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Migrants and Europeans: An Outline of the Free Movement of Persons in the EU

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1. Introduction

Both research and public debate on immigration in Europe are currently focused on Third Country Nationals – their numbers, rights, migration projects, and relations with host societies. While this focus is more than legitimate, as immigration from *outside* the EU boundaries is a potentially revolutionary force in demographic and cultural terms, little attention is devoted to European citizens moving *inside* Europe. Since they cross state borders to relocate abroad, these individuals are to be classified as ‘migrants’. However, thanks to European integration, they enjoy a quite extraordinary status among world migrants, inasmuch as they preserve a set of political and social prerogatives that are usually precluded to foreigners. EU regulations safeguard them from discrimination in almost any realm of activity. They can move, settle, return, and participate in the social, economic, and political spheres of host countries on an equal footing with citizens of such countries. Their life chances are denationalized, possibly as the only real avant-garde of those cosmopolitan migrants protected by human rights and international law that some scholars expect to emerge with the advent of the post-modern age (e.g., Soysal 1994).

This paper sets out to illustrate the institutional underpinnings and the socio-demographic outlook of intra-EU migrations on the eve of the 21st century. It starts by briefly recapitulating, rapidly but necessarily, the historical roots of migration in Europe in the industrial age (§ 2). Such traditional population flows form the social backdrop of the early free movement policies of the European Communities in the 1950s and 1960s (§ 3). Paradoxically, the deepening of free movement policies in the following decades coincided with the shrinkage of continental migration. However, once the Maastricht Treaty had

redefined free movement as the cornerstone of European citizenship, migrations across the EU seem to have been moderately on the rise (§ 4). In recent times, new and old mobility tracks intertwine and overlap, in a scenario of growing individualization and volatility of residential and work choices. The paper ends by reviewing some hypotheses about the social and political impact of intra–continental migration (§ 5), as a basis for further investigation and a more grounded assessment of free movement in the process of European integration.

2. A Continent of Migrants: Population Movements in Europe in the Industrial Age

Until some thirty years ago, Europeans used to be migrants. The option to expatriate appeared to many families and local communities as an extremely plausible and socially respectable life choice. As senders, receivers or both, all countries have been somewhat familiar with migration experiences. Any social history of Europe would be highly deficient were it to overlook movements of populations: ‘Migration was a long–standing part of the family, land–holding, and inheritance systems of the continent’ (Moch 1996: 7).

With a few exceptions (most noticeably France), no European nation has been exempted, at different times of its history, from sending a noticeable share of its younger population outside its borders. In the 1824–1924 period 52 million people were shipped from European ports to North and South America, Australia and New Zealand. About three quarters of them are likely to have stayed indefinitely out of their home country (Moch 1996: 124)¹. The United States took in 60–70 percent of European migrants, while Canada, Argentina and Brazil received 7–15 percent each (Nugent 1996: 79). The apex of transatlantic flows was reached between 1911 and 1915 and again in the early 1920s, when about one million and a half Europeans crossed the Ocean (Bade 2000: 143). However, European migrants of the late 19th and early 20th century had many possible destinations. If between 1851 and 1890 three quarters of them went to the USA, in later decades the proportion sank to about half (Bade 2000: 137)². Movements to colonies and other European countries appear to have grown in the new century. The latter, in particular, were almost as large as migrations out of the continent; for instance, 44% of all Italian emigrants from 1871 to 1914 left for another European country (Bade 2000: 162).

The 1929 recession and the rise of Fascist and Nazi regimes halted these population flows, which nonetheless reemerged soon after World War II. In the 1950s, Europe lost 2.7 millions residents who mainly followed the transatlantic migration tracks beaten by European migrants about one generation earlier (Bade 2000: 301–302). In the 1960s, however, movements to the Americas dropped. Intra–continental migrations replaced them

¹ Slightly different figures can be found in Bade (2000: 141–142), while a critical assessment of all calculations of historical migration flows is provided by Nugent (1996: 78–79). The most serious estimation problem has to do with commuters, as improvement in transport technologies, by lowering the costs of travel, progressively boosted the proportion of ‘rotation’ or ‘seasonal’ migrants also among long–distance travelers.

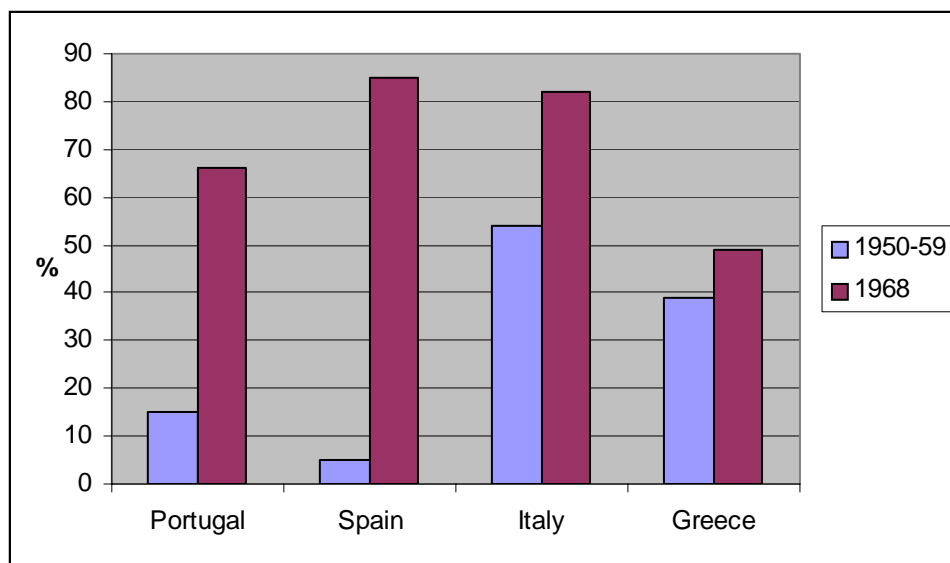
² However, ‘America’ epitomized any migration country (Hoerder 1996: 220–221). In Italy, for example, the ‘American uncle’ represented the popular image of the successful relative abroad regardless of the place where the migrant had actually settled.

(figure 1). In an age of reconstruction and economic expansion, Central–Northern European industrial areas attracted migrant workers within and between countries.

As King (1993: 23) summarizes,

the established model of mass Mediterranean migration to North European cities was that migrants were required for the lowest–status and most poorly–paid jobs which, in a tight labour market characterized by rising standards of education and thus employment aspirations, were shunned by the local work–force. Construction, factory employment and low–grade service occupations were typical employment sectors into which migrants were channeled.

