

# INTEGRATION OUTCOMES FROM A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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## Introduction: Dimensions of integration in academic research

In the academic literature, integration is increasingly being conceived as a multi-dimensional concept. However, the interplay between the various dimensions is not often analysed. Earlier attempts to look at the issue (such as, for example, the American assimilation literature) have recognised the complexity of integration, but often assume only one 'end point', or a certain convergence in outcomes. Main outcomes of integration are often described as pertaining to the economic/structural, social, cultural, political, and spatial domains, and often analysed separately. Recent attempts at theorising and conceptualising integration (such as the frameworks of Ager & Strang and Spencer & Charsley), do explore the idea of integration as a multidimensional, multi-actor, and multi-directional process and attempt to analyse it as such.

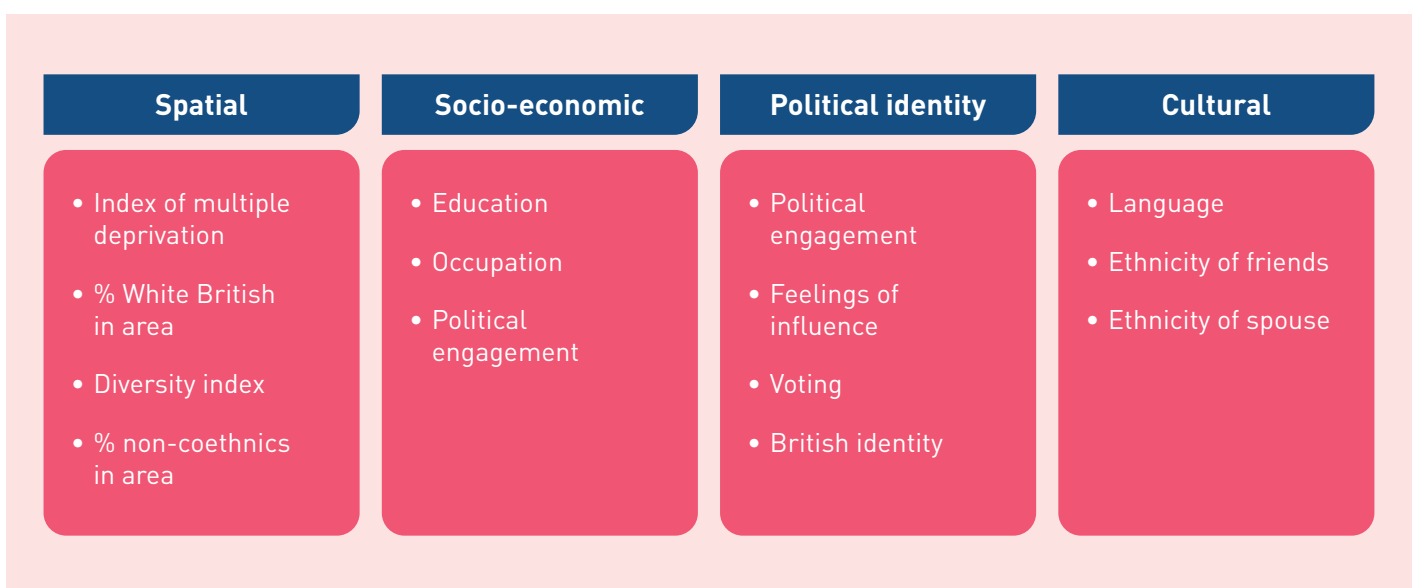
The work presented in this research brief analyses integration outcomes along similar lines for the main ethnic minority groups in the UK using an exploratory quantitative approach to investigate the multi-dimensionality of integration. It investigates whether specific profiles, or groupings, of integration arise out of the examination of integration

outcomes in various domains, and looks at differences across generational lines.

## Integration as a one-dimensional concept?

The first step of the analysis investigated the relationship between the different indicators of integration to determine whether, taken together, they measured one or many aspects of integration (using factor analysis). The results showed, rather unsurprisingly, that these indicators appeared to represent four distinct, latent components to integration. The first one comprised indicators of neighbourhood deprivation and diversity (a spatial dimension). The second one comprised indicators of education and occupation, as well as non-electoral political engagement (a socio-economic dimension). The third one (a political identity dimension) included indicators of political engagement, feelings of influence in politics, voting and British identity. Finally, the last dimensions (a social-cultural dimension) included indicators of language and ethnicity of friends and spouse. More information about the structure of components of integration can be found in Figure 1. This was the first step pointing toward a multi-dimensional empirical understanding on integration

