

CULTURE CLASH OR CULTURE CLUB? NATIONAL IDENTITY IN BRITAIN*

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This article investigates the extent and determinants of British identity among those living in Britain, a source of considerable contemporary angst. We find no evidence for a culture clash in general, and one connected with Muslims in particular. The vast majority of those born in Britain, of whatever ethnicity or religion, think of themselves as British. Newly arrived immigrants almost never think of themselves as British but the longer they remain in the UK, the more likely it is that they do. This process of assimilation is faster for those from poorer and less democratic countries.

Economists have had a lot to say about the economic effects of immigration (see Card, 1990, 2001, 2005, Borjas *et al.*, 1996, Borjas, 2003, Ottaviano and Peri, 2005 for varying US estimates and Dustmann *et al.*, 2005; Manacorda *et al.*, 2006 for UK estimates) but empirical estimates tend to suggest that the economic impact of immigration is not really large enough to be capable of explaining the strength of feeling many people have about immigration. A plausible explanation for this is that popular concerns surrounding immigration are as much about the social and cultural impact of immigration as the economic impact – for example, Dustmann and Preston (2004) find that opposition to immigration is more closely related to racial intolerance than to fears about economic effects; also see Card *et al.* (2009), for an analysis of European attitudes to immigration. If this is the case, it may be that economists' analysis of immigration are missing the most important issues. For example, conventional economic theory (see Borjas, 1999 for a survey) predicts that the net gains from immigration are largest when the immigrants are most different from the natives but this is when the dangers (perceived or real) of 'culture clash' may tend to be highest.

There is a literature in economics on the costs and benefits of ethnic diversity (that might be thought to be related to cultural diversity) that is usefully surveyed by Alesina and La Ferrara (2005). They review evidence like that presented by Easterly and Levine (1997) that ethnic fragmentation leads to lower growth in Africa and Alesina *et al.* (1999) that public good provision is lower in US cities with higher levels of ethnic diversity. Alesina and La Ferrara (2005, p. 794) conclude that there is 'overwhelming evidence' that public good provision is lower in fragmented societies but also concede that there might be productivity benefits from diversity – see Ottaviano and Peri (2006) for one paper arguing there is evidence for this. These findings might be taken as support for popular views that cultural diversity has costs – for example, Huntington (2004) expresses the fear that large-scale Mexican immigration jeopardises the traditions and values (that he thinks are Protestant and English) that have made the US the most powerful country in the world today.

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If cultural diversity has costs and benefits then public policy needs to take account of them. This policy might be immigration policy (how many immigrants from what countries to allow in) or policy on the assimilation of immigrants once they are in the country, e.g., forcing them to learn the language (Lazear, 1999) or to take exams in citizenship. Such policies to increase cultural assimilation might be thought of as turning up the heat on the 'melting pot'. We already see evidence that governments are moving in this direction and against the policy of 'multiculturalism' that, according to some of its critics, has actively discouraged assimilation by excessive celebration of diversity.¹ For example, the UK government introduced classes in citizenship into the national curriculum for schools in 2002 and since 2005 most immigrants acquiring British citizenship are required to pass a test of knowledge about British history and institutions (that many of the native-born might struggle to pass) and to attend a citizenship ceremony intended to make them feel British.

But, whether such policies are necessary depends crucially on the rate of cultural assimilation, the process by which the identities of individuals in a country change over time, and this is a question on which we have very little evidence. We do have studies of the rate of economic assimilation of immigrants (Chiswick, 1978; Borjas, 1999) but not many studies of the rate of cultural assimilation. Perhaps the most relevant studies are those by Bisin and Verdier (2000) and Bisin *et al.* (2004) who point out that small religious minorities in the US (specifically, Jews) have proved remarkably resilient in preserving their numbers and suggest this is because minority parents increase their investments in maintaining the distinct religious identity of their children. But this failure of the 'melting pot' is not generally regarded as a cause for concern because religion is now regarded as a private matter in which differences in tastes can be readily accommodated within society without serious cost. This article primarily considers another aspect of identity – national identity and, in particular, the extent to which those living in Britain think of themselves as British.

One might legitimately wonder why this matters for the functioning of British society. There are two answers. First, this is perceived as very important by many people (see, for example, CRE, 2005*b*) and, as such, becomes of political importance. In the UK context the most celebrated example is the 'Tebbit' test – the then Cabinet Minister told the *LA Times* that: 'A large proportion of Britain's Asian population fail to pass the cricket test. Which side do they cheer for? It's an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you came from or where you are?'.^{2,3} At the heart of current debates about culture clash in the UK is the concern that among some groups, a growing fraction of those who live (and were perhaps born) in Britain do not think of

¹ For example, Trevor Phillips the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality in the UK argued in a TV interview that multiculturalism was leading to segregation, saying that 'too many public authorities particularly (are) taking diversity to a point where they (are) saying, 'actually we're going to reward you for being different, we're going to give you a community centre only if you are Pakistani or African Caribbean and so on, but we're not going to encourage you to be part of the community of our town'. Some intellectual heavyweights have weighed in with their criticisms of multiculturalism – see Barry (2000), Parekh (2000) and Sen (2006).

² He followed this up with the following comment after the London bombings of July 7 2005 'if you have two cultures, you have two societies living in the same territory and if you look around the world, you see that is a recipe for trouble.'

³ A similar example is given by Huntington (2004, p. 14) who castigates Mexican-Americans for booing the US soccer team when playing against Mexico in LA in 1998.

themselves as British, have no aspiration to do so and do not want their children to either, subscribing instead to some other identity and creating little enclaves that resemble, as far as is possible, the countries from which they came or a model of the good society very different from what is generally thought of as 'British'. On this view Britain has failed in its 'nation-building'.

A second reason why the study of national identity may be important is that it is easy to find examples where clashes in national identity are symptoms of wider conflicts. We will give two examples from the UK. As this article shows, Catholics from Northern Ireland rarely think of themselves as British while Protestants do and this clash in national identities mirrors the wider culture clash within Northern Ireland. Secondly, the statements of some British Muslims (the focus of most contemporary concern) appear to explicitly reject a British identity and affirm another one. One of the July 7 London bombers (British-born but whose parents were from Pakistan) appeared in a video and said, 'your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people and your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters', with the use of the words 'your' and 'my' clearly expressing the people with whom he identified.⁴

This article uses data on national identity from the UK Labour Force Survey to investigate the determinants of national identity in the UK. The evidence here is firmly in favour of the culture club rather than culture clash view. New immigrants rarely think of themselves as British but the longer they remain in the UK the more likely they are to do so. Second generation immigrants are only slightly less likely to think of themselves as British than the white UK-born population and it seems that the gap narrows further with each generation. This process of assimilation is faster for some immigrant groups than others but not in the way which might be expected – we report evidence that immigrants from poorer and less democratic countries assimilate faster into a British identity and propose a simple model to explain this fact.

1. British Identity: Descriptive Statistics

There is a small amount of existing evidence on the national identity of immigrants in Britain. We have some ethnographic and focus groups studies (e.g. see the study by Lewis (1994) of Pakistanis in Bradford, and CRE (2005*a,b*) which was based on focus groups containing 96 people). The largest quantitative studies are Modood *et al.* (1997, pp. 328–31) which used data from the 1994 National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, and Georgiadis and Manning (2009*b*) that analyses data from the 2007 Citizenship Survey. Their findings are generally in line with what we report below.

The main data set used in this article is the Labour Force Survey. This is the main UK household survey for the collection of information on economic activity. It is an address-based household sample with each household being interviewed for five successive quarters and one-fifth being replaced each quarter. It started collecting information on national identity in Spring 2001 though not in Northern Ireland. The

⁴ Though the way in which he chose to pursue his objectives was rather odd with almost 10% of those murdered being Muslim compared to under 3% in the total UK population.

national identity question follows the questions about country of birth and, for immigrants, the question on when they arrived in the UK. The specific question asked is 'What do you consider your national identity to be? Please choose as many or as few as apply'. There are six possible responses: British, English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish and 'Other'. The order in which these responses are listed depends on the country of residence so English is the first option in England, Scottish in Scotland and Welsh in Wales. For the purposes of this article we group British, English, Scottish and Welsh into a single 'British' category and we will use the term British to refer to any of these answers in what follows.⁵ We also combine the Irish into the 'other' identity category.⁶

The first row of Table 1 Panel (a) gives the percentages of the population reporting a British and 'other' identity using these definitions. Overall 93.8% report having a British identity and 7.1% an 'other' identity where the sample is restricted to those aged 16–60 inclusive. These add to more than 100% because 0.9% report a multiple identity.⁷ Panel (b) of Table 1 shows the same information split by whether one is UK or foreign-born. For the UK-born, the first row shows that 98.4% report only a British identity and 0.5% a multiple identity. For the foreign-born 43.6% report a British identity with 4.6% reporting a multiple identity.

