

Introduction

(Un)settling Place Along- and Out-of-the-Way

Heike Drotbohm and Nanneke Winters

People considered to be “on the move” do not move in a void. They encounter, dwell in, and engage with particular places along-the-way, along the routes of their trajectories toward a desired destination. In the literature on migration, displacement, and humanitarianism, many of these places remain almost invisible, especially if they are not located near heavily monitored nation-state borders. They may thus be constructed as “remote,” “peripheral,” “marginal,” or “out-of-the-way” (Tsing 1994) from a scholarly and policy point of view. However, in this volume, we wish to emphasize and interrogate the centrality of these places along-the-way as key sites in the shaping of people’s mobility, from the surveillance and care that migrants and refugees experience, the re-creation of social ties in arrival settings and their struggles over communication and documentation, to considerations of onward travel and the futures of meaningful lives. Moreover, the histories of these places, their (geo)political positioning, ethnic and religious diversity, socioeconomic dynamics, and variety of local actors—who may be mobile themselves—interact with passing and dwelling “Others.”

In this volume we ask how people on the move, and those they encounter, make sense of the along-the-way and out-of-the-way place. Such a meaning of a place, gained through social interaction and imagination, is not given, fixed, or singular. Furthermore, the extent to which a place is considered and perceived as temporary or marginal shapes not only people’s experiences, perceptions, and practices of im/mobility but also the place itself.

(Un)settling place refers to a theoretical and empirical concern with an understanding of place as it has been discussed in anthropology, critical geography, and migration scholarship. By bringing these literatures together, we aim to rethink the co-constitutive relationship between place and im/mobility, further unsettling (normative) ideas about what it means to be

on the move, to transit, to dwell, to settle, and to make place. We position ourselves at the intersection of anthropology and critical geography while working in the broader field of migration studies. This vantage point allows us to simultaneously study people's mobility beyond conventional and often state-defined categories of migration (Bakewell 2008; Malkki 1995; Menjivar 2023; Drotbohm 2024) and consider the geometries of power (Massey 1994) and politics of mobility (Cresswell 2013) that shape different access to, control over, and enjoyment of different types of migration.

More specifically, we bring in the notions of along-the-way and out-of-the-way to argue against singularity: of supposedly linear migrant journeys, of limited socialities of place-making, and of so-called transit places. By empirically introducing along-the-way and out-of-the-way places, we enrich migration scholarship that tends to target "typical" sites of transit. By employing a non-normative way of selecting ostensibly marginal but still meaningful and often crucial along-the-way and out-of-the-way places, we bring out the productive tensions in how people on the move understand, engage with, and make place. In other words, this approach allows us to bring out the (un)settledness of place in a migration studies field that often aims to fix the meaning, characteristics and categories of places en route.

This line of thought requires thorough consideration of the open and dynamic character of places. In both anthropology and geography, it is in particular the recognition of a dialectics of mobility and immobility that has enabled a reappraisal of place in thinking about migration (Bjarnesen and Vigh 2016; Lems and Tošić 2019; Charmillot and Dahinden 2021) and migrants' cross-border connections (Drotbohm and Winters 2021; Drotbohm 2024). Not place as a static, bounded entity, but as a specific articulation of flows, relationships, and exchange: place constituted by movement and intersection (Massey 1994). Indeed, people on the move are always in place through their bodies, and by being in place, they co-constitute place (Casey 1996). Throughout their journeys, even those displaced become emplaced through sensing, navigating, claiming, and, ultimately, transforming the places that make up their journey. Hence, in this volume, the diverse and divergent place-making of people on the move is understood at the intersection of place and mobility. Although the inspiration for this volume draws from our work on migrant trajectories in transit settings (Drotbohm and Lems 2018; Drotbohm and Winters 2020; Drotbohm and Winters 2021; Guevara González 2022; Winters 2019, 2021, 2023), as we will show, empirically and analytically these trajectories belong to a broader field of situated im/mobilities. By examining how bodies, ideas, information, infrastructures, relationships, and objects move across and become part of differentiated space, we follow scholarly approaches

that consider movement and mobilities both as objects as well as methods of study (Salazar, Elliot, and Norum 2017; Sheller 2018; Lauser et al. 2022).

Here we also acknowledge the work done in feminist and postcolonial studies, in particular showcased in the seminal volume *Uprootings/Regroundings* (Ahmed et al. 2003). While this volume established a dialogue between migrating and homing and showed how “the work of migration” and “the work of inhabitation” (2003: 1) are intimately related, it questioned assumptions that equate mobility with freedom and staying put with stagnation, fashionable during a time when a boundless and rootless mobility was seen as becoming the norm (2003: 2–3; see also the section on place-making below). The authors’ emphasis on different scales, including the body, and on the intersections of social differentiation encouraged power-sensitive explorations of places that become part of migrant trajectories and thus incorporate differently positioned people in terms of their gender, ethnicity, nationality, and so forth. Moreover, their recognition of how the legacies of different colonial and imperial encounters shape current-day cross-border connections, displacement, and belonging, including alienation from one’s own land, serves as a powerful reminder to consider these histories in migration studies. Complementary scholarship (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2020; Grosfoguel et al. 2015; Gustafson 2014) further informs our effort to interrogate place itself, its materiality, and the meaning it acquires despite its possibly peripheralized status in global (knowledge) hierarchies.

