

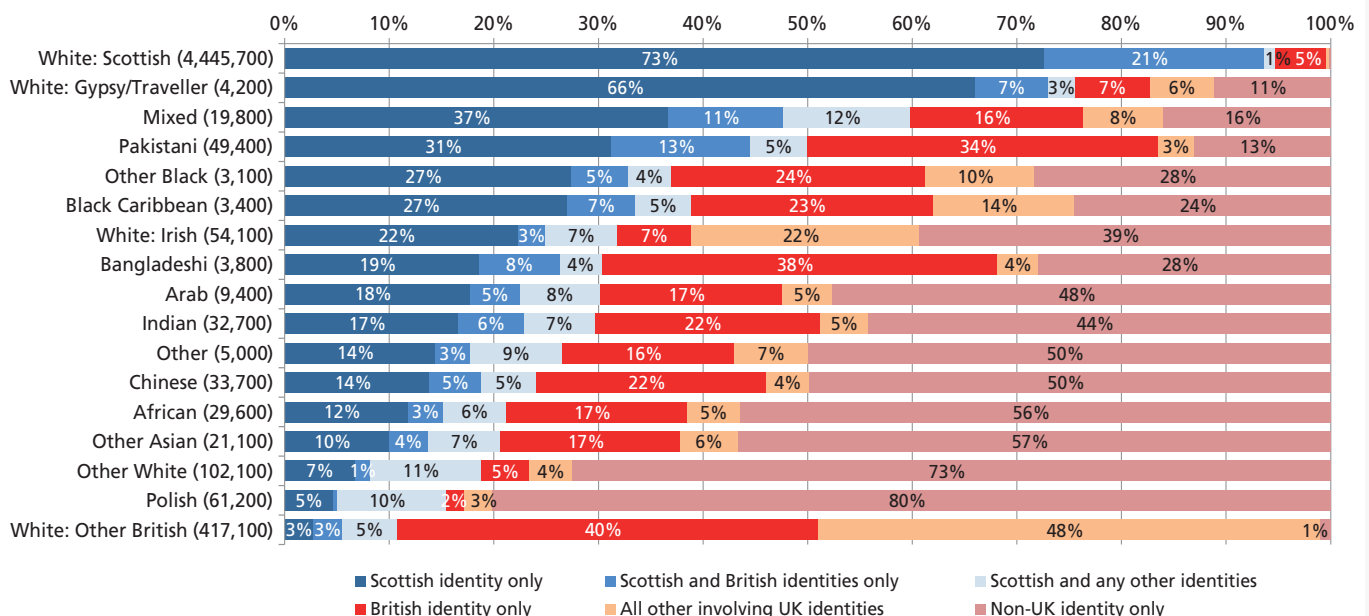
# Who feels Scottish?

## National identities and ethnicity in Scotland

### Summary

- 83% of Scotland's residents feel Scottish.
- 61% of Scotland's residents identify as being of White Scottish ethnicity *and* feel Scottish is their only national identity. A further 22% are from other ethnic groups and feel they have a Scottish national identity, or are White Scottish whose Scottishness is combined with British or other national identities.
- Catholics, Protestants and those of no religion share similar levels of commitment to a Scottish only national identity, while two-thirds of Muslims in Scotland identify as Scottish or British.
- The 'White: Other British' are the largest ethnic minority in Scotland, and the ethnic group least likely to feel Scottish national identity (11% feel Scottish, with or without other identities). 78% were born in England.
- Being born in Scotland makes people feel Scottish: 94% of the Scotland-born choose Scottish as their national identity alone or with other identities, but less than half of those born outside Scotland do so.
- About 25% of Scotland's residents born outside Scotland do feel Scottish, and this is no less for those from South and East Asia, Africa and the Middle East, than it is for those born in England or other parts of Europe. About a third of Scotland's residents born in North America, the Old Commonwealth and Western Europe feel Scottish.
- The Polish ethnic group, who have recently had the highest migration rates into Scotland, expressed most affiliation to a non-UK identity only (80%).
- For other groups, including Pakistanis, Bangladeshi, Africans, Indians and Chinese, British only was chosen as frequently as Scottish only. This perhaps reflects the emphasis on Britishness in citizenship regulations, and was also found in England where minorities identified as British more often than English.
- Almost all minority groups are more likely to claim a Scottish identity in Scotland than an English identity in England.

**Figure 1.** National identity and ethnic group, Scotland, 2011



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## Introduction

From the first results of the 2011 Census, a flurry of headlines declared that a majority of Scotland's residents had recorded their national identity as only Scottish. This Briefing examines what the public debates over independence have also made clear: that choices about national identity are complicated ones, shaped by the context in which they are made, by the different individual and collective histories of those who make them and, no doubt, by different understandings about what is at issue in the idea of national identity itself.