Figure 1. Switching to Europe: proportion of emigration flows from Southern European countries to other European countries in the 1950s and 1960s



Source: Livi Bacci (1972: 114)

The bulk of intra–European migrants left rural and mountainous areas of Southern Italy, Western Spain, Northern Portugal and Northern Greece. Italians moved first, already in the 1950s, Spaniards soon followed³, while the ranks of the moving Portuguese and Greeks swelled since the mid–1960s. The Portuguese presence in France, in particular, skyrocketed in the 1960s: from 50,000 at the beginning of the decade to more than 800,000 ten years later (Moch 1992: 185); many of them settled in miserable *favelas* on the outskirts of Paris, to be soon absorbed in French society. Generally speaking, in the 1946–1970 period Italy was the most common country of origin and West Germany the most common destination of all these flows. On the one hand, 1,520,000 Italians settled in another European country – more than 80% of them in Germany and Switzerland (Pugliese 2002: 21–22)⁴. On the other

³ Spanish international migration soared in 1960, as a consequence of the economic shock caused by Franco's Plan de estabilización y liberalización of 1959 (Ródenas Calatayud 1994: 63 ff.). Moreover, in 1960 a labor recruitment agreement was signed with Germany, channeling Spanish migrants to the strongest market for 'guest' work in Europe.

⁴ This figure amounts to net migration, that is the difference between four and a half million departures and three million returners.

hand, at its highest level, in the early 1970s, in Western Germany there were about 1,500,000 ‘guests’ from Mediterranean Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece) (Rogers 1985: 5–9).

More than the direct cause, the oil shock of 1973 was the occasion to put a halt to mass migration within Europe. Signs of growing xenophobia, linked to the awareness of an incumbent economic crisis, had driven Britain (in 1962 and 1968), Switzerland (in 1970) and Sweden (in 1972) to tighten their immigration policies already before the Kippur war. While repatriation schemes failed and family reunification never stopped, in the early 1970s mass labour migration to Europe and within Europe came to an end. Thereafter, the size of movements between European countries declined, destinations diversified, and migration projects became more individualized.

3. From Migrants to Movers: European Integration and Free Movement Policies

Given the backdrop of existing migration flows, free movement across member countries was one of the chief goals of European integration from its early days. Indeed, it was first introduced by the pioneer supranational organization of shared economic interests, the European Coal and Steel Community (formed in 1951), to ease specialized workforce recruitment across national borders. Among the six founding States of the Community (Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Italy), Italy was particularly keen to support this goal, as a way to lower domestic unemployment and underemployment, as well as to improve the living conditions of nationals who had already migrated abroad (cf. Willis 1971: 150; Ascoli 1979: 29–36; Dumoulin 1989; Romero 1991: 29–34; Maas 2003).

While the ECSC Treaty limited it to ‘workers who are nationals of Member States and have recognized qualifications in a coalmining or steelmaking occupation’ (article 69), the right of free movement was formalized in the founding Treaty of the European Economic Community signed in Rome in 1957. Basically, article 48 of this Treaty affirmed the right to accept offers of employment made in another Member State, to move freely within the Community, as well as to reside and remain in another Member State after having been employed. In its original version, however, the Treaty tied the right to move to the creation of job commitments, as it explicitly referred to ‘workers’ rather than ‘citizens’. At this stage, Community law openly treated migrants as production factors rather than persons *tout court*, in line with the functionalist conception of European integration as an essentially economic enterprise. While bilateral agreements between national governments had been established soon after World War II, and extended later to more peripheral countries (Germany and Portugal signed one in 1964, and Germany and Yugoslavia in 1968) (Salt 1976; Werner 1976), the EEC Treaty built a more solid legal framework around the intra-European mass migration system of its age, taking into account that free movement met the interests of both would-be foreign workers in Italy and potential employers in Germany, Benelux and France.

However, the implementation of free movement proceeded at a slow and discontinuous pace. For more than a decade, in spite of the Rome Treaty, citizens of EEC Member States who intended to work in a different Member State continued to be submitted to national

immigration laws just like Third Country Nationals. They had to apply for work and residence permits, which could be denied by discretionary ruling. According to article 49 of the Treaty, free movement was a fully intergovernmental policy left to decisions taken in the Council of Ministers. Central and Northern European EEC Member States resisted the interference of supranational regulations with their sovereign power to control aliens. More specifically, in these countries it was often argued that free movement would have given some competitive advantage to Italians over other Southern European migrants, possibly making them less controllable and stable workers⁵.

The real implementation of free movement was thus postponed to 1968, when Council Regulation 1612/68 and Council Directive 68/360 abolished movement and residence restrictions of Member State workers and their family in the entire EEC territory. On the one hand, Regulation 1612/68 forbade all nationality-based discrimination between workers of Member States in terms of work conditions, salary, and unemployment benefits. Furthermore, it established the foreign workers' right to the same social and tax benefits as national workers, including access to training in vocational schools and existing housing benefits. Family members of foreign workers (including TCN spouses) were entitled to reside with them and to be allowed access to any kind of employment in the host country. On the other hand, Directive 68/360 reduced the bureaucratic formalities of moving within the EU considerably, recognizing the workers' and their families' rights to enter a different Member State by simply showing an identity card or valid passport, without being forced to obtain a visa. Communitarian migrants were also entitled to a 'residence permit', with a validity of at least five years and an automatic renewal, by presenting an employment certificate. In addition, permanence in the host country was guaranteed thereafter, as the residence permit could not be withdrawn in case of involuntarily unemployment and its lack could not justify expulsion.

The 1968 provisions ended the transitional regime set by article 49 of the Treaty, and created the conditions for a full exercise of the free movement right. They indeed represent a turning point in this matter. In the following decades, up to the present, admission, residence and equal treatment of foreign residents from other Member States have been dealt with through a raft of secondary legislation. Community law and the European Court of Justice have increasingly spread the matter and scope of the right to free movement originally contained in the Treaty. In particular, since the 1970s the ECJ has played a fundamental role in widening the scope of free movement by shifting its focus progressively from the free movement of *workers* to the free movement of *persons*. Due to the contribution of European citizens submitting their cases, the Court was able to give a broader interpretation of article 39 (ex 48) of the Treaty and of the Regulation 1612/68, emphasizing the social and individual dimension of free movement. According to the ECJ, the right to equal treatment implies fully-fledged integration, not only in the job market, but in the whole society, including social, cultural, and educational aspects of workers' and their families' lives (O'Keefe 1998: 20–25). With the decisive contribution of ECJ

⁵ It is true that free circulation norms brought migrants from EEC Member States (basically, Italians) out of those official employment channels by which 84% of Spanish and 86% of Portuguese, but only 8% of Italian workers, were hired in Germany in 1969 (Romero 2001: 413). However, even before the full enactment of free movement rights, the popularity of commuting between Italy and other EEC countries had been very high in the post-World War II period (Corti 2003: 93).

jurisprudence, in the 1970s laws on free movement were extended to self-employed workers and in the 1980s to persons who take up a paid apprenticeship, who enter university in a Member State different from their own after having taken up a job activity, and who are employed as seasonal workers (Baldoni 2003: 8–9)⁶.

