



The British Candidate Study, 1991

Questionnaire

We are asking for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire as part of the British Candidate Study, 1991.

This study has secured the official support of your party. The survey is a research project under the direction of Dr Joni Lovenduski and Dr Andrew Geddes at Loughborough University, and Dr Pippa Norris and Dr Catriona Levy at Edinburgh University. The study is sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council, an academic research body. The project involves a survey of party members in constituency parties, applicants on approved party lists, Parliamentary candidates and MPs.

The aim of the research is to learn about your experience of the selection process, political attitudes and personal background. The success of the project depends upon our receiving as many replies as possible. We realise that there are numerous demands on your time, however your reply would make an invaluable contribution to the study, and your help would be greatly appreciated. The questions cover a wide range of subjects but each can be answered by simply ticking one of the boxes provided, or writing in a brief answer.

All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence. No information will be published which is attributable to individual candidates without their prior written permission. No information on political attitudes (Section C) will be published before the next general election.

It would be appreciated if the completed questionnaire could be placed in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope and posted back within one month. If you would be interested in learning about the results please indicate by ticking the final box. If you have any comments about the questionnaire they should be attached to your return. Please feel free to contact Dr Levy with any enquiries about the survey.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely

Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski

BRITISH CANDIDATE SURVEY 1991

SECTION A: POLITICAL BACKGROUND

First, we would like to ask you some questions about your political background.

1. What is your current party affiliation?

- Conservative__
- Labour/ Co-op__
- Liberal Democrat__
- Scottish National__
- Plaid Cymru__
- Green__
- Other (please specify)_____

2. Are you currently an elected Member of Parliament?

- Yes__
- No__

3. Are you a prospective Parliamentary candidate for the coming general election?

- Yes__
- No__

If 'yes', for which constituency are you standing?

4. When did you first join your present political party?

19__

5. Has your party membership been continuous since then?

- Yes__
- No__

6. Have you ever been a member of another British political party?

- Yes__
- No__

If 'Yes', which one?

- Conservative__
- Labour/Co-op__
- Liberal__
- SDP__
- Liberal Democrats__
- Scottish National__
- Plaid Cymru__
- Green__
- Other (please specify)_____

7. What was your single most important reason for joining your present political party?

PLEASE WRITE IN

8. Please tick if you have ever Yes
- Held a local Party office —
- Held regional Party office —
- Held national Party office —
- Been a candidate for local government —
- Been elected to local government —
- Been a candidate for the European Parliament —
- Been elected to the European Parliament —
- Served on a local public body —
- Served on a national public body —
- Held office in a local pressure group —
- Held office in a national pressure group —
- Held office in other community groups —
- Held office in a professional body —
- Held office in a student organization —
- Held office in a trade union —
- (For women only)
- Held office in a women's organisation? —

9. What are the two most responsible political positions you have held outside of Parliament?

10. How much time do you usually devote to party activities in the average month?

- Up to 5 hours —
- From 5 to 10 hours —
- From 10 to 15 hours —
- From 15 to 20 hours —
- More than 20 hours —

11. If you belong to any party groups, (for example the Fabian Society, the Bow Group or the Tawney Society) could you please say which ones?

12. If you belong to any pressure groups (for example the Electoral Reform Society, the National Council for Civil Liberties, the Chamber of Commerce, the Trade's Council or Greenpeace) could you please say which ones?

13. Has anyone in your family been active in public life, or held political office? If so, please give details.

14. Have you stood for Parliament before?

Yes___

No___

If 'Yes' could you give brief details below?

	Candidate?	Elected?	Name of Constituency?
1945	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1950	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1951	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1955	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1959	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1964	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1966	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1970	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1974(F)	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1974(O)	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1979	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1983	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
1987	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____
Byelection	Yes ___ Yes ___		_____

15. Have your mother and father ever been party members?

Mother	Father
Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___

If 'Yes', for which party?

