# RaY

Research at the University of York St John

**The return of citizenship? An empirical assessment of legal integration in times of radical sociolegal transformation**

Chris Moreh[*], Derek McGhee and Athina Vlachantoni

**Abstract:** 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 United Kingdom and combining an analysis of secondary administrative data and primary online survey data (N=1,413), this article examines practices and attitudes to such legal integration in the context of the 2016 EU Referendum among five major EU nationality groups. The analysis reveals that British citizenship is the main legal mechanism of integration among intra-EU migrants in the UK and that while there is continuity in this respect with pre-Brexit processes, Brexit also has a strong but differential effect as a driver of legal integration. The article also identifies some of the main decision-influencing factors shaping legal integration, making a significant contribution to understanding the complexities of integrative processes in times of radical structural change.

**Introduction**

Over the past two decades 'the emergence of a new European migration system' (Favell 2008b) reliant on the policy of free movement of people within the European Union (EU) has paralleled a 'renewed emphasis on assimilation and citizenship' in policy and public discourse on non-EU immigration (Joppke and Morawska 2003, 1). Intra-EU 'movers,' in both theory and practice, enjoy the liberty to 'keep their options deliberately open' in respect to plans of settling in the host EU member state, moving to another EU country, or returning to their origin country (Eade, Drinkwater, and Garapich 2007, 11, Favell 2008a). Furthermore, supranational EU citizenship rights afford them similar treatment in most aspects of life to those enjoyed by the national citizens of the EU countries in which they live, regardless of the length of their residence and future migration plans. Consequently, there have been few pressures on or incentives for mobile EU citizens to enter a formal path to permanent settlement and naturalisation – what we here call 'legal integration' – in their host countries.

This article questions whether such detached attitudes toward 'legal integration' still prevail among intra-EU migrants. It was argued previously that the changing political climate of the post-Euro-crisis years has been increasingly turning mobile EU citizens 'into immigrants who no longer enjoy unconditional European citizenship; migrants who are no longer free to

---

[*] Corresponding author e-mail address: Dr Chris Moreh, c.moreh@yorksj.ac.uk

be just European residents, and whose tolerated presence may be henceforth conditional on their willingness to integrate' (Favell 2013, 57). Graeber (2016) has tested statistically the consequences of this trend, and his analysis 'reveals that the Euro crisis and its economic and political consequences seem to be reincentivizing intra-EU migrants to acquire citizenship in other member states, despite the rights and benefits derived from EU citizenship' (2016, 1671). Others, like Dubucs et al. (2017), whose work describes the 'complex modes' of structural and socio-cultural integration prevalent among EU movers engaging in 'mobile lifestyles' as well as in 'multiple forms of embeddedness,' also feel obliged to ask 'whether dramatically changing macrocontexts in Europe – like Brexit and the rise of anti-EU nationalism – do alter this general picture and impose onto migrants more traditional forms of integration into host societies' (592). In this article we address precisely this question.

We examine the case of the United Kingdom (UK), where the politicization of intra-EU free movement in recent years culminated in a referendum vote to leave the EU in June 2016 (Glencross 2016). Since the 2004 EU enlargement,[1] the UK has welcomed to its workforce over 5 million new EU nationals.[2] Around 3 million EU nationals were estimated to be living in the country at the time of the EU referendum and being faced with the possibility of a dramatic change to their legal rights (Office for National Statistics 2016). Since the *legal* dimensions of residence and integration are in this case the processes most immediately affected by the unfolding events, we are interested here in examining EU movers' presumed detachment vis-à-vis *legal* integration.

Our main aim is twofold: (1) to test whether the 'reincentivizing of citizenship' identified by Graeber (2016: 1687) is a broader phenomenon pre-dating Brexit and (2) to assess Brexit's effect on legal integration. To do so, we combine a statistical analysis of administrative data on in-migration and legal integration trends over the past decade (Home Office 2018a, b, Department for Work and Pensions 2018) and cross-sectional data on future legal integration plans from a purposefully designed online survey conducted in the three months before the EU referendum. This approach allows us to examine the phenomenon of legal integration from two complementary perspectives. Given that our data originate from a strategic point in time when the UK had not yet formally exited the EU, we define 'Brexit' broadly as an emotionally charged discursive historical moment of heightened uncertainty, fit to explain social attitudes and behaviour in conditions of radical sociolegal transformation.

To capture possible differences based on origin country, we focus on a selected quantitative sample of five indicative nationality groups: Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Portuguese, and German citizens (N=1,413). Related to our main aim, we also test the significance for legal integration of various factors identified in the broader empirical literature as contributing to settlement practices. Our analysis shows that several socio-demographic

---

[1] The eight Central Eastern European (CEE) countries accessing the EU in 2004 were: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Romania and Bulgaria (the EU2) joined in 2007 and Croatia in 2013. Although the UK immediately opened its labour market to the EU8, it imposed the legally permitted maximum length of transitional restrictions of seven years for citizens of the EU2.

[2] National Insurance Number (NINo) registration statistics show that between April 2004 and July 2016, a total of 5,021,661 such numbers were allocated to EU nationals, of which 2,471,866 went to nationals of EU8 countries and 757,079 to those from the EU2 (Department for Work and Pensions 2018). These figures reflect the total number of working-age migrants who have registered for a NINo, not the total number of foreign EU national residents at any particular point in time.

variables are significant in shaping stated plans of legal integration, which is an important finding that points to the *social* roots of *legal* integration choices. By bridging the gap between *social* and *legal* processes of migrant integration, the article makes a significant contribution to understanding the complexity of integrative processes in times of radical sociolegal change.

The article's main argument is that national citizenship returns as – or remains – the main legal mechanism of integration among EU movers in the UK and that this development has pre-Brexit roots. The leading factor in naturalisation plans and practices is often the mere eligibility to apply for citizenship, and the motivations probably derive from pre-Brexit failings in the lived experience of supranational citizenship. At the same time, 'Brexit' is an even stronger driver of legal integration among those who were previously engaged in more 'mobile lifestyles,' and this finding also reflects important differences between nationality groups. Overall, the article identifies the perceived weakness of EU citizenship as the main guarantor of long-term residence and settlement rights and, through an original dataset and rigorous quantitative analysis, makes a significant early contribution to emerging empirical research into what might be called sociolegal de-Europeanization.

Before describing our data and methods in more detail and discussing our findings, we briefly outline the conceptual and policy framework of legal integration within the EU and review the empirical literature on the social factors influencing migrant settlement.

**Settlement and integration: legal framework and social factors**

The question as to whether EU movers will settle long-term or permanently in their countries of residence raises many empirical and conceptual difficulties. For one, EU movers may not feel compelled to formulate clear plans of return or settlement at any stage of their migration, and those who do will just as often see them changed as any other migrant group (Drinkwater and Garapich 2015, Ryan 2015, Ganga 2006, Ryan and Mulholland 2014). Furthermore, the increasingly common social experience of living transnationally and in super-diverse settings renders concepts such as 'settlement' and 'integration' overly narrow and inflexible (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore 2018). Instead, migration scholars have adopted conceptual tools of higher complexity to describe lived experiences of integration and settlement in terms of social 'embedding' (Ryan 2018, Ryan and Mulholland 2014), 'emplacement' (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013, Wessendorf 2018), or 'anchoring' (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016, 2018). Through these concepts, they describe migrant strategies as variably 'anchored' on a 'continuum of emplacement' that runs through degrees of social embeddedness and residence plans 'from temporary, short-term through to longer-term, without migrants ever formally making the decision to settle permanently' (Ryan and Mulholland 2014, 598).

Much less attention has been paid to *legal* mechanisms of integration. To some degree, individual statuses could also be mapped on a so-called 'continuum of legal emplacement.' Meissner (2018), for example, has charted the extent of 'legal status diversity' in the UK's immigration law, and Wessendorf (2018) has emphasised the determining influence of different legal statuses on processes of settlement and socio-economic integration. Kubal (2012) has shown that the experience of migrants from 'new' EU member states has been one of 'gradual' legal integration rather than undifferentiated status privilege. Nevertheless, at the

time of the EU referendum debates, the legal status of most EU movers in the UK was less differentiated, offering two main legal mooring points on the emplacement continuum: formal permanent residence and naturalisation as British citizens. For simplicity, we refer to these two primary status options as legal 'integration.' We acknowledge, however, that the diversity of individual circumstances significantly complicates access to and attitudes toward these statuses and that in many cases, they effectively serve as modes of legal 'anchoring,' helping establish legal 'footholds which allow migrants to acquire a relative socio-psychological stability and function effectively in new life settings' (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2018, 255).

Examining *legal* integration in cases where it is not a formal requirement, as in the case of intra-EU mobility, can provide an important complementary viewpoint to *social* practices and experiences leading to long-term 'settlement,' and the two may intersect in various ways. We are primarily interested in exploring these intersections empirically, as a first step toward a more unified conceptual approach to sociolegal integration. In the following we first briefly outline the legal dimensions of EU movers' long-term settlement in the UK, before reviewing some of the socio-demographic factors commonly associated with long-term settlement in the broader migration literature.

*Legal perspectives on long-term settlement*

The legal rights to settlement of intra-EU migrants in their countries of residence derive from their supranational EU citizenship rights. According to the EU Citizenship Directive [2004/38/EC], 'Union citizens who have chosen to *settle long term* in the host Member State' have an automatic right to enjoy permanent residency in that country, following five continuous years of legal residence. The EU legal framework is meant to assure that obtaining permanent resident status does not require any declaration of intention or an application procedure, although a certifying document must be issued by host Member states upon request by a qualifying person. The possession of a certifying document, however, 'may under no circumstances be made a precondition for the exercise of a right or the completion of an administrative formality' [Art. 25 (1)]. In other words, these measures are explicitly meant to shield intra-EU migrants from any pressure of national legal integration in the host member state, while ensuring that their social, economic, and political rights are guaranteed.

Although the transposition and implementation of the EU Citizenship Directive has not always been straightforward and although several countries continue to adopt unduly restrictive interpretations of EU law (Shaw, Miller, and Fletcher 2013, Mügge and van der Haar 2016), until recently, there have been few incentives for EU movers to formalise their long-term settlement within the legal systems of host countries. The potential benefits of legal integration defined in these terms manifested only under certain personal conditions, since EU citizenship has never been able to unambiguously guarantee certain social rights, particularly those related to family life, even for highly skilled and economically advantaged EU movers (Favell 2008a, Ryan and Mulholland 2014). However, amidst an increasingly hostile anti-EU-migration public discourse and growing concerns about the changing relationship between the UK and the EU, this structure of incentives is arguably undergoing significant change (Graeber 2016).

In response to this new socio-political context, mobile EU nationals who have chosen to settle long term in the UK have the option to formalise their legal entitlement to permanent

residence within the UK's national immigration framework through two related measures of legal integration: they can either obtain a Permanent Residence Certificate (PRC) or become naturalised as British citizens. As of November 2015, obtaining a PRC was also a formal requirement before an application for British citizenship, and while obtaining a PRC does not require any significant financial investment or assimilatory commitment, naturalising as a British citizen sets the same requirements for EU and non-EU nationals alike.[3]

Since the UK's vote to leave the EU, the PRC is no longer merely a selective mechanism in the transition to naturalisation but has become the only available legal measure for securing one's rights to long-term settlement. As a good reflection of the legal uncertainty facing intra-EU migrants during the Brexit transition, at the time of writing, the official governmental advice stated that 'if you already have a permanent residence document it won't be valid after the UK leaves the EU' but that 'a new scheme will be available for EU citizens and their family members to apply to stay in the UK after it leaves the EU' (Home Office 2018c). Nonetheless, holding a PRC allows you 'to apply for British citizenship after you've lived in the UK for 6 years,'[4] and the latter status will not be affected by the UK's exit from the EU.

*Social determinants of long-term settlement*

The empirical literature has primarily approached the question of settlement by highlighting factors that have proved conducive to putting down social roots in a host country (Ryan 2018). In the following, we summarise some of the most commonly cited 'rooting' factors: family ties, gender, employment status, education, language proficiency and bridging social capital, length of stay, original migration plans, stigma and the political climate.

