

**PIONEERS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ‘FROM BELOW’:
MOBILITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY
AMONG NATIONAL AND FOREIGN CITIZENS IN THE EU
(PIONEUR)**

5th Framework Program – European Commission

The PIONEUR research group is coordinated by the *Centro Interuniversitario di Sociologia Politica* (University of Florence; international director: Ettore Recchi) and composed by the *Center of Socio—Legal Studies* (Oxford University; director: Damian Tambini), the *Centre d’Etude de la Vie Politique Française* (CNRS, Paris; director: Anne Muxel), the *Zentrum für Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen* (Mannheim; director: Michael Braun), and the *Observatorio Europeo de Tendencias Sociales* (University of Alicante; director: Antonio Alaminos).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

European integration was founded on the principles of the free movement of goods, capital and services—but also of people. Since the Treaty of Rome, Europeans living within what is now known as the European Union have enjoyed progressively stronger rights to move freely, reside and work in other EU countries. When nationals of different member states are asked what it means to be a ‘European citizen’, this freedom to move is always cited as the most important right. Now, with the process of enlargement, migration within Europe has become a matter of huge public interest, as public policy in all European countries faced the task of balancing the economic benefits of such labour migration with other social and economic consequences. These have resulted in restricted rights of movement and work for new member state citizens in some European countries. However the storm of debate surrounding enlargement was conducted almost without reflection on the longer term processes of internal EU migration that have been developing since the Second World War.

Part of the reason for the lack of reflection on internal EU migration is that until recently very little was in fact known about the motivations, patterns and consequences of migration from one EU state to another. There are very few reliable sources of information on EU migration. Intra EU migrants constitute a hidden population in two senses. First, they are not registered as ‘foreigners’ in any systematic way by host countries. Second, they are very difficult to reach for survey purposes by the standard means of door-stepping or random questionnaires. Host countries governments’ policies are based on estimates and guesswork, and on the very blunt instrument of census data. Foreign missions and embassies of the home country, meanwhile, are generally contacted only by a tiny minority at times of crisis or for routine services.

Very little is known about the real reasons people migrate within Europe, or whether the new migration is different to the old. Can we simply assume that large numbers of poorer Europeans will seek work in other countries? Aren't there different kinds of European migration—including large numbers who migrate to study or retire—and what proportion of migrants do these various groups make up in the different countries? Are there countries in which migration from other EU member states is a potential burden, for example because a large number of these European migrants are economically inactive? Of those who do migrate to work, is this a successful strategy? Do we know if they succeed in job markets given the persistence of bureaucratic, linguistic and cultural barriers? Do they follow the traditional migrants' pattern of decline in social status whilst their children are the real beneficiaries? Nor do we know a great deal about what EU movers think about life—and particularly their own reception—in different European countries.

We might also ask about the political consequences of this migration. Some of the more idealistic architects of European integration simply assumed that an increase in migration within the Union, or Community as it was then known, would result in the emergence of a strong sense of commitment to a 'common European home'. Migrant experiences can lead to different kinds of acculturation to the host country. They may also cause an intensification of nationalistic feelings for home countries. The willingness of intra-EU migrants to move might not translate into a willingness to participate as prototypical European citizens. And if they do vote, do they have any particular political inclination in domestic politics?

The European Commission has a policy of encouraging mobility within Europe in order to promote flexibility and economic growth. 2006 was declared the European Year of Workers' Mobility. But policy makers have been confounded by the fact that since the single market was completed, official figures suggest that less than 2% of European citizens are counted as living outside their own native state. Despite the opportunities, European citizens seem remarkably reluctant to move and live abroad. At the same time, other studies suggest that numbers have been growing, that cross-border mobility of all kinds is expanding, and that there is sharp awareness of opportunities of mobility for an ambitious generation of new Europeans. Young people are moving to find work and adventure in global city hubs like London and Paris; professionals and corporate employees are taking up global placements; retirement migrants go looking for sunshine and quality of life; and international student exchange is broadening horizons, through the extensive Erasmus and Socrates programmes. On all these questions, new research is needed to sort out the myths from the realities of the new European mobility in all its forms.

