

BREXIT: Before and after

Session organizer: Athina Vlachantoni (University of Southampton)

Tuesday 11 September 11.00am

Love in a time of Brexit': Bi-national families and the UK's EU Referendum

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Partnerships between individuals of different ethnicity or nationality have been increasing as a result of intra-European migration, as well as migration into Europe by individuals born elsewhere. Bi-national partnerships have frequently been used as an indicator of social integration, particularly in the case of partnerships which result in bi-national children. Against the background of the impending Brexit, this paper explores the prevalence and characteristics of bi-national partnerships in the UK using data from the UK Census 10% sample and the Understanding Society dataset. In addition, the paper explores the association between the type of partnership and the preferences of respondents on whether the UK should remain in, or leave the European Union. The results show that around 3 percent of all partnered individuals aged 18 and over in the UK were in partnerships where one partner was UK-born, and the other was born in another EU country; this equates to around 2 million people. Individuals in bi-national partnerships were more likely to support the UK remaining in the EU. Those in UK-EU partnerships which also included children, were even more likely to support the UK remaining in the EU. However, approximately one-quarter of persons in UK-EU partnerships supported the UK leaving the EU, highlighting the complex influence of having a non-UK-born partner on one's views on Brexit.

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Examining homogeneity in EU and non-EU migrants in pre-Brexit UK

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Although there has been much focus on consequences of Brexit on EU migrants, little is known about its implications on migrants from the rest of the world. This analysis compares the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of two groups of migrants: those from EU countries and from the rest of the world. These two groups are examined by when they arrived in the UK; either recent migrants having arrived during the five years preceding the census or older migrants having arrived 5+ years preceding the census thus qualifying for naturalization. Their age, education, activity status and health needs were examined. The micro-data file of the 5% sample of the 2011 Census of England and Wales was used for this analysis. Preliminary results suggest that the proportion of the population aged 19-64 years was higher among migrants from non-EU countries. However, relatively more EU migrants of this age group were in employment. That said, recent migrants in both groups were less likely to be employed. For both recent and longer-term migrants, those from non-EU countries showed higher levels of education than their EU counterparts. This research highlights the important considerations that need to be taken into account in the social policies following Brexit. Any vacuum created in the labour force by Brexit may prove challenging to fill given the differences in the skills and backgrounds of EU and non-EU migrants. The EU and non-EU groups could complement one another, for example higher educated non-EU migrants potentially contributing towards supporting the healthcare needs of the proportionately larger elderly EU migrants.

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Brexit and EU student migration: Evidence from a natural experiment.

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This paper represents the first attempt to study the causal impact of Brexit, namely the UK's departure from the European Union (EU), on the post-graduation mobility decisions of EU students. We exploit the British government's formal withdrawal notification under Article 50 as a natural experiment and employ a difference-in-differences design. Using data from a new survey of graduating international students, we find that EU graduates are significantly more likely than non-EU graduates to plan on leaving the UK upon graduation immediately after the announcement. Interestingly, results are especially driven by all students from the new EU countries and students from the EU15 countries who are uncertain of their migration plans. We further show that the deterrent effects are stronger for students who are females, elder, study non-STEM subjects, have low grade expectations, receive student funding for their studies, and study at Russell Group universities. These findings carry important implications for the post-Brexit UK in transition and for European countries with emerging calls for their own referendums.

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Renationalised belonging? The effect of Brexit on EU immigrants' attitudes to British citizenship

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Intra-EU migrants have traditionally faced few pressures or incentives to formalise their 'permanent' residence or to naturalise in their EU host countries. Focusing on the UK, the paper examines changes in practices and attitudes to such 'legal integration' in the context of Brexit. Combining an analysis of the latest available secondary administrative data on naturalisation trends and primary data originating from an online survey (N=1517) undertaken in the months before the EU Referendum, the paper assesses whether Brexit is the sole motivating factor behind a renewed interest in British citizenship, or whether other factors also play a significant role. The results presented in the paper reveal both continuity with pre-Brexit processes and the strong but differential effect of Brexit. Results from regression models in particular show that factors related to more intrinsic attitudes, such as the migrants' initial reasons for migration, interest in legal integration options leading to a higher awareness of such options, and potentially Euroscepticism are also important factors driving a preference for naturalisation. Through this analysis the paper makes a significant contribution to understanding the complexities of legal integration processes in times of radical structural change, allowing for initial conclusions to be drawn regarding the possible political demographic consequences of Brexit.

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