

Chapter 10

UK: Large-Scale European Migration and the Challenge to EU Free Movement

Alessio D'Angelo and Eleonore Kofman

10.1 Introduction

International migration to the UK in the post-war years had typically concerned post-colonial migrants and then, in the 1990s, asylum seekers: both groups were third country nationals. Although there had been immigration of displaced people from Eastern Europe in the 1940s, and some sizeable flows of Italian workers in the 1950s–1960s, there was no equivalent of the guest worker flows in continental Europe. European immigration grew steadily in the 1980s and 1990s. Nonetheless it only became visible and a major political issue following Eastern enlargement of the EU in 2004 and the UK's opening up without a transitional period as in most other states. Hostility to immigration has always been present, even when levels were relatively low (Park et al. 2012), but the large-scale post accession migration has once again pushed immigration to the top of the agenda, bolstered by the emergence of a far right party – the UK Independence Party – portrayed as respectable unlike the earlier British National Party.

In this chapter we argue that Eastern European migration has reframed the debate on migration in the UK and led to calls for restrictions on free movement and access to welfare. As Southern European immigration grew, it began to be targeted and used as grounds for restrictions towards EU free movement. We also ask to what extent the recent arrivals from Southern Europe resemble the Eastern European migrants of the early 2000s, who were young and filled labour demand in less skilled occupations, often in areas and regions which had not experienced significant immigration in the last few decades.

In the first section we set out the current socio-economic situation which, though with higher levels of unemployment than during the boom years, has continued to be based on a demand for migrants. We then outline the migratory dynamics and

A. D'Angelo (✉) • E. Kofman
Social Policy Research Centre, Middlesex University, London, UK
e-mail: A.Dangelo@mdx.ac.uk

socio-demographic characteristics of Eastern European and, particularly, Southern European flows. In the second part we turn to the debates that have emerged as a result of the changing migratory landscape and the implications this will have for the new and highly educated Southern European migrants who have been increasingly attracted to the UK as the economic crisis hits their own countries.

10.2 Socio-economic Situation of the Country

A few months after the start of the recession in 2008, UK unemployment started to rise sharply. When the global financial crisis hit, the unemployment rate was a little over 5 % or 1.6 million. However, in 2009, it reached 7.5 %, to then peak at 8.1 % in 2011. This was the highest level since the early 1990s – but still about 2 percentage points below the European average. The economy has improved since 2012 and the unemployment rate has fallen to 6.4 % for April–June 2014.

Over the same period of time, youth unemployment also reached an historically high level, rising from 15 % in 2008 to 21.3 % in 2011. Though decreasing as with adult employment, it remains much higher at 16.9 % for the period April–June 2014. As elsewhere, the young have borne the brunt of austerity measures and the increasing use of insecure work contracts. The difficulties in obtaining full-time, stable employment have made it more difficult for them to live independently of their parents, which has been exacerbated by the shortage of affordable housing. In terms of gender differences, female unemployment has historically been lower than for men. This gap was particularly pronounced in 2011 (male unemployment: 8.7 %; female unemployment: 7.4 %); however male unemployment has improved more rapidly (6.6 % in April–June 2014, against 6.2 % among women), in part because of the large scale loss of public sector jobs.

During the 2010–2013 period, the unemployment rate among foreign-born workers – which since the early 1990s had been slightly higher than among UK-born ones (Rienzo 2014)- registered a widening of the gender gap. Whilst the level of unemployment amongst migrant men converged with the natives, the rates among migrant women increased compared to UK-born women.

Although overall unemployment rates have risen and the number of jobs available are less than at the peak of Eastern European immigration almost a decade ago, the economy still relies on migrant labour across a range of sectors and skills. Between January and March 2014, the UK employed 447,000 more UK born and 292,000 non-UK born workers compared to the same quarter of 2013 (ONS 2014). The Migration Advisory Committee (2014) – an independent body to the government – suggests that the demand for migrant workers in the UK is influenced by a broad range of institutions and public policies, such as low level of labour market regulation in some sectors, lack of investment in education and training, low wages and poor conditions in some publicly-funded sector jobs, poor job status and career tracks, and low-waged agency work. Moreover, a large number of zero-hours contracts, that is without fixed hours from week to week, has been created in recent

years. These give no stability or ability to plan ahead for the worker. The Office for National Statistics recently estimated that employers held 1.4 million contracts with workers that did not guarantee a minimum number of hours. The UK came to be seen as “the self-employment capital of western Europe” (IPPR 2014a). Two-fifths of all new jobs created since 2010 were self-employed; the incomes of these workers have fallen to a much greater extent than of those in regular employment (14 % compared with 9 %).

Examples of the high use of migrant workers include the construction sector, where increased migrant labour may be the consequence of inadequate vocational training, or the care sector, characterised by low wages, lack of training and rapid turnover (Ruhs and Anderson 2010). At the skilled level, cuts in training places in healthcare arising from reduced budgets for the National Health Service (NHS) have resulted in renewed shortages, as with nurses who have been recruited from Portugal and Spain as well as non-EU countries such as the Philippines (Donnelly and Dominiczak 2014).

10.3 Migratory Dynamics and Volume of Flows from Southern Europe

The UK’s patterns of immigration have been distinctive compared to other European countries. It had traditionally relied on flows from its former colonies in the Caribbean, South Asia and Ireland, whilst the flows of immigrants from the rest of Europe have been limited and much lower than those experienced, for example, by countries such as Germany, France or Belgium. Migration from Southern Europe, in particular, had been numerically limited in the post-war years, with the exception of a moderately steady inflow of Italian workers during the 1950s and 1960s (D’Angelo 2007; King 1977). These migrants, for the most part coming from Southern Italy, settled in industrial towns such as Peterborough, Nottingham, Coventry, Sheffield and Bedford (attracted by the local brick-making industry).

