08.30 Breakfast

09.00 Welcome from Chair

09.05 **Brexit, Brazil, and the Youth Mobility Scheme**

Dr Daniel Robins, Research Fellow, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

This paper examines how Brexit has affected semi-documented migrants. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with Brazilian delivery riders in London. Although participants noticed increased employment opportunities, they were excluded from many of these due to tighter controls from most mainstream employers. The alternative was working informally for migrant run businesses which often put them at risk of exploitation. Consequently, they chose to use borrowed documentation to work for online food delivery platforms where there was no face-to-face contact between employer and worker and the risk of exploitation was low. Although there was high satisfaction with their employers and with wage levels there were frequent reported incidents of hostility and harassment at the hands of customers and the police. Many felt they were often treated as less than human due to their perceived status as ‘illegal immigrants’ working in an informal ‘street’ service sector. Brexit does not seem to have affected the ease with which interviewees could enter the UK. The Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) allows adults under 30 from selected countries to work in the UK for two years. In 2018, HM government suggested extending the YMS to EU countries. To date, the scheme has only been extended to India. This talk argues that based on research on young Brazilians’ migration intentions, average duration of stay and work patterns, Brazil is an ideal candidate to be added to the Youth Mobility Scheme and doing so would be mutually beneficial to all stakeholders

09.25 **Assessing the new ‘points based’ immigration system**

Marley Morris, Associate Director for Migration, Trade and Communities, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

The introduction of the post-Brexit 'points-based' system - which applies the same immigration rules to both EU and non-EU citizens - has come at a time of exceptional change and uncertainty in migration research. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to major disruptions in global mobility and has expedited reforms to the UK's approach for measuring migration stocks and flows. Assessing the impacts of the new immigration system is therefore an extremely challenging task. This talk will provide an overview of what we know so far about the new system and how it has been used by individuals and employers. It will explore the emerging implications for different industries, the government's response to concerns over skills shortages, and the potential risks of exploitation for migrant workers. The talk will end with some suggestions for how the government can reform the system to help support a high-wage economic recovery.

09.45 **Immigration and the UK economy after Brexit**

Professor Jonathan Portes, Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Kings College London

Immigration was central to the politics of Brexit but was peripheral in the pre-referendum discussion of its economic consequences. Indeed, both before and in the immediate aftermath of the referendum, the UK’s choice was often framed as a trade-off between the economic costs of increasing trade frictions between the UK and EU on the one hand, and the political benefits of ending free movement and restoring “control” over immigration on the other. Since the referendum this has reversed – immigration has become a much less salient political issue, and public attitudes towards immigration have become more positive. However, its economic significance has become more apparent, first as migration flows from the EU fell sharply and then, in the past year, as the covid-19 pandemic has led to very large net outflows. In this paper I discuss migration trends since the referendum and examine developments during the pandemic. I then analyse the post-Brexit migration policy introduced in January 2021, review existing estimates of the likely economic impacts, discuss labour market developments during the post-pandemic recovery and beyond, and consider some of the resulting policy implications.

10.55– Q&A

10.15 – Break

10.30 **EU citizens' representation post-Brexit**

Dr Alexandra Bulat, Young Europeans Network Co-Manager, the3million

EU citizens are the largest migrant group in the UK, yet there is little literature on their political participation and representation, particularly in the post-Brexit context. This paper presents findings from the project 'EU citizens identity, belonging and representation post-Brexit', conducted by Dr Alexandra Bulat and Prof Tanja Bueltmann, looking at how EU citizens feel about UK politics and their ability to have a voice in political processes. The analysis is based on a survey of 2,424 EU citizens, with questions on voting rights, voter registration and political representation, and 48 follow-up interviews developing on the same topics. Overall, the findings show a significant rupture - the EU citizens consulted have a high willingness to participate in UK politics, with a large majority registered to vote, however, an even larger majority feel underrepresented or unrepresented in UK politics. The paper also looks at support for electoral reform amongst EU citizens, with a majority supporting a residence-based, rather than citizenship-based model of voting rights.

10.50 **Immigration, digital rights, and digital technology use**

Luke Piper, Head of Policy and Advocacy, Immigration lawyer, the3million

The UK’s decision to leave the EU brought about a significant change in immigration policy governing who can and cannot enter the country. It has also coincided with a significant shift in how technology has guided, developed and implemented these policies. What are these technologies? What are the emerging trends? What are the benefits? What are the risks? This part of the conference will address these questions with a focus on the experience of EU citizens impacted by Brexit and ask what the impacts are on migrants and their rights.