Family ties in the host country, especially having children, are most commonly associated with long-term settlement plans (White 2011, Ryan et al. 2009, Landesmann, Leitner, and Mara 2015, Ganga 2006, McGhee, Heath, and Trevena 2012). In respect to gender, women have been traditionally suggested to be more inclined toward permanent settlement than men (Pessar and Mahler 2003), and this assumption has received some moderate and inconclusive confirmation in correlational analyses of intra-EU migration (Snel, Faber, and Engbersen 2015, Drinkwater and Garapich 2015, Landesmann, Leitner, and Mara 2015).

Being employed has been shown to positively influence the likelihood of permanent settlement (Wessendorf 2018), although under conditions of free movement, this finding has been qualified with respect to the socio-economic status of the job, suggesting that association with highly skilled professions makes *temporary* migration more likely (Landesmann, Leitner, and Mara 2015). Similarly, more highly educated migrants have been shown more likely to return, although education may again relate to mismatch with the performed job (Drinkwater and Garapich 2015, Dustmann and Weiss 2007).

Language proficiency and bridging social capital have been identified as highly

---

[3] See 'The British Nationality (General) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2015,' http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1806/made.

[4] This 'means you must wait another 12 months if you've only lived in the UK for 5 years when you get your document. But you can apply immediately if: you've already lived in the UK for 6 years when you get your document' (Home Office 2018c).

important for successful labour-market and socio-cultural integration (Knight, Lever, and Thompson 2014, Cook, Dwyer, and Waite 2011, Ryan et al. 2008, McGhee, Trevena, and Heath 2015), which, in turn, favour settlement plans (Snel, Faber, and Engbersen 2015, Constant and Massey 2002). The length of time spent in the host country is an important factor in the development of language skills and social ties, although authors have recently highlighted the limitations of a simple linear and progressive understanding of temporality in this respect and described more dynamic processes associated with the lifecycle (Ryan 2016, Ryan and Mulholland 2014, Hunter 2011, Ganga 2006). Conversely, original intentions and plans at the early migratory stage have been shown to impact subsequent integration outcomes and longer-term settlement (Mara and Landesmann 2013). Luthra, Platt, and Salamońska (2016, 30) suggested that particularly under EU free movement conditions, 'preferences are more strongly linked to outcomes' than in visa-controlled types of migration.

Stigmatised migrant identities can become an incentive for both return plans and socio-cultural integration (cf. Moroşanu and Fox 2013). There is a perceived 'clear hierarchy between EU citizens from the West and those from Eastern Europe' (Mügge and van der Haar 2016, 82–83), shaped by what Bolognani and Erdal (2017) call 'political climate' – 'political rhetoric, media representations and resulting public perceptions' (354). We also know that certain migrant groups have been exposed to more negative media representations than others (Allen 2016), with Romanians in particular being portrayed as 'socio-political and cultural "problems"' (Mădroane 2012, 120). There is already emerging qualitative evidence that Romanian nationals are using naturalisation as a method of status enhancement in the face of perceived nationality-based discrimination (Paraschivescu 2016).

Our aim in this article is to test whether these socio-demographic and interpersonal factors identified as shaping practices of long-term settlement also affect aspirations of legal integration. Doing so allows us to address our main research questions concerning the reincentivizing of citizenship within intra-EU migration and Brexit's effect on legal integration in a more complex empirical framework and lay the basis for a more unified conceptual understanding of sociolegal integration.

**Data and methods**

Our analysis relies on two quantitative data sources: (1) secondary administrative data on NINo registrations and applications for PRC and British citizenship over the past decade (Home Office 2018a, b, Department for Work and Pensions 2018) and (2) an original online survey carried out in the three months leading up to the UK's referendum on EU membership. Although we aim to relate the results from the two data-sources, we give due consideration to the fact that they measure different phenomena: responses to our survey reflect attitudes and self-declared future plans rather than concrete past behaviour.

The administrative data not only provide a contextual overview of actual legal integration patterns but also help address our first research question of whether a 'reincentivization of citizenship' was already noticeable in the pre-Brexit years (see Graeber 2016). This question will be explored through a bivariate correlational analysis. The survey data then allow a more detailed cross-sectional assessment of subjective attitudes toward legal

integration, and of the various factors affecting these attitudes, through a series of multiple binomial and multinomial regression models. Before presenting our analysis and findings, we provide a brief overview of the survey design and the variables employed in multivariate statistical models.

*Survey design*

The online survey was conceived and conducted as part of a broader research project, with data collection taking place between the 2nd of March and the 23rd of June 2016. Questionnaires translated into several languages and targeting some of the most numerous EU national groups from different EU Accession waves living in the UK were administered through various online platforms – mainly nationality-specific Facebook groups – following a strategy of 'appropriate targeting' by which we actively engaged in inviting participants from targeted communities (see Miller and Sønderlund 2010, McGhee, Moreh, and Vlachantoni 2017).

For our current aims we restrict our analysis to a sample of 1,413 respondents comprising five national groups: Polish (N=965), Hungarian (N=128), Romanian (N=128), Portuguese (N=120), and German (N=72) nationals. Due to the nature of our research questions, we have excluded current full-time students from our sample and those who already held British citizenship. The choice for the five national groups is meant to provide representation of both 'old' member states (EU15) and the 'new' 2004 (EU8) and 2007 (EU2) Central-Eastern European Accession countries, while making sampling concessions based on convenience considerations. Thus, while the Portuguese, Poles, and Romanians are the largest national groups representing the three different EU Accession groupings respectively at the time of the survey,[5] Hungarians were included because of existing evidence regarding their relatively different mobility patterns compared to other EU8 citizens (Luthra, Platt, and Salamońska 2016, Moreh 2014), as well as the availability of linguistic resources for conducting a targeted data collection in Hungarian. On the other hand, German nationals are included because of expectations of different mobility trajectories between those from northwestern Europe and those from the southern European countries most acutely affected by the enduring Euro-crisis (see Graeber 2016), even though German nationals were targeted through their respective online communities with an English-language questionnaire only.

Consequently, our sample is not representative of the whole EU migrant population in the UK, and the generalisability of our analysis is in this respect restricted. However, our aim is not to provide generalised conclusions but to assess certain trends and enable the formulation of working hypotheses for further research. Nevertheless, through appropriate targeting we did aim to achieve as representative a sample as possible in respect to socio-demographic characteristics (Miller and Sønderlund 2010). As a basis for assessing our sample's socio-demographic representativeness, Table S1 in the Supplementary Materials (SM) offers a comparison with the Labour Force Survey (LFS) sample for the same approximate period (April–June 2016), broken down by selected nationality groups. Although the LFS itself suffers

---

[5] At the end of 2015, Polish nationals were the largest resident group in the UK, estimated at 916,000. The second largest EU national group – apart from Irish citizens (332,000) who have a historically particular relationship and status in the UK – were Romanian nationals (232,000), followed by the citizens of Portugal (219,000) and Italy (193,000) (Office for National Statistics 2016).

from several limitations, especially underrepresentation of recently arrived migrants, the comparison can nevertheless offer a valuable understanding of the limitations of our own survey sample. The most significant difference is in the over-representation of women in our sample (64% vs. 54% in LFS). Overall, however, our data collection method proved to yield a generally even sample comparable to those obtained through traditional methodologies such as the LFS.[6] In light of the gender imbalance, however, we strive in our analysis to employ variables that can reduce the bias caused by disparities related to gender.

*Dependent variables*

The survey asked about subjective attitudes toward naturalisation in general and legal integration plans under two scenarios still available at the time of the survey: under the UK's continued EU membership and in the eventuality of Brexit. Survey questions were formulated as follows:

(1) 'Regardless of the EU referendum, what is your most likely plan for the next 5 years?'

(2) 'If the UK votes to leave the EU, what will your most likely action be?'

(3) 'At any point in the future, are you planning to apply for British citizenship?'

The first two questions concerning medium-term future plans and Brexit-scenario short-term actions shared the same six response options ('return,' 're-migration' to either another EU or a non-EU country, 'no plan/action,' 'PRC,' and 'naturalisation'), which can be grouped together to reflect three general residence-related options: (a) to leave the UK in the short to medium term; (b) to settle long-term in the UK – in the phrasing of the EU Citizenship Directive – by simply planning to remain in the UK for longer than five years and deriving residence rights directly from EU citizenship; or (c) to formalise their long-term residence status within UK immigration law via legal integration measures such as a PRC or naturalisation. For simplicity, we refer to these options as 'exit,' 'derived permanent residence' (DPR), and proactive 'legal integration' plans, respectively.

In regression models, the first question is operationalised as a dependent variable with three levels measuring medium-term plans under a no-Brexit scenario. The individual change between 5-year plans and Brexit-scenario actions is then operationalised as a dichotomous independent variable ('Changed plans in case of Brexit') to measure which medium-term plan is most likely to be affected (i.e. altered) by Brexit. Essentially, this analysis provides a statistical measure of Brexit's possible effect on existing plans of legal integration.

The third survey question asking about general future naturalisation plans was a simple yes/no item in a later section of the questionnaire. It provides a dichotomous dependent variable meant to assess factors related to general attitudes toward naturalisation, as well as to test the relationship between the formalisation of permanent residence and naturalisation plans. This

---

[6] Some other noteworthy differences emerge with respect to age (our sample has a narrower age range of 19–65, compared to 16–97 in the LFS) and consequently the share of those economically 'inactive' (i.e. including those retired) (11% in our sample vs. 18% in the LFS). Those who had been in the UK for over 9 years are also underrepresented in our sample (30% vs. 47%). The validity of the differences in socio-economic status and education, however, are harder to assess due to the high number of missing values and misclassification in our survey and the LFS respectively.

analysis can therefore provide an understanding of whether PRC is more likely to be perceived as a step toward citizenship than a legal integration status in its own right.

### Independent variables

*Table 1* presents descriptive statistics for our sample's main socio-demographic, interpersonal, and attitudinal characteristics. These reflect the factors that emerged from the literature review as likely to shape migrants' settlement and serve as the main independent variables in our statistical analysis. Examining the effect of these factors contributes to our understanding of the broader relational and motivational structure underpinning subjective attitudes toward legal integration.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of independent variables**

|  | Total (N=1,413) | |
|---|---|---|
|  | % | N |
| Female | 64% | 910 |
| Age (cont.): Mean (SD) | 38 (9) | |
| Education: Postgraduate | 18% | 253 |
| Education: Undergraduate | 19% | 266 |
| Education: Post-secondary/Further ed. | 15% | 212 |
| Education: Secondary | 33% | 473 |
| Education: Vocational/Professional | 11% | 162 |
| Married/in civil partnership | 45% | 638 |
| Children: all in UK | 46% | 648 |
| Children: some/all not in UK | 4% | 57 |
| No children | 48% | 677 |
| Time in UK (cont.): Mean (SD) | 6y6m (4y) | |
| Time in UK: <3y | 24% | 345 |
| Time in UK: 3–6y | 23% | 324 |
| Time in UK: 6–9y | 22% | 306 |
| Time in UK: 9+y | 30% | 427 |
| Econ: Employed full time | 60% | 844 |
| Econ: Employed part-time | 15% | 208 |
| Econ: Self-employed | 9% | 130 |
| Econ: Inactive | 11% | 152 |
| Partner Econ: single | 32% | 451 |
| Partner Econ: full time | 43% | 611 |
| Partner Econ: part-time | 5% | 73 |
| Partner Econ: Self-employed | 7% | 93 |
| Partner Econ: Inactive | 6% | 87 |
| Has accessed benefits | 54% | 760 |
| Uses English at work | 78% | 1109 |
| Uses English at home | 20% | 282 |
| Assesses 'socio-political' factors as important reason for migration to UK | 19% | 265 |
| UK citizenship: Eligible | 41% | 576 |
| UK citizenship: DK (the requirements) | 27% | 381 |
| UK citizenship: Not eligible | 25% | 351 |
| Personal effect of Brexit: Negative | 57% | 809 |
| Personal effect of Brexit: None | 25% | 349 |
| Personal effect of Brexit: Positive | 4% | 57 |

| Brexit likelihood: Unlikely | 24% | 340 |
|---|---|---|
| Brexit likelihood: Equal likelihood | 48% | 682 |
| Brexit likelihood: Likely | 26% | 363 |
| Changed plans in Brexit scenario | 22% | 307 |

Note: Percentages are in respect to totals (i.e. remaining differences to 100% are due to 'missing', 'other' and 'prefer not to say' responses)

The basic socio-demographic variables considered are sex, age (<40 vs. 40+), educational qualification, marital/partnership status, parental status, years spent in the UK (<3, 3–6, 6–9, and 9+), the employment status of the 'economic unit,' and nationality. With respect to parental status, although our data differentiate between having dependent children who live in the UK and who live in a different country (see Table 1), the low number of the latter does not allow its effective use in a regression analysis, so we treat parental status as a simple dichotomous category.

