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Publisher: Routledge

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UK



Ethnic and Racial Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rers20>

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Published online: 19 Sep 2013.

To cite this article: David Sanders, Stephen D. Fisher, Anthony Heath & Maria Sobolewska, Ethnic and Racial Studies (2013): The democratic engagement of Britain's ethnic minorities, Ethnic and Racial Studies, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2013.827795

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.827795>

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The democratic engagement of Britain's ethnic minorities

David Sanders, Stephen D. Fisher, Anthony Heath and Maria Sobolewska

Abstract

Democratic engagement is a multi-faceted phenomenon that embraces citizens' involvement with electoral politics, their participation in 'conventional' extra-parliamentary political activity, their satisfaction with democracy and trust in state institutions, and their rejection of the use of violence for political ends. Evidence from the 2010 BES and EMBES shows that there are important variations in patterns of democratic engagement across Britain's different ethnic-minority groups and across generations. Overall, ethnic-minority engagement is at a similar level to and moved by the same general factors that influence the political dispositions of whites. However, minority democratic engagement is also strongly affected by a set of distinctive ethnic-minority perceptions and experiences, associated particularly with discrimination and patterns of minority and majority cultural engagement. Second-generation minorities who grew up in Britain are less, rather than more, likely to be engaged.

Keywords: democratic engagement; discrimination; second generation; embeddedness; acculturation; cognitive mobilization.

Introduction

A key concern for UK policymakers interested in citizen engagement is the need to ensure that members of Britain's ethnic minorities do not feel excluded from, or unrepresented by, the 'orthodox' political process. These concerns have been heightened in recent years by the alleged rise of sympathy for radical Islam among the UK's Muslim communities and by the explosive riots that occurred in many English cities in the summer of 2011, related to which particular anxiety has been expressed about the role of young British-born minorities. This paper explores the extent to which Britain's ethnic-minority communities engage with mainstream UK politics and compares their patterns

of engagement with those of the white majority population. Engagement is defined here as a multi-faceted phenomenon that embraces a variety of forms of citizen involvement with the political process. The empirical results reported show that there are important variations in patterns of democratic engagement across Britain's ethnic-minority groups, and between immigrants and second-generation minorities. Notwithstanding these differences, however, the overall pattern of ethnic-minority democratic engagement in Britain does *not* vary markedly from that exhibited by the 'white' majority.

In addition to *describing* the extent of ethnic-minority engagement, the paper also examines a variety of possible *explanations* for variations in people's orientations towards the UK political system. Models are developed and tested that evaluate the relative importance both of established 'general' accounts of citizens' orientations towards the political system and of accounts that relate more directly to ethnic-minority experiences and perceptions. The results show that democratic engagement among Britain's ethnic minorities is moved by some of the same general factors that influence the political dispositions of non-minority citizens in advanced democracies. However, minority democratic engagement is also strongly affected by a set of distinctive ethnic-minority perceptions and experiences, associated particularly with discrimination and with patterns of minority and majority cultural engagement.

The first part of the paper outlines our conceptualization of democratic engagement and specifies the main theoretical approaches that we consider relevant to its explanation. The second part summarizes our operational measures of democratic engagement and describes how they vary across different ethnic-minority groups. It also considers the important issue of how young people and second-generation minorities may differ. The third part develops a multi-variate model that seeks to assess the relative importance of different factors in explaining patterns of democratic engagement among Britain's ethnic-minority population.

The substantive and theoretical background to ethnic-minority democratic engagement in Britain

There is an extensive literature on the social, economic and political engagement and integration of ethnic minorities in Britain and other advanced democracies (see e.g. Morales and Giugni 2011; Wright and Bloemraad 2012). Debates about the extent of minority engagement and its sources have intensified as Britain's ethnic-minority populations have grown in size and as policymakers have become increasingly aware of the risks and dangers of social, economic and political exclusion. Three key themes emerge from recent UK studies. The first

relates to the demography of disadvantage that characterizes many ethnic minority (EM) communities. As in the USA, Britain's EM citizens tend to live in poorer, relatively deprived urban districts, although in the UK this is less true for people of Indian origin than it is for members of other ethnic-minority groups (see Karn 1997). Relatedly, Britain's EM citizens, especially young Afro-Caribbeans, tend to be significantly disadvantaged in the labour market. They experience disproportionate difficulty in obtaining secure employment and, when they do find employment, they tend to receive lower levels of pay (Cheung and Heath 2007).