If the 1970s and 1980s were mainly characterised by a limited number of European migrants, including young people coming to study or for short work experiences as well as highly skilled professionals, from the 1990s intra-European migration became increasingly more significant. Between the 1991 and 2001 censuses, the number of French-born residents increased by 80 %, the Spanish by 41 %, the Dutch by 35 %, and the Italians by 17 %. Already in this decade the UK became the preferred destination for Southern Europeans. Morgan (2004: 102), writing about the 1990s, suggested that in relation to the Spanish, this was due to the creation of freedom of mobility, the abolition of work permits, cheap travel, higher educational levels of young Spaniards, buoyancy of the British labour market, comparatively higher levels of unemployment in Spain, and the continuing rise of English as the lingua franca of the business community. More and more professionals, especially in education and health care, came to fill shortages in the labour

market for which there was active recruitment, especially of nurses. There was a distinct increase in professionals amongst migrants from Southern European countries from 19.4% in 1992 to 26.6% in 2000 and a sharp decline in manual workers from 62.5% to 45% in the same period. About 43% of females and 38% of men had a tertiary degree (Morgan 2004: 140). Another trend had been the increasing proportion of female migrants to over 50% from a number of European countries.

The accession of ten new countries to the EU in 2004 reshaped European migration patterns. The UK was one of three countries (in addition to Ireland and Sweden) which immediately opened up to the accession states, without imposing any transitory restriction. This was seen as a means of reorienting migratory supply for low skilled labour away from UK's traditional sources such as Bangladesh and Pakistan. Non-EU migrants were restricted to skilled labour markets which would be managed through a Points Based System fully implemented in 2008. As spelled out by the Home Office in its *Controlling our Borders* paper (2005: 21), "migrants must be as economically active as possible; put as little burden on the state as possible; and be as socially integrated as possible".

Thus between May 2004 and September 2008, 932,000 people from the EU-8 (for the most part Poles) registered initial applications under the 'Worker Registration Scheme' especially set-up by the British government to keep track of new employees from the new EU member states. The total number of those moving to the UK was in fact much higher, given that, for example, self-employed workers were not required to register (Pollard et al. 2008: 9). Still, the WRS figures were well above the original official estimates, which had been for as little as 13,000 per annum. This was in part due to the restrictions imposed by most other European countries, which led to a large-scale immigration to Ireland and the UK. It created the idea that it was impossible to forecast accurately future flows and was used subsequently in heated debates about how many Bulgarians and Romanians would enter after the end of the transition period in 2014 (Migration Observatory 2014).

In the meantime, the number of A8 workers registering had by 2008 sharply declined due to improvements in their economies and decreasing levels of unemployment, declining value of the pound, and the opening up of other EU countries to EU8 migrants as from 2006. It was also estimated that about half the arrivals between 2004 and 2007 had returned home (Pollard et al. 2008). Nonetheless, the entry into the labour market of Bulgarians and Romanians following their accession was restricted since the A8 were seen as already having filled labour shortages whilst raising concerns about the impact they had on public services and wages (see Sect. 10.5 on "Policies and Debates").

As we have noted, the UK has been a preferred destination for Southern European migrants since the 1990s (Gonzalez-Ferrer 2013; McMahon 2012) but for the period 1991–2003 net-migration from other EU countries to the UK was very small. This contrasts with an average annual net-migration from non-EU countries to the UK of over 100,000 migrants for the same period (Migration Observatory 2014). However, the numbers of those entering for work has increased sharply in the 2010s.

Table 10.1 Population in England and Wales by country of birth

	2001 (census)	2011 (census)	% change 2001–2011	2013 (APS)	CI +/-	% change 2011– 2013
All countries	52,041,916	56,075,912	7.8 %	55,595,000	388 k	−0.9 %
UK	47,406,411	48,570,902	2.5 %	48,254,000	363 k	−0.7 %
Non UK	4,635,505	7,505,010	61.9 %	7,341,000	...	−2.2 %
Non EU	3,953,829	5,469,391	38.3 %	4,944,000	...	−9.6 %
EU*	681,676	2,035,619	n.a.	2,397,000	...	17.8 %
A8	n.a.	882,748	n.a.	936,000	...	6.0 %
Poland	58,107	579,121	896.6 %	581,000	39 k	0.3 %
A2	n.a.	125,580	n.a.	176,000	...	40.1 %
Bulgaria	n.a.	45,893	n.a.	49,000	11 k	6.8 %
Romania	7,203	79,687	1006.3 %	127,000	18 k	59.4 %
South Europe	222,674	336,353	51.1 %	355,000	...	5.5 %
Greece	33,224	34,389	3.5 %	35,000	9 k	1.8 %
Italy	102,020	134,619	32.0 %	134,000	19 k	−0.5 %
Portugal	35,867	88,161	145.8 %	103,000	17 k	16.8 %
Spain	51,563	79,184	53.6 %	83,000	14 k	4.8 %

According to the latest Census, in 2011 there were over 7.5 million foreign-born (i.e. non-UK) residents in the whole of England and Wales.¹ Of these – as shown in Table 10.1 – about 2 million were EU-born and in particular 135,000 were from Italy, 88,000 from Portugal, 79,000 from Spain and 35,000 from Greece. The total number of Southern European residents (336,353) increased by over 50 % since the previous 2001 Census; however the trend has been very different across different groups. On the one hand, Greek-born residents have gone up by a mere 3.5 % over a decade, whilst over the same period of time Portuguese have increased by 145.8 %, Spanish by 53.6 % and Italians by 32 %.

Breaking down the Census data by year of arrival confirms the migratory history described above. Of all EU-born people living in England and Wales in 2011, 25.4 % arrived before 1991, 19.2 % in the 1990s and 55.4 % between 2004 and 2011. The proportion of Southern European residents arriving in the latter recent period is significantly smaller – for example 31.6 % among Italians. Unlike other European countries, the UK does not have a system of compulsory registration of residents, thus the best estimate of resident population in a given year – beyond the Census data collected every 10 years – is given by the Annual Population Survey (APS), a yearly dataset combining results from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) with a num-

¹ These detailed Census data are available for England and Wales only rather than for the United Kingdom as a whole – i.e. Scotland and Northern Ireland, which together represent over 10 % of the UK population, are not included.