As a logical consequence of the Single European Act of 1986, aimed at creating an ‘area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured’, a significant step forward in the history of the extension of free movement rights was made in 1990, when the freedom of movement and residence was explicitly extended to not economically active categories (as well as their families): students, pensioners and the unemployed (i.e., a residual category encompassing all those who do not enjoy freedom of intra-European movement on other grounds)⁷. Still, such arrangements are subject to two conditions from which workers are exempted: students, pensioners, and the unemployed must have health insurance and sufficient resources to avoid becoming a burden on the national health systems and social assistance of the host Member State.

Symbolically, however, the most spectacular step in the process took place with the Treaty on the European Union, signed in Maastricht in 1992 and entering into force on the 1st of November 1993. The Maastricht Treaty introduces the citizenship of the European Union to ‘reinforce the protection of the rights and interests of the nationals of its Member States’. Concretely, EU citizenship consists of a set of rights allowing to: a) vote and stand as candidates in elections of the European Parliament and in municipal elections in the Member State in which individuals reside, regardless of their nationality; b) submit petitions to the European Parliament and appeal to the EU ombudsman; c) be protected by the consular authorities of another Member State in third countries that lack diplomatic representation of one’s State; d) move and reside freely on the territory of any of the EU Member States.

Needless to say, the first three rights have a small scope compared to the last. For the ordinary EU citizen, access to diplomatic protection in third countries is an extremely unusual event; petitions to the EP or the ombudsman look like quite remote options; and the EP vote has little political relevance, suffering from higher abstention rates than all other elections in Europe (this is admittedly less the case for local elections). Indeed, the exercise of voting rights for the EP and local governments regardless of the country of residence is a second-order right requiring the exercise of the right to free residence abroad first. Thus, the rights to free movement and settlement in the entire EU territory form the cornerstone of EU citizenship. And this is exactly what many Europeans perceive that the EU is for: When questioned about the ‘meaning of the European Union’, young EU citizens point predominantly to ‘the ability to go wherever I want’ (39% of respondents in 2001, 35% in 1997) (Eurobarometer 2001: 16).

⁶ Yet, the controversial position of posted workers (i.e., workers who are temporarily sent to another Member State to perform services there and who return to their country of origin after completion of their work) was clarified only twenty years later, with the Council Directive 96/71.

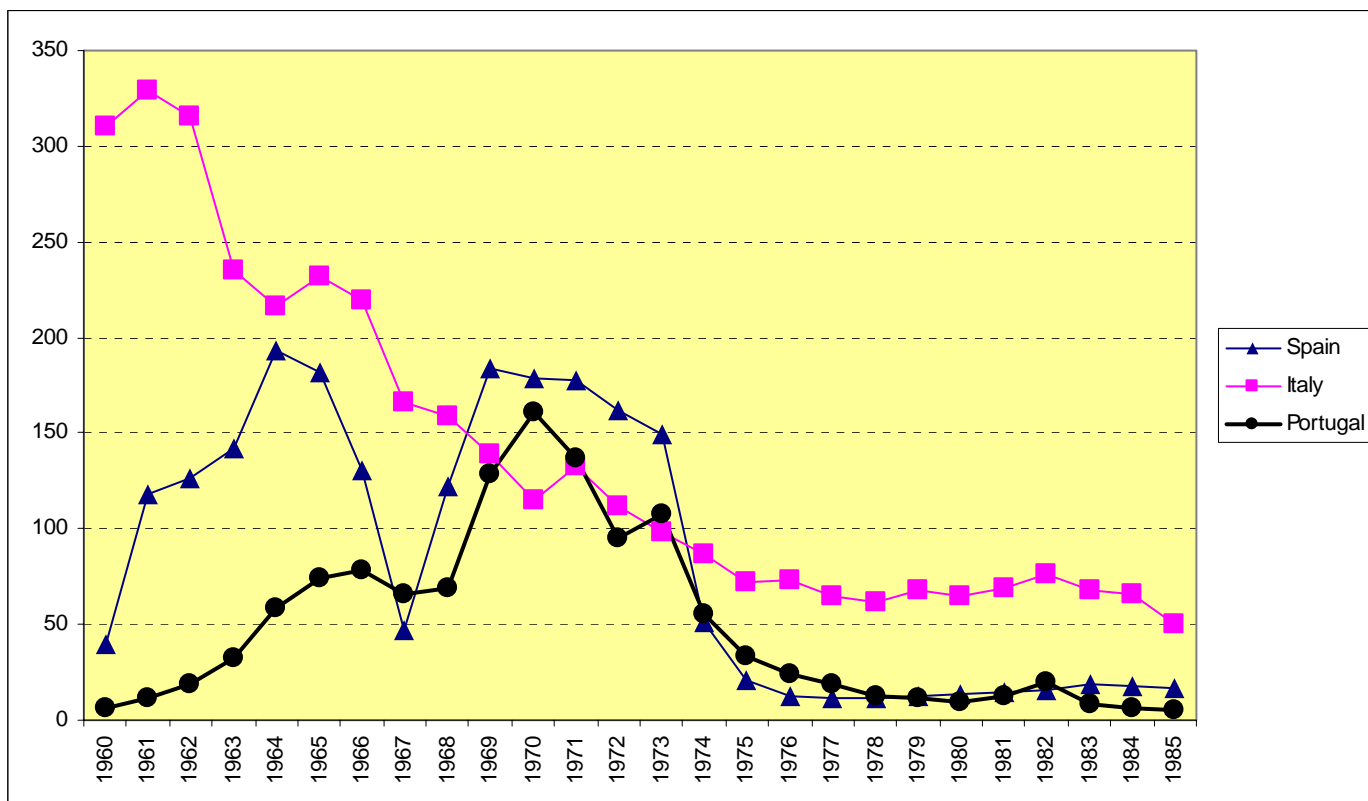
⁷ The legal bases of these changes are to be found in Directives 90/364, 90/365, 90/366 (the latter was then replaced by Directive 93/96).

To sum up, the free movement of persons across national borders – evoked as a long-term aim in the early years of the European integration process – has turned into a real possibility in the EU by the end of the 20th century. The two major legal steps in this process were the abolition of restrictions on movement and residence for workers of Member States and their families in 1968, and the introduction of EU citizenship in 1992. Another practical advancement was the adoption of the Schengen system, which took place progressively in the 1990s, to eliminate passport controls between EU national borders. Not less important, albeit less visible, was the action of the European Court of Justice. The ECJ promoted free movement significantly and progressively through its judgments, in particular by extending and reinforcing the rights of workers in host countries and fighting discrimination based on nationality. Especially at times when community legislation on the matter hung in the balance, the Court stood as a bulwark against all attempts to maintain privileges rooted in pre-existing or re-emerging nationality-based pieces of legislation. Even semantically, all these changes have turned intra-community ‘migrant workers’, as they were called in the ECSC Treaty of 1951, to ‘movers’, as they are now usually referred to in EU documents.

4. Migrating as Citizens: An Overview of Intra-EU Movements after the Maastricht Treaty

European Community regulation on free circulation began to be effective in the late 1960s, just when the interest to migrate from Southern to Northern Europe sank. Economic growth in sending countries discouraged migration. Free movement laws certainly removed the prior constraints to settling abroad, but in years of substantial weakening of both demand and supply of alien workforce (figure 2). Foreign workers from the European Community of Nine shrank from 1.8 to 1.2 millions in the 1973–1985 period (Molle and Van Mourik 1988: 326). Outflows from Italy, which were expected to be fuelled by Community legislation, declined steadily from 1961 onwards. Greeks could not exploit free movement opportunities until 1988, seven years after their country joined the European Community, while Spaniards and Portuguese had to wait until 1992, when the moratorium period for the extension of free movement rights to Spanish and Portuguese citizens ended. Even in these cases, the generalization of the rights to move, settle and work abroad in Western Europe did not revive the traditional sources of European migration. In economists’ language, ‘the stock of foreign residents from the Southern EU members had already reached its equilibrium level when the free movement was introduced’ (Boeri and Brücker 2001: 12).

Figure 2. Rise and fall of post–World War II European migration: intra–continental yearly flows from Spain, Italy and Portugal, 1960–1985 (thousands)

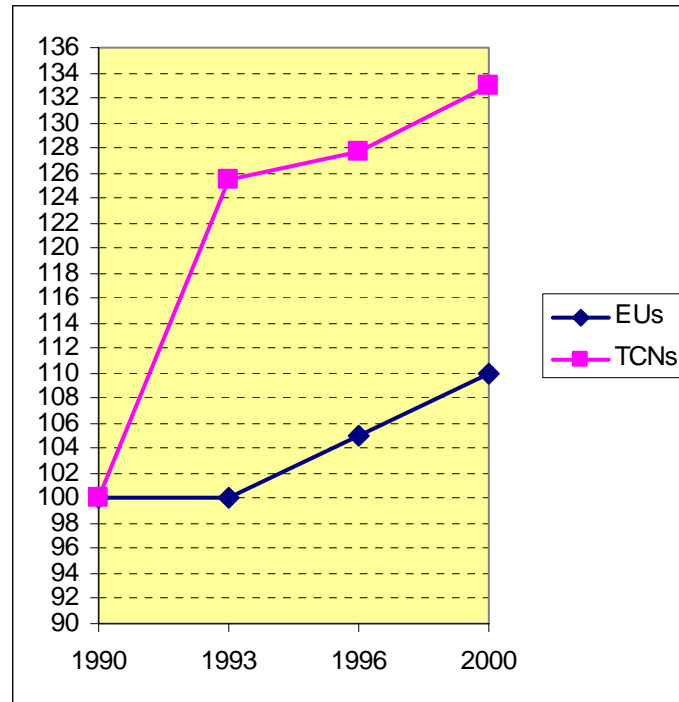


Sources: Golini and Amato (2001, 50); Pugliese (2002: 56); Istat (various years); Ródenas Calatayud (1994: 261 and 267); Baganha (2002: 19)

Is this still a valid picture? Although the introduction of EU citizenship did not prompt a renewed tide of intra–European migration, it probably changed its profile and character. In particular, in the absence of border controls, visa, and sanctions for non–registration, Europeans are entitled to move back and forth between home and host countries at their own will and pace. Free movement is thus likely to have fostered short–term, commuting and rotation mobility, at the expense of permanent settlement abroad. These are definitely more ‘invisible’ movements, which further complicate the already difficult task of assembling migration data that differ from one EU Member State to another because of discrepancies in the sources and methods of collecting statistics (Poulain 1996 and 1999)⁸.

⁸ In this section we concentrate on stocks of migrants, as comparative data on migration flows in the EU are much less complete. On the entire migrant population (i.e., workers and non–workers), sufficient time series are available only for Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden (Recchi et al. 2003). During the 1990s, the inflow of EU citizens in all of these countries tended to either rise slightly or remain constant. Eurostat indicates that ‘over the second half of the 1990s, an average of only just over one in 1,000 of those resident in the EU moved from one Member State to another each year’ (Thorogood and Winqvist 2003: 2). Among workers only, EU citizens made up 19% of the entire immigration flows into EU Member States in the 1995–2000 period (Bailly et al. 2004: 39). Significantly, 10% of them did not move away from their own country – that is, they were ‘global movers’ with other migration experiences as a background (ibidem). This was most often the case for EU citizens settling in peripheral Member States, both in Southern and Northern Europe (i.e., Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Denmark). The bulk of them were probably expats of multinational companies.

Figure 3. Growth in the stocks of TCNs and non-national EU-citizens in EU Member States, 1990–2000 (1990=100)



Sources: SOPEMI (2002), Eurostat New Cronos database (2001).

With this caveat in mind, there is little doubt that migration has been on the rise in the European Union in the 1990s. This is true for both TCNs and EU citizens. However, while the proportion of TCNs in the EU has increased by 33% over the decade, the proportion of EU citizens living in another EU country has grown by a less spectacular 10%. More precisely, foreign population has risen from 14,976,000 in 1990 to 18,915,000 in 2000 and the number of EU–foreign residents has gone from 5,502,000 to 6,014,000 (table 1). As they are based on citizenship and not on country of birth, these figures exclude holders of dual citizenship (forbidden in some EU countries) and naturalized migrants. But as has been aptly noted, ‘citizens of EU countries usually have little to gain from adopting the citizenship of another Member State. This is why the number of such acquisitions is limited’ (Eurostat 2004: 2). In the whole EU (Ireland excluded), in 2000 only 22,800 EU citizens acquired the citizenship of another Member State. This corresponds to 4.1% of all naturalizations and 0.3% of all intra–EU migrants (*ibidem*: 4–5)⁹.

⁹ Of course, naturalization did give some advantage before the introduction of EU citizenship, so that the proportion of pre–Maastricht intra–EU migrants who have been absorbed among nationals of the host country may be significant. For instance, Maas (2004: 16–17) shows that naturalizations of EU foreigners in France in 1986 were twice and a half more numerous than in 1996.

