1. Introduction

As asylum-seeking to Europe surged in 2015 and the following years, scholars, politicians, churches, and individuals engaged in debate about appropriate responses. Media outlets directed attention towards the increase in migration, churches offered long-term and emergency outreach, and scholars debated the significance of the upswell of migration to Europe. Images of overcrowded boats crossing the Mediterranean Sea circulated worldwide and polarizing debates about a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border took center stage. As millions of people left their homes to seek the elements necessary to live and support themselves and their families, migration became a defining political and social issue.

The complexity of citizenship, borders, and social and political responses to migration reveal deeper impacts of migration. While migration is often contextualized in terms of access to resources, another thread runs deeper – migration brings questions of identity and belonging into the foreground. One way this belonging is concretized is through definitions of home. Home is a highly contextual topic that is relevant to the people, policies, and programs around asylum-seeking. Home is a word that often indicates a place where someone feels connected through emotions, memories, or longings. Migration is a lens to understand how people understand the word "home."

This book undertakes a critical examination of how home operates in the work of churches and the lives of those seeking asylum in Switzerland. It explores aspects of home within the experiences of asylum-seekers and in the practices of *Projekt DA-SEIN*, a church outreach program for refugees and asylum-seekers in Basel, Switzerland.[1] The surge in migration to Europe affected not only national policies and government, but also local communities. Towns absorbed newcomers; migration, citizenship, and borders became urgent topics in local municipalities; and non-governmental organizations, including churches, responded to the local social and physical needs of migrants. In Switzerland alone, 15,000 people applied for asylum

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1   See also: Andrea Bieler and Katherine Kunz, "Responding to the Loss of Home: Perspectives and Practices of Refugees in the Context of Projekt DA-SEIN in Basel (Switzerland)," in *Religion and Migration: Negotiating Hospitality, Agency, and Vulnerability*, ed. Andrea Bieler et al. (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019).

in 2018.[2] As communities faced changes to their local demographics, churches were involved in responding to the concerns of the local population as well as to asylum-seekers.

The *Offene Kirche Elisabethen* (OKE), in Basel, Switzerland, is one local church that responded in a way particular to its mission and central location in the city. The OKE fills a unique role in the city of Basel. It is part of the two main, historical Christian denominations, the Evangelical-Reformed Church of Basel and the Roman Catholic Church in Basel. While these two churches support some of the costs of the building, its pastors, and its programs, the OKE does not have a traditional church structure or offerings. Founded in 1994 in response to changes in religious affiliation, church demographics, and theological priorities, the OKE was the first *City Church* in Switzerland.[3] Its mission is to be a spiritual, cultural, and social resource for all people in the city of Basel, regardless of their religious beliefs or affiliation. In 2015, the OKE launched Projekt DA-SEIN, an outreach program for asylum-seekers and refugees in Basel and the surrounding cantons.[4] The program roughly translates as

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2   Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Eidgenössisches Justiz- und Polizeidepartement (EJPD), *Migration Report 2018* (State Secretariat for Migration, SEM, 2018), https://www.sem.admin. ch/dam/data/sem/publiservice/berichte/migration/migrationsbericht-2018-e.pdf.

3   The City Church movement began in Europe in the 1990s to address declining religious affiliation and the increased diversity of people and social, cultural, and religious needs in the city. City Churches engaged more actively with social and political issues facing the city and with people who do not affiliate with religious organizations or churches; they also initiated cultural, ecumenical, and interfaith projects. See Chapter 4 for an in-depth history of the OKE. See also: Klaus Teschner, *City-Kirche Modelle, Erfahrungen, Ideen Vortrag von Landeskirchenrat, gehalten auf der Herbstsynode des Kirchenkreises Barmen am 6. November 1993*, Wechsel-Wirkungen Traktate zur praktischen Theologie und ihren Grundlagen (Hartmut Spenner, 1994); Benedict Schubert, "City Churches: Mission with a New Face in Transforming European Cultural Context? Reflections on the Example of the 'Offene Kirche Elisabethen' in Basel," in *Contextuality in Reformed Europe: The Mission of the Church in the Transformation of European Culture*, ed. Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Hendrik M. Vroom, and Michael Weinrich, Currents of Encounter: Studies on the Contact between Christianity and Other Religions, Beliefs, and Cultures (Rodopi, 2004).

4   The Offene Kirche Basel is historically part of the Evangelical-Reformed Church of Switzerland (*Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche Schweiz* – EKS). In its current iteration as a City Church, it is a partnership between the EKS and the Roman Catholic Church of Basel. The EKS has addressed the increase of migration, especially asylum-seeking, both in the work of their congregations and as an ethical issue that should be addressed by regional and national governmental organizations. One area of particular focus for the EKS is pastoral care for asylum-seekers. The church partners with other religious denominations and organizations, including the Roman Catholic Church and the Association of Jewish Communities in Switzerland, to offer pastoral care through the State Secretariat for Migration (*Staatssekretariat für Migration* – SEM). For more details, see: Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche Schweiz et al., *Seelsorge im Bundesasylzentrum* (Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche Schweiz, 2019), https://www.evref.ch/themen/migrati on/asylseelsorge/.

"being there" and provides a place to gather, share a meal, and meet other refugees and Swiss volunteers while asylum-seekers navigate life in Switzerland and wait for results of their asylum applications. The program hopes to offer a "piece of home" to asylum-seekers and refugees in Basel by providing a place to gather, to connect with each other and Swiss volunteers, and to share a meal, play a game, or practice German.[5]

This book draws on ethnographic research conducted at Projekt DA-SEIN at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen in Basel, Switzerland, from February 2018 to January 2019. The primary participants in this study were recently arrived asylum-seekers still waiting for results of their asylum applications. In 2018, resolving asylum claims was usually a two- to three-year process. During my time at the program, I used ethnographic methods to record 55 participant observations, 67 informal interviews, and 16 formal interviews with asylum-seekers, volunteers, and staff members.

