

## New forms of intra-European migration, labour market dynamics and social inequality in Europe

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### Abstract

This article deals with new forms of Intra-European migration, processes of integration and inequality, and dynamics of emerging transnational labour markets in Europe. We discuss these issues against the background of fundamental changes which have been taking place on the European continent over the past two decades. Drawing on available comparative European data, we examine, in a first step, whether the changes in intra-European migration patterns have been accompanied by a differentiation of the causes of migration. In a second step, we discuss the extent to which new forms of transnational labour markets have been emerging within Europe and their effects on systems of social stratification.

**Keywords:** Intra-European migration; social inequality; non-EU migrants; Transnational labour markets

### Introduction

This contribution deals with changes in European migration patterns, with a focus on labour market processes and processes of integration and inequality. Drawing on comparative European data, it examines whether conditions of social integration have changed in response to *differentiation in the form of intra-European migration* and to indications of the emergence of *transnational labour markets* in Europe and, if so, how.

We address this question in the context of fundamental changes which have been taking place on the European continent over the past two decades. Several years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, a process of European reintegration began, which led to the enlargement of the European Union and, thus, to the integration of post-socialist countries such as Hungary, Poland

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and Slovakia into the EU.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the EU became more strongly integrated internally, such as through the creation of the European Monetary Union and the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty. However, European integration and enlargement went hand in hand with a reinforcement of entry barriers (e.g. in the form of the Common European Asylum System). These structural changes have resulted in a widening rift between EU and non-EU countries. Taken together, these institutional dynamics have significantly transformed the conditions for migration both within Europe and from non-European states to Europe. This new situation calls for systematic research, on which we report in this contribution.

We begin with an introduction, which is followed by three substantive sections. The first step is to provide a brief overview of the recent history of migration in Europe. Using the analytical tools and approaches of migration research, which have themselves become more differentiated conceptually since the early 1990s, we sketch out the empirical differentiation of migration patterns of recent decades. To illustrate this, we then discuss the most current data on Europeans' migration intentions and reasons for migrating. The third step is to explore the extent to which new forms of transnational labour markets have been emerging within Europe. We conclude by summarising our most important findings and reflecting on their theoretical implications.

### Migration history in Europe

Historically, immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Europe (for an excellent overview of European migration history, see Bade et al., 2011). Europe was an important source of *emigrants* to North America and Australia well into the 1950s. The mid- and late 1950s saw an increase in the number of immigrants, which was due to labour migration and post-colonial migration. During the same period, intra-European labour migration began, with migrants moving from Southern Europe and North African Mediterranean countries to the industrial centres of France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. These migrations were stimulated by the economic boom of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, when the demand for labour grew rapidly in Western Europe. Most industrial economies imported labour during this period, especially for lower-skilled jobs. This led to a restructuring of the systems of social stratification in these countries, with the addition of a 'new' underclass, or substratum (Castles, 1986: 763ff).

Starting after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989/1990, a larger wave of migrants came from Eastern Europe in response to the demand for labour in certain economic sectors. In addition, large numbers of refugees arrived in Western Europe who had fled the armed conflicts in the Balkans; and migration from the new member states to the EU-15 has increased since the East-

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the EU is not identical with Europe; it is a unique economic and political partnership of 28 countries, which together cover much of the European continent.

ern enlargement of the European Union in 2004. The number of individuals living in the old member states who had come from one of the eight Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 increased significantly from 900,000 before the enlargement to about 2.3 million by 2011 (Authors' calculations based on Eurostat, 2012). Prior to the enlargement, Germany and Austria were the primary migration destinations; after the enlargement, Ireland and the United Kingdom became major destination countries (with the greatest influx coming from Poland), while Spain and Italy experienced a substantial increase in the number of immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria. Simulation models have predicted that under conditions of unrestricted movement the number of migrants from the new member states may increase to 4.4 million by 2020, corresponding to 5.2% of the population of the sending countries (EIC, 2009). Moreover, migration between Western European countries – e.g. between Germany and Austria, Spain and the United Kingdom or Belgium and France – has also increased since the late 1990s (Eurostat, 2012).<sup>2</sup>

Migration within the EU has been strongly promoted by the EU through institutionalised programmes since the early 1990s. Important factors since the mid-1990s include the principle of freedom of movement, the recognition of foreign qualifications, the Socrates and Erasmus programmes and the EURES network of European employment offices, all of which were designed to promote migration within Europe.<sup>3</sup> This institutional support of intra-European migration has brought about a change in the composition of migrating populations. Today, most intra-European migrants, particularly those migrating between Western European countries, have intermediate- or higher-level skills, corresponding to changed or improved forms of labour market integration for this group (for details, see Table 1).