Because a lot of discussion about national identity in Britain is about the views of ethnic minorities, Table 1 also presents the percentages reporting different identities for the main ethnic groups. Panel (a) shows that non-white ethnic groups have much lower percentage reporting a British identity than whites. Among the largest non-white groups, 41% of Black Africans, 45% of Chinese, 67–72% of South Asians and 77% of Black Caribbeans report only a British identity compared to 95.6% of whites. Non-whites are also more likely to report a multiple identity – 4–5% for most groups compared to 0.6% of whites. But Panel (b) suggests that a large part of these differentials in reported national identity can be explained by the fact that non-white ethnic groups are much more likely than whites to be foreign-born. Among the UK-born 98.7% of whites report only a British identity and 0.4% a dual identity while most of the non-white ethnic groups have 85–90% reporting only a British identity and 4–5% reporting a dual identity. For the foreign-born, there is much more variation but most non-white immigrant groups are more likely to report a British identity than white immigrants.

There are important questions about what respondents mean when they answer the national identity question in the LFS – it is quite possible that different respondents mean different things, some referring to their citizenship, others to the values that 'Britain' represents to them (see CRE, 2005a, for focus group discussions on what it

⁵ This approach does ride rough-shod over the sizeable literature that discusses the nuances of separate national identities within the UK – see, for example, Colley (1992) for a historical analysis or McCrone (2002) for a more recent one. We take the approach used here because no one is at all concerned about the fact that many Scots describe themselves as Scottish and not British, and among those born in Scotland but living in England only 5% describe themselves as English.

⁶ Our main reason for doing this is that most of those reporting an Irish identity were born in the Republic of Ireland which is not part of the UK. The only reason why one might not want to do this is because some of those in Northern Ireland choose to think of themselves as Irish and not British. The classification of the Irish identity only affects the results reported for those from Ireland so is not of great importance for what follows given this fact.

⁷ Because of the way the question is structured there are no observations recorded as having no national identity at all – these would be coded as non-responses. But only 0.33% (weighted) do not respond to this question so most respondents are giving at least one answer to this question.

Table 1
British and Other Identities by Ethnicity

	British Identity Only	Other Identity Only	Dual Identity			
<i>(a) Both UK and Foreign-Born</i>						
All	92.9	6.2	0.9			
White	95.6	3.8	0.6			
Mixed: White/Black Caribbean	92.8	5.2	2.0			
Mixed: White/Black African	66.5	31.5	2.1			
Mixed: White/Asian	81.3	14.3	4.4			
Mixed: Other	63.9	30.6	5.5			
Indian	66.6	27.8	5.6			
Pakistani	71.6	22.5	5.9			
Bangladeshi	67.9	27.0	5.1			
Other Asian	43.2	53.1	3.7			
Black Caribbean	77.3	18.0	4.8			
Black African	40.9	54.4	4.7			
Other Black	76.4	21.4	2.3			
Chinese	45.5	51.0	3.5			
Other	30.6	66.2	3.3			
	UK Born			Foreign-Born		
	British Identity Only	Other Identity Only	Dual Identity	British Identity Only	Other Identity Only	Dual Identity
<i>(b) Split by UK and Foreign-Born</i>						
All	98.4	1.1	0.5	43.6	51.8	4.6
White	98.7	0.9	0.4	41.1	54.5	4.3
Mixed: White/Black Caribbean	95.6	2.7	1.8	66.9	28.9	4.3
Mixed: White/Black African	91.6	6.3	2.1	31.4	66.6	2.1
Mixed: White/Asian	90.1	5.9	4.1	58.2	36.4	5.4
Mixed: Other	86.9	7.8	5.4	38.5	55.8	5.7
Indian	85.2	9.4	5.5	57.6	36.7	5.7
Pakistani	88.3	7.2	4.6	61.8	31.5	6.7
Bangladeshi	89.8	5.4	4.8	62.0	32.9	5.1
OtherAsian	88.3	9.4	2.3	35.9	60.1	4.0
Black Caribbean	89.1	7.3	3.6	64.0	30.0	6.0
Black African	85.9	8.1	6.0	32.2	63.3	4.4
Other Black	92.9	6.1	1.0	52.1	43.8	4.0
Chinese	86.6	9.0	4.5	35.6	61.2	3.2
Other	76.4	19.6	3.9	23.2	73.7	3.1

Notes. Statistics derived from LFS March 2001–March 2006 and relates to those aged 16 or over – grossing weights are used. Total sample size is 1,968,039 for the first panel, 1,785,087 for the UK-born and 182,862 for the foreign-born.

means to be British). As we are unable to dig into this deeper meaning, one should perhaps think of the enquiry into the determinants of a British identity as being in the spirit of Queen Elizabeth I not seeking to make ‘windows into men’s souls’ when, after a period of vicious religious conflict in the sixteenth century, she sought only outward loyalty and was not too concerned about the specific religious feeling that lay within. It is also quite possible that the fraction reporting a British identity is influenced by the framing of the question and the fact that it is part of a national survey. But, studies of other surveys with similar but related questions (Modood *et al.*, 1997; Georgiadis and Manning, 2009b) suggest that the patterns of variation in the responses that we observe are robust.

Because multiple identities are relatively rare in the data (even for the foreign-born) we only analyse who thinks of themselves as British in what follows. We conduct separate analyses of the UK and foreign-born because, as seen in Table 1, the levels of British identity are so different.

2. British Identity Among the UK-Born

We first investigate the effect of demographic characteristics on the probability of reporting British identity among the UK-born. It is worth noting that 98.9% of the sample report a British identity so a non-British identity is a rare event. We investigate the impact of a number of factors.

- gender
- age
- education, measured as years left full-time education and a dummy variable for full-time student
- region of residence
- country of birth within the UK (i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)
- ethnicity
- religion
- time trend

These variables are chosen to, as far as is possible, be exogenous demographic characteristics. We also experimented with including economic outcomes like employment status but these were always found to have small, insignificant correlations with national identity; for other work linking identity and economic outcomes see Casey and Dustmann (2010) or Battu and Zenou (2010). For this reason we only report results with the variables listed above. There are a number of other variables whose impact it would be interesting to explore, e.g., language proficiency and residential segregation, but the LFS does not contain the appropriate data for us to do this (though see Georgiadis and Manning, 2009*b*, for other evidence on these variables).

Descriptive statistics are summarised in Table A1. We estimate a probit model in which the outcome variable is reporting a British identity and all of the regressors are included separately. The results are reported in Table 2 where the marginal effects from a probit regression have been multiplied by 100. The standard errors are clustered on the individual because the structure of the LFS means we have multiple observations on the same individual.⁸ If we pool all respondents together we get the results reported in column 1. We discuss the sets of variables in turn, approximately in order of importance.

The largest marginal effect by a large distance is the effect of being born in Northern Ireland – this reduces the probability of reporting a British identity by 24%. It is almost certain that this is driven primarily by Northern Irish Catholics among whom there

⁸ Given that the LFS does have a limited panel component one might think about estimating fixed-effects model. However, very few individuals change their reported national identity over the 1-year maximum period of observation in the LFS.

Table 2
British Identity Among the UK-Born

	1 All	2 White	3 Mixed	4 Asian	5 Black	6 Chinese	7 Other	8 All
<i>Ethnicity</i>								
Mixed: White/Black	-1.465 (0.632)*							-1.433 (0.624)*
Caribbean	-3.977 (1.677)*		-2.764 (2.021)					-3.705 (1.587)*
Mixed: White/Black African	-3.017 (0.950)**		-1.074 (1.146)					-2.741 (0.903)**
Mixed: White/Asian	-5.068 (1.308)**		-2.999 (1.496)*					-4.708 (1.246)**
Mixed: Other	-3.271 (0.787)**							-2.796 (0.705)**
Indian	-4.576 (1.154)**			-0.151 (1.334)				-3.851 (1.024)**
Pakistani	-2.467 (1.120)*			0.135 (1.955)				-1.99 (0.979)*
Bangladeshi	-5.443 (1.452)**			-4.329 (2.305)				-4.708 (1.328)**
Other Asian	-4.502 (0.558)**							-4.272 (0.543)**
Black Caribbean	-3.252 (0.861)**				0.189 (1.301)			-2.743 (0.780)**
Black African	-2.437 (1.302)				2.059 (1.544)			-2.251 (1.246)
Other Black	-5.122 (1.510)**							-4.289 (1.348)**
Chinese	-14.788 (1.884)**							-13.809 (1.811)**
Other								
<i>Religion</i>								
Buddhist	-1.577 (0.627)*	-1.247 (0.624)*	-17.936 (12.653)	-11.435 (10.591)	-30.806 (22.317)	-4.823 (10.235)	4.722 (9.045)	-1.532 (0.620)*
Hindu	-0.803 (0.413)	-3.056 (3.352)	-51.4 (29.260)	-4.717 (3.074)	-22.463 (21.892)		-4.253 (9.977)	-0.57 (0.352)
Jewish	0.327 (0.123)**	0.353 (0.107)**					5.747 (5.542)	0.333 (0.118)**
Muslim	-0.413 (0.273)	-2.622 (1.196)*	-3.637 (2.909)	-2.2 (2.349)	2.484 (2.341)		5.47 (4.650)	-0.216 (0.225)