'Economic unit' is derived from two variables, one referring to the respondent's employment status and another to the employment status of the respondent's partner. Given the general overrepresentation of women in our sample among those 'looking after family,' this derived variable provides a more nuanced understanding of employment conditions that may influence decision-making within partnership units rather than individually. We consider the 'unit' to be in full-time employment if the respondent is either single and employed full-time or in a long-term partnership with both partners being employed full-time. We further differentiate if only one partner is in full-time employment, if at least one is self-employed, and if both partners are either inactive or working at most on a part-time basis.

Three further variables reflect more complex social and interpersonal characteristics: use of welfare benefits and exposure to English language at home and in the workplace. We measure whether a respondent had accessed any of the most common welfare benefits relating to employment, housing, disability, and family life during his/her residence in the UK through a dichotomous variable. We would expect that engagement with the British welfare state has an emplacing effect due to facilitating interaction with state institutions. Use of English at home and in a workplace environment (both coded as dichotomous) is the closest approximation of 'socio-cultural' integration we have available in our dataset, the expectation being that exposure to the English language would increase the likelihood of long-term settlement through legal integration.

A final set of variables represent further factors potentially affecting legal integration: original migration intentions, eligibility for naturalisation in the short-term, and anxiety about Brexit. To estimate the role of original migration intentions on future legal integration plans, we include a dichotomous variable denoting whether socio-political reasons played an important role in choosing the UK, rather than another EU country, as a destination. This variable was derived from a 10-item question block following a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) that showed reasons such as 'better medical care,' 'more political/civic freedom,' 'better schooling for children,' and 'better social benefits' as reliable for our purposes (Cronbach's $\alpha$ = .75) (Cortina 1993). Following the PCA, we constructed a scale measure based on these four socio-political reasons items, which we then dichotomised for our analysis (for a detailed description of the PCA procedure and results from preliminary tests of suitability, see PCA in the SM).

Self-declared civic status in respect to British citizenship estimates awareness of 'eligibility' for naturalisation within one year. While eligibility may limit one's legal integration options in the short term, awareness of the legal requirements for naturalisation hints at a more basic interest in acquiring British citizenship. The variable denoting 'anxiety about Brexit' is derived from two items: perceived likelihood of a Brexit outcome in the EU referendum and the expected personal effects of a Brexit vote. Brexit anxiety reflects the attitude of those who felt that there was at least 'an equal probability' of a vote in support of leaving the EU, while at the same time considering that a possible Brexit would have a 'very negative' or 'somewhat negative' effect on their lives and the lives of their family members.

To save space, we present full details of our survey questions, response categories, and derived variables in Table S3 (SM). Table S2 also provides a more detailed version of Table 1, with data broken down by nationality groups.

## Analysis and findings

### *Mere eligibility? Legal integration trends between 2002 and 2017*

As a first step in our analysis, we gauge the magnitude of migratory and legal integration practices of EU nationals in the UK. One available, although imperfect,[7] method of measuring migration inflows is NINo allocations, and *Figure 1* shows the evolution in the number of NINo-s allocated to EU27 nationals yearly between January 2002 and January 2018 and, within that, to nationals of the origin countries included in our survey.
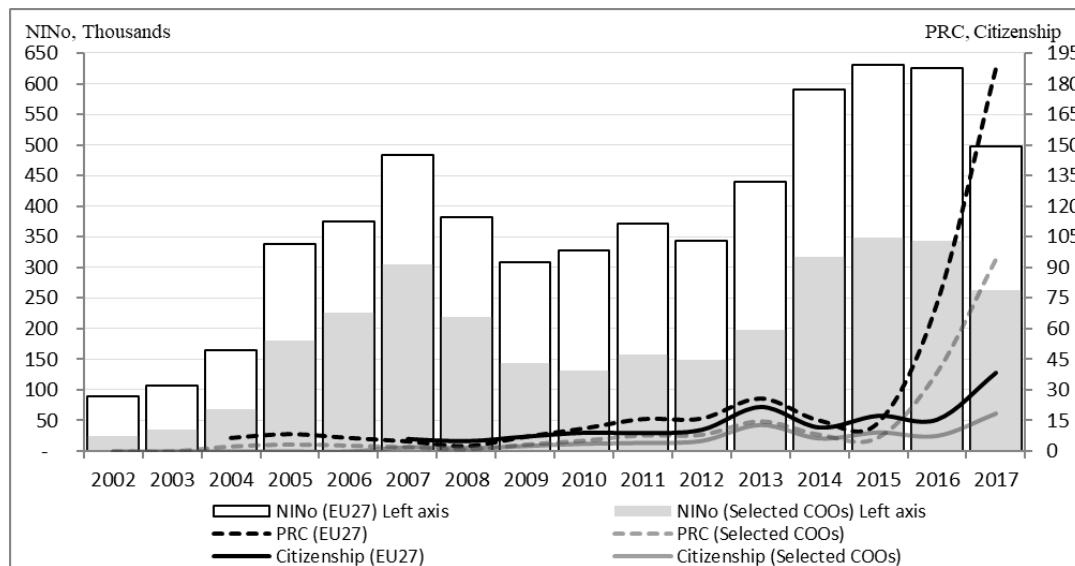


**Figure 1: NINo allocations, Permanent Residence Certificate applications and British citizenship applications (2002–2017)**

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Department for Work and Pensions (2018) and Home Office (2018a, 2017b).

Notes: PRC data contain all applications for 'documents certifying permanent residence and permanent residence cards' processed in that year, including issued, refused, and invalid applications. It is therefore not restricted to issued documents but may not count applications filed but not yet processed.

---

[7] A NINo is required of anyone planning to undertake employment or self-employment in the UK, and as such it is more reliable as a measure of *economic* mobility than of other types of migration.

*Figure 1* also presents the number of processed PRC applications (PRC) and applications for British citizenship (Citizenship) in each year for which data are available (right axis). We find that NINo numbers peaked in 2007 but have plateaued at record heights since 2014, following the lifting of transitional restrictions for EU2 nationals.[8] At the same time we see an increase in both PRCs and naturalisation applications in 2013, followed by a sudden soar particularly in PRCs during 2016 and 2017. This tenfold increase of PRCs to almost 190,000 (compared to the average of around 17,000 in any five-year period prior to 2016) is undoubtedly caused by the combined effect of the EU Referendum outcome and the previously mentioned November 2015 introduction of the requirement to obtain a PRC before making an application for British citizenship. However, the 2013 peak in PRCs and citizenship applications must be explained by other factors. Given that most EU nationals exercising Treaty Rights in the UK become eligible for naturalisation as British citizens after six years, one obvious hypothesis is that the 2013 peak in citizenship applications correlates with the 2007 peak in NINo allocations, which would mean that an important driver of naturalisation prior to Brexit was *the mere eligibility to apply*.[9]

To test this hypothesis, we performed a correlation analysis between the number of allocated NINOs in year $t$ – as a proxy for arrival year – and the number of citizenship applications in year $t+6$, with data allowing the consideration of ten such year-pairs (2002/2008 to 2011/2017) (*Figure 2*).

We are primarily interested in the period up to the 2009/2015 year-pair because it predates the start of the EU Referendum campaign and is thus telling of pre-Brexit processes. A statistically significant correlation would indicate that naturalisation, despite its high associated costs, had carried incentives even before Brexit. For this period, we indeed find a strong and statistically significant correlation for the entire EU migrant population (r=.771, p=.025), as well as for nationals of the selected post-2004 Accession countries (Figure 2). The relationship is not statistically significant, however, in the case of Portuguese and German nationals. If we extend the analysis to the Brexit period and include the 2010/2016 and 2011/2017 year-pairs, the correlation breaks off in most cases, except for groups that have arrived more recently – like Romanians, Hungarians, and Portuguese – in whose case NINo allocations themselves peaked in 2011. These results provide some support for the 'mere eligibility' hypothesis but at the same time highlight important differences based on nationality. Furthermore, the sudden rise in naturalisation rates during 2016 and 2017 shows, as we would expect, that Brexit provides a much stronger motivation for legal integration than 'mere eligibility' previously had.

---

[8] It is worth noting that NINo-s are less useful for assessing the in-migration of EU2 nationals who benefitted from free movement since 2007 while at the same time facing difficulties in obtaining a NINo prior to the end of transitional restrictions on their labour-market access in 2014. This partially explains the sudden rise in NINo allocations in 2014, while their beneficiaries were not necessarily recent arrivals. On the other hand, the 2007 peak was not caused by EU2 citizens; registrations by Romanian and Bulgarian nationals amounted to 6.5% of the total number of applications in that year. Since 2014, however, over one third of all new NINo-s were issued to EU2 nationals (32% in 2014, 33% in 2015, 37% in 2016, and 39% in 2017).

[9] A similar hypothesis regarding PRCs is more difficult to make, given that obtaining a PRC was not previously required before naturalisation and did not provide any substantial additional entitlements. Also, our data refer to *processed* PRC applications, and their processing could take up to six months (which may partly explain the peak in 2013 as opposed to 2012).
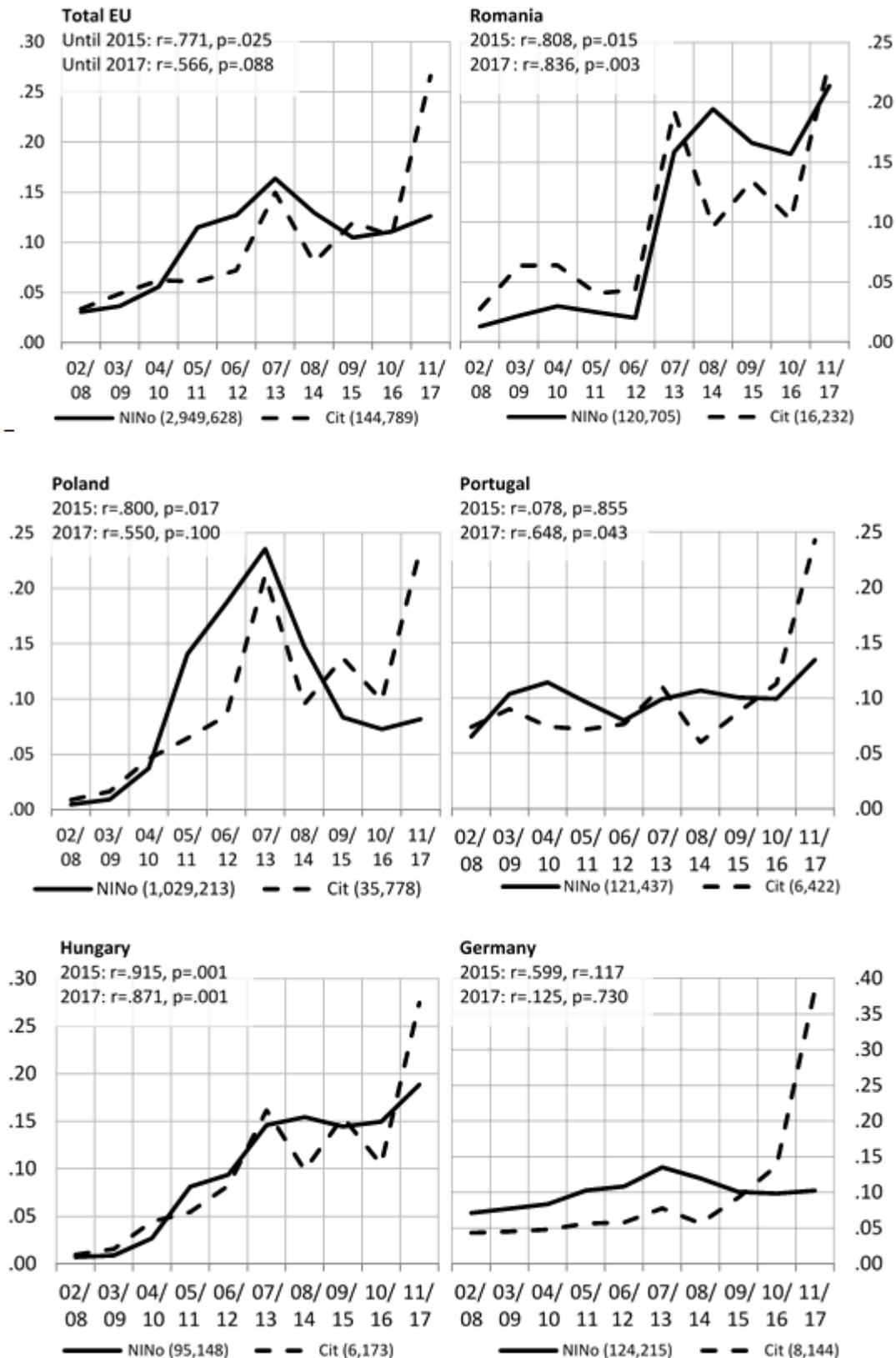
**Figure 2: Correlation between NINo allocations (2002-2011) and citizenship applications (2008-2017), (year-paired by six-year lapses)**

