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## **Making Cities through Migration Industries**

Introduction to the Special Issue

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## **Making Cities through Migration Industries: Introduction to the Special Issue**

### **Introduction**

The story of urbanization has always been, to a large extent, a story of human mobility. This holds not only for ancient cities that often relied, for example, on migrant labor - whether from a nearby hinterland or further beyond - but even more so for modern urbanization triggered by industrial capitalism and sustained by its value-extraction from migrants (Brenner, 2009; Piore, 1980). Earliest texts in urban studies evince this connection, whether it is Engel's writing about the living conditions of both native and immigrant working class in Manchester or Simmel's explorations of urban subjectivities enabled by increased diversity of all kinds of newcomers to modern cities. However, it was not until the early 20th century and the founding of the Chicago School that the co-constitutive relationship between internal and transnational migration on the one hand and urbanization on the other was explicitly recognized (Wirth, 1938). Even though the Chicago School has been rightly criticized for using highly problematic terms that seem to essentialize and naturalize socially constructed and situated phenomena, their work on historical patterns of immigrants' settlement, spatial assimilation in cities and migration-related changes in urban morphologies provided the grounds to investigate the relationship between migration, mobility and processes of urbanization (see for example Straughan and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2002 for a critical review).

Many of the Chicago School's concerns were taken forward by successive generations of urbanists and new debates such as neo-Marxist approaches emerged paving the way to an interdisciplinary field of urban studies (for an overview see Harding and Blokland 2014). Often, however, less attention was paid to the relationship between mobility and settlement. This linkage gained renewed importance in the early 1990s. It was in particular research on the 'global cities' thesis that stressed the entanglement between late capitalist globalization, urban transformations and migration (Friedman 1986; Sassen 1991; Marcuse and van Kempen 2000). Yet, especially Sassen's initial focus on the integral role of transnational migration in the making of global metropolises was abandoned for a more technology and business-oriented perspective (Samers 2002). Explicit suggestions to couple the global city paradigm more tightly to then new paradigm of transnationalism from within migration studies followed (Smith 2001; Smith 2005). Such calls seem to have until very recently contributed much more to the urbanization of migration studies than to "migrantification" or "transnationalization" of urban research and theory. For example, special issues that bring the urban and migration studies explicitly together, appear much more frequently in leading migration (Chacko and Price 2021; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016; Glick Schiller and Schmidt 2015; Conradson and Latham 2005; Amin and Thrift 2002) than urban or regional journals (but see Hayes and Zaban 2020; Ottaviano and Peri 2013).

This special issue seeks to contribute to the emerging rebalancing of these debates by exploring the significance of migration industries - as a resurgent concept and an area of research from migration studies - for understanding the urban. We first briefly review the urbanization of migration studies, including its limitations. We then move on to introduce the migration industries debate, pointing out its existing implicit urban dimensions. The third part of this introduction elaborates our argument about why and how migration industries provide an especially productive lens for urbanists to consider. Here we stress the three key analytical vantage points that the attention to migration industries enables us to see as central to contemporary city-making: its

political-economic embeddedness, the urban-constitutive nature of trans-local connectivities, and how business-driven city-making dovetails with more serendipitous, bottom-up shaping of the arrival city. Each of these points also describes how individual papers gathered in this special issue speak to them.

## **Urbanizing migration studies**

Many places around the world had experienced an accelerated migration-driven urbanization and diversification in the last quarter of the previous century. Still, the turn towards the urban in contemporary migration research had been sparked primarily by the migrant transnationalism paradigm of the 1990s. Against the statist orientation of most previous research, transnationalism brought forth the sustained maintenance of migrants' cross-border connections with home cities, towns, and villages (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992, 1995). Over time, a broader critique of methodological nationalism as a hegemonic episteme with migration research has emerged (Glick Schiller and Wimmer 2002 2002), calling for research to "locate migration", also theoretically, in places (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2011, 2009).

