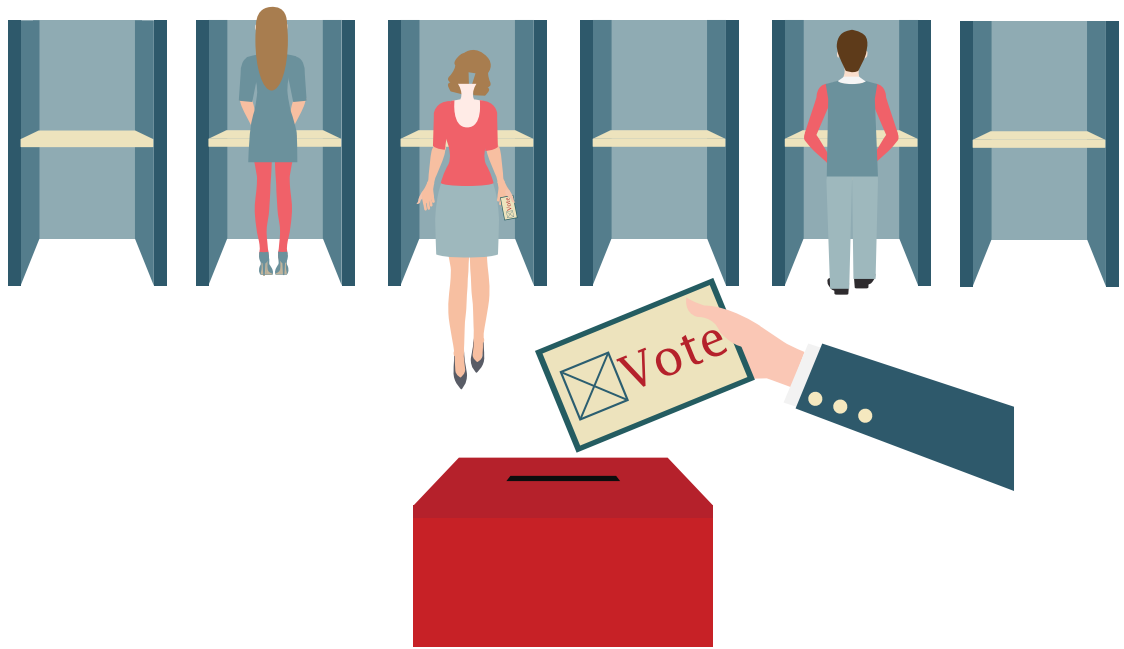




BREXIT AND UK UNIVERSITIES:

WHO IS THE UNDISPUTED BREXPERT?



INTRODUCTION

The result of Britain's June 23 referendum was a shock to many, after Britain voted [52% in favour](#) of leaving the European Union. Political Scientist Rob Ford [called it](#) "the biggest shock in European politics since the fall of the Berlin Wall."

Initially people worried that "Brexit", as it quickly became known, would [drive Britain into a recession](#). Others worried it would pose a [challenge to universities](#), limiting their funding and retention of students or staff. Others questioned [what influenced the decision to leave](#) in the first place.

With these looming questions, it was expected that media sources would turn to experts for answers. And being referenced as an expert in media reports is a valuable recruiting and funding tool for universities and academics.

So we used [Agility PR Solutions' Enterprise software](#) to investigate which British universities were tapped by media for expert opinions on Brexit, and which faculty members were referenced most often.

