

2011 CENSUS QUESTION TESTING – THE NATIONAL IDENTITY QUESTION (2009)

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CONTENTS

1.	Background.....	4
2.	Research aims and objectives.....	5
3.	Methods.....	5
3.1	Cognitive Interviewing	5
3.2	The sample.....	6
3.3	Respondent Selection.....	7
3.4	Fieldwork.....	7
3.5	The question developed for testing	8
3.6	A note on the terminology used in the report	8
4	Findings.....	9
4.1	Interpretation of the question	10
4.2	The instruction to “Tick all boxes that apply”	15
4.3	Response options.....	17
4.4	The purpose of the national identity question	19
ANNEX 1	21
ANNEX 2: Topic Guide	22

1. BACKGROUND

This research built on previous work carried out in 2007 and 2008, which involved testing a proposed question on national identity. The findings from 2007 and 2008 testing revealed several issues with the question:

- some people did not understand the meaning of the question, believing it referred to legal status, nationality, ethnicity or the nationality of people they associated with
- many respondents did not notice the instruction to “Tick all boxes that apply” and so felt uncomfortable, believing they were only allowed to select one identity when they might otherwise have selected more
- some people thought the question was intended to gauge levels of support for Scottish independence. As a result, some respondents, whose national identity was Scottish but who were not in favour of independence, ticked ‘British’ rather than ‘Scottish’ or ticked ‘British’ and ‘Scottish’ where they might otherwise have been happy to tick ‘Scottish’ only
- some people felt the question was intended to test the loyalty or levels of integration of some groups. Therefore, some people may have ticked ‘Scottish’ and/or ‘British’ for social desirability reasons and this would not therefore provide a true reflection of their feelings of national identity

Despite these issues and potential limitations of the data generated by this question, GROS felt that it was important to include a national identity question alongside an ethnic group question. The primary aim would be to allow respondents to express what they (subjectively) feel to be their national identity before recording their ethnicity. This was particularly important for people whose ethnicity is not ‘White: Scottish’ or ‘White: British’, but who have been born and brought up in the UK or have lived in the UK for a long time, who would not otherwise have an opportunity to express their sense of ‘Scottish-ness’ and/or ‘British-ness’.

Following testing carried out in 2008, Ipsos MORI made two key recommendations to GROS to help ensure that:

- people understood the meaning of the question and, in particular, interpreted the question as asking for their subjective views on their identity, regardless of their legal status, country of birth or ethnicity. Accordingly, we recommended that the word “feel” should be incorporated in the question wording
- people would notice that they could tick more than one box. It was recommended that the inclusion of the instruction as part of the question wording would increase the chances of people noticing that they could tick more than one box. Indeed, during testing the instruction “Please tick as many or as few as apply” was added as part of the question after the core question. While it did not remedy the problem fully, this instruction was noticed by more respondents than the previous format. In order to increase the number of respondents who noticed this further, we recommended that the instruction wording was included at the beginning of the question.

2. RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The national identity question is intended to:

- allow respondents to more fully describe different aspects of their identity
- provide stand-alone data on national identity.

The main purpose of the research was to build on the testing carried out in 2008 and test the question with a number of groups with whom the question had not yet been tested. The specific issues to be examined in this round were to:

- explore whether respondents notice the ‘tick all that apply’ instruction
- explore whether the choice of response options prompted reactions among particular groups, specifically people of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Eastern European origin and Scottish people not in favour of independence.

Testing also provided an opportunity to build on previous testing in terms of:

- exploring how respondents interpret and answer the question on national identity
- determine whether respondents understand the question and the terminology used
- identifying if there are any problems with the way in which respondents answer the question
- examining how respondents’ answers relate to their country of birth, ethnic group and length of residence in the UK
- examining whether respondents view the response options as acceptable and relevant
- exploring respondents’ feelings towards the question and, in particular, whether it is viewed as intrusive
- determining whether respondents think the question is useful when it is paired with a subsequent ethnicity question

3. METHODS

3.1 Cognitive Interviewing

Cognitive interviewing was used to critically evaluate the Census questionnaire. This technique allows an investigation into the way target audiences understand, mentally process and respond to survey materials. For example, when a questionnaire is designed it is possible that the author may intend one interpretation of a question but find that respondents presented with the question adopt an alternate understanding.

There are several different techniques that can be used in cognitive interviewing. A mixture of two techniques called “retrospective probing” and “think-aloud” was deemed most appropriate for this study. Retrospective probing involves the interviewer presenting a question to be answered, the respondent answering it and the interviewer following up by probing for specific information relevant to the question or to the specific answer given (e.g. What does this question mean in your own words?). This probing can be done immediately after an individual question is asked or after the respondent has

completed all the questions. Think-aloud involves asking the respondent to vocalise any thoughts or perceptions they have when completing the questionnaire. The interviewer is able to make a note of any comments and probe for more detail in subsequent discussions.

3.2 The sample

Overall, 70 cognitive interviews were conducted with a broad range of respondents. Twenty-nine were recruited primarily for the purpose of testing the national identity question, with the remaining 41 recruited to test the whole of the questionnaire, including the national identity question. The sample was not intended to be statistically representative of the Scottish population, but was designed to include people from the main groups that we anticipated might:

- have trouble working out the meaning or intention of the question
- interpret the meaning of the question incorrectly and, as a consequence, answer differently than they might otherwise have done
- feel that having both the national identity and the ethnicity question allowed them to describe themselves more fully
- have an objection to the inclusion or phrasing of the question or inclusion or exclusion of individual response options.

