



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland



Religion and National Identity in Northern Ireland

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Structure

- Background
- Data
- Religion: Demographic accounts 2001-11
- Religion: Transfers 2001-11
- National identity in 2011
- Conclusion

Background:

- Project is about changing religious affiliations and national identity in Northern Ireland
- Today we deal with both themes but only for the period 2001-2011 – later work will cover 1991-2011
- Religious affiliation is, of course, important in NI because of its political implications – demography = politics
- Overall population numbers are important as is geographical distribution (segregation)
- The new questions on national identity in the 2011 Census have also attracted attention
- Who are the different groups? What factors are associated with each group?

Background:

- Despite this, there have been few/no studies of population dynamics using data for a large part of the population because the Census is cross-sectional and data have been unavailable
- The linkage of the 2001 and 2011 Censuses within the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS) means it is now possible for the first time to analyse these issues

The data

- The NILES is a c. 28% sample of the population (104/365 birthdates)
- For the first part of the presentation (components of change) we deal with all NILES members who had a Census record in 2001 or in 2011 (2001 n=447,536, 2011 n=475,176)
- For the second part of the presentation (changing religious affiliation and national identity in 2011) we deal with all NILES members aged => 18 in 2001 who had a Census record in 2001 and 2011 (n=264,610)

Religion: Demographic accounts

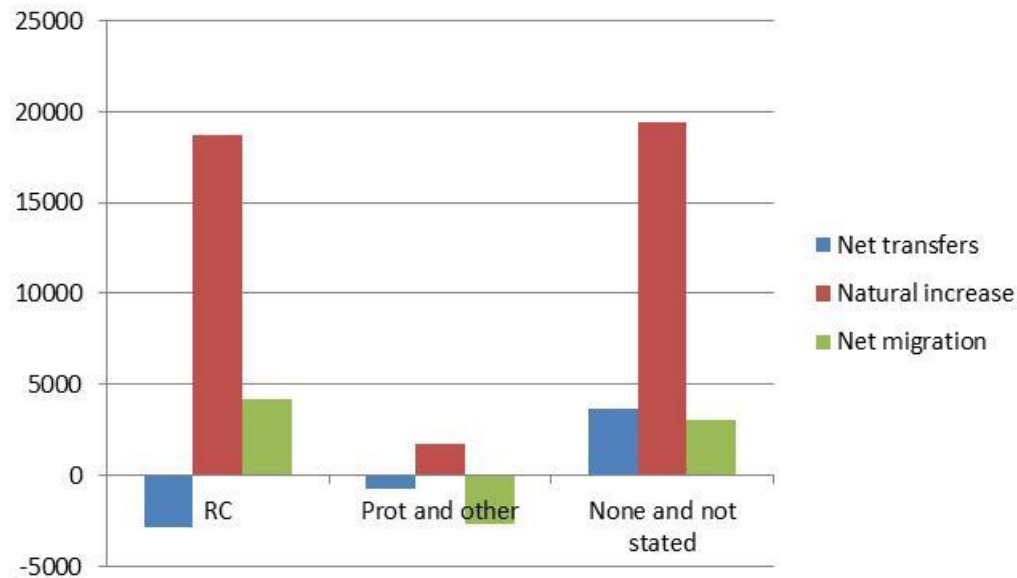
	2001	2001 PC	2011	2011 PC	Total difference
RC	179504	40	192799	41	13295
Prot and other	209486	47	205788	43	-3698
None and not stated	58546	13	76589	16	18043
Total	447536	100	475176	100	27640

Method:

1. Add and subtract the effects of transfers between the three groups – total NI pop 2011 was 1.8 million)
2. Subtract deaths to NILS members registered between 2001 and 2011 from the 2001 population
3. Add births (population aged < 10) in the NILS in 2011
4. Subtract emigrants
5. Add immigrants and re-entrants
6. Remove double counting – some of the population aged < 10 might be immigrants or re-entrants