In migration scholarship, the importance of considering not only place but the *multiplicity* of places that are part of winding migrant trajectories between departure and (un)desired destination settings has received growing attention in the last decade (Schapendonk and Steel 2014). However, although there have been critical explorations of migrants co-creating (sanctuary) cities (e.g., Bauder and Gonzalez 2018; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018), and migrant presence transforming the fringes of the so-called Global North (e.g., Tazzioli 2018), there has been considerably less attention for the ways in which people still on the move engage in place-making along the way (notable exceptions include Constable 2022; Schapendonk 2012; Guevara González 2022). As if the supposed temporality of their stay, in places away from hegemonic centers, would inhibit such place-making.

Yet drawn-out migrant trajectories, in which people spend considerable time in a diversity of places, have become more rule than exception. This is exemplified in the literature on transit migration and border externalization (e.g., Ould Moctar 2022; Vogt 2018), which has, through notions such as the arterial border (Vogt 2017), drawn attention to the ways in which the (unintended) manifestations, ruptures, and openings of border and mobility regimes (Khosravi 2007; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) steer migrants and refugees toward an increasing diversity of places located

away from the territorial borders of the Global North (Lucht 2011; Mainwaring and Brigden 2016). Places that may be mentioned as in-between “footholds” or “anchorage” in the migration journey literature (Schapendonk et al. 2020), requiring further exploration, as well as places not immediately affected by the implications of migration control yet interacting with people on the move, their circulations, and cross-border connections. Examples include coastal villages that alternate livelihoods between fishing and transporting people; Indigenous communities that carve out a living in marginalized territories by catering to migrants passing through; (sub)urban neighborhoods that function as, yet cannot be reduced to, gateways to elsewhere; refugee shelters that serve as “temporary homes”; or desert towns along trade routes that have so far escaped attention of the international policy and scholarly community. Considering such often-overlooked places challenges preconceived ideas in migration scholarship, including those about the directionality of migrant trajectories and the exactness of people on the move and their lives.

A note on terminology: migrants are central to this book. However, we opted for the broader term of “people on the move” to account for the different guises a migrant’s life may take over time, as a refugee, an asylum seeker, a tourist, someone looking for a job in the city or looking for safety across borders, or someone included in a “resettled” diaspora. We hope the more open notion of “people on the move” avoids premature categorization. At the same time, although the protagonists in this book are surrounded by movement (actual/desired, facilitated/withheld, enjoyed/enforced, past/current, momentary/drawn-out), “on the move” does not refer to an ongoing and unproblematic movement, just as along-the-way does not refer to linear journeys. “On the move” helps us consider the mobilities at play, while our simultaneous focus on place—with the variety of actors and dynamics that are part of it—helps us to further interrogate these mobilities as well as migrants themselves as part of their environment.

Thinking against Singularity, Centering the Out-of-the-Way

The literature on transit migration has stirred our imagination for considering migrant lives beyond the supposed origin and destination of their migration (De Haas 2008; Düvell 2010; Collyer 2010). However, labeling a person as “in transit” also implies a political stance and can reinforce a limited, unidirectional understanding of people’s trajectories. This would obscure the increased unpredictability of such trajectories (Basok et al. 2015) and the multiple movements, directions, and places that may be part of it.

Some authors have addressed the central role of (changing) temporality and spatiality in migrants' trajectories by characterizing transit as "in-between" or "liminal" phases (Schapendonk and Steel 2014; Mzayek 2019). Yet in writing about migrants and refugees they interviewed in Turkey, Greece and Italy, Crawley and Jones (2020) problematize the notion of the in-between now regularly used to describe migration journeys and their concrete local manifestations. According to the authors, speaking of in-between places still evokes the linear representation that policymakers and researchers often attach to the way in which migrants travel and dwell, yet it does not sit well with the multiple meanings that places assume. The in-between status of place is often assigned retrospectively, as a methodological, political, or personal decision, rather than established empirically. Such labeling may erase other possible meanings of place, gained as people carve out space for themselves in terms of work, family life, and socio-cultural identity. As has been established in the literature about "waiting" (Conlon 2011; Griffiths 2014; Brun 2015; Stock 2019; Jacobsen, Karlsen and Khosravi 2020; Guevara González 2022), life happens and continues to take shape and place as new obstacles are encountered and new opportunities and strategies arise. Glossing over the in-between moments and places as just a passive backdrop to migration obscures the multilayered meaning attached to place as well as the histories and particularities of place that influence migration (Crawley and Jones 2020: 12).