Because the Census asks its questions of everyone, it allows us to examine how Scottishness and other national identities have been affected by the changing ethnic diversity of Scotland.<sup>1</sup> It also allows us to examine how national identity relates to other characteristics such as place of birth and religious affiliation, as well as to draw comparisons with the corresponding data from other parts of the UK in order to explore what may be distinctive about national identification in the Scottish context.

While the 2011 Census reveals that 62% of the population felt only Scottish, and a further 20% felt Scottish alongside other national identities, these figures represent a mix of different forms of allegiances to Scotland. National identity is more nuanced than may be evident in the exclusionary view of either Scottishness or Britishness that is often canvassed in political debates.

## National identity and ethnicity in Scotland

In all, 3.2m or 61% of all Scotland's residents claim White Scottish ethnicity as well as Scottish as their only national identity. 22% more either feel only Scottish although they are not of White Scottish ethnicity, or feel Scottish as well as British or another national identity. Thus in total, 83% included Scottish in their national identity.

As one might expect, those who declare their ethnicity to be White Scottish are more likely than others to also claim a national identity of Scottish. Figure 1 (on page 1) shows the different ethnic groups identified in the census, in decreasing order of claiming Scottish as a national identity.

Within the White Scottish population, there was a strong difference between Edinburgh where two-thirds of this group identified as only Scottish, compared to 74% in Glasgow and 73% in the rest of Scotland. Gypsy/Travellers were the second most likely ethnic group, after White Scottish, to select Scottish as their national identity, 76% doing so and 66% choosing only Scottish.

Among the remainder who did not express any Scottish national identity were 26% of 'White: Other British' who claimed only English national identity. 78% of the 'White: Other British' were born in England (not shown in the Figure).

Those who identify as White Irish are 1% of Scotland's population; it is the same proportion as in England, but with a different composition regarding national identity.

## What do you feel is your national identity?

This was the question on national identity asked in 2011 for the first time in the census in Scotland, as in other parts of the UK. The instruction in Scotland was to 'Tick **ALL** that apply', with options of Scottish, English, Welsh, Northern Irish, British, and Other. There was space to write in 'Other' national identities. The national identity question preceded the ethnic group question.

In the 2011 Censuses of the UK, the instructions were the same in each country except for a different ordering of categories, and 'Irish' was offered as a category in Northern Ireland. The question allows more than one response but the use of the singular 'identity' in the title, and the fact that almost every other census question allows only one response, may have encouraged people to tick one answer and move on to the next question. Unlike the rest of the UK, the word 'all' was capitalised and emboldened in the Scottish census, and this may be partly responsible for the higher proportion of multiple identities chosen in Scotland than other parts of the UK.

See also the Briefings *How has ethnic diversity changed in Scotland?*, and *Who Feels British?*.

