

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CITIZEN? THE PERSPECTIVES OF  
IMMIGRANTS AND NATIVES IN EUROPE

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## ABSTRACT

The key question underpinning my doctoral thesis is: what does it mean to be a citizen? I build on political-philosophical research that identifies the principles governing the granting of citizenship to immigrants in liberal democracies. I complement this literature that is mostly theoretical in orientation by investigating the meaning of citizenship from the point of view of the general public. That includes both native citizens who, by voting, indirectly decide on the criteria for naturalisation, and immigrants who do not hold citizenship and sometimes seek it. An obstacle to studying citizenship empirically is lack of data, as most surveys conflate national identity and citizenship, and treat citizenship as a time-invariant status. Moreover, survey data on people's opinions and preferences over citizenship boundaries are rare. In my research I overcome these challenges by being creative with data sources and methodological approaches. My PhD contributes to our understanding of how the function and value of citizenship is changing in response to migration. Understanding the reasons for and the effects of the acquisition of citizenship tells us whether this institution holds identitarian significance for immigrants and if it is conducive to their inclusion. Identifying the attitudes towards the inclusion of immigrants as citizens is informative of the dominant narratives around what it takes to be a national and of whether citizenship matters to the native population.

## DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it). The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent. I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party. I declare that my thesis consists of 40,888 words excluding appendices and references.

I confirm that I jointly authored Chapter 2 with Dr. Haley McAvay. I have contributed to the majority of this work. I am responsible for the conception of the idea, research design and analysis; we jointly interpreted the results and wrote the manuscript (on which I received advice and feedback from both of my supervisors).

## DEDICATION

To my mother

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Citizenship draws clear boundaries between those who belong to the nation-state and those who do not. To be a citizen in a democracy entails having equal rights and duties established by law, sharing equal political power in the governing of the state, and holding a national feeling of belonging (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). The new wave of globalisation that started in the 1980s has prompted scholars to revisit citizenship to critically analyse how globalisation affects the experience and the construction of citizenship. In my thesis I focus on transnational migration as a core aspect of globalisation that challenges and questions current conceptions of citizenship in Western Europe. The growing number of people moving across borders and settling in countries they are not legally bound to has created new realities that challenge traditional ideas of citizenship. Following the increase in immigration to Europe since World War II (Castles 2018), more people in this region now acquire citizenship through a voluntary act, as opposed to inheriting citizenship from the previous generation almost exclusively by birthright. However, many decide against or are prevented from becoming recognised members of the community. These new realities require an examination of whether citizenship has become irrelevant for social inclusion and/or whether its function and value has changed, for example by losing its emotional connotation. The extension of citizenship to new members also poses new questions for existing citizens, who through their governments establish the criteria immigrants must meet to qualify for citizenship. This requires existing nationals and their governments to clearly outline what defines membership to their nation.

Questions about national membership go beyond experiences and attitudes related to immigration. Citizenship is more demanding and permanent than entry to the country. In democracies, it establishes equality among members, who are entitled to make the same claims from the state and fellow citizens (Bloemraad 2018). Citizenship remains the

universal currency that regulates the relationship between individuals and the state.

I contribute to our understanding of citizenship in the context of immigration for people in three Western democracies, namely the UK, France and Italy. These nation-states differ in their experience of immigration, in their citizenship policies and in their historical popular narrative of national identity. An obstacle to studying citizenship acquisition empirically is lack of data, as most surveys conflate national identity and citizenship, and treat citizenship as a time-invariant status. Moreover, survey data on people's opinions and preferences over citizenship boundaries are rare. In addition to the limits of existing data, investigating citizenship empirically is challenging because of its multidimensional nature and definitional complexity. In my research I overcome these difficulties by being creative with data sources and methodological approaches. I bring together four different datasets, two of which I collected myself. I also apply a host of methodologies to best address the research questions I set out.

This thesis has two parts, each including two papers. In Part 1 I analyse immigrants' behaviour and attitudes to investigate the relationship between their national sense of belonging and their political participation on the one hand and their citizenship status on the other. Identifying the ways in which national sense of belonging relates to naturalisation challenges the assumption in the literature that legal inclusion happens at the end of the integration process and shows, instead, that it can be a means for attaining more acceptance and recognition. Part 2 turns to native citizens and their beliefs around what it should take to become a member of the national group. These two papers highlight native members' attachment to and investment in their national identity and provide empirical evidence of popular narratives of citizenship.

**What is citizenship?**

In the 4th century B.C. Aristotle, the first political philosopher to write extensively about citizenship, reflected on the difficulties with defining the nature of citizenship (Aristotle 1905). He was the first of many scholars to discuss and theorise what citizenship is, what it ought to be and who should qualify for it. Today, we mostly think of citizenship as coterminous to the nation-state. However, citizenship has existed since long before Westphalian sovereignty did. To this day, an entire field has developed to analyse how citizenship is constructed, experienced and contested, both formally and substantively, in different parts of the world.

The concept of citizenship arose alongside democracy in the ancient Greek city-state of Athens, long before the existence of nation-states. Citizens were those who participated in the civic life of ruling and being ruled. Citizens had both political and judicial power, they had the duty to frame policy and laws, and to enact the law by making judgments (Heater 2004). An alternative model of citizenship developed in the Roman Empire. Roman emperors extended citizenship to non-Romans until it included all free residents of the empire. Citizens were both protected by Roman law and were under its authority; that is, they had rights and duties. Civic virtue was important in both Athenian and Roman citizenship. In the Athenian model citizenship rested on the politically virtuous man and on a constitutionally governed polity, a republic. In the Roman model the duties associated with citizenship were grounded in the idea of civic virtue. However, if direct political and judicial participation was crucial in the Athenian model, it was the fact that each individual was subject to the law that characterised Roman citizenship (Balot 2017).

Citizenship in the Middle Ages had a much less prominent position in society. Civic duty as the realisation of virtue was not compatible with Christianity and political agency

was not compatible with the subjecthood of feudalism and monarchism. Nonetheless, citizenship survived as direct participation at the municipal local level. In the 17th century, with the emergence of nation-states, polities came under pressure to limit the growing power of monarchs (Honohan 2017). Two distinct models of citizenship emerged. One is the republican one that took inspiration from the Athenian model and emphasised civic duty and small-scale participation. Rousseau (1968) was its most famous proponent. The other is the liberal tradition which focused on rights and believed that the state should exist for the benefit of the individual. This view is traceable back to the Roman model of citizenship and, later, in the 17th century, to Locke's (1962) discussion of rights. The French and American revolutions at the end of the century owe to both traditions. The concept of liberty that these revolutions advocated did not merely amount to the preservation of personal interests, but to a form of a civil liberty to be enjoyed and safeguarded by honouring one's duties, in line with the republican tradition (Heater 2004).

The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 is seen as the turning point from feudal principalities to sovereign nation-states. Rather than the empire or the Catholic Church, national governments became the prime governing system in Europe. In the 18th century nation and state began to overlap. Citizenship not only establishes people's rights and duties, and their roles as political agents, but also contributes to defining who they are. The idea that all citizens are part of an imagined community, with a shared past and common destiny, was at the core of the nation-state project (Anderson 1991; Smith 1991). Citizenship is national sense of belonging, a group membership to draw on to define and describe individual identities. What makes a community a national and political one? Kohn (1944) identified two types; in the Western or civic one the national community emerged primarily as a spatial conception, whereby people living in the same territory were united by the same political will, a common set of institutions and laws. In contrast, in the Eastern or ethnic model the national community united those of same descent, therefore emphasising ancestral ties. Kohn's (1944) dichotomy received criticism. Yack (1996) described



the characterisation of the civic model of nationhood as rational and free, 'as a mixture of self-congratulation and wishful thinking'. He argues that all conceptions of nationhood rely on specific experiences and cultural memories, even if not in relation to one specific ethnic group, such as in the USA. However, this distinction between ethnic and civic nations has been useful to understand the implementation of different citizenship policies. For example, civic nations like France and the USA have traditionally been more open to the naturalisation of foreigners than ethnic nations, such as Germany (Brubaker 1994).

By the 18th century citizenship had come to signify political membership to the nation-state, legal status with rights and duties within national borders, and sense of belonging to the nation. In North America and Europe citizenship became coterminous to the nation-state and to the ideal of liberal democracy. At its core citizenship formally granted equal participation in the governing of the state. However, until less than a century ago, citizenship also remained an elitist institution. Private property was a necessary condition for citizenship for the largest part of history. Women, slaves, men without property were therefore excluded from civic and political equality.

By the end of the 20th century Western countries had extended citizenship to these marginalised groups. However, it soon became apparent that the equality in civil and political rights did not ensure the full enjoyment of those rights. In the England of the 1950s T.H. Marshall (1950) optimistically saw the conquest of social rights as the working class's avenue to full integration in society. T. H. Marshall's insight was that despite the legal and political equality already achieved, there remained a gulf between the status of citizenship and the ability to fully act upon it (Revi 2014). He argued that social rights were fundamental to fulfil the aim of democratic citizenship to give everyone equal voice. Social rights have since been added to civil and political rights as constituents of the liberal conception of citizenship. However, his genealogy of how social rights have brought de facto equality received much criticism for seeing progress where progress in fact concerned a very select group, namely white men (Yuval-Davis 1997; Hoxsey 2011).

To this day, evidence on persisting inequalities questions the Marshallian argument that full substantive citizenship is achieved through social rights (Murray 2007).

### **Citizenship in an age of globalisation**

The new wave of globalisation that started in the 1980s prompted scholars to revisit citizenship to critically analyse how globalisation affects the experience and the construction of citizenship. Globalisation refers to the interconnectedness of people across national borders, including the exchange of goods that happens at increasingly higher rates; the development of communications and information technologies that connect people in different countries; the human rights movement that associates fundamental rights to personhood, rather than to the citizen; and transnational migration.

One of the most debated aspects of citizenship has been around the consequences of globalisation for the scale on which it is established. At the end of the 20th century scholars had hypothesised that the high flow of capital between borders would lead to the demise of the nation-state, which was believed to be destined to become irrelevant (Hirst and Thompson 1999). However, today this claim seems overstated and it appears that these economic processes happen within nation-state structures (Staeheli 1999). Scholars have also proposed forms of citizenship on a larger scale than the national one. Cosmopolitan, transnational and supranational citizenship all re-conceptualise citizenship to overcome nation-state borders. Broadly, cosmopolitan citizenship proposes a citizenship that is global and that grounds membership rights in universal personhood, rather than nationality. The crux of the controversy lies in whether cosmopolitan citizenship requires world-wide political membership, or whether we should rethink citizenship altogether not to be tied to political membership (Tan 2017). Transnational citizenship highlights the plurality of how citizenship is practised, and that many forms of citizenship already transcend national boundaries (Bauböck 1994). Supranational citizenship wants to abandon

the conflation between citizenship and nation-state, but accepts larger and/or alternative communities and their membership boundaries. In practice, these are often arrangements based on reciprocal agreements, rather than a common vision (Maas 2005). The European Union is an example of such an arrangement. Proponents of these alternative citizenships disagree, however, on the forms and practices of these concepts, that remain controversial.

Relatedly, globalisation has fundamentally expanded the notion of rights, from the national to the universal. Human rights have since been codified in international agreements, institutions and in popular discourse, expanding the remit of rights to historically neglected groups, such as women, immigrants and children (Soysal 2000). Yet, even the rights which the international community has agreed to be essential to human life are protected by the nation-states whose citizenship we hold. Famously defined as ‘the right to have rights’, citizenship remains the prime avenue through which we can make claims in the world (Arendt 1958). This highlights the inherent contradiction between universal agendas of equality and the fact that citizenship establishes equality among its members, but is not distributed equally among people (Nunez 2016).

As part of this re-found interest in citizenship, scholars have also expanded their focus to the world, beyond Western nation-states, to find that not only does national citizenship entail different claims within national borders, but also around the world. The comparison is typically made between Western and non-Western citizenship where the former becomes the ideal against which to compare other forms of citizenship (Chung 2017). However, this distinction between Western and non-Western makes Western citizenship the reference point and implies uniformity within both groups. Nonetheless, there are some key differences worth highlighting that can further our critical analysis of citizenship. A first dimension of citizenship in democracies, typically located in the Western world, where the liberal conception of citizenship has prevailed, is that formal citizenship bestows equal political membership and equal legal status. In contrast, in autocratic

regimes citizenship is a social identity and a legal status that does not entail equality in civil and political rights. Second, outside of the Western world, more often than not, citizenship is implemented on a more local scale than the national one. Citizenship rights are often assigned through formal and informal institutions on the basis of kinship, religion, ethnicity. It follows that there are communities of indigenous populations who are excluded from formal citizenship on this basis. This is in contrast to the Western world where national borders determine one's claim to citizenship. Moreover, the rights that are traditionally associated with citizenship in the West, are often associated with more local memberships in other parts of the world. For example, the Chinese Hukou household registry system is far more consequential in regulating access to rights to mobility, education, employment and healthcare than Chinese citizenship. Third, other global disparities are also related to citizenship, although they are not formalised. By virtue of the citizenship status people acquire at birth they enjoy very different life prospects (Shachar and Hirschl 2007). There are evident disparities between nation-states in terms of the opportunities their members enjoy in order to live a fulfilling life. Stark differences across territories exist with respect to virtually all the fundamental aspects of life: from health, to autonomy, to security, to education, to income, among others. Citizenship is acquired via birthright and it ties its members to a delimited territory, limiting their ability to leave and choose membership of another nation-state. Citizenship itself can therefore be said to perpetuate global inequalities around the world (Shachar 2009).

In the following chapters I focus on transnational migration as a core aspect of globalisation that challenges and questions current conceptions of citizenship in Western Europe. The increased mobility of people across borders and their settlement in countries other than those they were born in is likely to shape citizenship in 21st century Europe. There is no definition of who is an immigrant that satisfactorily captures the full breath of types of migration. People move between countries, transnationally, but also within countries, internally; they move for extended periods of time, but also seasonally and cir-

cularly, without settling in either origin or destination; people also move for different reasons, for studying, for employment, to fulfil caring needs; people may move voluntarily or they may be forced to move for survival. In this thesis I refer to immigrants as those who were born outside the national borders of the country they live in and who do not have a claim to birthright citizenship in their place of residence. Similarly, the term 'native' is contested. Native implies a natural claim on a territory. However, territorial state boundaries are socially constructed and it is therefore far from obvious to establish who has a birthright claim to that territory and to its governing. In this thesis, I refer to the native population as those people who were born in the country they reside in and of which they have birthright citizenship. I therefore use the terms immigrant and natives to distinguish between those who, by law, do not have birthright citizenship as opposed to those who do, without implying any normative judgment around who should and who should not have a claim on citizenship. Moreover, it is important to note that the immigrant-native dichotomy is helpful to critically analyse people's experience of citizenship, but it does not imply the existence of two coherent uniform categories.

The different ways in which citizenship is constructed and experienced prevent us from settling on a unifying definition of citizenship. I therefore refer to citizenship as the formal status that grants membership to the nation-state (Tilley, Exley, and Heath 2004). This status has three core dimensions: legal status, political participation and national sense of belonging (Bloemraad 2018). From this standpoint I critically analyse citizenship in relation to transnational migration. Over 2,300 years ago Aristotle (1905) had already noticed that the presence of resident non-citizens challenged any attempt to a coherent definition of citizenship. Today we face a similar challenge, albeit in a different historical moment. People are sometimes born without the citizenship status of their country of birth and may never acquire it. Immigrants may live in their destination country without ever naturalising as citizens. Others may naturalise in the host country or acquire citizenship through lineage, and may thereby hold multiple citizenship statuses. Others

nominally have full citizenship status, but are excluded from full participation in society. Moreover, the entitlements and claims of immigrants remain at the forefront of political debates, therefore questioning assumptions around who belongs and who should receive what rights (Bauböck 1994). These are some of the realities that have arisen in Europe following the steep immigration growth of the 20th century (Okólski 2012), raising new questions on citizenship for immigrants and their offspring, for the native-born and for society as a whole.

### **Interrogating citizenship for immigrants and natives**

Interrogating citizenship for immigrants entails asking whether it matters to them and for them. Why do immigrants decide to acquire citizenship and what do they gain from it?

As a legal status, the role of citizenship is less critical in contemporary Western societies than before WWII. Many of the rights that used to be exclusively tied to citizenship status are now tied to the individual (Soysal 2000). That is, human rights legislation and supra-national institutions ensure that in the West some of the most basic rights are protected irrespective of legal status. The distance in salience between citizenship and permanent residence has also decreased since borders have become more porous. Western nation-states offer residence permits that protect the rights needed to participate in the community similarly to native citizens. Scholars, such as Spiro (2008), have concluded that permanent legal residence is of much more importance than citizenship. In the European Union, the borders between European states have become less relevant as European citizens can freely move from one European state to the other and are entitled to an almost identical set of rights in other European countries they are not citizens of.

Moreover, the status of formal citizenship may not be enough for enacting substantive citizenship. Formally, citizenship is a legal category that establishes what rights and responsibilities one is entitled to and expected to fulfil. Substantive citizenship refers

instead to the ability to act as a citizen and to be recognised as one. Only autonomous human beings can pursue what is good for themselves individually and for society. T.H. Marshall's (1950) analysis drew attention to the fact that social rights are needed to fulfill the mandate of equality inherent to citizenship. He pointed out the fact that people cannot be autonomous when they are constrained by satisfying their basic needs. However, scholars have since illustrated that, although necessary, social rights are not sufficient to exercise substantive citizenship (Glenn 2011). This is in part due to how rights are distributed, where the contribution of white men as a group is valued more than everyone else's, for example by tying welfare to formal employment (Glenn 2011). Perhaps less apparent are the challenges that people face on the ground when they claim their rights if they are in a position of vulnerability (Carte 2014).

Nevertheless, citizenship in Western countries remains the only vehicle to the granting of crucial rights, such as the right to vote, protection from deportation and free movement. One way of assessing whether citizenship matters as a legal status that confers a bundle of rights is to compare immigrants' intention to naturalise in the context of regimes that differ in what rights they grant. Bloemraad (2006) does such analysis in North America and finds that rights and benefits do not explain higher naturalisation rates in Canada compared to the USA. This suggests that there are other incentives to naturalisation.

In addition to the rights that are restricted to citizenship status, citizenship is likely to indirectly affect immigrants' life opportunities by granting them more power of access (Bloemraad 2018). As citizens, immigrants may be treated more positively by the general population in the housing and labour market, for example. Immigrants themselves may also feel more empowered to make claims they are entitled to (Gleeson 2010). It follows that immigrants may want to naturalise to gain better opportunities for economic and social integration. Evidence suggests that citizenship acquisition may have an impact on employment rate and wage growth (Bratsberg, Ragan, and Nasir 2002; Gathmann and Keller 2017; Steinhardt 2012).

Citizenship may also have value and be consequential to immigrants as political participation and national sense of belonging. For example, the right to vote typically associated with citizenship might be a motivation for naturalising for those who want to participate in the political life of the country they live in (Kesler and Demireva 2011; Diehl and Blohm 2003). Being allowed to vote might be the principal goal of naturalisation, driven by the desire to participate in the decision-making process of the country of residence and/or by a sense of belonging to the country. Attachment to the nation and emotional investment in it should contribute to making the opportunity to participate politically more attractive.

Many people consider voting as a key reason for their application. A Scottish report on refugees who became citizens (Stewart and Mulvey 2011) found that people felt powerless as refugees and were eager to be politically involved through voting once they obtained citizenship.

A national sense of belonging could also work as a motivation for citizenship acquisition on its own. As a signifier for national identity, naturalisation could be motivated by emotional attachment to the country, identification with it and the feeling of recognition as part of it (Karlsen and Nazroo 2010; Reeskens and Wright 2013). This would entail firstly that people can hold multiple national identities. Waite and Cook (2011) show that immigrants' develop complex sense of national belonging and can express loyalty to multiple nations. Secondly, it would mean that national identity can be an important dimension of citizenship even if acquired and not granted at birth. Prabhat's (2018) interviews of immigrants in the UK suggest that feelings of belonging develop before naturalisation. Erdal et al. (2018) for the UK and Birkvad (2019) for Norway illustrate that citizenship matters especially for security and recognition, which are important dimensions of belonging. Varsanyi (2005) illustrates that those who have a sense of belonging are more likely to apply for permanent residence and citizenship in the USA. On the other hand, the official recognition as a member of the national community assigned through



citizenship might contribute to fostering a sense of belonging to that community. Qualitative research suggests that this is the case. Pogonyi (2019) finds that holding a Hungarian passport strengthens immigrants' feeling of national identity and enables them to signal that to the community they are part of.

Immigrants will balance all these incentives with the financial and emotional cost of naturalising. Naturalisation is typically costly and bureaucratically burdensome, making it more challenging for immigrants of low socio-economic status to naturalise. For example, naturalisation fees can be as high as £1,330 (UK) in Western Europe. Moreover, the level of complexity of the required documentation is typically high. This means, not only that the cost of naturalising may be higher than the benefit, but also that some groups are *de facto* prevented from naturalising because they cannot cover the cost of the process. Research points to selection into citizenship of immigrants who are socio-economically better off (Fougère and Safi 2008; Chiswick and Miller 2008). The cost may also be emotional if one feels a sense of conflicting belonging and loyalty between two countries. This may be especially the case when one has to renounce their citizenship at birth to acquire a new citizenship. Evidence suggests that those whose country of origin does not allow dual citizenship, are less likely to naturalise in their country of residence (McAvay and Waldinger 2021).

An investigation of the value citizenship has for immigrants and its function is informed by a sociological perspective. We need to consider the individual's motivations and actions in the context of a specific historical-political environment that will contribute to making some of these dimensions more or less salient and that might provide barriers to naturalisation itself. For instance, a national narrative that excludes specific groups along ethno-religious lines may contribute to undermining the national sense of belonging dimension of citizenship for the members of those groups (Yuval-Davis 2006). Similarly, the function of citizenship as means to participate in the governing of the state may become irrelevant if immigrants do not think their vote is consequential, perhaps because

the political class ignores their interests (Saggar and Geddes 2000). The awareness that citizenship status may not suffice to feel and be recognised as national members by compatriots and to participate in the community also contributes to shaping the structure in which immigrants decide to naturalise or not (Beaman 2015).

To examine how citizenship has changed in response to migration, we therefore need to complement the individual perspective within macro-level structures of dominant narratives and citizenship policy regimes. That is, immigration poses questions related to the meaning, function and value of citizenship for native citizens too. On the assumption that we allow people who do not have citizenship since birth to acquire it later in life, we need to establish what qualifying criteria they need to meet. Such a task requires clarity on what distinguishes existing citizens from non-citizens. The characteristics identified can reflect the multifaceted nature of citizenship, as a legal status and vehicle to integration, as well as political participation and national sense of belonging. Official criteria for naturalisation can communicate national narratives around what it takes to be and therefore to become a co-national.

European countries differ in the types of citizenship policies they implement to regulate political membership and associated rights and duties. With citizenship regimes, nation-states establish membership criteria that determine the make-up of their population. This is in their remit as they are sovereign over their territory. Scholars have investigated both how these regimes have regulated access to political membership over time and in different contexts and why they differ or align.

Citizenship regimes vary both in the criteria for access and in the rights and duties that are associated with citizenship. Most people in the world have access to a citizenship status by birthright. Citizenship is regulated either via *ius sanguinis*, when citizenship is passed on at birth through lineage, or *ius soli*, when citizenship is granted based on territory of birth. *Ius sanguinis* is the more common policy, but many countries adopt a combination of both principles (Vink et al. 2021). Alternatively, citizenship can be accessed by

choice, e.g. through naturalisation. I should note that, although atypical, citizenship can also be stripped and renounced.

Since citizenship regimes establish what people they are made of, there is a strand of literature that explains difference in regimes based on original and evolving conceptions of state-building and that therefore argues that these concepts are path-dependent. Brubaker (1994) is a famous example, although heavily disputed. He argued that Germany had to unify people who were not part of the same nation and therefore attributed citizenship through *ius sanguinis* to maintain the ethno-cultural group, whereas since France prioritised political integration it granted citizenship through *ius soli*. Similarly to Brubaker, Favell (1997) illustrates that current responses and approaches to immigration challenges are shaped by path dependent philosophies of integration. However, Weil (2001) shows that legal traditions, rather than historical conceptions, explain citizenship regime continuity. He contends that the *ius soli* derives from feudalism, whereby subjects owed allegiance to the monarch. France rid itself from it after the revolution and replaced it with *ius sanguinis*. Britain used *ius soli* in the colonies, but most of Europe adopted *ius sanguinis*.

According to Joppke (2003b) what explains development of national citizenship policy is the direction the government leans towards. For example, Germany in 1998 modernised citizenship law thanks to the social democrats being in power. Howard (2005) stresses that, rather than who is in power, the difference is made by how strong the far right is, even if not in government.

Citizenship regimes are also informative of how inclusive the nation-state is of minorities. Inclusivity itself merits attention as it is not straightforward to define and to measure. The object of inclusivity may refer to the individual or to minority cultures and religions (Koopmans, Michalowski, and Waibel 2012). As for measuring inclusivity, there are many projects that have categorised citizenship regimes based on their inclusiveness. MIPEX (2015) is an example of an indicator with eight dimensions that focuses on inclu-

siveness for immigrants. Vink and Baubock (2013a) extend their analysis to emigrants, who are also affected by citizenship regimes. They also analyse and categorise the rules around loss of citizenship. Although such typologies may come at the cost of simplification, they help us understand the role of context in shaping the environment in which immigrants and minorities are expected to become part of.

In the early 2000s many European countries adopted civic integration requirements, whereby the knowledge of civic skills becomes a requirement to naturalise or acquire permanent residence (Wallace Goodman and Wright 2015). Such skills, which include speaking the host country's language, knowledge of its institutions, values, history and rules, are tested through a variety of assessment tools. As in other policy frameworks, this policy represents a shift from rights as a vehicle to integration (T. H. Marshall 1950), to becoming a reward for the fulfilment of certain duties. It is therefore responsibility of the individual to integrate (Joppke 2007). The aim of these policies is twofold. On the one hand they attempt to communicate a clear conception of national citizenship in response to the demographic changes resulting from immigration. On the other hand, although their presented goal is to incentivise integration, by selecting immigrants, they make it harder for some to naturalise. Different forms of these policies have been adopted in 12 out of 15 Western European states (Mouritsen 2008), embracing what has been defined as the 'civic turn' (Mouritsen 2008; Joppke 2007). However, Goodman's analysis (2010) with her CIVIX index shows that, although for many countries the direction is towards implementing more requirements, there is large variation in how demanding the change has been.

Citizenship regimes differ not only in how lenient their membership criteria are, but also in what rights citizenship grants. Nation-states diverge in how much citizenship matters for immigrants. One important puzzle is whether the amount of rights and the openness to status are complementary or if is there a trade-off between them. To date, the evidence is inconclusive (Huddleston and Vink 2015; Ruhs 2013).

Finally, an investigation of how individual determinants of naturalisation interact with regime type can help us understand how inclusive nation-states are. Although research to date has focused on explaining why there are different naturalisation rates among different immigrant groups, a few studies also account for the role of regime types. For McAvay and Waldinger (2021) shows that when the country of origin allows dual citizenship immigrants are incentivised to naturalise in their place of residence. Vink et al. (2013) demonstrate that policies only affect immigrants from low-income countries, who are usually the ones most interested in naturalising. Peters et al. (2016) also found that changes to citizenship policy in the Netherlands in 2003 restricted access to citizenship. Goodman and Wright's (2015) find no evidence to suggest that civic integration policies promote integration.

Extant literature has focused on what citizenship regimes tell us about the ideal citizen and about the level of inclusivity of their society, but evidence on the opinions of the public about citizenship criteria is instead scant. We have little understanding of what dimensions of citizenship are most relevant for native citizens and what they expect from immigrants wanting to naturalise. Research has shown that across multiple countries people define national identity according to a combination of ethnic and civic characteristics (Janmaat 2006; Tilley, Exley, and Heath 2004). However, preferences for the allocation of citizenship go beyond conceptions of national identity because citizenship also entails a claim on equality of rights and entitlements.

Moreover, we know little about how responsive people are to the changing demographics of their country and how flexible they are in updating their idea of imagined community (Anderson 1991). Immigration and globalisation could also contribute to decoupling citizenship from national identity. As non-native immigrants become citizens the identitarian dimension of citizenship may lose salience instead of adapting to the new demographic composition of the population. Clarke's (Clarke 2021) qualitative analysis of the white British majority shows that for those for whom citizenship is taken for

granted, citizenship does not hold an important identitarian significance. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that people are highly selective when asked to grant citizenship to potential applicants (Hainmueller and Hangartner 2013).

### **Challenges and opportunities for methodological approaches**

The difficulties for the study of citizenship concern both available data and research design. An investigation of determinants and effects of citizenship acquisition requires, at the very minimum, the observation of citizenship status change. That is, we need a record of whether someone who was not a birthright citizen became one at a later point in time. Yet, most longitudinal surveys that follow respondents over time measure citizenship only at point of entry. This is because surveys are typically interested in the general population for whom citizenship and nationality are mostly fixed. Secondly, the measurement of citizenship status can be overly simplified and therefore misleading. For example, surveys operationalise citizenship as passport holding or national identity. Similarly, related concepts, such as national sense of belonging and political participation, are also often measured by surveys in different ways because of their definitional complexity. The study of attitudes to citizenship is also limited by the data available. Most attitudinal research is done with nationally representative surveys, such as the European Social Survey and the World Value Survey. However, none of these collect data on attitudes and preferences for what it takes to be a citizen.

Beyond data limitations, the identification of the mechanisms that drive and that are driven by naturalisation requires, not only the observation of the acquisition of citizenship, but also some source of exogenous variation. The challenge is that individuals self-select into citizenship by deciding to naturalise. This clouds our ability to isolate the extent to which citizenship itself matters for later outcomes from the process leading to the acquisition of citizenship. The study of attitudes related to citizenship is also not straight

forward. Citizenship is given for granted by the majority population. It is therefore likely that natives have given little thought about their own and others' citizenship status. In all likelihood, they also have little knowledge about the entitlements and rights that are exclusively tied to citizenship and the requirement for its acquisition.

Nonetheless, there are opportunities to be creative with data sources and research designs to overcome these obstacles. One way of going about the investigation of immigrants' naturalisation is to use administrative data. These are data that governments and institutions collect for reasons other than research, but that are rich sources for researchers to draw on. The frequent and regular collection of data may also allow the investigation of citizenship policy change effects on key outcomes. Peters et al's study (2016) is an example of the adoption of a research design that allowed the inference of a causal relationship thanks to the use of administrative data and the exogenous variation created by unexpected policy change. Immigrant-focused surveys are also more apt to the study of naturalisation. *Trajectoires et Origines* for France and UKHLS for the UK are examples of data collection efforts where the questionnaires are designed with immigrant and minority populations in mind. This means that they ask more detailed questions about naturalisation and/or follow the change of citizenship status over time.

The advancement of survey experiment designs has made the study of attitudes towards citizenship more feasible. With such designs we typically infer attitudes from behaviour, such as choosing between vignettes (Hainmueller and Hangartner 2013). It follows that we can observe and investigate respondents' instinctive views about citizenship, irrespective of their knowledge and awareness about it. The introduction of citizenship reforms is also fruitful to study an institution that is not always salient. Such proposals for reform can spark popular debates or, at the very least, parliamentary discussions. We can therefore examine them to get insight into how the citizen is constructed and to how open people are to the shifting of citizenship boundaries to include new members.

## **Outline of thesis**

In Part 1 of this thesis I investigate the meaning and function of citizenship for immigrants, by focusing on two salient but understudied dimensions, political participation and national sense of belonging. My research aims to complement existing empirical work that has documented the socio-economic characteristics of immigrants who naturalise and the effects of naturalisation on labour market outcomes. I study this in two national contexts, the UK and France. These offer the opportunity to observe how different histories and institutional approaches to immigration can shape the relationship immigrants have to naturalisation.

Although the immigrant populations in both the UK and France have been in large part the result of their colonial imperial histories, they have different conceptions of national identity and approaches to the integration of immigrants. The UK is the archetype of a multicultural country and France of an assimilationist one (Brubaker 1994; Joppke 2003a). In the former, citizenship is presumed to recognise and accommodate minorities, whereas in the latter citizenship requires the ascription to certain cultural values. However, the two countries have adopted more similar policies at the turn of the 21st century. These policies entail requiring immigrants to demonstrate knowledge of national civic values and history, and host society language competency. This policy shift, which has also been observed in other Western European countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, does not necessarily indicate convergence. It signals, instead, a new preoccupation with and emphasis on the integration of migrants (Wallace Goodman 2014). These policies and the paths that led to them are likely to influence whether and how immigrants develop a national sense of belonging in these two countries and, in turn, how this sense of belonging is associated with their intention to naturalise. Minorities in Britain may feel comfortable subscribing to a British identity, whilst also maintaining diverse cultural



practices. However, this may not be the case for Muslim immigrants who are the target of integration requirements (Kostakopoulou 2010). In comparison, minorities in France may feel more pressure to comply with a more exclusive notion of Frenchness in order to be recognised as belonging. Here too, Muslim immigrants who have been the target of exclusionary attitudes and policies, are likely to face greater barriers to inclusion than other minority groups (Onasch 2017; Fassin and Mazouz 2009).

In Chapter 2 I use two waves of the U.K. Household Longitudinal Study, to investigate immigrants' national identification and political engagement before and after naturalisation. I find that before naturalisation those who acquire citizenship are more likely to identify as British, to be familiar with the British political system and are less interested in politics compared to those who do not. I also find that after naturalisation, the importance new citizens give to their British identity is higher than before, but their interest in politics is lower. This suggests that citizenship retains its role as a marker of national identity for immigrants. The negative association between naturalisation and interest in politics for immigrants, although surprising, is compatible with the low political engagement of the British-born population. I argue that the further decline in interest in politics following naturalisation may be explained by immigrants' disillusionment with a political narrative that fails to include them.

In Chapter 3 I draw on the Trajectories and Origins Survey, to investigate how national sense of belonging shapes immigrants' intention to naturalise in France. I exploit rich information about subjective national identity, recognition by others, and perceived discrimination to build a multidimensional construct of belonging using a latent class model. I show that immigrants' sense of belonging articulates in five different ways, ranging from full belonging to exclusion. I then explore how different belonging types are related to naturalisation intentions. Naturalisation intentions are highest among those who feel they fully belong, and lowest among those who feel fully excluded. Yet, migrants whose strong sense of national belonging is undermined by the absence of recognition

by others and by the experience of racism and discrimination are also highly motivated to naturalise. In light of these findings we reflect on the different ways in which national sense of belonging may contribute to immigrants' intention to naturalise.

In Part 2 I investigate the opinions of the native population over whether immigrants can become national members and according to what criteria. I do this for the UK and for Italy. These two Western European countries could not be more different with respect to their history of immigration, national identity and citizenship. Italy is a young nation-state with no clear narrative of national identity, and a country that relatively recently transitioned from being a sending to a receiving country of immigrants (Antonsich 2016). It is therefore now grappling for the first time with questions around the inclusion of children of immigrants born in the territory. In contrast the UK's empire, one of the largest and most long-lasting in history, has shaped British national identity to rest more on civic rather than ethnic grounds, and to receive people from colonies and former colonies, whilst also being highly selective in its inclusion (Sales 2010; Joppke 2003a). I draw on these two case studies to investigate how different contexts inform public preferences for the allocation of citizenship.

In Chapter 4, I contribute new evidence about the types of immigrants that British nationals would accept as fellow citizens. I analyse the preferences of a large, nationally representative UK sample employing a choice-based conjoint-analysis experiment. Respondents were presented with paired vignettes of applicant types characterised by a combination of attributes, where combinations are allocated to respondents randomly as part of the experimental design. Randomisation allows me to draw causal conclusions on how individual attributes affect the granting of citizenship. The attributes of immigrants with the largest effect on the probability of granting citizenship were occupation and religion: respondents especially penalised applicants who were Muslim or without an occupation. Respondents granted citizenship at different rates (from 64% to 80%): rates were lower among respondents who had voted to leave the EU, were older, less educated, and earned

less. However, the types of immigrant who were most likely to be granted citizenship did not vary by respondents' income, education, or age, and varied little between Brexit Leave and Remain voters. My findings about nationals' citizen preferences reflect the inclusive-exclusive nature of British citizenship and national identity, whereby inclusion is conditional on productivity and on the endorsement of liberal values.

In Chapter 5 I analyse the first moment Italy consciously questioned its citizenship boundaries in the context of immigration, rather than emigration. Italy transitioned from a country of emigration to one of immigration in the early 1980s, but its citizenship policy does not reflect this demographic change (Okólski 2012). There are currently around 800,000 children residing and/or born in Italy who cannot be Italian citizens because citizenship is inherited through lineage, according to the principle of *ius sanguinis*. For the first time in 2013 the centre-left party Partito Democratico (PD) proposed a policy reform to grant the right to citizenship to children of immigrant parents. After a long debate and strong opposition from the right-wing party, the Lega, the reform was halted in 2017. In this study I investigate how the growing number of non-citizen children has shifted the political discourse around what makes an Italian and what is the purpose of citizenship acquisition. Using an innovative corpus of data that includes YouTube videos, Facebook posts and website articles, I analyse the discourse of the two political parties at the centre of the debate, the PD and the Lega. I find that, despite their diverging positions on the reform, both parties ascribe to traditional conceptions of citizenship. These reinforce the expectation that immigrants must conform to the majority in order to be accepted as insiders. I argue that for the boundary between natives and immigrants to be blurred, government must first shift these narratives.

In Chapter 6 I summarise key findings and I reflect on what I believe to be the core contribution of the thesis as a whole, whilst acknowledging its limitations. I conclude with suggestions for future research.

In the next four chapters I address the research questions I set out here by bringing

together four different data sources: longitudinal survey data, cross-sectional survey data with a focus on immigrants; experimental original data; qualitative original data in the form of text. I also apply methodological approaches that range from secondary data analysis, to a conjoint experiment design, to discourse analysis of qualitative data. With these varied research designs, I provide empirical evidence of what citizenship is to people in a globalised world. Discerning popular experiences and notions of citizenship is important. The different meanings people give to citizenship inform their behaviour as citizens and are informed by their relationship with the state and the society they are part of.

## CHAPTER 2

### British and Disengaged: National Identification and Political Engagement before and after Naturalisation

#### **Introduction**

Citizenship is a legal status that grants rights and obligations, it is national identity and it is the status that gives us the power to act as political agents to govern the society we live in (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). Yet, national identity and political engagement are understudied dimensions of citizenship in the context of naturalisation. We do not know if national identity and political engagement are among the reasons why immigrants naturalise and/or are affected by naturalisation.