A second theme that emerges is that, notwithstanding minorities' typical demographic disadvantages, EM and white citizens frequently display very similar political attitudes and dispositions (Clarke et al. 2004, 2009). For example, most citizens, whether they are from ethnic minorities or from the white majority, feel a weak sense of political efficacy: very few people indeed, from whatever ethnic background, believe that they have any real influence on political decisions or the political process. Similarly, most people, regardless of their ethnicity, have authoritarian views on how the state should deal with criminal behaviour. These similarities in attitude frequently extend, moreover, to the factors that motivate people to make political decisions. For example, in deciding which political party to vote for in a general election, EM and white voters both place similar emphasis on their evaluations of party leaders and on their assessments of the problem-solving capabilities of rival political parties (Sanders et al. 2011). In short, in their attitudinal profiles and the ways in which they think about politics in general, Britain's minority and majority citizens often appear very similar.

A third theme that emerges from the literature represents a direct contrast. Although EM attitudes and behaviour are frequently underpinned by the same factors that drive the attitudes and behaviour of white people, there are also distinctive factors specific to EM citizens that derive from their distinctive experiences as members of minority groups. In a society that is still overwhelmingly white, experiences of discrimination and the perception that one's own ethnic group is discriminated against are necessarily much more likely to affect members of ethnic minorities than they are members of the white majority.¹ Similarly, given the tendency for EM citizens to be either first-, second- or third-generation immigrants to the UK, minority citizens are more likely to be exposed to distinctive minority cultural values and practices than are their white counterparts. These distinctive minority experiences are clearly capable of exerting some sort of effect on the political world views of EM citizens. Thus, in addition to any general factors that might determine the patterns of democratic engagement of all citizens, there is likely to be a

complementary EM-specific set of factors that also need to be taken into account. In this sense, we need to recognize that while in many respects EM citizens are ‘just like everyone else’, there are also distinctive respects in which members of EM groups think and act differently from their white counterparts. It is the relative importance of these general and distinctive factors that are examined here.

Defining democratic engagement

Democratic engagement is associated with positive behavioural and psychological orientations towards mainstream democratic political processes and values, similar to Almond and Verba’s (1963) notion of the civic culture. An individual (group) can be considered democratically engaged to the extent that he/she (it) is positively engaged behaviourally and psychologically with the political system and associated democratic norms.

In the context of contemporary democratic practice, we propose four main aspects of engagement, summarized in Table 1. The categories are largely self-explanatory, but we have provided a brief justification for each of them in the ‘Logic’ column of the table. An important feature of our notion of democratic engagement is implied by the distinctions drawn in Table 1. Any given individual could in principle appear ‘strongly engaged’ on one dimension (say, voting, civic duty and party identification), but ‘weakly engaged’ on another (say, institutional confidence and a preparedness to engage in violence). There is certainly no logical *a priori* reason why a given individual should exhibit consistency across the different dimensions or that the dimensions themselves should be ‘scalable’ in a statistical sense. This said, we anticipate that the most engaged individuals will register high levels of engagement across the voting, electoral attitudes, conventional participation and institutional confidence dimensions, and at the same time will display a low propensity to violent protest. It accordingly makes theoretical sense to speak of individuals as being on a (measurable) spectrum ranging from low to high overall engagement.

Why are some people more democratically engaged than others?

There is a voluminous literature that seeks to account for individual variations in different forms of democratic engagement.² Here, we group the various explanations and theories under two main headings: those that apply generally to all forms of democratic engagement for all citizens; and those that apply almost exclusively to EM citizens and generational differences among minorities.

In the first ‘generally applicable’ category, three major theoretical accounts stand out: rational choice; cognitive and resource mobilization;

Table 1. *Dimensions and sub-dimensions of democratic engagement*

Dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Logic
Electoral engagement	Reported voting in general elections Identification with a mainstream political party Sense that voting is a civic duty	Shows behavioural commitment to primary citizen duty of representative democracy Shows psychological engagement with primary mediating institutions of representative democracy Shows normative commitment to the primary citizen activity in the democratic process
Conventional non-electoral engagement	Participation in conventional, non-violent political participation; including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● peaceful protest ● signing petitions ● product boycotts ● financial contributions to a political cause Interest in politics Knowledge of UK politics	Shows recognition that active citizens ‘do more than just vote’ in order to enable their voices to be heard, but also a recognition that this activity is bounded by conventional expectations Shows attitudinal engagement with the political system, even if the individual fails to participate in political activity Shows awareness of/psychological engagement with the UK political process
Institutional confidence	Trust in UK political institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Westminster parliament ● the police ● politicians in general Satisfaction with democracy in the UK	Trust implies a psychological connection with UK political institutions and polity; mistrust implies distancing Satisfaction implies a psychological connection with UK political institutions and polity; mistrust implies distancing
Rejection of non-violence in politics	Preparedness to engage in violent protest against either a war or taxation	Shows rejection of basic convention of UK politics (and law of the UK) – that objections to government policies should remain peaceful