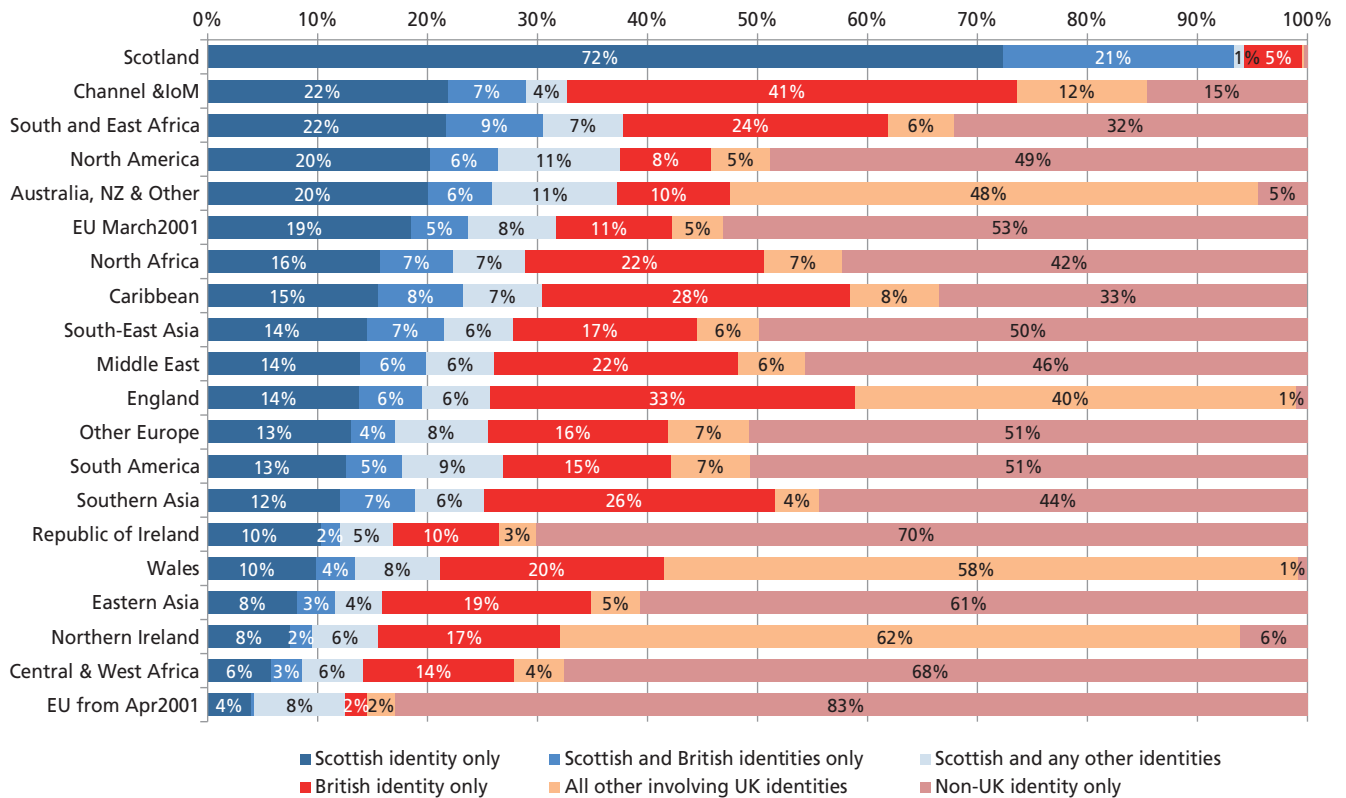
39% choose only a non-UK national identity, presumably Irish, compared to 60% in England. The difference is accounted for by those who choose other UK national identities – presumably Northern Irish – rather than British. This picture varies from Edinburgh where only 11% of the ethnic Irish feel a Scottish national identity, to Glasgow where over 40% feel Scottish.

For other ethnic groups, many chose a non-UK national identity only, rising to 80% of the Polish ethnic group which has had the highest migration rates into Scotland recently. Those groups with longer-established populations in Scotland are more likely to choose Scottish as a national identity: for example 49% of Pakistanis chose some degree of Scottish national identity, including 31% who choose only a Scottish national identity. In England, by contrast, 15% of Pakistanis chose only English as their national identity.

Similar numbers among established minorities choose 'British' as their only national identity – 34% of all Pakistanis, 38% of Bangladeshis, and 22% of both Chinese and Indians. These are lower percentages than in England (63%, 72%, 38% and 57% respectively).

In Scotland, more of each Black and Asian minority claimed a Scottish-only national identity than claimed an English identity in England, while fewer claimed a British-only national identity than in England. The census results clearly suggest that Scottish national identity is currently more ethnically inclusive in Scotland than is English in England. A fuller analysis of the results in England is provided in the Briefing *Who feels British? The relationship between ethnicity, religion and national identity in England*.

**Figure 2.** National identity and country of birth, Scotland, 2011



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The Scottishness of the Mixed ethnic group sits between the White Scottish and ethnic minorities, with nearly 60% claiming Scottishness and 16% claiming only British national identity.

## National identity in Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland

In Scotland, Wales and England, almost 60% claimed only the country of their residence as their national identity, and close to 25% claimed either British only, or their country of residence as well as British. In Northern Ireland a much higher proportion claim only British national identity, presumably as a declaration of ethnic nationalism or civic unionism.

Scotland stands out for the much larger proportion in the 2011 Census that claims both their country *and* British identity: 18% or nearly a fifth of all residents, double the percentage in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. Might this indicate that Scottishness is more 'open' or less likely to be treated as an exclusive, singular national identity? However, other reviews using surveys that cover all four countries suggest the opposite result: that fewer people claim their country and British identity in Scotland than in the other UK countries.<sup>2</sup> It may be that the slight difference in census instructions in each of the countries has affected this result (see box).