Table 2
Continued

	1 All	2 White	3 Mixed	4 Asian	5 Black	6 Chinese	7 Other	8 All
Sikh	-1.262 (0.502)*			-6.165 (3.153)			-8.471 (12.043)	-0.969 (0.434)*
Any other religion	-1.413 (0.306)**	-1.161 (0.307)**	-7.195 (4.620)	-14.754 (7.626)	-2.733 (5.392)	-36.524 (29.051)	-6.924 (9.768)	-1.357 (0.300)**
No religion at all	-0.251 (0.048)**	-0.225 (0.045)**	-1.012 (0.935)	-1.201 (3.165)	-0.176 (1.424)	-6.636 (4.729)	10.885 (3.730)**	-0.252 (0.048)**
<i>Country of Birth</i>								
Wales	0.402 (0.069)**	0.382 (0.061)**	-2.043 (2.884)	-0.42 (4.121)			4.756 (11.721)	0.399 (0.068)**
Scotland	0.532 (0.052)**	0.477 (0.047)**		-0.126 (4.677)	-6.817 (10.902)		10.936 (7.437)	0.529 (0.051)**
Northern Ireland	-24.305 (1.269)**	-23.131 (1.247)**	-13.545 (16.048)	-13.615 (17.365)			-44.93 (20.541)*	-24.083 (1.261)**
Country not stated	-5.934 (1.970)**	-7.18 (2.189)**	-41.25 (25.400)					-6.004 (1.969)**
<i>Other Variables</i>								
Month	0.554 (0.125)**	0.319 (0.121)**	3.195 (3.261)	19.739 (3.220)**	10.229 (3.576)**	-24.002 (19.874)	-3.428 (15.193)	0.552 (0.123)**
Sex	-0.059 (0.031)	-0.086 (0.030)**	0.571 (0.735)	0.285 (0.760)	2.094 (0.931)*	0.029 (4.619)	9.326 (3.655)*	-0.052 (0.031)
Age completed ft education	-0.064 (0.006)**	-0.062 (0.005)**	-0.225 (0.125)	0.313 (0.146)*	-0.175 (0.166)	1.003 (0.964)	-0.331 (0.596)	-0.061 (0.006)**
Student	-0.037 (0.082)	-0.169 (0.103)	-3.004 (2.079)	0.926 (1.094)	0.46 (1.696)	6.471 (3.687)	-0.034 (7.231)	-0.008 (0.079)
Household contains foreign-born individuals								0.51 (0.088)**
Observations	880,459	852,497	4,405	12,932	7,468	411	1,518	880,459
Fraction Reporting British Identity	0.988	0.990	0.953	0.924	0.937	0.914	0.791	0.988

Notes. Sample is from LFS March 2002–March 2006 inclusive.

Reported coefficients are marginal effects from probit model multiplied by 100.

Robust standard errors, clustered on the individual are in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%.

remains a strong demand to be part of Ireland and not the UK and who think of themselves as Irish rather than British. Supporting evidence for this view comes from Moxon-Browne (1991) about the reported national identity of those living in Northern Ireland. In 1989 68% of Protestants in Northern Ireland called themselves British, 3% Irish, 10% Ulster and 16% Northern Irish. For Catholics 6% described themselves as British, 60% as Irish, 2% as Ulster and 25% as Northern Irish. This is a perhaps useful benchmark as we know that the identity conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland has been associated with considerable violence, mostly in Northern Ireland but also on the mainland with over 3000 deaths since the Troubles began in the 1960s.⁹ This culture clash has been associated with significant support among the general population for the use of violence to attain political ends, e.g., Hayes and McAllister (2001) show that in 1978 16% of Protestants and 25% of Catholics thought 'violence is a legitimate way to achieve one's goals' while in 1998 31% of Protestants and 21% of Catholics had a little or lots of sympathy with the use of violence.

Now consider the effect of ethnicity on British identity. All non-white ethnic groups have a lower probability of reporting a British identity with marginal effects for all apart from the 'other' groups being in 2–5% range though none of these groups has an incidence of non-British identity that is anywhere near the level of those born in Northern Ireland. There is no particular pattern among the different groups, e.g., the overwhelmingly Muslim Pakistanis/Bangladeshis do not stand out as having very much lower levels of British identity than other ethnic minority groups. Now consider the effect of religion – even though this might be thought by many to be extremely important, the estimates suggest otherwise – the effect of religion is small. And among religious groups the pattern is not what might be expected – Muslims do not stand out as having especially low levels of British identity – Sikhs are noticeably lower and Hindus slightly lower. It is also interesting to note that Jewish respondents are more likely to report a British identity than the Christian default group even though few Jewish people in the UK could trace their UK roots back more than 4 or 5 generations – this gives an insight into cultural assimilation over a period of a 100 years or more.¹⁰ This all suggests that the vast majority of those born on the British mainland think of themselves as British whatever their ethnicity or religion. Any culture clash in identity is very small compared to that found in Northern Ireland.¹¹ This does line up with the focus group evidence (CRE, 2005*a*) where, for example, British-born Muslims saw no difficulty in being both British and Muslim and with opinion poll evidence that under 5% of Muslims in Britain think the July 7 bombings were justified (a much smaller proportion than have sympathy with violence in Northern Ireland).

The effects of other variables are small – education, gender, age – though often significant as the sample size is so large. It is also worth noting that the estimated time

⁹ Though it is also worth noting that the identity conflict remains to the present although the violence in recent years has been very greatly reduced if not quite entirely eliminated.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Jewish immigration into the UK around 1900 caused widespread fears of 'culture clash' and prompted the first legislation designed to limit immigration; see Winder (2004) for an account of this.

¹¹ One should not make light of the size of the conflict in Northern Ireland as, if transplanted to the mainland the same death rate would have seen over 100,000 deaths.

trend in column 1 of Table 2 is positive, suggesting that, among the British-born, there is no downward trend in feelings of British identity.

The results so far are an aggregate across all ethnic groups and perhaps the effects of certain variables differ by ethnic group. Columns 2–7 of Table 2 investigate this. The sample sizes for the non-white groups are fairly small so many of the variables are insignificant. But a few findings are worth noting – among the white population the more educated are significantly less likely to think of themselves as British while among Asians the opposite is true. And black women are more likely than black men to think of themselves as British though the effect is not very large. Perhaps most noteworthy is that the trend increases in British identity are largest among the Asian and Black groups with the estimates suggesting a rise in British identity of 19 percentage points for Asians and 10 percentage points for Blacks over a decade. This is not particularly surprising as British identity among the white group could not increase by much more but it is not consistent with the view that any of these groups have a crisis in British identity.

The findings so far suggest there is only one group of British-born individuals with a large percentage who do not think of themselves as British – those born in Northern Ireland. Levels of British identity are lower among ethnic minorities but this may be because these are more likely to be second- or third-generation immigrants than whites. This is a plausible explanation for why the time trend among British-born Asians and Black groups is larger than for the white groups – over time, a higher proportion of these are third- rather than second-generation etc. Unfortunately the LFS does not have the information on country of birth of the parents but there are more indirect ways in which we can get evidence for this.

First we include a variable to represent whether the household contains someone who was not born in the UK – this is reported in the final column of Table 2. It has a significantly negative effect on the probability of feeling British and the coefficients on the ethnicity variables are more muted. This is what we would expect if, as seems likely, those who are second-generation immigrants are more likely to be in a household containing an immigrant.

Secondly, if we consider young people living at home we can directly identify the country of birth of their parents as the LFS samples all individuals in target households. Taking this approach, Table 3 investigates the determinants of national identity among those aged 16 to 24. The first column estimates the same equation as the first column of Table 2 for everyone in this age group whether they are still living with their parents or not – the pattern of variation in British identity is similar to that found among the entire adult population. Religion is completely insignificant among this group so there is no evidence here of sizeable numbers of Muslim youth who are disaffected with Britain to the extent of not reporting themselves as British. The second column then drops the religion variables completely to increase the sample size to include the period from March 2001 rather than March 2002. The third column then keeps the specification the same but changes the sample to those who ever report in the 5 waves of the LFS that they are a child relative to the household reference person (in which case we can identify the country of birth of their parents). A comparison of columns 2 and 3 gives us some insight into the effect of selecting the sample to be young people who have not yet left home. The only coefficient for which this makes a sizeable

