

Election 2001

Viewers' Response to the Television Coverage

An ITC Research Publication

Report by Jane Sancho



Independent Television Commission

PUTTING VIEWERS FIRST

Election 2001

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SUMMARY

The Independent Television Commission (ITC) placed a number of questionnaires on a special broadcast panel of 3,000 people during, and immediately following the 2001 General Election campaign, to find out what viewers thought about the television coverage. The findings are compared with the results of the ITC's research published after the 1997 General Election.

AMOUNT * Overall, compared with 1997, more viewers believed that television had got the amount of coverage right this time. Thirty-three per cent said the amount was about right, compared to 26% in 1997. But still 33% thought there had been far too much (34% in 1997).

* As in 1997, a majority of viewers felt that too much time had been devoted to almost all aspects of the coverage including the personalities of politicians, press conferences or walkabouts, the results of opinion polls and political analyses.

* Fewer felt that too much time had been allotted to the policies of the different parties, with 19% (identical to 1997) stating that policies had not received enough coverage.

INTEREST * Interest in watching the election campaign on television was at an all time low. seventy per cent claimed to have either little or no interest in the coverage.

* A full quarter said they paid the coverage no attention whatsoever - a significant increase on the 6% who completely ignored the 1997 campaign.

* Forty per cent said they switched channels to avoid the coverage, rising to 49% of 16-34s, which included new voters.

* With one week to go, 52% said they had seen hardly any of the election coverage. Those actively tuning in to it tended to be male, professional, and over 65 years of age.

MAIN SOURCE OF POLITICAL INFORMATION * Television was named as the main source of political information with 41% saying this was where they got most of their information about political issues. Broadsheet newspapers and the tabloids were next with identical numbers (15%) saying they turned to each first to find out what was happening politically.

* The vast majority (69%) said that most of their political information came from news bulletins. Sixteen-24s were the age group most likely to get their knowledge of politics from news programmes (82%).

* When it came to knowledge about political parties, there was a split between television and newspapers with 33% naming each as their main source of information about the party they voted for. Other sources included the radio and talking to people.

NEWS PROGRAMMES * Audiences for election results programmes have fallen over the years from 11.8 million for BBC1 and 7.73 million for ITV back in 1992, to 4.9 million and 2.7 million respectively for the election on 7th June 2001.

* During the four weeks of the campaign, audiences for the main evening news programmes on BBC1 and ITV were just about even with each other, but on election night itself, as on other occasions of national significance, BBC1 was the channel most people tuned to.

* The majority thought news programmes accurate (68%) and informative (64%) most of the time, but fewer thought the news was nearly always balanced (47%) or that it was always interesting (46%).

* But more thought news programmes had got the level of coverage right compared to 1997. A greater proportion of viewers thought the amount of coverage of the economy, constitutional issues, social issues, and foreign affairs was about right this time round.

PARTY ELECTION BROADCASTS

* While 63% felt party election broadcasts were important during General Election campaigns, only 34% claimed to watch them whichever party was featured. The majority (56%) either switched channels to avoid them, or switched the set off altogether.

* Forty-four per cent thought Party Election Broadcasts were too long and they were generally seen as boring and dull, rather than informative, persuasive or educational.

* Sixty-seven per cent agreed that Party Election Broadcasts helped raise public awareness of what different parties stood for, but 65% believed that they did not influence people's allegiance to a particular party.

FAIRNESS

* As in previous elections, many felt the major parties had received too much coverage, and that the minor ones had received too little. Approaching a third thought that the Green Party had not been given enough coverage on BBC1 and ITV.

* Fifty-one per cent thought the Labour Party and 46% thought the Conservative Party had received too much airtime on BBC1. Slightly fewer, though still a significant number, thought Labour (46%) and the Conservatives (41%) had been given too much coverage on ITV. But these views are linked to the overall perception that there had been too much coverage per se, rather than to the identification of any channel bias.

* In fact overall, more viewers thought that the coverage was fair to all parties, compared to 1997 (49% versus 41%).

VOTING BEHAVIOUR

* Many more of the panel (81%) said that they voted compared to the national turnout. Members of panels such as this are likely to be more conscientious citizens than average.

* Most (52%) had made up their mind how they were going to vote a long time ago. Eleven per cent said they made up their mind early on in the campaign, 9% at a later stage of the campaign, and 15% decided how to vote in the last day or so, rising to 23% of first time voters.

* Only 16% said they would describe themselves as a very strong supporter of their political party. Those willing to nail their colours to the mast tended to be older (25% of 65+s) and manual workers (20% of DEs).

VIEWER SATISFACTION * While the majority (57%) agreed that the coverage had given them what they wanted, viewers were no more satisfied than in 1997 (56%). And a significant minority (43%) said the coverage had not delivered what they wanted.

* These dissatisfied viewers said they would have preferred less coverage generally, coverage confined to a single, specialist channel, greater coverage of policies, more about local issues and other issues such as the environment, a tougher style of interviewing, less of the main leaders and more coverage of local candidates.

* Suggestions as to how broadcasters could improve coverage of election campaigns included a three-way debate between the party leaders, more programmes like *Question Time* where the public could question politicians, fewer forecasts of the predicted outcome, which some felt contributed towards the low turn out this time, and making the election more appealing to first time voters

1 INTRODUCTION

The Independent Television Commission (ITC) conducted a significant amount of research into the television coverage of the 1997 General Election, in which Labour came to power for the first time in eighteen years. (*Election '97, ITC Research Publication* by Jane Sancho-Aldridge 1997). The 1997 campaign was the most televised General Election ever. One of the main findings of the ITC's research was that viewers felt they had received too much of everything: opinion polls, appearances by party leaders, political analysis and 'walkabouts'. The 1997 coverage did not appear to engage first time voters and did not appeal to waverers, the majority of whom were women. Women were less interested in the coverage largely because they felt it did not include issues of interest to them and because they disliked the negative campaigning. What voters said they wanted was less negative campaigning and less dominance from the main leaders. They wanted more involvement of women and of ordinary people, better explanation of policies, and straight answers to questions. Some felt the minor parties deserved more coverage.

For the broadcasters, the 2001 General Election was never going to be a particularly exciting or groundbreaking one to cover. With Labour's consistent opinion poll lead, and voter apathy, they had their work cut out to maintain interest. But, what lessons were learned from the televised coverage of the 1997 General Election? How did the 2001 campaign differ and did voters get what they wanted this time round?

2 METHODOLOGY

During the lead up to the General Election, a series of self-completion postal questionnaires were placed with an industry panel of 3000 viewers aged 16+, recruited to be representative of the UK population. The QUEST panel is run by the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB) and is used by broadcasters to find out what people think about what they watch. Panel members are selected throughout every region of the UK via in-home interviews conducted by trained market researchers. The panel is continuously monitored to ensure that it remains demographically representative of the UK population and to weed out poor responders.

The first questionnaire was placed in the field between 28th May and 3rd June 2001, one week before the General Election. During the week of the election another questionnaire was sent to panel members asking for their views on party election broadcasts. Finally, the last questionnaire was sent out the week after the General Election, so that respondents could be asked how they voted and for their retrospective thoughts about the television coverage.

3 VIEWERS' INTEREST

INTEREST IN THE TELEVISION ELECTION COVERAGE

Interest in watching the political election coverage in 2001 was at rock bottom. Seventy per cent said they were either not very interested (41%) or completely uninterested (29%) in watching the coverage. During the 1997 campaign, interest was not high, but considerably fewer (56%) claimed to be uninterested. The ITC's research found that women felt far less engaged in the 1997 campaign, and this remained the case four years later. Those most likely to be completely uninterested in the 2001 coverage were women (33%), 16-24s (33%), which of course included first time voters, and C2s (35%).

A quarter (slightly fewer (28%) than in 1997) said they were quite interested in the coverage, particularly ABs (31%); and just six per cent claimed to be very interested in it (9% in 1997). The over 65s and professional people were the most keen - 9% were very interested.