While historical research in migration had empirically often focused on cities, it is in wake of this turn that migration scholars have engaged with cities more explicitly. This engagement has involved an extension of concepts borrowed from urban studies, such as gateway cities (Price and Benton-Short 2008). More recently, scholars draw on the developments in urban studies, such as the infrastructural turn, to "de-migrantize" research on migrants (Dahinden 2016). This is the case, for example, in the emerging work on arrival infrastructures and neighbourhoods (Meeus et al 2019). Likewise, a large body of literature on urban diversity and urban encounters with (migrant) difference (Fincher et al 2019; Wilson and Darling 2016; Wilson 2011; Matejskova and Leitner 2011; Valentine 2008; Dirksmeier and Helbrecht, 2010) has resonated with the early theme of urban studies of strangers in the city over the past decade.

Attendant to both rescaling of governance and to cities as places where migrants' everyday settlement processes unfold, integration scholars had in the past decade systematically examined the role of local municipalities and their policies. The thesis of urban pragmatism (Poppelaars and Scholten 2008; Jørgensen 2012), tied to the hopeful understanding of cities as inherently more inclusive and progressive in face of restrictive national scale policies (Fogelman 2018), had become qualified (Schiller 2016), if not completely challenged (Emilsson 2015). Research has found variations in municipal approaches to migration governance (Walker and Leitner 2011), prompting further studies about the conditions that enable cities to create (more or less) inclusive environments (de Graauw and Vermeulen 2016; Gilbert 2009), predominantly in North American sanctuary and European solidarity cities (Darling and Bauder 2019; Kron and Lebuhn 2020).

European cities, increasingly collaborating through transnational city networks on integration policies (Caponio 2017), on the other hand draw in their approaches in hybrid ways on ideals associated with assimilationism as well as multiculturalism (Schiller 2016). Simultaneously, they search for "new political idioms vis-à-vis the de-legitimization of the multiculturalist lexicon and agenda" (Ambrosini and Boccagni 2015). Admittedly, beyond the Euro-American context, while rural-urban migration continues to be the main contemporary driver of urban change in cities of the global South (Tacoli and Chant 2014), the urbanization of migration studies is still embryonic. This possibly stems from the still dominant position of Northern scholars in the discipline of migration studies, or the growing (Roy and Ong 2011; Watson 2009), but still developing,

theorization of Southern urbanism. Either way, while in this special issue we make a concerted effort to urbanize migration studies in Southern cities, including in Malaysia, China, Israel, and South Africa, we remain cognizant that, as Dines et al. (2021:693) recently argued, “the move towards a truly global urban studies can only come about if we recognize the limits and consequences of allowing western European and North American cities to continue to set the theoretical agenda”.

Finally, much attention has been paid to the decisive role the urban scale plays in migrant access to citizenship, both as a bundle of rights (Holm and Lebuhn 2020; Varsanyi 2006) and as a form of belonging and claim-making on, to and through urban space (Koca 2019; Phillips 2015). Cities, in this context, have been seen as “generative spaces with unique constraints and opportunities” that allow migrants to form counter publics in post-multicultural cities (Nicholls and Uitermark 2016: 882). At the same time, they are transformed through practices of immigrant insurgent citizenship (Leitner and Strunk 2014). Such a dialectical relationship is crystallized through a recent exploration of the complicity of urban economic and political structures and policies in the making of migrant precarity that moulds not only their own urban experience, but urban relations, politics and material landscapes more generally (Chacko and Price 2021). Notable here are the fragmented, competing claims for citizenship (Blokland et al. 2015), whose local articulation by groups of (non)-migrants embroils them in intensive local ‘turf’ politics, or defensive urban citizenship (Cohen 2015; Yiftachel and Cohen 2021).

Notwithstanding such (recent) work, migration studies focus’ on cities continues to be mostly about migrants *in* cities where, if not simply a background, the urban figures primarily as an object. Instead, many papers in this special issue, by virtue of focusing on the multiple agencies – both individual and collective – of migration industries and how they mediate cross-border mobility, explore the urban as a dynamic process of becoming *through* and *in* relations with processes that occur elsewhere.