Table 3
British Identity Among the Young UK-Born

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Ethnicity</i>					
Mixed: White/Black Caribbean	-0.5 (0.5)	-1.4 (0.7)*	-1.9 (0.8)*	-1.4 (0.7)*	-1.4 (0.7)*
Mixed: White/Black African	-3.8 (2.2)	-5.7 (2.6)*	-3.6 (2.5)	-1.8 (1.5)	-1.8 (1.5)
Mixed: White/Asian	-1.2 (0.9)	-1.2 (0.7)	-1.2 (0.8)	-0.1 (0.4)	-0.1 (0.3)
Mixed: Other	-1.7 (1.2)	-2.9 (1.1)*	-2 (1.2)	-1 (0.9)	-1 (0.9)
Indian	-2.9 (1.1)**	-6.3 (0.7)**	-5.6 (0.8)**	-1.3 (0.4)**	-1.3 (0.4)**
Pakistani	-4.6 (1.8)**	-6.8 (0.8)**	-6 (0.9)**	-1.3 (0.4)**	-1.3 (0.4)**
Bangladeshi	-1.5 (1.1)	-2.2 (0.8)**	-1.9 (0.8)*	-0.1 (0.3)	-0.1 (0.3)
Other Asian	-5.4 (2.1)*	-6.3 (1.7)**	-5.1 (1.8)**	-1.2 (0.7)	-1.2 (0.7)
Black Caribbean	-3.9 (1.0)**	-4 (0.8)**	-3.6 (0.9)**	-1.5 (0.6)**	-1.5 (0.6)**
Black African	-3.1 (1.3)*	-3.2 (1.0)**	-2.6 (1.1)*	-0.2 (0.4)	-0.2 (0.4)
Other Black	-0.6 (1.0)	-2.1 (1.4)	-1.2 (1.2)	-0.2 (0.5)	-0.3 (0.6)
Chinese	-3.8 (1.8)*	-5 (1.6)**	-2.8 (1.2)*	-0.3 (0.4)	-0.3 (0.4)
Other	-10.2 (2.8)**	-11.3 (2.1)**	-10 (2.3)**	-3.7 (1.4)**	-3.7 (1.3)**
<i>Religion</i>					
Buddhist	-0.5 (0.8)				
Hindu	-0.9 (0.6)				
Jewish	-0.2 (0.4)				
Muslim	-0.3 (0.4)				
Sikh	-1.1 (0.7)				
Any other religion	1.3 (0.6)*				
No religion at all	-0.1 (0.1)				
<i>Country of Birth</i>					
Wales	0.4 (0.1)**	0.4 (0.1)**	0.4 (0.1)**	0.4 (0.1)**	0.4 (0.1)**
Scotland	0.6 (0.1)**	0.4 (0.1)**	0.3 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)
Northern Ireland	-27.7 (3.6)**	-28.7 (3.1)**	-8.6 (3.6)*	-8.6 (3.5)*	-8.6 (3.5)*
Country not stated	-6.8 (4.7)	-1.2 (0.6)*	-0.6 (0.6)	-0.6 (0.5)	-0.6 (0.5)
<i>Other Variables</i>					
Sex	-0.1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)
Age completed ft education	-0.1 (0.0)**	-0.1 (0.0)**	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Table 3
Continued

	1	2	3	4	5
Student	0 (0.1)	0 (0.1)	0 (0.1)	0 (0.1)	0 (0.1)
Parent is Foreign-Born				-1.9 (0.3)**	-1.7 (0.3)**
Proxy response					0 (0.1)
Proxy response × Parent Foreign Born					-0.3 (0.1)*
Observations	160,288	247,626	171,192	169,741	169,737
Fraction Reporting British Identity	0.987	0.988	0.989	0.989	0.989

Notes. Sample is from LFS March 2002–March 2006 inclusive for column 1 and March 2001–March 2006 inclusive for the other columns.
Reported coefficients are marginal effects from probit model multiplied by 100.
Robust standard errors, clustered on the individual are in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%.

difference is the variable for having being born in Northern Ireland which drops from a marginal effect of -28.7 percentage points to -8.6 percentage points¹² – the coefficients on the other ethnicity dummies are qualitatively similar. The fourth column then includes a dummy variable for whether the parent is UK-born – we find that having a foreign-born parent reduces the probability of reporting a British identity by a significant 1.9 percentage points. Perhaps more importantly it also has the effect of markedly reducing the ethnicity coefficients, e.g., reducing the Indian coefficient from -5.6 to -1.3 , the Pakistani coefficient from -6.0 to -1.3 , the Bangladeshi from -1.9 to -0.1 , etc. This is exactly what we would expect if successive generations of immigrants are more likely to feel British and implies that third-generation ethnic minority immigrants are only very slightly likely to feel less British than the white population. We also investigate the existence of a ‘generation gap’ using the fact that sometimes it is the young person themselves who responds and sometimes it is a proxy response (which will most commonly be a parent).¹³ If there is a proxy response, we will be learning about what the respondent thinks is the identity of the young person rather than what the young person thinks themselves. In column 5 we find that a proxy response when the household reference person is not UK-born is associated with being significantly less likely to report a British identity, though the effect is small. Young second-generation immigrants think of themselves as more British than their parents would like to think.

All of this suggests that there is no problem with British identity among the UK-born. But what about the foreign-born?

¹² The obvious explanation for this is that we are now restricting the sample to those who, although they were born in Northern Ireland, have parents who are resident on the mainland suggesting that they spent a large part of their childhood outside Northern Ireland and hence feel less link to the province and connection with its conflict.

¹³ The LFS always seeks to obtain individual responses but will accept proxy responses if that is the only information available.

3. British Identity Among the Foreign-Born

In studying the extent of British identity among the foreign-born we use all the variables previously described but there are some additional ones that are of interest – notably the country of birth, the age of arrival into the UK and the time since arrival.

There is a large amount of variation across country of birth in the fraction of immigrants reporting a British identity. For those from Slovakia it is less than 5%, for those from Malta more than 80%. But there is, for the most part, a simple explanation for these very large cross-country differences – the average amount of time spent in the UK. Figure 1 plots the fraction reporting a British identity against average number of years in the UK where each observation is a country of birth. The positive relationship is very clear, a first indication that feeling British is something that grows on you. We have also marked on Figure 1 some individual countries, singled out for a variety of reasons. There are two very marked outliers – Ireland and Italy. Ireland might be explained by the fact that there is an explicit ‘Irish’ answer to the question on national identity though is also likely to be partly explained by the long fight for Irish independence, something that lies behind the low level of British identity already noted among Northern Irish Catholics. The low level of British identity among Italian immigrants has no such obvious explanation – perhaps it is the atrocious food and coffee they can never come to accept.

Other countries are not such marked outliers as these but there are countries that lie above and below the line, suggesting that for a given time in the UK they are more or less likely to report a British identity than the average. But what is striking is that it is

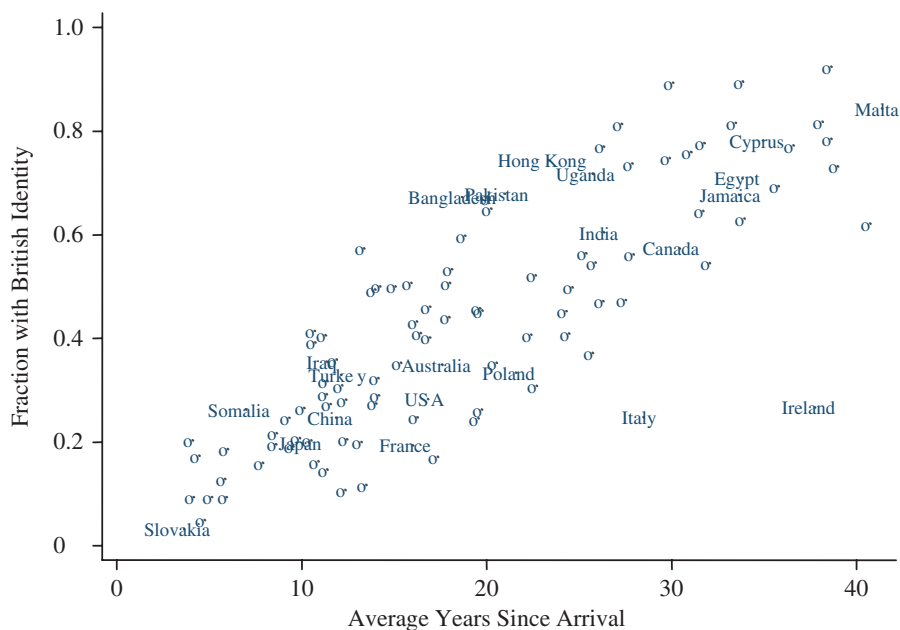


Fig. 1. *The Relationship Between British Identity and Country of Birth*

Notes. Pooled LFS – only countries with more than 100 observations reported.

not the countries from which immigrants are commonly perceived as a 'problem' who are below the line. For example, Pakistanis are, if anything, above the line as are Somalis, a group that is often felt to integrate rather badly and does extremely badly economically. We have also marked other Muslim countries which have large numbers of immigrants in Britain – Bangladesh, Turkey and Egypt. This is a first indication of results that we will confirm with a more sophisticated result below – there is no evidence in this data for a particular problem with British identity among immigrants from countries very different from the UK. If anything, the countries below the line are countries like the US, Canada and France.

Figure 1 is intriguing but not compelling so we now turn to an analysis of the individual data. We estimate probit models for British identity using the same explanatory variables as for the UK-born but also include as controls, country of birth and age at which they came to the country. These 'assimilation' equations have a parallel in the economics literature where the evolution of immigrants' earnings is investigated (Chiswick, 1978; Borjas, 1999).

In general we might expect identity to depend on age, age of arrival in the UK, date and year of arrival in the UK. It is impossible to separately identify all of these possible effects because there are identities between them; see Borjas (1999) for a discussion of these issues in relation to estimating earnings equations for immigrants. After experimentation we settled on modelling British identity as a function of the age of arrival in the UK and the time since arrival. The time since arrival variable will capture any true life-cycle effects but, as we found these to be small for the UK-born, it is reasonable to assume that most of the effects of time since arrival are assimilation effects. It is also possible that the time since arrival variable captures cohort effects caused by the changing nature of immigrants but we find similar qualitative effects of time since arrival for all immigrant groups so think that the assimilation explanation is the more plausible. Because of the large sample size we include a separate dummy variable for each age of arrival and each year since arrival. We also include 17 dummy variables for broad country or region of birth.