The core sample of respondents for testing the national identity question was as follows:

Type of respondent	Number of interviews
People of Bangladeshi origin who had lived in the UK for 10 years or more	2
People of Pakistani origin who had lived in the UK for 10 years or more	4
People of Bangladeshi origin who had recently moved to Scotland from outwith the UK (less than 3 years ago)	3
People of Pakistani origin who had recently moved to Scotland from outwith the UK (less than 3 years ago)	2
People from Eastern Europe (not Polish) who had recently moved to Scotland from outwith the UK (less than 3 years)	5
White people born in Scotland who were not positively in favour of independence	9
People born in England	4
Total	29

We also ensured there was a mixture of men and women and people from different age groups. Respondents were recruited primarily in Edinburgh and Glasgow but also in Aberdeen.

The further 41 cognitive interviews, carried out as part of testing the whole questionnaire, which involved testing the national identity question, mainly consisted of respondents born in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK but also included, respondents from India, France, New Zealand and Australia.

3.3 Respondent Selection

Most respondents were recruited through on-street recruitment and ‘snowballing’ from contacts¹. At the end of some interviews, respondents, particularly those from ethnic minority groups, were asked whether they knew anyone who fulfilled specific criteria for the research and might be willing to participate in testing. However, no more than two respondents were ‘snowballed’ from the same source in case this introduced bias.

On-street recruitment was used to recruit the eight respondents born in Scotland who were not positively in favour of independence and the four born in England. To ensure that they did not know why they were being recruited, potential respondents were asked a number of questions about a range of topics, only two of which related to the key recruitment question: their attitude towards independence or country of birth. If respondents knew coming into testing that they had been recruited on the basis of their attitude towards independence, they might have been more likely to interpret the meaning of the national identity question as being related to independence.

3.4 Fieldwork

In addition to using retrospective verbal probing and think-aloud techniques, respondents were observed while they completed the questions. Points at which they looked puzzled or confused, where they hesitated, where they seemed to be taking care or where they seemed to skim over or ignore instructions or response categories were noted, and respondents were probed accordingly.

To ensure that the experience of testing the question was as similar to the real life experience of completing the census form, respondents were asked to complete the question in the context of the actual census form. Accordingly, respondents answered questions from the individual section of the census that will precede the national identity question, as well as the ethnicity question which comes directly afterwards.

Interviews took place between 31st July and 7th October 2009 and were conducted using a topic guide² designed by Ipsos MORI in partnership with GROS (attached at Annex 2). The wording of the questions that respondents completed during testing was provided by GROS.

¹ Snowballing involves asking respondents for an introduction to other potential respondents who fit the relevant criteria and may be willing to take part in the study – with the anticipated result that the original sample will “snowball” into a larger one. This technique is regularly used to recruit hard-to-reach populations.

² A topic guide is a document that outlines the topics that should be covered in an interview. It often gives examples of the types of questions that might be asked, however, the precise wording used will vary as a result of the interviewer’s exchange with the respondent.

Most interviews were conducted in respondents' homes. For the convenience of the respondent, several others were conducted in the Ipsos MORI office in central Edinburgh, or in a private corner of a café or restaurant. On average the interviews lasted around 1 hour. The discussions were digitally recorded and transcribed. Respondents were given £30 to cover any expenses, to acknowledge that they had given up time to take part, and to encourage participation from a wider range of people.

All interviews were conducted in English. This was on the basis that those with little or no English language ability would tend to delegate the completion of the Census form to someone else to provide substantial help with the interpretation and comprehension of the form in English.

3.5 The question developed for testing

As mentioned previously, the question wording tested drew on the previous research, with the question including reference to the word "feel". Only two versions of the question were tested (shown at the start of section 4), with the only alteration being a change to the icon used to denote the question instruction. To maintain consistency with the rest of the instruction included in the questionnaire, GROS decided not to include the instruction as part of the question wording.

It is important to highlight that there were a number of constraints which restricted the changes that could be made to the question during fieldwork and limited the number of viable recommendations that can be made. These were as follows:

- the combined length of the question and instructions could not exceed two lines
- six response options needed to be included in the question (this included five national identities and one 'other' box with two accompanying write in boxes)
- the response options "Welsh", "Irish" and "Northern Irish" could not be included due to the desire to include non-UK identities in the question. Additionally, if "Welsh", "Irish" and "Northern Irish" were included, this would make the response options for the national identity question very similar to the response options in the first section of the ethnic group question which immediately follows. This may have caused confusion between the concept of national identity and the concept of ethnic group.

3.6 A note on the terminology used in the report

Other than when we are explicitly discussing the findings and implications from the research, our use of any particular term should not be interpreted as a recommendation on terminology. The wording is that of the authors of this report and not GROS.

4 FINDINGS

Two versions of the national identity question were tested (shown below). In the second version, the arrow within a circle next to the “Tick ALL that apply” instruction was replaced with a black diamond (the same change was made throughout the questionnaire).

Version 1	Version 2
<p>14 What do you feel is your national identity?</p> <p>☉ Tick ALL that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish<input type="checkbox"/> English<input type="checkbox"/> British<input type="checkbox"/> Polish<input type="checkbox"/> Indian<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>14 What do you feel is your national identity?</p> <p>◆ Tick ALL that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish<input type="checkbox"/> English<input type="checkbox"/> British<input type="checkbox"/> Polish<input type="checkbox"/> Indian<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please write in <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

In this chapter, we outline the main issues that arose in testing and the implications for the design of the questionnaire and data quality. While we report on the various issues separately, we would like to highlight that these issues are interlinked, for example, whether respondents notice the instruction to ‘tick all that apply’ impacts on their interpretation of the question.

4.1 Interpretation of the question

Consistent with previous testing, there was mixed understanding of the question. While a large number of respondents interpreted the question as asking about their subjective views on national identity, a number understood the question as seeking to capture factual information about nationality or citizenship.

