

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY**

**ICT MEDIATIZATION OF CONGOLESE
MIGRATION CULTURE: ASPIRATIONS, DESIRES
AND HOPE**

Ph. D. Thesis

GÜLER CANBULAT KAMBA

ISTANBUL, 2020

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY**

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
CINEMA AND MEDIA RESEARCH (PH.D.)**

**ICT MEDIATIZATION OF CONGOLESE
MIGRATION CULTURE: ASPIRATIONS,
DESIRES AND HOPE**

Ph.D. Thesis

GÜLER CANBULAT KAMBA

Supervisor: PROF. NİLAY ULUSOY

ISTANBUL, 2020



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL
SCIENCES

13.01.2020

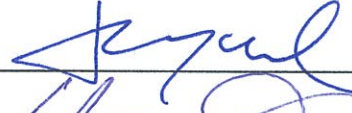
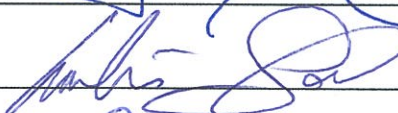
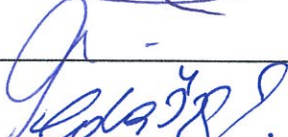
We hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under our supervision by
..Nilay Ulusoy..... entitled “..ICT Mediatization of Congolese
Migration Culture: Aspirations, Desires and Hope.....
.....” be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy Business Administration .

Thesis Supervisor


Prof. Dr. Nilay ULUSOY
Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi
İletişim Fakültesi
Sinema ve Televizyon Bölüm Başkanı

Recommendation concurred in:

Committee Members


Prof. Dr. Nilay Ulusoy

Doç. Dr. Levent Soysal

Prof. Dr. Mahir Şaul

Assist. Prof. Dr. Tolga Hepdinciler
Assist. Prof. Dr. Gonül Eke Özgül

Approved:


Prof. Dr. Nilay ULUSOY
Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi
İletişim Fakültesi
Sinema ve Televizyon Bölüm Başkanı
Program Coordinator

to my grandfather Hasan Canbulat



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Nilay Ulusoy for her encouragement and guidance that helped me overcome the difficult periods during the process of writing this dissertation.

I would like to thank my co-supervisor Assoc. Prof. Levent Soysal for giving me the inspiration to begin writing on this subject of study. His advice helped me find the perspective and shape the arguments of this dissertation.

I would like to thank Assist. Prof. Tolga Hepdinçler and Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Bozdağ for their constructive criticism during my follow-up juries. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Assist. Prof. Gönül Eda Özgül who accepted to be part of my defense jury.

I am grateful to Prof. Mahir Şaul whose work was my guide for this dissertation. He also read my drafts and gave me motivation to move forward with my work.

I am also grateful to TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) who deemed me worthy of their reputable PhD scholarship.

I could not have finished this dissertation without the support and love of my family and friends. First, I would like to thank my friends Assist. Prof. Özlem Yıldız and Assist. Prof. Şirin Fulya Erensoy. They were always the first to read my drafts and give me precious comments and suggestions. More importantly they made a great effort to make me believe in myself and that I could write this dissertation. Then, I would like to thank my friend Ayşe Bilge Yavuz who was always willing to listen to me whenever I needed someone to talk about my dissertation writing problems. I also owe my thanks to my husband Edy Kamba who took care of me and our daughter Ada. Thanks to him I could find the time to devote myself to writing this dissertation. Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to my mother İlkgül Canbulat and my father Lütfi Canbulat who were always there whenever I needed them and they patiently and unconditionally supported me with love.

I dedicate this dissertation to my deceased grandfather Hasan Canbulat. He was a dignified primary school teacher who graduated from the Village Institute of Pazarören. He was the first person who believed in me and my potential in academia. I've never forgotten his first lessons.

ABSTRACT

ICT MEDIATIZATION OF CONGOLESE MIGRATION CULTURE: ASPIRATIONS, DESIRES AND HOPE

Güler Canbulat Kamba

Cinema and Media Research (Ph. D.)

Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Nilay Ulusoy

January 2020, 210 pages

The primary concern of this dissertation is the affective and attitudinal motivations involved in the migration of migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and their usage within this context of information and communication technologies (ICTs). A mixed-methodological approach including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and digital ethnography is implemented in Istanbul, Turkey as case-study to research the topic.

Aspirations, desires, and hope around migration are ignited with the developments of digital communication as facilitated by ICTs that give access to and make people aware of other lives and other possibilities in other parts of the world. This dissertation first shows how migration is a cultural phenomenon fueled by those feelings and perspective of migrants as framed by a historical, vibrant, and continually evolving migration culture. It secondly and more specifically shows how the cultural aspects of migration materialize in the Congolese case as a personal, communal and socio-cultural desire to become a *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman (businessperson) is mediatized through the usage of ICTs.

Migration transforms a ‘home’ society and its structuring, a transformation that becomes institutionally embedded as a culture of migration, which, in turn, further generates the aspiration to migrate. In this dissertation, ways in which the aspirations, desires, and hope around Congolese migration are symbolized in the archetypal characters of the *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman/woman are centralized. Essentially, these characters are instilled in the Congolese migration culture as archetypal objects of desire that represent and motivate the ideal of the good life as attainable in the West. In order to understand how they operate in the psychic and material reality of the DRC and the Congolese people abroad, their historical background is explained and linked to the fieldwork conducted, with a focus on how they become mediatized through ICTs. This study thus contributes not only to the small but growing number of studies related to the ways in which aspirations, desires, and hope feed, combine with, and develop migration but also to

studies relating to the online connectivity and increasing mediatization of migrants through ICTs. In combining these two—relating, that is, the operation of migrants' aspirations, desires, and hope to the space of ICTs—this research fills a gap and thus makes an original contribution to the literature.

Keywords: Migration Culture, Congo (DRC), *Mikiliste*, *Sapeur*



ÖZET

KONGO GÖÇ KÜLTÜRÜNÜN BİLGİ VE İLETİŞİM TEKNOLOJİLERİ YOLUYLA MEDYATİKLEŞMESİ: İSTEKLER, ARZULAR VE UMUT

Güler Canbulat Kamba

Sinema ve Medya Araştırmaları Doktora Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Nilay Ulusoy

Ocak 2020, 209 sayfa

Bu tezin başlıca konusu Demokratik Kongo Cumhuriyeti'nden göçmenlerin göçündeki duygusal ve davranışsal motivasyonlar ve bu bağlamda bilgi ve iletişim teknolojileri (BİT) kullanımlarıdır. Bu konuyu araştırmak için Türkiye'nin İstanbul şehrinde derinlemesine mülakat, katılımcı gözlem ve dijital etnografya yöntemlerini içeren, karma yöntemli vaka çalışması yürütülmüştür.

Göç konusundaki istekler, arzular ve umut, dünyanın diğer yerlerindeki, diğer hayatlar ve diğer imkanlardan insanların haberdar olmasını sağlayan BİT'ler tarafından kolaylaştırılan dijital iletişim ile körükleniyor. Bu tez öncelikle göçün nasıl kültürel bir olay olduğunu ve göçmenlerin tarihsel, canlı ve sürekli gelişen bir göç kültürü çerçevesindeki duyguları ve bakış açılarıyla beslendiğini gösteriyor. Bu tez ikinci ve daha belirgin olarak, Kongolu göçmenler özelinde, göçün kültürel öğelerinin nasıl *mikiliste*, *sapeur* ve iş adamı (iş insanı) olma konusundaki kişisel, toplumsal ve sosyoekonomik arzuda cisimleştiğini ve BİT kullanımıyla nasıl medyatikleştiğini gösteriyor.

Göç, göçmen gönderen toplumu ve onun yapılanmasını dönüştürüyor. Bu dönüşüm daha fazla göç isteğine sebep olan kurumsallaşmış bir göç kültürü yaratıyor. Bu tez, Kongoluların göçü çerçevesinde, istekler, arzular ve umudun, nasıl *mikiliste*, *sapeur* ve iş insanı arketipik karakterlerinde sembolize olduğu konusunu merkezine alıyor. Esasen bu karakterler, Batı'da ulaşılabilir iyi hayat idealini temsil eden arketipik arzu nesneleri olarak Kongo göç kültürünün içine işlemişlerdir. Kongo'nun ve yurtdışındaki Kongoluların zihinsel ve maddi gerçeklikleri içinde bu karakterlerin nasıl işlediğini anlamak için tarihsel arka planları açıklanmış ve BİT'ler vasıtasıyla nasıl medyatikleştiklerine odaklanarak yürütülen alan araştırmasına bağlanmıştır. Nitekim bu tez yalnızca, istekler, arzular ve umudun göçü nasıl beslediği ve geliştirdiği hakkındaki, az ama giderek artan çalışmalara değil; aynı zamanda göçmenlerin çevrimiçi bağlantılılığı ve BİT'ler vasıtasıyla giderek artan medyatikleşmeleri çalışmalarına da katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırma, bu ikisini birleştirerek—yani göçmenlerin istekleri, arzuları ve umutlarının etkinliğini, BİT'lerin alanına bağlayarak—bir boşluğu doldurmaktadır ve böylelikle literatüre özgün bir katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç Kültürü, Demokratik Kongo Cumhuriyeti, *Mikiliste*, *Sapeur*

CONTENTS

FIGURES.....	x
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	7
1.2 METHODOLOGY.....	10
1.3 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS.....	17
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	20
2.1 MIGRATION THEORIES.....	20
2.2 THE ICT MEDIATIZATION OF MIGRATION.....	37
3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	52
3.1 MIGRATION FLOWS FROM THE DRC.....	52
3.2 <i>MIKILISTE</i>	62
3.3 <i>SAPEUR</i>	66
3.4 BUSINESSMAN.....	71
4. <i>MIKILISTE</i> AND <i>SAPEUR</i>	76
4.1 TRANSIT.....	77
4.1.1 The Issue of Transit.....	77
4.1.2 Transit in the Congolese Case.....	81
4.1.3 Transit versus Mobility.....	89
4.2 <i>MIKILISTE</i>	96
4.2.1 Who is <i>Mikiliste</i> ?.....	96
4.2.2 The Desire to go to Europe.....	99
4.2.3 Dreams, Lies and Reality.....	104
4.3 <i>SAPEUR</i>	107
4.3.1 “Dressing Well is our Culture”.....	107
4.3.2 <i>La Sape</i> versus “Fashion”.....	109
4.4 MEDIATIZATION OF THE <i>MIKILISTE</i> AND THE <i>SAPEUR</i>	114
4.4.1 <i>Mikiliste</i> , <i>Sapeur</i> and Social Media.....	114
4.4.2 Digital Media Platforms.....	117
4.4.3 Digital Media Content.....	122
4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	128

