

# Hidden and Revealed Attitudes to Immigration: A List Experiment in Ireland

## DATE

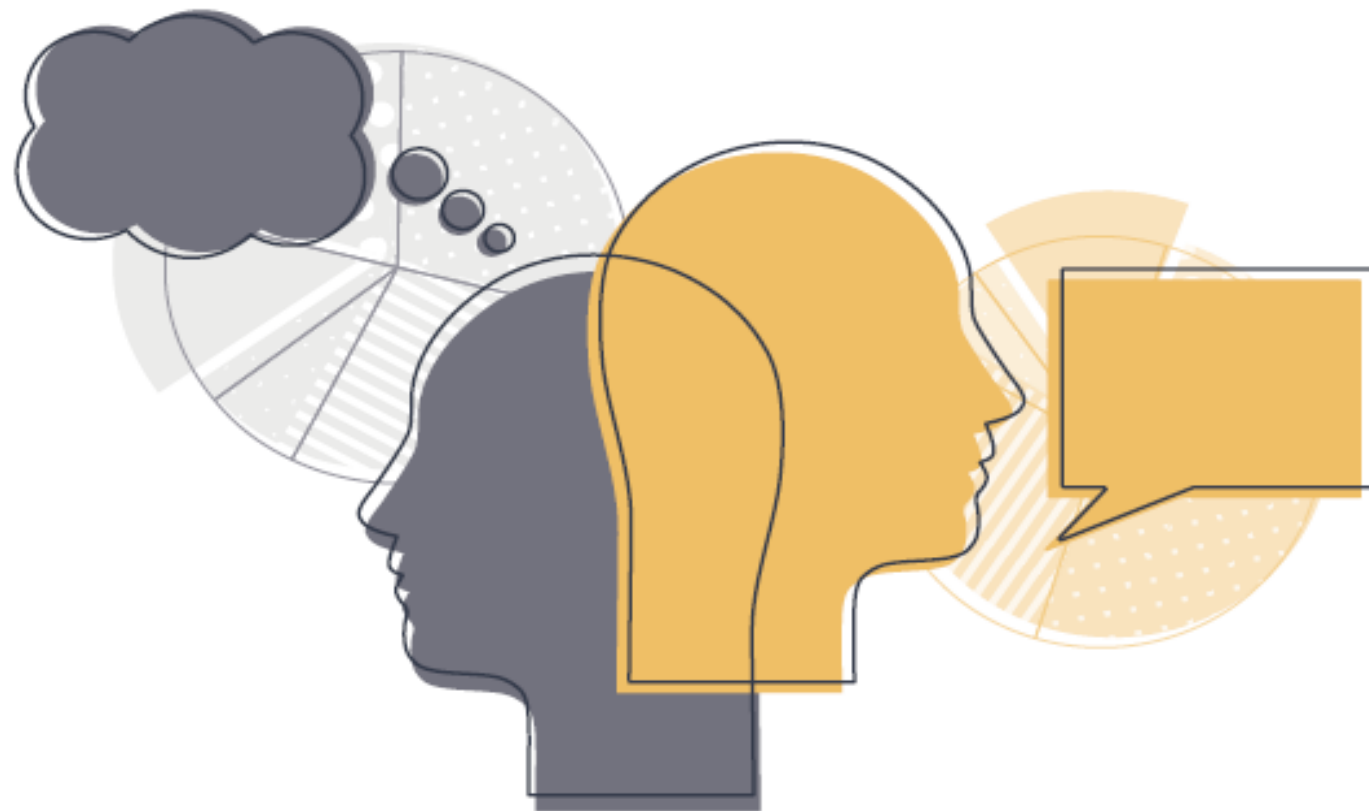
6th October 2020

## VENUE

Seminar Series on  
Migration, Ethnicity and  
Race, LSE (zoom)

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# Stigma and social desirability bias:

*The presentation of self*

“...[W]hen the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behavior as a whole.”

-Erving Goffman

*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959; p.35)

# Stigma and social desirability bias:

*People conceal a range of opinions/actions*

- **Nativism** (Knoll 2013)
- **Closing the US border** (Janus 2011; Creighton et al. 2015)
- **Immigration policy preferences** (Knoll 2013)
- **Attitudes toward certain immigrant groups** (Creighton and Jamal 2015; Creighton et. al 2020)
- **Race attitudes** (Kuklinski et al. 1997a)
- **Religious service attendance** (Brenner 2011, 2012a, 2012b)
- **Voting** (Holbrook and Krosnick 2010)
- **Stigmatized health** (Moseson et al. forthcoming)
- **Affirmative action** (Kuklinski et al. 1997b)
- **Same-sex marriage** (Janus 2011)

# Stigma and social desirability bias:

## *Some findings*

- In general, bias in reporting of “controversial” sentiment is widely documented (Phillips and Clancy 1972, Presser and Stinson 1998, Arnold and Feldman 1981....Heerwegh 2009)
- To influence behaviour, stigma needs to be...
  - ...anticipated (i.e., context matters).
  - ...avoidable (i.e., discreditable).

# Techniques to measure masked sentiment

## Economics

- Game theorists / behaviouralists – probabilistic techniques to compare outcomes to known distributions (e.g., sides on a die)
- Lab-based, interactive approaches.
- Modify cost of lying by using multiple players
- Focused, quite reasonably, on economic interactions
- Limited interest in survey-based approaches relative to more dynamic interactions

(Crawford and Sobel 1982; Crawford 2003; Gneezy 2005; Fishbacher and Heusi 2008; Mazar 2008; Gneezy et al. 2013; Gibson et al. 2013; Erat 2013; Cappelen et al. 2013)

## Political science

- List experiments / Item-count technique
- Particular interest in “controversial topics” and emphasis on social desirability bias (SDB)
- Examples are support of restrictionism, extreme political parties, race-based public policy
- Use of both lab-based and survey-based experimental design

(Presser and Stinson, 1998; Arnold and Feldman, 1981; Kuklinski et al., 1997; Davis and Silver, 2003 (again); Kuran and McCaffery 2008; Blair and Imai 2012; Glynn 2013; Blair, Imai, and Lyall 2014)

# Techniques to measure masked sentiment

## Sociology and demography

- List experiment / Item-count technique
- Observational work on stated aspirations/intentions and subsequent behavior
- Ethnography (turtles all the way down)
- Focus on stigma and limited interest in lab-based and/or survey-based experimental approaches

(Goffman 1959; Philips and Clancy 1972; Janus 2010; Jerolmack and Khan 2014; Creighton et al. 2015; Creighton and Jamal 2015; etc...)

## Survey methodology

- List experiment / Item-count technique
- Observational work using multiple measures (e.g., recall vs. diary)
- Implicit association test (IAT)
- Focus on wording and priming
- By nature and discipline, focused on survey-based interactions

(Davis and Silver 2003; Heerwegh 2009; Brenner 2011, 2012a, 2012b; Krumpal 2014)