Table 4 reports the marginal effects for selected covariates for the estimated model for all immigrants. The largest and most significant effects here are country of birth effects. The excluded category are immigrants from Western Europe. One can see that Irish immigrants are much less likely to think of themselves as British than any other group. Those from the US are less likely to think of themselves as British though the difference is not significantly different from zero. However those from Canada, Australia and New Zealand are significantly more likely to think of themselves as British, probably because many have some British ancestry. But it is when one moves away from the OECD countries that one sees very large positive marginal effects. Immigrants from Eastern Europe are 18.7% more likely to think of themselves as British but for immigrants from most developing countries the marginal effects are around 30%. There is no very marked difference between immigrants from India and those from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Other variables are much less important than country of birth. Non-white ethnic groups are, for the most part, less likely to think of themselves as British with particularly large effects among those with Black African and Chinese heritages. Interestingly, Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants are more likely to report a British identity than

Table 4
British Identity Among Immigrants

Dependent Variable	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	Identity	All	Citizenship	All	Identity	All	Identity	All	Identity	All	Identity	Non-Citizens	Identity	Citizens
<i>Ethnicity</i>														
Mixed: White/Black Caribbean	0.086 (0.103)		0.085 (0.117)		0.083 (0.120)		0.245 (0.102)*		0.235 (0.115)*		0.24 (0.178)		0.023 (0.073)	
Mixed: White/Black African	-0.251 (0.044)**		-0.088 (0.068)		-0.252 (0.047)**		-0.118 (0.079)		-0.143 (0.051)**		-0.057 (0.014)**		-0.09 (0.069)	
Mixed: White/Asian	-0.075 (0.056)		0.068 (0.069)		-0.135 (0.057)*		-0.078 (0.062)		-0.148 (0.056)**		-0.06 (0.012)**		-0.062 (0.060)	
Mixed: Other	-0.117 (0.042)**		-0.159 (0.039)**		-0.058 (0.050)		-0.102 (0.042)*		-0.032 (0.054)		0.028 (0.029)		-0.135 (0.054)*	
Indian	-0.051 (0.023)*		0.028 (0.026)		-0.082 (0.026)**		-0.082 (0.038)*		-0.045 (0.025)		-0.001 (0.013)		-0.032 (0.023)	
Pakistani	0.064 (0.052)		0.045 (0.054)		0.017 (0.060)		-0.117 (0.060)		-0.093 (0.041)*		-0.015 (0.014)		-0.079 (0.040)*	
Bangladeshi	0.036 (0.063)		0.01 (0.070)		0.018 (0.071)		-0.059 (0.047)		-0.023 (0.031)		0.005 (0.015)		-0.033 (0.031)	
Other Asian	-0.127 (0.020)**		-0.118 (0.022)**		-0.095 (0.025)**		-0.08 (0.032)*		-0.061 (0.025)*		-0.018 (0.011)		-0.042 (0.029)	
Black Caribbean	-0.02 (0.041)		-0.064 (0.041)		0.009 (0.049)		-0.078 (0.040)		-0.013 (0.025)		0.004 (0.016)		-0.023 (0.021)	
Black African	-0.169 (0.016)**		-0.204 (0.015)**		-0.086 (0.020)**		-0.178 (0.051)**		-0.07 (0.038)		-0.027 (0.012)*		-0.042 (0.040)	
Other Black	-0.094 (0.057)		-0.219 (0.045)**		0.051 (0.073)		-0.105 (0.067)		0.044 (0.075)		0.016 (0.035)		0.03 (0.055)	
Chinese	-0.275 (0.024)**		-0.248 (0.027)**		-0.218 (0.034)**		-0.24 (0.031)**		-0.196 (0.032)**		-0.05 (0.010)**		-0.191 (0.043)**	
Other	-0.226 (0.014)**		-0.204 (0.014)**		-0.17 (0.017)**		-0.197 (0.037)**		-0.141 (0.030)**		-0.036 (0.009)**		-0.13 (0.041)**	

Table 4
Continued

Dependent Variable	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	Identity	Citizenship	Identity	Citizenship	Identity	Citizenship	Identity	Citizenship	Identity	Citizenship	Identity	Citizenship	Identity	Citizenship
	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	Non-Citizens	Non-Citizens	Citizens	Citizens
<i>Religion</i>														
Buddhist	-0.067 (0.030)*	-0.055 (0.033)	-0.038 (0.035)	-0.045 (0.051)	-0.013 (0.042)	-0.006 (0.019)	-0.011 (0.026)							
Hindu	-0.001 (0.021)	0.016 (0.023)	-0.004 (0.025)	-0.031 (0.020)	-0.046 (0.017)**	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.046 (0.017)**							
Jewish	-0.047 (0.048)	0.071 (0.054)	-0.105 (0.053)*	0.087 (0.044)*	0.015 (0.046)	0.05 (0.031)	-0.036 (0.045)							
Muslim	0.047 (0.017)**	0.053 (0.018)**	0.026 (0.020)	0.045 (0.029)	0.015 (0.025)	0.009 (0.009)	0 (0.019)							
Sikh	-0.063 (0.027)*	-0.095 (0.028)**	-0.027 (0.033)	-0.08 (0.019)**	-0.058 (0.015)**	-0.033 (0.006)**	-0.022 (0.018)							
Any other religion	-0.066 (0.028)*	-0.022 (0.030)	-0.055 (0.031)	-0.081 (0.029)**	-0.077 (0.032)*	-0.021 (0.012)	-0.072 (0.029)*							
No religion at all	0.026 (0.013)*	0.052 (0.014)**	0.002 (0.014)	0.026 (0.019)	0 (0.018)	0.002 (0.008)	-0.007 (0.017)							
<i>Country/Region of Birth</i>														
Ireland	-0.332 (0.010)**	-0.341 (0.010)**	-0.205 (0.017)**											
Eastern Europe	0.112 (0.020)**	0.168 (0.022)**	0.036 (0.023)											
United States	-0.041 (0.025)	-0.118 (0.027)**	0 (0.026)											
Canada/Australia/NZ	0.083 (0.020)**	0.074 (0.023)**	0.066 (0.021)**											
Turkey	0.187 (0.034)**	0.252 (0.036)**	0.077 (0.039)											
Middle East/North Africa	0.353 (0.019)**	0.417 (0.019)**	0.191 (0.026)**											
India/Sri Lanka	0.292 (0.020)**	0.34 (0.021)**	0.148 (0.025)**											

Table 4
Continued

Dependent Variable	1	2		3	4	5	6	7
	Identity All	Citizenship All		Identity All	Identity All	Identity All	Identity Non-Citizens	Identity Citizens
Pakistan	0.284 (0.046)**	0.403 (0.041)**		0.129 (0.059)*				
Bangladesh	0.315 (0.050)**	0.424 (0.048)**		0.158 (0.065)*				
China/HK/Taiwan	0.452 (0.023)**	0.512 (0.023)**		0.284 (0.040)**				
Japan	0.158 (0.055)**	0.065 (0.058)		0.122 (0.063)				
Other Asia	0.298 (0.021)**	0.339 (0.023)**		0.171 (0.026)**				
Caribbean	0.24 (0.036)**	0.332 (0.035)**		0.086 (0.045)				
Central/South America	0.134 (0.030)**	0.215 (0.032)**		0.045 (0.034)				
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.395 (0.014)**	0.458 (0.015)**		0.227 (0.018)**				
Somalia	0.35 (0.030)**	0.399 (0.031)**		0.197 (0.043)**				
<i>Country-Level Variables</i>								
Visa Required					-0.004 (0.054)	-0.022 (0.036)	-0.003 (0.019)	-0.026 (0.016)
Commonwealth					0.08 (0.030)**	0.038 (0.021)	0.009 (0.010)	0.031 (0.018)
EU-15					-0.088 (0.075)	-0.065 (0.047)	-0.048 (0.010)**	0.06 (0.023)**
EU8					-0.13 (0.046)**	-0.131 (0.036)**	-0.034 (0.013)*	-0.114 (0.037)**
Log Per capita GDP					-0.063 (0.022)**	-0.031 (0.013)*	-0.013 (0.007)	-0.016 (0.005)**
Democracy/Autocracy					-0.011 (0.003)**	-0.008 (0.002)**	-0.003 (0.001)*	-0.005 (0.001)**

Table 4
Continued

Dependent Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Identity All	Citizenship All	Identity All	Identity All	Identity All	Identity Non-Citizens	Identity Citizens
Press Freedom				-0.002 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0 (0.000)	0 (0.000)
<i>Other Variables</i>							
Month	0.013 (0.030)	0.01 (0.035)	-0.004 (0.037)	-0.003 (0.039)	-0.031 (0.048)	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.021 (0.030)
Female	0.007 (0.008)	-0.013 (0.008)	0.016 (0.009)	0.013 (0.007)	0.018 (0.007)**	-0.001 (0.004)	0.022 (0.006)**
Age when completed ft education	-0.004 (0.001)**	0.002 (0.001)	-0.006 (0.001)**	-0.005 (0.002)*	-0.004 (0.002)*	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Student	0.005 (0.016)	0.023 (0.018)	-0.022 (0.018)	0.013 (0.025)	-0.016 (0.026)	-0.011 (0.010)	0.001 (0.017)
UK Citizen			0.571 (0.007)**		0.572 (0.017)**		
Observations	98,371	89,321	89,240	26,693	24,230	13,985	10,204

Notes. Sample is from LFS March 2002–March 2006
Reported coefficients are marginal effects from probit model
Robust standard errors, clustered on the individual are in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%.
Data on Democracy/Autocracy come from Polity IV database, on press freedom from Freedom House.

white immigrants though the effect is not significantly different from zero. Religion has smaller effects and perhaps not in the direction one might think, e.g., Muslims are more likely than any other religious group to think of themselves as British.