Although Crawley and Jones rightfully argue that a "failure to understand the significance of places to people—and of people to places—undermines conceptual and empirical understanding of migration and reduces the analysis of migration journeys to the physical movement itself," obscuring immobility experiences, and "plays into dominant anti-migrant policy and media narratives" (2020: 3), we propose to emphasize another limitation. A one-sided view on the travels or anticipated movements that get labeled as "migration" (from a border-control and migration-management perspective) tends to prioritize a limited number of high-stakes places as well as essentialize migrants situated in those places, rather artificially setting them apart from the people they encounter and dwell with along the way. A focus on the multiple meanings and roles of place amid movement, a place that, to use Casey's word (1996: 24), "gathers" migrants and non-migrants alike, would help to de-essentialize studies of journeys and trajectories (Schapendonk et al. 2021).

By thinking through the importance and production of places in and along migrant trajectories, we aim to contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of place amid transit, mobility, and displacement. We simultaneously consider how cultivating a "peripheral vision" (Nash 2001)—that is, centering the out-of-the-way by looking at actors, sites, and environments

that are not conventionally considered central to migration research—might open up new avenues for understanding emplaced trajectories. Next to border-control agents, police officers, civil servants, humanitarian workers, volunteers, activists, missionaries, smugglers, traders, and other entrepreneurs, we may think of an additional diversity of inhabitants such as earlier arrivals or diasporic communities, and residents of neighborhoods and towns commonly considered to be peripheral, and explore how together (though not necessarily in sync) they join people on the move, of different flows and directions, in experiencing, interpreting, and making these places.

People on the move are of course often not (voluntarily) moving at all, as they are also diverted, deterred, detained, and deported. Our desire to center the out-of-the-way enables us to address these fundamentally uneven (im)mobilities of our time (Sheller 2018) in three ways: First, a focus on along- and out-of-the-way places and place-making in contexts of temporariness allows us to advance scholarly work that has usefully countered fixity/flow binaries and integrated too-fixed-sedentary or too-mobility-celebrating notions of people's lives by reappreciating place (Ballinger 2012; Bjarnesen and Vigh 2016; Lems 2016). Relatedly, we explicitly seek to address the global inequalities and power geometries (Massey 1994: 149) that produce the marginality of certain people, places, and mobilities (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2020) and that relegate what is considered the margin(al) to mere "negative space," defined by exclusion from what is pre-eminent and powerful (Iskander and Landau 2022). Second, as this marginalization is actively contested, our focus helps to integrate place experiences of both people on the move and their (temporary) hosts (Turton 2005), thereby contributing to a de-migrantization of migration scholarship (Nieswand and Drotbohm 2014; Dahinden 2016). Third, we hope our volume contributes to upsetting the crisis-like mindset of much migration scholarship by transcending the humanitarian framework that has often equated displacement with loss (Bjarnesen and Vigh 2016; Cabot and Ramsay 2022; Drotbohm and Dilger 2024; Lubkemann 2016; see also Malkki 1995).

On Place and Place-Making, Along-the-Way

For understanding the value of place-making notions in contexts of (assumed) temporariness, we draw inspiration from earlier anthropological and geographical thinking about place. Although the late 1980s and the 1990s saw the typical anthropological focus on ("exotic") place give way to an emphasis on displacement and uprootedness through notions of globalization, nomadism, and fluidity (Appadurai 1996; Lems 2018: 12–14), in the 1990s different anthropologists also started to engage more critically

with the notion of place itself and its continued importance for people's lives (Feld and Basso 1996; Escobar 2000: 113; Lems 2018: 17). They emphasized a notion of place that is not fixed, tied to culture, or definitively demarcated but rather always evolving and porous. In geography, Massey's influential work on what she called "a global sense of place" argued for place as an open and evolving node of relationships and their concrete manifestation (Massey 1994, 2005). In tandem with these developments, in migration scholarship, a number of transnationalism scholars emphasized the situatedness of transnational dynamics in particular places and the importance of these places for transnational lives (Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Levitt and de la Dehesa 2017). More recently, migration scholars have begun to recognize the importance of mobility in producing place (e.g., Gregorič Bon and Repič 2016; Jefferson, Turner, and Jensen 2019; Lems and Tošić 2019; Charmillot and Dahinden 2021).

These debates paved the way for acknowledging how people on the move engage in place-making. Although place-making is often used interchangeably with emplacement, referring to rebuilding livelihoods and social belonging (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 130) as well as social recognition (Lems 2018: 16), in this volume, as elaborated below, we also incorporate possible conflictive dimensions that may be better captured by the term "place-making." Castillo (2014: 244) provides a useful definition of place-making as "a process [that] transforms space into familiar places and generates personal attachments and commitments—it is often used as a survival strategy and as a tool to unveil opportunities in a new place." Everyday place-making is thus both material and affective (Ballinger 2012: 392; Lems 2016) and results in people leaving traces in the places they cross (Cantor 2014; Marcelino and Farahi 2011; Pelican 2014). They encounter, dwell in, and give meaning to place; they position themselves in it, appropriating and thereby transforming it (Escobar 2010; Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016; Vogt 2013).