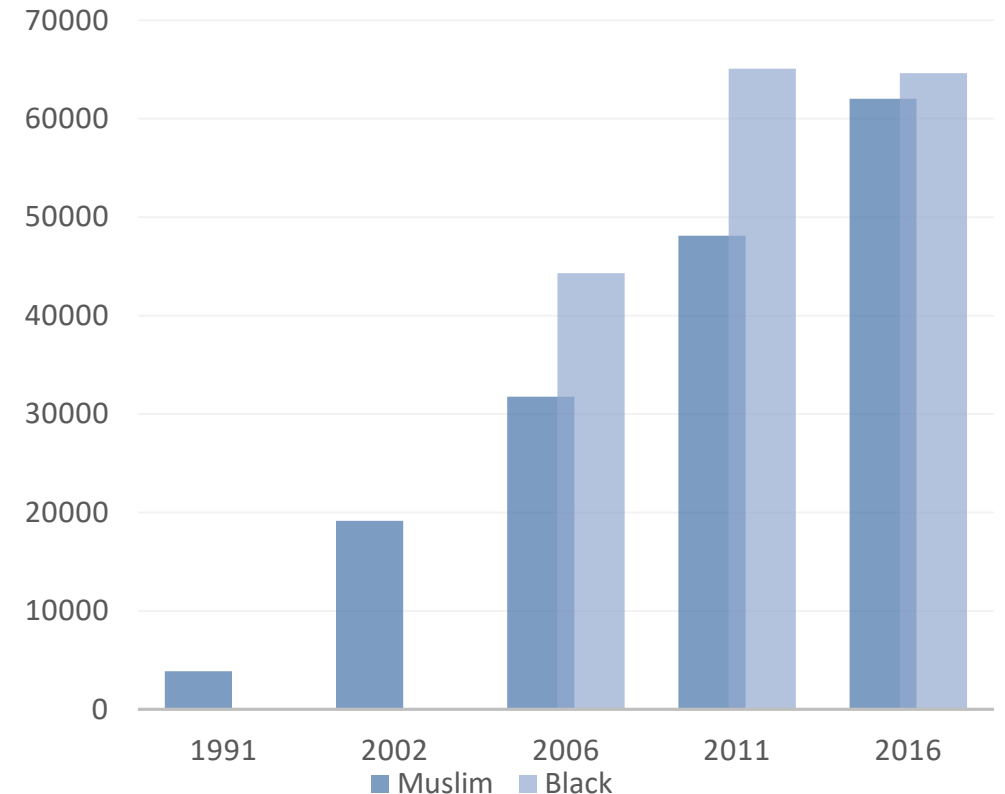
# Irish Migration and Diversity Research

- Irish attitudes to immigration
  - McGinnity et al (2018): association with educational attainment, financial stress, social contact
  - Qualitative work by Byrne (2014): In-depth interviews of 20 professionals – distancing, problematising of immigration in public sphere, and racialising in the private sphere
- Experience of discrimination
  - Ethnicity/nationality in the Irish labour market (McGinnity et al, 2018) – Black ethnic group at risk of poverty, unemployment and self-reported discrimination
  - Supported by O’Connell (2018) using Census data – suggests a potential scarring effect of direct provision
  - Qualitative: Michael – Afrophobia (2016), Carr – Islamophobia (2016)

# The Black and Muslim population living in Ireland (Census 2016)

- Rapid increase in size of both groups from a low base
- Young populations: highly educated, high unemployment

|                        | Black | Muslim | Total Population |
|------------------------|-------|--------|------------------|
| Third-level Education  | 63%   | 57%    | 48%              |
| Unemployed             | 20%   | 18%    | 8%               |
| Managers/Professionals | 24%   |        | 36%              |
| Students               | 26%   | 22%    | 11%              |
| Aged under 35          | 57%   | 68%    | 47%              |



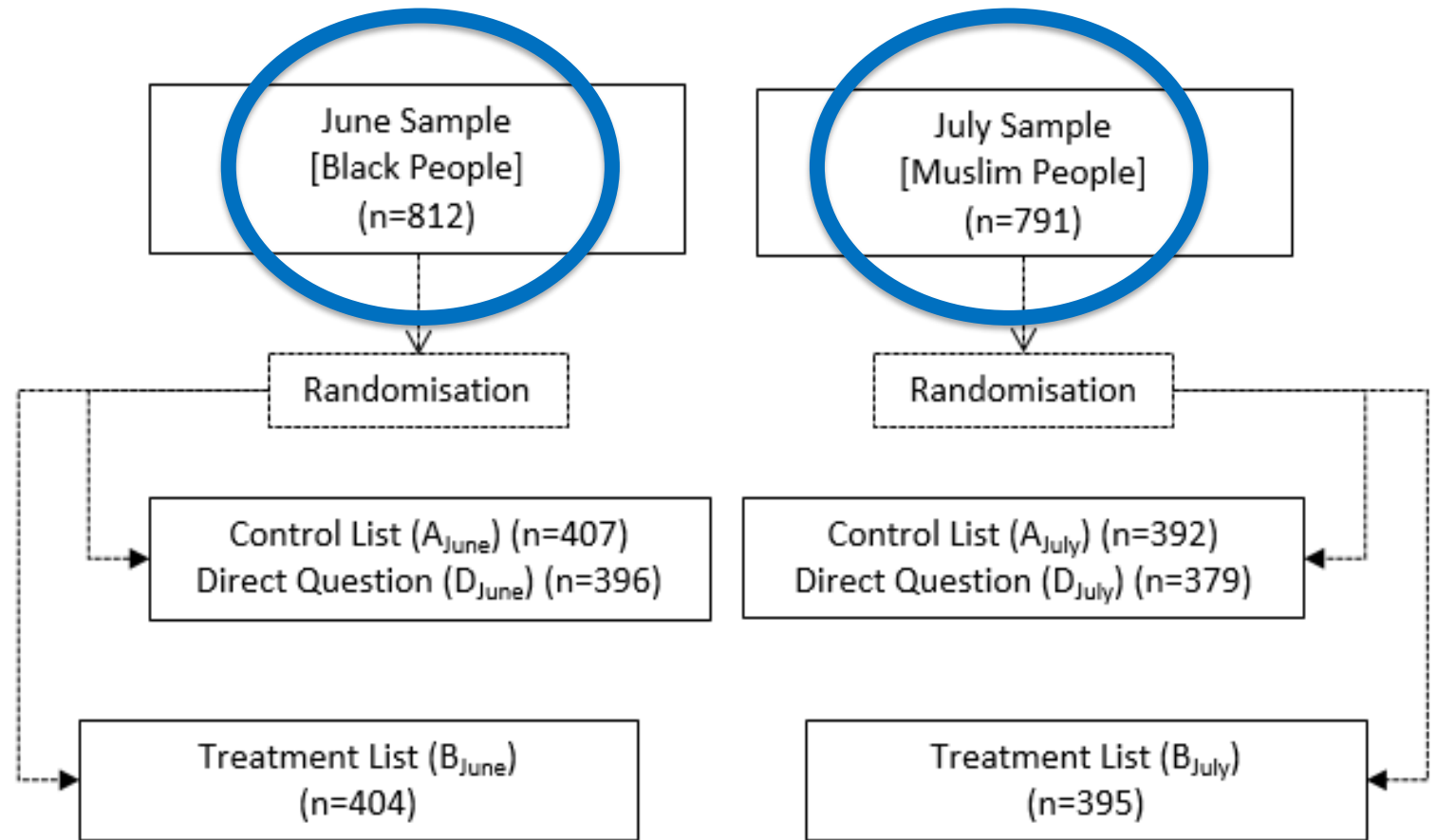
Note: Ethnicity first measured in 2006 Census in Ireland

# How the data was gathered

- The Economic Sentiment Monitor (ESM; n~800) is a nationally representative monthly telephone survey.
- In addition to standard demographic information, the ESM focuses on people's views of the economic situation, the housing market and savings environment in Ireland.
- Data was gathered in two waves with attitudes toward a specific immigrant group asked in each collection.

