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Article

Accessing Resources in Arrival Neighbourhoods: How Foci-Aided Encounters Offer Resources to Newcomers

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Abstract

Numerous studies have stressed the importance of social networks for the transfer of resources. This article focuses on recently arrived immigrants with few locally embedded network contacts, analysing how they draw on arrival-specific resources in their daily routines. The qualitative research in an arrival neighbourhood in a German city illustrates that routinised and spontaneous foci-aided encounters in semi-public spaces play an important role for newcomers in providing access to arrival-specific knowledge. The article draws on the concept of 'micro publics,' highlighting different settings facilitating interactions and resource transfers. Based on our research we developed a classification of different types of encounter that enable resource transfer. The article specifically focuses on foci-aided encounters, as these appear to have a great impact on newcomers' access to resources. Institutionalised to varying degrees, these settings, ranging from local mosques to football grounds, facilitate interaction between 'old' and 'new' immigrants. Interviews reveal forms of solidarity between immigrants and how arrival-specific information relevant to 'navigating the system' gets transferred. Interestingly, reciprocity plays a role in resource transfers also via routinised and spontaneous foci-aided encounters.

1. Introduction

> There's that football pitch…where I went to play. That's where I met him. I told him my problem [finding affordable accommodation] and he replied: "Okay, I can help you: You can stay in my apartment"….So then we shared flat for almost a month, during which time he helped me find a flat for myself. (Samuel, 34, Cameroon)

Samuel is a 34-year-old immigrant from Cameroon who moved to Dortmund four years ago to start studying there. Upon arrival, he had difficulties finding an apart-ment, as he neither spoke German nor had any friends to help him 'navigate the system.' Samuel's story illustrates how he gained access to resources by moving around in his neighbourhood and 'bumping into' people. He met the person who helped him find this flat "by chance," as he says, on a football pitch in the Nordstadt.

The example shows that spontaneous foci-aided encounters seem to play a vital role when it comes to sharing arrival-specific knowledge. Practical help (sharing a flat for a month) and information (on how to find accommodation) were provided by a previously arrived immigrant—a person outside Samuel's network and whom he met for the first time on the football

pitch. Crucial for access to resources via such encounters are specific (neighbourhood) settings acting as common meeting grounds (Allport, 1954; Small, 2009). Research refers to certain (semi-)public, more or less institutionalised places enabling interactions with other people, thereby facilitating access to resources outside an individual's immediate network (Nast & Blokland, 2014, p. 494; Small, 2009, p. 85; Wessendorf, 2014). Feld (1981) uses the term 'foci' to describe these settings where interactions occur as a result of common activities. Importantly, Small (2017) directs our attention to more spontaneous forms of resource transfers: "In the everyday flow of interaction, people often find themselves relying on those who happen to be before them…the neighbour at the social club…the clients at the barbershop" (Small, 2017, p. 157). This calls for a more nuanced reflection of peoples' daily practices and of the potential of shared interaction spaces in promoting resource transfer via such encounters.

These thoughts are taken up in the following discussion, examining how people with a recent migration experience gain access to resources in their arrival context. Newcomers constitute a particularly interesting group, as many of them cannot yet rely on locally embedded social networks for information on, for example, schools or housing. Our discussion focuses on the (very diverse) group of recently arrived immigrants and their experiences in an arrival neighbourhood in Germany. We show how they gain access to resources supporting them in their individual arrival processes—here understood as access to functional, social and symbolic resources (such as finding accommodation or feeling at home in the new neighbourhood). Although newcomers also often draw on digital networks in both their origin and arrival contexts (Schrooten, 2012), our focus in this article is on physical resources in the neighbourhood.

Arrival neighbourhoods are highly dynamic spaces, characterised by (sometimes temporary) immigration, a fluctuating population and a concentration of arrival-specific infrastructures. More often than not, these are highly diversified spaces from a social and ethnic perspective with a heterogeneous population, transnational lifestyles and income poverty (Hans, Hanhörster, Polívka, & Beißwenger, 2019, p. 515). Research on arrival areas has a long history. The Chicago School (e.g., Park & Burgess, 1925) had already described the 'urban transition zone' as a district where newcomers arrive and from where social mobility begins. Described among others as an 'immigrant enclave' (Portes & Manning, 1986), this type of neighbourhood has fostered discussions on the advantages and disadvantages of living in such neighbourhoods. The journalist Doug Saunders (2011) recently took up these thoughts in his research on *Arrival Cities*. Analysing the dynamics and functions of different urban arrival spaces worldwide, he focuses on local factors influencing newcomers' access to resources for their arrival process. The concept of 'arrival infrastructures' (Meeus, van Heur, & Arnaut, 2018) is closely linked to the

debate on urban arrival contexts: it analyses newcomers' access to resources through institutionalised arrival infrastructures (e.g., camps, reception centres, NGOs) as well as through informal practices.

