

# Italian Impact on British Vote: How Italians in the UK affect electoral events

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## I. Introduction

This paper investigates the role the Italian community in the UK may have played in influencing the 2019 UK electoral outcomes. In particular, we focus our analysis on the circumscription that falls under the Consulate General of Italy in London. The paper first provides a general overview of the Italian community's demographics by taking into consideration factors such as age, sex, education/literacy level and employment status, and locating them across the UK constituency in which they are residing. The study thus outlines a mapping of such factors per constituency, allowing us to observe the general trends. We look at Italians in possession of UK citizenship and the demographic trends of this specific category. Next, we provide a brief account of the results of the latest general elections in the UK, comparing the different vote shares per party across constituencies, as well as a brief consideration of how Brexit has overall influenced the results of these elections. By combining these main two sources of information, we then proceed to our exploratory analysis of how Italians can be said to influence such results, by considering both the European community more generally and different subsets of it and their respective behaviours. We find that Italians are representative of the European population in our results and their presence in a given constituency is correlated with a higher probability of voting for left-wing parties, while accounting for possible confounding factors. Moreover, we observe that it is likely the presence of Italian residents as opposed to the behaviour of Italian voters in a given constituency to influence the behaviour of UK voters in such a direction.

## II. The Italian community's presence in the UK

Today, the Italian community in the UK is one of the largest ethnic groups in the country. According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2021 around 17% of the 59.6 million residents in England and Wales were born outside the UK. Of these, 36,4% were born in a European Union country, continuing a long-term trend of migration of people born in current EU member states to the UK (ONS<sup>2</sup>, Census 2021). This motivates an investigation of the social and demographic trends of such countries to understand international migration to the UK more broadly.

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<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Focusing our analysis on Italy, a recent estimate has identified around 369.000 Italian nationals residing in England and Wales as of 2022. Such a number confirms a significant Italian community present in the UK, identified over the previous years. This has been inferred by the Office for National Statistics, which provides data for passports held by residents in England and Wales<sup>3</sup>. Among non-UK passport holders – accounting for 9,9% of the residents - in 2021, the Italian passport was the fourth most common non-UK passport held in England and Wales (ONS, Census 2021).

The Census also provides data for the Italian presence in the UK by dividing residents according to country of birth, estimating that 277.000 Italian-born people were living in England and Wales in 2021 (ONS, Census 2021). This, compared to 135.000 in 2011, constitutes an increase of 106% which has been the second fastest increase in population after Romania (573%) (ONS, Census 2011). In the last ten years, Italy has thus moved from 9th to being now the 6th most frequent country among foreign countries of birth – and 4th European country after Poland, Romania and Ireland.

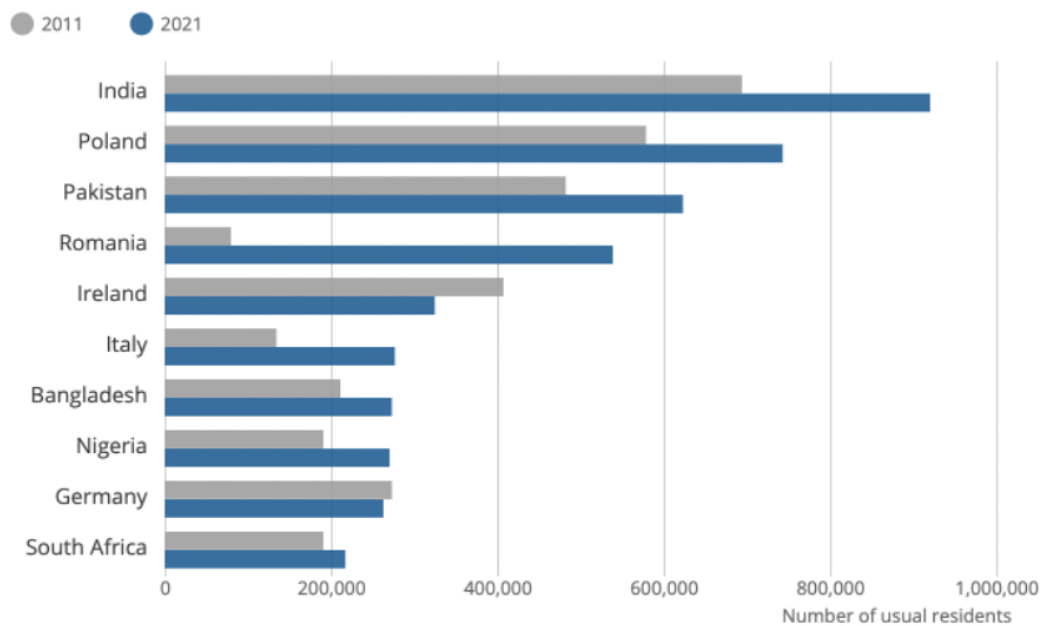


Image 1: Top 10 non-UK countries of birth in 2021, with 2011 figures for comparison, England and Wales  
Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021.

Additionally, as of 2022, the Consulate General in London has counted around 364.000 AIRE memberships. While this value appears to be very close to the one indicated by the 2021 Census, it is important to note that the 2022 data account for the circumscription of the Consulate General in London alone, without taking into account the data from the circumscription of the Consulate in Manchester. This would thus suggest that the number of Italians would be in reality larger compared to the one suggested by the Census. Furthermore,

<sup>3</sup> For simplicity and to avoid double-counting, individuals in possession of more than one passport were categorised in one of the following in order of relevance: UK passport, Irish passport and any other country passport.

it is also worth noting that the data suggest no considerable decrease in migration of Italians to the UK, as could have been expected after Brexit; on the other hand, the number of residents has more than doubled in number compared to a decade ago, and are nearly 40% higher than in 2016.

Distribution per constituency

The AIRE membership data provides insight into the distribution of Italians on the overall territory, enabling a stronger focus on their distribution in England and Wales. As a matter of fact, just the Italians residing in London account for 8% of all Italians living abroad. In 2023, for the first time, Italian is also the most common foreign nationality in the capital, followed by Indian and Polish (ONS, 2023; Bloomberg, 2023). This is further supported by data on the AIRE membership, which shows that the first 23 most popular constituencies among Italians are in the Greater London area, followed by Cambridge at 24th place and Oxford at 26th. (For a complete list of the Italian distribution per constituency, see Appendices – Appendix A).