## **The Migration Industries Debate**

The concept of migration industry first emerged nearly two decades ago to highlight commercial migration intermediaries that were previously unacknowledged in research focusing on either migrants’ social networks or structural explanations of drivers of migration (Hernández-León 2005). Its theoretical precedents, like the *commerce of migration* (Harney 1977), *migration as a global business* (Salt and Stein 1997) or *migration merchants* (Kyle and Liang 2001) underlined the facilitative role of non-state agents who gain profit from international mobility. However, they typically focused on services provided in the context of illegal trafficking or the recruitment of labor migrants, underestimating the breadth, structural complexity and multifaceted roles of the industry.

More recently, the concept of migration industry has been recognized anew as a creative framework to theorize an 'ensemble'-creating (Hernández-León 2008; 2013) intertwining of actors, practices, and infrastructures geared towards the provision of an increasingly diverse array of migration-related services. These intertwinings making up the “middle-space of migration” result in ensembles of institutional as well as individual actors that are at once “articulated but uncoordinated” (Collins 2021: 867). While the number of studies using the term has risen considerably since 2010, scholars still work on fleshing out its conceptual clarity. Indeed, a short review of the pertinent literature reveals multiple definitions of the term, differing (and sometimes conflicting) inclusion criteria, and a wide variety of roles, functions and motivations ascribed to

those agents who constitute part of it (Hernández-León 2013; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen, 2013). Consequently, it is still a concept in flux that needs not only a great deal of theoretical fine-tuning, but also a better realignment with the changing socio-political dynamics, including modes of interaction with the state (Groutsis et al. 2015; Surak 2017), through which it gets articulated in different spatio-temporal contexts.

Early research addressed especially the commercialization and privatization of formerly state practices through for-profit providers, like detention of the undocumented or recruitment of the highly skilled (Hernández-León 2005; Lindquist 2010). Alongside these, studies also explored the more or less “beaten paths” of (il)licit mobilities, which states were unable, or unwilling to regulate. More recent work has broadened the debate’s scope to include also, for example, services aimed to entice people into international mobility (Beech 2018), including returning to their countries of origin (Cohen 2020), or how production of knowledge about migration contributes to the expansion of the industry (Cranston, 2018). Also, rather than focusing solely on profit as the defining factor, recent conceptualizations contend that it is “the labor involved in managing, facilitating and controlling migration that makes it an industry” (Cranston et al. 2018: 544). As such, it highlights the variety of work done to “foster, assist, and constrain” migration and/or settlement, while maintaining the term ‘industry’ because it “captures the ways in which the processes of migration become an economy” (ibid).

While the commercial aspect of migration industries remains the most conspicuous one, especially in relation to the common and influential actors, humanitarian and social dimension have been enrolled in the economic ensemble-making that are migration industries. Betts (2013), for example, claims that the industry includes actors who engage in facilitation and control of migration, but also the rescue of migrants in need. Similarly, Hernandez-Leon (2013) who draws attention to the ways in which the industry facilitates mobility across different stages of the migratory cycle (e.g., initiation, take off, and stagnation), also counts actors engaged in “the rescue and rehabilitation of exploited and vulnerable mobile populations“ (p. 25) in the migration industry. Irrespective of its precise composition, what remains crucial in current theorizations of migration industries is the focus on a generalized practice of brokerage as a “work undertaken... to mediate between individual migrants and a migration system or regime” (Collins 2021: 868). Crucially, the work that migration industries do actively moulds not only the tenor of cross-border mobility but also the character of cities and urban systems. As we will argue in this special issue, most of the work of the migration industry is done *in and through* cities.

### **Conceptual Agenda: Bringing Migration Industries into Urban Studies**

Even though migration industries are profoundly urbanized, in terms of being urban-oriented and -based, the urban dimension has been strangely absent, or at best implicit, in this scholarship. At the same time, the migration industries debate has received little attention from urban scholars so far. It is the conceptual agenda of this special issue to tie these loose ends together.

