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Migration, security and development: Reflections on integrating migration into border studies

Thanh-Dam Truong

Abstract—Discerning the interfaces between migration studies and border studies in the globalizing process is necessary for interdisciplinary cooperation to achieve a productive integration of common concerns. Seeing the transformations of migration and of borders as a twin process would be helpful in building a unified approach to cross-border movements, their plural forms and contextual significance for border regions—both at the frontier as well as inside a society. A unified approach can help shed more light on the limitations of current practices of governance of cross-border movements. Processes of identities constructions and diverse experiences of human security among people on the move require new responses to ensure that human-centred values are honoured.

Introduction

Migration studies and border studies may be seen as twin fields. They have emerged from the context of Post-World War II reconstruction and post-colonial statecraft. Though they share the same concerns about the movements of people across borders and the protection of sovereignty, their initial foci of research differed but are increasingly becoming overlapping. Originally conceived as a subject of demography, migration research was concerned with the assessment of the geographical movements of the human population within a country in statistical terms and identifying the key factors underpinning their patterns (Ravenstein, 1885). Major societal disruptions during the World Wars and the decolonization process prompted mass migration across borders in different parts of the world under disorderly conditions. New research foci were added to help reduce human suffering by way of designing normative frameworks and distinctive institutional
arrangements for movements specified according to purposes considered as legitimate—immigration, labor, asylum-seeking, family reunification.

By contrast, with the protection of territorial sovereignty and relations between nation-states as the main concern, the focus of border research was mainly on practices and norms of regulating cross-border activities. Border studies thus begun with the study of cross-border interactions (inter-group and inter-state) for the control of disorderly flows. Where the delimitation and demarcation of territorial boundaries lacked the congruence between political and ethnic boundaries, as often is the case of post-colonial states, the interest of border research has been in the problems faced by the exercise of maintaining post-independence sovereignty. Tension associated with the formation of the post-colonial state can turn border areas into zones of intense surveillance, and some sections of a national frontier into a space where the notions of “nation”, “state” and “identities” meet, are fought out, or are negotiated. Regular and daily cross-border movements of people belonging to communities that are ethnically and culturally cohesive but artificially divided by nationality can produce different systems of crossing for survival that may not necessarily cohere with regulative arrangements (Castles et al. 2014).

In the last decades, the state-centric framework has been increasingly undermined by advances of globalization that generated an increasingly complex social world of multi-directional cross-border movements involving multiple actors and new technologies. These movements have shaped, and are continuing to shape, the politics of migration and border control. In consequence, just as new forms of culture and mapping of migrant communities for spatial control within a country have emerged, so too new measures to externalize border control to pre-empt illegal entry have reshaped border surveillance. New types of borderlands characterized by legal ambiguity and lawlessness have emerged and are becoming major sites of political and spatial tension along the lines of gender, sexual identity and ethnicity. Space when fixed by borders turns an abstract concept into a concrete entity as lived and as a social place, comprehensible through rules and regulations (Kolossov 2005; Andrijasevic 2010; Zuckerwise 2012). Social boundaries, new and old, must now be analytically treated as objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to
and unequal distribution of resources (both material and non-material) and social opportunities in particular places (Brettel and Holffried 2000; Lamont and Molnar 2002). The purpose of this paper is to offer some reflections on the interfaces between migration studies and border studies and suggest some directions for inter-disciplinary cooperation between the two fields for a more productive integration of common concerns.

In a rapidly globalizing world, seeing the transformations of migration and of borders as a twin process could be helpful in building a unified approach to cross-border movements, with their plural forms and contextual significance for border regions, both at the frontier as well as inside a society. A unified approach can help shed more light on the limitations of practices of governance of cross-border movements. Where the meanings of “liberty”, “security” and “development” are selectively applied, privileging some groups and marginalizing others, the formation of plural mechanisms of identity construction of people on the move for their personal security becomes unavoidable both at the frontier as well as inside a society through the formation of spatially gated communities. In the context of future multi-directional trade agreements within Asia (e.g., ASEAN, ASEAN + 3, Trans-Pacific Partnership) and elsewhere, the dynamics of trade and migration will likely generate new geopolitical boundaries and shape trends in cross-border movements of capital and labor accordingly. In this respect, policy frameworks that continue to disjoint trade and migration, or see migration only in terms of trade in services, will likely be unable to address the socially damaging proliferation of the phenomenon of human trafficking. These frameworks have resulted from incremental and cumulative changes in migration practices specific to regional processes. In some specific cases, these changes may also affect climate change and environmental erosion, not just the mobility of capital and labor. A human-centered approach to migration is direly needed to find appropriate responses to processes of identity construction of people on the move, with experiences of human security that can span across different scales and locations. A comprehensive understanding of the complex issues concerning borders and human migration can help guide the policy process in addressing the injustice embedded in the creation of flexible border regimes for some groups, and harsher ones for others.
Migration studies and border studies: contexts, concepts and methodologies