Almost four decades of anthropological and geographical thought and migration scholarship has thus given us a wealth of insight about the open character of place and its defining role in people's sense of who they are or aspire to be (Lems 2018). It is important to note here that the different characterizations of place that have been developed over time have two things in common: they point to both its shifting and its anchoring qualities. Place evolves, yet it has the capacity to settle people's lives. At the same time, a place may *unsettle* lives, when it changes unrecognizably, or when it is inhospitable, urging people to find new footing elsewhere.

Considering that place-making does not refer to fixed positions but to ongoing struggles for access (Bjarnesen and Vigh 2016: 14; Feld and Basso 1996; Malkki 1995: 516), "producing and maintaining a more or less pre-

carious sense of place in a contested environment” (Turton 2005: 265), carving out place in a migration context may be fleeting or transient and may involve different localities. At the same time, transience and liminality may become permanent states of being or characteristics of a place. On transit migration, Marcelino and Farahi note how migrants’ “permanence is perhaps one of the notable realities the term ‘transit’ is bypassing” (2011: 844). Similar situations of temporariness and their permanence have been addressed in a number of transnational and urban studies (on itinerant traders and labor migrants, see Castillo 2014; Pelican 2014) as well as displacement studies (on refugee settlements, see Malkki 1995), but not for the along-the-way and the out-of-the-way place.

On the Out-of-the-Way Place

How, then, do we theorize places that may be significant from one perspective but perhaps not from others? How do we approach the production and transformation of these places and their entanglement with people passing through? And how do we research how migrants inscribe their own meanings into places that might be occupied, named, and claimed by a range of other actors? In an early piece that was originally written against the core-periphery binary of globalization research, Anna Tsing (1994) introduced the notion of the “out-of-the-way place.” With this term, she criticized the nostalgic ascription of a special status to places that were depicted as pristine, stable, and “different” and thus opposed a cosmopolitan, hybrid, and dialogical modernity. With her work on the deep historic entanglement of spaces across the globe, she argued that ideas of “marginality” and “remoteness” need to be understood as matters of perspectivity.

Although Tsing’s interest in “zones of unpredictability at the edges of discursive stability” (Tsing 2005: 279) points to the importance of questioning taken-for-granted categories and research foci, we argue that what is considered “the margin,” “remote,” or “peripheral” is more than a vantage point. It has tangible consequences for the positioning of places and people and their place-making efforts. This becomes clear in Saxer and Andersson’s introduction to a recent special issue about the “return of remoteness” (2019). Not unlike Tsing, these authors make the case for seeing remoteness as something that is constructed, not given. Building on Ardenier (2012 [1987]) and Harms et al. (2014), they start from a notion of remoteness as “a structural relationship of social distancing” (Saxer and Andersson 2019: 141). In addition to emphasizing its relationality, the authors aim to historicize remoteness with specific reference to shifting global (dis)connectivity and geopolitics. They set out to investigate the processes behind defining what is remote, and the power relations involved, conclud-

ing that the making of remoteness is culturally, economically, and politically productive (2019: 144). What is considered remote is therefore central to global hierarchies (2019: 152).

It follows that studying sites of “marginality” or “remoteness” does not imply studying outside or beyond configurations of power. In their seminal work *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, Das and Poole (2004) make it clear that forms of illegibility, partial belonging, and disorder that seem to inhabit the margins of the state constitute its necessary condition as a theoretical and political object. Disconnection and exclusion need to be understood as necessarily constituting hegemonic power itself.

Ideas of (dis)connectivity and remoteness are also central to people’s sense of place. This becomes clear in Charmillot and Dahinden’s work (2021), which, in exploring the production of community boundaries and perceptions of membership in the Swiss Alps, considers multiple dimensions of mobility for understanding how a sense of peripherality comes into being. According to their understanding of “emplaced peripheralisation” (2021: 2), a sense of peripherality can take many forms (geographic, demographic, economic) and may coexist with an actual firm embeddedness in regional and international mobilities, connections, and fields. Hence, a peripheral sense of place is intimately related to the im/mobilities that are part of it and people’s place-making is shaped by this relative positioning.

Together, these authors, writing from very different contexts and disciplinary perspectives, point to the embedded character of supposedly out-of-the-way places. A place may be removed geographically and imaginatively from traditional fields of power, but it can be central to, for example, cross-border economies of smuggling, or the perception and construction of the self and identity. Moreover, the place-making that happens in these places and co-constitutes each as a place can figure centrally in the experiences, memories, or future orientations of people on the move.