Embedded in “a set of emerging ‘markets for migration management’” (Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013: 13) - and in turn contributing to making markets for intermediation (Collins 2021; Cranston 2018) - the urban work of migration industries is varied; from enforcing citizenship laws in border towns, through providing legal assistance to the undocumented in camps located at the edge of metro areas, to mobilizing skilled nationals abroad and (re)integrating them in technological urban hubs 'at home'. Moreover, contemporary cities and migration industries are becoming increasingly co-constitutive. It is so not only because cities continue to be key nodes of

transit for ongoing journeys and the main places of settlement for a majority of international newcomers (International Organization for Migration 2015). Multiple actors engaged in migration-related markets likewise actively re-make cities through, for example, the uneven patterns of location and consumption of their services – from legal counsel to hot soup, but also through residential engagement with and resistance towards them. Similarly, it is urban stakeholders – administrators, regulators, and financiers, among others - that constantly (re)form varied migration industries through a range of practices – material and discursive alike. Migration industries, then, can offer urban scholars a critically important conceptual framework with which to investigate “the remaking of the institutional nexus of city-level, regional, national, supra-national, and globe-spanning actors.” (Çaglar and Glick Schiller 2018: 9)

These urban re-makings are often structured through the conditions of increasing inter-relationships between cities, which take varied forms of networked exchange (Leitner et al 2002) and competition (Jessop and Sum 2000; Mazar 2018). In case of migration industries, such inter-urban linkages cross transnational borders, since it is precisely that territorial-cum-socioeconomic bordering, that they capitalize on. For example, “coyotes” in search of alternative routes through which to shuttle Latin American citizens from rural towns across the border into US cities, or administrators in the British higher education system devising city-based campaigns to court international student migrants not only draw on the differential geographies, material or imagined, of origin and destination cities. They also remake cities by solidifying trans-local linkages, that tie different locations through the labor expended, profit realized, and value extracted in the process of mediation of cross-border mobility.

Recent studies have expanded the range of sites through which to think migration industries. Yet, more sustained engagements with diverse urban settings in which migration industries are developed, enacted and at times challenged, remain wanting. Due to the disciplinary divide between migration and urban studies, stronger linkages with urban theory, and a deeper understanding of how migration industries are imbricated in contemporary urbanization processes are still crucially needed. If cities are indeed shaped by the migratory process, namely the “life-long process which affects all aspects of a migrants’ existence” (Castles 2000: 16), and if contemporary migration is, in many respects, about the wheeling and dealing of actors of migration industries, then the need for a more nuanced analysis of the interplay between cities and these industries has never been more pressing.

### **Migration Industries and City-Making: Key Vantage Points**

A theoretically informed and empirically grounded understanding of how migration industries play an active role in the process of city-making has much to offer. Focusing on actors and practices as well as infrastructures and institutions that are deeply interwoven with the urban fabric, this mid-range concept opens the black box of transnational urbanism (Guarnizo and Smith 1998). Much work has illuminated how migrants themselves produce and transform urban spaces and neighbourhoods through their own actions and practices. What comes into view through the migration industries lens is migration as a process in which trajectories of cross-border movement, arrival, and emplacement blend into each other and are mediated in different ways by a variety of agents ranging from micro-entrepreneurs to multi-national companies embedded in the local *and* the global. This allows for a detailed exploration of the workings of trans-local and multi-scalar relations between different places across the globe, and an understanding of how movements and mobilities not only connect cities with each other, but actually co-constitute them. From this

perspective the city emerges precisely not as “a bounded container for migrant populations”, as it often is in work on migrants *in* the city, “but rather as both a relational and territorial configuration, connected to other places yet marked by its own specificities” (Collins 2011: 317).

