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**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP, SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL
NORMS**

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Poverty and Social Exclusion
Survey of Britain ●●● ●

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PREFACE

This Working Paper arose from the *1999 Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain* funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The *1999 PSE Survey of Britain* is the most comprehensive and scientifically rigorous survey of its kind ever undertaken. It provides unparalleled detail about deprivation and exclusion among the British population at the close of the twentieth century. It uses a particularly powerful scientific approach to measuring poverty which:

- incorporates the views of members of the public, rather than judgments by social scientists, about what are the necessities of life in modern Britain
- calculates the levels of deprivation that constitutes poverty using scientific methods rather than arbitrary decisions.

The *1999 PSE Survey of Britain* is also the first national study to attempt to measure social exclusion, and to introduce a methodology for poverty and social exclusion which is internationally comparable. Three data sets were used:

- The *1998-9 General Household Survey* (GHS) provided data on the socio-economic circumstances of the respondents, including their incomes
- The *June 1999 ONS Omnibus Survey* included questions designed to establish from a sample of the general population what items and activities they consider to be necessities.
- A follow-up survey of a sub-sample of respondents to the 1998-9 GHS were interviewed in late 1999 to establish how many lacked items identified as necessities, and also to collect other information on poverty and social exclusion.

Further details about the *1999 Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain* are available at: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/pse/>

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of civic engagement as an indicator of social exclusion has been noted by a number of authors. (Barry (1998), Levitas (1998) Giddens(1999), Burchardt et al (1999). This paper uses two separate indicators in an attempt to quantify the extent to which individuals are socially excluded on this dimension. In addition to the activity questions in the list of socially perceived necessities, we asked two sets of questions designed specifically to cover any campaigning activities the respondents had done in the last three years and about memberships of organisations.

2. POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Table 1 lists the activities that respondents were asked whether they had done in the last three years. By far the most common activity undertaken by 73 per cent of respondents was voting in the last general election. This is comparable with the actual turn out at the 1997 general election. Next came voting in the last local election – 65% of respondents reported voting in their last local election – this by far exceeds the actual average percentage of citizens voting in local elections. The over reporting of voting in both general and local elections is well documented. Following these two activities, only a minority of the sample had engaged in any of the activities listed in Table 1 and 17 percent had not engaged in any of the activities.

Table 1

ACTIVITY	<i>% undertaking activity in the last 3 years</i>	<i>% of all activities undertaken</i>	<i>Number involved</i>
Voted in last general election	73	27	1100
Voted in last local election	65	24	981
Helped in fund raising drives	29	11	439
Urged someone in family to vote	20	8	309
Urged someone to contact local councillor or MP	16	6	241
Presented views to local councillor or MP	16	6	236
Been an officer of an organisation or club	14	5	212
Made a speech before an organised group	11	4	163
Written a letter to a newspaper editor	5	2	82
Taken an active part in political campaigning	3	1	51
Stood for public office	1	(12)	12
None of the above	17	6	259

The mean number of activities undertaken was 2.5 per respondent. We divided the sample into three groups; the 'inactive' who had not undertaken any of the listed activities (17%), the 'fairly active' who had undertaken one or two but less than three of the activities (39%) and finally the 'active', this group had done four or more of the activities. Table two compares variations in the activity rates of respondents according to their socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

Table 2. Campaigning activity by characteristics of respondents

	<i>Inactive</i>	<i>Fairly Active</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Mean Activity Score</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>
All	18	39	48	2.5	1534	
Male	21	39	41	2.4	741	**
Female	15	40	45	2.6	740	
Family type						
Single adult	17	40	43	2.5	274	***
Couple no children	12	42	46	2.7	485	
Couple with children	20	35	45	2.6	356	
Lone parent	22	49	33	2.0	58	
Other	24	38	38	2.3	360	
Age Group						
16-24	40	44	16	1.2	126	***
25-44	21	38	41	2.4	545	
45-64	12	38	50	2.9	515	
65+	15	41	44	2.6	350	
Number of adults in household						
1	18	41	41	2.4	332	***
2	17	39	44	2.6	919	
3+	22	39	39	2.3	283	
Number of children in household						
0	15	42	43	2.5	994	***
1	27	29	44	2.5	211	
2	15	41	44	2.6	218	
3+	32	34	34	2.0	112	
Ethnic Group						
White	17	40	43	2.5	1467	***
Non-white	46	28	26	1.7	67	
Housing tenure						
Owned outright	10	43	47	2.8	464	***
Owned with mortgage	18	37	45	2.6	704	
Renting (Local Authority)	27	40	33	2.0	186	
Renting (Housing Assoc.)	47	31	22	1.5	71	
Renting (other)	18	44	38	2.3	109	
Terminal age of education						
16 or under	21	41	38		657	***
17/18	18	39	43		232	
19 or over	11	32	57		361	
Employment status						
1 worker	19	39	42	2.5	361	**
2 workers	17	37	46	2.7	519	
3 workers	25	35	40	2.4	141	
No workers: unemployed	33	38	29	1.8	48	
No workers: retired	13	44	44	2.6	353	
No workers: sick / disabled	21	41	38	2.0	61	
No workers: other	24	50	26	2.0	38	
Equivalent income quintile PSE						
1	24	44	32	2.0	197	***
2	21	48	31	2.2	266	
3	19	39	42	2.3	265	
4	11	37	52	2.8	302	
5	13	32	55	3.0	308	

