

# Immigration, labor market integration and departures of primary and secondary migrants from PIIGS to Belgium before and after the 2008 economic crisis. A longitudinal analysis with linked administrative data.

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, we test whether the late 2000s great recession influenced migration flows from PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) to Belgium, and if the crisis had a stronger effect on migration to Belgium by non-natives (Secondary migrants – SM) than by natives (Primary Migrants – PM) of these five countries. We also focus on the insertion of PM and SM on the Belgian labor market before and after the crisis, and on the influence of their participation to the labor market on their length of stay. We use linked administrative data from the Belgian National register and the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection database. We show that migration from PIIGS countries increased strongly after the crisis, especially among secondary migrants. Migrants who arrived after the crisis tend to stay shorter than before the crises, but secondary migrants – especially those born in North Africa – stay longer. Finally, we show that having a job is also a strong deterrent to staying in the country, suggesting that employment is a key issue in these migrations and in the decision to further move or stay.

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## **Background**

In Europe, the global economic recession of the late 2000s strongly affected PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain). The rapid deterioration of the labor market conditions lead to an increase in outmigration from these countries and a decrease in immigration (Golaz, Lefèvre et Véron, 2018). In contrast, Western and Northern European countries were less affected by the crisis (Ferreiro et al., 2016). Despite slower economic growth from 2008, the crisis was much less severe than in other European regions, and unemployment remained stable in many of these countries (Ferreiro et al., 2016). Belgium, a medium-sized country in Western Europe, is illustrative of these countries (Lafleur et Stanek, 2017). The unemployment rate only slightly increased between 2007 and 2013, and Belgium attracted growing numbers of migrants from crisis-affected countries.

Crises may not only increase migration flows, but may also modulate the selection process of migration. People who would not have migrated if labor market conditions had remained favorable in their country of residence may have a greater incentive to leave (Constant et Massey, 2003 ; Hazans, 2011, 2012 ; McCollum et al., 2017). This leads to a change in the composition of migrants, possibly with a larger share of migrants moving for economic reasons and migrants in vulnerable situations. Non-native people in crisis-affected countries are a group of particular interest. The deterioration of the economic conditions may affect them more severely than natives, leading to larger increase in migration among non-natives than among natives. Their previous migratory experience, as well as networks of relatives abroad, may also encourage them to do a secondary migration.

In this paper, we test whether the great recession influenced migration flows from PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) to Belgium, and more specifically if the crisis had a stronger effect on migration to Belgium by non-natives (Secondary migrants – SM) than by natives (Primary Migrants – PM). Next, we focus on the insertion of primary migrants and secondary migrants on the Belgian labor market before and after the crisis, and on the length of stay in Belgium among these migrants. Our hypothesis is that secondary migrants enjoy less favorable economic conditions at their arrival in Belgium, but that their employment rates quickly improve over time, as employment is expected to be a major motive for migration among secondary migrants. We also expect employment to have a strong effect on choosing to stay in Belgium, and we hypothesize that secondary migrants who do not find a job, especially after the crisis, are more likely to leave Belgium quickly than those who have a job, as well as compared to primary migrants who do not have a job.

## **Data**

We use linked administrative data from the Belgian National register and the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection (DWLMSP) database. The National register is an exhaustive list of all individuals legally residing or having resided in the country. Information are collected during first registration (sex, date of birth, country of birth nationality at birth and at the arrival in Belgium, residence before settling in Belgium, civil status, household composition) and during all the stay in Belgium (changes in civil status, household composition, relocation in or out of Belgium). For this paper, we use data on immigrants, i.e. people born abroad, who arrived in Belgium between 1999 and 2014 and who were 18 years of age or older at the time of their arrival. We also used data from the DWLMSP database. This administrative database contains information on social security and labor market participation of all legal residents in Belgium. Information is available quarterly during all the stay in Belgium. For this paper, we have access to a 25 % sample of migrants in the DWLMSP database. Data from the DWLMSP and from the National Register are linked with the national register number, a unique identifier for each person in the National Register.