ATTENTION TO COVERAGE

A lot of news time was devoted to politics and the election campaign in the lead-up to the General Election. Respondents were asked how much attention they generally paid to this coverage. Twenty per cent of the sample said they paid a lot (5%) or quite a bit (15%) of attention to the coverage. Avid viewers were more likely to be over 65 years (26%) and to come from the upper end of the social class spectrum (28% of ABs versus 15% of C2s). Twenty-five per cent said they paid some attention, and another 30% said they paid a little attention to the coverage.

A full quarter (25%) said they paid the coverage no attention whatsoever – a dramatic rise on the 6% in 1997 who had completely ignored it. In fact, as many as 55% of viewers claimed they had paid hardly any attention to the television coverage.

AVOIDANCE OF COVERAGE

When asked what they usually did when coverage of the election appeared on the news, 45% said they watched it regardless of which party was featured, particularly ABs (58%), while seven per cent said they were only interested if the party they supported was shown – this especially applied to DEs (10%). Forty per cent (an increase on the 33% in 1997) switched to another channel to avoid election coverage; in particular young or new voters (49% of 16-34s); and 8% switched the television off altogether.

In fact, over half the sample (52%) claimed to have seen hardly any of the coverage or none at all, supporting the superficial level of attention most viewers said they paid it.

Thirty eight per cent claimed to have seen a fair bit and 10% (up on the 7% in 1997) said they had seen quite a lot. With one week to go, those actively tuning into the coverage tended to be male (54%), older (57% of 65+s) and those with professional/managerial status (56% of ABs).

OPINIONS ABOUT COVERAGE ON DIFFERENT CHANNELS

On average, over a quarter thought there was no difference in the election coverage on different channels, and an additional 43% had no opinion one way or the other. Perceptions of the way different channels covered the election, therefore, are based on very few respondents.

Among the minority who did perceive a difference, BBC1 came out ahead of the others. Its coverage was seen as the most interesting, the best at explaining the issues, the most thorough in dealing with all the issues, the most accurate, the most useful, the least biased and the most entertaining and exciting (see Table 1).

TABLE 1 PERCEPTIONS OF THE WAY DIFFERENT CHANNELS COVERED THE ELECTION

Bases: Unweighted 2808-2850 Weighted 2429-2461	BBC1 %	BBC2 %	ITV %	C4 %	C5 %	Sky News %	No Difference %	No Opinion %
Most interesting	20	6	6	4	1	3	27	35
Best at explaining the issues	18	6	6	4	1	2	24	39
Most thorough in dealing with issues	17	7	4	4	1	2	25	40
Most informative	17	6	5	4	*	3	25	40
Most accurate	14	4	4	3	*	2	28	45
Most useful	14	5	5	3	*	3	26	44
Least biased	12	5	8	5	1	2	27	40
Most entertaining	11	3	8	3	1	2	26	46
Most exciting	7	2	4	2	1	2	28	55

* Indicates less than 1%

4 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF COVERAGE

AMOUNT OF TIME DEVOTED TO DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE COVERAGE

Respondents were asked to think about what they had seen to date of the election coverage and to give their opinion on the amount of time devoted to particular aspects of it, such as opinion polls, party leaders, party policies etc.

The results, shown in Table 2, suggest that just as in 1997, most people felt that too much time had been devoted to all aspects of the coverage. The majority considered there was far too much focus on the personalities of the politicians, on walkabouts, on the results of opinion polls, and on various analyses. Fewer felt there was too much focus on the actual policies of the different parties, however, with an identical proportion to 1997 (19%) actually stating that there had not been enough. This was found to be the most important feature of the 1997 election campaign for viewers and yet four years later, two in 10 viewers still felt broadcasters did not devote enough time to parties' policies.

TABLE 2 PERCEPTIONS OF THE AMOUNT OF TIME DEVOTED TO DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE COVERAGE

Bases: Unweighted 2949-3004 Weighted 2540-2595	Too much time %	About the right amount of time %	Too little time %
Personalities of politicians	67	29	4
Press conferences, or walkabouts or other appearances by politicians	66	30	4
Results of opinion polls	65	32	3
Analysis by TV's own political correspondents	61	35	3
Analysis by other outside experts (not politicians or TV journalists)	58	32	9
Policies of the parties	46	35	19

AMOUNT OF COVERAGE ON EACH CHANNEL

Viewers were asked to think about the amount of election coverage on different channels (Table 3). Over half of the 3000 sample considered there was too much coverage on BBC1 (59%), a slightly higher proportion than in 1997 (57%). Fewer (53%) thought there was too much coverage on ITV, but this was a more prevalent perception compared to 1997, when 47% thought there had been too much. This is despite the fact that in real terms, there had been less election coverage on both BBC1 and ITV in 2001.

BBC2 and Channel 4 had the most viewers saying they got it about right. Far fewer said they watched Channel 5 and *Sky News*, so these figures must be treated with caution.

TABLE 3 PERCEPTIONS OF THE AMOUNT OF COVERAGE ON EACH CHANNEL

Bases: Unweighted 2433-2986 Weighted 2123-2588	Too much %	About right %	Too little %	Do not watch this channel %
BBC1	59	38	2	1
BBC2	42	45	4	9
ITV	53	37	4	6
Channel 4	34	41	6	18
Channel 5	23	27	7	43
Sky News	18	12	1	69

**AMOUNT OF POLITICAL
COVERAGE OVERALL**

Having asked about particular aspects of the election coverage and about the amount of coverage on individual channels, at the end of the election viewers were asked to assess the amount of time devoted to political coverage overall. More believed television had got it right this time.

One third said the amount of coverage was about right, compared to 26% in 1997. But still 33% thought there had been far too much, almost identical (34%) to the proportion who felt there had been far too much in 1997. A further 28% said there was a bit too much (26% in 1997). Very few (6%) thought the General Election was receiving too little airtime.

There were no differences between men and women on their opinion of the amount of time given over to the General Election and few age differences. The only strong differences were across the social class divide. ABs (26%) were far less likely than DEs (38%) to say there had been far too much coverage and were more likely to say the amount of time devoted to the General Election was about right (ABs 38% vs DEs 31%).

5 FAIRNESS

For each individual channel, viewers were asked to judge whether or not they felt the coverage on the different channels had been fair to all the political parties, or if some parties had been discriminated against. The two main broadcasters BBC and ITV were thought to be fair to all parties by a similar proportion of respondents (39% and 37% respectively). This was an increase over 1997 figures – 34% and 32% respectively. But many viewers felt unable to judge, especially when it came to Channels 4 and 5 where the vast majority said they had no opinion (see Table 4).

TABLE 4 PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS TOWARDS ALL PARTIES ON DIFFERENT CHANNELS

Bases: Unweighted 2761-2935 Weighted 2381-2532	BBC		ITV		C4		C5	
	1997 %	2001 %	1997 %	2001 %	1997 %	2001 %	1997 %	2001 %
Fair to all parties	34	39	32	37	19	24	n/a	14
Unfair to Labour	4	3	2	2	1	1	n/a	•
Unfair to Conservatives	4	7	2	4	1	2	n/a	1
Unfair to Lib Dems	6	5	4	4	2	2	n/a	1
Unfair to Scottish Nationals	10	7	8	6	4	3	n/a	2
Unfair to Plaid Cymru	10	8	9	6	4	4	n/a	2
Unfair to UK Independence	n/a	13	n/a	10	n/a	5	n/a	4
Unfair to Green Party	15	15	11	11	5	6	n/a	4
No opinion	45	41	51	50	64	68	n/a	81

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer so responses do not total 100%.

AMOUNT OF TIME DEVOTED TO EACH PARTY

Viewers were asked about the amount of time given to each party on different channels. No bias as such was identified on any individual channel towards a particular party. Rather, the major parties were more likely to be perceived to have been given too much coverage by all the channels, while the minor parties were more likely to be thought of as having too little time devoted to them, especially the UK Independence Party and the Green Party. But many more respondents were unsure about what they thought when it came to the minor parties, so these data are less reliable. See Table 5 for full list of responses.