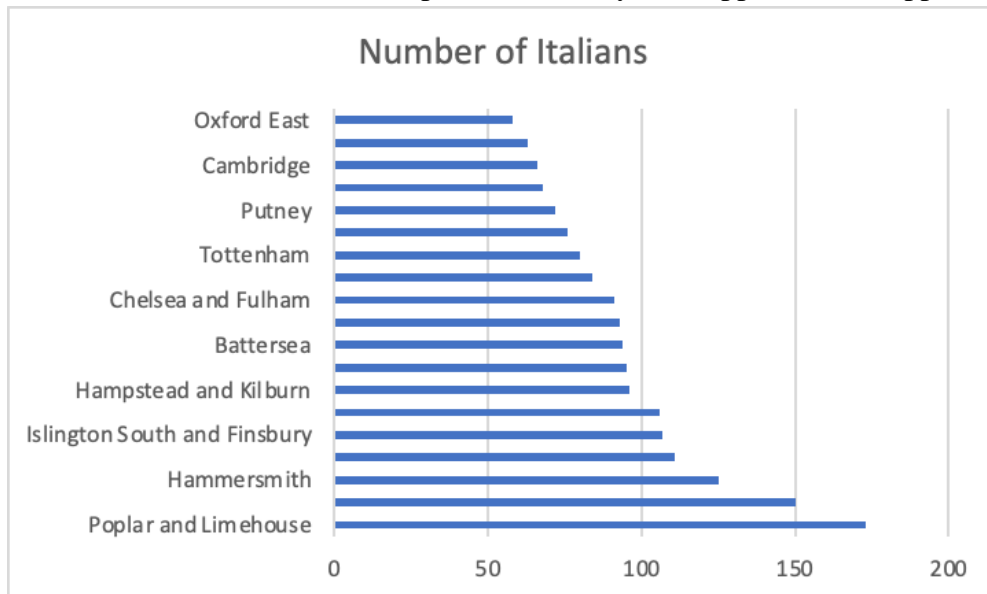


Image 2: Number of Italians per constituency (only constituencies under the Consulate General of Italy in London have been taken into consideration). Source: AIRE membership 2022 data.

Age

According to a subdivision based on age group, most of the Italians present in England and Wales are between 40 and 50 years old (22%), and the other two most common age groups are respectively between 30 and 40 years old (20%) and between 50 and 60 years old (17%). The data also suggests a significant number of middle-aged people, with those under-50 accounting for 58% of the population. On the other hand, young and elderly people seem to be almost equivalent, with under-30 and over-60 accounting respectively for 16% and 24% of the population.

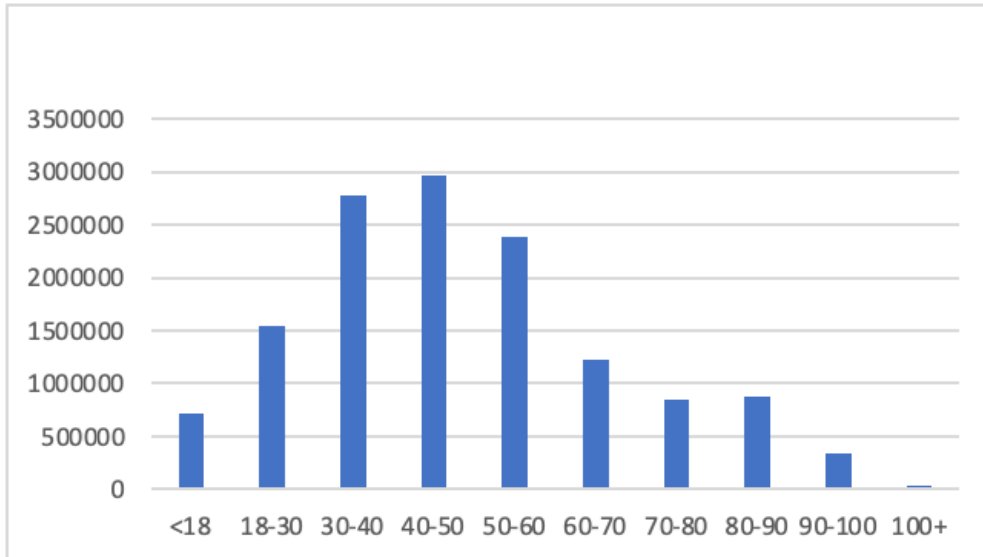


Image 3: Number of Italians by age (only constituencies under the Consulate General of Italy in London have been taken into consideration). Source: AIRE membership 2022 data.

### Sex ratio

Additionally, men are still a majority as recorded in previous years, accounting for 52% of the AIRE members. On the other hand, there has been no significant increase in the number of women, who account for the remaining 48%.

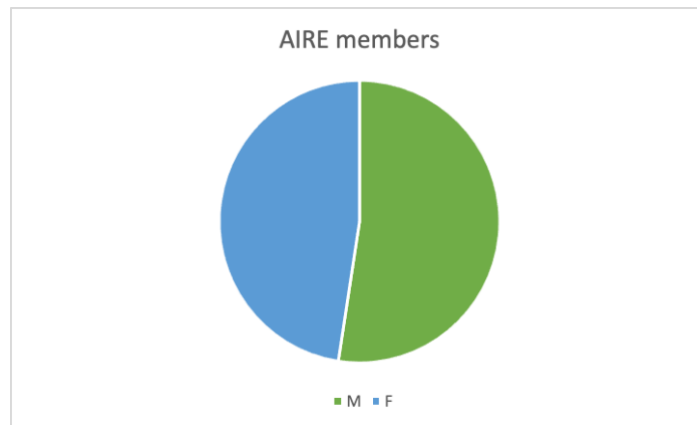


Image 4: Number of Italians by sex (only constituencies under the Consulate General of Italy in London have been taken into consideration). Source: AIRE membership 2022 data.

### AIRE subscriptions

Another factor worth to be noted is the rapid growth in AIRE membership subscriptions in recent years. Specifying this is important as it further contextualises our research in a moment of big changes in the overall demographics of Italians present in the UK. The current number of subscriptions between 2019 and 2021 has reached an average of 43.700 subscriptions per year. This is a number exponentially growth compared to the initial 8.200 yearly subscriptions registered between 1999 and 2011, and the more recent data of between 2016 and 2018 with 27.800 subscriptions a year (Consolato Generale d'Italia a Londra, 2021)). Understanding this

data in the context of Brexit is key, as it provides us with a different perspective on the Brexit deal, by showcasing the way Italians reacted to the need of formalising their presence and status as migrants in the UK. Furthermore, it also gives a more precise and up-to-date account of the current demographics of Italians in the UK, with more Italians engaging in this process of formalisation and having access to AIRE benefits.

According to the 2021 Statistical Study of the Italian Consulate, the combined effects of Brexit and the pandemic have not had a significant impact in determining the number of Italians leaving the UK. In fact, in 2021, around 6.107 Italians left the UK, compared to 7.337 in 2020.

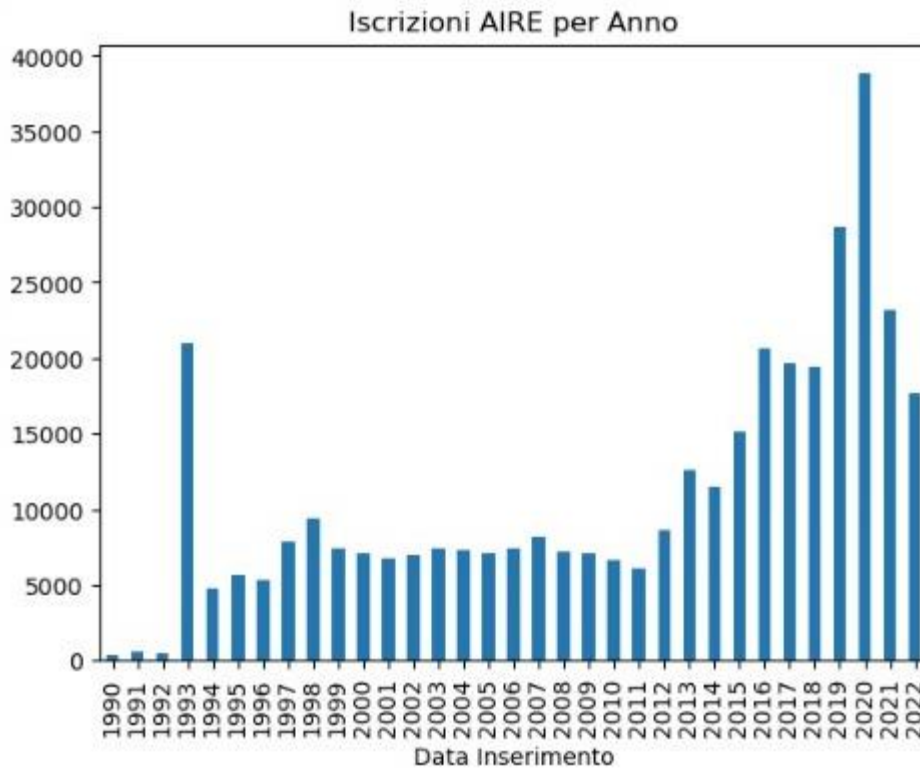


Image 5: Number of AIRE subscriptions. Source: AIRE membership 2022 data.