Receipt of income supplement						
Yes	30	42	28	1.8	127	***
No	17	39	44	2.6	1393	
Net equivalent (PSE) income less than 50% average						
Yes	23	46	32	2.1	279	***
No	16	38	46	2.6	1059	
At or below self perceived poverty						
Yes	25	42	33	2.7	260	***
No	16	38	46	2.0	1017	
Absolute poverty						
Yes	31	41	28	2.8	218	***
No	15	38	47	2.0	1116	
Overall poverty						
Yes	27	40	33	2.8	334	***
No	14	38	48	2.0	972	
Lacking socially perceived necessities						
Yes	27	39	34	2.0	133	***
No	15	39	46	2.7	523	

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

The other question on activism asked respondents whether they were active members of any of the organisations listed in Table 3. The data revealed that 44 per cent of the respondents were not active members of any of the listed organisations. The most common membership was of sports club, with 18 per cent of respondents having active membership, this was followed by religious groups, trade unions and social clubs. Only two per cent of respondents were active members of either a political party or another pressure group. The average number of memberships was 0.97 per person. Results of the analysis are summarised in Table 3, below:

Table 3: Active Membership of Organisations

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>% active members</i>	<i>% of all active memberships</i>	<i>N</i>
Sports club	18	13	275
Religious group or church organisation	12	9	188
Trade union	10	7	147
Social club or working men's club	10	7	152
Tenants / residents association / neighbourhood watch	9	7	143
Voluntary service group	8	5	117
Parent teacher association (PTA) / school governor.	6	4	95
Other community or civic group	3	2	46
Women's group or association	3	2	46
Environmental group	3	2	47
Political party membership	2	2	35
Other pressure group	2	1	29
Women's institute or townswomen's guild	1	1	20
Don't know	3	2	42
None of the above	41	29	620

Again we divided the sample into three groups: those with no memberships (44%), those with one membership (31%) and those who held membership of two or more organisations. We then examined the data to see if membership of organisations varied between respondents from differing socio-economic groups. The groups who reported the lowest rates of membership of organisations were pensioners, lone parents, the unemployed and those permanently unable to work, those with incomes in the lowest quintile and those defined as poor (based on the lack of three or more adult necessities). We found there was a strong association between the absence of memberships and poverty.

Table 4: Organisation membership by characteristics of respondents

	<i>No membership</i>	<i>1 membership</i>	<i>2+ memberships</i>	<i>Mean membership Score</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>
All	44	31	25	1.0	1534	
Male	43	29	28	1.1	740	**
Female	46	32	22	0.9	794	
Age Group						
16-24	52	26	22	0.7	125	*
25-44	43	34	24	1.0	544	
45-64	42	29	29	1.1	514	
65+	47	31	22	0.9	350	
Family type						
Single adult	45	28	27	1.0	274	**
Couple no children	44	33	23	0.9	485	
Couple with children	40	30	30	1.2	356	
Lone parent	60	22	17	0.7	58	
Other	45	32	23	0.9	361	
Number of adults in household						
1	48	27	25	1.0	333	*
2	43	32	25	1.0	920	
3+	45	30	25	0.9	282	
No of children in household						
0	45	31	24	0.9	994	**
1	48	30	22	1.0	210	
2	36	33	31	1.1	218	
3+	49	21	30	1.1	112	
Ethnic group						
White	43	32	25	1.0	1466	***
Non-white	63	12	25	0.8	67	
Housing tenure						
Owned outright	42	32	26	1.0	464	***
Owned with mortgage	37	34	29	1.1	704	
Renting (Local authority)	65	21	14	0.6	186	
Renting (Housing assoc.)	67	17	16	0.5	70	
Renting (other)	53	26	20	0.8	109	