Three key areas and analytical foci emerge from examining city-making through migration industries. In the **first** place, focus on this middle-space of transnational mobility allows for a better comprehension of the political economic-embedding of city-making through migration. Over a decade ago, Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2009) argued that the contemporary neoliberal restructuring has created a particular relationship between migration and cities. Emplacement or “the ability of migrants to forge a place for themselves within a specific locality” is not only intertwined with, but necessitates attention to “the economic, political and cultural positioning of cities within broader networks of power” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013: 494).

Hence, entrepreneurial urbanism, increasing intra- and inter-urban competition and the privatization and commodification of formerly public goods and services in the city (Harvey 1989) are setting the scene for the migration industry. If cities have been the laboratories for austerity and deregulation over the past decades (Brenner and Theodore 2002), they are also the places where migration related services, functions of migration control and management, and the invention of migration-related products are increasingly organized in private and profitable ways. As Menz claims, “the involvement of private actors is most pronounced where neoliberalism is most advanced” (2012: 110).

However, as we have argued above, the urban dimension of the migration industry should not be conceptualized as a plain effect of - or an external element to - neoliberalization, but as an integral part of urban development itself. This is especially true for the workings of so-called intermediaries, a category that applies to large parts of the migration industry. While on the surface, intermediating actors only seem to facilitate the movement of people, goods and information that are commodified by others, the approach we are taking in this special issue advances an understanding that it is the “intermediaries who make capitalism possible in the first place” (Davies, 2014: 2). Much of the migration industry generates its profit by facilitating and controlling the mobility, allocation, recruitment, training and integration of transnational migrants critical for the recurring cycles of urban regeneration and development. From this key vantage point, core concepts in critical political economy such as capital accumulation, commodification, exploitation and state power allow us to explore the interplay between public and private actors in the city and how these ensembles shape political regulations and profit-oriented agency with regard to urban processes of migration, emplacement and displacement.

The first paper in this section by *Deirdre Colon and Nancy Hiemstra* examines the detention of immigrants in three politically liberal counties in the USA. It shows how cities and municipalities are financially benefiting significantly from immigration crackdowns and local detention centres, and how these detention industries are economically connected to urban development. Understanding the migration industry as an assemblage, the authors trace fiscal ties, financial dependencies, and other forms of value, and identify who is involved and who benefits from local immigrant detention and deportation.

*Sin Yeeh Koh's* paper examines the emergence of an interurban migration industry in Malaysia. It consists of intermediary bodies that develop ‘migration products’ in real estate, education and lifestyle migration for foreign lifestyle migrants. In this paper, taking a migration industries perspective supports the speculative urbanism literature by showing that it is not only the state or city that generate and sustain the process, but the private sector as well, through the attraction of

privileged migrants. It is the migration industry that helps migrants imagine a brighter urban future, and in so doing helps the city promote speculative urbanism through migration.

*Matthias Bernt, Ulrike Hamann, Nihad El-Kayed and Leoni Keskinilic* take a close look at the current provision of housing to refugees in Germany. They first show how a specific financialized accumulation model of renting out privatized public housing stock to disadvantaged parts of the population has emerged and increasingly targets migrant tenants. Second, they discuss how access to housing is formed by informal agents giving rise to a new ‘shadow economy’ for housing offering services with dubious quality for excessive fees. As a result, a broad variety of ‘internal migration industries’ has emerged providing the housing infrastructure, but also controlling access to housing. This not only results in new opportunities for profit extraction, but actively shapes new patterns of segregation and the concentration of refugees in particular types of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Finally, *Sakura Yamamura* examines mechanisms through which superdiversity, encompassing both highly skilled professional and less skilled migrants, shapes variation in neighbourhood geographies in global cities. Focusing on Tokyo, she stresses how this local socio-spatial patterning is embedded in a mechanism of migration industries acting on a global scale, both corporate and conventional ones, making the cities, but also interfaces with local mediation, shaping the cities. This reinforces in part historical patterns where, for example, corporate migrants tend to congregate in the neighbourhoods that are not only dominated by embassies today but were central locations of American post-war regime in Japan. At the same time, she also shows how co-ethnic migrant networks for the lower-skilled and business networks for the highly skilled dovetail with the commercial intermediaries in this city-making process.