TABLE 5 PERCEPTIONS OF THE AMOUNT OF COVERAGE OF EACH POLITICAL PARTY ON DIFFERENT CHANNELS

Bases: Unweighted 2316-2914 Weighted 2027-2529	Too much %	About right %	Too little %	Don't know %
Conservative Party				
BBC1	47	35	5	14
BBC2	36	34	5	25
ITV	41	34	5	20
Channel 4	29	30	5	37
Channel 5	21	21	4	54
Sky News	15	12	1	72
Labour Party				
BBC1	51	33	3	14
BBC2	39	33	3	24
ITV	46	32	3	19
Channel 4	31	29	4	36
Channel 5	23	20	3	54
Sky News	16	11	1	72
Liberal Democrats				
BBC1	35	36	13	15
BBC2	29	33	12	26
ITV	33	34	13	21
Channel 4	24	27	11	38
Channel 5	18	19	7	55
Sky News	13	11	4	71
UK Independence				
BBC1	19	16	24	42
BBC2	16	15	20	48
ITV	17	15	22	46
Channel 4	14	13	18	56
Channel 5	11	9	13	67
Sky News	7	5	8	79

Bases: Unweighted 2316-2914 Weighted 2027-2529	Too much %	About right %	Too little %	Don't know %
The Green Party				
BBC1	13	12	32	43
BBC2	12	12	28	48
ITV	12	12	30	46
Channel 4	11	10	25	55
Channel 5	9	7	17	66
Sky News	6	4	10	79
Scottish National				
BBC1	17	18	12	54
BBC2	15	16	11	58
ITV	16	16	12	57
Channel 4	13	14	10	63
Channel 5	10	9	8	72
Sky News	7	6	5	82
Plaid Cymru				
BBC1	12	13	11	63
BBC2	12	12	10	66
ITV	12	12	11	66
Channel 4	10	11	9	70
Channel 5	8	8	6	78
Sky News	6	5	5	85

6 NEWS PROGRAMMES

Audiences for news programmes have gradually been diminishing over the last decade and there has been an accompanying lack of interest in watching General Elections. Back in 1992, an average of 11.8 million people tuned in on election night to BBC1 and 7.73 million to ITV. In 1997, audience levels were down to an average of 6.5 million for BBC1 and 3.7 million for ITV. This year's results kept even fewer viewers from their beds.

RATINGS DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Charts 1 and 2 show comparisons of the ratings for BBC1's *Ten O'Clock* news and ITV's *News at Ten*, averaged over the weeks of the latest election campaign compared to previous election campaigns. They illustrate the significant fall in audiences for both channels over the years, although BBC1 showed some improvement over its 1997 campaign, when it extended its main evening news for the period leading up to the General Election on 1st May 1997.

Ratings for ITV's *News at Ten*, prior to the election campaign, showed that it was ahead of BBC1's *Ten O'Clock News*. For the period between 5th February and 30th April 2001, *News at Ten* achieved an average share of 26%, while the *Ten O'Clock News* had an average share of 20.62% for the same period. During the election period, the two channels battled it out more-or-less neck and neck. *News at Ten's* average share over the five weeks of coverage was 23.6%, while the average share for the *Ten O'Clock News* was 23.8%. But whereas BBC1 increased its news audience over the period of the election by 15%, ITV lost 9% of its audience.

When it came to election night itself, BBC1 easily outstripped ITV in popularity. Between 9.55pm and 1.00am, BBC1 won an average audience of 4.9 million, versus 2.7 million for ITV. And whereas ITV's share of viewing remained constant at around 17% across the three hours of coverage, BBC1 increased its share from 27% to 51% between the first and last quarter hour. This is not surprising, since the nation traditionally has always turned to the Beeb for coverage of events of national importance.

CHART 1 – BBC1 TEN O'CLOCK NEWS (MON-FRI)

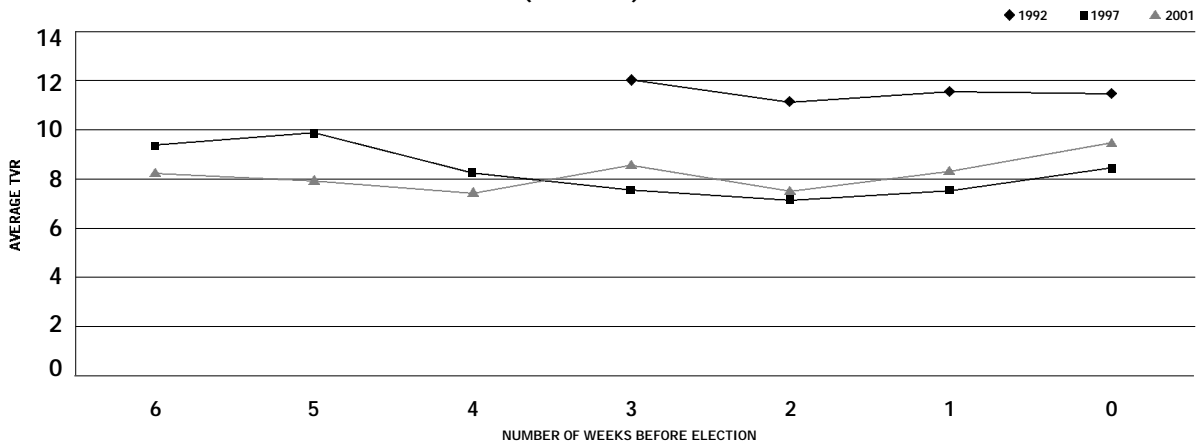
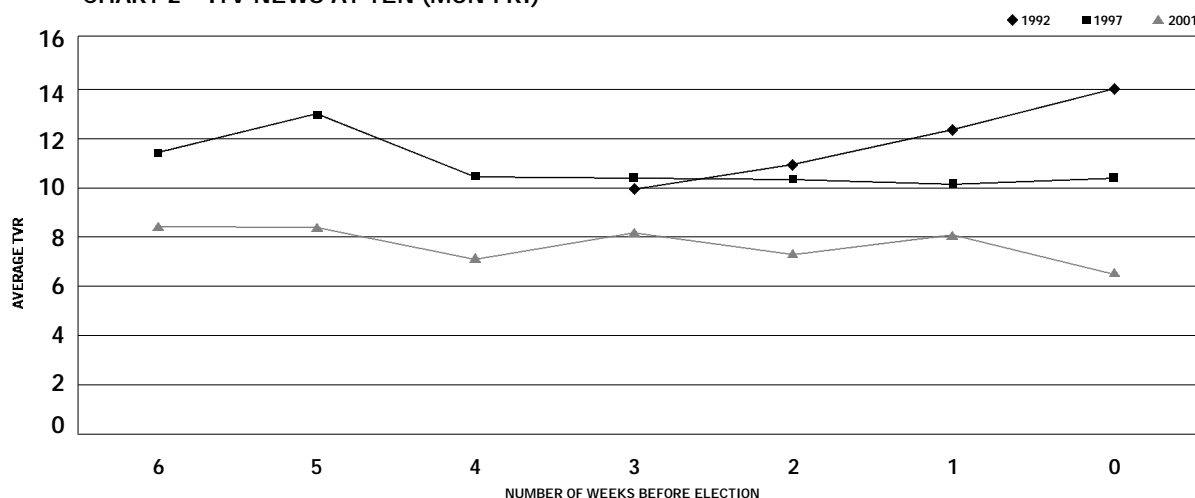


CHART 2 – ITV NEWS AT TEN (MON-FRI)



PERCEPTIONS OF NEWS PROGRAMMES

Respondents were asked to what extent they thought news programmes were accurate, informative, interesting and balanced. The majority (68%) considered the news was nearly always accurate, and similarly 64% also felt it was informative most of the time. But fewer regarded it as always balanced, with 13% believing it to be hardly ever balanced, rising to 16% of over 55s.