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Department for Work and Pensions (2018) and Home Office (2018a). Notes: To enhance the visualisation of the correlation, NINo allocations and citizenship grants in each respective year are presented as percentage of their total number over their respective time-period. Years-pairs should be read as follows: 02/08 refers to NINo allocations in 2002 and British citizenship applications in 2008.

*Future plans of legal integration: descriptive results*

Data obtained from our survey allow a more detailed cross-sectional understanding of the plans of selected intra-EU migrants during the months before the EU referendum. Based on the above findings, we expect a strong inclination toward naturalisation and legal integration in general, since naturalisation strategies based on 'mere eligibility' might be enhanced by the *possibility* of a Brexit. It is important to reiterate at this point that even when our survey question inquired about plans under a no-Brexit scenario, these plans may still be influenced by the uncertainty and anxiety caused by the broader discursive moment of the EU referendum. We test this assumption later through a multivariate analysis.

The distribution of answers to our three central survey questions is presented in Figure 3, broken down by nationality groups. These results confirm our initial expectation for strong legal integration plans. We find that 35% of respondents were considering applying for PRC and 33% for British citizenship as a 5-year plan 'regardless of the EU referendum,' while 5% of respondents already held a PRC and were planning to remain in the UK without planning to naturalise (Figure 3A). Only 9% were planning to leave the UK within 5 years (6% to 'return' to their origin countries and 3% to 're-migrate' to a third country), while 18% considered remaining in the UK relying on their DPR rights (i.e., without legal integration plans). In case of a Brexit vote (i.e., as a more short-term strategy), 48% would opt for PRC and only 21% for naturalisation, while a slightly higher proportion than otherwise would re-migrate (6%) and only 14% would not take any proactive measure of legal integration (Figure 3B). Overall, under both scenarios posited in our survey, combined legal integration plans amount to 68–69% (Figures 3A and 3B), and general plans for naturalisation 'at any point in the future' show a comparable result of 65% (Figure 3C).

Shifts between the two legal integration action-plans – PRC and naturalisation – under the different scenarios can therefore be better explained through the 'eligibility' hypothesis, assuming that fewer respondents would be eligible for naturalisation as British citizens in the immediate aftermath of a Brexit vote (especially since PRC is now a prerequisite for a citizenship application). If we examine the direction of individual changes, rather than the aggregate statistics presented in Figures 3A and 3B, we find that 75% of those who would change their stated 5-year plans *away* from naturalisation in the more immediate event of a Brexit vote would change *to* PRC; conversely, of those who said they would change their five-year plans *away* from PRC, 57% would change to naturalisation and 36% would, or rather could, take 'no action.' Arguably, this is also reflected in the much greater increase in actual PRC applications than in naturalisations over the past two years that we saw earlier in Figure 1.

Some of the differences between nationality groups can also be interpreted as supportive of the eligibility hypothesis. Hungarian and Romanian respondents in particular stand out in Figures 3A and 3B. Hungarians show the greatest overall shift from naturalisation to PRC plans in case of Brexit, while Romanians are the only group to exhibit a significant shift *toward* 'no action' under a Brexit scenario. Considering that Hungarians and Romanians in our sample have the lowest average lengths of residence in the UK (4 years 3 months and 3 years 9 months, respectively – see Table S2 in SM) and, furthermore, that despite their time of arrival, many Romanian respondents may not have had access to NINo and formal employment
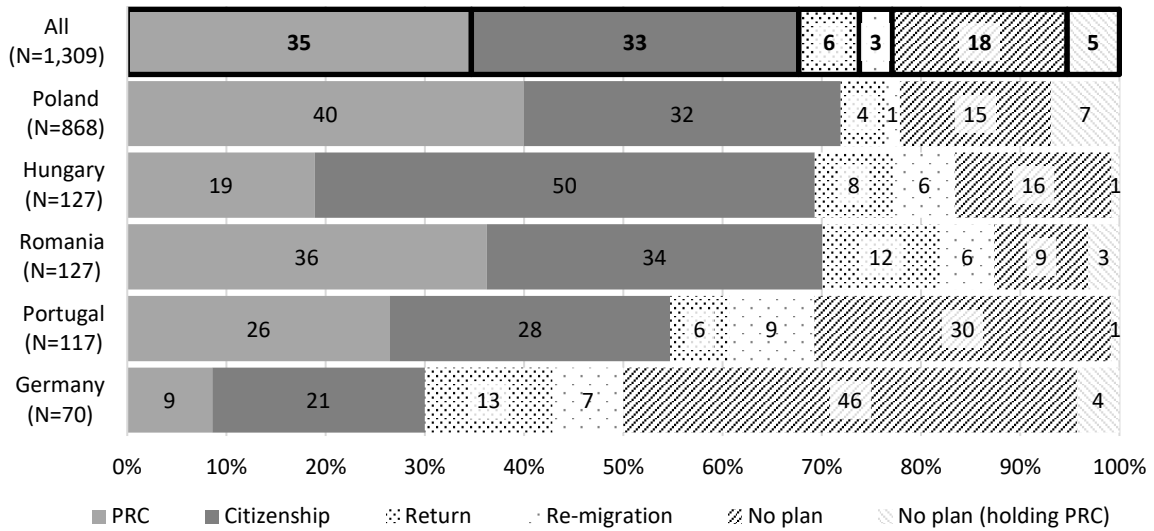
**A:** **5-year plans (no-Brexit scenario)**
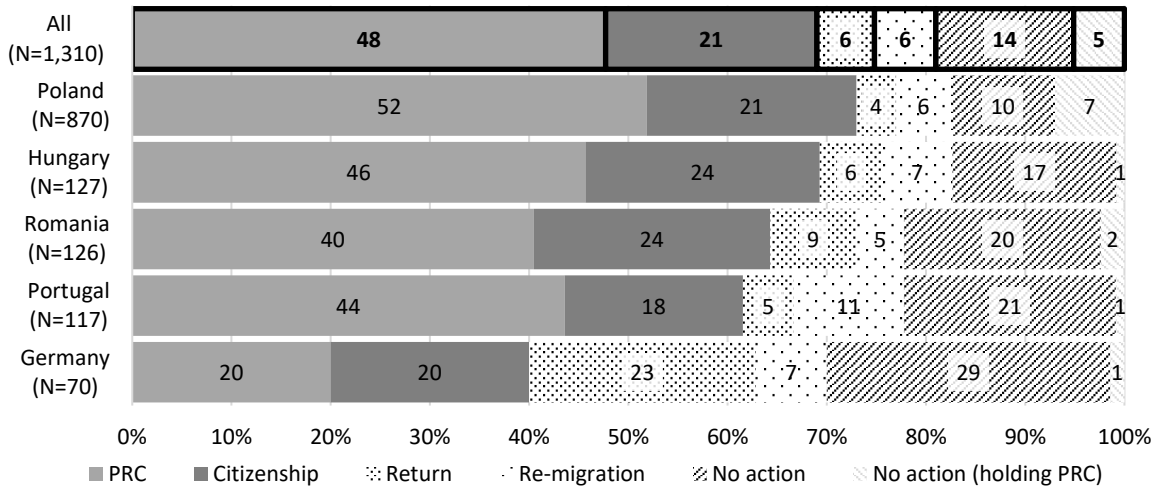


**B:** **Brexit action plans**
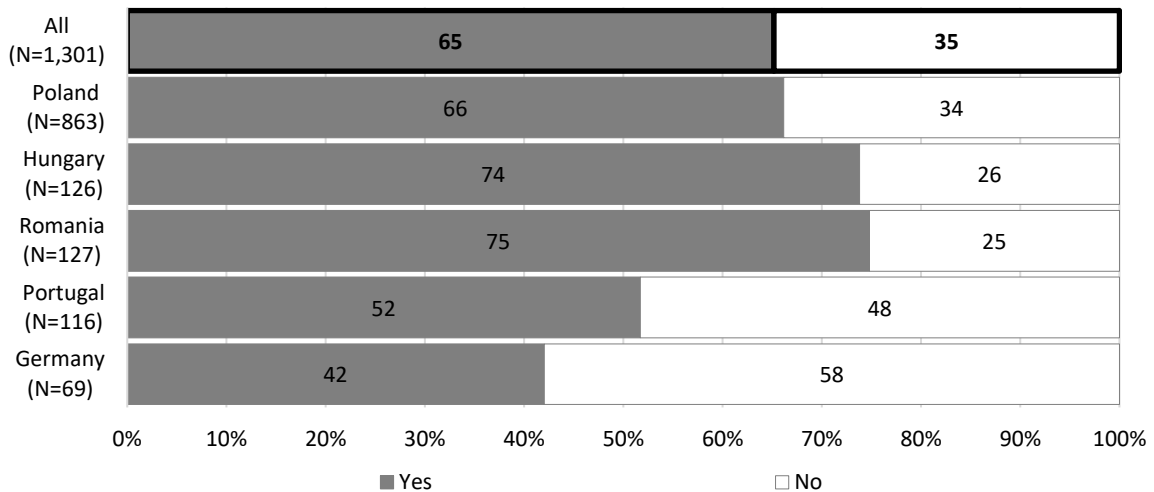


**C:** **Naturalisation at any time in the future**

**Figure 3: Legal integration plans - distribution of answers to three survey questions, by nationality group (%)**

until 2014 (and therefore are not eligible for a PRC), their patterns of likely change between the available strategies under the two scenarios become easier to interpret in line with the eligibility hypothesis.

At the same time, the general differences in attitudes toward legal integration between the various nationality groups also reinforce the findings highlighted in the previous section: German and Portuguese nationals show the least interest in legal integration across all scenarios; conversely, not only do Hungarians and Romanians declare the most interest in naturalisation (74% and 75%, respectively (Figure 3C)), but their actual naturalisation patterns even before the EU Referendum showed the strongest and most stable alignment with the 'mere eligibility' hypothesis, as can be inferred from the correlation coefficients shown in Figure 2.