Around 123,000 immigrants acquired British citizenship in 2017, putting the United Kingdom (UK) in second place among European countries for number of naturalisations conferred (Blinder and Richards 2018; Eurostat 2019).<sup>1</sup> This is despite the burdensome, complex and expensive process required to naturalise. Concurrently, over the past two decades other forms of membership such as legal residence status, rather than citizenship, have become critical in determining access to most social and civil rights and privileges in the UK as in many other Western countries. The key tangible differences between residence and citizenship that endure are the right to vote in general elections,<sup>2</sup> greater freedom of movement and the permanence of the status, which governments revoke only in extreme circumstances. Are these benefits the entire reason why over 100,000 immigrants acquire citizenship every year? The literature to date has focused on the barriers and in-

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<sup>1</sup>However, the British naturalisation rate, which takes account of the immigrant population size, is similar to the European average (around 2%) (Eurostat 2019).

<sup>2</sup>An exception in the UK is Commonwealth and Irish citizens who have full voting rights in the UK.

centives defined by different naturalisation policies, and on documenting the immigrants who naturalise with respect to their socio-demographic and socio-economic profile. However, the story we know of who and why immigrants naturalise is incomplete. Little has been said on whether national identification and being engaged with national politics are motives for naturalising. It is also worth asking if citizenship simply acknowledges immigrants who are already *de facto* citizens or if it is also a means to shape them into citizens. Existing research shows that, once naturalised, immigrants may enjoy better wages and higher rates of employment (Helgertz, Bevelander, and Tegunimataka 2014), but citizenship may also be a resource that fosters other dimensions of integration, national identification, national attachment, and political engagement.

In this paper I further the understanding of the role citizenship has for immigrants by considering two neglected, though integral, dimensions of citizenship, national identification and political engagement. I use longitudinal data to measure immigrants' identity as British and political engagement before and after the acquisition of citizenship. In the next section I discuss the salience of these dimensions of citizenship within the British context and the empirical evidence on the nexus between them and citizenship acquisition. In the subsequent sections I describe my data, samples and analytical approach. I follow with a discussion of findings and conclusions.

## **Background**

### *Citizenship*

Modern scholars define citizenship in democracies as a status that grants civic, political and social rights and responsibilities (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008; Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Carens 2000). Among these the right to vote ensures political equality in the governing of a well-defined society. Citizenship is also sense of belonging

to that same society, that is identification with the nation-state and emotional attachment to the community (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008; Yuval-Davis 2006). Such a definition highlights how citizenship may not only have an instrumental value, but also a sentimental and identitarian significance (Pogonyi 2019).

In Western countries, citizenship is the chief conferrer of rights and privileges, but the distance from other forms of membership has lessened. It has become increasingly challenging to deny non-citizens civil and social rights that in the post-war era have become associated with the individual, rather than the citizen (Soysal 2000). Alternative forms of national and supra-national membership have developed in a context of economic and cultural globalisation, with relevant cross-border institutions and increased mobility resulting from more flexible borders. From an instrumental perspective, these other forms of status have become almost as important in assigning rights. With residence permits non-citizens enjoy the same rights as citizens, except for the right to vote in general elections and greater freedom of movement. The European Union is also a supra-national institution that ensures social and civil rights to all its citizens, beyond their national status and residence permit.

Although citizenship has lost its distinctive primacy as a legal status that secures social and civil rights, it may still be associated with national identity and the will to engage politically. For the immigrants who acquire it, citizenship may hold more than an instrumental function.

### *Citizenship and National Identity*

Public and academic discourse often uses the terms citizenship and national identity interchangeably (Simonsen 2017). For example, it is only by virtue of being part of the same national community that we can justify paying taxes and support redistribution for the benefit of strangers (Sindic 2011). Citizenship lends itself to being a basis for a social

identity as an institution that officially draws a line between those who hold the status and those who do not. The membership of those who belong as opposed to those who do not is clearly defined and conceptually charged. Criteria for naturalisation are illustrative. In the UK, where these include a citizenship test on life in Britain, a language requirement and a ceremonial oath to pledge allegiance to the crown, citizenship is not a neutral legal institution that confers rights and duties, but it is also a symbolic one that delivers a conceptualisation of what it means to be British. In his comparative work on France and Germany, Brubaker (1994) highlights how citizenship is about national identity. He argues that immigration has triggered public discussions over citizenship acquisition policies, which are about what it means to belong to the nation-state, not about what and who gains from citizenship acquisition; “it is a *politics of identity, not a politics of interest*” (1994, 182). Survey data confirm that the loyalty and affection for nations remain unchallenged by other forms of community, such as a global or a European one (Smith and Jarkko 1998).

The nexus between national identity and citizenship may exist also for immigrants who are not granted citizenship at birth, but who make the decision to naturalise. Identifying with the country of residence can both be a reason for naturalising and a result of citizenship acquisition. Alternatively, as immigrants usually hold a different citizenship status and typically identify as belonging to another state, they may not be open to signing up to a British identity. As their stories of belonging are, to different extents, rooted in the country of origin, they may view citizenship entirely as a legal status with attached benefits.

Nonetheless, a number of empirical studies focusing on particular countries or particular groups of immigrants in different national contexts, have found evidence of a link between citizenship acquisition and national identification. Bevelander and Veenman (2006) for the Netherlands, Platt (2014) and Manning and Roy (2010) for the UK find that naturalised immigrants are more likely to identify with the host country compared to non-



naturalised immigrants. Reeskens and Wright (2014), and Karlsen and Nazroo's (2013) claim that citizen immigrants in the EU are more attached to the destination country than non-citizens. This evidence suggests that, even if the host country does not replace the home country, identification can gradually change over time (Casey and Dustmann 2010).

The cross-sectional nature of these studies prevents them from identifying the mechanisms at the heart of this relationship, which, potentially, goes both ways. As for any social identity, social recognition is as fundamental as identification in shaping national identity (Duveen 2001). Recognition of a social identity can take many forms, but its absence jeopardises one's self-definition (N. Hopkins and Blackwood 2011). Arguably, immigrants seek the legitimisation of their national identity embedded in legal institutions when they already identify as British. It follows that I expect those who identify as British to be more likely to later naturalise. The official recognition sanctioned by the passport then completes the sense of national identity, which should therefore intensify. Moreover, as the state gives citizenship to a select group of applicants on strict conditions, we can expect those who succeed to feel a stronger rightful claim to Britishness compared to those who do not. I therefore expect citizenship to enhance the importance given to immigrants' British identity.

### *Citizenship and Political Engagement*

Citizenship ensures political equality and representation by conferring the right to vote. In democracies non-citizens are not represented by the government and therefore do not contribute to the governing of the state and to the legislative process. When fundamental rights and entitlements to benefits are protected by supra-national institutions, voting and other more informal forms of national political participation may become less pivotal in shaping policy. Arguably, this is especially the case for European citizens and permanent residents whose rights are protected independently of citizenship status. Nonetheless,

Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU), which has resulted in a surge in citizenship applications by European citizens, is a recent example of a political upheaval that might affect the position of non-citizens who could not express their preference in the referendum. Nations still represent the primary political framework in which individuals assert their rights and have a claim on equality (Calhoun 2007).

Although citizenship grants the right to participate in the governing of the state, it translates into political participation only if there is sufficient political engagement. That is, people participate when they are sufficiently interested and knowledgeable (Russo and Stattin 2017). It follows that on the one hand, the more politically engaged immigrants may be more likely to naturalise in order to gain the right to vote. On the other, the formal right to participate may trigger greater interest and acquisition of knowledge. Cross-sectional evidence by Diehl and Blohm (2003) and Kesler and Demireva (2011) for Europe, and by Leal (2002) for the USA, tell us that on average naturalised citizens are more interested in politics, are more likely to identify with a political party in their country of residence, and to engage in a range of activities such as signing petitions or joining protests.

There is evidence that voting is one of the reasons why immigrants naturalise for those who are most politically engaged. A group of Prabhat's (2018) respondents told her they wanted to acquire British citizenship to be able to vote. Stewart and Mulvey (2011) also find that among Scottish refugees political representation was a key motive for citizenship application. Street (2017) for the UK, and Kahanec and Tosun (2009) for Germany find that that more politicised immigrants self-select into citizenship.

However, if we see citizenship acquisition as a process of integration and assertion of belonging, it may be to those who are less politically engaged that citizenship is a more natural pathway. In the UK, levels of political engagement are low among native British citizens. Only two thirds of British citizens voted in the last few general elections and even fewer vote in local and European elections (House of Commons Library

2017). It follows that if those who are most integrated within British society are the ones most likely to acquire citizenship, their level of political engagement should be relatively low. Heath et al. (2013) argue that immigrants show higher levels of commitment to voting than the British majority but that, with time, they tend to converge to similar levels. The relationship between political engagement and naturalisation may therefore not be clearcut.

In line with existing cross-sectional evidence, citizenship acquisition may also foster political engagement. Citizenship is a legal resource that, by granting the formal right to participate, may spark political interest and knowledge. Beyond the legal aspect tied to the right to vote, citizenship is also closely tied to national identity and attachment to the community. Citizenship may therefore represent a psychological resource for people who feel like they belong to the polity and want to participate politically (Just and Anderson 2012). Political engagement should therefore continue to grow following naturalisation. Bevelander and Pendakur (2011) find that citizenship increases the probability of voting. Waldinger and Duquette-Rury (2016) find that Latino immigrants in the USA become more politically invested in the host country after naturalisation, but Levin's (2013) analysis on the same population finds mixed results.

Although we would expect the right to vote to spark political engagement, we cannot ignore the possibility that the anti-immigrant sentiment in political discourse over the period considered may generate some form of cognitive dissonance. Immigrants who identify as British and have been granted British citizenship may feel disillusioned and disappointed by a political discourse that excludes them. Media representations and the political climate make it particularly hard for certain groups of immigrants to feel included into a British identity. For example, the redefinition and public representation of Britishness has often explicitly juxtaposed British values presented as liberal with Islamic values portrayed as non-liberal (Sales 2010). Favell (2013) has also identified the "sociological reality" of Eastern Europeans being at the bottom of a European hierarchy, despite

enjoying the same rights as other Europeans. Psychologists' work on interest formation suggests that social conditions are paramount to sustain interest development (Hidi and Renninger 2006). Moreover, citizen immigrants may feel more exposed to hostility towards immigrants in general and disappointed by the political system and by the lack of opportunities for social mobility (Levin 2013). If trust and political engagement are tightly linked, citizen immigrants may be less inclined to engage with politics (Putnam 2000). This dissonance between subjective perception of belonging and the political narratives and empirical realities of exclusion might push people to further disengage especially after the acquisition of citizenship.

Moreover, research suggests that political behaviour forms during teenage years and does not change much over the life course (Galston 2001; Schlozman, Jennings, and Niemi 1982). Consistent with this, Street (2017) finds an effect of naturalisation on political engagement only for immigrants who naturalise in early adulthood. If so, naturalisation in adulthood may not affect immigrants' existing disposition towards political engagement.

### *Other Determinants of Naturalisation*

Any analysis that investigates the relationship between national identification, political engagement and citizenship acquisition needs to account for other determinants of and barriers to citizenship. Research for different European countries and the USA finds that years of residence, age and age at migration influence the likelihood of naturalisation, indicating that duration of stay gives more opportunities and higher motivation to integrate with the host population (e.g. Picot and Hou 2011 for North America; M. P. Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers 2013 for 16 European countries). Arguably, immigrants of a low socio-economic status face higher barriers to naturalisation. The application process may be more daunting for people with low education levels and its cost may be unafford-

able for immigrants with low income. However, not all research has found evidence of this. Fougère and Safi (2008), Chiswick and Miller (2008) are recent examples of studies which do find this relationship for France and the USA; while DeVoretz and Pivnenko (2008) and Bevelander and Veeman (2006) do not for Canada and the Netherlands.

Family ties in the host country may also indicate how anchored one is there. Evidence suggests that immigrants in North America and in Europe who are married are more likely to naturalise than single immigrants (Chiswick and Miller 2008; M. P. Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers 2013; Yang 1994), especially if married to someone of the destination country's nationality (Bevelander and Veenman 2006). Evidence about having children is mixed. Yang (1994) and Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers (2013) find that it enhances the probability of naturalisation, but Bevelander and Veenman (2006) and Chiswick and Miller (2008) do not. Country context could play a role in how the presence of children influences the decision to naturalise. In the UK a parent need not be naturalised for her/his child to be entitled to citizenship. At the institutional level, several studies, mostly for the USA, find that the propensity to naturalise is lower for immigrants whose source country has a high level of economic development and civil liberties, suggesting that country of origin might affect the opportunity cost of choosing to naturalise (Picot and Hou 2011; Mazzolari 2009; M. P. Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers 2013).

Net of these factors, I investigate immigrants' degree of national identification and political engagement, both before and after naturalisation.

## **Data and Methods**

### *Sample*

I use Understanding Society (UKHLS) waves 1 (2009-11) and 6 (2014-16). The UKHLS is a nationally representative household panel study that collects information on people's

social and economic circumstances, attitudes, behaviours and health (University of Essex 2017). This longitudinal survey has collected annual information from respondents from a sample of over 30,000 households first surveyed in 2009 and includes interviews with all adult household members of original respondents at each sweep. Understanding Society is particularly suitable for this study as it includes an ethnic minority boost sample (EMBS) that focuses on the larger minority groups, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, black Caribbean and black African. The sample design ensures that there are at least 1,000 interviewees from each of these groups. Northern Ireland is excluded from the EMBS sample. Interviews are mostly conducted in English, but translation is also provided when requested (Knies 2018). Some questions, the ‘extra five minutes’, are specifically relevant to ethnic minority groups (e.g., identification with parents’ ethnicity) (Knies 2018) and are asked of a subsample of respondents (the EMBS sample, a comparison sample from the main sample, and ethnic minority individuals living at wave 1 in areas with relatively low proportions of minorities, which were therefore not covered by the EMBS).

The population of interest for this paper is immigrants who did not have citizenship when first observed in Understanding Society. I use the word immigrant to refer to anyone not born in the UK, although this includes people who have come to the UK at different periods, more or less permanently, and for a variety of reasons and therefore under different conditions. All UK born respondents are excluded from my analysis.

Wave 1 and wave 6 are the only interview rounds when citizenship status is recorded. My initial sample comprises 997 immigrants who were not British citizens at wave 1 and who responded to the survey at wave 6. Of these, 407 acquired citizenship after wave 1 and before wave 6, and 590 did not. My sample therefore excludes immigrants who acquired citizenship before wave 1. These have lived in the UK for longer on average, as length of stay is an important determinant of naturalisation (e.g. M. P. Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers 2013). I further restrict the sample to immigrants who have been living in the UK for at least two years by wave 1 because, by wave 6, they will have lived

in the UK for at least seven years, giving them enough time to be eligible for and attain citizenship.<sup>3</sup> This is a conservative way to select the population at risk of acquiring citizenship as there are other cases where permanent residence/indefinite leave to remain status, that usually precedes the opportunity to make a citizenship application, is acquired more quickly or is not necessary. As I use only complete cases,<sup>4</sup> my analytical sample is reduced to 884 respondents, 514 of whom remain non-citizens by wave 6 and 370 who acquire citizenship. Full sample descriptive statistics are provided in Table A1 and Table A2 of Appendix A.

If the respondents who drop out of the survey after wave 1 differ systematically from the rest, estimates may be subject to attrition bias. For example, this might be the case if the immigrants who leave the survey are the ones returning to their country of origin and who would have therefore differed systematically from my sample in their likelihood of acquiring citizenship. I apply wave 6 adult probability weights included in the dataset in order to minimise the effects of attrition.

### *Measures*

I outline the measures and then the methods for first investigating how far identification and political engagement is associated with citizenship and second investigating how far citizenship acquisition is associated with identification and political engagement.

#### National Identification and Political Engagement before Citizenship Acquisition

**\*\*Dependent variable\*\***. *Naturalisation*: I derived this measure from the wave 1 to wave 6 questions on whether the respondent is a UK citizen, citizen of their country of birth or citizen of another country. I recoded the latter two categories into one, resulting in a

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<sup>3</sup>Different routes to citizenship typically require six years of residence

<sup>4</sup>With the exception of “the importance of being British” variable which is part of the ‘extra five minute’ questions, asked by design to a subsample of immigrants only.

dichotomous variable that indicates whether (1) or not (0) the wave 1 respondent has acquired British citizenship by wave 6. I make no distinction between those who hold dual nationality and those who do not.

**Independent variables of interest measured at wave 1.** *National identification:* The survey includes a question that asks what respondents consider their national identity to be, with the available options Scottish, Welsh, English, British, Irish and other. I collapse the first four nationalities under ‘British’. Answers can be given alone or in combination. There are two resulting categories: ‘Other’ (0) if British nationality is not mentioned, and ‘British’ (1) if British nationality is mentioned alone or in combination with another nationality. As a sensitivity check I also measured national identification as ‘British only’, ‘Other only’ and ‘British and other’; the results were robust to this alternative specification.

*Political engagement:* I operationalise political engagement as the interest and knowledge needed to engage in politics.

*Interest in politics:* Respondents are asked the extent to which they are interested in politics on a four-item scale that ranges from ‘not at all’, to ‘very’.

*Familiarity with the political system:* I combine responses to questions aimed to gauge whether the respondent has a preference for a political party or not. Respondents are first asked if they support a political party and if their answer is negative, whether they feel a little closer to one. The second question therefore nudges them to give a preference even if they do not identify as supporters of any party. Given that the British political system is almost a two-party system, even without supporting one of the two parties, it is fairly easy to choose which one is closest to one’s beliefs. Hence these two questions measure knowledge and familiarity with the political system as opposed to partisanship.

**Other covariates measured at wave 1.** *Partnership and cohabitation status:* I matched information about cohabiting partners and spouses to create a variable in three categories: single/no co-resident partner, with a non-UK born partner, with a UK-born



partner.

*Presence of children:* I recoded the original survey question into a dichotomy of whether the respondent is a parent of any children.

*Children's country of birth:* I derived a variable that indicates whether at least one of the respondent's children was born in the UK. I inferred this if the birth of any child took place after year of arrival to the UK.

*Employment status:* I recoded the original survey question into three categories: employed or self-employed, unemployed and economically inactive, which includes respondents who are retired, studying full-time or in caring roles.

*Household income:* measured over the last month before the interview and divided by 1000 to aid interpretability.

*Age left education:* I derived the age at which the respondent left school or university, in the UK or elsewhere.

*Country of education:* I derived an indicator of whether at least some of the respondent's education took place in the UK. I imputed that this was the case if the respondent left school/university after arriving to the UK.

*Language proficiency:* I derive an indicator of whether the interview was translated or conducted in English.

*Home ownership:* I derive a binary measure of whether the respondent lives in an owned (including with a mortgage) or rented home.

*Years of residence:* I measure length of residence in the UK by the number of years between arrival and the date of interview. As a sensitivity check, I allowed for non-linearity by including it as a categorical variable. The results were robust to this alternative specification.

*Demographic variables:* I include sex, age and age squared.

*Region of origin:* I use the 2015 Human Development Index (HDI) of country of birth instead of the country of birth itself because individual country sample sizes are

very small. HDI also allows to account for the higher incentive to naturalise for people of low-income countries. I changed the scale from 0-1, to 0-100 to aid interpretation. I add an indicator of whether respondents were born in a European country, which brings particular rights, including freedom of movement across Europe, that might make naturalisation less important, and whether they were born in a country that is part of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth comprises 53 states that are mostly former territories of the British Empire. Although the British government stripped immigrants originally from Commonwealth countries of their status of subjects to the British crown in 1981 (immigration restrictions had already been introduced as of the 1960s), it left them full voting rights. Irish, Cypriot and Maltese citizens are European citizens who have also had full voting rights in the UK since 1949. I include a dummy to capture these nationalities who are less incentivised to naturalise.

#### National Identification and Political Engagement after Citizenship Acquisition

**\*\*Dependent variable\*\*:** The outcome variables are *interest in politics, familiarity with the political system and the importance given to being British* in wave 6. Respondents are asked to rate the importance they give to being British on a scale from 0 to 10 and where 11 is for respondents who spontaneously state that they do not consider themselves as British. I convert the scale to be from -1 to 10. I use this variable instead of the direct national identity measure used in the first part of the analysis because the latter is only asked at wave 1. Although the importance of being British is included both in wave 1 and 6, in wave 1 it is only asked of the ‘extra five minutes’ subsample of respondents and of respondents interviewed in the first 6 months of fieldwork therefore reducing sample size considerably.

*Independent variable:* The independent variable of interest is British citizenship status in wave 6, which indicates if the respondent has naturalised between after wave 1 and before wave 6.

*Analytical Approach**National Identification and Political Engagement before Citizenship Acquisition*

I estimate a probit regression model of the likelihood of naturalisation. With this method I jointly explore the relationship between national identification and political engagement, and naturalisation. In addition to using weights, I also cluster standard errors by wave 1 household to avoid bias in standard error estimation arising from within-household error correlation.

*National Identification and Political Engagement after Citizenship Acquisition*

Addressing this part of the research question presents three main challenges related to the lack of precise information on the date of naturalisation, which we only know happened in a window of time between wave 1 and wave 6. First, it is possible that any change in national identification and political engagement between waves 1 and 6, measured at wave 6, has occurred or started before naturalisation. For the respondents for whom this is the case, my analysis overestimates the effect of naturalisation. Second, it is possible that any change in national identification and political engagement between waves 1 and 6 affects the likelihood of naturalisation. That is, it drives naturalisation and remains constant thereafter. Third, there could be unobserved drivers of both naturalisation as well as national identification and the political engagement. However, since wave 6 outcomes are also measured at wave 1, i.e. before naturalisation, I can control for time-invariant unobservables that affect national identification and political engagement, therefore reducing bias and estimating the net effect of citizenship acquisition. Nonetheless, time-varying unobservables may still affect national identification and the political engagement in wave

6. For instance, the current state of British politics could influence both the willingness to naturalise and engagement with British politics.

Despite these data limitations, which limit the extent to which I can make causal claims, the data make it possible to observe the change in national identification and political engagement between waves and its relationship with citizenship acquisition. I use inverse-probability weighted regression-adjustment (IPWRA), a combination of matching and regression, whereby parametric regression is applied to matched data. I employ matching as opposed to regression alone because, by comparing respondents in the treatment group (i.e. those who acquired citizenship) and control group (i.e. those who did not acquire citizenship) with similar observed characteristics, it avoids areas where there is no overlap of covariates between the treatment and control group, a scenario where regression alone has been shown to perform poorly (Dehejia and Wahba 2002; Glazerman et al. 2003). Moreover, IPWRA is doubly robust if either one of the specifications of the prediction model of the treatment, naturalisation (estimated with matching) or of the outcome, national identification and political engagement (estimated with regression), is correctly specified. IPWRA therefore decreases the sensitivity of the estimated average treatment effect (ATE), the difference in mean outcomes, to the particular specification (Hill and Reiter 2006; Ho et al. 2007). As suggested by Stuart (2010) and Schafer and Kang (2008), using matching methods jointly with regression adjustment also reduces bias and increases efficiency compared to matching alone. Employing regression adjustment after matching ‘cleans up’ residual covariate imbalance between the treatment and control group, therefore minimising the bias related to observables (Stuart 2010). Finally, it provides a host of diagnostics that help to assess the quality of the model. A step-by-step breakdown of the analysis can be found in Appendix A.

I estimate three separate models of the effect of citizenship acquisition on each outcome measure. For each one I estimate both the average treatment effect (ATE) and the average treatment effect on the treated (ATET). The ATE estimates the effect of citizen-

ship acquisition for the entire population of immigrants, both those who do and those who do not acquire citizenship. The ATET estimates the effect of citizenship acquisition only for the immigrants who do acquire citizenship. Details of covariate balance checks and successful common support assumption testing can be found in Appendix A.

For both sets of analyses, I focus in my discussion of results on the variables of interest and report key results in graphical form. Full tables of results are provided in Appendix A.

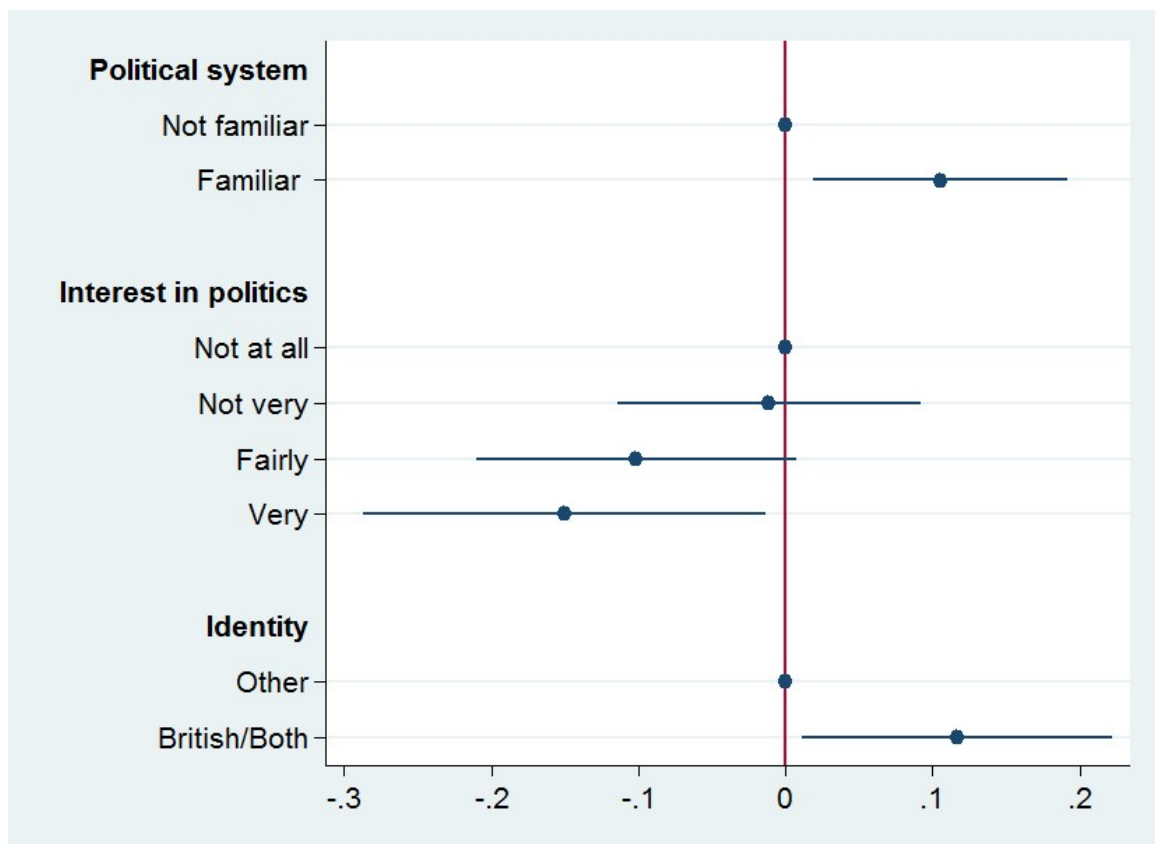
## Results

### *National Identification and Political Engagement before Citizenship Acquisition*

Figure 2.1 presents the average marginal probabilities of naturalisation by wave 6 for the key independent variables of interest, adjusting for other covariates. The full set of results from the probit regression can be found in Appendix A, Table A3. Identification as British, interest in politics and familiarity with the political system, all appear to matter in the decision to naturalise. Figure 2.1 shows that immigrants who identify as British, or as both British and another nationality, have an average marginal probability of 12 percentage points higher than that for immigrants who identify only with another nationality. For many successful applicants, identification as British takes place before citizenship acquisition. This finding suggests that, net of other drivers and barriers, identifying as British provides immigrants with a motive to naturalise. These findings are consistent with theories of social identity that illustrate the role of social recognition in identity formation (N. Hopkins and Blackwood 2011). Arguably, immigrants who identify as British seek social and official recognition through citizenship acquisition. This form of acceptance may be particularly important to more marginalised groups who may feel their British identification is not matched by general public endorsement.

As regards political engagement, the more immigrants are interested in politics, the less likely they are to naturalise. The effect is large, with those very interested in politics being 15 percentage points less likely to become citizens than those who are not at all interested. However, immigrants who are more familiar with the British political system are more likely to naturalise. The combination of these results may be puzzling at first because we would expect the two dimensions of political engagement to work in the same direction.

**Figure 2.1:** Average marginal effects of national identification and political engagement



Note: Average marginal effects computed after the probit model of the probability of acquiring British citizenship with clustered standard errors and weights. Circles show point estimates and the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. Circles without horizontal lines show reference categories. Estimates control for sex, age, age squared, years of residence, HDI of country of origin, Europe indicator, Commonwealth indicator, gross household income, home ownership, age left education, whether any education in the UK, presence of children, whether any children born in the UK, partnership status, employment status, language proficiency.

Reflection on what the two variables are measuring may help to explain these patterns. Familiarity with the political system is a necessary condition for political participa-

tion. Becoming familiar with the country's political parties may not necessarily provide a motivation for naturalisation, but might nevertheless signal a certain degree of integration. Without actively seeking this information, we can expect most people who read or watch the news and who have built ties with natives, to have some knowledge of British political parties. Sufficient knowledge of the British political system is also required to pass The Life in the UK test, a condition for Indefinite Leave to Remain or naturalisation. Immigrants who are more familiar with the British political system are therefore more likely to be those who self-select into citizenship. Importantly, this familiarity is necessary for later participation, enabled by the right to vote associated with citizenship.

In contrast, it is more difficult to interpret what the question on interest in politics is actually measuring. In light of the negative relationship with naturalisation, one possibility is that non-UK born respondents interpret the question with reference to their home country rather than to the UK. If this were the case, it would mean that those who are more interested in the politics of their home country are less likely to naturalise. However, further investigation suggests this is not the explanation. First, if respondents thought about their country of origin in their answer to the *interest in politics* question, I would expect the immigrants most interested in politics to be the least *familiar with the political system*. However, the positive association between the two variables indicates otherwise (Table A4 in Appendix A). Secondly, I test whether there is a correlation between identifying only as a national of a country that is not the UK and higher interest in politics. The result of a simple t-test shows that the relationship is the opposite. The immigrants who identify as British, or as both British and another nationality as opposed to another nationality only, are significantly more interested in politics (Table A5 in Appendix A).

Alternatively, the survey question may evoke an interest in geo-politics that stretches beyond well-defined geographical borders and that leads people to be less invested and potentially critical of investment in naturalisation in a specific country. The lack of this awareness of those who are relatively less interested in politics may even be helpful in

fostering the propensity to naturalise.

Finally, this finding may indicate that the immigrants who later naturalise have integrated more into British society than those who do not. As discussed, integration into British culture might equate to lower engagement with British politics. The British Social Attitudes survey provides evidence of an increasing disconnection with politics and a general voter apathy since the turn of the millennium (Phillips and Simpson 2015). On a similar question about interest in British politics in the same period 2009/10, they report that only one third of respondents expressed a ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a great deal’ of interest in politics (Butt and Curtice 2013). I compare how new citizens, non-citizens, those who already acquired citizenship before wave 1, and native citizens are represented on the ‘interest in politics’ scale. Remarkably, for all groups the majority says they are either ‘not at all’, or ‘not very’ interested in politics. The group with the highest proportion of respondents expressing they are ‘very’ interested in politics is that of non-citizens (Table A6 in Appendix A).

Although all respondents become eligible for naturalisation by wave 6, some are eligible for more time than others. As a sensitivity check for this I re-estimate the model on a restricted sample of immigrants who were already eligible for citizenship at wave 1, i.e. they had been living in the UK for at least six years. Results are consistent with previous estimates (Table A7 in Appendix A).

### *National Identification and Political Engagement after Citizenship Acquisition*

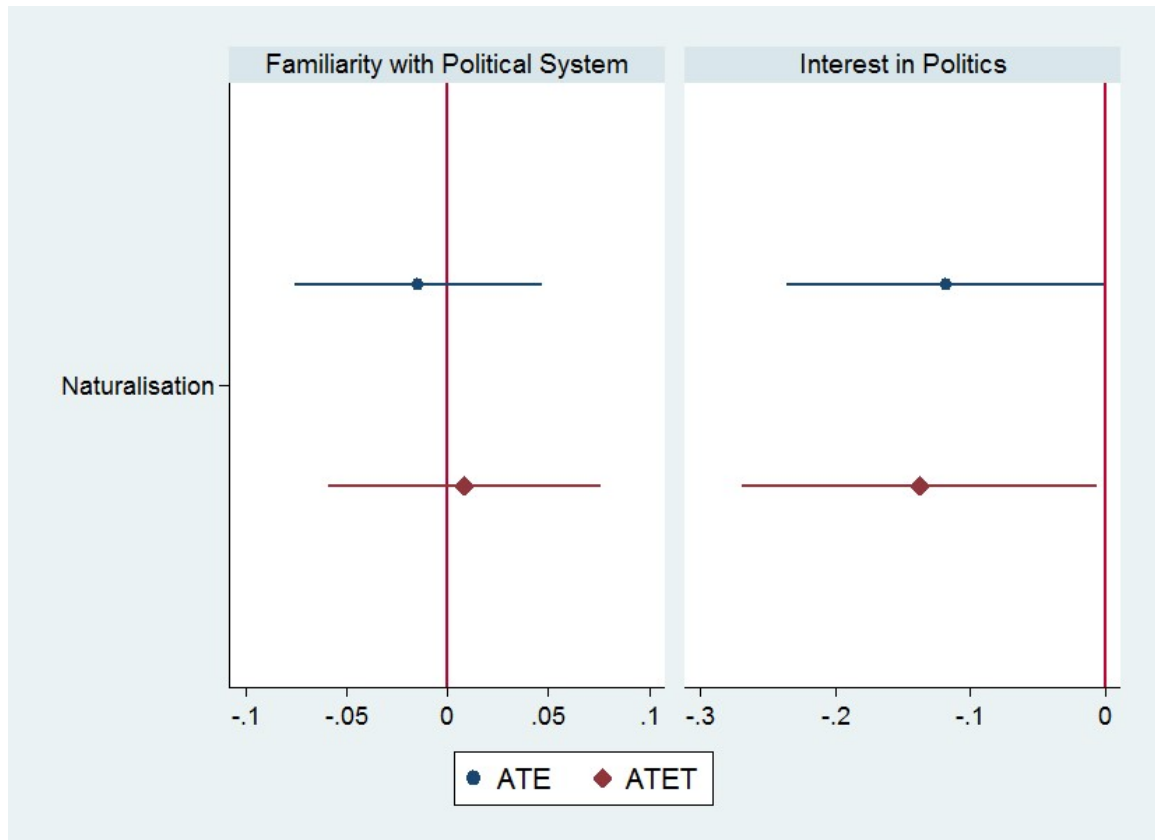
The second part of my analysis examines whether citizenship is a resource that fosters national identification and political engagement in British society. Figure 2.2 shows that immigrants who naturalise are not more likely to be familiar with the British political system. This is probably due to the more knowledgeable people having already self-selected into citizenship and to the variable not measuring the degree of familiarity, but merely if



there is any familiarity or not. Figure 2.2 does, however, show that after naturalisation, citizens report a lower level of interest in politics than non-citizens. That is, other things being equal, not only the least interested in politics self-select into citizenship, but their interest continues to decrease thereafter. This finding is consistent with Bartram's (2019) analysis using the same data, but a different methodological approach. He argues that the requirements for naturalisation (tests and ceremony) are to blame for the decrease in political interest. However, this explanation seems speculative. Importantly, it fails to take account of the fact that, as I have shown here, interest in politics is lower for citizens than non-citizens even *before* citizenship acquisition takes place. Moreover, 'citizenship tests' are a requirement not only to attain citizenship for EU nationals, but they are also required to attain Indefinite Leave to Remain for non-EU UK residents, whether or not they subsequently apply for citizenship. Alternatively, it is plausible that the contrast between identifying as British and being a British national, but being excluded by the political discourse which continues to associate immigrants with being non-British, pushes naturalised citizens further away from being engaged with the political world (Sales 2010). Especially after the strenuous process of naturalisation, those who already feel and are British may resent such non-acceptance and therefore dissociate from the political system that fosters it (Prabhat 2018).

As expected, immigrants who naturalise give a higher importance to their identity as British by around 1 point on a scale from -1 to 10 compared to those who do not. As shown in Figure 2.3, this is true both for the ATE and ATET. Although I cannot confidently say that the growth in the importance given to being British followed naturalisation, the finding reveals that growth in British identification occurs in association with naturalisation. The finding also suggests that, although immigrants who naturalise were found to already identify more as British before naturalising, their sense of identity strengthens once they gain official recognition. The fact that the application process is costly and challenging might also contribute to creating a feeling of satisfaction and pride for those

**Figure 2.2:** The ATE and ATET of the acquisition of citizenship on the probability of being familiar with the British political system and the degree of interest in politics



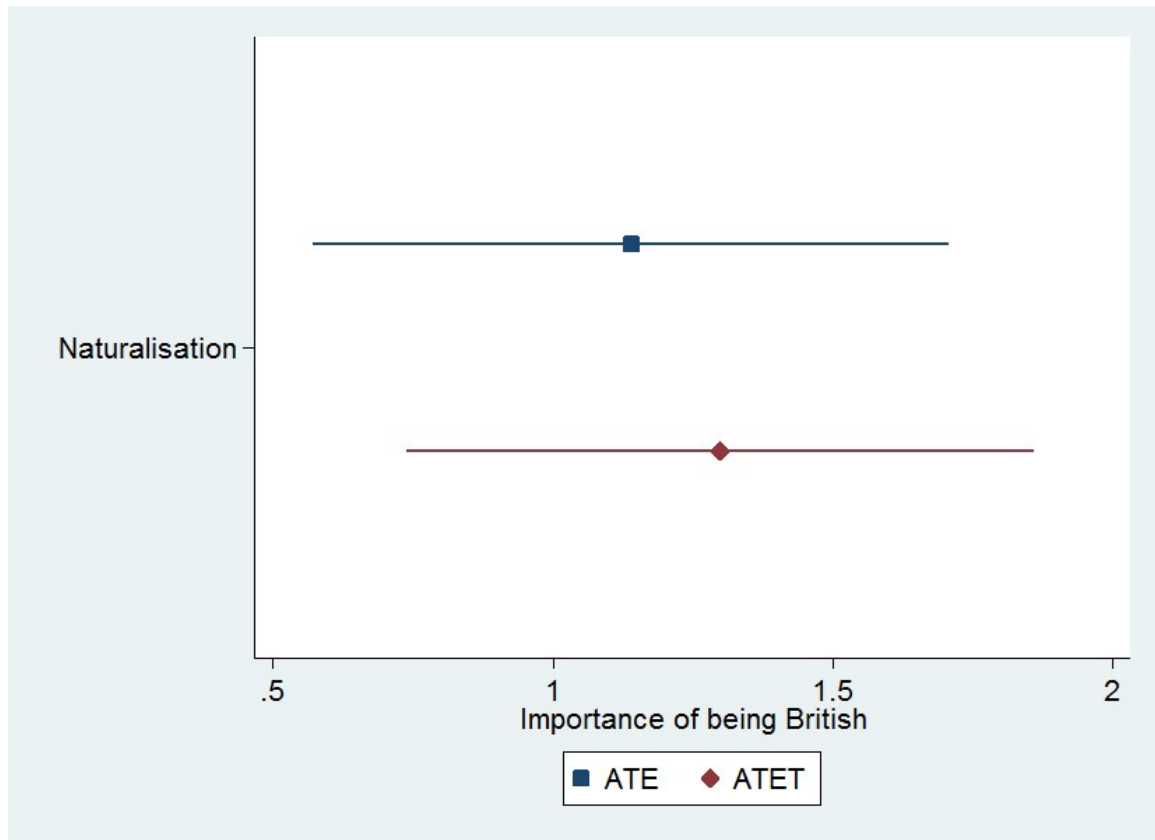
Average treatment effects (ATE) and average treatment effects on the treated (ATET) estimated through inverse probability weighted regression-adjustment (IPWRA) on the likelihood of being familiar with the political system and on the degree of interest in politics. Circles/diamonds show point estimates and the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals.

who are successful in attaining citizenship and may feed into boosting the importance given to their British identity.