Various studies point to the growing challenges for coexistence in urban areas with increasing social and ethnic diversity and high population dynamics ("new complexities," Vertovec, 2015, p. 2). For example, reference is made to increasing spatial, social and symbolic demarcations between groups along ethnic and social boundaries (Albeda, Oosterlynck, Tersteeg, & Verschraegen, 2017, p. 2; Blokland, 2017, p. 88). It is thus particularly interesting to analyse how newcomers gain access to resources in arrival neighbourhoods, as they are strongly dependent on arrival-specific knowledge such as local information on job vacancies or available and affordable housing. For newcomers not (yet) part of locally embedded social networks, local infrastructures and more fluid forms of resource transfer gain importance. Indeed, such 'absent ties' (Granovetter, 1973) can play an important role in accessing resources.

Against this background, research emphasises the relevance of encounters in public spaces for the transfer of resources. Research on arrival neighbourhoods illustrates that a concentration of arrival-specific infrastructures can promote foci-aided encounters and serve as starting points for interaction and resource transfers, thus supporting newcomers in their individual arrival process (Hall, King, & Finlay, 2017; Schillebeeckx, Oosterlynck, & de Decker, 2018). As we will argue in this article, the role of local settings in facilitating interaction and resource transfer is strongly shaped by their respective structures (Amin, 2002, p. 969; Valentine, 2008, p. 330). Of further interest in this context is the role of previous immigrants acting as 'pioneers' and brokers for arrival-specific knowledge (Wessendorf, 2018).

Focusing on newcomers, this article describes how they gain access to resources in their daily arrival routines. We propose a classification of different contact types and their respective role in facilitating resource transfer, analysing the importance of (semi-)public spaces and institutional settings for resource transfer and seeking to answer the following questions:

What is the significance of encounters for newcomers' access to resources in arrival neighbourhoods?

Which (semi-)public spaces emerge in the context of arrival neighbourhoods as resource transfer settings?

Section 2 provides a short literature review on the relevance of encounters and (semi-)public spaces for resource transfer, while our case study area and the research design are presented in Section 3. Section 4 highlights empirical findings on how newly arrived immigrants gain access to resources via routinised and spontaneous foci-aided encounters.

2. Resource Transfer and (Semi-)Public Spaces in Arrival Neighbourhoods

2.1. The Role of Encounters for Resource Transfer

Numerous scholars have stressed the importance of social contacts and interactions for access to social capital (Bourdieu, 1983; Coleman, 1990). Granovetter (1973) argues that resource transfer takes place not only in networks with 'strong ties' (for example family and close friends), but that 'weak ties' in particular allow information to flow across distinct social networks—thus potentially facilitating social mobility. But how do population groups like newcomers, with few locally embedded networks, gain access to resources supporting them in their individual arrival process? Ryan (2011, p. 709) points out that the above-mentioned network studies pay little attention to migration processes, arguing that it is important to analyse "how migrants engage in network formation in the destination society and how social ties with different types of people provide access to different kinds of resources."

Research has demonstrated that new media and transnational resources play an important role in the arrival process of recently arrived immigrants as they can provide access to arrival-specific knowledge without having to rely on distinct locally based network relationships (Schrooten, 2012). However, despite increased mobility, digital communication technologies and peoples' embeddedness in transnational networks, physical proximity is still considered to be of particular importance for accessing certain resources (Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, & Scholten, 2017, p. 242). Against a background of increasing ethnic and social diversity, everyday encounters and interactions between people or groups in public spaces gain particular importance:

> With the gradual or implicit 'normalisation' of diversity, public space has become increasingly defined as a space of encounter, where as a consequence of living among others, we must all habitually negotiate 'difference' as part of our everyday social routines. (Valentine & Harris, 2016, p. 3)

Depending on the circumstances, encounters can have ambivalent effects, reducing or possibly even reinforcing existing prejudices. As spatial proximity does not necessarily lead to meaningful social interaction and resource transfer, the role and structure of public spaces for these processes are stressed (Valentine, 2008, p. 330). Studies underline the importance of encounters in semi-public spaces, places ascribed the potential of enabling encounters and the development of meaningful interactions (Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2018).

