

**Ethnic minorities, national minorities and national belonging**

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## **Abstract**

The paper examines the relationships between ancestry (measured by the new ESS ancestry measure) and the sense of national belonging. The new ancestry measure allows one to distinguish national minorities or other kinds of sub-national groups (without a recent migration background) as well as migrants and the descendants of migrants (often described as ethnic minorities).

To be sure, some ESS countries are relatively homogeneous and do not, as far as we know, have major internal cleavages between national minorities and the majority. However, in a number of countries such as Belgium, Britain, the Czech Republic, Estonia, and Spain there are known to be long-standing national minorities. The paper will therefore focus on these five ESS countries where there are adequate numbers of respondents who indicate a national minority background. We will also compare these groups with those having a migration background.

Our main dependent variable is strength of national belonging. Our main hypothesis is that people with an exclusively majority-group ancestry will report a stronger sense of national belonging than do respondents with national minority ancestry or with migration backgrounds. We also expect that people with dual ancestries will lie in between those who indicate either an exclusively majority or an exclusively minority or migrant ancestry. An open question is whether we will find that that is national minority groups or those with a migration background who are least likely to feel a strong sense of national belonging.

**Key words:** ancestry; minorities; national belonging

## Introduction

While people with a recent migration background (that is to say the children of migrants, although not the grandchildren) can fairly readily be identified in surveys from the country of birth of the respondent and his or her parents, national minorities without a migration background have been largely invisible in most survey research. The new ancestry measures allow us to investigate the attitudes and identities of these national minorities for the first time in a systematic way and to compare their sense of national belonging with that of minorities with a migration background.

## Data and methods

We draw on five countries – Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain and the UK - from ESS round 7. In all five countries we have substantial numbers respondents who report belonging to a national minority. The national minorities which we distinguish are shown in table 1.

**Table 1: national minorities in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain and the UK**

<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>Belgian</b>	<b>Czech</b>	<b>Estonian</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>British</b>
<b>Brusselian</b>	<b>Moravian</b>	<b>Russian</b>	<b>Andalusian</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Flemish</b>	<b>Silesian</b>	<b>Estonian</b> <b>Russian</b>	<b>Basque</b>	<b>Northern</b> <b>Irish</b>
<b>Walloon</b>	<b>Roma</b>	<b>Ingrian</b>	<b>Canarian</b>	<b>Welsh</b>
			<b>Catalan</b>	<b>Scottish</b>
			<b>Galician</b>	
			<b>Navarran</b>	

These national minorities were all distinguished on their respective countries' showcards. However, there are some important differences between them. While in countries like Belgium we can be reasonably certain that the Brusselians, Flemish and Walloons will belong to internal communities, this will not necessarily be the case for Russians in Estonia many of whom may be migrants or the children of migrants. They are thus a mixed case and we need to bear this in mind in our interpretations of the findings. Detailed analysis of the generational profile of the groups distinguished in table 1 reveals that in no case are 100 per cent of them from the third or higher generation. In most cases 80-90 per cent can be termed third generation, the remainder either being born abroad themselves or having parents who were born abroad. This likely reflects the phenomenon of returning expatriates, an important set of people whom we shall investigate in more detail in subsequent research.

In the ESS round 7 two questions were asked about respondents' ancestry. Respondents were free to give only one ancestry, but many availed themselves of the option of giving two different

ancestries. This allows us to investigate dual ancestries. In our analyses we therefore distinguish two kinds of respondents:

- Those who gave only one ancestry – that is who described themselves exclusively as, eg, Belgian.
- Those who gave two different ancestries – for example as both Belgian and Flemish.

As the following tables will show, the ratio of exclusive to dual ancestries varied considerably from country to country and from group to group. This ratio can itself tell us something quite interesting about the nature of the internal divisions within a country.

Our dependent variable in the analysis is strength of national belonging. Respondents were asked: How close do you feel to [country]? Response options were ‘very close’, ‘close’, ‘not very close’, ‘not at all close’. In this preliminary analysis we combine the first two options and the last two options into a binary variable.

### Main results

We begin with Belgium, which represents an archetypal country with major internal divisions which have a clear institutional element.