Almost half the sample (46%) thought the news always or mostly interesting. Another 42% considered news programmes interesting some of the time (42%), while a minority (12%) said the news was hardly ever interesting. See Table 6.

TABLE 6 THE EXTENT TO WHICH NEWS PROGRAMMES WERE REGARDED AS ACCURATE, INTERESTING, INFORMATIVE AND BALANCED

Bases:	Always/Mostly	Sometimes/Hardly Ever
Unweighted 2863-2891	%	%
Weighted 2470-2496		
Accurate	68	32
Informative	64	36
Balanced	47	53
Interesting	46	54

AMOUNT OF ELECTION NEWS COVERAGE DEVOTED TO DIFFERENT ISSUES

Viewers were asked to give their opinions on the amount of election coverage devoted to different issues in news programmes. There were some strong differences in perceptions this time round. In 1997, the topic, which the highest proportion of viewers considered had received about the right amount of coverage, was 'coverage of the economy' (38%). In 2001, viewers were much happier with the amount of time spent on the economy, with over half (52%) saying they felt it was about right. Half also thought the amount of coverage of constitutional issues was about right (compare 33% in 1997); and a similar number (49%) agreed news programmes got it about right when it came to coverage of social issues (34% in 1997). Europe was not such a strong issue in 2001, reflected by the fact that 40% of viewers felt that too much time had been spent covering it. See full list of responses in Table 7.

TABLE 7 PERCEPTIONS OF THE AMOUNT OF COVERAGE OF DIFFERENT ISSUES IN THE NEWS

Bases: Unweighted 1692-1702 Weighted 1432-1441	Far too much %	A bit too much %	About right %	A bit too little %	Far too little %
Coverage of the economy	15	15	52	12	6
Coverage of constitutional issues	14	11	50	17	8
Coverage of social issues	14	13	49	18	7
Coverage of foreign affairs	16	14	43	21	7
Coverage of the environment	12	7	37	28	16
Coverage of issues to do with Europe	20	20	35	14	11

INTERVIEWS ON THE NEWS Respondents were asked whether or not they were happy with the way interviews had been conducted in news programmes during the General Election - the sorts of questions politicians were asked etc. Almost a third (29%) said they didn't know, but of the remainder, just over half (51%) said they had been happy with the way election interviews had been conducted on the news, while 21% said they had not liked it. Women were more inclined to say they didn't know (35%) than to indicate dissatisfaction with election interviews (17%).

STYLE OF INTERVIEWING When it came to judgements about the style of political interviewing on different channels, BBC1 came out on top with 51% saying it got it about right – identical to 1997. ITV did less well with 39% saying it got it right (a slight drop compared to 41% in 1997). Both channels were accused of being too soft by the same proportion of viewers (15%), a significant increase on 1997 data for BBC1 (8%). Men were more likely (19%) to say the style of political interviewing was too soft on ITV news than were women (10%), as were 35-44s (18%) and C1s (20%). The difference in opinion between men and women was even more extreme when it came to saying BBC1's political interviewing was too soft (21% and 10% respectively). As with other issues, a higher proportion of women than men responded that they didn't know.

What is evident from Table 8 is that most viewers tuned in to watch the election coverage on BBC1 and as a result were able to pass comment on it. The proportions saying either 'don't know' or 'didn't watch the channel' increased markedly for BBC2, Channels 4, 5 and *Sky News*.

TABLE 8 VIEWS ON THE STYLE OF POLITICAL INTERVIEWING IN NEWS PROGRAMMES

Bases: Unweighted 1303 Weighted 1094	Too hard %	Fine/ About right %	Too soft %	Don't know %	Did not watch channel %
BBC1	3	51	15	14	15
BBC2	3	30	9	18	40
ITV	2	39	15	18	27
Channel 4	2	18	6	20	55
Channel 5	1	9	3	12	75
Sky News	1	9	3	12	75

7 PARTY ELECTION BROADCASTS

IMPORTANCE Respondents were asked how important they thought it was for television to show party election broadcasts during General Election campaigns. Sixty-three per cent thought it was either very important (18%) or quite important (45%).

ATTENTION Acknowledging the importance of these broadcasts did not mean that viewers watched them. While 63% declared it important to show political broadcasts during election campaigns, only 32% said they paid any attention to them. The majority (68%) took very little notice of them. When a party election broadcast was shown, just 34% said they watched, whichever party was featured, and an additional 10% said they watched only if the party they supported was shown. Around half (49%) of viewers said they switched channels, and 8% turned the television off altogether.

DURATION Just over half the sample (55%) thought the length of party election broadcasts was about right, but 44% thought they were too long.

PERCEPTIONS Respondents were given a list of adjectives and asked which single word best described their view of party election broadcasts. Viewers were far more likely to describe them as boring and dull, rather than anything more positive. Just 13% thought these broadcasts informative, while hardly anyone felt they were persuasive or educational.

TABLE 9 PERCEPTIONS OF PARTY ELECTION BROADCASTS

Bases: Unweighted 1606 Weighted 1477	Party Election Broadcasts %
Boring	34
Dull	19
Informative	13
Useful	11
Slick	10
Helpful	4
Cheap	3
Unintelligible	2
Persuasive	1
Educational	1

ATTITUDES Respondents' opinions towards a set of attitude statements about party election broadcasts were mixed.

Party Election Broadcasts

Most people (68%) endorsed the right of political parties to make their own special broadcasts for television. Sixty-seven per cent agreed that party election broadcasts helped raise public awareness of what different parties stood for, with

a third disagreeing. But, while 58% agreed that they served a useful purpose, although a significant number disagreed (42%), 61% did not think they had any effect on people's allegiance to a particular party. A smaller majority (56%) agreed that while they might not watch these broadcasts themselves, they still felt it was important that they were shown, but a substantial minority (44%) did not sign up to this viewpoint.

TABLE 10 ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARTY ELECTION BROADCASTS

Bases:	Net Agree	Net Disagree
Unweighted 1726-1876	%	%
Weighted 1521-1639		
Political parties should have the right to make their own special broadcasts on television	68	32
Party Election Broadcasts help raise public awareness of what each different political party stands for	67	33
Party Election Broadcasts have no effect on people's allegiance to a particular party	61	39
Party Election Broadcasts serve a useful purpose	58	42
Although I do not watch them myself, I think it is important that Party Election Broadcasts are shown	56	44

Sources Of Political Information

Television was the main source of political information, with 41% saying this was where they got most of their information about political issues. Broadsheet newspapers and the tabloids were next with 15% saying they turned to each to find out what was happening in the political arena. Ten per cent named radio as their key source, 9% *The Express* or *Daily Mail*, 5% a local newspaper and 4% turned to other sources, including leaflets/flyers from local politicians, informed people/friends/family, *Teletext/Ceefax*. Use of the internet for political information was negligible.

When it came to political information from programmes, the majority (69%) said that most of their information came from news bulletins, especially 16-24s (82%) and ABs (78%). Next was current affairs programmes such as *Question Time* and *Newsnight* (22%), followed by documentaries on specific issues (5%), chat shows/discussion programmes e.g. *Kilroy* (3%), and other programmes (1%).

Sources Of Information About Political Parties

Respondents were asked where they got most of their information about the party they voted for. They were asked to name the main source. In 2001, there was a split between television and newspapers with 33% saying their main source of information about their political party was television and 33% saying it was newspapers. In 1997 television was top, followed by newspapers, although respondents were allowed to name more than one source so the results are not directly comparable. Thirteen per cent in the latest survey said they gained most of their information from talking to people, especially 16-24s (20%), and seven per cent mentioned radio, particularly 45-54s (11%) and professionals (11% of ABs).

Fifteen per cent said they got most of their information from other sources, which included: the party manifesto, pamphlets delivered through the door, books, the local candidate door knocking, own observations or experience, lifelong commitment to the same party, and a few mentioned the internet.