## Conclusion

Much of the discontent with multiculturalist policies in Europe concerns the lack of social cohesion between minority and majority groups under a common national identity (Koopmans 2013). Identifying as nationals of the country one lives in and engaging politically is important both for individuals' wellbeing and for the sake of society's functioning.

**Figure 2.3:** The ATE and ATET of the acquisition of citizenship on the extent to which the respondent deems being British as important.



Note: Average treatment effects (ATE) and average treatment effects on the treated (ATET) estimated through inverse-probability weighted regression-adjustment (IPWRA) on the degree of importance given to a British identity. Circles/diamonds show point estimates and the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals.

In this paper I asked if immigrants naturalise once they already feel and act as citizens. I find that they do. They feel British, they are familiar with the British political system and are as disengaged with politics as the average native population. I also asked whether citizenship contributes to immigrants' growth as citizens. I find that their identity as British nationals strengthens and that their interest in politics continues to decline.

These findings raise questions about what being a citizen means. From a theoretical conceptualisation of citizenship, it is difficult to make sense of why interest in politics of immigrants who later acquire citizenship is significantly lower than for those who do not and why it continues to drop thereafter. Moreover, this finding is in contrast with evidence from other country contexts for which there is a positive association between

political engagement and citizenship acquisition (e.g. Kesler and Demireva 2011). However, by considering that the average native citizen is not very interested in politics and does not participate in Britain's political life, I argue that low interest in politics is an indication of integration, rather than marginalisation. I also suggest that the further decline in interest in politics may signal disillusionment with a political narrative that excludes immigrants irrespective of their citizenship status and fails to recognise their status and identity as British nationals.

This raises methodological and conceptual questions, both for researchers and for policy makers. Firstly, as political disaffection is high in most Western countries, how far does it make sense to regard political engagement as a defining features of citizenship? Secondly, when we study immigrant populations, what reference group should we compare them to, the ideal or the real? This last question is directed to policy makers as much as researchers. Policy makers dictate conditions for naturalisation, including a test that asks questions that most native British people are unlikely to know the answer to. The 3,000 facts test-takers are expected to know, include about 278 historical dates, the height of the London Eye and the number of elected representatives in each regional assembly, for example. For researchers it is important to be mindful that the choice of a comparison-group against which we measure immigrants implies judgments of 'successful' and 'failed' integration on which we base notions of good citizenship (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008).

In contrast, the link between citizenship and national identification that exists for natives, appears to exist for immigrants too. This is in line with cross-sectional evidence of a nexus, both in Britain and other European countries (Manning and Roy 2010; Platt 2014). However, by distinguishing between national identity before and after naturalisation, this study contributes to our understanding of the mechanisms behind this relationship. I argue that social recognition is an indispensable facet of identity formation and might explain why the immigrants who identify as British naturalise, and why their sense

of identity continues to grow thereafter. This study also adds to the growing evidence that national identification tends to increase with time (Georgiadis and Manning 2013; Karlsen and Nazroo 2013; Güveli and Platt 2011). While we should not forget that other social representations, such as those used in the media and in everyday life, also affect immigrants' identity, this finding suggests that citizenship is still a valuable marker of national identity. This should be a reassuring finding to those worried about first and second generations failing to embrace a British national identity (Cameron 2011). If citizens, who can vote and are permanent members of nation states, identify as nationals of the country they live in, they are more likely to feel committed to the political community for a common good, contributing to the social cohesion of the country (Moran 2011; Calhoun 2002).

More geographically fine-grained evidence is needed to investigate whether immigrants' political engagement mirrors that of natives in different parts of the country. Studying other country contexts with longitudinal data, with particular attention to the variation in naturalisation policies, could also improve our understanding of the relationship between citizenship, political engagement and national identity.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Multidimensionality of National Belonging: Patterns and Implications for Immigrants' Naturalisation Intentions

#### Introduction

Citizenship is a legal status that defines formal belonging to a nation state and the rights and obligations of individual members. Extant empirical literature shows that immigrants' likelihood of naturalising varies according to their resources and how much they stand to gain from the rights granted by citizenship status (Mazzolari 2009; Fougère and Safi 2008). However, citizenship also involves a sense of belonging to the national community (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). While the relevance of this more subjective dimension has been widely discussed (Joppke 2010; Kymlicka and Norman 1994), few empirical quantitative studies have been able to investigate the subjective dimensions of belonging and their relationship to naturalisation decisions for lack of appropriate data.

In this article, we use rich survey data on the immigrant population in France, the Trajectories and Origins Survey (TeO), to investigate how different types of national belonging are related to the intention to naturalise. This paper makes two contributions to the literature on citizenship and national identity. First, we operationalise belonging as a multidimensional construct. While a distinctive feature of the theoretical literature is to point to the multifaceted nature of national belonging (Antonsich 2010), empirical analysis has failed to match this conceptual complexity. Employing a latent class measurement model, we exploit multiple measures in the TeO data to build a more complete operationalisation of belonging, involving both *place-belonging*, that is national identification and feelings of attachment to the country; and *relational belonging*, that is perceived

recognition by the community and institutions (Antonsich 2010; Yuval-Davis 2006). Our data also allow us to illustrate how these two aspects may align or contradict each other. We show, for instance, that some migrants experience national belonging as ‘conflictual’, namely they identify and feel at home in the receiving country, yet do not believe they are perceived as such. Others experience a strong sense of place-belonging, but do not identify as a member of the nation or believe others see them as belonging. Existing studies of citizenship do not capture these potentially orthogonal dimensions of subjective belonging but instead use singular proxies (such as linguistic ability, length of stay, intermarriage or “feeling at home”) to capture national belonging (e.g. Klok et al. 2017; Carrillo 2015).

Second, we investigate whether and how the types of belonging we identify are associated with intentions to naturalise. In doing so, rather than relying on the commonly used three-step approach to operationalise latent classes as predictors (e.g. Luthra and Platt 2016), we implement an innovative approach that is not sensitive to measurement error (Bakk and Kuha 2018). Further, we consider intentions to naturalise rather than citizenship status itself. This approach allows us to avoid the drawback of not being able to distinguish individual plans and desires from external obstacles, such as state requirements and procedure. Our findings show that naturalisation intentions are highest among migrants who feel both strong place and relational belonging. Yet, the desire to naturalise is equally high among those experiencing ‘conflictual’ belonging.

France provides an interesting case study to investigate the relationship between belonging and the intention to naturalise. The share of foreign residents who acquire citizenship is low relative to other countries (Eurostat 2019). This is despite France’s long history as a receiving country for migrants, the relatively accessible eligibility requirements for becoming a citizen, and the small financial cost of applying (Noiriel 2001). Citizenship has been historically construed as the primary means by which foreigners can melt into the French majority. However, citizenship in France is culturally and ethno-racially

marked (Weil 2002). Public debate tends to represent many potential citizens, particularly Muslims and ethno-racial minorities, to be incompatible with the Republican notion of Frenchness (Onasch 2017; Fassin and Mazouz 2009). The perceived exclusion of these groups from national membership is likely to have implications for non-citizens' feelings of belonging and consequently their desire to naturalise.

While prior work has examined perceptions of exclusion and belonging among visible minorities in France (Simon and Tiberj 2015), ours is the first study to disentangle how sense of belonging contributes to naturalisation intentions. Investigating the role of belonging provides new insights into citizenship and the boundaries separating citizens and foreigners. We show that motivations to naturalise are not only grounded in the benefits migrants stand to gain from citizenship, but also rooted in symbolic processes related to identity and perceived acceptance by others. Further, the lack of a sense of belonging or recognition among some migrants may help explain in part why France has low naturalisation rates. Finally, more broadly, the findings shed light on how feelings of belonging and recognition relate to the stratification of migrants based on their citizenship status, creating motivations for some and disincentivising others to pursue the naturalisation process.

## **Background**

### *Why do immigrants naturalise?*

Much of the prior research on naturalisation focuses on the determinants of citizenship status, rather than on intentions to apply. These studies may therefore conflate individual intentions with barriers to attaining citizenship that are outside of the individual's control, including the state's ultimate decision on the application. Nevertheless, this research sheds light on the factors that shape why immigrants choose to become citizens.



Generally, immigrants from low-income countries are more likely to become citizens, while at the individual level, higher socio-economic status and strong ties to the country of residence also increase the likelihood of naturalising (M. P. Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers 2013; Mazzolari 2009; Chiswick and Miller 2008). In European countries, immigrants from non-European countries may be more motivated to naturalise than European-origin immigrants because citizenship status offers them a greater degree of rights and protection, such as freedom of movement in Europe, protection from deportation and greater passport power (Shachar 2009). Variation in naturalisation across national origin groups evidenced in France generally points in this direction, with higher probabilities of citizenship among North Africans (Carrillo 2015), Asians and sub-Saharan Africans compared to Portuguese and Western Europeans (Fougère and Safi 2008). Immigrants who have a higher as opposed to lower level of education, are employed rather than unemployed and who earn a higher as opposed to lower income probably find navigating the citizenship application process less challenging and/or they may be viewed more favourably by the state (Chiswick and Miller 2008; Fougère and Safi 2008). The right to vote may also be more attractive to those who are more highly educated and therefore more politically engaged (Insee 2018). Prior studies of France show that higher socioeconomic status correlates with the likelihood of naturalisation (Carrillo 2015; Fougère and Safi 2008). Finally, factors relating to social ties and stability in the country of residence, such as length of stay, the presence of family members, and marital status, matter for naturalisation. In particular, marriage to a citizen may anchor immigrants to the country, therefore incentivising naturalisation more strongly, while also making naturalisation more accessible due to shorter residency requirements for the spouses of citizens in many contexts.

Our study aims to go beyond prior research on naturalisation determinants by integrating an additional, more symbolic mechanism: non-citizens' feelings of national belonging. The evidence that social and economic integration in the country of residence,

such as having a family, friends and a job, are associated with naturalisation suggests that attachment to the surrounding community plays an important role in the decision to acquire citizenship (Buonfino and Thomson 2007). Although citizenship is an important legal institution, it is also a social identity, one that delineates the boundaries of the national community (Anderson 1991). Citizens typically identify as members of a national political community and are attached to a territory and its people (Smith and Jarkko 1998). We thus posit that non-citizens' decisions to naturalise in the country of residence may not be entirely instrumental, based on the resources and rights they may gain from naturalising, but also driven by subjective feelings of national belonging which, as we argue below, take on several dimensions.

*The multidimensionality of national belonging: place belonging and relational belonging*

Although often used in migration research, the notion of a national sense of belonging is typically defined vaguely or simply equated to national identity and/or citizenship (Antonsich 2016). The lack of conceptual clarity in defining belonging has translated into a variety of approaches to measuring it in empirical studies. This has been particularly the case for quantitative studies that are less equipped to study multi-dimensional concepts because they have to rely on the limited measurements available in their data. A few studies measure belonging with behavioural indicators, such as speaking the language and contact frequency with the majority population (Klok et al. 2017). Others equate belonging to 'feeling at home' (Wu, Schimmele, and Hou 2012) or to national identification (Bond 2006). Still others measure group belonging using separate indicators, such as ethno-racial group, religious affiliation, location of residence and perception of recognition by others (Carrillo 2015). Finally, some studies equate belonging directly with citizenship (Clark 2009).

We measure national belonging to reflect its conceptual complexity and multi-dimensionality.

We argue that a sense of national belonging emerges from the intersection of two dimensions: one level of belonging is personal and intimate, the other social and relational (Antonsich 2010). Antonsich (2010) refers to the former as place-belonging, which involves two aspects: identification with and attachment to a place or a group. Place-belonging includes national identification and represents feeling at home, where home is a space of familiarity and emotional attachment (Hooks 2009). The absence of place belonging is a sense of loneliness, isolation and disengagement.

Yet, belonging is also a relational and social construct that creates inclusion and exclusion (Fenster 2007; Yuval-Davis 2006; Dixon and Durrheim 2000). Relational belonging refers to the boundaries set by the group that determine who belongs and who does not. Informally, boundaries are set in everyday practices and interactions in which inclusion or exclusion is created (D. J. Hopkins 2011). For example, intense forms of lack of recognition are manifest in episodes of racism and discrimination. The perception of exclusion also arises when official and formal boundaries, such as criteria for citizenship acquisition, signal that not everyone is welcome or acceptable as a member of the national community.

Place-belonging and relational belonging are interconnected (Erdal, Doeland, and Tellander 2018), but do not necessarily overlap. People are able to develop a feeling of belonging when other people, institutions and systems recognise them as part of the same community, acknowledge their value and identity, and protect their rights (Barreto et al. 2010; Mulgan 2009; Loader 2006). Recognition also enhances a sense of security and acceptance which are vital conditions for the development of a personal sense of belonging (Erdal, Doeland, and Tellander 2018). However, even in contexts where relational belonging is strongly exclusionary, non-citizens may still experience place-belonging, resulting in more conflictual forms of identity. For others, lack of recognition is not necessarily a source of exclusion or reduced opportunity, and aligns with one's own low sense of belonging. This could be the case for some migrant elites, who do not suffer from the conse-

quences of not being fully integrated because they are socio-economically better-off and have a more cosmopolitan or transnational identity (Luthra and Platt 2016; Beaverstock 2005).

Different articulations of place- and relational belonging can also be understood within theories of immigrant integration. The classical assimilation model predicts that immigrants will increasingly resemble the mainstream of the host society over time in terms of their economic position, social embeddedness, values, practices and national identity (Alba and Nee 2003). However, these various dimensions of integration are distinct and may not necessarily be concordant (Safi 2008; Gordon 1964). Portes and Zhou (1993) note that in unequal societies immigrants can assimilate into different segments of that society. Strong cultural or social integration, i.e. language skills, engaging with mainstream values and cultural practices, having native friends and families, may foster a sense of feeling at home, while a lack of socioeconomic integration could reinforce feelings of societal or political exclusion. Low cultural integration matched with high socioeconomic integration could be at the roots of why some migrants feel at home in the country of residence, without necessarily feeling like they belong there.

In France, place- and relational belonging are strongly shaped by ethno-racial boundaries, racism and discrimination. A recent meta-analysis shows that France has the highest rates of labour market discrimination against non-whites compared to eight other North American and European countries (Quillian et al. 2019). Prior studies based on TeO data also document high levels of perceived discrimination, racism (Safi and Simon 2014), and ethnoracial segregation (McAvay and Safi 2018), in particular among African-origin immigrants and Muslims. Onasch's (2017) ethnographic study on the French civic integration programme reveals that ethno-racial boundaries further penetrate the institution of citizenship itself, delineating who is entitled to sign up for national membership. Although, in the French Republican model of integration, citizenship is officially unrelated to race/ethnicity, religion or any other individual characteristics, research has high-

lighted the racialised underpinnings of French citizenship. Frenchness and whiteness tend to be conflated in the national narrative (Beaman 2015; Fassin and Mazouz 2009) and certain religious markers signal a lack of cultural assimilation that is seen as incompatible with French national identity (Mazouz 2019; Bussat 2012). For instance, in 2008, the French Conseil d'Etat denied citizenship to a Moroccan woman because she wore the niqab. Her application was rejected on the grounds that a radical practice of Islam is incompatible with the French basic value of gender equality. Reforms banning the use of headscarves in schools in 2004 and the burqa in public spaces in 2008 similarly contribute to forging ethno-racial boundaries around national belonging, likely further alienating immigrants and their descendants of African or non-European origin and/or Muslim backgrounds (Safi and Simon 2014; Hage 1998).

The French national narrative around colour blindness may further be considered an exclusionary mechanism shaping relational belonging. The colour-blind ideology of the French state refuses any categorical distinctions between individuals on the basis of race/ethnicity or religion. However, given the existence of racism and discrimination on these grounds, it has been argued that the state's unwillingness to recognise ethno-racial distinctions amounts to a denial of racial inequality and discrimination (Eseverri Mayer 2019; Fassin, É. and Fassin 2006; Jennings 2000). This absence of recognition and protection of minority rights could further reinforce a sense of illegitimacy and exclusion among certain groups with regards to national membership.

#### *How belonging matters for naturalisation intentions*

By utilising the distinction between place- and relational belonging, we can separate out different combinations of belonging and ascertain the extent to which these combinations are or are not associated with intentions to naturalise. Because citizenship is the highest formal embodiment of belonging, the decision to acquire citizenship may be a logical

conclusion for immigrants who have a full sense of belonging, namely a strong sense of place-belonging and recognition as part of the community. Research about the UK has shown that national identification with the host country predicts subsequent citizenship acquisition, suggesting that it may contribute to the choice of naturalising (Donnalaja 2020). Jayet (2016) finds that immigrants who have naturalised in France are more likely to feel French and to feel accepted by others.

In contrast, we expect those who do not feel part of the nation and who are not seen by others as belonging to have a low incentive to acquire citizenship. Although naturalisation may improve their life opportunities, being at the margins of society may stifle their intention to naturalise, especially if they experience racism and discrimination. Migrant elites, who are comfortable in the country of residence without identifying as members should have a similarly low incentive to naturalise. The identity aspect of citizenship, the right to vote, and the opportunities that arise from acquiring citizenship should be less consequential to them.

In cases where tension exists between place and relational belonging, the implications for naturalisation intentions may not be as straightforward. For immigrants whose personal sense of belonging is challenged and questioned by others, even in the form of racism and discrimination, naturalisation can be a means to recognition and inclusion. Such individuals may feel they are entitled to the benefits associated with citizenship and may also seek naturalisation as a form of security against a threatening environment. The right to vote may also be particularly appealing to people who feel unjustly excluded and misrecognised. However, if they feel that the institution of citizenship is yet another means of exclusion and negation of recognition, they may be put off from seeking to naturalise. Fassin and Mazouz (2009) find that immigrants in France decide against naturalising if they feel they are not recognised as deserving of a place in French society.

### **Data and Methods**

We use data from the Trajectories and Origins (TeO) Survey. Conducted in 2008-2009, with data collected from over 21,000 adult respondents living in metropolitan France, TeO aimed to study the outcomes of first and second generation immigrants (Beauchemin, Hamel, and Simon 2008). The survey was designed to over-represent migrant populations in order to analyse statistically rare groups, making it a rich data source for studying immigration-related topics. A sample of native French respondents is also included for comparison. We apply the survey weights to account for the over-representation of first and second generation immigrants with respect to the comparison sample. The overall sample is representative of the population in metropolitan France aged 18 to 60. TeO is an ideal source for our study as it includes a wealth of information on feelings of national belonging, recognition, and experiences of discrimination and racism. In addition to citizenship status, TeO includes a question about whether non-citizens intend to apply for citizenship. The survey also provides detailed characteristics about migration background, origin, and legal status.

There are 4,787 first generation immigrants in TeO, namely foreign-born individuals without French citizenship at birth. We further restrict the sample to the respondents who never applied for citizenship. That is, we exclude respondents whose application had been rejected, as the negative experience of rejection could influence national sense of belonging. This results in a total sample of 4,541 respondents. As Table B1 in Appendix B shows, our sample differs somewhat from the citizens and rejected applicants we excluded from our analysis, particularly in terms of eligibility for naturalisation. However, other compositional differences between samples are minor. Reflecting the composition of the immigrant population in France, most migrants in the sample come from North Africa, Southern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa (Beauchemin, Hamel, and Simon 2008).

*Method*

## Belonging as a multidimensional measure

We use latent class analysis (LCA) to measure the latent construct of belonging based on five observed indicators that tap into the dimensions of place- and relational belonging. A key advantage of a latent class model is that we can study categorical latent concepts as a typology, with the types offering interpretable construct categories (McCutcheon 2011). This allows us to investigate not simply if belonging matters for naturalisation intentions, but more importantly how different belonging types matter.

The latent class model (LCM) rests on two key assumptions: first, that the observed indicators are correlated, and second, that such correlations are uniquely explained by the latent variable. Given these assumptions, the LCM is a probability model that describes the distribution of answers to the indicators. By estimating the model parameters, the method allows us to classify respondents into mutually exclusive and exhaustive latent classes or types, based on the covariation of answers to the indicators. The model parameters that describe the nature of the latent class variable are conditional probabilities. Conditional probabilities indicate the probability that for each level of the observed indicator (e.g. ‘totally agree’) a respondent in the said class has answered that option. By observing the patterns of conditional probabilities in each class, we can understand the nature of each class and label it accordingly. The second set of parameters of interest are latent class probabilities, which describe the number of classes defined by the LCM and the relative size of each class, i.e. how the population is predicted to be distributed across classes. Latent class and conditional probabilities are Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimates (Goodman 1974). ML estimation allows for the use of observations with missing values, unless all values are missing and the observation is dropped.

In LCA, the researcher decides on the number of classes, beyond the necessary con-



dition for identification of LCM (See Appendix B for details). We decide on the number of classes for the model by comparing the goodness of fit of models, preferring the model with the lowest Akaike's information criterion (AIC) and Schwarz's Bayesian information criterion (BIC), and by choosing the model that is most easily interpretable.

To describe the composition of respondents across class types, we first determine the predicted probability of class membership for each respondent and assign respondents to the class for which they have the highest probability of belonging (Vermunt and Magidson 2007). We then run cross tabulations of respondent characteristics of interest and class membership. This approach is sensitive to measurement bias because it treats class memberships as known, rather than as a probability. We treat the results as indicative of the composition of class types.

#### Structural equation model

In the third part of the analysis, we estimate a structural equation model to investigate the association between class membership and the probability of intending to naturalise. As belonging and naturalisation intentions are endogenous, potentially affected by the same unobservables, we do not claim to be estimating a causal effect of belonging. Rather we aim to describe how intentions vary across types of belonging, adjusting for individual characteristics.

We use the 'two-step' method of estimation recently proposed by Bakk and Kuha (2018) because it is not vulnerable to the biases of other commonly used approaches. The most widely used model is the three-step model. After the LCM estimation, respondents are assigned to the class membership for which they have the highest probability of belonging. Class membership is then treated as an observed independent variable in a regression model. Because the latent variable is not observed, but is treated as such, the predicted probabilities assigned to each respondent are not equal to the true values of the latent classes, thereby producing measurement error. This measurement error may yield

biased estimates of the parameters in the regression model or their standard errors (Croon 2002). An alternative approach is the one-step method, where the LCM and the structural equation model are estimated simultaneously. This strategy has the limitation that the LCM responds to changes made to the structural equation model (e.g. adding a covariate). This means that decisions about the structural equation model may distort the estimation of the LCM and the resulting interpretation of the classes.

The two-step model addresses both these issues. It eliminates the issue of measurement error, despite employing a step-wise approach. The first step consists in estimating the LCM only (as in the three-step model). In the second step, the LCM and the structural equation model are estimated simultaneously (as in the one-step model), but the model parameters of the LCM are constrained to be fixed to the values estimated in the first step. This approach avoids the issues arising from estimating the two models simultaneously and means that the nature of the belonging types identified does not change as we add covariates. Measurement error is also not an issue because the latent construct is not treated as an observed variable. The model is estimated using ML to fit a logistic regression where intention to naturalise is the dependent variable and the belonging types are the independent variable of interest, controlling for other covariates. We then convert the coefficients to odd ratios for technical reasons. Code for the model is in Appendix B.

Finally, we calculate the predicted probabilities of intending to naturalise for each belonging type, everything else being equal. We report the average predicted probability for each type.

### *Measures*

#### Outcome variable

Intention to naturalise is measured using the following question asked of respondents without citizenship at the time of the survey: “Have you already applied for French citi-

zenship?” with response categories 1) Yes, my application is underway; 2) Yes, but my application was refused; 3) No, but I intend to apply; and 4) No, and I don’t intend to apply. As per our sample selection, we dropped category 2, and coded 1 and 3 as “Intention to naturalise” (1) and 4 as “No intention to naturalise” (0). 58% of respondents plan to apply or have recently applied for citizenship (see Table B1 in Appendix B).

### Measures of belonging

We measure place-belonging with two indicators. Respondents are asked the extent to which they agree that they feel at home in France and that they identify as French. Both indicators are measured on a four-point scale that ranges from ‘totally agree’ to ‘totally disagree’, and capture the key aspects of place attachment, namely the perceived connection to France and identification.

We measure relational belonging using three indicators. Respondents are asked the extent to which they agree that they feel others see them as French. The indicator is measured on a four-point scale that ranges from ‘totally agree’ to ‘totally disagree’. Respondents are also asked if they have experienced discrimination in France during the last five years due to their origins or nationality, and whether they have ever been the victims of insults, racist terms or racist attitudes in France during their lifetime. These three indicators measure the extent to which respondents feel recognised by others and whether they have felt excluded to the point of discrimination and/or racism.

Refusals/don’t know amounts to between 0.40% (N=18) and 6.90% (N=313) respondents. Our method enables us to include individuals with some missing data. Table 3.1 illustrates the weighted distribution of respondents on the indicators of belonging. The descriptive statistics reveal relatively high levels of place-belonging. Responses to relational belonging are more fragmented. More than a third of respondents totally disagree that others see them as French, and about a quarter have experienced racism.

**Table 3.1:** Indicators of belonging

Variable	Place belonging			Relational belonging	
	I feel French	I feel at home in France	Others see me as French	Victim of racism in life	Discrimination due to origins
Totally agree	22.9	52.8	14.7	-	-
Agree	25.9	31.1	19.8	-	-
Disagree	19.3	8.4	21.1	-	-
Totally disagree	28.2	5.2	37.5	-	-
Yes	-	-	-	24	15.9
No	-	-	-	75.5	84.1
Missing	3.8	2.5	6.9	0.4	-
Total %	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	4,541	4,541	4,541	4,541	4,541

### Covariates in the structural equation model

In our estimates of naturalisation intentions, we use a number of covariates to capture the degree of social and economic integration of immigrants and other factors that may influence naturalisation intentions. These include:

*Immigrant generation:* Based on age at which arrived, the variable equals 1 if the respondent arrived before the age of 16 (generation 1.5), 0 otherwise (generation 1).

*Eligibility for naturalisation:* Based on year of arrival, we created a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent has been living for at least five years in France or not. In France, immigrants must have five years of residence to be eligible for naturalisation.

*Legal status:* Respondents are asked about the type of residence permit issued upon arrival in France. We include this in the model as mode of entry indicates motivation for entry, which could affect the intention to naturalise. We recoded the original variable into eight categories: asylum, student, worker, spouse, family, other, exempt and no response. The non-response category includes those who did not respond either because they did not know their initial legal status or refused to answer.

*Education:* Respondents are asked their highest level of education attained in France

or elsewhere. We recoded this into seven categories: no qualification, primary, professional certificate, Bac, current student, university, and no response. The non-response category may include individuals who have been educated abroad and do not know how to translate their level of qualification.

*Employment:* Respondents are asked if they are in paid work, are unemployed but have worked in the past, or if they have never worked.

*Household income:* We recoded reported values into a seven-category variable comprising the lowest decile group (1), each of the three middle terciles (2-5), the top decile group (6) within the sample, and missing values (7).

*Home ownership:* This variable indicates whether the respondent is the owner or renter of the house they live in, or if they are housed for free.

*Language:* To capture linguistic skills, this variable is an indicator of whether the interview was conducted in French or in another language.

*Marital status:* We use a question about marital status and the follow-up question about whether they are married to a French national to construct a measure with the following categories: single, married to a French spouse, married to a foreign spouse/married to 'missing', and divorced/widowed.

*Number of children:* Respondents are asked how many children they have in total, including children who no longer live with the respondent or who are deceased. We recoded the variable into no children, one child, two children, three or more children.

*Regions of origin:* We recoded respondents' country of birth into nine countries/regions: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Turkey, Southern Europe, Other European countries, and other countries in the world.

*Age:* A continuous variable indicating the respondent's age in years.

*Sex:* A dummy indicating whether the respondent is a man (0) or a woman (1).

## Results

### *Types of national belonging*

Table 3.2 shows the results from the latent class model of types of belonging, which allocated respondents to a latent class variable with five classes. We choose a five-class model as its AIC and BIC are lower than the four-class model and the interpretation of the classes is clearer than in a six-class model. Table B2 in Appendix B shows the goodness of fit of a four-, five- and six-class model.

Table 3.2 presents the conditional probabilities for each indicator and marginal probabilities for each class. We named each class based on the combinations of the conditional probabilities of each observed indicator in each class: ‘Full belonging’, ‘Approaching full belonging’, ‘Conflictual belonging’, ‘At home but apart’, ‘Excluded’.

About one-third of the sample falls into the ‘Full belonging’ class. This type represents someone who feels at home, identifies as French, has not experienced racism or discrimination and feels that others see them as French. These immigrants both feel like they belong and that others recognise their sense of belonging.

Immigrants in the ‘Approaching full belonging’ type represent 31% of the sample. These respondents are likely to feel at home in France, have not experienced racism or discrimination, but only half of them feel French and they are unlikely to feel that others see them as French. These immigrants appear to be comfortable in France, but they do not belong fully.

Immigrants of the ‘Conflictual belonging’ type are those who are likely to feel at home in France and to feel French, but very few feel like others see them as such and they are likely to have experienced racism and discrimination. For this group, there is a contrast between place belonging and relational belonging. Only 8% of respondents belong

**Table 3.2:** Class distribution and marginal predicted means

	Full belonging	Approaching belonging	Conflictual belonging	At home but apart	Excluded
Pr(class)	0.32	0.31	0.08	0.22	0.07
Probability of: I feel at home in France:					
Totally agree	0.89	0.39	0.55	0.37	0.07
Agree	0.10	0.53	0.36	0.35	0.28
Disagree	0.01	0.07	0.08	0.15	0.34
Totally disagree	0	0.01	0.01	0.13	0.31
I feel French:					
Totally agree	0.64	0	0.30	0.02	0.02
Agree	0.26	0.48	0.43	0	0.03
Disagree	0.09	0.45	0.21	0.02	0.16
Totally disagree	0.01	0.07	0.06	0.96	0.79
Others see me as French:					
Totally agree	0.45	0	0.08	0.03	0.01
Agree	0.32	0.27	0.19	0.07	0
Disagree	0.12	0.42	0.29	0.12	0.07
Totally disagree	0.11	0.31	0.44	0.78	0.92
Discrimination					
Yes	0.06	0.11	0.62	0.06	0.63
No	0.94	0.89	0.38	0.94	0.37
Racism					
Yes	0.18	0.11	1	0.10	0.69
No	0.82	0.89	0	0.90	0.31

Note: class probabilities add up to 1. Conditional probabilities for each indicator level add up to 1 within each indicator. Survey weights are applied.

to this class.

‘At home but apart’ includes immigrants who are likely to feel at home, but not likely to feel French or think that others see them as French. Very few have experienced discrimination or racism. Feeling at home indicates that they are comfortable living in France, but they appear to be far from feeling like they belong. 22% of respondents fall into this type.

The ‘Excluded’ type is the immigrant who is unlikely to feel at home, identify as French, feel like others see them as French, but who is likely to have experienced racism and discrimination. These respondents score low on all dimensions of belonging,

both place-belonging and relational belonging. Moreover, not only do they not belong, but they also experience exclusion in its most intense form, through discrimination and racism. Only 7% of respondents belong to this class.

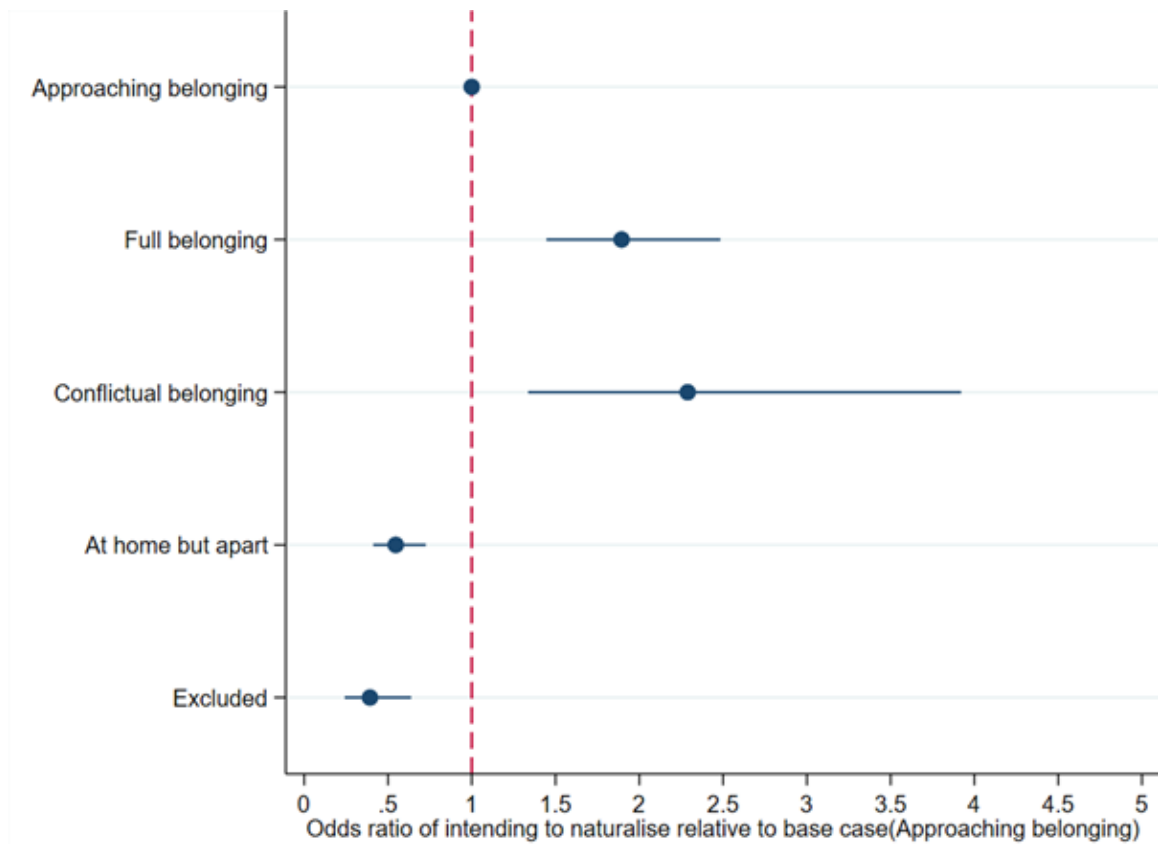
Table B3 in Appendix B shows the composition of the five belonging types according to key socio-demographic characteristics: origin, income, educational attainment, eligibility for naturalisation and marriage. The patterns that emerge are consistent with expectations. Low-income and non-European origin groups who may be perceived as non-white are more likely to belong to marginal belonging types, namely ‘conflictual’ and ‘Excluded’ belonging. Those in the top 10 income percentile are over-represented in the ‘At home but apart’ belonging type, suggesting that migrant elites have a low sense of belonging, but without the conflict that is experienced by people of lower socio-economic status. However, university students are also under-represented in the ‘full belonging’ type and over-represented in the ‘Conflictual belonging’ type. This may be due to more educated people being more sensitised to recognising discrimination (Gee, Pavalko, and Long 2007).

### *Belonging and naturalisation intentions*

We now turn to explore how these categories of belonging relate to naturalisation. Figure 3.1 shows the odd ratios of the likelihood of intending to naturalise for each typology of belonging compared to the reference category, ‘Approaching full belonging’, holding everything else constant. We choose this as the reference category because it represents over a third of respondents.

Unsurprisingly, migrants who experience ‘Full belonging’ have a stronger intention to naturalise than those ‘Approaching full belonging’, net of other factors. The odds of intending to naturalise are 1.88 those of the reference category. Yet, among those with the highest propensity to naturalise we also find migrants who fall into the ‘Conflictual



**Figure 3.1:** Odds ratios of belonging types on the probability of intending to naturalise

Note: The figure depicts the structural equation model of the relationship between belonging types and naturalisation included in Table B5 in Appendix B.

belonging’ class. Their odds of intending to naturalise are 2.26 as high as the ‘Approaching full belonging’ type. For this category, strong identification as French is combined with low relational belonging (i.e. a lack of recognition and the experience of racism and discrimination). Hence, lack of political inclusion does not appear to push these migrants away from the naturalisation process. On the contrary, it may even further motivate them to naturalise.

In contrast, the lowest odds are for those ‘At home but apart’ and who are ‘Excluded’. They have 0.54 and 0.40 respectively the odds of the reference category to intend to acquire citizenship. These two groups have similarly low intentions to naturalise, but for different reasons. The former do not need to because of their privileged position, whereas the latter are marginalised.

Table 3.3 shows the average probability of intending to naturalise by belonging type predicted from the structural equation model. Those in the ‘Conflictual belonging’ and in the ‘Full Belonging’ type are those who are most likely to want to naturalise. People in the ‘At home but apart’ and in the ‘Excluded’ category are the ones least likely to intend to naturalise.

**Table 3.3:** Average predicted probability of intention to naturalise by belonging type

Belonging type	Intention to naturalise (%)	Total (%)	Total (n)
Approaching belonging	58	100	1,421.7
Full Belonging	69	100	1,453.1
Conflictual Belonging	71	100	321.4
At home but apart	47	100	1,102.5
Excluded	42	100	242.3

Other covariates influence naturalisation intentions. Table B4 in Appendix B shows the effects of the full list of covariates. Non-Europeans and those who are married (especially to a French national) have a higher propensity to naturalise than Europeans and single respondents respectively. The likelihood of naturalising also decreases with age. In line with prior research, socioeconomic status also positively correlates with intentions: being in work as opposed to never having worked and having a high school diploma as opposed to not having one also increase the probability of intending to acquire citizenship. Yet, the largest effects in the model are that of membership of the ‘Full belonging’ and the ‘Conflictual belonging’ type as opposed to the ‘Approaching belonging’ type. The next highest factor is marriage to a French citizen as opposed to being single, which greatly simplifies citizenship acquisition.

As a sensitivity check we rerun the whole analysis only for the 3,867 respondents who are eligible to naturalise, that is those who have lived in France for at least five years. The findings align with those for the full sample. Results are illustrated in Table B6 and Figure B1 in Appendix B.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Two aims guided the analysis of this study. The first was to empirically identify the multidimensionality of belonging, involving both place-belonging and relational belonging. The second was to determine how the intention to naturalise among non-citizens varied by types of belonging, net of other socio-economic indicators of immigrant integration that influence citizenship acquisition.