Table 10.2 NiNo registrations – top 20 nationalities (years ending June)

	Year to June 2010	Year to June 2013	Year to June 2014	% change 2010–2014
Total	604,347	572,876	565,719	–6.4 %
European Union	284,822	398,027	420,646	47.7 %
EU Accession States	187,328	213,893	248,852	32.8 %
Non European Union	318,930	174,427	144,181	–54.8 %
Top 20 nationalities				
Poland	68,721	96,481	91,561	33.2 %
Romania	17,040	17,688	63,432	272.3 %
Spain	15,084	47,320	41,065	172.2 %
Italy	15,341	35,834	38,534	151.2 %
India	82,156	30,781	25,916	–68.5 %
Portugal	10,177	26,126	24,135	137.2 %
Bulgaria	11,784	9,986	21,593	83.2 %
Hungary	11,923	25,215	20,233	69.7 %
France	17,254	21,900	20,022	16.0 %
Rep of Lithuania	27,377	26,611	19,341	–29.4 %
Rep of Ireland	11,155	15,829	14,779	32.5 %
Pakistan	26,761	15,295	10,683	–60.1 %
Slovak Rep	12,837	11,686	10,676	–16.8 %
China Peoples Rep	12,878	11,843	10,067	–21.8 %
Rep of Latvia	25,868	13,257	9,594	–62.9 %
Nigeria	16,722	10,389	9,575	–42.7 %
Germany	10,966	10,978	9,448	–13.8 %
Australia	13,203	11,638	9,146	–30.7 %
Greece	2,415	8,957	8,303	243.8 %
Czech Rep	7,901	8,435	7,909	0.1 %
Others	186,784	116,627	99,707	–46.6 %

ber of regional ‘boosts’. The APS data for 2013 – see Table 10.2 – show a further increase of residents born in Southern Europe, against an overall population which appears almost unchanged.²

A good estimate of the most recent flows is offered by the official statistics on National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations. Under the UK system, a NINo registration is generally required by any overseas national looking to work or claim benefits or tax credits. Figure 10.1, which include NINo yearly data between 2012 and 2013, clearly shows a dramatic increase of registration by Spanish, Italian and Portuguese migrants, particularly since 2011, with an annual inflow almost quadrupled over the decade. Overall, NINo registrations from Southern European coun-

²The confidence interval for the four Southern European populations is between $\pm 9,000$ and $\pm 19,000$; thus the minor changes indicated in Table 10.2 should be read with caution.

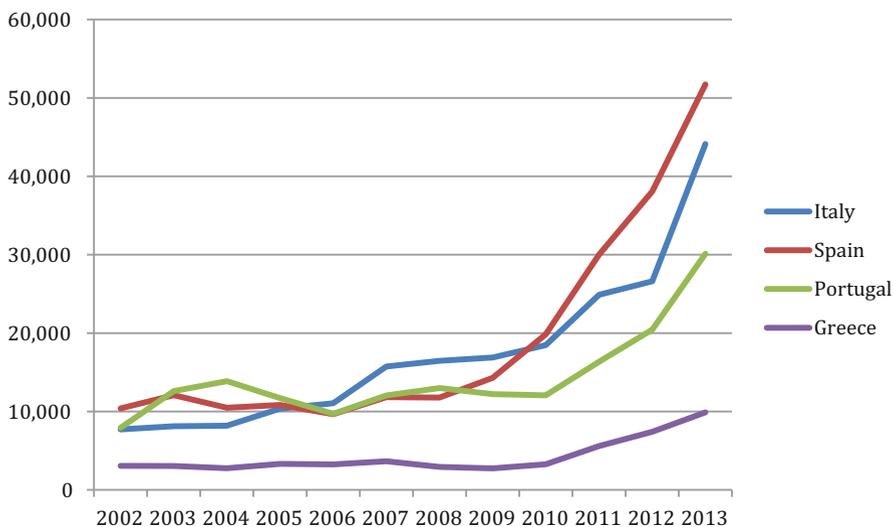


Fig. 10.1 NiNo registrations of Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish nationals (2002–2013) (Source: Authors' data analysis of Department for Work and Pensions data: adult overseas nationals registering for a National Insurance number for the purposes of work, benefits or tax credits)

tries represented about one fifth of all overseas registrations in 2012–2013, compared to less than 10% between 2002 and 2010.

As shown in Table 10.2, in the first half of 2014 Spanish, Italian and Portuguese registrations were among the top 6 groups: respectively with 41,000, 38,500 and 24,000 new registrations.³ These yearly values are around one and a half times higher than those registered in 2010 (during the same period, the number of yearly registrations from the EU as a whole increased only by 50%, whilst the overall number of overseas registrations has slightly decreased).

10.3.1 Secondary Migration

It is difficult to establish the exact degree of secondary migration, which includes two categories: that of citizens of another EU country and third country nationals. The UK has been a popular destination for TCNs gaining citizenship in another country, for example, Somalis from Netherlands and Sweden (Lindley and van Hear

³ A change to the process of recording NINOs during the quarter April to June 2014, means that the volume of NiNo registrations recorded is lower in this quarter than would otherwise be the case (estimated to be around 15–25% lower in the quarter April to June 2014 and 2–5% lower for the year to June 2014). Hence, comparisons of NiNo registrations for the latest periods should be viewed with caution.

2007; van Liempt 2011). Some migrant rights organisations, such as Latin American Women's Rights Services, report an increasing number of Spanish citizens of Latin American origin coming for advice and living in very poor housing conditions. It is also likely that this population may have different socio-economic characteristics than many of the highly educated young Spaniards. Amongst the Portuguese too there are many born in former colonies such as Brazil.