Respondents who understood the subjectivity of the question

For the most part, respondents understood the subjectivity of the question. However, even among those who understood, there were differences in levels of understanding of the concept of national identity. Respondents recognised that, while, to some extent, being influenced by country of birth, nationality and ethnicity, national identity is also distinct from them. Following previous testing, Ipsos MORI recommended that the word ‘feel’ should be incorporated into the question to assist understanding of the question and encourage people to think subjectively about their identity. Levels of understanding appeared to have been aided by the addition of word ‘feel’ to the question wording. Indeed, the word ‘feel’ formed part of many respondents’ definitions of national identity.

“It’s more of like a feeling one, really than a straightforward factual.... a bit like where you’re from and where you feel you belong I guess.” (Born in England)

There were three main aspects that shaped this understanding of national identity:

- it is a sense of pride or belonging, or an attachment, to a country
- it is very personal and subjective
- it is not fixed but is something that can change in time and depending on context.

First, one interpretation was that ‘national identity’ referred to a sense of pride or belonging to a country or place that is ‘home’. For some people their response was very straightforward.

“I’m Scottish, I’m proud to be Scottish, I’m proud to be born in Scotland, I love being associated with Scotland and a lot of what it stands for, not all of it, but a lot of what it stands for and I’m proud of my history and my background.” (Born in Scotland)

“Definitely I am from Czech Republic and there is no way, like I love Scotland, but I am just from Czech Republic and I am a very patriotic person, I’m proud of it and that’s my national identity....National identity

means where you've been born where is your home, where you feel at home, where you have just like got your base...Where is the place where you actually belong to.” (Born in Eastern Europe – been in the UK for less than 3 years)

For others, their response was a lot more considered and they discussed how they had previously thought about their own national identity. Indeed, understanding tended to be higher among respondents born outwith the UK but who have lived here for more than 10 years, for whom identity is more complex as it is something they have questioned themselves or have had queried by others. In this regard, national identity is a more considered concept to them.

“To be honest with you sometimes I get confused myself, because I came here when I was twelve years old and I spend the rest of my life here, while I go sometimes to Bangladesh once a year or after two or three years just to visit, but this is my, sometimes I ask same question myself, who am I? I get confused.” (Born in Bangladesh – been in the UK for more than 10 years)

Second, there was also an acknowledgement that national identity is very personal to each individual. Some respondents explained their interpretation of national identity as a subjective concept by contrasting it against the objectivity of ethnic group and nationality:

“...it's more of a label somebody else puts on you, that's what I think an ethnic group is....'National identity' that is what you identify with yourself, I feel Scottish, I am Scottish.” (Born in Scotland)

“I think nationality is something that is more like a government technical defined thing, while the national identity is something you feel.” (Born in Australia – been in the UK for less than 6 months)

Others explained that two people with identical backgrounds and ethnicity could feel completely different about their national identity.

“Two people who'll have the same genetics; two people of Indian extraction, who are second or third generation, one will consider their national identity as Scottish, while the other will retain [their Indian identity] just because of the way they have been brought up. So people from the same ancestry, they could consider themselves differently.” (Born in Scotland)

Third, there was awareness among some respondents, particularly those who had recently arrived in the UK, that national identity is by no means fixed but can change. Some respondents acknowledged they may change their answer in the future, as they come to feel like they belong to the country and become integrated in the community, even if they did not feel this way at present.

“If I had lived here longer I would probably put Scottish as well, just because I feel integrated into the community now, you know, if I had

thought about it longer [term]. I would think, oh I do actually feel more kind of British than Czech now in terms of living here, that's how I would identify myself." (Born in Eastern Europe – been in the UK for less than 3 years)

A few respondents recognised that national identity can change depending on the context.

"Yes I'm Scottish, but also I'm British, it depends where and when I'm asked if you understand." (Born in Scotland)

Similarly, another respondent justified his decision to select both Scottish and British by making reference to how his identity shifts between Scottish and British based on the context of the situation: if he was with an Irish, Welsh and English person, his identity is likely to be Scottish; however, if he was with a Dutch person and a French person, he is likely to consider himself as British.

Respondents who did not understand the subjectivity of the question

As was the case in previous testing, there were a number of respondents who did not understand the subjectivity of the question but instead understood the question as asking for objective information. Among those with this view, there were several different interpretations, most commonly thinking the question referred to nationality, country of birth, citizenship and legal status.

Understanding of the term 'national identity'

Most respondents were not familiar with the phrase "national identity." As a consequence, some interpreted the question as asking about nationality i.e. "What do you feel is your nationality?"

Further, others interpreted their national identity as something based on more factual information such as citizenship, legal status or country of birth and did not recognise the inherent subjectivity of the question.

In a number of cases, respondents said that they would have answered differently if they had understood the question was asking about their feelings.

Among those who interpreted national identity as asking about legal status and citizenship, some non-UK born respondents believed their answer was dependent on their length of residence in the UK and ownership of a British passport. Until they were granted citizenship in the country, they did not feel they could select anything other than their own nationality, sometimes in contrast to their feelings about their national identity.

"If you asked me what is your nationality, I am at the moment a Pakistani national so I would say I'm Pakistani....Well if it is entirely asking my feelings I would say Scottish, because I came over here on my immigration visa to settle here so I would say Scottish.... [But] it is a matter of legal status so I was not in the position to tick more than one.

Legally I can't tick any other over here." (Born in Pakistan – been in the UK for less than 3 years)

However, it is important to highlight that some of these respondents may have understood the subjectivity of the question but legal status drove their subjective view. In this regard, the way they 'feel' about national identity is inextricably linked to them becoming a legal citizen of the UK.