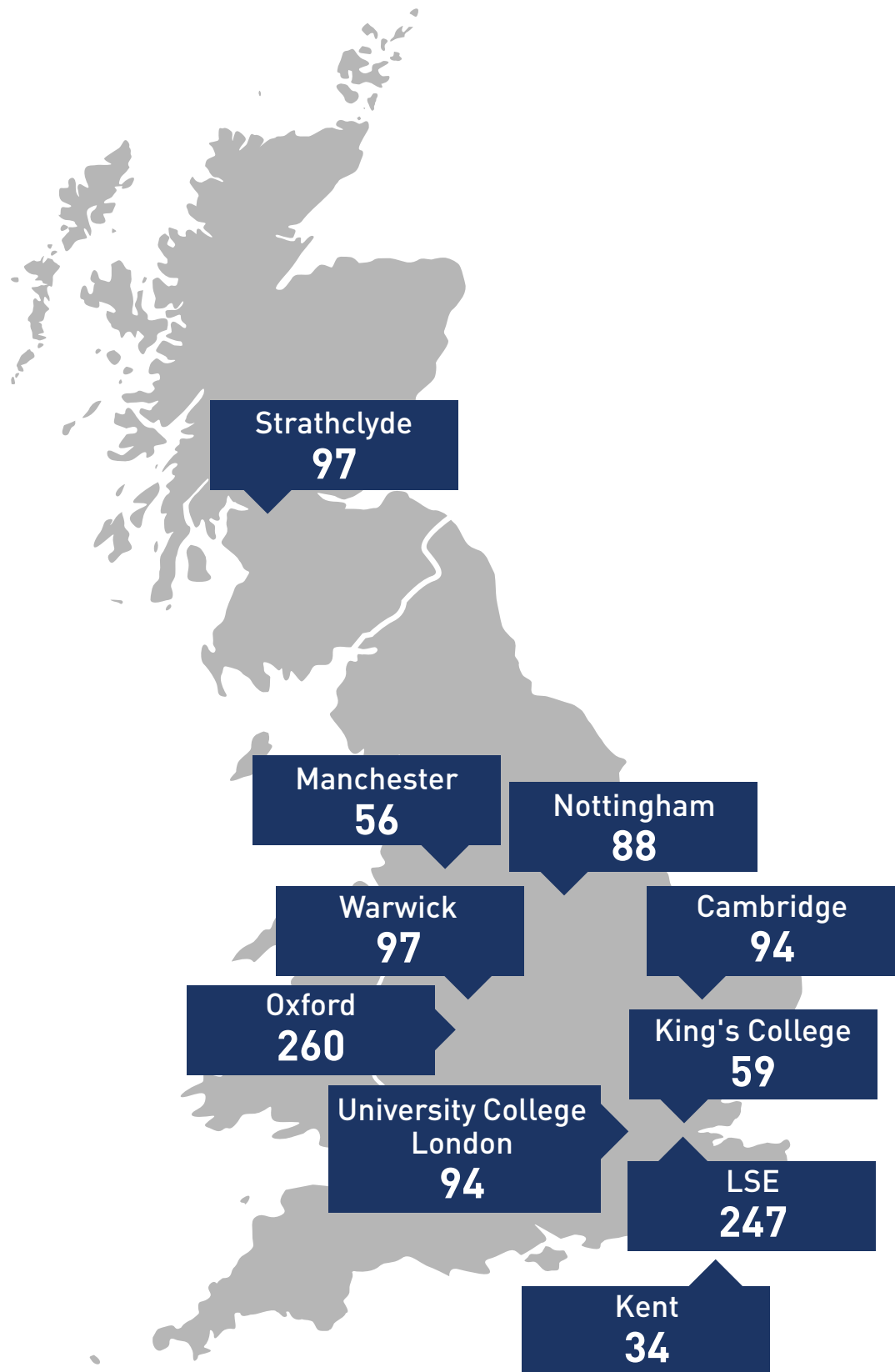
METHODOLOGY

Using [Agility PR Solutions software](#) along with Agility PR Solutions' QuoteHunter technology, we searched major online outlets from June 23 until mid-September 2016 for articles mentioning top British universities alongside Brexit. High-circulation outlets were selected from the UK, United States and Canada, with close to 1,700 articles being closely analyzed.

A text analysis was then conducted to determine the frequency and quality of mentions of various universities, along with their spokespeople and faculty, in relation to Brexit.

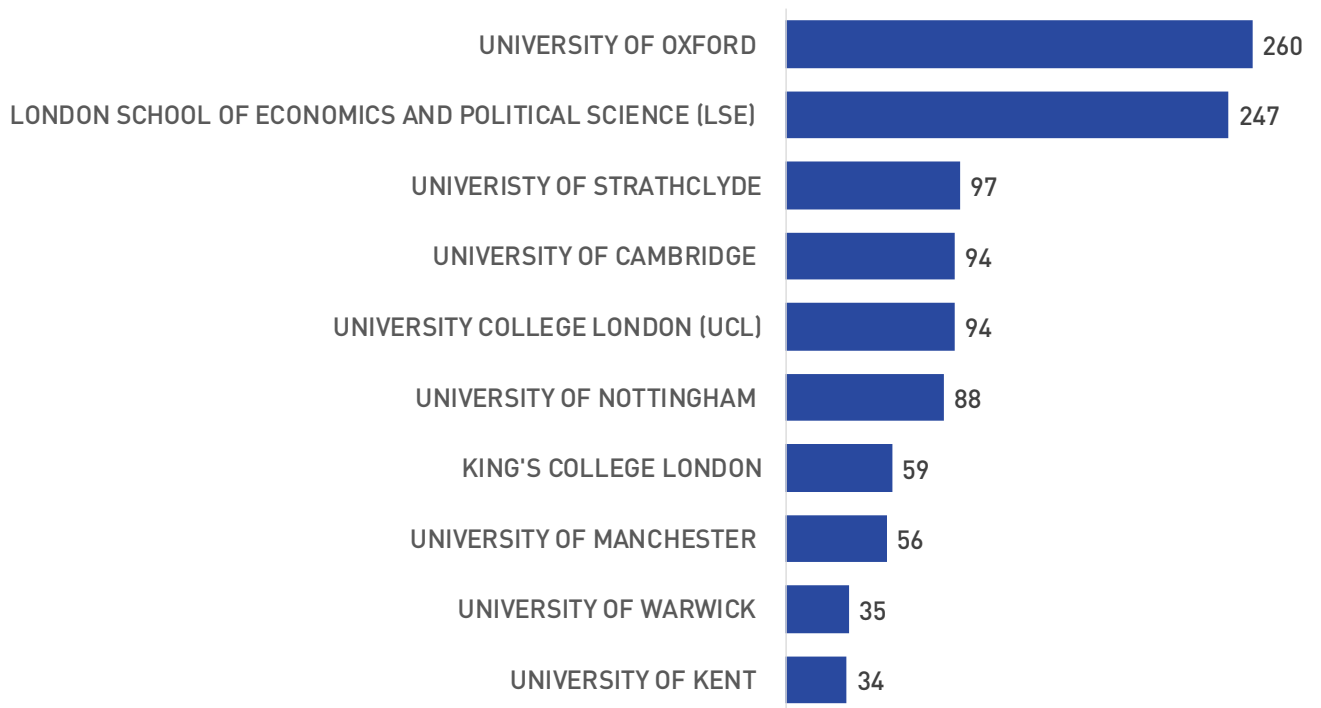
Through this analysis we determined which British universities and scholars online media channels have been the most referenced on the topic of Brexit. Further analysis revealed more details on the top spokespeople for the top ten most mentioned universities.

