

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
16 September 2013

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses**Fifteenth Meeting**

Geneva, 30 September – 3 October 2013

Item 12 of the provisional agenda

Migration and ethno-cultural characteristics**2011 Census for England and Wales: Measuring identity and Nationality****Note by the Office for National Statistics, United Kingdom¹***Summary*

Measuring Nationality, and other aspects of identity, is difficult in the United Kingdom, because it is made up of four separate countries (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). The 2011 Census in England and Wales collected more information to achieve this than ever before including, for the first time, data to enable a reliable estimate of Nationality/Citizenship.

This paper outlines the challenges faced in measuring identity in the UK, and the increasing demand for additional information and more varied response options. It then outlines the questions asked to successfully balance user requirements for information and respondent expectations in how they should be recorded.

The paper then discusses the information collected, and the methodology that will be used, to produce estimates of nationality, and the difficulties in doing so.

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I. Background

1. The United Kingdom has a rich mixture of nationalities, cultures and communities. Some of these reflect long-standing history and heritage, while others reflect more recent social changes. As different groups may have different requirements, for health, education and other services, it is essential to understand their size and characteristics to meet these and the census is the most effective way of doing so.
2. Census data are used to inform resource allocation, service provision and policy development across the public sector, and are also used to measure equality and to baseline other statistics. These data are increasingly also being used by communities themselves to understand and compare themselves, and to influence the development of culturally relevant services and activities.
3. The Census in England and Wales has met this requirement for information, through the inclusion of question on country of birth, ethnic group (since 1991), and on religion (since 2001). However, an increasing requirement to understand different aspects of “Identity”, has led to the collection of more information to achieve this than ever before.
4. In addition to requirements from users for additional information, the general public and community groups are increasingly asking for additional tick boxes to be able to identify themselves. These factors combine to make measuring identity increasingly difficult.

II. Aspects of identity

5. This section outlines the different questions asked in the 2011 Census to measure different aspects of identity, and explains why each is required.

A. Ethnic group

6. A question on ethnic group was first asked in 1991, and included nine response options: Seven tick-box options based on skin colour and national or geographical origin, and two “write in” options for people who did not identify with of them. This question was well received, and the data were extensively used for resource allocation and policy development across Government.
7. Consultation prior to the 2001 Census confirmed a strong user requirement for this information, but also requests for a significant expansion of the question used. The requests came, not only from users of census data, but also from community groups who felt very strongly that they should have a tick-box, rather than be required to include themselves under “other”, and that this was required to collect sufficient data to influence Government policy. The 2001 Census included an expanded question, with an additional four tick boxes and a total of five write-in options, split into four major ethnic groups.
8. However, this expanded question did not meet the requirements of all users or community groups. Some religious groups also consider themselves an ethnic group (notably Sikh and Jewish communities), and some residents of specific countries within the UK objected to being categorised as “White British”. ONS attempted to address the first of these issues through the inclusion of a separate question on religion (discussed in section II. C.), but the scale of the second issue did not become clear until after the questionnaires were finalised.

9. The 2011 Census included a further expanded question on ethnic group, based on consultation, which identified strong user requirements for information on two additional groups: Gypsies & Travellers and Arabs. Despite the composite nature of this question (mixing skin colour and geography), and unhappiness from groups who are not represented in the tick-box options, this was the topic identified as “most important” during that consultation, and is extensively in analysis, resource allocation and policy development across England and Wales.

10. In addition to expanding this question, and to address concerns that the “White British” category was unsuitable, a new question was included in 2011 to ask about National Identity.

B. National identity

11. Following the 2001 Census, it was clear that a significant number of respondents in England and Wales were not happy to describe their ethnic group as “White British” and ONS launched a programme of work to address this for future censuses and social surveys. This work concluded that the best solution was not to further expand the ethnic group question, but supplement it with an additional one asking about national identity.

12. This question allowed respondents to identify with a particular country of the UK, as British or any other identity through a write-in option, and was well received by respondents.

13. In addition to addressing these concerns, the new question provides valuable information to help improve understanding of migration and integration into British society. For example, it is possible to identify those born outside of the UK who now consider themselves British, and to observe second generation migrants who consider themselves of an Asian ethnicity but also British.