Despite these ongoing changes, the level of geographic mobility in the EU continues to be lower than the level of, say, migration within the United States (Vandenbrande, 2006). The European Commission estimates the annual level of international migration to be about 1% of the active labour population. Migration within member states (measured as migration between the largest regional units) is at about the same level (EC, 2006).<sup>4</sup> This level of migration is

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<sup>2</sup> One example is the recent migration of Germans to Austria, where they have become the second-largest immigrant group on the labour market.

<sup>3</sup> 'Intra-European migration' and 'migration within Europe' are used synonymously in this paper; they refer mainly to EU-internal migration and to migration from European non-EU countries to EU-countries.

<sup>4</sup> Current data on migration intentions would lead one to expect a somewhat higher level of migration. Recently, roughly 5% of EU-27 citizens stated that they were planning to migrate. These intentions are very common throughout Eastern European countries. However, Scandinavian, French and Irish respondents also stated an above-average level of intention to migrate. Low levels of intention to migrate were found in Italy, Spain and Portugal – countries with a long tradition of intra-European migration – and in Central European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary). About half of respondents prefer migration within the EU. The percentage of those who have lived abroad for extended periods of time for professional or educational rea-

similar to that between Canadian provinces, where geographic mobility is also at a level of about 1% of the economically active population, while the level of mobility between the various federal states of the United States is 3% (OECD, 2007).

About 12.8 million people (2.5% of all EU citizens) are currently living in an EU country that is not their home country (Eurostat, 2012); this segment of the population grew by 2.7 million between 2007 and 2011 alone, although with variations ranging from 0.05% in Bulgaria and 2.1% in Germany, to 2.9% in the United Kingdom and 5.1% in France, to 6.2% in Belgium and as much as 36% in Luxembourg (Eurostat, 2012). By comparison, the percentage of non-European migrants in the total population of the EU is even higher, at 20 million, corresponding to 4% of all EU residents. In recent years, however, the EU-internal migration has been increasing relative to the migration from non-European countries.

Now, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the situation can be summarised as follows: While individual countries and the European Union have made efforts to limit, regulate and filter immigration to the European Union, barriers to mobility within the EU have been gradually removed in recent decades. This has led to significant differences between EU and non-EU countries in processes of migration and to new inequalities in migration processes. While intra-European migration is systematically supported, the conditions for migration from non-EU countries have become more restrictive.

### **Differentiation of intra-European migration patterns**

The discussion so far suggests that migration patterns in Europe have changed considerably over the past few years and that internal EU migration in particular has been of a different character since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this and the next section we will pursue three lines of argument to support this claim:

- a) The change in intra-European migration patterns has been accompanied by a differentiation of the causes of and motivations for migration.
- b) The composition of migration populations is very different from the composition of those of the 1960s and 1970s, the classical period of intra-European labour migration.
- c) As the reasons and the composition of intra-European migration have changed, so have the forms of migration.

### ***Changing causes of and motivations for migration***

One of the most central questions of migration research is that of the origins of migration processes. For a better understanding of the differentiation of

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sons (13% and 8% of all EU citizens respectively) would also lead one to expect a higher level of migration (E.C, 2011: 34, 48ff.; Mau and Verwiebe, 2010: 326ff.).

types of intra-European migration processes it is thus useful to consider what *changed the causes of* and the *motivations for migration*.

It is typically assumed that during the period of what we might call classical intra-European labour migration, economic factors (especially imbalances in labour markets and differences in income) were considered to be the most significant motivation for migration (Stark, 1991). However, recent research has revealed that migration processes are the result of complex decision-making processes in which economic factors, social network resources and a number of other social, familial and cultural factors play important roles (Berry and Bell, 2012; Levitt et al., 2003; Pries, 2004).