### *Sample selection*

We first restrict our analysis to all people coming from PIIGS. Next, we use information on place of birth, and nationality at birth to define our sample for each country in two ways. All the migrants were living in one of the PIIGS country before migrating to Belgium, but primary migrants (PM) and secondary migrants (SM) differ in terms of country of birth and/or nationality. For exemple PM from Spain are people born in Spain, regardless of their nationality at birth, or born abroad with the Spanish nationality, and residing in Spain before moving to Belgium. In the case of Spain, SM are people born in another country than Spain without the Spanish nationality, and residing in Spain before moving to Belgium.

Our sample is composed of 25,208 individuals, in which 21,366 were PM, observed during 429,947 person-quarters.

## **Method**

We first observed changes in inflows to Belgium before and after 2008 for PM and SM. Then we analyze outmigration from Belgium before and after the crisis, comparing primary and secondary migrants, using survival curves. Finally, we investigate associated factors to outmigration and patterns of labour market integration in length of stay using discrete-time event-history models (Le Goff, 2003 ; Lelièvre et Bringé, 1998). Separate analyses are performed for males and females.

## **Preliminary results**

Graphic 1 shows, for the five PIIGS countries together and Spain and Italy, that migration flows to Belgium increased substantially from 2009. In the early years of the crisis, the increase in migration flows was much more pronounced among secondary migrants than among primary migrants, confirming the changing composition of the flows in times of crisis. The share of people who came from Spain and Italy increased. Moreover, the share of secondary migrants in total inflow increased strongly among women coming from Spain, Ireland and Italy after 2007 (Graphic 2).

Table 1 shows a few characteristics of primary and secondary migrants before and after the crisis, by gender. At their arrival in Belgium, SM were older than PM for each period. An increasing share of secondary migrants were born in North Africa. PM and SM women were less likely to have a job in Belgium than men at the arrival and one year after their arrival. PM men were more likely to have a job in Belgium at their arrival than SM, but one year after their arrival SM men were more likely to work, illustrating their greater economic vulnerability at arrival, but also their rapid integration on the labor market.

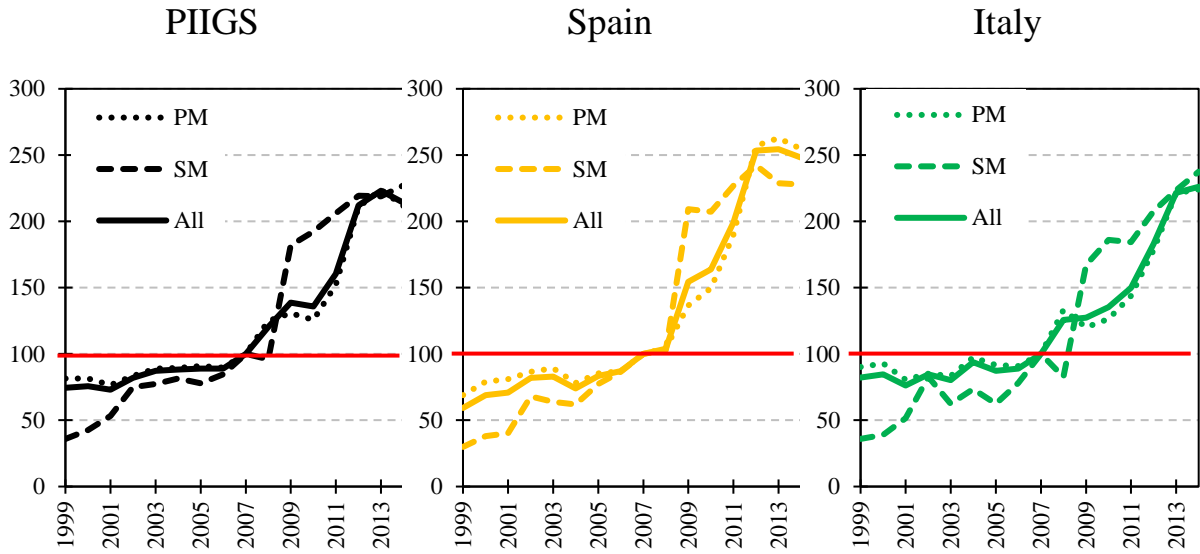
Graphic 3 shows that, overall, secondary migrants stay longer than primary migrants, reflecting the differences in profiles among these migrants. Male migrants who arrived after the crisis also leave Belgium more quickly than those who arrived before the crisis, suggesting these migrations tend to be temporary, and/or that people who do not find a job leave quickly. Women stay longer in Belgium than men, which may be related to a higher propensity to migrate as a relative.