**Table 2: National belonging in Belgium**

Percentage feeling close or very close to country

	%	N
<b>Belgian only</b>	<b>89.4*</b>	<b>417</b>
<b>Any Belgian</b>	<b>88.3</b>	<b>1442</b>
<b>Brussels only</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Any Brussels</b>	<b>87.2</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Flemish only</b>	<b>71.2**</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Any Flemish</b>	<b>83.4**</b>	<b>686</b>
<b>Walloon only</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Any Walloon</b>	<b>90.6*</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Other ancestry only</b>	<b>78.5**</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Any other ancestry</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>868</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>86.2</b>	<b>1768</b>

- As might be expected the respondents with an exclusively Belgian ancestry are significantly more likely than the sample as a whole to feel close to Belgium.
- People who exclusively report a Flemish, Walloon or other (non-Belgian) ancestry tend to feel markedly less close to Belgium than do those who report an exclusively Belgian ancestry.

- People who have dual Belgian ancestries are very similar to those with exclusive Belgian identities in their sense of closeness to Belgium. However, the Flemish and non-Belgians who report dual ancestries tend to be in-between, with greater feelings of closeness to Belgium than the respondents reporting an exclusively Belgian ancestry.
- There is thus a fairly clear hierarchy (leaving aside the Walloon anomaly), stretching from an exclusive Belgian ancestry to an exclusive Flemish one. It is striking however that people with a non-Belgian ancestry (in other words people with a migration background) tend to be in the middle. They are much more likely to feel close to Belgium than are respondents with an exclusive Flemish ancestry.

Moving on to the Czech Republic, we have a rather different pattern. We find that there is not significant difference between those giving Czech and those giving a Moravian or Silesian ancestry, or between those giving exclusive or dual ancestries. On this evidence we could not say that there are major internal cleavages within the Czech Republic – with the probably exception of Roma. We only have 8 respondents who gave a Roma ancestry (possibly there was non-response bias among Roma potential respondents). But the level of closeness is significantly lower. The degree of closeness reported but respondents with an exclusive non-Czech ancestry is also significantly lower than expected. This suggests something of an insider/outsider distinction in the Czech Republic.

**Table 3: National belonging in the Czech Republic**

Percentage feeling close or very close to country

	%	N
<b>Czech only</b>	<b>96.5</b>	<b>1638</b>
<b>Any Czech</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>2050</b>
<b>Moravian only</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Any Moravian</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>338</b>
<b>Silesian only</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Any Silesian</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Roma only</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Any Roma</b>	<b>50.0**</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Other ancestry only</b>	<b>73.7*</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Any other ancestry</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>2136</b>

Note that the Czech Republic did not include 'other' on the showcard.

**Table 5: National belonging in Estonia**

Percentage feeling close or very close to country

	%	N
<b>Estonian only</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>1060</b>
<b>Any Estonian</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>1257</b>
<b>Russian only</b>	<b>71.2***</b>	<b>292</b>
<b>Any Russian</b>	<b>76.1***</b>	<b>714</b>
<b>Estonian Russian only</b>	<b>78.3***</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Any Estonian Russia</b>	<b>83.3**</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Ingrian only</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Any Ingrian</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Other ancestry only</b>	<b>78.1*</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Any other ancestry</b>	<b>83.1**</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>2036</b>

Note that in Estonia many of the Russian and Estonian Russian communities are the children of migrants. So these are not straightforward subnational minorities in the way that the Flemish or Walloons are in Belgium. (It would be useful to repeat the analysis restricting the sample to the third or higher generations.)

The picture is nevertheless quite similar to that for Belgium. There is the same kind of hierarchy with exclusive Estonians at the top, although little different in their sense of belonging from those with dual Estonian and other ancestries. Those with an exclusive Russian ancestry come at the bottom, with the other dual identities coming in between. The Estonian Russians look very like the Russians with dual ancestries, which is reassuring.

Again, as in Belgium, the non-Estonian groups (ie those with a pure migration background) lie in the middle, less extreme than the exclusive Russian ancestries.

The UK also has some similarities with Belgium, although the internal differences appear to be larger.

