Question Time Scorecard – 25/6/2020

We have developed a scoring system to apply to BBC Question Time guests to gain a sense of how elite each weekly panel selection is. We score each guest either 0 (non-elite) or 1 (elite) in five categories: Income, Education, Connections, Honours/Titles, Political/Economic Views. Each guest achieves an overall elite rating out of 5, which is added to the scores of the other guests then divided by the number of guests to provide an overall rating for that week's panel.

Fiona Bruce, the presenter of the show, is a key figure in terms of directing debate and allocating panellists' speaking time so is always included in the calculation for that week's show.

For more information on why we are doing this and what we mean by "elite" check out this blog post.

If you'd like to get involved in the project tweet or e-mail us!

INCOME

Income is the most powerful indicator of elitism. Those with wealth have a wider range of options than those without and a vested interest (conscious or otherwise) in sustaining the economic framework that generates their affluence

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	Yearly salary < £68,000	Yearly salary > £68,000 OR Verified millionaire
Panel		*Fiona Bruce scores 1* *BBC Salary for 17/18 listed as £259,999*
		Steve Barclay scores 1 *Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)*
		Jess Phillips scores 1 *Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)*
	Iona Bain scores 0 *Yearly income cannot be verified*	
		Theo Paphitis scores 1 *Personal wealth estimated at around £250 million (source)*
	George the Poet scores 0 *Artist whose income cannot be verified*	

EDUCATION

The Sutton Trust reported in 2016 that Oxford and Cambridge recruit more students from eight independent/highly competitive schools (such as Eton) than almost 3,000 UK state schools put together. A linked government report stated that "Our examination of who gets the top jobs in Britain today found elitism so stark that it could be called 'Social Engineering'", with independent schools and Oxbridge a key component in this social selection.

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	State school attendee Non-Oxbridge higher education	Attended a private/independent school OR Attended Oxford, Cambridge or equivalent elite overseas university in top ten of Times Higher Education Rankings
Panel		*Fiona Bruce scores 1* *Attended Hertford College, Oxford*
		Steve Barclay scores 1 *Attended independent King Edward VII School in Lytham St. Annes Lancashire before reading history at Peterhouse, Cambridge*
	Jess Phillips scores 0 *Meets criteria*	
		Iona Bain scores 1 *Attended Oxford University (source)*
	Theo Paphitis scores 0 *Meets criteria*	
		George the Poet scores 1 *Studied Politics, Psychology and Sociology at King's College, Cambridge*

CONNECTIONS

It's not what you know, it's who you know shouldn't apply in a democracy…but most would agree that it does. Many high-ranking politicians and journalists (e.g. The Millibands, the Dimblebys) are embedded in the elite through family ties or are members of private clubs whose "exclusive" status marks them out as networking hubs for the elite. Moreover, if QT guests count as friends/kin people who occupy positions of power throughout politics, business and the media this again makes them less likely to reflect common opinion or present an unbiased view of institutions in which a loved one, confidante or network acquaintance plays a key role.

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	No close family, friendship or networking ties to high-ranking figures in politics, business, the media or other powerful institutions	One or more close family, friendship or networking ties to high-ranking figures in politics, business, the media or other powerful institutions
Panel		*Fiona Bruce scores 1* *Father a high ranking businessman, regional managing director of Unilever (2017 turnover 53.7 billion euros) (source)* *Husband Nigel Sharrocks a high-ranking businessman, CEO of the marketing company Aegis Group Northern Europe which represents companies with cumulative turnover of £500 billion (source 1) (source 2)*
		Steve Barclay scores 1 *Ian Mukherjee, the founder of Amiya Capital, a hedge fund managing over a billion pounds donated £25,000 to him as per Register of Members Financial Interests*
		Jess Phillips scores 1 *Mother Jean Trainor was deputy chief executive of the NHS Confederation (high-ranking position)* *Earned £8,000-a-year as a "sideline working for top Tory donor and former Conservative deputy chairman Lord Ashcroft's firm" on the parliamentary magazine The House*
	Iona Bain scores 0	

	No clear personal connections indicative of elitism	
	Theo Paphitis scores 0 *No clear personal connections indicative of elitism*	
	George the Poet scores 0 *No clear connections to figures/institutions outlined in criteria*	

HONOURS/TITLES

It seems fair to assume that those vested with hereditary titles such as Earl, Duke, Baronet, etc can be classed as elite. Prestigious titles bestowed by unelected bodies, such as OBEs, membership of the House of Lords and Church titles like Bishop and Archbishop, are often awarded regardless of background (e.g. OBEs to sports stars from poor backgrounds) but nonetheless suggest elite approval of these individuals – they are "vetted by the elite".