### III. Italians with UK citizenship

As of September 2022, more than 600.000 Italian citizens had applied to the EU Settlement Scheme, being also the largest number of any Western European country to have done so (Bloomberg, 2023). This could be also seen as an indicator of a potential increase of Italians with UK citizenship in the next 5 years. Such numbers, as well as the previously mentioned increase in AIRE subscriptions, are of importance as they are proof of a process of Italian assimilation in the UK that has increased over the last few decades, thus motivating the scope of our research. We thus proceed to observe the specific subset of Italians possessing UK citizenship.

#### Distribution per constituency

Looking once again at the distributions of Italians across constituencies in England and Wales, and focusing only on people above the age of 18 with UK citizenship and eligible to vote, we

see that the results differ significantly compared to the ones outlined above. Only the first three constituencies are in the Greater London area, with the second and third being respectively Watford and Wrexham. However, even in the case of the constituency with the highest number of Italians eligible to vote, we see that this only accounts for 3,33% of the overall Italians present. (for a complete list of the distribution of Italians with UK citizenship per constituency, see Appendices – Appendix B)

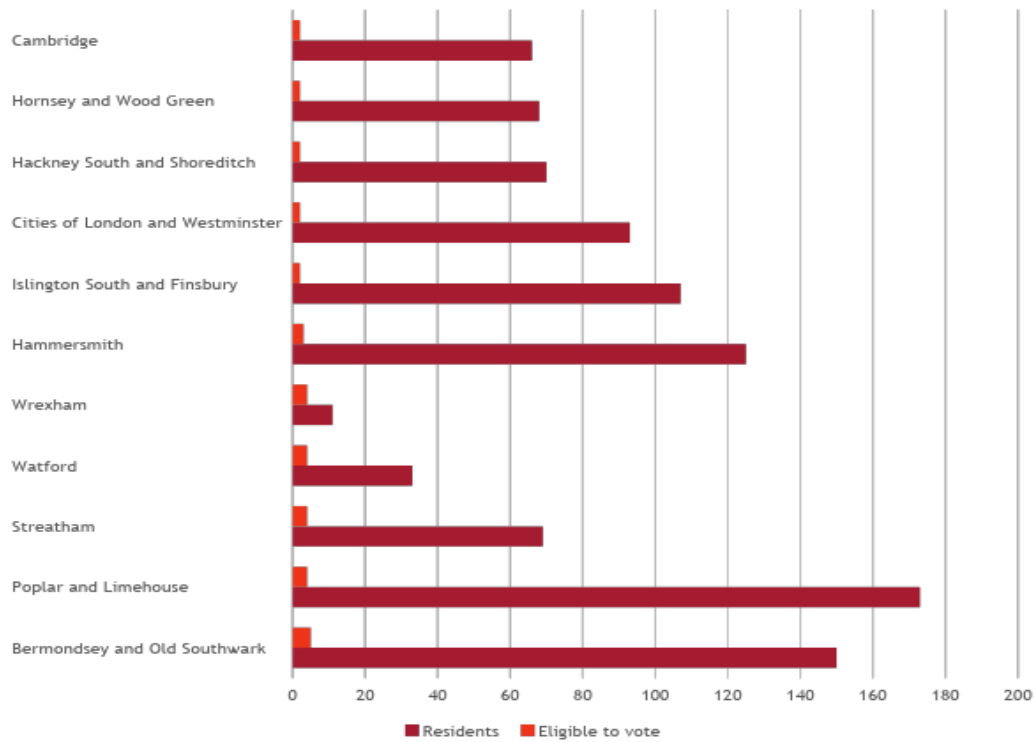


Image 6: Number of Italians with UK citizenship per constituency (only constituencies under the Consulate General of Italy in London have been taken into consideration). Source: AIRE membership 2022 data.

### Age

Analysing the age of the Italians with a UK citizenship, there is a preponderance of people between 50 and 60 years (28%) compared to the 17% identified above for the whole Italian population in England and Wales. The second most common age group is that of people aged between 40 and 50 years, whereas age groups such as 18-30, 30-40 and 60-70 have an equivalent presence on the territory, accounting respectively for 12%, 15% and 14% of the total. Furthermore, there is a very marginal presence of under 18 (2%) and of people between 90-100 (8%). The data of this subset reflects overall the demographics of the Italian population in the UK, once again underlining a majority of people between 40 and 60 years of age. However, we could expect these numbers to change in the near future due to the increase in the migration of students and young professionals in recent decades.

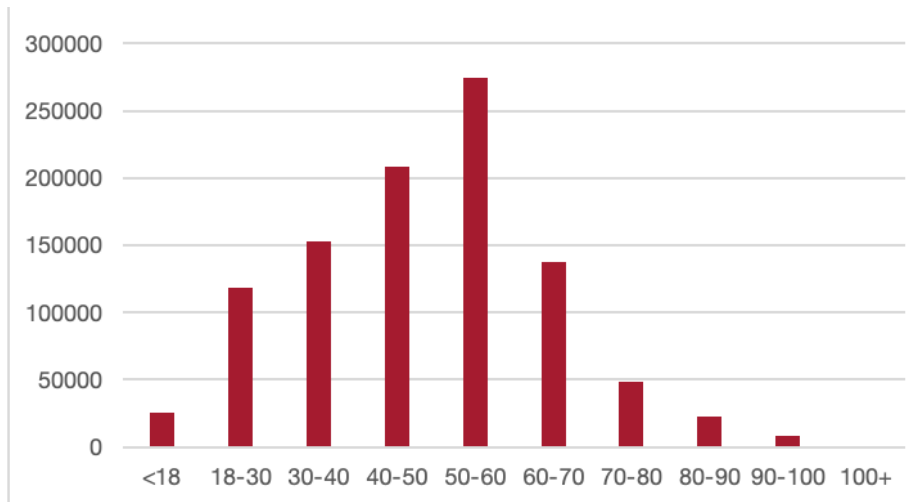


Image 7: Number of Italians with UK citizenship by age (only constituencies under the Consulate General of Italy in London have been taken into consideration). Source: AIRE membership 2022 data

### Sex ratio

When comparing the results of AIRE members alone with those having UK citizenship, the two values are almost equivalent. Men account in fact for 51% of the overall population, while women for the remaining 49%.