Conservative _____
Labour/Co-op _____
Liberal/Lib Dem/SDP _____
Scottish National _____
Plaid Cymru _____
Green _____
Other (please specify) _____

B: YOUR EXPERIENCE OF SELECTION

16. What was the single most important reason why you first wanted to stand for Parliament?

PLEASE WRITE IN

17. Some people receive encouragement from those around them when they decide to stand for public office, while others experience indifference or disapproval. How positive or negative were the following people in encouraging you to become a candidate in the next election? (Please circle one number per line)

	VERY POSITIVE	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE	VERY NEGATIVE
Your spouse or partner					
Other family members					
Personal friends					
Women's groups/networks					
Community groups					
Business associates					
Fellow trade unionists					
Party members					
Party agents					
Employers					

8. For the coming general election:

For how many seats did you apply? _____

For how many were you interviewed? _____

For how many were you on the final short-list? _____

9. In your most recent short-listing:

How many were on the final short-list? _____

How many were women? _____

How many were of Asian background? _____

How many were of Afro-Caribbean background? _____

20. When originally deciding to apply for a constituency, how important were the following factors in influencing your choice of seats?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
I already lived in the constituency				
I choose seats close to my home				
I choose seats in my region				
I chose seats close to Westminster				
I knew party members in the seat				
I was asked to apply				
I thought I could win the seat				
I thought it would be good experience				

FOR LABOUR PARTY ONLY:

21. How many of the following bodies nominated you in your most recent short-listing? And how many of each are there in the constituency?

	Total Who Nominated You	Total in Constituency
Branch sections	_____	_____
Trade Union sections	_____	
Co-operative sections	_____	
Women's sections	_____	
Socialist Societies	_____	
Other _____	_____	

FOR ALL RESPONDENTS:

22. In your experience how important are the following qualities to party members when selecting their Parliamentary candidate?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
Good speaker				
Personal energy/enthusiasm				
Good personal appearance				
Political experience				
Stable home life				
Supports members' views				
Likely to win votes				
Committed to constituency				
Nationally well known				
Local candidate				
Well educated				
Knowledgeable about issues				
Experienced party worker				

23. In your view was the procedure used in your most recent selection application...

	VERY	QUITE	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL
Democratic				
Efficient				
Complicated				
Fair				

24. Do you think the influence the national party leadership has over the selection of Parliamentary candidates is generally..

- Far too great ___
- Too great ___
- About right ___
- Too little ___
- Far too little ___

25. Do think that the influence the local party has over the selection of Parliamentary candidates is generally..

- Far too great ___
- Too great ___
- About right ___
- Too little ___
- Far too little ___

26. In your view how important are the following parts of an MP's job?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
Speaking in Parliament				
Holding regular constituency surgeries				
Attending local party meetings				
Parliamentary committee work				
Representing regional interests				
Helping with individual problems				
Supporting the party leader				
Developing party policy				
Voting the party line in Parliament				
Speaking to the national press & TV				
Attending local community functions				
Representing the constituency in Parliament				
Working with interest groups				
Defending party policy				

FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES AND MPs ONLY:

27a. In the next general election which party do you think will win in your constituency?

Conservative —
Labour —
Liberal Democrat —
SNP/PC —
Other —

27b. And which party do you think will come second?

Conservative —
Labour —
Liberal Democrat —
SNP/PC —
Other —

28. Do you think the result in this seat will be close or will one party win easily?

Close result —
Win easily —
Don't know —

FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ONLY:

29. Can you tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about the work of Members of Parliament:

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
MPs' casework has increased too much and ought to be reduced				
Solving constituents' problems is one of the most worthwhile parts of my job				
People would be more likely to vote for an active constituency MP				
MPs are elected to participate in government, not to act as unpaid social workers				
Most people vote for the party not the individual candidate				

FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ONLY:

30. Roughly about how many hours do you think you usually devote to the following activities in the average week when the house is sitting?

HOURS

Work in the Palace of Westminster:
Dealing with constituency casework
Attending Parliamentary debates on the floor of the House
Working in Parliamentary select committees
Working in Parliamentary standing committees
Working in backbench party committees
Informal meetings with other MPs
Meetings with group representatives and delegates

Work in your constituency
Holding constituency surgeries
Attending local party meetings
Attending other functions in your constituency
Travelling time between Westminster and your constituency

Total hours per week devoted to your work as an MP

31. Turning to your political correspondence, in the average week about how many letters do you receive from constituents?

And about how many letters do you receive from others? _____

FOR ALL RESPONDENTS:

32. Which of the following two statements comes closest to your views about politicians?

Politicians should spend more time listening to the views of ordinary people
or
Politicians should rely more on their own judgement, instead of on public opinion

33. Do you feel that there should be many more women in Parliament, a few more, about the same as now, or fewer women in Parliament?