(Un)settling Place

The contributions to this volume cover a wide range of along- and out-of-the-way places, places that certainly could be considered remote, marginal, or peripheral from a hegemonic perspective but that exemplify their significance and centrality for the understanding of the mobility processes, actors’ subjectivities, and newly emerging social relationships to be explored in this volume. In keeping with our effort to move beyond singularity, these contributions make use of a rich variety of empirical and theoretical tools to engage with the co-constitutive relationship between place and im/mobility. Wendy Vogt, to start with, in her chapter “Etched into Place: Communities

of Knowledge, Memory, and History-Making along Migrant Trajectories” takes us to places off the beaten track, as she calls it, to Mexican landscapes of transit, to the roads, train routes, footpaths, and rural transit towns—but also migrant neighborhoods or tourist zones—that people on the move pass through. Through the traces and residues migrants leave behind, Vogt brings to light questions of presence, absence, and memories that store the journeys and struggles of people who have already departed. In these settings, as she shows, the accumulation of practices of mobility are bound up with place-making and survival in the long run. Such accumulation also figures clearly in the chapter “Emplacing Arrivals: The Infrastructural Accommodation of Migratory Difference in Urban West Africa,” where Michael Stasik introduces us to Accra’s central bus station and the key capacity of this urban infrastructure to facilitate exchange and emplacement under permanent conditions of arrival. He follows his interlocutors’ distinction between old and new arrivals to foreground the affordances of an infrastructure that, from an outsider’s perspective, may be merely a place to pass through with a poor reputation. Just like the bus station, which can ultimately be understood as a site of manifold encounters across social difference allowing one to navigate the experiences of unfamiliarity and reorientation, the gym, presented in Noelle Brigden’s chapter, “Gym Mobilities: Shaping Bodies and Lifting Community at the Edges of San Salvador,” may, at first sight, be seen as a mundane and apolitical space. As her ethnography makes clear, however, this fitness space in a stigmatized neighborhood of San Salvador, which extends its transnational ties to communities in Los Angeles, supports collective attempts to transcend socioeconomic marginalization, continuing animosity and accusations of criminality, especially in the aftermath of internal displacement due to civil war and other disasters.

While Brigden, in the latter part of her chapter, compares the gym’s significance for the creation of alternative communities with that of a sanctuary, this notion is even more central in Friederike Eichner’s chapter, “A Place in the Making: Sheltering Unaccompanied Minors and the Limits of a ‘Safe Haven.’” In her account of a reception center for unaccompanied minors in an eastern German municipality, she contrasts the (assumably well-intended) ideas, desires, and rules of the organizing welfare organization with the diverging perceptions of the young asylum seekers who refuse to understand this shelter as a welcoming home. Although the symbolism and material infrastructure of such a shelter-in-the-making and a courtroom differ significantly, the place Lirio Gutiérrez Rivera presents in her chapter, “Strategic Place-Making in US Immigration Courts: The Role of Migration Attorneys, Expert Witnesses, and Place Narratives in Asylum Cases,” also attests to potentially fraught experiences of place-making, as multiple actors are involved in developing a common set of courtroom

rules to be imposed on migrating subjects. This imposition not only makes the courtroom a key site in migrant journeys but also requires narrative and imaginary references to “place,” understood as a painful loss experienced earlier through the violent process of displacement, serving as a meaningful and at times even strategic momentum in asylum procedures. In her chapter “Hesitant Place-Making: Dwellings and Avoidances in a Popular Mall in Argentina,” Franziska Reiffen tackles other often-disregarded contexts of place-making—those of consumption. In a shopping mall in Buenos Aires, long-term city dwellers, recent arrivals, and those who just pass by socialize and forge their—albeit provisional or punctuated—relations. While her chapter highlights the openness, fluidity and momentariness of place-making, a radical absence of place, as a site of productive encounters, features prominently in Antje Missbach and Gerhard Hoffstaedter’s chapter, “Survival and Deferred Place-Making at Sea: Onboard Socialities of Vietnamese and Rohingya Boatpeople,” as they examine a hampered process of place-making in the hostile or even dangerous maritime environment of refugee vessels.

Exploring further the question of how a sense of place can come into being in contexts of highly differentiated mobility in the first place, Joris Schapendonk and Tine Davids in their chapter, “Place Acrobatics: Re-envisioning Mobility-Place Relations along Migrant Trajectories,” invite us to consider places like a shelter in Mexico or a street-vending spot in Rome, which are created—or inscribed with meaning—through the place-making processes of mobile actors who target and dismiss, balance and reconsider, value or reject places along their fragmented journeys. Finally, that places are not only forged through movement but are also part of a historically embedded political ecology becomes evident in Georgina Ramsay’s chapter, “The Political Ecology of Displaced Place-Making,” as she traces the ecologies of place-making of Congolese refugees from a tiny garden at the outskirts of Kampala, to their food habits at their place of resettlement in Australia. Through this intertwinement of history and ecology she manages to capture a much broader constellation of ongoing and interrupted place-making and, ultimately, processes of dis- and emplacement. Together, by highlighting often marginalized or otherwise forgotten places amid mobility, the contributions to this volume bring out aspects of place-making that complicate clear beginnings and endings of migrant trajectories and that address persistent global inequalities as well as people’s situated resistance to these inequalities. In the afterword provided by Annika Lems, the contributions constitute “an archive of the often-overlooked stories, histories, and experiences of movement and interconnection making up such ‘out-of-the-way’ places,” showing how people’s mobility is linked to the enabling and limiting particularities of place-in-the-making. As will become

clear in the next sections, we can further distinguish the contributions by the insights in emergent social ties, temporalities, and materialities they reveal.