and relative deprivation.³ Rational choice theory has many variants, but a key rational choice model employed in explaining most forms of non-electoral democratic engagement is valence theory. Valence theory focuses on policy delivery (Sanders et al. 2011). The more that the orthodox political process is seen to deliver satisfactory policy outcomes to citizens, the more likely they are to be active citizens who will engage positively with the political system: they will be more likely to vote, to identify with a party and to feel a sense of civic duty; more likely to engage in conventional non-electoral activities; more likely to display institutional confidence; and less likely to support political violence. In contrast, negative valence – the perception that none of the mainstream parties is capable of delivering satisfactory policy outcomes – is expected to lead to low levels of engagement and higher support for violent political action. Cognitive mobilization theory's core claim is that, as people become more educated, they become more active and aware as citizens.⁴ More broadly, cognitive faculties can be considered as a resource facilitating political participation, along with socio-economic status and psychological predispositions such as efficacy. Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) emphasized such resource mobilization in their civic voluntarism model. Finally, relative deprivation theory suggests that people who believe that they have not and/or will not receive their 'just desserts' from the political system are more inclined to feel frustrated or disillusioned by it. Their sense of disillusionment in turn renders them less likely to engage with or be supportive of conventional democratic politics and more likely to participate in acts of political violence (Mueller 1979; Bowler and Segura 2012).

A key aspect of these three theories is that they in principle apply to everyone, regardless of minority or majority position. There is a further set of factors, however, that in a multi-ethnic society relate more obviously to people from ethnic minorities. The first two of these relate to experiences of discrimination. We distinguish between *egocentric discrimination* – direct discrimination experienced personally by the individual – and *sociotropic discrimination* – the sense that members of one's own ethnic group suffer discrimination, regardless of one's own personal experiences. In both cases, following Maxwell (2009), we expect that perceptions of discrimination will reduce engagement with the British political system. The calculation here, we assume, is simple: white majority society has indicated that it rejects me and/or people like me and as a result I choose not to engage it with politically. A third EM-specific factor relates to the individual's social distance from white society. In this context, we assume that individuals who would be bothered by a family member marrying a white person will feel somewhat separate from (white) society in

general and so less likely to want to engage with their politics, and perhaps also more likely to support political violence or to disengage.

Our fourth factor focuses on the individual's *embeddedness in his/her own EM community and culture*. By embeddedness here we mean a combination of activity focused on ethnic community organizations, regularly reading an EM newspaper, feeling a strong sense of religious and/or ethnic identity, and beliefs about the need for minorities to retain their own traditional values. The central component of this measure is involvement in community associations, which in turn is strongly linked to ethnic identities and beliefs. The measure thus captures both structural and cultural aspects of ethnic community life.⁵ It might be expected that the more embedded an individual is in his/her own community and culture, the less likely he/she would feel inclined to engage with mainstream national politics (Cantle 2001). This would imply that minority embeddedness should be negatively associated with engagement. Yet there is a contrary possibility – that higher levels of minority embeddedness could give EM citizens greater confidence and determination to engage with mainstream politics and therefore could be associated positively with engagement, similar to Fennema and Tillie's (1999) civic community argument (see also Maxwell 2012). The corollary to minority embeddedness is *majority acculturation*. By this, we mean the extent to which the individual embraces both the English language and 'traditional' British cultural practices such as wearing a poppy on Remembrance Day. The supposition here is that higher levels of participation in such practices, other things being equal, would imply stronger cultural engagement with British society and consequently would lead to more engagement with conventional UK politics.

If there were a process of acculturation and convergence between minorities and whites, we would expect to see greater similarity between British-born minorities and white citizens than between immigrants and whites. However, it has been convincingly suggested that while first-generation immigrants tend to be relatively enthusiastic about British democracy when they first arrive in the UK, extended exposure to discrimination leads to disappointed expectations and disillusion among their second-generation descendants (Maxwell 2010).

The pattern of democratic engagement among Britain's main ethnic-minority groups

In this section we describe the degree of democratic engagement of Britain's five main EM groups, as compared with that of the white majority. We also provide descriptions of the main explanatory measures employed in the model of engagement we present later. We use the same classification and basic measures of ethnicity as described

elsewhere in this volume. The data for EM respondents are all drawn from the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study (EMBES), which was a high-quality representative face-to-face probability sample survey with over 90 per cent coverage of each of Britain's five main EM groups (Howat et al. 2011). The survey includes new and repeated social and political survey questions and is large enough for within- and between-group analysis. For white respondents, with minor exceptions, data are taken from the parallel 2010 British Election Study (BES) face-to-face post-election survey.

Table 2 reports key percentages for each of our dimensions and sub-dimensions of democratic engagement. Percentages are reported for each major EM group, for all EM citizens (distinguishing the first from the second-plus generation), and for a representative sample of white people interviewed as part of the 2010 BES.⁶ The figure for whites 'prepared to engage in conventional non-electoral politics' is bracketed because the question wording in the BES and the EM samples differed, so the comparison between white and EM respondents is less helpful for this dimension.⁷ Several features of the table need highlighting. First, *reported turnout* is some ten percentage points higher among whites (79 per cent) than among EM respondents (69 per cent).⁸ Reported voting was lowest among Africans (60 per cent) and to a lesser degree Afro-Caribbeans (65 per cent), although this lower reported vote in part reflects the fact that African respondents were disproportionately ineligible to vote in the first place (Heath et al. 2011).