# Experiment Design

Experiment  
embedded in two  
waves of ESM,  
summer 2017



# Experiment Design

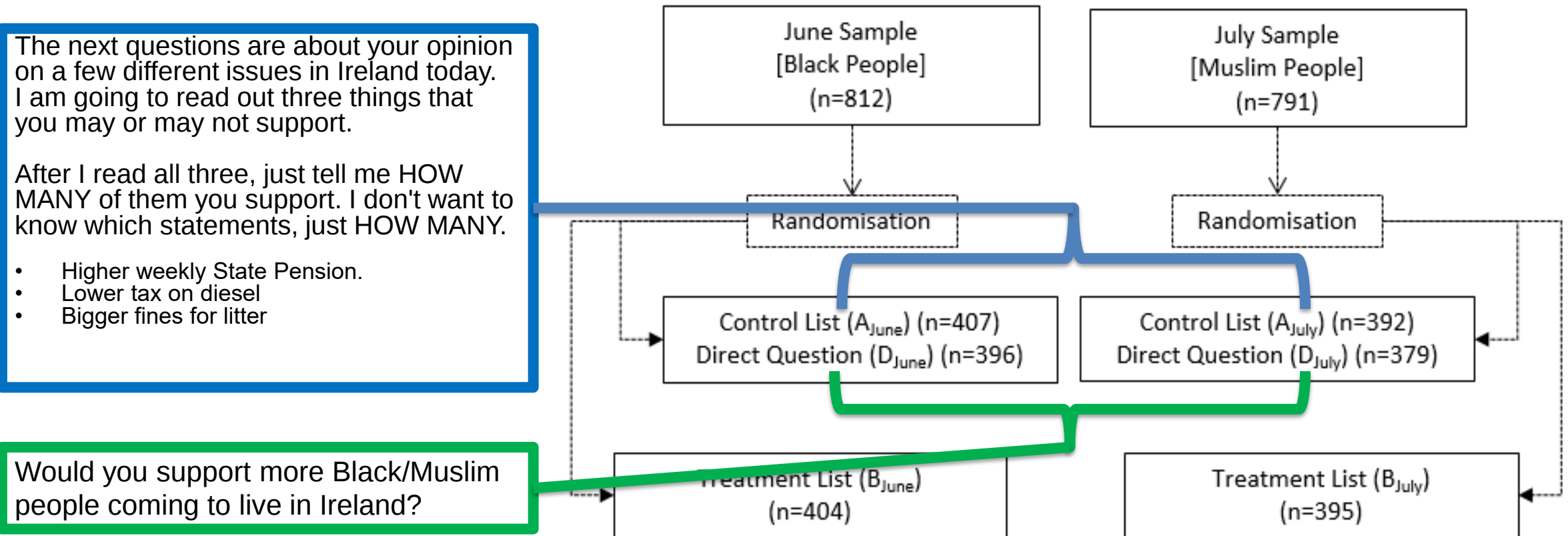
The next questions are about your opinion on a few different issues in Ireland today. I am going to read out three things that you may or may not support.

After I read all three, just tell me HOW MANY of them you support. I don't want to know which statements, just HOW MANY.

- Higher weekly State Pension.
- Lower tax on diesel
- Bigger fines for litter

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- After I read all three, just tell me HOW MANY of them you support. I don't want to know which statements, just HOW MANY.
- Higher weekly State Pension.
  - Lower tax on diesel
  - Bigger fines for litter

Would you support more Black/Muslim people coming to live in Ireland?

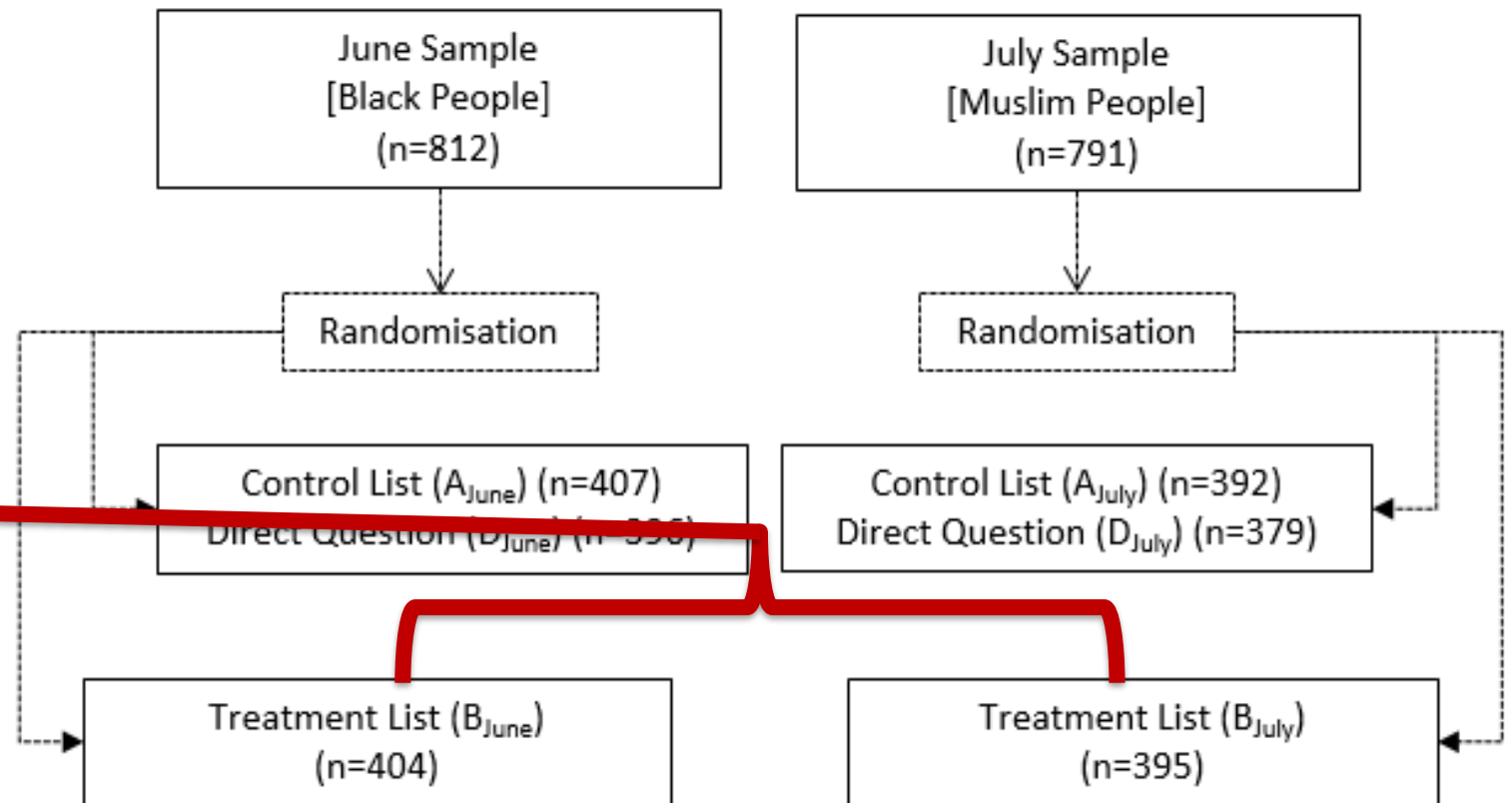


# Experiment Design

The next questions are about your opinion on a few different issues in Ireland today. I am going to read out four things that you may or may not support.

After I read all four, just tell me HOW MANY of them you support. I don't want to know which statements, just HOW MANY.