### *Socio-demographic and interpersonal determinants of legal integration preferences*

Having established the strong overall preference for legal integration strategies in descriptive terms, the next step is to examine what factors may influence these preferences. To do so, we first performed a multinomial logistic regression on a dependent variable grouping 5-year plans in the three broader action-categories of 'exit,' DPR, and legal integration, with the latter being the reference category (Model 1, Table 2). Those who already held a PRC and were not planning either 'exit' or naturalisation were excluded from this part of the analysis, due to their different legal status. Second, we ran a binomial logistic regression on the variable assessing whether the respondent is planning to naturalise 'at any point in the future' (Model 2, Table 2). We discuss relevant results from these regression models in parallel.

The used measure of age proved significant in respect to mobility, with those under 40 being around twice as likely to prefer 'exit' than legal integration in the medium term, even when all other variables were held constant (M1; OR=1/0.51). Young adults, we could conclude, are more likely to be mobile than the middle-aged, as would be expected based on our knowledge of the life cycle of social ties in migratory settings (Ryan 2016) and psychosocial development in general (Erikson and Erikson 1997). Age, however, does not seem to have an influence on the legal aspects of integration.

Education level has a more ambiguous effect. Those educated to university or postgraduate level are more than twice less likely to say that they are planning to undergo legal integration than to leave the country, compared to those educated to secondary-school level. This finding gives partial support to observations that highly skilled individuals tend to take 'fuller advantage of free mobility within the EU' and show 'less attachment to a particular country' (Landesmann, Leitner, and Mara 2015, 23, see also Drinkwater and Garapich 2015, Dustmann and Weiss 2007). However, the same effect stands for those with vocational/professional qualifications below secondary level, which probably signals that those in more elementary trade occupations see their migratory careers as similarly transitory. Those with post-secondary/further education degrees, on the other hand, are the only ones to be significantly more inclined to legal integration than to rely on DPR rights, compared to those educated at secondary level (M1; OR=1.92).

Having children favours legal integration by contrast to both 'exit' and DPR options, as well as with respect to general naturalisation plans. Those with children are 61% more likely

**Table 2: Socio-demographic and interpersonal determinants of legal integration (multinomial and logistic regression models, odds ratios)**

| | M1: *Legal integration in next 5 years* | | M2: *Naturalisation in future* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Vs: Exit | Vs: DPR | Vs: Not Planning |
| Female (d) | 1.066 | 1.034 | 0.963 |
| Aged under 40 (d) | 0.506** | 0.841 | 1.059 |
| Education: Postgraduate | 0.394** | 1.231 | 1.186 |
| Education: Undergraduate | 0.478* | 1.335 | 0.966 |
| Education: Post-secondary/Further ed. | 1.083 | 1.920** | 1.302 |
| Education: Vocational/Professional | 0.475* | 1.108 | 0.923 |
| Married/in civil partnership (d) | 1.056 | 1.390+ | 0.815 |
| Has children (d) | 1.784* | 1.457* | 1.612** |
| Years in UK: 9+ | 0.686 | 0.566** | 0.590* |
| Years in UK: 6– 9 | 0.863 | 1.049 | 0.630* |
| Years in UK: 3– 6 | 0.960 | 0.877 | 1.061 |
| Economic unit: Employed full-time | 1.703+ | 1.086 | 0.907 |
| Economic unit: One member full-time | 1.615 | 0.802 | 0.876 |
| Economic unit: At least one self-employed | 1.701 | 1.141 | 1.317 |
| Nationality: Germany | 0.195*** | 0.109*** | 0.232*** |
| Nationality: Portugal | 0.333** | 0.323*** | 0.332*** |
| Nationality: Hungary | 0.343*** | 0.686 | 1.054 |
| Nationality: Romania | 0.431** | 2.018+ | 1.253 |
| Has accessed welfare benefits (d) | 1.989** | 1.094 | 1.637** |
| Uses English at work (d) | 1.353 | 2.001*** | 2.355*** |
| Uses English at home (d) | 1.759* | 1.421+ | 2.599*** |
| Nagelkerke R-square | .187 | | .143 |
| N | 1,057 | | 1,057 |
| Notes: Dichotomous independent variables are marked with 'd', while non-marked variables should be read against the relevant reference category: 'secondary education'; 'has less than 3 years in UK'; 'Economic unit in part-time work or inactive'; 'Nationality: Poland'. | | | |
| M1: Chi-sq (42) = 168.435, p<.001; M2: Chi-sq (21) = 115.299, p<.001 M1 was rescaled for underdispersion based on the deviance statistic (φ=0.72) | | | |
| +p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 | | | |

to plan naturalisation at one point in the future (M2; OR=1.61), 46% more likely to undergo some form of legal integration within five years than rely on DPR (M1; OR=1.46), and 78% more likely to legally integrate than to leave the UK within five years (M1; OR=1.78). However, parental status is also highly correlated with having 'accessed welfare benefits,' which in the majority of cases represents childcare-related benefits (see Table S3 in SM), and the latter variable has an even stronger legally integrative effect with respect to medium-term mobility plans (M1; OR=1.99) and indefinite naturalisation intentions (M2; OR=1.64). Thus, those with children are more likely to plan to stay in the UK and eventually apply for citizenship but are even more likely to do so if they have engaged with the British welfare state.

With respect to the length of residence, we generally find that those who have lived in the UK for over 9 years are less likely to opt for legal integration than those with less than 3 years in the country. Although this observation does not lend itself to a straight-forward explanation, it may highlight that those who have arrived most recently are more sceptical about the ability of EU-derived rights to safeguard their access to long-term residence, a possible effect of the political climate (Bolognani and Erdal 2017, Favell 2013).

The employment status of the 'economic unit' did not prove significant; however, *speaking English in a workplace environment* has a strong legally integrative effect both by contrast to DPR in the medium term (M1; OR=2.00) and with respect to indefinite naturalisation intentions (M2; OR=2.36). A similar analysis (not reported here) on respondents' individual employment status, as opposed to that of the 'economic unit,' highlights that employment only gains significance if it takes place in an environment where English is spoken and is thus conducive to the enhancement of bridging social capital (see also our related analysis on the Polish sample, in McGhee, Moreh, and Vlachantoni 2017). This finding adds further nuance to the straightforward assumption that 'migrants with full-time jobs or self-employed migrants tend to favour permanent settlement' (Landesmann, Leitner, and Mara 2015, 22). *Using English at home* similarly makes one 2.6 times more likely to declare naturalisation plans at one point in the future (M2; OR=2.60) and 76% more likely to be planning legal integration in the medium term as opposed to leaving the UK (M1; OR=1.76). It is also less likely that those using English at home rely on DPR; however, the statistical effect in this case is not significant at the .05 level.

Finally, the effect of *nationality* shows a somewhat-complex picture when accounting for other variables but essentially confirms what emerged from the descriptive analysis (Figure 3). As the largest group of intra-EU migrants in the UK (and in our sample), Polish nationals were designated as the reference category, and, compared to them, all other nationality groups proved significantly more likely to be planning to leave the UK than to legally integrate (M1). At the same time, German and Portuguese nationals are 9 and 3 times less inclined, respectively, to say that they would undergo legal integration within five years than to rely on DPR (M1) and less likely to plan naturalisation at any time in the future (M2). Romanians are an interesting case; although compared to Poles, their likelihood to prefer legal integration over DPR in the medium term is not statistically significant at the p<.05 level in Model 1, if we do not control for the two 'use of English' variables, the effect is significant (p=0.024) and shows Romanians as over twice as likely to plan legal integration. Overall, these effects support the hypothesis that those from the pre-2004 member states are less attracted by integration within the UK's legal structures, while Romanian migrants, under certain circumstances, are particularly open to legal integration, perhaps motivated by a desire to enhance their civic status in the face of perceived discrimination (Paraschivescu 2016).

To conclude, several socio-demographic factors identified in the broader literature as conducive to socially emplacing migrants – such as parental ties, linguistic exposure, time spent in the UK (albeit counterintuitively), or education level (Dustmann and Weiss 2007, Landesmann, Leitner, and Mara 2015, McGhee, Trevena, and Heath 2015, Ryan et al. 2009, White 2011) – have proved significant in determining stated plans of legal integration in the medium term and naturalisation in the more distant future. This finding is important, since these factors would not necessarily play an important role in the mobile lives of EU movers, were it not for pre-Brexit practical failings in the lived experience of EU citizenship (Favell 2013, Graeber 2016). As such, they intimate that legal integration preferences may be rooted in broader relational and motivational structures than in the UK's potential departure from the EU.

**Table 3: Further factors affecting legal integration (multinomial and logistic regression models, odds ratios)**

| All non-students from selected EU countries | Model 3: *Legal integration* in next 5 years | | Model 4: *Naturalisation* in future |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Vs. Exit** | **Vs. DPR** | **Vs. Not Planning** |
| 'Socio-political' migration reasons (d) | 2.386* | 1.561* | 1.822** |
| UK citizenship: Eligible | 1.086 | 1.068 | 0.987 |
| UK citizenship: NK (the requirements) | 0.657+ | 0.586* | 0.529** |
| Feels anxious about Brexit (d) | 1.828** | 1.514** | 1.593** |
| Changed plans in case of Brexit (d) | 0.122*** | 0.069*** | 0.308*** |
| Nagelkerke R-square | .407 | | .243 |
| N | 1,057 | | 1,057 |
| Notes: All the independent variables included in Table 2 are also controlled for. The reference category for the non-dichotomous variable is: 'UK citizenship: Not eligible'. | | | |
| M3: Chi-sq (52) = 408.435, p<.001; M4: Chi-sq (26) = 204.579, p<.001 M3 was rescaled for underdispersion based on the deviance statistic (φ=0.60) | | | |
| +p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 | | | |

### *The Brexit effect on legal integration*

Having established the relevance of certain sociodemographic factors in shaping legal integration preferences, this section aims to assess more directly the degree to which Brexit affects practices and aspirations of legal integration. For this purpose, we expand the regression models discussed above with four variables of interest. Table 3 presents regression coefficients for these additional variables, while also controlling for the socio-demographic and interpersonal variables included in Table 2.

As the literature review established, original intentions behind migration can affect return and settlement practices (Luthra, Platt, and Salamońska 2016, Mara and Landesmann 2013). Although capturing the complexity of original intentions is never straighforward and always difficult to operationalise, any particular measure of intentionality is expected to highlight that long-term settlement is at least partly driven by long-term settlement plans at the time of initial migration. In our model we expect that those who had migrated for *socio-political reasons*, rather than merely to achieve an economic aim, had already been determined to settle in the UK and undergo legal integration (see SM3 for a derivation of the variable). One fifth of our sample had assessed 'socio-political' factors as relevant to their decision to migrate to the UK instead of another EU country (19%; see Table 1), and we find that having had socio-political migration reasons significantly increases the likelihood of legal integration plans: those with socio-political migration reasons are 82% more likely to be planning naturalisation in the future (M4; OR=1.82), 56% more likely to take measures of legal integration in the next five years instead of relying on DPR (M3; OR=1.56), and 2.4 times more likely to legally integrate than to be planning to leave the UK in the medium term (M3; OR=2.39).

Another variable measured the effect of self-declared civic status in respect to British citizenship. Rather than a reliable measure of eligibility for naturalisation, this variable denotes *awareness* of, and consequently, interest in eligibility requirements. We indeed find that self-

declared eligibility does not significantly determine one's plans but that *awareness* of the requirements significantly increases the likelihood of individual preferences for legal integration: those avowedly *unaware* of the *requirements* are almost twice less likely to hold future naturalisation plans (M4; OR=0.53), and over 70% less likely to plan legal integration than DPR in the medium term (M3; OR=0.59), than those *aware* of their *ineligibility* for naturalisation within one year.