"I think I would consider myself being Scottish if I get citizenship and if I [had] a residents permit for a long time, then I would feel, yes I belong here and at the moment, it doesn't matter how long I have been here I still consider [myself] to be Russian. It doesn't matter how I feel, do you know what I mean? Maybe sounds stupid but sometimes it's about official status." (Born in Eastern European – been in the UK for less than 3 years)

During testing, the interpretation of this question was shaped by two other issues. First, respondents had a tendency to read the question very quickly, resulting in some reading the words "national identity" as "nationality". Indeed, the location of the national identity question – question 14 in the individual questionnaire – means that respondents are around halfway through the questionnaire and up until that point they have answered only questions asking for factual information. When reading the question quickly, therefore, some respondents tend to read the question as asking for "objective" rather than "subjective" information.

"When I answered it I was answering my nationality....I suppose my nationality is British and if I was asked about my national identity, I suppose I would say Scottish...Probably read it too fast." (Born in Scotland)

"I took it to mean national identity being what nationality I belong to, which is, I think technically British....I suppose you could say what do you feel is your national identity, as opposed to what is your national identity and I suppose I could have ticked more than one, but I didn't read the question that deeply, so I suppose, I zoomed passed it.... I probably misread fourteen in that I took my national identity as being legalistic." (Born in Scotland)

Second, a few respondents expressed surprise at the inclusion of such a subjective question in the Census, which they understood as a tool to capture hard, factual data. In this respect, their understanding of the question was shaped by a pre-conceived view that government forms are very official and therefore they thought should base their answer on their nationality or country of birth.

"Since this is going to be a government document, so when I would be filling in any government document I will stick to the legality of my status, I wont be showing my feelings there, because I might feel that some day they might come back and you have given the wrong information." (Born in Pakistan – been in the UK for less than 3 years)

“I thought maybe like in France it is very strict when you answer questions and questionnaires given out by the government, so I thought if I don’t put French they will wonder why I didn’t put French, so just said I was French.... If it was just a feeling I would just tick Scottish, because since I went back to France the only idea I had in mind was go back to Scotland and settle there.” (Born in France – been in the UK for less than 6 months)

Interpreting the question as being about independence

As was the case in previous testing, a few respondents (particularly white UK-born respondents) assumed that the question on national identity was related to the debate on independence in Scotland. However, this did not have an impact on the way they answered the question. This notwithstanding, in previous testing there was evidence that people amended their answers in light of this interpretation. The tendency for people to think the purpose of the question was to gauge levels of support for independence is discussed in more detail below.

The impact of people’s interpretation on the data collected

The potential impact of interpreting the question as asking about objective information on the data remains the same as that outlined in the report on previous testing. Despite the confusion surrounding the meaning of the question, in the most part, there is likely to be minimal effect on the data collected.

For most Scottish or British-born respondents this is unlikely to prove problematic. Based on subsequent discussions, most respondents were unlikely to answer the question any differently had they interpreted the question correctly. Indeed, for those born in Scotland, for example, answering the question was very straightforward: they were born in Scotland and therefore were drawn to the Scottish box, even if they did not fully understand or could not articulate the meaning of the question. By default, they gave the correct information. This notwithstanding, it is important to note that there is scope for some UK born people to select British on the basis of it being their legal status or nationality when they might have otherwise have answered differently, for example, Scottish or English etc. .

Similarly, for British-born ethnic minority respondents, misinterpretation is unlikely to have a major impact on data quality. However, many of these respondents did not feel a strong identity with their ancestors’ country of origin, especially if their parents were also British-born, so they only identified with Britain and/or Scotland. Again, on further discussion with these respondents, most would not have identified themselves with another nation so would have answered the question correctly by default. Therefore, the major implication for the data is the same as it was for white British-born respondents, with British-born ethnic minority respondents being equally as likely as White respondents to respond incorrectly thinking their ‘nationality’ (technically) is British.

The issue is more problematic for others, particularly non-UK born respondents. For this group, responses to the question are likely to reflect their legal status or citizenship, and not necessarily their feelings on national identity.

Recommendation

It would be very difficult to ensure that all respondents understand the question in the way it is intended without fundamentally changing the wording of the question to include some sort of preamble containing an explanation that it is not asking about legal status etc. However, this would be impractical given the limitations of space and need to ensure consistency so we would therefore recommend retaining the core question wording as it is currently:

“What do you feel is your national identity?”

4.2 The instruction to “Tick all boxes that apply”

As discussed in section one, following previous testing, Ipsos MORI highlighted the problem of respondents not noticing that they could tick more than one box and recommended that the instructions be incorporated into the question wording. This recommendation was not implemented in order to keep the style of the instruction consistent with the rest of the questionnaire. As a result, the question developed in advance of this testing included the instruction wording as a separate instruction. For the first part of the testing, the instruction was denoted by an arrow inside a light blue circle. For the second part of testing, this arrow was replaced by a black diamond (the black diamond had also been used in the previous waves of testing). This change emerged from the project to test the whole questionnaire where it was found that the black diamonds were more effective in drawing attention to the instructions.

In line with the findings of previous testing, many respondents did not notice that they could tick more than one response option. While the change to the symbol denoting the instruction did appear to make a difference, with more respondents likely to notice they could tick more than one box, there remained some respondents who did not notice this instruction.

For most respondents, not noticing the instruction was unproblematic as they would only have selected one option anyway.

“All right, no I haven’t noticed that because I don’t know for me I’ve got just one national identity.... I wouldn’t probably tick Scottish and Czech together.” (Born in Eastern Europe – been in the UK for less than 3 years)

However, there were a few respondents who said they would have answered differently if they had realised they could tick more than one box. By assuming they could only choose one box, they were not able to fully describe their national identity. For example, some British-born respondents mentioned that they would have selected both Scottish and British if they had noticed they could tick more than one box.

