Chapter 4
Liquid Migration and Its Consequences for Local Integration Policies

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the notion of 'liquid migration' in relation to intra-European movement. Does intra-European movement challenge our conventional understanding of temporary versus permanent intra-European migration? And what does this mean in terms of the central dilemma of 'mobility' versus 'integration'?

The EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 led to an unexpected scale of labour mobility within the enlarged EU (mainly from Poland, the Baltic States, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia) (Black et al. 2010). Within the 10 years following the 2004 EU enlargement, the total number of nationals from the new member states residing in the 'old' member states increased more than fivefold, from 1.1 million in 2004 to 6.1 million in 2014. This is a total net inflow of 5 million migrants from Central Europe (Fihel et al. 2015), most of whom went to the UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands.

The EU expansion is an interesting case, not just because it resulted – in absolute numbers – in a substantial increase in migration from specific East European to specific West European countries, but also for the nature of the new labour migration (Krings et al. 2013). Favell (2008: 701) has claimed that the East-West migration associated with the EU enlargement process has resulted in "the emergence of a new migration system in Europe" that forces us to rethink standard theories and conceptions on immigration, integration and citizenship, as these are mainly tied up with post-colonial, guest worker and asylum migration. In my own work I have previously proposed that this new migration system can be described as 'liquid migration' (Engbersen 2013; Engbersen and Snel 2013). The main feature of liquid migration is its temporary, flexible and unpredictable character, with workers

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P. Scholten, M. van Ostaijen (eds.), *Between Mobility and Migration*, IMISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77991-1_4

'trying their luck' in different European labour markets before settling or moving on or moving home. One consequence of liquid migration is that many intra-European labour migrants only partially and temporarily integrate in the destination countries.

My analysis also led to the position that many destination locations were insufficiently equipped to deal with these patterns of liquid migration (Engbersen 2013). Despite experiences with temporary labour migration in West European countries (particularly with seasonal labour) and with intra- European movement (especially between the original EU member states), many cities and regions did not seem capable of responding adequately to the structural temporariness associated with liquid migration (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2005).

The introduction of the concept of liquid migration has met various objections, for instance that the extent of temporary and unpredictable intra-European movement was being overestimated. After all, there are also patterns of settlement migration in West European countries. A second objection concerned the local consequences of intra-European movement. Do any serious consequences actually occur at the local level, or are unwelcome consequences restricted to very specific groups and very specific problems?

In this Chap. 1 shall explore the nature of intra- European movement and the relevance of the concept of liquid migration, confronted with the IMAGINATION findings. I will also consider the consequences of intra- European movement for local integration policy. The chapter is structured as follows. First I will describe the features of liquid migration and the impact thereof at the local level. Next, I confront these features with the typology of intra- European movement as developed in Chap. 1 and with the findings on local consequences (Reeger, Chap. 3). I conclude with a discussion of liquid migration.

4.2 Liquid Migration and its Local Consequences

4.2.1 Liquid Migration as an Ideal Type

The concept of liquid migration is an ideal type. Ideal types draw attention to the typical features of a specific phenomenon, in order to build a picture of its key characteristics (Ringer 1997). An ideal type is a conceptual construct in order to unveil and explain social phenomena. Ideal types are, in the famous words of Max Weber (2002: 55) "constructed concepts endowed with a degree of consistency, seldom found in actual history.".[1]

The concept of liquid migration was formulated to capture the nature of intra EU-mobility, especially after the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007. A key principle

[1] This quotation is from Max Weber's (2002: 55) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He continues as follows: "Precisely because of the impossibility of drawing sharp boundaries in historical reality, our only hope of identifying the particular effects of these religious ideas must come through an investigation of their most consistent (or "ideal") forms."

underlying the concept of liquid migration is that migration forms an intrinsic part of wider social transformations within origin and destination countries in Europe. These transformations are related to several institutional changes:

- The transition by former communist countries to liberal democracies, giving citizens more freedom to migrate;
- The expansion of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 and the abolishment of internal borders;
- The increase in flexible, temporary and uncertain labour in many OECD and West European countries. Non-standard work, such as temporary work, part-time work and self-employment account for about a third of total employment in OECD countries. Since the mid-1990s, more than half of all job creation was in the form of non-standard work (OECD 2015);
- The individualisation of family relations, offering more freedom to individual members (especially the children) to go their own way (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002);
- Technological changes, especially the growth of social media, which have facilitated new and unconventional means of finding potential migration destinations (Dekker and Engbersen 2014).