TOP 10 UNIVERSITIES BY ARTICLE MENTION



TOP MENTIONED UNIVERSITIES

TOP MENTIONED UNIVERSITIES BY ARTICLES



As the chart above illustrates, the University of Oxford and The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) were the most likely British postsecondary institutions to be mentioned alongside Brexit.

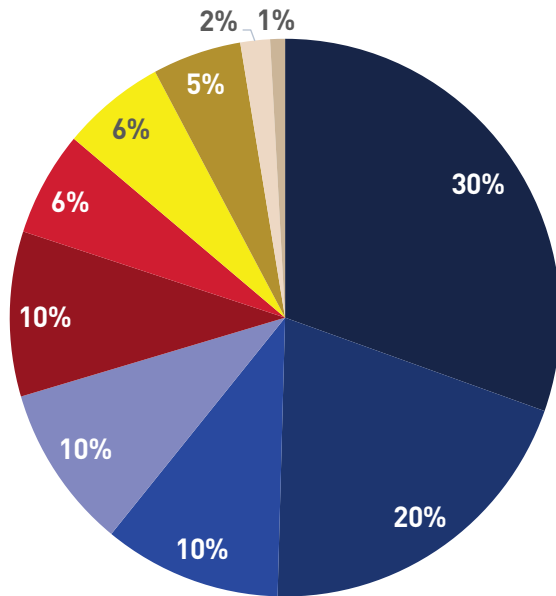
With that said, a number of Oxford mentions can be attributed to the fact that the most recent two prime ministers — Theresa May and David Cameron — [studied at the university](#).

University of Strathclyde mentions were mostly driven by Professor of Politics [John Curtice](#), who was frequently called upon to provide insight on Brexit-related issues. The Professor of politics is mentioned in 83 articles focusing on Brexit.

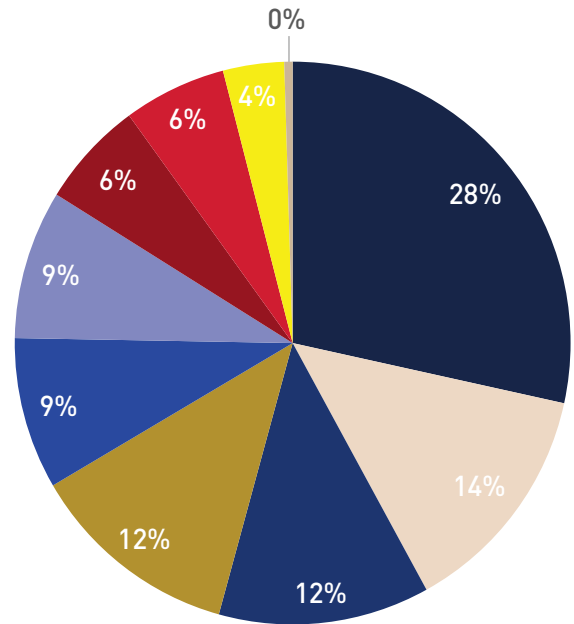
University College London (UCL) and Cambridge University were both mentioned in 94 articles. University of Nottingham followed these universities with mentions in 88 articles. Nottingham also had the second-highest mentioned spokesperson, Steven Fielding, with 59 articles mentioning the political history professor.