“Oh I didn’t notice that, see I didn’t read that...I would have ticked Scottish and British.” (Born in Scotland, ticked ‘British’ only)

The impact on the data collected

While not noticing question instructions is a common problem in surveys – there will always be respondents who do not fully read questions for various reasons – it is arguably more of a problem for the national identity question than it would be for other questions in the Census, for two reasons.

First, as was evident from the first round of testing, if respondents notice they can tick more than one box, they are less inclined to misinterpret “national identity” as nationality. In this sense, noticing that they can tick more than one box aids understanding of the question, leading people to think more carefully about the meaning of the question and its inherent subjectivity.

Second, one of the main intended purposes of the national identity question is for it to work in conjunction with the ethnic group question, to aid self-expression of identity by allowing respondents to express one or more national identities, as well as an ethnic group. For example, at the ethnic group question, a second generation Pakistani person would be expected to tick “Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British” but at the national identity question they could respond in a way that more accurately reflects the way they feel about their identity, for example, that they identify with both Scotland and Pakistan. Not noticing the ‘tick all that apply’ instruction may negate this benefit for those who feel they have more than one national identity.

Furthermore, the inconsistency in people noticing the ‘tick all that apply’ instruction has implications for the quality of the data collected at this question. Most fundamentally, if respondents do not notice they can multi-tick, the data collected will under-represent people who feel they have more than one of the national identities listed. In terms of the population breakdown of Scotland, this will affect the answers of British-born white respondents, leading them to either select Scottish or British, English or British, Welsh or British etc. With this in mind, the data may indicate that a person feels an attachment to Scotland rather than Britain, for example, or vice versa, when in fact they would have selected both if they had noticed they could select more than one box. It will also affect the data for non-British-born ethnic minority respondents who had been living in Britain for a long period of time or were British-born ethnic minority respondents who also identified themselves with their ancestors’ country of origin.

Recommendation

As noted, there will always be respondents who do not notice instructions to questions. However, for the two reasons highlighted above, it is particularly important that they notice the instruction at the national identity question. Ideally, if time allowed, we would recommend testing a version which included the instruction at the start of the questions: “Please tick as many or as few as apply. What do you feel is your national identity?”

If this is not possible, we would recommend that the latest version be retained.

4.3 Response options

The response options included in this testing were the same as those used in previous testing: Scottish; British; English; Polish; and Indian. There were no amendments made to the response options throughout testing.

One of the main areas of testing involved checking whether the inclusion of the response options Indian and Polish were deemed acceptable to other groups whose national identity had not been included as a response option – for example non-Polish Eastern Europeans, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis.

The acceptability of the response options

For the most part, respondents were accepting of the response options included in the question and did not hold particularly strong views that they should be changed. They believed that the response options were selected on the basis that they represented the most common nationalities in Scotland.

“My guess would be the current thoughts on the size that population currently within Scotland.” (Born in Scotland)

“Interesting as to why they chose Polish and Indian, not knowing enough about the population of Scotland, I presume that they are the two next most common ethnic origins, nationalities.” (Born in England)

However, there were a few notable exceptions, all of whom commented negatively on the inclusion of Polish as a response option.

One Bangladeshi, while not being particularly annoyed, was bemused by the choice of response options. He suggested that according to statistics he had read that Indian and Pakistanis are more common than Polish in Scotland. He felt that the decision to select Polish was based on the large number of media reports that have made prominent the issue of people from Poland coming to Scotland. As a result, he believed that Polish had been included as it was at the forefront of people’s minds, while other, more longstanding identities – including Pakistani and Bangladeshi – had been ignored.

Further, he questioned why a community such as Polish – many of whom, in his opinion, were likely to return to Poland at some point in the near future – were included over most established ethnic minority communities in Scotland, most of who call Scotland and the UK ‘home’.

“I think the Polish are going back as well, this year they were here for the last few years, but now, I’m not going to go back to Bangladesh. It’s simple it’s just people come from many European country, if their country is doing well, they will go back, they don’t want to live here.....they’re not going to stay here, no way....but for me, I have nothing in Bangladesh, for example, not me, for other person, because my parents and my brother

and sister are here, they're born here, this is our country, we feel like this is the country." (Bangladeshi – been in the UK for more than 10 years)

This same view was taken by a Pakistani respondent, albeit more strongly. He was unhappy that Polish was included rather than Pakistani and other communities that have been in Scotland for generations.

"You've got Indian, Pakistani not there, you've got Polish, why specifically Polish, they're recent migrants. So it does seem a bit ad hoc really the way it has been derived....They're here really as, not as a long term immigrant population to settle here, in my view I think they're here maybe more temporarily, so I would say more appropriate one would be Indian, Pakistanis, who have been here generations." (Pakistani – been in the UK for more than 10 years)

One other Eastern European respondent felt it was unfair that Polish should be included, while other recent immigrant populations from Eastern European are not, simply because there are large numbers living in the country.

"Because of where I come from, because Czech is not there, but Polish is, I know that there is a lot of Poles living in Scotland, but I don't see why they should be included in a questionnaire like this, do you know what I mean, it just feels a bit unfair to me." (Eastern European – been in the UK for less than 3 years)

Several other respondents did question the inclusion of only Polish and Indian as response options and suggested a range of other national identities that warranted inclusion. There was a feeling among some that in order to make it fair, the question should only include British, Scottish and English and an 'other' box, in which other national identities could be captured.

Further, the choice and, more specifically, the order of the response option led a few respondents think that the purpose of the question might be to capture views on independence.

"I would sort of say okay, unless you are an SNP extremist, better way of putting that would be British first, then give the choice of Scottish, English and Welsh and then other nationalities underneath it, which will be Polish, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi whatever you like." (Pakistani – been in the UK for more than 10 years).