Terminal age of education						***
16 or less	51	29	20		657	
17/18	45	29	26		232	
19 or over	28	34	38		361	
Employment status						
1 worker	46	28	26	1.0	362	***
2 workers	39	34	27	1.1	520	
3 workers	35	37	28	1.1	141	
No workers: unemployed	65	19	17	0.6	48	
No workers: retired	47	30	23	0.9	353	
No workers: sick	56	23	21	0.7	61	
No workers: other	63	24	13	0.5	38	
Equivalent income quintile (PSE)						
1	60	23	17	0.6	197	***
2	48	31	21	0.8	266	
3	50	31	20	0.8	265	
4	33	38	29	1.1	301	
5	34	33	33	1.4	309	
Receipt of Income Supp.						
Yes	68	18	14	0.5	1394	***
No	42	32	26	1.0	127	
Net equivalent (PSE) income less than 50% average						
Yes	55	24	21	.07	278	***
No	40	34	26	1.0	1060	
At or below self perceived poverty						
Yes	61	25	14	0.7	260	***
No	40	31	29	1.2	1071	
Absolute poverty						
Yes	62	25	13	1.1	218	***
No	40	31	29	0.6	1116	
Overall poverty						
Yes	55	28	17	1.2	334	***
No	39	31	30	0.7	972	
Lacking socially perceived necessities						

Yes	59	26	15	0.6	393	***
No	39	32	28	1.1	1141	

To estimate an overall participation rate we calculated the total number of activities and memberships of individual respondents and again, divided the respondents into three groups: non-participant, who reported having no involvement in any of the listed activities and also were not active members of any organisations (12%); moderately participant, those who reported active involvement in up to three activities and/or held membership in organisations (48%); finally most participant, this classification included respondents who reported being involved in four or more activities and/or organisations. Table 5 compares variations in the level of civic participation by social group. In common with the previous analyses, the data illustrates that participation varies with income with the non-poor having a greater propensity for civic engagement than the poor. The poor are most likely to have no participation at all, as Table 5 shows.

Table 5: Participation rates by socio-economic characteristics of respondents.

	No participation	Moderate participation	Most participation	Mean participation	N	Sig Level
All	12	48	40	3.5	1534	
Male	13	47	40	3.5	741	*
Female	11	49	40	3.4	793	
Family type						
Single adult	10	50	39	3.5	274	***
Couple no children	8	50	42	3.6	484	
Couple with children	11	48	41	3.8	357	
Lone parent	17	53	30	2.7	59	
Other	18	44	37	3.1	360	
Age group						
16-24	26	56	18	1.9	126	***
25-44	12	48	40	3.4	545	
45-64	9	47	44	4.0	514	
65+	11	49	40	3.4	349	
Number of adults in household						
1	11	51	38	3.4	333	***
2	10	49	41	3.6	919	
3+	19	43	38	3.2	281	

Number of children in household						
0	10	50	40	3.5	994	***
1	16	47	37	3.5	211	
2	8	49	43	3.8	218	
3+	27	37	36	3.1	112	
Ethnic group						
White	10	49	41	3.5	1466	***
Non-white	40	33	27	2.5	67	
Housing tenure						
Owned outright	7	50	43	3.8	232	***
Owned with mortgage	8	48	44	3.8	335	
Renting (Local authority)	23	50	27	2.5	94	
Renting (Housing assoc)	37	45	18	2.0	32	
Renting (other)	17	46	37	3.1	51	
Terminal age of education						
16 or less	15	51	34		657	***
17/18	10	49	41		232	
19 or over	6	38	56		361	
Employment status						
1 worker	12	51	37	3.4	362	**
2 workers	10	45	45	3.8	520	
3 workers	16	47	37	3.6	142	
No workers: unemployed	23	50	27	2.5	48	
No workers: retired	9	51	40	3.5	353	
No workers: sick	19	48	32	2.7	62	
No workers: other	18	55	26	2.5	38	
Equivalent income quintile (PSE)						
1	20	51	29	2.7	196	***
2	13	54	33	3.0	266	
3	10	55	35	3.0	267	
4	6	47	47	4.0	300	
5	7	41	52	4.4	309	
Receipt of income supp.						

Yes	23	54	23	2.3	127	***
No	11	48	41	3.6	1393	***
Net equivalent (PSE) income less than 50% average						
Yes	17	52	31	2.9	278	***
No	9	48	43	3.7	1060	***
At or below self perceived poverty						
Yes	17	55	28	3.9	260	*
No	10	46	44	2.6	1071	
Absolute poverty						
Yes	22	54	24	3.9	216	***
No	9	46	45	2.6	1116	
Overall poverty						
Yes	18	52	30	4.0	334	***
No	9	46	45	2.8	972	
Lacking socially perceived necessities						
Yes	20	53	27	2.7	393	***
No	9	47	44	3.8	1141	

In order to examine this further and attempt to control for some of the interactions in the characteristics examined we undertook a logistic regression. First we excluded all young people who might not have been eligible to vote in the 1997 General Election, therefore all those aged under 20 years were excluded from the analysis. We then regressed the odds of having none or only one activity or membership by age, gender, family type, employment status and whether the household was in poverty. The PSE threshold was used as the poverty indicator.