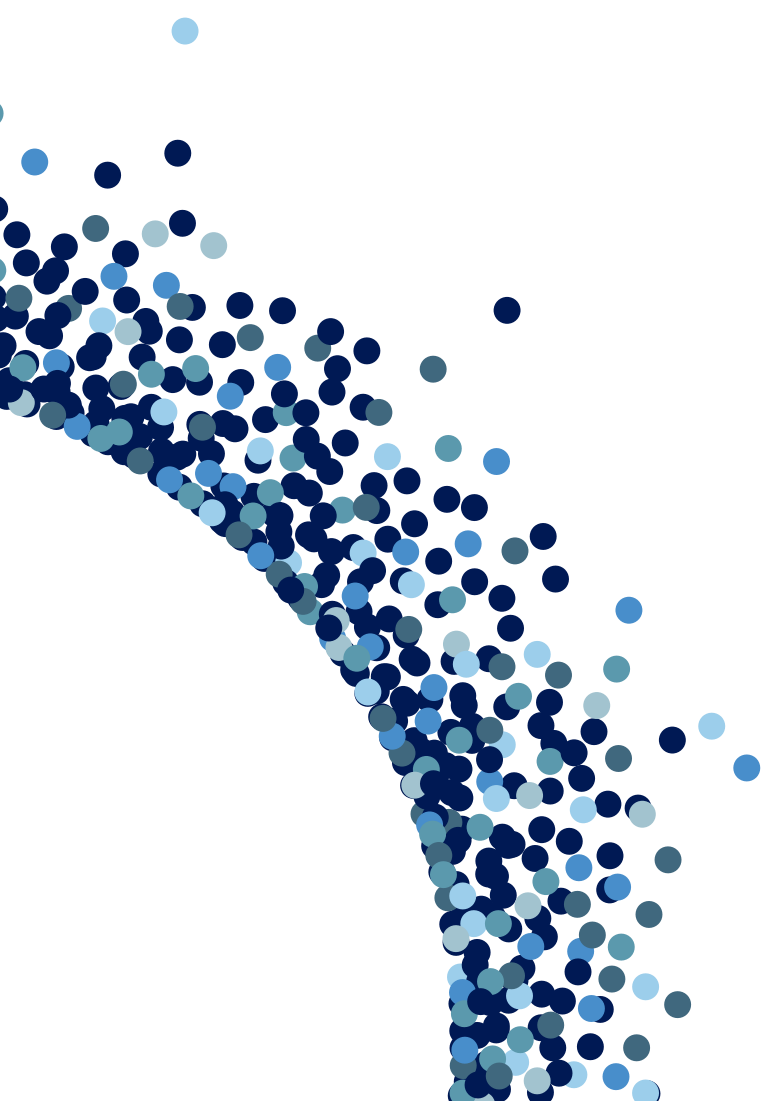




COMMENTARY

Recent trends in EU nationals born inside and outside the EU



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The Office of National Statistics' quarterly labour market statistics in May contained an interesting data point. The number of people working in the UK who were citizens of EU-14 countries (that is, countries that joined the EU before 2004, such as Germany and Spain), was no longer smaller than the number of those born in EU-14 countries, as it had been in previous years.

Among the UK's population as a whole, the number of foreign citizens tends to be smaller than the number of people born abroad, mainly because after staying for some years many foreign nationals 'naturalise' and become British citizens. The ONS has produced detailed statistics examining this issue based on 2011 census data.

The Migration Observatory received a number of requests to explain why this was not the case for people from EU-14 countries (that is, why the number of EU-14 citizens working in the UK was not smaller than the number of EU-14 born) – and specifically, whether EU citizens who were born outside of the EU were driving the trend. This commentary looks at recent trends in EU migration and the countries of birth of EU migrants living here.

Citizenship and country of birth

Birth in an EU country is not a pre-requisite for citizenship of that country. For example, in the first quarter of 2015, the UK was home to more than 3 million British citizens who were born overseas. This would include people who migrated to the UK and were granted UK citizenship after a period of residence, as well as people born abroad to British parents and thus eligible for citizenship by descent.

Similarly, other EU countries that have been destinations for international migrants have significant populations of foreign born citizens. At the time of the EU Census in 2011, for example, 9% of German citizens were born outside of Germany, 7% of French nationals were born outside of France, and 6% of Irish nationals were born outside of Ireland. Particularly in Western Europe, many countries have become more culturally and ethnically diverse as a result of immigration.