Socialities and Sociabilities

Numerous authors have emphasized the importance of social relationships that come into being along migrant trajectories (El-Shaarawi and Razsa 2018; Schapendonk 2012; Vogt 2018; Brigden 2018). The experience, meaning, and memories of a place come about through actors who share and accompany moments of migrant journeys and who eventually support or deny access and interaction. These can be people who are part of one's own ethnic group, fellow travelers, or strangers who become trusted friends over time, but they can also be perceived as different, foreign, or hostile, just like the places they stand for. Arguing against a simple distinction between functional relations based on alliances and coalition, on the one hand, and affective, friendly or respectful relations, on the other, the variety of constellations coming together in this volume illuminate how new social relationships emerge in moments of tentative, often fragile, and possibly skeptical or even violent situations of place-based encounter. How do these processes of (denied) access and integration impact on the perception and classification of places and social relationships? Here we are interested in exploring the "domains of commonality," as Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016: 18) name it. That is, to understand what kind of social relationships, frictions, and conflicts are formed and maintained between people on the move and between them and the diversity of actors they encounter along the way. Glick Schiller and Çağlar affirm that sociality "denotes the entire field within which individuals are embedded in a matrix of relationships with others" (2016: 3), urging us to explore how encounters, identities, and socialities are understood and embedded in these places. Moreover, the contributions compiled here explore how sociabilities—that is, the social relations emerging from a "mutual sense of being human" (2016: 3)—are created in moments of brief contact, in pragmatic forms of mutual support and competition, or rather in more profound encounters and sustainable relationships that continue after leaving a certain place.

Of particular interest is certainly the transformative potential of relationships that is linked to certain place-making processes, for example, when people struggle for getting access to support and care, be it in informal or in institutionalized settings, or when they integrate their lives into a given place's rules and routines such as those of urban markets, migrant shelters, governmental institutions, or "safe houses," even if only temporarily. A key example in this regard is Stasik's chapter on Accra's central bus station, in which mobility is taken as the norm and the categorical distinction be-

tween locals and foreigners, or non-migrants and migrants, is blurred. As he shows, an emphasis on commonality over difference was decisive to the observed social practices and the emerging relationships. In comparable ways, the community gym at the edges of San Salvador explored by Bridgen transcends the differences between people from the surrounding neighborhoods, their genders, ages, and abilities. Repairing the “social fabric,” despite place-stigma, as she calls it, under conditions of violence, criminalization, and out-migration, appears as a clear characteristic of this site.

Although also home to internal differentiation and exclusion, these are clearly places of connectivity, interaction, and support—yet people on the move can also encounter controlling, deterring, or even violent interactions. Unlike a range of earlier scholarship, which mainly underlined the supportive quality of social relationships along migrant trajectories, the chapters included here move beyond a normative dimension and explore more openly how different types of social encounters are part and parcel of place-making processes, in turn informing people’s (im)mobilities. This becomes clear in Reiffen’s chapter on the momentary dwellings in the popular mall, in which relational dynamics of reliability and care are as obvious as techniques of avoidance and noncommitment. The most sobering case is certainly contributed by Missbach and Hoffstaedter, whose examination of forced socialities on board refugee vessels show the constraints of these usually involuntary social encounters. However, other cases provide more ambivalent insights. Shelters for instance, crucial and intrinsic components of the international migration regime that appear in the chapters by Eichner, Vogt, and Schapendonk and Davids, are imagined as places of protection and relief. However, as Vogt shows in her chapter, shelter life can also be shaped by the experience of violence and by security concerns that are detrimental to the well-being of both staff and guests. In Eichner’s chapter on the fragile encounters between three minors and a shelter’s staff, the welfare organization’s intention to provide a “safe haven” is contradicted by the youth’s search for freedom and autonomy. Under circumstances of unequal mobility, and largely contradicting institutionalized practices of sedentariness, categorization, and containment (Drotbohm and Winters 2020), the nonbinding qualities of open places and even spatial instability can be the preferred mode of daily existence.

Temporal Regimes and Rhythms

Not only social relationships and the shape they take as they are formed through dwelling in, experiencing, and imagining place but also the temporal dimensions of a place contribute to differences between people either converging or becoming manifest. Perceptions of time and speed as well

as place-based experiences of waiting or accelerating are part of complex and shifting processes of social encounters and contribute to the hierarchization of differentially situated actors (Amit and Salazar 2020; Bendixen and Eriksen 2018; Jacobsen, Karlsen and Khosravi 2020; Ramsay 2017). In ports, neighborhoods, and bus stations, in the reception halls of NGOs and providers of legal or medical assistance, the difference between those who reached a place earlier and more recently can become manifest in different sociospatial and temporal (self-)positionings. The uncertainties of recent arrivals can be felt in hesitation, observation, and waiting, and those who already know the place set themselves apart through their already developed rhythms and routines. Most importantly, these sites of constant arrival and departure incorporate accumulated knowledge, storing the experiences and memories, the strategies of survival and mobility, of care and comfort of those passing through, who wait for their strength to return, their papers to be processed, or their allies to arrive, as Vogt's and Stasik's chapters illuminate so clearly.

