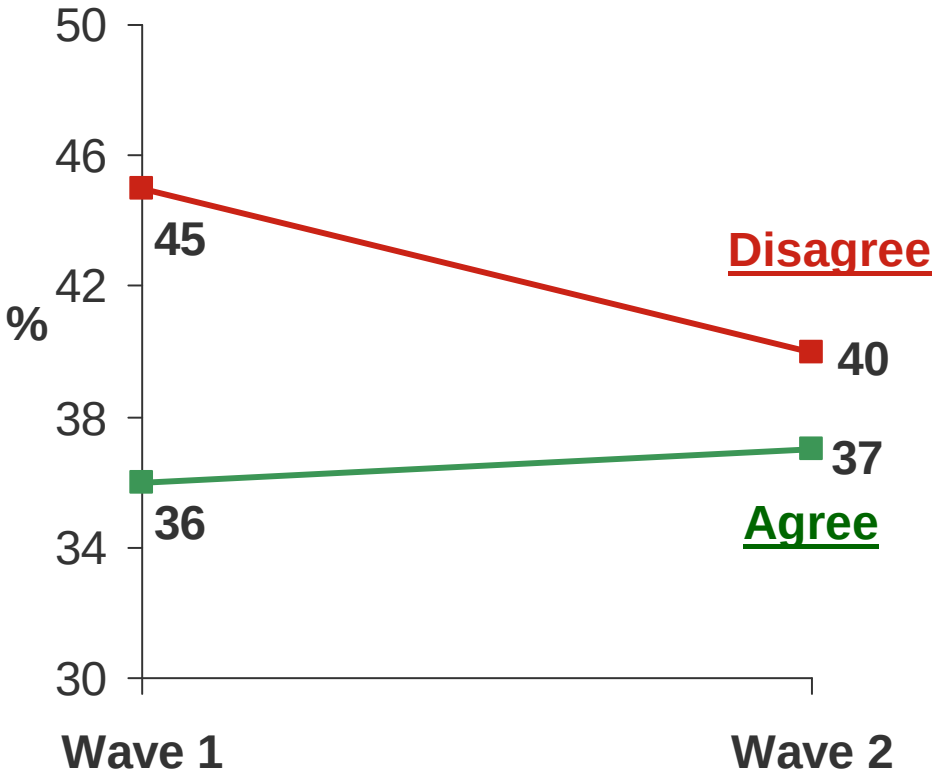
We are not convinced that immigration is good for the economy

Immigration is good for the British economy

2006-2007



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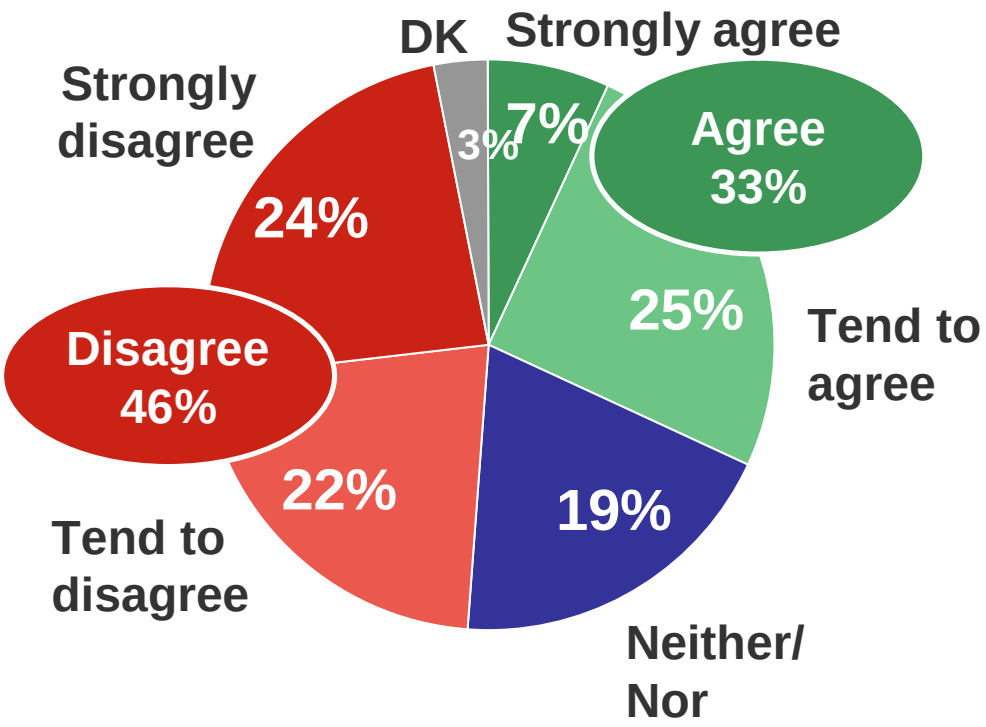
May 2009



Base: Adults aged 16+ in GB, 2009 (2,036)