Speaking to this gap in knowledge, the PIONEUR group—an international network of social scientists and research centres funded by the European Commission (Fifth Framework Programme)—was formed to develop the first systematic study of intra-EU migrants. Using a new sampling method based on telephone databases and frequency of particular surnames in particular national context, they have been able to generate a sample of 5,000 European citizens resident as foreign nationals in the five

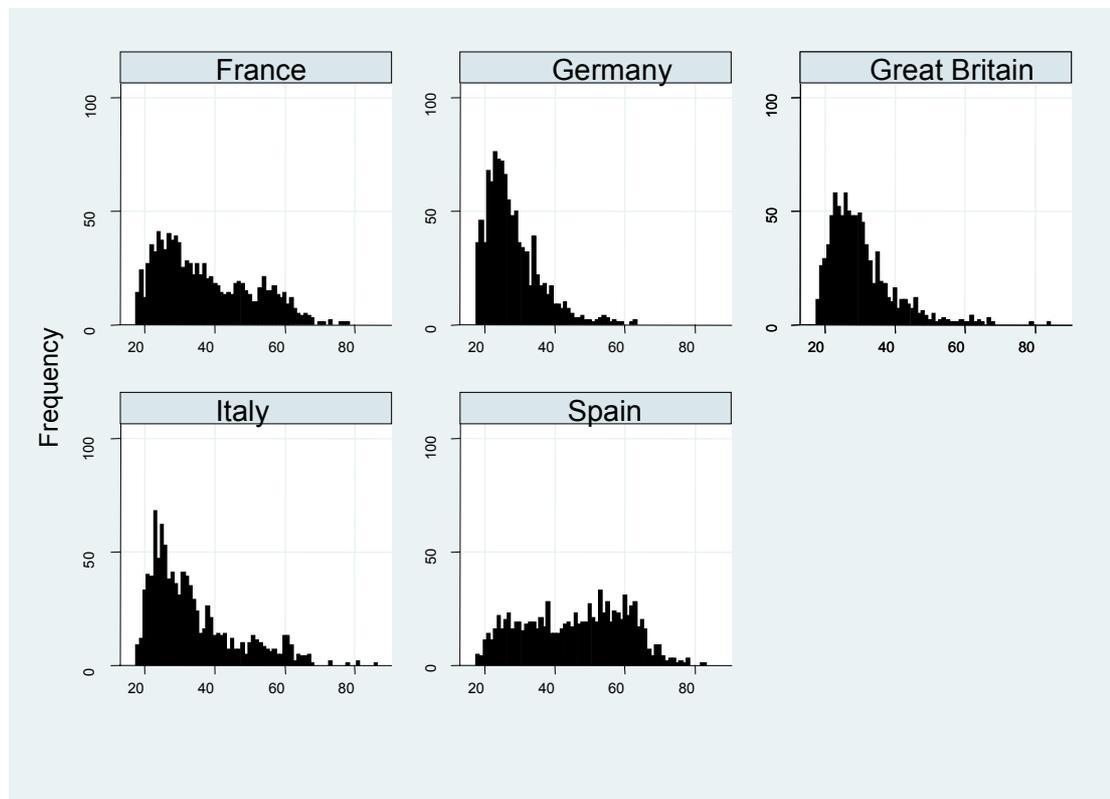
largest European member states (France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Spain) (EIMSS: *European Internal Movers Social Survey*). A survey of this target group has never before been carried out on this scale. EIMSS permits a systematic comparison of the attitudes and behaviours of EU movers and stayers, as measured by conventional Europe-wide survey instruments such as the *European Social Survey* (ESS) and *Eurobarometer*.

In this brief overview, we offer a synthesis of some of the most important findings of the study.