This finding could mean that an initial interest in one's legal options is conducive to legal integration plans, although we cannot unambiguously resolve the question of causation between the two: we have no way of checking whether the political climate of EU Referendum debates actually stirred that interest or whether it truly preceded the anxieties caused by the possibility of the UK leaving the EU. However, it is informative to note that when running the same regression model on the Brexit scenario as the outcome variable (not shown here), unawareness of eligibility criteria loses its statistical significance, while actual self-declared eligibility significantly increases, by a measure of two, the likelihood of legal integration over 'no action' (OR=1.96, p=.007). In other words, in case of Brexit, those who are unaware of the criteria for naturalisation are no longer less likely to opt for legal integration than those who are aware of the criteria and know that are ineligible for naturalisation. We can interpret this finding in line with our earlier conclusions that Brexit seems to have had a strong legally integrative effect on those who had previously not planned legal integration measures but not necessarily on those whose plans had already been shaped.

As a dispositional measure of the EU Referendum's psychological impact, we included a variable testing the effect of Brexit anxiety on reported legal integration plans (see Table S3 in SM). Overall, 43% of respondents were *feeling anxious about Brexit*, and this anxiety significantly increases both medium-term legal integration plans regardless of the EU Referendum (M3) and indefinite future naturalisation intentions (M4), even when all other variables are accounted for. We could interpret this situation as signalling that Brexit's discursive context may have also left its imprint on planning for a future in a no-Brexit scenario. However, the direction of causality remains a black box in this case too, and it may be that those who already hold legal integration plans are more likely to be concerned about Brexit, rather than the other way around.

A more direct measure of Brexit's potential effect on professed future plans is to assess whether planned actions under the Brexit scenario differ from planned actions in a medium-term no-Brexit scenario. As shown in Table 3, those who *change their plans in case of Brexit* are three times less likely to have planned to naturalise at one point in the future and in the medium term eight times more likely to have planned 'exit' (OR=1/0.12) and fifteen times more likely to have been planning DPR as opposed to legal integration (OR=1/0.07). In other words, those entertaining legal integration plans (i.e., over two thirds of our sample) are less likely to have their plans changed because of Brexit. Their motivations must have at least in part been motivated by factors other than the EU referendum, and Brexit may primarily *accelerate* their legal integration apace with increased anxiety about the negative effects of a foreseeable Brexit vote.

Finally, it is important to consider whether those who are planning to apply for a PRC do so with the aim of naturalising as British citizens in the future. We could hardly talk of a 'return of citizenship' otherwise. We have seen from the administrative data that the EU

20

**Table 4: The relationship between permanent residence and citizenship (logistic regression models, odds ratios)**

| | Model 5: _Legal integration_ in next 5 years | Model 6: _Naturalisation_ in future |
|---|---|---|
| 5–year plan: PRC vs. DPR | 2.704*** | |
| Brexit action: PRC vs. No action | | 3.660*** |
| Nagelkerke R-square | .200 | .217 |
| N | 656 | 763 |
| Notes: All the independent variables included in Table 2 are also controlled for. | | |
| +p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 | | |

Referendum's actual outcome has had a very noticeable influence on legal integration practices: primarily on PRC applications, but PRC is now a requirement for naturalisation, and citizenship applications themselves reached their highest levels during 2017 (Figure 1). We have also seen from the descriptive statistics of our survey data that the relative majority (35%) of respondents were planning PRC in the next five years regardless of the EU referendum, and almost half (48%) would apply for a PRC in case of a Brexit vote (Figure 3). The difference between the two scenarios, as we have noted, is due partly to the fact that 75% of those planning naturalisation in the next five years would, in case of Brexit, first apply for a PRC. Apart from this latter group, however, the question remains whether the PRC – a legal tool still regulated by EU law – is an end in itself or merely a transition to full citizenship. We attempt to elucidate this through Models 5 and 6 (Table 4) on a subset of our sample, including only those planning either PRC or DPR in the next five years (N=656) and in case of a Brexit vote (N=763), respectively.

We find that those planning for PRC, as opposed to DPR, in the next five years are 2.7 times more inclined to be planning naturalisation at some point in the future (M5) and that those with similar plans in case of Brexit are 3.7 time more likely to plan naturalisation in the future. When speaking of legal integration, we could therefore conclude that we see the return of citizenship as a legal status to be aimed at through formalising one's permanent residence rights. As noted earlier, while the latter is still a process derived from EU legal norms meant to reduce any assimilatory expectations raised by member states, naturalisation imposes the full set of civic integration requirements (Goodman 2012, Joppke 2017) through which EU 'movers' are indeed 'turning into immigrants' (Favell 2013, 57).

**Conclusions**

Combining a statistical analysis of data from secondary administrative sources and an online survey, this article examined patterns of legal integration among intra-EU migrants in the UK as a broader process predating the EU Referendum and assessed Brexit's effect on attitudes to legal integration. It has four main findings. First, we argue that national citizenship is the main legal mechanism by which intra-EU migrants seek to integrate within the UK's legal framework and that this was the case even before the EU Referendum. We show that naturalisation intentions are often shaped by the mere entitlement to apply for citizenship and that initial reasons for migration and interest in legal integration options, leading to a higher awareness of such options, are also factors driving a preference for legal integration. This

finding substantiates Graeber's (2016) observations concerning the 'reincentivizing of citizenship' in intra-EU migration.

Second, the article highlights Brexit's strong but differential effect on legal integration plans. Anxiety about Brexit is strongly associated with plans for legal integration, even in a scenario in which the UK remains in the EU and when other socio-demographic and attitudinal variables are held constant. Yet, as discussed, the causality in the relationship is hard to determine. Overall, Brexit affects disproportionately those who had previously planned to rely on EU citizenship as the main guarantor of their long-term residence and settlement rights.

Third, our analysis highlights significant differences between the selected nationality groups in respect to both practices and attitudes toward legal integration and, consequently, in Brexit's effect on their plans and actions. Those from pre-2004 EU member states are much less likely to have planned to legally integrate before the EU Referendum and thus see their plans as affected by Brexit to a greater degree. Findings concerning differences between nationality groups, however, must be considered in the context of our limited and unbalanced nationality sample. Nevertheless, they are useful for helping formulate new hypotheses for a more structured comparative analysis.

Fourth, several socio-demographic variables described in the broader migration literature as shaping migrants' social 'embedding' (Ryan 2018), 'emplacement' (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013) or 'anchoring' (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016) in countries of residence have proved significant in shaping attitudes toward legal integration. On the one hand, this finding, again, signals that preferences for legal integration are partly rooted in broader social and interpersonal processes beyond the Brexit factor. On the other hand, it highlights an intersection between legal and social forms of integration that needs further elaboration and disambiguation.

These findings make a significant contribution to beginning to grasp the complexity of integrative processes in times of radical sociolegal transformation. They place Brexit within a broader set of phenomena that could be summed up as sociolegal de-Europeanization: a loss of faith in the strength of supranational rights, materialised in both bottom-up and top-down attitudes and behaviours. Thus, this article makes a significant early contribution to the understandings of these phenomena.

The sociolegal aspects of integration are becoming ever more important following the Brexit vote, and there are several dimensions in this respect that our research was not equipped to address. We will highlight but two. Future research must examine further the qualitative lived experience of naturalisation and national citizenship as balances between providing a legal 'anchor' to achieving 'socio-psychological stability' while leaving open 'various possibilities' (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2018, 255) and serving the more assimilatory purposes of 'integration through citizenship' (Hansen 2003, 89). From a legal perspective, we also need a better understanding of how the citizenship laws of origin countries – particularly with respect to holding dual nationality in a non-EU country, which the UK becomes following Brexit – may affect migrants' attitudes and practices. In effect, these two research directions will involve developing a more unified focus on the stratification of legal transnationalism within the web of transnational social and interpersonal relationships.

# References

Allen, William L. 2016. A Decade of Immigration in the British Press. In *Migration Observatory Report*. Oxford: COMPAS, University of Oxford.

Bolognani, Marta, and Marta Bivand Erdal. 2017. "Return Imaginaries and Political Climate: Comparing Thinking About Return Mobilities Among Pakistani Origin Migrants and Descendants in Norway and the UK." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* no. 18 (1):353–367.

Constant, Amelie, and Douglas S. Massey. 2002. "Return migration by German guest workers: neoclassical to new economic theories." *International Migration* no. 40 (4):5–38.

Cook, Joanne, Peter Dwyer, and Louise Waite. 2011. "The Experiences of Accession 8 Migrants in England: Motivations, Work and Agency." *International Migration* no. 49 (2):54–79.

Cortina, Jose M. 1993. "What is coefficient alpha? An examination of theory and applications." *Journal of Applied Psychology* no. 78 (1):98–104.

Department for Work and Pensions. 2018. NINo Registrations To Adult Overseas Nationals Entering The UK. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

Drinkwater, Stephen, and Michał P. Garapich. 2015. "Migration Strategies of Polish Migrants: Do They Have Any at All?" *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 41 (12):1909–1931.

Dubucs, Hadrien, Thomas Pfirsch, Ettore Recchi, and Camille Schmoll. 2017. "Je suis un Italien de Paris: Italian migrants' incorporation in a European capital city." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 43 (4):578–595.

Dustmann, Christian, and Yoram Weiss. 2007. "Return Migration: Theory and Empirical Evidence from the UK." *British Journal of Industrial Relations* no. 45 (2):236–256.

Eade, John, Stephen Drinkwater, and Michal Garapich. 2007. Class and Ethnicity - Polish Migrants in London. In *Research Report for the RES-000-22-1294 ESRC project*: University of Surrey, Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism.

Erikson, Erik H., and Joan M. Erikson. 1997. *The life cycle completed*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Favell, Adrian. 2008a. *Eurostars and Eurocities: free movement and mobility in an integrating Europe*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Favell, Adrian. 2008b. "The New Face of East–West Migration in Europe." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 34 (5):701–716.

Favell, Adrian. 2013. "The Changing Face of 'Integration' in a Mobile Europe." *Perspectives on Europe* no. 43 (1):53–58.

Ganga, Deianira. 2006. "From Potential Returnees into Settlers: Nottingham's Older Italians." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 32 (8):1395–1413.

Glencross, Andrew. 2016. *Why the UK Voted for Brexit: David Cameron's Great Miscalculation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Goodman, Sara Wallace. 2012. "Fortifying Citizenship: Policy Strategies for Civic Integration in Western Europe." *World Politics* no. 64 (4):659-698. doi: 10.1017/S0043887112000184.

Graeber, John. 2016. "Citizenship in the shadow of the Euro crisis: explaining changing patterns in naturalisation among intra-EU migrants." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 42 (10):1670–1692.

Grzymala-Kazlowska, Aleksandra. 2016. "Social Anchoring: Immigrant Identity, Security and Integration Reconnected?" *Sociology* no. 50 (6): 1123–1139.

Grzymala-Kazlowska, Aleksandra. 2018. "From connecting to social anchoring: adaptation and 'settlement' of Polish migrants in the UK." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 44 (2): 252–269.

Grzymala-Kazlowska, Aleksandra, and Jenny Phillimore. 2018. "Introduction: rethinking integration. New perspectives on adaptation and settlement in the era of super-diversity." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 44 (2): 179–196.

Hansen, Randall. 2003. "Citizenship and Integration in Europe." In *Toward assimilation and citizenship: immigrants in liberal nation-states*, edited by Christian Joppke and Ewa T. Morawska, 87–109. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Home Office. 2018a. Citizenship applications by country of nationality. In *Immigration Statistics - October to December 2017: Citizenship tables*. London: Home Office.

Home Office. 2018b. Issue and refusal of residence documentation (excluding Worker Registration Scheme) to EEA nationals and their family members, by country of nationality. In *Immigration Statistics - October to December 2016: European Economic Area tables*. London: Home Office.

Home Office. 2018c. UK residence for EU citizens. In *Visas and immigration: EU, EEA and Commonwealth*. London: Home Office.

Hunter, Alistair. 2011. "Theory and practice of return migration at retirement: the case of migrant worker hostel residents in France." *Population, Space and Place* no. 17 (2):179–192.

Joppke, Christian. 2017. "Civic integration in Western Europe: three debates." *West European Politics* no. 40 (6):1153–1176.

Joppke, Christian, and Ewa T. Morawska, eds. 2003. *Toward assimilation and citizenship: immigrants in liberal nation-states*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Knight, Julie, John Lever, and Andrew Thompson. 2014. "The Labour Market Mobility of Polish Migrants: A Comparative Study of Three Regions in South Wales, UK." *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* no. 3 (2):61–78.

