Onward (im)mobilities: conceptual reflections and empirical findings from lifestyle migration research and refugee studies

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Abstract

Taking the new mobility paradigm as a starting point, this article provides a broader perspective on migration processes that goes beyond decision-making processes, the journey and the arrival, and addresses onward mobilities instead. In this regard, we assume that people permanently negotiate the decision where and how to live by means of various mobility practices and the establishment of place-based belonging. In order to capture different migrant groups, we provide empirical material from two different mixed methods case studies: (1) a study on relatively affluent lifestyle migrants in coastal areas and the rural hinterland in Spain and (2) refugees, who were initially placed in rural Bavaria, Germany. We firstly aim to unravel mobility processes among lifestyle migrants and refugees after arrival in Spain or Germany. Secondly, we aim to identify how migrants' mobility strategies counteract sedentarist logics of the state. Empirical data show that migrants' onward mobilities vary at length and thus blur boundaries between residential and everyday mobility. While negotiating mobility and immobility, they develop agency and learn to decide whether, when and how to be mobile or to be fixed to places and establish strategies how to deal with territorially based logics of the state. Thus, state authorities are highly interested in regulations to identify where people reside. Apart from security issues, particularly welfare states have to find solutions how to be responsible for people in a way that goes beyond territorially based registrations. In conceptual terms, results finally provide empirical evidence for a broader understanding of migration, especially considering onward mobility and forms of desired immobility.

Zusammenfassung

Ausgehend von Erkenntnissen des *new mobility paradigm* liegt Migrationsprozessen in diesem Beitrag ein breiteres Verständnis zugrunde, das nicht nur den Entscheidungsprozess, den Weg und die Ankunft an einem Ort einbezieht, sondern auch das Weiterwandern betrachtet. In dieser Hinsicht nehmen wir an, dass Menschen die Entscheidung, wo und wie sie leben möchten, durch unterschiedliche Mobilitätspraktiken und dem Aufbau von ortsbezogenen Zugehörigkeiten permanent neu aushandeln. Um unterschiedliche Migrant*innengruppen zu berücksichtigen, stellen wir empirische Daten aus zwei unterschiedlichen Fallstudien zur Diskussion: (1) eine Studie über relativ wohlhabende Lifestyle Migrant*innen an Küstengebieten und deren ländlichem Hinterland in Spanien und (2) Geflüchtete, die zunächst in ländlichen Räumen Bayerns untergebracht wurden. Ziel des Beitrags ist es, erstens, Mobilitätsprozesse von Lifestyle Migrant*innen nach der Ankunft in Spanien und Geflüch-

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teten nach der Ankunft in Deutschland nachzuzeichnen. Zweitens soll gezeigt werden, inwiefern Mobilitäts-strategien von Migrant*innen sedentaristische Logiken des Staates konterkarieren. Empirische Daten zeigen, dass Mobilitätsmuster des Weiterwanderns hinsichtlich der Länge variieren und demnach Grenzen zwischen Wohnstandort- und Alltagsmobilität verschwimmen. Indem Migrant*innen Mobilität und Immobilität aushandeln, entwickeln sie Fähigkeiten des eigenständigen Handelns. Sie lernen zu entscheiden, ob, wann und wie sie mobil oder sesshaft sein können und lernen schließlich mit territorial basierten Logiken des Staates umzugehen. Staatliche Behörden hingegen sind aus Sicherheitsaspekten sehr daran interessiert zu erfahren, wo Menschen wohnen. Daneben müssen insbesondere Wohlfahrtsstaaten Lösungen finden, wie sie ihren Verantwortlichkeiten gegenüber Menschen gerecht werden, die über territorial geregelte Registrierungen hinausgehen. In konzeptioneller Hinsicht liefern empirische Daten schließlich Evidenz für ein breiteres Verständnis von Migration, das insbesondere das Weiterwandern und Formen von erwünschter Immobilität einbezieht.

1.   Introduction

In an 'era of mobilities' (*Urry* 2007), our understanding of migration processes increasingly becomes challenged and contested. Complex patterns of movement as well as diversifying protagonists of migration challenge unidirectional and territorially based definitions, e.g. provided by the United Nations (*UN* 2012). In the 2000s, the 'new mobility paradigm' (*Sheller* and *Urry* 2006) served as an initial attempt to break static categorisations, while empirical justification was limited to highly mobile people in the original oeuvre. One innovation was to take mobility as 'normal' instead of an exception. As a consequence, we must not consider migration as one single act, but acknowledge ongoing negotiations of mobility and immobility (*Halfacree* and *Rivera* 2012). Moreover, the 'new mobility paradigm' suggests a broader view on mobility, as migration processes only constitute a relatively small part of spatial movements and blurring boundaries between residential mobilities and habitual/everyday mobilities are observable, yet less empirically proved.

Whilst the mobility paradigm has its empirical origins in highly mobile and simultaneously privileged individuals (*Urry* 2003), political aims, such as order, security or welfare, counteract free movements and result in restrictions of individuals' acts and routines of mobilities. Especially the regulation of mobilities among non-citizens is of particular interest for the state as a means to express difference to citizens, i.e., own nationals, and an assumed potential security threat (*Belina* 2010). Therefore, within migration regimes, it has to be negotiated "which forms of mobility count as migration" (*Rass* and *Wolf* 2018: 43), while

persons, organisations and institutions have to define, exercise, design or pursue the control of desirable and undesirable forms of migration (ibid.: 46). Associated with supranational developments and inter-/transnationalisation of polity (*Nieswand* 2018), national state orders increasingly become fragmented. Free movement for EU citizens, for instance, defies the control or governance of state actors impressively.

In this article, we take the 'new mobility paradigm' as a starting point and put a spotlight on onward mobilities of individuals who initially moved to another place in another country. In order to discuss this phenomenon, we provide empirical material from two different case studies, i.e., relatively affluent lifestyle migrants having moved from Germany to coastal areas in Spain and the rural hinterland and refugees that were initially placed in rural Bavaria, Germany, during their asylum procedure. We chose the two migrant groups as their initial impetus for movement can be characterised as relatively voluntary in the case of lifestyle migrants and rather involuntary in terms of refugees (cf. the discussion about tourists and vagabonds by *Bauman* 1998)[1]. We aim to show how both migrant groups negotiate mobility and immobility by focusing on onward mobilities after the arrival at a place in Spain or Germany. In concrete terms, we aim to unravel interdependencies between migrants' mobility strategies and territorially bounded regulations prescribed by state authorities. Accordingly, our research questions are:

- What mobility processes among lifestyle migrants and refugees can be identified after arrival in Spain or Germany?
- How do these processes counteract sedentarist logics of the state?