There are few recent empirical studies on the *causes of intra-European migration*. Table 1 summarises the findings of these studies. The conclusion we can draw is that migration within Europe is motivated primarily by work-related *and* family-related factors. However, on the whole, various family-related and social motivations are mentioned more frequently than solely work-related reasons. This clearly increases our understanding of the character of intra-European migration and of the inherent/typical reasons for migration. The findings presented in Table 1 further suggest that in many cases the decision to migrate is made not for one single reason but for a whole raft of reasons (Berry and Bell, 2012; Fouarge and Ester, 2007).

**Table 1.** Reasons for intra-European migration

	European Commission, 2005	PIONEUR Survey, 2004	TRANSMOB Survey, 2001	Eurostat Data, 2008
Economic and professional reasons	40%	25%	15% (economic and professional reasons only)	19% job before migration 23% job after migration
Social and family-related reasons	40%	30%	30% (marriage, family reunion, networks)	37% (family)
Cultural reasons and education	Not asked	7% studies	15% (studies, interest in foreign languages, cultures or metropolises)	8% (education)
Other reasons	20% quality of life	24% quality of life	40% combination of reasons (of which 28% economic and other reasons)	14% (not specified)

*Source:* Mau and Verwiebe (2010: 324).

***Changes in the socio-economic composition of intra-European migrants***

If we look at the *socio-economic composition* of the group of Europeans who have recently migrated within the EU, the assumption that there has been a struc-

tural change in intra-European migration becomes even more plausible. The first thing we can see from the data in Table 2 is that these migrants are relatively young. Of the EU citizens of working age who settled in another EU-15 country between 2000 and 2005, between 60% (EU-15) and 78% (accession states) were no older than 34. In addition, intra-European migrants are less likely to be married or have children. They tend to migrate to metropolitan centres, especially to major cities such as London, Paris, Berlin and Brussels (Scott, 2006; Verwiebe, 2008, 2011), vibrant urban population centres in Ireland and the United Kingdom, and the prosperous regions of Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland. This makes these urban agglomerations the most multicultural places in Europe (Favell, 2008), strongly shaped by immigration.

**Table 2.** Socio-economic characteristics of European migrant groups

	EU-15 migrants	EU-10 migrants	Non-EU-25 migrants	Natives
<b>Age</b>				
15–24	12	27	19	12
25–34	48	51	46	24
25–64	40	22	35	64
<b>Educational level</b>				
Low	15	15	36	27
Medium	41	63	40	47
High	44	22	24	26
<b>Occupation</b>				
Highly qualified white-collar employees	55	16	20	40
Lowly qualified white-collar employees	24	28	25	26
Qualified workers	12	27	21	25
Unqualified jobs	9	30	35	10
<b>Marital status</b>				
Unmarried	61	53	38	39
Married	39	47	62	61
<b>Household</b>				
Single	25	24	16	17
Couple without children	44	48	40	33
Couple or single with at least one child	31	31	44	51

*Source:* Mau and Verwiebe (2010: 326).

The levels of educational and occupational attainment of these migrant groups are equally interesting. The educational level of the majority of those with EU-15 citizenship is very high; 44% of EU migrants hold a university degree, compared to 26% of domestic employees. Among Eastern European migrants intermediate skills predominate, while among those without EU citizenship who have migrated to the EU-15 low- and intermediate-level qualifi-

cations are most common. This migration of highly qualified persons is often directly linked to the Europeanisation process. For example, Favell (2008) focused on highly skilled European migrants (mainly in services, IT, banking and the media) in ‘Eurocities’ such as Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris and London, which benefit from specific European structures of opportunity. Russell King has argued in a similar vein: “The movement of skilled persons lies at the heart of the attempts to integrate Europe through the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the EU” (King, 2002: 98).<sup>5</sup>

The empirical data on the fields in which individuals from EU-15 countries work indicates that they are mainly employed in jobs that match their skills and experience (see Table 2). This is less often the case among Eastern European (EU-10) and non-EU migrants. These groups are rarely employed as high-skilled workers, the most common forms of employment being jobs for which no qualifications are required. A comparison of their training with the work they actually do suggests that this is due to the formal and informal non-recognition of their professional qualifications (for a more detailed discussion of the importance of education and occupation for the integration of migrants, see also the next section).