Clearly, if we were to look only at voting, we might well conclude that Britain's EM citizens are less democratically engaged on average than their white counterparts. The same would be true if we just looked solely at *political knowledge*, where whites run some twenty-five percentage points ahead of EM respondents. However, if we consider the rest of Table 2, a very different picture emerges. Levels of *identification with parties* are practically the same for all EM groups as they are for white citizens, even if EMs are much more likely to identify with Labour than are whites. In relation to *civic duty*, EM citizens are clearly *more* civic-minded than their white counterparts. This is true both in general (86 per cent of EM respondents expressed a sense of civic duty compared with 78 per cent of whites) and for each minority group considered separately. The picture is less clear in relation to *conventional non-electoral politics* where, as noted above, question wording differences render a direct EM–white comparison impossible. Nonetheless, the figures reported indicate that there are no significant differences in engagement across the different EM groups – and in terms of *interest in politics*, whites and EM citizens register virtually identical average levels. On both measures of *institutional confidence* – trust in institutions and democracy satisfaction – the EM

Table 2. *Distributions of democratic engagement dimensions, by ethnic group and generation (cell percentages)*

	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Black Caribbean	Black African	All EM	EM first generation	EM 2+ generation	White
Electoral engagement									
Reported voting in 2010 general election	74	72	78	65	60	69	71	67	79
Identifying with mainstream political party	79	80	76	77	80	79	79	78	78
Expressing sense of civic duty	90	86	88	82	85	86	87	83	78
Non-electoral engagement									
Participated in conventional politics last year/(prepared to)	26	27	25	26	21	25	21	31	(40)
Interested in politics a great deal or quite a lot	40	33	23	42	48	39	38	39	41
Knowledge quiz, percentage scoring three or more out of four	60	57	50	61	51	57	55	59	82
Institutional confidence									
Expressing above midpoint trust in political institutions	63	61	67	33	58	55	63	47	51
Fairly or very satisfied with democracy in Britain	72	73	76	47	72	67	73	59	62
Rejection of non-violence in politics									
Prepared to engage in violent protest against war or tax	16	15	17	11	15	15	15	20	15
<i>N</i>	587	668	270	597	524	2,646	1,431	1,215	2,805

Sources: EMBES 2010, BES 2010, BES Continuous Monitoring Survey October 2011.

population is on average *more* positively engaged (55 per cent for institutional trust and 67 per cent for democracy satisfaction) than the white majority (equivalent figures: 51 and 62 per cent, respectively). This said, it is also clear from [Table 2](#) that black Caribbean respondents exhibit substantially lower levels of institutional confidence (33 per cent on trust and 47 per cent on democracy satisfaction) than both their EM and white counterparts. Finally, the table reports the percentage of respondents prepared to *engage in violent protest* against either war or taxes. Here, the different EM groups register similar levels of preparedness (average EM score: 15 per cent), although the figure is slightly lower (11 per cent) among Caribbeans. The crucial comparison, however, is with whites – where a figure of 15 per cent, identical to that for EM respondents in general, is observed.

The importance of these findings should not be underestimated. Although there are relatively minor variations across minority groups and between EM and white respondents, taken as a whole there is very little evidence that Britain's EM groups are any less engaged with the British political system than their white counterparts. To be sure, Caribbeans are much less confident in British political institutions than citizens from other groups. However, this caveat apart, it would appear that Britain's EM citizens are marginally *more* democratically engaged on average than the white majority. There is some evidence that trust and satisfaction with British politics is greater in the first than in the second generation, but this is balanced by increased participation in conventional politics in the second generation. In short, if there is a problem with democratic engagement in contemporary Britain it is a problem that affects the white majority of citizens as much as it affects ethnic minorities.

[Table 3](#) begins our exploration of the possible sources of variation in the democratic engagement of Britain's EM citizens. The table summarizes the average positions of each main EM grouping on the EM-specific potential explanatory variables outlined earlier. The results indicate that, although there are some interesting differences across minorities, for the most part the experiences and attitudes of Britain's EM citizens are fairly uniform. Consider, first, the question of discrimination. Average levels of both egocentric and sociotropic discrimination for EM respondents are almost identical – 35 and 37 per cent, respectively. This said, both Africans and especially Caribbeans score substantially above average on both measures – for example, fully 55 per cent of Caribbeans believe that members of their ethnic group suffer discrimination from the majority society. Given these relatively high levels of experienced and perceived discrimination, the proportion of EM respondents who express social distance from whites is modest. On average only 15 per cent of EM citizens

Table 3. Distributions of key independent variables, by ethnic group (cell percentages)

	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Caribbean	African	All EM
Egocentric discrimination	30	28	26	49	39	35
Sociotropic discrimination	28	26	29	55	43	37
Social distance	12	23	18	10	15	15
Education 'high' ^a	60	46	40	41	66	51
Relative deprivation ^b	52	56	60	72	66	61
Negative valence	48	48	51	46	35	45
Minority embeddedness ^c	55	54	57	55	71	58
Majority acculturation ^d	60	31	15	68	56	49
<i>N</i>	587	668	270	597	524	2,646

Source: EMBES 2010.