Furthermore, the EU is characterised by substantial inequalities between the member states, particularly between the old and new member states, making migration an attractive option for many. Obviously, the concept of liquid migration was inspired by Zygmunt Bauman's work (1999; 2003; 2005; 2007) on liquid modernity. Central to the notion of liquidity is the transformation of "solid" institutions (class, family, labour, community, neighbourhood, welfare state and nation state) into to more flexible and loose institutions. These institutions lose their power to interconnect individual choices and collective projects. They become less solid and less predictable, and in the melting pot of modern society, they lose their compelling and self-evident character.[2] As Bauman (2005: 1) notes:

> Liquid modern is a society in which the conditions under which its members act change faster than it takes the ways of acting to consolidate into habits and routines. Liquidity of life and that of society feed and reinvigorate each other. Liquid life, just like liquid modern society, cannot keep its shape or stay on course for long.

These insights are relevant to understanding contemporary patterns of labour mobility in Europe. Migration has always been strongly embedded in rather strong and stable institutions (the family, local community and local labour markets, and the nation state (Portes 1995; Boyd and Nowak 2013; Goldin et al. 2011). The transformation of these institutions, together with advanced communications technologies and the disappearance of internal borders due to the EU enlargements,

[2] Bauman (2007: 6) writes in *Liquid Modernity*: 'The solids whose turn has come to be thrown into the melting pot and which are in the process of being melted at the present time, the time of fluid modernity, are the bonds which interlock individual choices in collective projects and actions – the patterns of communication and co-ordination between individually conducted life policies on the one hand and political actions of human collectivities on the other.'

Overview 4.1 The characteristics of liquid migration

1	**Settlement**	Temporality of migration and stay Invisibility of stay (non-registration)	Temporal migration
			Economic integration in destination country
2	**Type of migration**	Labour and student migration	Labour migrants
			Student migrants
3	**Status**	Legal residential status	Regular labour migration
			Temporary work permit holders
4	**Destination**	No predestined receiving country	Multiple receiving countries
			New receiving countries
5	**Family**	Individualised life strategy (limited family obligations)	Individualised forms of migration
			First generation pattern
6	**Migratory habitus**	Intentional unpredictability	No fixed migration aspirations
			Open options

has changed migration patterns in post-industrial societies and has made migration more flexible, and less visible and predictable.

In earlier publications on the nature of CEE labour mobility I highlighted six dimensions (Engbersen 2013; Engbersen and Snel 2013) (see Overview 4.1). The first dimension is the temporality of a stay abroad. Migrants do not settle permanently, but move back and forth from their origin country to receiving countries (circular migration), operate in in-between situations that are neither wholly temporary nor wholly permanent, or move to multiple destination countries. Their stays abroad may differ from migrant to migrant and from group to group. Some stay briefly (for example seasonal workers), others will opt for a medium long stay or a longer-term stay (for example highly skilled workers). The temporal nature of residence often goes hand in hand with non-registration, which contributes to the invisibility of liquid migration.

A second dimension is that liquid migration is predominantly labour migration. Student migration may be seen as a minor supplement to this labour migration (short term labour migration is sometimes the true motive behind forms of student migration) (Ivancheva 2007).

A third dimension is that liquid migration is a regular form of migration. Mobile EU citizens formally have the same rights and duties as the native citizens in the destination Member State, and they should not be treated differently in comparison to the native citizens. However, before 2014 many EU migrants needed a work permit in order to access the labour market. Without such a work permit they could become irregular workers. This transition period, in which restrictions were imposed on workers from the A-8 and A-2 countries, ended on 1 January 2014.