8 VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Respondents were well intentioned. With one week to go, 87% said they intended to vote on 7th June 2001. A final survey was conducted one week after the General Election to find out whether they had voted and for which party. Well over three-quarters of the sample said they had voted (81%), a much higher figure than the national turnout of 57%. It is likely that some respondents may have been reluctant to admit to not having voted, although the question was phrased in as neutral a form as possible as follows: 'Many people do not manage to vote. Did you manage to vote on 7th June 2001?' But the more likely explanation is that membership of a panel such as this is linked to more conscientious behaviour than average.

Sixteen percent said they had not voted (higher than the 12% in 1997 who declared that they had not done so), while 2% of the panel were not eligible to vote. Voters were much more likely to be professional/managerial: 86% of ABs claimed to have voted versus 77% of DEs, and to be older; 93% aged 65+ said they voted compared to 71% of 25-34s. There was no difference between men (82%) and women (81%).

PARTY VOTED FOR As was the case in 1997, among those respondents who returned completed questionnaires, the vast majority were willing to say whom they had voted for, with just seven per cent refusing to answer this question. Excluding the 'not answered', the results were 36% Labour (slightly down on actual figure of 41%), 29% Conservative (close to actual figure of 32%), and 24% Liberal Democrat (higher than actual figure of 18%). Liberal Democrat voters were much more likely to be up-market (34% ABs versus 16% DEs). Labour supporters were much more weighted down-market (25% ABs versus 46% DEs). Conservative voters had an AB bias, but were more evenly spread across the social class spectrum than in 1997. See Table 11 for full list of responses.

TABLE 11 VOTING OF ALL RESPONDENTS SPLIT BY SOCIAL CLASS

Bases:	All	AB	C1	C2	DE
Unweighted 1245					
Weighted 1483	%	%	%	%	%
Labour	36	25	33	37	46
Conservative	29	34	29	28	27
Liberal Democrat	24	34	28	20	16
Scottish National Party	3	2	3	3	5
The UK Independence Party	3	1	4	5	3
Plaid Cymru	1	*	1	2	1
The Green Party	1	1	*	1	*
Other	3	2	3	4	3

* Indicates number less than 1%.

STRENGTH OF SUPPORT When asked if they generally thought of themselves as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Scottish National, Welsh National or something else, 34% said they considered themselves Labour, 24% Conservative, 13% Liberal Democrat, 15% said they didn't consider themselves any of these, and only a few said they felt Scottish National (2%), Welsh National (1%) or anything else (4%). Six per cent did not know.

Respondents were asked whether they would call themselves a very strong, a fairly strong or a not very strong supporter of their party. Only a minority (16%) described themselves as very strong supporters of their political party. This group was more likely to be elderly (25% of 65+s) and biased towards the lower end of the social class spectrum (20% of DEs). The rest of the sample was split between being fairly strong supporters (44%) and not very strong supporters (41%).

WHEN VOTE WAS DECIDED Viewers were asked how long ago they decided how they were going to vote. Just over half (52%) said they had made their decision before the start of the year: the same as in 1997 (51%). Older voters were much more likely than were others to have made up their mind well in advance: 65% of 65+s said they had chosen their party before the start of the year. Twelve per cent said they had decided sometime during 2001, a similar number (11%) early in the campaign, nine per cent later in the campaign, and 15% only in the last day or so. In 1997, there were slightly more voters deciding at the last moment (17%). In the 2001 campaign, those making up their minds at the final stage were more likely to be young voters: 23% of 16-24s said they reached their decision only in the last few days.

9 GENERAL ATTITUDES

The panel was given a set of attitude statements and asked to say whether they agreed or disagreed with each one (see Table 12). A significant proportion did not have a view one way or the other. Of the remainder, just over half (52%) agreed that the amount of coverage given to party leaders was balanced (higher than the 1997 figure of 48%), while a similar number (49%) thought the coverage had been fair to all parties, although 19% disagreed. This was an improvement over 1997 when fewer (41%) thought it had been fair.

Many agreed that there had not been enough coverage of politicians other than the main leaders and a significant minority (21%) disagreed that the policies of the different parties had been well presented. This latter group were most likely to be male (25%), 16-24 (28%) and AB (27%).

Only a quarter agreed that the coverage contained relevant issues to them personally. Similarly, only a minority said that they found the coverage helpful while the same proportion disagreed and the majority opted to sit on the fence. Twenty-three per cent endorsed the coverage being too shallow, rising to 34% of ABs, but more disagreed (25%) that it was not in-depth enough.

TABLE 12 ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE COVERAGE

Bases: Unweighted 1593-1612 Weighted 1343-1360	Agree %	Neither Agree nor disagree %	Disagree %
The amount of coverage given to party leaders was balanced	52	33	15
The coverage was fair to all parties	49	33	19
There was not enough coverage of politicians other than the main leaders	49	39	12
Parties' policies were well presented	37	42	21
The coverage contained relevant issues to me	25	47	29
I found the coverage helpful	24	51	24
The coverage was too shallow	23	52	25

Just thirty-five per cent of viewers said that the television coverage had contained topics that mattered to them personally, while 41% said that it had not, with 23% responding that they didn't know. Men (39%) were more likely than women (32%) were to agree that the right issues, as far as they were concerned, had been covered. Agreement was linked also with being older (48% of 65+s), and to being richer (43% of ABs). There were no distinct demographic differences amongst those saying that the coverage had not contained topics that mattered to them personally, although those aged 35-44 (46%) were slightly more likely than other age groups to say that it had not. Those responding that they didn't know were biased towards the young (34% of 16-24s) and social class C2 (29%).

EXPLANATION OF POLICIES The majority thought that the television coverage had explained party policies pretty well (60%), an improvement on 1997 (53%). There remained a significant minority, however, who thought they were not explained very well (40%). Clearly there is room for broadcasters to tackle party policies better. Viewers claimed this was the feature of the coverage which mattered most to them. The lack of focus on actual policies was one of the key reasons for viewer dissatisfaction with the televised election coverage.

DID THE COVERAGE DELIVER? Finally, after the election was over, the 3000 panel members were asked whether the television coverage had given them what they wanted. Over half (57%) said that it had, virtually identical to the response from viewers in 1997 (56%). A significant minority (43%), however, said it had not.

Those that felt the coverage had not delivered were asked what they would have changed or done differently. A representative sample of the responses has been selected to illustrate the key issues which emerged.

10 WHAT DISSATISFIED VIEWERS WOULD HAVE LIKED

LESS COVERAGE GENERALLY

Many still felt that coverage of the election was excessive, despite the fact that broadcasters had cut back compared to the amount in 1997. When asked what they would have done differently, a significant number made suggestions about reducing the amount.

"Reduce it dramatically." (Male, 45-54, AB)

"Too much coverage. Half the amount would do." (Male, 45-54, DE)

"Limit it to one week only and stop coverage at least a week before the election." (Male, 55-64, AB)

"Limit it to specific times." (Female, 45-54, AB)

"I think we need rather less but try to improve the quality. The saturation can be off putting." (Male, 55-64, AB)

"Four weeks is too long, two weeks is long enough." (Male 65+, DE)

"Halved it." (Female, 25-34, AB)

"More in-depth, longer news programmes and less by other programmes as television was over saturated and you just wanted to turn off." (Female, 25-34, AB)

"There was far too much. I was fed up of all the analysis before the actual election arrived." (Male, 16-34, AB)

"More in depth, less in total." (Male, 35-44, C1)

"I was inundated with information (not all of it relevant) which contained far too much guess work and 'expert' opinions. About half way through the coverage I had reached saturation point and thereafter tended to switch off. It was all too much and became a damned nuisance." (Male, 45-54, AB)

"Too much of a good thing is not helpful and will confuse some people. I think this was a major contributor to 41% of the electorate not voting." (Female, 25-34, C1)

"Less coverage would have been better. I felt that extended news bulletins were unnecessary. I did not like the 'battle bus' coverage. Watching party leaders travelling around the country saying the same things at each stop was particularly tedious." (Female, 35-44, C1)

**A SPECIAL
POLITICAL CHANNEL**

Niche channels have had a big impact on viewers' thinking. Some suggested that the election coverage should be placed on a specialist channel in future. This was not something which was mentioned back in 1997.