11.10 **The effects of Brexit on migrant smuggling and trafficking in the UK**

David Suber, Doctoral researcher, Dawes Center for Future Crime, Department Security and Crime Science, University College London

Brexit is likely to have long lasting effects on immigration to the UK. Some of these effects directly relate to the way in which the UK has so far been able to tackle with forms of organised immigration crime related to migrant smuggling and trafficking, both high on the agenda of the National Crime Agency and the Home Office. As of yet, the combined effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and post-Brexit souring relations between the UK and France on border management have contributed to some major shifts in the embodied techniques used by people smugglers offering dangerous services to reach the UK, moving away from lorry smuggling at the Calais port, and towards a higher use of small boats to cross the Channel. Similarly, the ending of law enforcement cooperation progressively built in pre-Brexit years between the UK and Europe’s law enforcement agencies such as Europol, Eurojust and Frontex, mostly through streamlined access, intelligence gathering and joint operations to face common threats, is likely to lead to further victimisation of migrants and asylum seekers, a condition prone to make their trafficking and exploitation more probable and frequent. This short paper and presentation will focus on the immediate effects that Brexit is having on both types of crimes, migrant smuggling, and trafficking, differentiating between the two and assessing how the UK is dealing with shifting practices of illegal entry to the UK through changes in law enforcement tactics and a criminal justice and protection approach.

11.30 – Q&A

11.40 – Break

11.55 **Understanding the local employment impacts of immigration in a post-Brexit world**

Professor Gwilym Pryce, Department of Urban Studies and Planning. University of ` Sheffield

How will Brexit affect local unemployment rates across different parts of the UK? Given that concern about EU migrants taking local jobs was one of the most potent drivers of the Brexit vote, this is a salient question. Brexit supporters might expect tighter immigration controls to boost their local employment rates in the long run. But will this really be the case? Economic theory predicts that immigration generates new jobs by boosting aggregate demand, productivity, and job creation. So, reducing immigration could diminish the total number of jobs available. Unfortunately, we have very little robust empirical evidence to draw on in order to estimate what the net effect on employment rates will be at the local level. There are currently no reliable historical estimates of how the local employment impacts of immigration vary across the UK, representing a huge gap in the evidence base. As a result, we have no empirical basis for predicting the regional impacts of Brexit. In this presentation, I draw on our recent econometric estimates of Ward-level employment impacts in London (Fingleton et al. 2020) to suggest a practical strategy for addressing one of the major gaps in the UK evidence base with respect to immigration. I also set out a number of intuitive arguments for why we might expect the employment impacts of Brexit to vary geographically in ways that could counteract attempts to "level-up".

12.15 **How UK employers are adapting to Brexit - new problems and solutions**

Chetal Patel, Partner, Immigration Department, Bates Wells

The combination of Brexit and the new immigration system introduced in December 2020 is the biggest shakeup in immigration history, it has sent ripples across the UK and around the world. With EU nationals now being treated the same as the rest of world and with employers getting to grips with the new immigration system, the implications for businesses cannot be underestimated. There have been impacts on labour shortages and costs, and a strain on business’s resources. Whilst the impact will have been partly masked by the pandemic, the results of these changes are still apparent.

12.35 **Impacts of the Brexit referendum on UK employment: a synthetic control method**

**approach**

Dr Luca Tasciotti, Senior Lecturer in Economics, Department of International Business and Economics, Business Faculty, University of Greenwich

On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom electorate decided that the UK would leave the European Union (EU). Independently from ex-ante expectations and predictions, Brexit constituted a (potentially consequential) policy experiment and a unicum since no other country to date has left the EU. Several estimates of the economic consequences of the decision to leave exist. These include estimates of economic costs of Brexit in terms of GDP loss, the impact on foreign direct investment towards the UK, on its financial markets and labour productivity. However, no study has applied impact evaluation techniques focusing on employment. We apply the Synthetic Control Method (SCM), which is particularly apt to study and quantify the impact of single major events (as in the case of significant policy decisions); we do this in the context of the Brexit referendum to estimate the difference that the 2016 Brexit referendum made on UK employment in the short term. The issue of unemployment is particularly salient since some of the arguments made for and against Brexit focused precisely on the impacts that leaving the EU would have on jobs. We estimate the impact of the 2016 Brexit referendum on the UK (un-)employment rate up to January 2020 by comparing the observed performance of the indicators in the UK with those of a synthetic control. The decline in the UK unemployment rate recorded after the referendum mimics the trend of the synthetic indicator and, similarly, the increase in UK employment follows the trend of the synthetic control. Overall, the Brexit referendum has had little effect on the UK (un-)employment rate.

12.55 Q&A

13.05 Lunch

14.00 **(Legal) assistance in employment matters to low paid EU migrant workers in the East of England**

Prof Catherine Sarah Barnard, Professor of European Union and Labour Law, Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge

This talk will explore the everyday lives of low paid, low skilled EU migrant workers living in and around Great Yarmouth in the East of England both pre- and post-Brexit. It considers the legal problems they face, especially around employment law, and how those problems may get resolved. It draws on the results of quantitative and qualitative research to examine the reach of law into the everyday lives of vulnerable EU migrants. We term our research ‘pre legalisation studies’ (PLS) because our experience is that most legal issues, at least with the groups we are working with, do not enter any formal legal resolution pathway at a community level. They are addressed in the everyday, often by first-tier generalist (and sometimes volunteer) advisers with no formal legal training, who make no express reference to ‘the law’. This access to advice and problem resolution at a street level can be a lifeline to those living at the margins of the workforce.