^a Education 'high' defined as greater than mean score on normalized alpha scale based on highest qualification and years in education.

^b Relatively deprived defined as a score of 4 or 5 on the 1–5 scale.

^c Extensive minority embeddedness defined as a scale score of 3 or greater on the 0–6 scale.

^d Extensive majority acculturation defined as a scale score greater than the mean score (0.289) on the –6.9 to +5.3 scale.

Note: Variable definitions available at http://repository.essex.ac.uk/7054/2/Annex_to_Sanders_et_al_Ethnic_and_Racial_Studies_2014.pdf. This Annex also presents a summary of all of the effects estimated in Equation (1) when each of the dimensions of our democratic engagement index is considered separately.

registered this response, although the figure rises to 23 per cent among Pakistanis.

The education measure in Table 3 reflects the individual's time spent studying and level of attainment, and it is a key variable for both the cognitive and resource mobilization theories.⁹ As the table indicates, the highest education levels are evident among Africans (66 per cent registered above the EM mean) and the lowest among Bangladeshis (40 per cent). The sense of relative deprivation is relatively high among all EM groups (the average EM score is 61 per cent), but with Africans (66 per cent) and Caribbeans (72 per cent) scoring highest of all. Similarly, the sense of negative valence – the belief that none of the major parties can solve Britain's most important policy problems – is relatively high among all groups, with an average score of 45 per cent. In terms of minority embeddedness – the extent to which individuals participate in their 'own' ethnic minority's organizations and cultural practices – members of most ethnic minorities score relatively highly, averaging 58 per cent for all EM groups taken together. The highest

figure (71 per cent) is for Africans, although this may reflect their (on average) more recent arrival in Britain rather than a specific determination to hold on to their own cultures and organizations. The most striking feature of Table 3, however, relates to majority acculturation, which reflects a familiarity with the English language and participation in 'established' British cultural practices. Here, there is a sharp differentiation between the scores for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (31 and 15 per cent, respectively) compared with Indians, Caribbeans and Africans (60, 68 and 56 per cent, respectively). This effect is probably a reflection mainly of religious differences across the different groups, with Pakistanis and Bangladeshis being disproportionately Muslim, which renders them less inclined to adopt cultural practices regarded as 'non-Islamic' and therefore to some degree morally suspect.

Two broad patterns are evident if we consider Tables 2 and 3 together. First, Caribbeans express the least confidence in British political institutions and register the lowest levels of satisfaction with democracy. Significantly, Caribbeans also record the highest levels of both egocentric and sociotropic discrimination. Second, although Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are clearly not *culturally* embedded in mainstream white society, they are just as democratically engaged as members both of other minority groups and the white majority.

These preliminary conclusions, however, pay no heed either to age or to generation. Exploratory analysis (not shown here but available on request) suggests a complex and variegated picture. There are examples of *age differences* (reported voting, political knowledge and interest in politics) where the younger cohorts consistently score below the older cohorts; *generational differences* (non-electoral participation) where the second generation consistently scores higher than the first; and *both age and generational differences* (institutional trust, satisfaction with democracy, support for violent protest) where second-generation younger people consistently score lower than their comparator groups. In other contexts (e.g. party identification and civic duty) there appear to be no systematic age or generation differences at all. We formally explore these possibilities through multivariate analysis in the next section.

A multivariate model of ethnic-minority democratic engagement in Britain

In our analysis so far we have treated the different dimensions and sub-dimensions of democratic engagement separately. Although some minority groups are *more* engaged on a given (sub-)dimension than others, on a different (sub-)dimension those same groups are *less* engaged than others. To get a broad overview we construct an *index of*

democratic engagement. This approach enables us to make general summary statements about the degree of democratic engagement of Britain's different ethnic groups. It also allows us to specify and estimate a single model that seeks to explain why some citizens are more democratically engaged than others. Since we have no *a priori* theoretical reason for assuming that any one (sub-)dimension of engagement is more important than any other, we simply standardize our measures of the separate (sub-)dimensions, add them together and divide by nine.¹⁰ The construction rules for the democratic engagement index are described in Table 4. The index is normally distributed around a mean zero, with a standard deviation of 0.46, a minimum value of -1.70 and a maximum value of 1.21. It yields average democratic engagement scores of 0.08 for Indians, 0.04 for Pakistanis, 0.03 for