One explanation for these findings is that immigrants from poorer countries are more likely to find it in their interests to acquire British citizenship and that they then mechanically think of themselves as British. To examine this, the second column of Table 4 uses UK citizenship as the dependent variable – the pattern of coefficients is very similar to that seen in column 1 suggestive of a strong link between British identity and citizenship among immigrants.¹⁴ But column 3 shows that not all of the results can be explained by the adoption of citizenship as it includes citizenship as an extra regressor in a regression where the dependent variable is British identity. This has a very powerful effect on feeling British – a marginal effect of 57% – but the pattern of differentials by country of birth remains, albeit muted.

Turning to the effect of age at arrival and time since arrival, Figure 2 plots the predicted probability by age at arrival for a new immigrant from Western Europe who is white, Christian, male and left education at 18. The pattern one sees is very sensible. Those who arrived as babies are 15% more likely to think of themselves as British but age of arrival has no effect once one arrives as an adult. Figure 3 investigates the effect of years since arrival which has a more powerful effect. The estimates suggest that no

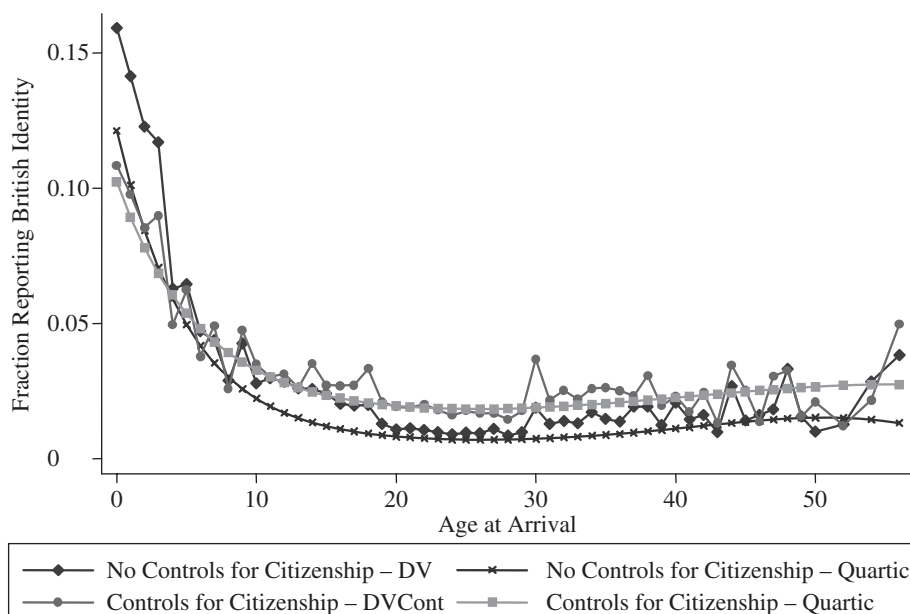


Fig. 2. *British Identity for the Foreign-Born by Age of Arrival*

Notes. The 'DV' estimates are the coefficients on each dummy variable for age of arrival in the first and third columns of Table 4. The quartic estimates are the marginal effects predicted when replacing these dummy variables by a quartic.

¹⁴ We do not pretend to be able to disentangle causality here – one might take citizenship because one felt British or feel that one is British as soon as one has citizenship.

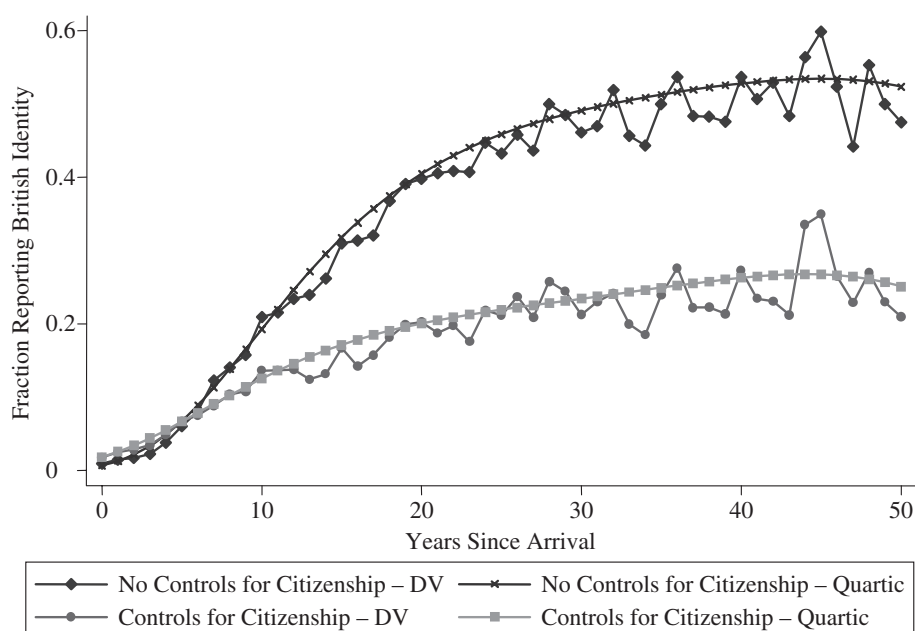


Fig. 3. *British Identity for the Foreign-Born by Years Since Arrival*

Notes. The 'DV' estimates are the coefficients on each dummy variable for age of arrival in the first and third columns of Table 4. The quartic estimates are the marginal effects predicted when replacing these dummy variables by a quartic.

immigrants feel British on arrival into the UK but that, after 40 years, more than half of them do. Figure 3 also shows the pattern of time since arrival effects after controlling for citizenship (i.e. based on the estimates in column 3 of Table 4) – these are more muted as a longer time in the UK makes an immigrant more likely to become a citizen. But there remain sizeable assimilation effects.

It is tempting to interpret these assimilation effects as causal but it could be caused by selective attrition. We know that many immigrants return to their countries of origin and if immigrants who feel British are more likely to remain then, among the immigrants who remain, the fraction with a British identity will rise over time but without any necessary causal effect. In duration models this is the problem of separating true duration dependence from unobserved heterogeneity. But it is not plausible to think that most of the assimilation effects seen in Figure 3 can be explained in this way as to do so would require a rate of return migration far in excess of what is plausible. To give an example, suppose that no immigrant ever changes their national identity – some feel British on arrival and some do not. Figure 3 suggests that at most 2% of immigrants are in the first category. For the observed proportion of immigrants feeling British to rise to 50% after 50 years would require 98% of those who do not feel British and 0% of those who do feel British to return home (with an overall return migration rate of 96%). Our best estimates of return migration suggest an overall return migration rate of 50% (Dustmann, 2006) and this is not obviously strongly correlated with feeling British. To investigate this we take immigrants observed in the first wave of the LFS and

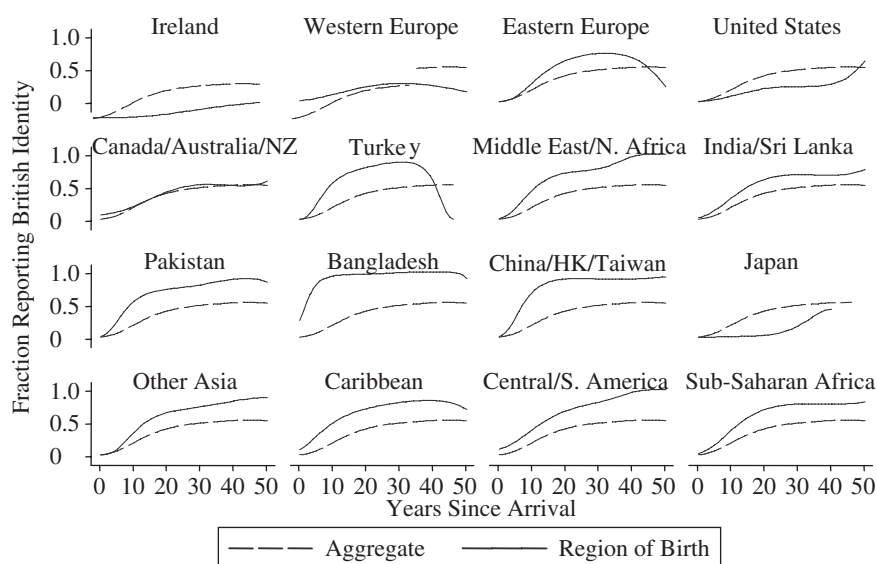


Fig. 4. *Rates of Assimilation by Country/Region of Birth* (No Controls for Citizenship)

Note. These estimates come from separate estimation of a probit model for British identity for immigrants from different countries where the assimilation is modelled as a quartic.

see whether they are still in the sample at wave 5. If they are not this may be because they have changed address (including leaving the UK) or because of non-response. But, once we control for time since arrival those who do not report a British identity are actually 0.05% more likely to be present in the household in wave 5, though the *t*-statistic on this is 0.07. The assimilation effects seen in Figure 3 are simply too strong to be primarily explained by unobserved heterogeneity (though part of the profile may be due to this cause) and can only be explained by sizeable assimilation.