### ***New forms of intra-European migration***

In this section, we argue that changes in the direction of migration flows, the differentiation of the motivations for migration and changes in the socio-structural composition of migration populations go hand in hand with a differentiation of the typical *forms of migration*.

Traditionally, the study of migration has usually focused on long-term migration processes. A migrant was generally defined as someone who permanently relocates to another country. This model was predicated on the notion that migrants would sooner or later become economically, socially and culturally integrated into the destination country (Eisenstadt, 1953), while the ties to their country of origin would gradually become weaker.

However, many new forms of intra-European migration have emerged to which this definition no longer applies. Migration movements are increasingly short-term or temporary in nature, with examples including transnational migration, cross-border commuting, seasonal migration, circular migration and retirement migration (see e.g. Beaverstock, 2002; Faist, 2000; Peixoto, 2001). One common factor is that stable ties are maintained with individuals in the country of origin despite migration, so it is not always easy to determine in which country migrants are actually based. Often these forms of migration are

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<sup>5</sup> Recently, new waves of emigration have been particularly characteristic of Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, which have been seriously affected by the economic crisis. The new emigrants are often highly qualified, and most of them are moving to cities to find employment, one recent example being Spanish IT-experts in London (Tremlett, 2011). Due to the crisis in their home countries, young adults are also applying to European universities (Oselt, 2012); these emigrants are moving not only within Europe but also to Canada, the United States and Brazil.

not recorded in official statistics because many migrants do not notify the authorities of their departure.

Until the early 1990s, seasonal migration, or circular migration, was particularly common among migrants from the South of Europe. Today, there are quite a number of regions in Europe with a high level of circular migration, such as between Luxembourg, France and Germany; the Czech Republic and Austria; Germany and Austria; and Denmark and Germany (Buch et al., 2009; Schmitz et al., 2012; Strüver, 2005; Verwiebe et al., 2010). Particularly noteworthy is the circular migration between Eastern and Western Europe. In the last ten years, many Eastern Europeans have worked in Western Europe on a seasonal basis as nurses, au pairs, cleaners, craftspeople or farm hands at harvest time (Kalter, 2011). This trend has become even more pronounced since the accession of new EU member states in May 2004.<sup>6</sup>

Another aspect of intra-European migration which has become increasingly significant in recent years is migration of older middle-class Europeans (Williams et al., 1997). In this group, moving to attractive areas in France, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece, as well as to the southwest of England or to Scotland has become increasingly popular. The main reason for migration after retirement is quality of life rather than local income levels or the prices of goods and services. In some cases, positive experiences while on holidays abroad encourage these forms of retirement migration.

### **Transnational labour markets in Europe and their effects on systems of social stratification**

The emergence of transnational cross-border labour markets has not been thoroughly studied in migration and social stratification research, nor are there any empirical data or national statistics on these new labour markets. However, a number of studies on various cross-border labour markets and other forms of transnational labour markets have been published recently (e.g. Baruffini, 2011; Buch et al., 2009; de Gijssel and Janssen, 1998; Gottholmseder and Theurl, 2007; Lechner et al., 2010; Schmitz et al., 2012; Strüver, 2005).

As early as the late 1990s, Peter de Gijssel and Manfred Janssen, in their study on the border regions between the Netherlands and Germany, were among the first researchers to recognise the potential of such transnational labour markets. By the 1990s, fewer than 50,000 German and Dutch citizens were working on each other's side of the border; "a cross-border labour market hardly existed" (de Gijssel and Janssen, 1998: 74). However, the primary data collected in the project also showed that willingness to migrate was sig-

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<sup>6</sup> For example, 3 million Poles have worked abroad since May 2004 (out of a population of 38.5 million), most of them without leaving their homeland permanently (Public Opinion Research Centre, 2007). Until recently, Polish emigrants usually moved to the United States or Australia. Since EU accession, however, most of them migrate to Western European countries, such as the United Kingdom and Ireland. Geographic proximity has contributed significantly to this trend towards temporary migration, which involves 'only working' in an EU country.



nificantly higher than actual mobility.