In relation to the mobility of third country nationals, a European Migration Network study (2013) notes that there are limited relevant statistics and lack of comparability. However, existing evidence suggests an increasing trend. In the UK, the long-term migration of non-EU citizens whose country of last residence was the EU, migrating for all reasons, appears to have increased by some 200%, from approximately 1,000 in 2007 to 3,000 in 2011. At the same time it was estimated that long-term migration of EU citizens had declined from 154,000 in 2007 to 147,000 in 2011 (EMN 2012:11). Thus the percentage of third-country mobility in relation to the overall intra-European mobility of both groups has increased from 0.6% in 2007 to 2% in 2011. We also know that the number of those applying for work permits from third country nationals residing in another member state rose from 2,940 in 2008 to 3,320 in 2010 but then fell to 2,560 in 2011, the first full year of the Conservative-led coalition government (EMN 2013: 55). Indians constituted the single largest group.

By cross-tabulating 2011 Census data by country of birth and nationality, it appears there are significant numbers of people with Italian, Portuguese and Spanish passports who were born in countries different from their citizenship. In particular, 27% of UK residents with a Portuguese passport were born in a non-European country (14% in Africa and 6% in India), some of whom may have been born in overseas Portuguese territories before de-colonisation. The proportion of non-European born is 15% for Italian citizens and 12% for Spanish ones.

It should be noted that the UK has opted out of the major Directives facilitating the mobility of third country nationals such as that regarding third-country nationals who are long-term residents (Directive 2003/109/EC); that on third-country national holders of an EU Blue Card for highly qualified employment in one Member State (Directive 2009/50/EC); those for researchers (Directive 2005/71/EC); and students (Directive 2004/114/EC) (EMN 2013:19).

10.4 Socio-demographic Characteristics and Labour Market Inclusion

According to the 2013 Annual Population Survey estimates, UK residents born in Southern Europe appear fairly balanced in terms of gender, with an estimated 48.6% females among Italians, 49.5% among Portuguese and 55.4% among Spaniards. Interestingly, the NINo (2013) data on most recent arrivals suggest a reduction of the female component (see Table 10.3 below) with, for example, only 40% of women among new entries from Italy. In terms of age, these recent flows – not surprisingly – appear fairly young, with about 80% of new registered workers from Italy and Spain being aged between 18 and 34 years and only 6% aged 45 or over.

Table 10.3 NiNo registrations (2013) by country of birth, age and gender

	Italy			Spain			Portugal		
	#	Age%	F%	#	Age%	F%	#	Age%	F%
<18	354	1 %	46 %	374	1 %	51 %	612	2 %	47 %
18–24	18,444	42 %	42 %	17,503	34 %	51 %	8,217	27 %	50 %
25–34	17,215	39 %	42 %	23,546	46 %	47 %	11,083	37 %	43 %
35–44	5,277	12 %	34 %	7,243	14 %	41 %	6,205	21 %	39 %
45–54	2,269	5 %	29 %	2,544	5 %	39 %	2,788	9 %	41 %
55–59	343	1 %	31 %	364	1 %	40 %	632	2 %	46 %
>60	218	0 %	37 %	172	0 %	60 %	593	2 %	51 %
Total	44,120	100 %	41 %	51,746	100 %	47 %	30,130	100 %	44 %

The picture is however somewhat different for Portuguese migrant workers: with 64 % aged between 18 and 34, 21 % aged 35–44 and 13 % aged over 45 years.

The areas of settlement of Southern European migrants follow the broader pattern of all non-UK and non-EU residents, with about 40–45 % living in the areas of Greater London and about 15 % in the South East of England and the others fairly spread across the rest of the country. The role of London as the main pole of attraction for Southern European migrants appears to have increased in recent years. Among Italians in particular, 68.9 % of those who registered for a NiNo in 2013 were based in London. The data for the same year shows 51 % of Spanish and 44.2 % of Portuguese new arrivals working in the capital.

Detailed information about labour market participation are available from the Labour Force Survey. The data from the second quarter of 2014 shows very different profiles for the four Southern European populations (see Table 10.4 below). Italian-born, with an activity rate comparable with that of the UK-born population, has a much smaller unemployment rate: 3.7 % against 6.0 %, whilst for Spanish-born the unemployment rate is exactly the same as among the native population (with a slightly higher activity rate). For those born in Portugal and Greece, however, the registered unemployment rate is around 8.5 % or 2 percentage points above the national average; interestingly, these two groups have also a much smaller proportion of inactive population (about 20 % compared to a national average of 40 %).

When compared to the latest Census data, these sample-based LFS figures suggest a significant reduction in the unemployment rate among Italian-born residents (5.2 % in 2011; 1.5 percentage points higher) but very little change among Portuguese-born (8.2 % in 2011). Finally, the Census data by year of arrival reveals much lower unemployment rates among those who have been living in the UK for a long time. Among Italian-born, the rate is just around 3 % for those who first arrived before the 1970s and between 4.5 and 5.5 % for those arriving in the 1970s–1990s.

Similar differences between groups are found when looking at the data by type of occupation (Table 10.5). The proportion of Italians working as managers and senior officials (14.8 %) is significantly higher than the national average (10 %) and the proportion of professionals (31.2 %) is over 10 percentage points above the average. As for Spanish workers, if the proportion of managers (8.1 %) is slightly above

Table 10.4 Population by country of birth and economic activity (LFS 2q2014)

	In employment	Unemployed	Inactive	Unemployment rate	Activity rate
UK	58.6 %	3.8 %	37.6 %	6.0%	62.4 %
Non UK	63.2 %	5.0 %	31.9 %	7.3 %	68.1 %
Greece	74.7 %	7.1 %	18.2 %	8.6%	81.8 %
Italy	62.6 %	2.4 %	35.0 %	3.7%	65.0 %
Portugal	73.0 %	6.8 %	20.2 %	8.5 %	79.8 %
Spain	65.7 %	4.2 %	30.1 %	6.0%	69.9 %
Total	59.3 %	3.9 %	36.8 %	6.2%	63.2 %