Precise details difficult to tie down but general picture is clear

Religion: Demographic accounts



1. Natural increase is most important followed by migration and then transfers
2. Roman Catholics and 'Nones' have higher natural increase because they have relatively young age structures compared to Protestants (eg more births and fewer deaths)
3. Protestants tend on average to be older – more deaths and fewer births everything else being equal – and to lose also by net out-migration

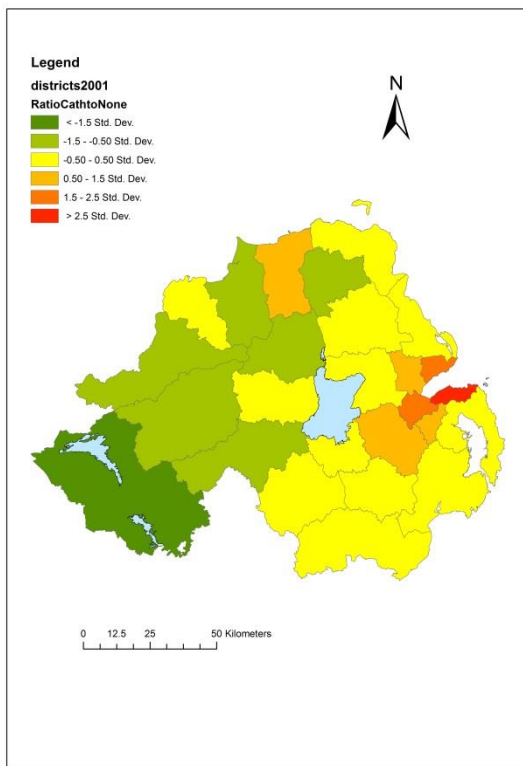
Religion: Transfers 2001-11

- **Headline results**

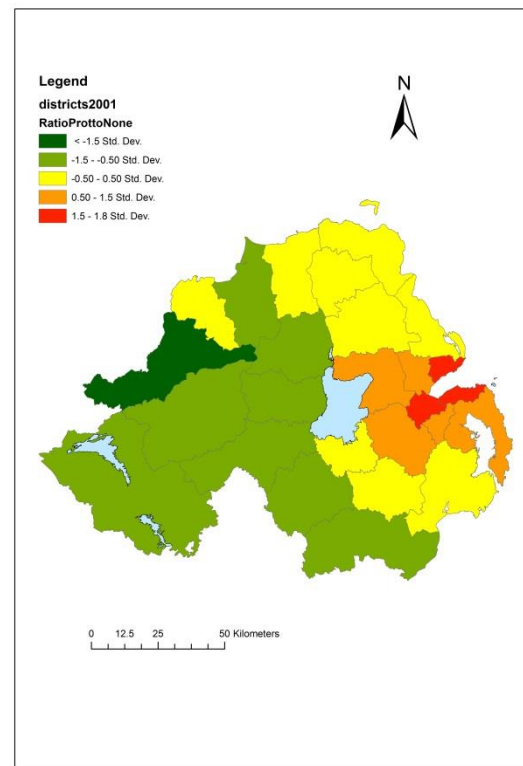
- There are considerable transfers between Protestant denominations
- Taking Catholics and Protestants as two blocks, most transfers are to the 'nones'
- Protestants are more likely to transfer to 'nones' than Catholics but 'nones' are more likely to change their affiliation (back?) to a Protestant denomination
- There are similarities but also differences in the 'switching' behaviour of Catholics and Protestants
- People who change SOA are more likely to transfer