"I would have put it on a special channel just for political matters." (Male, 25-34, C2)

"It would have been nice to turn to a channel and listen to all the election news when it suited you, not have it in the middle of programmes. Please give the election a channel of its own next time." (Female, 45-54, DE)

"If I was in control, I would put election coverage on one satellite channel, so the people who are interested can watch it." (Male, 25-34, DE)

"I think there was far too much coverage and there should have been a special channel called 'General Election Channel' for those people who were interested." (Female, 55-64, AB)

"Would have liked to have seen all election coverage on one channel only." (Female, 16-24, C2)

"Put it all on one channel." (Male, 45-54, DE)

"Just have it on an independent channel. One channel only." (Male, 45-54, DE)

MORE ABOUT POLICIES

As in 1997, a significant number were dissatisfied with the coverage of party policies.

"More coverage of parties' own policies and less of the criticism of other parties." (Female, 55-64, AB)

"More about the policies than slagging each other off." (Male, 65+, DE)

"More factual information on the parties' policies. Not enough detail was given. There is a good deal of agreement between e.g. the Liberal Democrats and Labour and the differences therefore need to be pointed out more clearly." (Female, 65+, AB)

"Often felt that the election was treated like a soap opera – with the personalities of the party leaders more important than issues or the histories of the parties in fulfilling policies." (Male, 16-24, AB)

"More coverage of party policies rather than party leaders." (Male, 16-24, C1)

"Less personality and more issues, particularly critical analysis of the policies." (Male, 25-34, AB)

"Not enough about the policies of every party. No comparison programmes – each programme was dedicated to one particular part making it hard to sum up. I had to take notes on what I watched to enable myself to compare." (Female, 25-34, DE)

"More details on policies, less polling." (Male, 35-44, AB)

"More specifics on what each party's policies were on each topic, instead of showing pictures of battle buses. Less concentration too on opinion polls." (Female, 25-34, AB)

"I would have ensured the parties gave specific details of their future plans and not allowed the vagueness that existed." (Male, 35-44, AB)

"Focus on point by point policies that relate to the 'normal everyday' member of the public – not allowing parties to skip over issues." (Female, 25-34, DE)

"Did not concentrate enough on the parties' manifestos." (Female, 25-34, DE)

"Concentrate on party policies rather than temporary/popular issues and leaders/personalities." (Male, 35-44, AB)

"More details on contrasting policies of the major parties." (Male, 35-44, AB)

MORE LOCAL COVERAGE Local issues appeared to be uppermost in many viewers' minds and these were not felt to have been given enough coverage.

"I live in Bexley Borough London, but we and other small areas hardly get mentioned. It's as though we don't count. Mainly they just talk about the key seats. We vote too or have they forgotten that." (Male, 35-44, C2)

"Local TV interviewing, local candidates." (Male, 16-24, C2)

"More focus on regional issues". (Male, 25-34, C1)

"There was only minimal coverage of the local issues/candidates. Too much focused on the main 'cast' and main general issues." (Female, 25-34, C1)

"More local coverage of issues which affect me." (Male, 35-44, C1)

"More regional information." (Male, 45-54, DE)

"It would have been interesting for politicians to have faced local people about local problems." (Female, 65+, DE)

"Local politicians could be interviewed on local news." (Female, 65+, AB)

"More interviews with local candidates. Questions put to local candidates by the public." (Female, 65+, AB)

"I would have preferred more coverage of local issues." (Female, 35-44, AB)

"More local representation." (Male, 25-34, AB)

"More local TV debates." (Male, 35-44, C1)

"Relevance to local concerns e.g. hospitals, schools, police numbers." (Male, 35-44, C1)

*"Local forum/debates at regional level. Regional question times every day."
(Male, 35-44, DE)*

"I would have given more coverage of local issues as they effect me. Regional TV stations cover too big an area for them to be effective. I would make greater use of local TV cable stations." (Male, 65+, C2)

"More local issues in the regional news and more coverage of local candidates instead of the visits of the leaders to the area." (Male, 65+ AB)

COVERAGES OF OTHER ISSUES

There were suggestions about other issues which viewers felt had not been raised and which deserved coverage. In particular, many wanted more time given to environmental issues.

*"There are so many students in London who are in debt and constantly looking for jobs to pay for their tuition fees etc. I didn't see any coverage of this issue."
(Female, 16-24, AB)*

"Animal and environmental issues to be discussed by other parties than the Green Party." (Female, 16-24, AB)

"Focus on wider range of issues, we are interested in more than the parties' agenda e.g. the environment." (Male, 25-34, C1)

"I wanted to know more about life issues, i.e. abortion, cloning etc." (Female, 25-34, AB)

"More focus on environmental issues." (Male, 25-34, C1)

"More of what was going to be happening with the NHS, in particular nurses. Also refugees." (Female, 16-2224, C2)

"More coverage of local issues, especially environmental issues." (Male, 45-54, C1)

"More environmental issues." (Female, 35-44, AB)

"More everyday issues. Working of various government agencies, government policies that override doctors' decisions. How much the parties influence the civil service." (Male, 45-54, C2)

"More about home issues and one of the big debates that concerned myself was the fuel issues." (Male, 45-54, DE)

"There wasn't enough emphasis on the city versus country issues." (Male, 55-64, AB)

"Deeper analysis of parties' policies on longer-term issues like the environment, world affairs, and Northern Ireland." (Male, 55-64, C1)

*"I wanted more information about the pros and cons of changing the pound for the Euro. I knew which party was for and against, but not why. Still don't."
(Male, 55-64, C2)*

**MORE COVERAGE FOR
MINORITY PARTIES**

A number made a plea for more coverage of the minority parties.

"More representation of smaller parties like the Green Party." (Male, 16-24, DE)

"Feature other parties as well as the main three." (Male, 25-34, C1)

*"There was too much coverage devoted to the three main parties."
(Male, 16-24, C1)*

*"More information/coverage on parties other than Labour, Lib Dem,
Conservatives, e.g. the Green Party." (Female, 25-34, AB)*

"More coverage of independent and minority parties." (Male, 16-24, C2)

*"They should have given more coverage to the smaller parties."
(Female, 25-34, C2)*

*"I would have let more of the smaller parties give their views – the coverage
(what I saw of it) was quite biased in that way." (Male, 16-24, C1)*

*"There was too much coverage devoted to the three main parties."
(Male, 16-24, C1)*

*"I would have also focused on the minority parties as well as some of the
independents." (Male, 25-34, C2)*

"Fairer representation for the nationalist parties." (Male, 45-54, C2)

*"I would concentrate more on smaller parties such as the Green Party and the
British National Party and Monster Raving Loony Party and independent
candidates." (Male, 45-54, DE)*

*"More coverage of the minority parties (serious ones) and of the largest party –
the Apathy Party." (Male, 55-64, C2)*

LESS OF THE LEADERS

There was a general perception that the party leaders hogged the limelight. Many respondents said they would have liked to have seen more visibility for local candidates.

"More time for all sorts of people to speak." (Male, 65+, DE)

*"More coverage of senior party figures other than the leaders."
(Female, 35-44, C2)*

*"Coverage of wider ranging issues, too much about party leaders, too
dominant." (Male, 35-44, C1)*

*"There was very little coverage of local politicians other than the main leaders.
More politicians should have had an opportunity to give their views."
(Female, 65+, AB)*

"The TV coverage was too much about the main leaders and not enough about other MPs. Also, the local coverage of my area was few and far between." (Male, 25-34, DE)

"Less on the personalities of the leaders. Policies are more important." (Female, 35-44, AB)

"Not so much about the main players e.g. Tony Blair etc. More about what the public thinks and who they are going to vote for and why. (Male, 16-24, DE)

"Less coverage of leaders and more on policies and more balance. Tony Blair was on TV far too much." (Male, 35-44, AB)

**STYLE OF ELECTION
INTERVIEWING**

Some were critical of the style of election interviewing which they felt was too soft at times.