The impact on the data collected

As outlined in the report on previous testing, despite being a minority view in testing, if response options for two other nations outside of Britain are to be included in the question there will undoubtedly be people from other nations who feel unhappy about this decision and feel it is unfair that their nation is not represented. It is therefore important to ensure that there is a clear rationale for including these nations, whether this is based on actual population sizes in Scotland or on some

other evidence that there is more of a need for a response option for certain nations. This would ensure that if respondents are unhappy any decision can be justified.

The choice of response options is also likely to impact on the data. While there was no particular evidence of this during testing, theoretically, people are more likely to tick a pre-given category than specify an “other” category. Therefore, differences between national identity and ethnicity among different ethnic groups would be affected, for example, comparing the proportion of people of Pakistani ethnic origin ticking Scottish, with the proportion people of Indian ethnic origin ticking Scottish. However, it would be very difficult to avoid this unless the number of response options could be increased. Equally, as noted in testing in 2008, the addition of two nations outside of Britain may reduce the tendency for people to answer for social desirability reasons. The inclusion of these response options would indicate that it is acceptable to feel attachment to other nations outside of the UK and thus increase the accuracy of the data.

Recommendation

As noted above, we recommend selecting nations on the basis that there is clear fair rationale as to why these have been selected instead of other nations. Accordingly, if the inclusion of Polish and Indian can be fully justified, we recommend retaining these options.

4.4 The purpose of the national identity question

The dominant interpretation of what the data would be used for related to establishing whether people, particularly immigrants to the UK, feel part of the country they live in. This view was particularly strong among non-British born respondents.

“How people feel. From whatever country they are from, what do they actually feel about staying in Scotland: do they feel Scottish, do they feel part of that society, or do they still feel that they are outsiders?” (Pakistani – been in the UK for more than 10 years)

“There are so many international people and students and workers and they just want to know how do they feel probably, do they still feel the national identity of the country where they’ve been born, or have been here so long, so do they feel that they are Scottish.” (Born in Scotland).

Another interpretation related to the debate on independence and some felt the data could be used to gauge whether people living in Scotland wanted to become separate from the rest of the UK.

“The national identity I guess it’s quite important, all this independence stuff going on at the moment.” (Born in England)

The impact on the data collected

During testing, none of the respondents who interpreted the purpose of the question as being related to independence answered differently in light of this interpretation. However, there is likely to be some respondents – as highlighted in previous testing in 2007 – who will amend their answer. Indeed, some respondents, who may feel Scottish but are not in favour of independence, might ticked 'British' rather than 'Scottish' or tick 'British' and 'Scottish' where they might otherwise have been happy to tick 'Scottish' only.

Recommendation

It would difficult to prevent respondents from incorrectly interpreting how data collected might be used without adding a large preamble to the question explaining the reasons for collecting the data. As a result, we recommend retaining the current wording of the question.

Summary of recommendations

In summary, we recommend the following:

- there should be no change to the core question wording and the word 'feel' should be retained
- if there is time, test a version of the question where the instructions come before the core question: "Please tick as many or as few as apply. What do you feel is your national identity?" Otherwise, retain the latest version
- ensure that the decision over which two nations are selected as the two non-British response options can be justified with a clear rationale.

ANNEX 1

Versions of the form

Two versions of the national identity question were used over the testing period. Each version of the question was tested with the following respondents:

Version 1

7 people born in Scotland (not in favour of independence)
4 people born in England
3 people born Pakistan (been in the UK for more than 10 years)
1 person born in Pakistan (been in the UK for less than 3 years)
0 people born in Bangladesh (been in the UK for more than 10 years)
1 person born in Bangladesh (been in the UK for less than 3 years)
5 people born in Eastern Europe
20 other respondents
Total: 41 respondents

Version 2

2 people born in Scotland (not in favour of independence)
0 people born in England
1 person born in Pakistan (been in the UK for more than 10 years)
1 person born in Pakistan (been in the UK for less than 3 years)
2 people born in Bangladesh (been in the UK for more than 10 years)
2 people born in Bangladesh (been in the UK for less than 3 years)
0 people born in Eastern Europe
21 other respondents
Total: 29 respondents

ANNEX 2: TOPIC GUIDE

Description

Introduction

Introduce self, Ipsos MORI

If you have a colleague with you, explain that they are here to observe you. Research commissioned by the General Register Office for Scotland – the organisation that runs the Census – which involves talking to members of the public to understand how they would answer revised possible questions for Scotland's 2011 Census and other Scottish official statistics.

Information about importance of Census (e.g. it is used by government, health authorities and many other organisations to allocate resources, tackle discrimination and plan services for everyone.)

Thank participants for agreeing to be interviewed; mention should take c 1/4 hour.

Anonymity of respondents and MRS (Market Research Society) code of conduct

Permission to record, explain how it will be used.

1. Completing the Census questions

Firstly, we would like you to complete these questions. I will ask you to stop completing the questionnaire after a certain point – don't worry I'll let you know when – so we can discuss what you have completed. I'd like you to work through the questionnaire as if this is the day of the Census and you have just received this form at the address printed on the first page of the questionnaire (or the address we would like them to think of). Please complete the questionnaire as you would if I was not here. Just work at your own pace. This is not a test. One thing that is helpful for me to understand how you are getting on with each question is for you to 'think aloud' and say what you are thinking about as you complete the questionnaire.

[In general throughout the questionnaire, note any important comments made in think aloud, expressions or body language.]