Kubal, Agnieszka. 2012. *Socio-legal integration: Polish post-2004 EU enlargement migrants in the United Kingdom*. Ashgate: Farnham.

Landesmann, Michael, Sandra Leitner, and Isilda Mara. 2015. Should I Stay, Should I Go Back or Should I Move Further? Contrasting Answers under Diverse Migration Regimes. In *WIIW Working Paper*: The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, WIIW.

Luthra, Renee, Lucinda Platt, and Justyna Salamońska. 2016. "Types of Migration: The Motivations, Composition, and Early Integration Patterns of "New Migrants" in Europe." *International Migration Review* (Early View). doi: 10.1111/imre.12293.

Mădroane, Irina Diana. 2012. "Romanian Migrants in the British Press: a Post-EU Accession Analysis." *Revista Română de Comunicare Şi Relaţii Publice* no. 14 (4):103–123.

Mara, Isilda, and Michael Landesmann. 2013. The steadiness of migration plans and expected length of stay: based on a recent survey of Romanian migrants in Italy. In *Norface Migration Discussion Paper*: The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies.

McGhee, Derek, Sue Heath, and Paulina Trevena. 2012. "Dignity, happiness and being able to live a 'normal life' in the UK – an examination of post-accession Polish migrants' transnational autobiographical fields." *Social Identities* no. 18 (6):711–727.

McGhee, Derek, Chris Moreh, and Athina Vlachantoni. 2017. "An 'undeliberate determinacy'? The changing migration strategies of Polish migrants in the UK in times of Brexit." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 43 (13): 2109–2130.

McGhee, Derek, Paulina Trevena, and Sue Heath. 2015. "Social Relationships and Relationships in Context: Post-Accession Poles in Southampton." *Population, Space and Place* no. 21 (5):433–445.

Meissner, Fran. 2018. Legal status diversity: regulating to control and everyday contingencies. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 44 (2): 287–306.

Miller, Peter G., and Anders L. Sønderlund. 2010. "Using the internet to research hidden populations of illicit drug users: a review." *Addiction* no. 105 (9):1557–1567.

Moreh, Chris. 2014. "A Decade of Membership: Hungarian Post-Accession Mobility to the United Kingdom." *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* no. 3 (2):79–104.

Moroşanu, Laura, and Jon E. Fox. 2013. "'No smoke without fire': Strategies of coping with stigmatised migrant identities." *Ethnicities* no. 13 (4): 438–456.

Mügge, Liza, and Marleen van der Haar. 2016. "Who Is an Immigrant and Who Requires Integration? Categorizing in European Policies." In *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe: Contexts, Levels and Actors*, edited by Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas and Rinus Penninx, 77–90. London: Springer International Publishing.

Office for National Statistics. 2016. *Population of the United Kingdom by Country of Birth and Nationality* (Online dataset). Retrieved 1 March 2017. https://www.ons.gov.uk/.

Paraschivescu, Claudia. 2016. "Political belonging and fantasies of inclusion: Romanians in London and Paris." *The Age of Human Rights Journal* no. 7:120–140.

Pessar, Patricia R., and Sarah J. Mahler. 2003. "Transnational Migration: Bringing Gender In." *International Migration Review* no. 37 (3):812–846.

Ryan, Louise. 2015. 'Another year and another year': Polish migrants in London extending the stay over time. London: Middlesex University, Social Policy Research Centre.

Ryan, Louise. 2016. "Looking for weak ties: using a mixed methods approach to capture elusive connections." *The Sociological Review* no. 64 (4):951–969.

Ryan, Louise. 2018. "Differentiated embedding: Polish migrants in London negotiating belonging over time." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 44 (2): 233–251.

Ryan, Louise, and Jon Mulholland. 2014. "Trading Places: French Highly Skilled Migrants Negotiating Mobility and Emplacement In London." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 40 (4):584–600.

Ryan, Louise, Rosemary Sales, Mary Tilki, and Bernadetta Siara. 2008. "Social Networks, Social Support and Social Capital: The Experiences of Recent Polish Migrants in London." *Sociology* no. 42 (4):672–690.

Ryan, Louise, Rosemary Sales, Mary Tilki, and Bernadetta Siara. 2009. "Family Strategies and Transnational Migration: Recent Polish Migrants in London." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 35 (1):61–77.

Schiller, Nina Glick, and Ayse Çağlar. 2013. "Locating migrant pathways of economic emplacement: Thinking beyond the ethnic lens." *Ethnicities* no. 13 (4): 494–514.

Shaw, Jo, Nina Miller, and Maria Fletcher. 2013. *Getting to Grips with EU Citizenship: Understanding the Friction between UK Immigration Law and EU Free Movement Law*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Law School Citizenship Studies.

Snel, Erik, Marije Faber, and Godfried Engbersen. 2015. "To Stay or Return? Explaining Return Intentions of Central and Eastern European Labour Migrants." *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* no. 4 (2):5–24.

Wessendorf, Susanne. 2018. "Pathways of settlement among pioneer migrants in super-diverse London." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* no. 44 (2): 270–286.

White, Anne. 2011. *Polish families and migration since EU accession*. Bristol: Policy Press.

# APPENDICES: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

## Table S1: Pre-Referendum Survey and Labour Force Survey comparative demographic and socio-economic statistics

| | Pre-Ref survey (Mar-Jun 2016) | | | | | | | LFS (Apr-Jun 2016) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Germany (N=72) | Portugal (N=120) | Hungary (N=128) | Romania (N=128) | Poland (N=965) | Total (N=1,413) | N | Germany (N=138) | Portugal (N=223) | Hungary (N=106) | Romania (N=296) | Poland (N=996) | Total (N=1,759) | N |
| Female (d) | 67% | 55% | 69% | 48% | 67% | 64% | 910 | 64% | 54% | 58% | 51% | 53% | 54% | 949 |
| Age (cont.): Mean (min-max; SD) | 36 (24-53; 8) | 37 (22-64; 9) | 38 (19-65; 10) | 35 (20-59; 9) | 38 (19-65; 9) | 38 (19-65; 9) | 1,413 | 43 (16-81; 13) | 40 (16-82; 13) | 37 (16-77; 10) | 33 (16-76; 9) | 35 (17-87; 10) | 36 (16-97; 11) | 1,759 |
| Age group: Under 30 | 22% | 19% | 22% | 29% | 16% | 19% | 261 | 14% | 21% | 21% | 41% | 27% | 27% | 474 |
| Age group: 30-39 | 49% | 46% | 36% | 41% | 46% | 45% | 633 | 28% | 32% | 44% | 40% | 49% | 44% | 767 |
| Age group: 40-49 | 22% | 26% | 29% | 24% | 26% | 26% | 366 | 28% | 30% | 23% | 15% | 15% | 19% | 327 |
| Age group: Over 50 | 7% | 9% | 13% | 5% | 11% | 11% | 148 | 30% | 17% | 12% | 5% | 8% | 11% | 191 |
| Education: Vocational or professional | 6% | 3% | 6% | 4% | 15% | 11% | 162 | 19% | 43% | 30% | 26% | 30% | 30% | 281 |
| Education: Secondary | 3% | 18% | 19% | 28% | 40% | 33% | 473 | 5% | 14% | 20% | 12% | 16% | 15% | 138 |
| Education: Post-secondary further | 14% | 10% | 27% | 12% | 15% | 15% | 212 | 5% | 1% | 13% | 10% | 15% | 12% | 111 |
| Education: Undergraduate higher | 22% | 38% | 36% | 38% | 12% | 19% | 266 | 22% | 26% | 28% | 37% | 21% | 25% | 236 |
| Education: Postgraduate higher | 56% | 26% | 11% | 15% | 15% | 18% | 253 | 49% | 15% | 9% | 14% | 19% | 19% | 181 |
| Econ: Employed full time | 75% | 65% | 67% | 55% | 58% | 60% | 844 | 38% | 57% | 60% | 58% | 60% | 57% | 1010 |
| Econ: Employed part-time | 7% | 12% | 16% | 12% | 16% | 15% | 208 | 18% | 15% | 6% | 5% | 14% | 12% | 215 |
| Econ: Self-employed | 10% | 8% | 6% | 16% | 9% | 9% | 130 | 18% | 6% | 12% | 17% | 12% | 13% | 220 |
| Econ: Inactive | 6% | 11% | 6% | 9% | 12% | 11% | 152 | 25% | 22% | 22% | 20% | 15% | 18% | 314 |
| Socio-Economic status: I | 56% | 30% | 7% | 12% | 5% | 14% | 138 | 27% | 10% | 8% | 5% | 3% | 6% | 98 |
| Socio-Economic status: II | 16% | 22% | 6% | 9% | 7% | 11% | 112 | 26% | 12% | 17% | 15% | 10% | 13% | 203 |
| Socio-Economic status: III | 19% | 13% | 12% | 6% | 4% | 9% | 87 | 13% | 5% | 8% | 7% | 8% | 8% | 121 |
| Socio-Economic status: IV | 2% | 3% | 5% | 9% | 6% | 8% | 80 | 15% | 8% | 10% | 19% | 13% | 13% | 210 |
| Socio-Economic status: V+VI | 6% | 18% | 23% | 21% | 23% | 30% | 296 | 14% | 35% | 31% | 28% | 36% | 33% | 516 |
| Socio-Economic status: VII | 0% | 14% | 24% | 11% | 23% | 28% | 283 | 4% | 29% | 27% | 25% | 30% | 27% | 428 |
| Married, in civil partnership, cohabitating (d) | 42% | 33% | 58% | 56% | 67% | 45% | 638 | 70% | 60% | 75% | 79% | 77% | 74% | 1308 |
| Children: has children | 26% | 36% | 29% | 34% | 58% | 50% | 705 | 44% | 63% | 42% | 44% | 55% | 53% | 925 |
| Time in UK: <3y | 29% | 55% | 40% | 52% | 15% | 24% | 345 | 12% | 14% | 14% | 41% | 11% | 17% | 288 |
| Time in UK: 3–6y | 13% | 16% | 37% | 25% | 22% | 23% | 324 | 11% | 20% | 38% | 21% | 18% | 19% | 333 |
| Time in UK: 6–9y | 19% | 9% | 13% | 13% | 26% | 22% | 306 | 10% | 14% | 20% | 23% | 17% | 17% | 298 |
| Time in UK: 9y< | 39% | 18% | 10% | 8% | 37% | 30% | 427 | 67% | 52% | 28% | 15% | 55% | 47% | 822 |

Notes:
All percentages are in respect to column *and* variable totals (i.e. remaining differences to 100% are due to 'missing,' 'other,' and 'prefer not to say' responses).

Socio-economic status is based on NS_SEC classification: (I) Higher managerial, administrative, and professional occupations, (II) Lower managerial, administrative, and professional occupations, (III) Intermediate occupations, (IV) Small employers and own account workers, (V) Lower supervisory and technical occupations, (VI) Semi-routine occupations, and (VII) Routine occupations.
The LFS national groups are based on the NATOX7 variable. Students are excluded from both samples.

