

Runnymede Perspectives

Race and Elections

Edited by Omar Khan and Kjartan Sveinsson

Runnymede: Intelligence for a Multi-ethnic Britain

Runnymede is the UK's leading independent thinktank on race equality and race relations. Through high-quality research and thought leadership, we:

- Identify barriers to race equality and good race relations;
- Provide evidence to support action for social change;
- Influence policy at all levels.

Runnymede

St Clement's Building,
London School of Economics,
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE
T 020 7377 9222
E info@runnymedetrust.org

www.runnymedetrust.org

Disclaimer

This publication is part of the Runnymede Perspectives series, the aim of which is to foment free and exploratory thinking on race, ethnicity and equality. The facts presented and views expressed in this publication are, however, those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the Runnymede Trust.

ISBN: 978-1-909546-08-0

Published by Runnymede in April 2015, this document is copyright © Runnymede 2015. Some rights reserved.

Open access. Some rights reserved.

The Runnymede Trust wants to encourage the circulation of its work as widely as possible while retaining the copyright. The trust has an open access policy which enables anyone to access its content online without charge. Anyone can download, save, perform or distribute this work in any format, including translation, without written permission. This is subject to the terms of the Creative Commons Licence Deed: Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivative Works 2.0 UK: England & Wales. Its main conditions are:

- You are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work;
- You must give the original author credit;
- You may not use this work for commercial purposes;
- You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

You are welcome to ask Runnymede for permission to use this work for purposes other than those covered by the licence. Runnymede is grateful to Creative Commons for its work and its approach to copyright. For more information please go to www.creativecommons.org



Contents

Foreword Hugh Muir	2
Introduction: Race and Elections in 2015 and Beyond Omar Khan	4
1. Ethnic Minorities at the Ballot Box Anthony Heath	6
2. Ethnic Minorities and Political Parties: Challenges and Dilemmas Shamit Saggarr	8
3. Britain's Far Right and the 2015 General Election: A View from History Nigel Copsey	11
4. Three Identity Divides that will Help Decide Election 2015 Rob Ford	13
5. The Rise of UKIP: Challenges for Anti-Racism Stephen Ashe	15
6. Religious Political Mobilisation of British Ethnic Minorities Maria Sobolewska	18
7. One Foot in the Door: Ethnic Minorities and the House of Commons Nicole Martin	21
8. Registration and Race: Achieving Equal Political Participation Omar Khan	24
9. The 2015 Election: BME Groups in Scotland Nasar Meer and Tim Peace	26
Appendix 1: Biographical Notes on the Contributors	30
Appendix 2: Black and Minority Ethnic Demographic Change, 2001-2021	32

Foreword

It is untrue to say our politicians cannot agree on anything, for they agree that the election of May 7 2015 will be the most important in a generation. In keeping with our fiercely partisan politics, each has distinct reasons for believing that to be the case.

Most also agree that one of the most urgent requirements of those who scrap for votes – currently and in the future – is a better understanding of how race and culture now impacts on the British electoral process. Once they had a working knowledge. But with fast moving demographic re-alignment in towns, cities and hamlets around the country, the tectonic plates are shifting. Around them they see ties loosening, traditions eroding, certainties unravelling.

With ethnic minorities projected to make up a quarter or more of Britain's population by 2051, compared with 8% in 2001, the parties do understand that new thinking is required; not just by those that wish to represent, but by those who aspire to form governments and municipal administrations. They know that the need to grasp new realities is greater than ever. And yet - here is the oddity - none can really be said to have risen to what could become a life-or-death challenge. The loser on May 8 may rue that failure as an opportunity squandered.

Talk to Labour officials and they will emphasise the importance of the party continuing to appeal to the majority of Britain's voting minorities. These are ties going back over a half a century and replicated down generations.

But they will know of grassroots disgruntlement that the relationship has been left untended. The party promises that if elected in May, it would enact a radical plan to tackle race inequality. But in the interim there are concerns that Miliband's Labour has done too little to address the specific problems of traditionally supportive minorities for fear of losing more support among white working class communities. Concerns that the party has been reluctant to boost minority representation within parliament with the same determination that led to the increase of more female Labour MPs via all women shortlists. In April, Diane Abbott warned her party that the Conservatives are on their way to overtaking Labour when it comes to electing more black and Asian MPs.

Labour faces questions connected with the pronounced shift of minorities from inner cities into the suburbs. Will those who supported Labour maintain that allegiance, or will they absorb the outlooks of neighbours who might support other parties?

The Conservatives also have much thinking to do. The Tories secured just 16% of the minority vote in 2010. In a time of political plenty, such underperformance was regrettable, no more. But with the shrinking of the traditional Tory vote reservoir in white, middle England and the projected demographic shift of minorities into Tory heartlands, party bosses understand that their position is not sustainable.

Are minorities conservative? Many, many are. The pollster Lord Ashcroft and others have produced research showing the relative extent to which some minority communities are more likely to connect with the Tory message than others. The key problem for the party is branding. In the years of political plenty, it didn't matter numerically that the Tories presented as uncomfortable and hostile to diversity. It carried the millstone of Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech - despite Powell's immediate dismissal by Edward Heath. There was the campaign in Smethwick in the 1964 General Election, with its unofficial slogan "If you want nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour". There was the tacit approval of Thatcherite right wingers for backbenchers who would occasionally make the news with racist remarks. There was Thatcher herself, dog whistling with talk of Britain being "swamped" by those of alien cultures.

Marketeers like brands. They communicate almost subliminally the form and shape and values of the product on offer. A positive branding endures. But so does a negative one. I once discussed this with Grant Shapps, the Conservative party chairman. He seemed puzzled that so few minorities felt able to embrace the Tory brand. I have to take my hat off to you, I told him. Given the conservative instincts of so many minorities - people who

exhort their own self reliance, people who revere family, church and institutions - for you to pick up so few votes from them is virtually an act of genius.

So the Tories have been thinking, as a sailor will think when the boat has sprung a leak. They have 18 ethnic minority candidates in held seats, compared - at the time of writing - with Labour's 19. And they have been doing things selected minorities might like; more action regarding possible corruption on the totemic Stephen Lawrence case and a thorough review of stop and search by the police. A reduction in air passenger duty, allowing minority Britons to take cheaper flights back to south Asia and the Caribbean. Action to stop the banks moving out of the remittance market used by UK Somalians to send money home to their families.

But if only it were that easy. Here's a conundrum still baffling Tories; how to be liberal enough to negate the negative branding and build minority support, without appearing so liberal that they lose the middle class right and the white working class vote to UKIP. How to look tough on immigration without being accused of an attack on difference? Problems like this have been identified by the party but require attention and sustained determination from the top to achieve solution. Thus far, they haven't had it.

Does this represent an opportunity for the smaller parties? Perhaps, but with the Liberal Democrats in retrenchment, few believe this will be the time for it to deal with a lamentable record in terms of race and front line political representation. It too has a branding problem; not Tory hostility - just the impression of cliquism and all smothering apathy. Addressing that might one day transport the party to a healthier state.

There are competing currents. Some argue that in the politics of 21st century Britain, race matters less in terms of belonging and party allegiance than class. But perhaps that is the rose tinted view. And still there are specific communities who are communally and collectively ill served by the way we do our politics. For them, the argument as to whether their disadvantage stems from race or class seems moot.

For all that - survey the landscape, read the varied and hugely informative series of papers compiled within this report by the excellent Runnymede Trust - and now must strike you as a significant moment; when the votes of those who live outside the walls of white Middle England matter, and increasingly so. What altruism has failed to achieve over all these years, numbers will.

Hugh Muir, Guardian

Introduction: Race and Elections in 2015 and Beyond

Omar Khan

In an election with the greatest uncertainty of outcome in living memory, the different voting behaviour of various groups in the UK is particularly salient. In this volume Runnymede has gathered together influential academics' analysis on the role of race, ethnicity and religion in this and previous elections.

For decades Black and minority ethnic (BME) voting patterns have not been a high priority for political parties and the wider public. The first BME MP (Dadabhai Naoroji) was voted in for the constituency of Finsbury Central over 120 years ago and yet there has been comparatively little progress in this time for BME politicians and voters alike. Nevertheless as various contributions to this volume make clear, there are historically important trends around the relationship between race, ethnicity and mainstream politics – notably the electoral weakness of the far right and the dominance of the Labour party among BME voters – that continue to exert significant influence over election outcomes, in 2015 and beyond.

In recent years the changing demographic profile of Britain's BME populations has seen a significant shift in their importance in electoral politics for all parties. In particular the rate of growth in the ethnic minority population has been quite significant. From less than 5% nationally (3 million people) in 1991, the BME population in 2011 rose to 13% – at 8 million, equivalent to the combined population of Scotland and Wales.

Of course this population is not evenly spread, and so does not equally affect parliamentary constituencies across the UK. In 1991, there were only 7 constituencies in which more than 40% of the population was Black and minority ethnic. According to the 2011 Census there are now 49 such seats. In 1992 the Conservatives could only lose 7 seats by failing to win over many ethnic minority voters, but in 2010 and beyond, the Conservatives could lose 50 or more such seats. This is perhaps most marked in London, where the Conservatives won a commanding majority of seats up until 1992, but have seen previously safe seats become marginal. In Margaret Thatcher's old seat of Finchley and Golders Green, the BME population is now 33%. The national average is about 13%.

It is not just in cities such as London, Birmingham or Bradford, where the large BME population can influence who gets elected. There have been notable increases in suburbia and smaller university towns. In 1981, there were 50 seats with 15% BME residents. By 2011, there were 150 seats with 15% BME residents. Inside this 150 are seats such as Cambridge, Halifax, and Richmond Park (all 18%). Seats such as Beaconsfield, Gloucester, Ipswich, Cheadle, and Leamington and Warwick are just outside the 150 (all around 12%). For comparison of scale, the Labour Party target list for the 2015 General Election is 106 seats. The Conservative Party strategy for the 2015 General Election is to hold 40 marginals while gaining 40 marginals.

Furthermore, there are fewer seats where BME voters have no impact at all on election outcomes. As recently as 2001, around half of all seats had a BME population of under 3%; in 2011 the equivalent seat had a BME population of 5-6%. These might not seem like large proportions, but in marginal seats with majorities in the thousands or hundreds, the BME vote will increasingly influence outcomes: Operation Black Vote research shows that there are now 167 seats where the BME population exceeds the current MP's majority. Estimates also suggest that the rural BME population will double by 2050.

The increasing dispersal of the BME population is matched and partly driven by the increasing diversity within the BME population. While the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study showed that the larger ethnic minority groups continued to disproportionately (68%) support Labour, there were some signs of differences among some populations (notably middle-class Indians). The impact of more recent migrants is only beginning to be felt electorally.

What, then, are the parties doing about this? In the 2010 party manifestos, there was only one mention of race and race equality – a Liberal Democrat commitment to name-blind CVs, lost in the coalition bargaining. Under the coalition, race and race equality have not been directly addressed, and has even been rolled back, although we have of course witnessed the rise of immigration as arguably the most politically salient issue.

Across the Atlantic, Barack Obama's success in building a winning coalition including large majorities of the rising ethnic minority vote has seen the Republicans reach out again, especially to Latino voters, to neutralise what might become an inbuilt Democratic electoral advantage. Those familiar with Canada will know that right-of-centre politicians have done much better in appealing to the children and grandchildren of immigrants.

While demographic change in the UK has been notable for a decade now, it has taken some time for political parties to catch up to this change. A key reason for this is that BME people compose a smaller share of the electorate than they do of the overall population, mainly because of the relatively younger age of BME residents in Britain, but also because of their lower registration rates and entitlement to vote among some overseas citizens.

This lag in the full impact of BME voting power will soon change. Among the 60+ population, only 5% are BME, but of those under 18 over 20% are BME. By 2020, 10% of the 60-64 population will be BME, and nearly 20% of those 40 and under.

Partly in response to change, the Conservatives have dramatically increased their number of ethnic minority MPs and candidates in winnable seats, meaning that they will more or less match Labour's total in 2015 from a base of none before 2005. For the 2015 General Election, the three major parties made significantly greater commitments to addressing racial inequalities, or otherwise appealing to ethnic minority voters, in their respective manifestos than they had done in 2010. However, the Conservatives' proposals are relatively limited, restricted to proposing an increase in the numbers of Black and minority ethnic police officers, albeit through new recruitment schemes which don't appear to target minorities.

The Liberal Democrat manifesto goes considerably further, with proposals to enact the remaining unimplemented clauses of the 2010 Equality Act, to promote BAME entrepreneurship, and to monitor and tackle the BAME pay gap – although there is no mention of the BAME employment gap. It also proposes to tackle discrimination and ethnic inequalities within the criminal justice system and policing. The Labour Party on the other hand has produced a separate BAME manifesto which makes a wider range of commitments, including proposals for a cross-government race equality strategy as well as measures on the pay gap, long-term youth unemployment and hate crimes. It also refers to the need for the police and judiciary to represent the

communities they serve, though the document is somewhat lacking in detail on how they will achieve all these objectives. It remains to be seen whether these commitments will be enough to convince BME voters in 2015, and whether these are the key concerns for the next generation of BME voters.