Table 10.5 Population by country of birth and occupation (LFS 2q2014)

	UK	Non UK	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Spain	Total
1	10.2%	9.1 %	1.9%	14.8 %	3.9%	8.1 %	10.0 %
2	19.3%	22.8 %	45.8 %	31.2 %	22.9 %	42.2 %	19.9 %
3	14.7%	10.4 %	20.9 %	10.3 %	2.9%	11.9 %	14.0 %
4	11.2%	7.6 %	11.3 %	8.4 %	3.6%	6.7%	10.7 %
5	11.3%	9.0%	3.9%	7.1%	9.0%	2.2%	10.9 %
6	9.3%	9.7%	3.0%	4.3%	8.2%	8.2%	9.4%
7	8.1%	6.3%	6.8%	7.2%	5.9%	6.5%	7.8%
8	5.9%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	11.0%	2.1%	6.3%
9	10.0%	16.8%	6.4%	16.6%	32.6%	12.2%	11.0%
Total	25,684,348	4,775,419	35,684	85,633	70,724	68,949	30,459,767

Note: 1 'Managers, Directors And Senior Officials'; 2 'Professional Occupations'; 3 'Associate Professional And Technical Occupations'; 4 'Administrative And Secretarial Occupations'; 5 'Skilled Trades Occupations'; 6 'Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations'; 7 'Sales And Customer Service Occupations'; 8 'Process, Plant And Machine Operatives'; 9 'Elementary Occupations'

the average, those working in 'professional occupations' are over 42%: more than double the national average. At the other end of the spectrum, only 3.9% of Portuguese-born workers are in the top group, whilst the proportion of those in 'elementary occupations' (32.6%) is almost three times the national average. Thus the different nationalities exhibit different insertions into the labour market. Italians in particular have a high proportion working in the managerial and professional groups (1–3) together with high levels in low level service employment but negligible in manufacturing, a pattern quite distinct to that of the Portuguese and the Polish.

Furthermore, a comparison with the 2011 Census data suggests an increase of the proportion of Italians working in the top 3 categories of about 5 percentage points. The Census data can also be broken down by year of arrival, revealing that the most recent Italian migrants are those more likely to work as managers or professionals: between 30 and 40% of those who arrived up to the early 1980s, against over 55% for those who arrived in the 1990s, 2000s and, again, 2010s. Conversely, the proportion of Portuguese migrants in the top categories is between 20 and 30%

for each decade of arrival from the 1960s to date (Detailed 2011 Census data for Spanish migrants is not available).

The distribution by occupational status is partially reflected by the data on the highest qualification of workers (Table 10.6). In particular, among Italian and Spanish-born people, the proportions of those with tertiary education – respectively 62.5% and 70.7% – are almost double the UK national average (35.1%). On the other hand, Portuguese-born have a lower than average proportion of people with tertiary and secondary education and a proportion of those reportedly with no qualification which is much higher than all other Southern European countries.

Unlike the abundant literature on immigration from the accession countries, and in particular Poland (Ciupijus 2011; Ryan et al. 2008; Sumption and Somerville 2010), there is little published academic research on recent and very recent Southern European flows. Since late 2012, there have been a number of journalistic accounts with titles such as ‘PIGS do fly’ (PIGS = Portuguese, Italians, Greeks, Spanish) (The Economist 2013) and the ‘Return of the Spanish Armada’ (The Daily Telegraph 2013). These tend to focus on Southern European migrants working in low skilled jobs in the hospitality, retail and construction sectors, but as the quantitative data presented in this chapter show, many have managed to find jobs commensurate with their education and training. National media has generally represented the young Southern Europeans as forced to flee their countries because of lack of opportunities in a fairly favourable light. In some cases – like in the above mentioned report by the Economist – they are presented as unlikely to remain for long due to their purported strong attachment to family and thus not likely to make claims on public services such as schools for their children. In reality, research evidence on their migration plans and family circumstances is missing (see Chap. 6 by Bermudez and Brey on Spain in this volume where they comment on the gap between Spanish data on emigration and UK data on immigration). It should also be noted that there is a tendency by British journalists (The Economist 2013) to present a somewhat inaccurate history of Spanish migrants, stating that they are predisposed not to migrate except in the early Franco years, thus erasing the earlier European flows of the 1960s to France, Germany and Switzerland. However, as we shall see in the follow-

Table 10.6 Population by country of birth and qualification (LFS 2q2014)

	UK	Non UK	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Spain	Total
Tertiary	33.1%	46.1%	78.0%	62.5%	29.3%	70.7%	35.1%
Secondary	47.9%	23.2%	9.5%	17.7%	29.3%	12.1%	44.0%
Other	7.9%	19.7%	8.0%	14.9%	29.0%	12.7%	9.7%
No qualif.	10.1%	10.4%	4.4%	2.2%	12.0%	3.9%	10.1%
Did not know	1.1%	0.7%	0.0%	2.7%	0.3%	0.7%	1.0%
Total	37,349,283	7,003,680	47,207	118,458	91,332	97,320	44,352,963

Note: Tertiary: degree, higher education or equivalent; Secondary: GCE, A-level, GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent

ing section, the growing hostility towards EU immigration, and more generally the EU, means that the conditionalities being proposed will affect all EU migrants.

10.5 Policies and Debates

The debate about immigration and ensuing policies needs to be placed within a very rapid growth of intra European migration although, as we shall see, hostile attitudes were prevalent before this happened. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, estimates of the modest numbers of workers (13,000) arriving in Britain post accession were wildly wrong⁴ (Dustmann et al. 2003) and were spectacularly eclipsed by the arrival of 1.5 million migrants EU8 from 2004 until 2011.