Table 4. *Component variables and construction of the democratic engagement index*

Dimension/Sub-dimension	Explanation
Reported voting	Dummy: 1 =voted; 0 =not voted; don't know coded as not voted
Party identification	No identification with a major party =0; 1 =weak identifier; 2 =fairly strong identifier; 3 =very strong identifier
Civic duty	Likert Scale response to statement 'It is every citizen's duty to vote in a general election'. Recoded so that 1 =no sense of civic duty; 5 =very strong sense of civic duty; no opinion coded as 3
Non-electoral participation	Number of activities engaged in over the last 12 months; from participation in: protest, petition, political boycott, giving money to political cause
Political interest	Combination of 1-5 interest in politics scale and 1-4 interest in general election scale; alpha-scaled to produce mean zero combined scale
Political knowledge quiz score	Number of items correct from four-item politics quiz
Trust in institutions	Average of trust scores on three 0-10 trust scales: for Westminster parliament; Police; Politicians in General; mean substitution for no opinion
Democracy satisfaction	Scale: 1 =not at all satisfied with democracy in Britain; 2 =fairly dissatisfied; 2.5 =no opinion; 3 =fairly satisfied; 4 =very satisfied
Support violent protest	Number of contexts (none, war, taxes) in which respondent would be prepared to participate in violent protest

Note: To construct the index, each of the dimension/sub-dimension variables was standardized with mean zero and unit standard deviation. The support violent protest measure was multiplied by -1. The standardized variables were added and the result divided by nine. This yields a normally distributed interval-level index.

Bangladeshis, 0.02 for Africans and -0.08 for Caribbeans.¹¹ In short, Britain's Asian minorities register the highest levels of democratic engagement, followed by Africans, with Caribbeans significantly behind.

How far can individual variations in democratic engagement be explained by the various theoretical claims made in the first section and by the sorts of age and generation differences referred to above? In order to estimate the importance of these different possible effects while at the time trying to avoid over-parameterizing the model, we employ a model specification that includes a series of dummies and interaction terms that reflect the fact that young black Africans and black Caribbeans and young Pakistanis and Bangladeshis frequently appear distinctive. Using Indians and other minorities as the reference group, we group Africans and Caribbeans into a larger 'black' grouping and Pakistanis and Bangladeshis into a larger 'PB' grouping. We test the effects of a range of general and EM-specific factors on democratic engagement by estimating Equation (1):

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Democratic Engagement Index score} = & a + \\
 & + b_1 \text{Education} + b_2 \text{PoliticalEfficacy} + b_3 \text{ManualWorker/not} \\
 & + b_4 \text{RelativeDeprivation} + b_5 \text{NegativeValence} \\
 & + b_6 \text{EgocentricDiscrimination} + b_7 \text{SociotropicDiscrimination} \\
 & + b_8 \text{Social Distance from White People} \\
 & + b_9 \text{MinorityEmbeddedness} + b_{10} \text{MajorityAcculturation} \\
 & + b_{11} \text{Young} + b_{12} \text{SecondGeneration} \\
 & + b_{13} \text{Young} * \text{Second Generation Interaction term} \\
 & + b_{14} \text{Male} \\
 & + b_{15} \text{Density of Own Ethnic Group} \\
 & + b_{16} \text{Black} + b_{17} \text{Young} * \text{Black} + b_{18} \text{Black} * \text{SecondGeneration} \\
 & + b_{19} \text{Young} * \text{Black} * \text{SecondGeneration} \\
 & + b_{20} \text{PB} + b_{21} \text{Young} * \text{PB} + b_{22} \text{PB} * \text{SecondGeneration} \\
 & + b_{23} \text{Young} * \text{PB} * \text{SecondGeneration} + e_i
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{1}$$

where b_1 – b_5 represent general effects; b_6 – b_{10} represent EM-specific effects; b_{11} – b_{13} represent general versions of the age, generation and combined age/generation effects alluded to above; b_{14} – b_{15} represent controls, with b_{15} a contextual-level control designed to capture the effects of living in a denser ethnic community of one's own (Leighley 2001); b_{16} – b_{19} and b_{20} – b_{23} respectively measure the extent to which the specified groups of black and Pakistani/Bangladeshi respondents differ from the reference group; and e_i is a random error term.