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The article is structured as follows: first, we provide an overview of the conceptual framework of the 'new mobility paradigm' as well as the specific migration processes that explain the initial relocation, i.e., lifestyle migration and refugee migration. Central to this section are interdependencies of mobility and immobility, whilst we include theoretical assumptions about place-based belonging, which could serve as an explanatory frame for desired immobility and intended staying. Afterwards, we introduce the setting and the methods for our two case studies, which provide empirical data from quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. In the results section, we discuss onward mobilities and the practices of registration of both groups and reveal strategies and consequences of counteracting legal frameworks. The article concludes with a discussion on terminology in migration scholarship and interpretation of migrants' mobilities and immobilities through the lens of agency.

2. State of the research: onward (im)mobilities within migration processes

When the sociologist *Anthony Richmond* (1988) claimed to develop sociological theories of international migration that are able to explain population movements from a broader perspective, he suggested to consider issues from the decision-making process to the arrival at a certain place and finally potential re-migration. This assumption can be addressed as groundbreaking as it is able to widen the lens of migration studies towards mobility processes, including onward mobilities. An even more holistic perspective is provided by the 'new mobility paradigm' that is presented in the following section.

2.1 Analytical framework: the 'new mobility paradigm'

Reflecting on increasing mobilities of human bodies, both physically and virtually, as well as the movement of goods and services in contemporary Western societies, *Mimi Sheller* and *John Urry* (2006) address two assumptions that encouraged various sub-disciplines of social sciences to rethink their perspectives on social realities: first, they criticise the hegemony of sedentarist assumptions about social reality, resulting in a need to consider mobilities more consequently; second, they point towards the role of mobilities in reproducing and contesting territorialisations (*Sheller* and

Urry 2006). The change of perspective by placing 'being mobile' at the core, however, is inherently interrelated to processes of fixity on a temporary basis (*Bell* and *Osti* 2010; *Kordel* 2017). Accordingly, *Urry* (2003) stated a 'dialectic of movements and moorings'. Since the 'new mobility paradigm' is able to capture the variety of mobility processes, a differentiation between residential and everyday mobility becomes obsolete when following the framework consistently. The diversity of mobility processes was, for instance, recently proved by *Milbourne* and *Kitchen* (2014), who introduced the term 'rural mobilities' encompassing "movements into, out of, within and through rural places; (...) linear flows between particular locations and more complex spatial patterns of movement (...) journeys of necessity and choice; economic and lifestyle based movements; hyper- and im-mobilities" (ibid.: 385f.). Addressing the latter aspect, in the 1990s, *Bauman* (1998) already highlighted a nexus between mobility and immobility, referring to the fact that mobility for some can create immobility for others, while current debates start to stress unmarked categories of migration, for example, consider staying as an active process and deliberate act (cf. rural staying, *Stockdale* and *Haartsen* 2018). In a similar vein, *Mata Codesal* (2018) provided a typology of immobilities in her study on mobile people in a Mexican village and identified desired, involuntary and acquiescent immobilities by referring to *Carling*'s (2002) aspiration-ability model. Finally, *van der Velde* and *van Naerssen* (2011) argue to focus on thresholds in decision-making processes, distinguishing between the threshold of indifference (whether to migrate), locational threshold (where to migrate) and trajectory threshold (how to migrate). Thus, we have to differentiate between actual and potential movement (motility, *Kaufmann* 2002), while the individual addresses mobility as either a resource or a burden, revealing the ambivalence and inherent inequality of mobility (*Freudendal-Pedersen* 2009).

2.2 Lifestyle migration – and onward mobilities

Deriving from social theory, and putting the individual in the spotlight, sociologists *Michaela Benson* and *Karen O'Reilly* established the lifestyle migration approach in the 2010s as a broad concept to explain relatively voluntary migration processes that are not primarily based on economic concerns, but rather on the individual's desire for self-fulfillment. According to them, "lifestyle migrants are relatively affluent in-

dividuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that, for various reasons, signify, for the migrant, a better quality of life" (*Benson* and *O'Reilly* 2009: 609)[2]. Besides their relatively affluent status, *Benson* (2013) suggests that systemic privilege plays an important role for spatial mobility, i.e., migration and mobility in post-migration lives. She refers, for instance, to visa regulations for international lifestyle migrants holding a citizenship from the USA moving to Panama. With regard to European citizens, freedom of movement within the EU as well as cheap and available means of travel and differences in purchasing power makes lifestyle migrants privileged over others (*Ackers* and *Dwyer* 2002; *Janoschka* 2009).

Research on intra-European lifestyle migration recently focused on movements from Northern and Central Europe to the Mediterranean coast and its rural hinterlands (for Spain e.g. *Rodríguez* 2001; *Kordel* 2016; for Portugal e.g. *Sardinha* 2018; for Malta *Åkerlund* 2017; for Turkey *Balkır* and *Südaş* 2014) as well as to rural France (*Benson* 2011) or Sweden (e.g. *Eimermann* and *Carson* 2018) and to more urban areas (*Griffiths* and *Maile* 2014). Due to the availability of financial resources and leisure time, protagonists are mostly (pre)retirees (*Kordel* 2015), whilst also economically active people are increasingly considered in studies on lifestyle migration, encompassing, for instance, middle-aged self-employed tourism entrepreneurs, who address work as part of their desired way of life (*Eimermann* and *Kordel* 2018). The choice of the destination is frequently characterised by a prior period of exploration, mostly realised as regular and long-term holidays that may subsequently result in longer or even permanent migration (see tourism-migration nexus, *Hall* and *Williams* 2002; *Kordel* 2015). After 'relocation', lifestyle migrants tend to evaluate whether their expectations and aspirations considering the good life have proven to be realised in everyday life or not and may adapt to new circumstances (*Benson* and *O'Reilly* 2009). Especially their relatively affluent status makes them particularly mobile and independently acting individuals. However, as soon as personal or structural contexts change, they either consolidate their seasonal stays – entering retirement may prolong stays or even result in permanent relocation (*Kordel* 2015) – or terminate their migration project. As such, their 'ongoing quest' (*Benson* and *O'Reilly* 2009) and the strife for the 'potential self' (*Hoey* 2005) makes them prototypical for permanent negotiation of being mobile and being settled and impressively shows that migration evolves as