As with all voters, BME voters are motivated by their political attitudes and values. While many such attitudes are shared across ethnicity, two issues are distinctive for ethnic minority voters. First is that unemployment is a particularly notable concern, a fact that is less surprising given the higher rates and future risk of unemployment among all BME groups, from 16 year old NEETs to Oxbridge graduates to currently employed professionals. Second, all BME groups suggest they still feel racism affects their life chances, with over a third of Black Caribbean people reporting a *personal* experience of discrimination.

This explains the focus in many contributors on discrimination and the continued effects of past party political responses to it. Furthermore, there are concerns that Islamophobia has passed what Baroness Warsi called the 'dinner table test', and that anti-immigration rhetoric can allow for wider questioning about the place of Black and minority ethnic people in the UK. In response to these concerns, Runnymede organised an academic forum meeting at the University of Manchester at which Stephen Ashe, Nigel Copsey and Rob Ford presented papers that were adapted for their contributions to this volume. Given the upcoming election, we felt it was important to gather further contributions from the leading UK academics to ensure that media and political party discussions on race and elections was informed by the evidence. This evidence indicates continuities with the past, as well as significant social change among the increasingly diverse Black and minority ethnic population in Britain.

All the parties need to reconsider their strategies to respond to this change, and whether their previous or current policies will be a barrier or incentive for BME voters in 2015 and beyond. Whatever the parties' respective strategies for winning as many seats as possible in the uncertain election of 2015, if they wait till 2020 to develop a plan for the various Black and minority ethnic groups living across the UK, it may be too late.

1. Ethnic Minorities at the Ballot Box

Anthony Heath

Nuffield College, Oxford and University of Manchester

It is well known that ethnic minorities tend to support Labour in much the way that the traditional working class used to support Labour back in the 1950s and 1960s, providing Labour with its safest seats. Nowadays many of the safest Labour seats, such as Stephen Timms' seat of East Ham, have very large ethnic minority populations. At the 2010 General Election ethnic minorities made up around two-thirds of the East Ham electorate, and Stephen Timms won 70% of the vote for Labour.

However, minorities are not a monolithic Labour-supporting bloc vote which can be delivered automatically at every general election. There are considerable differences between ethnic minorities, with voters of Black African or Black Caribbean background showing the highest levels of support for Labour. Voters with roots in Bangladesh or Pakistan have been somewhat less inclined to vote Labour, and at the 2010 general election around a quarter of the voters of Pakistani background supported the Liberal Democrats, almost certainly reflecting Muslims' unease about the Labour Party's support for the military adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan. And Britain's largest ethnic minority – the Indians (and particularly those from East Africa) – are the minority most likely to be supportive of the Conservatives. But even voters of Indian background gave only a quarter of their votes at the 2010 general election to the Conservatives compared with 61% voting Labour, a lead for Labour of 37 points – far larger than Labour's lead in the working class.

This support for Labour, rather like that of the traditional working class in the 1950s and 1960s, does not appear to be rooted in preferences for specific Labour policies (or opposition to specific Conservative ones). Rather it appears to be based on the general, and largely accurate, perception that Labour has in the past been the party most likely to protect minority interests, whereas the Conservatives in contrast are not seen as a party which is especially interested in helping minorities.

This shared perception that Labour is the party most likely to look after ethnic minority interests is

grounded on the historical record. All the legislation passed by Parliament to protect minorities against racial discrimination and to promote their opportunities within Britain have been passed under Labour governments. This applies to the 1965, 1968 and 1976 Race Relations Acts, the 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act, the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act, and the 2010 Equality Act, all enacted under Labour administrations. The 1998 Human Rights Act, passed under a Labour government, is also often seen as an act which has helped minorities. Many of these acts were opposed by sections of the Conservative party, and the Conservatives' 2010 manifesto promised to repeal the 1998 Human Rights Act (and to replace it with a UK Bill of rights). In contrast, Conservative governments have more often introduced legislation to restrict access to British citizenship and to make more difficult migration from the countries where Britain's main minorities have their roots. One important exception should be noted, however. The Conservatives under Edward Heath did grant entry to Britain for the East African Asians when they were expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972. It is not perhaps coincidental that these East African Asians are the group nowadays most likely to support the Conservatives.

However, minority support for Labour cannot be taken for granted. This was shown very clearly by the Respect Party. In 2005 George Galloway, who had been expelled from the Labour party for his strident opposition to the Iraq war, won the Bethnal Green and Bow constituency, and subsequently and sensationally overturned a safe Labour majority at the Bradford West by-election in 2012. More generally there is something of a tension between minorities' support for Labour at the ballot box and their policy preferences on specific issues (such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan), a tension which gives the possibility of a realignment of voting patterns.

This tension is not limited to divergences with Labour's former policies on Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, the policy agendas of minorities are not as distinctively left-wing as might be expected. On the classic issue of cutting taxes versus increasing spending on health and social services, for example, all the main ethnic minority groups are actually more

in favour of cutting taxes than is the electorate as a whole, with the South Asian groups being particularly distant from Labour's policies. Furthermore, on other topics like immigration there are large differences between the different minorities, with Indians being notable for their lack of support for high rates of immigration.

More generally, many members of ethnic minorities resemble the 'aspirational' voters whom the Conservative party has often successfully appealed to, and whom New Labour set out to woo with their move towards the centre of the political spectrum. So although minorities might look like traditional working-class Labour supporters if we look only at their voting patterns, more detailed examination of their policy preferences suggest that they have much more in common with the aspiring, upwardly mobile voters whom New Labour set out to win.

Migrants themselves are rarely representative of the population in their country of origin. Indeed, the more difficult it is to migrate, the more distinctive the migrant tends to be in terms of resourcefulness, drive and ambition from those who stayed behind in the country of origin. In the jargon of economics, migrants tend to be 'positively selected', and there is considerable evidence now that migrants from China, India, and parts of Africa are very highly selected (whereas migrants from Europe, for whom it is much easier to come to Britain, are more likely to be typical of their country of origin). Since many migrants found their opportunities to progress in Britain were blocked by lack of language skills or by racial discrimination, their aspirations have often been transferred to their children – and we indeed find that the children of migrants tend to have higher levels of educational aspiration and are more likely to progress to university than are their white British peers from similar social class origins.

It is probably fair to say then that minorities – both the migrants and their children – in many respects are aspirational voters eager for social mobility, if not for themselves then for their children. Many will also be employed in the private sector or be self-employed, and relatively few are members of Trades Unions – although once again this will vary between as well as within minorities.

Some commentators have even suggested that ethnic minorities have a 'natural affinity' with the Conservative party, but offsetting these affinities are two divergences with other policy areas. First of all, minorities tend to be much less interested in the European question than are the white British. This

probably tells us more about the kind of white people who are exercised about Europe than it does about minorities: European integration tends to be an issue which worries older generations, brought up at a time when Britain still had an empire and thought of itself as a world power. So the anti-European messages emanating from UKIP and the Euro-sceptic wing of the Conservative party are not likely to have much positive appeal to minority voters.

Second, and perhaps most important, all ethnic minority groups share a concern to be offered equal opportunities in British society. There is little evidence that minorities want special treatment to make up for a history of discrimination in the way that some African Americans do. There is absolutely no appetite among British ethnic minorities for quotas or for 'positive discrimination'. Rather, minorities in Britain want to achieve educational and economic success for themselves and their children on their own merits. It is a desire for a level playing field, an archetypal British concern. Any party which shows an appetite for trying to make a reality of the British dream of equality of opportunity is likely to find a receptive audience among ethnic minorities.

Further reading

Many of the topics briefly covered here are dealt with in greater depth in:

Heath, Anthony F, Stephen Fisher, Gemma Rosenblatt, David Sanders and Maria Sobolewska (2013) *The Political Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heath, Anthony F and Yael Brinbaum (eds) (2014) *Unequal Attainments: Ethnic Educational Inequalities in Ten Western Countries*. Proceedings of the British Academy 196. Oxford: OUP for the British Academy.

2. Ethnic Minorities and Political Parties: Challenges and Dilemmas

Shamit Saggar

University of Essex

The bulk of South Asian, African and Caribbean origin Britons trace their British roots to a time in the mid to late twentieth century. This is when either they, or their parents, or their grandparents, made the trek to Britain as permanent settlers. Britain was a rather different country then: it was awash with strong anti-immigrant public sentiment, early prospects for the newcomers were challenging at best, their potential contribution to society was scarcely noticed, and the country's major political parties reacted with indifference or arrogance.

Contesting the past

The period between the 1964 Smethwick episode and the 1968 Kenyan Asian crisis and the outspoken warnings of Enoch Powell, set the tone. Mainstream parties saw black and brown immigrants as a way to gather votes cheaply – ensuring that immigrants were viewed and discussed as the sources of social problems. First impressions counted in the minds of the immigrants and have contributed to a bitter legacy as a result.

British domestic party politics has undoubtedly been shaped by the legacy of Powell in the half century since. On the right, Conservative nationalists and social authoritarians have been influential and have clung onto a 'myth of invitation' argument. Since much of the immigration from the New Commonwealth had not been the product of explicit government policy, let alone endorsed by parliament, Powellites asserted that the migrants were and would remain an illegitimate presence. Older generations of voters on the right have thus tended to be prepared to tolerate – guardedly and at a distance – the ethnic diversity brought by mass immigration whilst not accepting its basis.

This has left open the opportunity to contest the past, itself a deeply divisive signal. Conservative liberal modernisers have thus had to address fears about the pace of cultural change as well as lingering grievances about its validity.

Meanwhile, for the Labour Party and the left, mass immigration has given rise to a substantial set of arguments about the limits of cultural pluralism and

impacts on national cohesion. The left has mostly enjoyed the electoral backing of New Commonwealth immigrants and their offspring, leading, in some places, to a heavy reliance on these voters and even voting blocs. Labour's core challenge has been to embed itself as the natural party of ethnic minorities much in the same way that it was once thought of as the natural party for, and of, the working class.

Electorally speaking, the task of successive Tories in appealing to migrants has been an uphill task from the outset. The party's motives, character and history are quickly dragged up, with a suggestion that the Conservatives have not done enough to repudiate their Powellite past. Writing in the run-up to the 2015 General Election, Rob Ford, a widely respected follower on the parties' fortunes in appealing to migrant voters, concluded that:

The first wave of migrants who arrived in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s have never forgotten the hostility stoked in particular by Enoch Powell and his allies in the Conservative Party, nor the passage by the Labour Party of the first wave of anti-discrimination legislation. The fierce arguments of the period forged an image of the parties in these voters' minds, with Labour then seen as the party which protects migrant and minority interests in contrast to the Conservatives. This image has survived to the present, and even been passed to second and third generation ethnic minority voters with no memory of the period when it was formed. (Ford, 2015)

Binary political choices

The party system itself poorly reflects and even distorts the nature of political choice facing ethnic minorities. This is because, as subsequent generations of ethnic minorities have become established, the factual picture describing their circumstances and outlooks has become ever-more heterogeneous. Meanwhile, parties mostly view minorities through homogenising spectacles, loosely equating ethnicity with disadvantage or exclusion of some kind.

Black and brown minorities occupy a broad spectrum of social, economic and cultural positions.

A compelling evidence base points to Indians and Chinese groups in general pulling ahead of most other minorities in educational and employment terms. However, the increasing educational success of all minority groups, through compulsory school attainment and higher education participation rates in particular, which now stand comfortably above the national average. Within all groups – though more notably among Indian and Chinese Britons – there are groups with rising levels of material prosperity, widening of occupational and social circles, increasing levels of residential dispersal, and an increase in marriage across ethnic lines. Yet all groups struggle to convert their educational success into commensurate employment outcomes, and all still have higher rates of unemployment, particularly for Black Caribbean, Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi people. While all groups affirm a British identity, on some attitudinal measures or in terms of marriage across ethnic lines some groups have lower rates of integration as well as reduced entry into recognised routes of progression, although there is some evidence of recent accelerated gains for Bangladeshis in Britain.

Political parties have generally not been alive to this layered and nuanced picture. Their reticence or discomfort is doubly frustrating because the signature lesson of party leadership and management in Britain in the past twenty years has been the enormous degree to which parties have managed, and accepted the need, to reach beyond their traditional base. Labour and the Tories have fully grasped the idea that voters in general are arranged along a series of overlapping continuums that reflect *inter alia* socio-economic realities, personal aspiration and social attitudes. In other words, there is every reason not to appeal to voters as members of two discrete, static camps. And yet this out-dated, binary logic remains cast in concrete in respect to campaigns to attract minority voters – due, in the main, to a sense that race remains an electoral trump card.

Westminster: the cockpit of democracy

If ethnic minority voters have been only partially integrated into British mass electoral democracy, what can be said about the function of political parties in political recruitment to Westminster and in shaping access to executive office? The picture here is rather better in that party membership and candidacy increasingly reflect a broader distribution of political attitudes and preferences.