**Table 1.** National identity within UK countries

	Scotland	Wales	England	Northern Ireland
Country identity only*	62%	58%	60%	47%
British identity only	8%	17%	19%	40%
Country and British only	18%	7%	9%	8%
Other identities	11%	18%	11%	5%

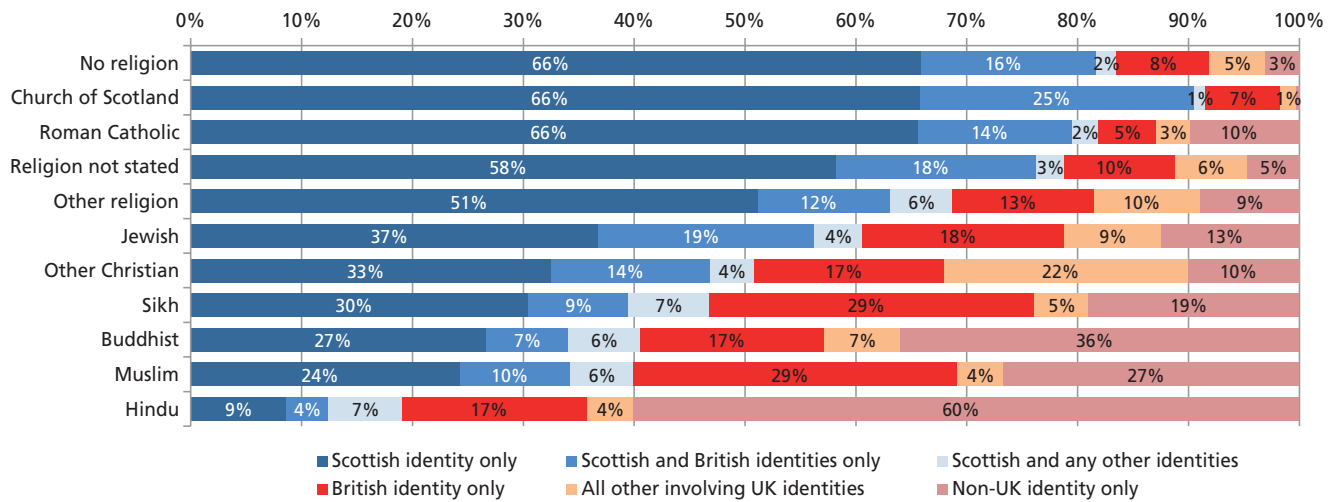
\* Eg. Scottish only in Scotland; for Northern Ireland, 'Country only' refers to N Irish only (21%) or Irish only (25%).

## National identity and country of birth

As has been suggested already in this briefing and other studies, national identity is strongly associated by many people with birthplace.<sup>3</sup> The 2011 Census shows that 94% of Scotland-born choose a Scottish national identity, compared to between 10% and 38% of those born outside Scotland (Figure 2).

What stands out is the similarity of the percentages feeling Scottish among those born outside Scotland, irrespective of birthplace, mainly between one quarter and one third. The slightly higher percentages for those born in the Channel Islands, South Africa, North America, Australia and New Zealand may be explained by the likelihood of pre-existing

**Figure 3.** National identity and religion, Scotland, 2011



[Click here for data in Excel](#)

family ties with Scotland. The slightly lower percentages feeling Scottish for those born in Eastern Asia (including China), Central and West Africa and the states recently joining the EU may be explained by the likelihood that they have immigrated to Scotland most recently, and that these populations include significant numbers of students.

There is a very similar level of feeling Scottish among those born in North Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East and South Asia as among those born in England and other parts of Europe. For all of these birth places, 12%-16% feel only Scottish, and a further 12%-15% feel Scottish together with another identity.

Those born in the Caribbean or South Asia have a higher proportion, just over one quarter, identifying as British only, compared to other overseas birthplaces. This may reflect earlier migration from those regions – and therefore a longer history in Britain – or it may reflect the focus of British colonialism in these two regions.

Finally, those born in the EU may be more likely to retain and report a non-UK national identity because they have rights in the UK that others would only acquire once they receive British nationality.

## National identity and religion

There are differences in national identity according to religion which may be largely accounted for by birthplace and time spent in Britain. Two thirds of both Roman Catholic and Church of Scotland populations identify with only Scottishness, the same as those with no religion.

Those who stated they belonged to the Church of Scotland are the most likely to report Scottish national identity, either as a single or a combination identity. Hindus have the least identification as Scottish, less than Muslims who in turn identify as Scottish a little less than Buddhists in Scotland. Among every religion with the exception of Hindus in Scotland, the majority of adherents claim some combination of Scottish or UK identities.

<sup>1</sup> Simpson (2014) *How has ethnic diversity changed in Scotland?* CoDE/JRF Briefing

<sup>2</sup> British Social Attitudes 2013, *Devolution: trends in national identity* and Rosie and Bond 2008, *National identities and the politics of devolution*, Radical Statistics 89, and British Social Attitudes 2013, *Devolution: identity and preference*, Table 6.11.

<sup>3</sup> McCrone, D. and Bechofer, F. (2008) 'National Identity and Social Inclusion', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31(7): 1245–1266.

Sources: The 2011 Censuses (Crown Copyright)

This briefing is one in a series, *The Dynamics of Diversity: evidence from the 2011 Census*.

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