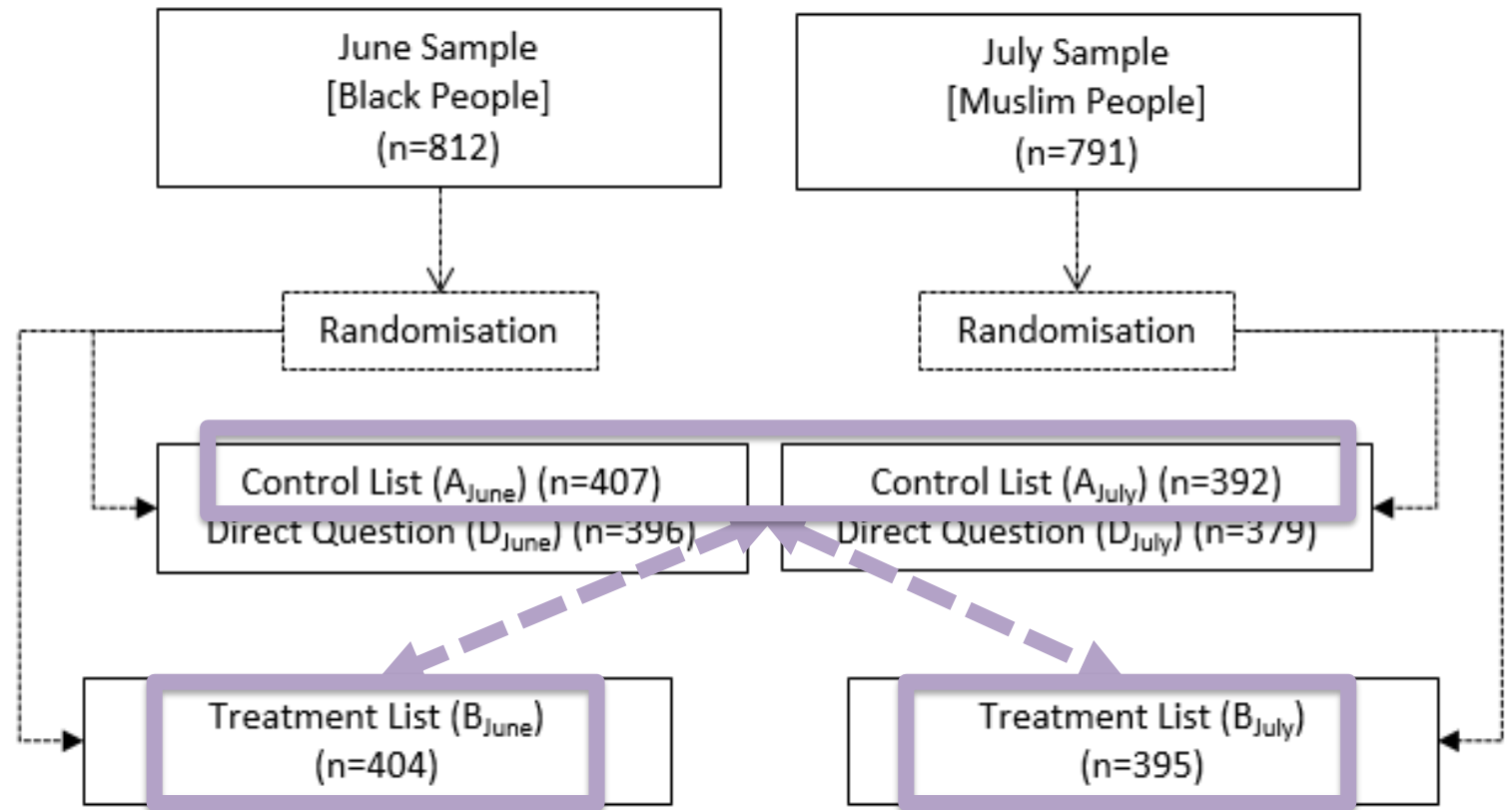
- Higher weekly state pension.
- Lower tax on diesel
- Bigger fines for litter
- **More Black/Muslim people coming to live in Ireland**



# Experiment Design: *Covert sentiment*

$$S = \bar{A} - \bar{B}$$

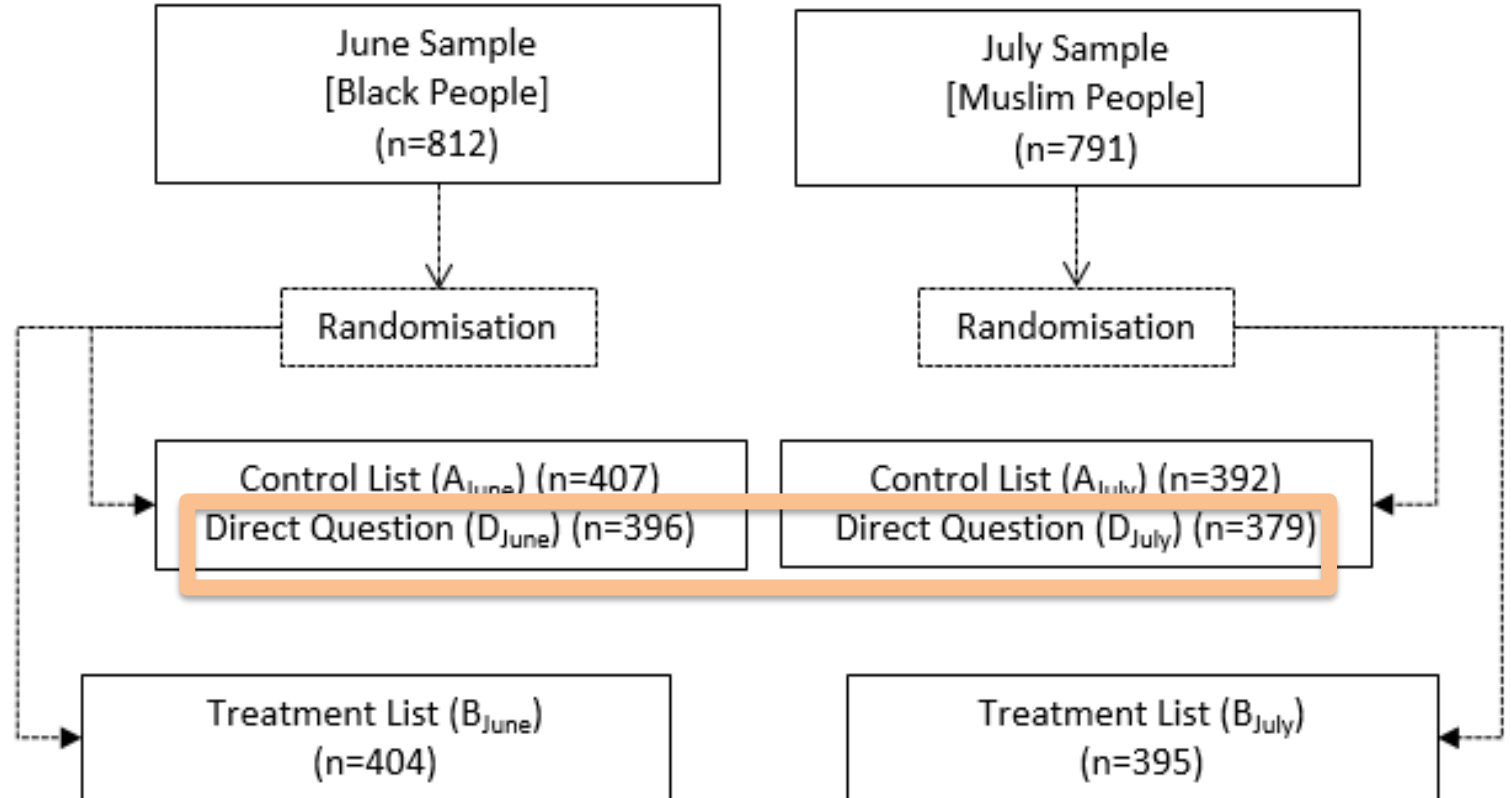
Where the outcome of interest ( $S$ ), is the proportion of the sample that select the focal item in the treatment, which is derived from the difference between the mean response to the treatment list ( $\bar{B}$ ) and control list ( $\bar{A}$ ). The resulting value ( $S$ ) is interpretable as the proportion who agree that a given group (e.g., Muslim Immigrants) should be allowed to reside in Ireland.