Multivariate analyses (Table 2) confirm the shorter length of stay after the crises (higher odds of leaving), as well as the lower propensity to leave among secondary migrants, especially among those born in North Africa (not shown). The fact that SM are less likely to leave Belgium than PM may be related to the fact that they are less likely to find a job back in their origin country or in their previous place of residence. This may also be explained by their administrative status that limits their possibilities of mobility, as the residence permit for non-Europeans citizens is valid only for the country who delivered it. Having a job is also a strong deterrent to leaving the country, suggesting that employment is a key issue in these migrations and in the decision to further move or stay. Interactions between types of migrants and jobs (not shown) suggest that having a job has a stronger effect on departure among secondary migrants than among primary migrants.

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**Graphic 1: Changing migration flows from PIIGS countries, Spain and Italy to Belgium by primary migrants and secondary migrants, 1999-2014 (index based on 100 in 2007)**

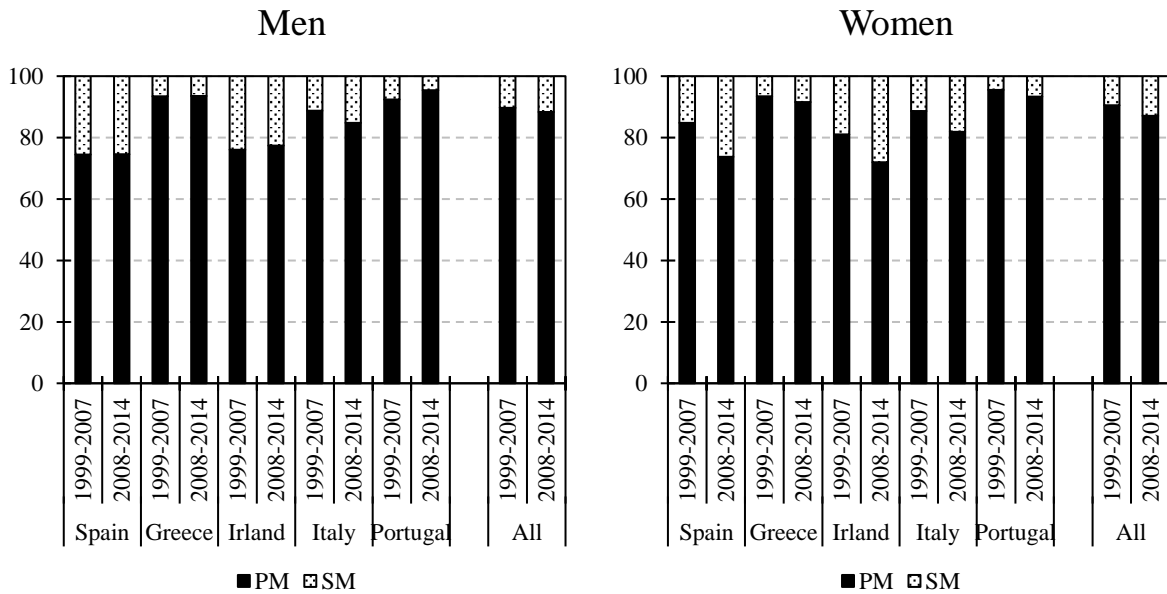


Sample: People came from Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain to live in Belgium between 1999 and 2014 who were 18 years of age or older at the time of their arrival.

Legend: PM: primary migrants, SM: secondary migrants

Source: Belgian National register and Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection database.