**Table 5: National belonging in the UK**

Percentage feeling close or very close to country

	%	N
<b>British only</b>	<b>82.5</b>	<b>640</b>
<b>Any British</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>1196</b>
<b>English only</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>Any English</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>847</b>
<b>Northern Irish only</b>	<b>47.8***</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Any Northern Irish</b>	<b>65.8</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Scottish only</b>	<b>71.1*</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Any Scottish</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>77.2</b>

Welsh only	62.5**	32
Any Welsh	74.8	115
Other ancestry only	85.5	234
Any other ancestry	81.7	360
All	80.5	2243

Note that there were surprisingly few respondents who gave a second ancestry. It is possible that there was an error with the fieldwork instructions with respect to the measure of second ancestry.

As with Belgium and Estonia, there is a clear hierarchy with exclusive British almost at the top, and little different in their sense of belonging from those with dual British and other ancestries. Those with an exclusive Northern Irish ancestry come at the bottom, with the other dual identities coming in between, with the exclusive Welsh and exclusive Scottish also having relatively low senses of national belonging. The differences between the Northern Irish and the British are however much more marked than the comparable comparisons in Belgium or Estonia. The UK is a more polarised society.

Remarkably however, the groups with a migration background are little different from the British or English in their sense of national belonging. Indeed those with dual ancestries have the highest score of all. So in this respect Britain is the opposite of the Czech republic: in the Czech Republic we found evidence of a strong insider/outsider distinction. In Britain, the big divisions are internal ones (not perhaps surprising given the history of nationalist movements and independence struggles within the UK).

Finally we come to Spain.

**Table 5: National belonging in Spain: respondents with exclusive and dual ancestries**

Percentage feeling close or very close to country

	%	N
Spanish only	96.9	487
Any Spanish	94.9	1489
Andalusian only	81.8	22
Any Andalusian	92.5	412
Balearic only	-	2
Any Balearic	96.3	27
Basque only	25.0***	16
Any Basque	55.2***	67
Canarian only	-	7
Any Canarian	82.8	58
Catalan only	17.3***	52
Any Catalan	48.0***	152
Galician only	87.0	46
Any Galician	91.0	144
Navarran only	50.0***	12
Any Navarran	53.8***	26
Other ancestry only	85.4	137

<b>Any other ancestry</b>	<b>88.8</b>	<b>465</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>2136</b>

Spain is quite similar to Belgium in that respondents reporting an exclusively Spanish ancestry are the group most likely to feel close to their country. At the other end of the spectrum come those respondents with an exclusive Catalan ancestry – at 17 per cent this is by far the lowest figure for national belonging which we have found. Exclusive Basques and Navarrans also have very low feelings of national belonging. Those reporting other subnational ancestries, or a non-Spanish ancestry tend to come in between, as do those reporting dual ancestries.

Also, as with Belgium, we find that respondents reporting non-Belgian ancestries are towards the middle, feeling less close to Spain than the ‘core’ group of exclusively Spanish respondents.

Spain differs from Belgium, Estonia and even the UK in having a much greater range between the extremes, with particularly low levels of closeness to Spain among Basques and Navarrans as well as among Catalans. Even those reporting dual Basque, Catalan and Navarran ancestries (typically dual with a Spanish ancestry) feel less close to their country than the Flemish do in Belgium. They also come far below respondents with a migration background. In this respect Spain appears to be a much more polarized society even than does Britain.

## **Conclusions**

**Even in this limited selection of five countries we have seen a number of parallel processes. Some are unsurprising, such as the finding that it is the members of the main national majority group who are most likely to feel close to their country. What is a bit more surprising is that some other groups are very similar in their feelings of national belonging (and sometimes have even higher feelings of national belonging), and that respondents reporting exclusive and dual majority ancestries differ very little from each other. There is no sign of a sharp divide in any of the five countries between the respondents with an exclusive majority ancestry and other groups.**

**Perhaps the most important finding, however, is that the countries in our selection seem to represent two distinct models. At one extreme comes the Czech Republic where we saw signs of a strong insider/outsider distinction, with no major internal divides but a strong division between all the national groups and those with an exclusive migration background. At the other extreme come Spain and the UK with their major internal divisions but migrant-background minorities with very high levels of belonging to the country.**

**The next step must be to check whether these results hold true when we control for potential confounders such as age, level of education, and generational status. If they do hold up, as we suspect they will, the intriguing challenge will be to understand why these different models occur, and what their implications are.**