

Card sorting exercise

This is used to test appropriate response ordering. Was done when space on the paper questionnaire was an issue.

Recommended order

From the analysis of the card sort exercise the following order of the answer options for the national identity question, on the census in England, is suggested below (pending thematic analysis):

Left Column	Right Column
British	Welsh
English	Northern Irish
Scottish	

A recommended order cannot be suggested for the census in Wales at this point due to the small number of participants who are Welsh. The next steps are to conduct this card sort in Welsh so we will await the results of this first.

Background

In preparation for the 2021 Census, a card sort was conducted to ascertain respondents’ opinions of how the nationalities should be ordered, for the national identity question. Using software called Optimal Workshop, respondents were presented with a left column and a right column to sort the nationalities, in the form of a digital card. Respondents were restricted to only putting 3 cards in the left column and 2 cards in the right column.

Main Findings

The card sort was in the field from 7th February 2018 until 28th February 2018. We received a total of 507 completed card sorts from across the world. It was agreed to remove 35 completed card sorts because they did not reside in England and Wales. From those removed their answers included Scotland, The Channel Islands, Spain and USA. It should be noted that participants who said they resided in the UK and the European Union were only included in the overall tables.

Table 1 – Overall card sorting positions for England and Wales – Left Column

Answer Options - Left Column					
Sorted Position	British	English	Welsh	Scottish	Northern Irish
1	310	98	24	16	24
2	10	251	75	100	36
3	22	25	126	166	133

Table 2 - Overall card sorting positions for England and Wales – Right Column

Answer Options - Right Column					
Sorted Position	British	English	Welsh	Scottish	Northern Irish
1	44	46	115	133	86
2	66	39	117	36	166

Table 1 shows that British was the most popular answer to put first (i.e. the first card in the left column), with English being the most popular in the second position in the left column, and Scottish being the most popular in the third position in the left column.

Table 2 looks at the right column where Scottish is the most popular card to put first. Interestingly, Scottish is also the most popular card to put in position 3 of the left column. The reason for this occurring is that respondents have disagreed with the positioning of Welsh across the two columns. The most popular position for Northern Irish is in position 2 of the right column.

Results from residents of England

Table 3 – Card sorting positions for England – Left Column

Answer Options - Left Column					
Sorted Position	British	English	Welsh	Scottish	Northern Irish
1	286	90	15	14	19
2	7	232	66	87	32
3	21	17	111	154	121

Table 4 - Card sorting positions for England – Right Column

Answer Options - Right Column					
Sorted Position	British	English	Welsh	Scottish	Northern Irish
1	44	46	115	133	86
2	66	39	117	36	166

Table 1 shows that British was the most popular answer to put first (i.e. the first card in the left column), with English being the most popular in the second position in the left column, and Scottish being the most popular in the third position in the left column.

Table 2 looks at the right column where Scottish is the most popular card to put first. Interestingly, Scottish is also the most popular card to put in position 3 of the left column. The reason for this occurring is that respondents have disagreed with the positioning of Welsh across the two columns. Therefore, Welsh is the second most popular option for position one in the right column, due to the most popular position for Northern Irish being in position 2 of the right column.

Results from residents of Wales

From the 507 completed card sorts, 44 participants resided in Wales. Of these 44, only 28 participants answered that their national identity was Welsh. Other national identities given included English, British and Northern Irish. It should be noted that there were 6 Welsh participants who resided in England.

Table 5 – Card sorting positions for Wales – Left Column

Answer Options - Left Column					
Sorted Position	British	English	Welsh	Scottish	Northern Irish
1	22	8	9	2	3
2	2	19	7	12	4

3	1	8	13	10	12
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Table 6 – Card sorting positions for Wales – Right Column

Answer Options - Right Column					
Sorted Position	British	English	Welsh	Scottish	Northern Irish
1	4	4	5	19	12
2	15	5	10	1	13

Northern Ireland question design

11 How would you describe your national identity?
 ↻ Tick all that apply.

British Irish Northern Irish
 English Scottish Welsh
 Other, write in

Testing of double banking

2017:14 (Welsh testing)

https://share.sp.ons.statistics.gov.uk/sites/ssd/ssdtra/QQD/Testing/ORS_Main_Language_2017/Qualitative_cog_Interviews/ORS_2017_Language_Final_Report.pdf?Web=1

5 How would you describe your national identity?
 ↻ Tick all that apply

Welsh English
 Scottish Northern Irish
 British
 Other, write in

Findings:

1.34 Participants appeared to like the response options presented in two columns (as opposed to a linear list), and said they found the option they wanted quickly and easily. Indeed, a few participants preferred this format, and as one participant said: it is easier to scan and takes up less room. Two participants pointed out that Welsh is the first option in the list, so it was easy to find.

1.35 However, several participants had not noticed that they could tick multiple options, and felt the instructions could have been clearer.