The Conservative-led Coalition government, elected in May 2010, had pledged to bring down net migration to tens of thousands, that is the level of the 1990s. However its only room for manoeuvre was with non-EU migrants, where it has tightened regulations for skilled labour migration and abolished the ability for the highly skilled to enter without a job offer. Less skilled jobs had already been reserved for EU workers under the Points Based System. Students, who count as migrants, have been very hard hit as have family migrants of both UK citizens and permanent residents through the income requirements introduced in July 2012. The Government also could not control the level of emigration, which is part of the net migration figure, except to the extent of not renewing work permits of those already in the country; hence the restrictions placed on moving from temporary to permanent residence permits for skilled migrants and intra-company transferees, which now depend on the level of income.

The national media and many politicians pointed out the fact that EU migration could not be controlled almost as a shocking revelation. By 2012 it was estimated that about 872,000 A8 migrants were resident in the UK. The tabloids took this as the cue for employing their favourite liquid metaphors of floods, deluges, inundations, swamps, and streams, not to mention hordes and invasions, to describe the new arrivals from Eastern Europe (Fox et al. 2012). Subsequently, the ending of the transitional period for Bulgarian and Romanian migrants generated another moral panic over 'tidal floods of new immigrants'. The Telegraph, a right-wing newspaper, warned that "Britain [is] powerless to stop tens of thousands of Bulgarians and Romanians moving to UK". The Sun, a populist tabloid, talked about "Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants ... threatening to swamp Britain – and flood our over-stretched jobs market". A Government e-petition implied that as many as 600,000 people could come, often to seek benefits (cited in Duvell 2013). A number of studies suggesting that potential emigration from these countries was fairly limited were dismissed (Duvell 2013).

⁴Dustmann maintains that his estimate was based on the assumption that Germany in particular would open its borders, at least partially (Lowther 2013).

Hostility to immigration is not new and was high even before the large scale immigration from accession countries in 2004. According to the British Social Attitudes Survey (Park et al. 2012), the proportion of respondents favouring some reduction in migration rose from 63 % in 1995 to 72 % in 2003 (with 40 % wishing to see a substantial reduction). The figure increased to 78 % in 2008, just before the beginning of the economic crisis. Attitudes among the British public had grown increasingly polarised between 2002 and 2011, with those who were educated being more comfortable with immigration compared to those with little education. The polarisation was more evident on views about the economic impact of immigration. Economically and socially insecure groups had become dramatically more hostile although all groups had become at least somewhat more negative about the cultural effects of migration. On the other hand, even for those who were generally negative towards immigration, skilled professional migrants were acceptable.

Although the main target of UK anti-immigration discourse are EU-migrants in general – with those from Poland and, increasingly, Romania and Bulgaria usually identified as the main example – more recently members of UKIP started to make specific reference to Southern European migrants. A party spokesman stated that “What we are seeing is a continued huge influx from eastern Europe now being supplemented by a sharp rise in immigration from southern Europe as citizens from countries like Portugal and Spain find that the only way to escape the eurozone nightmare is to vote with their feet” (BBC 16 November 2014).

10.5.1 Controversies Around Free Movement of Labour

The growing anti-immigration sentiments in the mainstream political discourse has always been juxtaposed – when not conflated – with a criticism of the EU system of free-movement and, more generally, with Euro-sceptic stances. The inflated figures and scare stories used by the tabloid papers sustained the growing popularity of far right and anti-immigrant parties and particularly of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), founded in 1993 by members of the cross-party Anti-Federalist League, a political party set up in November 1991. Its aim was to field candidates opposed to the Maastricht Treaty whose main primary objective was the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. It is now led by Nigel Farage. Its anti-immigration rhetoric obscures sharply contradictory economic policies from the ultra-liberal favouring further privatisation to more pragmatic positions retaining social institutions, such as the National Health Service (Wigmore 2014). It did well in the 2013 elections but it was in the European election of May 2014, that UKIP received the largest number of votes (27.5 %) and gained 24 representatives. In October 2014 it was the first time in a century that neither the Conservatives nor Labour had won the largest number of votes in a nation-wide election. It gained its first elected Member of Parliament through a by-election for the seat of Clacton, a feat repeated in November 2014 in the constituency of Rochester and Strood. Both by-elections were triggered by the defection of

Conservative MPs who had joined UKIP. This process has put increasing pressure not only on the Conservative Party, which already encompasses a strong Eurosceptic current, but also on the other political parties.

As from early 2013 David Cameron had promised – in case of a victory in the 2015 elections – a referendum on British membership of the European Union, following a period of renegotiation with the EU. In the meantime, he announced increasing restrictions on welfare rights for EU migrants – stretching current European treaties as far as possible.

The Liberal Democrats, the coalition partner in the previous government and, traditionally, the most pro-European British party, have moved from a pro-immigration position to one which supports restrictions on the right to free movement of future entrants as well as restrictions for new entrants coming as self-employed (Mason 2014). Nevertheless the then party leader Nick Clegg reiterated that freedom of movement among EU states was “a good thing” – although it was “never intended as an automatic right to claim benefits” – and was opposed to leaving the EU which would strike an “immense” blow to UK prosperity.⁵

However Clegg also supported Cameron’s proposals (The Guardian 29 July 2014) to restrict access to benefits for Jobs Seekers Allowance, child benefits and child tax credits to 3 months instead of 6 months as from November 2014, and that this would only begin after the individual had been in the UK for 3 months. Reports from the BBC suggested that ‘at most’ 10,000 people would be affected. It would be unlikely to affect EU workers in the UK who lose their job after having made National Insurance contributions and would be limited mainly to those arriving here in the first instance (Grove-White 2014). This measure reflected the attempt by political parties to push the idea that the UK is a welfare magnet, but for which the Migration Advisory Committee (2014) states there is no evidence.

The Labour Party also strove to show how tough it had become and argued that EU migrants should only be able to access welfare payments if they have paid national insurance. The party in government had been accused of allowing uncontrolled immigration through its immediate opening up to migrants from accession countries. As a response to the Conservative’s attempt to make immigration a major issue in 2007, Gordon Brown launched the slogan ‘British jobs for British workers’ at the annual Trades Union Conference (Daily Telegraph 11 September 2007). He had also pledged to make EU migrants learn English which it was estimated would reduce the immigration of the less skilled by about a third.