A fourth dimension of liquid migration is that intra-European movement has become more unpredictable. Some categories of labour migrants work and reside in well-established destination countries (such as Germany), while others travel to new destinations countries such as the UK but also to Belgium, Denmark, Ireland,

Norway and the Netherlands (Fihel et al. 2015). A crucial aspect of intra-European movement is that it partly ignores the political and economic factors that shaped migration flows in the past.

A fifth dimension concerns the role of family. International migration has always been stimulated and facilitated by networks of family (Tilly 1990; Massey et al. 2005; Palloni et al. 2001; Massey et al. 2005; Epstein 2008). Households develop strategies to maximise the household income. These classical forms of migration rely on the solidarity between generations and on extended family patterns. However, next to this classical pattern, new patterns are emerging that are much more individualised. Family ties have become looser and more fragile, not only in West European societies but also in Central and Eastern European societies.

A sixth dimension is that the social position of migrants and the migration field in which they strategically operate, generates a specific migratory habitus of 'intentional unpredictability'. This is especially true for young single migrants (Eade et al. 2007). This migratory habitus expresses the more individualistic ethos of migrants who are less bound by family obligations and also less constrained by borders and local labour markets than previous generations of migrants. Among the more highly educated migrants, the desire to experience a metropolitan lifestyle may also play a role (Drinkwater and Garapich 2015).

The concept of liquid migration has met with some criticism. First, there is the question whether it actually represents a new phenomenon, or whether, instead, it's a matter of old wine in new bottles? (Penninx, Chap. 5). Temporary, short-term, seasonal and circular forms of migration are nothing new. They have occurred throughout (European) history (Moch 1992) and are particularly visible in migration flows in Africa and China, but also between Mexico and the US (Chapman and Prothero 1983/84; Massey et al. 2005). Worth mentioning here is the work by Okolski (2012) on incomplete migration, which was an important phenomenon in post-war Poland, before the EU expansion. Incomplete migration concerns the trans-national circularity of people, on the one hand seeking employment and on the other pursuing a household risk minimisation strategy.

Second, the concept seems to pay little attention to the dynamics of migration, culminating in settlement migration. Thus, Friberg (2012) shows that the labour migration from Poland to Norway displays various phases, from circulation to transnational commuting and finally to settlement. On the other hand, Recci (2015) draws attention, not so much to the dynamics of intra- European movement but to the coexistence of old and new patterns of migration. This position is more in line with my own work on the heterogeneity of EU labour migration (Engbersen et al. 2013).

Third, the notions of the free-moving lifestyle and the migratory habitus of intentional unpredictability are questioned. Most mobile workers are in search of a possibility to settle down and live grounded, secure and stable lives (Bygnes and Erdal 2017). This observation – based on an analysis of the future narratives of Polish and Spanish migrants in Norway – is partly supported by the work by King et al. (2015) into the position of highly educated young adults from the Baltic states in the city of London. The researchers confirm the relevance of the concept of liquid migration for its acknowledgement of aspects such as self-development, life style,

metropolitan culture and the open-ended character of migration (King 2017). Yet they also point to "a young adult transition or a process of adult 'becoming' (hence, not yet complete) - from an individualised life style, with few family obligations, to a life-stage which combines thoughts on family formation with a possible return to the home country." To what extent a return ever materialises is an open question, but a longing for a more secure and stable social life is also found among Baltic graduates. Yet as King et al. note (2015: 2): "Where a stable home will be, however, is often not very clear in migrants' mind." Incidentally, it applies for all groups that a stable job with a decent income and 'normal' working life conditions are seen as important ingredients of a grounded life or stable home, in either the origin or the destination country.

The critical comments concerning the concept of liquid migration relate to the theme of structure and agency. However, liquid migration does not entail that migrants are free to choose the life they want and that they have a natural inclination towards the adventurous life. Liquid migration instead implies that keeping your options open is a rational attitude developed by intra-European mobile citizens in response to the institutional uncertainties and opportunities that they encounter. This pertains especially to uncertainties and opportunities in the labour market. Many mobile workers have temporary jobs and work below their actual educational qualifications in European countries, but they also have limited opportunities in the labour markets of their origin countries (Nowicka 2012; Verwiebe et al. 2014; Voitchovsky 2014; McCollum and Findlay (2015). This contributes to a liquid life: "lived under conditions of constant uncertainty" (Bauman 2005:2). Nevertheless, there are differences concerning the extent to which individuals have different options to choose from. Some individuals can afford to take more risks and to develop an adventurous lifestyle, for example graduates who are supported by wealthy parents or highly skilled workers who wish to gain experience working abroad. Low educated labour migrants who must depend on (temporary) work, offered by temporary work agencies (and who may have to sustain a family), are not as free to pursue an adventurous life style and to aspire to a rich cultural life. Their main concern is to find a reliable job with decent wages.