1. Who are the EU movers?

Our data show that intra-EU migrants are changing in their social composition. While once they were predominantly low-skilled economic migrants—like ‘guest-workers’ from South to North—more recently they tend to be better educated, highly skilled labour migrants, and they also partly come with other motivations, such as to retire and to study. There are by now strong migration flows of retired people from North to South as well as movements of the highly skilled particularly between the different countries of Northern and Central Europe.

Figure 1: Age at migration of EU movers in different countries of residence



Though most migrants are highly educated today, migration from Southern Europe to Britain and particularly to Germany still comes from a lower social background when measured by respondents' education. However, there are considerable differences between different groups. For example, while the most recent Spanish migrants to Germany are highly educated, their Italian counterparts have still mostly lower secondary education only (pointing to the existence of an economic niche for Italians, such as restaurants and ice-cream shops). Relatively low education is also found with German and British migrants in Spain, partly due to their higher age. Among British migrants to Spain, the proportion of the low educated has even clearly increased in the last decade.

Overall, retirement migration gains in importance compared with labour migration. This has clear effects on the age structure of migrants in the different countries of residence. German and British citizens living in Spain are the oldest migrants. This can also be seen by their age of settlement: British citizens were on average 51 years old when they came to Spain, while Italians and Spaniards who moved to Germany (the bulk of them to work or to join their partners) are on average in their mid-twenties.

2. The social mobility of EU movers

European integration poses the question of whether spatial mobility within the European unified space offers emerging opportunities of social mobility to individuals wanting to escape entrenched national social hierarchies. Evidence shows that the intergenerational mobility of EU movers does not differ significantly from that of the general population. Yet, this finding is arguably contingent on their differing social class background. The relative majority of EU movers in our sample come from upper class families, and thus have no leeway to move further up in the social structure. In fact, EU movers from the bourgeoisie are able to maintain their original standing even more frequently than stayers: as adult migrants, 60% of them belong to the same social class as their fathers. This means that, in contrast with traditional migration, a substantial share of intra-EU workers' migration qualifies as a new form of upper-class circulation.

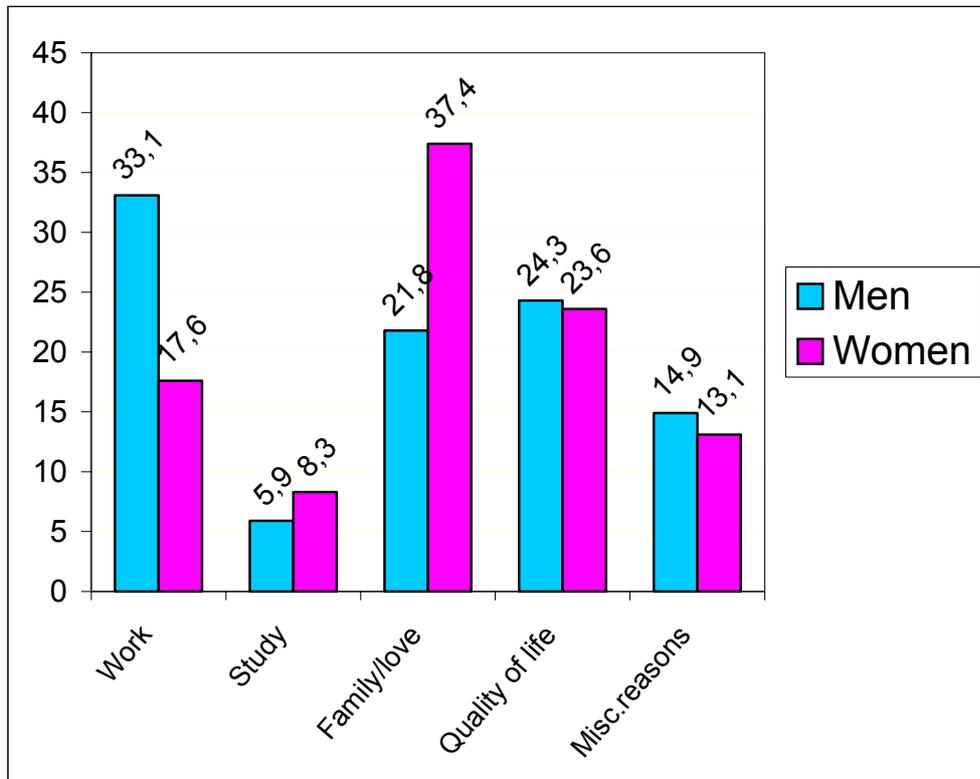
Cross-border mobility within the EU is, in fact, a more risky business for women and the less educated, who are more likely than other social categories to experience a downward shift in their career when abroad. In contrast, Spanish movers excel in turning their migration across Europe into an upward class shift, both compared to their family class (intergenerational mobility) and their previous class position when working in Spain (intragenerational mobility).