In order to analyse how newcomers access resources, we shift the focus to encounters and their relevance for resource transfer. The term 'encounters' refers to unexpected and spontaneous social interactions in (semi-)public spaces. Various studies point to the important role of encounters for the negotiation of coexistence in diverse urban societies (Darling & Wilson, 2016; Leitner, 2012). The effects of different forms of encounter are controversially discussed in the literature. Research illustrates that fleeting encounters between strangers in public spaces do not necessarily lead to 'meaningful contact' and can even, under certain circumstances, reinforce prejudices in multi-ethnic societies (Valentine, 2008; Wilson, 2011).

While Granovetter (1973, p. 1361) calls these encounters 'absent ties,' understanding them as "ties without substantial significance," more recent studies attribute importance to spontaneous types of encounters for accessing resources. Arguing that people ask for emotional support and confide in "whomever is around," Small (2017, p. 147) thus draws our attention to everyday settings. Although Small's research focuses on emotional support for graduate students at university, his results are also enlightening with respect to other contexts. He emphasises for example that interactions are more likely to happen when there are sufficient opportunities to meet: "The more such opportunities individuals have, the more likely they should be to have been motivated by availability—and the more likely they should be to confide in people they are not close to" (Small, 2017, p. 148). According to Small (2009, p. 85), such casual encounters have specific potential for people (such as newly arrived immigrants) not able to "dock onto" already existing physically embedded communities on arrival (Wessendorf, 2018, p. 271). He describes how people might get help or exchange information even without originally intending to do so—simply by being somewhere, for example when waiting in a queue (Small, 2009, p. 12).

While several scholars analyse encounters in (semi-)public spaces and how they facilitate resource transfer, they focus on different settings. Blokland (2017, p. 70) points to a wide range of 'fluid encounters,' including "all the interactions that are unplanned and happen as a result of people's doing something else…they may be completely accidental, superficial and very brief….They may also occur repeatedly and more regularly." More narrowly focused, Wessendorf and Phillimore (2018, p. 8) describe how 'serendipitous encounters' with strangers in (semi-)public spaces are able to help newcomers in their arrival process. But which settings initiate or facilitate such routinised or spontaneous foci-aided encounters? We now turn to settings providing opportunities to gain access to resources in (arrival) neighbourhoods.

2.2. The Relevance of (Semi-)Public Spaces for Encounters and Resource Transfer

In order to investigate the role of encounters for resource transfer, we need to differentiate forms of contacts. Related to the above-mentioned literature and

based on the classification of different types of contacts and relationships by Lofland (1998), Figure 1 presents a systematisation of five different contact types.

Figure 1 illustrates exemplarily which types of contact (network relationships or encounters) can lead to access to resources—and in which settings these interactions can occur. The range of contact types extends from strong primary relationships in social networks to fleeting encounters, defining the two poles. The form of each type of contact may be dynamic, changing from one mode to another. In this article we focus on routinised and spontaneous foci-aided encounters, as these play out as important starting points for newcomers' resource access. The term 'focus' refers to a "social, psychological, legal or physical entity around which joint activities are organised (e.g., workplaces, voluntary organisations, hangouts, families etc.)" (Feld, 1981, p. 1016).

While fleeting encounters describe very brief and often trivial contacts in public spaces, the term 'spontaneous foci-aided encounters' describes chance meetings of strangers whose connection results from the common 'focus' (e.g., the playground where their children are playing). So-called 'routinised foci-aided encounters' can also be spontaneous and result from the common 'focus' (e.g., a bar visited regularly), but they differ from 'spontaneous foci-aided encounters' in that they are recurring. Unlike 'routinised foci-aided network relationships' (e.g., with work colleagues) or 'primary network relationships' (with family or friends), 'routinised foci-aided encounters' are not classified as network relationships but as interactions between loose acquaintances.

For a long time, urban research has been looking at how such 'zones of encounter' (Wood & Landry, 2008, p. 105) are structured. Complementing the research of Feld (1981), Oldenburg (1989) describes how social barriers are reduced in so-called 'third places,' settings where group boundaries become permeable and interaction between different people can unfold. Amin describes these settings as "local micro-publics of everyday interaction" (Amin, 2002, p. 960) in which people from different social and cultural backgrounds come together: "Settings where engagement with strangers in a common activity disrupts easy labelling of the stranger as enemy and initiates new attachments" (Amin, 2002, p. 696). Micro-publics are semi-public, partly institutionalised spaces with (informal) rules that bring people together and offer potential for bridging group-related boundaries (Nast & Blokland, 2014, p. 494; Small, 2009, p. 85). While Amin's research focus is on the role of micro-publics for intergroup communication and the reduction of prejudices, we explicitly consider the role of these spaces for resource transfer.