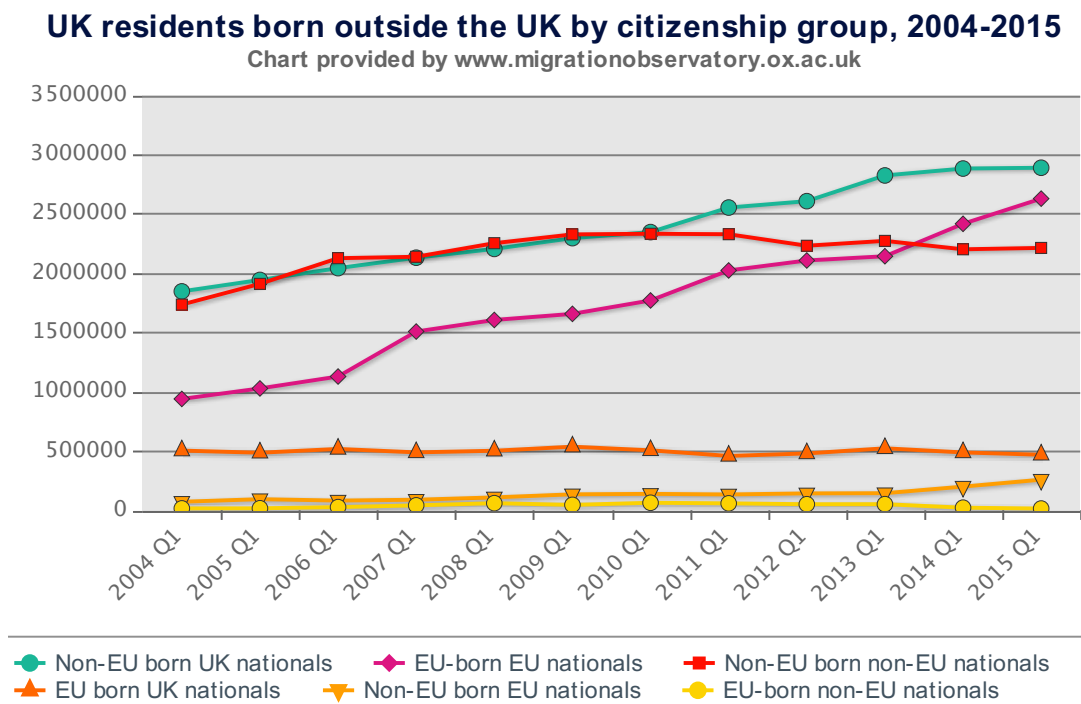
From a legal perspective, citizenship is much more important than country of birth. Citizens of a particular country generally have equal rights, regardless of where they were born or why they were eligible for nationality.

When it comes to EU free movement, citizens of any EU member state have the right to live and work in other EU countries, and one should expect people exercising these rights to include both EU born and non-EU born EU citizens. For example, a British citizen who was born in Canada can live and work in elsewhere in the EU, and EU countries are legally precluded from discriminating against a British citizen on the basis of their country of birth. UK has the same legal obligations in regard to citizens of other EU countries.

Where were 'migrants' in the UK born and what citizenship do they hold?

Figure 1 shows Labour Force Survey data outlining various changes in the UK's foreign born population since the first quarter of 2004.

Figure 1



Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Three groups dominate the top half of the chart:

- UK citizens born outside the EU. This includes people who move to the UK and naturalise after a period of residence. Their numbers have increased from 1.8 million to just under 3 million since 2004.
- EU citizens born in the EU. This includes people coming from EU-15 countries as well as new member states. Their numbers have increased from 0.94 million to 2.6 million since 2004.
- Non-EU citizens born in non-EU countries, whose numbers increased from 1.7 million to 2.2 million over the same period.

Three smaller groups make up the bottom half of the chart –

- British citizens born in the EU, whose numbers have changed relatively little over the past decade, fluctuating around 500,000.
- EU citizens born outside of the EU, whose numbers have increased from about 78,000 to about 264,000 from 2004 to 2015.
- Non-EU citizens born in EU countries, whose numbers currently stand at just over 20,000.

In other words, non-EU born migrants who are EU citizens made up just over 3% of the foreign-born population in Q1 2015.

The size of this group has increased by an estimated 186,000 since 2004. However, because migration of EU citizens has also increased considerably over this period, the share of EU citizens who were born outside of the EU has changed relatively little, fluctuating between 6% and 9% since 2004. Specifically, the share fell from 9% in 2005 to 6% in 2007, before rising again to 9% in 2015.

What do we know about non-EU born EU citizens living in the UK?

The non-EU born EU citizen population in the UK is diverse, and limited sample sizes in the Labour Force Survey make it difficult to produce precise estimates of their individual countries of nationality and birth. However, Table 1 shows the main countries of citizenship of EU migrants to the UK who were not born in the EU. The ranking should not be considered precise: because individual subgroups are quite small, the order would be expected to fluctuate from quarter to quarter.