Table 1. Stocks of foreign and non-national EU citizens in EU-15 countries, 1990–2000 (thousands)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
B	904,5	922,5	909,3	920,6	922,3	909,8	911,9	903,2	892,0	897,1	861,7
	555,6	559,3	541,6	548,5	552,3	554,5	559,6	562,0	562,5	563,6	–
DK	160,6	169,5	180,1	189,0	196,7	222,7	237,7	249,6	256,3	259,4	258,6
	38,4	39,2	40,5	42,4	44,6	46,5	48,9	51,2	53,2	53,8	54,3
D	5342,5	5882,3	6495,8	6878,1	6990,5	7173,9	7314,0	7365,8	7319,5	7343,6	7296,8
	1644,8	1698,8	–	1750,2	1779,9	1811,7	1839,9	1850,0	1854,3	1858,7	1872,7
EL	229,1	253,3	262,3	149,1	152,8	155,5	161,1	165,7	–	–	–
	59,1	61,6	64,7	42,9	43,7	44,4	45,0	44,1	–	–	–
E	278,7	360,7	393,1	430,4	461,4	499,8	539,0	609,8	719,6	801,3	895,7
	255,8	289,8	181,8	200,5	219,8	235,6	251,9	260,6	295,3	312,2	375,5
F	3596,6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3263,1	–
	1311,9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1195,5	–
IRL	80,0	87,7	94,9	89,9	91,1	96,1	118,0	114,4	111,0	117,8	126,5
	–	–	73,0	67,0	70,7	73,4	86,8	81,3	85,3	85,0	92,2
I	781,1	863,0	925,2	987,4	922,7	991,4	1095,6	1240,7	1250,2	1252,0	1338,2
	163,9	160,7	160,8	120,3	124,9	128,5	133,5	–	–	148,5	153,8
L	113,1	117,8	122,7	127,6	132,5	138,1	142,8	147,7	152,9	159,4	164,7
	–	–	–	–	–	–	127,8	131,4	–	–	–
NL	692,4	732,9	757,4	779,8	757,1	725,4	679,9	678,1	662,4	651,5	667,8
	174,0	181,9	188,7	193,9	193,1	191,1	188,3	190,2	192,2	195,9	201,6
A	456,1	532,7	623,0	689,6	713,5	723,5	728,2	732,7	737,3	748,2	757,9
	–	79,4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	219,8
P	107,8	114,0	123,6	131,6	157,1	168,3	172,9	175,3	177,8	190,9	208,2
	29,9	–	–	32,7	36,2	–	41,5	43,7	48,2	52,4	56,8
FIN	26,3	37,6	46,3	55,6	62,0	68,6	73,8	80,6	85,1	87,7	91,1
	11,4	11,9	12,2	12,5	12,9	13,7	14,1	14,9	15,7	16,3	16,7
S	483,7	493,8	499,1	507,5	537,4	531,8	526,6	522,0	499,9	487,2	477,3
	195,7	190,5	186,3	182,6	180,3	179	178,2	176,8	177	177,4	180,1
UK	1723,0	1750,0	1985,0	2001,0	2032,0	1948,0	1934,0	2066,0	2207,0	2208,0	2342,0
	781,0	818,0	–	812,0	–	818,0	805,0	877,7	859,1	856,2	–
Total foreigners	14975,5			15551,4			16249,7			18915,3	
Total non-national EU-citizens	5501,7			4832,6			5735,8				6014,3

Source: SOPEMI (2002); Eurostat New Cronos database (2001)

Note: Totals are calculated based on the closest available year for missing data

The highest growth rate of TCNs took place at the beginning of the decade, when in fact the number of EU-foreigners stagnated. After 1993, however, the curves of increase of the two categories of immigrants show comparable upward tendencies (figure 3). By the turn of the century, intra-EU migrants represent 31% of the total population of non-nationals legally residing in EU Member States. This proportion varies greatly from one country to another. Only in Luxembourg, Belgium and Ireland are intra-EU immigrants a majority among non-national residents. In spite of restrictive migration policies for TCNs (cf. Geddes 2003), in all other EU Member States the bulk of foreign residents come from outside the European Union¹⁰. In the 1990s the number of EU immigrants has grown all over Europe – exceptions being Greece, France, Sweden, and Italy. This increase has been spectacular in Austria (their number has almost tripled) and Portugal (their number has almost doubled). In Finland, Spain, and Denmark there are about 50% more EU immigrants in 2000 than there were in 1990, while in Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom the increase has been smaller. Generally speaking, the rising trend is quite stable, save for Greece, which experienced some growth in the 1990–1992 period, followed by a downturn in 1993, and some stabilization afterwards.

The total amount of European migrants in EU Member States is still significantly impacted by the national communities that settled abroad during the post-World War II period of industrial recovery and mass migration along the South-North axis of the continent (table 2). In the host countries of traditional immigration, more recent free movers have not altered the pre-existing picture. France is still the second largest Portuguese-speaking and Spanish-speaking country in the EU (64.3% of Portuguese and 37% of Spanish immigrants in the EU live there), as Germany is second home to the Greeks (82.5% of those who live outside Greece in Europe) and the Italians abroad (51.5%). In absolute figures, Italians in Germany form the single largest community of EU non-nationals in a EU Member State (619,000 persons). Another factor to reckon with is the ‘neighbor effect’: because of historical links, language homogeneity, or simply territorial proximity, some nationalities are strongly overrepresented among migrants in countries across their borders. This is the case for the Irish in the UK (91.5% of Irish immigrants in the EU are in Britain), but less so for Britons (14.9% of those who reside in another EU country are in Ireland, where they represent 75.3% of non-national EU citizens). Finns account for 54.7% of EU foreigners in Sweden, and Swedes for 47.4% of EU foreigners in Finland. Although in lower proportions, similar two-way migrations can be found between Germany and Austria, the Benelux countries (among themselves and with Germany), Germany and France (25.6% of the French EU migrants are in Germany, 18.8% of the Germans are in France) and Spain and Portugal (but in lower numbers). Finally, there are growing communities of Northern Europeans living in the Southern countries of the continent. The bulk of them moved at a relatively late age in search of more favorable weather and leisure conditions. German ‘retirement migrants’ have mostly settled in Spain, where they amount to 23.6% of non-Spanish EU citizens, and Italy (24.8% of non-Italian EU citizens), whereas Britons have an equally sizeable presence in Greece (30.4% of EU immigrants), Spain (26.4%) and Portugal (24.8%). Retirement migration seems to be a soaring trend currently boosting internal migration in the EU (King, Warnes and Williams 2000).

¹⁰ Labor immigration and family reunification of TCNs make for a larger share of the immigrant population in those countries where the stocks of immigrants are higher: Germany (74% of foreign residents are not EU citizens), France (63%), the United Kingdom (61%), and Italy (almost 90%).