TOTAL SPOKESPEOPLE BY UNIVERSITY

TOTAL SPOKESPEOPLE BY UNIVERSITY



SPOKESPERSON MENTIONS PER UNIVERSITY



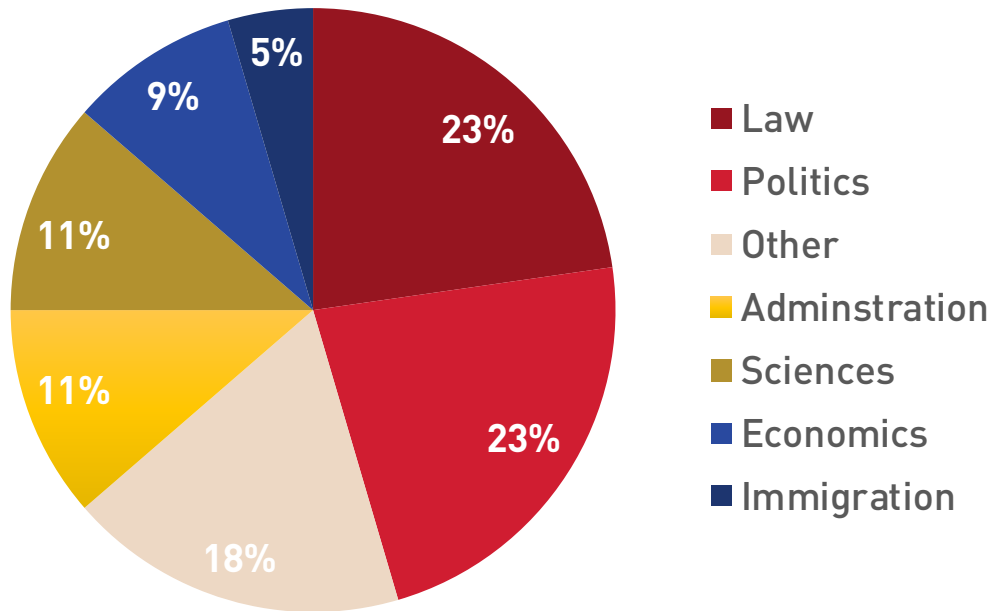
- London School of Economics and Political Science
- University of Oxford
- University of Cambridge
- University College London
- King's College University
- University of Manchester
- University of Kent
- University of Nottingham
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Warwick

While Oxford University had the most total mentions, more total spokespeople from the London School of Economics were mentioned in Brexit coverage.

And while the University of Strathclyde actually had the second-highest number of articles mentioning its spokespeople, thanks mostly to John Curtice, there were only two total spokespeople from the university mentioned in coverage.

TOP SPOKESPEOPLE BY FIELD OF STUDY

TOP SPOKESPEOPLE BY FIELD OF STUDY



Most top university spokespeople and faculty mentioned in articles on Brexit were experts in the field of law or politics.

Of the top five spokespeople from all universities — John Curtice of University of Strathclyde, Steven Fielding of University of Nottingham, Tony Travers of LSE, Alan Renwick of UCL, and Rob Ford of Manchester University — all are experts in politics. Three of the five are professors in political science or political history, and two of the five are in leadership roles in research departments dealing with politics.

#1 TOP MENTIONED SPOKESPERSON:



83 ARTICLE MENTIONS

JOHN CURTICE

**Professor of Politics
University of Strathclyde**

“Theresa May could at some point be faced with the choice of delivering Brexit or keeping Scotland inside of the U.K.”
...“It’s a game of poker already. Presumably what Theresa May is trying to say is ‘actually, you may discover the Brexit deal that we’ve got is not one that is so inimical to Scotland’s interests.”

- “May Says Cross-U.K. Stance Needed Before Article 50 Triggered”,
Bloomberg, July 15.

“Given how many Labour voters voted to leave, this may just be a wound that the Labour party will not want to rub.”

- “Could the U.K. Get a Second Vote?” *CNN*, June 28.

“We will have to wait a while before we get a firm idea of how much Impact the UK’s decision to leave the EU has on attitudes towards independence in Scotland... but so far the evidence is consistent with the claim that there is now a narrow majority in favour of independence in Scotland.”

- “Has the Tide Turned Since the Brexit Vote?”, *BBC*, June 27.

#2 TOP MENTIONED SPOKESPERSON:



59 ARTICLE MENTIONS

STEVEN FIELDING

Professor of Political History
University of Nottingham

“If the Brexit negotiations don’t go as people would like, then it’s the leave people who’ll take the blame.”

– “Brexit Bulletin: Boris and the Bank of England, *Bloomberg*, July 14.

“It’s a British decision, but with potentially spectacular consequences for the rest of Europe.”

– “Brexit Referendum Finally Arrives After Months of Division, *Bloomberg*, June 22.

“It’s not going to be the settled will of the British people... And for Cameron, that will create an instability and a threat.”

– “In stunning decision, Britain votes to leave the E.U.”
in *The Washington Post*, June 24.