Our findings show that national belonging is not a unidimensional indicator. Our data reveal five types of national belonging. We find that, for the most part, people's personal feeling of place-belonging or lack thereof is matched by a corresponding feeling of recognition by others, as predicted by theory (Erdal, Doeland, and Tellander 2018; Barreto et al. 2010). However, there are also cases when there is a clear contrast between how immigrants see themselves and how they perceive others to see them. This resembles the divergence in the different dimensions of integration highlighted by Safi (2008) among migrants, often of African origin, who are rooted in France in terms of their social networks and cultural practices, but face barriers to socioeconomic integration.

Our typology further reflects the complexity of the concept by allowing the sub-dimensions of place-belonging and relational belonging to also move in different directions. For example, feeling at home can exist without identifying as French. Similarly, not feeling recognised by others can occur without the experience of racism and discrimination. This evidence supports theoretical understandings of national belonging as a multi-dimensional process, rather than as a static continuum (Antonsich 2010).

Our data show that most immigrants, 63% hold some level of national sense of belonging that is not denied by the majority. Although exclusion, disconnect and conflictual belonging occur, they do not afflict the majority of immigrants living in France. Yet, this is not to say that we should not pay attention to these smaller groups. In fact, our five-

level national belonging typology appears to be highly associated with respondents' intention to naturalise. This study is not able to causally identify whether national belonging provides people with a motivation to naturalise or not, but it does show that there is a relationship between how people belong to the nation and whether they intend to acquire citizenship or not.

The two types of immigrants with the highest propensity to intend to naturalise are those who 'Fully belong' and who hold 'Conflictual belonging'. These are two very different groups of people, one that shows full integration and the other that experiences rejection by the majority. However, what they do have in common is that they score highly on both indicators of place-belonging, feeling at home and identifying as French.

At the opposite end of the scale we find two other groups who have the lowest propensity to naturalise, those who we define as the 'Excluded' and the 'At home but apart'. Again, these two types are quite different from each other. The former are situated at the very margins of society. Lacking a sense of national identification and recognition by others, as well as having a strong experience of racism and discrimination, they are also the only group who does not feel at home. The latter, instead, do not identify as French and do not think they are seen as French, but still feel at home and are not victims of direct exclusion. What these two types of people seem to have in common is that they do not identify as French.

National identification is thus fundamental in setting apart those who intend to naturalise and those who do not. However, it is the combination of national identification and other dimensions of belonging that matters for the intention to naturalise. Belonging types differently shape the motivations for naturalising and therefore the ways migrants view the function of citizenship. For example, although the 'Full belonging' and the 'Conflictual belonging' type have the same propensity to naturalise, their motivations for doing so may be very different. For the former group, citizenship is an acknowledgement of full integration and belonging. In contrast, the latter group may be moved by the frustration

of being the subject to various forms of exclusion, despite feeling French. They may also need citizenship to assert their identity and to overcome the obstacles associated with lack of recognition, such as discrimination in the work-place. Citizenship may therefore matter mainly as an identity or as a means to full integration. Similarly, the low intention to naturalise of the ‘Excluded’ and the ‘At home but apart’ types may follow from different mechanisms. The ‘Excluded’ type may need citizenship more than anyone, but is far from it, both as a personal feeling and in the eyes of society. In contrast, people in the ‘At home but apart’ type do not want citizenship because they do not need it.

The identification of national belonging types does not, however, explain why naturalisation rates are low in France compared to other European national contexts (Eurostat 2019). Rather, our findings underscore a paradox of naturalisation in France: despite such low achieved rates, the majority of migrants in the TeO survey do intend to naturalise (over 50% for 70% of the sample as shown in Table 3.3). This suggests that there are obstacles to naturalisation for migrants who want to become citizens. Unequal treatment linked to origin or legal status, perceived cultural integration, socioeconomic status, etc. undoubtedly enter into the application process, as illustrated by prior qualitative research (Mazouz 2017). It is also possible that migrants who experience belonging as conflictual self-select out of the citizenship process, even if they do state a desire to naturalise, due to prior experiences of racism and discrimination and a sense of social exclusion.

However, the low naturalisation rate in the country suggests there may be other obstacles that are unrelated to discriminatory mechanisms. Alternative explanations may be found in the bureaucratic procedure itself, which is long, painstaking, and at times discouraging. Despite relatively open eligibility rules, documentary requirements for naturalising are stringent and lack transparency, and the objective criteria used to determine successful applicants is often mixed with a large degree of discretion on the part of administrators (Mazouz 2017). Thus, even migrants with strong aspirations to become citizens may drop out or opt out of the process entirely. Future research should further investigate

why this desire to naturalise is not acted upon or made possible.

Overall, the different articulations of belonging that emerge from our findings mark a development over prior studies, which typically use single variables or imprecise proxies to measure migrants' attachment to the receiving society. Our findings highlight that immigrants are not a homogenous group in how they relate to the country of residence and that this relationship is complex. In doing so, this paper also illustrates how such modes of national belonging matter for immigrants' intention to naturalise. Previous research has tried to identify what motivates immigrants to naturalise by identifying what socio-demographic and economic characteristics are associated with citizenship status. This evidence suggests that those who have the available resources to do so, and those who have the most rights to gain from citizenship, are the most likely to naturalise. In this study we go a step further by showing that, for the same objective characteristics, immigrants' personal sense of belonging shapes naturalisation intentions and this appears to matter more than other typically influential determinants, such as marriage to a citizen. Immigrants of similar socio-economic status, country of origin and length of residence may have different intentions to naturalise if they view themselves differently and have different experiences of acceptance by others. Our findings underscore the multiple roles citizenship can have in the eyes of immigrants, not just as a legal status, but also as a means to more integration and acceptance, and as a national identity.

## CHAPTER 4

### British nationals' preferences over who gets to be a citizen according to a choice-based conjoint experiment

#### **Introduction**

We know much about the type of immigrant that native populations in Western countries prefer (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010; McLaren and Johnson 2007). In contrast, we know very little about the type of immigrant Western citizens are willing to accept as a fellow citizen. Attention to citizenship and attitudes to naturalisation is important because citizenship is a more demanding and definitive form of inclusion than entry into the country. Citizenship provides immigrants with crucial rights on a par with those held by native citizens and it marks national identity and belonging (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). However, citizenship differs from popular conceptions of nationhood. The allocation of citizenship demands thinking not only about what makes someone a co-national, but also about whom to recognise as equally entitled to a claim on mutual solidarity and responsibility.

We know that broader attitudes towards immigrants form along multiple domains in complex ways (Tartakovsky and Walsh 2020). These domains, such as ethno-cultural similarity, cannot be reduced to single individual characteristics, such as ethnicity. If people do not have enough information on all relevant individual characteristics, they form preferences by using stereotypes that bundle these characteristics together. That is, they form preferences on the grounds of the characteristics they assume (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010). In addition, groups of respondents may respond differently to these individual characteristics, according to their own socio-demographic profile. Such considerations

are also relevant to how populations come to conclusions about entitlement to naturalisation. However, extant evidence on preferences for citizenship allocation is not able to disentangle the effect of multiple factors affecting preferences and to do so for different groups of respondents (Kobayashi et al. 2015; Creighton and Jamal 2015; Hainmueller and Hangartner 2013; Harell et al. 2012).

Employing an innovative experimental design, this paper provides unique insights into what British citizens regard as legitimate criteria for extending citizenship to immigrants. I address the limitations of existing research by employing a conjoint experiment design in which citizen preferences were elicited by presenting respondents with vignettes that describe potential applicants for UK citizenship. With this design I am able to simultaneously test and compare the causal effects of each of several applicant characteristics on the probability of granting citizenship, therefore reflecting the multi-dimensionality of the decision-making process. I am also able to separate out the different elements of clusters of characteristics that are typically combined in existing stereotypes. For example, stereotypes associated with country of origin may drive hostility towards immigrants partly because of other characteristics that those from that origin are assumed to possess, e.g. their occupation. In addition, I investigate how respondents' expressed preferences relate to their own characteristics in ways that may be inferred from the literature as relating to broader attitudes to nationhood and economic threat (e.g. their Brexit voting behaviour).

My research also contributes new empirical knowledge about the normative contours of citizenship in the UK, complementing existing literature which has been theoretical in orientation (Joppke 2003a; Sales 2010). The UK provides a particularly interesting case for investigating the boundaries of citizenship that are set by the public. Although Britishness is not framed around belonging to one ethno-cultural group, governments have carved out a British identity that is increasingly more exclusive (Sales 2010). British nationals' preferences over who should become a fellow citizen are likely to reflect the



socio-historical characterisation of British national identity and citizenship policy.

Identifying what characterises the immigrants the public are willing to accept as fellow citizens has important implications. It has implications for the successful integration of those who are excluded from being recognised as fellow citizens; it has implications for our understanding of what it means to be a British citizen; and it has implications for the degree of social cohesion in the country.

In the next section I review the literature on citizenship and broader attitudes towards immigrants that I use to form expectations for nationals' preferences regarding who gets to be a citizen. I also outline key turning points in the recent evolution of citizenship policy in the UK that may shape who is regarded as eligible for inclusion. In the third section, I describe my data, experimental design, and analytical methods. I then present the findings, which I discuss in the final section of the paper.

## **Background**

For natives to accept an immigrant as fellow citizen they must first be in favour of the immigrant's presence in the country. Yet, citizenship is more demanding and permanent. It is a legal status that grants equality in rights, duties and political agency; it is also national identity, a salient social identity to most. It follows that on the one hand, selection of the preferred citizen-type could be expected to follow similar criteria to the selection of the preferred immigrant-type. On the other hand, preferences for citizenship may follow different patterns and be more stringent. To date, to whom people are willing to grant citizenship remains an unanswered question.

*Citizenship as entitlement to equal claims*

Citizenship provides key rights, which nationals may be reluctant to grant immigrants. This may be especially the case for non-European immigrants who have more to gain from citizenship acquisition. In addition to the right to vote in general elections and the protection abroad associated with being a British passport-holder, non-EU immigrants need to naturalise to enjoy the right of free movement, to vote in local elections, to transfer social security benefits across countries and to access public sector jobs. However, citizens of all 53 Commonwealth states, as well as Irish, Cypriot and Maltese citizens, have the right to vote in UK national elections if they are UK residents.

Besides tangible rights, citizenship implies a degree of permanence and irreversibility to all immigrants. For example, in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, it is likely that people saw the granting of citizenship as a ticket to a right to stay in the country for Europeans as much as for non-Europeans.

Citizenship also promotes equality for all its members, who are equally entitled to make claims and demands from the state and other citizens (Bloemraad 2018). Native citizens may therefore associate citizenship with a claim on welfare support equivalent to their own and to penalise applicants whose characteristics signal low economic value and productivity. It follows that because citizenship implies the granting of rights and sharing of resources, native citizens are likely to extend citizenship to immigrants according to their assumptions about contributions offered by different types of immigrant.

The literature on attitudes towards immigrants suggests that negative attitudes are directed to specific sub-groups who elicit the perception of economic threat. These usually include the low-skilled, immigrants from low-income countries and refugees (Ford 2011; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Citrin et al. 2006). Both Realistic Group Conflict Theory and Economic Labour Competition Theory credit these attitudes to competition over resources (Kunovich 2013; Sherif et al. 1961). Immigrants represent a threat when

the native population either objectively experiences or perceives competition with immigrants over jobs and services, and perceives them to be a threat to the economy and to aggravate the tax burden (Polavieja 2016).

The literature on welfare state support has also explored the role of perceptions of deservingness as opposed to threat to explain negative attitudes towards immigrants who do not work (Reeskens and Meer 2019). People may be less sympathetic towards immigrants whom they believe do not deserve to be in the country because they have not earned support, for example by demonstrating effort and willingness to work.

Empirical evidence is consistent with these theories. Evidence for the USA and Europe, including the UK, suggests that the perception of a higher collective burden, the belief that immigrants steal jobs from the native-born, are dependent on state support and make demands on social assistance services negatively affect attitudes towards immigrants (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Citrin et al. 2006).

On this basis I generate the following hypothesis:

*H1a: Respondents are less likely to grant citizenship to the applicants they perceive as least productive and to be a burden on the welfare system.*

#### *Citizenship as national identity*

Insofar as citizenship is understood as national identity, it represents an important social identity that arises from the imagining of the national community as limited to fellow-members who share certain characteristics (Anderson 1991). Social Identity Theory and Social Categorisation Theory posit that people tend to categorise themselves and others in groups according to salient social identities, such as national identity (Turner et al. 1987; Tajfel and Turner 1979). This ingroup-outgroup juxtaposition elicits feelings of inclusion with the in-group, distinctiveness and superiority over the out-group. It follows that people should be more reluctant to extend citizenship to those who they feel threaten their

conception of national identity by shifting its boundaries (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008).

Research on popular conceptions of nationalism in Western countries, including in the UK, finds that, irrespective of historical constructions of national identity, the majority of the population largely uses ethno-cultural elements in defining national identity (Janmaat 2006; Tilley, Exley, and Heath 2004). The inclusion of ethno-culturally distant immigrants as equal members should therefore be threatening to in-group identity as it reshapes the definition of Britishness.

The broader literature that investigates attitudes towards immigrants reinforces this expectation. Greater hostility is typically directed towards the immigrants who are identified as ethno-culturally different from the majority. Hostility based on origins may be due to dislike for specific characteristics, such as cultural practices (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010). A sense of threat may arise from fear that immigration flows of non-white immigrants will later result in a non-white majority population. From an analysis of British Social Attitudes survey data between 1983 and 1996 Ford (2011) finds that there is a racial hierarchy, in which white immigrants are largely preferred to non-white ones. People may also fear immigrants because they worry that their customs and values may permeate into the majority culture, or even take it over, changing it irreversibly. Evidence for Europe, including for the UK, suggests that greater hostility is directed towards Muslim immigrants, who are associated with values and customs that are considered threatening to the majority culture and to social safety (Creighton and Jamal 2020; Andersen and Mayerl 2018; Hellwig and Sinno 2017; Strabac and Listhaug 2008; Field 2007; McLaren and Johnson 2007).

Shared ancestry and length of residence, which are usually not pertinent to the study of attitudes towards immigrants, are also likely to be relevant attributes for the allocation of citizenship. They convey ethno-cultural similarity and integration (Gellner 2006). They are also legal criteria in rights to claim citizenship. On balance, I therefore hypothe-

size that:

*H1b: Respondents are less likely to grant citizenship to immigrants who they perceive as most ethno-culturally distant.*

#### *Preferences for citizenship criteria*

Existing studies on attitudes towards citizenship applicants identify the effect of some of the applicant attributes that signal ethno-cultural similarity and economic contribution. Harell et al. (2012) find for Canada and the USA that, overall, preferred naturalisation applicants are immigrants with a high-status job, but ethnicity does not matter greatly. In contrast, Hainmueller and Hangartner (2013) find with a natural experiment for Switzerland that country of origin was by far the most important predictor of approvals. Local residents were less likely to grant citizenship to applicants from Turkey and former Yugoslavia than other countries. Kobayashi et al. (2015) reach similar conclusions for Japan, where respondents favoured Korean over Chinese workers in the likelihood of awarding citizenship.

However, preferences for the allocation of citizenship are likely to be articulated in more complex ways. Ethno-cultural and financial threat cannot be reduced to single characteristics, such as origins and income (Tartakovsky and Walsh 2020). For each domain there may be several individual characteristics that independently drive overall attitudes. There is substantial evidence that hostility towards immigrants is often due to stereotypes that bundle characteristics together (Sobolewska, Galandini, and Lessard-Phillips 2017; Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010). It follows that in the absence of a full set of information about individual characteristics people tend to make assumptions about the immigrant's level of integration, occupation and religion based on their previous knowledge or preconceived ideas about the group they belong to (Fiske 2010; Phelps 1972). Hostility based on origins may therefore be due to dislike for other assumed characteristics, such as reli-

gion (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010). It is only by presenting detailed applicant profiles that we can disentangle which attribute is at the heart of the decision to grant citizenship or not. Existing studies on citizenship preferences have not been able to disentangle such individual characteristics from aggregate stereotypes.

### *British citizenship*

An investigation of popular preferences over the selection of co-nationals also requires appropriate understanding of the historical-political characterisation of UK citizenship policy and national identity. Public opinion does not form in a vacuum, but it typically mirrors policy design and political discourse (Mau 2003).

After the breakdown of the British Empire the UK government had to reconcile an inclusive citizenship that extended to people born in former colonies, with its intent to ground British identity on lineage and culture, therefore making it more exclusive (Joppke 2003a). Through a series of immigration and nationality acts it tried to limit entry to Britain to people who had ancestral ties to the UK. Nevertheless, by 1965 Britain had already become a multi-racial society. The British approach inherited from the empire was not assimilationist, but multicultural, which meant that already settled immigrants were quickly accepted as ethnic minorities (Joppke 2003a). It follows that, on the one hand the inflow of non-white immigrants in the aftermath of the empire led to long-lasting race tensions between majority and minorities, but on the other British national identity did not take shape around a mono ethno-culture, but rather as a pluralistic encompassing of different ethno-cultural groups.

The race riots in the UK in the summer of 2001 and the rise in Islamic extremism that started in the same year represented a symbolic moment that pushed the British government to promote a thicker national identity with the aim of increasing social cohesion between ethnic groups (Home Office 2001). Both Labour and Conservative governments

have since explicitly promoted democratic, liberal and tolerant values, referenced by the embodiment in institutions such as the NHS and the BBC. These values have come to define Britishness in political and public representations, implicitly in juxtaposition to the assumed non-liberal values of other cultures (Sales 2010); and they are required by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) to be taught in schools.

The early 2000s was also when New Labour developed a political discourse that emphasised the conditions attached to social rights based on how much immigrants contribute, both financially and civically, and how well they integrate within the majority culture. The introduction of citizenship studies to the national school curriculum in 2002 and civic integration requirements for naturalisation in 2005 heralded this shift from passive citizenship, whereby citizens are recipients, to active citizenship, whereby citizens have to engage and participate in public life (Anderson 2011).

Although British national identity has historically been flexible enough to be inclusive of its minority groups, it has also always been openly exclusionary on the basis of race first, and liberal values and productivity later. While it has not been formally tested, this contradictory inclusive-exclusive nature of British national identity is likely to influence and/or reflect people's preference formation and opinions over who belongs and who does not. The British public should be open to the inclusion of other ethno-cultural groups, but I expect this inclusion to be highly conditional on the ascription to British values, namely productivity and liberal culture, the latter itself typically opposed to religiosity and specific Muslim religiosity, as summarised by the following hypotheses:

*H1c: In the UK, religion and economic productivity have the largest effects among other applicant characteristics on the probability of the granting of citizenship.*

*H1d: In the UK, religion has a larger effect than ethnicity on the probability of the granting of citizenship.*

*Heterogeneity in attitudes across groups*

Finally, respondents' preference over certain immigrant characteristics, such as skill-level and ethno-cultural group, and the number of citizenships granted, are likely to vary according to their socio-economic status, age and political preferences.

In comparison to the most highly educated and to younger adults, low educated and older people are more attached to their national British identity (Manning and Roy 2010; Nandi and Platt 2015). They may therefore be more invested in who belongs and who does not in the country, and in the potential changes to the characterisation of British identity. Similarly, since the attachment to an English identity appears to have been a key driver of the vote to leave the European Union in the Brexit referendum of 2016, Leave voters may be more reluctant to grant citizenship, and hence national belonging, to immigrants (Henderson et al. 2017).

The evidence on attitudes towards immigrants suggests there is variation across populations in the extent to which immigrants are felt to be threatening in the ways described. Those with more negative attitudes typically include people with low levels of education and income. Poorer people are more susceptible to economic threat because they are more vulnerable to competition in access to public services and social assistance compared to richer native residents (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). However, according to economic competition theories anyone may have negative attitudes if in direct competition with immigrants in the labour market (Kunovich 2013).

The threat of ethno-cultural diversity might also explain why people with lower as opposed to higher levels of education are more averse to immigration. In comparison with low educated people, better educated individuals have better economic knowledge and are not only more accepting of ethno-cultural diversity, but may even prefer it (Haubert and Fussell 2006). However, some have questioned whether education changes attitudes, whether it merely teaches what is socially acceptable (Creighton and Jamal 2015), or



whether those who have more positive attitudes self-select in education (Lancee and Sarasin 2015).

Considerable evidence also suggests that older cohorts are more averse to immigration than younger ones (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010). This could be due to shifts in attitudes across cohorts or to people becoming more anti-immigrant as they become older. Party affiliation is also an important correlate of negative attitudes towards immigrants. Left-wing voters are more likely to be supportive of immigration compared to right-wing ones (Rustenbach 2010). In the case of the UK, Brexit supporters identified immigration as a major driving concern that motivated their vote to leave the EU (Prosser, Mellon, and Green 2016). Immigrants and natives of immigrant background have more positive attitudes towards immigrants than the native majority population, perhaps because they feel less socially distant from other immigrants, although differences dissipate with time spent in the host country (Becker 2019; Braakmann, Waqas, and Wildman 2017). Finally, environmental factors such as GDP contraction and the share of foreign-born population, also explain variation in attitudes towards immigrants across countries and over time (Dancygier and Donnelly 2013).

Nonetheless, experimental studies for the USA and the UK find evidence of a consensus over attitudes towards immigrants across varying socio-economic status and demographic profile (Sobolewska, Galandini, and Lessard-Phillips 2017; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015; Harell et al. 2012). As these studies' research design is less susceptible to social desirability bias, their findings question the existence of heterogeneity in attitudes.

Harell et al. (2012) and Kobayashi et al. (2015) study heterogeneity in citizenship preferences across groups of respondents. Harell et al. (2012) find that in the USA, though not in Canada, high income respondents approved a higher number of citizenship applications on average than low income ones. However, they do not find variation in how groups of respondents react to immigrants' job status for either country. In contrast, Kobayashi et al. (2015) find that affluent Japanese respondents were more likely to reject low-status

applicants compared to their high-income counterparts. On balance, from this literature, I hypothesise that:

*H2a: Respondents of low socio-economic status, who are older and voted for Brexit are less likely to grant citizenship than their counterparts.*

*H2b: Differences in naturalisation preferences outlined in H1a-d are smaller or non-existent for respondents of high socio-economic status, who are younger and voted against Brexit compared to their counterparts.*

## **Data and Measures**

I employ a choice-based conjoint analysis design based on that of Hainmueller et al. (2014). I commissioned the British public opinion and data company YouGov to field my experiment through its UK Omnibus Survey, a high quality multipurpose online panel. In addition to the experimental responses the data include information about characteristics of respondents.

YouGov recruits respondents via strategic advertising and partnerships. It then selects a sub-sample based on how representative it is of socio-demographic characteristics of the British population. YouGov also provides design weights based on the Census and other surveys to ensure representativeness. The experiment was fielded at the end of October 2018 to a sample of 1,648 adult (18+) respondents. For the analysis I restricted the sample to British citizens, giving a total sample of 1,597 respondents. Because I do not have information on country of birth, it is possible that some of these respondents are naturalised immigrants. Such respondents may have preferences that differ significantly from the majority population. However, given that naturalised citizens in the UK account for 6% of the total population, this group of respondents is likely to be negligibly small (Fernández-Reino and Sumption 2020).

Each respondent was shown five pair-wise comparisons and was asked to choose

whether to grant citizenship or not to each profile. Following Hainmueller, Hangartner and Yamamoto (Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto 2015) profiles were shown in pairs to aid decision-making by giving a direct comparison. Each profile vignette was characterised by 8 attributes each with several possible levels. The software used by YouGov to create the survey experiment randomised the combination of attribute levels.

Below is an example of an individual profile vignette, where words in brackets are levels of attributes that were randomised for each profile vignette:

This [woman] has lived in the UK for [4 years] [and has a British parent].

[She] is originally from [Somalia]. [She] [is a practising Christian]. [She] has a [good] command of spoken English and [works as a language teacher].

Because respondents could not be aware of the aggregate effects of their responses, they were invited to assume that a limited number of naturalisations can be granted every year.

Each respondent was presented with the following introduction:

“The next few pages will show you 5 pairs of profiles of working age (18-65) people who were not born in the UK and could submit applications to naturalise as British citizens. On the assumption that there is a limited number of naturalisations that can be granted every year, please choose to whom you want to grant citizenship. You may choose ONE, BOTH or NEITHER in each pair.”

The resulting dataset contains 1,597 (individuals) x 5 (choice tasks) x 2 (profile vignettes) = 15,970 observations nested in 1,597 respondents. YouGov oversamples and then stops collecting data once it receives enough complete responses from the target representative population. Hence there are no missing data.

## ## Measures

### Vignette attributes

Following H1a, the vignettes I use include information about attributes that signal productivity and dependency on the welfare state:

*Occupation:* I choose a list of occupations to reflect different income levels and status. I distinguish between corporate manager, language teacher, IT professional, farmer and cleaner. I make a further distinction between jobs that people perceive as beneficial and valuable to society such as doctors, and those more likely to need benefit support such as being unemployed or a stay at home parent. A breakdown of most common occupations immigrants in the UK are employed in is shown in Table C1 in Appendix C.

*English proficiency:* I distinguish between a basic, good and excellent command of spoken English.

*Refugee status:* I differentiate between refugees and non-refugees when relevant as per country of origin. Refugees experience a different more accessible path to citizenship.

Following H1b, the vignettes I use include information about attributes that signal the degree of ethno-cultural similarity:

*British ancestry:* I differentiate between whether the applicant has a British parent, grandparent or neither.

*Length of residence:* I use four levels of length of residence: four, six, ten and twenty years. Everyone without British parenthood applying to naturalise must have lived in the UK for at least five years.

*Religion:* I differentiate between Muslim, Christian and no religion.

*Country of origin:* Because associated characteristics are specified in the experiment, the effect of country of origin may be related to other characteristics, such as skin-colour, culture and values beyond religion, and country-level indicators of development such as average educational level in the country. I select a pool of high-income (Germany,

Poland, Italy, Ireland, Australia), middle-income (India, Pakistan, Syria and Nigeria) and low-income (Somalia) countries. These countries also vary according to majority-white and non-white populations. British citizens may favour Ireland and Australia in particular because of their cultural similarity to the UK and India because of its close historical ties to the UK. Among European countries there are further effects to be drawn out. Since the Brexit referendum centred around the fear of immigration and loss of sovereignty, I distinguish between Poland (as the main EU immigration source country), Germany (as particularly influential in the EU) and Italy (as a less contentious European state) (Prosser, Mellon, and Green 2016). These are also well represented nationalities in the UK (see Table C2 in Appendix C).

*English proficiency* as measured above.

Finally, I differentiate between men and women in order to help respondents visualise the profiles. Table 4.1 presents the full list of attributes, their levels and frequencies.

#### Respondent characteristics

To address H2a and H2b I investigate whether there is heterogeneity in preferences according to the following respondent characteristics:

*Age group*: I recoded age into three categories, up to age 29, between ages of 30 and 49, and over 50 years of age.

*Brexit vote*: Respondents are asked whether they voted to leave the EU or not. Those who did not vote or could not remember if they had are counted as missing.

*Income group*: I recoded reported values of gross household income per year into a three-category variable that corresponds to the poorest third, middle third and richest third of the income distribution.

*Educational level*: Respondents are asked their highest level of education attained. I recoded this into three categories: no qualifications/up to age-16 qualification, up to age-18 qualifications, higher education qualification.

**Table 4.1:** Immigrant characteristics produced by randomisation

Attribute	Level	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	8,047	50.4
	Female	7,923	49.6
Length of residence	4 years	3,973	24.9
	6 years	3,993	25.0
	10 years	4,010	25.1
	20 years	3,994	25.0
Country of origin	Germany	1,626	10.2
	Poland	1,512	9.5
	Italy	1,612	10.09
	India	1,546	9.7
	Pakistan	1,591	9.9
	Nigeria	1,649	10.3
	Ireland	1,606	10.1
	Australia	1,633	10.2
	Syria	1,570	9.8
	Somalia	1,625	10.2
	Occupation	Corporate manager	1,758
Doctor		1,804	11.3
IT professional		1,803	11.3
Language teacher		1,724	10.8
Admin worker		1,826	11.4
Farmer		1,737	10.9
Cleaner		1,771	11.1
Unemployed		1,774	11.1
Stay at home parent		1,773	11.1
Ancestry		British parent	5,368
	British grandparent	5,273	33.0
	Neither	5,329	33.4
Refugee status	Not refugee	3,256	20.4
	Refugee	3,179	19.9
English proficiency	NA	9,535	59.7
	Basic	4,276	26.8
	Good	4,270	26.7
Religion	Excellent	7,424	46.5
	Christian	5,577	34.9
	Muslim	4,788	30.0
	No religion	5,605	35.1
Total observations		15,970	100

The breakdown of key characteristics of sample respondents, how they are measured and sample frequencies is shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2:** Weighted respondent characteristics

Characteristic	Level	N	Percentage
Brexit vote	Leave	723	45
	Remain	655	41
	Didn't vote/Can't remember	219	11
Age group	Under 29 years	285	18
	30-49 years	514	32
	Over 50 years	798	50
Gross household income	Poorest third	608	38
	Middle third	442	28
	Richest third	546	34
Education	No formal qualification/Age-16	498	31
	Age-18	488	31
	Higher qualification or equivalent	553	34
	Don't know/Prefer not to say	58	4
Ethnicity	White	1,471	92
	Non-white	120	8
	Prefer not to say	6	0
Gender	Male	777	48.5
	Female	822	51.5
Total		1,597	100

Note: Age-16 level of education includes GCSE certificate or equivalent; Age-18 level of education includes A levels or equivalent; higher qualification level of education includes teaching diploma. Frequencies are weighted.

## Method

Conjoint designs have several advantages. First, they allow to estimate the effect of several attributes on the same outcome and therefore compare their effect on the same scale relative to each other (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014). This allows me to reflect the multidimensionality of the decision-making process.

Secondly, in a choice-based conjoint analysis design the combination of attribute levels is randomised, allowing for all possible combinations. The randomisation allows

for causal inference. Rather than estimating the causal effect of each profile as a whole on the probability of granting citizenship, I estimate the effect of each attribute relative to other attributes, the average marginal component effect (AMCE), averaged over the joint distribution of all other attributes. External validity is an important concern. Profiles had to be credible. For this reason, I imposed some restrictions on the randomisation of attributes in the vignettes. I restrict the attributes ‘country of origin’, ‘language proficiency’, ‘refugee status’ and ‘religion’ to appear only in certain combinations (see Table 4.3).

Thirdly, by avoiding direct questioning and increasing anonymity, this experimental design is likely to be less sensitive to social desirability bias than direct survey questioning. People do not give their true responses in surveys because they recognise that discrimination is not socially desirable (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015). If social desirability bias is higher for sub-groups of respondents, such as the more highly educated, it leads to misleading comparisons (An 2015). Moreover, people may feel the need to mask their hostile attitudes towards some groups of immigrants (e.g. Christians) and not others (e.g. Muslims) in response to the stigmatisation and normalisation of attitudes towards them, therefore also leading to misleading comparisons (Creighton and Jamal 2015, 2020).

### *Analytical strategy*

First, I calculate the proportion of applications that are granted citizenship (‘average acceptance rate’).

Second, to estimate the AMCEs I employ a linear probability model, where the choice to approve or reject the profile is the outcome variable and the attributes are independent categorical variables. Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014) prove that the linear probability estimator is an unbiased estimator of the AMCE. The regression co-



efficient associated with each attribute level is an estimate of the AMCE, i.e. the effect of moving from the reference category to that level. An example would be the effect of the applicant being a ‘woman’ as opposed to a ‘man’, on the probability of the granting of citizenship, averaged over the joint distribution of all other attributes. The linear regression estimator is an unbiased estimator for conjoint experiments that typically include a high number of attributes with multiple levels, even if particular combinations might not necessarily appear throughout the experiment.

To account for the randomisation restrictions, I extend Hainmueller et al.’s (2014) design to allow for a four-way restriction of combinations of attributes. It follows that estimation of the AMCEs need to take into account only the plausible counterfactuals that appeared in the experiment and therefore to exclude the restricted ones (e.g. being a refugee born in Germany). To do this I include a four-way interaction term. To estimate the AMCEs of these attributes I compute the linear combination of the appropriate coefficients in the interaction, weighted according to the probability of occurrence. For instance, because I do not allow the combination of ‘Poland’ as country of origin and ‘Muslim’ as religion, the counterfactual of the ‘Poland’ AMCE includes all possible combinations of levels of attributes, with the exception of ‘Muslim’. To reflect this ‘Muslim’ receives a weight of 0 in the AMCE calculation, whereas ‘no religion’ and ‘Christian’ receive a weight of  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

To demonstrate that the preference patterns identified are not sensitive to the arbitrary choice of a reference category, I additionally compute the marginal mean (MM), the marginal level of support, for each attribute level (Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley 2020). To compare MMs, I partition the sample in order to drop observations that included restricted attribute levels. For example, because ‘Muslim’ was not allowed in combination with ‘Poland’, to compare the MM of ‘Christian’ and ‘Muslim’ I drop the profiles that included ‘Poland’ as country of origin. However, this is not possible for attributes where the restrictions are mutually exclusive for substantive reasons. For instance, we cannot compare the

**Table 4.3:** Restrictions imposed on attribute randomisation

Attribute		Excluded combinations
Country of origin	Germany	Refugee/not refugee
	Poland	Muslim; refugee/not refugee
	Italy	Refugee/not refugee
	India	Refugee/not refugee
	Ireland	Basic/good English; refugee/not refugee
	Australia	Basic/good English; refugee/not refugee
Refugee status	Not Refugee	Germany/Poland/Italy/Ireland/ Australia/India
	Refugee	Germany/Poland/Italy/Ireland/ Australia/India
English proficiency	Basic	Ireland/Australia
	Good	Ireland/Australia
Religion	Muslim	Poland

Muslims in Poland are estimated to be only around 0.1% of the total population [PewResearchCenter2011].

MM of ‘refugee’ and ‘non refugee’ across non-refugee sending countries. See Table C3 in Appendix C for subsample sizes, following partitioning.

Third, to investigate whether the effect of religion varies by country group, I compute and compare the MMs of religion levels across different country groups by interacting attributes in the OLS regression (Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley 2020).

Fourth and fifth, I investigate whether average acceptance rate and attribute level MMs differ across respondents, e.g. by level of qualification attained. I compute the average acceptance rate separately for different groups of respondents. I calculate attribute level MMs by interacting them with respondent characteristics in the OLS regression. I also test the joint significance of the interactions using an F-test.

In the regression analysis I use the design weights provided with the dataset to adjust the sample to be representative of the population as a whole and I cluster standard errors by respondent to account for the potential correlations between choices made within each respondent.

## Findings

### *Share of approval*

Respondents granted citizenship to 73% of the 15,970 profiles. This estimate reveals a certain degree of inclusiveness, especially in comparison to current research on attitudes towards immigrants, which reports that 77% of the British population would like to see immigration reduced (Blinder and Richards 2018). The high approval rate could indicate an ease with which people decide to extend their national membership due to their low degree of attachment to citizenship status and to the low salience national identity has in their overall sense of identity. Although consistent with my finding, this explanation is in opposition to my assumptions about the salience of citizenship and ignores the wider political context already discussed and risks being simplistic. I therefore posit that the nature of the experimental design better explains this finding.

Although respondents were invited to think of citizenship allocation as a limited good, they were not aware of the aggregate consequences of their individual choices. However, the high average share of granted applications indicates that respondents were comfortable awarding naturalisation. In an extreme case where a respondent was against naturalisation, they would award no citizenships, regardless of the applicant's characteristics. In answering the typical survey questions about whether immigration should be reduced, I posit that people might be thinking about specific immigrant profiles or mental stereotypes. We know that respondents tend to be ill-informed about the composition of the immigrant population (Canoy et al. 2006), and overweight the types of immigrants they dislike (such as refugees) compared to those they welcome (such as students). In contrast, by giving detailed information about individual applicants, the experiment allowed respondents to tailor their answer according to the specifics of the profiles they like

and dislike. Respondents were therefore able to be inclusive, but highly selective in the types of immigrants they could prefer (and reject).

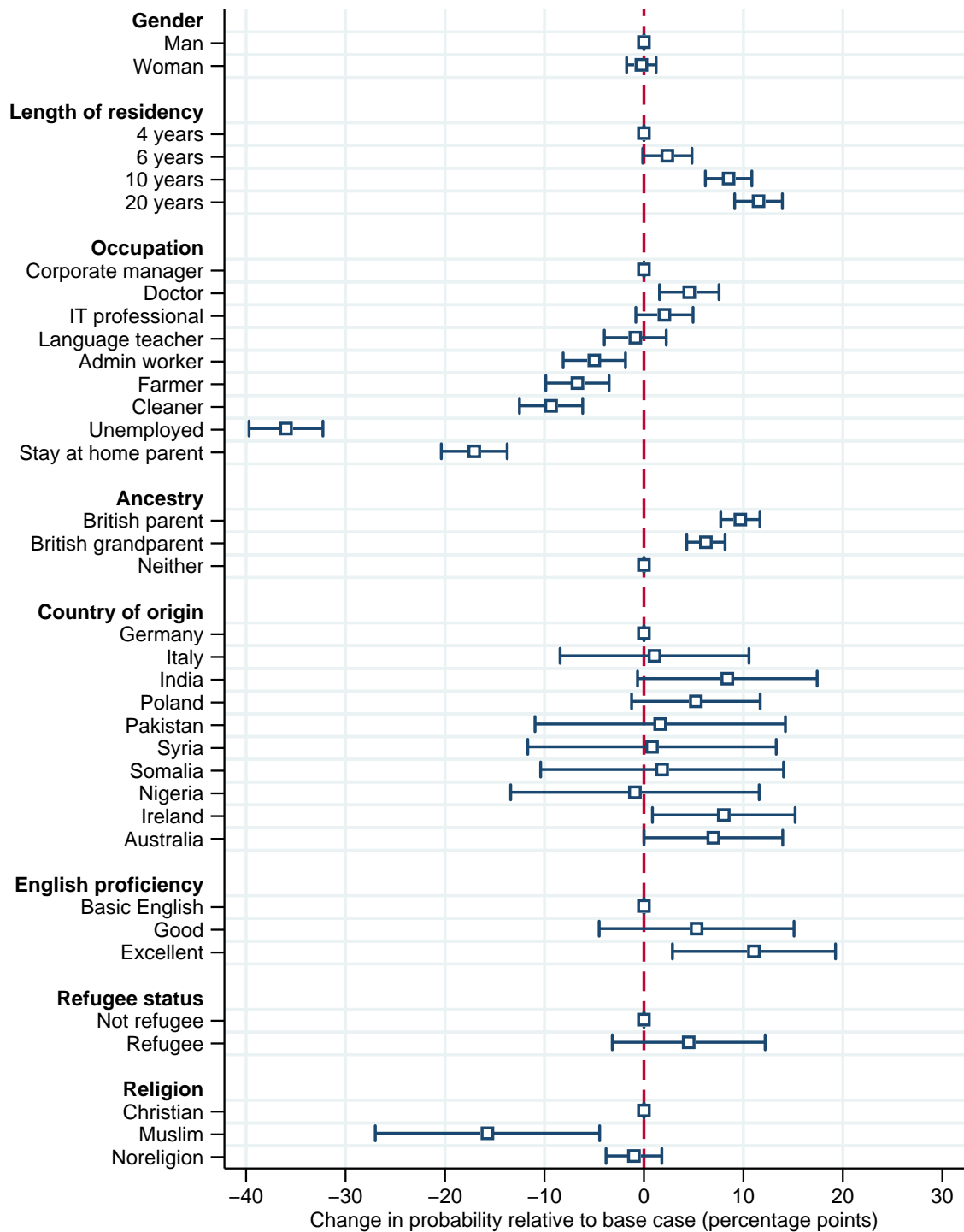
### *Most preferred profiles*

The 27% of profiles that were not granted citizenship differ significantly from those who were: see Figure 4.1 below. See Figure C2 in Appendix C for the corresponding MMs.