The concept of 'arrival infrastructures' (Meeus et al., 2018) links Amin's thoughts to the debate on urban arrival contexts, as it understands arrival infrastructures not just as support structures provided by the government. The concept also includes infrastructuring processes by a range of non-state stakeholders (e.g., NGOs) in urban settings which often emerge as a response or in opposition to state policies (Schrooten & Meeus, 2019, p. 6). It also discusses the relative importance of semi-public places and informal practices as key parts of the arrival infrastructure, referring to "local places that facilitate sociability and informal knowledge exchange such as bars, restaurants, hairdressers and ethnic shops" (Schrooten & Meeus, 2019, p. 2). Such arrival-related infrastructures, often located in arrival neighbourhoods, support newcomers in maintaining their transnational lifestyles (e.g., migrant eating places, shops, services or places of worship) and offer access to informal opportunities for exchange (Hall et al., 2017; Meeus et al., 2018). Thus, the sharing of (arrival-specific) information takes place predominantly in neighbourhoods where certain arrival infrastructures are con-

	Types of contacts	Examples of resource forms	Where do interactions primarily take place?
Social networks	Primary network relationships	Emotional support from family or friends	Private spaces
	Routinised foci-aided network relationships	Information on a vacant apartment from a work colleague	Semi-public spaces
Encounters	Routinised foci-aided encounters	Information on vacant jobs between regular visitors of a bar	Public spaces and semi-public spaces
	Spontaneous foci-aided encounters	Information on school choice between parents on a playground	Public spaces and semi-public spaces
	Fleeting encounters	Overhearing of helpful informaion in other peoples' conversation	Public spaces

Figure 1. Types of contacts and resource access. Source: Own classification, based on Lofland (1998).

centrated and where 'old' and 'new' immigrants meet (Vertovec, 2015). These settings can serve as starting points for encounters, low-threshold interaction and resource transfer (Schillebeeckx et al., 2018). In this sense, micro-publics are to be understood as more or less institutionally embedded settings providing the structure for interactions and influencing the emergence of social networks facilitating resource transfer (Nast & Blokland, 2014, p. 494; Small, 2009, p. 85).

3. Research Area and Methodology

3.1. Dortmund's Nordstadt as an Arrival Neighbourhood

The selected case study is Nordstadt, an inner-city working-class district belonging to the city of Dortmund. Built in the 19th century to the north of the main railway station, Nordstadt has always been characterised by migration. Initially populated by coal and steel industry workers mainly from rural areas, from the 1960s onwards it became home to large numbers of so-called guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) from southern Europe and Turkey. To this day, Nordstadt's retail infrastructure is shaped by (former) Turkish guest workers and their descendants. The district also became home to later inflows of immigrants, in many cases EU immigrants from Eastern Europe (especially Bulgaria and Romania since the expansions in the 2000s). Recent years have seen an influx of refugees (especially from Syria) to Dortmund (City of Dortmund, 2018, p. 25). With about 305 moves per 1,000 inhabitants per year, the district is characterised by a strong fluctuation, almost twice as high as for the city as a whole. About 75% of the population today have a migration background, among whom 52.2% have foreign nationality. Every year between 2013 and 2017, 46.3% (on average) of those arriving in Dortmund from abroad

found their first home in Nordstadt. This is reflected in the availability of various arrival-related infrastructures, including small (migrant) businesses and shops as well as NGOs. Other institutions such as mosque associations operating city-wide are also located in Nordstadt.

3.2. Methodology

Our study is based on 18 interviews with recent immigrants to Dortmund (see Table 1). The sample broadly represents the general sociodemographic composition of recent immigrants in Dortmund's Nordstadt. However, as we were not able to reach EU immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria, respondents from these countries are not included in the sample. The sample is made up mainly of young adults aged between 18 and 34, most of whom are just starting their working careers. All interviewees enjoy secured residence status in Germany (e.g., due to education visas, refugee status or family-related visas) and are thus free to choose their place of residence. Interviews were conducted by the authors as part of two consecutive projects with partly overlapping research questions. While the first focused on a wider range of people (with or without a recent migration background) living in the area, the second focused explicitly on newcomers. We define newcomers as people who have arrived in Germany within the last five years (at the time the interview was conducted). For the present article we draw solely on interviews with newcomers not following established chain migrations, i.e., potentially less able to initially draw on locally established networks. The interviewees were recruited via an intense process of introducing the project and its aims in a variety of local institutions such as childcare facilities, advisory institutions, migrant organisations and language schools. As the interviews were conducted in German, English,