**Graphic 2: Share of primary migrants (PM) and secondary migrants (SM) in migration flows for each country at each period**



Sample: People came from Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain to live in Belgium between 1999 and 2014 who were 18 years of age or older at the time of their arrival.

Legend: PM: primary migrants, SM: secondary migrants

Source: Belgian National register and Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection database.

**Table 1 : Socio-demographic characteristics of the population**

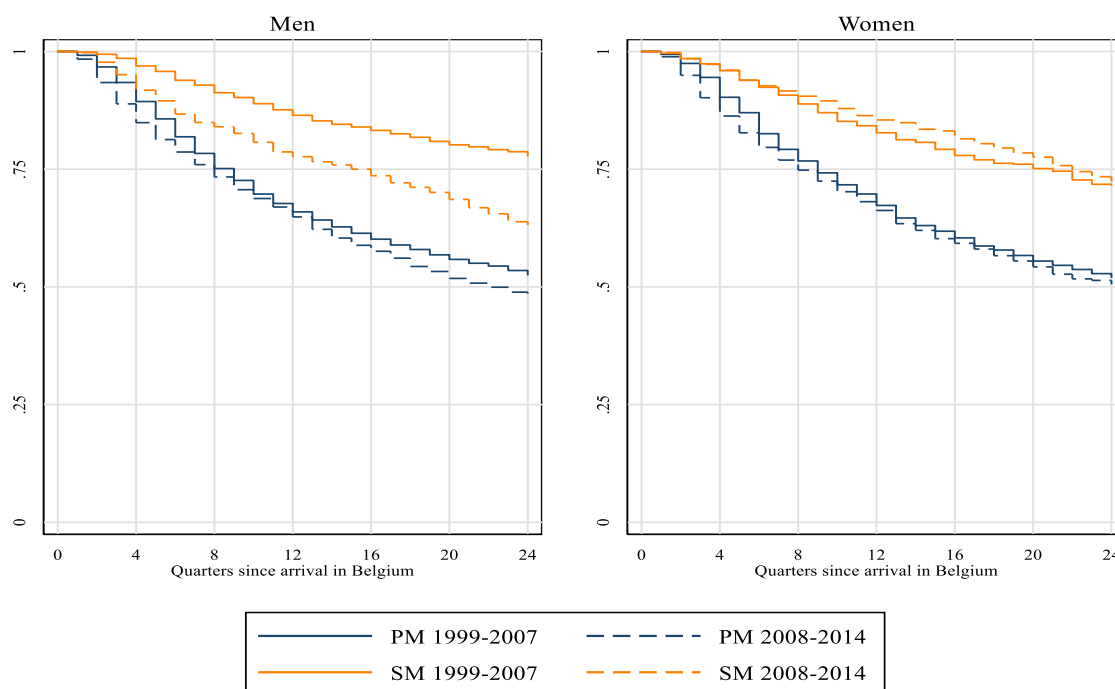
	Men				Women			
	1999-2007		2008-2014		1999-2007		2008-2014	
	PM	SM	PM	SM	PM	SM	PM	SM
<b>N</b>	4,207	686	6,765	1,241	4,309	539	6,085	1,376
<b>Mean age at arrival</b>	31.7	35.0	33.4	35.1	31.1	34.6	31.4	34.5
<b>% of individuals arrived at 18-29</b>	52.2	33.5	44.5	29.4	59.4	36.9	54.8	33.3
<b>Country of departure</b>								
Spain	21.6	45.2	28.6	53.3	30.9	44.3	34.1	53.8
Greece	8.8	3.8	7.5	2.8	11.2	6.3	9.6	3.9
Ireland	3.9	7.6	3.0	4.8	4.5	8.5	2.3	3.9
Italy	37.1	29.0	32.4	31.7	31.8	32.7	32.0	31.4
Portugal	28.6	14.4	28.5	7.4	21.6	8.2	22.0	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Region of birth</b>								
UE14	93.3	29.0	83.7	15.6	95.1	35.6	87.5	14.5
Rest of Europe		4.6		10.8		9.8		14.0
North Africa		32.4		42.0		23.2		46.2
Sub-Saharan Africa		5.0		8.9		6.3		5.8
Latin America		6.7		11.0		10.4		11.4
Other		22.3		11.7		14.7		8.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>% of individuals working</b>								
At the first trimester	31.1	19.1	30.5	24.8	17.5	10.6	23.3	10.9
At the 1st year	36.9	42.7	41.5	43.7	22.9	22.2	35.3	20.5

