

Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands IndexSM 2020

International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: Culture

11 March 2021

This bulletin is part of a series of six. The others are available on [the TEO website](#).

Key findings

- In 2020, Northern Ireland ranked 31st of 50 for the Culture dimension (up 1 place since 2019). Culture was Northern Ireland's lowest ranked dimension, as was also the case in all previous survey years.
- Northern Ireland's score for Culture increased to 56.78 in 2020 (+0.10 since 2019). Culture was Northern Ireland's 3rd lowest scoring dimension but was the only dimension with an increase in score compared with 2019.
- Culture received significantly higher scores from those who had visited Northern Ireland than those who had not.
- In 2020, seven countries gave Northern Ireland a higher rank for Culture than last year. The largest changes in rank were from China, who ranked Northern Ireland 17 places higher, and Egypt, who ranked Northern Ireland eight places lower than in 2019.

Introduction

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands IndexSM (NBISM) each year since 2016. The NBI measures and ranks the reputations of 50 nations across Six Dimensions: Exports; Governance; Culture; People; Tourism; and Immigration and Investment.

This bulletin examines Northern Ireland's reputation in relation to **Culture**. The score for the Culture dimension is calculated using scores from three attributes. For each attribute, survey participants were presented with a statement and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale.

Attribute	Statement
Sports	'This country excels at sport.'
Cultural Heritage	'This country has a rich cultural heritage.'
Contemporary Culture	'This country is an interesting and exciting place for contemporary culture such as music, films, art and literature.'

The score for the Culture dimension is out of 100, while the score for each of the attributes is based on a scale from one to seven (with seven being the highest and best, and one being the lowest and worst). 50 countries are included in the NBI; rankings presented in the report show Northern Ireland's position among these 50 countries.

Northern Ireland's score on the Culture dimension (56.78) was higher in 2020 than in 2019. It was the only dimension with an increase in score compared with 2019. Its rank also increased to 31st.

Figure 1: Northern Ireland's ranking and score on the Culture dimension of the NBI



Rankings and scores on the Culture dimension from around the world

Culture was Northern Ireland's lowest ranked dimension in 2020, as was also the case in all previous survey years.

Northern Ireland received lower rankings from panel nations on the Culture dimension compared with the other five dimensions of the NBI in 2020. Only four of 20 panel countries gave Northern Ireland a top half ranking (25th or above) for Culture. As in all previous survey years, this is fewer top half rankings than the other dimensions received.

In 2020, Northern Ireland's highest Culture rankings were received from China (17th of 50), the United Kingdom and Italy (both 20th). Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from Egypt (40th), Brazil (37th), Japan and Mexico (both 36th).

Seven countries gave Northern Ireland a higher rank for Culture than last year. The largest changes in rank were from China, who ranked Northern Ireland 17 places higher, and Egypt, who ranked Northern Ireland eight places lower than in 2019.