The question now is what insights the IMAGINATION project has produced with respect to the theme of liquid migration. We will address this question below, after we look into a related conceptual question, that is the implications of liquid migration for (local) integration policies.

4.2.2 Inplications of Liquid Migration for Local Integration Policies

In the introduction we cited Favell's claim (2008) that we need to rethink standard theories on immigration and integration as they are strongly related to post-colonial, guest worker and asylum migration. In Europe, integration policy has mainly focused on third-country nationals (TCNs) who settle in West European countries, such as (former) guest workers and the following family migrants, post-colonial

migrants and asylum migrants. Intra-European movement was never part of the domain of integration, also because of the small size of intra-European mobility.

With the EU enlargements, intra-European mobility has become a dominant phenomenon; in part due to the increasing size it. Specific countries and cities are receiving significant numbers of mobile EU citizens, without being adequately equipped to do so (Black et al. 2010). Besides, intra-European mobility challenges established integration policies due to its unpredictable and dynamic nature. Accordingly, we see that the arrival of large numbers of labour migrants is producing specific social problems for urban regions, for instance with regard to housing but also in the areas of registration, education and health care (see Chap. 3).

However, the gravity of these problems is assessed differently in the countries affected. In some European cities – such as Rotterdam and The Hague in the Netherlands – policy makers use strong metaphors (e.g. "a tsunami of Polish migrants") to focus attention on issues of housing and disorder in neighbourhood. But in other European cities that also faced a substantial influx of mobile EU citizens, the political idiom is more moderate. Nonetheless, cities like Antwerp, Berlin, Brussels, Dublin, Ghent, London, Oslo, and Manchester also report problems of housing and homelessness (Broadway 2011; Garapich 2011; Crellen 2010; Mostowska 2011).

Furthermore, in many European cities a debate is ongoing whether an integration policy ought to be pursued for specific categories of mobile EU citizens (Van Puymbroeck et al. 2011; Engbersen et al. 2017). Various considerations play a role here. On the one hand, policy makers wish to prevent that the arrival of mobile European citizens causes problems for settled citizens. On the other hand, they incorporate a timeline in respect of integration policy for mobile EU citizens. Thus, cities are developing language facilities for mobile workers who have taken up residence for the longer term. In sum: the co-existence of old and new forms of mobility – expressed in new forms of temporality – raises new questions for cities and local authorities. For this theme, too, it is important to examine the IMAGINATION findings.

4.3 Liquid Migration in the Light of the IMAGINATON Findings

How does the concept of liquid migration relate to the empirical findings of the IMAGINATION project, especially to the typology (see Chap. 1), and to integration issues encountered at the local level (see Chap. 3)?

4.3.1 On the Concept of Liquid Migration

When we apply the concept of concept liquid to the IMAGINATION data we see:

- the centrality of temporality: many CEE persons are working and residing temporarily in West-European urban regions or are in an in-between position;

- the dominance of labour migration as the main motive of intra EU movement;
- the importance of being an EU citizen that enables to cross borders in a regular way. However, some categories are not able to get access to regular labour and housing markets and rely on informal institutions (informal economy, informal housing markets and migrant networks);
- the changing nature of intra EU-movement. In the post second world period, there has been (temporal and circular) labour and asylum migration from specific Central and Eastern European countries to Austria, but this was less the case in the Netherlands and Sweden. The EU Enlargements created new migration corridors, and resulted in substantial migration flows from new origin regions of CEE countries to urban regions in Austria, Sweden and the Netherlands. The scale of these migration flows was not foreseen.
- the effects of the individualization process in family relations. Many temporary migrants are working in West-European urban regions to support a family back home, but we also see young couples and singles (students) who do not have these traditional obligations. They are taking care of themselves without having specific family responsibilities.
- the unpredictability of migrant's behaviour, especially in the big cities. One simple indicator of this unpredictability is that many CEE migrants do not register, making policies of registration one of the top priorities of local policies.