Overall, 51.9% of intra-EU migrants are men and 48.1% are women in 2001. About half the 15 EU Member States have a majority of male EU immigrants, and the other half a majority of female immigrants. At the extremes are Finland (63.7% of men) and Italy (58.1% of women). In particular, men prevail in all EU national communities settled in Finland. With the sole exception of the UK, all countries of older immigration (i.e., Central and Northern European countries) host a majority of male non-national EU citizens. The reverse is true for Southern European countries (except Portugal), where women from other EU Member States are in larger numbers. Possibly, this can reflect migration for intermarriage being more common than migration for work, since usually residence choices depend on breadwinner's residence (and traditionally husbands are more often breadwinners residing in their home country). In terms of 'national' orientations by gender, it can be noted that Greek migrants are disproportionately men in all EU countries (being 86% of the Greeks in Finland and 76% of the Greeks in Denmark), whereas Finnish women are a majority among Finns living in all other EU Member States (being 84% and 76% of their nationals residing in Greece and Italy). Like Finns, also Swedish and Danish women outnumber their male co-nationals in every EU Member State but Portugal and Finland.

Table 2. Stocks of non-national EU citizens in EU Member States by nationality, 2001

	Country of residence														Total
	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	P	FIN	S	UK	
B		520	23,494	1,183	18,272	66,666		5,208	13,200	25,860	2,115	116	629	8,230	165,493
DK	3,240		20,963	1,238	6,173	4,500		2,237	2,000	2,588	767	580	25,567	16,739	86,592
D	34,321	12,701		9,369	88,651	78,381		38,183	10,020	54,811	10,374	2,201	16,357	62,087	417,456
EL	18,386	660	365,438		866	5,768		13,538	1,250	5,692	143	312	4,407	26,307	442,767
E	45,917	1,802	129,471	670		161,762		14,867	2,910	17,155	12,189	533	3,320	46,560	437,156
F	107,240	3,296	110,173	5,094	46,376			29,713	16,530	13,326	7,186	859	4,709	85,592	430,094
IRL	3,295	1,094	15,690	495	3,413	5,314		2,204	930	3,990	446	218	1,146	411,834	450,069
I	200,281	2,833	619,060	5,493	27,874	201,670			19,890	18,248	3,031	774	4,512	97,230	1,200,896
L	4,353	18	5,981	40	354	3,640		257		312	85	11	26	544	15,621
NL	85,763	4,531	110,786	2,701	21,763	24,745		7,312	3,810		4,073	623	3,801	28,822	298,730
A	2,072	746	187,742	1,424	4,088	4,139		6,256	500	3,366	542	217	2,767	5,958	219,817
P	25,560	555	133,726	241	43,340	553,663		4,639	54,490	9,765		118	1,317	33,859	861,273
FIN	2,688	2,085	15,903	954	5,420	2,748		1,579	620	1,980	506		98,571	11,950	145,004
S	4,284	10,839	18,875	1,812	9,879	7,252		3,240	860	3,077	1,232	7,887		20,445	89,682
UK	26,156	12,630	115,353	13,394	99,017	75,250	77,320	24,592	4,400	41,404	14,094	2,207	13,062		518,879
Non national EU citizens	563,556	54,310	1,872,655	44,108	375,486	1,195,498	102,655	153,825	131,410	201,574	56,783	16,656	180,191	856,156	

Source: Eurostat, New Cronos database (2001)

Note: B = 2000; EL = 1998; F = 1999; L = 1998; A = 2000; UK = 2000

As is well known, ‘traditional’ migrations tend to follow established tracks especially because of network effects. Faced with the uncertainties of life in alien environments, migrants concentrate where nationals (and possibly families or friends) have already settled. Is this true also of intra–EU migrants? While micro–level studies are certainly needed to answer this question in greater details, Lieberman’s (1969) index of diversity can be applied to the distribution of each nationality of EU–migrants among EU Member States to measure how much these people scatter around Europe. In short, the index reveals that intra–EU movers do not spread around at random. As we have already seen, some of them are indeed channeled to typical destinations. This is the case for the Irish, who disproportionately move to Great Britain, the Austrians, who tend to migrate to Germany, and the Greeks, who also are more likely to move to Germany than anywhere else. Greater variability is shown by British, German and Swedish migrants. Generally speaking, it seems that more recent waves of migration (such as those from the latter countries) have more diverse destinations than traditional intra–EU migrations dating back to the 1950s and 1960s. On the other hand, Lieberman’s index can also be used to measure the degree of diversity of EU migrants within each Member State. Most EU countries show a quite high *mixité* of their immigrant population from Western Europe. The lowest level of diversity is shown by Sweden, due to the overwhelming presence of citizens from other Nordic countries – an effect of cultural proximity but also of legal facilitation for mobility across Scandinavian states since 1954.

Table 3. Lieberman’s index of immigrant population diversity per country of residence and nationality

	Per nationality	Per country of residence
DK	.81	.80
D	.86	.83
EL	.31	.82
E	.75	.83
F	.81	.73
IRL	.16	–
I	.67	.85
L	.72	.77
NL	.76	.84
A	.27	–
P	.55	.83
FIN	.52	.73
S	.86	.66
UK	.88	.73

Source: Author’s re–elaboration from Eurostat, New Cronos database (2001)

Overall, in the wake of the 21st century, four main intra–EU migration patterns can be outlined:

a) *Traditional South–North migration*. While current EU movers do not fit in the post–World War II migrants’ portrait (male, young, illiterate, from rural areas) any longer,

the diversification of migration projects and trajectories has not entirely offset the traditional model. Still in 2004, at least two different bus companies operate a weekly service between Sicily and Germany, catering for a larger public than old migrants visiting their home country, witness the rise in the number of Italian residents in Germany – 10% between 1994 and 2001 (Recchi et al. 2003: 30). Another clue to the persistence of these flows comes from employment data: in 2000 there were 16,225 Italians among construction workers in Germany (about 15% of the total), in an employment sector which normally absorbs immigrant workers in the early stages of their migration experience (Dobson and Salt 2002: 24). Work opportunities in the building and tourism industry of the richest Northern EU countries continue to be sought after by a sizeable proportion of the migrant population from Southern Europe.

b) *Cross-border migration.* Research on cross-border commuting in different areas of the EU found considerable variation in the propensity of Europeans physically located at a short distance from other Member States to take advantage of free movement rights (Clasen 2003). However, this form of migration does not hinge on geographical proximity alone, as cultural and linguistic closeness between countries does facilitate migration flows. EU citizens moving from and to Benelux, Scandinavia, Ireland and Britain, Germany and Austria benefit from lower barriers for social integration in the host country. Moreover, cross-border migration is likely to increase, as mobility to Austria and Germany was already very popular among Eastern Europeans before the 2004 enlargement that extended to them the right to move within the EU without a visa (Wallace 2002; William and Baláž 2002)¹¹.