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	No high-ranking hereditary title No high-ranking honour/title bestowed by an unelected body	Possesses a high-ranking hereditary title OR Possesses a high-ranking honour/title bestowed by an unelected body
Panel	*Fiona Bruce scores 0* *She does not have high-ranking title…yet!*	
	Steve Barclay scores 0 *Only title is a democratic one: Member of Parliament.*	
	Jess Phillips scores 0 *Only title is a democratic one: Member of Parliament.*	
	Iona Bain scores 0 *Meets criteria*	
	Theo Paphitis scores 0 *Meets Criteria.*	
	George the Poet scores 0 *Turned down an offer to become an MBE due to objections regarding Britain's colonial past.*	

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC VIEWS

It isn't entirely fair to classify someone as financially elite because they are wealthy. There are examples of financially privileged individuals who have campaigned for redistribution of wealth. Therefore, we take into account economic and political viewpoints expressed verbally or through voting patterns

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	Political outlook prioritises what we might call "public wealth" – redistribution of wealth, living wage, wage rises in line with or above inflation, protection or investment in public services, union and worker's rights, nationalisation of industries	Political outlook prioritises what we might call "private wealth" – low tax rates, downsizing of state, privatisation of state services, benefit freezes or cuts, public sector pay freezes, limitation of trade union powers
Panel	*Fiona Bruce scores 0* *As a journalist she does not express strong views in this area**	
		Steve Barclay scores 1 *"Consistently voted for a reduction in spending on welfare benefits" and disability benefits, yet "Almost always voted against higher taxes on banks" and "for reducing the rate of corporation tax" as per* **They Work for You**
	Jess Phillips scores 0 *"Almost always voted against a reduction in spending on welfare benefits" and for higher taxes on banks as per* **they work for you**	
		Iona Bain scores 1 *Financial journalist with regular columns in the Financial Times and previous work in Spectator strongly suggests support for private wealth. Affirmed by presentation of a video for* **The Scottish Investment Trust PLC***, a "high conviction, global contrarian" investment firm*
		Theo Paphitis scores 1 *Businessman and millionaire thus an advocate of policies that protect and perpetuate private wealth. Well known for appearing on Dragon's Den, a show*

		which presents the "Dragons" as formidable and ruthless high-achievers and making as much money as possible an end in itself.
	George the poet scores 0 *Creative figure whose political views are not sufficiently well known to classify.*	

* We accept that the burden of proof for making an "elite" judgment lies with us. Therefore, when sufficiently clear evidence to classify a panellist as elite cannot be found they will be classed non-elite in that category as a default. We may, for example, strongly suspect that someone has an income above £68,000 or influential contacts but if we can't access information that suggests this beyond reasonable doubt we will classify them as non-elite for these categories.

Overall elite ratings (for guests and the panel as a whole):

Total Score	0	1	2	3	4	5
Corresponding Status	Not Elite	A Little Elite	Quite Elite	Elite	Very Elite	Exceptionally Elite

Fiona Bruce scores three out of five – she is **Elite**

Steve Barclay scores four out of five – he is Very Elite

Jess Phillips scores two out of five – she is Quite Elite

Iona Bain scores two out of five – she is Quite Elite

Theo Paphitis scores two out of five – he is Quite Elite

George the Poet scores one out of five – he is A Little Elite

Combined score of panel = 3 + 4 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 1 = 14

Divided by no. of panellists (6) = 2.33, rounded to closest no. = 2

OVERALL ELITE RATING FOR THIS EDITION OF QUESTION TIME IS:

2 – QUITE ELITE