THE PUBLIC'S MULTIDIMENSIONAL VIEW ON INTEGRATION

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Aim

Academic research on integration stresses its multidimensionality, or that outcomes vary in different domains. By comparison, research on public opinion is relatively one-dimensional. This means that we know little about what the public's preferences are with regard to integration. Here, we explore how the public understand integration, especially with regard to their evaluation of integration outcomes.

We thus want to see whether people use a broad range of indicators in their evaluations of integration, or if only 'culture matters'. We want to explore whether stereotypes toward Muslim immigrants affect these evaluations. Finally, we also want to explore whether people from different social background or ideological orientations vary in their evaluations of integration.
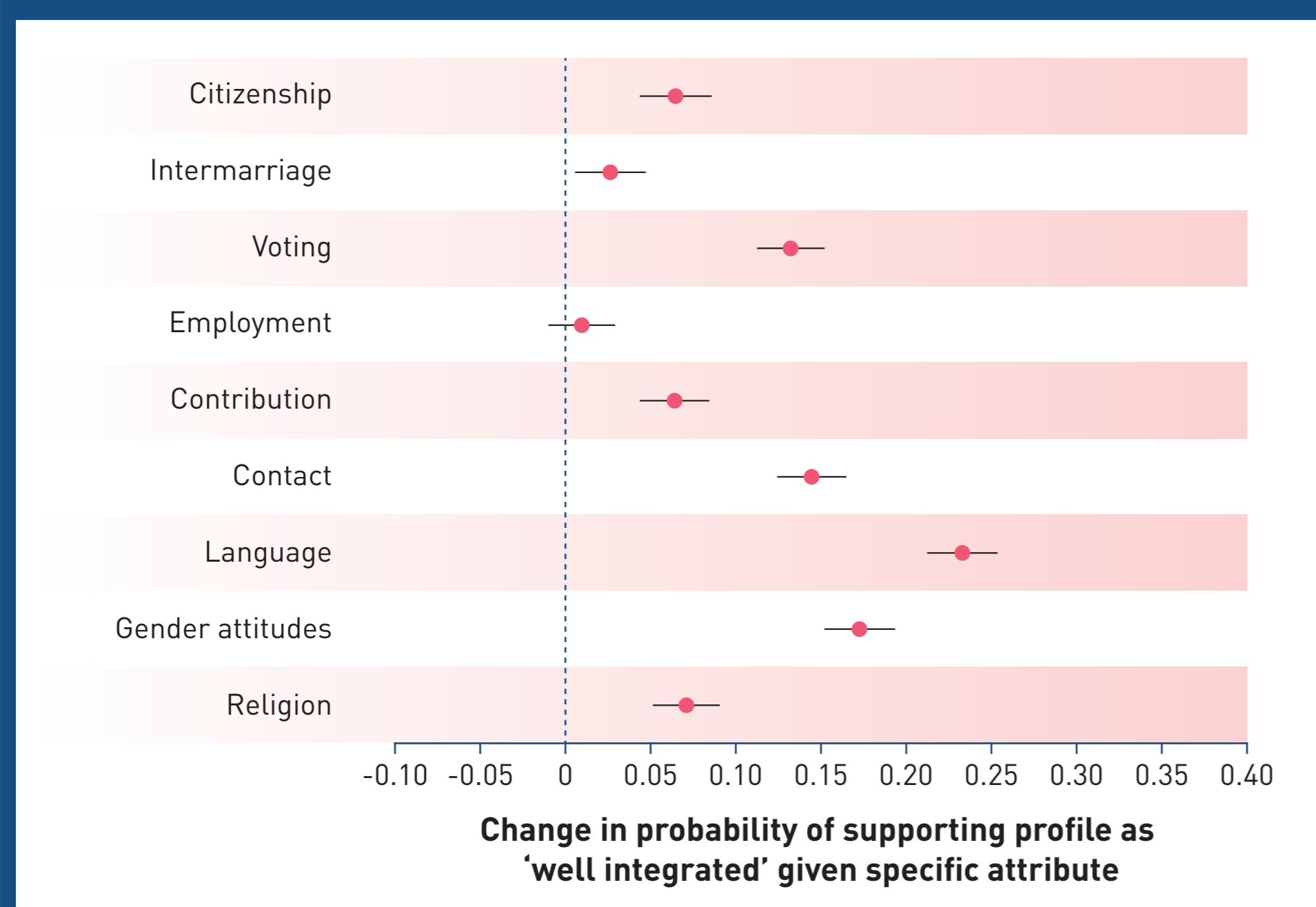
The data & the analysis

We use data from an online survey that was collected by YouGov in June 2014 (sample size of 1,894 respondents). Here we present the results from the analysis of two of the experiments: one where respondents were asked to choose the 'most integrated' profile between two profiles of male Muslim immigrants, and the other one where respondents were asked to rank the level of integration for profiles of female immigrants. In each of the experiments, the profiles included indicators of integration that were randomly generated. In both instances, we used a well-known methodology to analyse the responses, and establish which indicators of integration were more salient for respondents when trying to choose the most integrated profiles (in the case of the first experiment) or rate them (in the case of the second).

Results: Stability in preference and consensus

Our results show an interesting stability in preference and consensus in three main ways:

1 Preferences for integration outcomes are multi-dimensional, but there is a clear hierarchy of preference: cultural and social indicators matter more, whereas other indicators matter less (or not at all).

2 There is stability in the preference for the indicators across social groups. The same can be said for people with various views on immigration.

3 The national origins of migrants matter for evaluations of integration, especially for respondents with more ethnocentric attitudes.