3. Why do EU migrants move?

Subjective motivations of intra-EU mobility vary considerably by country of origin and destination. Overall, however, the classic pattern of labour migration tells only a limited part of the story. ‘Work opportunities’ (mentioned by 25.2% of our sample) are less common than non-work reasons. Among the latter, ‘family/love’ (29.7%) prevails over ‘quality of life’ (24%) and ‘study’ (7%), while 13.1% mention other more specific motives.

Half our EU movers are ‘supermobile’, as they have previous migration experiences (and 26.5% in a third country). Over time ‘family/love’ and ‘quality of life’ tend to become more common motives to migrate. Gender differences are also noticeable, reproducing traditional roles: four women out of ten move for sentimental reasons (probably following or joining their partners abroad), while one third of men still qualify as ‘work migrants’. Overall, the right to free movement is changing not only the objective conditions, but also the subjective underpinnings of intra-EU mobility from ‘international’ to ‘internal’ mobility, inasmuch as the latter is more frequently driven by personal relationships than by job shifts (as shown in other studies).

Figure 2. The subjective motivations of intra-EU mobility by gender (%)



4. The socio-cultural adaptation of EU movers in the host countries

One of the main concerns of the PIONEUR project was to monitor the quality of life of intra-EU migrants. A key factor of their integration into host societies is language competence. Our findings show that EU movers were not particularly proficient in the host country language at migration (an exception being the knowledge of English for movers to the UK). Still, their foreign language competence was higher than that of the general population, pointing at language skills as a serious pre-condition of cross-border mobility across the EU.

Competence in the language of the host country improves rapidly, though, for all movers but the British migrants, who seem to take advantage of the diffusion of English as second language in most EU societies and have a lower incentive to learn the host country language to feel integrated. Spain stands out as the country that puts the weaker pressure on intra-EU migrants to learn the local language. This has probably to do with the higher mean age of EU movers living in Spain—younger people tend to improve their language skills more than seniors.

Overall, Spanish migrants declare to suffer from home country nostalgia more than all other movers. But what each nationality misses when living abroad is strikingly different. The Spanish are nostalgic about their home country 'lifestyle', whereas German, British and French movers mention their home country 'civic culture', especially when settled in Southern Europe. Generally speaking, the time spent living abroad reduces the nostalgia of family and friends, boosting the nostalgia of social and more abstract cultural aspects.

Germans and British tend to have a close circle of co-national friends in Spain, as well as Italians in Germany. The French, in fact, have a higher proportion of friends from the host country wherever they settle down. All movers to Italy, lastly, tend to include a larger number of locals in their personal networks.

5. The national and European identities of EU movers

The EU movers' attitudes towards the European Union are also investigated in this report. Intra-EU migrants have a much more positive image of the EU, feel far more attached to the EU and perceive themselves as more knowledgeable about European institutions and policies than people who have not left their countries of origin. This finding may be due to the greater 'use' movers make of European provisions than stayers (free movement across borders, access to labour markets and welfare rights in other EU countries, making friends abroad, etc.).