Image 8: Number of Italians with UK citizenship by sex (only constituencies under the Consulate General of Italy in London have been taken into consideration). Source: AIRE membership 2022 data. Source: AIRE membership 2022 data

## **IV. Electoral results in UK general elections 2019**

In the following section we provide a brief account of the UK general elections of 2019, first by discussing voter turnout and then the electoral results.

### Vote turnout

The overall voter turnout rate was equivalent to 67,3%, being the sixth election in a row that did not pass 70% of the turnout. Despite there not being an overall trend of decrease in

participation, the voter turnout of the 2019 elections is 1,5% lower than that of the previous ones in 2017 (68,8%).

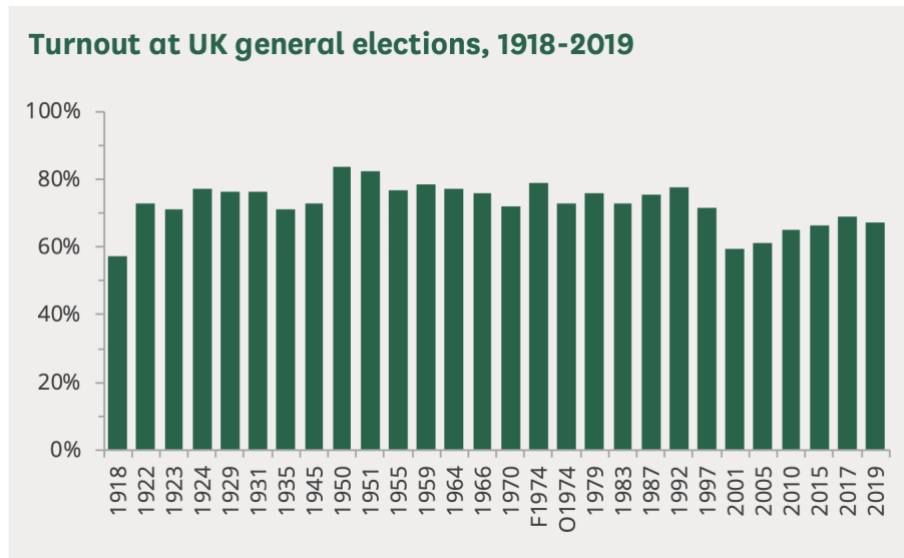


Image 9: Turnout at UK general elections from 1918 to 2019. Source: House of Commons Library, UK Elections Statistics

Analysing the turnout across countries in the UK, we can observe a decrease in turnout in both England (-1,7%) and Wales (-2%). This was overall a middle-ground result compared to the significant decrease in Northern Ireland (-4,4%) and the increase, on the other hand, in Scotland (+1,6%). In particular, in England we observe a further north-south divide: turnout was lower in the northern part of the country (-2%) compared to the south (-1%). The exception to this seems to be the case of London, where an average of -2,6% in turnout was registered, with some constituencies reaching as low as -6% (Brent and Ilford) and as high as +4% (Putney and Battersea). This has been partly explained in previous literature through marginality: since marginal seats are usually decisive for electoral results, parties tend to be conscious of their targeting strategy in such areas, reflecting also an increase in participation (Cutts et al., 2020).

It is also important to analyse turnout according to party seats, as the electoral results of the UK general elections of 2019 have been heavily influenced by such a factor. By considering the two main opposing parties, Labour seats have suffered from an overall decrease of turnout of -2,6%, while the Conservatives from a more marginal -0,9%. This is not reflected in the same way if we focus our analysis on the Brexit debate: while Remain seats experienced a marginal decrease of -0.6% in turnout, Leave seats observed an almost -2% decrease.

Lastly, it is of interest to also analyse the voter turnout by age group, seeing how it has evolved over time. Overall, The House of Commons' data shows an increase in participation by the younger age groups compared to previous general elections. However, by looking solely at the 2019 elections, it is evident that the trend of young people being less likely to vote than their older counterparts is still confirmed. While over-40s report a turnout of 70%, only 54% of under-35s take part in voting. This has been also observed through studies of the Electoral Psychology Observatory (EPO), whose estimates tend to be even more precise since they are based on survey data collected solely from participants verified to have registered to vote



(Harrison, 2020). Harrison then draws a further distinction between young voters and first-time voters. The former is defined as comprising under-30s, while the latter as people aged 18-20. This is a relevant distinction as existing literature has underlined multiple times the link between the turnout of the first two elections of an individual eligible to vote, and the overall political participation of that person over time (Bruter et al., 2017). According to the paper, while there seems to be a significant difference in voting behaviour and electoral choice between the two groups, this is not directly reflected in the stage of voter turnout. In fact, while young voters had a 51% turnout, first-time voters registered participation at 52% (Harrison, 2020).

Estimated turnout at general elections by age group							
1964-2019							
	Age group						All
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
1964 <sup>a</sup>	76.4%	70.7%	79.5%	79.1%	78.4%	76.7%	77.1%
1966 <sup>a</sup>	60.5%	70.8%	80.0%	79.8%	78.0%	75.9%	75.8%
1970	64.9%	66.5%	72.8%	74.9%	74.1%	77.2%	72.0%
F1974	70.2%	77.2%	78.7%	73.1%	82.2%	79.2%	78.8%
O1974	62.5%	69.0%	73.9%	76.6%	76.6%	76.0%	72.8%
1979	62.5%	72.4%	76.3%	81.2%	81.4%	77.7%	76.0%
1983	63.9%	67.6%	76.2%	77.6%	77.2%	73.1%	72.7%
1987	66.6%	74.0%	74.9%	79.9%	78.9%	76.0%	75.3%
1992	67.3%	77.3%	78.3%	81.8%	78.1%	79.2%	77.7%
1997	54.1%	62.2%	70.2%	76.4%	79.9%	77.7%	71.4%
2001	40.4%	45.0%	55.7%	63.2%	64.0%	70.1%	59.4%
2005	38.2%	47.7%	61.6%	65.5%	72.6%	74.3%	61.4%
2010	51.8%	57.3%	64.4%	67.5%	69.8%	74.7%	65.1%
2015	51.6%	51.8%	60.6%	70.1%	74.4%	79.3%	66.2%
2017	48.6%	50.6%	59.6%	70.7%	82.5%	85.2%	68.8%
2019	54.5%	54.4%	60.9%	71.0%	72.8%	78.5%	67.3%

Image 10: Data for 1964 and 1966 refers to people aged 21-24 as the voting age was 21, not 18; estimates using British Election Study data have been adjusted for actual turnout. Source: British Election Study, various editions

### Electoral Choice

While some differences can be observed in the vote turnout behaviour, the electoral choice seems to be drawing even clearer lines when analysing it across constituencies and age. As this paper focuses on understanding the possible effect of Italian immigrants on the UK 2019 general elections, we outline here the results of the two main opposing parties: Conservatives and Labour.

The 2019 general election ended with a victory by the Conservatives, with a total of 365 seats. This, compared to the 2017 elections, notes an overall increase of 48 seats and a 1.3% increase in votes. The Conservatives dominated the 2019 elections, leading already in the campaigning phase. It has had especially very wide support in England, reaching 48% of votes, where increases were registered in areas such as Yorkshire, North East England and East and West Midlands. However, as seen with the turnout, also in electoral choice there seems to be a

polarisation between the north and the south of England: Conservatives lost votes in London and did not manage to increase their seats in southern England as easily as in the North.