However, the key dimension of the concept of liquid migration is the temporal nature of movement. As we have seen, The IMAGINATION typology (TOMs) is based on two dimensions: socio-economic status and a temporal dimension (see Fig. 1.1 in Chap. 1). The concept of liquid migration mainly pertains to the left-hand side of Fig. 1.1 and on in-between situations, between temporariness and settlement.

To understand the dynamics of intra EU-movement, we should also incorporate a temporal dimension on the vertical axis. Unfortunately, the IMAGINATION data does not offer this longitudinal option. There are clear indications that settlement migration, circular or a return to the home country relate also to the (in-)ability to achieve a stable socio-economic position. To achieve this position often requires social mobility and this takes time (e.g. going from informal worker to a regular worker or from student to highly skilled), but finding a stable job with decent wages is more important. For this is what enables them to settle in the expensive European cities. Yet this goal is out of reach for many entrepreneurs, manual workers, persons working in private households, sex workers, trafficked persons, students and beggars. Moreover, many in these categories lack access to social security, so that they lack the financial resources to support a sustainable residence. For these categories, circular migration or temporary labour mobility offers better opportunities to achieve their aims and targets. The IMAGINATION project shows clearly that new routines of circular migration have evolved in Europe, with manual workers in Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden taking seasonal jobs mainly in the agricultural sector. In Austria, circular migration of mainly women appears to be a dominant pattern in the care sector for the elderly.

Still, we also see categories of migrants with marginal labour market positions managing to settle (Ciupijus 2010; Fox et al. 2014). This category has been typified as a 'new informal urban lower class' or as the 'precariat' (cf. Standing 2011; Savage 2015), which is settling in urban areas and is managing to survive through access to informal institutions of work and housing (and to migrant networks). These informal institutions are typical of big cities like Vienna, Rotterdam, The Hague, Stockholm and Istanbul (Saunders 2010).

The concept of liquid migration was formulated in relation to the EU's eastern enlargements, and one of the defining characteristics is its legal character. EU citizens are free to move to other members-states, and have full rights to residence, work and study. This is often not the case with the CEE-Turkey migration corridors. The Edirne and Istanbul areas have seen a gradual increase of migration from Central and Eastern Europe. This migration includes labour migrants as well as students. However, espcially, the CEE-Istanbul corridor is characterised by substantial irregular migration (see Chap. 12). But due to an implicit policy of toleration irregular migrants are rather free to engage in back and forth migration and develop liquid patterns of migration that have a resemblance with intra-European movement patterns. To conclude: the IMAGINATION findings particularly reveal a heterogeneity in forms of movement. Intra EU-movement includes all forms of migration: from very temporary to settlement. There are no clear, unambiguous processes. Temporary mobility does not necessarily culminate in permanent settlement. Circular mobility does not carry on perpetually. And temporary mobility is not necessarily coupled to circular mobility; there are also forms of once-only or twice-only mobility. Different patterns also occur simultaneously.

The concept of liquid migration does not cover the whole field of labour mobility within the EU. It relates to patterns of temporary and in-between patterns of mobility. The IMAGINATION project offers a further understanding of new temporalities of migration – circular, temporary, seasonal and short-term – and of the underlying institutional factors driving these temporalities. It also shows how the migratory habitus of keeping options open is a rational response to structural constraints and opportunities.