## Experiment Design: *Covert sentiment*

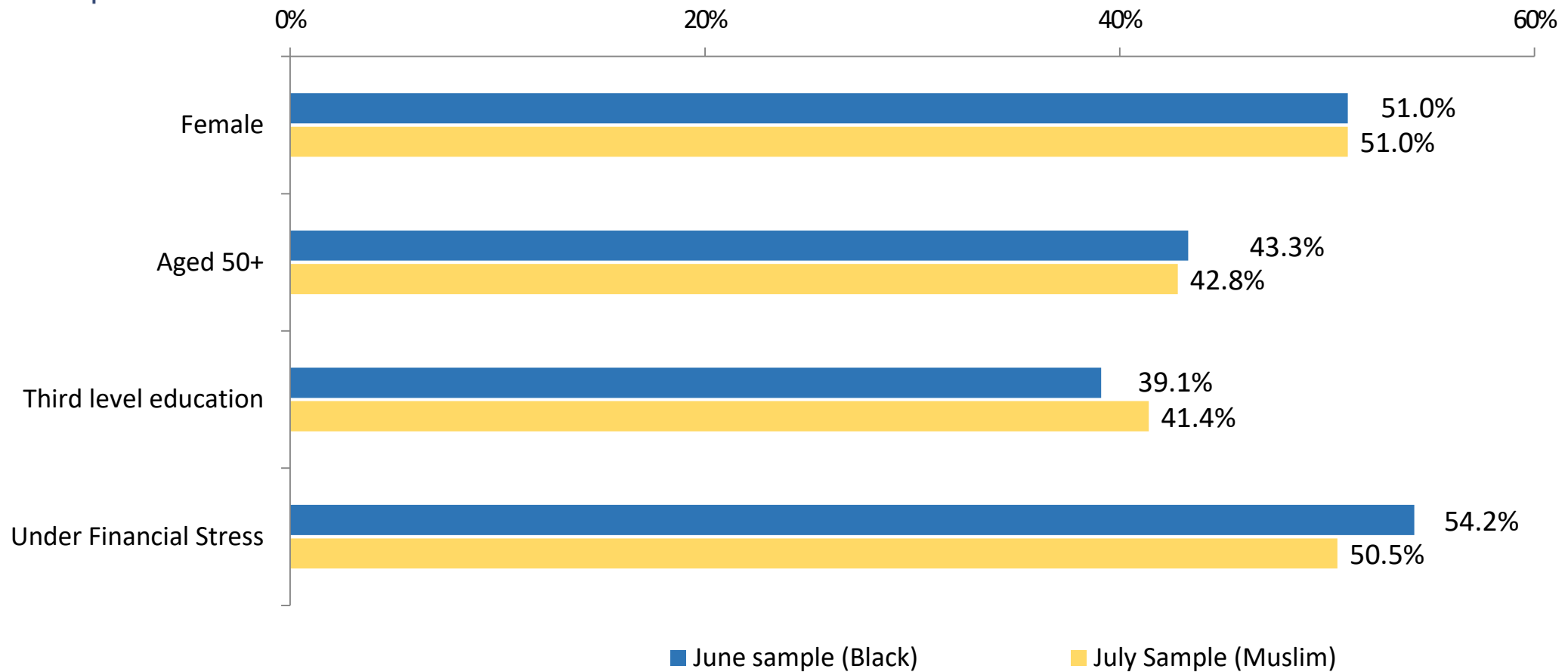
$$B = S - \bar{D}$$

Where  $B$  is direct measure of SDB that, when converted to a percentage scale, is typically interpreted as the number of percentage points difference between the explicit, derived from the control sample, and the implicit estimate ( $S$ ), derived from equation (1).