On the other hand, the Labour Party won 202 seats and 32% votes, which resulted in 60 seats and 8% less compared to the 2017 elections. Most of the lost seats by the Labour Party were in fact won by the Conservatives, which had especially targeted working-class voters in pro-Brexit areas during their campaigning. This had been primarily done not only through an emphasis on concepts related to culture and identity, but also through attentive policy reforms designed to appeal to Labour voters. The Conservatives' success in such a strategy was a fairly predictable outcome for some time, as Labour was also quite divided on the topic of Brexit. This has been clearly observed after the defeat at the European Parliament elections in May 2019, leaving pro-Brexit Labour voters more likely to vote for the Conservative party later in the year (Cutts et al., 2020). Geographically, Labour support fell homogeneously across all countries, with an average of 8% decrease in votes.

When analyzing electoral choice across age groups, the EPO studies once again seem to confirm the trend of younger generations voting for Labour: in the 2019 elections, the party was in fact supported by 62% of young voters and 58% of first-time voters. This creates a significant divide compared to people aged 30 and above, registered to have voted only 30% for Labour (Harrison, 2020). On the other hand, support for the Conservative party was very marginal across young and first-time voters, with only 14% of the former and 20% of the latter being in favour. This once again is in strong opposition to the rest of the population across age groups – considering 30 years and above – whose 46% have expressed themselves in favour of the Conservative party. While it would seem that no significant difference in electoral choice has been registered between young and first-time voters when analysing their preferences towards the two main opposing parties, support has been different for the Liberal Democrats. In fact, only 7% of first-time voters voted for the party, compared to 12% of other under 30 voters, who only in this instance were more similar in terms of voting behaviour to over 30 voters. For this reason, it is evident how the 2019 electoral choice results confirm the interest of previous literature in drawing a distinction between young voters and its subset of first-time voters: this has also shown that there is a correlation between electoral decisions in the first few elections and our overall voting behaviour in the future (Butler et al., 1974).

## **V. Research Design & Methodology:**

### Research Question

For the purpose of this paper, we investigate the following research question:

- How does the presence of Italian immigrants influence electoral outcomes in the UK?

Given the significant presence of Italians on the UK territory, we leverage their density amongst European citizens in the UK to analyse more generally the role that EU migrants play in conditioning electoral results, specifically making a distinction between European citizens

as a whole, countries of the EU14 and EU8. The classification adopted refers to the terms used for the status of EU migrants in the UK: EU14, EU8 and EU2<sup>4</sup>. We thus proceed to ask ourselves a second question which is:

- Does the presence of Italians play a different role than EU migrants in general? Why or why not?

This helped us in determining whether or not Italians are representative of EU migrants in general and if they could be thus taken as a case study for the influence of EU migration on electoral results. We then proceeded to ask a follow-up question:

- How do Italians and EU migrants influence electoral results in the UK? I.e., do Italians/Europeans have an effect on UK elections as voters or due to their presence as a community alone?

### Data collection

The main data source for our analysis is the Registry Office for Italian Citizens Residing Abroad (AIRE<sup>5</sup>) membership dataset of 2022. This was initially used to gain an understanding of the Italian presence in the UK with the preliminary overview highlighted above, further supported by data from the OSN (ONS) Census and the Statistical Studies of the Consulate General of Italy in London. In the data analysis, we combine the initial AIRE membership data with electoral results of the 2019 general elections, published by the House of Commons and further demographics from the ONS and the House of Commons library. All data has been anonymized before use.

### Data analysis

We have based our study on three main sets of experiments using linear regression analysis. The first experiment entailed fitting a multinomial logistic regression and an ordinal logistic regression regressing electoral outcomes – measured as the winning party in the constituency – on the ratio of Italians in the constituency – considered as the independent variable (1). While the multinomial logistic regression treats the parties as categorical, for the ordinal logistic regression we used the following order of parties on the political spectrum from right to left: Conservative, Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, Labour and Co-operative, Labour, Green. We have also added a series of controls of economic nature, including primarily average workplace earnings and unemployment rate by constituency. We hypothesised that economic drivers may be confounding factors in our regression as these are likely to drive both where Italians and Europeans migrate and electoral results.

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<sup>4</sup> ONS, *Migration, the European Union and work: How much do you really know?*

EU14: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden

EU8: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia

EU2: Bulgaria, Romania

<sup>5</sup> AIRE - Anagrafe degli Italiani Residenti all'Estero (Registry Office for Italian Citizens Residing Abroad)

$$(1) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{italians} + \beta_2 \text{unemployment} + \beta_3 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

We then used AIC and BIC<sup>6</sup> as statistical metrics for model selection between the multinomial and ordinal regression models. Lower AIC and BIC values determine a better fit of the model.

For the second experiment, we fit what we found to be the ‘best’ model according to the statistical metrics considered, substituting the ratio of Italian with the ratio of European migrants by constituency. This was done through three distinct experiments, first considering both European migrants as a whole, and then making a distinction between those coming from the EU14 and EU8 groups. The reason behind such a distinction is the fact that Italians are part of the EU14 group, and given their strong presence in the UK, they could be seen as either a representation of European migrants as a whole or of EU14 migrants. By comparing and contrasting such features with those of the EU8 group, we can have a wider perspective on how homogenous European migrants are, and consecutively, if belonging to one group influences voting behaviour differently than belonging to the other. We first fit a regression for each category of the European immigrant population and then added the Italian ratio term to check if its association with the dependent variable is explained away by the European immigrants variable(s) (2-7).

$$(2) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{europeans} + \beta_2 \text{unemployment} + \beta_3 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

$$(3) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{europeans} + \beta_2 \text{italians} + \beta_3 \text{unemployment} + \beta_4 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

$$(4) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{EU14} + \beta_2 \text{unemployment} + \beta_3 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

$$(5) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{EU14} + \beta_2 \text{italians} + \beta_3 \text{unemployment} + \beta_4 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

$$(6) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{EU8} + \beta_2 \text{unemployment} + \beta_3 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

$$(7) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{EU8} + \beta_2 \text{italians} + \beta_3 \text{unemployment} + \beta_4 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

We then addressed the question of how Italians and Europeans influence electoral results. More specifically, if it is Italian voters that influence them or the mere presence of Italians that then influences the overall voting behaviour of those who surround them. To do so, we have used two regressions changing the ratio of Italians: the first describing the ratio of Italian voters over to the number of total voters (8) and a second one representing the ratio of Italian voters over the population in the constituency (9).

$$(8) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{italianvoters/voters} + \beta_2 \text{unemployment} + \beta_3 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

$$(9) y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{italianvoters/pop} + \beta_2 \text{unemployment} + \beta_3 \text{earnings} + \varepsilon$$

Lastly, we added other controls that we think can explain away the relationship detected, such as through the ratio of university graduates and age.