About 50% of internal movers hold so-called 'tripartite' territorial identities that consist of two national attachments (country of origin, COO, and country of residence, COR) as well as a feeling of belonging to the EU. The other 50% of movers divide into three groups: first, those who identify with both the COO and the

COR but have not developed a feeling of belonging to the EU (two national identities: 17.7%), second, those who have experienced identity-conflict between the COO- and the COR-identity and feel attached to either one of those plus the EU (one national + European identity: 16.7%) and third, those who hold only one identity (single identity: COO, COR or European) or no territorial identity at all (15.9% altogether).

On the basis of social psychological theories, the authors suggest that, for intra-EU migrants, the best condition to develop a European identity is to hold two non-conflicting national identities. If so-called ‘cognitive inconsistency’ arises between the COO and the COR identity, the feeling of belonging to the EU can still be achieved but is less frequent.

Table 1. The collective identity of EU movers (%)

	COO + COR attached	COO not attached + COR attached	COO attached + COR not attached	COO + COR not attached
EU attached	49.7% Integrated Europeans	9.8% Assimilated Europeans	6.9% Separated Europeans	2.5% Marginalised Europeans
EU not attached	17.7% Integrated Non-Europeans	5.4% Assimilated Non-Europeans	5.4% Separated Non-Europeans	2.6% Marginalised Non-Europeans

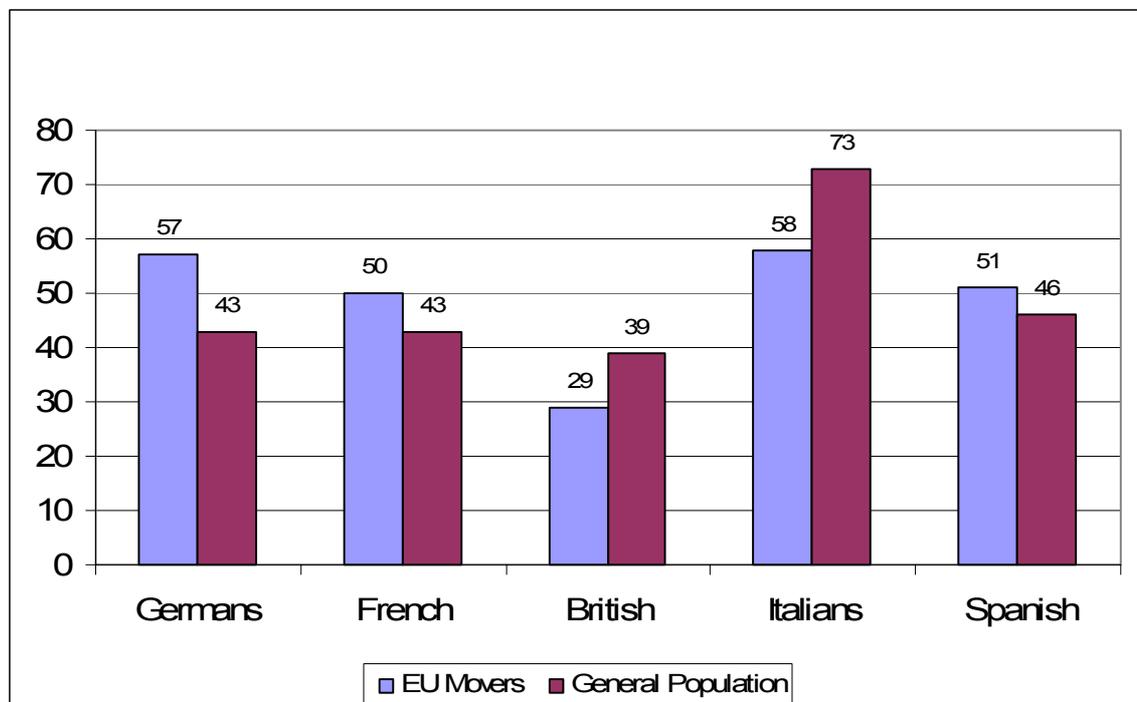
6. The political participation of EU movers

Does the experience of migration foreshadow another kind of relationship with politics and European citizenship? EU movers have favourable dispositions towards politics and a high level of political interest. But they remain detached from real politicization involving active and sustained participation. The most politicized are the highly educated and those who belong to the categories at the top of the professional hierarchy (like in the general population). The prevalence of a leftist tendency is noticeable, accompanied by economic anti-liberalism and by universalistic values. The higher politicization level of German and Spanish migrants stands out: the latter group presents itself as the most radical and protest-oriented.