C. Religion

14. A question of religion was asked for the first time in 2001, to supplement the ethnic group question by collecting information on a different aspect of respondents’ cultural identity. This question, uniquely in the Census in England and Wales, was voluntary, although the majority of respondents chose to answer it. The data from this question were well received by users, and used to target policies and services to support religious minorities.

15. However, this question criticised by Christian denominations, who considered that they should have separate tick boxes, rather than be aggregated together, and by non-religious groups who felt that the data did not reflect religious practise.

16. Despite requests for a number of additional tick boxes during consultation for the 2011 Census, no strong use was identified for them by users, so the question was largely unchanged.

D. Language

17. Consultation prior to the 2011 Census found that census data on country of birth, ethnic group and religion were increasingly being used as proxy information on languages spoken, in an attempt to target resources and services effectively. Users were clear that

these data were a poor substitute for that which a specific question could provide, and two new questions were added.

18. As the primary use of these data was to be in providing services to people who do not speak English well, the questions asked respondents to record their main language and also their proficiency in English. These data have been well received, and significant analysis has already been undertaken to improve understanding of migration and integration.

19. Despite the popularity of these data, the questions were criticised by some groups who wanted to record that they speak more than one language, which was not possible for those for whom English was the main language. This additional information would also have been useful understanding the language spoken by second generation migrants.

III. Nationality/Citizenship

20. In addition to increasing requirements for information on different aspects of identity, it is also necessary for the UK to provide data to Eurostat on nationality/citizenship. Prior to 2011, data on country of birth have been used as a proxy, but it was decided that this would be less acceptable at a time when migration has increased so significantly. This conclusion was reached because, although the United Kingdom has always had a comparatively large population born overseas, a significant proportion of these residents are British citizens.

A. Question development

21. While collecting information on nationality is straight-forward in most countries, that is not the case in the UK, where four countries share one nationality. As discussed in section II. A., a significant proportion of the population prefer to identify with a specific country within the UK.

22. Testing of questions asking about nationality or citizenship found that the concepts were poorly understood, and respondents were unhappy that there were not specific tick boxes for English, Welsh and other UK identities. Respondents were also confused by the similarity between these questions and those asking about ethnic group, national identity and country of birth. This testing concluded that it would not be possible to collect information about nationality in the way that this is done in other countries, and that proxy information would be required.

23. The solution developed was to ask respondents about their passports, where testing showed that "United Kingdom" was an acceptable response option, and to ask this question on a different page of the questionnaire to those on different aspects of identity (ethnic group, national identity, language and religion). It was accepted that it would then be necessary to derive information on nationality, and the method for doing this is discussed in section III. B.

B. Derivation of information on nationality

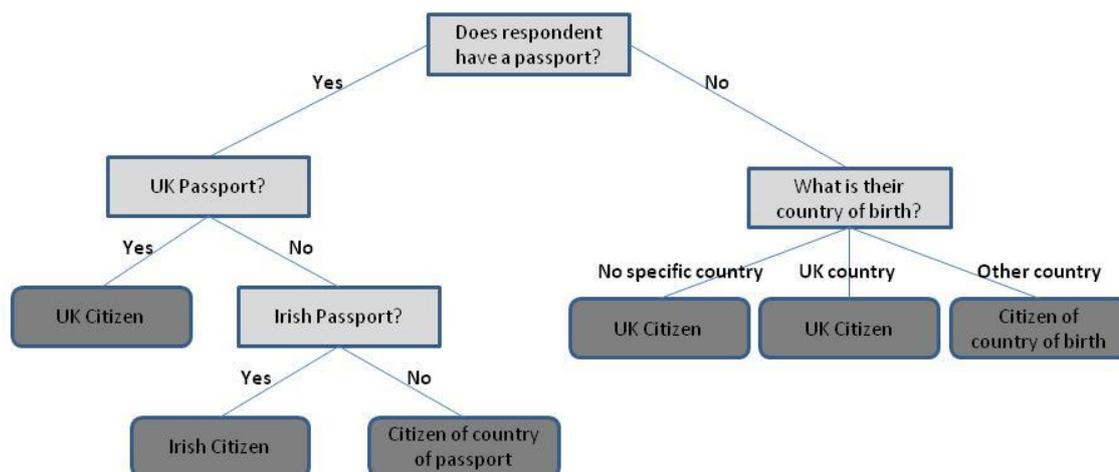
24. Although information on passports held is a better proxy for nationality than that on country of birth, it is not suitable for delivery to Eurostat because a large proportion of the population do not have a passport.

