

THE POLLS - TRENDS

British public opinion towards EU membership

SARA B. HOBOLT

Corresponding author

Department of Government

London School of Economics and Political Science

Houghton Street | London WC2A 2AE

Email: s.b.hobolt@lse.ac.uk

JAMES TILLEY

Department of Politics and International Relations

University of Oxford

Manor Road Building, Manor Road, Oxford

OX1 3UQ United Kingdom

Email: james.tilley@politics.ox.ac.uk

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SARA B. HOBOLT is the Sutherland Chair in European Institutions and professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.

JAMES TILLEY is Professor of Politics and Fellow of Jesus College, University of Oxford, UK.

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Corresponding author contact information

*Address correspondence to Professor Sara B. Hobolt, London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Government, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK; email: s.b.hobolt@lse.ac.uk.

Abstract In 2020, the United Kingdom became the first member state to leave the European Union (EU). This followed a referendum on membership in 2016. Public opinion about EU membership has been regularly measured since the 1970s in Britain. In this Poll Trends article, we document the changes in sentiment towards the EU in a variety of different ways. We report on attitudes towards the cost and benefits; national and European identities; support for continued membership of the EU; specific policy preferences towards Britain's involvement with the EU; vote intention in a referendum on membership pre- and post- the 2016 referendum; and the prevalence of new political identities created by the referendum.

Introduction

On January 31, 2020 the United Kingdom (UK) became the first member state to leave to the European Union (EU). This followed a decision by a narrow majority, 52 per cent, of British voters in a referendum on June 23, 2016 to exit after more than four decades of EU membership. The referendum result sent political shockwaves throughout Europe and the world. A burgeoning literature has examined the predictors of vote choice in the referendum, focusing on economic costs and benefits, cultural ties, attitudes towards political sovereignty and campaign effects (Goodwin and Heath 2016; Hobolt 2016; Vasilopoulou 2016; Becker et al 2017; Curtice 2017; Colantone and Stanig 2018). Yet, the referendum result also raised questions about the long-term trajectory of British views on Europe.¹ Has Britain always been more skeptical about the EU than its neighbors? What kind of relationship with Europe have British voters favored over the decades? Would Brexit have happened if the vote had been held a year, or a decade, earlier?

This article sheds some light on these questions by presenting long-term trends in British public attitudes towards European integration and the EU over the past fifty years. In compiling the available trends, we summarize public opinion across several dimensions: a) British attitudes towards EU membership, and national and European identities, compared to the attitudes of people in other European countries; b) long-term trends in vote intention in an hypothetical EU referendum; c) specific policy preferences about Britain's relationship with the EU; d) short-

¹ Although Britain and the United Kingdom are often used interchangeably, they are, of course, different entities as the UK includes Northern Ireland (currently 1.3 million eligible voters), while Great Britain does not. All the surveys presented here are surveys of the electorate of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales). When we say 'British', we therefore mean living in Great Britain. Only the British Eurobarometer sample after 1989 also includes Northern Ireland. At the 2016 referendum 56 per cent of voters in Northern Ireland voted to Remain.

term trends in referendum vote intention in the period before and after the vote, and finally; e) the emergence of a new political identity along Brexit lines.

British and European identities and attitudes towards EU membership

It has often been argued that the UK is the ‘odd man out in Europe’. When the UK first applied to join the European Economic Community in 1963, the French President Charles de Gaulle rejected the application out of fear that Britain would not be serious about integrating with its European neighbors due to its ‘special relationship’ with the US and its ‘insular’ character ‘very different from those of other continentals’ (Grant 2008). Britain did eventually join the European Communities in 1973, but British citizens continued to be more skeptical about membership than their European neighbors.

British attitudes towards EU membership can be compared with that of other member states using cross-national Eurobarometer survey data. We compare British public opinion over time with average public opinion in the eight other countries (EU-8) that were also members of the EU for the entire period under investigation (1973-2019). The ‘EU-8’ thus consists of the six founding member states (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) and the two countries which joined alongside Britain in 1973 (Denmark and Ireland). Figure 1 shows responses among British² and EU-8 respondents to the longest running continuous survey question on membership of the EU by Eurobarometer. This asks respondents whether they consider that their country’s membership of the EU is a good thing, a bad thing or neither good nor bad.

² Between 1975 and 1989, the British (GB) sample excludes Northern Ireland. For the remaining Eurobarometer surveys, Northern Ireland is covered as a part of the United Kingdom sample.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Figures 1a and 1b show that while public attitudes towards membership fluctuate somewhat over time, the British public was clearly more skeptical about the benefits of EU membership than were people in the EU-8. In fact, while the British public is generally fairly evenly balanced between those who say that the EU is a ‘good thing’ and those who say it is ‘a bad thing’, the electorates in the EU-8 are overwhelmingly positive about EU membership. For example, in the 1970s, an average of 36 per cent of people in Britain were positive about EU membership and 35 per cent were negative about membership. By comparison, 62 per cent of people in the EU-8 during the same period thought EU membership was a good thing and only 9 per cent said that it was a bad thing.

Support for membership peaked in the early 1990s with 57 per cent of people in Britain and 76 per cent of people in the EU-8 saying that it was a good thing. By the 2010s, support had declined again, although people in Britain were still slightly more positive about EU membership than in the 1970s. The stark difference with public opinion in EU-8 remained, however. These polling trends indicate that British public opinion has been consistently more skeptical of the benefits of EU membership compared to the continent (where opinions, of course, also differ between countries). Figure 1 also shows that this difference is not a recent phenomenon.

To further explore these differences in public attitudes in the UK and the EU, we look at the more fundamental question of national and European identities. We ask whether are Brits more likely to identify exclusively with their own country (and not Europe) compared to citizens in EU-8. To investigate this, we employ Eurobarometer data on national and European identities

that has been collected since 1992, with the question wording: ‘In the near future do you see yourself as...? (Nationality) only; (Nationality) and European; European and (Nationality); OR European only?’. Figure 2 plots the percentage of respondents with exclusive national identity, i.e. those who answered ‘(Nationality) only’ to this question, rather than one of the other answer options that include ‘European’.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

The figure clearly shows that many more people hold an exclusive national identity in the UK compared to people in the remaining EU member states. On average over the past 3 decades, 60 per cent of Brits have held an exclusive national identity compared to only 35 per cent in the EU-8. This may go some way towards explaining the Brexit referendum, since researchers have shown that exclusive national identities are highly correlated with Euroskepticism (Hooghe and Marks 2004; Hobolt and De Vries 2016; Hobolt 2016). Interestingly, the percentage of people holding an exclusive national identity in the UK only dropped below 50 per cent in the immediate aftermath of the Brexit referendum, where European identification grew stronger among those who had voted to remain in the EU (Hobolt et al. 2020). In 2017, 45 per cent of Brits said they held an exclusively national identity, whereas the same number responded that they felt both ‘British and European’, 7 per cent ‘European and British’ and 2 per cent ‘European only’. This is the highest reported level of identification with Europe among Brits over the past 30 years. Nonetheless, levels of European identification were even higher in EU-8 in the same year with only 31 per cent ‘national only’, 58 per cent ‘national and European’, 8 per cent ‘European and national’ and 8 per cent ‘European only’. Overall, these Eurobarometer data suggest that Brits have consistently felt less attached to Europe and less

convinced about the benefits of EU membership compared with citizens in other EU member states.

Next, we look at this question of how such exclusive identities and Euroskeptic attitudes translate into a willingness to leave the EU by showing trends in vote intention in a hypothetical EU membership referendum in the UK.

Vote intention in referendums on EU membership

To trace vote intention in a (hypothetical) referendum on membership of the EU over time, we rely on polling data from IPSOS Mori, which has repeatedly asked British respondents the following question: ‘If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the European Union, how would you vote?’.

[INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

After the 2016 EU membership referendum question was finalized, IPSOS Mori changed the question wording to the official referendum question: “Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?”

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The 2016 referendum on EU membership was the second referendum on continued membership held in the United Kingdom. The first referendum, on the June 5, 1975, was comfortably won by the ‘Remain’ side as 67 per cent of the electorate voted in favor of continued membership. Nonetheless, and as we saw in Figure 1, British public opinion soon

turned against the EU. As Figure 3 shows, between 1979 and 1983, there was a large majority in favor of leaving the European Communities. Yet, vote intentions have varied a lot over time, as a decade later, between 1989 and 1993, a large majority of people favored staying in. Interestingly, in June 2015 when the Conservative Party pledged to hold an ‘in/out’ referendum on British membership, the polls suggested a large majority of 61 per cent wanting to stay in and only 27 per cent wanting to get out. In Figure 4 below, we show how vote intention changed over the months leading up to the June 2016 referendum and immediately afterwards. First, we look at attitudes towards European integration in a broader sense.

Specific policy preferences about Britain’s relationship with the EU

Since the early 1990s, the British Social Attitudes (BSA) annual survey has regularly asked respondents in more detail what they would like Britain’s relationship with the EU to resemble. Rather than simply asking whether people would like membership to continue, the response categories allow people to indicate that they would like a closer or more distant relationship with the EU. Importantly, this allows respondents to say that they would like the powers of the EU to be reduced while Britain remains within the EU.

The trends shown in Table 2 match those in Figures 1 and 3 in that they show that the popularity of the EU peaked in the early 1990s and has been lower since. In 1993, 31 per cent of respondents wanted the EU’s powers to increase compared to 38 per cent who wanted a decrease and 22 per cent who preferred the status quo. The number of enthusiasts for greater EU power dropped substantially over the course of the 1990s. In 2000 only 17 per cent wanted the EU to have greater powers, with 55 per cent wanting the EU to have less power and 20 per cent endorsing the status quo. This pattern of opinion remained largely stable until 2015. After the referendum in 2016 however, there was a sharp increase in numbers preferring ‘leave’ to

the ‘reduce powers’ option. In 2017, opinion was very different to 1993. 69 per cent of people wanted to either leave or reduce EU powers in 2017 compared to only 7 per cent of people who wanted to increase EU powers. Overall, this points to the underlying dissatisfaction with EU membership since the mid-1990s. The greater pooling of sovereignty at the EU level which has occurred over the last 25 years was thus not, on the whole, supported by the British public.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Vote intention in the 2016 EU membership referendum

While vote intention in a hypothetical referendum has fluctuated considerably over the long term, the immediate years prior and post the 2016 referendum saw a close race and relatively little change. Figure 3 uses data from the British Election Study (BES) Panel, a large-N survey carried out intermittently from 2014 onwards. The share of people wanting to leave the EU drops slightly from the beginning of 2014 to a low of 35 per cent in June 2015, but by April 2016 the two sides are again neck and neck. Figure 3 also shows, from November 2016 onwards, the way in which people say that they would vote if there another referendum on EU membership. This shows the Remain side narrowly ahead by between 1 and 9 percentage points from 2016 until the end of 2019. By June 2020, both sides were again tied.

[INSERT FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]

Brexit as a social identity

Figure 4 shows that the divide between ‘Leavers’ and ‘Remainers’ remained relatively stable after the referendum in 2016. One of the most interesting developments among voters post-referendum was the emergence of distinctive social identities, separate from party identity,

which represented the two sides of the referendum debate. A number of studies have shown that the Brexit referendums led to the emergence of a new political identity dividing ‘Leavers’ and ‘Remainers’, which were cross-cutting to existing partisan divisions of Labour and Conservative supporters (Evans and Schaffner 2019, Curtice 2018, Hobolt et al. 2020). Figure 5 shows data from a repeated YouGov survey measuring the willingness of people to self-identify as ‘Leavers’ or ‘Remainers’ from April 2017 until January 2021. A large majority of people, on average across all the survey waves 72 per cent, claim one of the two Brexit identities. It is also notable that the numbers in each group have been very slow to change. Nonetheless, Figure 4 shows that while there were more Leavers than Remainers in 2017, by July 2018 we see more people with Remainder identities than Leaver identities. This pattern continues until 2020, but after Britain left the EU at the end of January 2020 there is also a small, but noticeable, increase in those not claiming one of the two identities. By January 2021 a third of people professed no Brexit identity compared to only a quarter through 2017 and 2018.

[INSERT FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE]

Discussion

The result of the Brexit referendum in 2016 came as a surprise to many in Britain and beyond. However, this article shows that British Euroskepticism is hardly a new phenomenon. The British electorate has consistently been less supportive of membership than citizens of other large member states and less likely to identify as ‘European’. Even though the UK voted decisively to stay in the European Community in the first referendum in 1975, this was followed by growing opposition to membership later in the decade. The heyday of support for

membership occurred in the early 1990s, but since the late 1990s there was a consistent majority for either leaving the EU or reducing its powers. Nonetheless, when faced with the binary of leaving or staying, the public was remarkably evenly divided both before and after the Brexit vote. Part of the reason for that stability is the fact that the referendum generated strongly held political identities, ‘Leavers’ and Remainers’, among over two-thirds of the population which people retained even after Britain left the EU. Rather than uniting people between Brexit, the referendum on membership thus divided the Brits into two camps, with pro-European sentiments very pronounced among those who wanted to remain in the EU.

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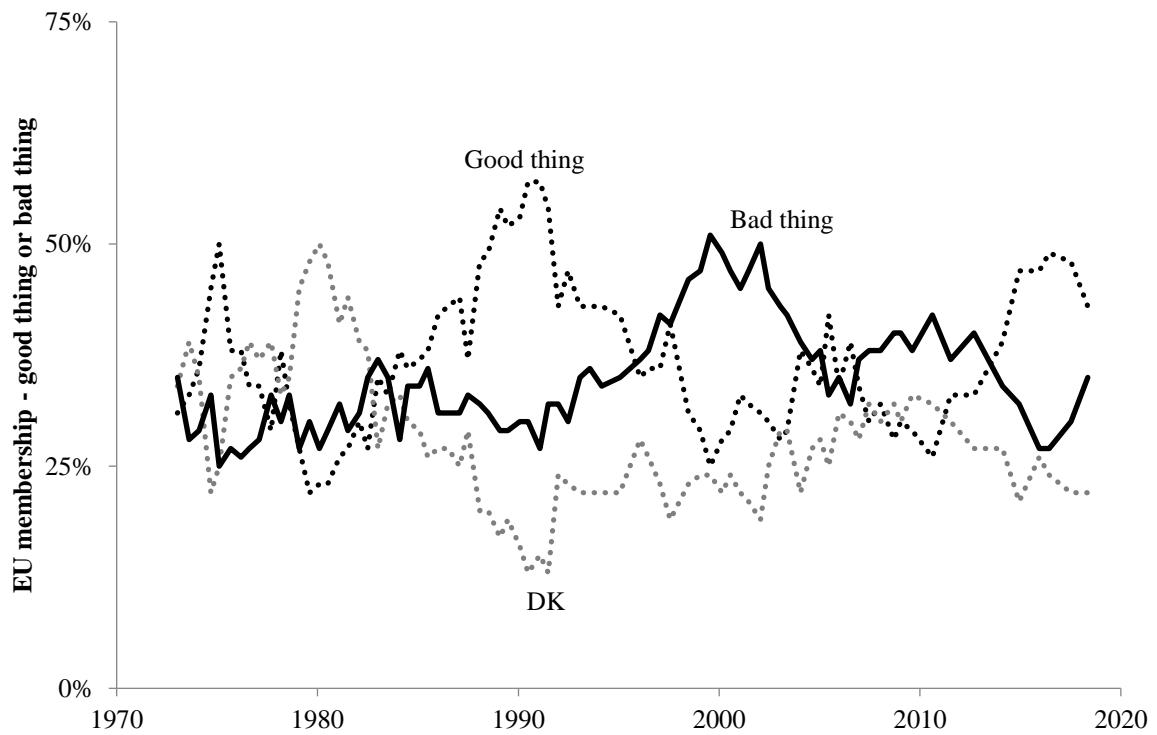
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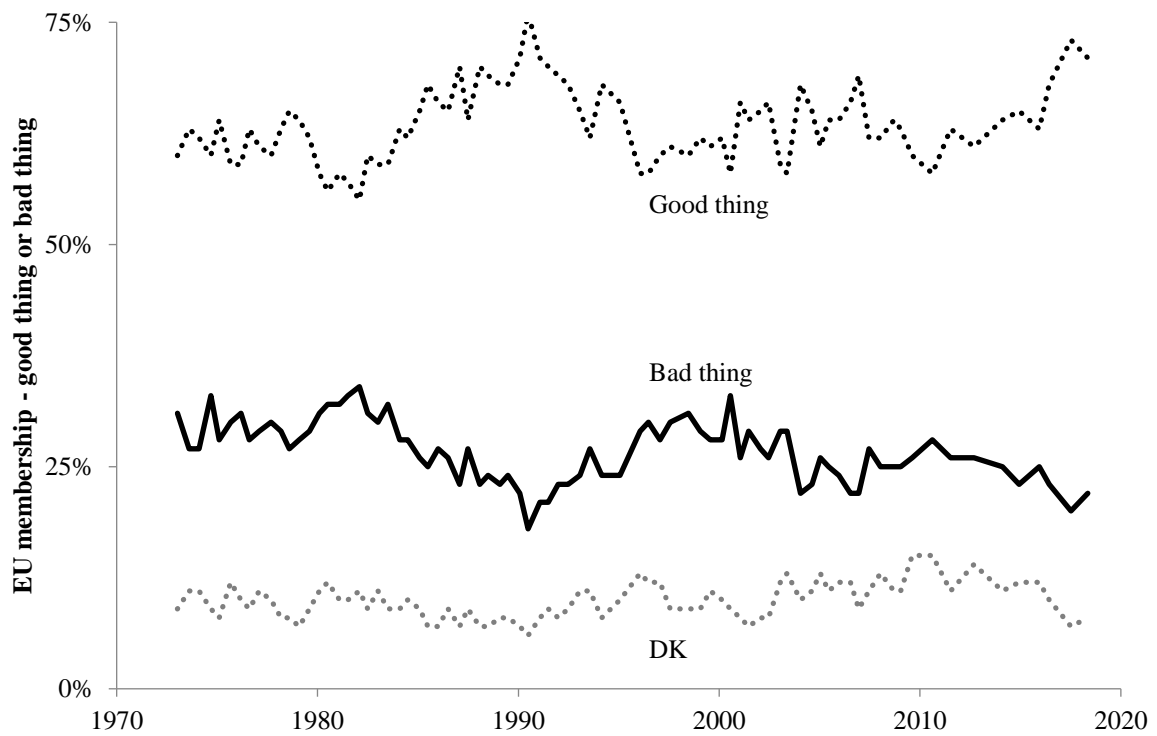
Figure 1. Attitudes towards EU membership

Eurobarometer: “Generally speaking, do you think that (your country’s) membership of the EU is...?”

a) In Britain



b) In EU-8



Note: Full details in Table A1.

Figure 2. Exclusive national identity in the UK and EU-8

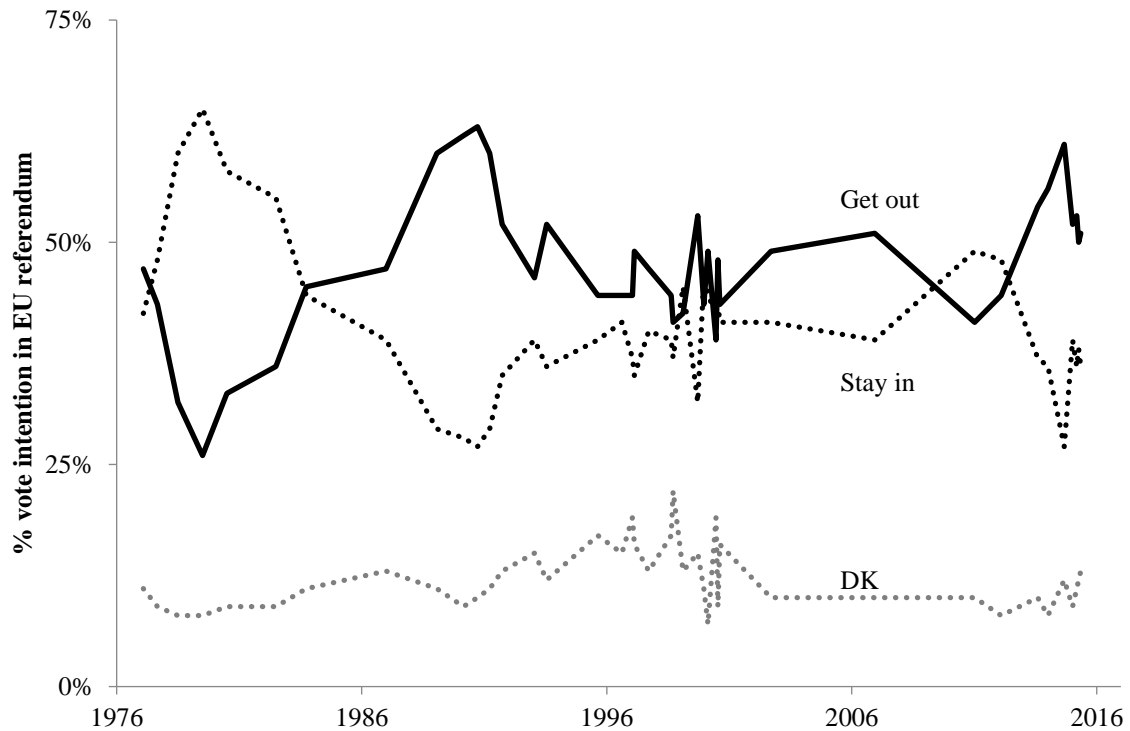
Eurobarometer: "In the near future do you see yourself as...?"



Note: The figure shows the percentage of respondents who answered '[NATIONALITY] only' in response. Other answer options were: '[NATIONALITY] and European'; 'European and [NATIONALITY]'; 'European only'; and 'None'. Full details in Table A2.

Figure 3. Vote intention in a referendum on EU membership

IPSOS Mori: "If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the European Union, how would you vote?"



Note: Question wording up to June 1991 was: 'If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the Common Market, how would you vote?'. Question wording from June 1991 to June 1992 was: 'I would like to ask you about Britain's role in the European Community. If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the European Community, how would you vote?'. Question wording from 1993 to 1998 used either 'European Union', 'European Community', 'European Union (Common Market)' or 'European Community (Common Market)' in the question. Full details in Table A3 (repeated polls in same month not shown above).

Table 1. Vote intention in the 2016 EU referendum

IPSOS Mori: “Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?”

	10/2015	12/2015	01/2016	02/2016	03/2016	04/2016	05/2016	06/2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Remain	52	58	55	54	49	49	55	43
Leave	36	32	36	36	41	39	37	49
Undecided	12	10	9	10	8	8	5	8
N	<i>c.500</i>	<i>c.500</i>	<i>c.500</i>	<i>c.500</i>	<i>c.1000</i>	<i>c.1000</i>	<i>c.1000</i>	<i>979^a</i>

^a Sample is limited to all adults registered to vote and 9/10 certain to vote

Table 2. Policy preference on Britain’s position within EU

BSA: “Do you think Britain's long-term policy should be to leave the European Union, to stay in the EU and try to reduce the EU's powers, to leave things as they are, to stay in the EU and try to increase the EU's powers, or to work for the formation of a single European state?”

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leave the EU	11	11	14	19	17	14	14
Reduce EU powers	27	25	23	39	29	37	41
Leave things as are	22	21	20	19	18	23	22
Increase EU powers	22	28	28	8	16	9	10
Single European government	9	8	8	6	7	8	7
Don't know	9	7	6	9	13	10	6
N	1,450	1,139	1,252	1,167	1,352	1,016	2,875

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leave the EU	17	14	15	15	18	17	15
Reduce EU powers	38	38	35	32	38	36	36
Leave things as are	20	21	23	27	23	24	27
Increase EU powers	10	11	12	11	7	10	9
Single European government	7	7	8	6	5	5	4
Don't know	8	9	8	8	8	9	9
N	2,283	1,108	3,426	2,282	3,195	4,263	1,075

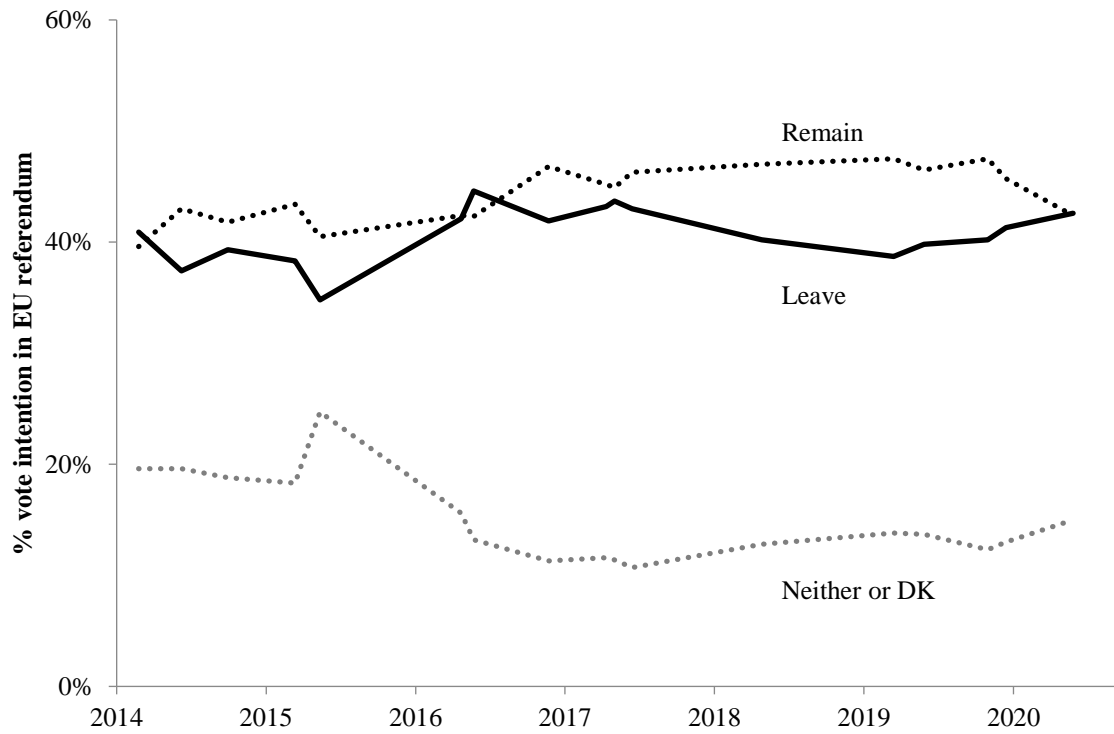
	2008	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 ^a	2017 ^a
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leave the EU	20	30	26	24	22	41	36
Reduce EU powers	35	37	39	38	44	35	33
Leave things as are	25	16	19	18	19	16	19
Increase EU powers	9	9	6	10	8	4	4
Single European government	4	3	3	4	3	2	3
Don't know	8	6	9	5	5	3	4
N	1,151	1,094	2,147	978	1,099	1,970	1,999

	2018 ^a
	%
Leave the EU	34
Reduce EU powers	33
Leave things as are	20
Increase EU powers	4
Single European government	3
Don't know	5
N	2930

^a “Leaving aside the result of the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, what do you think Britain’s policy should be. Should it...”

Figure 4. Vote intention in EU referendum

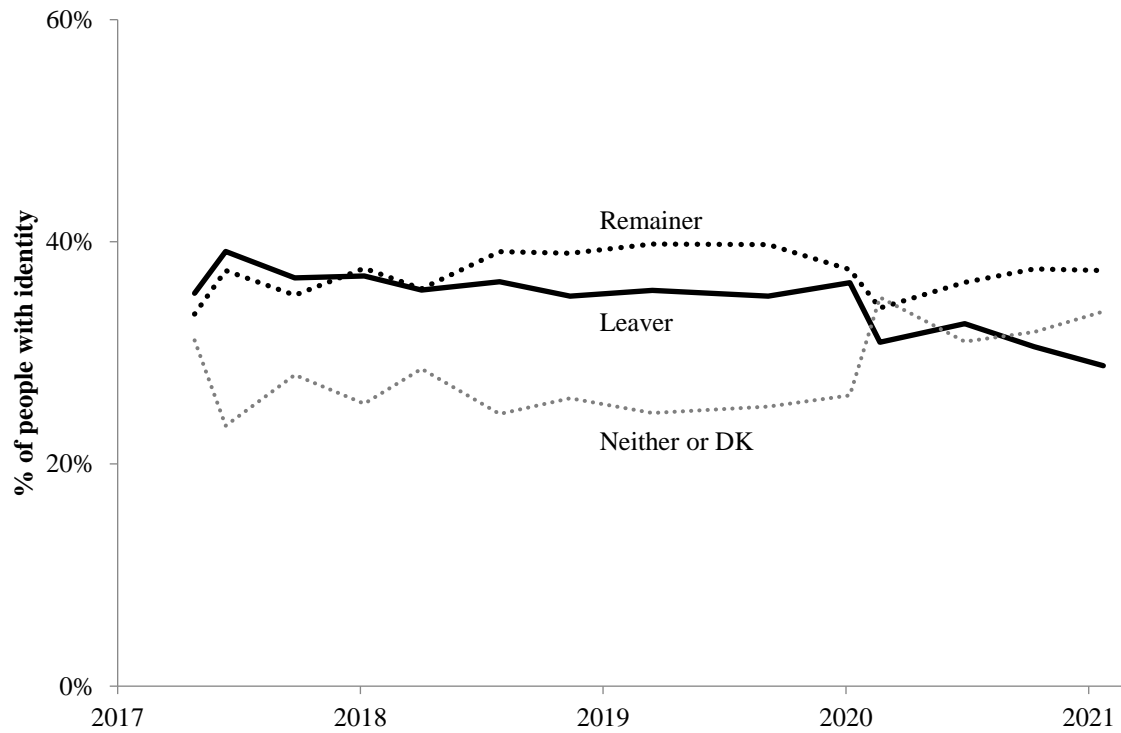
BES: “If there was a referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union, how do you think you would vote?”



Note: Question wording in April 2016 and May 2016 was: ‘If you do vote in the referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union, how do you think you will vote?’. Question wording from November 2016 onwards was: ‘If there was another referendum on EU membership, how do you think you would vote?’. Full details in Table A4.

Figure 5. Brexit identity

YouGov: “Since the EU referendum in 2016, some people now think of themselves as Leavers and Remainers, do you think of yourself as a Leaver, a Remainer, or neither a Leaver or Remainer?”



Note: Full details in Table A5.

APPENDIX

The surveys used here are all representative of the adult population of Great Britain (where Northern Ireland is included in the sample this is mentioned below). Adults are defined as 18 years or over.

Interview mode

The British Social Attitudes (BSA) series is a face-to-face survey designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over in Great Britain. The sampling frame for the survey is the Postcode Address File (PAF), a list of addresses (or postal delivery points) compiled by the Post Office. The sample is confined to those living in private households. People living in institutions (though not in private households at such institutions) are excluded, as are households whose addresses were not on the PAF. The sampling method involved a multi-stage design, with three separate stages of selection. Postcode sectors are first stratified (by sub-region, population density, and the percentage of homes that are owner-occupied) then randomly selected with probability proportional to the number of addresses in each sector. Within those postcodes, an address is randomly selected and subsequent addresses are selected at fixed intervals from that address. Within each address an individual is randomly selected. All data is weighted to account for the unequal selection of addresses, DUs and individuals, and for biases caused by differential non-response.

For the British Election Study Panel (BESP) data and the YouGov data, respondents are drawn from YouGov's online panel of over 1 million British adults. Panel members are recruited from a variety of different sources. Sub-samples are drawn that are representative of British adults in terms of age, gender, social class and education. All data is then weighted by the national profile of all adults aged 18+ (including people without internet access) on age, gender, social class, region, level of education, vote at the previous election, vote at the EU referendum and political interest. Targets for these weights derived from the census; large scale random probability surveys (such as the Labour Force Survey and the British Election Study); the results of the 2017 general election and 2016 referendum; and official Office for National Statistics population estimates.

The standard Eurobarometer survey was established in 1973 to survey a representative sample of the population in each of the EU member states. Each survey consists of approximately 1000 face-to-face interviews per country, except in Luxembourg where each survey consists of approximately 500 face-to-face interviews per country. Separate samples are drawn for Northern Ireland and Great Britain (GB) starting with Eurobarometer 3 (1975) and up to Eurobarometer 89.1. Starting with Eurobarometer 89.2 (1989), Northern Ireland is covered as a part of the United Kingdom sample.

Ipsos MORI's political polling design is based upon a telephone quota sample using both landline telephone numbers (generated by random digit dialing) and mobile numbers (a mix of random digit dialing and targeted sample for some hard to reach groups), weighted to demographic population totals, aimed at achieving a representative sample of all British

residents aged 18+. Base: c. 500-2,000 British adults aged 18+, except 1981 (Base: 1,990 British adults aged 15+)

BSA:	Face-to-face
BESP:	Online panel
Eurobarometer:	Face-to-face
IPSOS-MORI:	Telephone
YouGov:	Online panel

Response rates

Response rates, where applicable, are as below. The BSA response rates are as a proportion of the upper limit of all eligible cases at which an interview was achieved.

BSA:	1993 (68.3%), 1994 (65.2%), 1995 (69.2%), 1996 (68.1%), 1997 (63.0%), 1998 (59.1%), 1999 (58.2%), 2000 (62.0%), 2001 (58.9%), 2002 (60.9%), 2003 (59.1%), 2004 (56.5%), 2005 (54.9%), 2006 (54.2%), 2008 (55.9%), 2012 (53.5%), (2013 (53.8%), 2014 (47.4%), 2015 (51.4%), 2016 (46.5%), 2017 (46.1%), 2018 (42.4%).
BESP:	Online panel
Eurobarometer:	Not reported
IPSOS-MORI:	Not reported
YouGov:	Online panel

Table A1. Attitudes towards EU membership in Britain and the EU-8

Eurobarometer: “Generally speaking, do you think that (your country’s) membership of the EU is...?”

	09/1973		04/1974		10/1974		05/1975		10/1975	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	31	60	33	63	36	62	45	60	50	64
A bad thing	34	9	39	11	35	11	22	9	25	8
Neither good nor bad	22	20	19	17	20	18	21	23	17	19
Don't know	13	11	9	10	9	9	12	10	8	9
N	1933	8140	1031	7886	1039	8019	1328	8066	1438	7726

	05/1976		11/1976		04/1977		10/1977		05/1978	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	38	59	38	59	34	63	34	61	29	60
A bad thing	35	12	36	10	39	9	37	11	39	10
Neither good nor bad	19	21	21	23	23	20	23	20	28	21
Don't know	8	9	5	8	4	8	5	9	5	9
N	1340	7214	1351	8031	1417	7650	1351	7536	1426	8049

	11/1978		04/1979		10/1979		04/1980		10/1980	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	38	63	32	65	27	64	22	62	23	58
A bad thing	33	8	35	8	45	7	48	9	50	11
Neither good nor bad	25	21	26	19	22	20	23	21	24	23
Don't know	5	8	7	8	5	8	7	8	3	8
N	1339	7433	1317	7988	1403	7623	1454	7438	1432	7549

	03/1981		10/1981		03/1982		10/1982		03/1983	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	23	56	26	58	27	57	30	55	27	60
A bad thing	48	12	41	10	44	10	39	11	38	9
Neither good nor bad	29	32	27	25	23	24	25	25	28	22
Don't know	0	0	5	7	6	9	6	9	7	9
N	1369	7529	1395	7516	1419	8868	1335	7354	1348	7486

	09/1983		03/1984		10/1984		03/1985		10/1985	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	35	59	33	59	38	63	36	62	37	65
A bad thing	27	11	32	9	33	9	30	10	29	9
Neither good nor bad	30	21	29	24	25	23	29	20	29	21
Don't know	7	9	6	8	3	5	5	8	5	5
N	1277	7442	1355	7389	1405	7506	1443	7483	1383	7463

	03/1986		09/1986		03/1987		10/1987		03/1988	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	38	68	42	66	43	65	44	70	37	64
A bad thing	26	7	27	7	27	9	25	7	29	9
Neither good nor bad	29	18	26	21	25	20	26	18	29	21
Don't know	7	7	5	6	6	6	5	5	4	6
N	1378	7446	1352	7327	1306	7267	1309	7266	1345	7367

	10/1988		03/1989		10/1989		03/1990		10/1990	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	48	70	49	69	54	68	52	68	53	71
A bad thing	20	7	20	7	17	8	19	8	16	7
Neither good nor bad	27	19	25	19	23	17	24	18	24	16
Don't know	5	4	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	6
N	1324	7457	1354	7377	1259	7492	1374	7397	1360	8504

	03/1991		10/1991		03/1992		09/1992		03/1993	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	57	76	57	71	54	70	43	69	47	68
A bad thing	13	6	15	8	13	9	24	8	23	9
Neither good nor bad	26	14	21	15	25	17	24	19	25	19
Don't know	4	4	6	6	7	4	8	4	5	4
N	1353	8666	1322	8628	1319	8763	1362	9536	1379	8705

	10/1993		04/1994		11/1994		10/1995		10/1996	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	43	65	43	62	43	68	42	66	35	58
A bad thing	22	11	22	11	22	8	22	10	28	13
Neither good nor bad	30	20	29	23	28	20	29	20	26	23
Don't know	5	4	7	4	6	4	6	4	11	6
N	1361	8690	1374	8703	1351	8718	1371	8678	1359	8461

	03/1997		10/1997		04/1998		03/1999		10/1999	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	36	58	36	60	41	61	31	60	29	62
A bad thing	26	12	23	12	19	9	23	9	24	9
Neither good nor bad	27	24	29	22	30	23	26	23	28	23
Don't know	11	6	13	6	11	7	20	8	19	6
N	1455	8705	1375	8714	1366	8701	1356	8698	1352	8705

	04/2000		11/2000		04/2001		10/2001		03/2002	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	25	61	28	62	29	58	33	66	32	64
A bad thing	24	11	22	10	24	9	22	8	21	7
Neither good nor bad	29	22	29	22	27	25	31	22	32	23
Don't know	22	6	20	6	20	8	14	4	15	6
N	1370	8690	1371	8679	1347	8754	1312	8622	1311	8689

	10/2002		03/2003		10/2003		02/2004		10/2004	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	31	65	30	66	28	59	29	58	38	68
A bad thing	19	8	25	8	29	12	29	13	22	10
Neither good nor bad	35	23	31	20	30	25	29	25	33	20
Don't know	15	4	14	6	13	4	13	4	6	2
N	8732	1314	1319	7917	1352	8691	1343	8789	1310	8098

	05/2005		10/2005		03/2006		09/2006		04/2007	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

A good thing	36	65	34	61	42	64	34	64	39	66
A bad thing	27	11	28	13	25	11	31	12	30	12
Neither good nor bad	28	21	32	24	28	23	28	22	27	20
Don't know	9	2	6	2	5	2	7	2	5	2
N	1347	8103	1320	8159	1312	8089	1308	8062	1319	8069

	09/2007		03/2008		10/2008		06/2009		10/2009	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	34	69	30	62	32	62	28	64	30	63
A bad thing	28	9	32	11	30	13	32	11	30	11
Neither good nor bad	31	20	30	24	31	22	32	22	34	22
Don't know	6	2	8	3	7	3	8	3	6	3
N	1340	8125	1306	8150	1308	8186	1352	8126	1322	8084

	05/2010		05/2011		04/2012		06/2013		11/2014	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	29	60	26	58	33	63	33	61	39	64
A bad thing	33	15	32	15	30	11	27	14	27	11
Neither good nor bad	31	23	37	25	34	24	37	24	30	23
Don't know	7	3	5	3	3	2	3	2	4	2
N	1316	8115	1309	8155	1305	8147	1305	8130	1,317	8162

	09/2015		09/2016		03/2017		04/2018		02/2019	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A good thing	47	65	47	63	49	68	48	73	43	71
A bad thing	21	12	26	12	24	10	22	7	22	8
Neither good nor bad	28	21	24	24	22	21	26	19	28	20
Don't know	4	2	3	1	5	2	4	1	7	2
N	1,321	8154	1343	8096	1365	8233	1015	8183	1032	8150

Table A2 (for Figure 2) National and European identity

Eurobarometer: "In the near future to you see yourself as...?"

	03/1992 (37)		10/1993 (40)		11/1994 (42)		04/1995 (43)	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nationality only	54	37	59	38	49	30	53	32
Nationality and European	35	48	29	48	34	48	32	48
European and Nationality	4	7	5	8	7	11	6	9
European only	4	4	3	3	7	7	6	7
Don't know	3	4	4	3	3	4	2	4
N	1319	8763	1361	8700	1351	8718	1371	7828

	10/1995 (44)		10/1996 (46)		03/1997 (47)		10/1997 (49)	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nationality only	57	37	60	43	57	42	60	41
Nationality and European	31	47	26	43	29	43	25	44
European and Nationality	4	7	6	7	3	7	5	6
European only	6	7	5	6	6	6	5	6
Don't know	2	3	3	3	5	3	5	4
N	1381	8045	1381	8045	1455	8705	1366	8701

	10/1998 (50)		10/1999 (52)		04/2000 (53)		11/2000 (54)	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nationality only	62	40	67	41	64	38	62	36
Nationality and European	27	45	24	44	27	47	27	49
European and Nationality	4	7	3	7	4	8	3	7
European only	5	5	3	6	2	5	3	5
Don't know	3	2	3	3	3	3	5	4
N	1366	8701	1322	8705	1370	8690	1371	8679

	10/2001 (56)		03/2002 (57)		10/2002 (58)		03/2003 (59)	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nationality only	71	39	62	35	65	33	64	36
Nationality and European	22	47	28	50	27	52	24	46
European and Nationality	4	7	4	8	3	9	4	9
European only	2	5	4	5	3	4	3	6
Don't know	2	2	3	3	3	2	5	3
N	1312	8622	1311	8689	1314	8734	1319	8917

	10/2003 (60)		02/2004 (61)		10/2005 (64)		05/2010 (73)	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nationality only	62	36	62	38	63	36	70	40
Nationality and European	28	48	27	47	31	50	24	45
European and Nationality	5	8	4	7	2	9	2	8
European only	3	5	4	6	1	4	2	5
Don't know	3	3	3	2	3	2	0	2
N	1362	8691	1343	8789	1320	8159	1316	8115

	05/2012 (77)		05/2013 (79)		11/2013 (80)		06/2014 (81)	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nationality only	60	34	60	35	63	38	64	35
Nationality and European	33	52	33	48	29	50	30	55
European and Nationality	3	7	3	8	3	7	2	7
European only	2	4	2	4	1	3	1	2
Don't know	1	1	2	2	4	2	3	2
N	1305	8147	1305	8130	1326	8165	1373	8159

	11/2014 (82)		05/2015 (83)		11/2015 (84)		05/2016 (85)	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nationality only	58	34	64	31	66	35	62	31
Nationality and European	33	56	31	58	29	55	31	57
European and Nationality	4	7	2	7	3	7	3	8
European only	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	2
Don't know	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	1
N	1317	8162	1306	8145	1314	8154	1352	8153

	05/2017 (87)		11/2017 (88)		03/2018 (89)		11/2018 (90)	
	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8	UK	EU 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nationality only	45	31	50	31	51	31	50	29
Nationality and European	45	58	42	58	41	59	34	58
European and Nationality	7	8	6	8	6	7	14	10
European only	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	2
N	1334	8218	1334	8218	1337	8174	1015	8183

	06/2019 (91)	
	UK	EU 8
	%	%
Nationality only	53	29
Nationality and European	32	59
European and Nationality	10	9
European only	2	2
Don't know	3	2
N	1032	8150

Table A3 (for Figure 3). Vote intention in a referendum on EU membership

IPSOS Mori: “If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the European Union, how would you vote?”

	10/1977 ^a	05/1978 ^a	03/1979 ^a	03/1980 ^a	03/1981 ^a	03/1983 ^a	06/1984 ^a	09/1987 ^a	10/1989 ^a
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Stay in	47	43	32	26	33	36	45	47	60
Get out	42	48	60	65	58	55	44	39	29
Don't know	11	9	8	8	9	9	11	13	11
N	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>

	11/1990 ^a	06/1991 ^a	12/1991 ^b	06/1992 (5-6) ^b	06/1992 (10-13) ^c	10/1993 ^c	04/1994	05/1996 ^d	11/1996 ^d
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Stay in	62	63	60	52	53	46	52	44	44
Get out	28	27	29	35	32	39	36	39	40
Don't know	9	10	11	13	16	15	12	17	16
N	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>

	04/1997 (15) ^d	04/1997 (25-28)	10/1997 ^d	11/1997 ^d	06/1998 ^d	05/1999	06/1999	10/1999 (13-14)	10/1999 (27-29)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Stay in	40	44	44	49	47	44	41	51	42
Get out	40	41	37	35	40	39	37	41	45
Don't know	20	15	19	16	13	17	22	8	13
N	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>

	06/2000	09/2000	11/2000	03/2001	04/2001	05/2001	06/2003	09/2007	10/2011
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Stay in	53	43	49	39	48	43	49	51	41
Get out	32	46	44	42	43	41	41	39	49
Don't know	15	11	7	19	9	16	10	10	10
N	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>

	11/2012	05/2014	10/2014	06/2015	10/2015	12/2015	01/2016	02/2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Stay in	44	54	56	61	52	53	50	51
Get out	48	37	36	27	39	36	38	36
Don't know	8	10	8	12	9	11	12	13
N	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>	<i>see Base</i>

^a Asked as “...stay in or get out of the Common Market...”

^b “I would like to ask you about Britain's role in the European Community. If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the European Community, how would you vote?”

^c Asked as “...stay in or get out of the European Community (Common Market)...”

^d Asked as “...stay in or get out of the European Union (Common Market)...”

Base: c. 500-2,000 adults 18+, except 1981 (Base: 1,990 adults 15+)

Table A4 (for Figure 4). Vote intention in EU referendum

BES: “If there was a referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union, how do you think you would vote?”

	2/2014	5/2014	9/2014	3/2015	5/2015	4/2016 ^a	5/2016 ^a
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leave the EU	41	37	39	38	35	42	45
Stay/ remain in the EU	40	43	42	43	41	42	42
I would/ will not vote	4	4	4	3	7	5	4
Don't know	16	16	15	15	18	10	9
N	30,195	25,485	27,827	31,325	30,073	30,874	33,501

	11/2016 ^b	4/2017 ^b	5/2017 ^b	6/2017 ^b	5/2018 ^b	3/2019 ^b	6/2019 ^b
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leave the EU	42	43	44	43	40	39	40
Stay/ remain in the EU	47	45	45	46	47	48	47
I would/ will not vote	6	5	5	5	5	7	7
Don't know	6	6	6	6	7	6	7
N	30,189	30,900	34,323	31,078	31,055	30,466	37,951

	11/2019 ^b	12/2019 ^b	6/2020 ^b
	%	%	%
Leave the EU	40	41	43
Stay/ remain in the EU	48	46	42
I would/ will not vote	6	7	7
Don't know	6	6	8
N	33,866	32,144	30,677

^a “If you do vote in the referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union, how do you think you will vote?”

^b “If there was another referendum on EU membership, how do you think you would vote?”

Table A5 (for Figure 5). Brexit identity

YouGov: “Since the EU referendum in 2016, some people now think of themselves as Leavers and Remainers, do you think of yourself as a Leaver, a Remainer, or neither a Leaver or Remainer?”

	4/2017	6/2017	9/2017	1/2018	4/2018	7/2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leaver	35	39	37	37	36	36
Remainer	34	37	35	38	36	39
Neither	25	18	23	20	22	20
Don't know	6	6	5	6	6	5
N	1,600	1,638	1,602	1,714	1,663	1,772

	11/2018	3/2019	9/2019	1/2020	2/2020	7/2020
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leaver	35	36	35	36	31	33
Remainer	39	40	40	38	34	36
Neither	20	18	19	21	28	26
Don't know	6	7	6	5	7	5
N	1,629	2,103	1,618	1,624	1,680	1,618

	10/2020	01/21
	%	%
Leaver	31	29
Remainer	38	37
Neither	27	27
Don't know	5	6
N	1,629	2,103