5. BUSINESSMAN.....	132
5.1 MIXED EMBEDDEDNESS.....	133
5.1.1 Structural Forces.....	138
5.1.2 Politico-institutional Forces.....	140
5.1.3 Sub-Saharan African Labor and Entrepreneurship.....	144
5.2 FINDINGS.....	148
5.2.1 <i>Çabuk</i> Jobs: Low-paid Work.....	148
5.2.2 <i>Müşteri</i> Jobs: Trade Guides and Commissioners.....	152
5.2.3 Commercial Motivations.....	156
5.2.4 Trade-related Activities and Order and Delivery Work.....	160
5.2.5 Turkish Store Owners.....	173
5.2.6 Zacharie.....	178
5.2.7 Commercial Aspirations.....	187
5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	191
6. CONCLUSION.....	198
REFERENCES.....	211
APPENDICES.....	226
Appendix 1 Table 1 – The List of Interviews.....	227

FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Papa Wemba on stage.....	61
Figure 4.1: Nationalities of sea arrivals to Greece in the first half of 2019...	82
Figure 4.2: Congolese <i>sapeur</i> group <i>Les Léopards de la Sape</i>	121
Figure 4.3: The photo shot and shared by Lukas on his Facebook account...	125
Figure 4.4: Akim Prince de Lausanne.....	127
Figure 5.1: Koffi Olomide wearing a jacket of Versace.....	172



1. INTRODUCTION

Étienne recounted the story of Stéphane, who is now in Paris. Stéphane was living in Kinshasa up until 2012. His five older siblings moved to Paris one by one when Stéphane was still a teenager, leaving only him and his younger brother with his mother in Kinshasa. When he finished high school and started working, Stéphane received support from his siblings living in Europe. After trying out a couple of jobs, he began working in the transport business, using the car sent by his siblings. Stéphane started to make a good living from this job, and his brothers and sisters organized to send him other cars. Using these also to transport passengers in the city allowed Stéphane and his family in Kinshasa a comfortable life. In a matter of just two or three years, Stéphane became a boss who earned a good living, according to his friend Étienne.

The number of cars increased. Stéphane decided to visit his siblings in Paris and applied for a Schengen visa with the invitation letter sent to him by his eldest brother. With the income from a regular job in Kinshasa, he was granted the visa. Thus, Stéphane went to Paris for two weeks. Upon his return to Kinshasa, he continued his job, in which he was very happy. A year later, he went to Paris again; this time for a month. The fact that he was able to go to Paris whenever he wanted was regarded as prestigious. He had become a *mikiliste*, referring to a person who has left Africa and gone elsewhere, particularly Europe.

One day, it was announced on the news that the European Union (EU) was going to tighten up its visa policies. As a result, Stéphane's older brother advised him to come and live in Paris permanently. According to Étienne, Stéphane's brother said the following:

At the moment, you can come and go to Paris as you please. But this road may be cut off one day and when that happens, you'll be stuck in Kinshasa. Come here. When you get a French passport, you will be free. Then you can go wherever you want (ÉTIENNE, oral interview).

Due to the fear engendered by the fact that his freedom of movement might be limited, Stéphane decided to move to Paris permanently. He received a Schengen visa for the last time and went to Paris, but he did not return. Stéphane's brother's prediction came true.

After a while, it became nearly impossible to get a Schengen visa from Kinshasa. If Stéphane had not left the country in time, he would have been stuck there. Stéphane has been living in Paris for seven years. He has still not been able to become a French citizen, but he has a residency permit. Étienne arrived in Istanbul seven years ago, at the same time as Stéphane. Étienne believes Stéphane made the right decision at the time. According to Étienne, Stéphane is no longer the boss of his business like he was in Kinshasa; he just does a regular job as a worker in Paris. But this is better than being stuck in Kinshasa.

According to Carling (2002), involuntary immobility characterizes the age we are living in, together with large migration flows. A growing number of people wish to move but are unable to do so. Carling argues that conflict over mobility and the frustration about immobility are the most compelling aspects of today's migration order. The optimistic view of globalization asserted that geography no longer matters, but as Carling remarks, this view does not make sense to the involuntarily immobile:

The massive extent of involuntary immobility is not a counter-indication of globalization. Rather, involuntary immobility is a concomitant of globalization, and a symptom of its contradictory nature. More specifically, the problem of involuntary immobility reflects the different hierarchies of globalization (2002, p. 37).

More than ten years before Carling, Bauman (1998) was drawing attention to the question of immobility in a world of permanent change. He argued that to be fixed in a locality is a sign of social deprivation and degradation in a globalized world. According to Bauman (p. 2), "Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values – and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times".

Bauman's foresight that mobility would become a stratifying value is strikingly exemplified in Stéphane's story. And this story also demonstrates how the desire to be mobile and to travel freely can itself be motivation enough for migration. The fear of being stuck in Kinshasa, motivates Stéphane to move to Paris. Movement fuels movement—or rather, the threat of restrictions to mobility—impel actions to maintain it. This desire for freedom of mobility is only one of the motivating desires for migration. Appadurai (2013) defines the total of these desires and aspirations as the *desire for the*

good life. It is that fundamental desire and a study of how it plays out that drives the present work.

This dissertation explores the motivations of the migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) based on mixed-methods research undertaken in Istanbul, Turkey. The research includes in-depth interviews, participant observation, and digital ethnography. It aims firstly to show how migration is an importantly cultural phenomenon that is fueled by aspirations, desires and hope of migrants. Secondly, in respect of the desire in Congolese case to become a *mikiliste*—or a *sapeur* (one who displays fashion and elegance) and/or a businessman¹—it investigates how the cultural aspects of migration are materialized in *mediatization*, specifically through *information and communication technologies* (ICTs).

In 1996, Appadurai asserted that media and migration mark the world of the present. They are new forces that impel the work of imagination. He argued that electronic media transform the field of mass media and they offer new resources for “the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds” (p. 3). The mass migration coincides with the rapid flow of mass-mediated images, texts, and sensations. In this context, imagination goes beyond the space of art, myth, and ritual and becomes “the quotidian mental work of ordinary people in many societies” (p. 5). With imagination as a collective, social fact becomes the basis of the plurality of imagined worlds. Appadurai argues that “ordinary people have begun to deploy their imaginations in the practice of their everyday lives,” and that “This fact is exemplified in the mutual contextualizing of motion and mediation” (1996, p. 5). Mass media represent a rich repertoire of possible lives that enters into the imaginations of ordinary people, and more people than ever before imagine the possibility of a life elsewhere for them and/or for their children:

I should be quick to note that this is not a cheerful observation, intended to imply that the world is now a happier place with more choices (in the utilitarian sense) for more people, and with more mobility and more happy endings. Instead, what is implied is that even the meanest and most hopeless of lives, the most brutal and dehumanizing of circumstances, the harshest of lived inequalities are now open to the play of the imagination. Prisoners of conscience, child laborers, women who toil in the fields and

¹ The gender-neutral “businessperson” is more correct, and many Congolese migrant business people nowadays are female; however, “businessman” (with “businesswoman” to specify otherwise) remains in common usage and, more importantly here, works better as emblematic (including in the French, “*hommes d'affaire*”), better representing the traditionally and still genderized aspiration, so that term is generally employed here.

factories of the world, and others whose lot is harsh no longer see their lives as mere outcomes of the given ness of things, but often as the ironic compromise between what they could imagine and what social life will permit. Thus, the biographies of ordinary people are constructions (or fabrications) in which the imagination plays an important role (1996, p. 54).

This framework in the context of mass media expressed by Appadurai is even more meaningful today in light of the scope and diversity attained by ICTs. In 2013, Appadurai remarked once again on a generalized growth in shared images of the good life through the global media, cyber-communication, and travel circuits. Furthermore, the imagination of regular people regarding the good life is not only fed by mass media and digital media platforms, but also by content produced by regular people on social media and social networks.

In order to ground a future with a good life one needs the capacity to aspire:

It is important to see that the capacity to aspire is a cultural capacity, in the sense that it takes its force within local systems of value, meaning, communication, and dissent. Its form is recognizably universal, but its force is distinctly local and cannot be separated from language, social values, histories, and institutional norms, which tend to be highly specific (Appadurai 2013, p. 290).

Migration to attain a good life is a universal phenomenon. This universal situation today is symbolized through migration to wealthy Western countries and the Global North. As indicated by Appadurai (2013), the capacity to aspire a good life is universal but its manifestation is local. Appadurai also argues that the significance of ideas of the good life in different societies should be examined. In the particular case of Congolese migration, aspirations and desires include (but are not limited to) freedom of mobility and upward social mobility, good food, nice clothes, entertainment, and fame, to be one's own boss and support one's family and also to enjoy a spectacular return to the Congo with the financial means to distribute gifts. And in the particular case of the Congolese, these desires and aspirations are symbolized in the characters of the *mikiliste*, the *sapeur*, and the businessman, as argued in this dissertation. These archetypal characters, which are instilled in the Congolese migration culture, each represent different aspects of desire: the *mikiliste* represents access to the world outside of Africa, the *sapeur* the access to the expensive and fashionable clothes as well as visibility, and the businessman upward social mobility.

Migration is cultural. The cultural characters of migration—*mikiliste*, *sapeur* or businessman in the Congolese case—echo in the imagination of Congolese people as part of their aspirations, desires and hope for a good life. As migration becomes more prevalent within a society, it transforms the structure, values, and perceptions, which in turn begets an intricate culture of migration (Horvath 2008, Cohen 2004, Kandel & Massey 2002). Horvath identifies three contexts in which the culture of migration rises. The first is that in which migration becomes a cultural fact in the migrant-sending communities. This does not refer just to the existence of migratory practices in a particular society; rather, “it concerns the emergence of new artifacts, habits, perspectives, ideas and values that become a part of the sending society’s culture, marking the decisional context of that society” (Horvath 2014, p. 773). The second context is where the system of norms and ideologies frame the interpretation of stability and mobility in a particular society. Continuous migration influences how migration and migrants are assessed. When migration becomes the most preferred strategy, local activities and opportunities are ignored. This causes a total decline of some productive practices and can make the society quite dependent on migration. The third is the context wherein migration acquires cultural representation in a particular society. Migration can turn into a crucial social act marking the transition to adulthood or other symbolic functions (Horvath 2014).

Bal and Willems (2014) build on Horvath’s definition for culture of migration. They argue that the imaginations of aspiring migrants in a culture of migration not only relate to previous migration history and the successes of migrant kin, peers, neighbors, and others. Those imaginations are interconnected with globalization and sociocultural, political, and economic transformations in the migrant-sending society. Migration aspirations in a culture of migration include processes such as “the adoption of new lifestyles and the cravings for modern commodities that are not directly linked with migration as such” (p. 253). Both the local and the global should be taken into account to understand “the way in which people assess their circumstances, give meaning to their lives, perceive of needs and develop desires” (p. 253). Although the culture of migration manifests itself locally, it is a world cultural phenomenon in the context of people’s global awareness of other lives and other possibilities in other parts of the world.