25. A method for deriving nationality, using information on passports and country of birth has been agreed with ONS experts on migration statistics, and a simplified version of this is shown in the diagram below.

26. This methodology is further complicated by the need to allocate a nationality to those with no passport and no specific country of birth (e.g. respondents who answer “EU”) and to those who’s passport is not also a nationality (e.g. respondents with a Hong Kong passport, who are Chinese citizens).

Diagram 1

Simplified derivation of nationality



27. Although the data produced using this methodology are not an exact estimate of nationality, they are the most accurate that can be achieved through a self-completion questionnaire in the UK.

IV. Results

28. This section summarises some results from the questions discussed, to illustrate why all are required.

A. Ethnic Group

29. The data in table 1 show the different median ages for different ethnic groups, which are used to target health and care resources effectively. The groups highlighted are those with the highest median age, who are significantly more likely to require healthcare and other support.

B. National identity

30. The data in table 2 show the proportion of people in each ethnic group by their national identity, and are used to help assess integration into British society. The groups highlighted are those least likely to identify with a British identity.

Table 1
Median age for ethnic groups in England and Wales

	<i>Population (Thousands)</i>	<i>Median age</i>
All categories: Ethnic group	56,076	39
White: British	45,135	42
White: Irish	531	53
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	58	26
White: Other White	2,486	31
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	427	18
Mixed: White and Black African	166	16
Mixed: White and Asian	342	17
Mixed: Other Mixed	290	20
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1,413	32
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	1,125	25
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	447	24
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	393	28
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	836	31
Black/Black British: African	990	28
Black/Black British: Caribbean	595	40
Black: Other Black	280	23
Other ethnic group: Arab	231	27
Any other ethnic group	333	31

Table 2
Ethnic Group and National Identity

	<i>British only</i>	<i>English and British</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Welsh</i>	<i>Other UK</i>	<i>Irish</i>	<i>Other</i>
White: British	14.4	10.1	68.0	5.1	2.1	0.0	0.3
White: Irish	16.9	1.1	12.3	0.3	8.2	58.7	2.5
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	9.3	4.7	65.6	3.5	3.6	4.0	9.4
White: Other White	10.4	0.7	5.5	0.1	5.7	0.3	77.3
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	24.5	7.4	61.7	1.9	1.3	0.1	3.1
Mixed: White and Black African	30.2	5.7	36.8	1.6	3.4	0.4	21.9
Mixed: White and Asian	36.3	7.5	40.2	1.4	3.4	0.4	10.9
Mixed: Other Mixed	33.9	5.7	33.2	1.3	5.0	0.6	20.3
Asian/Asian British: Indian	57.9	3.1	11.9	0.1	2.2	0.1	24.6
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	62.7	3.7	15.2	0.3	2.6	0.1	15.5
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	71.4	2.2	7.9	0.4	2.5	0.0	15.5
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	38.0	1.7	8.5	0.3	3.3	0.2	48.0
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	41.4	1.6	7.8	0.1	4.0	0.1	44.9
Black/Black British: African	43.2	1.9	10.1	0.1	3.3	0.2	41.3
Black/Black British: Caribbean	54.8	4.7	26.3	0.2	1.8	0.1	12.0
Black: Other Black	47.5	5.1	26.5	0.3	2.4	0.2	18.0
Other ethnic group: Arab	39.5	1.7	10.3	0.5	4.5	0.3	43.2
Any other ethnic group	41.5	2.0	11.9	0.3	5.1	0.3	38.9

C. Religion

31. The data in table 3 show the economic activity for different religions. The groups highlighted are those most likely to be self-employed or unemployed, which can help quantify cultural differences but may also highlight discrimination.