an extended project rather than a single act. Whilst moving back seems to be a logical consequence of the temporary life project, recently discussed in terms of Dutch migrants in Sweden (*Eimermann* 2017) or the British in Spain (*Giner* et al. 2016), the lifestyle mobility approach assumes "on-going semi-permanent moves of varying duration" (*Cohen* et al. 2013: 4; cf. *McIntyre* 2009). Compared to temporary mobility or permanent migration, individuals sustain mobility throughout their lives and maintain multiple homes and belongings. However, also processes of becoming rooted and attached are of scientific interest in lifestyle migration research (cf. section 2.4).

2.3 Refugee migration – and onward mobilities

Refugee migration is frequently addressed as a reaction to life-threatening circumstances, associated to lacking access to basic human rights in the country of residence. Refugees, therefore, strive for "'belonging' to a political community under whose sovereignty they are protected" (*Kleist* 2018: 171). The role of mobility becomes apparent in the process of flight since access to mobility is addressed as an important prerequisite for realising escape from political, ethnic or religious conflict, simultaneously revealing refugee's agency (*Gill* et al. 2011). It is widely acknowledged that refugees mostly seek refuge in neighboring countries. However, availability of resources, for example, financial and social capital, the household or family situation, access to employment, education and health (*van der Velde* and *van Naerssen* 2011), as well as legal security, social networks, information and finally return prospects have an impact on the selection of a destination. The latter may alter during the migration process, given that aforementioned factors change. As soon as refugees manage to enter the territory of the host country by drawing on public or privately sponsored resettlement programs or smuggling, they often face dispersal policies or local connection rules (*Robinson* et al. 2003; *Weidinger* et al. 2017). These locate asylum seekers and refugees to specific areas, restricting individuals' bodily mobility and subsequently reduce their agency (*Witteborn* 2011; cf. *Martin* and *Mitchelson* 2009). Asylum seekers and refugees, thus, become immobilised for issues of control and security (see also *Foucault* 1975).

In light of the previously mentioned call for a broader view on migration as mobilities, *Barcus* and *Halfacree* (2018) consider all forced migration processes "not

just as involving relocation but encompassing displacement and initial flight, arrival at safe(r) location, and resettlement" (ibid.: 258) and also take into account arrival and onward mobilities. Taking a closer look at the meaning of the latter for the individual, a search for a place where long-term settlement and local integration is possible (*Barcus* and *Halfacree* 2018) is frequently considered as a common goal in light of refugee's seek for durable solutions within unstable and transient everyday lives (*Moorehead* 2005)[3]. *Nielsen* (2004) addresses refugees' realisation of moving onward, for instance to another EU member state after receiving the citizenship of the host country, as an opportunity to exercise control over the own destiny (cf. *Koser* and *Pinkerton* 2002)[4]. Thus, individuals' accumulated agency[5] can result in an altered self-perception: they do not consider themselves as passive agents any more. The decision-making process for onward migration is influenced by the individual's orientation towards past, present and future. As *Huisman* (2011) showed in a study on Somali refugees in the U.S., past and present oriented individuals stress issues of security and social control, while future oriented individuals consider anticipated education opportunities or the availability of employment. Especially the presence of transnational and translocal social networks to the own ethnic community provide an important resource of information (*Nielsen* 2004). Support of friends and relatives, however, does not provide a sufficient explanation for long-term settlement and local integration. In a study on onward migration in British Columbia, Canada, *Sherrell* et al. (2005) emphasise that jobs are the most important precondition: "People are satisfied with their host cities; they appreciate the amenities such as schools, parks, and recreation centres, but without jobs, they cannot fully settle" (ibid.: 90).

2.4   Place-based belonging

When looking at mobilities, however, processes of becoming attached to places have to be taken into account (*van der Velde* and *van Naerssen* 2011). The development of place-based-belonging, understood as a personal feeling of being at home in a place (*Yuval-Davis* 2006), strongly encourages fixity and finally staying (cf. *Haartsen* and *Stockdale* 2018). Individuals establish and re-negotiate place-based belonging via everyday practices and concrete experiences of exclusion and inclusion, as well as experiences of (non-)access to and (non)participation to in-

dividually important activities at places and identities (*Yuval-Davis* 2006; *Anthias* 2009). Especially a strong social attachment to place correlates significantly to time of residence (*Scannell* and *Gifford* 2010) and thus highlights the importance of positive experiences and memories in homemaking processes (*Leung* 2008). Especially in light of living arrangements spanning transnational social spaces (*Pries* 2008) and resulting transnational connections (*Glick Schiller* et al. 1995), place-based belongings can also become 'multifarious' (*Lam* and *Yeoh* 2004).

In the specific context of lifestyle migration research, place-based belonging was recently addressed in terms of transnational lifeworlds of Swedish retirement migrants in Spain. *Gustafson* (2001a) pointed towards the length of stay, emotional feelings, such as well-being, being part of a community (whether the Swedish retirement community or the local population), as well as material issues, for example, owning a house or a flat, as important predictors for evolving attachment to place in Spain. Moreover, addressing place attachment as a process that continues throughout life, *Gustafson* (2001b) stresses the opportunity to enhance place attachment by means of personal efforts. Drawing on the concept of 'elective belonging' (*Savage* et al. 2005), *Benson* (2016) confirms the processuality of belonging and highlights that social connections of lifestyle migrants are established and maintained both within the destination and to previous or other places or destinations, if they fit the individual's overall identity formation that is of specific importance in lifestyle migration framework. Besides, the establishment of place-based belonging was discussed under the umbrella of home-making processes (*Kordel* 2015). In the context of transnational lifestyle migration, home is constructed in relation to other places that were or are inhabited in another time in the present or past, or even in another season.