Key milestones in migration studies

Classical migration studies approached people's spatial movements as a demographic phenomenon and used mainly quantitative data compiled by census and surveys to explain them in terms of labor, income and opportunity external to the places of origin (Daugherty and Kammeyer 1995; Bodvarsson and Van den Berg 2009). Little attention was given either to the migrants as embodied and socialized human subjects, or to the symbolic relations embedded in societies capable of shaping the identities and roles of persons as well as social relationships. Where there exists disaggregated data on the movements of men and women, gender-differentiated patterns of movements may be identified. However, the question of gender-based agency in migration had long been an enigma until Boserup's intervention (1970). By combining survey methods with interviews, she showed women's social position in processes of demographic transition and economic development in Southern Africa. Women appeared in her work both as actors in migration as well as bearers of the consequences of male migration.

Migration research since then has shifted from the classical paradigm embedded in demography and economics to alternatives using multiple disciplines. Brettel and Hollified's (2000) survey of the literature offered important insights as follows. Neo-classical economic theory uses demographic data and social surveys plus examinations of macro aspects of the labor market and micro labor conditions to assess the costs and benefits of migration and explain the phenomenon as a result of wage differentials. Looking mainly at patterns of migration within the national borders of a country, it generally emphasizes rational choice and cost-benefit analysis as the motivation for migration, (Harris and Todaro 1970). Neo-liberal economic theory looks at the impact of migration in both sending and receiving areas countries and analyzes migration as risk diversification when seen from the perspective of the household. Thus, from an individual decision-making perspective, we now see the household as a unit of analysis. This paved the way for later frameworks that examine intra-household
relations, their dynamics in resource allocation, and the significance for individual household members (Massey et al. 1993).

In recent years frameworks of migration studies have brought the interpretation of migration closer to the people and role of governing institutions, (e.g., household/family, work place, market and state practices), thereby enabling the adoption of plural methodologies (those derived from social anthropology, political sciences, critical sociology and ethnography) to produce perspectives that can accommodate diversity in behavior, decision-making, and impact on individuals as well as the significant structures that affect migrants’ lives and social relationships (De Jong and Gardner 2013). Defined as a time- and space-bound phenomenon, the patterns of migration are seen as outcomes of interactions between institutions and collective actors (e.g., households, labor markets, recruitment and employment agencies, migrants’ organizations). This paved the way for the development of migration research from the perspective of social capital which takes serious account of the role of communities, social differentiation along the lines of social identities (gender, age, ethnicity), and trans-local and transnational networks and institutions in enabling as well as constraining migrant agency (Glick-Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc 1995; Zontini 2010). Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) demonstrated the “social embeddedness” of migration chains, and directed researchers to explore how migration is mediated through local structures of power and networks at both the sending and receiving ends. The “circular and cumulative” characteristics of these chains have been noted, especially their degree of dependency on the paths laid down by earlier migrants (Massey et al. 1998). Furthermore, interactions between policy norms and the agency of migrants can change public opinion and so influence and alter the practices of states in migration management (Maas and Truong 2011; Rajan and Varghese 2010).

In contrast to the neo-classical and neo-liberal approaches, the dual labor market theory (Piore 1979) and the world-system theory (Cohen 1987) emphasizes the role of the state in linking labor market conditions in sending and receiving countries and areas. They show how structural and sector-specific demands in advanced market economies led to the involvement of the state on both ends in steering the process of labor import feeding niche markets of labor migration. These approaches are relevant beyond their initial sites of research of indus-
trialized countries (often termed as “advanced economies”). In fact, the link between patterns of migration, industrializing processes, and the role of the state stands out as significant as data on the phenomenon of labor migration and niche markets have shown in different regions of the world (e.g., the Middle East, East and Southeast Asia, Southern Africa, the Russian Federation).