Waiting certainly is one of the key temporal routines along the way. In her work on internally displaced Georgians from Abkhazia, Cathrine Brun explores multiple dimensions of waiting that can become indicators of different kinds of social status and represent the framework of different persons' identities (Brun 2015: 23). At the same time, as Katerina Rozakou convincingly shows in her work on the Greek migration regime, through the ubiquitous and "violent reconfigurations of the border," not only waiting but also radical acceleration can mean the loss of control over time (Rozakou 2020: 35). Especially in institutionalized contexts, the temporal rhythms imposed by the state or an organization—clock time measuring when to appear and when to leave, imposed routines of acceleration or deceleration—can be felt as a form of dominance, control, or even violence (Ramsay 2017), as the refusal articulated by the young asylum seekers in Eichner's chapter reveals. Barber and Lem speak of "discrepant temporalities" (Barber and Lem 2018: 4) that highlight the inconsistencies and disjunctive time scales in the lives of migrants who are expected to submit themselves under unfamiliar temporal regimes. Yet, as Lems argues in her afterword to this volume, part of the particular and unequal temporalities of these places is also the "stubbornness" people invest. Spending shared time at the gym, on a bench or under a beautiful tree in the backyard of a migrant shelter, as Brigden's, Reiffen's and Vogt's chapters show, can generate a sense of agency, hope, and communality that transcends the confinements and burdens of daily life.

Another temporal dimension of out-of-the-way places explored in this volume is the reference to the past, especially under conditions of displacement, loss, and exile. Ramsay's interlocutors unmistakably expressed their

sense of alienation due to a dislocation from the social and material conditions of the life they had lived before. In this case, it is the afterlives of colonialism and the continuation of extractive industries in the postcolonial present that produce the rupture with one's chosen place. The past also becomes inscribed—or etched, as Vogt names it so tellingly—into these places, as people who pass through dwell in and engage with place, leaving social and material traces, transforming the landscape permanently.

At the same time, however, we are aware of the risk of reinforcing a logic of otherness that is attached to a particular spatiotemporal framing of both migration and the figure of the “migrant other” as it has been (re-)produced particularly in migration studies (Çağlar 2016; Ramsay 2019). Place-based temporal aspects, such as those related to a linear conception of time and an interpretation of migration processes as relating to a temporary “crisis,” often contribute to migrant othering and a type of categorization that may not coincide with the experiences, concerns, and ambitions of people on the move (Drotbohm and Winters 2020). Several chapters in our volume point toward alternative spatiotemporal framings that resist common categories. The chapter by Schapendonk and Davids reveals intersecting temporalities and rhythms of people who come together and share places, who inscribe them with meaning albeit from different power positions. Stasik's chapter highlights different temporalities coming together at Accra's main bus station, where earlier arrivals interact with newcomers and defy common migrant categorization. In Gutiérrez Rivera's chapter we get insights into an imposed chronological order of events that needs to be understood as a requirement of an acceptable story that eventually supports the chance of obtaining asylum. Exploring such “nooks and crannies of a globalized world order,” as Lems describes it in her afterword, thus allows us to explore different qualities, entanglements, and tangible implications of time structures along these routes.

Materialities and Infrastructures

Place not only becomes a place through situated social relationships and the rhythms that are imposed, accommodated, and resisted but also through the meanings that people attach to it (Agnew and Duncan 2014 [1989]; Cresswell 2013; Geertz 1996). This becomes especially clear through the sites and things that are key to people on the move: from the landscapes of deserts, jungles, and seas to the very concrete boats, buses, trains, rented rooms, shelters, and the papers and devices that people make use of. In their recently published volume, Lauser et al. (2022) point to how things interact with people on the move, providing them with new possibilities of agency, perception, and knowledge. Following Xiang and Lindquist (2014)

as well as Kleist and Bjarnesen (2019), we see these sites and things as part of “migrant infrastructures” that enable, frustrate and facilitate mobilities through material, social, environmental, institutional, and technological structures. We consider it important to include the mediating powers of these materialities into our understanding of place-making along-the-way, as they have a considerable impact on how migrant mobilities achieve significance, legitimacy, and value, and on experiences of traveling.

In his seminal work on the Sonoran Desert of Arizona, where thousands of migrants annually attempt to cross the border from Mexico into the United States, Jason De León (2015) vividly exposes how this desert is not a neutral space to pass through. Rather, it figures as an unbearably dry and killing ally of US border-control policies and agents. Inevitably, it invites migrants to develop devices that may improve their chances of comfort and survival, devices that are subsequently abandoned, such as special water bottles, shoe soles, and shrines. Similar meanings of materiality can also be found elsewhere, for example, in the “remote” terrain of the Darién Gap, an extensive swath of jungle on the border between Colombia and Panama (Drotbohm and Winters 2020: 13–15). In different ways, the Darién Gap may be considered an out-of-the-way place, illustrated by the fact that it is here where the Pan-American Highway, which stretches from Alaska to South America, is interrupted. At the same time, this jungle has become a key witness and accomplice to migrants who try to cross the dense rainforest and rugged mountain peaks from Colombia to Panama on their way north, with its dangers of deadly animal species, river currents, and criminal groups. The emergent migrant infrastructures that arise for guiding and misguiding these migrants, as well as the belongings and footprints they leave behind, contribute to people’s lived experiences and multifaceted perceptions of place amid mobility. The little stony statue in Annika Lems’s home village (Lems, in this volume), similarly, not only displays a certain stubbornness to the winds on this path leading up to the mountain ridge but also provides orientation and possibly even an anchorage in times of rupture and friction.