By identifying home as a significant locus of meaning-making and migration as a source of valuable experiences and insights, this book asks how the intersection of home and migration informs church responses to asylum-seekers, questions normative and assumed definitions of belonging, provides a lens for understanding migration as a critical event for individuals and communities, and situates home as a locus of meaning-making. These topics draw on three main scholarly threads: migration studies, sociology, and practical theology. The discourse on home includes contributions from philosophy, sociology, and theology as well as literature, feminist theory, and urban studies. Migration studies attends to migration trends, laws, issues of privilege and oppression, and empirical studies of migration experiences. Practical theology engages the practices of religious and social life to explore lived expressions of faith and theology. From the ethnographic data collected, I offer reflections on home as both personal and political, address possibilities and challenges for church outreach to asylum-seekers, and explore the impact of using relational ethnographic methods in a theological project. This book provides perspective on migration and home, adding to the literature on experiences of asylum-seeking and the work of local churches. This research generates practical theory about ethnographic research in migration, churches' engagement with migration, and social and religious theories of home.

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5   Offene Kirche Elisabethen, "Offene Kirche Elisabethen Geschichte: Kunstgeschichtliches," accessed May 17, 2019, https://www.offenekirche.ch/de/offenekirche/geschichte.html; Offene Kirche Elisabethen, "Die Offene Kirche Elisabethen (OKE)," accessed September 8, 2018, https://www.offenekirche.ch/de.html.

1.1   Overview and Context

Migration may describe people moving for education, career opportunities, and short-term relocations as well as those fleeing political persecution and violence, food shortages and climate chaos, and war and corruption. This book focuses on migration in Basel, Switzerland in 2018 through the experiences of asylum-seekers, many of whom were still waiting on the results of their asylum applications. This book considers understandings of home as both personal and political realities within this landscape of migration. It explores how one church, the Offene Kirche Elisabethen, in Basel, Switzerland, balanced its theological commitments and leveraged its social location, providing a compelling example of church engagement with the practical, social, and spiritual aspects of home and migration.

1.1.1   Migration

Even as this book nears completion, new migration flows emerge, including as a result of the war in Ukraine, beginning in February 2022. Many others flee regime change in Afghanistan; are displaced by national policies, such as those in Myanmar and Venezuela; or become subject to continued political upheaval, war, and corruption, such as those fleeing Syria, Eritrea, and South Sudan.[6] Even in wealthier countries, such as in the United States, people are increasingly displaced internally by wildfires, flooding, and other extreme weather patterns. The number of people on the move and the percentage of the world's population they represent is greater than at any other time in recent human history. According to the United Nations, in 2015 there were an estimated 244 million international migrants (3.3% of the world's population), including 19.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers.[7] This represents a 41% increase of migrants since 2000.[8] In 2020, international migration increased to 281

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6   For more information about current refugee flows, see the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) at https://www.unhcr.com.

7   United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *International Migration Report 2015: Highlights* (United Nations, 2015), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3921645?ln=en&v=pdf.

8   International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2022* (UN Migration, 2023), https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022. The report details the changes in migration flows as follows: "The estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past 50 years. In 2020, almost 281 million people lived in a country other than their country of birth, or about 128 million more than 30 years earlier, in 1990 (153 million), and over three times the estimated number in 1970 (84 million). The proportion of international migrants as a share of the total global population has also increased, but only incrementally."

million people (3.6% of the world's population), despite increased mobility restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.[9]

Yet, migration is not a new phenomenon. The planet was populated by human migration, emerging out of the African continent, and people have been motivated to leave their current home to work, explore, exploit, trade, and follow curiosity ever since. People have migrated to expand empires as well as to follow their desires to improve personal circumstances. Migration has also been an established way of life for nomadic communities who follow food, water, or weather. With the rise of the nation-state, migration met fixed barriers at delineated borders, that are sometimes real but are more often imagined or enforced by systems of power. Borders have existed for a long time, whether as the environmental borders of land, ocean, rivers, and ecosystems or as the linguistic and cultural borders between communities. Yet, the borders of nation-states brought bureaucratic organization and more centralized control.[10] This can be traced though histories of citizenship, immigration laws, and passports, which became standard only after the First World War, and will be explored in the Swiss context in greater detail in Chapter 3. In addition to the increase in border regimes, globalization and technological advances have improved the speed of movement of information, ideas, and goods, but not necessarily the equitable distribution of economic and cultural resources among people. The 2017 United Nations Migration report describes this phenomenon:

> In today's increasingly interconnected world, international migration has become a reality that touches nearly all corners of the globe. Modern transportation has made it easier, cheaper and faster for people to move in search of jobs, opportunity, education and quality of life. At the same time conflict, poverty, inequality and a lack of sustainable livelihoods compel people to leave their homes to seek a better future for themselves and their families abroad.[11]

The circumstances that spur migration are increasing, not decreasing. Yet many countries have responded with nationalist and protectionist policies.

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9   International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2022*; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Population Division, *International Migration 2019 Highlights* (ST/ESA/SER.A/439) (United Nations, 2019), https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/files/documents/2020/Jan/un_2019_internationalmigration_highlights.pdf; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *International Migration Report 2017: Highlights* (ST/ESA/SER.A/404) (United Nations, 2017), https://www.unpopulation.org.

10   Regina Polak, *Migration, Flucht und Religion: Praktisch-Theologische Beiträge, Band 1: Grundlagen* (Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 2017), 31–32.