Since studies revealed positive experiences in a rural site of living as important predictor for staying despite having the opportunity to move (*Stewart* 2011), a closer look at the mechanisms of how refugees establish belonging are provided in a case study conducted by *Boese* and *Philips* (2017) in rural Australia. Belonging accordingly stems from social contacts to local inhabitants with and without experiences of migration as well as the participation in cultural practices. "A sense of (...) belonging was clearly fostered by spaces for interaction and shared experiences" (ibid.: 63; cf. *Wernesjö* 2015; *Radford* 2017). In light of the ongoing

negotiation of mobility and immobility, a decision for staying and immobility at a rural site of living can be addressed as an indicator for place-based belonging. This particular decision is, according to various case studies, based on gratitude towards local population (*Mulvey* 2013; *Sim* 2015), the availability of housing and a feeling of security as well as the time people had to wait for the completion of their asylum procedure (*Sim* 2015). It is widely acknowledged that refugee's decision to move or to stay is embedded within needs and desires of the extended family (*Lindley* and *van Hear* 2007) as well as transnational ties (*Faist* 1999).

3. Case studies and methods

Intra-European Lifestyle Migrants in Spain

In order to discuss onward mobilities of relatively voluntary migrants, a study focusing on lifestyle migrants, aged 50+ and living at least three months a year in Spain was conducted in the Spanish provinces of Alicante, Málaga and the Canary Islands, where citizens from EU-15 countries aged 50+ comprise more than 15 % of the total population. On a macro-scale, a nationwide survey (MIRES/3I)[6] was implemented, whilst a local case study was executed by the author in the municipality of Torrox (province of Málaga). About 15.371 inhabitants lived in Torrox (2017; *INE* 2018), which comprises the largest proportion of German citizens in Spain (2901 inhabitants according to the population register provided by the municipality). Both studies were conducted from 2010 to 2013 by means of a mixed methods approach, encompassing quantitative surveys (n = 176 for MIRES, n = 118 in the Torrox case study) and qualitative interviews (n = 36 for MIRES, n = 40+26 in Torrox). The core topics of the former included the decision to relocate, mobility processes between Spain and Germany, daily life from the past to the present, social interactions, issues of belonging and political participation as well as socio-statistical data. The latter included expert interviews with local actors (MIRES and Torrox), biographical-narrative interviews (MIRES) and reflexive photography (Torrox).

Interviews with local actors focused on specific issues, for example, social lives, healthcare, language and economic implications, while interviews with migrants aimed at elaborating issues of the quantitative survey by means of narratives. To acknowledge the complex patterns of absence and presence al-

ready mentioned in previous studies (*Rodríguez* 2001; *Janoschka* 2009), various ways of access were chosen for sampling and for approaching people, for example, acknowledging different seasons (autumn, winter and spring) and strategies for acquisition (cold acquisition and via associations). Data processing was undertaken by means of SPSS for quantitative data and transcription, subsequent sequencing and analysis by means of coding, supported by atlas.ti programme for qualitative data.

Refugee Migrants in Rural Bavaria

To address migrants, whose initial movement is addressed as relatively involuntary, a case study on mobilities and attachments of refugees, who were initially placed in two rural districts (Landkreise) in Bavaria during their asylum procedure, was conducted between 2016 and 2017. The aim of the study was to reveal processes of residential choices, including mobilities and staying. In the studied districts of Freyung-Grafenau and Regen, located in southeastern Bavaria close to the German-Czech and German-Austrian border, about 500 asylum seekers were accommodated at the end of 2016 and gradually received a temporary protection status (refugee protection, entitlement to asylum, subsidiary protection, national ban on deportation, ~ 900 individuals on 31st December 2016; *DESTATIS* 2017). Empirical results derive from a quantitative survey with refugees, who had a certain protection status (n = 171) and resided in one of the two districts at the time of inquiry. Besides socio-statistical issues, the questionnaire covered topics such as sites of living since entering Germany and the evaluation of the current site of living. The respondents of the survey were mainly male (89 %), from Syria (73 %) and Eritrea (19 %), and had an average age of 29.7 years (with an age range of 18 to 65). The qualitative interviewing with asylum seekers and refugees (n = 86) was conducted by means of visual tools like mobility mapping, where participants were told to draw individually important places and their accessibility. The individuals and households who participated were mainly recognised refugees (77 persons), male (81), from Syria (68) and Eritrea (9) and were in their 20s and 30s (with an age range of 17 to 65). Similar to the above mentioned case study, recruiting interviewees was challenging because of their absence due to the obligation to visit language courses on a daily basis, being weekly commuters or visiting friends and relatives. Moreover, we anticipated expected bias effects (*Kabranian-Melkonian* 2015) and

avoided to focus only on recommendations of 'good refugees' by refugee relief groups. Accordingly, cold acquisition at public places and the use of multiple gatekeepers helped to balance the sample. For exploration and validation reasons, guideline-based interviews (n = 31) with 45 local experts from administration, NGOs and refugee relief groups were conducted. Data processing was undertaken by means of SPSS for quantitative data and transcription and subsequent qualitative-oriented content analysis.

4. Results

4.1 Intra-European lifestyle migrants in Spain

Registration obligations

Regarding mobilities within the European Union, the EU treaty determines specific legislations, for instance, freedom to travel, to settle and to work (*Ackers* and *Dwyer* 2002), which aim to encourage mobility and finally EU integration. EU citizens are therefore equipped with certain rights that make them privileged over third country nationals. However, national and local registration rules are established in order to govern people and provide infrastructures. For EU nationals in Spain, registration is necessary if a stay is longer than three months. Provided that health insurance and sufficient income can be proved[7] – the most important prerequisites for the group of (pre)retirees – people can register themselves at the Central Register of Foreign Nationals (*Registro Central de Extranjeros*), located either at the foreigners' office on provincial level or at the local police station (*EC* 2017). A Foreigner's Identity Number (*N.I.E., Numéro de Identificación de Extranjeros*) is issued, which is an important requirement for certain contracts, for example, telephone and internet. The registration has to be renewed every two to five years in most cases. A right to permanent residence in Spain will be issued when a residence in Spain can be proved for five consecutive years (*MTAS* 2018). However, in reality, registration practices strongly vary from legal obligations. Before illustrating and evaluating these practices and corresponding consequences, mobility processes will be displayed as they are assumed to represent important influencing factors for registration.