I find support for H1a, that respondents were less likely to grant citizenship to the applicants they perceived as least productive and to be a burden on the welfare system. The attribute that most clearly affects the probability of being granted citizenship is occupation. Not only is having a job almost essential for approval, but the type of occupation is also decisive for immigrants' chances of being considered worthy of citizenship. Figure 4.1 shows a clear gradient whereby lower-end jobs and positions of no occupation are severely penalised compared to better paid and more highly valued jobs. Interestingly, corporate managers, IT professionals and language teachers are equally likely to be awarded citizenship. In contrast, doctors' applications have a 5 percentage points higher chance of being accepted compared to corporate managers ( $p < .05$ ), indicating that the social contribution associated with the occupation is more important than pay. As we move down the pay scale, we observe a monotonic decrease in the probability of being accepted for citizenship.

Compared to corporate managers, administrative workers, farmers and cleaners are 5, 7 and 9 percentage points respectively less likely to be considered to merit citizenship ( $p < .05$ ). At the bottom of the scale, the effect of not having an occupation is striking. Stay-at-home parents and unemployed immigrants are associated with a penalty of 17 and 36 percentage points respectively compared to corporate managers ( $p < .05$ ). This finding indicates a strong aversion to economic inactivity. It may also indicate that respondents associated the granting of citizenship with the granting of welfare rights.

**Figure 4.1:** Average marginal component effects on the probability of citizenship award



Note: Age-16 level of education includes GCSE certificate or equivalent; Age-18 level of education includes A levels or equivalent; higher qualification level of education includes teaching diploma. Frequencies are weighted.

People who speak excellent English are 11 percentage points more likely to be awarded citizenship compared to those who speak basic English ( $p < .05$ ). However, there is no significant difference between those who have a good rather than a basic command of spoken English. The difficulty in conveying differences in English language proficiency to a majority sample of native speakers is probably at the heart of this result. ‘Good’ may have been more difficult to assess relative to the two other levels of English competence. The result suggests that respondents rewarded those who signalled higher employability, ability and willingness to integrate and be active members of society, as well as compliance and higher similarity with the majority population.

Refugee status does not affect the probability of granting British citizenship. Given this contrasts with general attitudes to refugees, this finding may signal that, once other attributes are specified, refugees are not penalised for being perceived as a burden on the welfare system.

The evidence largely supports H1b, that respondents were more likely to grant citizenship to the applicants who were more ethno-culturally close to them. British ancestry is very relevant to British nationals in their decision to accept citizenship applications. Applicants with a British parent or grandparent are 10 and 6 percentage points more likely to be granted citizenship than immigrants with no British lineage ( $p < .05$ ). Although in the UK grandparents’ nationality has no bearing on legal entitlement to British citizenship, it appears that this is a pertinent relationship to the lay public. The effect of grandparents suggests that people consider being British as something that is inherited. It also indicates longstanding ethno-cultural commonality through generations to represent key grounds for in-group national belonging.

Length of residence is another clear marker of the likelihood of granting citizenship. Having lived in the UK for 10 and 20 years as opposed to four years increases the probability of being accepted by 9 percentage points ( $p < .05$ ) and 12 percentage points ( $p < .05$ ) respectively. Interestingly, there is no significant difference between four and six

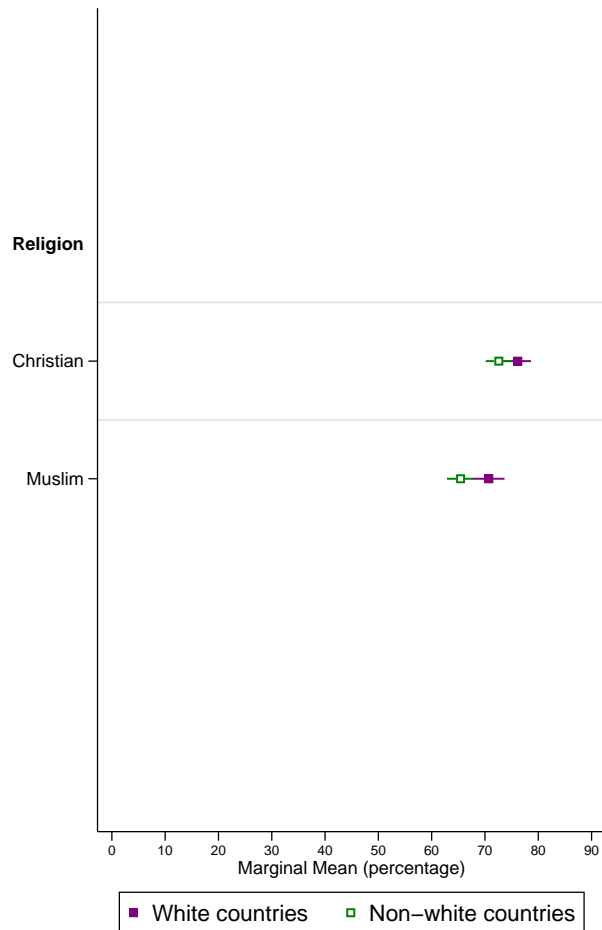
years, although the legal requirement for most applicants is five years. This finding suggests that respondents might associate length of residence with attachment to the UK and, perhaps, a higher degree of integration.

Respondents severely penalised Muslims. Muslims are less likely to be granted citizenship by 16 percentage points ( $p < .05$ ) compared to Christians. However, there is no significant difference between Christians and immigrants with no professed religion. As I hypothesised with H1c, in the UK context economic productivity and religion are the applicant characteristics that have the largest effects on the probability of the granting of citizenship.

I examine whether respondents reacted negatively to the Muslim attribute because they conflated it with non-whiteness (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010). If this were the case we would expect Muslims to be less likely to be granted citizenship compared to Christians from origin countries that are majority white. In such cases, respondents could plausibly read “Muslim” as signalling “non-white”. In contrast we would not expect a distinction between Muslims and Christians in non-white majority countries, where adherents to both religions would be expected to be non-white. Figure 4.2 compares the MMs of Muslim and Christian applicants separately for majority white countries and majority non-white countries. Respondents were less likely to grant citizenship to Muslim compared to Christian applicants in both sets of countries. It follows that respondents reacted to the Muslim attribute as a religious-cultural signal as opposed to an indication of non-whiteness. This finding suggests that the Christian and atheist majority perceives Muslims as culturally different and with values that are potentially threatening to British culture and national identity. Alternatively, respondents may have felt comfortable disclosing hostility towards Muslims, but not towards Christians, despite similar levels of support, as evidence for the USA suggests (Creighton and Jamal 2015). However, Creighton and Jamal (2020) find that if before Brexit people did not feel compelled to mask their attitudes towards Muslims, they did after the referendum. It follows that if the research

design were vulnerable to social desirability bias, it would be so for Christian and Muslim applicants alike.

**Figure 4.2:** Religion MM by country-group (white vs non-white)



Note: MMs calculated after OLS regression of the probability of being granted British citizenship by country-group, with clustered standard errors and weights. Full and open squares show MMs point estimates for white and non-white respectively; the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. The average MM is 74% for white countries and 69% for non-white countries. ‘Poland’ was dropped because not allowed in combination with ‘Muslim’. White countries included ‘Italy’, ‘Australia’, ‘Ireland’, ‘Germany’. The resulting number of observations for white countries is 4,050. Non-white countries include ‘India’, ‘Pakistan’, ‘Syria’, ‘Nigeria’, ‘Somalia. The resulting number of observations for non-white countries is 5,341.

Irish and Australian immigrants are 8 and 7 percentage points respectively more likely to be chosen over Germans ( $p < .05$ ). Of the pool of countries used in the experiment these are clearly the most similar ones to the UK in terms of ethnicity, culture, and shared heritage. Although language fluency is a separate attribute, sharing the same



mother tongue could also be considered a relevant cultural factor.

My estimates suggest that there is no hierarchical preference with respect to the skin-colour of the country of origin's majority population, or the income group it belongs to. For instance, German applicants are not preferred to Somali ones. Within European countries of origin, being Polish is not a disadvantage compared to being German or Italian. This is despite the weight that the debate leading up to the Brexit referendum gave to Polish immigrants, the largest European immigrant group in the UK (see Table C1 in Appendix C). This finding is consistent with H1d, that non-Christian religion carries more weight than non-white ethnicity in the UK context. This finding also suggests that the detailed information given to respondents is likely to have limited the possibility of the stereotypes usually associated with country of origin, namely skill level and religion, to influence respondents' decisions. My analysis shows that attitudes to 'groups' are likely to assume clusters of characteristics either based on previous knowledge or stereotypes, but that once separated out, respondents can distinguish the characteristics they actually do or do not object to rather than 'bundling' them in a single stereotype.

#### *Average acceptance rate and Marginal Means by respondent characteristics*

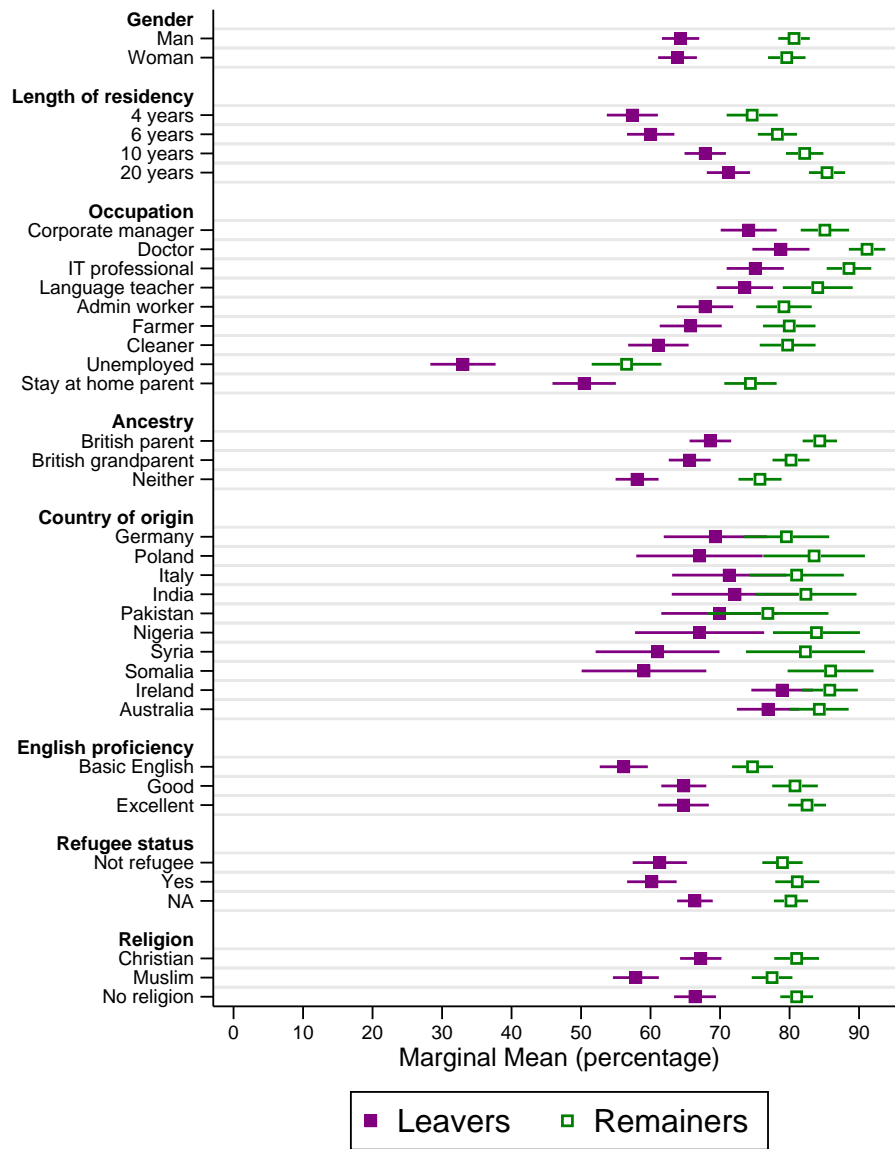
In the fourth phase of the analysis I compute the average acceptance rate for different groups of respondents, and the results align with H2a. The groups we would expect to be most attached to national identity are those who were more frugal in awarding citizenships. Leave voters accepted 64% of profiles, whereas Remain voters accepted 80%. As the level of education attained gets higher the rate of acceptance does too. It is 64% for respondents with up to age-16 qualifications, 73% for respondents with up to age-18 qualification and 77% for respondents with tertiary qualifications. Finally, the share of accepted profiles also decreases with age: 78% up to 29-years olds, 73% between 30 and 49-year olds and 69% over 50-year olds. This variation indicates that respondent char-

acteristics are associated with how restrictively people view citizenship. However, the average acceptance rate varies little with gross household income group. The rate is 70% for respondents who belong to the lowest third of gross household income, 74% for the middle tercile group and 71% for the top tercile group. This lack of variation may be due to the use of household, as opposed to individual income.

Perhaps even more interestingly, I do not find evidence in support of H2b, the criteria respondents used to decide whether the applicant presented to them had a rightful claim to citizenship are comparable for all types of respondents. Results are mostly consistent across gross household income group, education, age group, gender and EU referendum vote. See Figure 4.3 for a graphical representation of MMs for Brexit Leavers as opposed to Remainers, and Figures C2 to C5 in Appendix C for an illustration of MMs across other respondent characteristics. Similarly to findings of experimental studies on attitudes towards immigrants in other contexts (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015; Harell et al. 2012; Sobolewska, Galandini, and Lessard-Phillips 2017), there appears to be some national consensus over who has greater claims to belonging as a citizen. However, for Remain voters, high income respondents and people who are under the age of 30, the effect of the applicant's Muslim as opposed to Christian religion is negative, but not statistically significant as it is for Leave voters, low income respondents and people who are above the age of 50 ( $p < .05$ ); these latter groups also appear to drive the preference for Ireland and Australia over other countries of origin. These findings are consistent with the expectation that these groups have a more exclusionary ethno-cultural conception of Britishness. A higher susceptibility of high income, high education, Remainer and younger groups to social desirability bias might explain why they did not significantly differentiate between Muslim and Christian applicants. However, Creighton and Jamal (2020) find that, since Brexit, British people are subject to the same pressure to mask negative attitudes towards Muslims, irrespective of their political attitudes. It follows that if the experimental design were vulnerable to social desirability bias for some respondents,

it would be so for others too. Moreover, the consensus found with respect to all other attributes, and the nature of the design which does not distinguish individual characteristics but always presents them in combinations, also suggests that social desirability bias should not be a concern.

**Figure 4.3:** MMs by respondent Brexit referendum vote



Note: MMs calculated after OLS regression of the probability of being granted British citizenship where Brexit voting is interacted with the attributes, with clustered standard errors and weights. Full and open squares show MM point estimates for Leavers and Remainers respectively; the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. F-test of the null of hypothesis that all interaction terms are equal to zero:  $p < 0.05$ . See Table C3 in Appendix C for subsample sizes. To allow comparisons between ‘country of origin’ categories all Muslim and basic/good English cases were dropped when computing MMs for country of origin.

### *Robustness*

I fit alternative specifications to the benchmark model to account for the possibility that the dependence of profile choices within individual respondents drives the effect of applicant characteristics (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015). I employ regression model specifications that incorporate (i) respondent fixed effects and (ii) random effects. I also compare MMs of profiles based on whether they were in first or fifth ordering. To ensure that results are not driven by the preferences of the children of immigrant parents, I estimate the AMCEs for the subsample of respondents who identify as white British/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/Welsh. Estimates from all specifications are in Appendix C.

All specifications yield results that are almost identical to the ones obtained with the benchmark model. See Figures C6 and C8 in Appendix C for details.

### **Conclusion**

Using original data and an innovative method, this study provides unique insights into what it entails to become British according to British nationals.

I find that a relatively high proportion of applicants were regarded as meriting citizenship by respondents. With the caveat that respondents were not explicitly asked about how many citizenships they were willing to grant, they allocated citizenship to an average of 73% of applications. Although I find that the groups I expected to be more attached to their national identity and to be more averse to immigration were more parsimonious in awarding citizenship, the rate of approval of applications remained over 60% across subgroups. This high share of acceptance is in sharp contrast with British people's voiced desire to see immigration reduced (Blinder and Richards 2018). These findings suggest that respondents were comfortable awarding citizenship, conditional on the applicant's

attributes.

Crucially, I find a broad consensus over the criteria respondents used to decide whether to grant citizenship or not to applicants. Most interestingly, respondents agreed on the importance of the applicant's occupation and on the irrelevance of their country of origin to establish whether they were meriting of citizenship or not. It follows that once other characteristics are specified, there is no hierarchy of preferences based on skin-colour (as proxied by country of origin). This suggests that when people do not need to draw on the stereotypes and knowledge they hold about immigrants, skin-colour does not shape preferences for the granting of citizenship. My findings align with the historical-political characterisation of British citizenship as both inclusive and exclusionary: it is inclusive of minorities, but strictly conditional. It is inclusive, provided that immigrants are perceived to be economic contributors to society and to ascribe to liberal values.

While I collected evidence about preferences, I cannot measure their real-life repercussions. Citizenship is a claim on the attention, solidarity and responsibility of fellow citizens and the state (Brubaker, 2004). The largely shared exclusionary understanding of British citizenship may have negative implications for those who are excluded and for collective national cohesion. Of the growing Muslim population in the UK (2.7 million in 2011) according to Ali (2015), 73 per cent consider their only national identity to be British. However, according to my experiment, these people who think of themselves as British are considerably less likely to be recognised as such by a large part of the majority population compared to non-Muslims. An emphasis on economic contribution could also lead to the exclusion of specific immigrant-groups and minorities that are more likely to cluster in low-paid occupations, to be out of work and/or to have caring responsibilities (e.g. Drinkwater, Eade, and Garapich 2009). These people are less likely to be recognised as equals by natives, which could hamper their socio-economic and cultural integration and, in turn, the social cohesion in the country (Bloemraad 2018).

This study also did not investigate respondents' understanding of citizenship in the

context of naturalisation. Future research could shed further light on the native population's awareness of what naturalisation grants to different groups of immigrants, and the value and meaning it attaches to it.

The mechanisms identified in this study are likely to apply to other country contexts. As a combination of national identity and entitlement to claims and rights, citizenship elicits preferences around who is most similar to the majority and who brings the most value. In Western capitalist economies this amounts to Christian and productive immigrants. However, we might expect those contexts which have a more recent experience of immigration and/or who have not had a multicultural approach to it to be overall less generous in granting citizenship, but also potentially less selective in these choices. Future research could valuably test such possibilities and thereby extend our understanding of the meaning of citizenship and its potential for inclusion.

## CHAPTER 5

### Citizens in the making: analysing Italy's first attempt to define what makes a citizen in the context of immigration

#### **Introduction**

When in 2020 the 14-year old Great Nnachi made the highest ever pole-vaulting jump among under 16-year old girls in Italy, her record could not be registered. This is because she is one of around 800,000 children who have lived most of, if not all their lives in Italy, but who are not Italian citizens (Istat 2016). To become Italian, children born to immigrant parents have to wait until they turn 18 and must actively register within a year. Italian citizenship is inherited through lineage, via the principle of *ius sanguinis*. Place of birth and residence are irrelevant. A proposed change to this principle was brought to parliament for the first time by the centre-left political party Partito Democratico (PD) in 2013. The proposal offered a tamed *ius soli*, whereby, given certain conditions, second-generation children would be entitled to citizenship. After five years of debate, strong opposition from the Lega party allowed a parliamentary crisis of 2017 to prevent the reform from making it to the last stage of the legislative process. In this paper I make use of this rare moment of citizenship policy change in the making to investigate how immigration shapes conceptions of citizenship. I analyse the debate around the reform to answer two questions: according to the Italian political class, what makes a citizen? What is the purpose of citizenship acquisition?

Scholars have devoted much attention to defining and categorising citizenship regimes. Political theorists and legal scholars have done so by identifying the origins of citizenship policies in their histories of migration and national identity (Brubaker 1994;

Favell 1997; M. P. Vink and Bauböck 2013b). Empiricists have studied the opinions of the general public to investigate whether they employ these theoretical frameworks defining what it takes to be a citizen (Janmaat 2006; Tilley, Exley, and Heath 2004). Research has drawn on immigrants' experiences to understand whether access to citizenship translates into social inclusion, for example in the labour market (Gathmann and Keller 2017).

In this paper I take a new perspective. I analyse the dialectic between the two main political parties that fought for and against the reform. By exposing the underlying ideas that policy makers use to frame the debate, we can identify the dominant narratives about the function of citizenship acquisition and who should qualify for it (Béland 2016). To this end I use an innovative corpus of data. To get a good grasp of the parties' positions and the ways they are communicated, I analyse their discourses in a variety of forms. I combine all posts from their official Facebook pages, videos from their official YouTube channels and articles from their official websites during 2017, the year the debate reached its peak.

My research contributes to the literature investigating the contours of citizenship in countries that recently went from primarily sending, to primarily receiving immigrants. Italy, Greece, Finland and Denmark underwent this transition in the early 1980s, but have resisted updating their citizenship policy in response to this demographic change (Okólski 2012; Tintori 2018; Pedersen and Smith 2005). The result is growing populations of non-citizen children who are nonetheless permanent residents (Istat 2018). As Central Eastern European states are now in the early stages of this migration transition, they too are likely to soon face similar pressures (Drbohlav 2012; Rovny 2014).

This is the first time Italy consciously reflected on what it means to be Italian in the context of immigration, rather than emigration. In countries with a history of emigration citizenship is a means to construct and maintain a solid national community, even when its members live outside national borders (Zincone 2006). However, citizenship policies based entirely on *ius sanguinis* represent a bright institutional boundary that separates



the children of immigrants from the children of Italian lineage and hinders their opportunities for social inclusion (Alba 2005; Colombo, Leonini, and Rebughini 2009; Anton-sich 2016). Citizenship grants key rights, legitimises belonging and enables participation in the governing of the nation-state (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). By studying the renegotiation of citizenship boundaries, I shed light on the extent to which changes in the composition of the population resulting from immigration have challenged traditional understandings of citizenship.

With my analysis I find that, despite their diverging positions on the reform, the two parties articulate their viewpoint around similar concerns. They both argue that whether someone is Italian depends on how similar they are to the native population; their stance on the reform hinges on whether it benefits Italy and its national security, rather than the children at the centre of the reform; both parties use the debate on the reform to communicate their core values to the electorate. My analysis shows that, although the PD wants to shift the institutional boundary of citizenship to make it more inclusive, it does not make the narrative around what it means to be an Italian citizen more inclusive. The PD expects minorities to adjust their behaviour to fit existing notions of citizenship in order to be accepted. I argue that, despite their apparently different framings of the reform, both the Lega and the PD justify naturalisation with an exclusive conception of citizenship, which regards immigrant children as needing to be assimilated to a national norm.

Although the reform did not become law, the debate endures. News stories that have second-generation children as protagonists are continuously brought up as proof for the need for this reform. For example, in 2019, after the 13-year old Ramy Shehata saved other passengers from the hijacking of the bus they were on, a big media debate around his lack of Italian citizenship brought back attention to the reform (Barone 2019). He was awarded citizenship based on merit after three months of discussion between the family, the Lega interior minister at the time (Matteo Salvini), and other members of parliament. A year later the story of Great Nnachi continues to fuel the debate. The new leader of the

PD, Enrico Letta, has mentioned the intention to put the reform back on the agenda (Mari 2021).

The paper is structured as follows. In the next section I review the literature on conceptions of citizenship and on how they relate to migration. I also outline the origins of current Italian citizenship policy, the proposed changes to the reform and their expected implications. In the third section, I describe my data and method. I then present the findings, structured around three key themes. I conclude the paper with a discussion section.

## **Background**

I make sense of the current debate on the backdrop of two literatures. First, I draw on how citizenship regimes historically relate to different conceptions of citizenship, and how immigration may challenge them. Second, I contextualise the current debate within the Italian history of unification and immigration.

### *What makes a citizen and what is citizenship for?*

By describing citizenship as ‘illusive and ubiquitous’, Staeheli (2010) clearly illustrates the difficulty with pinning down the exact purpose, meaning and boundaries of citizenship. Because of the historical overlap between nation and state in the West, citizen and national have typically been synonyms. Asking what makes a citizen has been equivalent to asking what makes a national. Identifying what characterises a national and therefore a citizen in different nation-states has always been challenging as testified by a long scholarly tradition on the subject. Brubaker (1994) famously juxtaposed citizenship regimes where citizenship status is regulated through the principle of *ius soli*, whereby citizenship status is a right those born on the national territory acquire at birth, and *ius sanguinis*, whereby citizenship status is inherited by ancestry. The former policies embrace civic na-

tionalism, whereas the latter draw on an ethno-cultural conception of nationhood. Civic nationalism refers to the belief that a nation is made of people who want and are able to be part of a political nation-state and to participate in its civic and political life (Henrard 2018). In contrast, according to ethno-cultural nationalist ideologies what unites people in the same nation is belonging to the same ethno-cultural group; that is sharing common ancestry, language, religion and so on (Gellner 2006).

Many, including Brubaker himself (2010), have questioned how well nation-states fit into this categorisation and have deemed that most embrace elements of both traditions. Kymlicka (1999) has criticised the framework for not distinguishing between ‘ethnicity’ and ‘culture’. He argues that a form of nationalism that rests on sameness understood as ethnicity is very different from a form of nationalism that understands sameness as common culture: the former is innate, whereas the latter can be acquired. Modern scholars such as Shachar (2009) have also tried to move past the ethno-cultural vs. civic dichotomy. Shachar (2009) proposes the principle of *ius nexi* as grounds for legal membership, whereby membership rights should be granted based on a person’s meaningful connection to the society. Their interests, attachments and aspirations in the country should give people the right to membership, rather than only descent, *ius sanguinis*, or place of birth, *ius soli*.

Empirical research has also tried to identify whether the general public defines nationhood as ethno-cultural or civic. Evidence for both European and non-European countries suggests that citizens draw on both civic and ethno-cultural characteristics to define what makes a co-national (Jones and Smith 2001; Tilley, Exley, and Heath 2004; Janmaat 2006). Nonetheless, the civic vs. ethno-cultural framework is a useful analytical tool to identify the defining features of citizenship regimes today and the changes they are undergoing (Gans 2017).

Identifying what makes a national today is further complicated by the increased diversity within national boundaries resulting from colonisation and immigration. We live

in nation-states that have growing numbers of non-citizen permanent residents. There have always been people within nation-states who were either without citizenship status or had a citizenship status that did not ensure equality of rights, opportunities and welfare. Yet, rising ethno-racial diversity arising from the growing volume of immigration exposes the inadequacy of current citizenship boundaries and leads to demands for their renegotiation. At the very minimum this has forced policy makers to revive the discussion over the qualifying characteristics for citizenship. Even in Germany, Brubaker's archetype of ethno-cultural nationhood, a new reform in 2000 introduced a *ius soli* component to allow children of immigrants to become German citizens.

Alba (2005) describes citizenship as a fundamental boundary between the majority and the immigrant minority. This is because citizenship grants important rights for inclusion, from the rights to vote, to freedom of movement, to protection from deportation, to the power to aid relatives to immigrate. Citizenship also legitimises belonging and it entitles people to make claims from the state and from fellow citizens (Bloemraad 2018). Alba (2005) argues that the nature of the boundary of citizenship affects the nature of immigrants' integration. When this boundary is bright, immigrants must assimilate into the majority to bridge the social distance between them. In contrast, with a blurred boundary, immigrants and their offspring do not have to choose between the membership of the ethnic minority or of the mainstream. They can ascribe to identities and cultural practices that belong to both groups.

There is empirical research that has investigated the association between citizenship and social inclusion. Some, but not all evidence suggests citizenship acquisition may have a positive effect on labour market outcomes and national attachment (Bevelander and Pendakur 2011; Donnalaja 2020; Helgertz, Bevelander, and Tegunimataka 2014). Research has shown that national identification may grow before naturalisation (Donnalaja 2020). Although this evidence suggests that there is an association between citizenship acquisition and integration, we should note that, historically, citizenship has not sufficed

to guarantee full participation in society and in the democratic process. This has been the case for women, for the working class and indigenous groups. More recently this has also concerned the children of immigrants, who experience their national identity being contested, even where they have birthright citizenship (Beaman 2015). This suggests that an inclusive citizenship policy may not be enough to blur the boundary between those who belong and those who do not. A combination of institutional practices and norms constructs citizenship as a bright or blurred boundary. These range from the citizenship law itself, to norms related to what cultural practices are accepted, e.g. in relation to religion and language (Alba 2005).

### *Contextualising Italian citizenship policy*

To understand Italian nationhood today we must learn what led up to it. Current Italian citizenship law reflects the tenuous nature of Italian nationhood and is the product of its fraught history of unification and high emigration flows. Italy is a recent nation-state and for this reason it is often thought to have been a nation first and a state second (Gans 2017). However, at the time of unification in 1861 Italy was hardly a nationhood to most people living on the territory who had strong local identities, rooted in the long history of city-states on the territory (Antonsich 2016). The attachment to the idea of a unified country was harboured mainly by the intellectual elites and urban population, rather than by the masses (Bedani and Haddock 2000). Once a nation-state, Italy was therefore composed of numerous people who spoke different languages and dialects, had very strong regional identities and historical memories, and little sense of belonging to a national Italian state. Bedani and Haddock's (2000) estimates suggest that only between 2.5% and 12% of the population spoke Italian at the time of unification. The opposition of the Catholic Church to the Italian state after the annexation of Rome in 1870 also contributed to weakening the development of an Italian national sentiment among the masses. Nowadays,

most people speak Italian, but strong regional identities endure. These come at the expense of the nation-state when they take the form of secessionist movements such as the political party Lega Nord.

In addition to this weak and fragmented national identity, Italy has a long history of emigration. Italy was a country of emigration from 1876 to a century later in the 1970s, when it transitioned into a country of immigration. This shift was partly due to the return of temporary migrants who had worked as guest workers in other European countries that were introducing more restrictive immigration policies. Nevertheless, from the early 1980s higher immigration than emigration flows are attributable to foreign migration (Tinctori 2018). Over the first decade of the 2000s the inflow of migrants came as a response to push and pull factors. Important pull factors included the discontinuation of internal migration from the south to the north, combined with a welfare system that was not fit to support the aging population and a substantial underground economy (Bonifazi et al. 2009).

Zincone (2006) claims that current citizenship law reflects the need for a more solid national identity and the emigration history of the country. The law currently in place, L. 92, dates back to 1992. Claims to Italian citizenship rest primarily on the principle of *ius sanguinis*, whereby nationality is inherited based on ancestry. This is a familialistic model that focusses on Italian emigrants and facilitates the maintenance of citizenship through the generations even if they live abroad. One can claim an Italian passport by virtue of having an Italian ancestor who has not voluntarily given up Italian citizenship. For immigrants naturalisation is possible if certain conditions are fulfilled, including ten years of residence if non-European and four if European. Children born in Italy to non-citizen parents who are legal residents are entitled to request Italian citizenship within one year of having turned 18 if they have legally resided in Italy for their entire life.

Following Brubaker's (1994) theoretical framework, Italian citizenship law based on the principle of *ius sanguinis* was aimed at establishing an ethno-cultural rather than

a civic community. However, *ius sanguinis*-based citizenship policy is also the product of a history of emigration, whereby there was little need to distinguish between nationals and non-nationals, if not for the offspring of those who had left the country. This explains why current citizenship policy neglects the growing population of children of immigrant parents born and/or living in Italy. The proportion of births to two foreign-parents out of total births grew from 1% in 1992 to 6.2% in 2002, to 14.9% in 2019 (Istat 2018). There are currently around 800,000 children who have only ever lived in Italy and who are not formally recognised as Italians (Istat 2016).

#### *Proposed changes to the current citizenship policy*

Although there have been several attempts by parliamentarians to change the 1992 citizenship law, the most successful one has been a citizens' initiative which brought the discussion of a reform of the law to parliament in 2013 (Sredanovic and Farina 2015). The proposed reform has a *ius soli* component. It proposed that a child born in Italy with at least one parent who has been residing legally in Italy for five years be granted citizenship if the parent requests it. This form of conditional *ius soli* law would align Italian citizenship policy with that of the UK, Ireland, Germany and Portugal (Vink and Groot 2010). The reform also proposes a *ius culturae* component, whereby a child, either born in Italy or arrived before the age of 12, who has completed an entire stage of school for five years, is entitled to Italian citizenship if the parent requests it. Children arrived in Italy between the age of 12 and 18 would also have the same right if they attended school in Italy for at least six years as part of a full school cycle.

The reform was championed by the largest centre-left party, the Partito Democratico (PD) and opposed by the right, including the main opposition party at the time, the Lega. The PD was founded in 2007 as a broadly centre-left party and was in power over the XXVIIth parliamentary term, from 2013 to 2018, albeit in coalition with right-

wing parties. During this term, it ruled with three different prime ministers. By 2018 they were very unpopular as testified by the election that followed where they took home the worst result of the centre-left in the Republic's history (Emanuele 2018). The Lega was founded as Lega Nord in 1991 with the primary goal of achieving the autonomy of the Padana plane region. With new leader Matteo Salvini, in 2013 the party rebranded as Lega and shifted its gaze to the entire country. With the 2018 election they became the leading right-wing party. Although other right-wing parties were vocal in opposing the reform, as the biggest opposition party, the Lega was the most influential and received most coverage in the public debate.

When the law was presented to parliament support appeared to be high. Istat reported that 72.1% of their respondents were in favour of an automatic *ius soli* at birth (Tintori 2018). The bill was passed in the chamber of deputies in October 2015. For a bill to become law it must be approved by the Senate as well. In order to delay and halt the legislative process, right-wing parties opposing the law, the Lega and Fratelli D'Italia (FDI) in particular, presented thousands of amendments. The bill finally reached the senate in June 2017, just in time to be passed before the upcoming general election in 2018. On the one side, the leader of the FDI party collected 131,000 signatures for a petition asking for a referendum to repeal the law if it got approved. On the other side, many initiatives gained attention in solidarity with the law and with the population of children it was going to affect. Examples of these are the event Carnevale della Cittadinanza (carnival of citizenship) held in February in Rome, and the campaign 'l'Italia sono anch'io' (I too am Italy), in which many actors and intellectuals participated. The reform was finally shelved by the government because of the parliamentary crisis of December 2017. Today the *Ius soli* reform may be part of the agenda of the PD, as it is still widely debated (Mari 2021). Intellectuals, including actors and writers, continue to plead and to protest in favour of the law (Polchi and Rodari 2019).



*How citizenship makes a difference to second-generation children*

Research on the integration of the children of immigrants in Italy suggests that after only a few years most of them speak the language well, have Italian friends and develop a sense of belonging to the country (Gabrielli, Paterno, and Dalla-Zuanna 2013). Yet, these children are not a homogenous group and differ in the extent to which they feel at home in Italy, identify as Italian and are well integrated within Italian society (Marchetti 2010). Interviewing children of immigrant parents in Milan, Colombo, Leonini and Rebughini (2009) find that some children feel excluded and marginalised, others have a strong sense of belonging to both Italy and their parents' country, and others adopt a more cosmopolitan identity. Antonsich (2016) finds that the children of Italian immigrants mostly identify as Italian, but do not feel recognised as such by the majority.

With this reform second-generation children would acquire rights they currently do not hold. At present, all children in Italy, irrespective of legal status, have the same rights to education. All children have the right to emergency healthcare; but only legally residing children have full healthcare rights. Crucially, citizen children have a permanent right to stay in the country, whereas resident children do not. Citizens cannot be removed from their country of citizenship, except in highly unusual circumstances. In Italy the legal status of children is tied to that of their parents. This means that if the parent stops being a legal resident, the child does too. For example, in many cases permanent residence is secured through employment. It follows that job loss can lead to illegality. Other important rights associated with citizenship are the right of free movement within the European Union, the right to protection by the state in foreign countries, the opportunity to compete professionally in sports and to access many jobs in the public sector.

Although the *Ius soli* is about granting citizenship to people as children as opposed to as adults, by simplifying the naturalisation process, the reform would also increase the future number of adult citizens. In addition to the differences in rights between citizen

and non-citizen children, the right that citizen adults enjoy, but immigrants do not, is the right to vote. Finally, the parent of a child who is an Italian citizen can request legal status if they cohabit with the child and the procedure for its attainment is simpler if they are the main carer.

Evidence based on interviews with some of these children suggests they want citizenship to be freed from the burden of having to prove their right to remain in the country and want to enjoy the opportunities opened up by citizenship, such as those related to free movement. Citizenship to them is also a matter of justice and equality, something they feel entitled to. Finally, it is the consolidation and recognition of their Italian identity (Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti 2011).

## **Data**

The corpus I analyse consists of anything the Lega and the PD posted during 2017 on their official Facebook page, YouTube channel and website that refers to the reform. This includes written text, articles, images and videos. In a multi-party political system I restrict the data corpus to the PD, the party that presented the reform and was in government at the time, and the Lega which was the main opposition party. I further restrict the corpus to 2017, the year the debate took off. The corpus of data is made of Facebook, YouTube and the parties' official website posts as these are the platforms used by political parties to communicate with the public. Compared to other media outlets, such as TV programmes or newspaper articles, the content on these pages is posted and therefore selected by the parties themselves. It therefore provides a window on what they want to communicate to their audiences. The variety of sources also has the potential to capture a wide range of parties' positions and arguments. I excluded Twitter because of the limitations with retrospective data mining on the platform.

I identified relevant documents by searching for text that mentions the name of the

**Table 5.1:** Data corpus

Party	Facebook posts	Party website	YouTube videos
Lega	47	11	45
Partito Democratico	6	22	21

reform, which is always referred to by politicians as ‘ius soli’. I also cross-checked that I had identified all documents by running alternative searches such as ‘cittadinanza’ (citizenship), ‘ius culturae’ (a specific part of the reform) and ‘naturalizzazione’ (naturalisation). Table 5.1 illustrates the number of items in each party’s corpus, per source. There is an obvious difference between the Lega’s and the PD’s means of communication. Firstly, the Lega prefers visual media. Their YouTube channel and Facebook page are more curated and fuller of content. Although there are 11 relevant documents on their website, these are designed similarly to Facebook posts. They usually involve an image and short text, hashtags and slogans. In contrast, the PD does not fill its Facebook page or YouTube channel with much content and it dedicates much more attention to its website. The documents that I downloaded from their website are mostly newspaper articles where PD parliamentarians are interviewed on the topic by the main national newspapers, such as *Il Corriere della Sera* and *la Repubblica*.