Sample: People came from Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain to live in Belgium between 1999 and 2014 who were 18 years of age or older at the time of their arrival.

Legend: PM: primary migrants, SM: secondary migrants

Source: Belgian National register and Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection database.

**Graphic 3: Proportion of individuals still in Belgium by time spent since arrival**



Sample: People came from Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain to live in Belgium between 1999 and 2014 who were 18 years of age or older at the time of their arrival.

Legend: PM: primary migrants, SM: secondary migrants

Source: Belgian National register and Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection database.

**Table 2 : Factors associated to outmigration from Belgium**

	Men			
	n/N	%PQR	ORa	CI 95%
<b>Trimester*</b>	5,131/219,093	2.34	0.97***	[0.97,0.97]
<b>Age*</b>	5,131/219,093	2.34	0.98***	[0.98,0.99]
<b>Period of arrival</b>				
1999-2007	2,572/135,368	1.86	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
2008-2014	2,559/78,594	3.15	1.29***	[1.22,1.37]
<b>Country of departure</b>				
Spain	1,441/58,747	2.39	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
Greece	415/14,924	2.71	1.04	[0.93,1.16]
Ireland	222/8,609	2.51	1.17*	[1.01,1.35]
Italy	1,719/74,809	2.25	1.00	[0.93,1.08]
Portugal	1,334/56,873	2.29	1.09*	[1.01,1.18]
<b>Migratory status</b>				
PM	4,640/175,942	2.57	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
SM	491/38,020	1.27	0.56***	[0.51,0.62]
<b>Professional activity*</b>				
Work in Belgium	4,691/122,869	3.68	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
Do not work in Belgium	440/91,093	0.48	7.82***	[7.08,8.63]
<i>N</i>	5,131/219,093	2.34	219,093	
	Women			
	n/N	%PQR	ORa	CI 95%
<b>Trimester*</b>	4,739/210,854	2.25	0.97***	[0.97,0.98]
<b>Age*</b>	4,739/210,854	2.25	0.98***	[0.98,0.98]
<b>Period of arrival</b>				
1999-2007	2,632/132,692	1.94	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
2008-2014	2,107/73,423	2.79	1.23***	[1.15,1.30]
<b>Country of departure</b>				
Spain	1,733/67,094	2.52	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
Greece	470/19,308	2.38	0.86**	[0.78,0.96]
Ireland	237/8,224	2.80	1.29***	[1.12,1.49]
Italy	1,472/67,726	2.13	0.89**	[0.83,0.96]
Portugal	827/43,763	1.85	0.87**	[0.80,0.95]
<b>Migratory status</b>				
PM	4,338/172,698	2.45	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
SM	401/33,417	1.19	0.42***	[0.38,0.47]
<b>Professional activity*</b>				
Work in Belgium	4,598/145,951	3.05	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
Do not work in Belgium	141/60,164	0.23	14.08***	[11.90,16.67]
<i>N</i>	4,739/210,854	2.25	210,854	

Sample: People came from Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain to live in Belgium between 1999 and 2014 who were 18 years of age or older at the time of their arrival.

Legend: n/N: number of person-quarter of experiencing the event among all person-quarter at risk for experiencing the event, %PQR: percentage of at-risk person-quarter that experienced the event. ORa: odds ratios adjusted for all variables presented in the table. CI 95%: 95% confidence interval. \*: time-dependent variables. PM: primary migrants, SM: secondary migrants. + p<0.10, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

Source: Belgian National register and Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection database.