The **second** vantage point laid bare is that of how migration industries actors forge and solidify connectivity between different cross-border locations and through that (re)make cities. This is unsurprising given that migration is inherently networked, linking in complex nodes that bind together points of origin, transit, and destination through multiple transnational practices and infrastructures. However, when looked at through the lens of migration industry, this connectivity does not lend itself simply to translocal geographies, understood as “the simultaneous situatedness across different locales which provide ways of understanding the overlapping of place-time(s) in migrants’ everyday lives” (Datta and Brickel 2011:4). Neither does it involve a mere exploration of the largely sedentary practices engaged in by migrants, which underpins “grounded transnationalism” (Mitchell 1997). Rather, it is precisely the mobile nature of actors in the migration industry, and the practices they engage in along migrant trajectories (Schapendonk and Steel 2014), that makes them important contributors to migratory routes of individuals and the making of cities. Hence, by zooming in on the mediating agents and the unfolding of their workings along migrant trajectories, a migration industry lens allows us to explore the myriad mobile ways in which they (re)construct cities located along them.

Taking a mobile perspective to city-making is important for two main reasons; first, it evades the linear and sedentary logic, which still dominates some of the urban literature on migration. By way of its mobility towards, in, and through cities, the migration industries help fashion, transform, renew, or devalue specific urban spaces. Whether it markets glamorous neighbourhoods to entice highly skilled foreigners to Malaysia, channels privileged Diaspora Jews to upscale gated communities in Israeli cities or commutes young Chinese children to schools lying across the urban borderscapes with Hong Kong, the migration industry is a potent ensemble of travelling agents capable of (re)forming urban landscapes in a variety of material and symbolic ways. Second, inasmuch as its operation requires a constant movement between and across (two or more) cities



in different nation-states, the migration industry is inevitably implicated in a set of uneven power relations in either. This sort of cross-jurisdictional assemblage is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it makes the industry an influential agent, capable of leveraging its political-economic power to sustain profitable flows and, consequently, urban development. On the other hand, it makes the industry highly susceptible to fluctuations occurring in the urban (and national) spheres they operate in, which could put actors in harm's way, economically or politically. Either way, taking actors' mediating functions as a starting point allows us to carefully examine how they effect and are affected by socioeconomic urban processes – from segregation and zoning through urban renewal and gentrification.

Taking a non-sedentary approach to city-making, the four papers in this section explore how urban landscapes are (re)made through cross-border connectivity engaged by migration industries in different parts of the world. They show that the (re)formation of cities is a continuous process involving both the industry as well as other powerful (non)-state agents, through which social hierarchies are maintained or altered, physical infrastructures are revamped, and imagined geographies are constructed.

In her paper on urban enclaves and segregation, *Hila Zaban* explores privileged migration from the Jewish diaspora to Israel. She argues that while the Israeli state remains salient in facilitating and controlling mobility at the national level, migration industries dictate urban areas to which privileged migrants will be channelled. In some cases, this “beaten path” for the few leads to transnational gentrification (Hayes and Zaban 2020) and solidifies what is already a highly unequal and stratified urban terrain. Consisting of rent-seeking individuals and groups, like real estate brokers and migrant-led organizations, the migration industry is instrumental to the shaping of urban location decisions made by incoming migrants. Aided by migrant social networks and embedded in Israel's competitive urban market where entrepreneurial city administrations seek to entice skilled (Jewish) migrants, the migration industry plays a crucial role in the (re)production of the country's increasingly segregated and gentrified urban geographies.