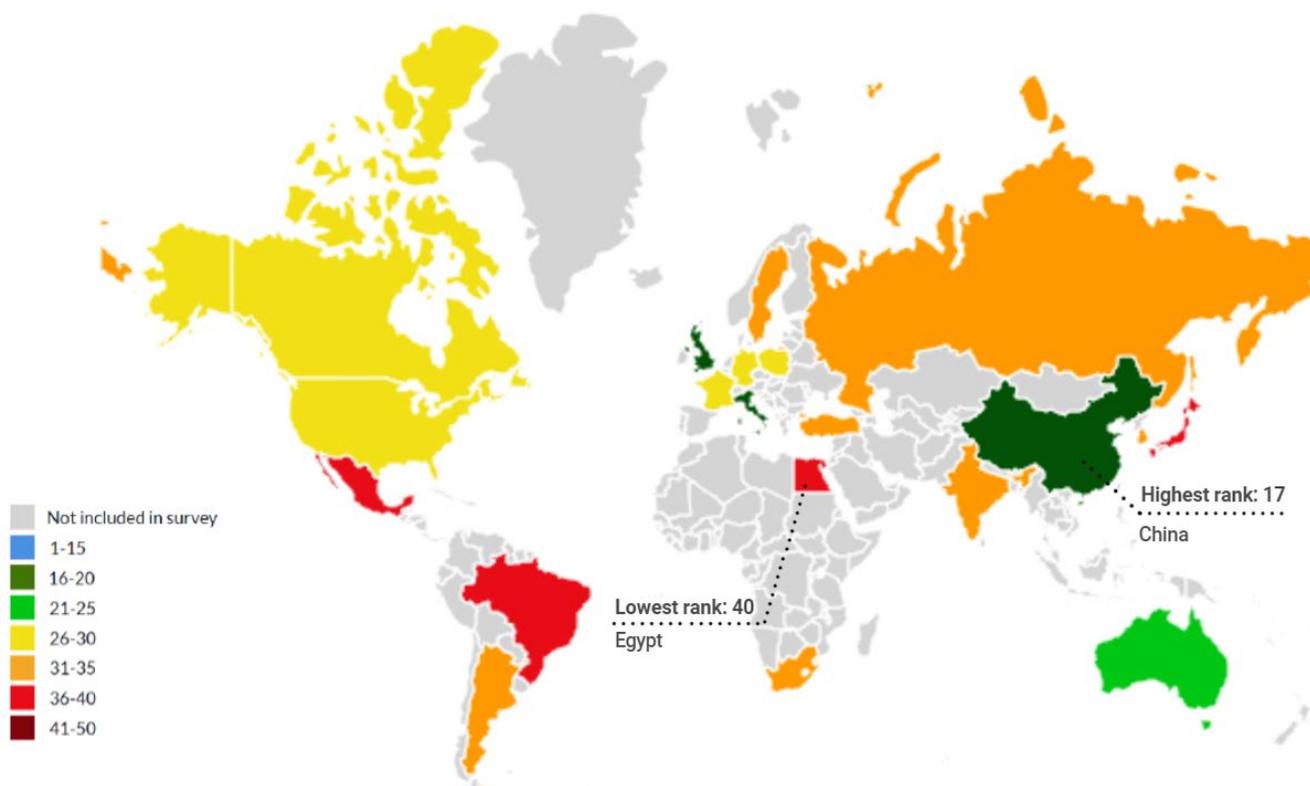
While rankings provide an insight into how Northern Ireland is viewed by panel countries relative to the other participating nations, they can be impacted year on year due to the inclusion of new countries in the survey. The dimension score provides a more absolute understanding of how Northern Ireland is viewed, both overall and by each of the individual panel countries. In this sense, it is useful to consider both rankings and scores.

Overall, Culture was Northern Ireland's 3rd lowest scoring dimension in 2020.

Northern Ireland's highest scores were received from India (69.25), China (69.11), Australia (59.43) and Egypt (58.80). Northern Ireland's lowest scores were received from Japan (50.29), Sweden (50.82), South Korea (52.35) and Turkey (52.64).

Northern Ireland received a high rank (20th) but low score (54.13) from Italy, which contrasts with the relatively low rank (32nd) but high score (69.25) received from India. This suggests that scores from different panel countries are not necessarily comparable, again, highlighting the importance of considering both score and rank when evaluating responses from other countries.

Figure 2: Northern Ireland's rankings on the Culture dimension from around the world



Attribute scores and rankings

The score for each attribute is an average of participants' scores, on a scale from one (lowest and worst) to seven (highest and best) with four being neither positive nor negative.

In 2020 the "sports" attribute received its second positive score (i.e. above the neutral value of 4) since Northern Ireland was included in 2016. Nonetheless, it remained Northern Ireland's lowest scoring attribute across all dimensions (4.04). The highest scoring Culture attribute in 2020 was "cultural heritage" (4.74).