Table 1. Characteristics of the interviewees.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Country of origin	Duration of residence in Germany (approx.)
Abdul	m	32	Syria	3 years
Yasser	m	32	Syria	4 years
Yara	f	28	Syria	3 years
Issam	m	34	Syria	2 years
Anas	m	21	Syria	5 years
Farida	f	34	Syria	1 year
Samuel	m	34	Cameroon	4 years
Janet	f	25	Uganda	2 years
Diana	f	18	Uganda	1 year
Mahsum	f	26	Syria	3 years
Adar	m	28	Syria	3 years
Dilan	f	28	Syria	3 years
Moussa	m	25	Morocco	1 year
Merita	f	29	Kosovo	3 years
Fernanda	f	n.a.	Spain	1 year
Yasemin	f	n.a.	n.a.	5 years
Selma	f	n.a.	n.a.	2 years
Yousef	m	18	Palestine	2 years

Spanish or Arabic, the sample does not include persons not speaking any of these languages. While the interviews in German, English and Spanish were conducted by our multilingual project team, the interviews in Arabic were conducted and translated by an Arabic-speaking person previously trained in conducting interviews.

In both projects, interviewees were asked about their access to resources in their arrival process. Even though there are numerous NGOs in Nordstadt providing social support and access to information and support for newcomers, such formal access was not the focus of this study. Rather, we were interested in whether and how newcomers accessed resources in more informal ways, complementing institutionalised channels. For this purpose, the semi-structured interviews contained qualitative, mostly open questions on access to different forms of support in different fields (e.g., education, housing or work).

To facilitate our interviewees' reflections on routinised and spontaneous encounters, we focused our questions on their daily lives and their experiences in gaining a foothold in different fields. In order not only to extract information about potentially available support, but to trace concretely received resources, we explicitly asked for received support in different fields such as education, housing and leisure time (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). For example, interviewees were asked how they got the apartment they were currently living in or how they found the school their child was attending. Encounters, as understood in this article, involve different forms of contacts. We included in our research a range of contacts, from recurring and routinised encounters, for example in local organisations such as schools or clubs, to spontaneous one-time encounters in public spaces. As opposed to 'weak ties,' our explicit focus was on interviewees' interactions with people not belonging to their social networks. Special attention was paid to encounter settings facilitating interaction and resource transfer. To stimulate reflections on these settings, additional go-alongs (Kusenbach, 2018) were conducted. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed by interpretative coding using the software MAXQDA.

4. Empirical Findings

The focus of this analysis is on the extent to which routinised and spontaneous foci-aided encounters with strangers in (semi-)public spaces can act as starting points for forming social relations and gaining access to resources. We studied in which settings and under which conditions routinised and spontaneous encounters between strangers occur and lead to further interaction.

4.1. Gaining Access to Arrival-Specific Knowledge: The Role of Routinised and Spontaneous Encounters

Overall, our interviewees felt quite comfortable living in the Nordstadt and being out and about in its public spaces. Many of them mentioned how much they appreciated the neighbourhood's diversity and openness to different lifestyles or cultural expressions:

> Living in Nordstadt makes me feel like I'm really at home, because there are a lot of different cultures. (Janet, 25, Uganda)

> The beautiful thing is the familiarity. You won't find that in any other part of the town. Here there are many women with headscarves in the streets and I feel a little more comfortable. (Farida, 34, Syria)

These quotes demonstrate that, in arrival neighbourhoods, there is a shared feeling of "being together of strangers" (Young, 1990, p. 240) "where those with 'visible' differences can blend in" (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2018, p. 733). Also, several women belonging to traditional religious milieus stated that they felt comfortable in public spaces in Nordstadt (Hall, 2015, p. 864). Such feelings of 'familiarity' contribute to the fact that people spend (more) time in (semi-)public spaces, a precondition for encounters and the possibility to receive arrival-specific resources.

The interviews with all 18 newcomers revealed their initial lack of arrival-specific knowledge on how to 'navigate the system,' for example on how to register their children at one of the local childcare centres or how to find affordable housing. While there are several institutions in Nordstadt providing formal information for example on housing, newcomers still have to gain information on waiting lists for educational institutions or vacant flats. While previous immigrants, for example from Turkey or Spain, often have distinct family or friendship networks with strong ties at their places of residence through which they can receive necessary information (Farwick, Hanhörster, Ramos Lobato, & Striemer, 2019), our interviewees had only a very limited network of acquaintances available on arrival: "Many people here need help. I am one of them. I need someone to talk to. There are many things I often cannot describe in German. It has to be someone who listens to me and helps me" (Issam, 34, Syria).

