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Abstract

In this study we examine two heterogeneous countries (United States and Scotland) to determine residents' knowledge and interest of their personal ancestry. The preconceived notion is that Scotland's residents know more about their ancestry than residents of the United States. We see this notion in movies such as Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* and the Scottish tourist market which sells tartans, clan booklets, bagpipes -- all things Scottish ancestry. The subtle images displayed in media and the markets suggest that Scotland's residents are more aware of their backgrounds than those in the United States. We investigated these notions by personally interviewing young adults residing in the Northeast area of Georgia and from around the Glasgow region in Scotland. We created a set of questions and a scale. Our survey consisted of 8 questions. In some questions, we asked the respondents to rank their attitudes about their ancestry on a scale from 0-10, 0 being the least important and 10 being the most important. Other questions were open-ended, for example, "how far back can you trace your ancestry?" We then compared the answers from the two countries. We surprisingly found not too many differences between young people in Georgia and Scotland. We hypothesize that this could reflect the ancestry attitudes of the younger generation. Our results contribute to previous findings, providing a more complete perspective of the Scottish culture and understanding of ancestry. For further studies, we would want to compare attitudes across different age groups, along with other heterogeneous and perhaps homogenous countries.

Keywords: heterogeneous, ancestry, ethnicity, race, attitudes, culture