National Identity:

3.45 Response 'options' are typically presented in the form of a linear list. In this test questionnaire the national identity question was presented in two columns.

3.46 Participants appeared to like this format, and said they found the option they wanted quickly and easily. Indeed, a few participants preferred this format, and as one participant said: it easier to scan and takes up less room. Two participants pointed out that Welsh is the first option in the list, so it was easy to find the option they wanted.

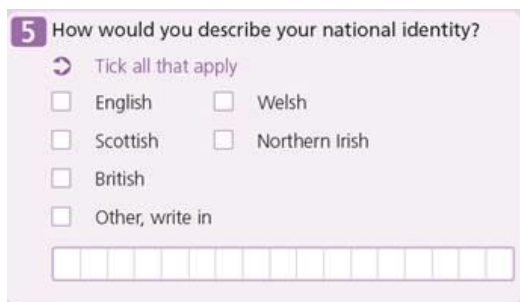
3.47 Participants could tick multiple options; however, several participants had not noticed this and felt the instructions could have been clearer. Although some said they would have been happy to just tick Welsh, they appreciated that some people would like to tick more than one option. One participant felt there should also be a 'European' option.

3.48 Interestingly, as aforementioned in the initial feedback three participants said they particularly liked the presence of a question on national identity in addition to your ethnic group.

Commented [1]: Important finding. Presenting response options that respondents most likely will want to use together – reduces response burden. In Eng have Britain and England first two; in Wales Britain and Wales.

2017:21

[https://share.sp.ons.statistics.gov.uk/sites/ssd/ssdtra/QQD/Testing/ONS Religion 2017 2018/Qualitative Cog Interviews/QQD 2017 Religion Final Report.docx?Web=1](https://share.sp.ons.statistics.gov.uk/sites/ssd/ssdtra/QQD/Testing/ONS_Religion_2017_2018/Qualitative_Cog_Interviews/QQD_2017_Religion_Final_Report.docx?Web=1)



5 How would you describe your national identity?

↻ Tick all that apply

English Welsh

Scottish Northern Irish

British

Other, write in

- Double-banked NI question on Page 15
- Most participants (16/20) did not notice the multi-tick instruction on the double banked question
- Some comments about British coming first, others suggested alphabetical order

Double-banking comments:

Most participants were happy with or had a neutral view on the answer options being listed in two columns, known as double-banking the response options:

"I think it's okay. I think normally they come in a single column of options, but it just seems more natural to lay them out in this manner." (Male, 16-24)

"I think that's better. I think if you had it as English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, British, then you're like, "Why are we bottom of the list?" whereas this way it's more of a group setting." (Female, 35-49)

"I didn't actually notice, well you notice but it doesn't really make much of a difference to me just looking at it." (Female, 16-24)

It should be noted that most participants (12 people) selected 'English' and this is the first response option on the list on the left. Only one participant from the sample used one of the response options on the right-hand side.

Two participants showed a preference for the response options to always be shown in one list rather than two, suggesting that it is easier to read:

"I mean I always think it's a little bit easier, because where you've got number four, you've got them in a list, that encourages people – and it would encourage me – to read all of them. Whereas I think if it's set out like this, it might be a little bit more

difficult to read and you do more of a scan of the answers rather than going down in detail.” (Male, 25-34)

When asked to try to recall whether they had read the response options by reading down or across, the majority (12 participants) thought that they had initially read downwards. Three recalled reading across the response options and three others thought that they just spotted an appropriate answer and moved on, without scanning through all the answer options. For two participants, it was unclear how they had approached reading the answer options in either direction. Of those that read downwards, views were mixed as to whether they had also looked at the answer options on the right-hand side or not.

Recommendations

- Double-banked response options worked well in this testing but it would be desirable to test this on a wider-range of national identities, especially with those whose response option would be located on the right-hand column
- Whilst participants raised whether the response options should be in alphabetical order, the order used is based on minimising respondent burden (English first in England and Welsh first in Wales) therefore it is recommended that the order be maintained (although with double-banked response options). An explanation of the order used should be made clear in relevant publications.

England – online (current)

How would you describe your national identity?

> [What is a national identity?](#)

Select all that apply

English

Welsh

Scottish

Northern Irish

British

Other
You can enter a national identity on the next question

England – online (British first)

How would you describe your national identity?

> [What is a national identity?](#)

Select all that apply

British

English

Welsh

Scottish

Northern Irish

Other
You can enter a national identity on the next question

Wales – online (current)

How would you describe your national identity?

> [What is a national identity?](#)

Select all that apply

Welsh

English

Scottish

Northern Irish

British

Other
You can enter a national identity on the next question

Wales – online (British first)

How would you describe your national identity?

> [What is a national identity?](#)

Select all that apply

British

Welsh

English

Scottish

Northern Irish

Other
You can enter a national identity on the next question