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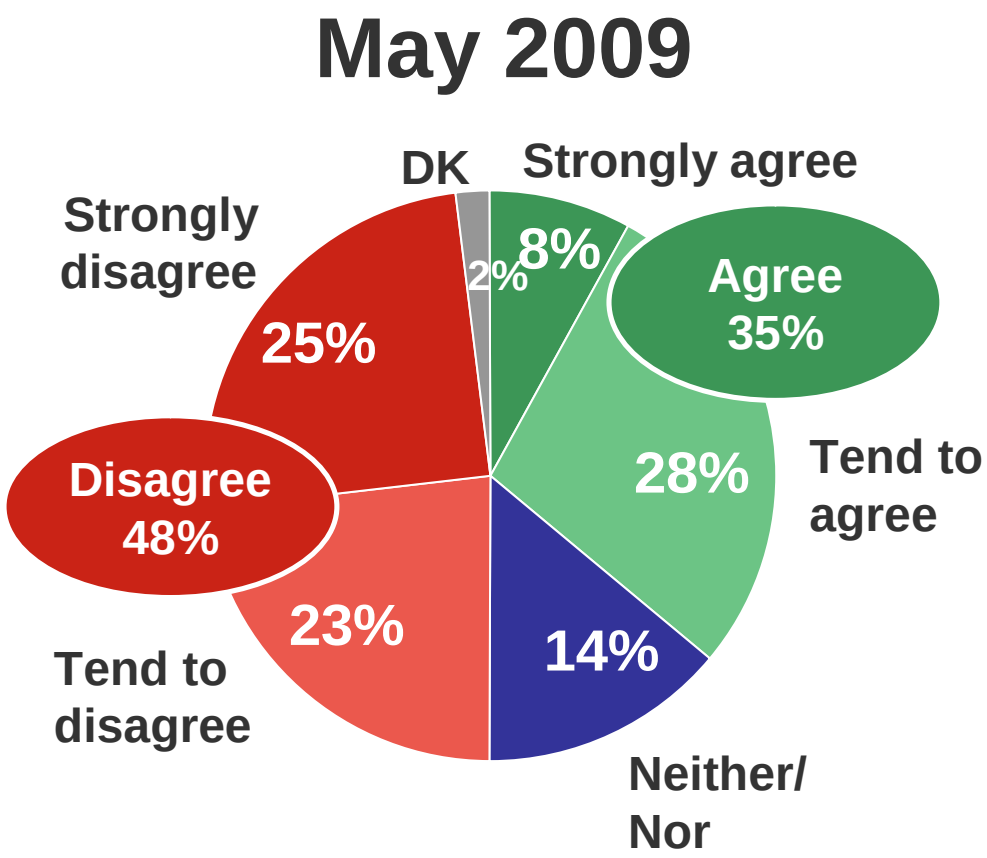
And we don't think we need immigrants for skills shortages

We need immigrants to fill skills shortages in the economy



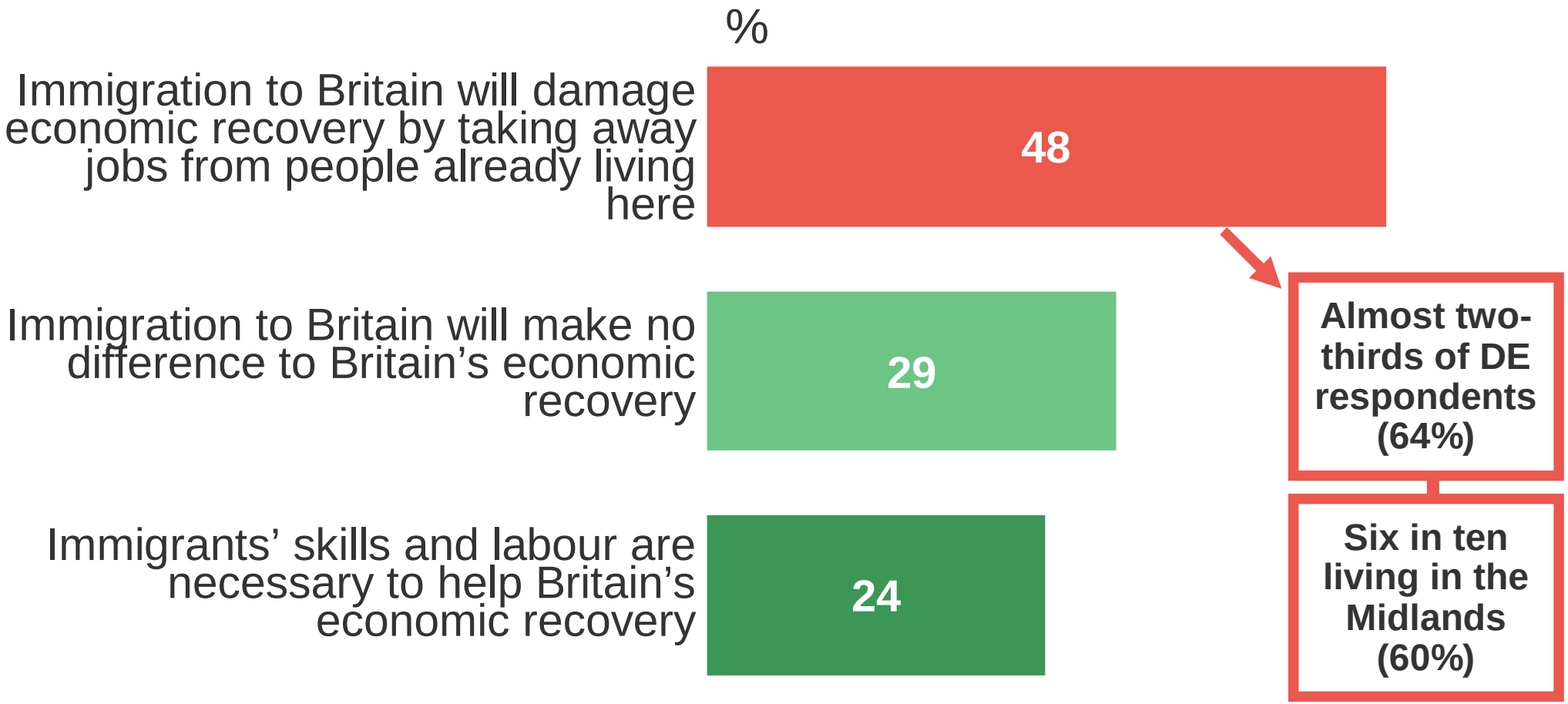
	2009 % **disagree**
AB	**33**
C1C2	**50**
DE	**60**
North	**53**
Midlands	**59**
South	**39**
Wales/Scotland	**51**

Base: Adults aged 16+ in GB, 2009 (2,036)

How is immigration perceived in relation to the economy recovery?

Opinions sways towards the view that immigration will damage economic recovery

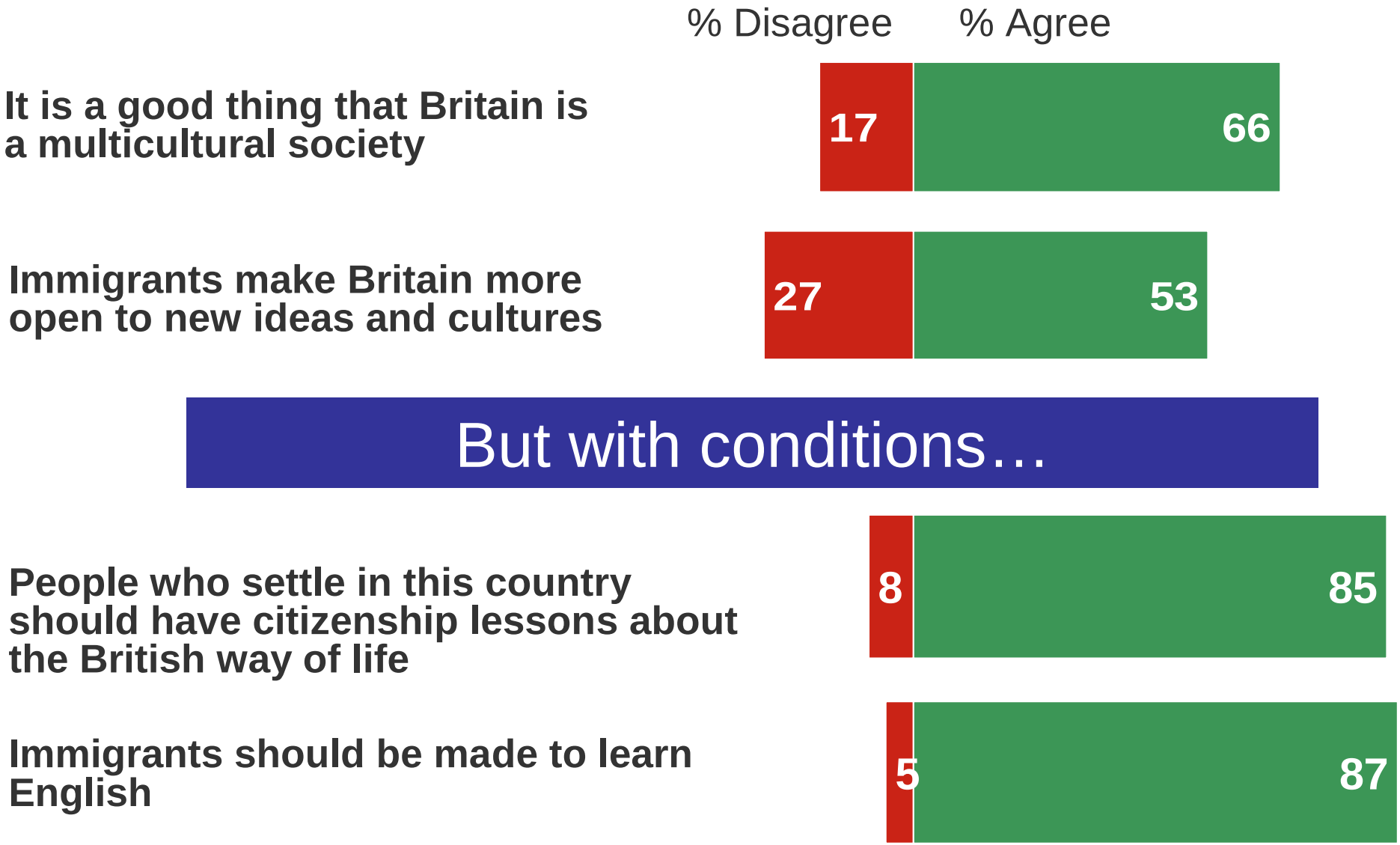
Q. Which one of the following statements, if any, comes closest to your view?