Luxembourg is particularly interesting for the understanding of transnational labour markets (see Schmitz et al., 2012). Each day Luxembourg's labour market draws tens of thousands of border crossers. There are currently nearly 160,000 workers from Lorraine, Rhineland-Palatinate, the Saarland and the Walloon Region working in Luxembourg, 50% of those employed in the Luxembourg labour market (compared to 9% in 1975). Nearly half of the cross-border commuters are university graduates. Liechtenstein, another rather small European country, also has a high number of commuters in its labour market. About 46% of those employed in Liechtenstein are cross-border commuters from neighbouring countries (Gottholmseder and Theurl, 2007: 99). Gottholmseder and Theurl note that this is the result of microeconomic imbalances in the region: Liechtenstein, unlike other countries, has almost no unemployment and is also known for its very well-paid employment positions.

Recent studies on cross-border labour markets and new forms of transnational migration also show that there is a shift in the socio-structural composition of the population of intra-European migrants. The crucial difference between those moving now and migrants in the 1960s is that most emigrants today are skilled graduates. In terms of theoretical consequences, this suggests various forms of super-stratification in the national class system rather than sub-stratification, which was typical of intra-European migration movements of the 1960s. According to Verwiebe and Eder (2006: 144),<sup>7</sup> important causes of increasing migration of the highly skilled have been the boost in foreign direct investment and the growth of multinational corporations. In this logic, highly skilled migrants are crucial to the flows of knowledge and capital movements of international corporations, as well as their economic strategies and success. Beaverstock (2002) and Beaverstock and Hall (2012) can be drawn upon as one example of this kind of research because they describe this specific group of transmigrants as important constituents of the global economic system. This research suggests that the individual career paths and the social and business networks of these professionals, which extend across national boundaries, are the key factors that produce and reproduce traits of 'transnationalism' in the global cities of post-industrial economies in Europe and other parts of the world. The above-mentioned studies also argue that the economic competitiveness of global cities is substantially dependent on the functioning of their global labour markets, a key factor of which is the influx of highly skilled migrants from various regions of the world.

## Conclusion

This contribution has dealt with increasing differences among intra-European migrants in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our analysis has shown that the various groups

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<sup>7</sup> The beginnings of a 'super-stratification' of national class systems could be observed when an increasing number of British and German professionals – an elite group among migrants – started to enter the Austrian and Swiss labour markets some years ago.

of individuals who migrate to and within Europe differ considerably in terms of reasons for migration, educational composition and overall degree of societal integration. Our most important outcome is that EU-15 citizens in particular are far better integrated economically and socially than other groups of migrants.

Our findings suggest that it is safe to assume that EU support for intra-European migration has had a favourable effect on the integration of this migrant group, but further differentiation is appropriate: EU-10 migrants who have a low or intermediate level of qualification have a different starting point than highly qualified EU-15 migrants. This finding clearly shows that the framework conditions for EU citizens are indeed one of the critical factors which support mobility within the European area. However, there are additional factors which can decisively shape the conditions of integration in the recipient country. One such factor is the specific interdependence and reciprocal interaction among individual dimensions of integration. For example, language skills promote placement in the labour market, and vice versa, while factors relating to structural integration are closely related to social assimilation. Our analysis has further shown that non-EU migrants are by far the least integrated migrant group with regard to most dimensions of societal integration. This means that for a considerable proportion of migrants there is still a 'less privileged' type of integration occurring in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A worthwhile consideration for further research might be to take a closer look at this group. Where do they come from? What are their migration intentions? What socio-economic characteristics distinguish these migrants from well-integrated EU migrants? Or, more specifically: To what extent does socio-structural composition constitute a significant factor to explain the conditions of migrant integration? Does national origin play any role at all in the integration of those with advanced skills? Does the enhanced selectivity and control of non-EU immigrants lead to differences in the formation of identity processes? And, finally – a question we have not been able to answer based on the data available to us: How do transnational European citizens (e.g. cross-border commuters) differ systematically with regard to these and other dimensions of integration from migrants who have permanently relocated the geographical centre of their lives? Given our findings, we see a need for further research on these questions.

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