11   United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *International Migration Report 2017*.

The increase in migration to European countries, beginning in 2015, has been called a "migration crisis," especially by countries forced to adapt and to increase their capacity to respond to an influx of new people. Yet, migration has always been here and will continue in the future. Marc Engelhardt, a news reporter who has covered migration extensively, challenges the term "migration crisis," used to describe current migration flows. Instead, he argues that we are living with a "migration revolution."[12] Continued conflicts, climate change, globalization, and other political and social factors will cause migration to continue. Even as distinct crises ebb and surge, migration will appear in new places and in new forms, impacting populations, economies, and politics in the places that migrants leave, travel through, and arrive at. One reason for the increased media and political focus on migration is the increase in migration to wealthier countries, such as those in North America and Europe. Yet, the majority of migrants move either internally (within their country of origin) or to neighboring countries.[13] In 2017, nearly half of all refugees and asylum-seekers resided in Northern Africa and Western Asia.[14] In 2018, there were 3.5 million people worldwide who were waiting on results of asylum applications.[15] Of these, just 15,000 people applied for asylum in Switzerland in 2018.[16]

The current response to refugee migration is rooted in the 1951 Refugee Convention. The 1951 Refugee Convention was a response to the mass dislocation of people after the Second World War. The Convention's protocols were revised in 1967 to expand its coverage beyond Europe and make the protections offered to World War II refugees universal.[17] Europe was significantly impacted by migration following the Second World War and many families were personally affected by the movement,

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12   Marc Engelhardt, ed., *Die Flüchtlingsrevolution: Wie Die Neue Völkerwanderung Die Ganze Welt Verändert*, 2. Auflage (Pantheon, 2016).

13   The category of "international migrants" includes two more specific sub-populations: immigrants (voluntary migration) and refugees (forced migration). Yet it is rarely simple to parse out the reasons why individuals migrate. Economic, environmental, political, and personal safety may all contribute to the choice to migrate.

14   United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Population Division, *International Migration 2019 Highlights*.

15   UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018* (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019), https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf.

16   Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

17   UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees: Text of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; Text of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; Resolution 2198 (XXI) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly; with an Introductory Note by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (United Nations, 2010), https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html. This revision to the 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."

and loss, of people during this time. Today global demographics and migration flows have shifted and those seeking asylum are mostly non-European. Despite similar experiences and the guarantees of the Refugee Convention, the protection of current asylum-seekers is often contested. Judith Gruber argues that Europe has "an amnesia of migrational experiences."[18] Despite a history of migration, European countries often emphasize homogeneous identities. Such amnesia contributes to a backlash against migration and a rise of nationalist sentiments that fixate on difference among migrants while emphasizing similarities within established communities.

Considering migration as an enduring reality, instead of a short-term crisis, results in different approaches to addressing the people, places, and processes of migration. Instead of something to be fixed and eliminated, migration has a place within political, social, and economic frameworks. Instead of being marginal and in need of assimilation, migrants have their own authenticity and right to exist. Yet, current responses to migration have frequently led to situations that marginalize those migrating and center the needs of more settled populations.

The ways national governments have responded to recent migration can marginalize migrant perspectives and needs. Migration is often considered as a threat to national identities and to the policies designed to meet the needs of citizens or permanent residents (while others fall outside of these political structures). The impacts of asylum-seeking on nation-states are broad and include redirecting national budgets, changing demographics of local communities, and increasing contact between different beliefs and lifestyles. These challenges have led to a rise in exclusionary forms of nationalism and an increase in political movements that maintain a perceived status quo through xenophobia and "othering." These movements are often supported by rhetoric harkening back to definitions of national identity based on race, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, beliefs, language, or other characteristics of the dominant group. Fueled by such narratives, populist parties, such as those seen in both Europe and the United States, lay claim to essential and concrete definitions of what it means to belong. While migrants are often contrasted with national populations, the reality is much more complicated. National populations include citizens, legal residents, visitors, and diverse ethnicities, languages, and religions. Agreements like those that form the European Union further open borders (to some people). In Switzerland this diversity is seen in its four national languages, the many international residents (especially due to its banking and pharmaceutical sectors), and a history of immigration to and from other European countries.[19]

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18   Judith Gruber, "Remembering Borders: Notes Toward a Theology of Migration," in *Migration as a Sign of the Times: Towards a Theology of Migration*, ed. Judith Gruber and Sigrid Rettenbacher, Currents of Encounter, vol. 52 (Brill Rodopi, 2015), 81.

19   For more information on migration in Switzerland, see Chapter 3.

This project develops new frameworks with which to theorize, engage, and practice home in the context of migration. New intersections of home and migration emerge by considering political, social, and theological discourses on home, examining church practices in the context of migration, and centering the experiences of asylum-seekers.

1.1.2   Home

Home is often perceived as a neutral or innocent word associated with personal experiences of safety, belonging, and familiarity. Yet, home also has political implications. It delimits borders, defines membership, and describes acceptable practices. Home is something that is defended from outsiders, debated during cultural and generational shifts, and fortified through borders, both symbolic and physical. Concepts of home have been part of colonial projects, have served to reinforce ethnic and racial discrimination, and have been called upon to shore up borders against migration. A 2018 article in the German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, asked "Is this my homeland?"[20] The article describes concern and fear about the influence of Islam on German identity and definitions of home, and in doing so it invites readers to define a German home through a certain language, a certain religion, and certain cultural practices. Home is not necessarily, or not only, the actual practices that occur there; home is formed through the feelings, memories, and affective associations generated by these practices.

Heimat is one of several words for home in German. *Heimat* is often translated as "homeland," yet its particular meaning and resonance are distinct from the English word for home. *Heimat's* complex relationship to German-speakers' sense of home and belonging, as well as to German and European history, will be discussed in Chapter 2. Yet, *Heimat* is more than just the place that is considered home. It often refers to nostalgic and affective associations with particular places, languages, and customs and designates an emotional connection to home.[21]

Building affective attachments across geographic areas is part of the project of nation-state building, which takes place by generating so-called "imagined communities" that connect otherwise unconnected people through the creation of shared histories, attitudes, and beliefs.[22] Since home is often understood through familiar

20   Matthias Bartsch et al., "Neue Heimat," *Der Spiegel*, April 14, 2018.

21   Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*, Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Camden House, 2011); Friederike U. Eigler, "Critical Approaches to 'Heimat' and the 'Spatial Turn,'" *New German Critique* 115 (2012), https://www.jstor.org/stable/23259389.

22   Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, with the assistance of Richard O'Gorman, ACLS Humanities E-Book (Verso, 2006), 6. Anderson describes his definition of these communities and nations as having dual imagined qualities.

and affective associations, the unfamiliar can then serve to designate who does not belong. This sense of home can become a boundary marker that protects a sense of collective identity. Thus, conceptions of home operate in multiple directions, creating life-affirming attachments while also generating life-denying policies and practices.

How home is inserted in political, cultural, and religious discourses around border and migration politics is highly contested and ambivalent. Home is a political sentiment appearing directly in uses of words such as homeland or *Heimat*. The political use of the word home is seen in the German *Heimatministerium*[23] (Homeland Ministry) and the United States' Department of Homeland Security,[24] and indirectly in wording such as the Swiss citizenship requirement to "be familiar with the Swiss way of life."[25] *Heimat* and homeland have been reclaimed in these examples, often through the selective appropriation of history, to emphasize borders and determine criteria for belonging.[26] The word *Heimat* is often associated with idyllic and stereotypical foods, dress, and landscapes. Seemingly innocent, idealized renderings of home can project a false innocence that is often destructive.[27] In the United States, this is seen in rhetoric that defends "our country" from "outsiders," despite the legacy of settler colonialism, the decimation of the native population, and the history of slavery. Anxiety about home is often anxiety about belonging and identity and can fixate on people and practices that are different and threaten this sense of belonging.

"I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."

23 Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat, "Bundesministerium Des Innern und Für Heimat: Homepage," accessed January 28, 2024, last modified 2023, https://www.bmi.bund. de/; Ben Knight, "What Is Germany's New Heimat Ministry for?," *Deutsche Welle*, February 12, 2018, https://www.dw.com/en/a-deeper-look-at-germanys-new-interior-and-heimat-minis try/a-42554122.

24 The United States Department of Homeland Security was established in 2002 to unify efforts to support and protect domestic and civilian areas. It brought together 22 existing federal departments and agencies including the U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. See: Department of Homeland Security, "History," accessed January 2, 2025, https://www.dhs.gov/history.

25 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer und über die Integration (Ausländer- und Integrationsgesetz, AIG)*, 142.20 (Fedlex, 2005), https://w ww.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20020232/index.html#a83; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Federal Department of Justice and Police, FDJP, *Swiss Citizenship / Naturalization* (Staatssekretariat für Migration, SEM, 2019), https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/h ome/themen/buergerrecht.html; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

26 Daniel Schreiber, "Heimatministerium: Deutschland Soll Werden, Wie Es Nie War," *Der Zeit*, February 10, 2018, https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2018-02/heimatministerium-heimat-rechtsp opulismus-begriff-kulturgeschichte/komplettansicht.

27 Blickle, *Heimat*.

1.1.3   Research on Home

Knowledge of home is drawn from lived experience and theoretical inquiry and spans the theological, social, political, and personal. This work of defining home includes knowledge and interpretations from those often marginalized from discourses, including asylum-seekers. While all cultures and communities create knowledge, how widely that knowledge is shared, accepted, and valued varies. Some people and groups are subject to hermeneutical marginalization, which occurs when interpretive resources to understand their experiences are lacking.[28] People impacted by this may include those whose experiences are marginal or who belong to groups with less structural power. Hermeneutical marginalization is a form of epistemic injustice, as described by philosopher Miranda Fricker. Epistemic injustice is "a kind of injustice in which someone is wronged specifically in her capacity as a knower."[29] Epistemic injustice can perpetuate injustices and bolster systems that benefit those who have knowledge. As Fricker explains, hermeneutical marginalization is "a situation in which some social groups have less than a fair crack at contributing to the shared pool of concepts and interpretive tropes that we use to make generally shareable sense of our social experiences."[30] Because of this tendency, dismantling hermeneutical systems is critical to broadening knowledge on diverse subjects, including home.

Any research about a population that has less power, is marginal, or is subject to exploitation must contend with issues of power and privilege. One challenge is the tendency towards othering in any research that looks from a place of greater power towards the margins. This othering is the phenomenon that sets individuals or groups apart, often with negative attributes. Drawing on the works of previous theorists, including Jacques Lacan, the term othering was re-coined in 1985 within postcolonial studies by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.[31] In postcolonial studies othering occurs through stereotyping, through racializing, and through systems

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28   José Medina, "Varieties of Hermeneutical Injustice," in *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, ed. Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus (Routledge, 2017), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315212043-4.

29   Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 20.

30   Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Injustice and the Preservation of Ignorance," in *The Epistemic Dimensions of Ignorance*, ed. Rik Peels and Martijn Blaauw (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 163.

31   Gayatri C. Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives," *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985); Oscar Thomas-Olalde and Astride Velho, "Othering and Its Effects – Exploring the Concept," in *Writing Postcolonial Histories of Intercultural Education*, ed. Heike Niedrig and Christian Ydesen, Interkulturelle Pädagogik und Postkoloniale Theorie, Bd. 2 (Peter Lang, 2011).

of power.[32] Othering sets up an "us versus them" dichotomy that can essentialize groups, ignore individual differences, and fail to acknowledge the ways difference exists in the dominant discourse. What is familiar and accepted becomes defined by that which it is not. This appears through the use of normative terms and assumed, stereotypical qualities. Because understandings of home are so often associated with what is familiar and comfortable, home is particularly subject to dichotomizing in terms of what does and does not belong.

Expanding hermeneutical possibilities means not only "including" other voices in the conversation but also challenging systems that silence and mishear. These systems can present monolithic interpretations of concepts while ignoring the multiplicity and diversity that exist in collective contexts.[33] In this way, home can become rigid, fixed, and ideological and associated with what is sentimental, comfortable, or safe. Individual or personal definitions of home can become conflated with what is established, pseudo-historical, and normative. In these configurations, home becomes the opposite of that which is different and not-home, or the "unhomely." As Michael Nausner writes, "the dominant sense of home seems to me to be achieved by purging it of the uncanny, the strange, the foreign – by projecting it outward, onto the other."[34] This projection serves not only to exclude those who are different but also to ascribe undesirable aspects of home exclusively to those outside of familiar systems and to exclude what is different and unfamiliar.[35] Instead, critical theorist Homi K. Bhabha advocates for starting from the perspective of impermanence and centering the "misfits," those who do not fit neatly into the dominant categories of home and belonging, such as refugees.[36] Feminist scholar Sara Ahmed goes on to describe the danger of home becoming too sentimental and rigid and excluding those on the margins. She writes, "Home is implicitly constructed as a purified space of belonging in which the subject is too comfortable to question the limits or borders of her or his experience, indeed, where the subject is so at ease that she or he does not think."[37] Asking questions and examining dis-ease in contexts of home are critical to

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32 Sune Qvotrup Jensen, "Othering, Identity Formation, and Agency," *Qualitative Studies* 2, no. 2 (2011), https://doi.org/10.7146/qs.v2i2.5510. See also: The Othering and Belonging Institute, https://belonging.berkeley.edu/.

33 José Medina, "Varieties of Hermeneutical Injustice," 43.

34 Michael Nausner, "Homeland as Borderland: Territories of Christian Subjectivity," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera (Chalice Press, 2004), 118–19.

35 Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (Routledge, 2000), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203349700.

36 Homi K. Bhabha and Klaus Stierstorfer, "Homi K. Bhabha in Interview with Klaus Stierstorfer on 'Diaspora and Home,'" in *Diasporic Constructions of Home and Belonging*, ed. Florian Kläger and Klaus Stierstorfer (De Gruyter, 2015), 11, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110408614-002.

37 Ahmed, *Strange Encounters*, 87–88.

challenging comfortable responses to migration in personal, political, and religious spaces.

In theological language, broadening hermeneutical possibilities occurs by more broadly considering spaces where religion exists, and where theology might be produced. The field of lived religion considers how faith and religious practice occur in the everyday lives of people and puts these observations in conversation with theological knowledge. It considers both experiences and teachings as valid sources of knowledge and as critical to developing theological understandings. Catholic theology utilizes the concept of a *locus theologicus* – a site of theology – to be more inclusive of where and how theology might arise.[38] This term is found especially in liberation theology, to emphasize how contextual experiences become concrete places of generating knowledge.[39] Theology is found in lived experiences, and especially in the lived experiences of the marginalized and vulnerable. Theologian Regina Polak challenges scholars to consider migration as a *locus theologicus.* She writes, "Every theology dealing with migration must thus include the voices of people with a migration history; otherwise, it cannot do justice to presence, nor can theology understand its own migration tradition properly."[40] This approach to theology not only prioritizes other knowledge sources, it also challenges established and monolithic narratives about migration. Presence opens up spaces that can create room for multiple and disparate practices, possibilities, and knowledges. These efforts attempt to counter hermeneutical marginalization by engaging alternative perspectives and challenging assumed definitions. Philosopher José Medina writes:

> [W]e should all feel responsible to facilitate, in any way we can, the hermeneutical agency of eccentric voices and perspectives that resist established meanings and communicative dynamics, and work toward the formation of original meanings, alternative expressive styles, and new horizons of interpretation.[41]

By including the perspectives and experiences of asylum-seekers, this book hopes to expand the meaning of and interpretive frameworks for home, migration, and church. This book engages asylum-seeking as a site of knowledge production in theological, social, and political arenas by considering, through the experiences of asylum-seekers, the tenuous but also central relationship of home to migration.

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38   Regina Polak, "Migration as a Sign of the Times: Questions and Remarks from a Practical-Theological Perspective," in *Migration as a Sign of the Times: Towards a Theology of Migration*, ed. Judith Gruber and Sigrid Rettenbacher, Currents of Encounter, vol. 52 (Brill Rodopi, 2015).

39   Polak, "Migration as a Sign of the Times," 47–78. See also essays in this volume by: Judith Gruber, Gemma Tulud Cruz, and Hans-Joachim Sander.

40   Polak, "Migration as a Sign of the Times," 54. By presence, Polak means God's presence, which can create space in assumed and established definitions.

41   José Medina, "Varieties of Hermeneutical Injustice," 49.

1.1.4   Borders

Theologians Judith Gruber and Sigrid Rettenbacher describe migration as both a physical event and an experience of identity formation. "Migrations [...] are contested sites of identity negotiations: they are not simply a process of border crossings but more so of border shiftings."[42] The shifting of borders, whether concrete or imagined, occurs for those who experience migration as well as for those who remain settled. As borders shift, identity, meaning, and belonging are suspended from their habitual frameworks and new understandings are both necessary and possible. In ecological language, an ecotone is a space between two types of terrains where, for example, a prairie meets a forest and the two blend, merge, and shift. One way that experiences of migration generate new perspectives and knowledge is by crossing and redefining borders between regions, cultures, and nations, thus creating new intersections at the personal, social, and political levels.

Migration necessitates understanding the border as something that must be crossed, breeched, and negotiated. Yet, the border is not a single entity and crossing it is not a one-time event. Theologian Kwok Pui-lan, writing about migration, says, "I prefer to use 'border passage' instead of 'border crossing' to indicate that it is a continuous journey and not a *fait accompli*."[43] The border remains present in migration stories, even after it is crossed. Migration means dwelling at the border where the established norms of life, whether on one or the other side of the border, do not fully apply. As theologian Gemma Tulud Cruz describes in her theology of migration, "To cross the border is to live on a border."[44] Dwelling at this in-between place makes everyday questions of belonging, identity, and home more complex. This complexity occurs at the physical level in terms of securing housing, material provisions, personal safety, and legal rights. There is also emotional and symbolic complexity in the negotiation of connections and commitments to family, country of origin, communities, and one's own self.

Borders add ambivalence and challenge the insistence on permeance. Home can include crossing and being located on the border as well as remaining in a place that is established and familiar. Chicana feminist scholar Gloria Anzaldúa describes her experience of borders in her book *Borderlands/La Frontera* – from the physical border of the U.S.-Mexico border to the borders of identity, emotion, and body. She writes,

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42   Judith Gruber and Sigrid Rettenbacher, "Preface," in *Migration as a Sign of the Times: Towards a Theology of Migration*, ed. Judith Gruber and Sigrid Rettenbacher, Currents of Encounter, vol. 52 (Brill Rodopi, 2015), 1.

43   Kwok Pui-lan, "A Theology of Border Passage," in *Border Crossings: Cross-Cultural Hermeneutics*, ed. Devadasan N. Premnath (Orbis, 2007), 104.

44   Gemma Tulud Cruz, *An Intercultural Theology of Migration: Pilgrims in the Wilderness*, Studies in Systematic Theology (Brill, 2010), 122.

"A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition."[45] These qualities of emotion and transition are not antithetical to home; they inform a deeper understanding of home for those who migrate as well as for those who remain in one place.

Migration has powerful and far-reaching impacts on nations and economies as well as communities and individuals. Viewing migration as an enduring reality foregrounds the perspectives of people seeking asylum and considers migration as a valid location for creating policies, generating meaning, and shaping social responses, not from a crisis mentality, but from a dynamic reality. From this place, this book seeks to build more flexible understandings of home and migration.

1.2 Migration and Churches

To build deeper understandings of home and migration, this book explores the role of churches and their religious, social, and political engagements with home and asylum-seeking. Increased migration to Europe caused churches and faith communities to join the political conversation about migration, reflect on theological engagement with migration, and offer practical aid to asylum-seekers and refugees.[46] As Frank Lorenz, pastor of the Offene Kirche Elisabethen, explained in my interview with him, "Because of the things that happen right now, because of the migration and refugee matter, we have to rethink our society structures and our approach towards religion in the public space, in church, religion, and society. Nobody can afford to not say something."[47] As migration to Europe increased in 2015, church bodies and individual congregations made both theological and political statements and appeals about the treatment of migrants.[48] These included local congregations and Swiss church bodies, including the mainline Protestant Church in Switzerland, the

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45   Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 4th ed. (Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 25.

46   Daniel G. Groody, "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees," *Theological Studies* 70 (2009), https://doi.org/10.1177/004056390907000306.

47   Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, January 15, 2019: 20190115_1EI_IN.

48   It is worth noting that these documents and church programs do not reflect the diversity of opinions about migration, either at the congregational or individual level. Denominations include churches in different geographic areas that represent distinct social, economic, and political milieus. In addition, congregants in these churches hold differing political opinions, are of different socio-economic status, and prioritize varied social issues and theological perspectives. Religion is not immune from the tendency to create purified spaces of belonging. Churches in many countries are explicitly or implicitly part of national identities, which in some cases skew toward an exclusive nationalism, curtailing friendliness or promoting aggression toward migrants.

Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche, and larger denominational bodies, such as the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (WCC).[49] Some churches responded with support for asylum-seekers based on commitments of hospitality and care for the stranger as well as theological teachings that emphasize Jesus' experience as a refugee, the gift of creation, and God's unconditional love.[50]

In its current iteration as a City Church, the OKE is a partnership between the Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche Schweiz (EKS) and the Roman Catholic Church of Basel. The EKS has addressed the increase of migration, especially asylum-seeking, both in the work of their congregations and as an ethical issue that should be addressed by regional and national governmental organizations. One area of particular focus for the EKS is pastoral care for asylum-seekers. The church partners with other religious denominations and organizations, including the Roman Catholic Church and the Association of Jewish Communities in Switzerland, to offer pastoral care through the State Secretariat for Migration.[51] For example, in 2018 the EKS participated in the Interreligious Declaration on Refugee Issues (*Interreligiöse Erklärung zu Flüchtlingsfragen*), which brought together religious organizations and theological thinking from the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian traditions. It points out that each person is a creation of God, emphasizes hospitality, and underscores the human value and dignity of all people, including migrants.[52] Based on the outlined theologies, the document appeals to governments for the ethical treatment of asylum-seekers and a moral approach to migration policies.