**Table S2: Descriptive statistics of survey sample, by nationality groups**

| | Germany (N=72) | Portugal (N=120) | Hungary (N=128) | Romania (N=128) | Poland (N=965) | Total (N=1,413) % | Total (N=1,413) N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 67% | 55% | 69% | 48% | 67% | 64% | 910 |
| Age (cont.): Mean (SD) | 36 (8) | 37 (9) | 38 (10) | 35 (9) | 38 (9) | 38 (9) | |
| Education: Postgraduate | 56% | 26% | 11% | 15% | 15% | 18% | 253 |
| Education: Undergraduate | 22% | 38% | 36% | 38% | 12% | 19% | 266 |
| Education: Post-secondary/Further ed. | 14% | 10% | 27% | 12% | 15% | 15% | 212 |
| Education: Secondary | 3% | 18% | 19% | 28% | 40% | 33% | 473 |
| Education: Vocational/Professional | 6% | 3% | 6% | 4% | 15% | 11% | 162 |
| Married/in civil partnership | 42% | 33% | 24% | 37% | 51% | 45% | 638 |
| Children: all in UK | 26% | 33% | 23% | 23% | 55% | 46% | 648 |
| Children: some/all not in UK | 0% | 3% | 6% | 11% | 3% | 4% | 57 |
| No children | 72% | 63% | 69% | 63% | 40% | 48% | 677 |
| Time in UK (cont.): Mean (SD) | 8y7m (7y4m) | 4y6m (4y7m) | 4y3m (3y1m) | 3y9m (3y5m) | 7y2m (3y5m) | 6y6m (4y) | |
| Time in UK: <3y | 29% | 55% | 40% | 52% | 15% | 24% | 345 |
| Time in UK: 3–6y | 13% | 16% | 37% | 25% | 22% | 23% | 324 |
| Time in UK: 6–9y | 19% | 9% | 13% | 13% | 26% | 22% | 306 |
| Time in UK: 9+y | 39% | 18% | 10% | 8% | 37% | 30% | 427 |
| Econ: Employed full time | 75% | 65% | 67% | 55% | 58% | 60% | 844 |
| Econ: Employed part-time | 7% | 12% | 16% | 12% | 16% | 15% | 208 |
| Econ: Self-employed | 10% | 8% | 6% | 16% | 9% | 9% | 130 |
| Econ: Inactive | 6% | 11% | 6% | 9% | 12% | 11% | 152 |
| Partner Econ: single | 36% | 36% | 39% | 38% | 29% | 32% | 451 |
| Partner Econ: full time | 49% | 43% | 43% | 30% | 45% | 43% | 611 |
| Partner Econ: part-time | 3% | 7% | 4% | 7% | 5% | 5% | 73 |
| Partner Econ: Self-employed | 6% | 1% | 5% | 10% | 7% | 7% | 93 |
| Partner Econ: Inactive | 4% | 7% | 3% | 4% | 7% | 6% | 87 |
| Has accessed benefits | 19% | 38% | 44% | 25% | 64% | 54% | 760 |
| Uses English at work | 83% | 86% | 91% | 84% | 75% | 78% | 1109 |
| Uses English at home | 61% | 35% | 21% | 26% | 14% | 20% | 282 |
| 'Socio-political' factors as important reason for migration to UK | 3% | 13% | 18% | 27% | 20% | 19% | 265 |
| UK citizenship: Eligible | 50% | 24% | 28% | 34% | 45% | 41% | 576 |
| UK citizenship: DK (the requirements) | 17% | 42% | 13% | 30% | 27% | 27% | 381 |
| UK citizenship: Not eligible | 31% | 32% | 59% | 34% | 18% | 25% | 351 |
| Personal effect of Brexit: Negative | 82% | 54% | 61% | 53% | 56% | 57% | 809 |
| Personal effect of Brexit: None | 10% | 19% | 16% | 24% | 28% | 25% | 349 |
| Personal effect of Brexit: Positive | 0% | 2% | 3% | 7% | 4% | 4% | 57 |
| Brexit likelihood: Unlikely | 25% | 28% | 39% | 29% | 21% | 24% | 340 |
| Brexit likelihood: Equal likelihood | 49% | 35% | 37% | 44% | 52% | 48% | 682 |
| Brexit likelihood: Likely | 25% | 33% | 21% | 26% | 25% | 26% | 363 |
| Changed plans in Brexit scenario | 51% | 32% | 32% | 31% | 16% | 22% | 307 |

Note: Percentages are in respect to totals (i.e. remaining differences to 100% are due to 'missing,' 'other,' and 'prefer not to say' responses)

**Table S3: Survey questions and derived variables**

| Survey questions: | Response options (R): | | Derived variables: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regardless of the EU referendum, what is your most likely plan for the next 5 years? | (1) Move to a non-EU country (not your country of origin/citizenship) <br> (2) Move to another EU country (not your country of origin/citizenship) <br> (3) Move to your country of origin/citizenship <br> (4) Remain in the UK and apply for a permanent residence certificate (for yourself and your family, if applicable) | | 5-year plan/Brexit action: <br> (1) Exit (R=1–3) <br> (1.1) Re-migration (R=1–2) <br> (1.2) Return (R=3) <br> (2) Civic integration (R=4–5) <br> (2.1) PRC (R=4) |
| If the UK votes to leave the EU, what will your most likely action be? | (5) Remain in the UK and apply for British citizenship (for yourself and your family, if applicable) <br> (6) Remain in the UK without any concrete plan/take no action | | (2.2) Citizenship (R=5) <br> (3) Derived permanent residence (R=6) |
| What language do you use most often at work (if applicable)? | (1) My native language <br> **(2) English (not my native language)** <br> (3) Another language <br> (4) Not applicable | | Speaking English in a work-place environment: <br> (1) Yes (R=2) <br> (2) All else |
| What language do you use most often at home? | (1) My native language <br> **(2) English (not my native language)** <br> (3) Another language | | Speaking English at home: <br> (1) Yes (R=2) <br> (2) All else |
| Have you **applied**, or are you currently (or within one year from now) **eligible** to apply for **British citizenship**? | (1) I have applied for British citizenship (*Not included in the analysis*) <br> **(2) I am eligible to apply** <br> **(3) I am not eligible to apply** <br> **(4) Do not know (the eligibility requirements)** | | Eligibility for citizenship <br> (1) Eligible <br> (2) NK (the requirements) <br> (3) Not eligible |
| On a 1-to-5 scale where *1* is *not at all important* and *5* is *very important*, how important were the factors below in your decision to move to **the UK instead of another EU country**? <br><br> (If you feel that any statement is NOT TRUE of the UK, tick *Not true of UK*) | (a) Higher wages <br> (b) Better business opportunities <br> (c) More jobs available <br> (d) Better study opportunities (for yourself) <br> (e) Better schooling for your children <br> (f) Better medical care <br> (g) More political/civic freedom <br> (h) Better social benefits <br> (i) Cheaper living costs <br> (j) English language learning/development <br> (k) Partner or family member already in UK <br> (l) Other factors | *(0) Not true of UK (recoded as 1)* <br> (1) Not at all important <br> (2) <br> (3) <br> (4) <br> (5) Very important | 'Social' reasons for choosing the UK: <br> (1) Important (e+f+g+h)>= 16 <br> (2) Less important <br><br> *Variable derived following a Principal Components Analysis* **(see SM2)** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Since arriving to the UK, have you or anyone in your family received any social **benefits** or **services**? (See examples below) (please tick as appropriate) | (a) Jobseeker's Allowance; (b) Income support; (c) Housing benefit; (d) Council Tax Benefit; (e) Working Tax Credit; (f) Child Tax Credit; (g) Employment and Support Allowance (ESA); (h) Universal Credit; (i) Child benefit; (j) Maternity /paternity pay; (k) Personal Independence Payment (PIP); (l) Invalid Carer's Allowance; (m) UK state pension; (n) Free healthcare service; (o) Student loan; (p) Free translation /interpretation services; (q) Legal aid; (r) Other | Has accessed benefits: (1) Yes (Any (a)–(l)) (2) No |
| How **likely** do you think it is that the UK **will leave** the EU after the Referendum? | (0) Do not know; (1) Very unlikely; (2) More unlikely; **(3) There is an equal probability; (4) More likely; (5) Very likely** | Brexit anxiety: (1) Anxious about Brexit (Likelihood R=3–5 with Effect R=1–2) (2) All else |
| What **effect** would it have on your (and your family's) life if the UK chose to **leave** the EU? | (0) Do not know; **(1) Very negative; (2) Somewhat negative;** (3) None; (4) Somewhat positive; (5) Very positive | |

**PCA: Principal Components Analysis procedure for the *'Socio-political' reasons for choosing the UK variable***

A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was run on 10 items in a question bloc that measured respondents' reasons for moving to the United Kingdom (UK) instead of another EU country: (1) Higher wages, (2) Better business opportunities, (3) More jobs available, (4) Better study opportunities (for yourself), (5) Better schooling for your children, (6) Better medical care, (7) More political/civic freedom, (8) Better social benefits, (9) English language learning/development, and (10) Partner or family member already in the UK. The analysis was undertaken on a sample including only non-students from nine national groups (N=1,526). Answers were measured on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important), with an additional option of 'Not true of UK,' which was recoded as 1 (not at all important) for this analysis. Only cases with valid answers on all items were included in the PCA (N=1,496). Conceptually, items 1–3 were conceived to denote economic reasons, items 4 and 9 educational reasons, and items 5–8 and 10 reflect social, political and personal motivations.

The distribution of the responses' means and standard deviations is presented in Table S4 in order of importance. As we can see, jobs availability was the most important and least divisive (SD=1.17) reason on average, followed by English language learning/development opportunities and higher wages. Having a partner or family member already in the UK and better schooling for children had the highest standard deviations, as they denote personal circumstances that may not apply to everyone.

**Table S4: Reasons for moving to the UK instead of another EU country**

| How important were the factors below in your decision to move to the UK instead of another EU country? (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important) | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| More jobs available | 4.17 | 1.170 |
| English language learning/development | 4.09 | 1.211 |
| Higher wages | 4.04 | 1.220 |
| Better business opportunities | 3.34 | 1.472 |
| Better study opportunities (for yourself) | 3.20 | 1.496 |
| More political/civic freedom | 3.01 | 1.485 |
| Better schooling for your children | 2.82 | 1.621 |
| Better medical care | 2.60 | 1.434 |
| Partner or family member already in the UK | 2.59 | 1.804 |
| Better social benefits | 2.43 | 1.451 |

Valid N (listwise)=1,496; Min=1, Max=5

An initial PCA was undertaken on the ten items, with three items proving unsuitable and excluded from the analysis: first, having a "partner or family member already in the UK" did not correlate highly enough with any other item; second, "English language learning/development" and "better study opportunities" loaded on all extracted components (both when 2 or 3 was extracted), failing to achieve a simple structure that would aid interpretation. The remaining seven items were suitable for PCA: the overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was .81, with individual KMO measures all being greater than .77; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2$ (21) = 2329.89, p<.001). Two components were extracted and retained, with eigenvalues greater than 1 and satisfying interpretability criteria. The two components explained 58% of the total variance. Due to correlation between the components, an oblique rotation method was employed (Direct oblimin). The two extracted items were consistent with the initial conceptual assumption, with social-political reasons loading strongly on the first component and economic-career reasons having high loadings on the second component (see Table S5 for rotated solutions). We also conducted separate reliability analyses on the

two components, with the "socio-political reasons" subscale proving reliable for our purposes (Cronbach's α = .75), while the reliability of the "economic reasons" subscale is questionable (Cronbach's α = .64), although it must be taken into consideration that the component consists of only three items (see Cortina 1993).

**Table S5: Results from a PCA of seven questionnaire items relating to reason for moving to the UK instead of another EU country**

| Rotated component matrices | Pattern Matrix | | Structure Matrix | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reasons: | Socio-political | Economic | Socio-political | Economic |
| Better medical care | **.862** | -.087 | **.824** | .286 |
| More political/civic freedom | **.738** | .011 | **.742** | .330 |
| Better schooling for children | **.732** | .026 | **.743** | .343 |
| Better social benefits | **.688** | .071 | **.719** | .369 |
| More jobs available | -.055 | **.827** | .303 | **.803** |
| Higher wages | .016 | **.795** | .360 | **.802** |
| Better business opportunities | .054 | **.667** | .343 | **.690** |
| Eigenvalues | 2.958 | 1.122 | | |
| % of variance | 42.25 | 16.02 | | |
| Cronbach's Alpha | .751 | .639 | | |
| N | 1,496 | | | |

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
Component loadings greater than .4 are highlighted in bold.

For further analyses, we have constructed a scale of 0 to 16 summing the four constituent items of the "socio-political reasons" component. The binary variable *'Socio-political reasons for choosing the UK* was created by coding scale scores of 12 or greater as 'Important' and scores lower than 12 as 'Less important.'