Table 5. Clustered regression model of ethnic-minority democratic engagement in Britain

	Coefficient	Robust SE	<i>p</i>
$R^2 = 0.23$ <i>N</i> of cases (<i>N</i> of clusters) = 2,787 (578)			
Predictor variables derived from general theories of engagement			
Education	0.07	0.01	.000
Political efficacy ^a	0.02	0.00	.000
Manual worker	-0.05	0.02	.006
Relative deprivation	-0.03	0.02	.163
Negative valence	-0.23	0.02	.000
EM-specific variables			
Egocentric discrimination	-0.00	0.01	.991
Sociotropic discrimination	-0.05	0.02	.008
Social distance	-0.00	0.01	.617
Minority embeddedness	0.03	0.01	.000
Majority acculturation	0.03	0.00	.000
Age and generation effects			
Young (36 and under)	-0.17	0.09	.059
Second generation	0.03	0.05	.518
Young*Second generation	-0.04	0.10	.627
Black	0.02	0.05	.610
Young*Black	-0.03	0.10	.748
Second generation*Black	-0.11	0.06	.080
Young*Second generation*Black	0.00	0.11	.995
Pakistani-Bangladeshi/not	0.12	0.05	.009
Young*Pakistani-Bangladeshi	0.04	0.10	.706
Second generation*Pakistani-Bangladeshi	-0.16	0.07	.025
Young*Second generation*Pakistani-Bangladeshi	0.07	0.12	.545
Individual-level control			
Male	0.01	0.02	.637
Aggregate-level control			
Percentage of respondent's own ethnic group living in locality	0.12	0.06	.027
Constant	0.20	0.06	.002

Source: EMBES 2010.

^a Political efficacy measured as 0–10 personal political influence scale.

Table 5 reports the results of estimating Equation (1). Given that the dependent variable is an interval-level scale, estimation is by clustered regression with robust standard errors. The clusters are the 578 small areas used as primary sampling units in the sampling design of the EMBES survey. The model is reasonably well determined for individual-level data, with an R^2 of 0.23. The raw b coefficients are not directly comparable as the metrics of the independent variables differ. Nonetheless, several conclusions are suggested by Table 5. First, all five of the general effects produce correctly signed coefficients. As expected from the cognitive and resource mobilization theories, education ($b = 0.07$) and political efficacy ($b = 0.02$) increase engagement.

Manual worker status ($b = -0.05$) and negative valence ($b = -0.23$) clearly reduce engagement. Relative deprivation also reduces engagement, although its effects were not statistically significant. Overall, the coefficients show that education and negative valence are two of the biggest drivers of engagement. Second, turning to the EM-specific variables, of the two discrimination terms, only sociotropic discrimination serves to reduce democratic engagement ($b = -0.05$). This is an important result, parallel to the research findings on the effects of individual and collective economic hardship on voting behaviour (e.g. Kinder and Kiewiet 1981). The rationale is probably the same too: one's individual experiences of unfair treatment may have a wide variety of specific sources, whereas unfair treatment of one's ethnic community is seen as having institutional sources, which the government can be held responsible to tackle. Social distance exerts no significant effect on engagement. Most interesting of all, however, are the positive and significant coefficients for both minority embeddedness and majority acculturation. The key point is that although, as might be expected, democratic engagement is facilitated by participation in the *majority* culture, it is *also* facilitated by involvement with *minority* culture and organizations. This confirms the finding reported elsewhere in this volume that multiculturalism has not failed. On the contrary, the positive effect of minority embeddedness on our index of democratic engagement demonstrates that the maintenance of minority cultural commitments enhances rather than detracts from the overall democratic engagement of EM citizens.

The third segment of Table 5 shows the effects on democratic engagement of age and generation. Again unsurprisingly, young minority citizens tend to be significantly less engaged than their older counterparts ($b = -0.17$), a finding that holds for white British too. While there is no significant effect of being second generation among Indians, there are negative effects among blacks ($b = -0.11$) and Pakistani/Bangladeshis ($b = -0.16$). After accounting for these effects, the only statistically significant term in this segment shows that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, other things being equal, are more engaged than other groups ($b = 0.12$). The final segment of Table 5 shows the effects of the individual- and aggregate-level controls. The results suggest that gender exerts no direct effect on democratic engagement, but that EM democratic engagement is higher in areas where there are relatively high concentrations of EM citizens.

Summary and conclusions

Democratic engagement is a characteristic of both individuals and social groups. It is the outcome of a combination of several different forms of behavioural and psychological engagement with the political

system to which the individual belongs. It is susceptible to explanation in terms both of general theories of political activism and, as far as EM citizens are concerned, theories about the consequences of EM experiences and attitudes, including experiences of discrimination, feelings of prejudice against white people, and both minority and majority cultural embeddedness.

The descriptive analysis we have presented was based on a multi-dimensional characterization of democratic engagement. This showed that, *on a range of different indicators, Britain's EM citizens are generally as democratically engaged as members of the white majority with little overall change across generations*, although the various minority groups do vary in their degrees, and rates of change, of engagement on different measures. EM democratic engagement appears to be less of a distinctive problem than is sometimes thought. Some members of ethnic minorities are *not* engaged – but, in general, EM citizens in Britain are no less democratically engaged than their white counterparts.