The geography of denominational switching in Northern Ireland

Catholic 2001 to None 2011



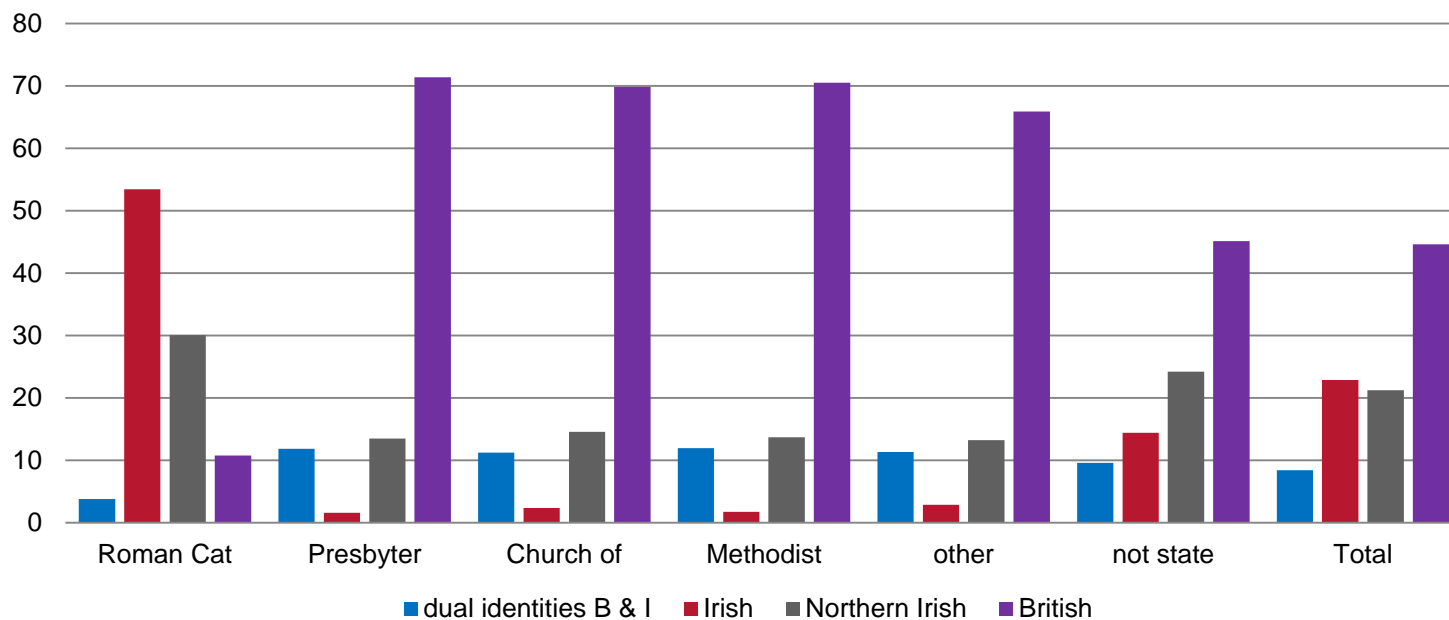
Protestant 2001 to None 2011