Table 1 - Countries of nationality for UK resident EU citizens born outside the EU, Q1 2015

Country of nationality	N
Total	264,000
PORTUGAL	54,000
ITALY	36,000
FRANCE	33,000
SPAIN	30,000
IRELAND	21,000
NETHERLANDS	19,000
GERMANY	18,000

Source: Migration Observatory analysis of ONS Labour Force Survey, Q1 2015 (LFS)

One observation is that this list is entirely comprised of EU-14 member states that were members of the EU before 2004. All other countries of nationality were fewer than 10,000, the level below which LFS data are too unreliable to publish.

Table 2 shows the main countries of birth for UK resident EU citizens who were not born in the EU. Again, the numbers for individual countries of birth should not be considered precise and the rank order could fluctuate due to statistical error.

Table 2 - Countries of birth of non EU-born EU nationals in the UK

Country/region of birth	N	% of total
Total	264,000	100%
INDIA	24,000	9%
SOUTH AFRICA	15,000	6%
USA/CANADA	14,000	5%
BRAZIL	13,000	5%
SRI LANKA	11,000	4%

Source: Migration Observatory analysis of ONS Labour Force Survey, Q1 2015 (LFS)

Countries of birth for non-EU born EU citizens range from India and South Africa to North America and Brazil. All other groups were fewer than 10,000.

The only group larger than 10,000 with a common EU country of citizenship and a common non-EU country of birth is Indian-born Portuguese citizens. This group accounted for just over 20,000 UK residents in the first quarter of 2015.

In other words, no single country of origin or country of EU nationality dominates. This is perhaps not surprising, since EU countries themselves have diverse foreign-born populations. The origins of foreign-born citizens in other EU countries vary considerably, in some instances related to their colonial past or other established connections to other states. Portugal, for example had overseas territories in Goa (now part of India), Brazil, Angola, East Timor and Macau (now part of China). Ireland, meanwhile, has long-established connections with the United States and Canada through a history of emigration.

Note that more detailed breakdowns are available from the 2011 Census, although these data are now a few years old.

Demographic and labour market characteristics

The LFS data do not tell us how long these EU citizens have lived in other EU countries before coming to the UK. However, we do have some information about their demographic characteristics and employment here. This allows us to analyse whether non-EU born EU citizens living in the UK have characteristics closer to other migrants who share their country of birth vs. their country of citizenship.

Table 3 shows some basic characteristics of three groups: non-EU nationals born outside the EU; EU nationals born outside of the EU; and EU nationals born in the EU.

EU citizens born outside the EU are slightly older, on average, than other EU citizens and than other non-EU born. This could be because they have already spent time in other European countries, while the other two groups are more likely to be migrating for the first time.

In the labour market, EU citizens born outside the EU have employment rates that are closer to those of EU citizens than they are to non-EU born. 73% were employed in Q1 2015, compared to 80% of other EU citizens and 60% of other non-EU born.

Interestingly, the finding that non-EU born EU citizens have significantly higher employment rates than their counterparts with non-EU citizenship is driven primarily by women. Women born outside the EU have relatively low employment rates if they are also non-EU citizens (49% in Q1 2015). However, women born outside the EU who hold an EU citizenship are much more similar to their EU-born counterparts, with an employment rate of 70%.

Looking at the skill levels of the jobs they hold, EU citizens born in non-EU countries are more likely to be in high-skilled work than other EU citizens. In Q1 2015, 30% held senior management and professional jobs, compared to 22% of other EU citizens. Of course, EU citizens are a heterogeneous group when it comes to skills, and those from new member states are much less likely to be working in skilled jobs than those from EU-14 countries, as the table shows. The difference between the (higher) shares of non-EU born migrants based on their citizenship was not statistically significant (meaning that they could result from statistical error rather than real differences in characteristics).

Table 3 - Demographic and employment characteristics by selected regions of nationality and regions of birth

Region of birth/nationality	All	Average age, 16-64 population	Employment rate	Employment rate (men only)	Employment rate (women only)	Management & professional jobs	Share age 16-64
Non-EU born EU national	264,000	38	73%	76%	70%	30%	87%
EU-born EU national	2,633,000	35*	80%*	87%*	74%	22%*	81%
EU-born EU-14 national	1,111,000	39	76%	80%	73%	42%*	73%*
EU-born new member state national	1,522,000	33*	82%*	90%*	75%	11%*	87%
Non-EU born non-EU national	2,218,000	36*	60%*	71%	49%*	36%	86%

Labour Force Survey Q1 2015. Notes: employment rates are for the 16-64 year old population; management and professional occupations defined as ISCO 1-2, as a share of employment; working age defined as 16-64 years old. Summary statistics are marked with * if they are statistically different from the result for non-EU born EU nationals.