Access to information on jobs, education, housing or health issues was a challenge not only for refugees like Issam who was desperately looking for a flat when he had to move out of his collective accommodation. The interviews revealed that all interviewees were in need of support to come to grips with their new circumstances. While transnational networks of friends and family—accessible via communication technology—can give emotional support, arrival-specific knowledge is necessary for gaining one's bearings in the new place of residence. As we will see in the following, this 'migrant social capital' is available in arrival neighbourhoods, where previous immigrants act as brokers (Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2018, p. 2).

An interesting aspect inductively derived from our empirical findings is that reciprocity plays an impor-

tant role in the transfer of arrival-specific knowledge. Generally speaking, reciprocity is to be understood as "doing for others what they have done for you" (Plickert, Côté, & Wellman, 2007, p. 406). Being part of a social network involves having reciprocal relationships. Though providing support, these may also include the obligation to give something back (Bailey, Besemer, Bramley, & Livingston, 2015). Reciprocity is understood as a universal norm (a 'golden rule'), whereby the form it takes is variable. While in the common understanding of 'reciprocity' a given resource is returned to the same person or passed on to another person within the network, reciprocity may also be expressed in a wider and—as we will show—more spontaneous social context (Plickert et al., 2007). This process is described by Phillimore, Humphris, and Khan (2017, p. 224) as 'informal reciprocity,' meaning that immigrants routinely share their arrival-specific knowledge with newcomers once they have become established.

Interestingly, the newcomers we interviewed in order to gain a better understanding of how they received resources also mentioned how they shared their experiences with others. The finding that reciprocity also plays a role in resource transfers via spontaneous foci-aided encounters not embedded in network structures was unexpected. Schillebeeckx et al. (2018, p. 149) call this process of passing on resources—such as information, practical or emotional help received on one's own arrival—to other newcomers as 'reciprocity within communities.' The following examples illustrate how different forms of contacts can lead to resource transfers and also initiate some kind of reciprocity at a later point of time when received resources are then shared among other newcomers.

But how can newcomers gain access to this arrival-specific knowledge without having distinct social networks? In the following section, we show that routinised and spontaneous foci-aided encounters with strangers in semi-public spaces can lead to further interaction, enabling different pathways into societal systems (Bloch & McKay, 2015). Our interviews show that newcomers' fleeting encounters with strangers in public spaces did not initially go beyond small-talk or greetings:

I say hello to many people; some I see again and again. But these are not people who visit me or whom I visit….We have no contacts like that. For me, contact means having to do with someone, seeing each other often, visiting each other regularly. But such street contacts—'Hello, how are you, what's new?'—happen every day, with many people. But nothing more. (Issam, 34, Syria)

This quote of Issam underlines that social interactions and resource transfers do not easily occur in public spaces (Valentine, 2008) and that certain settings are necessary to enable social interaction between strangers (Amin, 2002; Small, 2009), as illustrated in the following subsection.

4.2. Local Settings Facilitating Encounters and Resource Transfers

On the basis of a variety of situations described in the interviews, we identified different kinds of settings where routinised and spontaneous foci-aided encounters had led to resource transfers and sometimes even to further contacts. All described settings share characteristics of 'micro-publics' as described by Ash Amin (2002), i.e., connecting people in their everyday lives through common interests and activities. Yet, as described above, there are distinct modes of contacts and resource transfer. The following examples and narratives of recent immigrants reveal how newcomers may gain access to arrival-specific knowledge through recurring and routinised, and sometimes spontaneous encounters. The examples underline the relevance of specific settings facilitating social interaction and resource transfer.

The first example characterises an institutionally embedded resource transfer and thus stands for a routinised foci-aided encounter: support structures in a mosque frequented by Muslims of different nationalities, ethnic backgrounds and social status. Yousef, an 18-year-old immigrant from Palestine, describes how recurring and routinised encounters with different people at the mosque helped him gain his bearings in the new community, for example when he was looking for a flat: "What helped me were the people in the mosque, because I asked everywhere, all the people I know: 'I need a flat now'….They helped me a lot and that was very nice" (Yousef, 18, Palestine).

In this case, the arrival-specific knowledge was very much institutionalised and its provision closely linked to community 'membership.' Even though worship was the main purpose of his visiting the mosque, Yousef's example shows that recurring and routinised encounters with other Muslims at the mosque led to a transfer of resources by people who were not yet part of his networks.

The interview with Yousef also provides interesting insights into how reciprocity works inside such highly institutionalised settings. We see that reciprocity in the case of the mosque was not a mutual exchange of resources between two people, but instead a case of newcomers first receiving information and support and later passing them on to (new) members of the community: "I got a lot of support from them when I arrived. And now, I'm the one in touch with refugees who need help. Yes, I'm now involved in an Islamic foundation that organises camps for children, for the refugees" (Yousef, 18, Palestine).