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<sup>6</sup> Akaike information criterion (AIC) and Bayesian information criterion (BIC)

## VI. Results

### Model selection

A comparison of the ordinal and multinomial logistic regression models is reported in the Appendix (Appendices - Appendix C) . Overall, by looking at the AIC and BIC values, we have established ordinal regressions as the best-fitting model. In the interpretation of the results, we have specifically looked at the p-values and coefficients. The p-values indicate whether the coefficient for each independent variable is statistically significant or not, while the coefficients show us the estimated effect. To ascribe statistical significance we use the conventional threshold of 0.05 below which coefficients are considered significant predictors of the outcome variable. However, it is important to note that the coefficients represent associations, not necessarily causal relationships. Further analysis would be thus needed to determine the causal effects of these variables on electoral outcomes.

### 1. How does the presence of Italian migrants influence electoral outcomes in the UK?

#### Experiment 1

Dep. Variable:	party_name	Log-Likelihood:	-433.08			
Model:	OrderedModel	AIC:	882.2			
Method:	Maximum Likelihood	BIC:	916.0			
Date:	Mon, 20 Mar 2023					
Time:	11:37:37					
No. Observations:	510					
Df Residuals:	502					
Df Model:	8					
	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
Italian Ratio	0.2907	0.060	4.815	0.000	0.172	0.409
Workplace Earnings	-0.0005	104.474	-5.13e-06	1.000	-204.765	204.764
Unemployment (Rate)	0.1152	0.026	4.434	0.000	0.064	0.166
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	1.0945	0.162	6.777	0.000	0.778	1.411
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2315	0.375	-8.615	0.000	-3.967	-2.496
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0658	0.575	-7.066	0.000	-5.194	-2.938
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-2.0061	0.203	-9.866	0.000	-2.405	-1.608
Labour/Green	0.9895	0.138	7.159	0.000	0.719	1.260

Table 1: Ordinal regression results reporting the association between Italian migrants and electoral outcomes in the UK.

Overall, the experiment suggests that the presence of Italian immigrants has a significant effect on the outcome of UK elections. This is due to the fact that the p-value is below 0.05 and the coefficient for the Italian Ratio variable is 0.29. This suggests that an increase in the proportion of Italian immigrants in a constituency is associated with an increase in the probability of voting for a left-wing party. In other words, for every one percent increase in the Italian ratio, the odds of a more left-wing political party being elected will be 1.34 as high.

From the results of the experiment, we can also observe that the coefficient for workplace earnings is very small (-0.0005), and its p-value is of no statistical significance. This suggests that it is not a reliable predictor for the choice of a political party keeping all other variables constant. On the other hand, the coefficient for the unemployment rate is 0.12, with a p-value of less than 0.001, making it statistically significant by conventional standards. For this reason, a positive coefficient for unemployment suggests that higher unemployment rates are associated with increased support for left-leaning political parties.

By doing this, we have controlled for the effects of other variables – ‘Workplace Earnings’ and ‘Unemployment Rate’ – which have confirmed that ‘Italian Ratio’ is a significant predictor of political parties keeping these variables constant.

## 2. Does the presence of Italians play a different role than EU migrants? Why or why not?

### Experiment 2

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=====
Dep. Variable:      party_name      Log-Likelihood:      -426.76
Model:              OrderedModel    AIC:                  867.5
Method:             Maximum Likelihood BIC:                  897.2
Date:               Mon, 20 Mar 2023
Time:               11:37:39
No. Observations:   510
Df Residuals:       503
Df Model:           7
=====

```

	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
Percentage Europeans	8.6509	1.446	5.984	0.000	5.818	11.484
Unemployment (Rate)	0.0922	0.026	3.489	0.000	0.040	0.144
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	1.3236	0.161	8.228	0.000	1.008	1.639
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2028	0.375	-8.540	0.000	-3.938	-2.468
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0369	0.575	-7.015	0.000	-5.165	-2.909
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-1.9835	0.203	-9.759	0.000	-2.382	-1.585
Labour/Green	0.9833	0.134	7.316	0.000	0.720	1.247

```

=====
Dep. Variable:      party_name      Log-Likelihood:      -426.70
Model:              OrderedModel    AIC:                  869.4
Method:             Maximum Likelihood BIC:                  903.3
Date:               Thu, 06 Apr 2023
Time:               17:15:31
No. Observations:   510
Df Residuals:       502
Df Model:           8
=====

```

	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
Percentage Europeans	8.0308	2.249	3.570	0.000	3.622	12.439
Unemployment (Rate)	0.0935	0.027	3.503	0.000	0.041	0.146
Italian Ratio	0.0336	0.093	0.360	0.719	-0.149	0.217
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	1.3125	0.164	8.011	0.000	0.991	1.634
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2032	0.375	-8.541	0.000	-3.938	-2.468
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0372	0.575	-7.016	0.000	-5.165	-2.909
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-1.9836	0.203	-9.759	0.000	-2.382	-1.585
Labour/Green	0.9865	0.135	7.312	0.000	0.722	1.251

Table 2: Ordinal regression results reporting the association between European migrants and electoral outcomes in the UK.

The ordinal regression for European migrants in general attempts to predict the likelihood of a party being elected based on the percentage of Europeans, using the unemployment rate as a control. We can observe that the variable for European migrants has a positive coefficient (8.65) and a p-value above 0.05. In addition, while the coefficient observed is larger than the one reported for the Italian Ratio, it suggests a similar and much stronger trend in behaviour. For this reason we can deduce that European migrants have an effect on the general elections, as initially observed in the singular case of Italians. Precisely, we observe that for one percent increase in the ratio of EU migrants the odds of a left-wing party winning increase by 57.10. We then further test this hypothesis by running an additional regression with both the ‘European migrants’ variable and that of ‘Italian Ratio’. When both are present in the

regression, we see that the ‘Italian Ratio’ variable disappears, thus confirming that Italians are representative of the voting behaviour of Europeans as a whole.

### Experiment 3

```

=====
Dep. Variable:      party_name  Log-Likelihood:      -426.76
Model:              OrderedModel  AIC:                  867.5
Method:             Maximum Likelihood  BIC:                  897.2
Date:               Mon, 20 Mar 2023
Time:               11:37:37
No. Observations:  510
Df Residuals:      503
Df Model:           7
=====

```

	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
EU14 countries	15.6453	2.641	5.925	0.000	10.470	20.821
Unemployment (Rate)	0.1027	0.026	3.906	0.000	0.051	0.154
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	1.2734	0.159	8.029	0.000	0.963	1.584
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2058	0.375	-8.548	0.000	-3.941	-2.471
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0430	0.575	-7.026	0.000	-5.171	-2.915
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-1.9886	0.203	-9.783	0.000	-2.387	-1.590
Labour/Green	1.0228	0.141	7.261	0.000	0.747	1.299