Under intensified economic globalization, borders between categories of workers—as lines of legal and administrative distinction—become more pronounced, as expressed by the terms of WTO GATS-Mode 4. Such terms only acknowledge skills related to the corporate sector, and those of independent consultants as part of the export of services, to be treated as being distinct from labor migration. State endorsement of this selectivity means that migrant workers in the low-skill range who are recruited by unscrupulous employment agencies form over time an indentured segment of the global labor force (Kuptsch 2006). With passports being kept by their employers, these workers are tied to their work place, legally and socially—further restricting their spatial mobility. New types of social borders set them apart from the local population, tying identities to spatiality (Silvey 2006). This is the case even among workers who go through a formal bilateral agreement between two countries. It is not uncommon to find some who run away attempting to find less restrictive employment options (Tadian and Bergh 2013).

In sum, interdisciplinary cooperation has helped to overcome two fundamental biases in migration research methodology, namely methodological nationalism (using the national state as a unit of analysis, and conflating nation, ethnicity, and state) and sedentary bias (viewing migration as a “problem” rather than an integral part of social transformation) (Castles et al. 2014). Acknowledging the multifaceted and multi-levelled dynamics of cross-border movements operating both locally and trans-locally means also endorsing the view that the contemporary realities of cross-border migration are highly complex and no single paradigm will be able to provide satisfactory explanations. Viewing such movements as being shaped by on-going geopolitical processes of (re)formation of regions would stimulate cooperation between and across the disciplines to obtain deeper insights on the geopolitical as well as socio-demographic aspects, especially those triggering large-scale movements, the re-definition of lines and boundaries
of territorial sovereignty, as well as social distinction between groups.

**Border studies, sovereignty and securitization**

Concerned with the defense of territorial sovereignty as well as the distinctive lines between legal, political and administrative accountability, especially those related to resources management, border studies has long been rooted in political geography. In the last decades, the field has become interdisciplinary, adopting new methodology and theoretical approaches to challenge the unfounded claim of a "borderless" world made by business and technology (Hagen 2013). Furthermore, though environmental pollution and diseases are indeed borderless, they are created by people and require cross-border cooperation and control to temper their effects, especially with regard to the legal, social and technical boundaries of accountability between neighboring states and beyond. The interdisciplinary approach rejects the "thin" conception of borders as merely a political line defining territorial sovereignty or an administrative line for state management and accountability. It adopts a "thick" approach to border studies by embedding the concept in social realities in which the diversification of cross-border flows of persons, goods and services prevails. This diversification generates new forms of social, economic and political relations, some of which operate trans-locally as well as transnationally. Against this setting, the "thick" approach, though inclusive in the legal, political and administrative definition, seeks to move beyond this realm by defining a social construct and an outcome of a social process of interactions occurring at different levels (international, national and local) that can take on different facets (political, social, economic) at different times and places. Much can be learned about the experience of arbitrary lines of sovereignty drawn up by colonial powers often cutting through the territory of cohesive ethnic groups (Rodrigues and Tomàs 2012), and of the disintegration of the Soviet Union which led to massive movements of people to Russia from different former republics, and the reverse, in search of a secure identity and livelihood (Heleniak 2001).

Border studies, by definition, studies the geopolitical and ideational processes that create, sustain or destroy lines of distinction. It enables the integration of many relevant aspects such as migration, cross-border trade, law and legitimacy, conflict, gender, socio-cultural change, and identity. Two new affiliated concepts have been introduced, notably
“bordering” and “borderland.” Bordering refers to the activities of social differentiation between places, peoples, and jurisdictions related to the management of resources and accountability, social interests and identities. Borderland refers to the zones of international boundaries with varying social, cultural, religious and economical aspects. It can be a space of intense circulation and exchange (e.g., of goods, services and emotions) despite the rituals of border control.

Three observations may be offered about border studies as a field: 1. it is a people-centered field that takes into account specific geopolitical formations and the role of the state in establishing and managing the lines of sovereignty; 2. it validates not just the management of circulations of goods, services and people, but also the implicated subjective positions, ideas and emotions of actors involved in this management; and 3. it directs analytical attention to the consequences of a particular understanding of a region, whether by formed agreements between states or by cross-border actors due to sheer material interests and/or a broader range of issues related to emotions, beliefs, historical affinities and so forth. Given that processes of bordering vary across space and time, the implications for understanding border security and challenges requires careful examination of the substantive material and ideational changes, the causal forces behind transformation of borders and the diverse trends in (re)formation of regions (Lacy and Van Houtum 2013).

One main facet of border studies connects this field with migration studies in the management of cross-border flows of people. Contemporary history of post-colonial borders reminds us of the danger of assuming congruence between national sovereignty, ethnicity and faith. Political contests manifest the deeper roots of conflict to be found in the creation of modern sovereign nation-state boundaries inherited from colonial rule. These often cut through communities who live on both sides of the line but share historical, cultural, ethnic and social roots. The maintenance of social ties for their socio-economic well-being by way of border crossing in the post-colonial period had been one of the initial key subjects of inquiry of African border studies (Asiwiwu 2011).

Inquiries into the plural experiences of post-colonial states in maintaining sovereignty through border policing led to the re-conceptualization of borders in broader terms. Borders are now defined as
physical spaces and social spheres (*sui generis*), characterized by inter-related regional flows of people, commerce, goods and services that are affected by the socio-economic processes taking place well within the territorial boundaries of a nation-state. With the advance of globalization, certain illegal trans-border flows (trafficking drugs, refugees and workers) have posed great challenges to border control leading to a greater emphasis on sovereignty and border security.  

While the concern for border security is universal as inscribed in international law, practices of border security do differ given historical and geopolitical contexts of (re)drawing borders as well as resources allocated for control. Variations may also stem from geographical differences (landlocked states versus coastal states, states made of a desert and mountains versus archipelagic states). Administrative cultures also play a role, especially in the case of the formation of a region as a community of states. In the case of the European Union, its enlargement was built on a system of supranational institutions and inter-governmental decisions by the member-states. Other forms of region-based community building include the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). Though they are charter-based, each has its distinctive style of diplomacy, pace and challenges of integration and border management. Other regional entities cooperate on trade only, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

This diversity warns against any attempt to homogenize the concept of border security and regional integration. One common aspect is the fact that these regional entities are built on the Westphalian framework of nation-states and they face the common challenge of managing different cross-border flows. Adherence to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, especially its supplementing Protocols—the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children—have produced mixed results, although features of a common punitive regime characterized by detention without due legal process is emerging. Unmanageable flows in some regions have
led to the adoption of exceptional practices of border control in the name of national security, involving not just border police but also an array of parastatal actors to selectively control migratory flows and label specific groups of mobile people as "undesirable" (Biswas and Nair 2009).

In some regions, these practices have stimulated parallel processes of "othering" of human beings at the societal level, which underpin the drawing of territorial boundaries based on identities and belonging and the defining of fields of access as well as the scale of transgressions (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2001). The intensity and levels of "othering" as well as the implications for the human rights and personal security of cross-border migrants may differ depending on the particularity of a region, the location of the point of entry, and the extent of extra-territorial control adopted by a given state.

Where a particular border is subject to intense policing by state and non-state actors, the link between migration and development is increasingly tilted in favor of "national security" over the personal security of migrants, legal or illegal. Not only state legal borders, but intra- and inter-group relations of power and domination can also function as barriers constraining their agency. Migrants' invisibility may not be just a logical outcome of securitization policy but can also become a strategic choice for survival within a system of oppression (Rojas-Wesner and De Vargas 2013; Zuckerwise 2012). The enduring absence of migrants' personal security can be understood as an outcome of the functioning of an identity-related web of power dynamics, whereby one negative force can feed another.

Contemporary transformations of migration as a multi-layered process in different places need to be researched in their changing geopolitical contexts. Forces that stimulate cross-border flows need to be studied together with the modes of crossing and affiliated aspects of identity formation. In this process lines and boundaries are drawn at the frontier as well as inside a country or region, creating new socio-legal and cultural places. In some places the lines of differentiation can generate forms of structural violence, reproduceable by administrative machineries governing a transnational proletariat (Gardner 2010).

By contrasting empirical realities with normative claims and asking new questions regarding whose liberty of movement and whose security matter to whom, it is possible to place the human subject at the
meeting point between migration studies and border studies and study a gamut of institutional, social, technological, and political issues related to the proliferation of borders, and the management of migratory streams (labor, refugees and asylum-seekers) and their implications on the lives of migrants. In this respect, borders remain powerful and constitute a great challenge to development processes characterized by peaceful cooperation. They are subject to multiple levels of negotiation and resolution for conflict avoidance. Thus, migration studies should be united with border studies as its twin to produce a coherent body of knowledge about cross-border flows and learn from similarities and differences in regard to the functioning of migration and border regimes in order to remove or at least temper aspects of structural violence embedded in them.

Security, migration and borders: implications for development and migrants’ human security.

Initially, the migration and development nexus was conceptualized in terms of the construct of the North-South relationship. Today, there is acceptance of the reality that migration flows are diverse and multidirectional. They involve different people acting on different motivations and moving across varied geographical and distance. Much criticism is directed at the hegemonic treatment of the North and South as binary opposites of power and privilege, and therefore unable to identify forms of structural inequality and vulnerability that cut across countries, whether defined as belonging to the geographical North or the South.

Space is much needed for empirical and theoretical reflection on, and by, those groups of migrants situated in vulnerable positions within the hierarchies of social power, in comparison to second or third generations of migrants who have acquired citizenship but may not have achieved a full sense of belonging. This is a necessary step to help correct unsubstantiated assumptions about migrants and the directions of their movements to overcome the bias inherent in the dominant discourse on migration and development. The migration and development discourse only acknowledges the significance of South-South movements, with the publication of the Human Development Report in 2009 as a trendsetter. Though the scarcity of data
and the lack of uniformity in the methods of assessment mean that no conclusion can yet be drawn on its significance in terms of statistical representation, the wealth of data obtained from qualitative methods and small surveys on South-South migration trends should not be ignored (Campillo-Carrete 2013).

Contrasting Northern and Southern realities may help to reckon with the issue of interconnectedness in a globalizing world so as to find means of cooperation to compare and respond to those practices of border control that reinforce migrants’ structural vulnerabilities in their particular manifestations and thereby reduce their impact of migrants’ personal human security. Such an exercise requires some uniform framework for which the concept of “migration and security regime” may be useful. Yet for this concept to serve migrants in vulnerable positions, ways must be found to connect migration with a human-centered framework of security. The use of regime theory should also move beyond the conventional thin definition of a “regime” in terms of inter-state coordination of policy and its impact, or a technocratic managerial approach to the governance of migration and borders. The distributive consequences of policy choices and the mechanisms of distribution should have more prominence.

For example, the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the Palermo Protocol on Human Rights (UN Convention on Organized Crime) enacted since 2000/1 have been used as instruments for diplomacy and development cooperation to pressure governments on legal reforms and law enforcement. The application of the Palermo Protocol Research in the last decade has raised much doubt about the effectiveness of a punitive regime in terms of prevention, victim protection, assistance and prosecution (Siskin and Wyler 2010). Special mention must be made of the absence of multilateral and cross-sector coordination in anti-trafficking strategies in most countries. Aspects of personal security during the post-trafficking period such as stigmatization, hostility, and aggression remain anecdotal and have not found their way into trafficking and rescue research.

A holistic approach to study the links between migration, development and security needs to move the concept of a “regime” beyond its sterile limits by recognizing the following. First, the techno-managerial approach to human rights in migration is useful only in assessing inter-governmental interaction and “measurement” of compliance to agreed
international standards, of which only the two Protocols on human rights of the UN Convention on Transnational Organized crime have been universally ratified but remain contested by some non-governmental migrants’ rights organizations (Truong 2014). The International Migrant Workers Convention has been ratified by sending countries but rejected by the major receiving countries, and thereby leaving the protection of undocumented migrant workers uncertain as states can pursue the legal principle of territorial sovereignty to deport them. Yet the presence of millions of migrant workers who are undocumented, or have an irregular status, shows that in practice control measures are either ineffective, or the sheer demands for sector-specific cheap labor are too overwhelming (e.g., in care, construction, agriculture, fisheries) for structural reasons. While market capitalist and nation state principles of organization do differ, they combine their actions in hybrid systems of migration, such as those currently being adopted in policy regimes for temporary migrant workers, triggering new types of circular movements that place migrant laborers in exploitative conditions without means of ensuring their personal security. Many of these arrangements mirror the indentured labor regimes of earlier eras (Truong et. al. 2013).

The reasons for rising trends of human insecurity in migration should be examined retrospectively. Administrative reforms since the late 1990s in Northern receiving countries with long-standing social policy have shifted the location of migration management from social security and welfare departments to judicial ones. While the state has clearly retreated from the social domain, it has enhanced its presence in the domain of policing for security both at the border and within the society. The retreat of the state from the social domain may be seen as an outcome of the neo-liberal policy of labor migration, privileging the new knowledge and service economy at the expense of other sectors, consistent with the view of a borderless world upheld by business and technology communities (Truong 2012). In many places, the process of selection of migrants—based on the merit of skills and sometimes also gender and cultural identities—has created a new type of broker supplying the required papers (medical certificates, skill qualifications, identity papers) to low-skilled migrants. This has created a migration business operating between the lines of legality and illegality (Irianto and Truong 2013).
Rather than vetting the behavior of these transnational networks of services through inter-state cooperation, nationalist attempts to safeguard security since 9/11 have strengthened the surveillance side, triggering a process of securitization of migration involving a complex mix of perceptions, logics and actors (Bourbeau 2011). The new and unknown “enemy” is no longer the “other state” perceived as being threatening, instead it is seen as the presence of inter-societal aggression (e.g., porous borders, proliferation of forms of transnationalism crime, communal violence). As participants in cross-border flows, migration and migrants have come to be framed as a “destabilizing” factor in terms of cultural identity, public order, and the national economy. These tendencies often turn borders into spaces of suspicion and maltreatment at best, punishment at worst (Aas and Bosworth 2013). Externalization of border control involves checking the legality of people’s movement before they embark, with the help of the local authorities and with air or land carriers. The measures have included visa restrictions, lengthy asylum processing, extra-territorial detention, physically preventing onward movement with maritime patrols for coastal interdiction and anti-trafficking operations.

Second, migration dynamics today are so complex that the categories of migrants (including refugees, asylum-seekers, labor migrants, trafficked persons) do not reflect the actual reality of being human while on the move. By law in many countries, a labor migrant may be severely abused but will not be given asylum unless the case can be proven as sexual exploitation. The complexity of cross-border migrations requires new perspectives that can give more meanings to norms of cooperation in the nexus of migration, security and development at many levels. While much analytical attention has been given to inter-state cooperation, limited knowledge exists on the cooperation between civil society organizations and states and their impact on migrants’ organizations operating trans-locally. Scholars who have adopted a socially-embedded approach to transnational labor migration have highlighted the role of networks that can, under certain conditions, foster cooperation or conflict. Given the contextual nature of cooperation and conflict and their geopolitical and ideational forces, comparative analysis by sector, region, and types of transnational networks would shed more light than research that focuses merely on norm compliance.
Likewise, the relations between border security and human security are equally fluid; contextual comparison could help elucidate how to reconcile conflicting interests between migration, development and security. If the focus were to be on the protection of migrants’ personal security, then the issue of mutual perceptions between migrant communities and host communities on “societal security” needs to be explored to understand the process through which some aspects of “security” becomes translated into the politics of national security. In brief, there are merits to pursuing questions such as who benefits from inter-state cooperation on migration, why and how; who bears the burdens; which border (territorial and social) matters; and whose security counts for whom and why. The evaluation of the benefits of migration for development in terms of remittances is insufficient to guide policy for it reduces the migrants to economic actors without addressing the full spectrum of the emotive and ideational aspects of being human. A human security perspective, in particular, helps to base concern for human rights in an awareness of body and mind, as well as emotional needs, and shows how global interconnections and intersecting circumstances can shape the migrants’ experiences of security in their everyday lives.

Conclusion

Mobility is a normal and necessary component of human life and is key in the processes of economics, social evolution, learning and cultural enrichment. Yet in a world structured around a nation-state system and nationalist principles of identity, mobility—at least the mobility of poor people—is treated as abnormal. Development interventions on migration often aim at improving living conditions to make the potential migrants stay in their places of origin, the homestead being assumed to be a “secure” place for people who do not have aspirations for personal growth through geographical mobility. Moving between locations, and certainly moving between nation-states, is often presumed to arise from some failing, inadequacy, or some kind of distortion in the outmigration locations (economic, cultural or otherwise). Managing the nexus between migration and development boils down to ensuring safe remittances and secure legal identities by creating expanding institutional frameworks to control
cross-border movements of people. Little attention has been given to how contemporary cross-border migration has been structured by market forces and capital-centered policy calculation, ignoring the conflict between markets and nation-states. While the former actively generates cross-border movements through development investment and activities, the latter actively tries to control people’s cross-border movements through selection. Hybrid regimes of migration draw on migrant labor while minimizing the rights granted.

In contrast to trade, short-term travel, travel as consultants or travel for corporation, international migration is yet to be included in the sphere of matters that governments are morally obligated to regulate universally, instead making each government regulate this domain as it sees fit. Such a perspective matches the conflation of migration with pathologies of crime and drug smuggling. Young people’s migration for work is likewise often presented as overwhelmingly due to the machinations of traffickers. The Westphalian perspective combines a normative nationalism—moral communities are held to exist only within borders, not across them—with an explanatory nationalism that seeks to explain and allocate responsibility for events within a country’s borders exclusively within those borders. The present-day scale of flows of messages, ideas, hopes and values, commodities and finance, of longer-term and permanent migrants and refugees, and of short-term visitors, pathogens, weapons, and technologies, has required changes in social science’s traditional choice of boundaries of nations and states as the main frame for organizing their attention (Truong and Gasper 2013).

 Persisting structural inequalities may eventually lead to sad and disruptive outcomes. In the longer run, legal exclusion but de facto admission of low-skilled workers creates in some countries an under-educated marginalized underclass. It provides a supply of cheap labor, but can foster a world of associated illegality and criminality—of ‘black money’, bribes, and marginalized people who lack qualifications—whose existence then serves in the ideological reproduction of a certain sort of system of rule (Biswas and Nair 2009). It isolates a group or groups who are deemed “other” and can be viewed as dangers: “they” must “therefore” be ruled firmly by a tough-minded national elite. The politics of securitization of borders in various parts of the world has eroded existing protection systems and promoted xenophobic senti-
ments. These have in turn encouraged ever more stringent practices of migration management where thinking is in terms of "flows of people" across borders rather than with understanding of persons having their own histories, networks, and contributions (Andrijasevic 2010). Many migrants have chosen to remain "invisible" as a strategy connected to personal security. In this respect, the concept of "invisibility" must be re-examined through different angles that are connected. First statistical invisibility, or the invisibility of certain types of migrants (gender, age, ethnicity) in the eyes of planners has led to their exclusion from policy attention and from activities for social protection. Second, institutional invisibility (the fact of having no formal status, or an unauthorized status) derived from the rigidity of tacit presumptions and institutional settings excludes some migrants from programs that might benefit them. Third, strategic invisibility can be chosen by migrants in order to evade discriminatory practices by the state or abusive behavior at inter-group level or both. Fourth, cognitive invisibility in the sense of being outside the realm of formal knowledge, and sometimes even as tacit knowledge, underlies statistical and institutional invisibility, which then motivate strategic invisibility. These forms of invisibility must be recognized as part of social fields of power, not just cognitive error. The struggles for rethinking are not just cognitive struggles; they involve the transformation of boundaries of institutions, mental frames and ethical values embedded in social structures, something that demands laborious work to find the means of protecting human security as the security of persons and their families.

Notes

1 Today with the growing use of digital technology, niche markets may well be disappearing in some high tech countries. Digital technology may enable access to labor directly, no longer requiring the mediation of third parties such as migrants organizations or recruitment agencies for jobs at the middle-range skills level, especially in regions characterized by a single market such as the EU.

2 Long-term impact of climate change is another causal force of migration, documented in the case of the Sahel drought (Findley 1994). Yet there is a prevailing assumption that climate change-related migration occurs mainly within a country or between contiguous countries, and mainly in developing countries. This debate is
more about local mitigation and adaptation, rather than anticipation of major trends of cross-border migration per se (Gomez 2013).

3 See http://www.globaldetentionproject.org/

4 Structural violence is a form of institutionalized discrimination based on hierarchical criteria (elite, ethnocentric, or class, race and gender distinctions).

5 In some areas of prolonged conflict the sheer volumes of migratory cross-border flows in search of a safe haven are too overwhelming to curtail without having to cross basic human rights protocols.

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