Mobility processes

As German (pre)retirees, who moved to Spain in order to have better lives, are addressed as relatively privileged individuals (*Benson* 2013), they chose their place of residence in Spain on a self-determined basis. However, they permanently negotiate their better lives in Spain in relation to other places by (1) living part-time in Spain and visiting friends and relatives and (2) return or relocate to other places. Considering the former, half of the respondents in the nationwide study reside permanently in Spain, while in the specific case of Torrox the majority stays there for up to half a year, particularly during the winter months (*Fig. 1*).
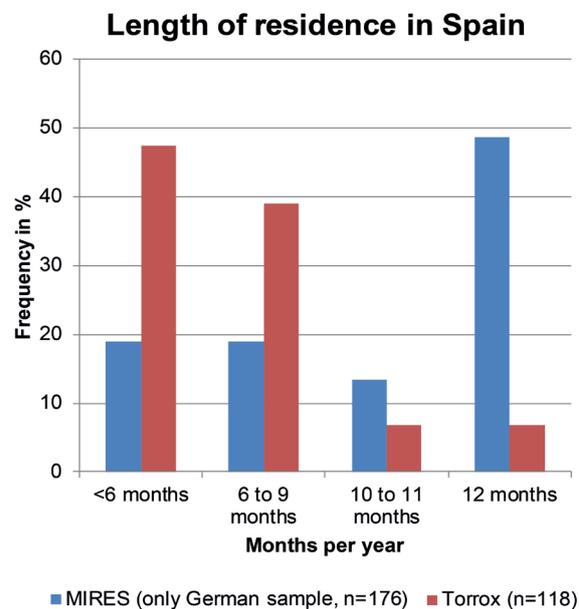

Fig. 1   Length of residence in Spain. Source: own investigations

As these data represent accumulated durations of stays within one year, patterns such as several long-time holidays per year of up to six weeks are not captured separately in this figure. Also permanent residencies are interrupted by visiting family and friends (mentioned by 89.2 % of MIRES participants, multiple answers were possible) or other obligations in Germany, such as medical consultation (18.7 %) or administrative affairs (14 %), for example, preparing the income tax return. Structures of cheap and easy travel, especially with no-frills airlines, are considered as important for maintaining mobilities. As a result of various mobility practices that are either of transnational nature or inherent part of the desired lifestyle (e.g., excursions with associations or friends and rela-

tives), temporary absence at the place of residence in Spain of varying duration is very common among lifestyle migrants.

Apart from these mobility practices, lifestyle migrants also express a desire for immobility when pursuing practices that encourage them to become rooted and fixed at the selected place in Spain. Besides activities related to their new home, the garden and partially the land, they get involved in the local social and political life, both through interactions with members of the German retirement community (cf. *Janoschka* and *Haas* 2011) and, to a much lesser extent, the local population. Involvement in social affairs explicitly became evident in rural municipalities and during the economic and financial crisis (*Weidinger* and *Kordel* 2016). The establishment of place-based belonging is addressed in the following quote by a German Protestant priest in Spain:

> *It is not only about sun and the beach. This would be too simplistic. Of course, mild and pleasant climate conditions at the Costa del Sol play an important role and invite you to visit. Perhaps it is also about the way of life here; it is uncomplicated and simpler than in Germany. Bit by bit, you stay longer, and many times you think about buying a holiday apartment in one of the apartment blocks in Torrox Costa or Algarrobo. (…) Bit by bit you become familiar with how many things work here. You get to know streets, the surroundings. You know people, even Spaniards, who live in the same building. You know bars. This encourages the establishment of groups in churches, choirs, skat clubs. I think many people would be much lonelier in Germany. Down here in the South you can socialise more with other people* (interview with a German speaking local priest, 11/2010, quote translated).

In light of a permanent negotiation of 'the good life' (*Kordel* 2015), lifestyle migrants consider their stay in Spain as a temporary life project. Especially when it comes to implications of the ageing process, they realize that they cannot maintain their leisure-oriented way of life. 36.1 % in the nationwide sample and 69.5 % in the sample of Torrox consider returning to Germany, either to places close to family members or other places that are identified as providing better lives such as spa towns (*Weidinger* and *Kordel* 2015). A statistically significant correlation between the intention to return and the duration of stay in Spain (Chi^2 ,001) could be identified. Those who intend to

go back to Germany, mostly live temporarily in Spain. Finally, the intention to return significantly correlates with maintaining property in Germany (Chi^2 ,03) and highly with legal legitimations, such as registering at the town hall (Chi^2 ,002).

Implications of (im)mobilities

While there are clear legal frameworks for registering in Spain, practices of registration differ widely among European residents. At first, fuzzy patterns of presence, ranging from several stays of a few weeks in the one year to half-year stay in the other, has an influence on registering. Besides real presence in Spain, the self-evaluation of individuals is another issue. While it is obvious that many consider themselves as tourists (20.5 %) in the Torrox case, both samples reveal that the most common answer is the identification as a 'European citizen' (54.2 % in the MIRES sample and 53 % in the Torrox sample). *Janoschka* and *Haas* (2011) interpret this as an empty signifier and exemplify the strategy to avoid clear commitments in a post-national era, rather than a meaningful category. Thus, they do not realise a necessity to register as a resident in Spain. Most important, however, is the fear of negative consequences, predominantly with regard to social security and taxing (*Schriewer* and *Encinas* 2007; *Janoschka* and *Haas* 2011). Others instead register themselves actively in order to take part in local and EU elections. An individualised way of living complicates a reliable quantification and results in a systematic underestimation by official statistics. It is assumed that the real presence of European residents exceeds data provided in the official statistics by the factor two to three. Taking a closer look at the individual level, a relatively privileged status results in agency and finally in an ample scope of how to interpret legal frameworks. Well established industries, ranging from real estate agencies to legal advisors (*gestorías*) to the German speaking community, share local knowledge about how to deal with legal obligations and provide advice to counteract rules (cf. *Fig. 2*).