Britain elected its first cohort of ethnic minority MPs in modern times in the mid 1980s. This all-Labour group was spawned from a then-strong alignment between the party's hard left factions committed to tackling structural inequalities and the ambitions of a rising second generation of minority politicians. Thereafter Labour's tightened its grip on minority representation at Westminster for more than fifteen years, giving rise to an impression of a natural affinity with Labour accompanied by a stand-off-ish posture by their Tory rivals. The breakthrough for the Tories came a full decade later, and even then only a small trickle of black and Asians got as far as Westminster.

A particular pattern stood out early on whereby minority elected representation was overwhelmingly channelled into areas of relatively high ethnic minority residential and voter concentration. An obvious colour-coding of constituencies was at play: minority hopefuls focused on their chances in these seats; such seats tended to be Labour strongholds thus carrying big prizes for those selected; and the ethnically and racially-oriented concerns of minority electors in such places were given prominence over the full array of political issues. Only one Labour minority MP (the late Ashok Kumar) managed to defy this unwritten code in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland. And the code was further reinforced as a result of concerns about the continuing electoral liability of ethnic minority candidates in 'snow-white' constituencies. Several rows in Battersea, Cheltenham and elsewhere highlighted this anxiety, coupled with another regarding how selectors might favour particular groups in seats where many different minority groups had settled and might be competing for a single vacant nomination, e.g. Southall and Bethnal Green and Bow.

In the period from 2005 onwards the bias towards Labour in minority representation in parliament has been diluted significantly. In the 2010 general election in particular, the Conservatives surged both in terms of minorities and women who succeeded in gaining nominations in either safe or reasonably attractive seats. The Tories going into the 2015 contest are likely to improve in their current tally of 11, and some estimates suggest that, if the party were to win an outright parliamentary majority, this total could rise to 19. Given that Labour currently has 16 such MPs, the symbolic importance of overtaking the standard bearer cannot be downplayed.

The Tory catch-up, if it can be dubbed as such, is attributable to two main factors. First, it reflects the considerable effort that has been invested by the national party bureaucracy in professionalising

the selection processes and practices of local constituency associations. This has often been viewed locally as unwanted interference, and alien, in what is after all a federally organised national political party. Secondly, the recruitment of a fresher, more feminine and black and brown cast list to fight in winnable seats has been an integral element of the modernisation tone set by the Cameron-Osborne-Hague-Maude quad at the helm of the party. Modernisation may have stalled on many occasions but it is likely to deliver an irreversible shift in the sociological composition of the party's parliamentary wing.

Both of these factors have not been without risks. Local party backlashes have occurred regularly signifying the disruption intended and felt. Equally, the direction of travel has been keenly fought over, in a party that is struggling with its long post-Thatcher legacy.

Diversity and difference

With the convergence between the major parties' ethnic composition at elite level, an old debate is now expected to come to the fore. This centres on: a) what difference will a less-white parliament result in? and b) how should minority MPs behave and be thought of politically?

The answers to these two questions will depend on how the major parties address two mostly unrelated matters. First, issues of party discipline are likely to be more important in the next parliament than the current one. This is because winning majorities are simply less attainable today. Therefore, in some cases the ethnicity of an MP – and indeed any individual-level characteristic – may be cast as especially relevant in securing their support, particularly if standard party loyalties come under heavy pressure. Second, MPs' division lobby behaviour on certain issues is likely to pose as many questions as it answers. Traditional bread and butter political issues such as deficit reduction or NHS funding can be interpreted to more easily address the needs of discrete population sub-groups. So squeezes on public spending are rapidly viewed through the lens of ethnicity to highlight which groups use or are reliant on which services. Health service priorities also contain many potential ethnically-related prisms.

The next parliament can, however, point in a different direction. Its greater ethnic diversity can be a powerful force to interrogate political difference by focusing on the overlaps and shared understandings that exist across ethnic lines. This principle then enables minority and majority ethnic group MPs to

support tailored services and revised priorities in a way that commands greater legitimacy. Ethnicity, in other words, is respected for the twist that it brings in describing political outlooks and supporting political choices.

Reference

Ford, R. (2015) *Migrant Voters in the 2015 General Election*. Migrant Rights Network/CoDE, University of Manchester. Available under: http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/files/publications/Migrant_Voters_2015_paper.pdf

3. Britain's Far Right and the 2015 General Election: A View from History

Nigel Copsey

Teesside University

Introduction

Fractured more today than for many years - possibly more fractured than ever before - Britain's far right is in absolute disarray. If in 2010 the British National Party (BNP) had returned its best ever set of general election results, five years later, the BNP has foundered on the very same rock as its predecessors. Britain's far right may have succeeded in winning representation to the European Parliament in 2009, but like the National Front before it, the BNP failed to navigate the more tortuous passage to Westminster. Left rudderless by unremitting internal strife (in 2014 Nick Griffin was finally ousted as leader and expelled), and buffeted both by the rise of UKIP and the headline-grabbing activities of the English Defence League (EDL), the BNP has now well and truly run aground.

A miscellany of fragments has emerged from the wreckage. While history never quite repeats itself, parallels have inevitably been drawn with the fragmentation of the far right following the National Front's abysmal showing in the 1979 general election. Recent developments have been watched with a combination of delight (particularly at Nick Griffin's fall from grace) and concern. Some in the media have viewed the proliferation of far-right groups (over two dozen at my last count) as an indicator of far-right strength. If truth be told, this is more a marker of organisational *weakness*. Having said that, when electoral prospects are so bleak the proclivity of the far right towards combative and violent forms of direct action is probably more likely to increase than decrease (see Goodwin and Evans, 2012). Moreover, as groups vie for hegemony on the far right, some might be tempted to further radicalise as a way to carve out a distinctive identity. Reciprocal radicalisation between the far right and violent Islamism also remains a lingering possibility (even if the dynamics of this 'cumulative extremism' remain poorly understood).¹ Fortunately one can only speculate but what might have happened had the six jihadists succeeded in exploding their homemade bomb at an EDL demonstration in Dewsbury in 2012? What if a far-right group decides to gamble

on more violent tactics against Muslim targets? And yet the horrific murder of Lee Rigby did not usher in a spiral of radicalisation (see Macklin and Busher, 2015; Feldman and Littler, 2014).

The same old story?

As I write, the outcome of the 2015 general election remains impossible to predict. Yet when it comes to the far right, one thing is absolutely certain: its impact at the ballot box will be negligible. So what more needs to be said? The story is an all too familiar one: Britain's far right remains, or so it seems, historically irrelevant. Highly marginal, unimportant in terms of popular support and political significance, its history reads like a classic case of abject political failure. Britain's largest far right organisation, the British Union of Fascists, did not even contest the 1935 general election. That the BNP polled over 563,743 votes in the 2010 general election, an increase of 192,746 on their performance in 2005, should not blind us to the fact that no fewer than 267 of their candidates lost their deposits and their share of the national vote was a paltry 1.9 per cent.

The stock line is that British society, with its liberal traditions of tolerance and civility enjoys immunity to the right-extremist virus that is rarely found elsewhere. Something about 'our history' so the argument runs, makes Britons reluctant to embrace the fascist or far right. There is, as one anti-BNP campaign group had once put it, 'Nothing British about the BNP'.² But are 'British values' so inherently benign?

There is a clear problem with overemphasising tolerance: we turn a blind eye to the racism that runs alongside it. So, we have been told by Nigel Farage, the hard-working Britons that once voted for the BNP, and now UKIP, are not 'real' right-wing racists but just decent folk concerned about 'changes' in their community, concerned about the scale of 'uncontrolled' immigration. When these folk voted for the BNP they did so 'holding their nose' because they did not agree with the BNP's racism.³ Yet aside from begging the question as to what a 'real' racist

is (?), and not wanting to blanket all UKIP voters as 'racist', we will undoubtedly find racism amongst the votes that UKIP have stolen from the far right.

The obvious point to make is that racist expression in British society has not disappeared with the collapse of the BNP (or for that matter, the EDL). In March 2014, in one of his self-congratulatory moments, Nigel Farage remarked that 'I would think we have probably taken a third of the BNP vote directly from them, I don't think anyone has done more, apart from Nick Griffin on *Question Time*, to damage the BNP than UKIP and I am quite proud of that.'⁴ But has Farage really challenged the racism that courses through the veins of some of his supporters?

The bigger picture...

For sure, the far right is part of Britain's national story. It will continue to be part of that national story even when voters abandon it, as they have recently done in their droves – almost 764,000 voters in the 2014 European elections when compared to 2009. Of course election results count, but there is a much bigger picture, and yet it is one which we struggle to see (and no doubt the 2015 general election results will reinforce this myopia). So let us, for a moment, look beyond the ballot-box, and think about historicising the impact of Britain's far right in its broader social and political context.

For a start, there is its impact on immigration control. Thatcher's intervention in this area is one well-known example from the 1970s. There are others of course: the role of the British Brothers' League in the 1905 Aliens Act; or the role played by domestic fascists in the 1930s in deterring the British government from opening the door to 'too many' Jewish refugees; or the part played by local Immigrant Control Associations in encouraging the introduction of immigration controls in 1962. But it is not just in relation to immigration control where we see impact. We also encounter it in relation to legislation restricting fascist activity, such as public order legislation: the 1936 Public Order Act, for example, and subsequent amendments (in 1963 Section 5 of the Public Order Act was strengthened following disturbances between fascists and anti-fascists). No fewer than 430,000 signatures had been collected by the anti-fascist Yellow Star Movement in 1962 calling for legislation against racial incitement. And after Labour came to office, a new offence of incitement to racial hatred was enacted under section 6 of the 1965 Race Relations Act. Providing machinery by which appropriate legal steps could be taken against propaganda of the 'Hitler was Right' type formed part of the Home Secretary's rationale.⁵

History does matter and it tells us that the far right has, at various moments, impacted on British politics and society. Beyond its effects on legislation, let us reflect on the everyday impact upon local communities: the Jewish community in London's East End in the 1930s; its impact upon East London's Bengali community in the 1970s; or more recent interventions in Oldham, Bradford and Burnley. What is the relationship between the far-right presence in such localities and the extent of racial violence? Also consider the impact of the far right in terms of the popular opposition that its activities have given rise to, from Cable Street in 1936 through to Lewisham in 1977 and beyond. The 2015 general election will no doubt bring further electoral reverses to Britain's far right but there is much more to be said about Britain's far right 'fringe' than its interminable inability to make a serious challenge for representation in Westminster.

Notes

1. For the most sophisticated conceptual treatment of 'cumulative extremism' to date, see Macklin and Bushier (2014).
2. 'Nothing British about the BNP' was an online, centre-right campaign group.
3. See Nigel Farage's comments when speaking in March 2014 at a debate at Chatham House.
4. *Ibid.*
5. See Cabinet Memorandum by Home Secretary, 17 February 1965, available online at <http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-120-c-23.pdf>.

References

Feldman, Matthew and Mark Littler (2014)

Tell MAMA Reporting 2013/14: Anti-Muslim Overview, Analysis and 'Cumulative Extremism'. Middlesbrough: Teesside University.

Goodwin, Matthew and Jocelyn Evans (2012)

From Voting to Violence? Far Right Extremism in Britain. London: HOPE not hate/Searchlight Educational Trust.

Macklin, Graham and Joel Bushier (2014)

'Interpreting "cumulative extremism": Six proposals for enhancing conceptual clarity', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 0: 1-22.

Macklin, Graham and Joel Bushier (2014)

'The missing spirals of violence: four waves of movement-counter-movement contest in post-war Britain', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 7(1): 53-68.

4. Three Identity Divides that will Help Decide Election 2015

Rob Ford

University of Manchester

Election 2015 looks set to be the closest, hardest fought and most unpredictable for a generation. Neither of the main two parties has a decisive advantage, while surging support for UKIP in England and the SNP in Scotland has changed the nature of the political competition. Much of the analysis of this close race focuses on the short term cut and thrust of politics – dissecting policy and messaging, and the strengths and weaknesses of leaders. While such things doubtless matter, there are other, longer term forces at work: changes in the composition, values and loyalties of the electorate which will impact on the competition in May, and well beyond. Some of the most important are the identity divides in the British electorate, which are playing an ever more significant role in driving voters' political loyalties: the steady growth in Britain's ethnic minority communities, the emergence of new immigrant minorities arriving as part of the largest wave of migration in British history, and the growing identity divide within the white majority population between those who embrace these changes and those who find them threatening.

