Preface

What began as an international conference successively became a colossal project. It took over six years from preparing the conference to subsequent publication of some of the papers, and thus far longer than planned. This is maybe not unusual, but this time the challenges were multiple and not always anticipated.

At the beginning we held the international conference ‘(Irregular) Transit Migration in the European Space’, which was held in April 2008 in Istanbul. It was funded by the Network of Excellence on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE), organised by the editors, as well as Hein de Haas from the International Migration Institute (IMI) at Oxford University and Ahmet İçduygu, Biriz Karacay and their team from Koç University, which also generously hosted the event.

The conference brought together researchers from all relevant regions in Europe and its neighbourhood. Twenty-six experts from the Russian, French and English speaking scientific community presented papers on the cases of Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Hungary, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt, Malta, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Morocco, Spain and Portugal, and on methodologies and research ethics; colleagues and PhD students from another ten countries (USA, UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, France, Italy, Turkey, Libya and Estonia) contributed to the discussion. This circled on concepts and definitions, constructions and discourses, EU and Russian migration and asylum politics, migrants’ strategies and smuggling, analyses and methods. Various perspectives were taken, as from sending (Moldova, Senegal) and receiving countries (Spain, Portugal), from staging posts (Mali), ‘dead end roads’ (Cyprus and Malta) and ‘transit countries’ (Ukraine, Turkey and Morocco).

For various reasons, not all papers could be considered for publication and not all papers could be published in one volume. Also, not all countries or regions that are transited by migrants are covered in this book. This is because first, not all regions are equally well researched and there remain research gaps; second, the cases presented here are considered to be precedent cases which also throw light on the countries not explicitly covered here; and third, more case studies would inevitably produce repetitive results. Some papers were made available in a special issue of Population, Space and Place published in 2011. Others went into a Russian volume which was published by University Books, Moscow, in 2009, which contains some of the chapters presented in this volume as well as contributions that were considered less
relevant for a Western audience. Several papers were made available online at the Centre for Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, at www.compas.ox.ac.uk/events/past_conferences_events.shtml. Finally, a policy brief was published at the IMISCOE website at www.imiscoe.org/publications/policybriefs/documents/PB12-Transitmigration-Duvell.pdf.

All chapters in this book are revised and updated versions of the conference papers. The main challenge, as it turned out, lay in the different scientific cultures of the scholars involved, the trilingual communication between editors, authors and translators and the actual translation of the chapters from Russian and French into a common language, English. All chapters were updated by additional research, they were revised several times, some had to be translated and retranslated (our thanks go to Alan Watt at the Central European University) due to quality issues, another translator had to be replaced and still some final language editing (thanks to Briony Truscott from the International Migration Institute) was necessary. All this was only made possible by a team effort and the hard work of additional translators who remained anonymous to most of the editorial consortium. Our thanks also go to some anonymous referees who compelled us to make some cumbersome but necessary revisions that improved the volume. We hope the readers appreciate these efforts and enjoy the book!

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Oxford, October 2013