



News Release

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National identity plays a key role in voters' views on Europe

How British people define their national identity will influence voting patterns in the forthcoming European elections, producing widely differing outcomes across the UK, research suggests.

A study shows that the UK Independence Party's (UKIP) electoral appeal is much stronger in England than in Scotland or Wales, with Scots significantly more in favour of staying in the European Union than voters in England.

The research has been carried out by the Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change at the University of Edinburgh, working with Cardiff University and the think tank, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). It was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

European Parliament election outcomes typically differ widely across EU member-states, with domestic political factors producing widely divergent outcomes. The study shows that England, Scotland and Wales are also likely to produce very different outcomes in the European election on 22 May.

The research suggests that UKIP is challenging Labour for first place in England with the Conservatives trailing in third place. Labour has a clear lead in Wales over UKIP, who are just ahead of the Conservatives. In Scotland the Scottish National Party and Labour are tied for the lead at just over 30 per cent, while the Conservatives and UKIP are vying for a distant third place at around 10 per cent.

Across the three countries, UKIP's support varies widely. In England it is nearly at 30 per cent, in Scotland it is at 10 per cent, and at 20 per cent in Wales. The Liberal Democrats are the lowest placed of all the main parties everywhere.

European Election Voting Intentions, April 2014 (%)

Party	England	Wales	Scotland
Labour	30	39	31
Conservative	22	18	12
Liberal Democrats	11	7	7
Plaid Cymru/SNP	--	11	33
UKIP	29	20	10
Other	8	6	6
<i>N of respondents</i>	2846	793	782

The research also finds that, within England, UKIP support is much stronger among those with a mainly English rather than British identity:

European Election Voting Intention by National Identity, England, April 2014 (%)

	<i>English only/More English than British</i>	<i>Equal English & British</i>	<i>British only/More British than English</i>
Labour	24	25	33
Conservative	22	31	18
Liberal Democrats	7	10	19
UKIP	42	26	19
Other	6	7	10
<i>N of respondents</i>	<i>943</i>	<i>1160</i>	<i>546</i>

Professor Richard Wyn Jones, director of the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University and co-author of the study, said: “Although UKIP’s name – the *UK Independence Party* – suggests it is aimed at those with a British identity, our research shows that it is the party of choice for those who identify as being more English than British.”

When people in England were asked which party and which political leader “best stands up for the interests of England”, UKIP and Nigel Farage both came out on top at over 20 per cent. By contrast only three per cent of survey respondents in Wales identified UKIP as the party that best stands up for Welsh interests, and only one per cent in Scotland as the party that best stands up for Scottish interests.

‘Best stands up for the interests of England’ (%)

<i>By Party</i>		<i>By Politician</i>	
UKIP	23	Nigel Farage	22
Labour	17	David Cameron	15
Con	16	Ed Miliband	13
LD	4	Boris Johnson	9
Other	5	Nick Clegg	4
No party stand up for the interests of England	19	None of these	21
Don’t Know	15	Don’t Know	17
<i>N of respondents</i>	<i>3695</i>	<i>N of respondents</i>	<i>3695</i>

The nations of Britain also hold different attitudes towards membership of the European Union. Survey respondents were asked how they would vote in a referendum on EU membership. England was the most Euro-sceptic, with more respondents favouring leaving the EU than staying. In Wales respondents leant marginally in favour of remaining in the EU, while in Scotland opinion was more clearly in favour of continued EU membership.

Voting Intention in ‘In/Out’ EU referendum (%)

	<i>England</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>Scotland</i>
Remain	37	39	48
Leave	40	35	32
Wouldn’t vote/Don’t Know	22	26	20
<i>N of respondents</i>	<i>3695</i>	<i>1027</i>	<i>1014</i>

Ranked among the top universities in the world

A clear majority of those in England who identify themselves as only or mainly English were for withdrawal from the EU. By contrast an equally clear majority of those in England who feel only or mainly British favour remaining part of the EU. Euroscepticism in England is clearly associated with Englishness and not Britishness. There was no significant relationship between patterns of national identity within Scotland and Wales and attitudes towards EU membership.