c) *Retirement and resort migration.* As anticipated, by the end of the 20th century flows of North-to-South migrants have contributed to the rise of international migration in Western Europe. Recent research on a Spanish coastal area shows that pensioners activate some network effects on their friends and relatives, expanding and diversifying the scope of these flows (Alaminos, Santacreu and Albert 2003). Perhaps, thus, retirement associates to resort migration, taking account of the growing number of people who buy or rent a second home and live intermittently in another EU country (usually in Southern Europe, but also in global cities, art towns and resorts elsewhere in the EU). The boundaries between the two forms of migration are indeed blurred. What they probably share is subjective identification: retirement and resort movers are likely to refrain from calling themselves ‘migrants’, but neither would they accept to be classified as ‘tourists’.

d) *Student migration.* Erasmus (in 1995 renamed Socrates), an EU-funded program launched in 1989 to encourage student mobility between universities in the European Union, looks like the single most successful EU activity to spread Europeanness in everyday life¹². In the late 1990s participation in the program was extended to citizens of candidate countries; Icelandic, Norwegian, and Liechtensteinian citizens were entitled to

¹¹ Citizens of the states who joined the EU in 2004 (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta) are free to travel and live in any other Member State, and also to deliver services abroad as company-holders or self-employed. Yet they cannot take up employment in those States that did not adopt an open labor market policy explicitly. This transition arrangement, which replicates the limits to free movement set by previous enlargements, will terminate in 2011 at the latest. As an exception, citizens of Cyprus and Malta were granted full mobility rights all over the European Union immediately in 2004.

¹² While Erasmus-Socrates targets higher education, other smaller programs promote mobility for internships (Leonardo program), language teaching and learning (Lingua program), voluntary work (Youth for Europe program), and adult education (Grundtvig program).

apply from the start; Turkey joined in 2004. The program has widened its scope enormously: from 3,200 participants in 1987 to 124,000 fifteen years later. In 2002 the symbolic threshold of one million participants was trespassed. High as they can seem, these numbers lag behind the European Commission's goal of involving 10% of all students in institutions of higher education¹³. Since duration of stay abroad can last from three to no more than twelve months, and registration rules vary from country to country, the incidence of Erasmus students among officially resident intra-EU migrants is hard to assess. For sure, however, it contributes to keep the average age of European movers low. On the basis of national statistics, Eurostat estimates that among EU nationals moving between Member States '37.5% of men and 43.5% of women were in their 20s' in the 1995–1999 period' (Thorogood and Winqvist 2003: 3).

5. Free Movement for What?

Pleading for Research on Intra-EU Migration

Free movement within the EU is part and parcel of the European integration project from its inception. From an economic viewpoint, it represents the labor market counterpart to monetary union. High labor mobility is required in an optimally functioning single currency area to absorb local economic shocks due to the decline of some country-based production system. This argument won Robert Mundell, who first formulated it in a widely cited article (Mundell 1961), the Nobel prize for economics in 1999 and represents the theoretical justification for the support to free movement of market-oriented policymakers. From a political viewpoint, on the other hand, free movement is cherished by EU institutions as an instrument to deepen European integration at the societal level. As has been observed, 'the Union has not been totally "agnostic" with respect to the Good. It tends to favour the way of life of mobile, well resourced and well educated Europeans who have participated in Erasmus exchange programmes and developed a cosmopolitan outlook' (Kostakopolou 2001: 89). The rationale for this, as affirmed for instance in the *Action Plan for Mobility* (European Commission 2002), is that those who do taste free movement rights are led to appreciate EU citizenship and endorse European unification more vigorously. In addition, there is the expectation that movers may contribute to play down national differences, fulfilling the vision of Euro-enthusiastic intellectuals like Vaclav Havel: 'if regulations on the movements of citizens disappear, we will see the sort of blending produced in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy before the First World War. Subjects came and went, married all over the place, tried their luck at many things, without any of the preceding impeding development of national cultures' (Havel 1998: 119)¹⁴. In this scenario, the fusion of European societies would be greatly facilitated by an increased territorial mobility.

¹³ Spain and France are the most popular destinations, while the UK has the greatest net immigration of EU moving students. All figures are taken from the official EU Erasmus-Socrates website (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates>).

¹⁴ From the viewpoint of sociological theory, this is not a trivial hypothesis. It implies that migratory experiences bring about collective identities on the basis of acculturation and contacts occurring in the everyday life of another European country. In other words, it assumes that practices influence values more than the other way around – that is, the reverse of socialization theories.

Yet, migration flows of European citizens do not seem to match economists' and Euro-enthusiasts' aspirations. As an EC top officer bitterly admits, in the EU 'people do not seek to migrate unless there are compelling reasons. Frequently, in both Member States and candidate countries, jobs in one part of a country fail to attract people from other parts; how much less is the attraction then in a wholly different linguistic and social environment?' (Glaser 2001: 33). Europeans' alleged reluctance to move can be imputed to a variety of reasons. Candidate explanations are the ongoing reduction of cross-country differences in salaries due to economic convergence (although minimum wages still range from €116 in Portugal to €1369 in Luxembourg [Clare and Paternoster 2003: 2])¹⁵, the deep-seated persistence of national identities and life habits, and geographical stability as a typically European value associated with well-being and affluence (Pastore 2004: 76).

But are we really sure that Europeans are so immobile? Statements like Glaser's quoted above are quite common in both political and academic discourse. They assume a *spatial* yardstick for comparison: internal migration in the EU is low vis-à-vis its US counterpart. Annual cross-EU mobility flows – 0.1% of the resident population – is compared to the cross-state mobility flow of the US, which amounts to 3.1% (e.g., European Commission 2002: 29; Piracha and Vickerman 2003: 5; for US data, Schachter 2001: 1). The correctness of this exercise seems questionable on many grounds. The United States is a federal State, whereas the European Union is not; the USA is a nation, the EU not; free movement in the USA is a century-old phenomenon, being only a very recent possibility in the EU. Perhaps, when assessing the success of intra-EU migration, a *temporal* yardstick is more appropriate. In this perspective, as shown before (figure 3), it must be acknowledged that the number of moving EU citizens is in fact on the rise by the end of the 20th century.