*NOTE: if the participant has been selected primarily to test the **national identity question**, allow them to complete the questionnaire up to and including the ethnicity question about themselves (Person 1). Stop and probe on national identity question and ethnicity question (topic guide sections 2 and 3). Following this, ask them to complete the remainder of the questionnaire. Follow-up with probing on the household questions (H1 to H5 and H14) and the whole questionnaire (sections 4 and 5).*

*If the participant has been selected primarily to test the **household questions**, allow them to complete the Household section. Stop and probe on the household questions (H1 to H5 and H14) (section 4). Following this, ask them to complete the remainder of the questionnaire. Follow up with probing on the national identity and ethnicity questions and the whole questionnaire (sections 2 and 3, and 5).*

*If the participant has been selected to test **both the household questions and the national identity question**, allow them to complete the Household section. Stop and probe on the household questions (H1 to H5 and H14) (section 4). Following this, ask them to complete the questionnaire up to and including the ethnicity question. Stop and probe on national identity question and ethnicity question (sections 2 and 3). Ask them to complete the remainder of the questionnaire and follow up with probing on the whole questionnaire (section 5).*

2. Verbal probing on national identity

Overall

How did you find this question?

What does this question mean in your own words?

Did anything come into mind when you read this question?

What do you think is meant by “national identity”?

Was it an easy or difficult question to answer?

Response options

How did you decide which box(es) to tick? [*Probe (non-UK born respondents): Did you take in to consideration the length of time which you have spent in the UK?*]

What did you think of the response options? [*Probe: Would you have included any others? Not included some that are already listed?*]

[If wrote in other boxes: How did you feel about having to write in the ‘other’ boxes?]

Did you notice that you could tick more than one box? [If no: If you had noticed, would you have answered the question any differently?]

Did you feel there was a ‘correct’ answer to this question?

How well do you feel the description [*insert their choice*] describes your national identity? How would you normally describe your national identity?

How would you have answered this question if there were no response options given and you just had to write in? [*Probe: why did you answer differently?*]

3. Verbal probing on ethnicity question

Overall

What do you understand by the term ‘ethnic group’?

Response options

How do you normally describe your ethnic group? How does this compare to how you describe your ethnic group on this question?

Did you notice that you could only select one option?

Ethnic group vs national identity

You answered [*insert choice*] for national identity and answered [*insert choice*] for your ethnic group – why did you decide to do this? [*In particular, probe instances where respondent multi-ticked at national identity: How did you feel about having to select one box?*]

Do you feel the way you answered the national identity question affected the way you answered this question?

Would you have answered this question differently if the national identity question was not included?

How do you feel about having to answer both of these questions?
[*Probe: Does it help you to more fully describe yourself than one question?*]

Do you think it is important/unimportant to be asked both questions in the census?

How would you complete the national identity and ethnicity questions for other members of your household?

Do you have any comments you want to make about this question and the categories listed?

Purpose

Why do you think the national identity question has been included in the census?

Why do you think the ethnicity question has been included in the census?

Do you think these questions should be asked in the census?

How do you think the information on national identity will be used?

How do you think the information on ethnicity will be used?

If this was the real census and I wasn't here, would you have answered these questions?

Do you think you would answer these questions any differently in 10 years time?

What would you have said 5 years ago?

4. Verbal probing on Household section

How did you find completing this section? [Probe: Easy/difficult to understand]

Important Guidance – before you start (page 2)

Did you read the guidance instructions fully, scan them or skip them?
[Probe for: any specific parts of the instructions that they read]
[helpful/confusing? Probe for: specific parts that were helpful/confusing
Easy/difficult to understand?]

Did you notice the definitions of household and/or householder? [Probe for: helpful/confusing?]

[For participants who live in households with more than 5 members: Did you notice the instruction about additional questionnaires? What would you do about this if you were completing the census for real?]

Did you notice the instruction about individual questionnaires being available for household members aged 16 or over who do not want to disclose their information?

Did you notice the instructions on how to complete the questionnaire correctly? [Check for any mistakes made in the questionnaire: did they correct them as instructed?]

Extra Guidance for household questions (H1 to H5) (page 3)

Did you read the extra guidance instructions fully, scan them or ignore them? [Probe for: any specific parts of the instructions that they read]

If read: how did you feel about filling in this section after reading it?

[If they have not read it, ask them to do so now. Also ask why they did not read it. Probe for: Did you notice it? If yes, reasons why did not read – not thought relevant? Decide to refer back to the extra guidance instructions if required?]

Are they easy or difficult to understand? [Probe: anything found difficult]

Is there any information in the instructions that is particularly relevant to your household?

Children with parents who live apart

[For participants whose children spend time at another address: Did you read the instruction about children with parents who live apart?

How did you feel about completing the questionnaire after reading this?

[Probe: Was it clear/unclear?]

Students and schoolchildren who live away from home during term-time

[For participants who have students or school children, or students themselves, who live away from home during term time:

Did you read the instruction about students living away during term time?

How did you feel about completing the questionnaire after reading this?

[Probe: Was it clear/unclear?]

CHECK: did they complete the questionnaire correctly i.e. Did they include themselves in section H; If they are the parent or guardian of the students or schoolchildren, did they complete individual questions 1 to 6 only? If they are the student, did they complete all individual questions? *[Probe: Why did you complete the questionnaire this way?]*

People from outside the UK

[For participants who themselves are/or have someone staying with them from outside the UK but are living here temporarily]: Did you read the instruction about people from outside the UK?

How did you feel about completing the questionnaire after reading this?

[Probe: Was it clear/unclear?]

CHECK: Did they complete the H1 to H5 correctly? i.e. If their total length of stay in the UK will be **6 months or more**, did they complete the census questionnaire. If their total length of stay will be less than 6 months, were they only included in questions H4 and H5 and the back page?

People temporarily away from home

[For participants living in a household in which one or more members are living away from home temporarily]: Did you read the instruction about people with more than one UK address?

How did you feel about completing the questionnaire after reading this?

[Probe: Was it clear/unclear?]