Race matters for party politics because white and non-white British voters behave very differently. All of Britain's large ethnic minority communities have a much higher propensity to vote Labour than white voters do, and all tend to shun the Conservatives. As a result, the steady increase in the ethnic diversity of the electorate has important political consequences. Recent analysis by the think tank British Future has suggested that the Conservatives would have won a majority in 2010 if the electorate had the same ethnic mix as in 1992. The sharp rise in the ethnic diversity of London, Manchester, Birmingham and other large cities is an important driver of the long term decline in Conservative prospects in these areas. The big question for the Conservatives in 2015 is whether they can increase their appeal to ethnic minorities to neutralise the electoral cost of rising diversity. The big question for Labour is whether they can retain the loyalty of ethnic minority communities. Such loyalties were frayed by the last Labour government's actions in Iraq and "the war on terror", and research by the Ethnic Minority British Election Study team suggests that partisan attachments to Labour are much

weaker among younger, second and third generation ethnic minority communities.

Over the past decade or so, the long term rise in ethnic diversity triggered by the "first wave" of mass migration to Britain from the Commonwealth in the 1950s and 1960s has been overlaid by a further shift driven by a "second wave" of mass migration. The growth in British migrant communities over the past two decades is the largest in the nation's history, and the most diverse in its origins. Britain now has large and rapidly growing communities from Poland, Nigeria, Lithuania, China, and Somalia, joining the more established communities from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent. The political impact of these communities in 2015 depends heavily on where they come from. Migrants from Commonwealth countries have voting rights from arrival in Britain, and their rapid growth provides an important new electoral constituency, with distinctly liberal views on immigration, race relations and other issues. Migrants from many poorer non-Commonwealth countries such as Somalia or Iran also tend to acquire British citizenship at high rates, and so rapidly enter into the electorate.

Migrants from the new EU member countries of Eastern Europe, however, do not. As a result, this group – who have formed the focus of intense and polarised political debate – have little political voice of their own. Less than 5% of Britain's new Polish community will be eligible to vote in the 2015 election (though all are eligible to vote in local and European elections). This is likely to change over time, however. Migrants of all origins tend to acquire citizenship in growing numbers as they settle and form families – there is already evidence of an acceleration of citizenship grants to Polish migrants in recent Home Office statistics. The politics of the next Parliament may accelerate this – the growing demands for a referendum on Britain's EU membership will increase anxieties among East European migrants that their rights to live and work in Britain may be under threat. This could encourage more to take British citizenship in order to protect the lives they have built here, bringing a new electorate with very distinct views

and experiences on the immigration issue into party politics for future elections.

The unprecedented wave of migration to Britain since the mid-1990s has also helped to politicise a deepening value divide within the native born white majority, between “traditional nationalist” voters who oppose migration as a threat to British identity and a source of economic problems, and “confident cosmopolitan” voters who accept mass migration as a normal part of an outward looking society and a globally integrated economy. This divide is one of generation, education, class and values, splitting younger, middle class, socially liberal university graduates from older, working class, socially conservative voters who left school with few qualifications. A deep division in outlook between these groups has been visible in public opinion for many years, but the sharp rise in immigration, and the emergence of UKIP as the political voice of opposition to it, has greatly increased its relevance to political competition.

This divide will be a key feature in the 2015 election. It cuts across the traditional issues of economics and public services that split Labour and Tory voters, and poses dilemmas for both. In an election as close as this, neither party can afford to lose “traditional nationalist” voters angry over immigration to UKIP. Yet short term appeals to such voters, through promises of swingeing cuts to immigration or action to restrict the social or political rights of migrants, carry their own risks. Parties who define themselves as hostile to immigrants and immigration will struggle to appeal in future to migrant and ethnic minority voters, who will distrust them. The Conservatives already paid this price with “first wave” migrants whose descendents still shun them today. Exclusionary rhetoric and restrictive policy risks alienating second wave migrants in the same fashion.

Placing too much focus on migration and the anxieties of anti-immigration voters also risks alienating the growing young “confident cosmopolitan” electorate – socially liberal university graduates unconcerned by migration, who may perceive parties who place too much emphasis on the issue as intolerant and out of touch with their concerns. The recent surge in support for the Green party has come primarily from this group, who form the opposite end of the identity divide to UKIP.

Identity divides new and old will force tough choices on all the mainstream parties in May 2015. The high electoral salience of immigration, and the rise of UKIP, creates a strong short term pressure to assuage the anxieties of older white “traditional nationalist” voters. Yet any party that adopts an overly restrictive and nationalistic stance on these issues could lose credibility with established ethnic minority voters, new migrant voters and the cosmopolitan young. Although right now all parties worry about appearing too soft on immigration, in the long run the greater risk may come from seeming too tough.

5. The Rise of UKIP: Challenges for Anti-Racism

Stephen Ashe

University of Manchester

Much of the academic, media and political discourse in recent months has focussed on how the Conservative and Labour parties ought to respond to the electoral challenge posed by the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). At a series of conferences and workshops over the past year I have frequently heard it been suggested that the minute that 'You start using the terms racist and racism they [UKIP voters] won't listen to you, they'll shut the door', thus preventing any meaningful discussion of the 'drivers' of UKIP's electoral support. Alongside this suggestion, it has also been argued that the last twenty years has proven that the strategy of condemning extreme right-wing and radical right-wing populist parties does not work. I want to look at the electoral challenge posed by UKIP in terms of what this might mean for those who are looking to oppose UKIP from an anti-racist standpoint. Below I highlight that some of the ways in which UKIP seek to deflect accusations of racism are hardly new. Moreover, it is suggested that we must grasp the forms of 'race talk' and the ways in which certain notions racism operate in the public sphere. Thus, highlighting the ways in which talk around racism is narrowed to the point where structural and systemic racism, as well as everyday and cultural racisms, are denied. Moreover, it is suggested that such denials further contribute to the entrenchment of racial inequality and white privilege.

Shortly after 9-11, the British National Party (BNP) approached representatives of different ethnic minority populations to form an 'anti-Muslim front' (Copsey, 2008). Alongside the party's 'Ethnic Liaison Committee', this was a strategic attempt to deflect accusations of racism. Between 2002 and 2010, 'American Christian', 'Jewish' and 'Sikh' supporters of the BNP regularly appeared on BNP leaflets expressing their 'fears' about 'the Islamification' of Britain. When the Equalities and Human Rights Commission rather belatedly challenged the party's 'whites only' policy, this had a direct impact on the BNP's 2010 election campaigns. Just days before voters in Barking and Dagenham went to the polls, Pastor James Gitau, described as a Kenyan man living in Croydon, was presented to the media as a non-white BNP member in order to suggest that the party was not racist (TheNewsViddies, 2010).

This stage-managed performance was followed up by Nick Griffin's appearance on a Christian TV channel opposite black Pentecostal minister George Hargreaves, the Christian Party candidate for Barking (Histroika, 2010). The party followed this up with a leaflet of Griffin standing next to Hargreaves. The leaflet protested that the BNP did not want to 'persecute or hurt anyone of any race or religion' but that immigration had been 'unfair on everybody in Barking ...including West Indians and Sikhs, and even more recently arrived groups'. The leaflet also criticised Labour for encouraging the 'spread of Islam'. Similar tactics have also been employed by the English Defence League, who have sought to deny that they or their supporters are racist by pointing towards their Jewish and Sikh 'divisions', who are said to be concerned that Islam represents a threat to Britain, while also being a symbol of the 'successful integration of other minorities into Britain'.

UKIP also has a long history of Islamophobia (see Ford and Goodwin, 2014). In the wake of the killing of four Jewish people and twelve Charlie Hedbo employees in Paris in January 2015, Farage responded by declaring that 'We do have, I'm afraid, I'm sad to say, a fifth column that is living within our own countries, that is utterly opposed to our values ... We're going to have to be a lot braver and a lot more courageous in standing up for our Judeo-Christian culture' (BBC, 2014a). These are well-versed tropes in Islamophobic forms of cultural racism in the post-9-11 era. Furthermore, Farage's reference to Britain's 'Judeo-Christian culture' may well be part of a deliberate attempt to distance UKIP from the anti-Semitism and extremism of parties such as the BNP and the French Front National (FN). That said, UKIP has recently put forward a policy that plans to outlaw the religious killing of animals. Whilst being another well-versed Islamophobic narrative, this policy has also been considered to be an attack on Jews living in Britain (Stevens, 2015; Sommers, 2015).

The BNP and UKIP have different organisational and ideological origins. UKIP does not have its ideological roots in fascism and Nazism, nor has it ever had a formal 'whites only' membership policy.

Despite previous discussions about an electoral pact with the BNP, Nigel Farage tried to maintain a clear distinction between UKIP and the 'extremist' BNP. Farage has also ruled out a pact with the French FN, claiming that the FN was a party of 'prejudice and antisemitism' (Mason, 2014). Such claims are undermined by the fact that prior to collapsing, UKIP's Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy group in the European Parliament contained, amongst others, a Polish MEP renowned for making racist, sexist comments and raising questions about the holocaust (Syal, 2014).

Despite attempts to maintain a clear distinction between the party and extremism, 'prejudice and antisemitism', UKIP have openly courted what they call 'decent' BNP voters who 'weren't true BNP supporters at all' (BBC, 2014b). In Barking and Dagenham, UKIP revived the themes of the BNP's 'African's for Essex' campaign. In a letter to the local press in 2007, UKIP's Kerry Smith wrote that:

The EU plan to open job centres at some employment agencies in north-west Africa [sic] ... If low-skilled African workers can come to the UK legally, where will they live? (Barking and Dagenham Post, 2007)

Smith is not the first UKIP member or election candidate to make such comments. Over the last year, UKIP election candidates have attacked Muslims and have even suggested that 'if black people come to this country and don't like mixing with white people why are they here? If he [Lenny Henry] wants a lot of black people around go and live in a black country' (BBC, 2014c). When looking at these comments, there is one very obvious but important point that often gets overlooked: these individuals are, at least in part, attracted to UKIP precisely because of the anti-Black and Islamophobic racist campaigns and narratives outlined above – there is an attitudinal and ideological synchronism between UKIP's campaigns and the views of their members and election candidates.

Appearing on *The Andrew Marr Show* on May 4th 2014, Farage insisted that the party's 2014 local election broadcast would highlight 'black, minority ethnic candidates who are proudly standing for UKIP' (Huffington Post UK, 2014). UKIP followed this up by holding a rally in London. During his speech, Farage dismissed the racist comments of UKIP members and election candidates as 'offensive' and 'idiotic', defiantly claiming that these individuals are just a few rotten apples in the barrel, who 'never have and they never will' represent the view of the party (Ukipmedia, 2014).

I draw attention to this because the types of discursive and performative repertoires employed by UKIP and the BNP can have an impact on voting behaviour. This is evidenced in the following quotation:

You know their getting a bad name because they're racist and then I went to the hall to vote, one of them ..., the chairman of the local BNP, he's married to a black girl ... And we're getting it knocked into us that they're racist ... Nick Griffin is supposed to be the most racist man in the world ... he was outside the hall and he was talking to the Indian fella and the coloured people that were walking in.

When I carried ethnographic research in Barking and Dagenham between 2009 and 2010, I found that many BNP supporters did not think that their demand that 'white Britons' receive privileged and preferential access to scarce material resources to be racist. Racism was defined either as something that is intentional or as hatred towards black and Asian people; because they did not hate black and Asian people, they were not racist. Interestingly when Kerry Smith, formerly the party's parliamentary candidate for South Basildon and East Thurrock, recently resigned after he was recorded mocking gay party members as 'poofers' and referring to someone as a 'Chinky bird', part of Farage's defence of Smith was that 'I don't think that in the comments he used he meant malice' (Press Association, 2015).

These discursive and performative repertoires, the political equivalent of the disclaimer, 'I am not racist because I have black friends', represent a challenge to those who are genuinely interested in halting UKIP's electoral advances and challenging racism more broadly. These repertoires are part of wider processes of denial that frame racism as something 'extreme', out of the ordinary and at times violent. In doing so, political parties and their supporters seek to position themselves as ordinary, normal and reasonable. At the same time, 'race talk' and racism is narrowed in such a way that structural and systemic racism, as well as everyday and cultural racisms, are denied, reducing racism to 'seemingly benign discursive and representative mechanism[s]' (Harries, *forthcoming*). Moreover, the experiences of ethnic minorities are overlooked: thus, denying both the cultural dominance and the broader entrenched nature of racial inequality and white privilege.

Miri Song has recently argued that 'We live in a time when our understandings and conceptualisations of racism are often highly imprecise, broad and used to describe a wide range of racialised phenomena' (2014: 107). It seems to me that opposition to

parties such as UKIP cannot just be about exposing the racist, sexist and homophobic comments of party members, election candidates and elected officials. Moreover, rather than 'parachuting' into local communities to hand out leaflets with the words fascist, Nazi and racist written on it, more time and effort needs to be devoted to sustained community-based, interventionist anti-racist work. This work must engage local civil society organisations in an attempt to promote an anti-racist ethos and inter-ethnic solidarity. Central to this work is recognising and engaging the local politics of race, everyday forms of 'race talk', commonsense understandings of racism, how people read their local context and levels of racial inequality at both the national and local levels. A great deal has still to be done if a genuine anti-racist culture is to be established: that is, an anti-racist culture that recognises the multiple and contradictory ways in which 'race talk' and racism structures social relations and the role that this plays in reproducing white privilege and structural racism. This will be crucial if we are to challenge UKIP's electoral advance and common sense understandings of racism.