*Suzanne Beech* draws on interviews with international staff in British universities and observations at recruitment events in Hong Kong to demonstrate the centrality of the urban in the international student migration industry. Showcasing three urban encounters in the recruitment process – both pre- and post-departure - the paper illustrates how actors of the industry mediate the migratory experience to foreign students eager to acquire their academic degrees in British institutions of higher education. The urban features prominently in this experience, as agents shape prospective students' imagined urban geographies of the UK. The spatial interactions between actors of the British migration industry and students, their clients, are linked to a set of encounters between multiple urbans, in which Hong Kong, London and the sites of recruiting universities, are in direct conversation.

*Felicitas Hillman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, and Brenda Yeoh* compare three pairs of regional dependencies between providers of nurses in the context of the Global North/South (Philippines-Singapore, India-Canada, and Vietnam-Germany). Using the migration industries concept and the urban assemblage approach they explore the role of providers, both non-state and state actors, in facilitating, filtering/channeling, and constraining the migration of nurses. They show how the socio-spatial configurations of glocal urban assemblages yield different social integration outcomes for migrant nurses.

Finally, *Maggi Leung and Johanna Waters* unpack how the urban mobility industry works across international borders. Tens of thousands of children living on Mainland China cross the border between Shenzhen and Hong Kong for a ‘better education’ every day. A well-oiled industry

is in place to manage, facilitate and control this education mobility field. By mapping out and visualizing the workings of the industry - schools, buses, escorts, tutoring centers, day care, and boarding houses - the authors show how the industry, which intersects with other business networks and systems, links Shenzhen and Hong Kong, taking and making places in these cities, especially in and around the border region. The paper illustrates how the industry (re)makes the political economy and socio-cultural landscapes of the border area, which connects, divides, and redefines both cities and the urban regions it bridges. The paper ends by reflecting on the implications of the recent political challenges and the pandemic on the cross-border urban connections and the urban mobility industry that shapes them.

Contributions discussed in these first two sections examine city-making unfolding through the workings of more conventional or formal migration industries, comprised of commercial actors that provide services – whether wanted, or, as in case of detention, unwanted, for migrants. Working often in conjunction with local and national state authorities’ interests, their role in the making of social and material urban landscapes is quite unquestionably impactful, even spectacular. The final section is comprised of papers that examine informal, often micro-sized and migrant-driven migration industries that nonetheless provide services for primarily vulnerable migrants uncatered to by the more intentional, institutionalized migration industries. Focus on such providers highlights how commercialized provision of services is often intertwined with or arises within and through spaces of migrants’ social networks, problematizing earlier dualistic framing of pure for-profit migration industries on one hand and altruistic social networks on the other (Jones and Sha 2020; Rai 2020). But more importantly in relation to their urban dimensions, they highlight the city as an often-unwelcoming space of arrival, whether for those sojourning temporarily or more long-term. Examining - especially ethnographically as most of the last four papers do – a disparate set of service-providers in the arrival city through the lens of migration industries allows for seeing how migrant-driven bottom-up mediation of migration also makes cities, albeit in more serendipitous, messy, and, at times, less durable ways. This makes for the final, **third** vantage point we stress in this special issue.

In the first paper in this section *Tanya Zack and Loren Landau* examine Johannesburg’s Park Station neighborhood that serves as southern Africa’s node in the global trade in Chinese fast fashion. This migrant-driven “enclave entrepôt” has been shaped by informal migration industry consisting of actors that in a networked fashion provide a variety of logistical services for cross-border apparel traders sojourning in the city. The authors highlight how this neighborhood works as a place claimed and carved out in the city by such circular migrants who tend to want to stay invisible to the hostile South African state and local population, something paradoxically allowed by Park Station despite its hypervisibility.

The issue of in/visibility is also at the heart of *Mirjam Wajsberg* and *Joris Schapendonk’s* paper, albeit in a very different way. Bringing conceptually together migration industries and infrastructures they focus on the everyday practices of refugees in Athens through which they create socio-material ensemble of services that provide them, and others like them, with shelter, work opportunity or pathways for further mobility. The resulting infrastructures produced through these migrants’ commercialized practices constantly remake urban micro-spaces, even if such remaking invisible to the mainstream city. These improvised socio-material services have also a trans-urban aspect since parts of them get reconstituted in other cities along the migrant journeys.