4.3.2 On Liquid Migration and Local Integration Policies

The consequences of these diverse temporalities of mobility for local integration policy are described in Chap. 3. Although there are differences between urban regions, the following policies issues are encountered:

- The issue of registration, particularly keeping track of workers that stay temporarily;
- Providing adequate housing, both for those who settle permanently and those who stay (very) briefly. Most workers do not have access to public housing and rely on the private housing sectors, where (abusive) landlords may charge exces-

sive rental prices. A new phenomenon for many cities is the need to realise short-stay facilities for temporary and circular labour migrants;
- Preventing homelessness and forms of public nuisance as a result of overcrowded housing. Homelessness is partly an inevitable consequence of temporary labour and temporary accommodation, as to lose one's job means to lose one's housing. Various European cities are now developing voluntary return programmes;
- Education and language acquisition, for both adults and young children. Cities may experience a sudden influx of new school pupils (especially in primary school). Making sure that labour migrants' children do enrol in schools and don't drop out of schools is an important issue.
- Access to health care and claims on social assistance and other public provisions. Some mobile EU citizens lack health care insurance, and rely on NGO's often supported by central and local state policies (Fermin 2016). Besides, there are concerns about growing claims on local social assistance schemes.

The extent to which such issues occur varies from city to city. The IMAGINATION project reveals that in cities like Vienna and Stockholm, the intra-European mobility is not treated or portrayed as a problem as much as in cities like The Hague and Rotterdam (Reeger and Enengel 2015). The project also reveals that it is crucial for cities like Vienna, Stockholm, The Hague and Rotterdam to monitor the new temporalities of intra-European mobility in order to develop effective measures regarding registration, housing, education, health care and public order. It requires a flexible structure to cope with temporary, short-term and circular migration (especially in the sphere of housing), but also with middle long-term mobility that is related to the in-between category of mobile EU citizens (between temporality and settlement).

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has confronted the concept of liquid migration with the findings of the IMAGINATION project. This confrontation reveals that liquid migration pertains to a part of intra EU-mobility. It focuses on the complex temporalities of intra-European movement – circular, temporary, seasonal, short-term – associated with various social groups. These temporalities have been described previously in migration literature, for instance in the European migration literature on the mobile nineteenth century and in post-war literature on guest workers. One new aspect is that migration movements have become more individualised and less predictable, and that new migration destinations are more easily found. The increased opportunities for free movement, the availability of strategically important knowledge (thanks to social media), the reduced costs of travel and the greater role of international recruitment agencies facilitate finding new and multiple destinations more quickly.

A second aspect of the concept of liquid migration is that it acknowledges the institutional changes that create opportunities and impose restrictions on (potential) mobile EU citizens. The EU expansion with its principle of freedom of movement has brought more freedom to migrate, but other institutional changes have created more uncertainties: the growth of non-standard labour, structural unemployment, individualisation of family relations and welfare state retrenchment. Liquid migration can be seen as a product of these institutional changes.

The consequences of intra-European movement are apparent in specific regions, as the results of IMAGINATION show. These findings indicate that part of the mobile EU citizens easily find their way in the new destination locations (e.g. in family households or in highly skilled jobs), but that some problems do occur. The complex temporalities raise questions about the relevance of contemporary integration policies and compel cities to develop new approaches for the integration of intra-European mobile citizens.

The local policies and governance strategies described in this study seem to develop along three lines: (1) Prevention: prevent that natives and established citizens (including migrants) are confronted with the influx of intra-European mobile workers in a negative manner. This implies providing for an adequate (flexible) infrastructure of housing, education and health care. This can help prevent unwelcome effects of intra-European movement such as overcrowded neighbourhoods, houses and schools, homelessness and health risks. (2) Non-discrimination and equal treatment: prevent that intra-European mobile workers are exploited and treated unequally. In this regard, local authorities do have some authority to counter and control abusive landlords, but hardly any authority to counter unfair treatment and exploitation in the domain of work, as this is a national policy domain. The same applies for policy that should prevent EU mobile workers of unfairly competing with established citizens by being much cheaper; (3) Incorporation: developing programmes targeting EU mobile workers who remain for extended periods or who repeatedly return. Since these are EU citizens, mandatory programmes cannot offer a solution here. Many cities have begun offering voluntary integration programmes, and language courses in particular have proved to be popular.

To maintain public support for intra-European movement, it is essential that these three policy lines are developed further. Local authorities cannot do so wholly on their own, but must be able to rely on the support of the state government and of the EU.

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