References

- Barking and Dagenham Post**, 14 February 2007, p32.
- BBC** (2014a) 'UKIP's Nigel Farage urges 'Judeo-Christian' defence after Paris attacks'. Available under: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-30776186> - last accessed on 1 February 2014.
- BBC** (2014b) 'UKIP attracts 'decent' BNP voters, says Neil Hamilton'. Available under: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-27177864> - last accessed on 27 August 2014.
- BBC** (2014c) 'UKIP candidate William Henwood defends Lenny Henry tweet'. Available under: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-27176803> - last accessed on 27 August 2014.
- Copsey, Nigel** (2008) *Contemporary British Fascism: the British National Party and the Quest for Legitimacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Ford, Robert & Goodwin Matthew** (2014) *Revolt on the Right: Explaining Support for the Radical right in Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Harries, Bethan** (2015) 'Everyday Racism: a useful concept?' Paper presented at the British Sociological Association Conference, Glasgow Caledonian University.
- Histroika** (2010) 'Christian TV debate with Nick Griffin BNP leader & Christian party leader'. Available under: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlajdCG8pJI> - last accessed on 27 August 2014.
- Huffington Post UK** (2014) 'Heino Vockrodt Is Yet Another Ukip Candidate In Outrageous Anti-Muslim Rant' The Huffington Post. Available under: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/05/15/heino-vockrodt-ukip-musli_n_5329311.html? - last accessed on 27 August 2014.
- Press Association** (2015) 'Nigel Farage: I feel sorry for Kerry Smith over racist language', The Guardian. Available under: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/dec/19/nigel-farage-defends-kerry-smith-comments> - last accessed on 31 January 2015.
- Rowena Mason** (2014) 'Nigel Farage rejects offer of Ukip tie to French far-right Front National'. Available under: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/apr/18/nigel-farage-rejects-ukip-tie-french-front-national> - last accessed on 27 August 2014.
- Song, Miri** (2014) 'Challenging a culture of racial equivalence', *British Journal of Sociology*, 65(1), pp107-129.
- TheNewsViddies** (2010) 'BNP's Ethnic Minority Member'. Available under: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzSesQ5epwQ> - last accessed on 27 August 2014.
- Ukipmedia** (2014) 'UKIP Nigel Farage With Black and Asian Ukip Supporters At Rally - 2014'. Available under: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDYSQKciM34> - last accessed on 27 August 2014.
- John Stevens** (2015) 'Farage accused of driving Jews from Britain after Ukip pledge to ban religious slaughter of animals'. Available under: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2938362/Farage-accused-wanting-drive-Jews-Britain-Ukip-pledge-ban-religious-slaughter-animals.html> - last accessed on 4 February 2015
- Jack Sommers** (2015) 'Jews 'Collateral Damage' In Ukip's New Animal Slaughter Policy, Senior MEP Says'. Available under: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/02/03/ukip-religious-slaughter_n_6606102.html - last accessed on 4 February 2015.
- Rajeev Syal** (2014) 'Ukip does deal with far-right, racist Holocaust-denier to save EU funding'. Available under: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/oct/20/ukip-does-deal-with-far-right-to-save-european-grouping> - last accessed on 31 January 2015

6. Religious Political Mobilisation of British Ethnic Minorities

Maria Sobolewska

University of Manchester

Ethnic minorities in Britain are substantially more religious than the white British population. This is not just the case for Muslims, whose religiosity gets discussed the most, but for other ethnic groups as well. Some minority ethnic identities are explicitly linked to religion, and again not just for Muslims: Sikhism is very much an ethno-religious identity. Apart from the more personal aspects of religiosity like identity, religion plays a very important role for ethnic minorities and will have an impact at the 2015 Election. Religious involvement is one of the most important ways in which many minority groups participate in wider society and where they learn skills crucial for political participation. At election time, their places of worship are also an important source of reminders that voting is every citizen's duty.

What we do in our communities, be it at a local level through clubs and societies through to politics and charity, or at a national level perhaps through signing Number 10 e- petitions or voting, helps create a cohesive, engaged and democratic society. For ethnic minorities in Britain, participating in religious events (including attending mass or other worship) is one of the main sources of community involvement. As Table 1 shows, the only civic activity that is more common than religious involvement, is voting. This is important, because as an extensive American study has demonstrated, these kinds of religious and social participation teach citizens skills that are useful for politics and make them more engaged

citizens (Jones-Correa and Leal, 2001). In fact, these skills can be psychological. Using the Ethnic Minority British Election Study conducted at the 2010 General Election, we found that minorities who attended their places of worship regularly had more trust in political institutions such as the UK parliament and felt a greater sense of influence in British politics. For the minority groups who often have fewer political resources from other aspects of their social lives, the engagement in their local communities through a place of worship may mean a difference between voting and participating on the one hand and apathy and exclusion on the other.

Not all religions are equal, however, in terms of how much attention they pay to the political mobilisation of their faithful. Table 2 shows that the percentage of adherents encouraged to vote ahead of the last election in their places of worship varies substantially between different religions. Pentecostal churches are the most likely to deliver the message of voting to their worshippers as over half of our respondents who attended those churches said they heard a message of political mobilisation. Almost 40 per cent of our Sikh and Anglican respondents heard political encouragement in their Gurdwaras and churches. Around a third of Muslims, Catholics and other Christians heard political messages. However, the Hindu temples were very unlikely to deliver such messages: only 18 per cent of our Hindu respondents reported that their temples encouraged

Table 1 Religion and participation in public life by ethnic minorities in Britain (%)

	Anglican	Catholic	Pentecostal	Other Christian	Hindu	Sikh	Muslim
Attending place of worship more than once a month	61	71	85	72	45	64	66
Voting in elections	72	63	72	61	67	79	70
Political participation (signing petitions, consumer politics, attending demonstrations, donating money)	43	32	40	33	26	35	31
Social participation (in social, cultural and sports clubs)	41	43	46	42	39	46	32
Number of respondents (unweighted)	120	206	257	258	234	164	1140

Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study 2010, results weighted to be nationally representative (Sobolewska et al 2015).

Table 2 Political encouragement by religion (weighted percentages)

	Anglican	Catholic	Pentecostal	Other Christian	Hindu	Sikh	Muslim
Respondent encouraged to vote by place of worship	37	29	56	30	18	38	32
<i>N (unweighted)</i>	120	206	257	258	234	164	1140

Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study 2010, results weighted to be nationally representative (Sobolewska et al 2015).

them to vote. When we asked our respondents if they thought it was right that places of worship should do this, opinion was divided. Sixty-one per cent of Hindus in our sample thought that the temples should keep out of politics entirely at the one extreme, while 44 per cent of Pentecostals thought church should be engaged in all political issues at the other. A subsequent YouGov poll shows that the general public is equally divided, with 45 per cent saying that religious leaders should express an opinion on political matters while 41 per cent thought they should keep out (YouGov, November 2013). Despite the importance of political engagement and mobilisation to vote, clearly not everyone agrees that religious institutions should play this role.

Inevitably, the question that cannot be ignored is why the British ethnic minorities rely upon their places of worship to mobilise their vote. Given the uneasy place of religion in British politics, illustrated by the proportion of the public thinking that religious institutions should keep out of politics, the role of religion in political mobilisation may be questioned. Usually this role has been played by the political parties, but as Table 3 shows, the problem is that the minorities are not receiving as much contact from political parties as their white British counterparts. While 54 per cent of the white British respondents to

Table 3 Percentage of British ethnic minorities who got contacted by a political party during the last general election campaign 2010.

	White British	Ethnic minorities
Not contacted by any party	46	71
Contacted by Labour	38	21
Contacted by Conservatives	41	14
Contacted by Liberal Democrats	34	12
Contacted by Greens	6	1
Contacted by UKIP	9	1
Contacted by Respect	0	1
<i>N</i>	2643	2779

Sources: BES 2010, EMBES 2010, weighted (Sobolewska et al 2013).

Notes: percentages do not sum to 100 since respondents could be contacted by more than one party.

the British Election Study in 2010 reported that they were contacted by at least one political party during the course of the 2010 electoral campaign, only 29 per cent of ethnic minorities were contacted. Also, looking at the breakdown of which party contacted our respondents, it is clear that the white British people who were contacted were likely to hear from more than one political party; ethnic minorities by contrast were most likely to hear from Labour and virtually not at all from any of the smaller parties. Sobolewska et al (2013) showed that this is not due to ethnic minorities living in safer seats.

Given that the level of political engagement among minorities is fairly high despite the dearth of mainstream political mobilisation from the political parties, it is not easy to overestimate the importance of the work done by places of worship. However, a question often raised – and one perhaps related to the general distrust of the political role of religion – is whether the religious leaders encourage the ‘right’ kind of participation. This is especially the case with British Muslims whose religious devoutness is generally treated with mistrust. Mosques are often portrayed as preaching extremism and encouraging separation from mainstream British society. A more detailed investigation into the relationship between attending a mosque and the type of participation it encourages shows that protest behaviour by Muslims is not encouraged by mosques. Instead, other non-religious predictors, such as the perception of prejudice and feeling of social distance from white people are more likely to lead to protest behaviour. Attending a mosque does not encourage these feelings and does not discourage social contact with non-Muslims or a sense of belonging to Britain (McAndrews and Sobolewska, 2015). As we saw earlier, it directly promotes political trust in mainstream political institutions. Thus the worries about places of worship mobilising an insular and extremist political activity seem unwarranted bar a few isolated exceptions.

The importance of religious institutions to minorities’ political behaviour should be recognised and used to mobilise and engage minorities politically, but it also should serve as a warning sign to the political parties.

Delegating the responsibility for political mobilisation to non-party organisations may result in more tenuous support for the parties among the religious communities and ultimately may not prevent a sense of disillusionment with what the mainstream political parties have to offer.

References

Jones-Correa, M. A., and Leal D. L. (2001)

'Political Participation: Does Religion Matter?'

Political Research Quarterly 54(4):751–70.

McAndrews, S and M. Sobolewska (2015)

'Mosques and political participation: segregation or integration?', in Tim Peace (ed.), *Muslims and*

Political Participation in Britain. London: Routledge.

Sobolewska, M., E. Fieldhouse and D. Cutts

(2013) 'Who takes the black vote for granted?

Electoral campaign and ethnic targeting: the case of Britain', *Parliamentary Affairs* 66(2): 329-44.

Sobolewska, M., S. Fisher, A. Heath and D.

Sanders (2015) 'Understanding the effects of religious

attendance on political participation among ethnic minorities of different religions' *European Journal of*

Political Research (available on Online First).

7. One Foot in the Door: Ethnic Minorities and the House of Commons

Nicole Martin

University of Essex

The Census shows that 20% of the population of England and Wales, and 8% of Scotland, were not white British in 2011. The most recent estimates suggest that over 8% of the electorate are from an ethnic minority¹ (Heath, 2013), in contrast to only 4.2% of Westminster MPs.

Prior to 2010, ethnic minority MPs were largely from the Labour Party, and mostly represented areas with higher proportions of ethnic minority voters. New minority MPs were often replacing retiring or defeated minority MPs, rather than white MPs. However, in 2010, these facts changed markedly. There was not only a large jump in the number of ethnic minority MPs elected from 16 to 27, but 15 of these replaced white MPs. Moreover, the Conservative Party increased their number of minority MPs from 2 to 11. The ethnic composition of seats represented by ethnic minority MPs changed, largely as a result of these new Conservative MPs; 10 of the 11 Conservative minority MPs in Parliament at the moment represent constituencies where ethnic minorities comprise less than 10% of the population. In summary, the increase in minority MPs in 2010 was largely down to the Conservatives selecting minority MPs in safe seats with largely white populations (Sobolewska, 2013). This pattern looks set to continue; the Conservatives have 8 ethnic minority candidates standing in seats where the sitting Conservative MP is retiring, compared to 2 in the equivalent situation for the Labour Party. Nevertheless, the number of ethnic minority candidates standing in winnable seats for Labour and Conservatives is roughly the same (Katwala and Ballinger, 2015).

There were 132 ethnic minority candidates standing from Labour, Conservative and the Liberal Democrats in 2010.⁷ Of these, the vast majority were of South Asian origin, but with comparatively few Bangladeshi candidates: 34 of 47 Labour minority candidates in 2010 were of South Asian descent, but only 5 of them Bangladeshi. Similarly, 30 of 44 Conservative candidates were South Asian with only 1 Bangladeshi candidate. This mirrors other socio-

economic trends, but there is a specifically political or perhaps demographic explanation: because South Asians tend to be more geographically clustered, it is easier to become a persuasive force in local parties to select a minority MP (Maxwell, 2012). Kinship networks may have played a part too. The Liberal Democrat experience underlines the importance of being selected for a winnable seat – though they elected no ethnic minority MP in the 2010–15 parliament, the Liberal Democrats fielded 41 unsuccessful minority candidates. There were also a substantial number of Muslim candidates – 55 from Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats combined, but very few Sikh candidates – 8 from these parties, of which 4 from Labour.

