

New research finds UKIP is becoming patriotic party of England

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Following UKIP's surge in the local elections, new survey data indicates that one possible explanation of their success - until now largely overlooked - is their emergence as the party with the strongest appeal to English patriots.

The data, taken from the Future of England Survey (FoES) run by Cardiff University's Wales Governance Centre, the think tank IPPR and Edinburgh University, charts the strengthening of English identity, but also its politicisation.

The 2011 Census found that 70 per cent of the English population identified themselves as either solely English or English in combination with some other national identity. Just 29 per cent of [respondents](#) identified themselves as feeling any sense of British national identity.

Without explicitly promoting themselves as an English party, UKIP appears to have become the key political beneficiary of this trend because the more English someone feels, the more likely they are to believe that England is getting a bad deal from its membership of both the European Union and the United Kingdom.

UKIP's supporters express the strongest sense of English identity (55 per cent describe themselves as either 'English not British' or 'More English than British'). And UKIP supporters are the most dissatisfied with the constitutional status quo in the United Kingdom (49 per cent agree that England should become an independent country compared to 36 per cent of Tories, 35 per cent of Lib Dems and 29 per cent of Labour supporters) while over 90 per cent want to withdraw from the EU.

When people were asked: 'which party best stands up for English interests', UKIP tops the list.

- UKIP - 21 per cent
- Labour - 19 per cent
- Conservative - 17 per cent
- [Liberal Democrats](#) - 6 per cent
- None of the parties stand up for England - 16 per cent

(Note - These responses are taken from a separate YouGov poll conducted 14-15 April 2013. Please refer to Table 1 in notes to editors for responses from November 2011, November 2012 and April 2013)

Even more striking is the fact that UKIP's support as the party that best stands up for England has more than doubled since 2011 - up from 9 per cent, and overtaking Lab (21 per cent) and Con (20 per cent) and none of the parties (23 per cent).

UKIP's rise in this context will be of particular concern to the

Conservatives. Conservative voters at the last general election (2010) are split on the party who they believe best stands up for England. While 38 per cent say the Conservatives, almost as many (34 per cent) say UKIP - and this figure has almost doubled from 18 per cent in 2011, suggesting a potential for Conservative support to drift over to UKIP.

Nick Pearce, IPPR Director, said: "There is an undercurrent of English national sentiment that has been growing in recent years and this appears to be propelling UKIP forward. Tories traditionally feel more confident that they are the patriotic party; but there are signs that complacency on their part is handing a gift to UKIP which is fast emerging - in the eyes of the English electorate - as the party which best stands up for English interests.

"If the Tories have been complacent about their natural position as England's patriotic party, Labour has been consumed by fear. Fear that giving England more recognition in the union will inhibit its political interests by limiting the role of its Celtic fringe; fear that recognition of Englishness will simply lend credibility to the views of Little Englanders in respect of Europe and immigration. But fear breeds inertia, and inertia weakens Labour's capacity to contest the politics of England."

Richard Wyn-Jones, Professor of Politics at Cardiff University, Director of the Wales Governance Centre and co-author of the report said: "To understand the rise of UKIP as simply a manifestation of anti-European sentiment or even some kind of anti-political spasm is to ignore the very significant, and much broader transformation in attitudes currently underway in England. It is a transformation that is bringing England and Englishness to the fore as a political community and political identity. It is a transformation that the current political class seem scarcely to have noticed let alone formed a coherent response too. UKIP is surfing a wave of existential angst about England's place in world."

The Future of England Survey (FoES) 2012 is a joint initiative between IPPR and the Wales Governance Centre (Cardiff University) and the Institute of Governance (Edinburgh University). The FoES is the most comprehensive examination of how public attitudes within England are changing in respect of issues around national identity, nationhood and governance. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGovTotal sample size was 3600 English adults/3401 White adults/651 BME adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 23rd - 28th November 2012. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults (aged 18+).

IPPR will publish a major report based on the full findings of FoES 2012 later this summer.

Provided by Cardiff University

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