Figure 1. Components of integration



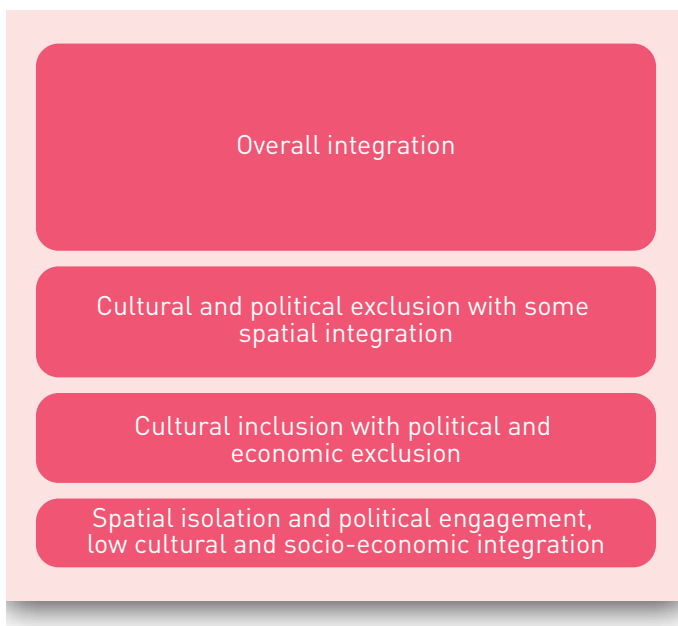
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outcomes, in that it showed that selected indicators of integration appeared to measure more than one component to integration.

### One or many profiles of integration?

The second step of the analysis examined whether individuals are grouped in specific integration profiles based on their integration outcomes in the different domains (using cluster analysis). The analysis suggested four main profiles of integration (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Main cluster of integration outcomes and their main features (larger box = larger group in the data)**



The first, and most prominent, grouping included individuals with high average scores of integration in all four dimensions. The second grouping comprised individuals with lower average scores in the cultural and political dimensions, but relatively high levels of spatial integration and average levels of socio-economic integration. The third grouping included individuals with high average scores in the social-cultural dimensions, and lower scores in the political and socio-economic dimensions. The fourth, and smallest, grouping included individuals with lower average scores in the spatial dimension, and, to some extent low scores in the cultural and socio-economic dimensions, but higher average score in the political dimension.

There were differences in group membership along ethnic and generational lines that follow established knowledge (with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups, for example, being less likely to be in the largest grouping compared to their peers in the Indian group), with fewer differences in group membership for UK-born respondents. The notable exceptions included the greater likelihood of membership in the third grouping for UK-born respondents of Black African and Black Caribbean origins compared to their peers in the Indian group.

### The data & indicators

In order to explore the dimensionality and structure of integration outcomes, data from 1,628 respondents from the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study (EMBES) is used. EMBES provides an array of indicators linked to various domains of integration often found in the literature but not often found in other British surveys. The main indicators used in the analysis include: education; occupation; political engagement, feelings of influence in politics; voting; socio-economic composition, ethnic density and diversity in the neighbourhood; language; ethnicity of friends and spouse; and British identity.

These findings should not be interpreted that some groups are more willing to integrate, but rather that they face barriers to doing so in some domains, in many cases in socio-economic dimensions. In some instances, these barriers cut across generational lines.

### Conclusions & discussion

The results above reinforced the idea that integration is multi-dimensional and complex. The analysis of the dimensions suggests that the spatial dimension plays an important role. The groupings of individuals shown here suggest that trade-offs in the social-cultural dimensions play an important role. This calls for a more in-depth evaluation of these domains, their drivers, and the mechanisms at play. Despite some evidence of 'generational progress', the persistence of some 'disadvantages' for certain groups warrants further examination (and intervention).

### References

- Ager, A., & Strang, A., (2008) Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21: 166–191. doi:10.1093/jrs/fen016
- Spencer, S., & Charsley, K. (2016). Conceptualising integration: a framework for empirical research, taking marriage migration as a case study. *Comparative Migration Studies* 4: 1–19. doi: 10.1186/s40878-016-0035-x

### Want to know more?

For more information on the methodology used for the results, see:

Lessard-Phillips, L., (2015) Exploring the Dimensionality of Ethnic Minority Adaptation in Britain: An Analysis across Ethnic and Generational Lines. *Sociology*. doi:10.1177/0038038515609030

<http://tinyurl.com/unidiv-sociology>

### Acknowledgements

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