Base: Adults aged 16+ in GB, 2009 (2,036)

What about the impact on cohesion?

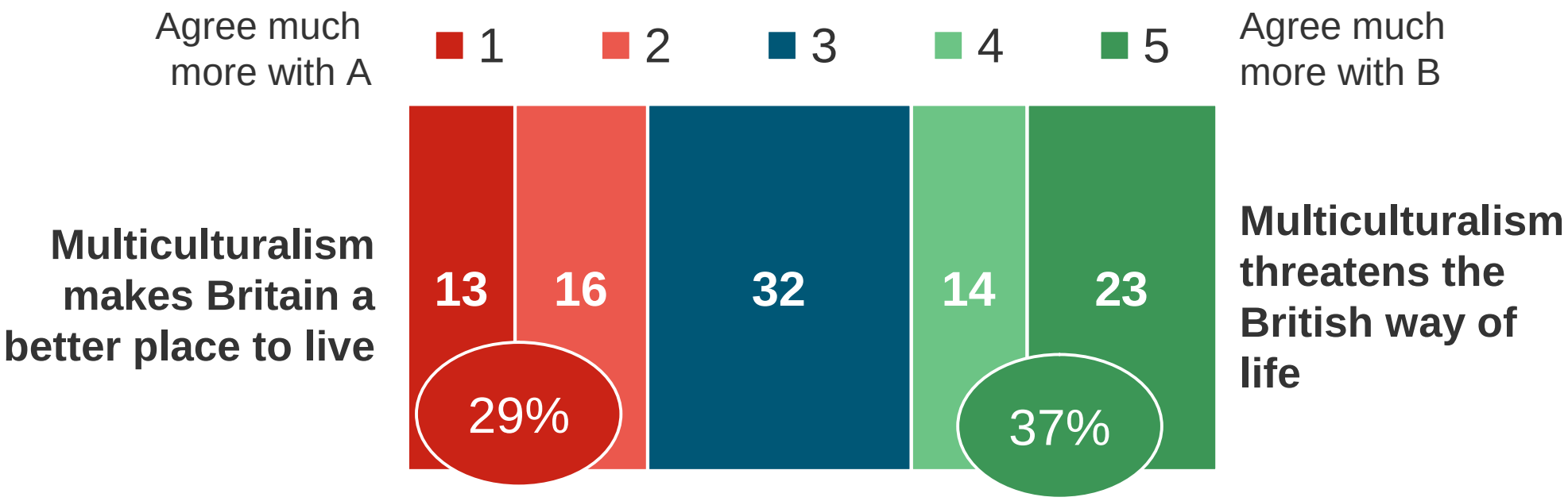
People believe that immigrants benefit Britain culturally



Ipsos MORI Base c1,000 GB adults aged 16+ years, 2007 (UK Border Agency)

Although multiculturalism is seen in a positive light, evidence suggests there are concerns

Please read each pair of statements and decide which comes closest to your own opinion



Base: 2,019 British adults 15+, 9 May-5 June 2008, self completion and online

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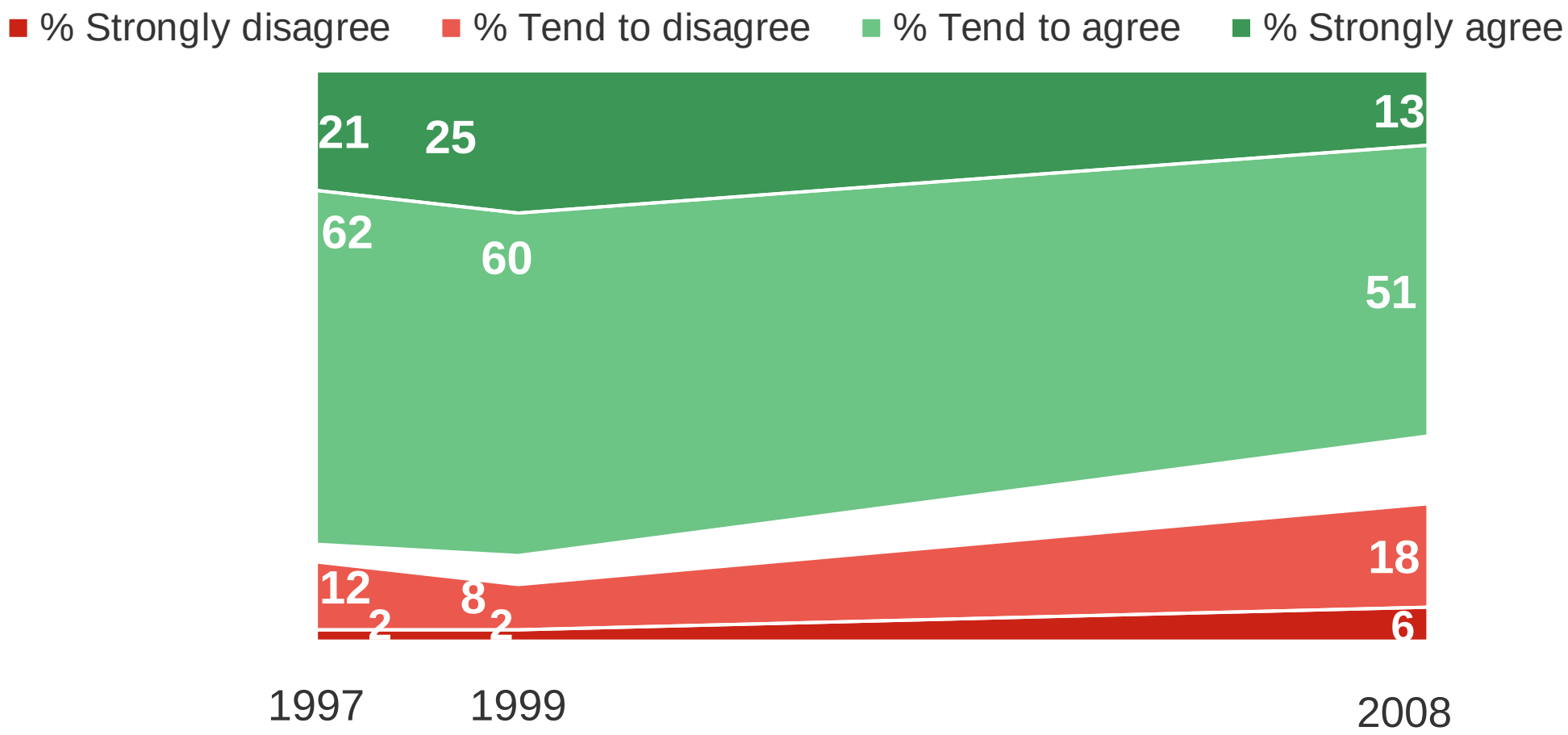
Majority still agree it is important to respect the wishes of minority groups – but weakening