The example of the mosque shows how reciprocity within communities can work. It illustrates that religion can be a decisive reason for mutual support and the passing on of resources (Hirschman, 2004).

The second story features Moussa, a 25-year-old immigrant from Morocco who, in the course of the interview, described his regular visits to an Arabian café where he could have a drink and chat with other Arabic-

speaking people. Moussa stressed that he generally got in touch with other people while sitting in the café: "I sit in a café and there are people looking around and sometimes other people smile at me and then we say 'hello' and the contact comes about. It's easy" (Moussa, 25, Morocco).

Being with other Arabic-speaking people gave Moussa the feeling of being at home. He described the situation in the café as an informal atmosphere facilitating spontaneous interaction with strangers. Whenever he needed help or information, he visited the café without knowing whom he would run into. He had trust in the solidarity of the other visitors to the café:

> You just meet in a café. The Arabic-speaking people are always in contact. As we all live in a foreign country, we have to stick together. If you need something or you're looking for a job, someone can help or show you. (Moussa, 25, Morocco)

The Arabian café is an example of a setting in which people with a similar background (in this case the same language and cultural background) meet to socialise. In our interviews we found similar situations in Turkish tea houses or cultural clubs where newcomers can meet up with previous immigrants and where arrival-specific knowledge is transferred. Even though Moussa is still in the process of arrival, he mentioned that he was already trying to help others whenever possible. This example thus illustrates that resource transfer is not dependent on the amount of capital a person has, but on whether there is a link (in the form of solidarity) between resource giver and taker (Farwick et al., 2019). In contrast to the mosque, the café's prime purpose is to provide an informal platform for communicating and sharing information among Arabic-speakers. Visitors do not need any 'membership' to receive support. Nevertheless, sitting in the café seems to imply a rule of communication and mutual support, based on a shared knowledge of arrival and difficulties faced in the new environment, for example to overcome barriers posed by limited language proficiency.

The third example describes how spontaneous encounters in less institutionalised semi-public spaces led to deeper contacts and resource transfer between newcomers and previous immigrants. Samuel—whose story was portrayed at the beginning of this article—received support from another football player who helped him a lot in finding a flat. Samuel plays football every week on a public football pitch in Dortmund's Nordstadt. Every Sunday, immigrants from different countries meet here to play football. According to Samuel, matches also involve informal conversations where players talk about their everyday problems. As players often change, Samuel gets into contact with many different people. As mentioned above, he received support from a teammate he did not know before. Again, also this example illustrates some form of reciprocity in support. In the in-

terview, he expressed his wish to share his knowledge and experiences with other newcomers:

> We met quite by chance. He [another newcomer] came from Italy. His wife was pregnant at the time and he didn't know anyone here. He was looking for an apartment and then we looked around a bit. I helped him. He found a flat over there. (Samuel, 34, Cameroon)

In the football example, a very informal "common activity" (Amin, 2002, p. 696) is the starting point for further interactions and resource transfers in the sense of sharing arrival-specific knowledge. Like several of our interviewees, Samuel is a good example of a person experiencing a common activity or shared interest in a little-institutionalised setting, resulting in further interactions and sometimes in concrete resource transfers. A further example is Diana, an 18-year-old immigrant from Uganda. Already in Germany for one year, she met another woman from Uganda while shopping in a so called 'Afro-shop,' a shop selling products from across Africa. In this case, the Afro-shop constituted an arrival-specific infrastructure, where products and services known to Diana from her home country were on offer. This setting again resulted in previously unknown people meeting up. Even though socialising was not the women's main purpose for visiting the Afro-shop, the setting was conducive to an informal opportunity for spontaneous interaction, leading to a low-threshold connection between the two women. The example shows that such shops can play an important role in the socialisation of recently arrived women, as they can act as platforms of interaction and information exchange (Jenkins, 2019). As Diana mentioned in the interview, she was able to benefit from the arrival-specific knowledge of the other woman: "[I got help] when I met her. That's how she helped me. Of course, she has lived here a lot longer" (Diana, 18, Uganda).