West Africans with residency permits in Spain, a migrant group in *Kristine Juul’s* paper, have also strong trans-urban connections through places in Europe where they either travel to earn money or sojourn on their journeys to other places, like Copenhagen. Against the background of

European as well as national border and immigration policies, the paper examines how a charity established to provide shelter and care for locals with substance dependencies or mental health problems has been pushed into becoming a shelter-provider for homeless West African migrants. Juul's research highlights how non-profits that were originally not involved in migration-related labor can become "unintentional migration industry" actors when marginalized migrants' access to public providers of even basic resources is cut-off. It also stresses how such transformations reverberate more widely in the city, impacting especially the relations established in neighborhoods where such institutions are located.

Finally, *Tatiana Fogelman* and *Julia Christensen* analyze two migrants' blogs and Instagram accounts about Copenhagen as an emerging digital component of wider integration industries. The content these informal integration intermediaries produce translates their urban know-how to newcomers, while also showcasing their having become (almost) local. And while each produces their own particular translation of everyday Copenhagen – one that includes at times also critical perspectives on gentrification and lacking accommodation of difference – they both draw on and amplify the broader portrayal of Copenhagen as the pinnacle of sustainable and livable urbanism. As such, they reinforce for newcomers the expectations of green urban citizenship. Moreover, by virtue of their content being hashtagged, this celebratory image, circulates widely in digital lifeworlds, available for consumption not only to potential migrants but all those interested in contemporary urbanisms.

## Conclusions

Taken together, the contributions to this special issue provide various examples of how urban studies can benefit profoundly from integrating the concept of migration industries and, vice versa, how migration scholarship can be enriched by adopting a more nuanced urban perspective to the localized workings and socio-spatial embeddedness of the industry. Just as importantly, the understanding of processes of migration and emplacement that emerges from this special issue helps to move beyond the ethnic lens perspective still dominating much of urban migration research (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013; 2016). This is so despite the fact that many concrete actors of the migration industry do target migrants of specific ethno-national origin. We hope that the rich empirical case-studies from cities around the world and the theoretical discussions offered in this volume will stimulate further debate and contribute to a curious and conceptually sound interdevelopment of urban and migration studies.

Finally, much of the work on this special issue took place before Covid-19. Not only was the collection of data for most research projects completed months, or even years, before the pandemic, but the majority of papers were conceived and largely written before its effect on either migration or cities was sufficiently clear. Hence, only few authors were able to reflect on its possible impacts on the migration industry. What is clear from the initial research on pandemic and migrants is that vulnerable migrants as well as more marginalized populations with migration background have been in many contexts especially negatively impacted by the pandemic (Rajan 2020; Suhardiman et al. 2021). These impacts range from erosion of livelihood through a greater exposure to the infection to the stigmatization and racist harassment through public discourses and in everyday life. What, however, became also clear early on in the pandemic, is that in many places migration industries and infrastructures provided a basis for migrants' navigation of the newly closed borders, as well as state responses to the pandemic (Collins 2021).

While further research will be necessary to understand more long-term impacts, we contend that the ongoing, pandemic-induced attempts to re-regulate international mobility, to track and control internal mobility and even individual interactions at all scales, and to provide - or fail to - additional resources for vulnerable populations, will likely strengthen the migration industry and, consequently, (re)make urban landscapes. Some early signs for this include the proliferation of state-funded and privately-operated Covid-19 testing centers for expats at different city airports and the mass mobilization of urban-based civic organizations supporting asylum seekers that are stranded in and around borderlands. If we are to understand these crisis-driven processes, to strengthen urban citizenship and social justice, additional research will be needed to explore, *inter alia*, the role of inter-sectoral partnerships in urban policy towards migrant incorporation, the urbanization of the punitive migration control industry, the NGOization of urban care service-provision, and the imagined urban geographies produced by agents of migration.

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