



Immigration, Scotland and the constitutional change debate: Geography, difference and the question of scale

This research uses the 2011 UK Census to explore the diverse immigration picture in the UK. In contrast to a simplistic comparison between England and Scotland, this briefing paper suggests that a more pertinent approach is to consider how Scotland compares with English regions. The authors provide evidence which argues that Scotland, and indeed other parts of the UK, would benefit from a more nuanced approach to immigration policy.

Key Points

- Population growth in Scotland has continued to increase over the past decade and looks likely to meet the Scottish Government's official population target, which is to match average European (EU15) growth from 2007 to 2017.
- Scotland still has a relatively small immigrant population compared with most European (EU27) nations.
- Scotland attracts migrants from across the world. The 2011 Census revealed that Poland had become the most common non-UK country of birth of residents in Scotland.
- The proportion of the foreign population who stay for less than five years is much higher in Scotland than in any region of England.
- Seventeen per cent of the migrant population in Scotland arrived as a child under the age of five years old. In contrast the figure is just nine per cent in London.

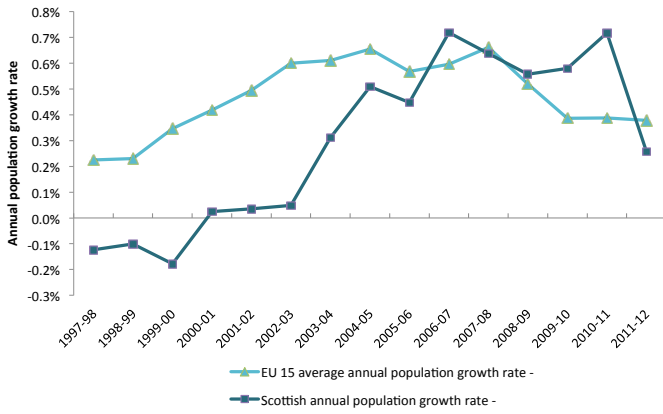
Introduction

The 2011 Census Day population in Scotland was 5.2 million, the highest number ever recorded. Some seven per cent (369,000) of people in Scotland reported a country of birth outside of the UK, an increase of three percentage points compared with 2001. Population growth has long been viewed as a key priority for the devolved Scottish Government and at the core of its strategy for economic growth in Scotland.

In line with this, a target was set to match average European (EU15 countries Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, UK, Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Sweden and Finland) population growth over the period from 2007 to 2017. Figure 1 reveals the progress that has been made. The latest population growth in Scotland is slightly lower than the EU15 average; however for most of the period since

2007 it has exceeded this level. Scotland's population has grown by three per cent since 2006/7 whereas the average across the EU15 countries has been two per cent. Therefore Scotland seems on track to meet its population target.

Figure 1 – Population change: Scotland and the average for EU15 countries 1996-2012



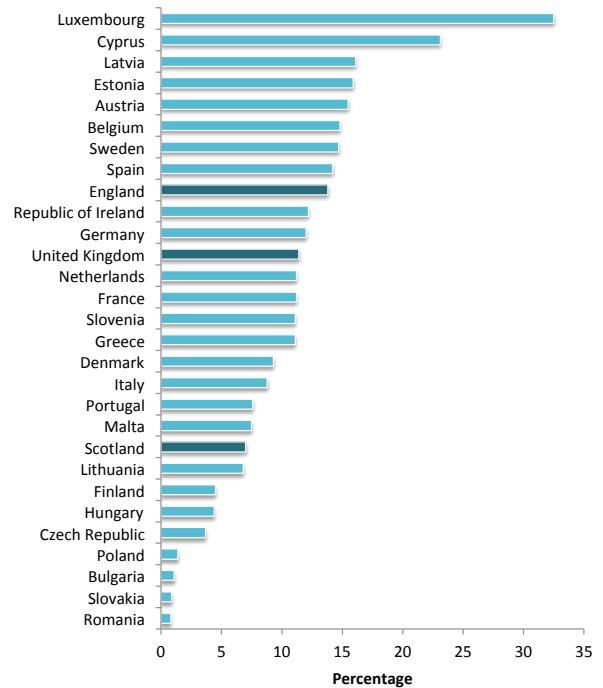
Source: Eurostat and National Records of Scotland (2013)

The study

Immigration plays an important role in maintaining this population growth in Scotland, and the Scottish Government sees continued population inflows as central to maintaining this demographic growth. However, figure 2 reveals that Scotland still has a relatively small immigrant population compared with other European (EU27) nations.