```

=====
Dep. Variable:      party_name  Log-Likelihood:      -426.54
Model:              OrderedModel  AIC:                  869.1
Method:             Maximum Likelihood  BIC:                  903.0
Date:               Thu, 06 Apr 2023
Time:               17:15:10
No. Observations:  510
Df Residuals:      502
Df Model:           8
=====

```

	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
EU14 countries	18.5618	5.161	3.597	0.000	8.447	28.677
Unemployment (Rate)	0.1011	0.026	3.828	0.000	0.049	0.153
Italian Ratio	-0.0775	0.118	-0.660	0.510	-0.308	0.153
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	1.2976	0.163	7.963	0.000	0.978	1.617
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2042	0.375	-8.544	0.000	-3.939	-2.469
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0414	0.575	-7.024	0.000	-5.169	-2.914
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-1.9883	0.203	-9.782	0.000	-2.387	-1.590
Labour/Green	1.0254	0.142	7.244	0.000	0.748	1.303

Table 3: Ordinal regression results reporting the association between EU14 migrants and electoral outcomes in the UK.

We narrow the analysis of the European migrants' effect on elections by dividing them into EU14 and EU8 countries. This is done to observe if the behaviour outlined in the previous experiment changes when distinguishing between the two groups. In the ordinal regression experiment for EU14 countries, we can see that the results are very similar to those obtained for the Italian Ratio in experiment 0. This is due to the fact that the p-value is below 0.05 and the coefficient for the EU14 variable is (15.65), which is a similar result to the coefficient for the ‘Italian Ratio’ variable, but with a larger coefficient. From this, we can confirm that overall, the presence of EU14 countries has a significant effect on the electoral outcomes in the UK.

Additionally, when running a further regression with both variables, the ‘Italian Ratio’ variable disappears. From this, we can assume that Italians can be considered not only as a subset of EU14 countries but also as representatives of their overall voting behaviour.

### Experiment 4



=====						
Dep. Variable: party_name Log-Likelihood: -438.05						
Model: OrderedModel AIC: 890.1						
Method: Maximum Likelihood BIC: 919.7						
Date: Mon, 20 Mar 2023						
Time: 11:37:38						
No. Observations: 510						
Df Residuals: 503						
Df Model: 7						
=====						
	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
EU8 countries	13.9148	3.672	3.789	0.000	6.718	21.112
Unemployment (Rate)	0.1065	0.026	4.102	0.000	0.056	0.157
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	1.1670	0.157	7.444	0.000	0.860	1.474
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2445	0.375	-8.649	0.000	-3.980	-2.509
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0753	0.575	-7.082	0.000	-5.203	-2.947
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-2.0177	0.203	-9.921	0.000	-2.416	-1.619
Labour/Green	0.9369	0.135	6.949	0.000	0.673	1.201
=====						

=====						
Dep. Variable: party_name Log-Likelihood: -430.34						
Model: OrderedModel AIC: 876.7						
Method: Maximum Likelihood BIC: 910.6						
Date: Thu, 06 Apr 2023						
Time: 17:15:20						
No. Observations: 510						
Df Residuals: 502						
Df Model: 8						
=====						
	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
EU8 countries	9.1989	3.909	2.353	0.019	1.538	16.860
Unemployment (Rate)	0.1059	0.026	4.037	0.000	0.055	0.157
Italian Ratio	0.2452	0.063	3.878	0.000	0.121	0.369
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	1.2046	0.159	7.595	0.000	0.894	1.515
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2202	0.375	-8.586	0.000	-3.955	-2.485
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0539	0.575	-7.045	0.000	-5.182	-2.926
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-1.9956	0.203	-9.816	0.000	-2.394	-1.597
Labour/Green	0.9848	0.136	7.231	0.000	0.718	1.252
=====						

Table 4: Ordinal regression results reporting the association between EU8 migrants and electoral outcomes in the UK.

In the experiment for EU8 countries, we observe that the ordinal regression follows the same trend as outlined in the previous experiments. Once again the p-value and the coefficient for the EU8 variable (13.92) are of statistical significance, indicating that the presence of EU8 countries also has an effect on electoral choice in the UK. The coefficient, in this case, is smaller than that reported for the EU14 variable, yet still larger than that for ‘Italian Ratio’.

As done above, we then proceed to run an additional regression with both the EU8 and ‘Italian Ratio’ variables. While the Italian Ratio variable disappears when in the regression with the EU14 variable, this is not the case for EU8. This confirms our previous finding in saying that Italians are representative of the EU14 voting behaviour, but their influence on voting behaviour is not correlated with that of EU8 migrants.

### 3. How do Italians and EU migrants influence (if at all) electoral results in the UK? I.e., do Italians/Europeans have an effect on UK elections as voters or due to their presence alone?

#### *Experiment 5*



=====						
Dep. Variable:	party_name	Log-Likelihood:	-444.67			
Model:	OrderedModel	AIC:	903.3			
Method:	Maximum Likelihood	BIC:	933.0			
Date:	Mon, 20 Mar 2023					
Time:	11:37:39					
No. Observations:	510					
Df Residuals:	503					
Df Model:	7					
=====						
	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
Percent Voters Italian	0.5972	0.597	1.001	0.317	-0.573	1.767
Unemployment (Rate)	0.1235	0.026	4.812	0.000	0.073	0.174
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	0.9973	0.150	6.664	0.000	0.704	1.291
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2696	0.375	-8.714	0.000	-4.005	-2.534
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.1016	0.576	-7.125	0.000	-5.230	-2.973
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-2.0408	0.203	-10.030	0.000	-2.440	-1.642
Labour/Green	0.9327	0.138	6.776	0.000	0.663	1.202
=====						

Table 5: Ordinal regression results of Italian migrants with the right to vote on the total UK voting population.

To answer the last research question and explain whether Italians have an effect on UK elections merely due to their presence in the UK or as voters, we have run two further regressions. We analyse the effect of Italians as voters: considering a subset of the ‘Italian Ratio’ variable as used in experiment 0, by only taking into consideration Italians with the right to vote. These, outlined as ‘Percent Voters Italian’, are then put in the regression by making a ratio with the overall voter population of the UK, investigating how the Italian ratio of voters influences electoral results. From the results of the experiment, the positive coefficient (0.60) suggests that the ratio of Italian voters shifts towards left-wing parties, thus confirming the previously observed trend. However, the p-value in this case is indicated as above 0.05 (0.32), thus being of no statistical significance. For this reason, we cannot establish a significant effect of Italian voters on electoral outcomes.

### Experiment 6

=====						
Dep. Variable:	party_name	Log-Likelihood:	-434.75			
Model:	OrderedModel	AIC:	883.5			
Method:	Maximum Likelihood	BIC:	913.1			
Date:	Mon, 20 Mar 2023					
Time:	11:37:39					
No. Observations:	510					
Df Residuals:	503					
Df Model:	7					
=====						
	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
Italian Ratio Voters	-0.0413	0.010	-4.169	0.000	-0.061	-0.022
Unemployment (Rate)	0.1011	0.026	3.865	0.000	0.050	0.152
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	0.6717	0.162	4.147	0.000	0.354	0.989
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2394	0.375	-8.636	0.000	-3.975	-2.504
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0670	0.575	-7.068	0.000	-5.195	-2.939
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-2.0057	0.203	-9.866	0.000	-2.404	-1.607
Labour/Green	0.9409	0.134	7.012	0.000	0.678	1.204
=====						

Table 6: Ordinal regression results of Italian migrants with the right to vote on the total UK population.

To test whether or not the mere presence of Italians has an effect on election results, we run the same regression, substituting the ‘Percent Voters Italian’ variable with ‘Italian Ratio Voters’. Resultantly, the negative coefficient of the ‘Italian Ratio Voters’ variable (-0.04) indicates that an increase in the proportion of Italian voters is associated with an increase in the probability of a right-wing party being elected. The regression results imply that a one percent increase in

Italian voters in the constituency’s population corresponds to a 0.04 less likely victory of a left-wing party. This entails that the presence of more Italians with the right to vote in the population seems to shift the voting trend towards the right, while this seems not to be true when the proportion of Italians among voters increases – as per the experiment just above.

### Experiment 7