Figure 1. Support for the dimensions of integration when choosing between two profiles

Change in probability of supporting profile as 'well integrated' given specific attribute

Figure 2. Support for the dimensions of integration when rating level of integration

Change in probability of giving higher rating of integration given specific attribute
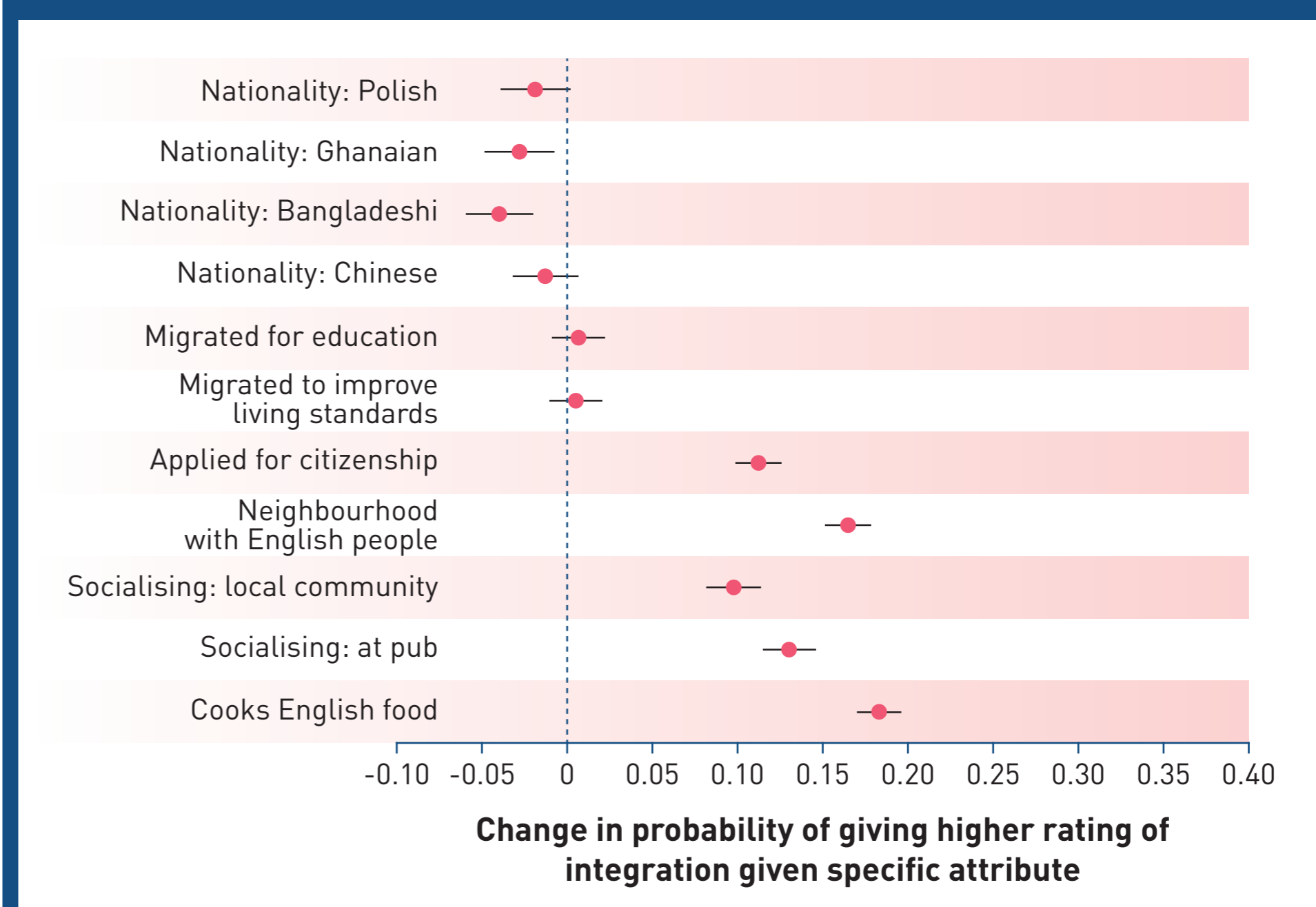
The first experiment

To consider the importance of religious stereotypes, we examined evaluations of integration for Muslim-origin men. Each respondent was asked (on three separate occasions) to choose the 'most' integrated out of two profiles. In each profile, 9 indicators of integration were presented (and randomly selected). These included: citizenship and voting habits as indicators for political integration; intermarriage and cross-ethnic friendship as social integration outcomes; high and low skilled occupation and tax status as measures of economic integration; language spoken at home as a measure of cultural integration; and attitude towards women's employment and level of religiosity, two measures as particularly stereotypical in anti-Muslim narratives.

Data points to the right of the line indicate that the respondents were more likely to choose a profile when shown those attributes in the profile. Data points that cross the line are not significant.

The second experiment

To generalise our findings to non-Muslim immigrants and test their robustness, we ran a second experiment where the respondents were presented separate vignettes of female immigrants and asked to rank their level of integration on a 1-10 scale, with 10 indicating a higher ranking. In these vignettes we varied 6 different attributes, including some that are directly unrelated to integration but may have an effect on evaluations of integration: national origin; reason for immigration; composition of neighbourhood; main place of socialisation; citizenship; and cooking British food. For national origins, we differentiated between immigrants with various levels of representations in public discourses as 'problematic': Poland, Ghana, Bangladesh, France, and China or Hong Kong.

Data points to the right of the line indicate that the respondents gave a more positive evaluation of integration when shown those attributes in the profile. Data points to the left indicate a more negative evaluation. Data points that cross the line are non significant.

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