#3 TOP MENTIONED SPOKESPERSON:



51 ARTICLE MENTIONS

TONY TRAVERS

Director of "LSE London"
London School of Economics
and Political Science

"I don't detect Theresa May being an impulsive person... I think she's a cautious person, and the British political establishment needs to come to terms with this massive decision."

- "Theresa May takes over as British PM, quickly begins assembling staff",
Chicago Tribune, July 13.

"A big question facing Canary Wharf is exactly what the immigration rules are going to be... it is very important to the continued success of Canary Wharf that there is relatively free movement of labor."

- "London's Other Financial Center Needs to Keep Banks Close",
Bloomberg, August 18.

"Maybe moving more decision making to cities and councils could be a solution to the differences within the country."

- "Brexit Vote Sees 'London Independence' Seriously Touted by Labour Lord",
The Huffington Post, June 24.

#4 TOP MENTIONED SPOKESPERSON:



30 ARTICLE MENTIONS

ALAN RENWICK

Deputy Director of the Constitution Unit
University College London (UCL)

"In legal theory that is possible. In practice, that is absolutely not possible." (Referencing the possibility of U.K. lawmakers ignoring the Brexit process)

- "More than 3M sign Brexit do-over petition", *USA Today*, June 26.

"(A do-over would be plausible) if a party wins the 2020 election on a platform of having a second referendum and trying to go back in"

- "How the UK could remain in the EU despite a vote to leave", *The Seattle Times*, June 24.

"It would be sensible for the U.K. to work out its negotiating position and construct its negotiating team before setting the clock running. The government might also hope to hold preliminary discussions with other member states – though how far they would be willing to engage at this state is unclear."

- "This is the process for leaving the E.U. Except nobody's ever used it", *The Washington Post*, June 24.

#5 TOP MENTIONED SPOKESPERSON:



23 ARTICLE MENTIONS

ROB FORD

**Professor of Political Science
Manchester University**

Rob Ford, professor of political science at Manchester University, said Farage had tapped into deep disenchantment with politics among people, particularly those without a university education, who felt left behind by Britain's globalized economy.

- "Triumph for 'Brexit' Nigel Farage, British scourge of the EU",
Reuters, June 24.

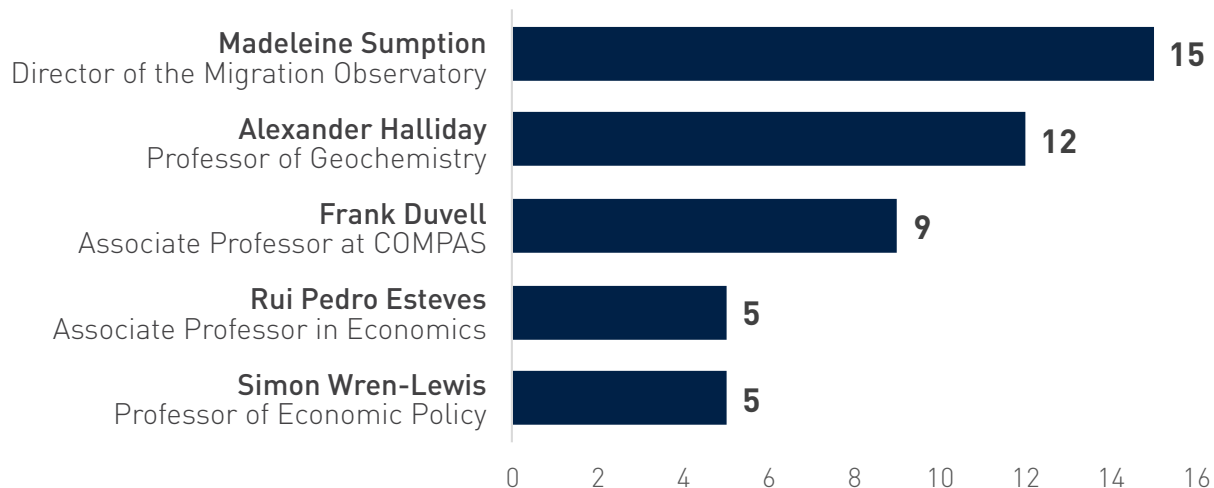
“It's pretty evident that places with lots of older voters voted for Brexit while places with more younger voters voted Remain.”

- "Brexit: how much of a generation gap is there?", *BBC*, June 24.

“This is the biggest shock to European politics since the fall of the Berlin Wall.”

- Brexit aftershocks buffet markets; Cameron quits as premier",
Chicago Tribune, June 24.