Northern Ireland was ranked relatively poorly (34th, 29th and 28th) compared with the other participating nations on all three Culture attributes (Figure 3 below). As in previous years, all three Culture attributes were among the lowest ranking attributes in any dimension.

Figure 3: Rankings and scores for Northern Ireland's Culture attributes



Note: Attribute scores range from 1 to 7 and all rankings are out of 50.

Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each Culture attribute statement

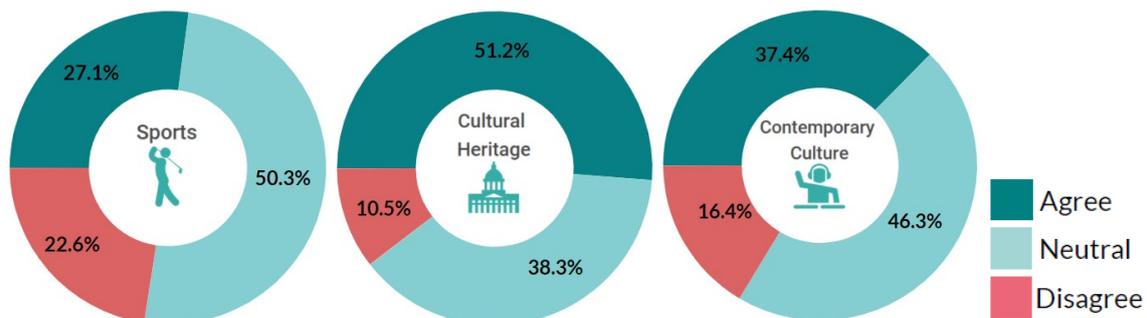
It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement¹ (see Figure 4).

A relatively large proportion disagreed that Northern Ireland excels at sport (23 per cent) and the agreement rate for this statement was low compared with other attribute statements (27 per cent). Half of participants (50 per cent) gave a neutral response.

More than half of participants agreed that Northern Ireland has a rich cultural heritage (51 per cent), while 37 per cent agreed that Northern Ireland is an interesting and exciting place for contemporary culture. A large proportion of participants gave a neutral response in relation to both of these attributes (38 per cent and 46 per cent respectively) while disagreement rates were lower for both attributes (11 per cent and 16 per cent respectively).

The proportions reported below for the attributes within the Culture dimension are all similar to those observed in previous survey years. Agreement rates are slightly lower than 2019 but are an increase on all previous years.

Figure 4: Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement in the Culture dimension



Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

¹ For each attribute statement, survey participants reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale. These are converted to scores, where one to three were categorised as 'disagree', four as 'neutral', and five to seven as 'agree'.

Cultural activities or products associated with Northern Ireland

Participants were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the cultural activities or products they would most associate with Northern Ireland (participants could choose more than one response). The most common response was 'none of these' (41 per cent of participants). 'None of these' was selected less frequently for similar questions on four of the other dimensions. Figure 5 presents adjectives chosen by remaining participants. The activities and products most commonly associated with Northern Ireland were 'Museums' (21 per cent), 'Music' (19 per cent), and 'Sports' (15 per cent). These proportions were broadly similar to those observed in 2019.

Figure 5: Cultural activities or products associated with Northern Ireland



Visitors to Northern Ireland

In 2020, 12 per cent of NBI participants reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Participants who had previously visited the region scored Northern Ireland statistically significantly² higher on the Culture dimension (65.72) than those who had not visited (55.48). This was also the case for each of the composite attributes (Figure 6). This pattern was also evident in all previous survey years.

Figure 6: Attribute scores (those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not)



Further Information and Feedback

Further information can be found in the [overall report](#) (published February 2021) which includes data tables and methodological documents.

Feedback on these publications is gratefully received, and can be provided through our [User Feedback Survey](#) or by contacting: Emma Morgan, pfganalytics@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk.

² *Statistically significant differences are at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance.