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Between Flows and Places: Conceptualizing the Migration-Mobility Nexus

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Abstract

This paper sets out to conceptualize the nexus between migration and mobility as the connection between two contrasting perspectives on human movement. I use the notion of a "nexus" as an analytical lens to identify connections, overlaps or contradictions between the terms "migration" and "mobility". I find that although migration and mobility are often seen as distinct phenomena, the ways of differentiating between the two ultimately lead to arbitrary attributions of the labels "migrant" and "mobile person". I argue that instead, we should see "migration" and "mobility" as categories reflecting a perspective on human movement that either normalizes sedentariness and fixed borders or movement and fluidity. In a second step, I distinguish between the perceptions of the principal actors involved in the movement: the state and the individual. Both the state and the individual can characterize a movement in terms of "flow" or in terms of "place". The migration-mobility nexus is then the node between the perspective taken by the state and that taken by the individual. Based on this, I put forward four ideal-types of aligned or non-aligned perspectives on movements across borders. The notion of aligned and non-aligned perspectives helps us to identify the core assumptions and blind spots of the place and flow perspective respectively. What is more, it can disclose instances where the intention of a given migration policy is not congruent with the migrant who is supposed to be covered by it. The notion of a migration-mobility nexus is thus a conceptual contribution to both migration and mobility studies and can serve as a basis for more applied migration policy analysis.

Keywords

Migration-mobility nexus, migration studies, new mobilities, space of flows, space of places

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1 Introduction

When is the movement of a human being across a state border called “migration”, and when is it called “mobility”? What looks like a banal distinction has profound implications for how states that receive migrants and individuals who move regard this movement. A salient case is the European Union: the movement of persons between the Member States is not labeled “migration” but “mobility” in political discourse as well as policy, thus eschewing usual “migration” statistics and policies. As this example shows, whether a person moving from A to B is a “mobile individual” or a “migrant” is not an empirical question but one of perception and categorization. Attempts to tackle the complex interaction between migration and mobility have gained traction (Babar, Ewers, and Khattab 2018; Gianni 2017; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Kalir 2013), and the notion of a migration-mobility nexus is at the heart of the Swiss National Center for Competence in Research (NCCR) in the framework of which this paper is written (D’Amato, Wanner, and Steiner 2018). Still, a tangible conceptualization of this nexus is lacking.

A “nexus”, in its basic form, refers to a connection between two phenomena – in our case, migration and mobility. The notion of nexus can serve as an analytical lens, focusing our attention on the question of how actors define migration and mobility and where the notions meet, overlap or contradict each other.[1] Among the most common differentiations in the scholarly literature on migration and mobility are distinctions based on time, (national) border crossing and social hierarchies between privileged “mobile” persons and unwanted migrants. As I will argue, none of these differentiations offer a satisfactory distinction between migration and mobility. This is the starting point to develop a simplified conceptual framework that defines and delineates migration and mobility as phenomena captured by two contrasting perspectives on human movement. The first perspective refers to movement from the point of view of fixed territories, or “place”, while the second perspective does so from the point of view of mobility itself, referred to as “flow”. The notions of “flow” and “place” draw on a distinction in geography and the social sciences literature more broadly between “spaces of flows” and “spaces of places” (Blatter 2004; Castells 2004) or “sedentarist metaphysics” and “nomadic metaphysics” (Cresswell 2006). I define the place perspective and the flow perspective respectively as approaches that either normalize rootedness, sedentariness and a view of the world as organized in mutually exclusive national containers or movement, mobility, and fluidity in an interconnected world. Further, I assume that the two main actors involved in human movement across a state border include the individual who is moving and the state that relates to this movement by regulating it and by defining and guaranteeing the rights and obligations of those within the state’s territory. Both the state and the individual can characterize a movement in terms of “flow” – in which case it is characterized as mobility. Or they can both refer to a movement in terms of “place” – in which case it is characterized as migration. Based on these distinctions, I put forward four ideal-types of aligned or non-aligned perspectives on movements across borders which combine and systematize the characterization of human cross-border movement by the state and the individual.

This conceptualization helps us, firstly, to identify the core assumptions and blind spots that are inherent in both perspectives. The combination of the state view on movement with an individual’s

[1] Thus, this paper connects with ongoing discussions within the NCCR, where the nexus is conceived as an analytical lens that focuses on the interplay between the categories of migration and mobility (nccr – on the move 2019).

own perception can then disclose the second type of blind spot, where the intention of a given migration policy is not congruent with the migrant who is supposed to be covered by it. This links up with efforts to seriously take into account the agency of migrants, not only in studies on migration itself, but also in migration policy research (Castles 2004; Lutz, Kaufmann, and Stünzi 2019).

2 State of the Art

2.1 Distinguishing Migration and Mobility

The conceptions underlying definitions of "migration" and "mobility" can most clearly be identified when looking at how the notions of migration and mobility are (made) distinct, that is, defined *against each other*. Among the most common differentiations in academic literature as well as policy discourse are: (1) along a time dimension – after a certain length of stay, someone is no longer mobile and becomes a migrant; (2) a distinction between "internal" movements and those crossing a state border; and (3) along a differentiation between "privileged mobile persons" and "unwanted migrants", a differentiation that is both used as a political discourse strategy (e.g. by the EU) and from a critical perspective (Faist 2013; Spijkerboer 2018).

The distinctions along a time dimension and the crossing of a nation-state border are (often implicitly) part of most accounts in migration studies. The bulk of scholarly literature tends to take for granted that at least two elements are needed to consider that a human movement constitutes migration. The first element is the departure from the previous state of residence and entrance to another state, and the second is "a time dimension – decided by convention (one year in the statistics) – after which [migrants] can be considered to have moved residency" (Favell 2008, 269). The "time dimension" and the presumption of change of residence imply that permanency or at least non-temporariness of a stay is needed for it to be conceived as "migration". Consequently, "temporary movements" are deemed as "mobility". The meaning of "temporary" is, however, not straightforward, and one can only assess objectively ex-post whether a movement across a border is indeed temporary (whatever the time threshold applied) (Bauböck 2011, 670). Some "temporary mobile persons" might thus stay for several years and still not count as "migrants". Circular movements such as the entry and stay of seasonal workers or repeated short-term stays also escape a definition of migration based on time thresholds. Favell (2008, 274) illustrates the resulting blind spot of the migration definition by referring to service trade-related cross-border movement:

> *A posted service worker is no longer a temporary migrant or potential immigrant. Yet move across borders they certainly must—services nearly always require a physical movement—and it is quite possible that they might relocate and work for several years in another society under these regulations, with all the social implications this entails. The space they live in is a space carved out and largely ungoverned within the receiving society. The all-integrating nation–state has many such holes, like a giant Swiss cheese.*

Ultimately, the distinction between migration and mobility based on a time threshold thus involves arbitrary judgments along a continuum between very short-term movements on the one hand and permanent settlement on the other (cf. DAmato, Wanner, and Steiner 2018, 6). What is more, it is hard if not impossible to identify the "nexus" between migration and mobility when we conceive of

migration and mobility as opposite ends of a continuum (i.e. a linear distinction) rather than two distinct phenomena.

A second distinction between migration and mobility is made on the basis that migration involves the crossing of a state border, while mobility does not, and indeed most scholarly work on migration is actually about international migration (King and Skeldon 2010, 1620). Quite obviously, a distinction between migration and mobility based on the mere crossing of a border would count international tourists and business travelers as migrants, while most would agree that they are not. But this supposedly "neutral" distinction between migration and mobility is problematic in at least three more ways: first, because it disregards movements within a state as irrelevant for migration studies, although they might be equally significant for answering research questions related to human movement (Kalir 2013; King and Skeldon 2010).

Second, the focus on state borders is a direct consequence of the methodological nationalism inherent in many if not most accounts of international migration (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). The "assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 302) makes us see the earth as a space of clearly separated territories defined by national borders. The nation-state thus functions as the central category and starting point for determining what is migration and what is not, and makes migration a notable and exceptional phenomenon in the first place, since without state borders, we would not speak about (international) migration (Zolberg 1981, 64); see also (Dahinden 2016, 2208; Lavenex 2018, 1). Somewhat paradoxically then, "[t]he notion of 'migration' highlights the capacity of a nation to define who belongs to the state and who does not" (D'Amato, Wanner, and Steiner 2018, 2). The focus on state control over cross-border flows is omnipresent in at least the political science accounts of international migration. However, at the same time scholars have acknowledged for some time that the economic structures of nation-states have become increasingly interdependent, leading to a tension between open economies and closed states often referred to as the liberal paradox (Hollifield 2004). Human movement that follows the needs of an interdependent economic structure does not fit easily with the notion of an all-controlling state and is often disregarded. However, movements where the state does not assume the role of the guardian of the nation's territory but instead encourages mobility do exist in many forms (Spijkerboer 2018, 454), most prominently with the EU free movement and border control-free regions such as the Schengen area.

This leads us to the third differentiation along a social hierarchy between "mobile persons" and "migrants" – i.e. those whose movement is "desired" or considered "useful" are not labeled "migrants" while "unwanted" ones are (Faist 2013; Sandoz 2019, 19; Spijkerboer 2018, 453). This way of distinguishing can be found both as a political discourse strategy and in critical accounts highlighting the different treatment of those who are considered to be "migrants" vs. those whose mobility is desired. For the latter, Faist gives the example of "on the one hand, those often called labour migrants, including those with regular and irregular legal status, and, on the other hand, the so-called highly skilled […] who venture abroad" (Faist 2013, 1642). Similarly, Gianni differentiates between immigrants who settle in the country of destination and "highly mobile individuals, such as highly skilled migrants, global jet-setters, global individuals of high social class, or diplomats [who] make mobility their lifestyle and are less in need of integrating themselves into their host environment" (Gianni 2017, 214). In both accounts, "mobility" seems to be equated with high skills, frequent movement and no need for belonging or integration in the

place of destination.[2] The use of "mobility" vs. "migration" as a discursive political strategy is most prominently found in the EU: while cross-border movement of EU nationals, also for long periods of time, is labeled "mobility", the term "migration" applies instead to the movement of third-country nationals only. We can find a similar discursive distinction in free trade agreements, which allow for binding rules on the admission of some categories of labor migrants but avoid the term "migration" and use "terms of mobility or, even more abstractly, 'Mode 4'" (Lavenex 2006, 52). However, such a distinction between "desired" mobility and "unwanted" migration, while being useful to identify and critically analyze attributions of both terms, is not fruitful for a conceptualization of the migration-mobility nexus. Ultimately, the distinction rests as fuzzily as the two other ones: "desired" movers are not exclusively labeled "mobile" when we consider the literature and policy discourse on highly skilled, or highly paid, immigrants. On the opposite extreme of "unwanted migration" we have states actively inviting "investor citizens" who are given residency and sometimes full citizenship rights in exchange for a financial investment (Džankić 2019). On the other hand, an "elite-focused" view on mobility fails to account for other forms of "highly mobile individuals", like low-paid temporary or seasonal migrant workers (Crettaz and Dahinden 2019; Gogia 2006). Mobile persons can be just as unwanted as migrants, and indeed this is often the reason for denying groups of persons the status of "immigrants" and only letting them enter as "seasonal workers", thus imposing mobility.

To conclude, none of the above differentiations are in and of themselves sufficient to capture the phenomena of migration and mobility, nor do they propose a clear interpretative scheme for distinguishing between them. In the next section, I, therefore, propose a conceptual scheme that integrates the differentiations into an overarching framework based on two fundamentally different perspectives on the world and movements within it.

2.2 Perspectives of Place and Flow

I propose to conceptualize "migration" and "mobility" as two fundamentally different perspectives on human movement, the perspective of place and the perspective of flows. Manuel Castells coined the notions of "place" and "flow" and conceptualized the "space of places" and the "space of flows" as different organizing principles of society. Networks and connections characterize the space of flows, which is independent from territory, while the space of places depends on the existence of "places" in a territorial or local sense (Castells 1996, 412–13; Haddad 2003). As Castells (1996s, 423) states, "A place is a locale whose form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity". Spaces of place and spaces of flows co-exist as two forms of spatial organization: While the "space of flows links up […] separate locations in an interactive network, […] The space of places organizes experience and activity around the confines of locality" (Castells 2004, 85). Castells associates the space of flows with the "spatial organization of the dominant, managerial elites" (Castells 1996b, 415). While maintaining that "the overwhelming majority of people, in advanced and traditional societies alike, live in places, and so they perceive their spaces as place-based" (Castells 1996b, 423), "function and power in our societies are organized in the space of flows" (Castells 1996b, 428).

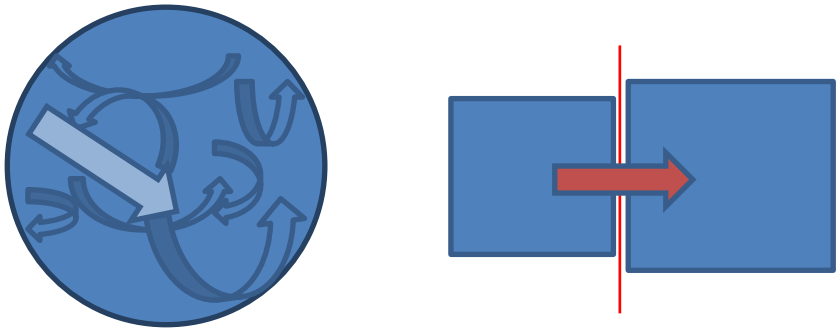
[2] In a similar fashion, critical accounts of the differentiation between "expats" and "immigrants" address the racialized notion of those terms (Koutonin 2015).

This differentiation resonates with Tim Cresswell's critical geographic approach, which identifies two fundamentally different perspectives on the world and the movements occurring within it: the "sedentarist metaphysics" [cf. also (Malkki 2004)] and the "nomadic metaphysics":

> *The first sees mobility through the lens of place, rootedness, spatial order, and belonging. Mobility, in this formulation, is seen as morally and ideologically suspect, a by-product of a world arranged through place and spatial order. The second puts mobility first, has little time for notions of attachment to place, and revels in notions of flow, flux, and dynamism. Place is portrayed as stuck in the past, overly confining, and possibly reactionary. (Cresswell 2006, 26)*

As with the "space of places" and the "space of flows", the perspectives thus differ in the respective emphasis they put on either "fixed, bounded, and rooted conceptions of culture and identity" (Cresswell 2006, 30) produced by the "desire to divide up the world into clearly bounded territorial units" (Cresswell 2006, 29), or on flows and connections. What is different from Castells' notion of flows and places is that the "metaphysics" are not co-existing forms of spatial organization but fundamentally different worldviews which take for granted either a place-based world and "produce discourse and practice that treats mobility and displacement as pathological" (Cresswell 2006, 30) or, on the contrary, normalize movement and mobility.

Figure 1: The "flow" perspective and the "place" perspective (own illustration)



I aim to combine the notion of a "space of places" and a "space of flows" as well as sedentarist and nomadic metaphysics to make them productive for a more comprehensive, clearly differentiated understanding of migration and mobility. Doing so requires relying on Castells because I use "place" and "flow" to describe two perspectives on the movement of persons: one in which movement is something that happens between two separate, geographically confined spaces and another in which movement happens in a "space of flows". Drawing upon Creswell's account of two worldviews, I describe the normative basis of the two perspectives: from the "migration", or place perspective, movement from one place to another happens against a norm of sedentariness,[3] whereas from the "mobility" or flow perspective, movement happens in the context of a general norm of mobility, not only of humans but of ideas, goods, and capital, among others. Whichever perspective is taken on a specific form of human movement determines whether this movement is defined as migration or as mobility. Note that these perspectives are meant to be heuristic tools rather than observable realities.

[3] "Norm" is used here as both a descriptive and as a prescriptive term: from a place perspective, sedentariness is the norm as the dominant behaviour of behaviour of most persons, and it is the norm in that it is seen as a desirable behaviour, too.

The place perspective roughly corresponds to the classical (now often criticized) approach in migration studies in which migration is seen as a one-off, long-term phenomenon. It reflects the "sedentary bias" in migration studies and in social sciences more broadly (Dahinden 2016; Sheller and Urry 2006). In this perspective, movement is seen through the lens of "rootedness, spatial order, and belonging" (Cresswell 2006, 26). As a consequence, "migration was and remains publicly debated around the concepts of integration or assimilation" (D'Amato, Wanner, and Steiner 2018, 2). Movement is always directed towards a "place". The term "migration" itself implies that movement is place-oriented, being composed of "*e*migration" – the move away from a place – and "*im*migration" – the move towards a place. Fixed boundaries in a "space of places" imply that persons either belong to a place or they do not – temporalities and the ensuing ambiguity do not fit well with a place perspective, which emphasizes state control over movement, both physically and conceptually as the ability to control who *should* be part of a place.

The flow perspective, on the other hand, is a lens which has become prominent with the emergence of the new mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry 2006). It puts mobility at the center of interest, highlighting "the dimensions of circularity and movement as constitutive elements of human societies" (D'Amato, Wanner, and Steiner 2018, 3). It sees human movement across borders "within the context of various forms of movement of people in space – at first independently from nation states" (Dahinden 2016, 2215). From a flow perspective, human movement is not directed towards a new "place", but is either a goal in itself or connected to other flows, such as those of goods, services, knowledge, etc. It is shaped by connections, opportunities, and constraints rather than by the place of destination. The role of borders and state regulation of movement is also reconceptualized: rather than being a tool for control, borders and regulations are either irrelevant or, if they have to be taken into account, are perceived as an impediment to the free flow of people, goods or capital.

Each of the two perspectives entails limitations. They stipulate different types of movement and different attachment to place, and in so doing fail to take into account the view of the other perspective. Taking a place perspective entails a disregard for short-term or frequent movement, for movements that are connected to flows of goods or services and for connections to places other than the destination. On the other hand, a flow perspective overlooks the importance of territorially defined places, desires for belonging and the control and regulation of movement (Babar, Ewers, and Khattab 2018, 1557). By way of example, "literature on highly skilled migrants has often associated high levels of skills and human capital with increased mobility" (Babar, Ewers, and Khattab 2018, 1554). This then seems to preclude the possibility for highly skilled migrants to settle in the country of destination long-term and develop a sense of belonging to it (Favell, Feldblum, and Smith 2006, 18). By neglecting the aspect of regulation, the flow perspective cannot account for inequalities in the conditions of moving and staying. Yet "legal status, as well as global racializing categories, can make a world of difference in terms of the ease of travel, the repercussions of trying to move, and whether or not the traveler gains or loses status from being from elsewhere" (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013, 188).

Normalizing either sedentariness or mobility thus leads to a selective understanding of the phenomenon studied, the research questions related to it, and the importance of regulation. What is more, the main actors involved in a cross-border movement may not always agree on whether a person's move is geared to a new place of stay, or whether it is attached to a different and more

temporary purpose. Therefore, in order to understand how migration and mobility intersect it is crucial to bring in and distinguish the perspectives of the individual who is moving and of the state who regulates this movement. As I argue in the next section, the individual's and the state's approaches may not always be aligned, and it is in these constellations that the migration-mobility nexus becomes most apparent.

3 The Migration-Mobility Nexus: Four Intersecting Perspectives on Human Cross-Border Movement

In our conceptualization, the state stands for the level at which the movement and stay of individuals are regulated. Two dimensions define the relationship between the state and the individual: the rules and regulations on the movement and stay (e.g. conditions for entry, length or legitimate purpose of stay) and the (human) rights obligations of the state towards the individual. Both the regulation of entry and stay and the rights granted to an individual are an expression of a certain (place or flow) perspective on that specific movement. From a place perspective, the state's main role is to control access to the national "container" and to regulate the attachment to a place through rights and obligations. The underlying idea is that only those who are assigned to a specific place can be bearers of the rights and obligations of that place. The state adopts a place perspective on a certain movement when its regulations stipulate a long-term stay with gradually increasing, ultimately full-encompassing rights and request the individual to "integrate" in the host society.

3.1 Perspectives of the State and the Individual

From a flow perspective, on the other hand, movements of ideas, capital, goods, services, and people are taken as a given. The role of the state then is to manage the movement of people so it contributes to other goals, such as the need to fill labor shortages, to foster innovation, to promote tourism, to facilitate cultural exchange, etc. Examples, where the state adopts such a flow perspective in regulating cross-border movement are manifold, from seasonal workers programs to intra-corporate transferees to academic researchers. A somewhat extreme example are the Gulf states, where "[m]ore than merely a temporary supplement for the local knowledge base, the goal […] is to create the ultimate urban-neoliberal dream: permanent, self-sustaining global hubs for talent which are constantly made and remade as they attract new flows of knowledge and expel those which are no longer contributing to urban competitiveness" and where migrants are not given "the possibility of long-term integration and citizenship" (Babar, Ewers, and Khattab 2018, 1554). Even in less extreme cases, the state of destination as a regulator is assumed to grant less encompassing rights, since the movement and stay are seen as instrumental and not aimed at permanent settlement.

The previous discussion shows that the place and the flow perspective manifest themselves at two different *loci operandi* of migration governance (Helbling et al. 2017, 85): they have implications both for the regulation of entry, i.e. for policies applying at the state border, and for the regulation of stay. In a place perspective, the state has the two-sided task of, on the one hand, ensuring strict control of the borders to preserve the "place" that the state represents, and on the other hand, fostering settlement and belonging once migrants have crossed the border. From a flow perspective, migration governance materializes almost exclusively at the border, with the goal of enabling frictionless flows of goods, people, and ideas.

The individual who moves is subject to the rules imposed by the state and bearer of certain rights. Above all, however, she or he is the agent and subject of the movement in question. As such, an individual on the move has subjective conceptions on his or her movement across a border and a personal notion of what this entails. These understandings can also reflect either a place or a flow perspective on the movement, which may or may not be in line with the state's regulatory approach to that movement. For the individual who crosses a border, adopting a place perspective implies that the movement is a way to get to another country and establish new roots there. For individuals who approach cross border movement from a flow perspective, a movement to and stay in another place is not driven by the intention to "belong" to this new place. The place of destination may be "just another work place" (Kalir 2013, 324) or travel destination (Kesselring, 2006); i.e. notions of belonging are not tied to places but constructed around relationships, objects or memories (Nowicka 2007). The movement is not explained by a specific location, but by the choice between different social or economic opportunities, by networks, or by connections to other places, people or ideas.

From the state perspective, but even more so in the view of an individual, the separation of a place and a flow perspective is probably never clear-cut in reality. The identification with the place of destination and concepts of belonging or "home" are "multiple, hybrid and dynamic" (Ralph and Staeheli 2011, 522), as the transnationalism literature points out. Yet, the identification of these ideal-typical perspectives allows us to specify where the migration and the mobility perspectives cross each other, and thus to define the migration-mobility nexus.

3.2 Circumscribing the Migration-Mobility Nexus

Having identified two perspectives on movement and argued for the need to take into account both the state and the individual perspective, I now combine the perspectives of both actors and specify how migration and mobility are "nexed". The fourfold table below captures the four constellations of individual and state perspectives. These four constellations are meant to be ideal-typical representations. Thus, they are hypothetical constructions representing "pure" cases (Weinert 1996, 74) which do not necessarily correspond to or capture all empirically observable constellations. Rather, they can be a heuristic tool for better understanding the use of the concepts of migration and mobility by individuals and states alike and for identifying when they meet, overlap or contradict each other.

Table 1: Four constellations of individual and state perspectives (own illustration)

		State	
		Place	**Flow**
Individual	**Place**	**Aligned perspectives**: host state fosters long-term inclusion through rights, individual seeks settlement and belonging.	**Perspectives not aligned**: host state fosters short-term stay and limits access to rights, individual seeks settlement and belonging
	Flow	**Perspectives not aligned**: host state fosters long-term inclusion through rights, individual seeks temporary stay or maintains ties abroad	**Aligned perspectives**: host state fosters short-term stay and limits access to rights, individual seeks temporary stay or maintains ties abroad

The upper left and the lower right box are the cases when the perspective of the state and the individual align. Both actors then conceive of the specific movement and stay in a place either in terms of flow or of place. This is not to say that these types of movements are without conflict or problematic regulations. Rather, it shows that both involved actors approach the movement with a similar lens, emphasizing either questions of belonging and rights or of mobility and more instrumental and temporary stay.

In the upper left constellation, the state emphasizes place and belonging, and thus applies policies with a view to regulate long-term stay, requiring or supporting "integration" of migrants into that place and ultimately regulating naturalization. The individual equally envisages a long-term stay as well as integration into the host society. The mobility needed to do the initial move is short-lived and loses its importance upon arrival. In the lower right box are movements and stays at which both the state and the individual look from a flow perspective. Here, notions of "hypermobile individuals" come to mind, but this could also apply to other, less privileged mobile individuals. Examples could be seasonal workers, intra-corporate transferees, diplomats, researchers or travelers, to name just a few. Here, the distinguishing characteristic of those on the move is that they do not intend to belong to the "place" to which they come and in which they might stay for some time – irrespective of how privileged or comfortable they are in their movement and stay. Notions of belonging or "integration" are irrelevant, instead, their mobility itself is a form of identity and belonging.

The two other boxes are instances where the perspectives of the state and the individual clash with one another and hence where their blind spots become apparent. Examples for the upper right box, where the state takes a flow perspective while the individual seeks belonging, include persons with temporarily limited residence permits whose desire to turn into long-term foreign residents is obstructed by the host state authorities and former seasonal workers or short-term visa holders-cum-irregular migrants. They have entered a country based on regulations and policies coming from a flow perspective, but intend to stay in the place where they moved to and to create an existence based on their belonging to that place. Their existence in this place is especially precarious since the state does not recognize them as long-term inhabitants and thus does not grant them the rights and benefits attached to permanent residency.

The lower left box refers to movements that individuals regard from a flow perspective, while the state regards them from a place perspective, emphasizing stasis and not mobility. This applies to long-term immigrants who retain attachment to their place of origin or other places, and for whom it is difficult to maintain those ties or a "mobile life" in general because the state's regulation inhibits circular movement or requires loyalty to the place of stay, e.g. through integration requirements or disallowing dual citizenship. A similar discrepancy in perspectives can exist with highly skilled and highly mobile migrants who a state might want to attract and retain with a long-term perspective but who do not wish to settle and might end up moving on to a more attractive destination.

This concept of aligned and non-aligned perspectives is not a normative concept, but a descriptive one. Identifying the lens from which a movement is categorized can help explain why it is "defining" for some and "irrelevant" for others. Combining the perspectives of flow and place and taking into account both state and individual, then, makes explicit *who* conceives of movement this way. Thus, I avoid conflating "objective" notions of what migration and mobility are with

categorizations used by policymakers or individuals. The “blind spots” of an emphasis on either migration or mobility become apparent when juxtaposing the rationale underlying a certain policy with the view of an individual concerned by it. The conceptualization can thus be a helpful tool to analyze policy measures since the clash between the individual’s and the state’s perspective on movement is often at the heart of what is described as a “policy failure”. For example, policies that aim at ensuring the closeness of a geographically defined place can be confronted with the “mobility norm” of individuals crossing borders on a regular basis. This visible clash can then lead to learning effects and further interactions between a flow and a place logic, be it by even stronger enforcement of border control or by the adoption of policies to support circular movements. Similarly, the attachment to the place of destination which some of the “guest workers” in Western European countries have developed despite their stay always being instrumental and temporary from the state’s point of view has ultimately led to the adoption of a “place perspective”, leading to integration policies and the recognition of their belonging. Equally, policies can be contradictory in and of themselves and consist of elements testifying to a flow and a place perspective simultaneously. Whether the flow perspective or the place perspective becomes the overarching view guiding public policy or political discourse often depends on which state function dominates in a specific case. The complexity certainly increases even more when the so far unitary notion of “the state” is disentangled into different state functions and interests within governments. Indeed, the liberal paradox described above as a tension between open economies and closed states could be described as a clash of the place and the flow perspective *within* states, and the ensuing political strategies of states as an attempt to find a balance between them.

4 Conclusions

This paper has developed a conceptualization of the migration-mobility nexus as the nexus between the state’s and the individual’s view on the cross border movement of individuals, which can both come from what I have called a “flow perspective” or a “place perspective”. In a place perspective, migration is an “anomaly” which needs to be controlled, whereas, from a flow perspective, the movement of humans is just as “normal” as is the movement of capital, goods, services, and ideas. The migration-mobility nexus becomes apparent when crossing the perspectives on “place” and “flow” by the regulating state and by the moving individual. When the two perspectives overlap we tend to speak of either “migration” or “mobility”, but the more problematic cases emerge when the state and the individual take different views.

This being said, this conceptualization is a first sketch rather than a fully-fledged conceptual approach, and several questions and claims remain for further refinement. Firstly, it is not an explanatory framework that can account for causal relations, but rather an analytical approach that enables us to deepen understanding of “migration” and “mobility” than already existing concepts and approaches can provide. Still, the question as to when and why the state and the individual look at a specific form of movement from which of the two perspectives needs further refinement, as does the conceptualization of the state in this account. So far, this initial sketch does not fully take into account competing perspectives within states or individuals nor changes in perspective over time. Secondly, the focus on the state of destination and the individual on the move certainly disregards many important actors involved in movement, such as the state of origin and the host society as well as the meso-level actors, such as networks or sub-national state entities. I hold that this is a necessary simplification if we want to focus on the meaning of migration and mobility with

a focus on migration policy, which is largely dominated by the destination state at the national level. For a wider application of the conceptualization, though, it might be useful to look at more actors and levels as well. Thirdly, the conceptualization does not take into account the fact that a "place" logic might be applied to a movement and stay in very different ways – for example, while a state can demand "integration" from a migrant, this does not mean it is always open for the actual and equal belonging of migrants in "its place". A further refinement of the relation between flow and place, on the one hand, and rights for individuals on the move, on the other hand, would surely be desirable, as would a more detailed account of the relation between our conceptualization and the regulation of cross border movement. Yet our differentiation between movement in terms of "place" or "flow" and between the perspective of the state and the individual offers a systematization of the migration-mobility nexus that can be refined and studied empirically in further research.

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