TOP SPOKESPEOPLE

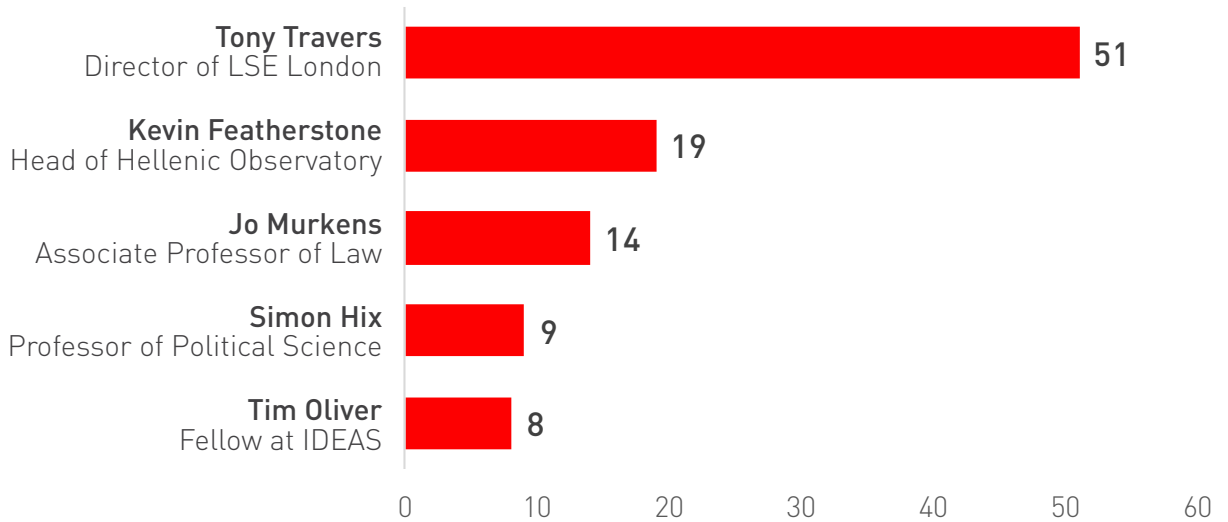


The Director of [Oxford's](#) Migration Observatory, [Madeleine Sumption](#), was the top mentioned person from this university. Ms. Sumption often reflected on what Brexit means for EU citizens already living in the U.K. "Depending on how long Brexit negotiations take, the government may need to register EU citizens already living here quite quickly," she told [Bloomberg](#).

[Simon Wren-Lewis](#) was the second-highest mentioned from Oxford. The Professor of Economic Policy was referenced for how Brexit would affect the economy. "Leaving the EU will have a negative impact on the U.K. economy in the short term as well as the longer term," he said in a [Bloomberg](#) article.

[Frank Duvell](#) commented on [images of Syrian refugees](#) that were used in the Brexit referendum.

TOP SPOKESPEOPLE

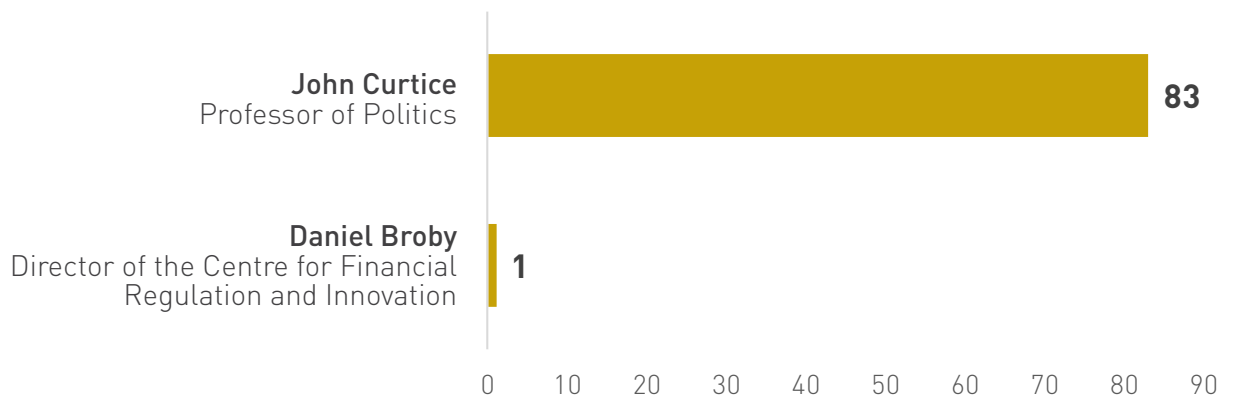


[Tony Travers](#) was the most mentioned from LSE, often offering commentary on what might come next in the process. For instance, he [stated that](#) “[Theresa] May probably would not rush to trigger Article 50,” which would start the process of exiting the EU.

The head of LSE’s Hellenic Observatory, [Kevin Featherstone](#), also commented frequently in the media, and [argued that](#) the vote would serve as a wakeup to politicians.

