



The Ethnic Minority British Election Survey (EMBES)

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The research team

- Anthony Heath (Oxford and ISC, Manchester)
- Stephen Fisher (Oxford)
- Gemma Rosenblatt (Electoral Commission)
- David Sanders (Essex – current director of main BES)
- Maria Sobolewska (Manchester)

Background – the BES

- Regular post-election British Election Surveys have been conducted after every general election since 1964
- Longest-running social survey in Britain
- Originally aimed to understand electoral behaviour (turnout and vote choice) but aims gradually widened to include political attitudes and behaviour more generally
- Representative high-quality probability samples of around 2-3000 respondents
- But not of sufficient size to give reliable estimates of ethnic minority political attitudes and behaviour

Ethnic minorities

- Ethnic minorities make up an increasing proportion of the electorate, probably around 8% in 2010
- Geographically concentrated, especially in metropolitan areas of England
- Small numbers in the main BES (around 200 in 2010)
- ‘Booster’ sample of minorities in 1997 BES to permit a more detailed study but no major study since then

Why study ethnic minorities?

- Voting patterns are very different from those of majority group
- Influences on vote also seem to be different, so interesting academic puzzles
- Wider social justice and practical concerns about integration/exclusion of minorities and their political responses (eg protest or withdrawal)

Aims of EMBES

- To conduct a nationally-representative post-election probability sample of the main established ethnic minorities – people of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Black African background
- To harmonize with main British Election Survey (which we use to examine attitudes and behaviour of the White British majority group)
- To help understand the political integration or exclusion of ethnic minorities in Britain today
- NOT intended to investigate extremism – extremists don't answer surveys

Major focus on

- Registration
- Turnout
- Vote choice
- Other forms of political participation (eg protest)
- Trust in Parliament
- Satisfaction with democracy
- Sense of British identity

Major explanatory themes

- Attitudes to political issues, eg the economy, war in Afghanistan, multiculturalism
- Perceptions of the parties and leaders
- Feelings of relative deprivation and experiences of discrimination
- Bridging and bonding social capital
- Ethnic mobilization

Plan of the afternoon

- Gemma on registration and turnout
- Anthony on the ethnic agenda
- David on vote choice
- Anthony on satisfaction with democracy
- General discussion

Design 1

- Stand-alone survey rather than a booster to the main BES (ie separate sample design etc)
- Nationally-representative probability sample with face-to-face interviewing
- Clustered, stratified design with over-sampling in high EM density areas and exclusion of lowest density areas (< 2% EM)
- PAF used as sample frame
- LSOAs were the PSUs (unlike main BES)
- Initial screening of addresses

Design 2

- 30,000 addresses issued for screening
- In 620 PSUs
- £20 conditional incentive offered to participants
- 50 minute questionnaire, administered by CAPI with a self-completion module for confidential items
- Translations into main languages available
- Around half items exact replications of those in main BES, and a few replicated from the small 1997 ethnic minority module
- Short mailback questionnaire – variable names indicate whether in BES or mailback

Language and translation

- Interviews in English, but
 - Translators (over 12) within household allowed
 - Interviewer allowed to translate but no special arrangements for bilingual interviews provided
- Paper versions of the questionnaire in:
 - Punjabi (Urdu script)
 - Punjabi (Gurmukhi script)
 - Urdu
 - Hindi
 - Gujarati
 - Bengali

Outcome

- 2787 respondents in total (including some from mixed and other backgrounds who had been indicated as belonging to one of the 5 target groups at screening)
- Response rate of 58 – 62% (depending on method of treating those with unknown ethnicity from the screening exercise)
- Poor response to mailback – only 975 returned

Sample characteristics

	EMBES	BES
White British	0	3126
Other white	0	57
Mixed	113	32
Indian	587	52
Pakistani	668	17
Bangladeshi	270	8
Black Caribbean	598	31
Black African	525	38
Other	26	59

Our theoretical approach

Prior values and orientations (cf loyalty)	Position in British society/interests and political demands	Treatment by British society	Individual and collective resources	Outcomes
Commitment to democratic values	Class interests and other 'mainstream' concerns	Labour market discrimination	Individual resources (money, skills/political knowledge and time)	Democratic engagement, eg participation in national and local elections
Commitment to British society (national identity and patriotism)	Cultural demands, eg for right to wear traditional dress	Other areas of discrimination, eg by police and courts	Acculturation (eg fluency in English)	Other forms of standard engagement, eg peaceful protest
Motives for migration	Racial demands, eg for equality of opportunity	Social rejection and prejudice	Bridging and bonding social capital	Withdrawal (lack of interest)
Orientation to origin country	Religious concerns, eg over war in Afghanistan	Political exclusion (eg lack of substantive or descriptive representation)	Collective resources, eg ethnic solidarity	Hostility and willingness to resort to non-democratic means
Ethnic media consumption	Relative deprivation	Access to citizenship and voting rights	Ethnic mobilization	

Questionnaire content 1 – common questions with BES

- Standard questions covering ‘outcomes’ eg turnout, vote choice, political participation, satisfaction with democracy
- Standard questions on explanatory variables eg perceptions/evaluations of parties and leaders, attitudes to main issues, political knowledge, political efficacy, demographics
- Questions added to main BES to provide comparability with EMBES, eg on improving opportunities for Blacks and Asians

Questionnaire content 2 – new ethnic-specific questions

- Additional demographics
- Ethnic and religious identities
- Acculturation and attitudes towards integration
- Experiences of discrimination
- Attitudes to ethnic issues
- Bridging and bonding social capital
- Mobilization

Demographics

- Own, mother's and father's country of birth (used for constructing generations and distinctions within the Indian and Black African categories) [bq102, eq52_f, bq52_m]
- Contacts with origin country and interest in home country politics [eq54_1, eq56]
- Reasons for coming to live in Britain [eq60_1a, eq60_2q, eq60_3a etc]
- Main language spoken at home [eq61_1]
- British and foreign qualifications [eq63, eq64_1 etc]
- Ownership of workplace [eq68]

Identities and group consciousness

- ‘Moreno’ questions on ethnic and British identity, also religious and ethnic identity [eq16a, eq16b, eq16c]
- How much you feel in common with your ethnic or religious group, or with Britain [eq17, eq18, eq19]
- Feelings of relative deprivation [bq18_1a, bq18_2a]

Acculturation and attitudes to integration

- Do you or your family send Christmas cards, wear poppy on remembrance day, etc [eq23_1 to eq13_6]
- Orientations to maintaining own culture/British culture [eq22_1, eq22_2, bq72_2] – cf Berry's typology
- English language fluency [eq61_3]

Discrimination

- Experiences of discrimination over last 5 years, reasons and areas (borrowed from Canadian Ethnic Diversity Survey) [eq37 to eq40k]

Attitudes

- Attitudes towards affirmative action [bq72_1]
- Sharia law [eq32]
- To people wearing different types of dress [eq31_1 to eq31_5]
- Social distance [eq33_1 to eq33_4]
- Support for violent demonstrations [eq34 to eq36_2e]

Bridging and bonding social capital

- Membership of organizations, churches, workplaces and their ethnic compositions [eq41 etc]
- Ethnic composition of friends and neighbours [eq46_1 etc]

Mobilization

- Church, friend persuaded you to vote [eq47, bq55_1a to bq55_1g]
- Party campaigned for Black and Asian votes [eq20_1]
- Party campaigned for votes of prejudiced [eq21_1]
- Contacted by party [bq86_1 to bq86_2m]
- Ethnic canvasser [eq50a to eq50i]