It is argued that migration is cultural item, a world cultural phenomenon. In the conceptualization of Lechner and Boli (2005), all the things that make the world one are deeply cultural, and many ordinary activities and institutions are saturated with world culture. They argue that the idea of cultural universalism is implicit in the concept of world culture. Universalism in that sense does not mean that a cultural element is to be found everywhere, in all cultures. Rather, it is to say that the cultural element is “universally meaningful, applicable, useful, or proper” (p. 21). It has a universal scope and it is interpretable in any particular local culture. According to Lechner and Boli, world culture is not a threat to the diversity that still prevails today. It does not refer to a global monoculture that makes the world entirely similar. Rather, they suggest, “world culture grows alongside of, and in complex interaction with, the more particularistic cultures of the world”; thus, “In relating to world culture the more particularistic ones also change” (p. 25-26).

In this dissertation, it is argued that the culture of migration, as a world cultural phenomenon matters for the world and for all its varied parts in the sense of Lechner and Boli’s insight. Congolese migration culture oscillates between forms of particularism and universalism in world cultural sense. In this research, the cultural characters of Congolese migration identified—of *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman—are evaluated through both their particular histories and current manifestations with global links.

Another aspect of the culture of migration is its mediatization. The culture of migration becomes mediatized as part of the general mediatization of cultures. The term ‘mediatization’ here is used to get at the idea of a becoming media-saturated, based on Hepp’s (2013) conceptualization. According to Hepp, media culture is neither a mass culture, nor the culture of a particular dominating medium, nor a cultural program or a cyber-culture. Instead, media culture should be conceived as a shorthand for the *mediatization of culture*. It is defined by “extremely complex arrangements of different forms of media-based, communicative action” (p. 17). Media communication more and more permeates our cultures temporally, spatially, and socially. It molds not only our representational imaginations but also our lived realities on an everyday level. In fact, life becomes itself unimaginable without media. Thus, today’s cultures of mediatization are actually those of the mediatized worlds of ordinary people in their daily lives.

While a comprehensive description of media cultures is unachievable, the conception of mediatized world provides a point of departure for empirical study. According to Hepp (2013, p. 83), “By studying such specific mediatized worlds we can, step by step, arrive at a comprehensive understanding of today’s cultures of mediatization”. In another work, Hepp with Bozdag and Suna (2013) explore the mediatization of migrants. They argue that migrants live “highly media-saturated lives,” and that the present culture of migrants must be understood as media cultures (p. 1). The everyday life of migrants can only be captured by focusing on the interrelations between different media and everyday practices. This dissertation follows that lead as a methodology to explore the mediatized lives of Congolese migrants.

1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The research for this study commenced through personal observation of Congolese migrants’ intense use of ICTs. In this context, the social media accounts of certain migrants were followed. As a result of the examination of these social media posts, it was observed that certain posts share the same, repeated themes. These themes related to migration and being a migrant and to clothing and business. As a result, the main concepts for the research started to develop.

The primary topic of this dissertation is the motivations behind the migration of Congolese migrants and their use of ICTs. A mixed-methods approach has been deployed for this. Ethnographic field research was used, as well as digital ethnography as a supplementary technique. After conducting interviews, it became apparent that, over the years, the migration motivations of Congolese migrants have become part of a migration culture. The aspirations, desires, and hope of these migrants combine to form the pushing force behind this culture. And in the context of the Congolese migration culture, these motivations have informed the characters of *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman. As a result, the primary aim of the research emerged. The research firstly aims to show that migration is cultural and it is fueled by the aspirations, desires, and hope of migrants.

In order to realize this aim, certain objectives have been determined. The first is related to the existing theoretical approaches related to aspirations, desires, and hope in order to

examine the ways in which they have been evaluated. Another objective was to assess Congolese migration culture in a historical context. The desire to migrate is inspired by the experiences of previous generations. In this sense an understanding of the characters of *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman was aimed at for a sense of the historical continuity of this migration culture.

In order to demonstrate that migration is cultural and is fed by aspirations, desires, and hope, another objective determined was to analyze the repeated motivations, aspirations, desires and hope as mentioned in the fieldwork. These driving emotions and attitudes of Congolese migrants are investigated as symbolized through the characters of *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and the businessman.

As a result of the interviews and participant observation, it was observed that the lives of migrants have become more and more mediatized as a result of the use of new ICTs. The mediatization of the lives of migrants brings along with it the mediatization of migration culture. In this context, the second aim of this dissertation was formulated. The research secondly aims to show that the cultural aspects of migration materializing in the desire to become a *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, or businessman in the Congolese case, become mediatized through ICTs.

Certain objectives were determined to realize this second aim of this dissertation. First, a need was recognized to analyze the connectivity of migrants through the already existing theories relating to their ICTs usage. It was found, however, that these approaches did not take into consideration the cultural aspects of migration relating to aspirations, desires, and hope of migrants when analyzing the mediatization of their lives. It was in order to fill this gap, therefore, that examples were analyzed wherein ICTs provide a symbolic space that feeds the aspirations, desires, and hope of the Congolese migrants. The aim here was to demonstrate that Congolese migration culture and the characters of *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman increasingly show themselves in the techno-communicative space of ICTs. What was also observed in this study was the various ways in which ICTs are also affecting and interacting with the expression of these characters and the possibilities of migration itself.

Summarizing, the aims and objectives of the research presented in this dissertation were as follows:

- a. To investigate, assess, analyze the various motivations behind the migration of Congolese migrants and their use of ICTs, focusing on those resident in Istanbul, Turkey during the period of the research in respect of their aspirations, desires, and hope in the context of the Congolese migrant culture;
 - i. To examine existing theoretical approaches related to aspirations, desires, and hope of migrants and migrant culture and the way in which these relate to the Congolese situation observed;
 - ii. To assess Congolese migration culture in a historical context, relating this to the models and inspirations provided by the experiences of previous generations and thereby gain an understanding of the *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman characters in respect of the historical continuity of this migration culture;
- b. To look at how cultural aspects of migration materialize in the desire to become a *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, or businessman in the Congolese case, and specifically how they become mediatized through ICTs.

This research aims to contribute to the fields of migration studies, migrant connectivity and mediatization studies, migrant entrepreneurship studies, Congolese migration studies and sub-Saharan African migration to Turkey studies. While the number of studies relating to the ways in which aspirations, desires, and hope feed migration is limited, they are increasing. There are also studies relating to the connectivity and the increasing mediatization of migrants through ICTs. However, there are no studies combining the two, related, that is, to the operation of migrants' aspirations, desires, and hope in the space of ICTs.

Since there are no studies that evaluate migration culture and their use of ICTs together, this may stand as the most original contribution of this dissertation. Another original contribution this dissertation makes is related to the cultural perspective of Congolese migration studies. Until now, Congolese migration has been perceived through the lens of internal turmoil, war and economic difficulty. This dissertation reframes that,

conceptualizing migration in terms of the three archetypal characters as a basis for further analysis of the migration culture.

Taking seriously the critique of concepts of transit in respect of contemporary migration theory, the research site of Istanbul is not assumed to be just that of a transit. Thus, this research makes a contribution to studies on sub-Saharan migration studies in Turkey through analysis a specific community, which is missing in the current studies. Previous research studies have mostly approached sub-Saharan African communities as a whole. Last but not least, this research contributes to the migrant entrepreneurship studies. It clarifies the potential of the use of ICTs in migrant entrepreneurship.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative research of Congolese migration and its mediatization by means of ICTs, an interdisciplinary mixed-method approach is used. The use of ICTs cannot be separated from everyday lives of the global Congolese community and their aspirations, desires, and hope. Leurs and Prabhakar (2017) detect three paradigms of qualitative digital migration studies.

The first is the “digital-media-centric cyber culture studies approach,” which uses digital ethnography methods, such as textual and visual analysis focusing on migrants’ digital communicative experience in various online platforms. The second is the “non-digital-media-centric ethnographic approach,” which uses pre-existing social sciences methods, such as participant observation and in-depth interviews focusing on migrants’ media consumption in their social context connected to their everyday life. Leurs and Prabhakar argue that the “media consumption of migrants can only be understood in its broader social, spatial and temporal context as part of everyday spaces including domestic, public, urban and transnational connections” (p. 252). The third paradigm is the “digital-media-centric digital approach,” which uses computational methods, such as mapping and network analysis, and focuses on digital migrant connectivity.

Miller and Slater (2000) in their study on internet usage among Trinidadians remark that “if you want to get to the Internet, don’t start from there.” Internet media are embedded

in other social spaces and operate within mundane social structure and relations. There is no “self-enclosed cyberian apartness” (p. 5). According to Pink et al. (2016), non-digital-centric-ness should be one of the key principles for doing digital ethnography. Putting media at the center of analysis would be problematic because they are involved in wider sets of environments and relations. Thus, Pink et al. argue, “media are inseparable from the other activities, technologies, materialities and feelings through which they are used, experienced and operate” (p. 10). It follows from this that researchers should not directly ask respondents about their media use; instead, they should study the everyday routines and activities in which participants engage through digital media: “In order to understand how digital media are part of people’s everyday worlds, we also need to understand other aspects of their worlds and lives” (p. 10).

In this dissertation, based on the categorization of Leurs and Prabhakar (2017), the digital media-centric cyber culture and non-digital-media centric ethnographic approaches are used together. The former is used to collect visual and textual online data in order to analyze the aspects of migration culture in terms of aspirations, desires, and hope (how these are formed, expressed, etc.). And the non-digital-media centric ethnographic approach is used through the fieldwork based on participant observation and in-depth interviews. The ethnographic data collected in Istanbul reflects ways in which ICTs become the epicenter of Congolese mobility in both practical and speculative ways. The ethnographic fieldwork gives also important data on how the social imagination with its motivating attitudes and emotions are consistently consolidated through the digital connectivity of everyday life.

This research into Congolese migrants in Istanbul cannot fit into the landscape of Istanbul if this is delimited. These migrants are bound to the Congolese diaspora in the world, families in the Congo, and locals in Istanbul. Thus, the interviews have not been limited to Congolese migrants located in Istanbul. Congolese migrants who live in different countries, but who, in one way or another, have a connection to Istanbul have been included in the fieldwork of this study, along with Turkish shop owners who conduct business and trade with the Congolese. During the fieldwork, certain respondents left Turkey, but communication with them continued via online means.

There is no official data regarding the number of Congolese migrants in Istanbul. The total present in the city fluctuates, as many Congolese migrants cross over to Greece from Turkey. The conditions for this passage change periodically, depending on the control mechanisms of the authorities. During times when the crossing is easier, the population of Congolese migrants in Istanbul decreases; when the control mechanisms are tightened, making the crossing more difficult, the population increases. Based on the researcher's personal observation as well as observations made by informants, it is informally estimated that the population of Congolese migrants in Istanbul in 2019 was around 5000, which was a relatively high figure due to the difficulty of crossing over to Greece that year.

This dissertation employs semi-structured in-depth interviews with 55 Congolese migrants and four Turkish shop owners (see Appendix 1, Table 1). Some 15 of the interviews were conducted with the participation of Mahir Şaul, as part of a project under his direction entitled "Sub-Saharan African Migration to Turkey." The other interviews were conducted alone (solely by the researcher, i.e., the author of this dissertation). Although Congolese people differ in terms of ethnic groups, the Lingala language is mostly spoken among them in Kinshasa and in the diaspora. The official language of the DRC is French; those who have had a formal education learn how to read, write and speak in French. Some of the interviews for this dissertation were conducted in Turkish, but most were conducted in French.