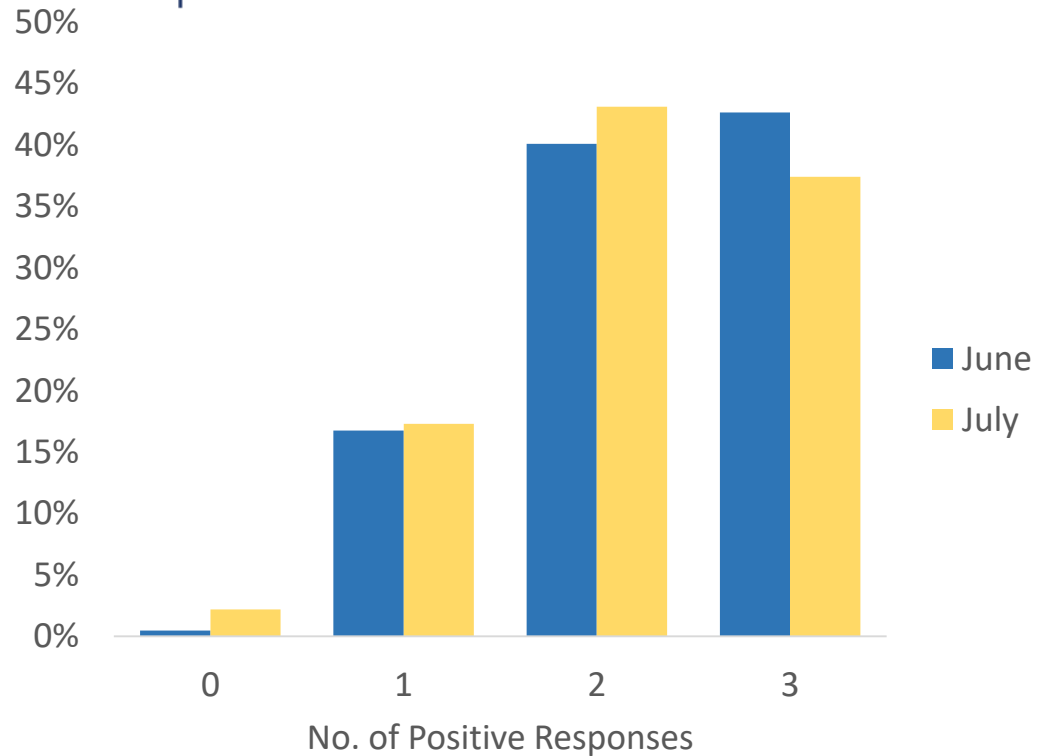


# Economic Sentiment Monitor (ESM):

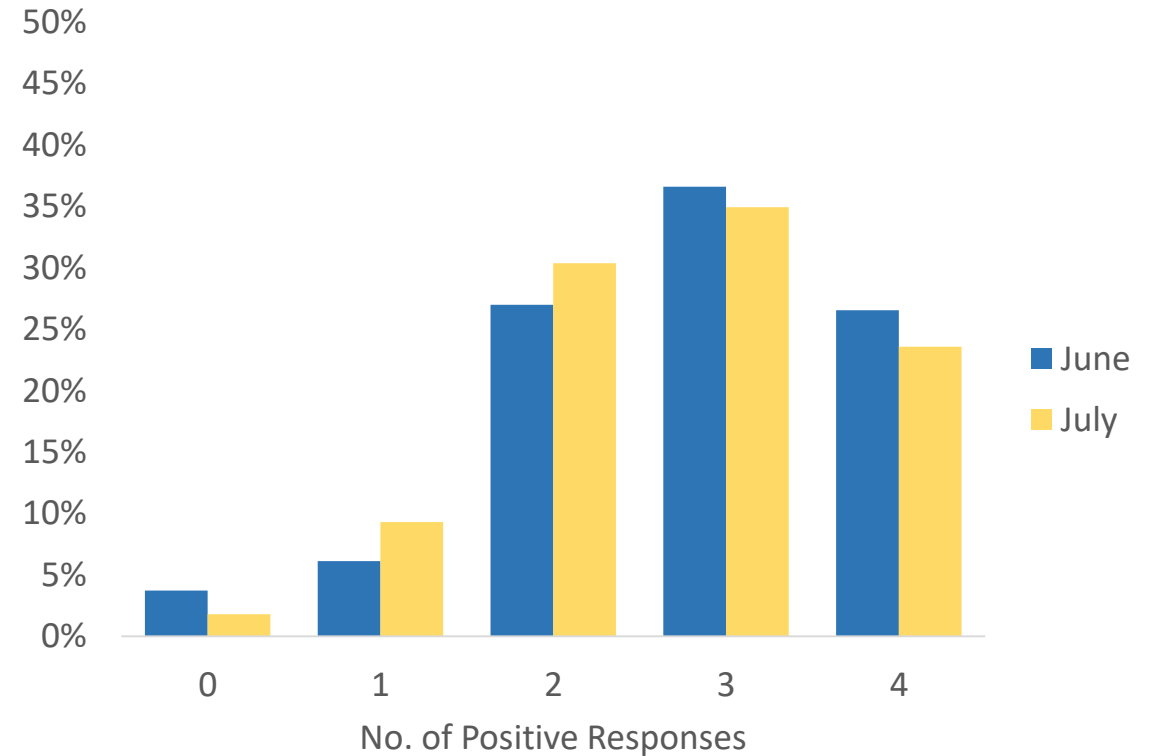
*Demographic groups, weighted*



## Control Group

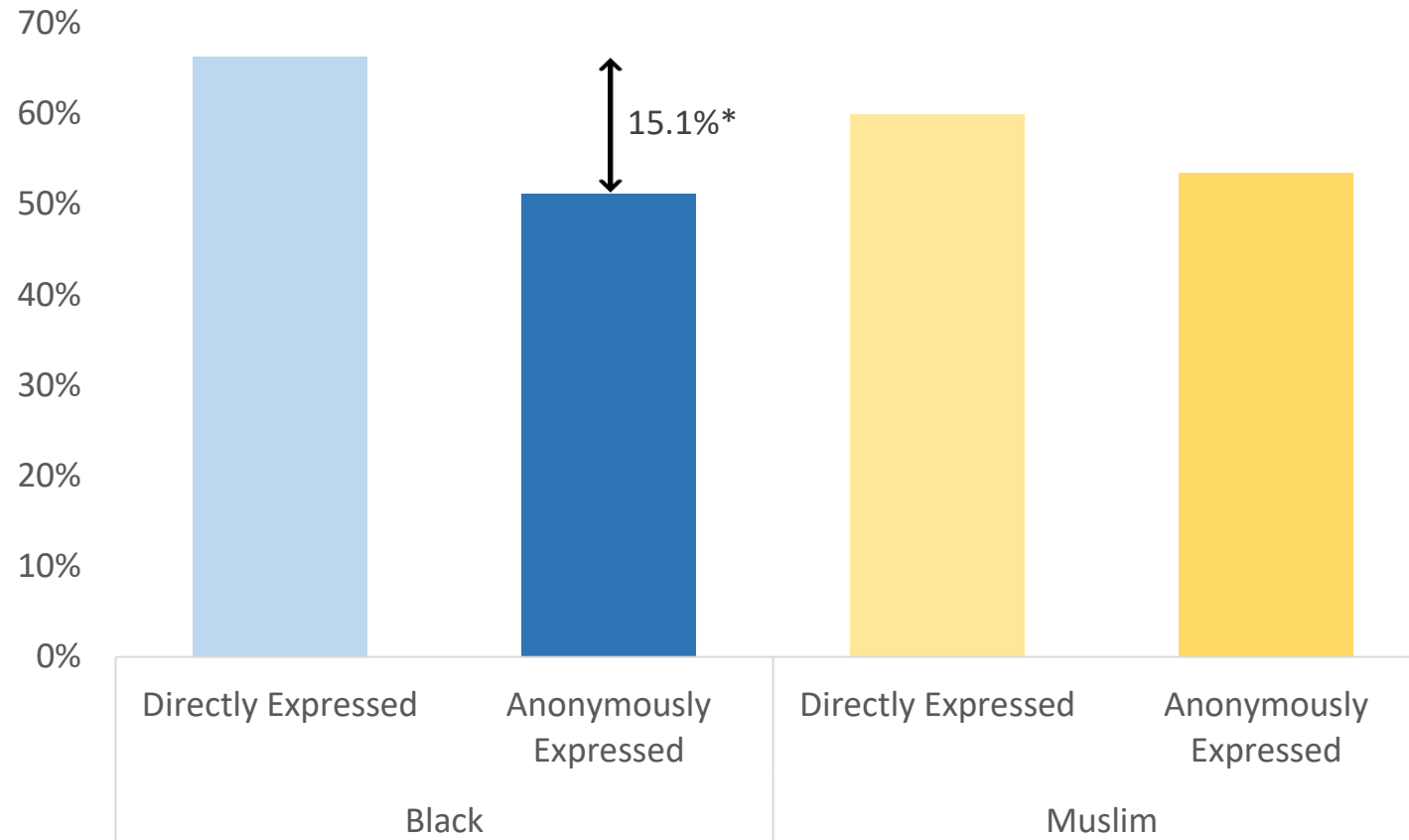


## Treatment Group



After I read all three, just tell me HOW MANY of them you support.

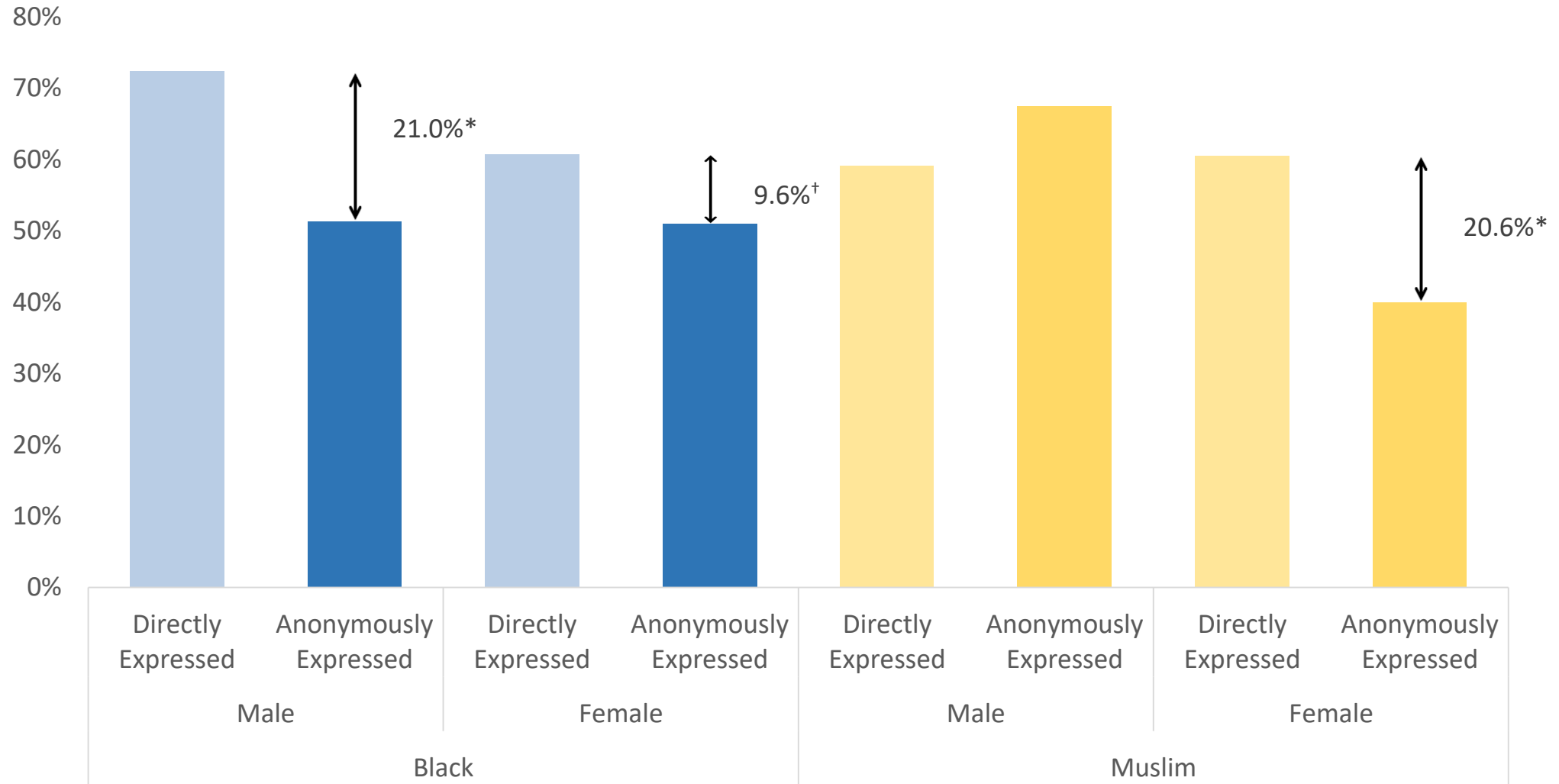
# Results I: Support for Black and Muslim immigration



Source: Economic Sentiment monitor, June and July 2017.