14.20 **Onward Latin Americans: making sense of and navigating the EUSS during COVID-**

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Domiziana Turcatti, Doctoral researcher, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), School of Archaeology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford

This presentation focuses on Onward Latin Americans (OLAs)—individuals who migrated to Southern Europe in the early 2000s, acquired EU citizenship via naturalisation, and then began onward migrating to London after the 2008 global financial crisis. It explores how OLAs living in London navigated and made sense of the EUSS in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, paying particular attention to how their prior experience of being subject to immigration control and having non-EU family members shaped their uptake and understanding of the EUSS. It draws from qualitative fieldwork conducted between July 2020 and May 2021 in the context a public engagement with research project carried out in collaboration with a London-based Latin American NGO and a doctoral study on Colombian onward migration from Spain to London. Apart from drawing attention to the EUSS experiences of onward EU migrants, this presentation will provide insights on what it means for migrants to have their newly acquired citizenship challenged, while highlighting the need for research that considers the heterogeneity of the EU population in the UK if the Brexit and post-Brexit experiences of individuals and families are to be understood.

14.40 **The Random Status: problems with the EU Settlement Scheme**

Cristina Juverdeanu, Lecturer in Politics and International Studies, POLIS, University of Leeds

The presentation examines the functioning of the EU Settlement Scheme through the case study of high skilled EU citizens in the UK. It uses a qualitative approach to expose the randomness of the automated data checks - an essential and mandatory part of the EUSS application – through 22 information-rich interviews. Applicants on linear residence and career trajectories were suggested pre-settled status and had difficulty proving their entitlement to the full status, while EU citizens who did not qualify were granted settled status. By questioning the accuracy of and reliance on an opaque algorithm, the article reveals an inherently limited form of justice that comes from automation, undercuts safeguards and shares the burden of responsibility between an algorithm and the applicant.

15.00 Q&A

15:10 Break

15.25 **Occupational shortages and the post-Brexit immigration system**

Dr Madeleine Sumption, Director, Migration Observatory, University of Oxford and member of the Migration Advisory Committee

One of the key questions facing immigration policymakers is which jobs should be eligible for work visas. This question has dominated discussions about the post-Brexit immigration system, which has focused in particular on the issue of shortages. While the UK government resisted calls to open labour migration routes in low-wage or low-skilled jobs with high demand for foreign workers, workers in middle- and high-skilled jobs that are deemed to face a labour market shortage can qualify with significantly lower wages. This paper examines the arguments for and against using immigration policy to prioritise labour migration in ‘shortage occupations’. It argues that the idea is politically appealing but problematic in practice. Shortages are more difficult to measure satisfactorily than policymakers may imagine, and different methodologies produce different results. This makes it unwise to develop an immigration policy that depends too heavily on the notion that the shortage list is an accurate reflection of what is really happening in the labour market.

15.45 **The impact of Brexit on Latvian workers in West Yorkshire**

Lyndsey Kramer, Doctoral researcher, Department of Sociology, University of York

Through an exploration of empirical data gained from two tranches of in-depth interviews undertaken in 2019 and 2020, this paper considers how crises in the form of Brexit has affected Latvians living in West Yorkshire. The twenty-two participants moved to the UK and eventually West Yorkshire after the 2007 economic crisis, which affected Latvia particularly harshly. An important finding has been that some of the participants who could not envisage being able to return to Latvia in their first interview in 2019 have now returned. The participants initial reticence to return to Latvia was due to a perceived lack of opportunities there and continuing economic issues. The empirical data therefore suggests that as crises were a motivational factor in moving to West Yorkshire, crises experienced in West Yorkshire could motivate a return to Latvia, especially if crises in West Yorkshire were considered as more detrimental compared to those in Latvia. During the first tranche of interviews the respondents were positive about the effects of Brexit, however, after experiencing the economic circumstances of COVID-19 this confidence was less evident in the second tranche of interviews. This suggests that if crises are a motivational factor for migration and they arise in a new locale, this could present motivation for people moving within the EU to return to their country of origin, especially if, as the Latvian participants described in the in-depth interviews that place is particularly beautiful or if family remains there.

16.05  **Is immigration policy equipped for the cross-border future of work?**

Seema Farazi, Partner, Ernst & Young

Shifted ways of cross-border working triggered by the pandemic have collided with Brexit to create a perfect storm of immigration compliance and right to work risk. Some jurisdictions have seized the opportunity and opened innovative routes for remote workers. Others, particularly across the EU, have struggled to move away from traditional gaps around short-term and remote cross-border work. How have immigration models performed and how relevant has immigration policy been to a volatile and quickly changing landscape?

16:25 Q&A

16.35 End