When permitted by respondents, the interviews were recorded with a sound-recording device, later to be transcribed. The information in the transcriptions used for this dissertation was later translated into English. Those respondents who did not want to have their interviews recorded, allowed for notes to be taken in Turkish by the researcher. Then these notes were written out on the computer and brought together in a report format. All of the translations from Turkish and French to English were made by the researcher. Translations from Lingala to English regarding online research were made by one of the respondents, who was willing to help for the project.

It was explained to the respondents that the interviews conducted were serving an academic purpose for a doctoral dissertation. It was further pointed out that the

respondents were not obliged to answer any questions that they did not feel comfortable about and could end the interview process whenever they wished. The real names of the respondents have not been used in this dissertation, although some did give their permission to do so. The real names and the corresponding pseudonyms used in this dissertation have been written out by hand, and the document is stored safely. Sound recordings, transcriptions, and reports relating to this dissertation research are archived in the personal computer of the researcher.

The interviews for this dissertation were conducted in the two-and-a-half-year period between January 2017 and July 2019. The relationships established with the respondents during this time continued offline and online. Certain respondents were interviewed more than once at different dates. In this manner, a continuity in their stories could be captured enabling a certain longitudinal aspect to the research. Since the research period was spread over a long period of time, those who left Turkey in that duration were determined. As of October 2019, two of the 55 respondents have returned to the Congo, two flew legally to Europe, and 14 crossed illegally over to the Greek Islands by boat. Some of the 14 are still on the islands, while others are in Athens and in Paris. Communication with those who have left Turkey has continued via social media.

Regarding demographics, the ages of the 55 respondents, all originating from the DRC, are between 25 and 52. The median age is 37. It could be said that this number broadly reflects the general average. In order to migrate, a certain economic capital needs to be saved up; thus migrants have to do this in their countries over a period of time. This raises the average age of migration. The respondents have different educational levels, ranging from primary education to Master's degree. The average level of education is high school. Ten of the 55 respondents (18 percent) are women. It has been suggested by researchers that the number of female migrants are equal to male migrants in international Congolese migration (Flahaux & Schoumaker 2013, Vause 2012). According to observations made in the context of this dissertation also, it can be said that there are a relatively high number of women in the Congolese migrant world in Istanbul also, close to the number of men.

However, even though a special effort was exerted in order to increase the number of women participants in this dissertation research, it was not successful. Often, interview

requests were turned down by women. Some of the reasons for this refusal to be interviewed can be related to women feeling vulnerable and distrustful. Another reason could be the language of the interview. According to the observations made in the context of this dissertation, the women had a lower level of formal education than men, which could be expected to make them reticent about speaking French. Since they are ashamed to do interviews conducted in the company of a translator, they end up refusing interview requests by providing various excuses. These are the reasons as to why the rate of women interviewed for this dissertation is only 18 percent.

All the interviews were conducted in Istanbul. The majority of the respondents were found to have lived in Kinshasa before moving to Istanbul. Some lived in Angola and South Africa. Almost all (53 of the 55) respondents were resident in Istanbul at the time of the interviews. Two of them spent half of their year in the Congo and the other half in Turkey; they had transnational lives. The two who were not resident in the city had a regular connection to Istanbul but were living in Paris and Zurich. They were in Istanbul for business and visiting purposes during the time in which the interviews were being conducted. Out of the 53 migrants who were living in Istanbul; the longest time that any had stayed in Turkey was 22 years; the shortest was one week. Some of the respondents stated they wanted to stay in Istanbul, while others said they wanted to have mobile lives, going back and forth between Istanbul, Kinshasa, and trade centers, such as Dubai. Still others stated that they wanted to go to western Europe after Turkey, and some to the USA and Canada. However, it was observed during fieldwork that intentions can change according to changing conditions.

The interviews lasted from half an hour to three hours. The average interview time was one-and-a-half hours. The interviews were mostly conducted one-on-one. Only three interviews were conducted with two people together. These three interviews were useful in that sometimes the two respondents would disagree on an issue, leading to an environment of discussion.

The interviews were conducted either in the house of the respondent, the house of the researcher, or a variety of cafes in the city. The 15 respondents for the research project of Mahir Şaul received a small amount of money as a thank you for their time. It was not

revealed to the respondents that this money would be given to them before the interview. Thus, the decision to participate in the research was made independently of the financial present. The other 40 respondents (outside of Şaul's project) did not receive any such gift. The aim was to provide a warm environment, where the respondent and researcher would eat and drink something together. The researcher paid for the food and the drinks. Some of the respondents were guests at the house of the researcher. The researcher cooked the respondents food and underlined how important their participation was to her. It was observed that this approach removed the distance and the power relations between the researcher and research subject. The fact that the researcher's partner is a Congolese migrant also facilitated the relationship of trust. Also in order to eliminate the imbalance of power between the researcher and subject, the researcher not only asked questions but responded herself to enquiries. The respondents had many questions, both related to the fieldwork as well as to the researcher's private life and other topics.

The researcher found many of the respondents through her own network, established already through her personal relationships. Later, snowball sampling was employed to reach more respondents and to penetrate further into the Congolese community. Purposive sampling was used to locate people with different background characteristics, while people were also included she met randomly in public places (in the street, on the bus, at the Congolese churches, etc.). As a result, the sample was formed with migrants with a wide variety of histories (motives, positions, legal statuses, etc.). All the respondents had come to Istanbul through legal means, (by plane, with a Turkish visa). Some applied for a residency permit before their entry visas expired, while others had expired visas and thus an irregular status. Almost two fifths (20/53) of the respondents living in Istanbul had a residency permit at the time of their interview. Five of the respondents with residency permits had come to Turkey for educational purposes. A handful of the 33 migrants without a residency permit had applied to receive international protection (asylum seekers). The legal status of the respondents was generally not considered mainly because this had no particular bearing on the main concepts investigated but also because the legal status of migrants can change over time. Thus all the migrants in this dissertation are simply labeled thus (i.e., "migrants").

The aim was to form a sample representative of the respondents' use of ICTs. The researcher did not specifically search out respondents who were active on social media as this would increase the number of those respondents and potentially skew the results, since online activity *was* pertinent to the main investigation. However, at the end of the interviews, the researcher did ask to follow the respondents on their social media, as part of the ongoing research. Those who accepted that their social media profiles be used as part of the research accepted the follow requests. In this sense, the researcher was not only a silent observer, but also became an active participant, liking and writing comments. Social media allowed for continued communication with those who had left Turkey and moved on to different countries. The different places the respondents were at different times were followed through personal messaging.

Another of the methods used for this dissertation is participant observation. Personal connections with the community and participations in their events predated the research. During the two-and-a-half years that the fieldwork was being undertaken, these connections were further developed. The researcher attended a variety of events (celebrations, church meetings, home visits, etc.). Each time, she presented herself as a researcher. The observations made at the end of these encounters were written out in a report format and employed in formulating the basic concepts of the study. Where appropriate (in suitable social environments), the researcher opened up about her dissertation and shared her basic ideas, leading to discussions. This enabled an informal concept testing and facilitated their further development.

While one leg of the qualitative research of this dissertation lies in ethnographic fieldwork, the other is constituted by digital ethnography. Digital ethnographic data was used to complement the findings of the fieldwork, guide conceptualization and test theory. In order to collect this data, the social media accounts of permitting participants were followed. This was extended beyond respondents to other Congolese migrants (thus, as part of the participant observation process). Digital news platforms and YouTube channels mentioned by respondents were also followed. The digital material collected on social media and digital media platforms that complimented the ethnographic information gathered through interviews was approached systematically. First, it was archived; then it was visually and textually analyzed in the context of the main concepts of this

dissertation. No visuals were taken from the social media accounts of the respondents in order not to reveal their identities. Therefore, those visuals referenced in the final text are described verbally. The only visual material used for this dissertation comes from open sources accessible to all, including the accounts of non-respondents and YouTube channels.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The chapter following this Introduction presents the Theoretical Background and is divided into two sections. The first section reviews prominent theories in migration studies. They are classified as the theories of the initiation of migration and the theories of the perpetuation of migration. These theories explain the initiation of migration mainly with economic reasons, and the perpetuation of migration mainly through the formation of social networks. Then, migration theories that go beyond the economic rationalization basis are considered. In this context, migration theories dealing with the concepts of aspirations, desires, and hope are examined. Ways in which migrant subjectivities are taken into consideration in these theories of aspirations, desires and hope are assessed in terms of their place in migration studies.

In the second section of this (the second) chapter, theories of migrant connectivity and mediatization through ICTs are reviewed. It is revealed that there are three approaches to research into the relationship between migrants and ICTs. The first focuses on how ICTs allow for migrants to stay connected with families and acquaintances; the second concentrates on how ICTs lead diasporic community formations; and the third looks at how migrants use ICTs practically to organize their migration process. Finally, it is argued that these three approaches do not have a sufficient scope of study. There is a need to focus on how cultural aspects of migration—specifically, migrant aspirations, desires, and hope—are mediatized through ICTs. Besides their practical role, ICTs become a symbolic space for emotions around and attitudes toward migration, in terms of both initiation and perpetuation.

The third chapter, a Historical Background, sets out with a summary of Congolese migration flows in conjunction with a history of the DRC. Socio-political crisis, economic

downturn, and armed conflicts are assessed as primary motives of Congolese migration. Then, arguing that this should not be taken to obviate the need for investigation of cultural phenomena in migration, the chapter discusses how Congolese history of migration begets a sophisticated culture which motivates further migration. Then the Congolese migration culture is historically examined through its special characters. The figures of the *mikiliste*, the *sapeur*, and the businessman are presented in separate sections. Lastly, an inquiry is made into how these characters become the symbols of aspirations, desires, and hope for a good life with wealth, status, and the freedom of mobility.

The fourth chapter is named *Mikiliste and Sapeur*, after two of the cultural characters of migration. This is the first of the two chapters presenting the empirical findings. It firstly aims to evaluate *mikiliste* and *sapeur* as characters symbolizing Congolese migrant desires in respect of freedom of mobility and dressing well (looking good, presenting a certain self-image, etc.). The chapter secondly aims to shed light on the mediatization of these two characters through ICTs (regarding image development, communication and connectivity, etc.). The chapter is divided into five sections.

The first section discusses transit migration of the *mikiliste* in the context of Turkey. For the *mikiliste*, the issue of transit migration emerges when Turkey is evaluated according to whether or not it is able to provide enough opportunities and freedom of mobility. The second and third sections elaborate on the characters *mikiliste* and *sapeur* in the light of the findings. The fieldwork provides helpful data on what it means for the *mikiliste* to go to Europe and for the *sapeur* to dress well. The fourth section investigates the mediatized lives of migrants in the context of *mikiliste* and *sapeur*, which are found to function increasingly in the spaces of ICTs. In this section, certain digital media content is also analyzed to demonstrate how it feeds the migration practically and its culture symbolically. Finally, in the fifth section, the general findings of this chapter are summarized with concluding remarks.