The different means of communication employed by the two parties shape the content of the discourse itself. This is consistent with what has been found in other country contexts: populist political parties use social media to bypass classic news outlets and communicate directly with the voter (Engesser et al. 2017). The short populist message works well on social media and, compared to classic news outlets that are mediated by professional gatekeepers, it communicates to a more participating audience. It follows that the discourse of the Lega lends itself to a simpler narrative made of short and clear affirmations. In contrast, the PD offers more complex argumentations.

## Method

I use discourse analysis, a method that aims at explicitly showing how meaning is constructed and communicated through texts. The term discourse refers to the fact that language has social meaning (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). The assumption is that text, understood as any type of language, is both the product and producer of social constructs. As such, language is political because it distributes power, acceptance and other social goods according to the rules established by the social context. Gee (2010) describes the function of language as three-fold: it is saying, being and doing. With language we give and receive information; we take on social identities, we can wear different ‘hats’ to give the same piece of information (e.g. advice as a lawyer or as a friend); we take action (e.g. we make promises, we pray). To fully understand the meaning of something it is therefore not enough to know what it is being said, but also who the person saying it is and wants to be, and what they are trying to do.

Following Gee’s (2010) theory and methodological approach to discourse analysis, I aim to identify the saying, the being and the doing of text to fully grasp the meaning of the language in my data. Having gathered the data (as described in the Data section), I begin the analysis with a descriptive reading of the texts to identify recurring topics and nodal points that warrant closer analysis. I code the topics that emerge.

In parallel, I gather the relevant contextual knowledge that is needed for interpreting the text. This is a combination of local knowledge, such as awareness of key political events and current affairs that happened around the time of the debate; knowledge of the history of the formation of the Italian nation, of how the history of emigration has shaped Italian citizenship law and the discourse on national identity; broader theories of how experiences of migration shape citizenship and nationalism (as I have discussed in the Background section).

This begins an iterative process between the reading of the text and reference to the social context. The process involves moving from the initial overarching descriptive reading aimed at identifying recurring themes, to a closer reading of small portions of text. I implement this fine-grained analysis to the parts of text that I find to be most informative for the aim of the research question. This part of the analysis changes according to the mode of communication, which ranges from TV interviews on YouTube, to parts of parliamentary debates on YouTube, to posters for rallies on Facebook, to newspaper articles or written interviews on the party's website. The analysis therefore ranges from observing and analysing the grammar and structure of sentences, interpreting images and noticing changes in tone of voice or the use of hand gestures.

This back and forth between text, portions of text and theory allows me to move beyond describing what is represented and to interpret the text in the context of broader structures of social meaning of which it is part (Dunn and Newmann 2016). I organise the codes for the topics identifies around three themes: conceptions of national identity, the purpose of naturalisation, and the political salience of the reform. In Table 5.2 I illustrate how the three themes relate to each code, for which I give examples of text translated into English. My presentation of findings in the manuscript reflects the coding framework in Table 5.2. For each theme I include examples of text that I discuss in depth.

My position as an Italian citizen who follows Italian politics, but lives abroad is relevant in shaping the kind of knowledge I had access to. My personal interest and expertise on the subject may have made me more sensitive to the debate around which I formed strong opinions. However, this has also put me in an advantageous position to address the research question, to gather information and to contextualise my findings.

The analysis was carried out on the original text in Italian, but only the English translation is included in the main text. Original transcripts for these examples are to be found in Appendix D. The translation is not always literal in order to convey the same sense as the original text. When I report text transcribed from live speeches, I use capital

letters and exclamation points to illustrate moments emphasised by the speaker.

## Analysis

### *What makes a co-national?*

Despite the overlap between citizenship and national identity, neither party offers an explanation of what constitutes a co-national. No politician explicitly attempts to justify the party's position on the reform by drawing on their idea of 'imagined community': what they think are, and should be, the defining features of an Italian national (Anderson 1991). However, a close analysis of the discourse of both parties uncovers how important their conceptions of nationhood are in framing the debate and driving their statements.

**Figure 5.1:** Lega and PD on Italianness

#### (a) Salvini in TV debate



#### (b) Snapshot from PD's promotional YouTube video



Figure 5.1a is a snapshot of a post from Lega's Facebook page displaying a frame of an interview of Salvini and the journalist Udo Gumpel on the popular daily news commentary programme 'Otto e mezzo' (La7) on June 20th 2017. Above the frame is the caption *I wouldn't want anyone from left-wing parties to plan a process of CRIB SUBSTITUTION*. This is a quote from one of Salvini's replies during the debate. During the interview he adds that he is worried about *'importing children and gifting them citizenship because Italians no longer have children'*. In contrast, Figure 5.1b shows a frame taken from one of the videos on the PD's Youtube channel. The video shows a text that explains the details of the Ius soli reform on the backdrop of images that resonate with the explanations. The video ends with the frame in Figure 5.1b, when the leader of the party at the time, Matteo Renzi, says

*'A child, who was born in Italy, who born in Italy and has, in any case, completed a full stage of school in Italy, primary school or middle school; they may be called Matteo, or they may be called Miriam, [pause] Leyla, [pause] Mohamed, they have the right, if they study in Italy, if they grow up with Italian values, to be an Italian citizen'* M. Renzi (YouTube 16/06/2017)

These two images exemplify the way in which the two parties communicate their different conceptions of what makes someone Italian. In Figure 5.1a the use of capital letters in the short quote is used to underscore the gravity of the process Salvini is implying. This is one of the instances where the Lega expresses fear of ethnic substitution. This particular post refers explicitly to 'replacement theory'. According to this conspiracy theory brought to fame by Renaud Camus in his 2012 book 'You will not replace us!', the low fertility rate of white women will result in non-white people replacing white people (Camus 2018). This theory has recently caught on to justify the most horrific racist acts, such as the terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand (Smith et al. 2019) The theory is new in its use of demographic concepts such as replacement-level fertility, the rate at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next. However, the message

it sends is not.

Camus's thesis centres around whiteness as a marker of otherness. To Camus non-whiteness is an obvious indication of different culture, religion and values. However, Lega politicians do not mention race and whiteness explicitly. Their talk of ethnic replacement and invasion leaves 'the other' unnamed. They address the public in a way that assumes that who they are referring to is obvious and known. The context to this debate is important in this respect. Following the assassination of Gaddafi, Libya's dictator, the onset of the Arab Spring and the war in Syria in 2011, undocumented immigration to Italy intensified (Spindler 2015). These immigrants are mostly black African and reach the Italian shores on dinghies under desperate circumstances. Irregular immigration has therefore received wide coverage by the media and politicians. The fact that the *Ius soli* reform is often discussed in conjunction with immigration on TV and news programmes has probably contributed to creating an association between the potential beneficiaries of the reform and recent irregular immigrants, most of them black (Sredanovic and Farina 2015). By not defining the 'other', by using all-encompassing fear-mongering terms such as 'invasion' and 'crib replacement', Lega politicians give the public the space to make these associations. The lack of definition of the 'other' also indicates that race is not the only criterion for inclusion. Their form of ethno-nationalism is more demanding because anyone who is not ethnically Italian is 'othered'.

The Lega further exploits the fear of 'the other' by associating the *Ius soli* reform with the financial struggles of the Italian people. In their Facebook posts the hashtag #noiussoli is typically accompanied by the hashtags 'Italians first' (#primagliitaliani), 'fewer taxes more work' (#menotassepiùlavoro), 'enough with fiscal torture' (#bastaconlatorturafiscale). Since the 2008-11 financial crisis Italy has struggled with austerity and high rates of unemployment (Statista 2021). The Lega exploits the fear of 'the other' in conjunction with the fear and experience of financial hardship for political gains. This juxtaposition between Italians and non-Italians relies on a conception of nationality ac-



ording to which these children are categorised as ‘them’, rather than as ‘us’. As it typical of populist parties, the Lega ascribes to an ethno-exclusionary nationalism that pits ‘the people’ against immigrants (Cleen 2017).

Nonetheless, the Lega’s contrary position to the *Ius soli* reform may not rest entirely on an ethno-cultural nationalist account. A point often made by the Lega is that children cannot rightfully express the will to become citizens because they are not eighteen. In an interview on the programme *Tagadà* (La7) on 22nd June the senator Centinaio repeats the word ‘to choose’ (‘scegliere’) 6 times in the space of a minute and 52 seconds in reference to the reform. His argument is that only adults are capable of consenting to be citizens because citizenship is ‘an important thing’ (‘una cosa importante’). At first sight this is an argument that is compatible with a civic notion of citizenship. Agreeing to become a member of the community is akin to signing a contract and agreeing to the rules of the community. Nonetheless, the ethno-cultural underpinning of the argument remains. The request that these children wait until they turn 18 to wilfully register as citizens puts them in a different category from native children. Native citizens agree by tacit consent and become citizens automatically at birth. By denying this reform they are not denying these children the right to become citizens, but to do so as native Italians. Instead, they have to do it as immigrants through a process of naturalisation.

**Table 5.2:** Coding framework

Political Party	Code	Example	Organising Theme
The Lega	Fear of ethnic substitution	‘Stop the invasion’; ‘we are living through an attempt at ethnic substitution’; ‘IUSOLi is alright in a country that needs populating’	What makes a co-national?
	Competition between Italians and immigrants over resources	‘Italians first’; ‘ius soli...guarantees a favourable treatment to the foreigner’; ‘on the backs of Italians’	
	Adults only are capable of making the choice to acquire citizenship	‘Citizenship is not to be given away’; ‘you are capable of judgment at 18 years of age’; ‘citizenship is not acquired by birthright, but you choose it when you’re 18’	
The PD	‘These children are already Italian’	‘Young people who represent the future’; ‘these children are Italian, we recognise a reality that already exists’	
	Shared experience makes citizens	‘A child who studies, grows up with Italian values, has the right to be Italian’; ‘a Chinese or Senegalese child who goes to school with your children’; ‘wearing the same football shirts as everyone else’	

The Lega	Integration before citizenship acquisition	‘Because before attaining citizenship you must integrate’; ‘one takes it after a path’; ‘it is the point of arrival, not an instrument for integration’	Citizenship acquisition effects on Italian society
	PD wants the reform to buy votes	‘The left wants a million votes’; ‘Italy is not for sale!’; ‘it needs new voters or new slaves’	
The PD	Citizenship as a means to social cohesion	‘To recognise it is of interests also to security of the country’; ‘we want a united, cohesive society’; ‘the ius soli strengthens the community’	
The PD	Citizenship gives duties no just rights	‘You acquire both rights and duties’; ‘the chance to share our laws’	
The Lega	Opposition to Ius soli to win elections	Photographs of election posters that include reference to the Ius soli reform	Political salience of the reform
	Lega as defender of the Italian people	‘The Lega doesn’t give up’; ‘no one will stop this revolution’; physical fight in the Senate and protest over the Ius soli reform	
	Disparaging language in reference to the reform	‘Mad law’; ‘load of shit’; ‘abomination’	
	Comparison with Europe	‘The only country with a record of citizenships’; ‘the failure of integration models for migrants in Countries such as France and Great Britain and Belgium’	

The PD	Ius soli is a matter of civilisation (justice and tradition)	‘Law of civilisation’; ‘for reasons of humanity, coherence and seriousness’; ‘the ius soli expresses in the most authentic way the principles of our judicial civilisation’
	Mentioning Europe	‘A European solution for the ius soli is always a good idea’; ‘exactly how Germany has done it’

The PD’s understanding of nationality is in clear antithesis to the Lega’s. The two lines at the end of the video captured in Figure 5.1b outline the PD’s core arguments for supporting the reform: that the children in question are already Italian. In the video Renzi pauses a little after every name, foreign sounding or Italian, to highlight the irrelevance of this information. What matters, he implies are shared experiences: going to school in Italy and growing up with Italian values. As captured in this post, the reform would be acknowledging the reality that these children are Italian, are part of Italian society and will continue to be so in the future.

*#the ius soli recognises a reality that already exists* (Facebook 21/06/2017)

Yet, this argument is compatible with an ethno-cultural notion of nationalism. Their case rests on ‘sameness’: these children deserve Italian citizenship because their behaviour and their values are akin to the average Italian child: they go to the same schools, they speak the same language, they even speak the local dialect, they like the same things and they support Italian football teams. The use of ‘if’ (‘se’) can be interpreted as ‘as long as’ to introduce a series of conditions the child must meet to be considered Italian. By highlighting these conditionalities they are demonstrating they too take seriously the integration and alignment of these children within Italian society. However, they do not call for any testing of these conditions, therefore suggesting that the experience of growing up in Italy suffices to meet these criteria. This notion of ethno-cultural nationalism is intuitively

very different from the Lega's. This is because it revolves around culture, rather than ethnicity. As Kymlicka (1999) notes this is an important distinction because culture can be acquired, whereas ethnicity cannot.

School attendance is central to the PD's argument that shared experiences make citizens. Completing a full stage of school is a core requirement of the proposed reform. This use of school as grounds for common nationality is also consistent with a civic notion of nationalism. School shapes people into citizens by creating a sense of community on the basis of shared values, rules of conduct, constitutional and social norms (Orgad 2017). The argument that these children should be recognised as Italian because they speak the language, go to school and live in Italy also fits with more modern theories that put people's experiences at the centre of membership claims, such as Shachar's *ius nexi* (2009). Going to school and doing the same things as other kids highlights not only these children's sameness, but also their connection to the country. The PD offers a conception of nationality that emphasises the linguistic and cultural integration of immigrants.

Both the Lega and the PD rest their case on sameness. According to the Lega the children who would benefit from the reform are not like other Italian children, whereas according to the PD they are. As found in other research that investigates popular conceptions of citizenship (e.g. Janmaat 2006), neither party's conception of nationhood clearly fits in the civic vs. cultural-ethnic schema of citizenship, with both parties borrowing from both civic and ethno-cultural principles.

*Citizenship acquisition: to the detriment or benefit of Italian society?*

On June 15th Calderoli, one of the Lega's most well-known parliamentarians, delivered a strong speech against the *Ius soli* reform in the senate. In this 5-minute speech he argues against the reform, touching on various arguments, including the danger they would be putting the country in if the reform passed.

*'...But what scares me [sigh] is the aspect not only of the selling off of our identity, but the aspect of security. I cannot forget that exactly the fact that in those countries there is a law like the ius soli, the attackers, ALL OF THEM; I'm talking about the ones in Brussels, in London, in Manchester, anywhere in Europe where they have happened. They had a passport of the country against which this character made the attack, in their pockets [other Lega senators clap and shout 'bravo'!] I will say more! You can protest, but it won't amount to anything! I will say more, the truth hurts, but in the meantime, deal with it! And go tell your citizen voters! I will say more, the man in Manchester, son of Libyans, who thanks to the ius soli, i.e. with the law that today you want to pursue, got British citizenship and a passport, he made the terrorist attack in Manchester and, last but not least, he'd got a 7,500 euro scholarship and instead OF STUDYING, with that money he bought the bomb. Bravo! Well done!'* R. Calderoli (YouTube 16/06/2017)

Calderoli champions Lega's rhetoric: he changes his tone of voice to the point of shouting to draw emphasis where he wants to rally up his colleagues. Party members follow him by applauding and murmuring in the background. His language is peppered with grammatical mistakes – such as lack of appropriate subordinating conjunctions to link sentences – and vernacular sayings, e.g. 'the truth hurts..,but deal with it' ('la verità fa male.., ma portatevela a casa'). This choice of language and tone conveys urgency, as well as a detachment from the formalities of politics. This is the speech of someone who is angry, shocked and deeply concerned.

That citizenship should be given only to those who are fully integrated in Italian society is one of Lega's core arguments against the reform. This is suggestive of an understanding of citizenship acquisition as official recognition of belonging. However, Calderoli's statement goes further. He insinuates that, had the terrorist in Manchester not been allowed to be a citizen and therefore to have access to scholarship funding, he could

not have carried out the attack. The terrorist, according to Calderoli, used his citizenship status to harm his co-nationals. The selective granting of citizenship, he implies, is necessary because citizenship grants privileges people can abuse of. This line of argument taps into the fear that Muslim immigrants may be terrorists. The Lega's belief that citizenship should be given to immigrants who are integrated is widely shared. It is what has motivated several European countries to introduce civic integration requirements for naturalisation, whereby immigrants have to prove their level of integration in order to become citizens (Goodman 2010). There too political parties focus on integration as an acceptable way to express Islamophobic feelings (Kostakopoulou 2010).

Several inconsistencies confirm that greater integration is not Lega's true goal. For instance, they accuse the PD of using this reform to buy the children's loyalty and therefore their future votes. For example:

*'The left insists on the ius soli propaganda to pockets the votes of MIGRANTS'*

(Facebook 04/12/2017)

However, if this were the case the reform would be conducive to increased integration. By arguing that children are more likely to vote if they are awarded citizenship, they are stating that citizenship fosters political participation, a key aspect of integration. If integration were their goal, incentivising voting would be a welcome outcome of this reform.

Consistently, the Lega never attempts to define the concept, which becomes particularly obscure in the context of Italian naturalisation policy. Children born in Italy from foreign-born parents, are not required to fulfil any civic integration requirement. It follows that the Lega's position to keep the current law in place because it ensures that people are given citizenship once they are integrated merely equates integration to length of residence. Moreover, for some children, the choice of becoming Italian requires losing the nationality they inherit from their parents. This is the case for the Chinese community, representing 8.6% of non-European immigrants in Italy, as China does not allow dual citi-

zenship (Istat 2019). Surely, the decision to renounce another citizenship status to acquire the Italian one is a sign of integration of both the parent making the decision and their child.

Reference to national security is part of the PD's rhetoric too. In the year of the terrorist attacks in Manchester, London and Brussels, they choose not to ignore this theme. The PD tries to assuage the fear of the 'other' by arguing that citizenship benefits social cohesion. On the PD's YouTube channel show 'Ore Nove' where a presenter reads and comments on articles from several newspapers, there are a few episodes that touch on the *Ius soli* reform. In one in particular, the current leader of the PD in the senate, Simona Malpezzi, lays out the PD's argument in relation to national security:

*'Maybe one should read, read the law proposal that talks about a ius culturae that means more security because when YOU FEEL YOU ARE AN ITALIAN CITIZEN and you are part of that world because you have breathed that literature, that culture and that history and you are not illiterate of the symbols that surround you, at that point you feel part of a community. And if you feel part of a community, YOU WORK for that community, you have no intention of going against that community. So, citizenship and therefore ius soli, or rather ius culturae in order to recognise the right of those who live with us, study with us, sit with us at school desks, it's a right to civilisation that guarantees to the country that offers it more security because it creates more community, a term we often forget.'* S. Malpezzi (YouTube 05/07/2017)

The central argument of this extract is that denying these children citizenship jeopardises social cohesion and national security. The PD's starting point is that refuting citizenship means marginalising and discriminating against people who are effectively part of the community. This argument appears to follow directly from the belief that these children are Italian. If we do think they are Italian, not recognising them will result in the frustration that creates dangers for the community and harms social cohesion. This suggests an



understanding of citizenship as recognition and officialisation of national identity. Relatedly, according to the PD, citizenship seems almost to have a pedagogic function. By often underlying that citizenship grants duties, as well as rights, they imply that we can hold fellow citizens to a higher standard than immigrants.

The PD seems more concerned with social cohesion, than with what second-generation children would gain from the reform. They do not centre their argument around the benefits and opportunities the children in question would have access to as citizens. Instead, they argue that the failure to acknowledge these children as Italians hampers a shared sense of community. The protagonists of this narrative are not the beneficiaries of the reform, but voters. Despite the evidence that research has found that most children of immigrants see themselves as Italian (Antonsich 2016), but do not think others recognise them as such, PD politicians hardly discuss the children's feelings, opinions and experiences. Similarly, the opportunities that would arise from citizenship, including those related to the rights they would acquire, are seldom considered. It is plausible that the omission of these rights from the conversation is a strategic choice to avoid being accused of protecting undocumented immigrants from deportation. The strategy of both parties is therefore to target the fear of national security and failed integration that was at its height in 2017 all over Europe. The Lega uses it to oppose the reform, the PD to support it.

### *The political salience of the reform*

Figure 5.2 shows one of the several Facebook posts on the Lega's official page during the second half of 2017 that showcases a poster inviting people to a rally for Salvini as Prime Minister. Glancing at the poster our eye falls quickly to its centre. A bigger font size and different colours are used to draw attention to the main slogan of the poster: *'No ius soli because Italy is not for sale'*. Like many others, this poster from Salvini's campaign offers only one point from his manifesto, fighting the Ius soli reform. This is a testament

to two things: to how much people cared about this reform and to how much the Lega thought it could gain from fighting this battle.

**Figure 5.2:** The Lega's billboard



In contrast, the PD did not have such a clear strategy. Although they supported the reform and debated in favour of it, they ended up losing control over its destiny. During the winter of 2017 the PD split between those who wanted the government to ask for a vote of confidence on the reform and those who believed the government did not have the support necessary to pass the law. The vote on the reform kept being postponed until the very end of the parliamentary term, when the quorum of senators necessary for a vote was not met. None of the M5S senators showed up.

It follows that we cannot ignore how politically loaded and consequential this debate over reforming citizenship law was in 2017. With the elections looming in the horizon, it is important to note that both the PD and the Lega chose the reform on citizenship as an issue important enough to be put on the centre-stage of the political agenda (Béland 2016).

The uncompromising language used by both parties illustrates how invested they were in the outcome of the debate. In one of the videos on the Lega's YouTube channel the senator Centinaio is interviewed outside the Senate chamber with an icepack on his right hand. The attention of the viewer is directed to the centre of the scene, where the hurt hand lies underneath an icepack. He gives no explanation for the hand until later when the interviewer finally asks about it. Centinaio replies:

*'It happened because the moment they didn't let me speak, we occupied the benches in parliament and [he smiles] I was the last one to be taken away because I resisted until the end [he pauses and laughs] like at Fort Alamo [he laughs], let's put it that way'* G. Centinaio (YouTube 15/06/2017)

What happened is that during a parliamentary discussion on the law proposal, a Lega senator was given the right to speak later than he thought he was entitled to. From there a protest that involved all the Lega senators ensued. After occupying the desks of the senators sitting in the front, and in the midst of getting kicked out by security, Centinaio hurt his hand. The Lega senator uses the Fort Alamo metaphor, where Texan people were killed for refusing to surrender to the Mexican invader, to demonstrate the extent to which they are willing to fight. The fight seems to be both against what they routinely refer to as a 'mad law' ('legge folle') and against the political establishment. Like other right-wing populist parties in Europe they present themselves as the defenders of the Italian people and of their national identity (Noury and Roland 2020). This is the one instance where the fight over the reform got physical, but it was long-time coming. The Lega had threatened and continued to threaten the PD with the use of physical obstruction to prevent the law from passing.

*'We will do barricades here in the building, but outside they risk that angry citizens will come looking for them with pitchforks'* R. Caldeorli (website 8/11/2017)

The PD takes different, yet extreme, measures to fight for the reform. On October

4th tens of PD members of parliament joined a hunger strike initiated by 900 teachers in support of the *Ius soli* reform (Il Fatto Quotidiano 2017). The PD's investment in the success of the reform is evident throughout the debate. If the Lega refers to the reform as 'mad', the PD often calls it a 'law of civilisation' ('legge di civiltà'). They ground their position in a sense of justice, as in the following quotations taken from the PD's website:

*'Ius soli, Zanda: How can Centrist politicians close to the Church say no?'*

Alessandro Trocino, *il Corriere della Sera* (website, 18/07/2017)

*'The ius soli expresses in the most authentic way the principles of our judicial civilisation, of our ancient cultural tradition of Greek and Roman inspiration'* Senator Manconi, *il Manifesto* (website 24/12/2017)

As done in other periods of Italian history, such as during the Fascist era, the PD justify current policy by recalling an idealised glorious past (Bedani and Haddock 2000). They evoke a Greek and Roman tradition of justice and the Catholic value of hospitality as core underpinnings of Italian identity.

Both parties also draw comparisons with other European countries, namely France, Germany and the UK. The Lega uses these countries as examples of the dangers of granting citizenship to children of immigrant parents (As in the extract in the above section). This attitude is suggestive of the Euroscepticism that is typical of populist parties (Noury and Roland 2020). Lega politicians also point out that Italy holds the European record for number of naturalisations granted. The number of new Italian citizens has increased since 2004 as a result of family reunification, second-generation children coming of age and immigrants meeting the residence requirement for naturalisation (Finotelli, La Barbera, and Echeverría 2018). In contrast, the PD expresses the need to conform to the rest of Europe, as in the following extract from a Facebook post:

*'We must instead work on integration like Germany'* (Facebook 16/11/2017)

Among Western European countries, Italy's current citizenship policy is comparable to that of Greece, Austria, Denmark and Finland (Vink and Groot 2010). Other Western Eu-

European countries have either a form of *ius soli* at birth or more privileged *ius soli* provision after birth.

Although at the antipodes, the two parties approach the debate with the same urgency. The combination of strong language and action communicates not only their view on the reform, but also their core values. Similarly to other political events, such as the UK referendum to leave the EU, the attempt to redraw citizenship boundaries exposed deep-seated cleavages (Ford and Goodwin 2017; Hobolt 2016). As I have shown, the Lega used the reform to express broader concerns around undocumented immigration, the financial struggles of the Italian people, national security and Europe. That is, they combine populism and ethno-exclusionary nationalism to win over the electorate (Cleen 2017). In response to that the PD appeals to progressive liberal values associated with their highly educated electorate (Piketty 2018). It is important to recognise the mobilising power of citizenship.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The two sides disagree on what characteristics qualify someone to be Italian and on what aspects of citizenship matter the most. However, they resorted to a similar logic to frame the debate. Both parties argue about whether the children of immigrants are similar or not to the Italian majority. Their positions on the matter differ because to the Lega the common denominator is lineage, whereas to the PD it is behaviour and common experiences. Yet, they argue on the same grounds. Equally, both parties' arguments hinge on what is best for the majority. The Lega chooses to discuss citizenship for the children of immigrants as a means to access rights and a privileged position, whereas the PD sees citizenship as an identity and as a form of recognition. Yet, for both parties the judgment of whether the children of immigrant parents are Italian or not is an external one, a decision to be made by current group members. Both sides are concerned with what is most bene-

ficial to the country, especially for its security. Neither party gives agency to the children in question or to their parents. The children that would be affected by this reform remain silent. Their feelings of belonging or the opportunities that would arise from the acquisition of citizenship are not central to either party's position.

The narrative of the Lega is clear. They want to maintain an unambiguous legal distinction, a bright boundary, between autochthonous Italians and second-generation children (Alba 2005). The PD's position is less obvious. On the one hand, by calling for the extension of citizenship rights, they want to shift the boundary of citizenship. This change in law would turn outsiders into insiders. On the other hand, their line of argument relies on the expectation that minorities must first individually cross the existing boundary that separates them from the majority (Alba 2005). Their notion of what makes an Italian focuses on behaviour, rather than lineage, but still relies on the assumption that minorities must subscribe to existing notions of citizenship in order to be accepted. What is missing is the idea that children of immigrants can be Italian citizens, whilst also maintaining more diverse and complex cultural practices and identities. The debate over whether the children of immigrant parents have a claim on Italian citizenship did not end in 2017. The new leader of the PD Enrico Letta has put the *Ius soli* reform back on the agenda as a priority (Mari 2021). Yet, a conception of Italian citizenship that is more inclusive seems a long way ahead.

Italy is only one of a few Western European countries that have a restrictive citizenship policy, but growing numbers of second-generation children (Okólski 2012; Pedersen and Smith 2005; Vink and Groot 2010). Central Eastern European countries are also approaching positive net immigration and have citizenship policies that do not take into account this demographic change (Drbohlav 2012; Rovny 2014). Similarly to Italy, they will soon have to start grappling with immigrants staying long-term. Given how consequential citizenship acquisition is for integration, the introduction of more inclusive principles for the granting of citizenship seems inevitable.

However, my analysis shows that if political parties wish to incorporate immigrant populations that challenge current boundaries between native and second-generation children, calling for policy change is not enough. Alongside policy, they are likely to need to promote new conceptions of citizenship that are more attentive to minorities and that break away from path-dependencies. These are that sameness constitutes the grounds for making someone a citizen and that the purpose of citizenship acquisition is to protect or benefit the majority. Moreover, we cannot ignore that discussions around citizenship are a pretext for right-wing populist parties to express their nativists values in order to win elections. This provides a further challenge to the introduction of a *ius soli* principle in citizenship policy.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusion

I set out to interrogate the value and function of citizenship at the start of the 21st century in Europe. A distinguishing fact of our time is that people acquire the citizenship of countries they do not have a birthright to in large numbers (Okólski 2012). Settled immigrants either have to renounce their original citizenship in order to attain the one of their country of residence or, more often, they acquire a second citizenship. This new reality raises questions regarding the significance immigrants attach to the citizenship they acquired. The settlement of people across borders also requires majority populations to decide what they deem makes someone a fellow citizen. These are the issues I addressed with my research. I will briefly summarise the findings of my four substantive chapters. I will then reflect on the overall contribution this thesis makes, whilst acknowledging its limitations. I will conclude with suggestions of avenues for future research.

In Part 1, I investigated the reasons why immigrants decide to naturalise. I contribute to extant research by considering citizenship not only as a legal status that grants key rights, but also as political participation and national sense of belonging. Quantitative research to date had examined the decision to acquire citizenship as the product of a cost-benefit analysis, where the benefits relate to economic gains, key rights that ensure freedom, autonomy and stability (e.g. Chiswick and Miller 2008; Fougère and Safi 2008; M. P. Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers 2013). Although these are fundamental aspects of citizenship that surely incentivise people to naturalise, I posited that the decision to become a citizen is also motivated by what citizenship represents. To most people the citizenship acquired at birth signifies nationality, a source of identity and belonging to the nation-state (Smith 1991). Citizenship also grants political membership through the right to representation. It follows that a full understanding of immigrants' relationship



to naturalisation needs to account for these understudied, yet fundamental dimensions of citizenship.

In my two papers for the UK and for France I find that national sense of belonging is an essential dimension of naturalisation. First, immigrants can develop attachment and can identify with the country they reside in. This finding contributes to the, mostly qualitative, evidence that shows that national identity is dynamic and that immigrants can develop strong feelings of attachment to the country they live in, while also feeling loyal and attached to their country of origin (Erdal, Doeland, and Tellander 2018; Birkvad 2019; Manning and Roy 2010; Platt 2014). These findings should assuage some of the anxiety around whether immigrants and their offspring can be loyal to their country of residence (Cameron 2011).

Second, I find that this national sense of belonging matters in relation to naturalisation. For both the UK and France my research shows that national sense of belonging contributes to the decision to naturalise over and above socio-economic and demographic factors. Using longitudinal data for the UK, I show that those who identify as British are more likely to naturalise than those who do not, and that after naturalisation the importance given to this identity grows. With the caveat that I could not demonstrate a causal relationship, this suggests that the attainment of citizenship can foster national belonging. Policies that make citizenship acquisition harder, for example by increasing costs and requirements, may therefore reduce opportunities for greater social inclusion.

For France, I employ a latent class model, drawing on rich survey data on the immigrant population, to show how national sense of belonging articulates in five different ways. This empirical evidence corroborates extant theoretical understandings of national belonging as multi-dimensional and dynamic (Antonsich 2016). Although for most immigrants a personal feeling of belonging is aligned with a corresponding feeling of recognition by others, that is not the case for everyone. Those with a conflictual sense of belonging experience other people's denial of their French identity. Crucially, I show that that

these belonging types relate to the intention to naturalise. The propensity to naturalise is highest among those foreign-born residents with a conflictual sense of national belonging and a full sense of national belonging. These findings illustrate that the assumption found in classic assimilation and acculturation theories that legal inclusion coronates the integration process may be overly simplified (Maehler, Weinmann, and Hanke 2019; M. P. Vink, Prokic-Breuer, and Dronkers 2013; Hochman 2011). Citizenship may be the pinnacle of a process of integration for those who fully belong, or it can represent a means to full acceptance for those whose sense of belonging is delegitimised by the majority population. For this latter group naturalisation may also help overcome the obstacles related to lack of recognition, e.g. discrimination in the workplace. This demonstrates the complexities of how national belonging can translate into the decision to naturalise. As for the UK, the evidence for France suggests that naturalisation can have a crucial role both as national identity, and as means to greater acceptance and social inclusion. Moreover, my evidence exposes a puzzle. In contrast with the low naturalisation rates in the country, the majority of TeO respondents want to naturalise. This suggests that there may be obstacles to immigrants' aspiration to acquire citizenship. Since the financial cost of naturalisation in France is low, other deterrents may include demanding bureaucratic requirements and unequal treatment in the application process based on origins and socio-economic status.

Unexpectedly, in my study for the UK I find evidence of a negative relationship between political interest and naturalisation. That is, the immigrants who are least interested in politics are the most likely to naturalise, and their level of political interest continues to decrease thereafter. These findings suggest that immigrants in the UK do not necessarily value citizenship for its role as political membership. This is a surprising finding given that citizenship bestows the right to vote. Although I could not prove causality, the decrease in political interest following citizenship acquisition is consistent with the low degree of political engagement of the majority population (House of Commons Library 2017).

In Part 2, I turned to the native population and to their views about immigrants naturalising, using original data sources that I put together myself. With two different research designs, one for Britain and one for Italy, I asked what qualifies someone to be a citizen according to the native population / political elite of the country. For the UK I used an innovative experimental design that asked respondents to choose whom to grant citizenship to, according to specific individual characteristics. I find that people have selective preferences for the allocation of citizenship in response to applicants' individual characteristics. British respondents were more likely to grant citizenship to non-Muslims as opposed to Muslims. Moreover, regardless of their political leanings, respondents were more likely to grant citizenship to applicants with higher paying and more socially valued occupations as opposed to those without an occupation. However, I also find a high degree of openness to the inclusion of immigrants as fellow citizens, even among the groups that are most attached to their national identity. This set of findings suggests that societal context plays a part in shaping people's notions of citizenship and their degree of inclusivity. These British preferences align with the conception of good citizenship heralded by political parties since the early 2000s which has emphasised financial contribution as a condition for social rights (Anderson 2011). The reluctance to grant citizenship to those without work might also indicate that the British population associates citizenship with the granting of social rights that is compatible with T.H. Marshall's theory (1950) of citizenship for England. The ease with which British respondents in my experiment assigned citizenship is to be expected in the context of a long history of immigration that is a by-product of the empire (Brubaker 2004).

For Italy, I analysed the discourse used on social media by the two main political parties, the PD and the Lega, in relation to their position on proposed changes to Italian citizenship law. I find that both political parties partially justified their position on the reform in relation to the security threat they perceived to be posed by the low integration of Muslims. However, the Lega's position on the reform relies on more than strong fear and

hostility towards this group; it exposes a xenophobic dislike for the inclusion of all foreigners. Given how successful the Lega was in the national elections that centred around the debate on the *Ius soli* reform, their views are indicative of those of at least part of the general public (Béland 2016). In contrast, only the Lega, representing the right-wing position against the reform, expressed anxiety over the competition introduced by immigrants over resources. They endorsed the populist rhetoric of pitting ‘the people’ against immigrants in the competition over jobs and resources to win the elections (Cleen 2017). Both political parties used the debate around whether to reform Italian citizenship policy to mobilise their voters on a range of other political issues. Moreover, the debate on the proposed reform received high media attention. Overall, the Italian unwillingness to grant citizenship to the children of immigrants signals a reluctance to accept that Italy has long transitioned into being a country of immigration.

### **Contribution**

My thesis contributes quantitative evidence of the role citizenship holds in an age of globalisation where transnational migration has become more frequent and has been increasingly politicised. This quantitative analysis contributes to extant qualitative evidence by systematically testing theories through a deductive approach. Through hypothesis testing, the use of large samples, standardized measures and structured data collection instruments my analysis reveals patterns that are generalisable to the broader population. Research to date had shown that immigrants form complex feelings of belonging that transcend the origin-destination divide (Waite and Cook 2011). However, the lack of standardised operationalisation of such concepts such as national sense of belonging meant we could not investigate how and why people differ in developing such feelings, and how they relate to the acquisition of citizenship. Similarly, debates on the criteria for citizenship acquisition have been dominated by political theorists and legal scholars who investigate who should

be a citizen according to the liberal tradition and by historians who search for historical explanation of current citizenship (Harpaz; and Mateos 2019; Bauböck and Guiraudon 2009; Bosniak 2006; Kymlicka and Norman 1994). Yet, this literature lacks evidence on what existing citizens' views are on this issue. Given the almost complete absence of such examination, I employ both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The former allows me to identify generalisable patterns of preferences, whereas through the latter I achieve a nuanced investigation of narratives.

Thus, the core strength of my contribution lies in the data sources and methods I employed. These allowed me to overcome some of the challenges I outlined in Chapter 1 that prevented us from addressing some of the pressing puzzles that have evolved. In Part I I used survey data that enabled me to discern the temporal ordering of naturalisation relative to the development of national sense of belonging and political engagement. Employing UKHLS data for the UK I was able to observe the change in citizenship status. With logistic regression and with the IPWRA methodological approach this enabled me to further isolate how both national identity and political engagement change in association with the acquisition of citizenship. Employing Teo data for France allowed me to measure national sense of belonging in relation to the intention to naturalise, rather than naturalisation itself. I could therefore observe a process that happens before, as opposed to during or after, the acquisition of citizenship. This is an important contribution to extant evidence that has relied on cross-sectional data, where these changes are observed at one point in time.

In addition to this longitudinal perspective, I also operationalised concepts that are theorised as multidimensional and complex in the literature, but that are typically poorly measured in quantitative research. This is especially the case for my Chapter 3 where I construct a multidimensional measure of national sense of belonging that includes both personal and relational belonging, enabling me to identify a replicable typology of belonging. I used this construct for the analysis of citizenship intentions, but it could be

applicable to other areas of interest where belonging may play a part, such as political participation.