As a result of complex patterns of absence and presence, local administration and policymakers have to deal with the provision of infrastructures as respective funds are distributed based on data from population registers. Especially small municipalities at the coast and the rural hinterland struggle with shrinking population that is ascribed to non-registering or non-renewal of registering among intra-EU lifestyle migrants, i.e. statistical invisibility (*Janoschka* and

Haas 2011). An impressive example is the municipality of L'Alfás del Pi in the province of Alicante, which lost more than 3,000 inhabitants within one year (2016: 21,494, 2017: 18,394; *INE* 2018), mainly among EU foreign nationals. This led to the cut of one million Euro funds from Madrid and a reduction of four counselors in the local parliament. The town hall currently brings an action against the national statistics institute. Other municipalities start information campaigns (cf. caption of the billboard in *Fig. 2*, "Please register or renew your registration") and visit people at their homes in order to explain benefits. They encourage registration in the local population register or reduce the time span between renewals.

Fig. 2   Newspaper article titled "Rights of residents in Spain" in Costa Nachrichten 2017. Source: Screenshot of the website of Costa Nachrichten (2017)

4.2   Refugees in rural Bavaria, Germany

Mobility restrictions and registration obligations

Taking a closer look at onward mobilities of refugees in Germany, the Geneva Convention on Refugees, EU, national and regional regulations provide structural frameworks for both asylum seekers and persons with protection status. During the asylum procedure, asylum seekers have to take up residence in a first reception centre for up to six months and are distributed throughout the country by the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees (BAMF; §45, 47 AsylG)[8].

In case the procedure cannot be finished within that period, they are distributed within the federal states and are allocated to certain places afterwards (§50, 60 AsylG). Only after the legal decision of their asylum procedure they are allowed to leave state accommodations and live in private flats. Whilst the Geneva Convention on Refugees declared a freedom of movement for recognised refugees within the host country, the German government introduced a local connection rule for three years in 2016 (§12a AufenthG). This rule is basically applied to the federal state, where the asylum procedure was processed, but can also be restricted to an administrative (Bezirk) or rural district within the state, as it was decided for Bavaria, for instance (§8 DVAsyl). In addition, the mobility of recognised refugees who rely on social welfare is restricted as costs for moves are only refundable if the move is deemed necessary by the employment centre. Only after receiving the citizenship of the host country, they are equated to European citizens, e.g. with regard to the right to freedom of movement (cf. *Ahrens* et al. 2016 for onward migration of former third-country nationals within the EU).

For asylum seekers and refugees, a compulsory registration is set according to the Federal Law of Resident Registration (Bundesmeldegesetz), including an automated data transfer to the registration office provided by the BAMF. However, in light of high numbers of arrivals and dispersed accommodation, for example in Bavaria, the registration of asylum seekers for population statistics was suspended in first reception centres for one and a half years, while in Hesse, asylum seekers were registered in the city of the first reception centre even if they lived in a dependance of the respective centre in another municipality. Thus, population statistics had a limited explanatory power for the past.

Mobility processes

In light of their relatively short stay in Germany (one and a half year on average), studied refugees in rural Bavaria revealed a high share of relocation both during the asylum procedure and – in a reduced way – also after having received protection status (2.04 moves on average, n = 161). Thereby, the time spent at the respective place of residence continuously increased from two months at the first to about one year at the current. Considering highly mobile recognised refugees, who moved more than four times since entering Germany, characteristic patterns could be identified

Onward (im)mobilities: conceptual reflections and empirical findings from lifestyle migration research and refugee studies

(n = 14, cf. *Fig. 3*): whilst the first relocation (dark blue colour) was mostly realised from the German-Austrian border at the end of the so-called 'Balkan route' to a first reception centre in Deggendorf or Munich, the second move (light blue) targeted towards dependances of these centres and communal and decentral accommodations provided by the administrative and rural districts. The latter ones were also located in small municipalities. The last relocations were undertaken within the districts. Whilst these data provide a first insight to the extent of residential mobilities and thus stress the relevance of onward mobilities, they hardly capture whether asylum seekers and refugees were located to several places or moved voluntarily. Furthermore, deeper insights into individuals' negotiations about onward mobilities cannot be reflected in this graph. In order to get a more profound understanding of this issue, explanations for mobility processes of both asylum seekers and refugees are pointed out subsequently.