"More aggressive and thorough questioning of the government's record to date." (Male, 16-24, C1)

"Less people and more policy and tough questions about tough problems." (Male, 16-24, C1)

"Jazz it up. Really grill interviewees." (Female, 25-34, DE)

"More hard questioning." (Male, 35-44, C1)

"More serious questions please." (Male, 65+, AB)

"In general, politicians like to have the last word in an interview. While I think the interviewers did very well, I would like a more aggressive approach. Make the politicians answer the question. There has been a noted effort in this direction during this election." (Female, 65+, AB)

"More intensive and extensive interviewing of the politicians." (Male, 25-34, C1)

"More forceful interviewing. Something that "turned on" the majority of the population and made them feel they had to vote." (Male, 35-44, AB)

"More hard hitting interviews to allow viewers to see how good/bad politicians are under pressure." (Male, 35-44, C1)

"A more probing, even hostile form of questioning." (Male, 35-44, DE)

"Harder questioning and not allowing MPs to fob answers off." (Male, 35-44, C1)

"Less people more policy and touch questions about tough problems." (Male, 16-24, C2)

"Tougher, more searching, controversial questions. Make the politicians answer the questions they are asked rather than wriggle out of it and change the subject." (Male, 35-44, AB)

"More direct question and answer sessions." (Male, 45-54, C2)

"More 'in-depth' interviewing about political/economic/philosophical beliefs and how this will translate into actions, rather than the lightweight short 'sound bite' type of political interviewing." (Male, 55-64, AB)

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Some suggestions as to how broadcasters could improve their coverage included:

"Stop giving forecasts of the outcome before the election. This gives people the impression that the outcome has already been decided and they do not vote as a result. This is the primary cause of low turnouts." (Male, 45-54, C2)

"I'm sure that the reason the turnout was so low was because opinion polls and pundits told us how we were going to vote and what the outcome of the election would be so that many people felt there was no point in voting." (Male, 55-64, AB)

"Less emphasis on the personalities and more on relevant issues." (Female, 55-64, C1)

"Three way debate between party leaders." (Male, 25-34, AB)

"Put it at the end of the news bulletins rather than at the beginning." (Female, 35-44, AB)

"Made it more appealing to first time voters." (Female, 16-24, AB)

"Comparative charts with each issue relevant to me listed with a column of ticks and crosses so that I can see at a glance what each party intends to do." (Male, 25-34, C2)

"I agree the election is a major event and should take up a lot of TV time, but it is not always relaxing or exciting viewing. It can be quite boring. It's difficult to make it appealing." (Female, 35-44, C2.)

"More programmes akin to Question Time in which the public can question politicians about their concerns. I don't feel there's enough of this type of programme." (Male, 25-34, C1)

"I would like to see reporters out and about interviewing the general public on what they want and then replaying the interviews to MPs for their comments." (Male, 35-44, C1)

"Better exposure of failing and weaknesses of parties." (Female, 35-44, AB)

11 CONCLUSIONS

Broadcasters are up against it. Audiences for news programmes have declined markedly over the last 10 years and political programmes attract disappointing ratings. A fresh approach is needed.

It is true that the election coverage was not helped by the fact that many thought the result was a foregone conclusion. But how much did broadcasters contribute to public apathy and could they have done more to explain the issues? Their challenge must be to find new ways of engaging audiences. With this in mind, the BBC has already announced its decision to review all of its political output.

This research offers some useful insights. The 1997 campaign failed to engage women and first time voters and this remained the case four years later. In fact, women were much more apathetic about the 2001 campaign, tending to respond “don’t know” to many of the questions, rather than expressing an opinion. In 1997 they at least wanted to be engaged, whereas this time round they appeared much more disinterested.

Despite the fact that television is a key source of political information for young people, in particular news programmes, 16-24s were the age group which showed least interest in watching the election coverage. The research suggests that this was because they felt issues which directly affected them, such as student loans, were not given a great deal of coverage. Young people also expressed interest in hearing more about minority parties, which many felt had not received enough coverage. It is vital that broadcasters seek new ways of capturing this audience who are, after all, the voters of the future.

Crucially, what viewers want is more involvement of ordinary people in the political arena, a focus on policies, and straight answers to questions from the politicians.

APPENDIX

TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

We would like to ask you some questions about coverage of the General Election in actual programmes for example news programmes, current affairs programmes, or even entertainment programmes. We are not interested in the special broadcasts on behalf of particular parties that is party election broadcasts.

Q1 Thinking about what you have seen to date of the coverage on television of the **General Election**, what do you think of the **amount of the time** devoted to the following aspects? (Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	About the right amount of time	Far too little time	A bit too little time	Far too little time
Results of opinion polls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personalities of politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policies of the parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis by TV's own political correspondents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis by other outside experts (not politicians or TV journalists)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Press conferences, walkabouts or other appearances by politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2 Thinking about what you have seen to date of the coverage on television of the **General Election**, what do you think of the **amount of the time** devoted to the following aspects? (Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	A bit too much time	About the right amount of time	A bit too little time	Far too little time	Don't watch this channel
BBC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3 What do you think of the amount of time devoted to coverage of the General Election in general? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- Far too little
- A bit too little
- About right
- A bit too much
- Far too much

Q4A What do you think of the amount of time devoted to **each party** on **each channel**? (For each party, please place a cross in one box on each line across)

The Conservative Party

(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	A bit too much time	About the right amount of time	A bit too little time	Far too little time	Don't watch this channel
BBC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Labour Party

(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	A bit too much time	About the right amount of time	A bit too little time	Far too little time	Don't watch this channel
BBC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Liberal Democrat Party

(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	A bit too much time	About the right amount of time	A bit too little time	Far too little time	Don't watch this channel
BBC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The UK Independence Party

(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	A bit too much time	About the right amount of time	A bit too little time	Far too little time	Don't watch this channel
BBC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4b What do you think of the amount of time devoted to **each party on each channel?** (For each party, please place a cross in one box on each line across)

The Green Party

(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	A bit too much time	About the right amount of time	A bit too little time	Far too little time	Don't watch this channel
BBC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Scottish National Party

(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	A bit too much time	About the right amount of time	A bit too little time	Far too little time	Don't watch this channel
BBC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Plaid Cymru

(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

There has been...	Far too much time	A bit too much time	About the right amount of time	A bit too little time	Far too little time	Don't watch this channel
BBC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5 Which channel's coverage do you think is?
 (Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

	BBC1	BBC2	ITV	Channel 4	Channel 5	Sky News	There is no diff- erence	No opinion
The most interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The least biased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The most entertaining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The most accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The most thorough in dealing with all the issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The best at explaining the issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The most exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The most informative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The most useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6 To what extent do you think that **news programmes on television** are accurate, interesting, informative and balanced?
 (Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

	Just about always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Hardly ever
Accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balancing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7a Thinking now about the election coverage only on **BBC television**, would you say it has been fair to all parties or unfair to one or more of the political parties?
(Please place a cross in all boxes that are applicable)

The BBC's election coverage on television was...

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fair to all parties | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Labour | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Liberal Democrats | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Scottish National Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Plaid Cymru | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to the UK Independence Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to The Green Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q7b Thinking now about the election coverage only on **ITV**, would you say it has been fair to all parties or unfair to one or more of the political parties?
(Please place a cross in all boxes that are applicable)

ITV's election coverage was...

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fair to all parties | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Labour | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Liberal Democrats | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Scottish National Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to Plaid Cymru | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to the UK Independence Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfair to The Green Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q7c Thinking now about the election coverage only on **Channel 4**, would you say it has been fair to all parties or unfair to one or more of the political parties? (Please place a cross in all boxes that are applicable)

Channel 4's election coverage was...