In part II I employed both an experimental and a qualitative research design. As I mentioned, the lack of readily available data on attitudes and popular narratives of citizenship, prompted me to collect my own datasets. With these two different sets of data and associated methodologies, I demonstrate how such different approaches can contribute to our understanding of popular constructions of citizenship. The experimental methodology I applied to the survey data I collected allowed me deliver several contributions. Not only was I able to examine attitudes of which we knew little, but I also did this whilst overcoming crucial limitations in the quantitative study of attitudes. First, most surveys are subject to the risk of social desirability bias whereby direct questioning exposes respondents to the opportunity to hide their true attitudes in order to conform with social norms. An experimental design like the one I employed overcomes this by putting respondents in front of a task, within which the attitudinal question of interest is hidden. Second, and most importantly, my design allows me to single out how immigrant attributes drive people's attitudes towards them. This is a broader contribution to the field of attitudes towards immigrants where questions are typically asked about broad groups. Instead, I am able to separate out clusters of characteristics and to show that this can lead to different conclusions about what matters in the eye of the respondent. The application of discourse analysis to a political debate had different goals. Through this approach I was able to analyse text data in different forms, from video, to social media posts and articles. I analysed a debate that is ongoing and that takes place in many settings and under different conditions. A qualitative in depth analysis of such text allowed me to capture the arguments made in the debate and to identify the nuances that shape them, including what was not said. Together, a quantitative and a qualitative investigation can illuminate a fuller picture of how the different actors, political parties and their voters, establish citizenship boundaries.

Beyond methodological approaches, the contribution of my thesis to our under-

standing of citizenship in an age of migration lies in the combining of the point of view of those who do not have citizenship and who may seek it, with those who hold it and decide who merits it. My work illustrates how these are two sides of the same coin. Immigrant's experience and view of naturalisation is shaped by social norms and citizenship regimes. In turn, the native population's own view of citizenship is morphed by the addition of new members. The majority population does not usually decide the terms of naturalisation. However, citizens vote the governments who do. Moreover, attitudes about citizenship go beyond criteria for naturalisation. They expose views about who belongs, permanently and equally. Both immigrants and natives react to each other in an evolving dynamic process of citizenship and nationality construction. It follows that to critically analyse the value and function of citizenship we need to consider the perspectives of everyone involved.

### **Limitations**

My work is not exempt from limitations. In part I, although my longitudinal analysis constitutes an advancement compared to extant cross-sectional analysis, I could not infer causal mechanisms. The lack of exogenous variation means that I can observe change, but cannot rule out alternative explanations and the possibility of uncontrolled sources of endogeneity. Relatedly, I should note that I could not completely isolate the extent to which different dimensions of citizenship, legal status, political participation and national sense of belonging, matter to immigrants. For example, a socio-economic factor, such as having a job in the country of residence, may have an impact on the decision to naturalise for several reasons. It decreases the costs of the application process, it provides a financial incentive to stay permanently and it fosters a sense of rootedness in the country. Similarly, more than one mechanism can explain why a feeling of rejection from the community shapes the intention to naturalise. Citizenship can legitimise one's belonging, but

it can also be a means to socio-economic integration, for example by lowering the risk of discrimination. Hence, I cannot delineate precisely the extent to which competing mechanisms, socio-economic integration or sense of belonging for example, weigh in the likelihood of naturalisation. Notwithstanding this caveat, my research clearly demonstrates that a cost-benefit analysis approach is insufficient to the understanding of the drivers and effects of naturalisation.

A limiting aspect of the two chapters in Part 2 is that we have little understanding of what native citizens know about the institution of citizenship and how they define it. Because citizenship is multidimensional and granted at birth, people may attach different meanings to it and have little knowledge about what it entails. It is unlikely that the majority population knows what benefits and rights are restricted to citizenship status. Do native citizens know what they themselves have a right to by virtue of their citizenship status? Do they know what welfare rights immigrants are entitled to if they are not citizens? Moreover, people are likely to differ in how important their citizenship status is to their sense of identity. These differences in knowledge and perception are likely to affect people's views of new members' claim to citizenship. More insight into this aspect can help elucidate the reasons for variation or lack thereof in terms of popular attitudes and narratives around national membership.

Finally, I am limited in the extent to which I can piece together the views of immigrants and natives within each country. This is because I did not examine both perspectives within each country of interest. Relatedly, my research designs were not comparative in nature, which prevents me from drawing comparisons between countries.

### **Where to go from here**

In my research I brought to bear different data sources, methodologies and methods to investigate citizenship for immigrants and the native-born. None of these is sufficient to



answer a given question perfectly, but together they contribute to illuminating different aspects of citizenship. Future empirical research should continue to use innovative research designs to deal with the complexities of the concept to further our understanding of citizenship acquisition and the attitudes related to it.

Going forward, we need better insight into how the different dimensions of citizenship interact in shaping the intention to naturalise and naturalisation itself. This may require directly questioning immigrants on why they want to naturalise. Both of my first two studies (Chapter 2 and 3) suggest that motivations are complex. For example, although I speculate on the underlying mechanisms that lead someone with a conflictual sense of national belonging to want to naturalise as French, I do not know about them for sure. Direct survey questioning about motivations can elucidate whether those with a conflictual sense of belonging expect citizenship to lower the risk of discrimination, to recognise their feeling of belonging or both. More broadly, insight on this could clarify why and how socio-demographic factors, such as having a family, shape motivations to naturalise.

A surprising finding that warrants further investigation is that of a negative relationship between naturalisation and political engagement. UKHLS data allows to monitor whether the nature of this relationship is the same for future cohorts of immigrants naturalising. However, we need survey questions aimed at measuring political engagement specifically for immigrants. Such questions should allow researchers to distinguish between attachment, including political interest, to the country of origin and the UK. Only when we know if we are measuring political engagement in the UK or elsewhere can we question the mechanisms driving it.

The question of what motivates immigrants to naturalise is also closely related to the question of whether and how immigrants benefit from acquiring citizenship. My findings for the UK provide a first piece of evidence that more research on the effects of citizenship acquisition on national belonging and political engagement is worth doing. Longi-

tudinal surveys rarely record a change in citizenship status, but the UKHLS (2017) has recently started asking non-naturalised immigrants about their citizenship status every year. This will allow a better understanding of the effects of citizenship on various outcomes. Nonetheless, however complete the data are, isolating the effects of naturalisation remains challenging. This is because many of the factors that we expect to be affected by naturalisation, such as national sense of belonging and political participation, are also motivations for naturalisation. In this increasingly digitalised world, data sources other than surveys can provide a better opportunity to isolate the effect of citizenship acquisition on a host of outcomes. Administrative data is one example of data collected for other purposes that can be used for the study of citizenship. Peters et al. (2016) for example study the change in policy regime to investigate what drives naturalisation rates.

Asking whether citizenship benefits immigrants and, in turn, society, is also an ideological question. By suggesting that citizenship may accelerate or even increase the chances of full integration I advance the possibility that citizenship is a means to full membership, rather than only its official recognition. This tension around what citizenship is meant to be is evident in the debate around the *Ius soli* reform in Italy. It is perhaps the permanence and irreversibility of citizenship, including the fact that it can be passed on, that makes some reluctant to see it as anything other than the end point of integration.

To improve our understanding of people's beliefs about who should become a citizen future research should look more closely at natives' notion and knowledge both of their own citizenship and of naturalisation for immigrants. In my investigation of the meaning of citizenship for immigrants my reference point was citizenship as legal status, political membership and national belonging. However, these dimensions may matter to different degrees in how relevant they are for native citizens' understanding and valuing of citizenship. For example, the fact that native citizens make little use of their right to vote questions the importance of political engagement as a salient dimension of citi-

zenship (House of Commons Library 2017). Since citizenship for European natives is acquired by birthright, it is given for granted. Thus, it may be challenging for researchers to unpack the meaning people associate with citizenship. An analysis of political and media discourse could provide an indirect avenue to getting at this question. Now that people's opinions about their views of the world are exposed on social media, we have an avenue to collect and analyse these policy preferences directly from the source. Policy debates around the reforming of citizenship law, such as the Italian one, provide the perfect opportunity for this type of analysis. Relatedly, we need more evidence on what the general public knows about naturalisation. Although lay people are not typically in charge of deciding whether immigrants should be granted citizenship or not, they vote for governments and the naturalisation policies they propose. Direct survey questioning could illustrate whether people conflate naturalisation and permanent residence, and the entitlements that come with them. Furthermore, with my research I have shown how attitudes towards the inclusion of immigrants as co-citizens are located in national histories and narratives. Goodman (2014), among others, has illustrated how individual historical paths have led different countries to reach similar citizenship policies in the 2000s. Future research could directly investigate whether there is convergence over preferences for naturalisation criteria among the public. The same survey experiment across different countries could capture the degree of similarity in preferences between national groups. Such preferences should then be analysed in the context of national histories of immigration, citizenship policy and national identity. This type of comparative research design could directly elucidate the extent to which convergence is apparent or motivated by similar conceptions of citizenship.

My research has answered some questions and raised others. Despite its much presaged demise, the nation-state is here to stay (Archibugi and Held 1995). In a world where processes and institutions operate on a global scale and people move across borders, membership of the nation-state matters more than ever. Nation-states remain the

chief authority that establishes the law that defines the boundaries within which we operate. Citizenship in democracies grants equal treatment, claims and rights. But membership of the nation-state also matters to people: existing nationals care about what new members they are going to share their citizenship status with; immigrants care about their voluntarily acquired citizenship as a meaningful social identity. While legally citizenship is clearly defined, as a social identity its boundaries are not quite so circumscribed. As researchers, we must be open to people differing in where they mark the contours of what citizenship is to them. Ultimately, the value and function individuals ascribe to their citizenship status will inform how they act upon it. Through citizenship we can understand people's conceptions of national identity and belonging, their attitudes towards outsiders and the use they make of fundamental rights and privileges, such as the right to vote.

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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

**Sample characteristics**

Tables A1 below shows the list of variables and associated frequencies in the sample used for the analysis. Table A2 gives a detailed breakdown of respondents' country of birth and associated sample frequencies, although the Human Development Index is used instead.

**Table A1:** descriptive characteristics of the sample by citizenship status

Variable	Non-citizens	New citizens
Rented home	60.9%	56.5%
Owned home	39.1%	43.5%
Years of education	22.1	20.7
No education attained in the UK	72.2%	72.7%
At least some education attained in the UK	27.8%	27.3%
Interview conducted in English	97.5%	92.9%
Translated interview	2.5%	7%
Age	39.2	37.5
Single/Widowed/Separated/No co-resident partner/Divorced	27%	28.1%
With non-UK born partner	47.9%	52.4%
With UK-born partner	25.1%	19.4%
Male	39.7%	40%
Female	60.3%	60%
No children under age 16 in household	47.3%	46.5%
Children under age 16 in household	26.7%	53.5%
No children born in the UK	73.3%	71.9%
At least one child born in the UK	27.3%	28.1%
Gross household income (month before interview)	3,289	3,155
Human Development Index of country of birth	0.8	0.7
Country of birth not in Europe	54%	80.5%
Country of birth in Europe	45.9%	19.4%
Country of birth not part of the Commonwealth	62.6%	37.6%
Country of birth part of the Commonwealth	37.4%	62.4%
Unemployed	8.5%	7.3%
Employed/self-employed	61.5%	61.3%
Other	30%	31.4%
Not at all interested in politics	29.9%	33.8%
Not very interested in politics	27.8%	32%

Fairly interested in politics	29.6%	26.7%
Very interested in politics	12.7%	8.9%
Not familiar with the political system	64%	57.8%
Familiar with the political system	36%	42.2%
National identity: Other	89.1%	81%
National identity: British	5.2%	14%
National identity: Both 'other' and 'British'	5.7%	4.9%
Total observations	370	514

Note: Proportions for categorical variables and averages for continuous variables.  
Only complete cases used.

**Table A2:** Sample respondents' country of birth

Country of birth	Frequency	Percent
India	105	11.9
Poland	88	10
Republic of Ireland	73	8.3
Pakistan	59	6.7
Bangladesh	38	4.3
Nigeria	37	4.2
Sri Lanka	31	3.5
USA	29	3.3
Zimbabwe	26	2.9
South Africa	19	2.2
Ghana	18	2
France	17	1.9
Germany	17	1.9
Italy	17	1.9
Malaysia	15	1.7
Portugal	14	1.6
China / Hong Kong	13	1.5
Jamaica	13	1.5
Philippines	12	1.4
Australia	11	1.2
Spain	9	1
Hungary	9	1
Somalia	9	1
Sweden	9	1
Lithuania	8	0.9
New Zealand	7	0.8
Thailand	7	0.8
Mauritius	6	0.7
the Netherlands	6	0.7
Turkey	5	0.6
Kenya	5	0.6

Uganda	5	0.6
Angola	5	0.6
Belgium	5	0.6
Brazil	5	0.6
Indonesia	5	0.6
Japan	5	0.6
Latvia	5	0.6
Canada	4	0.5
Algeria	4	0.5
Czech Republic	4	0.5
Democratic Republic of Congo	4	0.5
Gambia	4	0.5
Malawi	4	0.5
Nepal	4	0.5
Romania	4	0.5
Trinidad and Tobago	4	0.5
Ukraine	4	0.5
Vietnam	4	0.5
Austria	3	0.3
Barbados	3	0.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	0.3
Bulgaria	3	0.3
Mexico	3	0.3
Norway	2	0.3
St Vincent and the grenadines	3	0.3
Yemen	3	0.3
Denmark	2	0.2
Eritrea	2	0.2
Greece	2	0.2
Guinea-Bissau	2	0.2
Guyana	2	0.2
Iran	2	0.2
Iraq	2	0.2
Ivory Coast	2	0.2
Mozambique	2	0.2
Sierra Leone	2	0.2
Singapore	2	0.2
Slovakia	2	0.2
Switzerland	2	0.2
Zambia	2	0.2
Afghanistan	1	0.1

Albania	1	0.1
Argentina	1	0.1
Bahamas	1	0.1
Cameroon	1	0.1
Cape Verde	1	0.1
Finland	1	0.1
Grenada	1	0.1
Israel	1	0.1
Korea, republic of	1	0.1
Lebanon	1	0.1
Libya	1	0.1
Madagascar	1	0.1
Malta	1	0.1
Moldova	1	0.1
Palestine	1	0.1
Qatar	1	0.1
Russia	1	0.1
Serbia	1	0.1
Seychelles	1	0.1
Slovenia	1	0.1
Sudan	1	0.1
Total	884	100

**Analysis: national identification, political knowledge and attitudes before citizenship acquisition**

Table A3 below shows the full results for the probit model of the probability of naturalization by wave 6. Figure 1 in the main paper graphically depicts only the coefficients of the variables of interest: national identification, familiarity with the political system and interest in politics.

**Table A3:** Probability of naturalisation by wave 6

Independent variable	Average Marginal Effect	Standard error
Rented home	0	(.)
Owned home	0.13***	(0.04)
Age left education	-0.00	(0.00)
No education attained in the UK	0	(.)
At least some education attained in the UK	0.04	(0.05)
Interview conducted in English	0	(.)
Translated interview	0.04	(0.09)

Age	0.00	(0.01)
Age squared	-0.00	(0.00)
Single/Widowed /Separated/No co-resident partner/Divorced	0	(.)
With non UK-born partner	0.02	(0.05)
With UK-born partner	-0.05	(0.06)
Male	0	(.)
Female	0.02	(0.04)
No children	0	(.)
Children	-0.07	(0.05)
No children under age 16 in household	0	(.)
Children under age 16 in household	-0.01	(0.06)
Years of residence	0.00	(0.00)
Gross household income (month before interview)	-0.00	(0.01)
Human Development Index	-0.01***	(0.00)
Country of birth not in Europe	0	(.)
Country of birth in Europe	-0.17*	(0.06)
Country of birth not Commonwealth	0	(.)
Country of birth in Commonwealth	-0.00	(0.05)
Unemployed	0	(.)
Empl/self-employed	0.11*	(0.06)
Other	0.11	(0.07)
Not at all interested in politics	0	(.)
Not very interested in politics	-0.01	0.05
Fairly interested in politics	-0.10*	(0.06)
Very interested in politics	-0.15**	(0.07)
Not familiar with the political system	0	(.)
Familiar with the political system	0.11**	(0.04)
National identity: other	0	(.)
National identity: British/both identities	0.12***	(0.06)
Observations	856	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Gross household income is divided by 1000

HDI index is multiplied by 100

The observed average probability of citizenship acquisition is 0.42

The total number of observations is 626 following the use of appropriate weights.

Table A4 shows the correlation between interest in politics and familiarity of the political system in the sample. Because the two variables correlate positively, if respondents were thinking of their country of birth in answering the question about

their interest in politics, they would be less familiar with the British political system.

**Table A4:** The correlation between interest in politics and familiarity with the political system

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Other	0	(.)
Familiar with the political system	0.98***	(0.06)
Constant	1.83***	(0.04)
Observations	884	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table A5 shows the positive correlation between interest in politics and the likelihood of identifying as British. It suggests that respondents are not thinking of their home country when answering the question about political interest.

**Table A5:** The correlation between interest in politics and national identification

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Other	0	(.)
British/Both	0.36***	(0.10)
Constant	2.15***	(0.04)
Observations	884	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table A6 shows the level of interest in politics for sample respondents, those who do not acquire citizenship by wave 6 and those who do acquire citizenship by wave 6; for respondents outside the sample, including immigrants who had acquired citizenship before wave 1 and native-born citizens. It shows that, among all groups, interest in politics is the highest, expressed by ‘very interested’ for non-citizen immigrants.

**Table A6:** Interest in politics at wave 1 among natives, already citizens, new citizens (who acquire citizenship between wave 1 and 6) and non-citizens

Interest in politics	Non-citizens	New citizens	Already citizens	Natives
Not at all interested	26.7%	28.9%	22.4%	22%
Not very	25.7	31.3%	28.4%	28.3%

Fairly	32.3%	30%	36.5%	37.8%
Very	15.1%	9.6%	12.7%	11.9%
Observations	514	370	2,313	21,101

Note: Estimates with wave 1 cross-sectional weights

The sample of non-citizens and new citizens is the one used in models 1,2,3 (complete cases and at least two years of residence).

As a sensitivity check I re-estimated the probit model on a restricted sample of immigrants who were already eligible for citizenship at wave 1, i.e. they had been living in the UK for at least six years by wave 1.

**Table A7:** Probability of naturalisation by wave 6 on sensitivity sample (at least six years of residence)

Independent Variable	Average Marginal Effect	Standard Error
Rented home	0	(.)
Owned home	0.07	(0.05)
Age left education	-0.00	(0.00)
No education in the UK	0	(.)
At least some education in the UK	0.08	(0.06)
English interview	0	(.)
Translated interview	-0.10	(0.09)
Age	0.01	(0.01)
Age squared	-0.00	(0.00)
Single/Widowed /Separated/Divorced	0	(.)
With non UK-born partner	-0.03	(0.06)
With UK-born partner	-0.10	(0.07)
Male	0	(.)
Female	0.05	(0.05)
No children under age 16 in household	0	(.)
Children under age 16 in household	-0.04	(0.07)
No children born in the UK	0	(.)
At least one child born in the UK	-0.04	(0.07)
Years of residence	0.00	(0.00)
Gross household income (month before interview)	-0.00	(0.01)
Human Development Index	-0.01***	(0.00)
Country of birth not in Europe	0	(.)
Country of birth in Europe	-0.04	(0.07)
Country of birth not Commonwealth	0	(.)
Country of birth in Commonwealth	0.10	(0.07)
Unemployed	0	(.)
Empl/self-employed	0.12*	(0.07)



Other	0.18**	(0.08)
Not at all interested in politics	0	(.)
Not very interested in politics	-0.09	0.07
Fairly interested in politics	-0.16**	(0.07)
Very interested in politics	-0.24***	(0.09)
Not familiar with political system	0	(.)
Familiar with political system	0.05	(0.05)
National identity: other	0	(.)
National identity: British/both identities	0.21***	(0.07)
Observations	531	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Gross household income is divided by 1000

HDI index is multiplied by 100

The observed average probability of citizenship acquisition is 0.37.

### **Analysis: national identification and political engagement after citizenship acquisition**

#### *Matching*

The first step of the analysis involves matching on the propensity score to balance the distribution of covariates in the treated and control group. The propensity score represents the probability of receiving the treatment for individual  $i$  given the observed covariates:  $e_i(X_i) = P(T_i = 1/X_i)$  (Rosenbaum and Rubin 1983).

I estimate the propensity score using logistic regression where the covariates are the explanatory variables described in addition to the value of the outcome variable at wave 1 for each outcome. For instance, when estimating the effect of citizenship acquisition on the level of interest in politics in wave 6, the logistic regression to estimate the propensity score also includes interest in politics at wave 1.

The second step employs regression whereby propensity scores are used as inverse weights (IPW) to weigh the treated and control sub-samples based on their probability of receiving treatment. The contributions of respondents are weighted by the inverse of the propensity score for the treated and by the inverse of the

complement of the propensity score for the controls. The propensity score therefore reweights individuals to give more weight to the ones in the treatment group less likely to receive treatment and the ones in the control group more likely to receive treatment. Regression is either linear or logistic, depending on the outcome. I employ the same set of covariates for this second stage as the ones used to estimate the propensity score.

Tables A8 to A12b present tests for balance of covariates between treated and untreated observations. In the analysis I also use the “overlap(newvar)” option which indicates if the common support assumption is violated for any observation. This is never the case. Although the analysis is firstly done through stages, here only post-estimation imbalance checks are presented. A significant result is evidence of imbalance. Full results are also included.

**Table A8:** Covariate balance summary for political engagement

	Raw	Weighted
Number of observations	884	649.0
Treated observations	370	441.5
Control observations	514	442.5

**Table A9a:** Average Treatment Effect of naturalisation on familiarity with the political system

Familiarity with the political system	Coefficient	Robust Standard error
Citizen (ATE)	-.01	.03
Non-citizen (POmean)	.43	.02
Observations	884	

Overidentification test for covariate balance. A significant result is evidence of imbalance

H0: Covariates are balanced:

$$\text{chi2}(15) = 14.423$$

Prob > chi2 = 0.636

**Table A9b:** Average Treatment Effect on the Treated of *naturalisation* on *familiarity with the political system*

Familiarity with the political system	Coefficient	Robust Standard error
Citizen (ATT)	.01	.03
Non-citizen (POmean)	.43	.03
Observations	884	

Overidentification test for covariate balance. A significant result is evidence of imbalance

H0: Covariates are balanced:

chi2(15) = 14.05

Prob > chi2 = 0.59

**Table A10a:** Average Treatment Effect of *naturalisation* on *interest in politics*

Interest in politics	Coefficient	Robust Standard error
Citizen (ATE)	-.11**	.06
Non-citizen (POmean)	2.26	.04
Observations	884	

Overidentification test for covariate balance

H0: Covariates are balanced:

chi2(15) = 14.42

Prob > chi2 = 0.63

**Table A10b:** Average Treatment Effect on the Treated of *naturalisation* on *interest in politics*

Interest in politics	Coefficient	Robust Standard error
Citizen (ATT)	-.14**	.07
Non-citizen (POmean)	2.25	.06
Observations	884	

Overidentification test for covariate balance

H0: Covariates are balanced:

$$\text{chi2}(15) = 13.64$$

$$\text{Prob} > \text{chi2} = 0.55$$

**Table A11:** Covariate balance summary

	Raw	Weighted
Number of observations	485	485.0
Treated observations	228	247.2
Control observations	257	237.8

**Table A12a:** Average Treatment Effect of *naturalisation* on the *importance of being British*

Importance of being British	Coefficient	Robust Standard error
Citizen (ATE)	1.10***	.29
Non-citizen (POmean)	5.17	.20
Observations	485	

Overidentification test for covariate balance

H0: Covariates are balanced:

$$\text{chi2}(15) = 22.96$$

$$\text{Prob} > \text{chi2} = 0.19$$

**Table A12b:** Average Treatment Effect on the Treated of *naturalisation* on the *importance of being British*

Importance of being British	Coefficient	Robust Standard error
Citizen (ATT)	1.24***	.28
Non-citizen (POmean)	5.59	.24
Observations	485	

Overidentification test for covariate balance

H0: Covariates are balanced:

$$\text{chi2}(15) = 14.67$$

$$\text{Prob} > \text{chi2} = 0.68$$

## APPENDIX B

**Sample characteristics****Table B1:** Weighted descriptive statistics of sample selection

Variable	Non-sample (%)	Sample (%)
<i>Intention to naturalise</i>		
Intend to	-	57.8
Do not intend to	-	42.2
<i>Eligibility</i>		
Not eligible	1.71	16.06
Eligible	98.26	83.81
Missing	0.03	0.14
<i>Education</i>		
No qualification	20.35	25.79
Primary	14.07	16.38
Professional certificate	16.21	11.63
Bac	15.03	13.36
University	28.37	21.28
Current student	3.57	6.76
No response	2.39	4.79
<i>Income</i>		
Bottom decile	12.22	17.88
10-25 <sup>th</sup> centile	7.44	10.60
25-50 <sup>th</sup> centile	28.58	29.34
50-75 <sup>th</sup> centile	28.70	22.93
75-90 <sup>th</sup> centile	9.46	6.53
Top decile	5.17	3.62
No response		
<i>Origin</i>		
Algeria (ref)	13.18	12.38
Morocco	17.02	12.53
Tunisia	4.82	4.56
Sub-Saharan Africa	14.07	14.13
Southeast Asia	5.92	1.05
Turkey	5.14	6.73
Southern Europe	15.56	19.55
Other Europe	10.62	16.78
Other World	13.68	12.30

Total (n)	3537.24	4721.76
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### Latent Class Model (LCM) specification

#### *Necessary and sufficient condition for identification of LCM*

The number of latent variable classes that fit the data must satisfy the necessary and sufficient condition for identification that the degrees of freedom (df) are bigger than zero:

df = a+b where

a =  $(K_1 \times K_2 \times \dots \times K_n)$  where  $K_i$  is the number of levels of the observed indicator i

b =  $(C - 1) + C \times [(K_1 - 1) + \dots + (K_n - 1)]$  where C is the number of latent classes

**Table B2:** Goodness of fit statistics

Number of classes	Observations	df	AIC	BIC
Three class	4,541	35	$1.72 \times 10^5$	$1.72 \times 10^5$
Four class	4,541	47	$1.70 \times 10^5$	$1.70 \times 10^5$
Five class	4,541	57	$1.69 \times 10^5$	$1.69 \times 10^5$
Six class	4,541	66	$1.69 \times 10^5$	$1.69 \times 10^5$

**Table B3:** Composition of belonging types-Weighted belonging types by key socio-demographic variable (row percentages)

	Approaching belonging (%)	Full belonging (%)	Conflictual belonging (%)	At home but apart (%)	Excluded (%)	Total	Total (n)
<i>Origin:</i>							
Algeria	30.37	36.55	8.47	18.59	6.02	100	462
Morocco	32.72	31.94	12.65	17.27	5.43	100	439
Tunisia	27.4	35.59	11.98	19.49	5.54	100	156
Sub-Saharan Africa	31.67	27.89	12.22	17.6	10.62	100	922
Southeast Asia	40.37	23.81	3.25	25.99	6.57	100	126
Turkey	32.45	24.3	7.28	30.62	5.35	100	535
Southern Europe	26.1	44.25	3.03	24.8	1.82	100	818
Other Europe	35.1	27.55	3	30.9	3.44	100	687
Other World	33.55	22.4	4.48	33.12	6.45	100	396

<i>Income:</i>							
No response	31.96	32.99	6.37	22.83	5.84	100	400
<i>Education</i>							
No qualification	31.61	31.82	6.23	24.55	5.79	100	1,171.1
Primary	31.31	36.5	4.74	22.84	4.61	100	743.9
Professional certificate	23.04	45.95	10.73	15.71	4.57	100	528.3
Bac	33.73	29.93	6.55	25.88	3.91	100	606.7
University	32.75	25.88	8.52	26.49	6.36	100	966.4
Current student	32.33	28.48	8.15	24.44	6.6	100	306.9
No response	35.15	21.63	4.35	33.99	4.89	100	217.6
<i>Eligibility for citizenship</i>							
Not eligible	37.35	17.01	3.58	35.79	6.28	100	729.4
Eligible	30.19	34.93	7.76	21.96	5.16	100	3,806.6
<i>Relationship status</i>							
Single	31.08	32.14	8.91	21.65	6.22	100	1,379.6
Married French spouse	31.17	31.43	7.64	24.3	5.47	100	923.8
Married foreign spouse	32.64	30.27	5.27	27.18	4.65	100	1,878.2
Widowed/Divorced	25.6	41.98	8.04	19.17	5.21	100	359.3
Total	31.31	32	7.08	24.28	5.34	100	4,541

## Structural Equation Model

### *Details of estimation of the structural equation model*

The Stata command *gsem* is used to estimate the structural equation model. Stata does not allow for a latent construct to be used as independent variable in a structural equation model. We therefore estimate the model for the five latent class and add equality constraints for all other explanatory variables in the model to be the same across classes. That is, the coefficients of other covariates do not depend on the latent construct (e.g. the coefficient for age is the same for class 1, class 2 etc.). To then estimate each class coefficient and its standard error we calculate the difference in

intercepts between each class and the class used as reference category (class 1, i.e. ‘Approaching belonging’). We use the command *lincom*. Table B4 includes the logistic coefficients converted to odds ratios for each independent variable and for the intercepts for each class. Table B5 illustrates the calculated difference in class intercepts also converted in odds ratios.

**Table B4:** Odds ratios of the intention to naturalise

Variable	Odds ratio (intent)
<i>Generation:</i> G1.5 (ref)	1
G1	0.986 (0.134)
<i>Eligibility for citizenship:</i> Not eligible (ref)	1
Eligible	1.129 (0.158)
<i>Origin:</i> Algeria (ref)	1
Morocco	0.716* (0.132)
Tunisia	0.85 (0.221)
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.194 (0.218)
Southeast Asia	0.484* (0.18)
Turkey	0.385*** (0.073)
Southern Europe	0.079*** (0.014)
Other Europe	0.165*** (0.03)
Other World	0.625** (0.122)
<i>Age</i>	0.943*** (0.005)
<i>Gender:</i> Male (ref)	1
Female	1.099 (0.109)



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<i>Legal status at entry: Asylum</i>	1
(ref)	
Student	0.204*** (0.05)
Worker	0.268*** (0.057)
Spouse	0.235*** (0.059)
Family	0.291*** (0.063)
Other	0.36*** (0.087)
Exempt	0.175*** (0.043)
No response	0.26*** (0.069)
<i>Education: No qualification</i> (ref)	1
Primary	1.007 (0.144)
Professional certificate	1.213 (0.197)
Bac	1.399** (0.221)
University	0.994 (0.156)
Current student	0.701 (0.174)
No response	0.689* (0.138)
<i>Employment status: In work</i> (ref)	1
Unemployed (previously worked)	0.882 (0.101)
Never worked	0.627*** (0.098)
<i>Income: bottom decile</i> (ref)	1
10-25 <sup>th</sup> centile	1.418* (0.263)
25-50 <sup>th</sup> centile	1.271 (0.217)

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50-75 <sup>th</sup> centile	1.543** (0.322)
75-90 <sup>th</sup> centile	1.222 (0.234)
Top decile	0.826 (0.24)
No response	1.101 (0.23)
<i>Home ownership: Owner (ref)</i>	1
Renter	1.144 (0.116)
Free housing	0.927 (0.214)
<i>Language of interview: not French(ref)</i>	1
French	0.806 (0.129)
<i>Relationship status: Single (ref)</i>	1
Married French spouse	1.845*** (0.293)
Married foreign spouse/NR	1.477*** (0.211)
Widowed/Divorced	1.787*** (0.356)
<i>Number of children: One child (ref)</i>	1
Two children	0.931 (0.134)
3 or more children	0.829 (0.119)
No children	0.891 (0.14)
<i>Intercept Class 1</i>	91.428*** (42.760)
<i>Intercept Class 2</i>	172.787*** (80.642)
<i>Intercept Class 3</i>	208.025*** (107.959)
<i>Intercept Class 4</i>	50.022*** (23.216)

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<i>Intercept Class 5</i>	35.842*** (17.453)
Observations	4,541

Note: Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\*p<.001 \*\*p<.05 \*p<.1

Non-linear quadratic effects of age were excluded as non-significant.

**Table B5:** Difference between class intercepts

Class	Odds Ratio
Approaching Belonging	1
Full Belonging	1.88*** (.26)
Conflictual Belonging	2.26*** (.62)
At Home but Apart	.54*** (.78)
Excluded	.40*** (.10)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\*p<.001 \*\*p<.05 \*p<.1

*Sensitivity check*

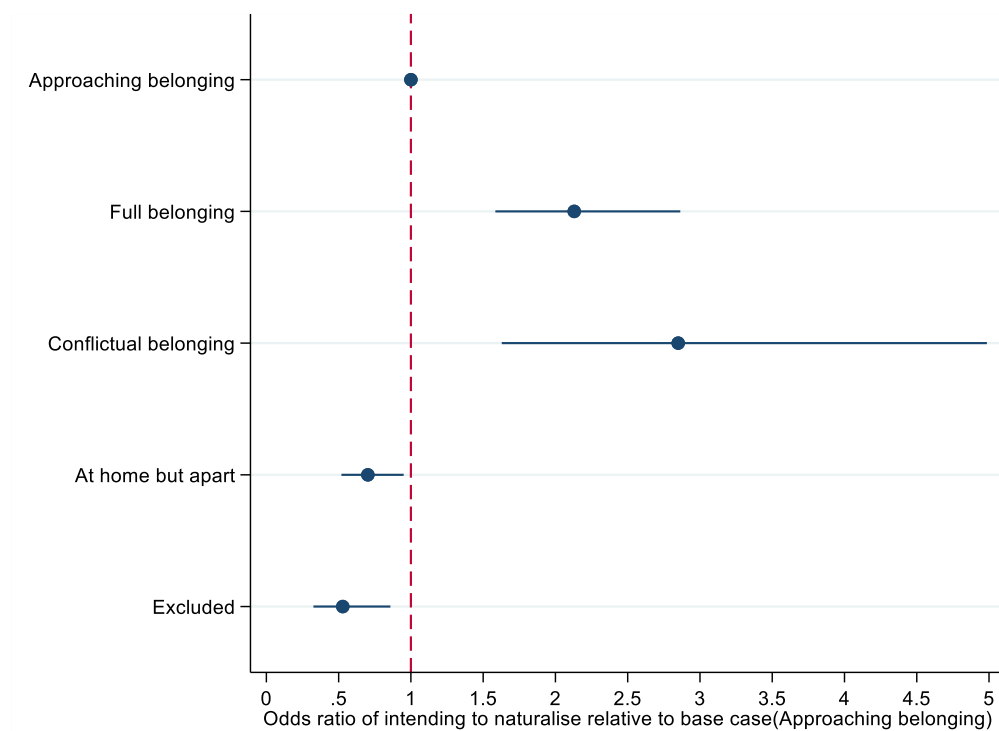
**Table B6:** Class distribution and marginal predicted means on respondents eligible for naturalisation

	Approaching full belonging	Full belonging	Conflictual belonging	At home but apart	Excluded
Pr(class)	34%	29%	9%	20%	8%
Probability of:					
<i>I feel at home in</i>					
<i>France:</i>					
Totally agree	0.90	0.39	0.57	0.40	0.09
Agree	0.08	0.53	0.35	0.33	0.33
Disagree	0	0.07	0.07	0.15	0.32
Totally disagree	0	0	0.01	0.11	0.26
<i>I feel French:</i>					
Totally agree	0.66	0	0.31	0.02	0.02
Agree	0.24	0.51	0.45	0	0.04
Disagree	0.09	0.45	0.12	0.02	0.19
Totally disagree	0	0.03	0.05	0.96	0.89
<i>Others see me as</i>					
<i>French:</i>					

Totally agree	0.46	0	0.09	0.03	0.01
Agree	0.31	0.27	0.21	0.09	0
Disagree	0.11	0.43	0.29	0.14	0.10
Totally disagree	0.11	0.30	0.42	0.74	0.89
<i>Discrimination</i>	0.06	0.11	0.59	0.04	0.56
<i>Racism</i>	0.18	0.11	1	0.1	0.68

Note: Total sample is of 3,867

**Figure B1:** Odds ratios of belonging types on the probability of intending to naturalise for respondents who are eligible for citizenship



## APPENDIX C

**Table C1:** Occupational distribution for foreign-born and UK-born workers in 2017

Occupation	Eu		Non EU		UK born	
	Number (thousands)	%	Number (thousands)	%	Number (thousands)	%
Managerial	167	7.1	350	11	2,681	10.6
Professional	382	16.2	819	25.8	5,017	19.9
Associate professional	246	10.5	369	11.6	3,819	15.2
Administrative	156	6.6	257	8.1	2,730	10.8
Skilled trades	300	12.7	221	7	2,689	10.7
Personal service	186	7.9	325	10.3	2,402	9.5
Sales	141	6	238	7.5	2,003	8
Processing	283	12	210	6.6	1,460	5.8
Elementary occupation	491	20.9	382	12.1	2,395	9.5
Total	2,354	100	3,172	100	25,196	100

Source: Cinzia Renzio's analysis of Labour Force Survey, Q1-Q4. Occupational categories derived from the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2000)

(<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-labour-market-an-overview/>)

**Table C2:** Largest immigrant groups in the UK in 2017

Rank	Country if birth	Number (thousands)	Percentage share of total population
1	Poland	922	9.8
2	India	829	8.8
3	Pakistan	522	5.6
4	Ireland	390	4.1
5	Romania	390	4.1
6	Germany	318	3.4
7	Bangladesh	263	2.8
8	Italy	232	2.5
9	South Africa	228	2.4
10	China	216	2.3

Source: adapted from ONS Population of the UK by nationality and country of birth, table 1.3 and 2.3 (<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview/>)

### Technical note on method

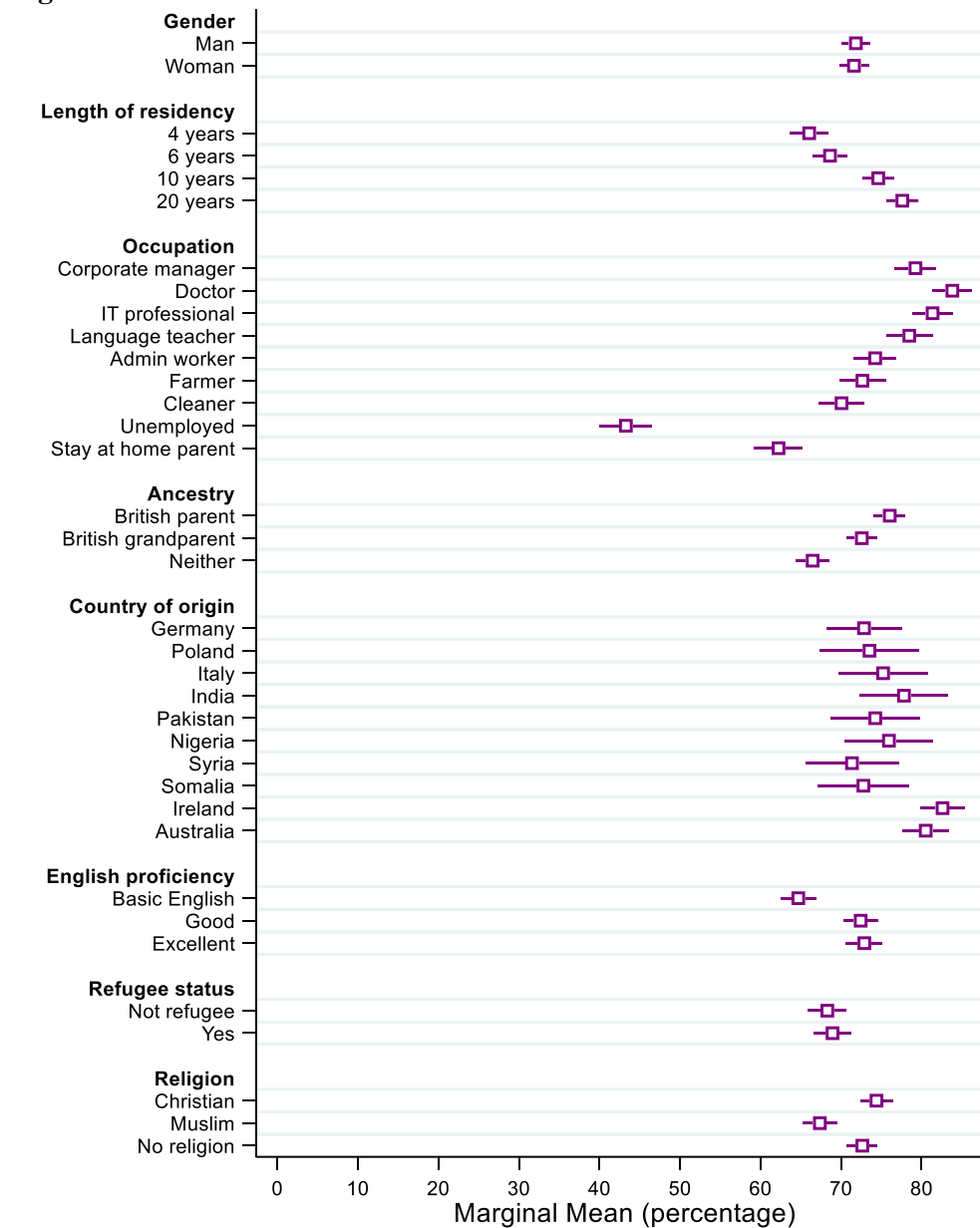
Each individual profile vignette is designed as part of a fractional factorial experimental design that matches the occurrence of each attribute with all other attributes. Each respondent  $N$  is presented with  $j$  choice tasks and  $k$  profile vignette alternatives. Each profile vignette is characterised by  $S$  attributes. The treatment given to each respondent  $N$  as her  $k^{\text{th}}$  profile vignette in her  $j^{\text{th}}$  choice task is a vector  $T_{\text{nj}k}$ , whose  $S^{\text{th}}$  component  $T_{\text{nj}ks}$  corresponds to the  $S^{\text{th}}$  attribute of the profile vignette. The vector  $T_{\text{nj}k}$  can take on any value given by the product of all possible levels of the attributes, except for the restrictions imposed to specific combinations of levels of attributes. I estimate the attribute's average marginal component effect (AMCE), the average marginal effect of attribute  $S$ , on the probability of a profile receiving citizenship. The AMCE is the probability that a profile will be picked if the value of the  $l^{\text{th}}$  level changed from  $t_0$  to  $t_1$ , averaged over all the possible values of the levels conditional on the joint distribution of all profile attributes. I obtain the AMCEs by estimating an OLS regression of the choice outcome on dummy variables for each attribute level, where each coefficient estimate gives the value of moving from the reference category  $t_0$  to a different  $t_1$ . To account for the restrictions I impose, I include all main effects of the restricted attributes  $S^{\text{R}}$  and all level interactions between them. The estimator of AMCE of changing level from  $t_0$  to  $t_1$  for  $S^{\text{R}}$  is the linear combination of the coefficients of the attribute  $S^{\text{R}}$  and the relevant interactions, weighted by the corresponding probability of occurrence.