The empirical specification used so far has allowed immigrants from different countries to differ in the level of British identity but not in the rate of assimilation. However, there may well also be important differences in the rate of assimilation. To that end, we estimated separate equations for different countries and regions of birth and computed the predicted probability of feeling British by years since arrival. In these equations the sample sizes mean we cannot estimate precisely a dummy variable for each year since arrival so we approximate by a quartic – in the aggregate this works well – see Figure 3. The first set of results are shown in Figure 4 where we show the rates of assimilation and the aggregate for comparison. It is very noticeable that rates of assimilation are lower for those from richer countries and higher for those from poorer countries. Among the poor countries there is no tendency for those from predominantly Muslim countries to have lower rates of assimilation – if anything, it is the opposite. The second set of estimates summarised in Figure 5 include a control for citizenship. This is important because those from poorer countries are more likely to acquire citizenship. The differences are less marked but qualitatively the same.

These patterns of variation by country/region of birth in the rate of assimilation among immigrants to Britain raise the question of whether there is any systematic pattern to this – are immigrants from certain types of countries more or less likely to

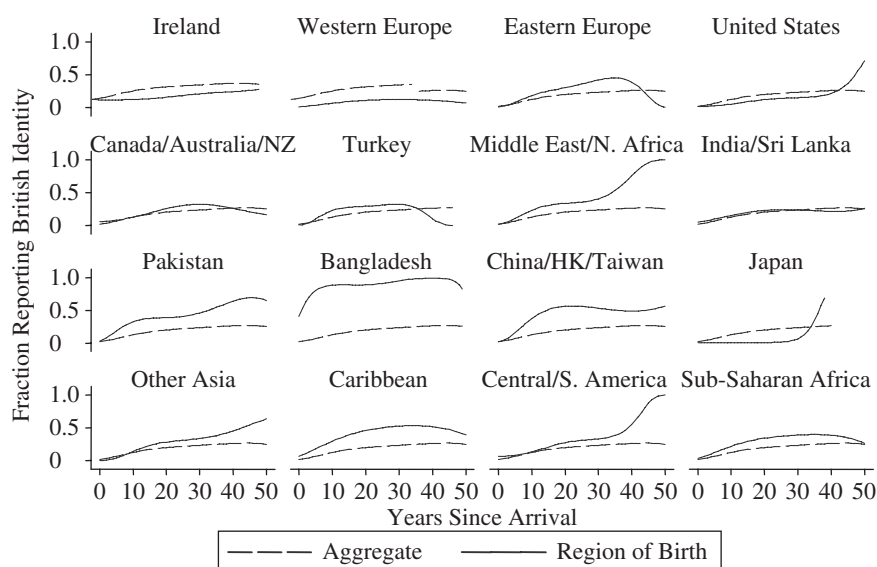


Fig. 5. *Rates of Assimilation by Country/Region of Birth* (controlling for citizenship)

Note. These estimates come from separate estimation of a probit model for British identity for immigrants from different countries where the assimilation is modelled as a quartic and a control for citizenship is included.

feel British? The last part of this Section investigates this and we start by speculating on the factors that might be important. First, we have seen that those immigrants who become UK citizens are much more likely to report a British identity and the take-up of citizenship might be influenced by a number of factors. First, there are a number of practical advantages to citizenship – one has the right to work and vote in the UK and one can travel into the country without the need for a visa. To account for these, we include dummy variables for coming from an EU-15 countries and the A-8 countries who have the automatic right to work in the UK, a binary variable ‘Visa’ taking the value 1 if citizens from that country require a visa to enter the UK and a binary variable ‘Commonwealth’ denoting that the immigrant comes from a Commonwealth country who have the right to vote in all UK elections (there may also be closer affinities between these countries and Britain). Apart from the practical advantages, there may be more emotional advantages to adopting a British identity. In particular we hypothesise that immigrants may be more likely to express a British identity if Britain compares favourably with the country from which they came. The dimensions of this comparison might be economic so we include log GDP per capita, or political, so we include the Polity IV measure of democracy/autocracy,¹⁵ or connected with civil liberties (so we include the Freedom House measure of press freedom).¹⁶

The fourth column of Table 4 shows what happens when we include these variables instead of the country/region of birth variables. The standard errors are clustered on country and we exclude the Irish because they are such an outlier. When we simply

¹⁵ More details can be found at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/polity/>

¹⁶ More details can be found at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=1>

include the levels of these variables we find that immigrants from richer countries are significantly less likely to think of themselves as British, as are those from strong democracies. Those from countries with a free press are more likely to feel British but this is not significant. Being from a Commonwealth country has a powerful positive effect while being from an A8 country has a significant negative effect. This does provide some evidence that immigrants from poorer, less democratic countries are more likely to assimilate into Britain. Because this might be correlated with the incentive to acquire citizenship, we include a control for citizenship in the fifth column of Table 4. This does weaken the effect of per capita GDP and the democracy measure but they remain significant. The same is true when, as in the final two columns of Table 4 we estimate separate equations for citizens and non-citizens.

These specifications assume the country variables have a level effect but they might also affect the rate of assimilation so we then estimate a model in which a quartic in time here is interacted with the country-level variables. There are too many coefficients to report all the results but the terms involving the country-level variables are all jointly significantly different from zero for all variables except the press freedom measure. To summarise results, we plot the predicted assimilation profiles for different types of individuals. Figure 6 does this for democracy/autocracy showing that immigrants from democracies assimilate less quickly. Figure 7 shows the same for GDP per capita with the result that those from richer countries assimilate more slowly. These results hold whether or not one controls for the immigrant being a UK citizen.¹⁷

4. A Simple Model to Explain Our Findings

The finding that immigrants from countries most dissimilar to the UK are more likely to come to feel British is interesting because it is perhaps unexpected as one suspects that their behaviour remains more distinct. Here we propose a simple ‘identity’ model (along the lines pioneered in economics by Akerlof and Kranton, 2000) to explain which immigrants adopt a British identity; see Shayo (2009) for a model designed to explain the related concept of national pride that could also be used to explain a desire to be on the ‘winning side’ as an explanation for our findings). Assume that immigrants have to choose some behaviour or value, x , and how British they feel, b , which we treat as a continuous variable on the unit interval. There are norms of behaviour both in the culture of origin, x_0 , and in Britain, x_b . Immigrants suffer a loss if their behaviour deviates both from the norm of their culture of origin and the norm in Britain so they feel torn between the two cultures – this is a simple way of capturing the cultural tension experienced by many immigrants. By choosing to be British they can increase the weight on the deviation from the British norm and reduce it on the norm of the culture of origin. However there is also a loss from ‘betraying one’s roots’ by being British at all. We represent the loss function for the immigrant as:

$$L(x, b) = (1 - \theta - b)(x - x_0)^2 + (\theta + b)(x - x_b)^2 + \frac{1}{2}\alpha b^2 \quad (1)$$

¹⁷ One possible explanation is that immigrants from rich democracies expect to remain a shorter time in the UK. But, the differences in assimilation are most marked not for those who have just arrived but for those who have been in the country for decades.

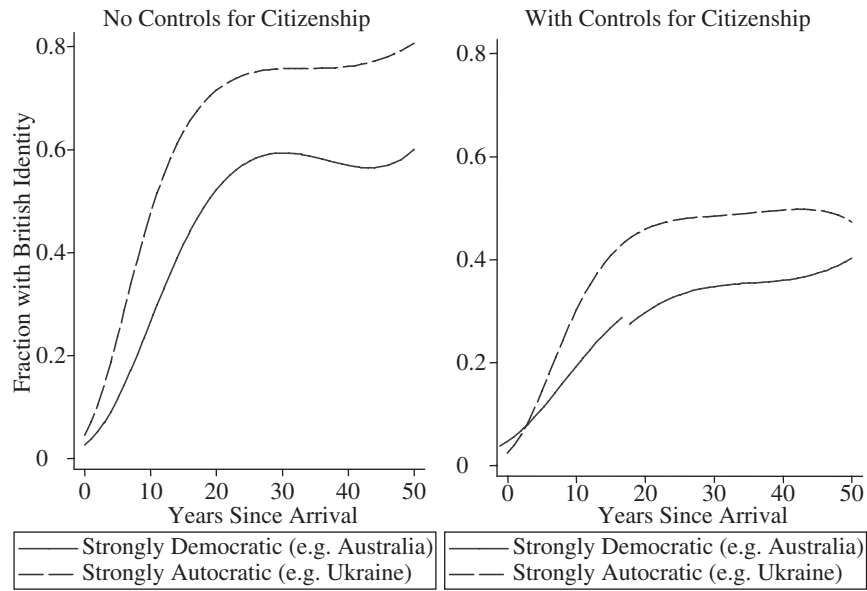


Fig. 6. *Rates of Assimilation for Democracies/Autocracies*

Notes. These estimates come from estimation of a probit model for British identity for immigrants from different countries where there are controls for the characteristics of individuals (as in Table 4) and countries, assimilation is modelled as a quartic, and this quartic is interacted with country characteristics.