CHECK: Did they include/exclude everyone they should have? [People who are living away from home while working; members of the armed forces; staying at their second address; on holiday or travelling (unless outside the UK for 12 months or more); visiting friends or relatives; living, or expecting to live, in a residential establishment (such as a hospital, care home or hostel for less than 6 months; in prison on remand]

People with more than one UK address, including lodgers

[For participant living in a dwelling that is not their permanent or

family home, or the address where they spend most of their time]:

Did you read the instruction about people with more than one UK address?

How did you feel about completing the questionnaire after reading this?
[Probe: Was it clear/unclear?]

CHECK: Did they complete the questionnaire correctly i.e. did they include the person at H4 and H5 only?

Question H1

How did you find this question?

How did you decide which box(es) to tick? *[if didn't tick any boxes: why not?]*

Did you notice the instructions? *[Probe: Easy/difficult to understand]*
[Was it clear who to include/exclude?]

Who did you include? *Probe: is there anybody you did not include?*
Anybody you included/did not include who were not sure whether you should include or not?]

[Probe specifically on any errors made: Who did you include/exclude?]

What did you think of the response options *[Probe: easy/difficult to understand]*.

Did you notice the note about getting more advice about who to include?
[Did you consider using this?]

Question H2

How did you decide who to include *[Probe: Did you refer to question H1?]*?

Have you counted anyone at H2 that you did not include at H1 (or vice versa)?

Question H3

How did you decide who to include *[Probe: Did you refer to questions H1 and H2?]*?

How did you find completing this question? *[Probe: Any difficulties]*

Was it clear how you should write in the boxes?

Was it clear who you should include?

How did you decide who to include?

Did you know what to do if you made any mistakes?

CHECK: If mistake was made, was it corrected as appropriate? [*Probe for: if not, why was it done it that way?*]

[For participants who live in a household with more than 5 members: You were not able to include all household members at this question. Are you aware what you should do in this situation?

Did you notice the instruction for people with more than 5 people in their household? [*Probe: what would you do in this situation?*]

Did you notice the instruction about an individual questionnaire? [*Probe: did you understand what this meant?*]

Question H4

How did you find this question?

What do you understand by the term “visitors”? [*easy/difficult to understand?*]

How did you decide who to include?

Have you counted anyone at H4 that you also included at H1?

[For those without anyone else staying: did you notice the instruction to go to H6?]

Question H5

How did you decide on this final count?

Have you counted anyone at H5 that you also counted at H2?

CHECK: If they have included anyone else at H4 and H5, did they complete the back page? If not: did you notice the instruction to record the details for visitors on the back page?

CHECK: “Visitor-only” households: did they complete questions H6 to H12 and the back page?

Did you notice the instruction for households made up of **visitors only**? [*Probe: easy/difficult to understand.*]

Was it clear which part in the questionnaire you were to go to next?

[If they have completed more that H6 to H12 and the back page]: Why

did you complete the questionnaire the way you did?

H14 Relationship Matrix

How did you find this section? [*Probe: Easy or difficult to fill in?*]

Did you notice the instructions? [*Probe: easy/difficult to understand?*]

How did you decide who to include?

Did you use the same order as you used in H3? [*Probe: Why/why not? Did you notice the instruction to do so?*]

Did you notice the example? [*Probe: Was this helpful/unhelpful?*]

[For those with more than 5 household members: Did you notice the instruction to contact the census helpline to ask for more continuation questionnaires?]

5. Verbal probing on whole questionnaire

Overall, how did you find the questionnaire? Please answer honestly.

Thinking about your first impressions of the questionnaire, how did you feel when I asked you to complete the questionnaire? [*Probe: was there anything you found off-putting about it? Was there anything you particularly liked about it?*]

How would you feel about completing it if was not here?

Length

How did you find the length of the questionnaire?

Was it clear when you were to stop completing this questionnaire?

Were there any questions/sections that you felt were too long?

Order of the questions

How did you find the order of the questions?

Were there any questions that seemed out of place?

Questions/sections

Was there anything you found difficult to answer? [*Probe for: Specific words/phrases*]

Probe on any particular difficulties observed or mentioned while the participant was completing the questionnaire: What was it about that question that you found difficult?

Was there anything you were surprised at being asked?

Was there anything you expected to be asked but weren't?

[If respondent missed out question or refused to answer question: Why did you not answer question X?]

Also probe on specific questions/sections of interest:

Cover page

What did you remember about the first page?

Did you notice the letter from the Registrar General? *[Probe: Did you read it? What did you think of the messages contained in the letter?]*

How did you feel about filling in the census after reading the letter?

If you needed help while you were completing the questionnaire, how would you go about getting this?

Did you notice the option to complete the questionnaire online?

Was there anything good/bad about the cover page?

Was the purpose of the address box at the top right hand side clear? *[If they entered address again: Why did you write your address in the boxes?]*

Did you notice the declaration? What were your thoughts on this? *[Probe: was it clear who was to sign this?]*

What did you think of the title at the top of the page?

Other instructions/routing/guidance in questionnaire:

In general, how did you find the question instructions and guidance provided in the questionnaire *[Probe: is it helpful/confusing?]*

Was it easy or difficult to tell the instruction and question wording apart? *[Probe for any particular questions where this was an issue?]*

Was it always clear which question you needed to go to next? *[Probe: any questions where it wasn't clear?]*

What did you think of the use of arrows and question numbers in circles in the routing instructions? *[Probe: helpful/unhelpful?]*

Providing honest information

Was there anything you weren't particularly happy about being asked?

Did you have any concerns when you were answering it about how the information you provided might be used?

Where there any questions you did not answer honestly? [*Probe: Why not?*]

THANK RESPONDENTS

Is there anything else that is relevant, that you would like to add, that hasn't already been mentioned?

We would like to thank you for taking part and remind you that the findings will be used by the Scottish Government to improve wording of the next Census.