In 2014, Mark Leonard, Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations, said Labour should push for EU governments to issue social insurance cards to more easily control access to welfare, restrict some benefits for EU migrants for at least a year, and make language tests compulsory for new arrivals. Hence, as UKIP gained ground, Labour sought to toughen its stance, and though not turning its back on free movement, proposed clamping down on tax credits claimed by working EU migrants. The then shadow work and pensions secretary, Rachel Reeves, stated that

⁵ Clegg urges restrictions on new EU migrants, BBC 5 August 2014-08-19 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-28638493>

the UK social security was not designed for the current level of immigration.⁶ She has thus proposed an increase to 2 years of contributions, which was more than the 3 months announced by the Conservatives. Labour had also raised the possibility of not paying in work tax credits (for low income households) to EU migrant.

It should be remembered that, whilst competence for the coordination of social security schemes is 'shared' between the EU and Member States, Member States have exclusive competence for the design, organisation and funding of their social security systems which differ extensively. Within the overarching EU framework, they are free to decide who is entitled to be insured, which benefits are granted and under what conditions, and how benefits are calculated.

In summer 2014 Cameron (28 July) had also hit out against EURES – the European 'Job Mobility Portal, since of the 2.4 million jobs posted on its web-site, over 1.1 million were in the UK. Jobs at UK firms including supermarket chains Tesco and Sainsbury's are automatically advertised on the site. In future, jobs will only be uploaded to the website if an employer specifically requests that the position is offered across the EU. Thus Cameron stated (28 July 2014) "So we are banning overseas-only recruitment – legally requiring these agencies to advertise in English in the UK ... and massively restricting this, aiming to cut back the vacancies on this portal by over 500,000 jobs" and therefore make easily accessible knowledge about job vacancies in the UK.

In their repeated attempts to outdo each other in terms of firmness on EU migration policies, British political parties are moving the bar further and further. Following his re-election, the former Conservative politician and now UKIP member of Parliament, Mark Reckless, suggested that EU migrants currently living in the UK might be asked to leave the country under certain conditions, should his party be in Government. Although this statement was officially rejected by party leader Farage, it gave an indication of the extent to which every aspect of EU mobility had become the object of political discussions and central to the results of the parliamentary elections of May 2015, as well as the outcome of the referendum on whether the UK should leave the European Union on 23 June 2016.

According to an IPSOS-Mori poll conducted late June/early July 2015 (Nardelli 2015), freedom of movement had become the most contentious issue, and was heavily orienting the vote. The majority of British (60%) thought that freedom of movement should be restricted with 70% of respondents saying that it was due to pressure on public services, 59% the number coming to the UK to claim benefits, and 55% pressure on housing. If it were not limited, the proportion who said that the UK should stay in the EU dropped 16 percentage points from 52% to 36%, while the vote to get out rose by 12 points from 31% to 43%. Relatively few (16%) thought that freedom of movement should be kept as it is or with no controls (Nardelli 2015). Amongst the most popular measures to tackle the perceived problems of free movement was the proposal to place restrictions on EU migrants claiming benefits together with broader restrictions to access welfare. These elements were at the centre of the

⁶No recourse to public funds applies to non EU migrants who do not have access to a range of non-contributory benefits until they gain permanent residence i.e. minimum of 5 years.

David Cameron's negotiations with the European Commission for a 'new settlement for the UK in a reformed EU' ahead of the Brexit referendum. This was not seen as sufficient and in the ensuing referendum 51.9 % voted to leave.

10.6 Conclusions

The large-scale immigration of Eastern and more recently Southern Europeans to the UK has progressively fed increased hostility towards immigrants and contributed to the popularity of curbs on free movements and access to welfare. The filling of low skilled labour from these countries has contributed in particular to such calls. However the analysis of quantitative data seems to show that the Italians and Spanish in particular are not filling the less skilled sectors in the same way as Polish migrants have done. They are geographically more concentrated in the large urban centres which have long experience of immigration, both of labour migrants and asylum seekers and refugees. Even within the lower level service sector, they are often working in the hospitality sector and are less likely to be seen as being in competition with less educated local populations.

As has been commented, the current immigration debate demonstrates the loss of statistical reasoning. Following a period of large scale immigration from Eastern Europe, conflict over competition in employment, pressure on public services and access to welfare have been the issues which have led to increased hostility towards immigration aired in the media and increasingly taken up by political parties across the spectrum apart from the Greens and the Scottish Nationalist Party. According to IPSOS-Mori (2014) immigration has become the single most important issue of concern to the British public and ended up becoming the major issue in the vote to leave the European Union, even in areas with low levels of immigration. The results of the referendum, which saw a high turnout, revealed profound polarisation, with those with lower educational qualifications, older people and those living in provincial England, more likely to vote in favour of leave. Outside of London, Scotland and Northern Ireland were the only two areas to vote in favour of remaining in the EU (Ford 2016). The Brexit vote opens up a period of economic and political insecurity and constitutional instability with unpredictable outcomes for the status of EU migrants currently in the UK and for the future of intra-European migration.

References

- (2014) Spanish workers flock to Britain in record numbers, the Local <http://www.thelocal.es/20140228/spanish-workers-flock-to-britain-in-record-numbers> (English language version of Spanish newspaper).
- Barbulescu, R. (2014) *EU freedom of movement is coming under increasing pressure in the UK and other European states*. blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2014/02/20/eu-freedom-of-movement-is-coming-under-increasing-pressure-in-the-uk-and-other-european-states/ Accessed 20 Sept 2014.

- Bristol Post. (2013). <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/VE-SWAPPED-SPANISH-SUN-SOUTHVILLE/story-20109545-detail/story.html>, 21 November. Accessed 10 Dec 2014.
- Cameron, D. (2014, 28 July). We're building an immigration system that puts Britain first. *Daily Telegraph*.
- Ciupiujus, Z. (2011). Mobile central eastern Europeans in Britain: Successful European citizens and disadvantaged labour migrants. *Work, Employment and Society*, 25(3), 540–550.
- D'Angelo, A. (2007). *Britalians. Le migrazioni italiane in Gran Bretagna*, in *Rapporto Italiani nel Mondo*. Rome: Fondazione Migrantes, Idos.
- Donnelly, L., & Dominiczak, P. (2014, May 13). Number of foreign nurses up 50pc in a year. More than 5,000 nurses come to UK from EU, as NHS cuts training for home-grown staff. *Daily Telegraph*.
- Dustmann, C., Casanova, M., Fertig, M., Preston, I., & Schmidt, C. (2003.) *The impact of EU enlargement on migration flows*. Home Office on Line Report 25/3.
- Duvell, F. (2013). *Romanian and Bulgarian migration to Britain: Facts behind the fear*. Our Kingdom: Power and liberty in Britain, 28 March <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/news/latest/article/date/2013/04/duvell-on-the-facts-of-romanian-and-bulgarian-migration-to-the-uk/> Accessed 10 Dec 2014
- EC. (2012, June). EU employment and social situation. *Quarterly Review*.
- Economist, The. (2013). 'PIGS' can fly. *Economist* 16 Nov <http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21589879-some-european-economic-migrants-are-more-welcome-others-pigs-can-fly>. Accessed 20 Sept 2014.
- EU migrant curbs should be 'temporary' says Major. BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-30073844> 16 November 2014 Accessed 10 Dec 2014.
- European Migration Network. (2013). *Intra-European mobility of third- country nationals, synthesis report*.
- Ford, R. (2016, June 26). The 'left-behind', white, older, socially conservative voters turned against a political class with values opposed to theirs on identity, EU and immigration. *The Observer*.
- Ford, R., Morrell, G., & Heath, A. (2012). *Fewer but better? Public views about immigration* (British Social Attitudes, Vol. 29). London: NatCen Social Research.
- Fox, J., Moroşanu, L. E., & Szilassy, E. (2012). The racialization of the new European migration to the UK. *Sociology*, 46(4), 680–695.
- González-Ferrer, A. (2013). *La nueva emigración española. Lo que sabemos y lo que no*. Madrid: Fundación Alternativas (Zoom Político, issue 18).
- Grove-White, R. (2014, July 30). What will Cameron's immigration crackdown mean for migrants?, *Migration Rights Network*.
- Her Majesty's Government. (2014). *Review of the balance of competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union single market: Free movement of persons*
- Institute for Public Policy Research. (2014a). *UK becoming the 'self-employment capital' of Western Europe*, London. Available from: <http://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/uk-becoming-the-%E2%80%98self-employment-capital%E2%80%99-of-western-europe>. Accessed 15 Jan 2015.
- Ipsos MORI. (2014). Ipsos MORI Issues Index – October 2014. Available from: <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3468/EconomistIpsos-MORI-October-2014-Issues-Index.aspx>. Accessed 1 Feb 2015.
- King, R. (1977). Italian migration to Great Britain. *Geography*, 6(3), 176–186.
- Lindley, A., & van Hear, N. (2007). *New Europeans on the move: A preliminary review of the onward migration of refugees within the European Union* (COMPAS Working Paper 57), University of Oxford.
- Lowther, E. (2013). Prof says his '13000 EU migrants' report 'misinterpreted' BBC 7 March. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21682810>. Accessed 1 Feb 2015
- Mason, R. (2014, August 4). Clegg to call for tighter EU immigration rules. *The Guardian*, 6. Accessed 1 Feb 2015.

- McMahon, S. (2012). *Gli accademici italiani nelle università britanniche*, in *Rapporto Italiani nel Mondo 2012*. Rome: Fondazione Migrantes, IDOS.
- Migration Advisory Committee. (2014). *Migrants in low-skilled work: The growth of EU and non-EU labour in low-skilled jobs and its impact on the UK*. London.
- Migration Observatory. (2014). *Migrants in the UK labour market: An overview*. Oxford: University of Oxford.
- Morgan, T. (2004). *The Spanish migrant community in the United Kingdom*. Cambridge: Anglia Ruskin Polytechnic University.
- Nardelli, A. (2015, October 9). EU referendum: Polling reveals freedom of movement most contentious issue. *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2015/oct/09/eu-referendum-polling-reveals-freedom-of-movement-most-contentious-issue>. Accessed 9 Oct 2015.
- Office of National Statistics. (2014, June). *Labour market statistics*.
- Park, A., Clery, E., Curtice, J., Phillips, M., & Utting, D. (Eds.). (2012). *British social attitudes: The 29th report*. London: NatCen Social Research. Available online at: www.bsa-29.natcen.ac.uk Accessed 1 Feb 2015.
- Pollard, N., Latorre, M., & Sriskandarajah, D. (2008). *Floodgates or turnstiles? Post-EU enlargement migration flows to and from the UK*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Rienzo, C. (2014). *Characteristics and outcomes of migrants in the UK labour market*. Oxford: The Migration Observatory.
- Ryan, L., Sales, R., Tilki, M., & Siara, B. (2008). Social networks, social support and social capital: The experiences of recent Polish migrants in London. *Sociology*, 42(4), 672–690.
- Sumption, M., & Somerville, W. (2010). *The UK's new Europeans: Problems and challenges five years after accession*. London: Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Van Liempt, I. (2011). And then one day they *all* moved to Leicester: The relocation of Somalis from the Netherlands to the UK explained. *Population, Space and Place*, 17, 254–266.
- Wigmore, T. (2014, November 19). Is UKIP the most divided party in British politics? A fundamental economic tension runs through UKIP. *New Statesman*.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.5 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.5/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

