

Question Time Scorecard – 24/9/2020



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		<i>Fiona Bruce scores 1</i> <i>BBC Salary for 17/18 listed as £259,9990</i>
		<i>Alok Sharma scores 1</i> <i>Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)</i>
		<i>Louise Haigh scores 1</i> <i>Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)</i>
		<i>Ed Davey scores 1</i> <i>Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)</i>
		<i>Peter Borg-Neal scores 1</i> <i>As the founder and CEO of Oakman Inns, a company with “1000 team members and 24 properties” (source) Borg-Neal’s net worth is unquestionably in the millions</i>
	<i>Devi Sridhar scores 0</i> <i>Professor whose salary cannot be confirmed</i>	

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		<i>Fiona Bruce scores 1</i> <i>Attended Hertford College, Oxford</i>
		<i>Alok Sharma scores 1</i> <i>Attended two independent schools</i>
		<i>Louise Haigh scores 1</i> <i>Attended independent Sheffield High School</i>
		<i>Ed Davey scores 1</i> <i>Attended independent Nottingham High School and Oxford</i>
	<i>Peter Borg-Neal scores 0</i> <i>Meets criteria</i>	
		<i>Devi Sridhar scores 1</i> <i>Attended Oxford University</i>

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		<p><i>Fiona Bruce scores 1</i> <i>Father a high ranking businessman, regional managing director of Unilever (2017 turnover 53.7 billion euros)</i> <i>(source)</i> <i>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</i> <i>(source 1) (source 2)</i></p>
		<p><i>Alok Sharma scores 1</i> <i>Accepted a £10,000 donation to his constituency party from Aquind, a company owned by millionaire Russian businessman Alexander Temerko (source)</i></p>
	<p><i>Louise Haigh scores 0</i> <i>Meets criteria</i></p>	
		<p><i>Ed Davey scores 1</i> <i><u>Parliamentary Register of Member's Financial Interests</u> contains a lengthy list of donations from wealthy individuals and businesses to Davey</i></p>
	<p><i>Peter Borg-Neal scores 0</i> <i>Meets criteria</i></p>	

	<i>Devi Sridhar scores 0</i> <i>Meets criteria</i>	
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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	<i>Fiona Bruce scores 0 She does not have high-ranking title...yet!</i>	
	<i>Alok Sharma scores 0 Only title is a democratic one: Member of Parliament.</i>	
	<i>Louise Haigh scores 0 Only title is a democratic one: Member of Parliament.</i>	
		<i>“Sir” Ed Davey scores 1 Knighted in 2016</i>
	<hr/> <i>Peter Borg-Neal scores 0 Meets criteria</i>	
	<hr/> <i>Devi Sridhar scores 0 Meets criteria</i>	

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	<i>Fiona Bruce scores 0 As a journalist she does not express strong views in this area*</i>	
		<i>Alok Sharma scores 1 As per <u>They Work for You</u>: Consistently voted against raising welfare benefits at least in line with prices and consistently voted for a reduction in spending on welfare benefits BUT Generally voted against a banker’s bonus tax and almost always voted against an annual tax on the value of expensive homes</i>
	<i>Louise Haigh scores 0 As per <u>They Work for You</u>: consistently voted against a reduction in spending on welfare benefits BUT almost always voted for higher taxes on banks</i>	
		<i>Ed Davey scores 1 As per <u>They Work for You</u> 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 a banker’s bonus tax and consistently voted against an annual tax on the value of expensive homes</i>
		<i>Peter Borg-Neal scores 1</i>

		<i>A business owner who has described being “under attack” by coronavirus restrictions - making clear his business-first perspective (source)</i>
	<i>Devi Sridhar scores 0 Professor whose political views are unclear</i>	

* 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***

*Alok Sharma scores four out of five – he is **Very Elite***

*Louise Haigh scores two out of five – he is **Quite Elite***

*Ed Davey scores five out of five – he is **Exceptionally Elite***

*Peter Borg-Neal scores two out of five – he is **Quite Elite***

*Devi Sridhar scores one out of five – she is **A Little Elite***

Combined score of panel = 3 + 4 + 2 + 5 + 2 + 1 = 17

*Divided by no. of panellists (6) = 3.4, rounded to closest no.
= **3***

**OVERALL ELITE RATING FOR THIS EDITION OF QUESTION TIME
IS:**

3 – ELITE