Many more women _____
A few more women _____
Same as now _____
Fewer women _____

34. Would you agree or disagree with the following explanations of why there are few women in Parliament?

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY	DON'T KNOW
Women don't come forward to be considered						
Women lose votes						
Women are not given the opportunity by parties						
Women put their families above a career in Parliament						
Women don't have the right experience and education						
Women are not suited to the job						
Women don't have the confidence						
Women don't fit into Parliament						
Women are not interested in politics						

35. Do you approve or disapprove of the following proposals for increasing the number of women in Parliament?

	APPROVE STRONGLY	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DISAPPROVE STRONGLY
Party training programmes for women				
Positive quotas/affirmative action for women				
Better childcare facilities in Parliament				
Changing the hours of Parliamentary sittings				
Financial support for women candidates				

36. Concerning MPs of Asian and Afro-Caribbean background, do you feel that there should be many more, a few more, about the same as now or fewer MPs?

Many more _____
A few more _____
Same as now _____
Fewer _____

37. Would you agree or disagree with the following explanations of why there are so few Asian and Afro-Caribbean MPs?

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY	DON'T KNOW
They don't come forward to be considered						
They lose votes						
They are not given the opportunity by parties						
They don't have the right experience and education						
They are not suited to the job						
They don't have the confidence						
They don't fit into Parliament						
They are not interested in politics						

C: YOUR POLITICAL ATTITUDES

38. What would you say are the three most important problems facing the country at the present time? Please list in order of priority.

i. _____

ii _____

iii _____

39. In political matters some people talk about 'left' and 'right'. Where would you place your views on this scale?

Left Right

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

40. And where would you place the views of your constituency party on this scale?

Left Right

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. And lastly where would you place the views of your party leader?

Left Right

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

42. Do you think the government should or should not do each of the following things, or doesn't it matter either way?

Spend more money to get rid
of poverty

Encourage the growth of private medicine

Put more money into the NHS

Introduce stricter laws to regulate
the activities of trade unions

Spend less on defence

43. Are you generally in favour of..

More nationalisation of companies by government ___
More privatisation of companies by government ___
Or leaving things as they are now ___

44. Suppose the government had to choose between the following three options. Which do you think it should choose?

Reduce taxes and spend less on health and education ___

Or keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now ___

Or increase taxes and spend more on health and education ___

45. If the government had to choose between keeping down inflation or keeping down unemployment, to which do you think it should give highest priority?

Keeping down inflation
Keeping down unemployment
Or both equally

—
—

46. Do you think that trade unions in this country have:

Far too much power
Too much power
About right
Too little power
Far too little power

47. And do you think that business and industry have:

Far too much power
Too much power
About right
Too little power
Far too little power

48. Which, if either, of these two statements comes closest to your own opinion on British nuclear weapons?

Britain should keep her own nuclear weapons, independent of other countries

Or Britain should have nuclear weapons only as part of a Western defence system

Or Britain should have nothing to do with nuclear weapons under any circumstances

(No opinion/ Don't know)

49. On the whole, do you think the UK's interests are better served by

Closer links with Western Europe
or closer links with America?
or - both equally

50. People hold different views about how they would like to see the European Community develop. Which of these statements comes closest to your own view?

A fully integrated Europe with most major decisions taken by a European government

A Europe more integrated than now but with decisions that mainly affect Britain staying in British hands

The situation much as it is now, with Britain retaining a veto over major policy changes it does not like

Complete British withdrawal from the European Community

51. There is a lot of talk these days about what the aims of the country should be for the next ten years. If you had to choose between the following items, which seems most important, and next most important, to you?

Most Next
Impt Most Impt

Maintaining order in the nation
Giving people more say in important government decisions
Fighting rising prices
Protecting freedom of speech

52. Can you tell me how far you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Agree Strongly Agree Neither Disagree Disagree Strongly

Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those less well off

Too many people these days like to rely on government handouts

Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth

When someone is unemployed, it's usually his or her own fault

The welfare state makes people nowadays less willing to look after themselves

Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values.

People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences

For somecrimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence

Schools should teach children to obey authority

The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong

There should be more severe punishments for domestic violence

Rape in marriage should be a crime

During the first 2 weeks of pregnancy the law should not restrict a woman having an abortion

Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards

Spending more on poverty won't help the problem

Cutting taxes will increase government revenue

Many people who get social security don't really deserve help

53. An issue in Scotland and Wales is the question of an elected Assembly - a special parliaments dealing with Scottish and Welsh affairs. Which of these statements comes closest to your view?

Scotland Wales

Scotland and Wales should become independent, separate from the UK and the European Community.

Scotland and Wales should become independent, separate from the UK but part of the European Community

Scotland and Wales should remain part of the UK but with their own devolved Assemblies with some taxation and spending powers.

There should be no change from the present system

54. Next we want to ask you about some changes that have been happening in Britain over the years. For each one can you say whether it has gone too far, not far enough, or is it about right.

Welfare benefits that are available to people today?

Attempts to give equal opportunities to women in Britain?

The building of nuclear power stations?

Attempts to give equal opportunities to black people and Asians in Britain?

The availability of abortion on the NHS?

D: YOUR PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Finally we would like to ask you some questions about your social background.

55. In what year were you born? 19__

56. Are you

Male
Female

57. What is your present marital status?

Married
Widowed
Divorced
Single
Separated

58. Do you have any children in your care who are aged

Under 5 5-5 yrs
No
Yes

If Yes how many? ___

59. How old were you when you completed continuous education? ___

60. Have you a university or polytechnic degree?
No
Yes

If Yes, where did you take your first degree? _____

6. Which type of school did you last attend full-time?

Secondary Modern
Technical
Comprehensive
Grammar
Direct Grant
Junior Secondary
Senior Secondary
Grant aided
Independent Fee-paying
Primary / Elementary
Other

If private (fee-paying), which school? _____

62. Are you currently a member of trade union or staff association?

Yes Trade Union
Yes Staff Assoc.
No

63. Are you a union sponsored candidate?

Yes
No

If Yes, which union? _____

64. Which of these best describes what you were doing last week? If you are an MP, which best describes your occupation immediately prior to being elected?

In full-time education
In paid work
Registered unemployed
Wholly retired from work
Looking after the home
Other....._____

65. If currently employed, please describe your occupation and employer. If an MP, please describe your occupation and employer immediately prior to being elected.

Occupation:_____

Employer:_____

66. Please tick to show which best describes the sort of work you, and your partner/spouse, do. If you are an MP, or not working now, please indicate what you did in your job immediately prior to being elected.

Self Spouse

Farmer or farm manager

Farm worker...

Skilled manual work
(for example: plumber, electrician, fitter, train driver, cook, hairdresser).

Semi-skilled or unskilled manual work
(for example: machine operator, postman, waitress, cleaner, labourer)

Professional or technical work
(for example: doctor, accountant, school teacher, social worker)

Manager or administrator
(for example: company director, manager, executive, local authority officer)

Clerical
(for example: clerk, secretary, telephone operator).....

Sales
(for example: commercial traveller, shop assistant) ..

Other (please describe)._____

67. Which sector you are employed in? If an MP, which sector were you employed in immediately prior to being elected?

- Small business
- Large business
- Central government
- Law
- Local government
- Education
- Health service
- Nationalised industry

68. Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to any particular social class?

- Yes
- No

If 'Yes', which class is that? _____

69. In your main accommodation do you, or your household:

- Own the property
- Rent from your Local Authority
- Rent from a private landlord
- Rent from a Housing Association

70. Which ethnic grouping do you belong to?

- White
- Black-Caribbean
- Black-African
- Black-Other
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other ethnic group

71. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which one? _____

72. Is your household's total income?..

- Less than _5,000
- _ 5,000 - 10,000
- _10,000 - 20,000
- _20,000 - 30,000
- _30,000 - 40,000
- _40,000 - 50,000
- _50,000+

73. Where were you living when you were 14?

Village, town, or city : _____
County: _____

And where do you live now?

Village, town, or city : _____
County: _____

74. Would you be willing to help the project further with a brief interview?

- YES
- NO

If 'Yes', could you give a telephone number:

Tel Home: _____ Tel Work: _____

75. If you would like to know about the results when they are published please tick here

Many thanks for completing the questionnaire. All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Please return by post to: Dr Pippa Norris, Department of Politics, Edinburgh University, 31 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9JT.