Possible explanations for the low numbers of ethnic minority MPs and candidates are complex. Let's start with those who select candidates. Party members often have more extreme views than people who do not join a party, and it is entirely plausible that some candidates face discrimination at this stage. David Lammy voiced concern after a number of minority councillors and candidates were deselected in wards that were vulnerable as a result of British National Party electoral activity. But maybe there aren't as many ethnic minorities putting themselves forward to be selected – either due to disinterest in politics or the current party system, due to expectations of discrimination, or due to not fitting the expected profile of a future MP. After all, MPs are not representative of the rest of the country in a variety of ways – they are more likely to have gone to university and particularly Oxford or Cambridge, been lawyers, worked for existing MPs as Special Advisers, been local councilors, and to be middle class, to name just a few examples. If ethnic minorities are underrepresented in these groups, there will not be the same pipeline of potential minority candidates and MPs. This is indeed the case; in the Army, a popular route into politics for some, only 2.4% of officers come from ethnic minorities, as compared to 8.1% of other ranks. Only 5% of the senior civil service (Wood and Cracknell, 2013), and 6% of QCs come from ethnic minorities. Of course, none of this

is to say that our next MPs *should* be former lawyers, say, or Special Advisers.

Once an ethnic minority candidate has been selected to stand, research has focused on three main questions; whether white voters are prejudiced against them, whether ethnic minority voters are more inclined to support them, and whether they represent ethnic minority interests in Parliament once they get there. In 2010, ethnic minority candidates tended to attract lower vote shares. Research differs on whether this applied to all ethnic minority candidates, or only to some groups. One paper compared incumbent MPs who faced an ethnic minority challenger to those who didn't, concluding that incumbent candidates did better when they faced an ethnic minority opponent – suggesting that some voters preferred to vote for a white candidate (Stegmaier, Lewis-Beck, and Smets, 2013). On average, the gain to the white incumbent candidate would have been just over 2 percentage points.³ Looking more closely at how individual voters behaved however, this figure is closer to 4 percentage points, but mostly due to white voters with anti-immigrant feelings being reluctant to vote for Muslim candidates (Fisher et al, 2014). This is solid evidence that in 2010, ethnic minority parliamentary candidates faced an electoral penalty on account of their ethnicity.

The picture is more mixed, however, when it comes to the question of whether ethnic minority candidates can expect an electoral bonus from voters who share their ethnicity. Research on the 2010 election shows that Pakistani candidates experienced an 8 percentage point bonus from Pakistani voters (ibid), although perhaps only among Labour candidates (Martin, forthcoming). However, there is no evidence that other minority candidates benefitted in 2010 from increased votes from minority voters. A simple reading of these results has unsettling implications for party strategy; if ethnic minority candidates tend to have an electoral disadvantage, and most do not receive an electoral bonus, then selecting a minority candidate may still be seen as a risk outside a safe seat. The response to this is firstly that the Conservatives showed last election that minority candidates can win in largely white seats, and secondly that ethnic minority candidates in seats with large minority populations may not always have an advantage, but might be better able to represent their constituents.

This leads us to the knotty question of whether ethnic minority MPs behave differently. One reason we care about whether parliament represents the

true ethnic diversity of the population is that we think that politics would be better as result – the idea is that a greater diversity of experiences leads to better discussion, more ideas, and in the end, better representation of minority groups' interests in politics, rather than the interests of people who are the majority in parliament – white, middle class men. In the UK, ethnic minority MPs do speak up more than their white counterparts on issues relating to the rights of ethnic minorities, immigration, and equality issues (Saalfeld and Bischof, 2013). This is despite a desire from some not to be seen as single-issue MPs (Nixon, 1998). Positively though, it is not just minority MPs who are interested in issues of equality; all MPs ask more questions about ethnic minority rights and equality issues if they have an ethnically diverse constituency (Saalfeld, 2011). A word of caution however; this research looked at the pre-UKIP era, and before Labour and the Conservatives became more exclusionary in an effort to minimize the damage done by UKIP. How ethnic minority MPs and candidates deal with this party will be one of the big challenges for minority political representation in the next parliament.

Notes

1. This figure excludes people of Chinese origin, referring only to people of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, black Caribbean or black African origin.
2. Source: author's own data
3. Of the three-major-party vote share

References

- Fisher, S. et al.** (2014) "Candidate Ethnicity and Vote Choice in Britain," *British Journal of Political Science*: 1–23.
- Heath, A. et al.** (2013) *The Political Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Katwala, S. and S. Ballinger** (2015), *The Race for Representation: How Ethnic Diversity became the 'New Normal' in British Politics*. London: British Future.
- Martin, N.** (forthcoming) 'Do Ethnic Minority Candidates Mobilize Ethnic Minority Voters? Evidence From the 2010 United Kingdom General Election' *Parliamentary Affairs*.

- Maxwell, R.** (2012) *Ethnic Minority Migrants in Britain and France: Integration Trade-Offs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nixon, J.** (1998) 'The Role of Black and Asian MPs at Westminster,' in (ed. Shamit Saggar) *Race and British Electoral Politics*. London: UCL Press Limited.
- Saalfeld, T.** (2011) 'Parliamentary Questions as Instruments of Substantive Representation: Visible Minorities in the UK House of Commons, 2005–10,' *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 17(3): 271–89.
- Saalfeld, T. and D. Bischof** (2013) 'Minority-Ethnic MPs and the Substantive Representation of Minority Interests in the House of Commons, 2005–2011,' *Parliamentary Affairs* 66: 305–28.
- Sobolewska, M.** (2010) "Party Strategies and the Descriptive Representation of Ethnic Minorities: the 2010 British General Election," *West European Politics* 36(2): 615–33.
- Stegmaier, M., M. S. Lewis-Beck, and K. Smets** (2013), "Standing for Parliament: Do Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Candidates Pay Extra?," *Parliamentary Affairs* 66(2): 268–85
- Wood, J. and R. Cracknell** (2013) *Ethnic Minorities in Politics, Government and Public Life* SN/SG/1156. Library of the House of Commons, October 6.

8. Registration and Race: Achieving Equal Political Participation

Omar Khan

Runnymede Trust

Voting in elections is ordinarily viewed as the minimal way in which people participate in democracy as citizens. The declining turnout figures in British elections since 1945 are taken as a sign of a 'democratic deficit' while individuals who choose not to vote may be criticised for being less engaged citizens.

To vote in elections, individuals need to be registered. While many are aware that African Americans and other groups are less likely to be registered because of barriers to their registration in the United States, historically registration in the UK has not been viewed as a concern for equal democratic participation. Yet evidence suggests that while BME people in the UK are as likely to vote *if* they are registered to do so, they have typically been less likely to do so. Those who were registered voted as much as white British electors (Ethnic Politics, 2013).

The change to individual electoral registration, discussed below, has led to some concern about the effects on BME voters. For the 2015 UK General Election the change to voting registration will not have a direct effect, as the electoral roll is based on previous rolls. However, as many as 20% of BME people (compared to 7% of white people) are *already* not registered even before these changes have been implemented.

Group	% not registered
White	7%
Pakistani	15%
Black Caribbean	16%
Bangladeshi	17%
Indian	18%
Mixed	22%
Black African	28%

Data: Ethnic Minority boost to British Election Study (EMBES) 2010.

These figures show that all ethnic minority groups are at least twice as likely to be unregistered as white British people, with Black Africans 4 times more

likely to be unregistered. And although Black African people are more likely to be born overseas, the group with the second-highest rate of non-registration are people in the 'Mixed' ethnic category, people who are the most likely to be born in Britain.

These two groups reflect two of the main reasons why BME people are disproportionately under-registered. The most common reason BME people cited is they believe they are not entitled to vote. Yet in the UK all citizens of the Commonwealth and Pakistan *are* entitled to vote, suggesting that many do not realise they are in fact entitled, a finding further supported by 'I don't know how to register' being the fourth most common reason for non-registration.

The other main reason why people are not registered is because they have recently changed address. This is particularly relevant for Mixed people, who have the youngest age profile in the UK. While there has been some coverage of the effect of registration rules on young people and students, less have focused on the fact that over 20% of the 18-21 year old population is BME, meaning that any disenfranchisement of young people through under-registration will affect ethnic minorities disproportionately.

Given that BME people are as likely to vote when they are registered, and that the main reasons for non-registration are lack of information or changes in residence, higher rates of BME non-registration should not be interpreted as greater political apathy. Yet a presumption of greater apathy is the only implied justification in the government's initial white paper on individual voter registration. The further implication was that constituency boundaries could be legitimately redrawn in such a way as to exclude non-registered electors. If boundaries are drawn only to include registered voters as electors, that will increase constituency sizes where BME are more likely to live, diluting their voting power.

While this redrawing has been put on hold, and so the voting power of BME people thereby not further diminished, there remain concerns beyond 2015,

when the full-scale roll out of individual electoral registration will require local authorities to do more actively to ensure people can vote. In an initial assessment of proposed changes to the electoral roll, the government accepted that ethnic minorities would be more likely fall off the register (Deputy Prime Minister, 2011). The Electoral Commission has also suggested that ethnic minorities would be disproportionately affected by an overall drop from 92% to around 60-65% (The Electoral Commission, 2011).

Shockingly, the government offers no argument for this disproportionate effect nor do they offer any mitigating policies to address it. If a foreign government were to adapt a similar change that affected people who strongly voted against that government (with 68% of BME voters supporting Labour in 2010 (Heath and Khan, 2012)), the Foreign Office would be voicing concerns about a sham democracy. While the changes in the law are to be welcomed, the boundary review has only been postponed, and there are still significant risks that BME people could be disenfranchised in the next (post-2015) election, as there are still no positive measures in place to improve registration rates.

The recent film *Selma* drew attention to the various ways in which local officials put up unreasonable barriers for African Americans to register to vote. Voting rights for ethnic minorities in Britain today are vastly more secure than those in Alabama 50 years ago. Yet there is not enough awareness of the effects of impending changes to registration, nor is government doing enough to explain these or ensure local electoral registration officers effectively reach ethnic minority electors. The single biggest reason why ethnic minorities are under-registered is that they don't realise they are entitled to vote, particularly those from Commonwealth countries and the Republic of Ireland (Sobolewska and Heath, 2014). To mitigate those effects, people will need further information and support to ensure they are registered. And if this information is not adequately provided, senior political leaders who have suggested that Commonwealth and Irish citizens should lose their votes (Pack, 2015) clearly will not ignore the issue.

Two other groups that will need further support are young people (previously registered by their parent, and disproportionately likely to be ethnic minorities), and women who may never have registered before due to their male 'head of household' registering for them – 1 in 6 ethnic minority women in 2010 indicated someone else filled in the household registration form.

The case of Jim Crow laws and practices shows that formal rights need citizens' empowerment and practical action by local democratic institutions to be realised. As *Selma* highlights, we also need to focus on practical policies and measures that hinder or promote abstract rights, an salutary lesson in this anniversary year of the Magna Carta and of the first race relations legislation in Britain (1965), neither of which have been able to deliver equal liberties for all, and especially Black and minority ethnic people. If even the right to vote – a right without which democracy can have no legitimacy – can be so atrophied, *Selma* shows how citizens can instead regain their rights and improve the quality of our democracy.

The stakes in the UK may be lower, but the evidence suggests that central and local government are still not doing enough to ensure that formal rights for BME people are a reality, denying them their legitimate political voice, and damaging the nature of democracy for everyone.

References

Deputy Prime Minister (2011) *Individual Electoral Registration Impact Assessment*. London: The Stationary Office.

Ethnic Politics (2013) 'Ethnic minority voters: engaged and optimistic'. Available under: <http://www.ethnicpolitics.org/2013/01/22/political-participation-of-ethnic-minorities/>

Heath, A. and O. Khan (2012) *Ethnic Minority British Election Study – Key Findings*. Available under: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/EMBESbriefingFINALx.pdf>

Pack, M. (2015) *Liam Fox wants to kick half a million Indians and Pakistanis off the electoral register*. Available under: <http://www.markpack.org.uk/113663/liam-fox-wants-kick-half-million-indians-pakistanis-off-electoral-register/>

Sobolewska, M. and A. Heath (2014) *Individual electoral registration may further marginalise voters from ethnic minorities*. Available under: <http://www.democraticaudit.com/?p=4470>

The Electoral Commission (2011) *The Electoral Commission's response to the Government's White Paper and draft legislation on Individual Electoral Registration*. Available under: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/141294/Electoral-Commission-IER-White-Paper-Response-2011-10-14-FINAL.pdf

9. The 2015 Election: BME Groups in Scotland

Nasar Meer

University of Strathclyde

and

Timothy Peace

University of Stirling

As we approach the 2015 General Election, BME electoral participation in Scotland will encounter similar challenges and opportunities as that of the rest of the UK. These include disproportionately lower levels of voter registration amongst some BME groups (EMILIE Research Project, 2009), a concern about satisfaction in electoral systems (Meer and Modood, 2009) and the issue of sufficient levels of ethnic minority representation (Uberoi, Meer and Modood, 2010). Yet Scotland offers an interesting case through which to explore BME political participation in the 2015 election because it is also characterised by three distinguishing features which make direct comparisons with rUK difficult.