Figures 3 and 4 reveal the geography of international migration to Scotland. Poland emerges as the most

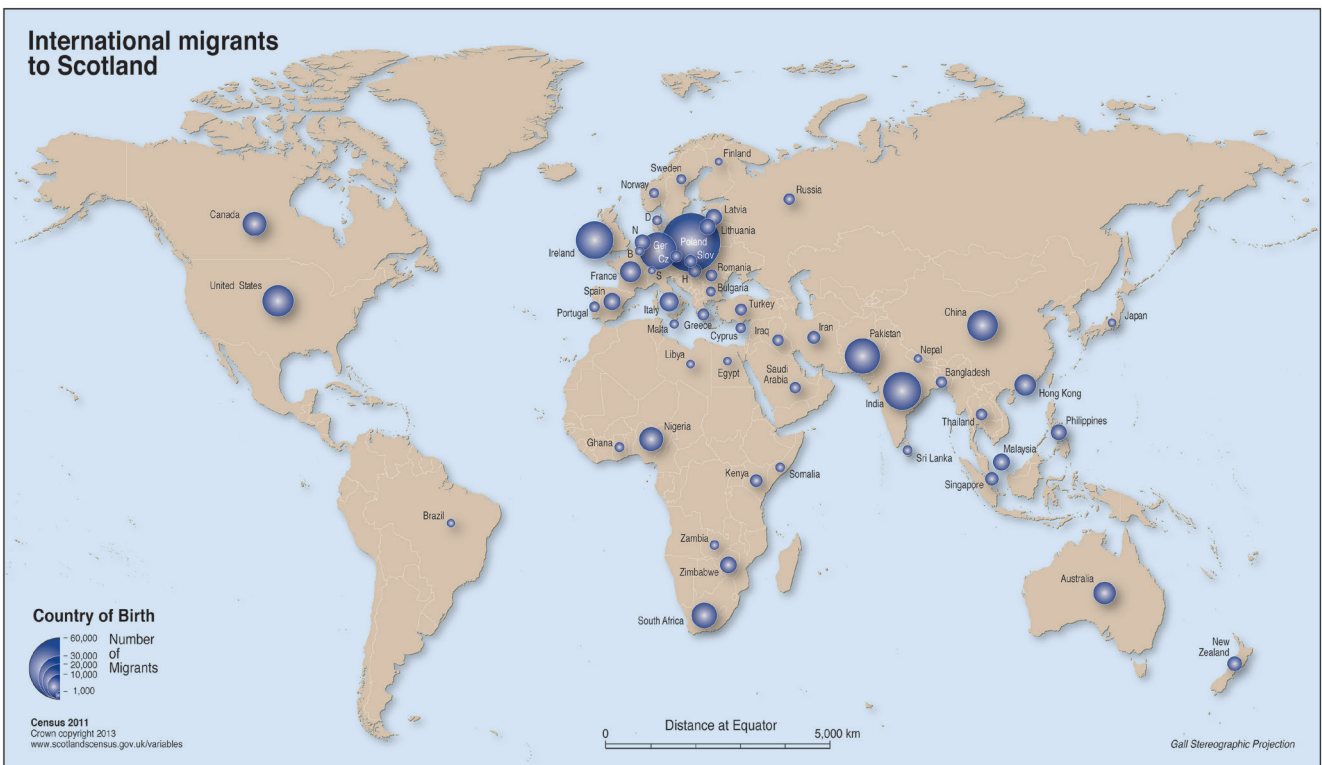
Figure 2 – Percentage of usual residents in EU27 countries that are foreign born, 2011



Source: Authors' own analysis of 2011 Census and 2011 Eurostat data (ONS 2013 and NRS 2013)

common non-UK country of birth in Scotland, despite being ranked 18th in 2001. As the most populous of the 'Accession 8' countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), Poland has been the biggest sender of East-Central European migrants since the enlargement of the European Union in 2004. Polish migrants now form 15 per cent of all foreign born residents living in Scotland.

Figure 3 – Origin of International Migrants to Scotland 2011



Source: Authors' own analysis of 2011 Census (ONS 2013)

Figure 4 – Top 10 countries of birth for the non-UK -born population in Scotland 2011

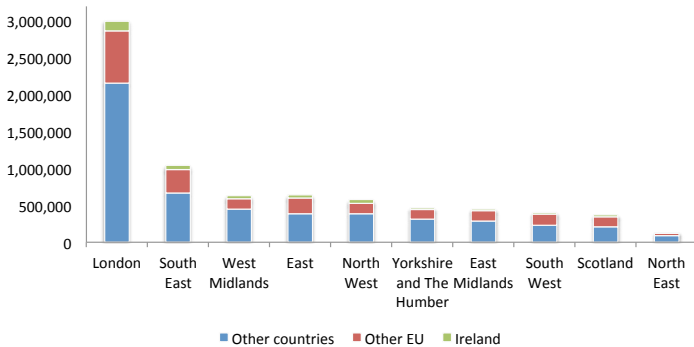
Scotland				
2001 Rank	2011 Rank	Country of Birth	Number of usual residents	Percentage of foreign born population
18	1	Poland	55,231	15.0%
5	2	India	23,489	6.4%
1	3	Republic of Ireland	22,952	6.2%
2	4	Germany ¹	22,274	6.0%
3	5	Pakistan	20,039	5.4%
4	6	United States of America	15,919	4.3%
13	7	China	15,338	4.2%
7	8	South Africa	10,607	2.9%
27	9	Nigeria	9,458	2.6%
6	10	Canada	9,435	2.6%

Source: 2011 Census (ONS 2013)

In contrast to crude binary comparisons between England and Scotland, this briefing paper builds on the work of McCollum et al. (CPC Briefing Paper 10, 2013) and argues that a more pertinent comparison is to consider how Scotland compares with English regions.