[Jo Murkens](#) was also mentioned relatively frequently for comments in regards to the [possibility of a second Brexit vote](#). The law professor argued that “two nations have voted to remain and two nations have voted to leave. And if the overriding objective is to keep the United Kingdom together and intact, then MPs have a duty to read this referendum result differently and say in order to preserve the UK we will not leave the EU.”

TOP SPOKESPEOPLE



Mentions of [John Curtice](#) made up all but one mention from the University of Strathclyde on Brexit. [He was quoted during the referendum itself](#) stating “There are far more places where ‘leave’ are doing better than expected,” but also made statements about the vote’s potential political fallout and how Scotland could be affected. [According to the Toronto Star](#), Curtice argued that former Prime Minister Cameron would have been indebted to Scotland if the Brexit vote had turned out negative.

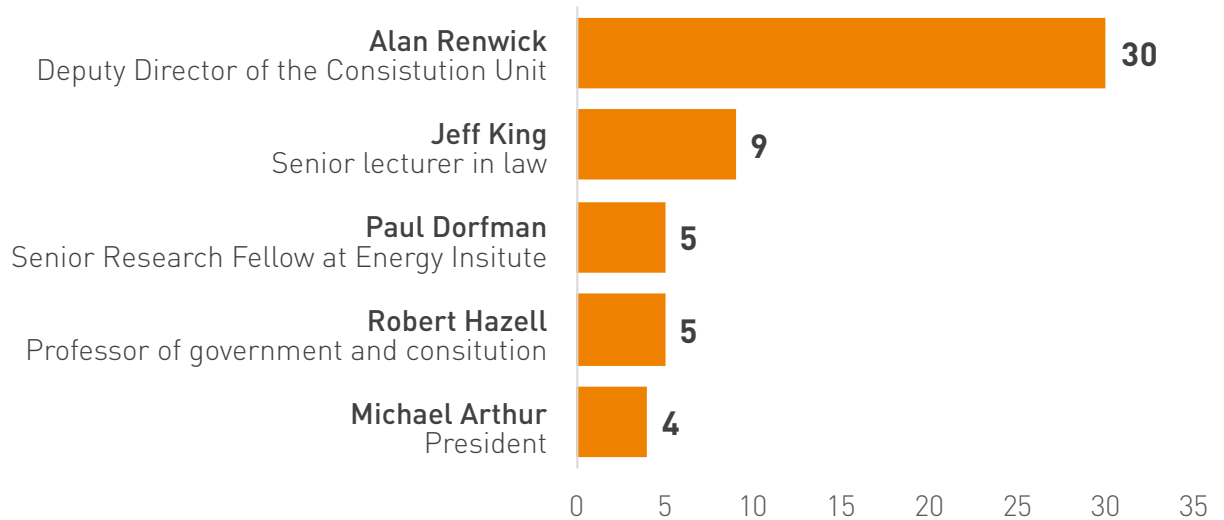
Mr. Curtice was also a thought leader through bylined articles. In a [piece he authored for the BBC](#), he wrote “A number of polls indicate the Brexit vote has increased support for Scottish independence.”

[Daniel Broby](#), the Director of the Centre for Financial Regulation and Innovation, was mentioned in only one article. In [an article from Scotsman](#), he is sourced as arguing that post-Brexit Scotland will become a digital hub for financing.



University College London (UCL)

TOP SPOKESPEOPLE



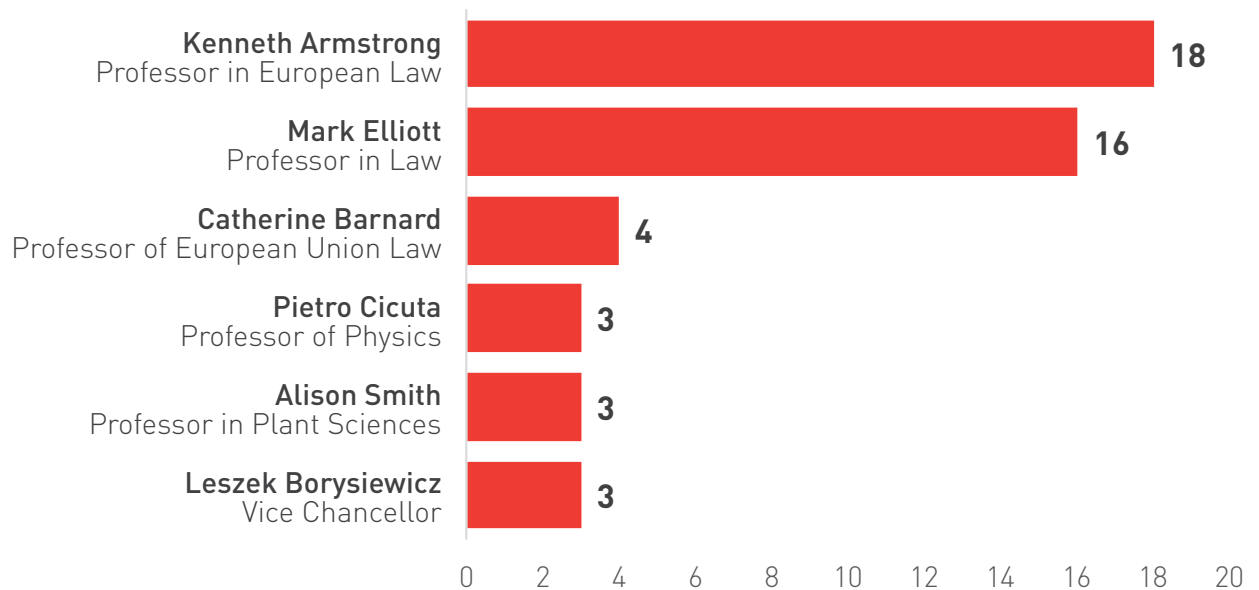
[Alan Renwick](#) was most mentioned from University College London. [Reflecting on the future of politics](#) in the U.K., he stated, “you have so many possible long-shot scenarios... if you add up the probabilities of all of them, you end up with a significant chance of something surprising happening, whatever that might be.”