Churches engage with migration through a range of programs. These include government contracts for providing resettlement services; social groups, such as sports and conversation groups; and activist movements, such as the Sanctuary Movement. In Switzerland, the federal and local governments partner with non-go-

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49   The World Council of Churches is an international, ecumenical organization of 350 churches which promotes partnerships among churches, especially in the areas of mission, ecumenism, and *Diakonia* (social outreach). For more information see: https://www.oikoumene.org/.

50   For examples see: Andrea Fröchtling, "*The Other*" is My Neighbour: Developing an Ecumenical Response to Migration (World Council of Churches Publications, 2013), https://www.urc.org.uk/images/mission/at_home_strange/The_Other_Is_My_Neighbour_WCC.pdf; C. J. P. Niemandt, "Together Towards New Life for Missiology? Mission and Missiology in the Light of the World Council of Churches 2013 Policy Statement," *Acta Theologica* 35, no. 2 (2016), https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v35i2.6; World Council of Churches, *Christmas Statement* (World Council of Churches, 2018), https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/christmas-statement; Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche Schweiz et al., *Seelsorge im Bundesasylzentrum*.

51   Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche Schweiz et al., *Seelsorge im Bundesasylzentrum*.

52   UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, Schweiz und Schweizerischer Israelitischer Gemeindebund (SIG) et al., *Gegenüber ist immer ein Mensch: Interreligiöse Erklärung zu Flüchtlingsfragen* (Schweizerischer Rat der Religionen (SCR), 2018), https://www.ratderreligionen.ch/wp-content/uploads/Interreligi%C3%B6se-Erkl%C3%A4rung-zu-Fl%C3%BCchtlingsfragen_DE.pdf.

vernmental organizations (NGOs), including churches, to work with refugees and asylum-seekers. The work of NGOs includes implementing integration policies and systems, running language schools and vocational training programs, providing legal support, managing housing, and offering recreational, religious, and cultural programs.

Other secular and religious organizations in Basel provide services to asylum-seekers in areas ranging from legal aid to education to social programs. In 2018, two main secular organizations provided legal counsel to migrants: *GGG Basel* and *Beratungstelle für Asylsuchende der Region Basel* (BAS). GGG is an independent non-profit organization (*Verein*). BAS is supported by the Swiss social service arms of the Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche and the Roman Catholic churches (HEKS-EPER and Caritas). These organizations assist in providing services to support asylum-seekers, and other migrants, in navigating the immigration process. In addition, national programs such as the Swiss Refugee Aid (*Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe*) and the GGG provide services, consultations, and classes to asylum-seekers. Churches in Basel, including Protestant, Catholic, and Evangelical churches, also offer their own outreach to asylum-seekers. These include the *Matthäuskirche*, an Evangelical-Reformed Church, which hosts a program, *Mitenand*, that every Sunday provides a place for migrants as well as other marginalized individuals to gather, share food, and participate in a religious service. An ecumenical program, *Seelsorge für Asylsuchende*, provides pastoral care opportunities for asylum-seekers. The program also offers childcare, clothing, counseling, and social support, and a drop-in café for conversation and language learning.[53]

In addition to Projekt DA-SEIN, the Offene Kirche Elisabethen serves as the host for an organization called Coordination Point for Volunteers with Refugees (*Koordinationsstelle Freiwillige für Flüchtlinge*), also known as KoFfF, which is sponsored by the canton of Basel-Stadt and the *Christoph Merian Stiftung*.[54] It is targeted towards Swiss citizens or residents who want to work with asylum-seekers and refugees and provides general information about volunteer work, opportunities to network across programs, and descriptions and contact information for a diversity of migration-

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53   GGG Migration, "GGG Migration: Willkommen," accessed August 25, 2020, https://www.ggg-migration.ch/; Beratungsstelle für Asylsuchende BAS der Region Basel, *Jarhresbericht 2018* (HEKS-EPER, Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz; CARITAS, Caritas beider Basel, 2018), https://www.bas-basel.ch/media/BAS_Jahresbericht_2018.pdf; Matthäuskirche, Basel, "Sonntagszimmer – Mitenand," accessed August 20, 2019, http://rehovot.ch/mitenand/mitenand/; Oekumenischer Seelsorgedienst für Asylsuchende, "Willkommen beim OeSA," accessed July 20, 2019, https://www.oesa.ch/; Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz, Kanton Basel-Stadt, "Koordinationsstelle Freiwillige für Flüchtlinge Basel (KOFFF)," accessed September 29, 2020, https://www.srk-basel.ch/jugendrotkreuz/kofff.

54   Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz, Kanton Basel-Stadt, "Koordinationsstelle Freiwillige für Flüchtlinge Basel (KOFFF)."

focused non-governmental organizations. It lists opportunities offered by over 100 religious and secular organizations in areas ranging from education, to recreation, to health.

Some churches, such as the OKE, engage in outreach and direct services to migrants. These programs arise from the organizations' commitments to work with refugees and asylum-seekers. Through these engagements churches fulfill a theological and spiritual role while also occupying social and political spaces within civil society.

1.3   Overview of Chapters

This book weaves together research on home and asylum-seeking with the specific context of Basel, Switzerland, and the work of Projekt DA-SEIN at Offene Kirche Elisabethen. Chapter 2 explores scholarly perspectives on home from the disciplines of sociology, philosophy, and theology. The chapter begins by examining a common association of home with place. Instead of viewing home as a static location, the spatial turn in the social sciences provides tools to view place as a more relational and dynamic experience. Home is also characterized by affective associations such as feelings, moods, and memories. These affective experiences create meanings that transcend the basic elements of place. Narratives, longings, and absence are related to affective associations that also characterize experiences of home. Staying and leaving are both part of home.[55] The chapter further explores home in specific contexts of migration, culture and politics, and religion.