The fifth chapter focuses on the other character studied, the businessman. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section introduces the theory of migrant entrepreneurship and evaluates the entrepreneurial context in Turkey for Congolese migrants. To begin with, agency and structure perspectives in migrant entrepreneurship

are reviewed. Then, the theory of mixed embeddedness is introduced as a model that combines agency and structure perspectives. Next, structural forces in sub-Saharan migration and entrepreneurship in Turkey are discussed—specifically, the contemporary ones of the Turkish Opening to Africa and African countries’ economic growth. Afterwards, politico-institutional forces in foreigners’ labor and entrepreneurship in Turkey are introduced, in order to delineate the entrepreneurial context in Turkey. Finally, previous studies on sub-Saharan African labor and entrepreneurship in Istanbul are reviewed to situate the Congolese case in the general framework.

The second section of the fifth chapter presents the culmination of the research findings in respect of Congolese migrants’ work-life and commercial endeavors. This section evaluates the businessman as a character symbolizing Congolese migrants’ desire for upward social mobility, and it shows how the businessman is mediatized through ICTs. The section is divided into sub-sections that focus on different kinds of work: low-paid work, trade guides and commissioners, and order and delivery work. The commercial motivations and aspirations of Congolese migrants are investigated in sub-sections to clarify the cultural effect that links their past to the future. Another sub-section is dedicated to a specific case study that of a migrant called Zacharie. *Mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman as cultural characters of Congolese migration are treated separately in this dissertation, and Zacharie is a good example showing how actually these characters are simultaneously embodied (i.e., expressed together through single individuals). Finally, in the concluding section, the general findings of this chapter are summarized, connecting the mixed embeddedness theory to the dissertation case.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Migration tends to expose one's personality, it expresses one's loyalties and reveals one's values and attachments (often previously hidden). It is a statement of an individual's world-view, and is, therefore, an extremely cultural event. And yet, when we study migration scientifically, we seem to forget all this. Migration is customarily conceptualised as a product of the material forces at work in our society... The migrant is seen either as a "rational economic man" choosing individual advancement by responding to the economic signals of the job and housing markets, or as a virtual prisoner of his or her class position, and thereby subject to powerful structural economic forces set in motion by the logic of capitalist.

(Fielding 1992, p. 201)

2.1 MIGRATION THEORIES

The movement of people across territorial borders is of great significance. Today, international migration takes place in many directions. It is a complex phenomenon, and there is not a single theory that encompasses it in all its expressions. This is a multi-disciplinary concept, so many disciplines attempt to understand and theorize international migration—economically, sociologically, culturally, psychologically, and so on. In this section, firstly prominent migration theories are reviewed, and then theories dealing with concepts such as aspirations, desires and hope. It is argued that these concepts should be integrated into migration theories as motivator and continuator forces, as well as cultural aspects of migration. Migrants refer to these notions in their decision-making processes, thus framing the concepts in terms of subjective realities and concrete reasons compelling and enabling the migrants to move.

Massey et al. (1993) categorize migration theories in two groups. The first group of theories deal with the causes of migration—that is to say, the “initiation of migration.” The second group deals with the continuity and universality of migration—the “perpetuation of migration.” The theories explaining the former are neoclassical economics macro theory, neoclassical economics micro theory, the new economics of migration, dual labor market theory, and world systems theory.

The neoclassical economics macro theory of international migration explains labor migration in the process of economic development (Todaro 1976, Harris & Todaro 1970).

In this theory, geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labor cause migration. There is a flow of workers from areas that are labor-abundant and capital-poor to those that are labor-scarce and capital-rich. The differentials in wages and employment conditions lead to this flow. The monetary and mental costs of international movement are also taken into consideration to evaluate the gain of migration. This theory assumes that the labor market is the primary influencer of labor migration, and the elimination of wage differentials will end it (Massey et al. 1993).

The neoclassical economics micro theory of international migration is based on individual choice (Todaro 1976, Sjaastad 1962). In this theory, individual rational actors evaluate costs and benefits. If there is a profit to be gained from movement, they decide to migrate as an investment in human capital. This theory assumes that people go to the places where the private costs of migration are low and net return is high (Massey et al. 1993). The private costs consist of money and non-monetary costs. Monetary costs include the out-of-pocket expenses of movement, such as expenditure for food, lodgings, and transportation. Non-monetary costs include the “psychic” costs of changing one's environment. The time required to find and learn a new job, the effort to learn a new language, and the difficulty of losing familiar surroundings, family, and friends may all be considered as non-monetary costs (Sjaastad 1962).

The new economics of migration (Stark & Bloom 1985) argues that individuals are not isolated while making migration decisions. The migrant and some group of non-migrants, such as the family, act collectively in migration decisions to maximize expected income and minimize risks. The migrant and the family enter voluntarily into a mutually beneficial contractual arrangement with each other to share costs and returns. Patterns of remittances are part of this arrangement. The allocation of household resources is an attempt to control risks. Even if there is no wage differential, households may decide on international migration to eliminate a potential risk in the future. The new economics of migration shifts the focus of migration theory from “individual independence” to “mutual interdependence” and emphasizes its strategically calculated features (Stark & Bloom 1985, p. 174).

Dual labor market theory (Piore 1979) asserts that international migration stems from the permanent demand for immigrant labor of industrial societies, which is the structural need of the economy. Immigration is mostly demand-based and caused more by pull factors in receiving countries than push factors in sending countries. This theory differs from neoclassical economics in that it disregards wage differentials and instead highlights the recruitment practices of employers and governments in developed societies. According to Piore (1979), such wage differentials do indeed exist, but they do not initiate the migration process—“income is not the critical analytical variable” (p. 8)—and donor countries are not, in fact, the lowest income countries that could provide the highest income differential. Although there are large surpluses of labor in sending countries, only those people who can secure employment, migrate and reside in receiving countries.

World systems theorists oppose the idea that international migration depends on the wage differentials between particular national economies. They link international migration to the structure of the capitalist world market as creating potential migrants in peripheral societies (Sassen 1991, Castells 1989, Portes & Walton 1981). In the past, colonial regimes administered poor countries on the periphery of the world economy for the economic benefits of colonizing societies. Today, neo-colonial governments and multinational firms enter those countries in search of land, raw materials, labor, and new consumer markets. The world systems approach takes disruptions and dislocations in the process of capitalist expansion and market penetration as the cause of international migration (Massey et al. 1993).

These are the first group of theories of international migration, which look at the initiation of migration. The second group of theories, on the perpetuation of migration, start from the assumption that the conditions that perpetuate international migration may be different from those that initiate it. These theories may be listed as network theory, institutional theory, cumulative causation, and migration systems theory (Massey et al. 1993).

Network theory sheds light on the role of migrant networks in international migration (Gurak & Caces 1992, Massey & Garcia Espania 1987, Hugo 1981). Migrant networks are webs of social ties based on kinship and friendship that link potential migrants to

sending and receiving communities. Migrant networks differ from social groups, and they are quite varied in form and function. Networks evolve over time, they are not spontaneous or ephemeral, and they influence both “the shape and magnitude of migration flows” and provide a “coherent structure” for migrants (Gurak & Caces 1992, p. 150).

According to Massey and Garcia Espania (1987, p. 733), “with each person that becomes a migrant, the cost of migration is reduced for a set of friends and relatives, inducing them to migrate and further expanding the network.” Based on their research on the Mexican migration to the United States, Massey and Garcia Espania argued that wage differentials alone could not explain the growth of migration between the two countries. The migration upturn in the 1970s occurred in spite of falling real wages and high unemployment in the US. Massey and Garcia Espania found that the increase in Mexican migration was related to the growth of migrant networks, which gave momentum to the migration process. The formation and elaboration of networks form a base for the institutionalization of international migration (Massey et al. 1993).

Institutional theory argues that international migration becomes institutionalized and independent of the factors that originally caused it. The effort of the core countries to keep the immigrants out creates a field for entrepreneurs and institutions to support the international movement for profit or humanitarian purposes. For-profit organizations provide a range of services set in the underground market. The provision of lodgings, smuggling across borders, and arranging counterfeit documents, visas, and fake marriages are some of these services. For their part, voluntary humanitarian organizations defend the rights of migrants and provide legal counselling, social services, shelter, and suchlike: “Over time, individuals, firms, and organizations become well-known to immigrants and institutionally stable, constituting another form of social capital that migrants can draw upon to gain access to foreign labor markets” (Massey et al. 1993, p. 450-51). With the functioning of these migrant-supporting institutions, regulating migration flows becomes difficult for governments. Police efforts push profit-based institutions to operate in the black market of international migration. When immigration policies are restricted by the governments, then humanitarian groups oppose with resistance on behalf of migrants. Thus migration becomes perpetual.

The cumulative causation of migration view argues that international migration self-perpetuates through a process in which additional movement becomes more likely over time (Massey 1990, Stark et al. 1986). Migrants' decisions are based on many personal and socioeconomic factors. Over time, these decisions reshape the social context in ways that encourage further migration. When those who are encouraged to migrate do so, their departure further affects structural conditions. Each act of migration makes the following migration decisions more likely, resulting in a complex process of circular and cumulative causation. According to Massey (1990), both inter-level and inter-temporal dependencies should be considered in order to fully appreciate the dynamic, self-feeding character of migration. The cumulative causation of migration incorporates disparate theories and research to show the interconnections between individual behavior, household strategies, community structures, and national political economies.

All the theories dealing with the perpetuation of migration suggest that migration flows achieve stability and structure over space and time, thus allowing theorists to identify migration systems (Zlotnik 1992, Fawcett 1989). Migration systems theory focuses on the functions of diverse linkages that stimulate, direct, and maintain international flows of people between countries. Fawcett (1989) proposed a framework to discuss non-people linkages in international migration systems. Here, an emphasis on migration systems serves to link the component parts and analyze changes in such linkages. The migration systems approach does not deal particularly with the flows of people, but rather with all the important elements that are fully interdependent in the system. Fawcett's classificatory framework for linkages in a migration system comprises four categories and three types to produce a matrix of twelve cells. The four categories of linkages are state-to-state relations; mass culture connections; family and personal networks, and migrant agency activities. The three types of linkages are tangible linkages, regulatory linkages, and relational linkages. Each of the cells discusses powerful forces that are associated with the flows and counter-flows of people in a migration system. This conceptual framework identifies interactions that may be critical to an understanding of the dynamics of migration.

Further to the categorization of Massey et al. (1993), push-and-pull factors can also be mentioned here as a theory dealing with the initiation of international migration. Lee

(1966) defined four headings of factors that affect the decision to migrate and the process of migration. The first is the factors associated with the area of origin, the second is the factors associated with the area of destination, the third is intervening obstacles, and the fourth is personal factors. Lee argued that in every area there are a myriad of factors that attract or repel people, and he showed these in a diagram of push-and-pull factors related to the origin and destination areas and intervening obstacles. He accepted that some factors affect most people in the same way, while others affect different people in different ways. Also problematic for this theory is that it is not possible to evaluate the actual factors at origin and destination; rather, it is usually the *perception* of these factors that results in migration. The theory does not deny personal factors that facilitate or retard migration, such as personal characteristics or the effects of specific event in a certain period of life.