I also compute the marginal mean (MM) of all attribute levels, including of the reference category, after the OLS regression. In order to compare attribute levels on the same sample, I partition the sample to estimate the MM only on the subset of data for which all combinations were possible. For the attribute 'religion' I partition the

sample, dropping all the observations that have ‘Poland’ as country of origin. For the attribute ‘English proficiency’ I drop all cases that have ‘Australia’ or ‘Ireland’ as ‘country of origin’. For the attribute ‘country of origin’ I drop all observations that have ‘basic’ and ‘good’ as ‘English proficiency level’ and that have ‘Muslim’ as religion. The MM of the attribute ‘refugee status’ is computed only across refugee sending countries. Table C4 shows the number of observations used to compute the MM of each attribute.

**Table C3:** Sample sizes for each attribute when computing MMs

Attribute	Sample size (n of observations)
Sex	15,970
Length of residence	15,970
Occupation	15,970
Ancestry	15,970
Country of origin (non-refugee sending)	9,535
Country of origin (refugee sending)	6,435
English proficiency	12,731
Refugee status	6,435
Religion	14,458

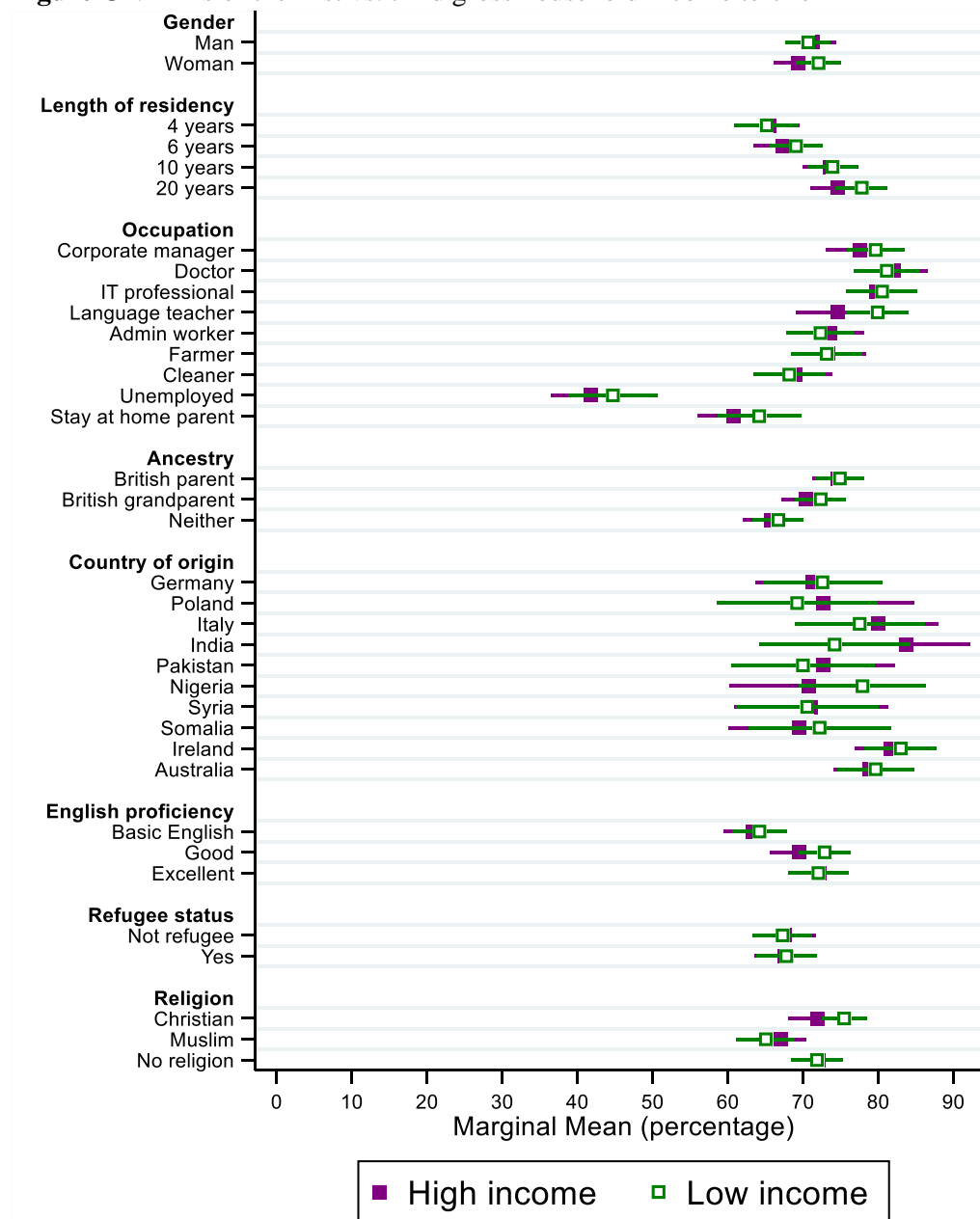
**Figure C1: MMS of all attribute levels**

Note: MMs calculated after OLS regression of the probability of being granted British citizenship with all attribute levels and no interactions between them, with clustered standard errors and weights. Open squares show MM point estimates and the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. See Table C3 for subsample sizes. To allow comparisons between 'country of origin' categories all Muslim and basic/good English cases were dropped when computing MMs for country of origin.



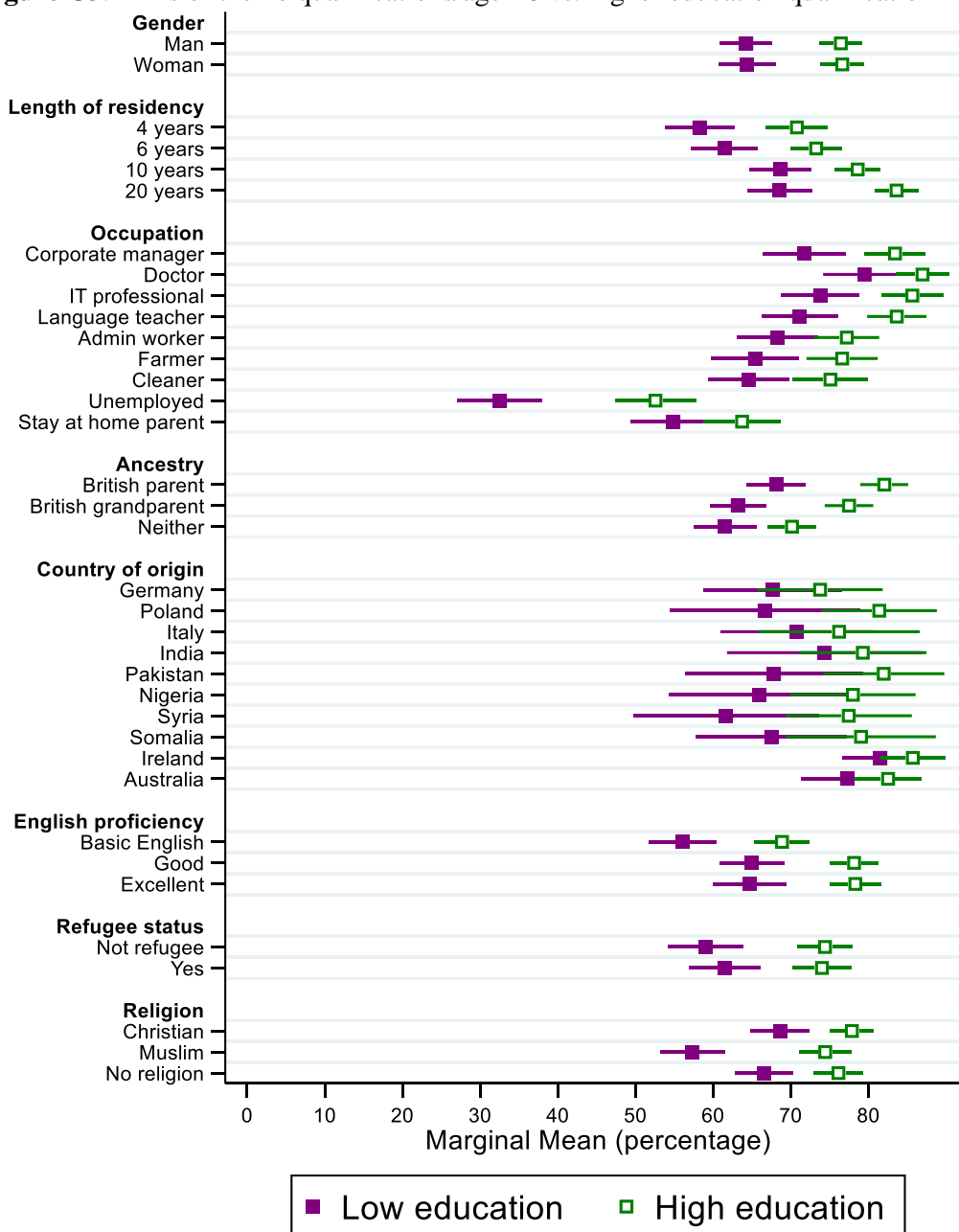
## Marginal Means according to respondent characteristics

**Figure C2:** MMs of the first vs. third gross household income tercile



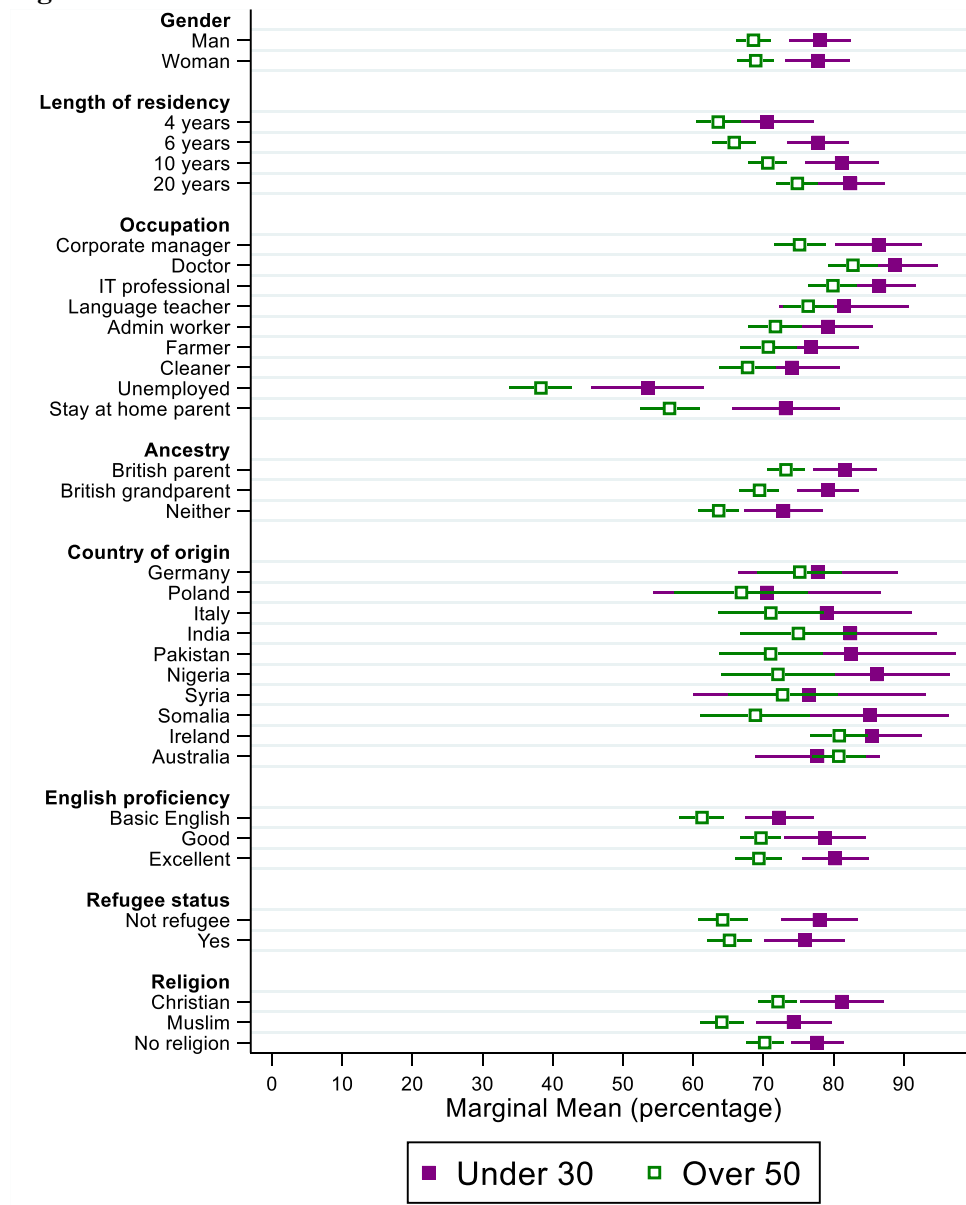
Note: MMs calculated after OLS regression of the probability of being granted British citizenship where gross household income (first or third) is interacted with the attributes, with clustered standard errors and weights. Open and full squares show MM point estimates for first and third income group respectively; the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. F-test of the null of hypothesis that all interaction terms are equal to zero:  $p > 0.05$ . See Table C3 for subsample sizes. To allow comparisons between 'country of origin' categories all Muslim and basic/good English cases were dropped when computing MMs for country of origin.

**Figure C3: MMs of the no qualifications/age-16 vs. higher education qualification**



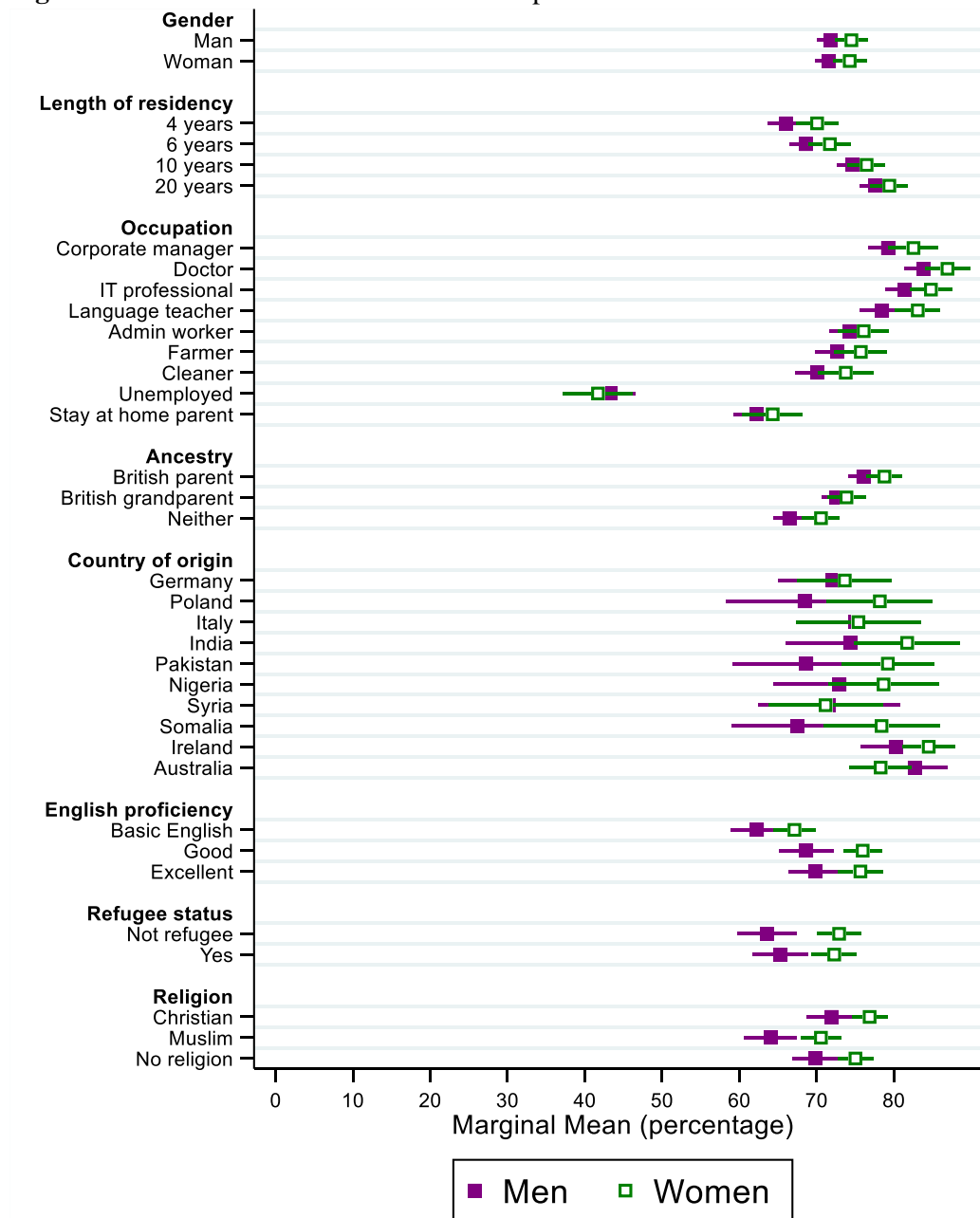
Note: MMs calculated after OLS regression of the probability of being granted British citizenship where qualifications (no qualifications/age-16 or higher education) is interacted with the attributes, with clustered standard errors and weights. Full and open squares show MM point estimates for no qualifications/age-16 qualifications and higher education respectively; the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. F-test of the null of hypothesis that all interaction terms are equal to zero:  $p < 0.05$ . See Table C3 for subsample sizes. To allow comparisons between ‘country of origin’ categories all Muslim and basic/good English cases were dropped when computing MMs for country of origin.

**Figure C4: MMs of under 30s vs over 50s**



Note: MMs calculated after OLS regression of the probability of being granted British citizenship where age group (Under 30 or over 50) is interacted with the attributes, with clustered standard errors and weights. Open and full squares show MM point estimates for over 50s and under 30s respectively; the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. F-test of the null of hypothesis that all interaction terms are equal to zero:  $p > 0.05$ . See Table C3 for subsample sizes. To allow comparisons between ‘country of origin’ categories all Muslim and basic/good English cases were dropped when computing MMs for country of origin.

**Figure C5: MMs of under male vs female respondents**



Note: MMs calculated after OLS regression of the probability of being granted British citizenship where age group (men or women) is interacted with the attributes, with clustered standard errors and weights. Open and full squares show MM point estimates for women and men respectively; the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. F-test of the null of hypothesis that all interaction terms are equal to zero:  $p < 0.05$ .

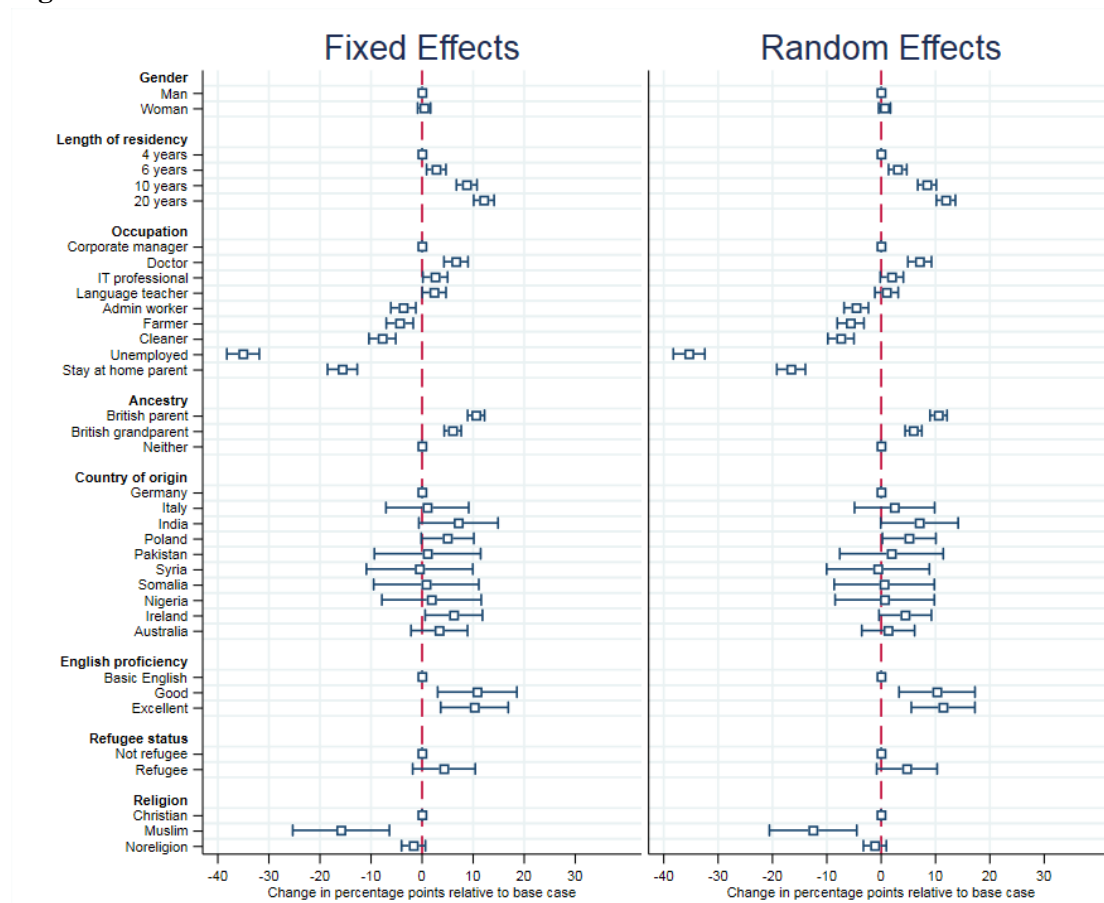
See Table C3 for subsample sizes. To allow comparisons between ‘country of origin’ categories all Muslim and basic/good English cases were dropped when computing MMs for country of origin.

### **Robustness checks**

The dependence of profile choices within individual respondents means that respondent characteristics may drive the effect of applicant characteristics. I fit alternative specifications to the benchmark model to account for this possibility (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015). I employ regression model specifications that incorporate (i) respondent fixed effects and (ii) random effects. The AMCEs in the fixed effects model are net of the variation between respondents due to respondents' characteristics. They therefore estimate the average marginal effect of each attribute within the average respondent. The random effects model exploits the variation between and within respondents, meaning that the AMCEs are the same as in the benchmark model, but standard errors estimates are more efficient because they account for the clustering of observations within respondents.

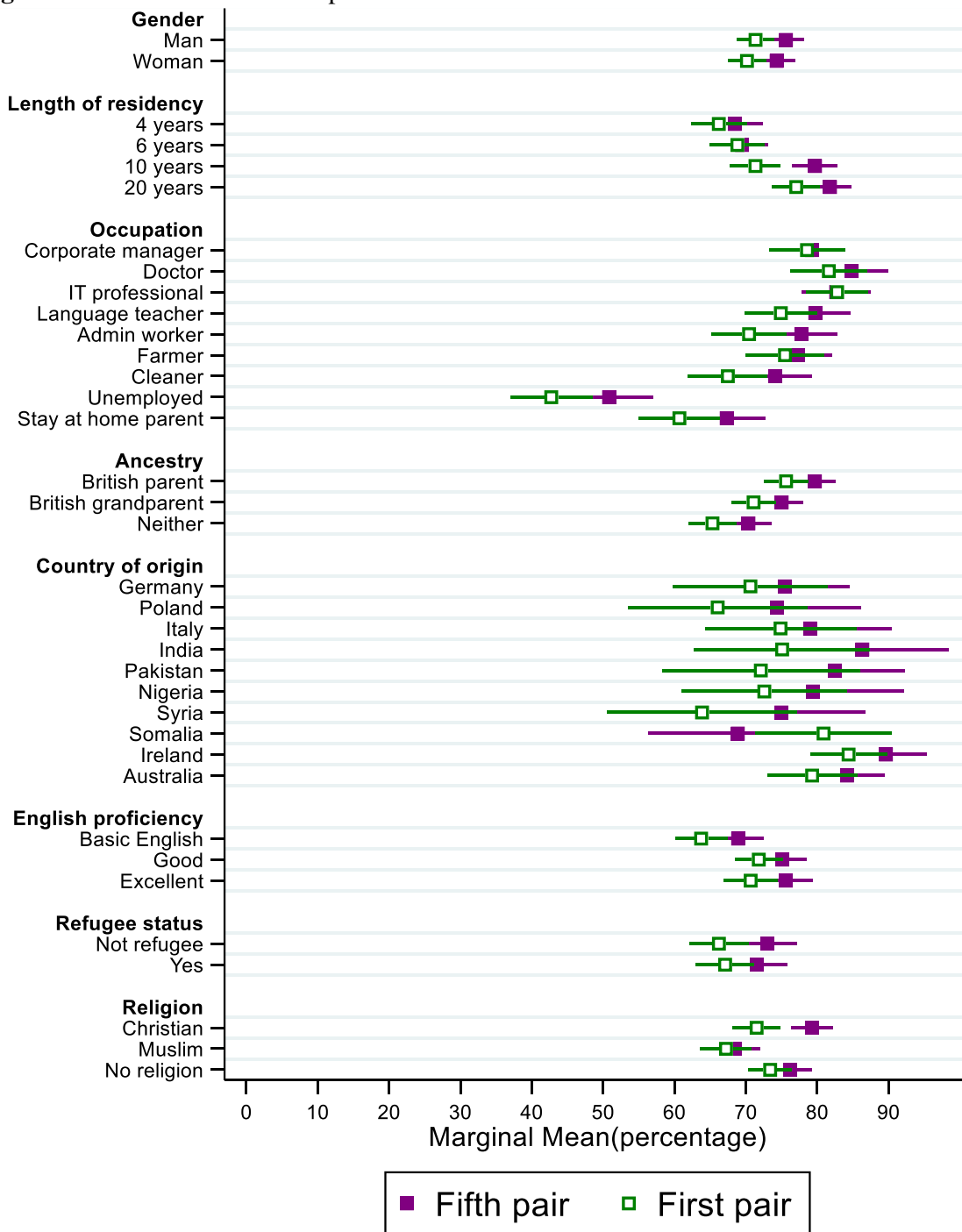
The clustering of profiles within respondents may affect findings specifically if the ordering of profiles influences respondents' decision-making process. As respondents are shown five pairs of profiles, arguably, they could learn with experience and make choices based on information from previous profiles. MMs for the fifth pair would therefore differ from MMs for the first pair. I compare MMs of profiles based on whether they were in first or fifth ordering. Finally, I restrict the sample to the respondents who identify as white British/English/Northern Irish/Welsh/Scottish, who do not have a migration background.

All specifications yield results that are almost identical to the ones obtained with the benchmark model. See Figures C6 and C8 below.

**Figure C6:** Fixed effects and random effects model AMCEs

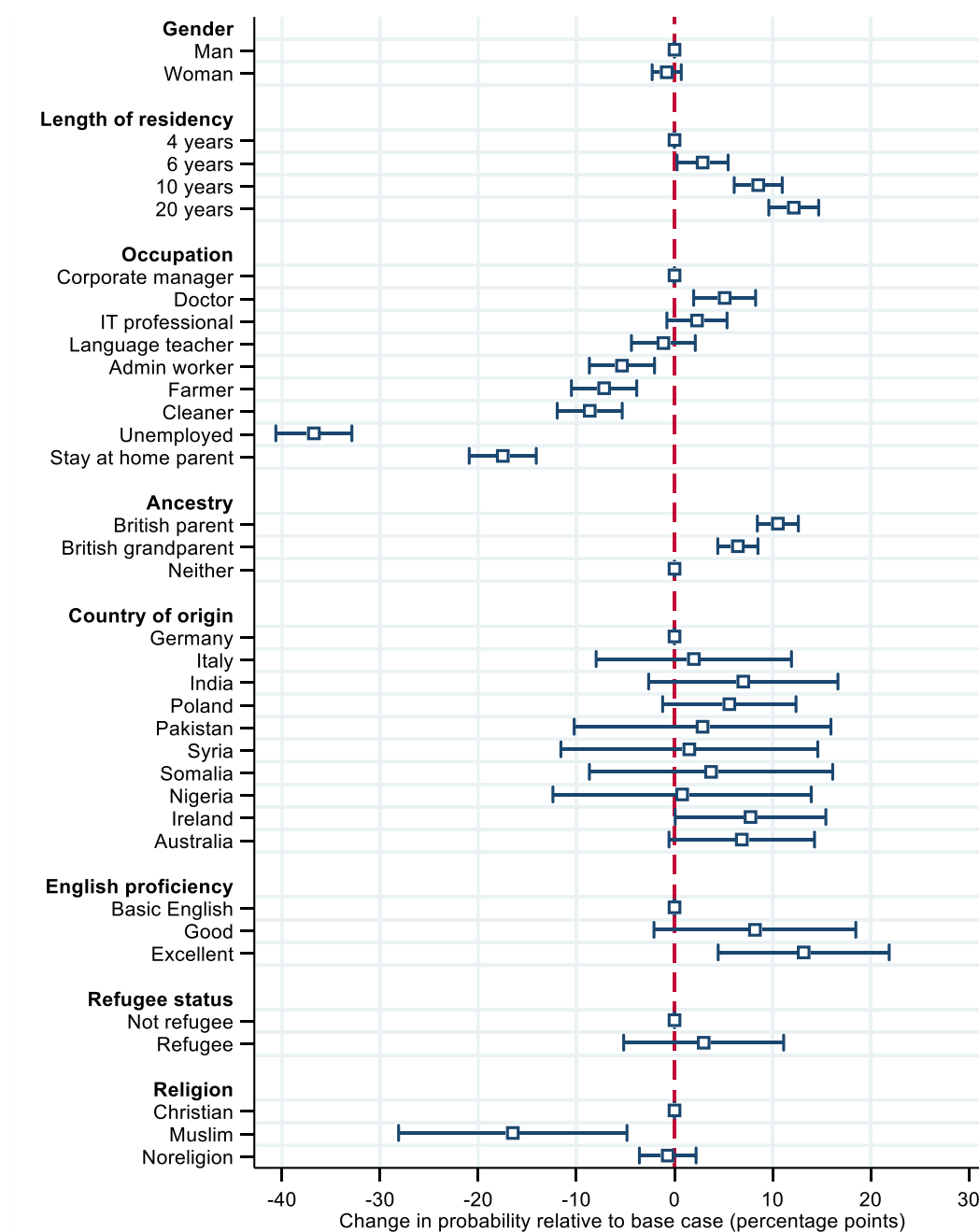
Note: there is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between the AMCEs of the two groups. Open squares show AMCE point estimates and the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. Open squares without horizontal lines show reference categories.

Figure C7: MMs of first vs fifth pair



Note: MMs calculated after OLS regression of the probability of being granted British citizenship where pair-order (first or fifth) is interacted with the attributes, with clustered standard errors and weights. Open and full squares show MM point estimates for first and fifth pairs respectively; the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. F-test of the null of hypothesis that all interaction terms are equal to zero:  $p < 0.05$ . See Table C3 for subsample sizes. To allow comparisons between ‘country of origin’ categories all Muslim and basic/good English cases were dropped when computing MMs for country of origin.

**Figure C8:** Average marginal component effects on the probability of citizenship award for white respondents



Note: OLS estimates of average effects of each randomised attribute of the probability of being granted British citizenship with clustered standard errors and weights for the subsample of 1,466 white British/Scottish/English/Northern Irish/Welsh respondents. Open squares show AMCE point estimates and the horizontal lines delineate 95% confidence intervals. Open squares without horizontal lines show reference categories.



## APPENDIX D

**Transcription of original quotes in main paper in order of appearance**

*“Non vorrei che qualcuno a sinistra volesse attuare un processo di SOSTITUZIONE DELLE CULLE”* (Facebook 20/06/2017)

*“Un bambino che è nato in Italia, è nato in Italia e o comunque ha fatto un ciclo di studi in Italia: le scuole elementari o le scuole medie; che si chiami Matteo, o si chiami Miriam, [pause] Leyla [pause] Mohamed, ha diritto, se studia in Italia, se cresce con i valori italiani, ad essere cittadino italiano”* M. Renzi (YouTube 16/06/2017)

*#iusoli si riconosce una realtà già esistente* (Facebook 21/06/2017)

*“...Ma quello che mi spaventa [sigh] è l'aspetto non solo della svendita della nostra identità, ma è l'aspetto della sicurezza. Io non posso dimenticare che proprio a l'essere in vigore in quei paesi una legge come quello dello ius soli gli attentatori, TUTTI; sto parlando di quello di Bruxelles, di Londra, di Manchester, di qualunque parte di Europa si siano verificati, avevano in tasca un passaporto del paese contro cui ha fatto l'attentato questo personaggio! [other Lega senators clap and shout 'bravo'!] Dirò di più! Protestate pure, non porta nulla. Dirò di più, la verità fa male ma intanto portatevela a casa! E andatela a dire ai vostri cittadini elettori! Dirò di più, il signore di Manchester, figlio di libici che grazie allo ius soli, cioè con la legge che oggi voi volete portare avanti, ha preso la cittadinanza e il passaporto inglese, ha fatto l'attentato a Manchester e dulcis in fundo aveva preso 7.500 euro di borsa di*

*studio e al posto DI STUDIARE con quei soldi ci ha comperato la bomba. Bravi! Complimenti!” R. Calderoli (YouTube 16/06/2017)*

*“La sinistra insiste sulla sua propaganda soli per intascarsi I voti dei MIGRANTI..” (Facebook 04/12/2017)*

*“Forse bisognerebbe invece leggere, leggere quella che è la proposta di legge che parla di uno ius culture che significa maggiore sicurezza perché nella misura in cui tu TI SENTI CITTADINO ITALIANO e sei parte di quel mondo perché hai respirato quella letteratura e quella cultura e quella storia e non sei un analfabeta dei simboli che ti circondano, in quel momento ti senti parte di una comunità e se ti senti parte di una comunità, LAVORI per la comunità. Non hai intenzione di andare contro quella comunità. Allora, cittadinanza e quindi ius soli o meglio ius cultuae riconoscere il diritto di chi vive con noi, ha studiato con noi, è seduto sui banchi a fianco ai nostri figli, è un diritto di civiltà che garantisce al paese che lo offre anche un’ ulteriore sicurezza perché fa ulteriore comunità, termine che troppo spesso ci dimentichiamo” S. Malpezzi (YouTube 05/07/2017)*

*“No ius soli perchè l’Italia non è in vendita” (Facebook 10/12/2017)*

*“è avvenuto perché abbiamo, nel momento in cui non mi hanno lasciato parlare, abbiamo occupato i banchi del governo e [smiles] io sono stato quello che è stato portato via per ultimo visto perchè ho resistito fino alla fine [he pauses laughs] come a Fort Alamo [he laughs], mettiamola così” G. Centinaio (YouTube 15/06/2017)*

*“Faremo le barricate qui nel palazzo, ma fuori rischiano che i cittadini inferociti vengano a cercarli con i forconi”* R. Caldeorli (website 8/11/2017)

*“Ius soli, Zanda: Centristi vicini alla Chiesa, come possono dire di no?”* Alessandro Trocino, il Corriere della Sera (website, 18/07/2017)

*“Lo ius soli esprima nella maniera più autentica i principi della nostra civiltà giuridica, della nostra antica tradizione culturale di ispirazione greca e romana.”*  
Senator Manconi, il Manifesto (website 24/12/2017)

*“Bisogna piuttosto lavorare sull’integrazione proprio come la Germania ha fatto”*  
(Facebook, 16/11/2017)