Chapters 3 to 5 elaborate on the context and background material of the research project. Chapter 3 provides context for the political and social realities of migration in Basel, Switzerland. It covers basic migration data and the process of seeking asylum, in Basel specifically and Switzerland broadly. The chapter also explores how Swiss requirements for citizenship and integration impact the experiences and possibilities of seeking asylum in Basel. I highlight a requirement for newcomers to Switzerland to "be familiar with the Swiss way of life."[56] This requirement, which is found in Swiss laws on citizenship, colors the approach Switzerland takes to asylum-seekers and reveals an emphasis on integration at all levels of the migration process.

Chapter 4 delves into the history of the Offene Kirche Elisabethen and the establishment of Projekt DA-SEIN by the church in 2015. This chapter traces the the-

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55   Karen Joisten, *Philosophie Der Heimat – Heimat Der Philosophie* (Akademie Verlag, 2003).

56   Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Federal Department of Justice and Police, FDJP, *Foreign Population and Asylum Statistics 2018* (Staatsekretariat für Migration, SEM, 2019), https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/publiservice/statistik/bestellung/auslaender-asylstatistik-2018-e.pdf.

ological and social threads that led to the creation of the OKE as an ecumenical City Church in Basel in 1994. The church's mission is rooted in a commitment to openness and to meeting the shifting social, cultural, and spiritual needs of all people in the city of Basel. Theological values of openness, ambivalence, and convivence shape the church's theology and outreach, including the establishment of Projekt DA-SEIN. Convivence is a practice of creating community with others instead of for others.[57] The term, which was used contemporarily in liberation theology, means "living with others"[58] and emphasizes communities of learning, helping, and celebrating that engage in ordinary activities of living together. The chapter ends with an overview of the motivations for founding Projekt DA-SEIN and the goals, structures, and programs that characterize the project.

Chapter 5 presents considerations on research with asylum-seekers and explores the book's ethnographic approach to researching home and migration at Projekt DA-SEIN. In this chapter I explore specific challenges of doing research with asylum-seekers, including securing interviews, scheduling and finding interview locations, and language and translation. The chapter concludes by advocating for a more relational, and even theological, approach to ethnographic research, one that takes seriously the co-production of knowledge and the necessity for the researcher to relinquish some control over research processes and outcomes.

The following sections, Chapters 6 to 8, present findings from my data that address home, migration, and ecclesiology. Chapter 6 explores how the Offene Kirche Elisabethen responds to those who have left their homes and considers how Projekt DA-SEIN creates "a piece of home" for asylum-seekers who have arrived in Basel. Home is not explicitly defined at Projekt DA-SEIN yet it is shaped in a particular social and theological context. From these contexts, aspects of home at the program are centered in welcome, helping, and "being there" together. I draw interpretations from my data that reveal how the program understands the kind of home that it hopes to offer to asylum-seekers through the engagement of its volunteers, its social location, and its theological commitments.

Chapter 7 draws on my ethnographic data that was gathered in my time with asylum-seekers in order to explore a particular aspect of home, namely home as place. This chapter, which draws from formal and informal interviews as well as conversations with asylum-seekers, addresses their perspectives on the home they left, the

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57   Theo Sundermeier and Volker Küster, *Konvivenz und Differenz: Studien zu einer Verstehenden Missionswissenschaft Anlässlich Seines 60. Geburtstages*, Missionswissenschaftliche Forschungen n.F., Bd. 3 (Verlag der Ev.-Luth. Mission, 1995).

58   Richard H. Bliese, "Convivenz and Globalization: The Church's Mission within North America's Religious Pluralism," in *Mit dem Fremden leben: Perspektiven einer Theologie der Konvivenz; Theo Sundermeier zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Dieter Becker, Missionswissenschaftliche Forschungen Neue Folge (Erlanger Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, 2000), 235.

experience of seeking asylum, and their attempts to find a new home. Place was often revealed as an important marker of home through geographic location, language, citizenship, and the meeting of basic needs, as well as through associations with family, especially mothers, and community roles. The experience of seeking asylum, because it is shaped by living between places and amid uncertainty, means that dislocation, absence, and multiplicity are also part of creating home and serve to organize places in new ways.

Chapter 8 explores home as connected to agency. This chapter also draws from formal and informal interviews with asylum-seekers and from participant observations at Projekt DA-SEIN to develop an understanding of relational agency and home. For asylum-seekers in Basel, agency included making places familiar by engaging in practices from their countries of origin as well as by utilizing public spaces and cultivating community. Agency took the form of taking responsibility for meeting migration requirements and finding new ways to engage in meaningful activities. Relational agency also appears in the conviviality, openness, and interdependence of Projekt DA-SEIN and serves to shape home for asylum-seekers in the context of Basel.

Chapter 9 concludes by reflecting on how the Offene Kirche Elisabethen attends to the public sphere by engaging asylum-seeking and home in the specific context of Basel and how migration creates new possibilities and challenges for churches. Drawing on the example of Projekt DA-SEIN, this chapter considers a theological engagement with a contested home through practices such as providing alternatives to isolation and creating rituals of grief and remembrance. Finally, I consider the role of vulnerability in understandings of home and I suggest "de-heimatizing"[59] belonging as a means of decoupling fixed definitions of home and place and engaging home as something located and informed by border spaces.

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59   This phrase is adapted from: Bilgin Ayata, "Prologue: Keynote De-Heimatize Belonging" ("De-Heimatize Belonging" Conference, Maxim Gorki Theater, Berlin, Germany, October 25, 2019), accessed April 17, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtQkdQT4IgE.