Hein de Haas (2011) criticizes push-pull models and other functionalist social theory as viewing society as a system with a tendency towards equilibrium. People are expected to migrate from low-income to high-income areas as a consequence of spatial disequilibria, which omits crucial non-economic, sending-country, and policy factors, and these tend to specify an ambiguous list of factors that stimulate migration. Migrants are assumed to be pushed out of places of origin and lured into destination places because of various economic, environmental, and demographic factors. Push-and-pull models are static and tend to portray migrants as passive beings lacking any agency.

Instead, de Haas (2011) proposes a conceptual framework to shed light on the determinants of international migration. He argues that the different disciplinary theories can be integrated into one framework through conceptualizing all forms of migration “as a function of capabilities and aspirations” (p. 2). De Haas tries to integrate macro-level theories to the micro-level through a behavioral link: “People will only migrate if they perceive better opportunities elsewhere and have the capabilities to move,” he states, continuing that “Although this assertion implies choice and agency, it also shows that this agency is constrained by (historically determined) conditions which create concrete opportunity structures” (p. 16). Thus, when de Haas refers to “the determinants of migration,” the term “determinant” does not indicate a deterministic causation independent of migrants’ agency and internal migration dynamics.

According to de Haas' (2011) theoretical model, not only income or wage differentials but also spatial opportunity differentials and people's life aspirations function in migration. Migration propensities depend on migrants' aspirations and capabilities to migrate. De Haas argues that many existing theoretical and empirical insights can be synthesized in these two basic assumptions about migration. Through the concept of aspirations, it is also possible to integrate agency and culture into migration theory. De Haas opposes the assumption of previous theories that migration preferences are constant across societies and over time. He argues instead that culture, education, and access to information have a great impact on "people's notions of the good life and, hence, personal life aspirations" as well as "their awareness and perception of opportunities elsewhere." Essentially, the desire to migrate stems from the awareness of other lifestyles (De Haas, 2011, p. 21).

General conceptions of immigration refer to a permanent rupture from the home society and assimilation to the host society; immigrants are considered to be uprooted from their old society in order to adopt a new one. In the 1990s, however, Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1995, 1992) suggested a new conception of "transnationalism." They argued for the emergence of a new kind of migrating population, whose lives go beyond national boundaries, whose activities, networks, and life patterns encompass both their host and home societies thus creating a transnational social field. Thus,

Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political—that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously (Glick Schiller et al. 1992, p. 1).

Because of the fact that discourses about identity still continue to be framed in terms of nations, migrants rarely identify themselves as transnational, but they are transformed by their transnational practices, and their social identities become fluid, hybrid, and "in-between" (Basch et al. 1994).

Çağlar and Soysal (2003) discuss various notions of this transnational migration approach. They agree that the new framework opens a new appreciation of the complexity of migrants' multi-level, multi-local ties and activities. The increasing intensity and scope of circular flows of people, goods, information, and symbols become visible with this

new perspective. On the other hand, Çağlar and Soysal draw attention to the limits of the transnational migration approach. The “in-betweenness” of migrant culture and identities became valorized as the richness of migrants’ multiple identities, but it remains still problematic. Transnationalism tends to confine itself to the bipolar connection between host and home countries—the dichotomous view that resulted in the “in-between” concept. Therefore, transnationalism failed to capture the diverse and multifaceted border crossings and networks of migrants.

There are two contemporary accounts that frame the justification of migration: one is that perpetuated by media images, wherein migrants pass long distances and borders with great difficulties or die in dangerous waters. This promotes the belief that migrants are forced to migrate, whether they want to or not. The second account, often also supported by government migration policies, indicates that migrants set out for their economic benefits but that governments can manage the process with drastic measures. Manifestly, these two accounts do not reflect the complicated structure of migration.

According to Carling and Collins (2017), alternative conceptualizations are needed to advance accounts of migration beyond the theories of economic rationality and completely involuntary displacement. Migration research should open new ground in the conception and examination of the motivating forces that induce and disrupt migration. In this context, notions of aspiration and desire should be foregrounded, renouncing the primacy of economic rationality in migration theories. Carling and Collins (2017, p. 5) remark that “even economic narratives of movement are socially constructed and can only be read concerning the subjectivities of migrants, their states of feeling and the circulation of affect within and across borders.” Aspiration and desire are matters of individual cognition and emotion. Carling and Collins draw attention to emotions in order to blur boundaries between different types of migration; they believe it is critical to a humanizing of migration. The subjectivity and identity of migrants are not predetermined by place of origin or mode of arrival, for these are always in formation.

Migration aspirations refer to a subject’s relation to migration possibilities. This subject is considered to be convinced that leaving would be better than staying. The term “migration aspiration” is both an umbrella term referring both to migrants’ generalized

desires, wishes, and preferences and also to a more specific expression of thoughts and feelings about potential mobility. Aspirations and desires also have a social grounding. Individual attitudes to migration cannot be separated from those manifested in the social context. The transformative potential of migration generates an aspiration to migrate for the prospective migrant, an imagined transformation that is also institutionally embedded as a “culture of migration.” As people observe the migratory achievements of their peers, migration becomes a realistic prospect and part of their “aspirations window” (Carling & Collins 2017, p. 8).

Carling and Collins draw attention to the correlation between aspirations to migrate and aspirations in general. They argue that migration theory should ask “what it is that people aspire to when they aspire to migrate.” Most probably people aspire to something that they think migration can help them achieve, a claim that makes the migration something instrumental. Therefore, the nature of the underlying aspirations becomes the subject of migration theory. In this conception, “specific expressions of desire, such as an interest in or will to migrate, are necessarily social determinations of more free-floating desires for individual becoming” (Carling & Collins 2017, p. 9).

De Haas’ aspirations/capabilities approach is the successor of two-step approaches originally proposed by Carling (2002) as an aspiration/ability model. Carling argued that large migration flows and involuntary mobility characterize our times and that the aspiration and the ability to migrate should be addressed separately, since there is a great number of people wishing to migrate but not able to. Based on fieldwork in Cape Verde, Carling’s model of migration incorporates restrictive immigration policies and associated barriers to migration. Migration and non-migration are two sides of the same coin, but non-migration has attracted little attention. In fact, involuntary immobility has become a central concern for large numbers of people in different parts of the world. These people cannot develop a strategy to create a better life, beyond migrating. The problem is only exacerbated by those who are able to migrate and sustain transnational social links, as the opportunities globalization offers and extensive transnational activities of migrants mark a stark contrast with the immobility of who want to move but cannot.

Carling (2002) supposes the aspiration and ability model to be appropriate for analyzing migration within most contexts, including involuntary population movements in the case of refugee migration, where civilians might have strong aspirations to leave but less ability to do so. This model contests the common idea that different migration categories essentially correspond to different processes. The model of aspiration and ability define three migratory categories of people. Some people have an aspiration to migrate as a consequence of a belief that migration is preferable to non-migration, some of whom have the ability to do so, and thus become “migrants.” Other people have aspirations to migrate without the ability, so they are “involuntary non-migrants. And a third group consist believe that non-migration is preferable to migration, making them “voluntary non-migrants” (Carling 2002, p. 12).

According to Carling, aspiration to migrate can be evaluated at two levels. The first is the macro-level question of why these people desire to emigrate. The social, economic, and political context form the “emigration environment” that is the most common to members of a society in general. In this context, Carling (2002, p. 13) argues that migration is a “socially constructed project.” People who actually migrate consider it as an option through “the meanings with which it is embedded”. The second is the micro-level question of who wants to migrate and who wants to stay. Here, Carling states that “individual characteristics such as gender, age, family migration history, social status, educational attainment, and personality traits are likely to provide some answers.” Relations between individuals may also have encouraging or discouraging effects on migration aspirations. Thus, aspiration to migrate can be analyzed in consideration of both macro and micro-level influences.

Ability to migrate can similarly be examined at two levels. Carling (2002, pp. 12-13) treats the macro-level effects in terms of “immigration interface.” Each of the modes of migration is accompanied by certain barriers with costs and risks that constrain many potential migrants from migrating. Surmounting the barriers is a prerequisite for actually migrating. According to Carling, these macro-level barriers are mainly the direct or indirect results of restrictive immigration policies. Then, at the micro-level, individual-level characteristics determine who will have the ability to overcome the barriers to migration.

In a world where there may be huge obstacles for prospective migrants, it is not possible to just assume that when people decide, they move, and a positive assessment of costs and benefits might be insufficient for an actual migration. Many migration desires remain unfulfilled. Thus, the distinction between wishing to migrate and being able to do so leads to further research on migration processes. Writing later with Schewel, Carling revisited the aspiration/ability model. Carling and Schewel (2017, p. 1) argued that the analytical distinction between aspiration and ability still helps to solve complex questions around “why some people migrate but others do not,” but they recognize that the aspiration/ability model has its own theoretical and methodological challenges and thus go on to discuss the question of how aspiration and ability may be assessed through empirical research.

The aspiration of migration has been widely evaluated as a potential course of action, with ability considered as the realization of actual mobility at a given moment. Such research is generally based on survey questions intended to identify migration aspirations. However, there are also methodological challenges regarding how survey questions can properly determine whether or not people wish to migrate. Carling and Schewel analyze survey questions dealing with the possibility of migration as taking seven main forms, with questions about 1) the aspiration, desire, or preference to migrate, 2) the intentions or plans, 3) preparations, 4) consideration, 5) conditional willingness, 6) necessity, and 7) likelihood of migration. Carling and Schewel (2017, pp. 5-6) see three challenges generated from the usage of survey methodology. The first is “conceptual vagueness surrounding the object of evaluation”; the second is the difficulty of understanding a complex phenomenon through simple, mostly yes/no questions; and the third is the difficulty of capturing “the potentially transient nature of aspirations.”

Regarding migration ability, the conversion of migration aspirations into actual movement depends on context-specific opportunities and obstacles. Especially those desiring to migrate from a poor country to a rich one face an imposing barrier of restrictive immigration policies. When legal migration is not possible, alternative channels emerge for unauthorized migration: “Depending on the mode of migration, different types of resources—financial, social or human capital—are required to be able to migrate” (Carling & Schewel 2017, p. 11). Carling and Schewel argue that migration ability can

be conceptualized in two ways: as potential or revealed. Potential ability refers to the possibility of realizing migration aspirations in a specific context, while revealed ability is the observable migration ability of somebody who has actually migrated. Revealed ability can be examined empirically through two-step approaches focusing on the transition from desired to observed migration. It is challenging to examine and quantify potential ability, but, for example, visa restriction indexes and passport costs can be used to compare potential abilities in a multi-country data set. Notwithstanding the methodological challenges, Carling and Schewel argue that the aspiration/ability model strikes a balance between diverse theoretical approaches to migration.