It is important to respect the wishes of minority groups



Base: 2,019 British adults 15+, 9 May-5 June 2008, self completion and online

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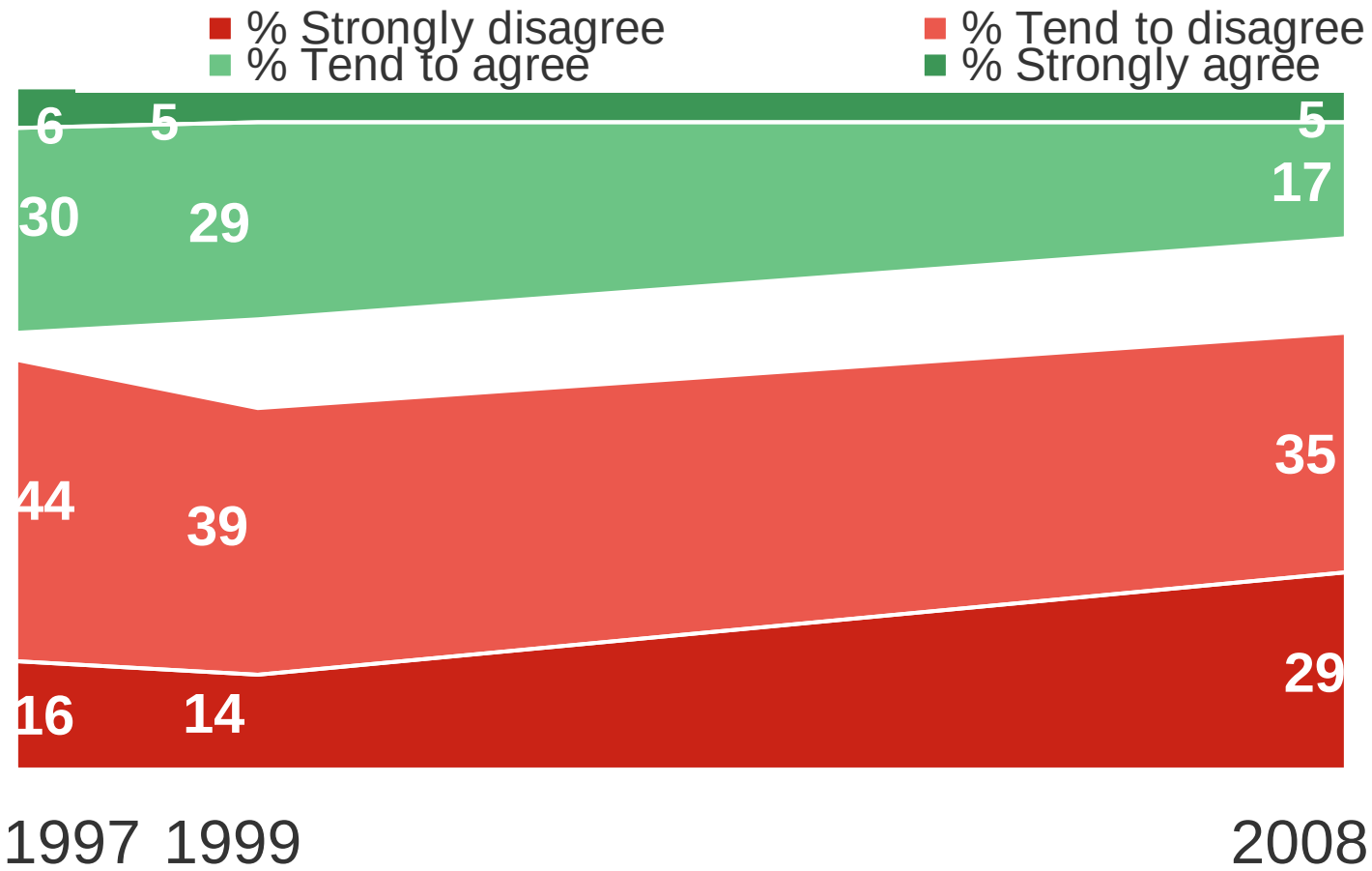
Less support for minorities' lifestyles in Britain