However, such a higher-than-average interest for politics does not yield a high level of electoral participation. EU movers vote less than the general population, whatever

the type of election. While their participation at the last general elections in their country of origin is markedly lower than that of stayers, they seem to be slightly more motivated to go at the polls of European elections. The fact that EU movers are more likely to vote to European than to national elections may depend on an easier access to EU citizenship rights than to the voting rights as national citizens, but it can also reflect their shift of interest to European issues over home country politics. In so far as it can be judged from the results of this study, therefore, a ‘political Europe’ seems to emerge cautiously in the awareness and practices of intra-EU migrants, who make a larger use of all their EU citizenship rights.

Figure 3. EU movers and co-nationals at the polls: European elections, 2004 (%)



7. The media use of EU movers

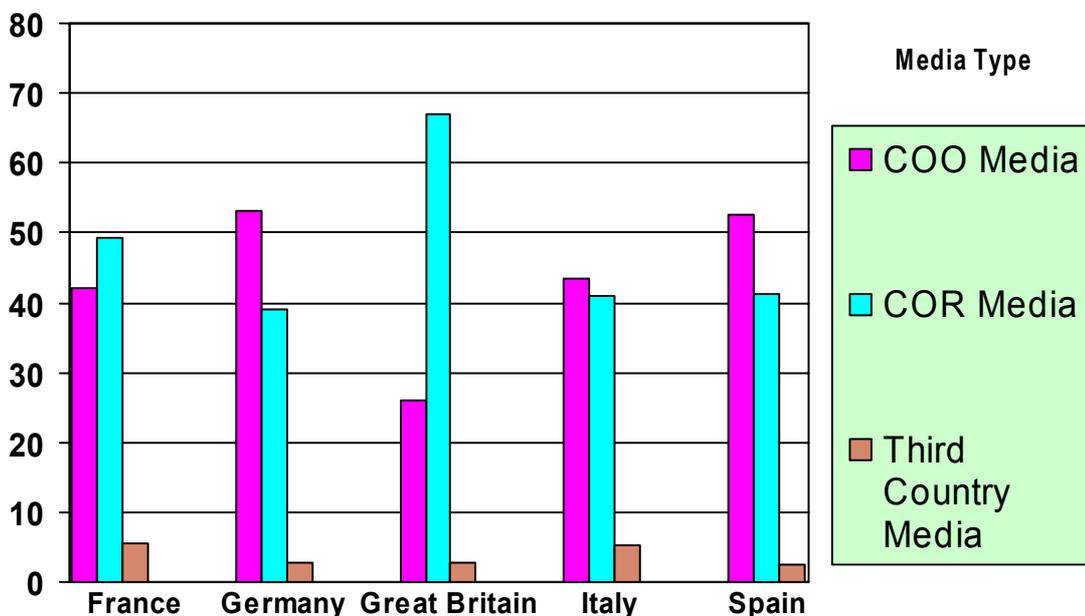
Thanks to advances in media technology, current European migrants stand out as the first generation of migrants with a genuine choice between using home country media and residence country media.

The distribution of preference regarding where to search for information regarding important world events shows that 47.2% of EU movers in our sample report that they use COR media, compared with 43.8% who use COO media. A very small

percentage uses media from a third country (3.8%). This question does not reveal differential access to press, radio, television or the internet. It is likely that many of those accessing COO media are doing so via the internet. There are also major differences between countries of residence. Migrants living in Great Britain and France are more likely to use COR media in order to find information regarding the latest news, while migrants living in Germany, Italy and Spain are more likely to use COO media. This can be explained by reference to a combination of language proficiency, lower ability to access COO broadcasts and perhaps a high level of trust of UK media outlets, but our data cannot offer any guidance on which of these best explain the UK anomaly.

