The Dimensionality of Immigrant Adaptation in Britain: An Analysis across Generational, Ethnic, and Gender Lines

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Background

• Looking into the long-term experiences of migrants and their descendants (adaptation) is an important topic in academic and policy circles
  – Especially given the changes in the origins of migration flows in the past few decades

• One issue is how to qualify those experiences:
  – What do they comprise (i.e. their dimensions)?
  – How do they link together?
Background

• Different theoretical approaches, different assumptions about dimensionality (Bean et al 2012):
  – Assimilation-based perspectives: more uni-dimensional
    • Not necessarily over one generation
  – Segmented assimilation: bi-dimensional (cultural)
  – Multicultural perspectives: multi-dimensional

• Some argue for a trade-off (Maxwell, 2012) between cultural adaptation and political/economic
Aims of paper

• Explore the dimensionality of immigrant adaptation in the British context

• Analytical focus:
  – Whether indicators of adaptation measure one latent factor
  – How individuals of migrant origins fare in the uncovered dimension(s)
    • Simultaneous observation of adaptation as a whole rather than various aspects of it
Data & variables

Data

• Ethnic Minority British Election Study
  – Nationally-representative survey of main ethnic minority groups in Britain; focus on political behaviour, with items measuring other aspects
  – Conducted in 2010
  – Face-to-face and self-completion questionnaires
  – Total sample size: 2,787
  – Analytical sample size: 1,391

Variables

• Economic (education, occupation)
• Political (engagement, feelings of influence, voting)
• Spatial (socio-economic composition, ethnic density & diversity, number of co-ethnics)
• Cultural (language, ethnicity of friends and spouse, ethnic identity)
• Controls (ethnicity, age, country of birth)
Dimensions of adaptation?

• Factor analysis
  • Ordinal & dichotomous variables: polychoric correlation matrix

• If assume that variables measure 1 latent factor, we get 4 dimensions:
  1. Spatial (most important)
  2. Political identity
  3. Cultural
  4. Economic
Group differences in factor scores

Spatial  Political identity  Cultural  Economic
Indian    Pakistani    Bangladeshi    Caribbean    African

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Clusters of adaptation

- Cluster analysis of generated factor scores for main dimensions (average linkage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spatial</th>
<th>Political identity</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Lack of political and economic adaptation (384)</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Overall adaptation (492)</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Low cultural adaptation (325)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Spatial segregation and political adaptation (85)</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethnic effects

Average Marginal Effects

- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Caribbean
- African

-0.4 -0.3 -0.2 -0.1 0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4

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Gender effects

The image shows a graph with average marginal effects for different ethnic groups (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, African) for both Men and Women. The x-axis represents the average marginal effects, ranging from -0.4 to 0.4. The y-axis lists the ethnic groups. For each group, there are error bars indicating the variability of the effects. The graph highlights the differences in the impact of gender on economic and political outcomes across different ethnic backgrounds.
Generational effects

Average Marginal Effects

Born outside the UK
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Caribbean
- African

UK-born
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Caribbean
- African
Preliminary conclusions

• Results appear to suggest that the adaptation of individuals with a migration background appears to be more of a multi-dimensional nature
• When looking at the different groupings of adapted individuals that arise, they incorporate various dimensions
• Group differences appear to fit existing (i.e. separate) knowledge
• Important to bear in mind that most individuals are in the ‘overall adaptation’ group
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Questions? Comments?
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THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION