# Londoners show weaker attachment to England amid strong pride in city’s diversity



A recent YouGov poll has unveiled striking insights regarding the attachment Londoners feel towards England, revealing a marked distinction in regional identities. While only 29 per cent of those surveyed in the capital expressed a 'very strong attachment' to the country, a substantial 38 per cent indicated a stronger affinity for their city. This divergence in sentiment underscores the capital's unique cultural landscape, with 30 per cent of respondents identifying London’s 'diversity and multiculturalism' as its most distinguishing feature. Meanwhile, historical landmarks, though iconic, resonated with merely 11 per cent of participants, and even fewer (8 per cent) associated London’s identity with the famed Underground system.

This poll comes amid increasing discourse around national identity in light of migration trends. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer recently warned that without stricter controls on immigration, the UK risks devolving into an 'island of strangers.' His remarks prompted comparisons to Enoch Powell's infamous 1968 speech, which addressed fears over immigration, drawing criticism from various quarters for their potentially polarising implications. League tables of regional identity reveal that Londoners are decidedly less attached to their regional roots compared to residents of the North East, where 48 per cent expressed strong ties to their locality.

In exploring what distinguishes various regions, results showed a wealth of differing opinions. For instance, individuals in the North East and North West frequently cited friendliness as an identifying characteristic, while those in the South West pointed to their coastal features. In contrast, a significant number of Londoners found it challenging to articulate what makes their area unique, with 6 per cent expressing that there was nothing distinctive about the capital.

Interestingly, the broader context of identity across the UK highlights that while many Londoners identify primarily as British, those hailing from ethnic minorities often display even stronger leanings towards this national identity, in part reflecting a desire for cohesion amid societal changes. Scholars from the London School of Economics have pointed out that this British identity may correlate with lower Euroscepticism and greater acceptance of multiculturalism, despite a contrasting narrative among individuals who feel negatively towards London.

Additionally, studies indicate a correlation between views on multiculturalism and regional sentiment. Those who harbour unfavourable views of London are disproportionately likely to oppose multiculturalism, reinforcing the notion that perceptions of the capital significantly inform views on national identity. The multifaceted relationship between ethnic diversity and regional identities illustrates that while some feel marginalized by the city's cosmopolitan nature, others find in it a source of pride and belonging.

Within this landscape, the challenge remains to foster a dialogue that embraces both regional pride and national unity. As the discourse continues to evolve, notably with voices from both primary political parties emphasizing the potential threats to national identity posed by mass immigration, it becomes increasingly crucial to engage with the nuanced narratives that shape personal and collective identities. This will be vital in addressing the perceived fractures in social cohesion across the UK, especially in major urban centres like London.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://qz.com/1314604/brits-who-hate-london-are-nearly-twice-as-likely-to-oppose-multiculturalism)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/londoners-are-not-little-englanders/), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/sep/17/four-in-10-people-think-multiculturalism-undermines-british-culture-immigration)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://unherd.com/2019/06/just-how-english-is-london/), [[6]](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01419870.2013.831932)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://qz.com/1314604/brits-who-hate-london-are-nearly-twice-as-likely-to-oppose-multiculturalism), [[7]](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/multiculturalism-immigration-support-white-population/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764293/London-weak-attachment-England-new-poll-diversity-multicultural.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/londoners-are-not-little-englanders/> - An article from the London School of Economics discusses how Londoners identify more as British than English, citing the 2011 census data. It highlights that Black and ethnic minority groups in London are more likely to identify as British, and that this stronger attachment to British identity correlates with less Euroscepticism. The piece also notes London's unique political institutions, such as the Greater London Authority, which provide it with more autonomy and representation than other areas of England.
3. <https://qz.com/1314604/brits-who-hate-london-are-nearly-twice-as-likely-to-oppose-multiculturalism> - A Quartz article reports on a YouGov survey revealing that individuals with unfavorable views of London are almost twice as likely to believe that multiculturalism has had a negative impact on the UK. The survey found that 45% of Brits have a favorable view of London, while 28% have an unfavorable view. The sentiment is especially strong among those who dislike London, with the article noting that living in London boosts people's opinions of the city.
4. <https://unherd.com/2019/06/just-how-english-is-london/> - An UnHerd article examines the complexities of English identity in London, noting that while 85% of White British Leavers in London consider the English landscape important to their identity, only 54% of non-white Londoners feel the same. The piece suggests that despite some minority groups not identifying as English, they still value key symbols of Englishness, indicating a nuanced relationship between ethnicity and place-based identity in London.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/sep/17/four-in-10-people-think-multiculturalism-undermines-british-culture-immigration> - A Guardian article reports on a study revealing that 40% of people in the UK believe that having a wide variety of backgrounds has undermined British culture. The study also found that 63% of people felt migrant workers supported the economy by doing jobs British workers did not want to do, and a similar number believed migrants brought valuable skills to the economy and public services like the NHS.
6. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01419870.2013.831932> - A study published in the journal 'Urban Studies' examines the impact of ethnic diversity and segregation on social cohesion in London. The research finds that neighbourhood ethnic diversity is positively related to perceived social cohesion among residents, once economic deprivation is accounted for. However, ethnic segregation within neighbourhoods is associated with lower levels of perceived social cohesion, with the effects varying by age group.
7. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/multiculturalism-immigration-support-white-population/> - An article from the London School of Economics discusses how multiculturalism in the UK has succeeded in fostering a sense of belonging among minorities but has paid too little attention to sustaining support among parts of the white population. The piece highlights that while multiculturalism has created a sense of belonging among minorities, it has not sufficiently addressed the concerns of the white population, leading to challenges in social integration.