In our volume, a range of unexpected and somehow unlikely materialities comes together to allow for solidarity and community building among and with people on the move. It is the rusty, noisy, pounding bus station that allows people to come to rest (Stasik). It is the loud music, the red walls, and the imitated but coveted brand products that attract urban city dwellers in Buenos Aires’s mall (Reiffen). It is the formal and symbolically ostentatious courtroom where migrants and refugees, shoulder to shoulder with their lawyers, defend their claims to belonging (Gutiérrez Rivera). And it is the small, wind-broken boats and their human-hostile maritime environment—

emblematic of the ephemerality of transit—that provide people with the hope for safe journeys (Missbach and Hoffstaedter).

The mural, noted by Vogt during one of her recent field trips, is probably one of the most impressive examples for how meaning-making en route becomes materialized. This wall is composed of a grid of white crosses on a rust-colored background, each cross carrying the name of a migrant who has gone missing. Such reminders of absences, pinned as posters on the walls of bus stations, acquire political and symbolic meaning, not only for people on the move but also for the communities they engage with along the way and for their (international) allies. Materialities highlighting the gaps and voids of earlier presences are also unearthed through the precious minerals that are part of the global extractive industries contributing to loss, war, and displacement in the DRC, clearly shown in Ramsay's chapter. At the same time, she also makes clear how the attachment to our (rebuilt) ecological surroundings, such as the gardens, plants, and food cherished by Congolese refugees for continuing vital, and viable, relationships, despite the painful experience of displacement, can constitute opportunities for imagining one's future. When Brigden explores not only the informal passports that provide access to the gym in San Salvador but also the concrete wall that separates one community from another, we get a glimpse of the sense of solidarity that emerges through the shared space of dumbbells and fitness machines, creating connected bodies that transcend social boundaries normally so prevalent in these neighborhoods. Thus, all these materialities, resources, and infrastructures are part and parcel of broader place-making processes that lend themselves well for challenging fixed notions about the relevance of particular places and the meaning that becomes materialized en route and in transnational fields.

An Unsettling Understanding of (Un)settled Place-Making

The contributions to our volume point out that the ambiguous relationships, temporalities, and materialities that people encounter and mold along-the-way are inscribed with differentiating power. They not only illustrate the steering and controlling power of states, governments, and their allies but also the powerful positions of other actors who inhabit these routes and places. People and the ways they enact and experience im/mobility differ in their skills, their material or financial resources, legal status, biographical preconditions, and other characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, class, or age. These differences have affective and material implications for the ways places are made and people are positioned in it.

Focusing on how differently situated people make sense of places that are considered and constructed as along-the-way and out-of-the-way, and the tangible effects of these efforts, not only contributes to de-essentializing the study of people on the move and its accompanying sociospatial hierarchies; it also allows us to highlight aspects of place-making that have so far remained sidelined. As place-making always builds on existing structures of exclusion and privilege, its effects can be contradictory, controversial, precarious, exclusionary, even xenophobic. Dwelling in place, turning it into something familiar, making use of it to survive and get ahead, making it into an archive of migrant agency, appropriating and transforming it can be redemptive but can also be resisted. It can amount to feelings of recognition and acceptance, as well as to new dynamics of alienation. This unsettling understanding of place-making reveals how place and displacement are produced. The contributions to our volume document people contesting marginalization in their daily lives, be it through migrating, fleeing, or staying put. Through centering the along- and out-of-the-way, we are able to nuance what place-making entails, simultaneously substantiating how place amid mobility has not only open and anchoring but also unsettling qualities.

Heike Drotbohm is professor of social and cultural anthropology at Johannes Gutenberg University – Mainz, Germany. Her research conducted in Haiti, Cape Verde, and Brazil concentrated on the intersection between im/mobility, kinship, and care. She followed migrant trajectories across urban and cross-border spaces and explored configurations of care and control in humanitarian and solidarity settings. Publications appeared in *Ethnography*; *Citizenship Studies*; the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*; *Population, Space, and Place*; *Humanity*; *Focaal*; and several co-editions. She was fellow at the research center “Work and the Life Course in Global History” (HU Berlin) and at the New School for Social Research (New York City).

Nanneke Winters is an assistant professor in migration and development at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her research interests include im/mobility, migrant trajectories, and translocal livelihoods in Central America and beyond. Her work has been published in a variety of journals including *International Migration Review*; *Geoforum*; *Population, Space, and Place*; *Social Analysis*; and the *Journal of Latin American Studies*. Before joining ISS, she held research positions in the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz and in the Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning at Utrecht University.

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