<sup>†</sup>indicates  $p < 0.1$  and \* indicates  $p < 0.05$ . Data are weighted.

# Results II: Gender differences in support

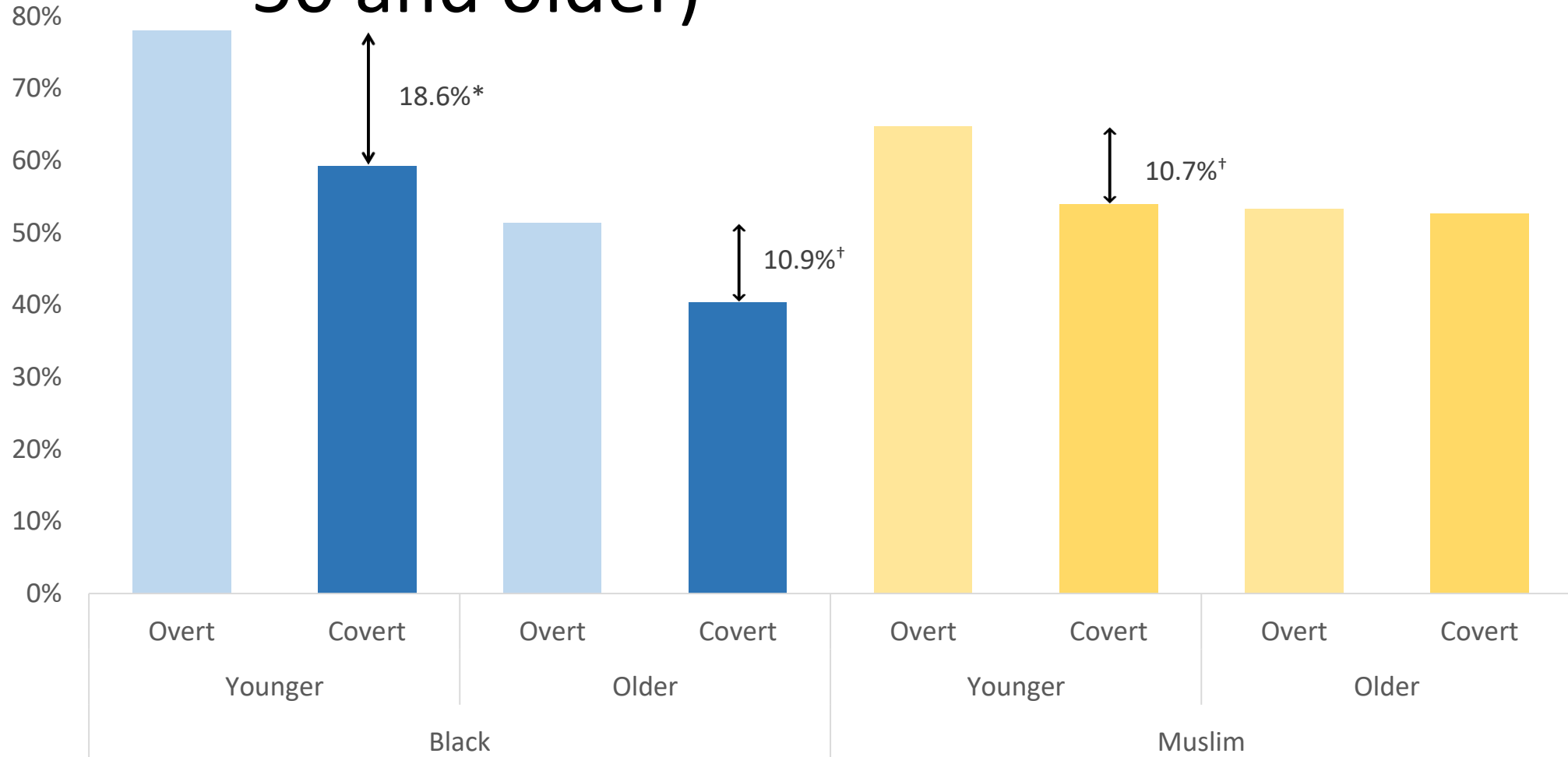


† indicates  $p < 0.1$  and \* indicates  $p < 0.05$ . Data are weighted.

Source: Economic Sentiment monitor, June and July 2017.

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# Results III: Age differences in support (under 50 v 50 and older)

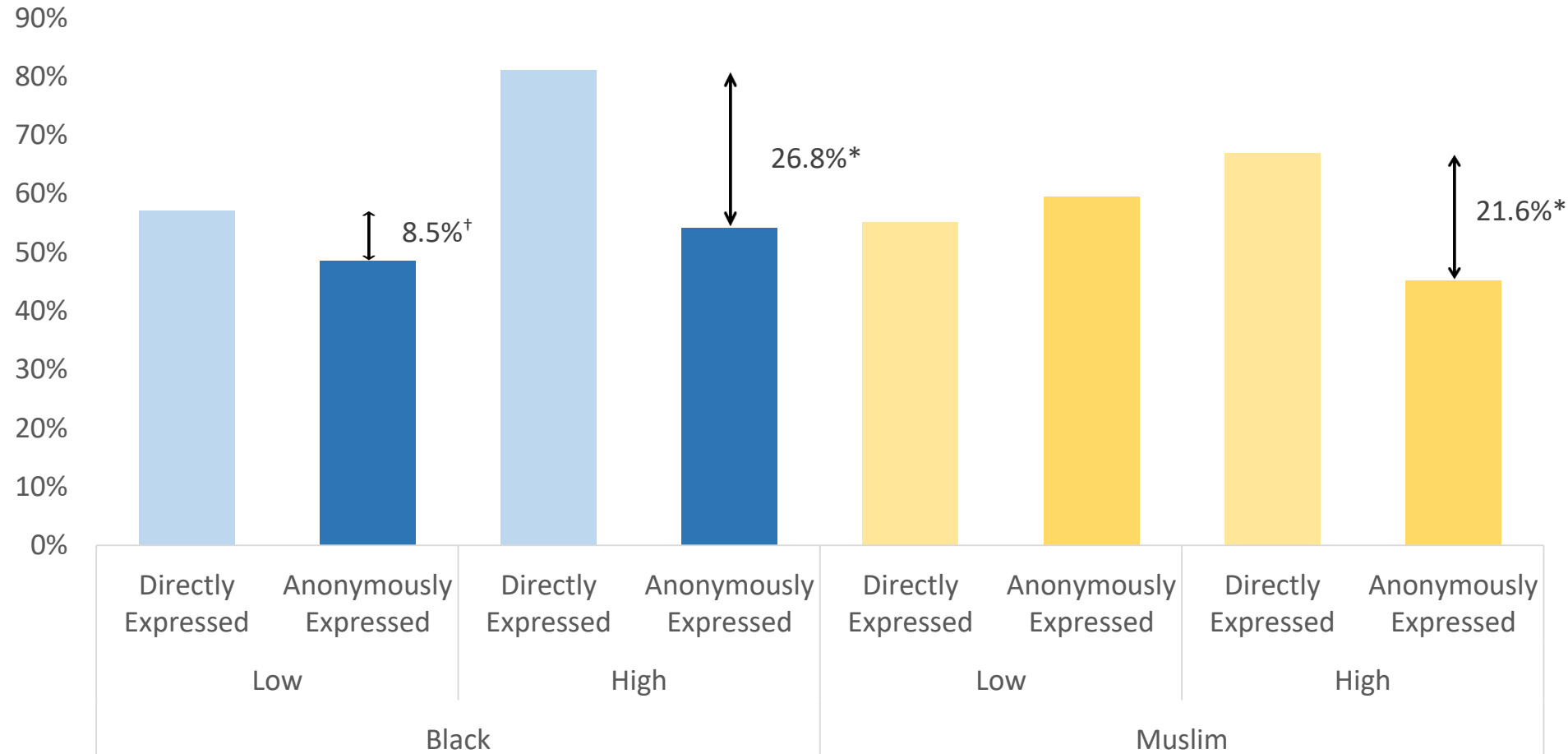


Source: Economic Sentiment monitor, June and July 2017.