Large majorities of all three groups are of working age, and the differences between them are not statistically significant (with the exception of EU-born EU-14 nationals, who have a slightly lower share of working-age individuals than non-EU born EU citizens).

How does the UK compare to other countries in Europe?

A final area to investigate is how the UK compares to other EU countries. Is the migration of non EU-born EU citizens unique to the UK, or is it also happening in other EU member states?

All previous data in this analysis has come from the UK's Labour Force Survey, but to allow us to make international comparisons we need to look at a different data set - EU census data from 2011. This is collected differently and refers to a different time, so it cannot be directly compared with the previous data in this analysis.

Table 4 shows that in 2011, Germany had a larger number of migrants from EU countries who were born outside the EU than the UK. The UK came second, followed by Spain, France and Belgium.

As a share of all EU citizens living in the country, the size of the non-EU born EU citizen population in the UK is comparable to that of the Netherlands, Spain and Belgium. Cyprus and Germany had the highest shares, at 12% and 10%, respectively.

Table 4 - Top 10 EU countries in number of EU national population who are non-EU born, 2011 EU Census

Residence	Non-EU born & EU nationals Number	Non-EU born & EU nationals As % of all EU nationals
Germany	245,000	10%
United Kingdom	210,000	7%
Spain	126,000	6%
France	51,000	4%
Belgium	42,000	6%
Switzerland	37,000	4%
Italy	22,000	2%
Netherlands	22,000	7%
Sweden	13,000	5%
Cyprus	13,000	12%

EU Census 2011, sourced from the European Statistical System; EU nationals exclude the reporting country of residence. Note: numbers rounded to nearest 1,000.

The countries of origin of non-EU born EU nationals vary considerably by EU member state. Perhaps not surprisingly, other EU countries are more likely to reflect the origins of other non-EU migration they receive. The top non-EU country of birth for Germany in 2011 was Turkey, for example. In Spain it was Argentina, in France Morocco, and in Italy Moldova.

Conclusions – what does it all mean?

Are the results of the analysis surprising? On one hand, the numbers of non-EU born EU citizens living in the UK have increased considerably, from less than 80,000 in 2004 to an estimated 264,000 in the most recent data. On the other hand, they have been a relatively constant fraction (6% to 9%) of the UK's EU citizen population, which has also increased considerably over the past decade. At the same time, results from other EU countries suggest that this phenomenon is by no means unique to the UK.

One gap in the evidence is information on how long non-EU born EU citizens lived in other EU countries before moving to the UK. Some will have lived within the EU for years, perhaps having moved for work or family before becoming eligible for naturalisation. Others are likely to have been born abroad to EU-born parents who had emigrated temporarily or permanently to a country outside the EU; they would be considered eligible for citizenship through their parents but counted in the data as non-EU born. In certain countries, such as Ireland and Italy, some people can qualify for citizenship even if they or their parents never lived there, based on the ancestry of their grandparents or great-grandparents.

From a legal perspective, no distinctions can be made between these different routes to citizenship. In an EU with free movement, citizenship policies of other countries may be of interest to other EU member states, since citizenship in one country gives people the right to free movement to others. But while some countries have come under pressure from the European Commission because of their citizenship policies (a recent example is the decision by Malta to offer citizenship in return for €650,000), EU countries remain free to decide their own citizenship laws. Any attempt to harmonise citizenship laws across the EU would likely encounter significant political resistance.

Finally, the UK migration debate makes strong distinctions between EU and non-EU migration, although as we have noted elsewhere, how 'migrants' are defined varies enormously. Migration scholars often rely on country of birth to define where migrants are 'from', but the reality is more complicated and European citizens themselves have diverse origins.

Thanks to Bridget Anderson for comments on an earlier draft.

Related Material

- ONS Statistical Bulletin - UK Labour Market, May 2015 www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_402319.pdf
- ONS - Detailed country of birth and nationality analysis from the 2011 Census of England and Wales www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/detailed-characteristics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/index.html
- Migration Observatory briefing - Who Counts as a Migrant: Definitions and their Consequences www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/who-counts-migrant-definitions-and-their-consequences
- COMPAS blog - Immigrant Investor Programmes: Navigating Economic and Political Tensions <http://compasoxfordblog.co.uk/2015/02/immigrant-investor-programmes-navigating-economic-and-political-tensions/>



The Migration Observatory

Based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford, the Migration Observatory provides independent, authoritative, evidence-based analysis of data on migration and migrants in the UK, to inform media, public and policy debates, and to generate high quality research on international migration and public policy issues. The Observatory's analysis involves experts from a wide range of disciplines and departments at the University of Oxford.



COMPAS

The Migration Observatory is based at the ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford. The mission of COMPAS is to conduct high quality research in order to develop theory and knowledge, inform policy-making and public debate, and engage users of research within the field of migration.

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