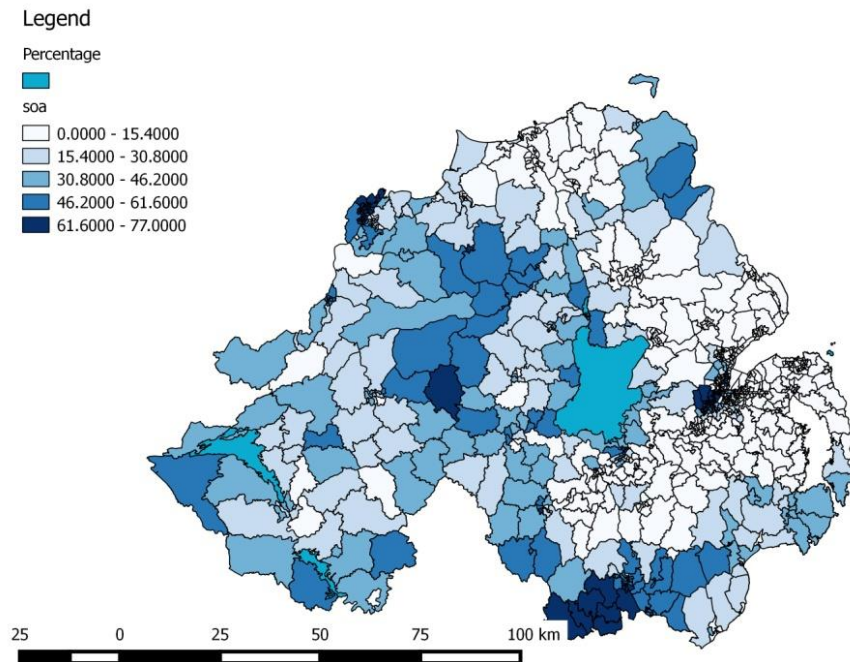
National identity in 2011



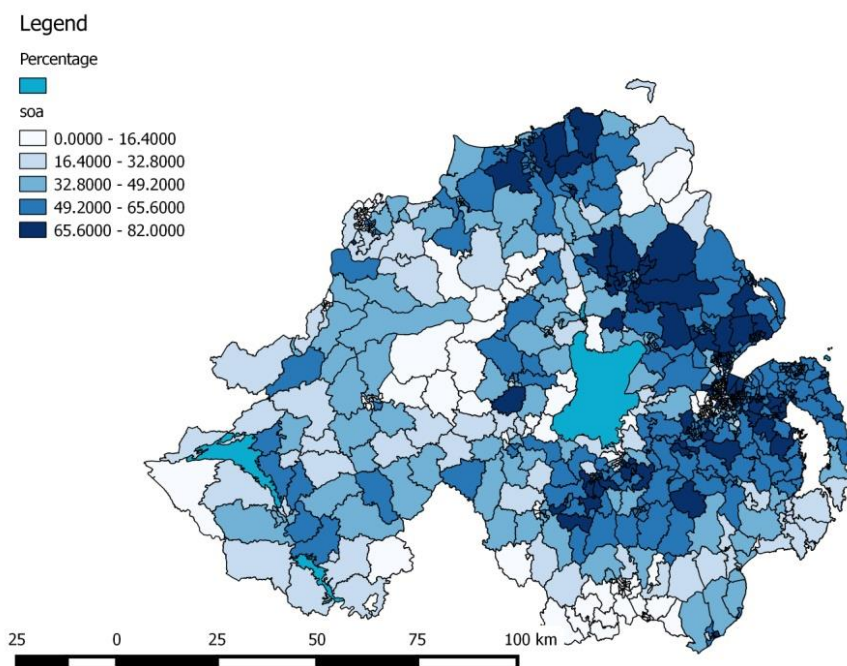
National Identities by Religion in 2011, Column Percent