Collins (2017) explores the potential of desire as a theory for migration studies. Human aspiration and desires illuminate the generative potential of migration and its transformative possibilities for the subjects and spaces. According to Collins, today's migration is mostly viewed through the perspective of migration management, which aims to regulate borders and mobility. The political rationality of migration management assumes migration as either economic action or forced movement and has been influenced by the theories of migration studies that mostly rely on the image of the migrant as a "utility-maximising individual" (Collins 2017, p. 2). Relatedly, Collins suggests that much migration scholarship involves the claim that the reason why people choose to migrate is measurable. There are three propositions behind this claim. These involve the presumption that migration is mainly economic, derived from the unequal distribution of resources, that the individual migrant chooses to migrate in an autonomous and individualistic way, and that migration decision-making arises at a particular moment in time, perhaps in a relatively short period of time before departure.

Developing his thesis, Collins suggests an alternative conceptual framework that focuses on the formation of migration, especially the social and temporal conditions motivating and sustaining the movement. This approach aims to embrace the excesses and uncertainties of migration, highlighting the concept of desire as a social force (developed here through the work of Deleuze and Guattari). Using desire as a theory for migration implies paying attention to how movement is encouraged by a range of "conscious and sub-conscious influences." Desire differs from aspiration because it draws attention to "the embodied and emotional generators of migration" (Collins 2017, p. 3).

Aspiration refers to the intentions and plans about future actions that are assessed as potentially valuable. Otherwise, in the conception of desire, the possibilities are considered good because one desires them, rather than vice versa. Desire is mostly used as a synonym for 'motive', 'reason' or 'want'. Collins (2017, pp. 3-4) summarizes Deleuze and Guattari's (1983) conception of desire as constituting "the human condition, the continual attempt to reaffirm our status as a becoming-subject." Desire is not just an effect of power but "the very force that animates the world." Collins relies on this conception of desire as a social force and defines three conceptual issues in migration: temporality, assemblage, and becoming. Interest in migration only exists within a certain social context where desires are invested in that social formation. The temporality of decision-making is not a singular moment, for it is in relation with past, present, and future:

Migration, particularly that discussed in this article, is clearly coded in the norms of contemporary capitalism and the valorisation of economic, social and cultural powers that emanate through this assemblage. Of course, migration is articulated through other desires that emanate from variable, if not fully distinct, assemblages – a desire to embody different identities as a 'global subject' or 'cosmopolitan', feelings of filial piety and commitment to community and place, a yearning for travel, adventure and experience or to escape from social and institutional constraints (Collins 2017, p. 4).

The conception of desire as a social force in migration considers all these factors as expressions of an underlying desire that cannot be reduced to simple justifications for action. Collins argues that a focus on desire highlights the transformative dimension of migration. The desire as a social force emphasizes the processes of becoming that migration entails. Collins uses migrant narratives to explore desire and unpredictable aspects of migration, arguing that the narratives allow researchers to compile accounts of movement which pass across geographical and temporal settings. Interviews provide an opportunity to explore expressions of desire and observe its effects on and in mobility and subjectivity.

Another study, by Collins et al. (2014), explores the mobility of international students in Singapore through Deleuzian theorizations on desire. Here, the researchers identify three elements of mobility and desire. First, desire does not simply influence what individuals choose to do, it is a socially generated force. It is not subject of calculated choices or fantasies we lack, and we do not desire objects; rather, we desire to delve into the world

expressed by that object. For instance, international students in Singapore do not desire the object of an overseas degree in itself, they desire what it expresses socially, culturally, and educationally in terms of future trajectories. The desire for mobility does not only take them to other places but also transforms the social spaces they inhabit.

Second, desire is integral to the imagination that takes the individual toward the objects of desire and into the world in which they are intertwined. This emphasis on imagination draws attention to the way that desire is shaped by discourses which promote certain objects and demote others in collective imaginaries. “This process is carried out through coding, overcoding, and decoding of objects and behaviors as more or less desirable and undesirable” (Collins et al. 2014, p. 665). The imaginaries sometimes encourage rationality, such as capital accumulation, but sometimes they refer to a desire to escape from constraints, to embody different positions, or to embark on an adventure. Third, desire is full of transformative potential. New modes of being in the world are generated by desire. Collins et al. (2014, p. 665) conclude that desires to circulate can become intertwined with “both subtle and radical transformations of the self, the social spaces one inhabits and the global city.” Employing Deleuzian constructs, they argue that desires to circulate can be better articulated as desires “to be in circulation” or “to become in circulation.”

There are also scholars using the concept of hope as a theoretical base in migration research. Mar (2005) argues that the old conception of push-and-pull cannot adequately explain the increasingly complex causes of migration. He focuses on internal emotional forces that motivate or demotivate actions as much as external events or circumstances. Even people sharing the same objective conditions differ from one another in the choice to emigrate. According to Mar (2005, p. 361), “Pushing and pulling is experienced by migrants as emotional tensions and ambivalences, particularly where there is no clear and predictable outcome or directionality.” Dealing with hope needs to engage with a determined field of values and significations—but the researcher should move away from this symbolic load to ground concrete ethnographic analysis with a method of hope.

Hope cannot be categorized as an emotion in simple terms because it involves cognitive dimensions and public evaluations of the possibility that make it an “intellectual emotion”

(Mar 2005, p. 364). The concept of hope has an element of realism that is vital in attempting to grasp what motivates and sustains migration. Thus, hope differs from other possible concepts, such as 'desire' or 'fantasy'. Mar (2005, p. 365) argues that the "social analysis of hope must encompass the time of waiting, spatial and social movement, expectation and achievement, all of which are fundamental to the emotional experience of migration."

Kleist conceptualizes hope in the context of African migration, claiming that contemporary migration is characterized by a mobility paradox: "The increased reach and accessibility of communication, media and transport technologies mean that people in many parts of the world are exposed to visions of the good life elsewhere" (Kleist 2017, p. 1). Meanwhile, and in the face of a growing inequality, the vast majority of people in the Global South are restricted from legal mobility channels. Kleist links mobility practices to migrants' "temporal and spatial horizons of expectation and possibility." Collective social imaginaries and aspirations instill migration projects in a context of restrictive mobility regimes. Hope is the constituent of this process. It sustains the possibility of a desired alternative to current reality: "Hope is grounded within the realm of the thinkable or imaginable and hence has a strong collective and normative dimension" (Kleist 2017, p. 2).

Hope is the anticipation of the 'not-yet' with faith and confidence in the future. But this is not an absolute faith, for hope does not exclude uncertainty. Kleist argues that hope can be used as an analytical framework to examine potentiality as well as uncertainty. Examining potentiality means analyzing the social imaginaries of the good life, faith, and confidence, while examining uncertainty means analyzing how the hoping subjects deal with precarious and unpredictable conditions. According to Kleist (2017, p. 2), a "hope perspective enables us to analyze how visions of the good life or future are generated and distributed, and how horizons of possibility and expectations are linked to different places and temporalities."

Hernández-Carretero and Carling (2012) explore the decision-making and risk-taking factors of Senegalese boat migration, finding them to be shaped by context-specific interactions of diverse factors. These mostly involve the difficulties of social adulthood,

notions of masculinity, pride and honor, and religion. Hernández-Carretero and Carling argue that aspects of modernization put pressure on young adults, mostly on men in the Senegalese case, who can no longer earn enough in traditional private sectors, such as agriculture and fisheries, or access the limited opportunities in the public sector. At the same time, these people are exposed to wealth, both locally and globally, through media and transnational networks, which creates new desires and ambitions. There is an impasse in which they are unable to gain the status and responsibility of adulthood, which is a source of shame for these Senegalese youth. They need to do something, which leads to high-risk migration (2012).

According to Hernández-Carretero and Carling (2012, p. 410), “Migration aspirations are formed in specific social contexts,” and “Rather than absolute poverty, the decisive factor is often a perceived inability to fill a social role.” The figure of the emigrant exemplifies economic success and social prestige and has become a “social role model.” Emigration is perceived to be equal to success. Hernández-Carretero and Carling observe that the desire to migrate is omnipresent, like a collective dream or even an obsession. Here, the economic pull of financial gain is more deeply appreciated as a vehicle for a social self-worth: “As those at home witness emigrants’ ability to assist their families, build a house, get married, and even buy a car, the notion has developed among Senegalese youth that emigration is the most direct path to success” (2012, p. 411). In this context, boat migration is seen as a courageous action that a man should perform to fulfill his duty to his family and protect his dignity as a man. The informants of this research see the possibility of death as a matter of honor and sacrifice. Hernández-Carretero and Carling conclude that the notions of life and death become inverted in the context of boat migration: “Setting out on the dangerous journey represents hope, ambition, and glory – even if death should be the outcome,” whereas “not departing is presented as wilting away” (2012, p. 412).

Bredeloup is another researcher who has explored psychological motivations behind the decision to migrate. In her article “The figure of the adventurer as an African migrant,” Bredeloup (2013) disagrees with common, preconceived notions of African migration as determined solely through misery and danger. Individual motivations and personal ambition are important factors in the decision to ‘hit the road’, literally as well as

metaphorically. Bredeloup refrains from using “personal ambition” in terms of a “rational behaviour” per microeconomic theories of migration, arguing that “the decision to leave does not systematically result in ‘costs-advantages calculations’ but can also result in a pressing urge to change lifestyle, to invent new ways of life, [and] to explore far-off lands, real or imaginary” (Bredeloup 2013, p. 170). Thus, the migratory adventure is not only a physical departure abroad but also a moral experience identified with risks and the intensity of life.

Summarizing, in this section, prominent migration theories have been reviewed. These theories explain the initiation of migration with a range of economic reasons as push-and-pull factors, including differentials in wages, individual evaluations of costs and benefits, collective decisions to maximize income and minimize risks, demands for immigrant labor in receiving countries, and the overall structure of the capitalist world system. Then, following the initiation of migration comes its perpetuation. First, social networks emerge, webs of social ties that make each migration easier than the previous one. Over time, migration becomes institutionalized and creates self-feeding mechanisms. Migrants transform structural conditions for future migrants in a cumulative causation, with each movement making future movement more possible and likely. Finally, non-people linkages emerge to create migration systems.

Broadly, one can adjudge there to be a certain lack of migration theories that go beyond economic rationalization, where migrant subjectivities are taken into consideration. In fact, economic reasons are constructed within social contexts. Aspirations and desire to migrate refer to the subject’s conviction that leaving would be better than staying. They are also related to what people aspire to achieve and desire to become in general. Although individual emotions and attitudes are highlighted here, aspirations and desire have a social grounding and cannot be separated from the social context. Migration transforms a society and its structure, a transformation that becomes institutionally embedded as a ‘culture of migration’ which, in turn, further generates the aspiration to migrate. As people observe the migration experiences and achievements of their peers, the idea of migration becomes real for them, an actual prospect. Indeed, the perspective of aspiration, desire, and hope draw attention to the crucial role of emotion in any culture of migration.