But this is not all. There is room to believe that the real size of the phenomenon is not entirely taken into account by existing statistics. Western Europeans are likely to be more mobile than represented in censuses and other public records. The point is that their mobility is becoming too volatile for the statistical eye. Paradoxically, it is the very legislation on free movement that engenders elusive migrations. EU citizens can relocate for temporary or intermittent stays without any stringent necessity to register abroad. The emerging pattern of Europeans' mobility projects is likely to be 'bite-and-go migration'. Some city areas (Paris, London, Berlin, Brussels, and Barcelona) take the lion's share of these movements as they enjoy inherent and persistent appeal, also because of their higher permeability in terms of access to temporary housing, employment arrangements, commercial niches, and specialized leisure tastes. If economic considerations contribute to shape individual migration projects, they obey more subtle logics than the kind of disequilibria that explain traditional migration flows in economists' view (e.g., the accumulation of different forms of cultural capital at lower costs than in home countries). Indeed, recent analyses indicate that changes in the economic outlook of EU-15 Member States do not affect population movements between them significantly (Mouhoud and Oudinet 2004). Intra-EU migrations are largely due to inertia. Year after year, movements in and out of each country repeat themselves with marginal variations regardless of variations in wage and unemployment differentials. But what is more, emigration and

¹⁵ Existing studies on the effects of wage and unemployment differentials on workforce mobility within the EU show that intra-communitarian migration flows have a relatively low elasticity to changes in these two economic factors, in particular when compared to US states (for a review, see Ederveen and Bardsley 2003).

immigration in EU countries are highly correlated – that is, destinations with higher inflows have higher outflows as well (ibidem: 90). This is consistent with the hypothesis that the emerging form of migration across the EU has a short-term and circulatory character. *Guests come to stay* was the brilliant title of a study on post-World War II migration in Europe (Rogers 1985). ‘Guests come to stay and go’ could be its new version capturing intra-EU movements in the early 21st century.

Although we may speculate that this model of territorial mobility has some overrepresentation in middle-upper classes with a nomadic and globalizing lifestyle, it would be highly misleading to classify it as ‘elite migration’. In fact, the opportunity to move around the EU without too many formalities is appealing also to lower-middle class individuals as a shortcut to capital accumulation – be it economic or cultural capital, or a mix of the two. An example is the myriads of young Europeans temporarily employed in the tourism business in London, trying to make some pocket money and improve their English at the same time. Among more stable workers, there are certainly the ‘golden migrations’ of expat managers (Wagner 1999), but also the tiresome and lonesome commuting experiences of sales agents and technicians (Tarrus 1992 and 2000). They have little in common, except for the (still quite unusual) practice of mobility, which seems to be a growing criterion of social distinction in Western societies (Bauman 1998). Should their number expand, we may even expect the rise of a new politico-identitarian cleavage based on multicultural practices for ‘movers’ vs. monocultural frameworks prevailing among ‘stayers’. In a sense, this outcome would reproduce the ‘local-cosmopolitan’ divide – a dichotomy of reference group orientations dear to classic sociologists and unjustly forgotten (Merton 1957: 368 ff.; Gouldner 1957 and 1958).

Of course, this is nothing more than conjecture, as we have very limited knowledge of this heterogeneous population. In fact, further investigation of it seems promising in several directions. Intra-EU migrants sit on the cutting edge of social change in Europe. They straddle at least two issues that are on top of the agenda of European studies: the integration of European societies and the emergence of a European collective identity.

On the one hand, scholars focusing on the convergence of national societies in the EU are invited to consider that perhaps no other research target offers the opportunity to grapple with ‘Europeanization from below’ as much as they do. Their micro-social integration can be taken as a significant indicator of the state of macro-social processes of integration of EU societies. These people are practitioners of comparative sociological analysis on the European scale (at least on a two-case level, but often on more). Since Montesquieu’s *Lettres persanes*, transnational migrants provide the Litmus test of societal difference. Societies *are* different inasmuch as social actors moving across them *perceive* them as different. In this light, research should focus on the *integration* of intra-EU migrants in host countries, along the lines set out by Favell (2001 and 2004). In his study on free moving EU citizens in London, Brussels and Amsterdam, Favell (2004: 2) highlights ‘the array of informal barriers and struggles they encounter in forging ordinary middle class lives in a foreign environment – in terms of housing, child care and education, political participation, medical and welfare benefits, and long term financial planning – [discovering] sedimented regional and national cultures that sustain domestic middle class privileges in intensely competitive urban environments’. In this research framework, a relevant question to address is whether intra-EU destinations are chosen because of their imagined cultural proximity or,

rather, represent fungible worldwide locations on the basis of changing opportunities. Should the latter be the case, European free movers would fit into Sklair's (2001) 'transnational capitalist class' driven by global market imperatives, irrespectively of political citizenship and historic-cultural processes of supranational integration.

The second perspective is equally worth exploring. Intra-EU migrants can be studied profitably by research on European *identity*. Assuming a constructivist view by which a stronger attachment to Europe emerges out of denser networks of communications and interactions, who else more than internal migrants can nurture some identification with Europe? Intra-EU migrants exploit the opportunities of a wider labor market, or at least, if they are not workers, that of crossing State frontiers (something they do presumably more often than 'ordinary' EU citizens) without border controls, registration duties, and concerns about currency exchange. European integration seems to be in the best interest of many of them, just like the creation of a new nation (and its political-administrative bureaucracy) used to be for the cultivated young in Gellner's imaginary and prototypical Ruritania (Gellner 1983: ch. 5). One can even speculate that internal migrants might act as vehicles of cultural unification and legitimization of the polity that contains and allows their movements (be it the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the United States, or the EU)¹⁶. In sum, there are good reasons to expect intra-EU migrants to be heralds of Europeanness. However, empirical evidence supporting this argument is modest so far. Apart from small-scale studies of a highly specific work environment (Zabuski 2000) and of university students involved in university exchange programs (King and Ruiz-Gelices 2003), on the issue there is definitely a research void. We simply don't know if intra-EU migrants are more highly Europeanized and pro-EU than other European citizens. This lacuna can be filled only by taking a bottom-up approach to the study of the relation between intra-EU migration and identification with Europe – that is, by listening to the voices of the human beings who concretely and personally experience what it means to move and settle in a different European country¹⁷.

¹⁶ On the basis of Eurobarometer data, Recchi and Nebe (2003) tested the hypothesis of a 'halo effect' of intra-EU migrants on support for the EU in their host countries. This did not seem to be the case with the exception of Luxembourg, the EU Member State with the highest proportion of residents from the rest of the Union (29.9%) and also the highest levels of support for European institutions and European integration (20% of respondents to Eurobarometer in 1999 described themselves as 'European' without reference to any nationality [European Commission 2001: 10–11]).

¹⁷ This is precisely the primary objective of a research project – the PIONEUR project – that a multinational team is currently undertaking. The PIONEUR project is coordinated by the author of this paper at CIUSPO, Università di Firenze. Research partner institutions are ZUMA, Mannheim (coordinator: Michael Braun), CEVIPOF, Paris (coordinator: Anne Muxel), CSLS, Oxford University (coordinator: Damian Tambini), OBETS, Universidad de Alicante (coordinator: Antonio Alaminos). PIONEUR is funded by the European Commission (5th Framework Program). For more detailed information, see the project web site: <http://www.obets.ua.es/pioneer/>.

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