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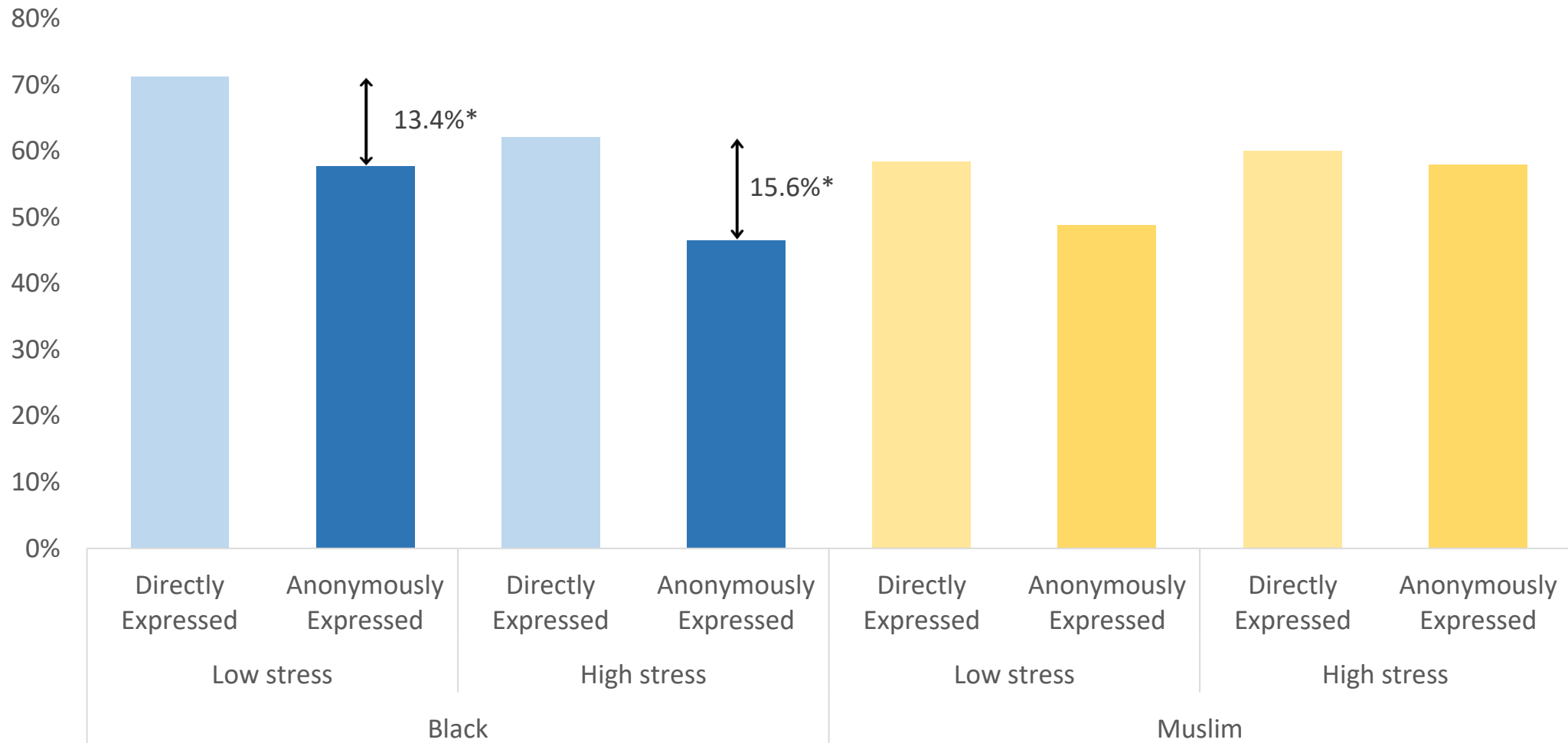
# Results IV: Educational qualifications and support



Source: Economic Sentiment monitor, June and July 2017.

<sup>†</sup> indicates p. <0.1 and \* indicates p <0.05. Data are weighted.

# Results IV: Financial stress and support



Source: Economic Sentiment monitor, June and July 2017.

<sup>†</sup> indicates p. <0.1 and \* indicates p <0.05. Data are weighted.

# Results V: Comparison of Directly Expressed Attitudes

|                        |                              | Black       | Muslim      |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Gender                 | Male                         | 72%         | 59%         |
|                        | Female                       | 61%         | 61%         |
|                        | P-value                      | <b>0.06</b> | <b>0.84</b> |
| Age                    | Younger                      | 78%         | 65%         |
|                        | Older                        | 51%         | 53%         |
|                        | P-value                      | <b>0.00</b> | <b>0.10</b> |
| Educational attainment | Leaving Certificate or below | 57%         | 55%         |
|                        | Third Level Education        | 81%         | 67%         |
|                        | P-value                      | <b>0.00</b> | <b>0.09</b> |
| Financial Stress       | Low Financial Stress         | 71%         | 58%         |
|                        | High Financial Stress        | 62%         | 60%         |
|                        | P-value                      | <b>0.15</b> | <b>0.82</b> |

Source: Economic Sentiment monitor, June and July 2017, weighted.

# Results V: Comparison of Anonymously Expressed Attitudes (List estimates)

|                        |                              | Black       | Muslim      |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Gender                 | Male                         | 51%         | 67%         |
|                        | Female                       | 51%         | 40%         |
|                        | P-value                      | <b>0.98</b> | <b>0.00</b> |
| Age                    | Younger                      | 59%         | 54%         |
|                        | Older                        | 40%         | 53%         |
|                        | P-value                      | <b>0.04</b> | <b>0.88</b> |
| Educational Attainment | Leaving Certificate or below | 49%         | 59%         |
|                        | Third Level Education        | 54%         | 45%         |
|                        | P-value                      | <b>0.53</b> | <b>0.12</b> |
| Financial Stress       | Low Financial Stress         | 58%         | 49%         |
|                        | High Financial Stress        | 47%         | 58%         |
|                        | P-value                      | <b>0.20</b> | <b>0.32</b> |

Source: Economic Sentiment monitor, June and July 2017, weighted.

# Summary and Discussion

1. Attitudes are more positive towards Black immigrants than Muslim immigrants when expressed directly, but not when expressed anonymously. Something particular to Black immigrants or to Muslim immigrants?
2. On direct questions, a large difference in those with third level compared to leaving cert education or less. On anonymously expressed attitudes, no such education differences are found, at least for these two groups
3. Masking varies by gender – more prevalent among women when asked about Muslims. Women less supportive of Muslim immigration than men in Ireland.

# Implications for research and policy

- Directly expressed attitudes still matter – likely to influence public behaviour (e.g. protesting, public debate) and ‘public’ experience of minority groups
- Covert attitudes may matter more for private actions – voting, hiring, letting property. Exp of discrimination in recruitment is high for Black ethnic group in Ireland (McGinnity et al 2018)
- Note decision makers are likely to be highly educated
- Directly expressed opinions clearly important but efforts may also be needed to understand and combat more subtle or coded forms of prejudice

# Avenues for future research

- An additional experiment fielded two years later in Ireland (2019) explored attitudes to EU-origin integration, and analysis of these findings will form a complement to this study
- List technique could be applied to social distance scales or other social attitudes in Ireland
- Could be added to international surveys (ESS, Eurobarometer)
- Or indeed investigate behaviour – eg compliance with COVID-19 public health guidelines – recent list experiment in Ireland

*Thanks for listening!*  
*Questions? Comments?*

Full report is here:

<https://www.esri.ie/publications/hidden-versus-revealed-attitudes-a-list-experiment-on-support-for-minorities-in>

For more info on the research programme, see here:

<https://www.esri.ie/current-research/human-rights-and-equality-research-programme>