Firstly, and in many respects crucially, there is an astonishing lack of quantitative data collection on BME electoral participation in Scotland. This largely stems from the reliance on sample sizes that do not sufficiently take into account the smaller ethnic minority presence in Scotland (discussed below). A typical illustration is the routine ICM Electoral Commission surveys. For its winter 2013 poll, ICM interviewed a nationally representative quota of 1,203 BME adults aged 18+ living in the UK of which just 87 were living in Scotland (Electoral Commission, 2013). This is also true of the 2010 British Election Study (BES) data which despite a bigger sample size of 2,631 (Wave 2), included only 6 people of Indian background in Scotland and 2 people of Pakistani background. Even using the data from the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Survey (EMBES) would not yield enough data for Scotland as the Ethnic Minority sample comes to 39 (Heath et al, 2013). Seeking to extrapolate from these kinds of base figures would offer false precision and so we are not able to make meaningful predictions based upon existing quantitative data-sets. In understudying BME voters in Scotland, therefore, the possibility of BME electoral variation remains overlooked.

The second important difference is demographic. According to the 2011 Census, only 4% of people in

Scotland are from minority ethnic groups (compared with around 12% in England). South Asians make up the largest minority ethnic group (3% of the total population or 141,000 people) compared with over 6% in England. This modest number of the largest and most longstanding 'visible' ethnic minority is made apparent when set against the finding that 1.2% (61,000) people record their ethnic group as 'White: Polish' (a more recently arrived group). It is worth noting also how few African Caribbean groups there are in Scotland compared to the number of Chinese groups – an inversion of the trend in England. While the differing ethnic composition in Scotland is centrally relevant,¹ part of the reason that direct comparisons of electoral participation are not easy is that unlike in England where there is some significant BME residential dispersal (across a variety of electoral wards outside the major centres) this is much less evident in Scotland. The electoral concentration of BME groups is significantly clustered in a handful of cities, namely Glasgow City where 12 per cent of the population were from a minority ethnic group, in the City of Edinburgh and Aberdeen City it was 8 per cent and in Dundee City it was 6 per cent. This means that of the 59 Scottish Westminster constituencies, the ethnic minority electorate are only visible in just 16 (5 in Edinburgh, 7 in Glasgow, 2 in Aberdeen and 2 in Dundee). From these constituencies, only Glasgow Central has an ethnic minority population that is significant (around ¼ of the population is non-white).² Indeed, this is the only UK parliamentary constituency in Scotland that has been represented by a BME MP. Mohammed Sarwar who won this seat (then known as Glasgow Govan) in 1997 was the first Asian Muslim elected to the House of Commons (his son Anas Sarwar won the same seat in 2010). One in 59 is lower than the Westminster average of 1 in 43 BME Parliamentarians for the 2010 intake.

Perhaps a starker illustration comes in the form of Local Government. Bashir Maan blazed a trail for all British ethnic minorities by getting elected to

represent Glasgow's Kingston ward for Labour in 1970 (Peace, 2015: 4). However, heading into the 2012 Local Government elections, the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) report there were just 10 non-white Local Councillors from a total of 1,222 across the country, representing 0.8% of the total. Over half of the elected BME Councillors in Scotland were in Glasgow, meaning that only 5 of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities had minority ethnic representation. Of Scotland's cities, Dundee was the only one other than Glasgow to have any minority ethnic Councillors, with the capital, Edinburgh, having no representatives (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, 2012: 6).

This leads more broadly to a third point concerning the question of political representation. The devolution settlement has added a layer of democratic representation and distinct opportunities for ethnic minority political participation. We see this in terms of both the seeking of office, taking part in elections and also the kinds of issues that become subject to political debate. So in addition to 59 Westminster constituencies and 32 council wards, the Scottish Parliament created 79 new constituencies plus 56 through additional member lists. Currently there are only 2 BME MSPs (Humza Yousaf for the SNP and Hanzala Malik for Labour - both representing Glasgow constituencies).

Returning to Westminster, latest polling suggests that the SNP are set to gain the largest number of Scottish seats at the 2015 General Election.³ Ethnic minorities have traditionally been very loyal to Labour but this relationship already became strained with the decision to invade Iraq (Dobbernack, Meer and Modood, 2014). The SNP will be working very hard to persuade even more BME voters that their interests are best represented by the nationalists, irrespective of the way they voted in the 2014 Independence Referendum. A marked feature of that campaign was the visible BME presence and participation, on both sides of the arguments.

While the referendum analysis is still being undertaken, throughout the campaign anecdotal evidence suggested that BME voting intentions were consistent with the wider electorate, though what stood out most was that the Yes campaign had no less traction with ethnic minorities than the No campaign, and BME voices were at the forefront of both sides of the issue.⁴ This was true across all age ranges and markedly amongst young people who are typically viewed as less electorally engaged. In a study with a qualitative sample of 259 ethnic minorities in Scotland, Arshad et al (2014:

12) conclude that there was 'no indication that there is any apathy among [BME] young voters'. One Electoral Commission study has however reported some disparity relating to the ease of access to information on the Scottish referendum. It specifically notes that 'BMEs found it less easy to find information on how to cast their vote in the referendum (78% vs 91%), or on what would happen if there was a Yes vote (49% vs 60%) or a No vote (51% vs 64%) compared to the white Scottish electorate' (Electoral Commission, 2014: 26). Despite the referendum result, the 'Scottish question' is not going away, yet the BME and constitutional issues appear to continue 'to fire past each other' (McCrone, 2002: 304).

The obvious point is that political participation is not simply about electoral participation but about the social and political field in which – in our case – BME groups in Scotland are confident and audible. In addition to the technical questions of participation therefore this has to do with a sense of ownership over what Scotland might be and become. In the words of the late Bashir Ahmed (Scotland's first ethnic minority MSP – of the SNP) 'it isn't important where you come from, what matters is where we are going together as a nation' (Salmond, 2009). Here there is a longstanding trend of self-identification and claims-making on Scottish identities by ethnic minorities (Hussain and Miller, 2006). The important aspect is the subjective confidence and willingness amongst minorities to stake such a claim. Yet it is not clear how stronger claims-making that come with this will be met.

In a recent study of Scottish BME and national identity questions (Meer, 2015), it was noted that Scottish political actors frequently point to a number of boundaries for ensuring integration and pursuing unity. Two examples include the question of multilingualism and multi-faithism. Taking the issue of language first, when the question is raised of bringing other minority languages into the fold, which are more frequently spoken than Gaelic and appear to be taking on distinctive Scottish forms in terms of content and dialect, there is a consensus amongst respondents that Scottish Urdu and Scottish Punjabi could not warrant a status as one of Scotland's national languages. In this assessment, historical multilingualism is seen as a feature of the national identity whereas migrant languages are potentially fragmentary. A more charged illustration, however, concerns the prospects for religious pluralism, especially corporate recognition where the state-church relationship is pluralised. There are some very good reasons to be cautious about seeking to

mirror one religious settlement in the present with something from the past, and it must be stressed that Scottish political actors were positive (often very positive) about the fact of religious pluralism in Scotland. What is interesting in their responses was that each framed the question of formally recognising religious pluralism – as opposed to the fact of religious pluralism – within a register of sectarianism, and therefore resisted it. This is one way in which ‘countries with an inherited ethos of accommodation in relation to old minorities are not predestined to be inclusive of new minorities’ (Kymlicka, 2011: 289).

When authors such as Hanif Kureshi and Salman Rushdie, and politicians including Diane Abbott and Bernie Grant, tackled Britishness in the 1980s they held a mirror up to white British society and asked: ‘Who do you think you are?’ Today it would be impossible to think of the identity of Britain without placing minorities at its core. Something similar is yet to happen to Scottish identity, and political actors will play a vital role in these debates as they unfold.

Notes

- For example, disproportionately high numbers of black African and black Caribbean minorities reside in social or rented housing which can lead to frequent movement and thus a requirement to continually re-register (a problem compounded by the recent move to individual registration). Conversely, there are disproportionately high levels of home ownership amongst some Asian and Chinese communities.
- The total population of Glasgow Central at the time of the 2011 census was 91,257 of whom 69,218 identified as white. The largest non-white group are Asian Scottish/Asian British. <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk>
- The Election Forecast UK website currently predicts that the SNP will win somewhere between 23 and 51 seats. <http://electionforecast.co.uk/> while the What Scotland Thinks/ScotCen Poll of Polls of voting intentions in Scotland for the 2015 UK general election has the SNP winning 49 seats <http://blog.whatscotlandthinks.org/2015/01/poll-polls-westminster-vote-intentions-19-jan/>
- ‘I may be Muslim but I identify myself as Scottish’: the indyref battle for the Scottish Asian vote’, Herald Scotland, <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/i-may-be-muslim-but-i-identify-myself-as-scottish-the-indyref-battle-for-the-scottish.23444359>

References

Arshad et al. (2014: 12) *Minority ethnic young people and the Scottish independence referendum – Briefing*. Centre for Research on Ethnicity and Racism: Edinburgh University.

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (2012) *Information, Motivation, Representation: Minority Ethnic Participation in the 2012 Scottish Local Government elections*. Available under: <http://www.crer.org.uk/images/PDFs/IMR2012.pdf>

Dobbernack, J., Meer, N. & Modood, T. (2015) ‘Misrecognition and political agency: The case of Muslim organizations in a General Election’, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 17 (2): 189–206.

Electoral Commission (2013) *Winter Research BME Booster Survey Key findings*. Available under: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/179459/Winter-Tracker-2013-BME-Booster-Survey-WEB.pdf

Electoral Commission (2014) *Scottish Independence Referendum Research: Post-polling day opinion research report*. Available under: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/179807/Scottish-referendum-Public-Opinion-survey-ICM-Report-WEBSITE.pdf

EMILIE Research Project (2009) *Minorities and political life in Britain: Increasing political participation through representation*. Available under: http://emilie.eliamep.gr/wpcontent/uploads/2009/10/emilie_political_rights_policy_brief_uk_en.pdf

Heath, Anthony F, Stephen Fisher, Gemma Rosenblatt, David Sanders and Maria Sobolewska (2013) *The Political Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hussain, A. M. and Miller, W. (2006). *Multicultural Nationalism*. Oxford: OUP.

Kymlicka, W. (2011: 289) ‘Multicultural Citizenship within Multination States’, *Ethnicities*, 11 (3): 281–302.

McCrone, D. (2002) ‘Who Do You Say You Are?’, *Ethnicities*, 2 (3): 301–320.

Meer, N. (2015) ‘Looking up in Scotland? Multinationalism, multiculturalism and political elites’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1005642

Meer, N. and Modood, T. (2009) *The impact of migration related diversity upon political participation in Britain*. European Commission FP6 Program. Available under: <http://emilie.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/uk-wp-5-final.pdf>

Peace, T. (2015) 'Introduction' in Peace, T. (ed.) *Muslims and Political Participation in Britain*. London: Routledge.

Salmond, A. (2009) 'Bashir Ahmad: The Scottish Parliament's First Asian Member.' *Independent*, February 14. Accessed October 20, 2010. Available under: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/bashir-ahmad-the-scottish-parliaments-first-asian-member-1609209.html>.

Uberoi, V., Meer, N., and Modood, T. (2010) Submission to the Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary Representation: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/spconf/239/239we10.htm>

Appendix 1: Biographical Notes on the Contributors

Stephen Ashe is a political sociologist working in the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity at the University of Manchester where he is researching ‘hidden histories’ of Britain’s anti-racist civil rights movement between 1966 and 1990. Stephen is also currently writing a monograph documenting the electoral rise and fall of the British National Party in Barking and Dagenham.

Nigel Copsey is Professor of Modern History at Teesside University. He has published widely on Britain’s far right and its opposition. His major publications are *Anti-Fascism in Britain* (2000; 2nd edn 2016) and *Contemporary British Fascism: The British National Party and the Quest for Legitimacy* (2004; 2nd edn 2008). His most recent book is *Cultures of Post-War British Fascism* (co-edited with John Richardson, 2015). Professor Copsey co-directs Teesside University’s Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies.

Rob Ford is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Manchester. Robert’s research focuses on public opinion and electoral choice, in Britain and elsewhere. He is currently involved in projects examining the impact of diversity and austerity on support for the welfare state, looking at the political impact of anti-prejudice social norms and developing new experimental survey measures to improve understanding of attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims in Europe. He is the co-author (with Matthew Goodwin) of “Revolt on the Right”, the first academic study of UKIP and winner of the Political Book of the Year. He is also the co-editor (with Philip Cowley) of “Sex, Lies and the Ballot Box” a collection of short essays for a general audience by leading academics on public opinion and electoral choice in Britain, shortlisted for the Practitioner Political Book of the Year. He has written for several daily newspapers and is regularly asked to comment on politics on the TV and radio.