Figure 5 reveals the quantity and origins of foreign born residents in the English regions and in Scotland. It is quickly apparent that, in terms of ‘distinctiveness’, the outlier is not Scotland but London. The number of non-UK born residents in Scotland is similar to the English regions, with the notable exception of London.

Figure 5 – Country of birth of international migrants: Scotland and England by region 2011

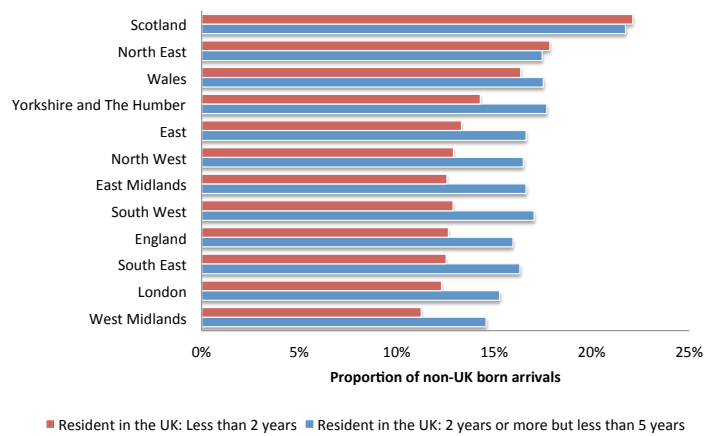


Source: Authors' own analysis of 2011 Census (NRS 2013 and ONS 2013)

By asking respondents ‘If you were not born in the United Kingdom, when did you most recently arrive to live here?’ the 2011 Census gives an interesting snapshot of how long migrants have been resident in the UK. Figure 6 reveals that Scotland has a larger proportion of recent international migrants than the English regions. The chart demonstrates the varied distribution of recent migrants to the UK, with 22 per cent of Scotland’s migrants arriving within the last two years (before the 2011 Census). In contrast, the West

Midlands, London and the South East of England have seen a smaller proportion of recent migrants. A further 22 per cent of international migrants in Scotland arrived within less than five years prior to the 2011 Census; again this marks a distinction with migration to other parts of the UK. Based on this data, migration to Scotland appears to be relatively transient, with migrants settling for shorter periods than in England.

Figure 6 – Length of residence of international migrants in Scotland and England by region 2011

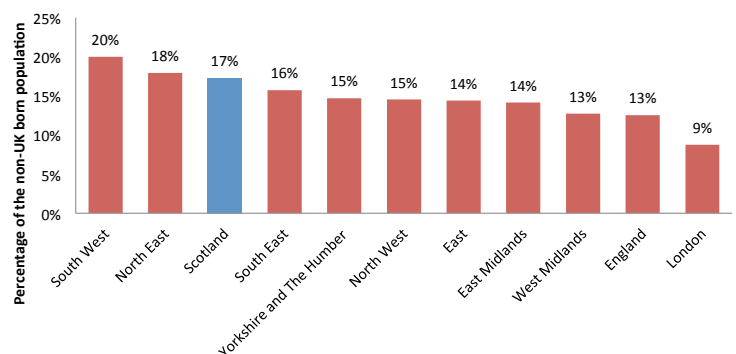


Source: Authors' own analysis of 2011 Census (NRS 2013 and ONS 2013)

Analysis of the age of migrants on arrival in the UK reveals an interesting picture of the nature of new migrants. These figures point to where young migrant families are arriving in the UK.

Figure 7 reveals the proportion of migrants who arrived under the age of five. Scotland is among the top three locations for migrants arriving aged 0-4 years old. In contrast, just nine per cent of London’s foreign born population arrived aged 0-4 years.

Figure 7 – Proportion of non-UK born population who arrived aged 0-4 years Scotland and England by regions 2011



Source: Authors' own analysis of 2011 Census (NRS 2013 and ONS 2013)

Policy implications

This analysis has important policy implications that impact on the current debate on constitutional change. While it is possible to argue that current UK immigration policy does not serve the interests of the Scottish economy particularly well, given the powerful influence of London in shaping perceptions of the UK's immigration needs, it is seldom recognised that the same argument is true for other regions of England. Moreover, as Bell et al. (2014) have argued, establishing migration policies suited to the different needs of regional economies is a policy option that has been taken up by some states such as Canada (Wright, 2013), and is an option open to the Scottish and UK governments regardless of the outcome of the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence.

Conclusion

In examining Scotland alongside regions within England it was apparent that London has a much more diverse population than anywhere in the UK. In fact, London stands in contrast to many areas of the country, particularly geographically 'peripheral' regions such as the South West, the North East and Scotland. The 'London-effect' clearly has a bearing on the UK and English averages in relation to most migration statistics, which underlines the importance of examining the data at a range of scales rather than defaulting to considering only aggregate Scottish/English data.

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