All these examples demonstrate that newcomers are significantly supported in their arrival processes by routinised and spontaneous encounters in different semi-public spaces. In all described settings and encounter situations, a common interest or an informal "common activity" (Amin, 2002, p. 696) was the starting point for further interaction with people who had experienced similar problems on arrival. Often serving as hubs for the transfer of arrival-specific knowledge (Schillebeeckx et al., 2018), such arrival-specific infrastructures can be understood as settings where 'old' and 'new' immigrants meet and mutually support each other. While the chosen examples like mosques, Arabian cafés and football pitches are mainly frequented by men, the interviewed women in charge of household routines and child-related activities seem to use (semi-)public spaces in a different way. Our female interviewees were greatly involved in daily (family) routines such as shopping at the local grocery store or dropping children off at school. As a consequence, their social interactions in (semi-)public spaces

tended to be more in the waiting room of the local general practitioner, the hairdresser or Afro-shop (as illustrated above), and less in explicitly leisure time settings such as a sports ground. In other words, the described settings in our examples are all quite gendered spaces (see also Hall, 2015, p. 859).

As illustrated above, most of our interviewees expressed the wish to support other newcomers after having received help from others. This reflects the important role played by reciprocity in the system of support between people with (migration) backgrounds—even if the resource transfer takes place outside their distinct network structures. We thus argue that "ties without substantial significance" ('absent ties,' Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361) are indeed significant for gaining access to arrival-specific knowledge. Even though one would not expect reciprocity to be of relevance in such contacts, our interviews illustrate that 'giving back' often characterises such spontaneous encounters.

5. Conclusion

The aim of our empirical analysis was to reveal how recently arrived immigrants draw on resources facilitating their individual arrival processes. The analysis shows that, alongside information and social support provided by NGOs and other formal institutions, newcomers can rely on more 'informal' ways of gaining access to arrival-specific knowledge, for example information on a vacant apartment or a job vacancy. As the interviewed newcomers had no distinct locally embedded social networks upon their arrival, encounters in semi-public spaces played an important role for them to come into contact and interact with other residents. Our research underlines that arrival neighbourhoods like Dortmund–Nordstadt offer many settings helping newcomers to 'navigate the system.' Arrival-specific infrastructures can trigger interactions and thereby offer access to different kinds of resources, ranging from emotional and practical support to resources supporting upward social mobility (Hall et al., 2017; Schillebeeckx et al., 2018). Drawing on the concept of micro-publics (Amin, 2002), we identified a variety of settings linking the everyday lives of people from different (migration) backgrounds. These settings feature different levels of institutionalisation, from formal mosques to informal football pitches.

Our interviews have shown that it is important to differentiate between different types of encounters: While fleeting encounters in public spaces were not mentioned (or remembered) by our interview partners as leading to resource transfer, encounters facilitating resource transfer took place in semi-public spaces, ranging from spontaneous foci-aided encounters to recurring and routinised foci-aided encounters. Even though these two types of contact do not differ in the form of resources they may provide, it is analytically helpful to differentiate them. While spontaneous foci-aided encounters en-

able resource transfer between strangers, routinised foci-aided encounters provide access to resources of loose acquaintances—people not yet belonging to a person's social networks. Both types of contact can thus support newcomers with few locally embedded networks in their arrival processes.

What conclusions can be drawn for urban planning? First of all, arrival-specific infrastructures are important settings where immigrants spend time, come into contact with each other and exchange resources. These settings, often concentrated in arrival areas, play an important role citywide. Planners should aim not to counteract these structures, for example by strategies promoting a social and ethnic residential mix, but to strengthen the local negotiation processes and—also temporary—appropriation processes of different groups. Nevertheless—and this needs to be highlighted—these settings allowing more 'informal' forms of resource access are no replacement for the formal support structures provided by the public sector.

The structuring of public spaces for encounters is considered as one of the major interventions in superdiverse urban neighbourhoods (Fincher, Iveson, Leitner, & Preston, 2014). However, Wilson (2017, p. 616) refers to the "unmanageable nature of encounter" and the difficulties related to such interventions. The shared migration background between 'old' and 'new' immigrants seems to form an important link, facilitating interactions and resource transfer. Newcomers can draw on the arrival experiences of other (more established) immigrants. Feelings of solidarity seem to be an underlying factor and individual motivation to pass on arrival-specific knowledge (Bynner, 2019, p. 347). Interestingly, our analysis shows that even spontaneous foci-aided encounters can provide a basis for reciprocity, whereby a given resource is not necessarily returned to the same person, but shared within a wider community whose members are not part of a distinct network (Schillebeeckx et al., 2018). The research reveals that in addition to immigrant's agency, the very existence of arrival infrastructures, resulting from the over-layering of 'old' and 'new' migration, plays an important role in gaining access to arrival-specific resources. Thus, arrival neighbourhoods provide newcomers with important resources not available in neighbourhoods dominated by national majorities (Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2018).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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