- Fair to all parties
- Unfair to Labour
- Unfair to Conservative
- Unfair to Liberal Democrats
- Unfair to Scottish National Party
- Unfair to Plaid Cymru
- Unfair to the UK Independence Party
- Unfair to The Green Party
- No opinion

Q7d Thinking now about the election coverage only on **Channel 5**, would you say it has been fair to all parties or unfair to one or more of the political parties? (Please place a cross in all boxes that are applicable)

Channel 5's election coverage was...

- Fair to all parties
- Unfair to Labour
- Unfair to Conservative
- Unfair to Liberal Democrats
- Unfair to Scottish National Party
- Unfair to Plaid Cymru
- Unfair to the UK Independence Party
- Unfair to The Green Party
- No opinion

Q8 In the lead up to the General Election, a lot of time on **television news** has been spent on politics and the election campaign. How much attention do you generally pay to these items? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- A great deal
- Quite a bit
- Some
- A little
- None

Q9 Typically, when coverage of the election appears on the news, in a programme or on the channel you are watching, what do you **usually** do?
(Please place a cross in one box only)

- Watch it regardless of which party is featured
- Watch it only if the party I support is featured
- Switch to another channel to avoid the coverage
- Switch off altogether

Q10 In general, how interested have you been in watching the political election coverage? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- Very interested
- Quite interested
- Not very interested
- Completely uninterested

Q11 In general, and not just in the news, how much of the political election coverage would you say you have seen on television?
(Please place a cross in one box only)

- Quite a lot
- A fair bit
- Hardly any
- None at all

Q12 Do you intend to vote in the General Election on 7th June?
(Please place a cross in one box only)

- Yes
- No

Q13 Have you made up your mind already about how you are going to vote in the General Election? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- Yes
- No

PARTY ELECTION BROADCASTS

Party Political Broadcasts (or PPBs) were introduced originally on television after the Second World War at a time when there was very little journalistic coverage

Q5 Which ONE of the following words best describes your view of **Party Election Broadcasts** in general? (Please place a cross in one box only)

Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dull	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slick	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheap	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persuasive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unintelligible	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please place a cross in one box in each line across only)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Political parties should have the right to make their own special broadcasts on television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party Election Broadcasts help raise public awareness of what each different political party stands for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party Election Broadcasts have no effect on people's allegiance to a particular party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Although I do not watch them myself, I think it is important that Party Election Broadcasts are shown	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party Election Broadcasts serve a useful purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7 From which of the following sources do you...

(a) **EVER** get information about political issues?

(b) get the **MOST** information about political issues? Please select just one of these options.

(Please place a cross in **as many boxes as applicable** in **column A**, but please place a cross in **one box only** in **column B**)

	Column (A) Ever get information from this source	Column (B) Which ONE source do you get most of your information from
Television programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Press - broadsheets e.g. The Daily Telegraph, The FT, The Guardian etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Press - tabloids e.g. The Sun, The Mirror etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Express/The Daily Mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local paper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Please write your answer inside the box provided)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Q8 Thinking specifically about the types of **television programmes**, from which of the following sources do you...

(a) **EVER** get information about political issues?

(b) get the **MOST** information about political issues? Please select just one of these options.

(Please place a cross in **as many boxes as applicable** in **column A**, but please place a cross in **one box only** in **column B**)

	Column (A) Ever get information from this source	Column (B) Which ONE source do you get most of your information from
Current Affairs programmes e.g. Question Time, Newsnight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
News broadcasts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentaries on specific issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat shows/discussion programmes e.g. Kilroy or The Time, The Place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other television programme type	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Please write your answer inside the box provided)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Q9 Finally, in order to help us, please could you answer the following two questions on how you voted in recent **General Elections**. As with information in all our questionnaires this information is treated in the strictest confidence.

Which ONE party did you vote for in the last **General Election** on **May 1st 1997**? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plaid Cymru | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Labour | <input type="checkbox"/> | UK Independence Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Liberal Democrat | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Green Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scottish National Party | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Referendum Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Q10 Which ONE party will you or did you vote for in the **General Election** on **7th June 2001**? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plaid Cymru | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Labour | <input type="checkbox"/> | UK Independence Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Liberal Democrat | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Green Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scottish National Party | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Referendum Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

ELECTION QUESTIONS

Television coverage of the General Election is now over. In order to help us interpret your answers to previous questions on the election coverage we would like to ask some questions about voting. Please note that the information that you give will be used in the strictest confidence.

Q1 Talking to people about the General Election in 1997 we found that a lot of people did not manage to vote. Did you manage to vote in the most recent **General Election**? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Please answer Question 2 onwards |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | } Please go to Question 7a |
| I am not eligible to vote | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Q2 Which party did you vote for in the most recent **General Election**? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plaid Cymru | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Labour | <input type="checkbox"/> | UK Independence Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Liberal Democrat | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Green Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scottish National Party | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q3 How long ago did you decide that you would definitely vote the way you did? Was it...? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Before the start of this year | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sometime this year | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Early in the campaign | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Later in the campaign | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Only in the last day or so | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q4 Where did you get **most** of your information about the party you voted for? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Radio | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Television | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Talking to people | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(Please write your answer inside the box)

Q5 Did you vote in the **previous General Election** on May 1st 1997?
(Please place a cross in one box only)

- Yes Please answer Question 6 onwards
- No } Please go to Question 7a
- Can't remember }

Q6 How did you vote in 1997? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- Conservative Plaid Cymru
- Labour The Green Party
- Liberal Democrat Other
- Scottish National Party
- Can't remember Not eligible to vote

Q7a Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Scottish National, Welsh National or another?
(Please place a cross in one box only)

- Conservative }
Labour }
Liberal Democrat } Please go to Question 8 onwards
Scottish National Party }
Welsh National }
Other }
None } Please answer Question 7b
Don't know }

Q7b Do you generally think of yourself as a little closer to one of the parties than the others? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- No Please go to Question 9 onwards
- Yes Please answer Question 8 onwards

Please write the party's name in the box below

Q8 Would you call yourself a very strong, fairly strong or not very strong supporter of the party you mentioned in your previous question?
(Please place a cross in one box only)

- A very strong supporter
- A fairly strong supporter
- Not a very strong supporter

Q9 Did you think there was too much or too little of the following elements on the **television news** shown during the **General Election** campaign?
(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

	Far too much	A bit too much	About the right amount	A bit too little	Far too little
Coverage of the economy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coverage of social issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coverage of foreign affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coverage of constitutional issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coverage of the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coverage of issues to do with Europe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q10 What did you think generally about the amount of television coverage devoted to the **General Election**? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- Far too little
- A bit too little
- About right
- A bit too much
- Far too much

Q11 Did the television coverage of the **General Election** contain topics that matter to you personally? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q12 How well do you think party policies were explained in television coverage of the **General Election**? (Please place a cross in one box only)

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not very well
- Not at all well

Q13a Thinking about **interviews on the news**, were you happy with the sorts of questions interviewers asked politicians during the **General Election campaign**?
(Please place a cross in one box only)

- Yes Please go to Question 14 onwards
- No } Please answer Question 13b onwards
- Don't know }

Q13b Why were you not happy with the questions interviewers asked to politicians?
(Please write your answer inside the box)

Q14 What did you think about the **style** of political interviewing in **news programmes** for each of the following channels?
(Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

The style of political interviewing was...

	Too hard	Fine/about right	Too soft	Don't know	Did not watch this channel
BBC1 news	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BBC2 news	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITV news	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 4 News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channel 5 News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q15 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the overall coverage of the **General Election on television?**
 (Please place a cross in one box on each line across)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The amount of coverage given to party leaders was balanced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The coverage was fair to all parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parties' policies were well presented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There was not enough coverage of politicians other than the main leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The coverage contained relevant issues to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found the coverage helpful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The coverage was too shallow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q16 Finally, do you feel that the television coverage of the **General Election** gave you what you wanted? (Please place a cross in one box only)

Yes

No Please answer Question 13b onwards

Q17 What would you have changed in the **General Election** TV coverage?
 (Please write your answer inside the box)