It is a good thing that foreigners in Britain keep the lifestyle which they had at home



	% Agree
15-29	27
30-49	25
50-64	17
65+	16
AB	20
C1	21
C2	20
DE	28

Base: 2,019 British adults 15+, 9 May-5 June 2008, self completion and online

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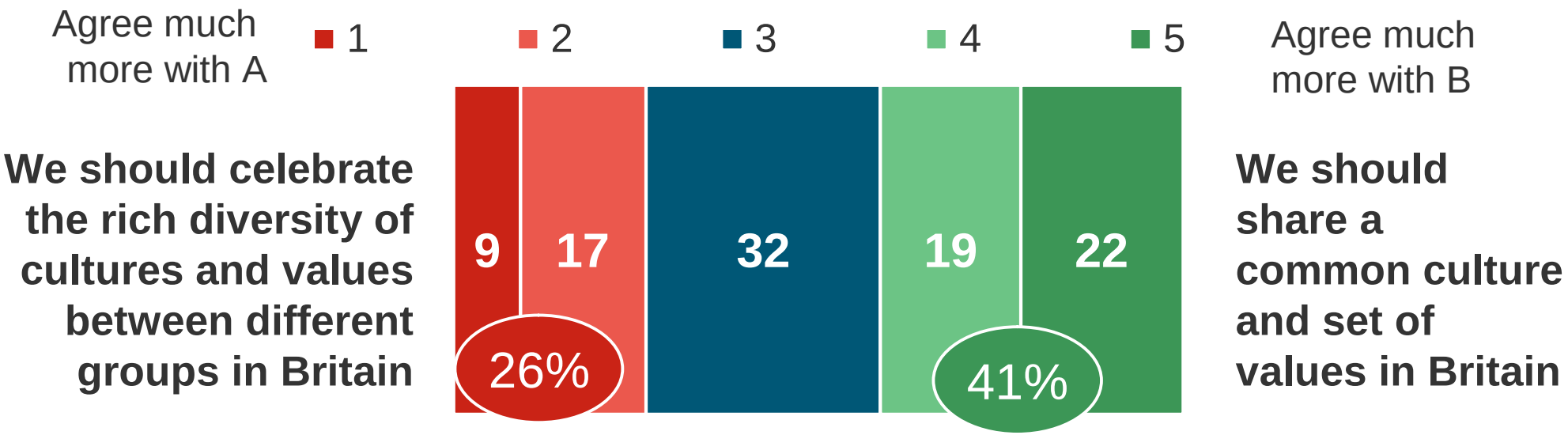
… and more in favour of common values

Please read each pair of statements and decide which comes closest to your own opinion