During the asylum procedure, mobility processes mostly result from redistributions of asylum seekers between state accommodations due to various reasons (see also §9 DVAsyl; for discussions on the use of space to control people and their movement, cf. *Mountz* et al. 2012): firstly, economic reasons and the aim of public and private providers of accommodation to ensure profitability could be identified. In light of decreasing numbers of arrivals, costs for rent, security, cleaning or catering rose and certain accommodations were closed, while people were relocated on a no-choice basis. Secondly, redistribution was processed as a means of disciplinary measure (cf. 'disciplined mobility', *Moran* et al. 2012), for instance as a consequence of individual's disregard of house rules or violence. Finally, relocation occurred due to safety issues, for example, to prevent the outbreak of diseases, because of inadequate fire prevention or for the security of the individual based on the asylum seeker's request, as it is indicated in the following quote:
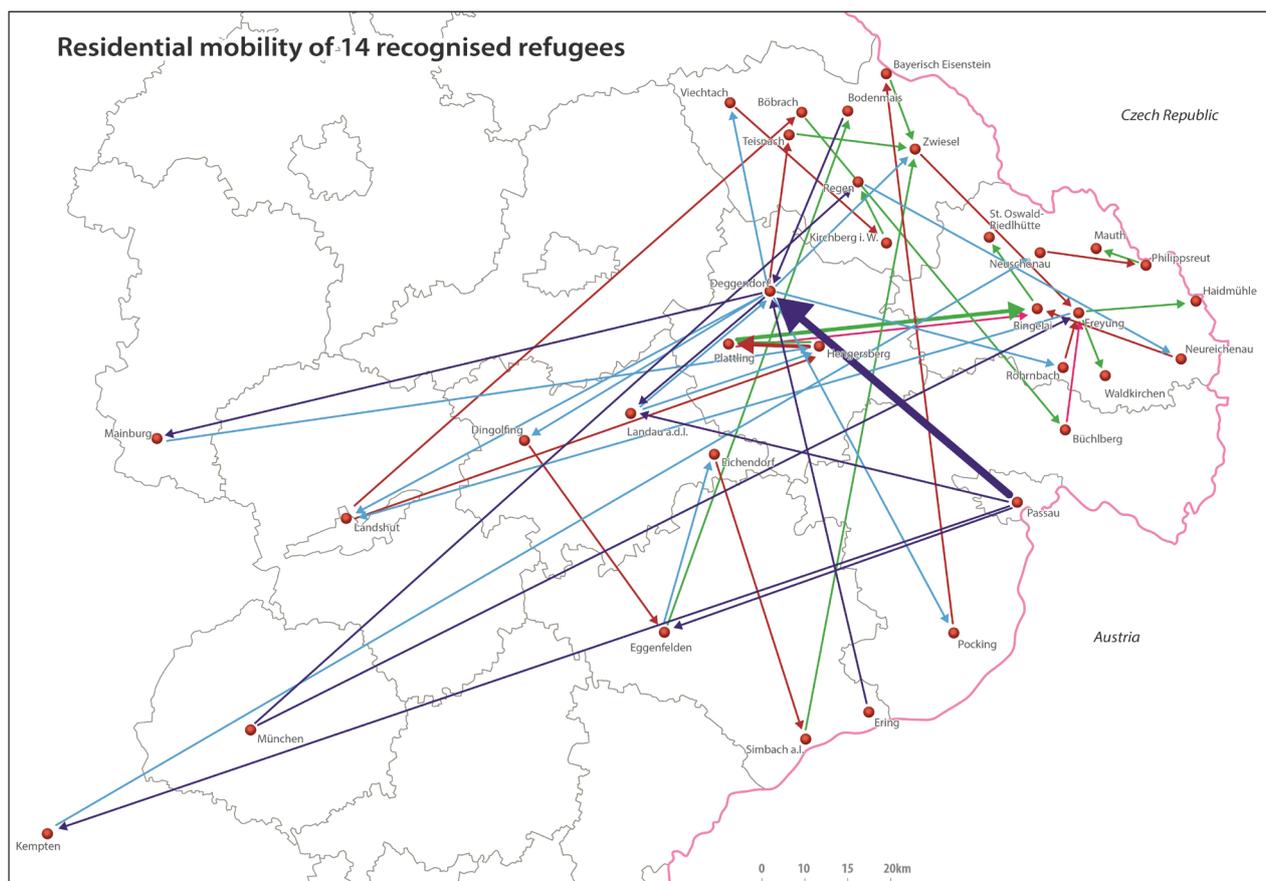

Fig. 3   *Residential mobility of 14 recognised refugees between 2014 and 2017 (different colors of the arrows indicate the different moves; their thickness indicates the number of individuals). Source: own investigations, cartography: Stephan Adler*

A young guy had enormous problems in this first reception centre, because he is gay. (...). He came over to me and we had a talk. (...) Well then I contacted the rural district administration with absolute discretion. And after two days, I was able to put him to another place (volunteer in a small town, 11/2016, quote translated).

For migrants with protection status, from the perspective of experts in the studied rural districts, four relevant mobility processes that reflect rural mobilities in general (*Kordel* 2017) could be identified: type A: rural-urban-migration, type B: re-migration to rural areas, type C: urban-rural-migration, type D: rural staying. On-site, however, concentration processes occurred towards accessible small towns and places, where 'catalytic actors' (*Woods* 2016), such as mayors or private landlords, play an active role. In general, influencing factors for residential mobility encompass the availability of housing space, employment and offers of tertiary education, the availability of social networks, especially social bonds, as well as positive experiences of support and the feeling of safety and security (*Weidinger* et al. 2017).

Already during the asylum procedure, habitual and everyday mobility processes result in temporal absence of individuals, varying at length. For the first three months (or six months, if the person still has to live in a first reception centre), however, the mobility is restricted to the district of the responsible foreigners' office, i.e., the administrative district or the federal state, which can be overcome only with a permission of authorities. When being caught without, asylum seekers can receive a penalty or detention. In everyday life, asylum seekers and recognized refugees are on the way for working on construction sites commuting on a weekly basis as the following quote shows:

M. in the meanwhile got a job in Munich, lives with his friend and acquaintances in Freising [city near Munich] and is commuting forth and back. The rural district administration allowed it. However, he is still registered here [as a resident] (volunteer in a rural municipality, 07/2016, quote translated)*.*

In addition to commuting, asylum seekers and refugees visit friends and relatives, go shopping of culturally appropriate food such as halal meat or bread or join religious feasts in mosque or church congregations in nearby cities. In order to practice these mo-bilities, asylum seekers and refugees rely on public and private transport (local busses and trains, interregional low cost bus travels) as well as lifts of volunteers and friends. Longer absence, for example, for days or weeks, results in the need for strategic presence at the place of registration, i.e., the state accommodation, for instance when pocket money is provided. When being recognised as refugee, instead, they are allowed to also travel abroad for visiting friends and relatives, and in case they are reliant on social welfare, they are allowed to stay away their place of residence for 21 days per year after indication of absence. Mobility in everyday life, thereby, can be interpreted as a reaction towards regulation policies, because these hamper the possibility to live close to ethnic communities and do not reflect individuals' mobility preferences.

Addressing the matter of agency, recognised refugees consider living in an own apartment as a means to enhance agency (see also *Geiger* 2016). Desired immobilisation (*Mata Codesal* 2018) is therefore evaluated positively and referred to as becoming rooted and attached. Qualitative interviews showed that three out of four wishes to become homeowner, while one third of the participants preferred a rural place as 'ideal' site of living. The quantitative survey revealed, however, that about 40 % of the respondents did not know if they will live in the same apartment or the same municipality a year from now. Several factors of uncertainty continued to exist even having received a residence permit, such as ability to find a private apartment or a job/apprenticeship after finishing the language course or waiting for family reunion (see also *Phillips* 2006).

