Question Time Scorecard – 17-09-2020

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 £259,9990*
		Nadhim Zahawi scores 1 *Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)* *Verified millionaire – owns properties worth £25 million ([source](#))*
		Jon Ashworth scores 1 *Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)*
	Sunetra Gupta scores 0 *Average salary for a UK professor is [above £68,000](#). Sunetra Gupta is a distinguished professor at Oxford and award winning novelist however income cannot be verified so meets criteria.*	
	Nicci Gerrard scores 0 *Published multiple novels and a Newspaper Journalist likely to earn over £68,000 but this cannot be verified so meets criteria.*	
		John Caudwell Scores 1 *Billionaire who co-founded Phones4U and is worth an estimated £1.576 Billion.*

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*
		Nadhim Zahawi scores 1 *Privately educated at Ibstock Place School then at King's College School*
	John Ashworth scores 0 *Meets Criteria.*	
		Sunetra Gupta scores 1 *Educated at Princeton and Imperial College Lond. Professor at Oxford.*
		Nicci Gerrard scores 1 *Studied at Oxford University.*
	John Caudwell scores 0 *Meets criteria.*	

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)*
		Nadhim Zahawi scores 1 *Individual donors to Zahawi on Parliamentary Register of Members Financial Interests include Peter Cruddas, a billionaire, and Jo Bamford, the heir to Lord Bamford, billionaire owner of JCB* *Zahawi also has strong links to a Kurdistan oil company (source)*
		Jon Ashworth scores 1 *Wife Emilie Oldknow, a regional Director of the Labour Party and former election candidate. Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown attended their wedding.*
		Sunetra Gupta scores 1 *Formerly married to Professor Adrian Hill, director of the Jenner Institute. The Jenner institute is currently working on a Covid vaccine in a UK government*

		funded project. He also founded Vaccitech.
		Nicci Gerrard scores 1 *Married to novelist and former New Statesman journalist Sean French who she publishes novels with under a pseudonym. He is the son of producer and film critic Philip French.*
		John Caudwell scores 1 *Donated £2000 to Conservative Bill Cash for his election campaign and £500,000 to conservative party 2019 election campaign.*

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!*	
	Nadhim Zahawi scores 0 *Only title is a democratic one: Member of Parliament.*	
	John Ashworth scores 0 *Only title is democratic one: Member of Parliament*	
	Sunetra Gupta scores 0 *Meets criteria*	
	Nicci Gerrard scores 0 *Meets criteria.*	
	John Caudwell scores 0 *Meets criteria.*	

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**	
		Nadhim Zahawi scores 1 *As per They Work for You:* *Consistently voted against raising welfare benefits at least in line with prices and almost always voted for a reduction in spending on welfare benefits BUT generally voted against increasing the tax rate applied to income over £150,000 and almost always voted against a banker's bonus tax*
	Jon Ashworth scores 0 *As per TheyWorkForYou* *Almost always voted against a reduction in spending on welfare benefits and consistently voted for an annual Mansion Tax.*	
	Sunetra Gupta scores 0 *Academic whose political views are not sufficiently well known to classify*	
	Nicci Gerrard scores 0 *Regular contributor to The Observer and The New Statesman both of which are ostensibly liberal, progressive publications.*	.

		John Caudwell scores 1 *Donor to both Conservative MP Bill Cash and Conservative Party 2019 Election campaign..*

* 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***

*Nadhim Zahawi scores four out of five – he is **Very Elite***

Jon Ashworth scores two out of five – he is Quite Elite

Sunetra Gupta scores two out of five – he is Quite Elite

Nicci Gerrard scores two out of five – she is Quite Elite

*John Caudwell scores three out of five- he is **Elite***

Combined score of panel = 3 + 4 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 = 16

Divided by no. of panellists (6) = 2.6, rounded to closest no.
*= **3***

OVERALL ELITE RATING FOR THIS EDITION OF QUESTION TIME IS:

3 – ELITE