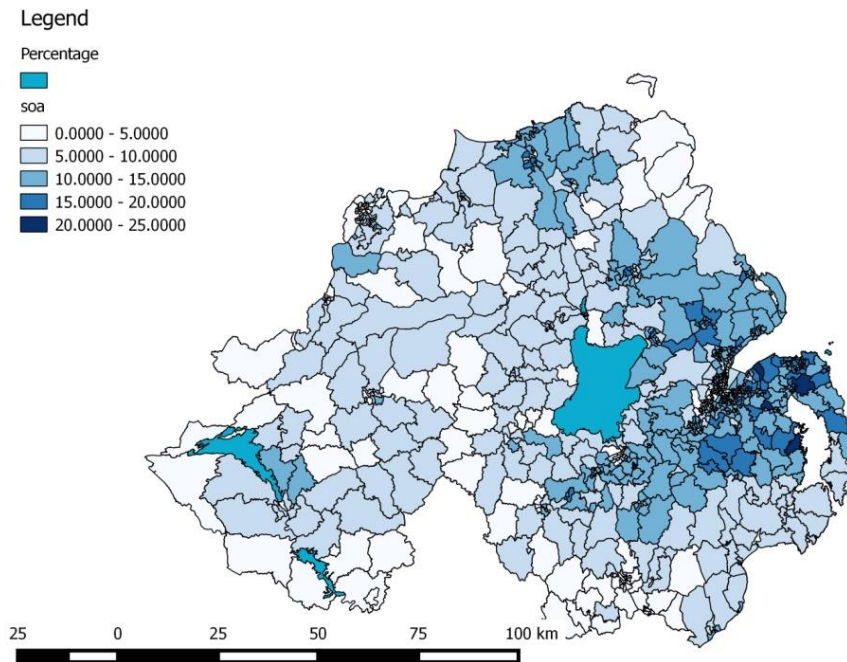
Percent “Irish” per SOA, 2011



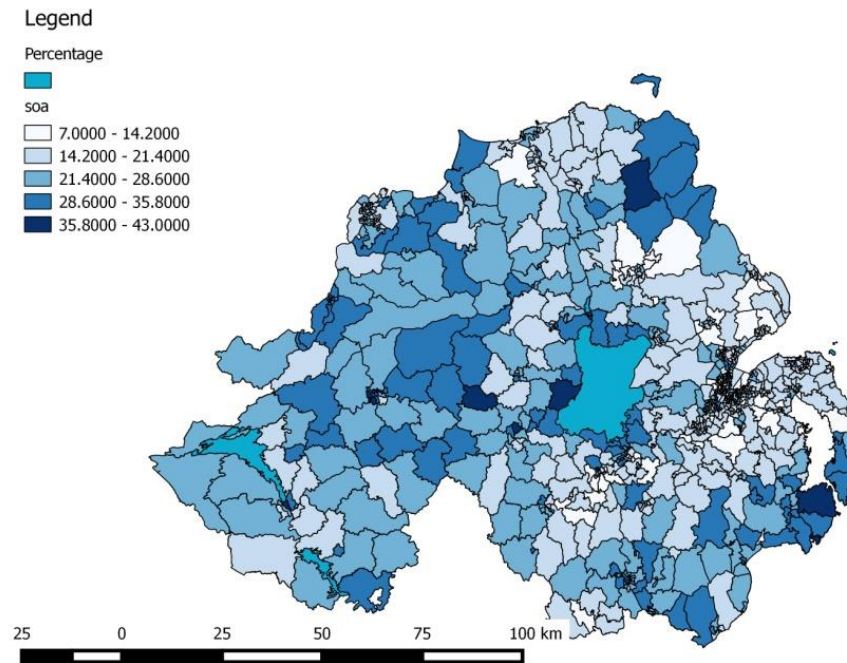
Percent “British” per SOA, 2011



Percent “Dual-or Multiple Identities” per SOA, 2011



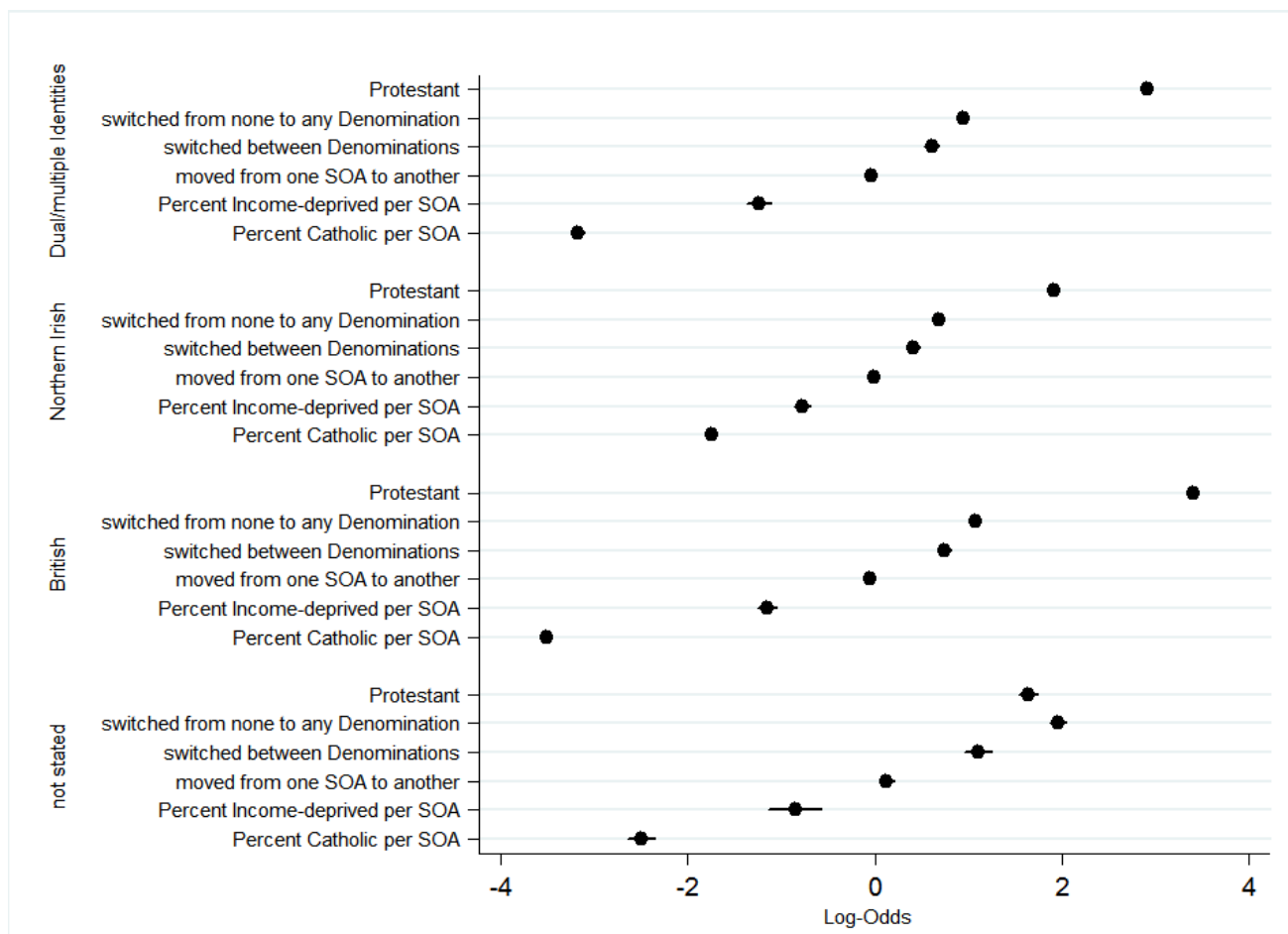
Percent “Northern Irish” per SOA, 2011



National identity in 2011

- **Headline figures**
- **Dual/multiple Identities:** more likely to be Protestant, likely retired, and switchers of religious identities, more likely to be educated
- **Northern Irish:** Protestants more likely than Catholics to tick this box. Less likely to be deprived, and more likely to be highly educated than the Irish but more so than the British
- **British:** more likely to be Protestant than Northern Irish, more likely to be movers and switchers between religious identities and to be less educated
- **Not Stated:** Protestant more likely than Catholic, likely deprived (social housing and unemployed), movers and those who moved into more Catholic areas.

Religious Switching and National Identities



National Identity in 2011: Contextual Effects

- Those living to live in deprived areas are more likely to endorse an Irish national identity.
- Minority-Identity- strengthening Effect of Concentrated Areas:
Respondents living in highly concentrated areas and belonging to a religious minority in that area, are more likely to endorse one of the two main groups (British – Irish) rather than Northern Irish or dual/multiple identities. This effect is not typical for Northern Ireland alone, but known from literature.

Conclusion

- Dual and mixed identity people are more educated and are more likely to have changed between the religious and none/not stated categories and back again
- The Northern Irish seem a diverse group, sitting between the Irish and the British in terms of religious affiliation and education
- Changing address seems important for some religious transfers and also for some national identities but less so for the Catholics and the Irish
- We cannot claim causality for these statistical patterns, but they do show some clear patterns and inter-relationships within the data
- As such they indicate some of lines for further enquiry which might include greater efforts to understand the stability and persistence of national identities.

Acknowledgment

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Northern Ireland
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