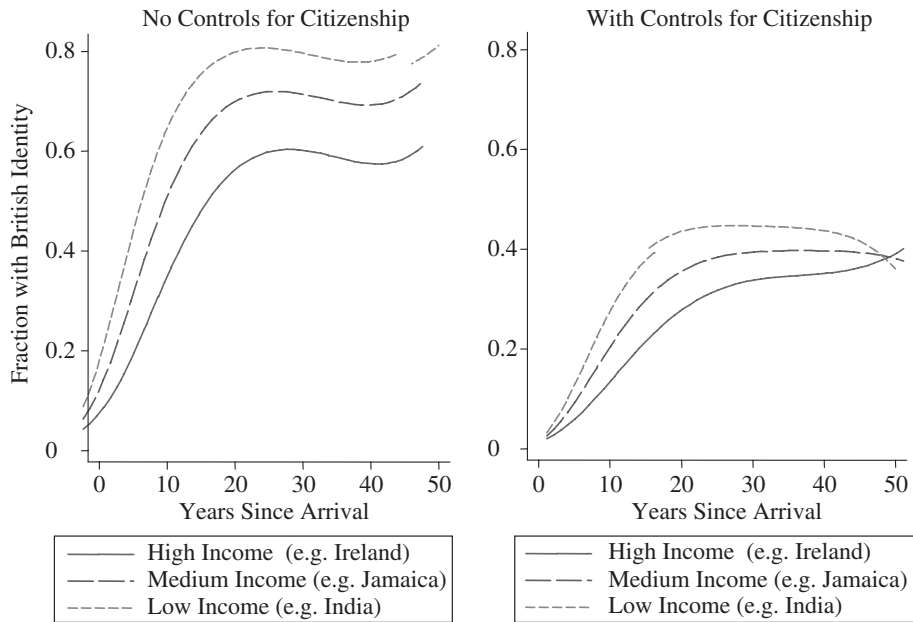


Fig. 7. *Rates of Assimilation by Per Capita GDP*

Notes. As for Figure 6.

where θ is the weight on deviations from the norm of origin and α is the cost of betraying one's roots. Define $\beta = \theta + b$, and consider the optimal behaviour. Minimising (1) with respect to x , we get that:

$$x^* = \beta x_0 + (1 - \beta)x_b \quad (2)$$

so that optimal behaviour is a weighted average of the cultural norm of origin and the British norm with the weight being influenced by how British the person feels. Define $\delta = (x_b - x_0)^2$, a measure of cultural distance between Britain and their country of origin and substituting into (1) we get:

$$L^*(\beta) = \delta\beta(1 - \beta) + \frac{1}{2}\alpha(\beta - \theta)^2. \quad (3)$$

Minimising this with respect to β leads to:

$$\beta^* = \frac{\alpha\theta - \delta}{\alpha - 2\delta} \quad (4)$$

which implies that:

$$b^* = \frac{\delta(2\theta - 1)}{\alpha - 2\delta}. \quad (5)$$

For the minimisation problem to have an interior solution we need to make the assumptions that $\alpha > 2\delta$ and that $2\theta > 1$. With these assumptions we get the result that the optimal level of British identity depends negatively on the cost of 'betraying one's roots', α , and positively on the influence of the British on the loss function, θ . But it also depends positively on δ the difference in norms between the culture of origin and those of the British. Hence the model predicts that those from cultures that are most dissimilar from Britain are more likely to adopt a British identity as found in the empirical results. The intuition is best understood by thinking of those who come from cultures identical to Britain – these immigrants are under no pressure to change their behaviour so have no incentive to increase the weight on the British component of the loss function and will only suffer a loss by betraying their roots if they become British.

If, as seems plausible, the influence of Britain, θ , rises over time then we can also explain why immigrants come to feel more British over time, and at a faster rate for those from more dissimilar countries.

Note that the model does not predict that immigrants from very different countries come to be as similar in behaviour. Putting (4) into (2) we have that:

$$(x^* - x_b)^2 = \delta(1 - \beta^*)^2 = \delta \frac{[\alpha(1 - \theta) - \delta]^2}{(\alpha - 2\delta)^2} \quad (6)$$

which, in the region of $\delta = 0$ is increasing in δ .

One can also explain why certain groups may seek to segregate themselves which one can interpret as a reduction in θ (see Bisin *et al.*, 2006, for some British evidence on such endogenous segregation). However, the data do not suggest this is the dominant factor in the data and do not have sufficiently disaggregated regional information so we do not explore this further here.

5. Conclusion

When asked a direct question, most respondents can say whether they are British or not and there are clear patterns of regularities in their responses. Among the UK-born it is very rare for someone to deny a British identity and the only sizeable group that does so would seem to be Northern Irish Catholics. Those from ethnic minorities are less likely to report a British identity but we presented evidence that this is less true for the third- as compared to second-generation immigrants. Newly-arrived immigrants almost never think of themselves as British but the feeling grows on them, the longer they remain. This assimilation into a British identity is faster for those from poorer, less democratic countries. We have suggested that this is because the greater culture clash experienced by these immigrants actually increases their incentives to become British. The data on national identity do not support any alarmism about the effects of immigration in general or Muslims in particular on national identity.

But, perhaps this misses the point of people's fears surrounding the cultural assimilation of immigrants. The finding that immigrants from other rich democracies are less likely to come to think of themselves as British might lead one to argue that national identity *per se* is unimportant. There is little concern about the fact that Italians rarely seem to come to think of themselves as British because it is felt that Italians have similar views on the way in which society should be run. And it is the values that possibly lie behind British identity that are probably more important to the functioning of society than any name that people use to identify themselves. But, other research (Georgiadis and Manning, 2009a) looks at values and fails to find evidence of a marked 'culture clash' there.

These findings strongly suggest that the 'culture club' rather than 'culture clash' view is the correct one about the attitudes of immigrants into the UK. The culture club view should not be taken to imply that there are no problems or no potential for conflict. Those with extremist views do exist and have the potential to cause problems disproportionate to their numbers (which are too small to be detectable in the surveys used here).

There is also one very important question that has not been touched upon in this article. We have seen that almost all of the UK-born see themselves as British and that most immigrants come to do so as well if they remain in the UK long enough. But, do the white UK-born population think of all of these people of British? We have some evidence perhaps that they do not. For example, the 2003 British Social Attitudes Survey asked the respondents to say whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'Muslims are more loyal to Muslims than to Britain'. Of the non-Muslim respondents only 9% disagreed with a further 25% neither disagreeing nor disagreeing. But, among the Muslim respondents (who we might expect to be better-informed on the subject) 45% disagreed, a significant difference even though the survey only contained 20 Muslim respondents. And 62% of non-Muslim respondents thought there was a fairly or very serious conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain, compared to 27% of Muslims.¹⁸ A more serious culture clash may be the refusal of the majority population to see minorities as British and it would be useful to think about how people see others as much as how they see themselves; see Glaeser (2005) for a model along these lines.

¹⁸ Another question about conflicts in the world as a whole between Muslims and non-Muslims had 85% of non-Muslims say they thought there was a fairly or very serious conflict and 67% of Muslims.

Appendix

Table A1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	UK-Born		Foreign-Born	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
British Identity	0.988	0.108	0.459	0.498
Age	38.371	12.421	37.643	11.122
Female	0.482	0.500	0.459	0.498
Age Completed FT education	1.468	2.480	2.987	3.636
Student	0.069	0.253	0.067	0.251
Religion				
Buddhist	0.002	0.041	0.018	0.133
Hindu	0.003	0.054	0.075	0.263
Jewish	0.003	0.058	0.007	0.081
Muslim	0.009	0.095	0.198	0.398
Sikh	0.003	0.057	0.029	0.169
Other Religion	0.007	0.085	0.018	0.133
No Religion	0.178	0.383	0.125	0.331
Ethnicity				
Mixed: White/Black Caribbean	0.002	0.047	0.001	0.034
Mixed: White/Black African	0.001	0.024	0.004	0.060
Mixed: White/Asian	0.001	0.038	0.004	0.061
Mixed: Other	0.001	0.034	0.009	0.092
Indian	0.008	0.088	0.117	0.322
Pakistani	0.006	0.074	0.073	0.260
Bangladeshi	0.001	0.034	0.033	0.180
Other Asian	0.001	0.031	0.053	0.223
Black Caribbean	0.007	0.081	0.030	0.172
Black African	0.002	0.041	0.077	0.267
Other Black	0.001	0.025	0.003	0.057
Chinese	0.001	0.031	0.033	0.179
Other	0.002	0.042	0.095	0.293
Country/Region of Birth				
Wales	0.051	0.219		
Scotland	0.105	0.306		
Northern Ireland	0.005	0.073		
UK Country not stated	0.000	0.018		
Ireland			0.060	0.237
Eastern Europe			0.058	0.234
United States			0.029	0.167
Canada/Australia/NZ			0.050	0.218
Turkey			0.014	0.116
Middle East/North Africa			0.053	0.223
India/Sri Lanka			0.107	0.309
Pakistan			0.064	0.244
Bangladesh			0.043	0.202
China/HK/Taiwan			0.032	0.176
Japan			0.007	0.082
Other Asia			0.057	0.231
Caribbean			0.040	0.195
Central/South America			0.020	0.140
Sub-Saharan Africa			0.187	0.390
Somalia			0.012	0.109
Age at arrival			11.6349	20.3655
Years since arrival			14.6060	17.7041
UK Citizen	0.9761	0.1529	0.4977	0.4519

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