[Senior Lecturer in Law Jeff King](#) was second-highest, after [commenting on lawsuits directed at Parliament](#) in an effort to slow Brexit. “Whether the prime minister has the authority to notify or whether that authority lies with Parliament is quintessentially a legal question and ultimately for an authoritative ruling you can only look to the courts,” he said.

University President [Michael Arthur](#) was mentioned four times for his comments that [Brexit could affect university funding](#).



TOP SPOKESPEOPLE



Professor in European Law [Kenneth Armstrong](#) was tops for Cambridge, after being [quoted stating](#) that “the referendum doesn’t itself trigger Brexit...it still requires the decision of a government.”

Following close behind was another law professor, [Mark Elliott](#), who [backed Prime Minister Cameron’s statement](#) that Scotland did not have the legal power to veto the referendum.

[Catherine Barnard](#) received four mentions after reflecting on how Brexit might affect U.K. and EU citizenship. [According to Barnard](#), EU citizenship is now “a really big question – and no one knows the answer.”



CONCLUSION

- Oxford University was the most mentioned U.K. university overall in articles about Brexit.
- London School of Economics had the most spokespeople offering expertise to the media.
- Most of the top spokespeople were experts in law or politics.
- John Curtice was the top spokesperson from within the top ten universities. He and the other four top spokespeople were all experts in politics.

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APPENDIX 1

MAJOR ONLINE PUBLICATIONS LIST

BBC
Bloomberg
Bloomberg BNA
Boston Globe
Chicago Tribune
CNN
Daily Mail
Daily Mirror UK
Dallas Morning News
Denver Post
Financial Times
Forbes
Houston Chronicle
Huffington Post UK
International Business Times
La Presse
Le Journal de Montreal
Los Angeles Times
Metro
Metro Montreal
Metro UK
National Post
New York Daily News
New York Post
New York Times
Newsday
Reuters
Scotsman
Seattle Times
Tampa Bay Times
The Globe and Mail
The Guardian
The Huffington Post
The Independent
The Standard
The Sun Daily
The Telegraph UK
The Wall Street Journal
The Washington Post
Toronto Star
Toronto Sun
UK Express
USA Today
Washington Post
World News

APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSITIES CONSIDERED IN ANALYSIS

Aberystwyth University
Aston University
Bangor University
Brunel University
Cardiff University
City University London
Coventry University
De Montfort University
Durham University
Heriot-Watt University
Imperial College London
Keele University
King's College London (KCL)
Kingston University London
Lancaster University
Liverpool John Moores University
London Metropolitan University
London School of Economics (LSE)
Loughborough University
Manchester Metropolitan University
Middlesex University
Newcastle University
Northumbria University at Newcastle
Nottingham Trent University
Oxford Brookes University
Plymouth University
Queen Mary University of London (QMUL)
Queen's University of Belfast
Robert Gordon University
Royal Holloway University of London
Swansea University
The Open University
University College London (UCL)
University Dundee
University of Aberdeen
University of Bath
University of Birmingham
University of Bradford
University of Brighton
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge
University of Central Lancashire
University of East Anglia (UEA)
University of East London
University of Edinburgh
University of Essex
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
University of Greenwich
University of Hertfordshire
University of Huddersfield
University of Hull
University of Kent
University of Leeds
University of Leicester
University of Lincoln
University of Liverpool
University of London
University of Manchester
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
University of Portsmouth
University of Reading
University of Salford
University of Sheffield
University of St. Andrews
University of Stirling
University of Strathclyde
University of Surrey
University of Sussex
University of the West of England
University of Ulster
University of Warwick
University of Westminster
University of York
University Southampton