Implications of (im)mobilities

Onward mobilities and resulting complex patterns of people's absence and presence challenge local administration and policymakers in providing infrastructures such as mandatory language courses. Moreover, predictability is not given due to uncertainty of legal status. A strategy, pursued by providers of language courses was to allocate only those persons who already moved out of state accommodations and found a private apartment as this seemed to show their willingness to stay in the region at least in the medium run. In addition, some political decision-makers in the municipalities try to retain refugees in order to take advantage from them in terms of rural development, for example to reduce vacancies, maintain infrastruc-

tures such as schools or village shops or to recruit workforce (see also *Weidinger*, accepted).

5. Conclusions

The aim of the paper was firstly, to provide empirical evidence for interdependencies of residential and habitual/everyday mobilities. The results show a clear link in terms of individuals' mobility processes. In accordance with claims made by the 'new mobility paradigm', we must consider migration as a complex trajectory, whilst its end can be hardly identified (cf. *van der Velde* and *van Naerssen* 2011). Terms like secondary migration – frequently used by policymakers and scientists to describe either moving through a safe third country before claiming asylum in the EU, migrating within the EU or within a certain member state as asylum seeker or persons with protection status (e.g. *Robinso*n and *Hale* 1989; *Nielsen* 2004; *Moret* et al. 2005; *European Parliament* 2017) – do not adequately reflect the complexity of migration biographies[9]. Secondary migration, furthermore, assumes a hierarchy in migration processes and a 'final' migration process, which is connected to failed integration policy (*Stewart* and *Shaffer* 2015). Instead, several authors including the *UNHCR* (2016) started to use 'moving on' and 'onward migration' for the same phenomena instead (e.g. *Lindley* and *van Hear* 2007; *Stewart* 2011; *Sim* 2015; *Weidinger* et al. 2017). Thus, in conceptual terms, categories of migrants shall be considered as fluid, while categorizations of migrants shall be reflected critically. Thereby, it is inevitable to include non-marked categories in the discussion, such as immobility, non-migrant or staying as they are interdependently connected to mobility (see also *Stockdale* and *Haartsen* 2018). Taking the mobilities perspective further enables to capture the temporality of mobility processes and resulting absence and presence at certain places as normal, particularly in light of migration biographies of the individual. Consequently, mobility and also place experiences throughout the life course offer the opportunity to take a relational perspective for analysing mobility and fixity (see also *Coulter* et al. 2016).

Secondly, the results show a coexistence of mobility and fixity, either for voluntary/desired or involuntary reasons. Against this mobility, fixity continuum, complex interactions between legal structures and individual agency were identified. Despite structural differences between both groups, assuming to be based on socio-economic power, which were not at the core of this analysis, we could depict inequalities based on systemic privilege in terms of legal rights as a persisting influencing factor on onward mobilities. The amount of accumulated agency among migrants in both cases investigated, however, reflect legal as well as socio-political frameworks and individual resources (see also *Woods* 2016). In some cases, individuals are 'placed' in spaces by external forces, for example the state, whilst in others, they pursue a relatively free and active choice of the place of residence. Thus, as *Woods* (2016) stated, there is a "mixed message about the agency of migrants: some emphasising the structural disempowerment of migrants as marginalised individuals who are acted on; others emphasizing the agency of individual migrants to construct their own identities and futures" (ibid.: 574). In our case studies, however, we could identify a co-existence of both, structurally caused impuissance and developing agency (cf. *Foucault* 1975). Lifestyle and refugee migrants learn how to maneuver themselves through bureaucracy and state regulations regarding mobility. An important resource are establishing social networks of volunteers or earlier cohorts of migrants who provide assistance in legal and practical terms. As agency is not static, but can be positioned as a "mobile resource that needs to be attracted, captured, retained and nurtured" (*Woods* 2016: 582), future research should therefore put a focus on mechanisms of how individuals develop agency, addressing (1) how they fulfil preferences for (im)mobility and (2) how they acquire local knowledge about how to counteract practices that inhibit (desired) (im)mobility. Simultaneously, however, structural aspects that may alter legal preconditions for mobility and settlement or regulations for asylum, should not disappear from view (e.g. Brexit, *Benton* et al. 2018).

Notes

[1] Whilst many scholars emphasised the prominent distinction between forced and voluntary migration and classified refugee migration as the former, *Samers* (2010) stressed a continuum between both categories. Moreover, as *Barcus* and *Halfacree* (2018: 234) pointed out, "both force and choice – structure and agency – are expressed within *all* migrations".

[2] In contrast, the amenity migration approach assumes objective pull factors of landscape and the environment as drivers for migration (e.g., *Moss* and *Glorioso* 2014).

[3] Refugees consider potential places of residence not only in Europe, but also take into account the option of returning to the country of origin (*Barcus* and *Halfacree* 2018).

[4] *Innes* (2016) even considers the act of starting a flight as an opportunity for subjects to practice agency instead of accepting passivity.

[5] *Emirbayer* and *Mische* (1998: 963) address agency as "temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its 'iterational' or habitual aspect) but also oriented toward the future (as a 'projective' capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a 'practical-evaluative' capacity to contextualise past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)".

[6] The MIRES/3I project (Migración internacional de retirados a España – impactos, integración, identidad / International Retirement Migration to Spain – impacts, integration, identity) was directed by Dr. Vicente Rodríguez at the Spanish Centre for Human and Social Sciences (CCHS).

[7] Besides, a salaried position in Spain, self-employment, being registered as a student or being a family member of an EU national are further options to be entitled to live in Spain.

[8] The local connection rule is applied to those recognised refugees who rely on social welfare, and they or their family members do not work for more than 15 hours per week, do not earn more than 710 € per month and do not study or are on a vocational training.

[9] The term 'secondary migration' was even applied earlier for movements of resettlement refugees within the U.S. (e.g. *Zucker* 1983).

Legal texts

Asylgesetz, AsylG (Asylum Act)
Asyldurchführungsverordnung, DVAsyl (Asylum Implementing Ordinance)
Aufenthaltsgesetz, AufenthG (Residence Act)
Bundesmeldegesetz (Federal law of resident registration)

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