EU Referendum Vote by National Identity in England (%)

	<i>English only/More English than British</i>	<i>Equally English & British</i>	<i>British only/More British than English</i>
Remain	26	39	55
Leave	55	37	29
Wouldn't Vote/Don't Know	19	23	17
<i>N of respondents</i>	<i>1171</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>667</i>

Professor Ailsa Henderson, head of Politics and International Relations at the University of Edinburgh and co-author of the study, said: “We now have clear evidence that national identity plays a key role in voters’ views about Europe. It will affect the choices people will make in the May 22 elections and, in England, the way people would vote in any referendum on EU membership. These effects vary across Britain, with ‘Scottish’ and ‘Welsh’ identifiers backing entirely different parties from ‘English’ identifiers”.

Professor Wyn Jones said: “There is now a significant chance that UKIP will top the European election poll in England. However, while UKIP are also currently on course to win an MEP in Wales, if the results of this research were repeated on 22 May, they would likely not win an MEP in Scotland. Such a result would highlight the political differences between the nations of Britain. Moreover the strength of UKIP’s popular support in England, draws on something which even they appear to have not fully recognised: the extent to which the party has become the champion of an increasingly politicized sense of English identity.”

Glenn Gottfried, from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) said: “Attitudes to Europe vary significantly across the nations of the UK. The English are the most Eurosceptic, while the Scots are the most positive about Britain’s membership. These differences in outlook between England and Scotland could have an impact on the Scottish independence referendum. A strong performance by UKIP in May’s European elections might encourage Scots into the Yes camp if they read it as a signal that England may vote to leave the EU in a future in-out referendum on Europe.”

Notes to Editors

The surveys were conducted as part of an ESRC-funded research project, the Future of England Study. The surveys were carried out by YouGov, via the Internet, on 11-22 April 2014. Data were weighted post-fieldwork to ensure a representative sample of adults (18+) in each of the three countries. Sample sizes were 3695 in England, 1014 in Scotland and 1027 in Wales. This gives an approximate margin-of-error of +/- 1.7% in England and +/- 3% in Scotland and Wales.

1. The Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change, based at the University of Edinburgh, is a major interdisciplinary project examining the options for, and implications of, constitutional change in Scotland. It is supported by the Economic and Social Research Council as part of a programme of investments into the Future of the UK and Scotland. Beginning in October 2013, this 2-year project contributes to the evidence base for the 2014 referendum, and the implications of the result. In the longer term, it will build a multi-institutional research centre which creates capacity for interdisciplinary work on the social, economic and political challenges facing Scotland, irrespective of the outcome of the referendum. <http://www.futureukandscotland.ac.uk/projects/research-centre>
2. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funds research into the big social and economic questions facing us today. We also develop and train the UK's future social scientists. Our research informs public policies and helps make businesses, voluntary bodies and other organisations more effective. Most importantly, it makes a real difference to all our lives. The ESRC is an independent organisation, established by Royal Charter in 1965, and funded mainly by the Government.
3. Cardiff University is recognised in independent government assessments as one of Britain's leading teaching and research universities and is a member of the Russell Group of the UK's most research intensive universities. Among its academic staff are two Nobel Laureates, including the winner of the 2007 Nobel Prize for Medicine, University Chancellor Professor Sir Martin Evans. Founded by Royal Charter in 1883, today the University combines impressive modern facilities and a dynamic approach to teaching and research. The University's breadth of expertise encompasses: the College of Humanities and Social Sciences; the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences; and the College of Physical Sciences & Engineering, along with a longstanding commitment to lifelong learning. Cardiff's three flagship Research Institutes are offering radical new approaches to neurosciences and mental health, cancer stem cells and sustainable places.
4. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is the UK's leading progressive think tank. With Cardiff and Edinburgh Universities it publishes the regular Future of England survey, the most comprehensive assessment of public attitudes in England on issues concerning identity, governance and nationhood. See www.ippr.org.
5. Established in 1583, the University of Edinburgh is one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities and regularly ranks among the top 50 universities in the world.

For further information please contact:

Edd McCracken, University of Edinburgh Press and PR Office, tel 0131 651 4400; email edd.mccracken@ed.ac.uk

To arrange interviews with Richard Wyn Jones, contact Heath Jeffries, Cardiff University, tel 02920 870917 / 07908 824029; email jeffrieshv1@cardiff.ac.uk; or Llew Williams, tel 02920 688059 / 07455 015819; email WilliamsL59@cardiff.ac.uk

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