Exploratory analysis of the individual (sub-)dimensions of democratic engagement suggests that there is a complex pattern of age and generational effects, a pattern that is further confounded by distinctive variations across different EM groups. By estimating the effects of age, generation and 'large' ethnic group simultaneously with the general and EM-specific effects outlined above, we were able to show that there are important general tendencies for the young and second generation to be less engaged, with the exception that there are no significant generational differences among Indians. While a failure to engage younger citizens is a problem for both white and EM groups, it is striking that second-generation black citizens and those of Pakistani or Bangladeshi background who have grown up in Britain are less engaged than immigrants. We suspect a key contributory factor is that the second generation, having grown up in Britain and been educated in British schools, have somewhat different frames of reference from their parents. The second generation expects to be treated in the same ways as their white British peers, whereas the first generation may be more likely to frame comparisons with reference to the situation of their non-migrant kin who remained in their country of origin. In line with this interpretation, we find that the second generation are actually more likely to report discrimination. This has been termed the 'paradox of social integration': as groups integrate socially, they become more aware of and sensitive to inequality of treatment. It is probably no accident that it is mainly among the black groups, and those of Pakistani or Bangladeshi background, where the second generation is more negative than the first. These are the groups for whom, in rather different ways, life in Britain has provided the greatest challenges, for example from institutional racism or Islamophobia. The challenge for British parties is to ensure that the positive

orientations of the first generation are not undermined by negative experiences in the second generation.

Notes

1. While discrimination might well be related to the more general issue of relative deprivation, this key EM-specific issue requires separate analysis.
2. The analyses published are too numerous to list here. On voting turnout and civic duty, see for example Clarke et al. (2009), on conventional non-electoral participation Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995), on confidence in institutions Kornberg and Clarke (1992), on support for violence Mueller (1979).
3. On some accounts, social capital constitutes a further general explanatory factor underpinning citizen orientations towards the political system. We do not consider this approach explicitly here for two reasons. First, social capital is primarily a quality of social aggregates rather than of individuals, and our approach here is based fundamentally on analysis at the level of the individual. Second, insofar as the ideas of social capital theory are relevant to our analysis, we do introduce them in the discussion of minority and majority 'embeddedness' below.
4. Cognitive mobilization can also have a deleterious effect on engagement: increased political awareness may induce some citizens to become more critical of the established political system (Norris 1999). However, we expect the positive effects to outweigh any negative influence.
5. Our measure does not include informal bonding social capital, but our more detailed research (Heath et al. 2013) suggests that this has less political relevance than associational social capital.
6. The data for whites' preparedness to participate in violent protest are taken from the October 2011 BES Continuous Monitoring Survey because the relevant survey questions were not asked in the main 2010 BES. See: <http://bes.utdallas.edu/2009/cms-data.php>
7. The EMBES questions about non-electoral participation asked if respondents had engaged in each activity over the previous twelve months. The BES questions asked if the respondent was likely to engage in each activity in the future.
8. We use reported voting rather than 'validated' voting (checking electoral rolls to see if respondents had actually voted) because almost half the EM respondents refused to allow these data to be linked. Over-reporting of voting was only slightly greater among EM respondents and our conclusions are unlikely to have been affected by the choice of reported versus validated turnout.
9. We operationalize cognitive mobilization here purely in terms of education. Cognitive mobilization is sometimes taken to include political knowledge and interest as well. We exclude them here because we consider that they are better regarded as indicators of the individual's degree of political engagement – they are accordingly included in our list of dependent variable measures.
10. This produces an index that allows for considerable individual inconsistency across the different (sub-)dimensions. We do not conduct scaling or dimensionality tests on the data because such tests are not theoretically appropriate (i.e. we do not require or expect the different indicators to be positively correlated). We nonetheless test the robustness of the index by iteratively dropping each of the (sub-)dimensions from its construction and estimating Equation (1). The results (not reported: available from the authors on request) produce virtually identical results for all iterations – thus lending credence to our assumption that no one (sub-)dimension is more important than any other.
11. The mean differences between the Asian groups and Africans and between Africans and Caribbeans are all statistically significant at $p = .01$ or better.

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DAVID SANDERS is Professor of Government, Essex University
ADDRESS: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ
Email: sanders@essex.ac.uk

ANTHONY HEATH is Professor of Sociology, Oxford University
ADDRESS: Nuffield College, University of Oxford, New Road, Oxford OX1 1NF
Email: anthony.heath@sociology.ox.ac.uk

STEPHEN FISHER is University Lecturer in Political Sociology, Oxford University
ADDRESS: Trinity College, University of Oxford, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BH
Email: stephen.fisher@trinity.ox.ac.uk

MARIA SOBOLEWSKA is Lecturer in Politics, Manchester University
ADDRESS: Department of Politics, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL
Email: maria.sobolewska@manchester.ac.uk