```

=====
Dep. Variable:          party_name      Log-Likelihood:          -426.49
Model:                OrderedModel    AIC:                    873.0
Method:               Maximum Likelihood BIC:                    915.3
Date:                 Mon, 20 Mar 2023
Time:                 11:37:40
No. Observations:    510
Df Residuals:        500
Df Model:             10
=====

```

	coef	std err	z	P> z	[0.025	0.975]
Italian Ratio	0.4467	0.085	5.231	0.000	0.279	0.614
age	0.0259	0.012	2.090	0.037	0.002	0.050
degree	-260.1341	86.634	-3.003	0.003	-429.934	-90.334
Workplace Earnings	-1.8432	978.945	-0.002	0.998	-1920.541	1916.855
Unemployment (Rate)	0.1117	0.027	4.154	0.000	0.059	0.164
Conservative/Liberal Democrat	1.4807	0.747	1.983	0.047	0.017	2.944
Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru	-3.2104	0.375	-8.560	0.000	-3.945	-2.475
Plaid Cymru/Labour and Co-operative	-4.0387	0.575	-7.019	0.000	-5.166	-2.911
Labour and Co-operative/Labour	-1.9761	0.203	-9.723	0.000	-2.374	-1.578
Labour/Green	1.0077	0.135	7.457	0.000	0.743	1.273

Table 7: Ordinal regression results reporting the association between Italian migrants and electoral outcomes in the UK with added controls for age and ratio of university graduates.

Lastly, we detect that adding controls for age and ratio of university graduates does not explain away the correlation between the presence of Italian migrants and the likelihood of left-wing voting, but rather we notice an increase in the Italian Ratio coefficient when such variables are introduced. This implies that the effect of Italian Immigrants on electoral outcomes is not correlated with age or ratio of graduates, further suggesting that Italians do not influence electoral results by altering age or ratio of graduates in a constituency.

## VII. Discussion of Italian electoral influence

The experiments show some evidence of Italians having an impact on UK electoral events. First, we have looked for a link between Italian immigration and electoral outcomes in the UK, questioning whether or not Italians influenced electoral outcomes in UK elections. After reaching the conclusion that this is the case, we have analysed how this is expressed in terms of voting preferences, noticing some evidence that the presence of Italian immigrants in a constituency increases the probability of a left-wing party being elected. While a vast part of the literature has accounted for areas with high immigration rates as more right-leaning areas (Migration Observatory, 2022), recent studies also bring forward the idea that there is a perception-reality divide that has not been accounted for in the past. In fact, while it is true that strict anti-immigration policies of right-wing parties could have been a strong selling point for many voters in areas with high levels of immigration, this is not necessarily related by a cause-effect relationship. Some studies have in fact suggested that many of the areas with anti-

immigrant sentiment tend to have the least direct experience of it (Migration Observatory, 2022). This could thus explain why areas with a high number of Italian immigrants might instead favour a left-leaning voting trend.

Considering the significant presence of Italians in the UK, we have then proceeded to ask ourselves whether or not they are representative of EU migrants more in general, or if they are playing a different role. This has been done through an analysis of the voting behaviour of EU migrants as a whole, but also by dividing them into EU14 and EU8 countries. In this case, we have reached the conclusion that Italians and EU migrants tend to vote in a similar way. In particular, Italians can be defined as representative of the voting behaviour of EU14 countries, but not of those of EU8. We suggest that this could be a consequence of Brexit impacting differently the various countries of the two groups (Svitkova, 2023). Further research would be needed to confirm this. A cross-comparison between our results and those of other countries as well as of pre-Brexit elections could strengthen or weaken the authority of such a proposition. Moreover, the fact that the detected influence of Italian migrants on electoral outcomes cannot be explained by alterations in age and ratio of graduates in the local population invites further investigations of why the presence of EU14 migrants may have such effects on electoral results.

Once confirmed that Italians could be taken as a case study for the impact of EU migrants on the UK elections, we then wanted to define if this was done by the mere presence of Italians on the territory, or by Italian voters alone. By comparing and contrasting the voting trends first by considering the overall Italian community and then the Italians with the right to vote in the UK, we have found some evidence that it is the presence of Italians to increase the likelihood of electing left-wing representatives and not their participation in electoral events. This is further confirmed by the unexpected result that an increase of Italian voters in the population seems to have the rather opposite effect of increasing the likelihood of electing a right-wing representative as observed in experiment 6. More research is surely needed to explain this interesting finding.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

This paper has provided a comprehensive analysis of the Italian community in the UK and their voting trends in the latest general elections. By mapping the demographic factors per constituency, we have observed general trends and made assumptions about the main factors of influence that explain them. Moreover, we have combined the results of the general elections with factors such as literacy and employment status to understand the decision-making process of Italian voters in the UK. The first research question explored the overall impact of Italian immigrants on the UK's electoral outcomes. The second research question then determined whether the influence of Italians differs from that of other EU migrants. Finally, the third research question delved into the specifics of how both Italian and EU migrants affected the 2019 UK general election, either as voters or due to their mere presence. This study can serve as a useful basis for policymakers, academics, and anyone interested in the Italian community's political participation in the UK. It highlights the importance of understanding the influence of

demographic factors and political proposals in shaping voting behaviour, and the need for tailored policies to engage different communities in the democratic process.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Italian distribution per constituency

	Constituency	Number of Italians
1	Poplar and Limehouse	173
2	Bermondsey and Old Southwark	150
3	Bethnal Green and Bow	130
4	Hammersmith	125
5	Brent Central	111
6	Islington South and Finsbury	107
7	Kensington	106
8	West Ham	97
9	Hampstead and Kilburn	96
10	Islington North	95
11	Battersea	94
12	Ealing Central and Acton	94
13	Cities of London and Westminster	93
14	Vauxhall	93
15	Chelsea and Fulham	91
16	Westminster North	84
17	Tottenham	80
18	Hackney North and Stoke Newington	76
19	Lewisham, Deptford	76
20	Putney	72

21	Hackney South and Shoreditch	70
22	Streatham	69
23	Hornsey and Wood Green	68
24	Cambridge	66
25	Holborn and St Pancras	63
26	Oxford East	58

### Appendix B: Italians with UK citizenship distribution per constituency

	Constituency	Residents	Eligible to vote
1	Bermondsey and Old Southwark	150	5
2	Poplar and Limehouse	173	4
3	Streatham	69	4
4	Watford	33	4
5	Wrexham	11	4
6	Hammersmith	125	3
7	Islington South and Finsbury	107	2
8	Cities of London and Westminster	93	2
9	Hackney South and Shoreditch	70	2
10	Hornsey and Wood Green	68	2
11	Cambridge	66	2

### Appendix C - Comparison between ordinal and multinomial regression

The first model of regression used is a multinomial regression, used when the dependent variable has more than two categories and each category is mutually exclusive. The second model of regression used is an ordinal regression, used when the dependent variable is ordered but the difference between each category may not be the same. The two models of regressions have two different objectives. Multinomial regressions predict the probability of each category of dependent variables based on the independent variables. The goal of ordinal regressions, on the other hand, is to verify the relative order of the dependent variable based on the independent variables; in other words, determine the *strength* of the influence that the independent variables have on the dependent variables when changing (Gupta et al., 2021).

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