	% Agree more with A		
15-29	24	AB	36
30-49	27	C1	27
50-64	25	C2	20
65+	29	DE	22

Base: 2,019 British adults 15+, 9 May-5 June 2008, self completion and online

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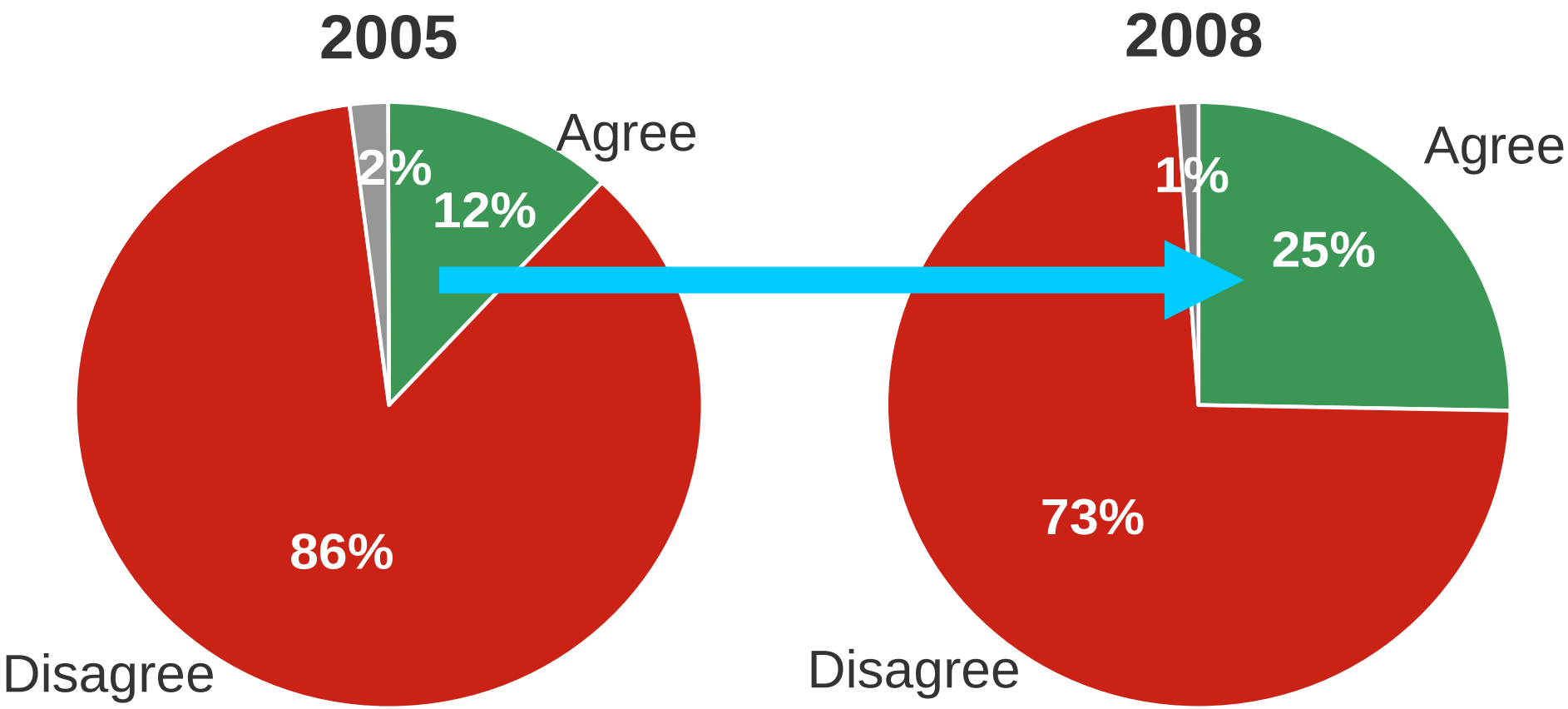
And people are noticing differences in their local area

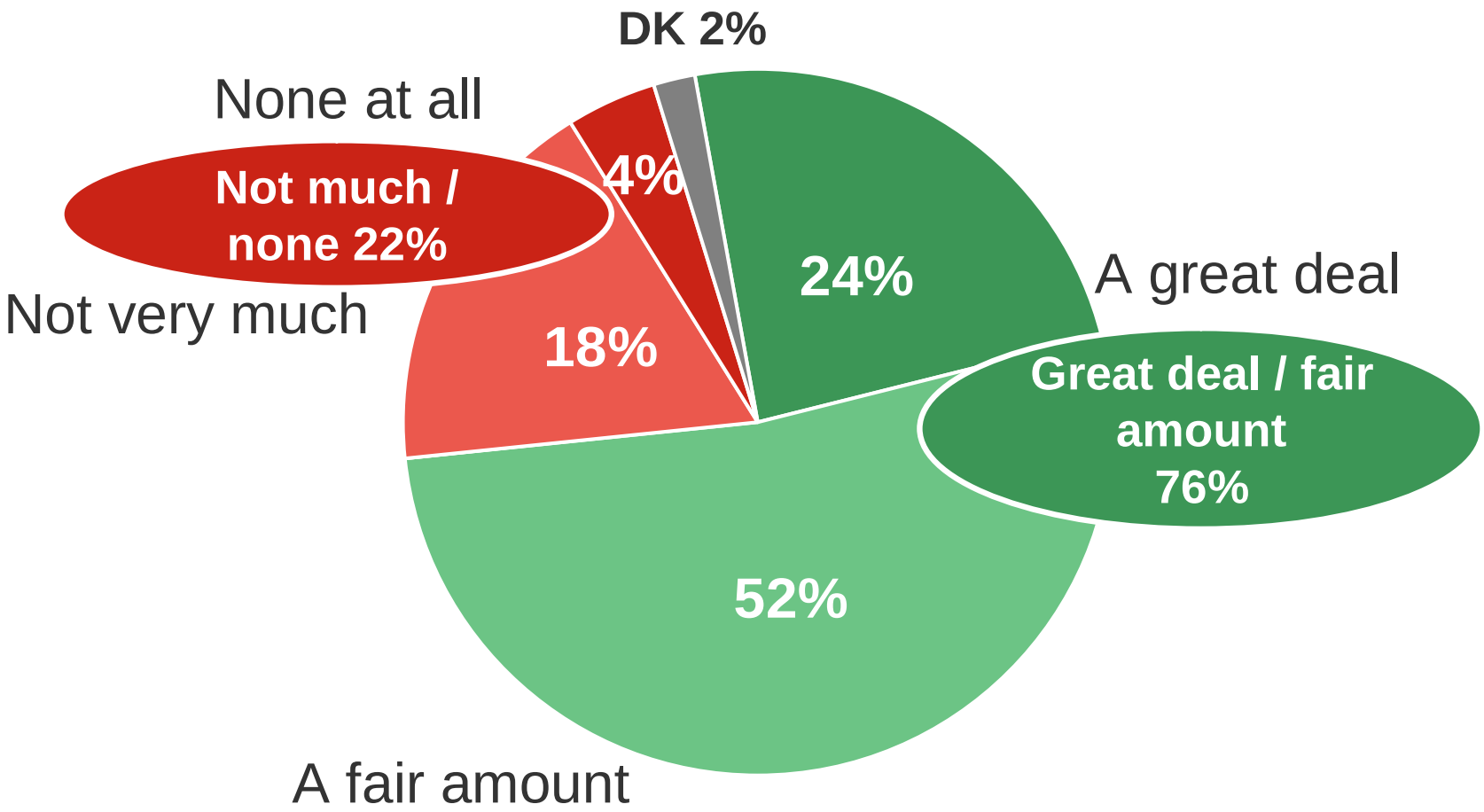
My area doesn't feel like Britain any more because of immigration