Anthony Heath CBE, FBA is Director of the Centre for Social Investigation, Nuffield College, Oxford and Professor of Sociology in the Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research (CMIST), University of Manchester. His primary research areas are ethnic and class inequalities, social mobility, social integration and equality of opportunity. Working with

Roger Jowell and John Curtice, he directed the 1983, 1987, 1992 and 1997 British Election Surveys. More recently his work has been focusing on ethnic inequality, and he was the principal investigator for the Ethnic Minority British Election Survey. He has written reports for government on discrimination in the labour market, social cohesion and on national identity.

Omar Khan is Runnymede’s Director. He has written widely on race equality, including Runnymede’s previous analysis of race and elections in 2001, 2005 and 2010. Among his various advisory roles are chair of the Ethnicity Strand Advisory Group to Understanding Society, chair of the advisory group of the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity at the University of Manchester, and a member of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework assessment. Omar is also a member of the Department for Work and Pensions’ Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group Advisory Group, the chair of Olmec, a 2012 Clore Social Leadership Fellow, a Commissioner on the Financial Inclusion Commission, and was the UK representative on the European Commission’s Socio-economic network of experts.

Nicole Martin is a Senior Research Officer at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex. She completed her doctorate on ethnic minority political behaviour at the University of Oxford. Her research interests are ethnic inequality, migration, political behaviour, and quantitative methods in social science. Her research has been featured in the Guardian, the Daily Mail, and the Independent.

Nasar Meer is a Reader in Comparative Social Policy and Citizenship at Strathclyde University. His research takes an over-arching approach to the study of citizenship, and his publications include: *Citizenship, Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (Palgrave 2010, 2nd Edition 2015), *European Multiculturalism(s): Cultural, Ethnic and Religious Challenges* (co-edited with A. Triandafyllidou and T. Modood) (EUP 2012), *Racialization and Religion* (Ed, Routledge 2013), and *Race and Ethnicity* (Sage, 2014). He is a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh’s (RSE) Young Academy of Scotland and the UK Social Policy Association (SPA) Executive Board.

Timothy Peace is Lecturer in Comparative European Politics at the University of Stirling. His research focuses on the political participation of ethnic and religious minorities in Europe. His publications include *European Social Movements and Muslim Activism* (Palgrave, 2015) and *Muslims and Political Participation in Britain* (Routledge, 2015).

Shamit Saggat is Director of the Understanding Society Policy Unit and Professor of Public Policy, based in the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex. Professor Saggat's main academic and applied interests lie in public policy, regulation, migration, ethnic pluralism, social change, social exclusion, labour markets, extremism and radicalisation, and political participation. He has published over 50 peer reviewed papers and chapters, six books and 10 policy reports. His most recent book, *Pariah Politics*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2011.

Maria Sobolewska is Lecturer in Politics at the University of Manchester. She and her colleagues conducted the *Ethnic Minority British Election Study* at the 2010 General Election. She is a team member on the *Representative Audit of Britain* survey of Parliamentary Candidates at the 2015 General Election and on the international project studying *representation of citizens of immigrant background*. Her book *The Political Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, co-authored with Anthony Heath, Stephen Fisher, Gemma Rosenblatt and David Sanders has been published with Oxford University Press. Many of her papers are available without paywall on <https://manchester.academia.edu/MariaSobolewska>.

Appendix 2: Black and Minority Ethnic Demographic Change, 2001-2021

In this report we have shown the past and present evidence on race and elections, including the experiences and attitudes of Black and minority ethnic (BME) voters. In this Appendix we outline the nature and extent of BME population growth in the UK Parliament's 650 seats (659 in 2001) using 2001 and 2011 Census data, and a projection for 2021, to indicate the relative salience of the issues raised in this volume. These data suggest that the impact of Black and minority voters will soon be just as important in the hundreds of 'typical' seats as in the highly diverse urban seats that usually attract political parties' attention and the public imagination.

Table 1 shows the BME proportion for the 650 Westminster seats divided into fifths, or quintiles. Each quintile is 130 seats. The top quintile is for the 130 seats with the greatest BME population, and the bottom quintile is for the 130 seats with the lowest BME population. In 2001, the top quintile of seats had a BME population of just over 10%. In 2011, the top quintile had a BME population of over 18%. We estimate that by 2021, the top fifth will all have a BME population of at least 25%. To put it another way, in 2001, only 57 seats had a BME population of 25% or more. By 2021, at least 130 seats – a fifth of the total – are estimated to have a BME population of 25% or more.

The middle quintiles may be viewed as the more 'typical' seats in Parliament. The second quintile

Table 1. BME Proportion of UK Parliamentary seats, by quintile (2001-2021)

	2001 BME%	2011 BME%	2021 BME% (projected)
Top quintile (1-130)	10.5%+	18.4%+	26.2%+
Second quintile (131-260)	4.1-10.4%	7.7-18.3%	11.3%-26.1%
Middle quintile (261-390)	1.9-4.0%	3.4-7.7%	4.9-11.2%
Fourth quintile (391-520)	1.2-1.9%	2.1-3.4%	3.0-4.9%
Bottom quintile (521-650)	Under 1.2%	Under 2.1%	Under 3.0%

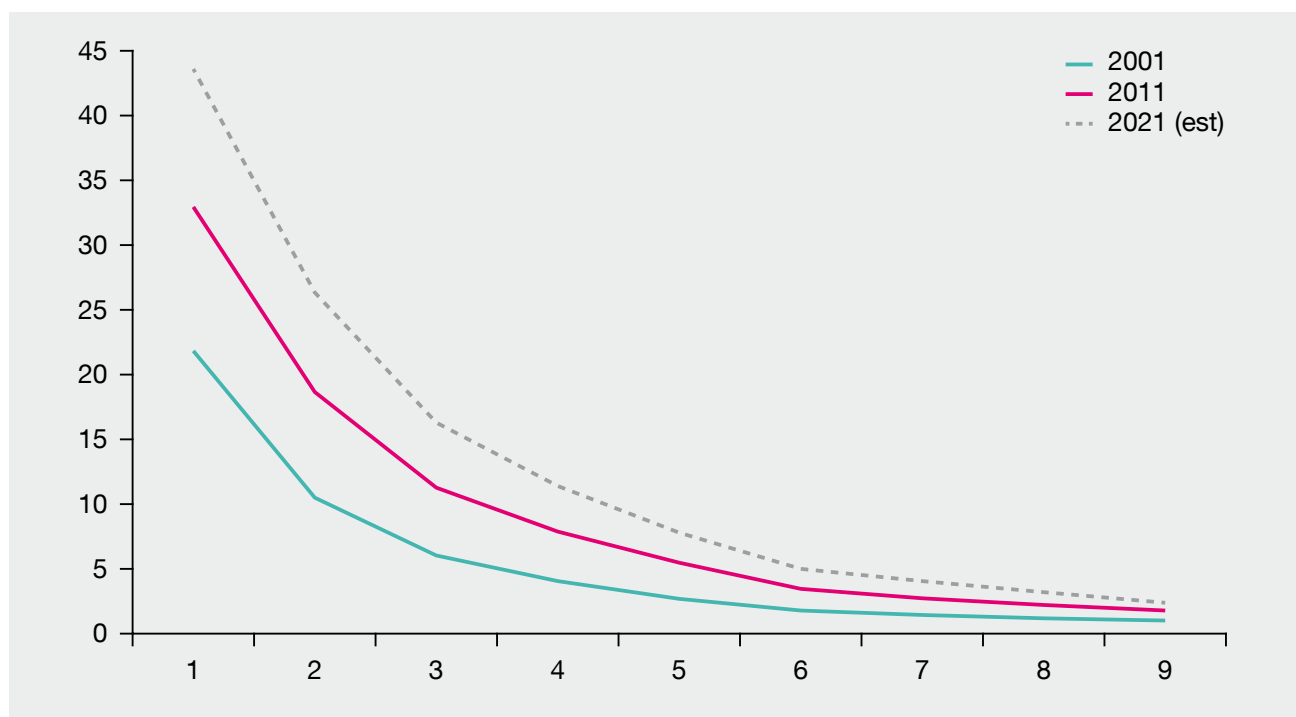
of seats includes such a diverse range of seats as Thurrock, Swansea West, Cambridge, St Albans, Sheffield South East, Stoke-on-Trent Central, Gloucester, Wokingham and Bromley and Chislehurst. These seats have risen from a BME population of 4-10% in 2001 to 8-18% in 2011. We estimate all such seats will exceed 11% by 2021, with many reaching a BME population of 20-25%.

In 2001, the middle quintile of seats had a BME population of between 2-4%, thus meaning their ethnic minority residents had relatively little impact on voting or indeed on policy or public debate. By 2011 this had risen to 4-8%, and the middle quintile seat will rise further still to 5-11% by 2021, or around the likely Liberal Democrat vote share in the 2015 General Election. Together with the second quintile, these represent hundreds of seats where the ethnic minority vote may be more significant than the 50-100 seats with very large BME populations but that generally remain safe for Labour parliamentary candidates.

Historically there have been a large majority of seats with under 3% BME population. In 2001, the bottom 40% of seats all had less than 2% BME population, but by 2011 this had risen to 3.4% and below, with only the bottom quintile under 2%. By 2021 we project that the bottom 40% will reach around 5% BME, the bottom quintile 3%, with only 40 seats – mainly in rural Scotland and Northern Ireland – having less than 2% BME residents.

Figure 1 further captures the increase in the BME population, as well as its increasing dispersal. This figure indicates deciles rather than quintiles, and again shows the increase between 2001, 2011 and 2021 (projected).

The figure shows how the BME population has increased significantly in every kind of seat in the UK: from metropolitan London to rural Scotland. So while it is significant that the top 10% most diverse seats have increased from 22% to 33% BME over a decade (and will rise further to 44% by 2021), the increase in the middle deciles is equally notable.

Figure 1. BME proportion of UK Parliamentary seats, by decile (2001-2021)

Roughly a third of seats (the upper three deciles) had a BME population of 5% or more in 2001, while half of seats have reached that figure in 2011, and nearly two-thirds will pass that threshold in 2021. In 2001, only the top two deciles had a BME population over 10%, whereas by 2021 twice as many constituencies (and 40% of the UK total) will have at least 1 in 10 residents from a BME background.

The bottom decile includes all of the more rural and semi-rural seats in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with only a few rural English seats. Here the change is somewhat more difficult to read but is still quite remarkable. While in 2001 there were areas where people would have almost no contact with Black and minority ethnic people, by 2021 even these areas will have BME populations of 2-3%.

As these data indicate, when discussing and responding to ethnic minority voters, politicians and the wider public will have to move their focus beyond the very diverse seats such as East Ham, Birmingham Ladywood and Bradford West. Instead, the ethnic minority vote will be increasingly and perhaps even more significant in the hundreds of more 'typical' parliamentary seats such as Rugby, Rochester and Strood and Glasgow South. In 2021 and beyond, non-white people may still be a minority, but their increasing population and dispersal will make it impossible for any party seeking to govern Britain to ignore their voices wherever they are standing for election.

A note on our projections

Our projections for 2021 assume a slightly lower rate of change between 2011 and 2021 than that between 2001 and 2011. The projection is based on the same overall increase in the BME population in each ranked constituency for the next 10 years as in the previous 10 years. For example, we assume that the overall increase in the BME population for the seat with the 200th largest BME population will be roughly the same from 2011-2021 (around 5,000 more BME people) as it was from 2001-2011.

Runnymede Perspectives

Runnymede Perspectives seek to challenge conventional thinking about race in public and policy debates. Perspectives bring the latest research to a wider audience and consider how that research can contribute to a successful multi-ethnic Britain.

About the Editors

Omar Khan is Runnymede's Director. He has written widely on race equality, including Runnymede's previous analysis of race and elections in 2001, 2005 and 2010. Among his various advisory roles are chair of the Ethnicity Strand Advisory Group to Understanding Society and chair of the advisory group of the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity at the University of Manchester. Omar is also a member of the Department for Work and Pensions' Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group Advisory Group, the chair of Olmec and a 2012 Clore Social Leadership Fellow.

Kjartan Sveinsson is a PhD student at the Department of Sociology, London School of Economics. Prior to this, he was a Senior Research and Policy Analyst at the Runnymede Trust. He has written widely on super-diversity, ethnic profiling, race and class, and medical migration. His publications include *Who Cares about the White Working Class?* and 'Super-Diversity and the Return to Integration: Paradoxes in Multi-Ethnic Britain'.

Runnymede

St Clement's Building,
London School of Economics,
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE

T 020 7377 9222

E info@runnymedetrust.org

Registered in England 3409935

Registered Charity 1063609

www.runnymedetrust.org

RUNNYMEDE