The majority of our EU movers use the internet on a daily basis. Only 23.8% have never used the internet. Our respondents are not, however a homogenous group in terms of their internet use. Well over 80% of intra-EU migrants in Britain are regular internet users. This probably reflects the higher numbers in employment in Britain. In contrast, as a consequence of their higher average age and their retiree status, migrants living in Spain are the most likely to have no access (13.2%) or to have never used the internet (36.2%). Overall, the survey data show that EU movers display higher levels of media consumption than the wider population.

Figure 4. Info on world events, by country of interview (%): “If you heard about an important world event, where would you first look to find out more information?”



8. Internal and External Movers: East-West Migration and the Impact of EU enlargement

An additional study undertaken by the PIONEUR project compared intra-EU migrants with migrants from East and Central Europe. With EU enlargement in May 2004, the issue of East-West migration has become an extremely pressing one in the EU, especially considering the barriers to full free movement still being maintained against most of the new member states. Our study, based on 40 qualitative interviews with migrants from Poland (a new member state) and from Romania (a candidate country), looks at their experiences of EU mobility, access to formal residency status, West European labour markets, and perceptions of discrimination.

In future, one might expect these new ‘pioneers of European migration’ to come to resemble the West European movers, as these countries take their full membership in the European club. For the moment, however, our findings point to a rather different outcome, which suggests that their life conditions are not comparable to the West Europeans surveyed.

While moving across borders to work is not particularly difficult for nationals of either country (despite formal restrictions), settling and establishing long term residency is. Both Poles and Romanians experience discrimination, especially in countries such as Italy and France where they usually expect closer cultural ties. Higher skilled migrants have greater opportunities, but downward social mobility is widespread, as their qualifications and talents are not usually recognised in the West. Only those educated in the West find that they have good prospects in their current country of residence, but these individuals often constitute a serious ‘brain drain’ for their country of origin.

The British economy seems to offer relatively higher opportunities, but migrants there still expect the experience to be short term. In other countries, nationally regulated labour markets restrict access to many professions. Finally, circular and temporary migration is on the rise, especially for the Poles who, with barriers down, find it easier to move back and forth. This allows them to take the benefits from mobility without the drawbacks of immigration and settlement.

9. Conclusions

The PIONEUR project offers a map of the geographical mobility of EU citizens within Europe, including the continuing flows of labour migration from South to North, an emerging high skilled brain circulation, the vast expansion of North to South retirement migration, and other new forms of mobility across borders and regions that are overlooked in existing studies on migration in Europe. Overall, EU movers are a quite *unique but not unitary* population, formed by such diverse categories like retirees and traditional working class migrants.

The research results of this project show that the bulk of younger intra-European migrants are highly educated and are drawn from upper-middle class backgrounds. The dominant cause of spatial mobility is love (following or joining a partner abroad) and not economic interests (work, career shifts). Cross-national marriages and personal relationships stand out as the prime sources of free movement.

EU movers seem to integrate well in their new country of residence. We are not in a position to say whether their mobility sustains economic growth and innovation. Even economists are at pain with this question. However, we know that from the perspective of EU movers themselves, mobility does not seem to lead neither to spectacular status upgrades, nor to downward social trajectories. EU movers are specialists in border-crossing, not in class-crossing.

In fact, the PIONEUR study shows that the ‘political dividends’ of geographical mobility within the EU are clearer than the economic benefits. EU movers uphold European integration and feel much more strongly European than the general population. Significantly, their identification with Europe grows with the number of years spent abroad. In sum, EU movers contribute to reinforce the legitimacy of the EU. They form a ‘carrier group’ of European identity, the living testimonials of an ever closer Union. The study, however, alerts us that such an outcome is much more likely when EU citizens on the move are at ease with different cultures and able to combine, not to transcend, home and host country lifestyles.