Ipsos MORI Base: 1,000 British adults, 11th-13th April 2008/BBC News

The majority believes there is a great deal or fair amount of tension in Britain

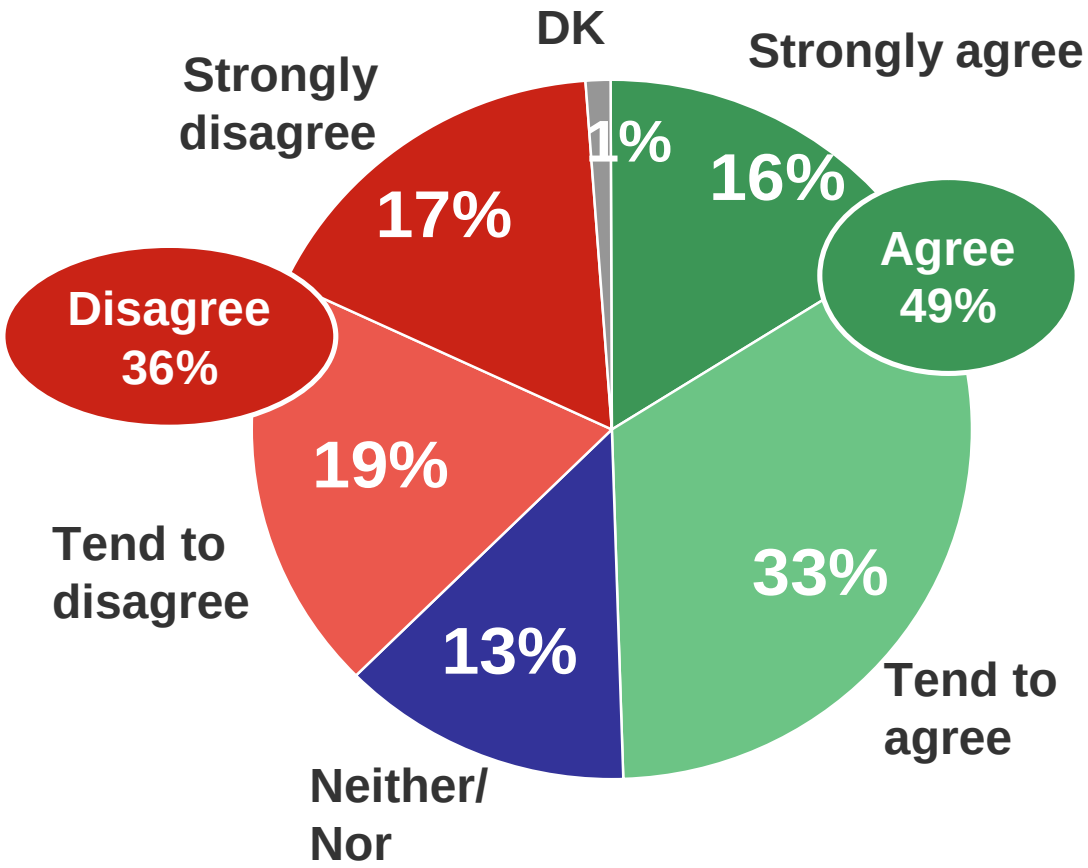
Q. How much tension, if any, do you think there is in Britain between people of different races and nationalities?



Ipsos MORI Base: 1,000 British adults, 11th-13th April 2008/BBC News

Notwithstanding, there is optimism

I am broadly optimistic that in 10 years, Britain will be a more diverse and tolerant place to live



Base: Adults aged 16+ in GB, 2009 (501) for EHRC

	2009 % **Agree**
General public	**49**
Black African/Caribbean	**53**
Muslim	**61**
Non-Muslim Asian	**64**
BME	**58**

Base: General public (501), Black African/Caribbean (334), non-Muslim Asian (275), Muslim (438), BME (1,045)

Conclusions

- The economy continues to overshadow other issues but there is renewed concern about immigration
- The public is worried about the number of immigrants, the pressure immigration has on resources and jobs…
- …and they are simply not convinced that immigration benefits the British economy
- People continue to be positive about cultural benefits but would impose strong conditions on immigrants
- There is uncertainty in relation to cohesion and tolerance with a general shift towards shared values and away from multiculturalism
- The **challenges** are to make the case for immigration at a time when resources and jobs become more scarce, and to manage cohesion in a time when tolerance amongst those under threat appears to be declining

Thank you

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