Table 3

Proportion of economically active people by type of economic activity

	<i>Other religion</i>	<i>Sikh</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Buddhist</i>	<i>Christian</i>	<i>No religion</i>
Employee	68	70	59	65	73	69	77	74
Self-employed	19	16	17	28	13	17	14	13
Employed, full time students	3	5	7	3	6	6	3	4
Unemployed (Including unemployed students)	10	9	17	4	8	9	6	9

D. Language

32. The data in table 4 show the languages spoken by those who are least likely to speak English well. These data are useful across government to plan translation services efficiently.

Table 4

Main language

<i>Main language</i>	<i>Total population aged 3 and over</i>	<i>Per cent Proficient</i>
Gypsy/Traveller languages	461	37.5
Pakistani Pahari (with Mirpuri and Potwari)	21,854	55.2
Vietnamese	15,168	58.3
Cantonese Chinese	44,404	61.0
Yiddish	3,987	62.2
Panjabi	273,231	67.6
Romani language (any)	629	68.7
Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya)	221,403	69.6
Turkish	99,423	69.9
Latvian	31,523	70.8

E. Passports held and country of birth

33. The data in table 5 show the most common countries of birth for those not born in the UK, and the proportion of these who hold a UK passport. These data highlight why data on country of birth are not a suitable proxy for nationality.

Table 5
Country of birth by passport held

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Population (Thousands)</i>	<i>UK passport</i>	<i>Non-UK passport</i>
India	694	55.1	44.9
Poland	579	4.9	95.1
Pakistan	482	68.8	31.2
Republic of Ireland	407	24.0	76.0
Germany	274	56.8	43.2
Bangladesh	212	72.4	27.6
Nigeria	191	41.9	58.1
South Africa	191	61.4	38.6
United States	177	32.4	67.6
Jamaica	160	72.8	27.2

V. Conclusions

34. In the 1991 Census, questions on identity used less than 5 per cent of the questionnaire. In 2011, despite a significantly larger questionnaire being used, questions on identity used over 20 per cent of it.

35. User requirements for information on different aspects of identity continue to increase, to help develop and target services and resources for all minority population groups. These data are also used to analyse all other variables, to help assess integration and discrimination.

36. Although a range of questions are used to achieve this, people do not necessarily categorise their own identity into these distinct aspects. For example, a significant number consider that their national identity and ethnic group should both be “English” or that their ethnic group and religion should both be “Sikh”. This makes data collection more difficult because, if people object to the questions and categories used, they are less likely to complete the questionnaire.

37. The requirement to produce data on nationality for Eurostat is made more difficult by the similarity between questions ideally used to collect it and those used to measure identity. This had led to the collection of information on passports as a proxy, which then increases the data processing required before results can be produced.

38. Developing and agreeing the questions to meet all of these requirements was the most difficult part of agreeing the questionnaires used in the 2011 Census, and some user, community groups and members of the public remained unhappy. Given that requirements for these data are likely to continue to increase, this will be even more difficult for any future census.

Annex A: Question images

This annex contains images of all questions discussed in this paper.

15 How would you describe your national identity?

☞ Tick all that apply

English

Welsh

Scottish

Northern Irish

British

Other, write in

16 What is your ethnic group?

☞ Choose **one** section from A to E, then tick **one** box to best describe your ethnic group or background

A White

- English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background, write in
-

B Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in
-

C Asian/Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background, write in
-

D Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in
-

E Other ethnic group

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group, write in
-

20 What is your religion?

☞ This question is voluntary

No religion

Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)

Buddhist

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

Sikh

Any other religion, write in

18 What is your main language?

English → Goto **20**

Other, write in (including British Sign Language)

19 How well can you speak English?

Very well Well Not well Not at all

9 What is your country of birth?

England → Goto **13**

Wales → Goto **13**

Scotland → Goto **13**

Northern Ireland → Goto **13**

Republic of Ireland

Elsewhere, write in the current name of country

22 What passports do you hold?

☞ Tick all that apply

United Kingdom

Irish

Other, write in

None