Qualitative studies have been considered here that approach migration from the theoretical perspective of aspiration, desire and hope—but these studies approach the aspiration and the desire and the hope as distinct. These self-motivating feelings and forward-looking attitudes are separated and treated as (though) unrelated. However, it is not really possible to separate these emotions out from one another in migrant narratives; they are all intertwined and co-exist. Indeed, even a totally abstract analysis will define them in terms of their inter-relatedness. Thus, as will be seen in the fieldwork conducted and reported in the main chapters of this dissertation, participants recount their stories through all these three emotions.

In the previous studies reported here, it is mentioned that people are exposed to visions of the ‘good life’ in other parts of the world through their increased contemporary access to communication, media, and transport technologies. However, those studies do not explain how this process works. To my knowledge, there is no research that examines linkages between the different cultural aspects of migration of aspirations, desires and hope and ICTs. The role in international migration of the relation of emotion to mediatization has not been investigated. In the contemporary context, this represents a highly pertinent field of study precisely because the expressions and reflections of aspirations, desires, and hope can be located within the content and usage of migrant mediatization and thus present as obviously motivational and thus explanatory.

2.2 THE ICT MEDIATIZATION OF MIGRATION

With the advent of cell phones, the Internet and digital information, media culture has become pervasive, a part of all aspects of life. In this societal development, migration is no exception, both as an imaginary and an enactment. Evidently, migration itself has become mediatized, with migrants using digital media throughout the process of emotional and attitudinal change or opening leading to the conception and (attempted) realization of physical movement from one place (country) to another. While in the past, forms of communication such as letters and phone calls were pertinent to the process, with the advent of ICTs, migration has taken on a form of connectedness never seen before. The nature of migration has been fundamentally altered.

This new connectedness has been investigated as an important area of interest in migration studies under three main headings. The first is related to transnationalism, wherein the connectedness provides a method of regular communication that allows for families who are dispersed to stay in touch. This has been considered as enabled through cheap telephone calls (Vertovec 2009), computers (Hiller & Franz 2004), polymedia (Madianou & Miller 2012), social media (Dekker & Engbersen 2014, Komito 2011), cell phones (Gordano 2013, Schaub 2012), and smartphones (Dekker et al. 2018, Zijlstra & van Liempt 2017).

Diminescu (2008) argues that the generic divide between the old concepts, such as migrant, foreigner, immigrant and nomad, is tending to blur. People are able to envisage that they or their children most probably will live and work in a place other than where they were born. According to Diminescu (2008, p. 567), the “global media paint a picture of an easily accessible elsewhere that contributes to standardizing, reinforcing and generalizing this culture of mobility.” She proposes “the connected migrant” as a term emphasizing migrants’ transnational “culture of bonds.”

When migrants began to use modern ICTs as a common practice, this culture became immediately visible and highly dynamic. Thus, migration can no longer be seen as a movement between two distinct communities and separated places. Migrants maintain and activate remote relations on a daily basis. Telephone, email, and other technologies create a virtual bond that allows the migrant to stay close to his/her family and friends. They are aware of and involved in what is happening at home and elsewhere. Diminescu argues that the figure of the uprooted migrant now gives way to the figure of the connected migrant, and the lines of continuity should be addressed in order to understand this figure. It is mobility and connectivity that define the 21st-century as the era of the connected migrant: “Yesterday the motto was: emigrate and cut your roots; today it would be: circulate and keep in touch” (Diminescu 2008, p. 568).

Hepp, Bozdag, and Suna (2011) take Diminescu’s concept of the “connected migrant” and extend it to the “mediatized migrant.” This is an all-embracing “mediatization” of diasporic lives. They argue that migrants live “highly media-saturated lives,” in which the everyday experience can only be captured by focusing on the interrelations between

different media and everyday practices. Traditional mass media and the new media of personal communication constitute together a “media environment”. The present culture of migrants must be understood as media cultures and the migrant identity as thence “deeply interwoven with and molded by different forms of media” (Hepp, Bozdag, & Suna 2011, pp. 1-3).

‘Migrant transnationalism’ refers in part to the networks, to the systems of ties, interactions, exchange, and mobility that are spread throughout the world. These networks are efficiently connected through new technologies, especially telecommunications. “Cheap telephone calls, faxes, email, and internet sites, satellite TV, ubiquitous print media and inexpensive and frequent modes of travel have allowed for continuous and real-time communication within global migrant networks” (Vertovec 2009, p. 15). Thereby migrants are able to maintain strong identity bonds of emotion, of closeness, loyalty, and affiliation with their families and homelands.

Vertovec (2009) defines cheap international telephone calls as the social glue of migrant transnationalism. Parallel with other processes of globalization, the overall volume of these calls climbed massively in the 1980s and the 90s. Migrants adopted ICTs very quickly. Besides their role in maintaining social networks, ICTs are also involved in other transnational formations, such as “political parties and movements, homeland outreach programmes and policies, diasporic marketing and business practices, remittance activities and hometown associations” (Vertovec 2009, p. 160). Migrants connect better in an interconnected world for a variety of purposes. In this context, “the dispersed diasporas of old have become today’s ‘transnational communities’ sustained by a range of modes of social organization, mobility and communication” (p. 5).

According to Hiller and Franz (2004), the computer serves as a new resource of social capital among migrants. They define three phases in the migration cycle—pre-migrant, post-migrant, and settled migrant—and three categories of computer usage—developing new ties, nourishing old ties, and rediscovering lost ones (2004). The pre-migrant is still located in the place of origin. He/she may be in the process of the decision to move or has already made the decision. In any case, the pre-migrant needs to obtain information, assistance and advice and makes contacts through the Internet to facilitate the move. The

post-migrant has been located in the new destination for less than five years, which is considered a period of adaptation. The post-migrant uses the computer first, to integrate and learn about the new environment, and second, to look backwards and stay in touch with the people in the community of origin. The settled migrant has been located at the destination for more than five years and is well-adapted to the destination. He/she wishes to rediscover a lost or neglected connection driven particularly by nostalgia.

Hiller and Franz (2004) argue that migration shows how online and offline connections are supported by computer-mediated communication through three types of relationships. New ties refer to the new relationships acquired online through a computer. The pre-migrant establishes new ties to make his/her move possible, the post-migrant uses new ties to become established and integrated into the new community, and the settled migrant establishes new ties with people who share a common heritage. The computer helps to retain old ties too. This includes keeping in contact with family and friends and generally with the home community. The post-migrant mostly sustains old ties because they are still fresh and vibrant in the post-migration period—while “new ties are essentially instrumental,” old ties tend to be “primarily expressive and affective, dealing with emotional linkages, reminiscence and often childhood and family history” (Hiller & Franz 2004, p. 744). Thirdly, migrants rediscover lost ties through computer-mediated communication. Especially settled migrants use the computer to search message boards, guest lists, and chat rooms to reconnect with their lost ties.

ICTs have become crucial for migrants and non-migrants who live geographically separated but connected through transnational ties. Dekker and Engbersen (2014) focus on how social media transform migration networks and facilitate international migration. Users of the Internet are not just consumers, since it allows them to produce content, especially through social media. The variety of closed and open groups on various social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Friendster, Twitter, and LinkedIn employing verbal and image-based modes along with related advertising and other analogue targeting all serve both for personal communication and information distribution.

Dekker and Engbersen (2014) conclude that social media facilitate migration in four ways. First, communication between migrants and non-migrants with strong ties such as

family and friends has become “cheaper, more frequent and more media rich” (p. 413). The availability of long-distance communication technologies has lowered the migration threshold and made the migration decision easier to make and accept. Second, social media allow migrants to create important weak ties. This is different from one-to-one communication. Migrants can find new information about the routes or the destinations in these loosely bounded networks than in their existing networks with close contacts. Third, social media enable migrants to gather resources from networks of latent ties. For instance, they contact settled migrants in the destination country to obtain information about migration and settlement such as labor market and legal conditions. Fourth, social media offer a rich open-source of insider knowledge on migration that is unavailable in more traditional or institutional information channels. Social media democratizes knowledge and offer access to the information related to migration through discrete, non-institutional sources.

Komito (2011) focuses on the effect of social media on links between migrants and their home communities. Based on his fieldwork among Polish and Filipino migrants residing in Ireland, Komito argues that social media enable migrants to maintain strong ties of affinity and to participate in the community they have left: “Social networking sites, combined with webcam use, instant messaging and texting all combine to enable people to still feel as if they are participating in their friends’ lives” (Komito 2011, 1084). This ability for migrants to maintain their relationships transforms the process of migration and integration. New technologies reduce communication and transportation costs and make further migration easier especially by “increasing the number of friends and relations abroad who can be found and might be willing to provide assistance” (p, 1077).

Madianou and Miller (2012) draw attention to the separation of families as a consequence of globalization and migrant transnationalism. They question how parents and children care and look after each other when they live many years in different countries. Transnational families are not new, but especially with the feminization of migration demographics, the separation between mothers and their children is also becoming common. These families maintain their long-distance connection through the Internet and “email, instant messaging (IM), social networking sites (SNS) and webcam via voice over internet protocol (VOIP)” (2012, p. 1). Madianou and Miller refer to the new

communication environment as “polymedia.” The convergence of migrant transnationalism and the new communication opportunities culminates in a new type of “connected transnational family.” Conducting a multi-sited ethnographic study with Filipino migrant mothers in England and their left-behind children in the Philippines, Madianou and Miller (2012, p. 2) argued that relationships and media are mutually shaped in the process of prolonged separation and intense mediation of these families.

Madianou and Miller shed light on both the consequences of new media and the nature of parent-child relationships. Although ICTs do not solve all the problems of the separation, the whole experience of migration and parenting is transformed through them. For instance, migrant mothers justify their decision to migrate on the basis of the existence of and their access to cheap and instant communication opportunities. Madianou and Miller firstly propose a theory of polymedia that refers to the users’ appropriation of the rapidly developing and burgeoning media environment. They find that users are not dependent on any particular medium, they use different media as an integrated environment. Then, Madianou and Miller propose a theory of mediation. They learn that the social relationship of the mother and child becomes a mediated relationship. Mothers desire to be mothers to their children, and children desire to have mothers, so they each fulfil their desires and facilitate their relationship through the mediation of polymedia, which themselves have become increasingly diverse and affordable.

It has also been pointed out that the process of integration has become more complicated due to connectedness. Komito (2011) explains how social media are being used for different purposes than the already old communication tools of calling, texting or e-mailing. Notably, social networking sites are rarely used by these migrants as an active form of communication. The respondents explain that they use social media in a passive way to check messages, browse photos, and look for friends. Komito (2011, p. 1075) argues that “social media usage enables a passive monitoring of others, through the circulation of voice, video, text, and pictures that maintains a low level mutual awareness and supports a dispersed community of affinity.” This background awareness is new in the usage of internet applications, and is characteristic of individuals in social groups of solidarity and commonality. When certain individuals leave these social groups and move away, new social media serve to maintain a sense of continuity within the group,

disregarding locality. This, too, may have consequences in migration and integration processes.

For example, people who have strong emotional support within a social media community may be unexcited about having to make new social contacts in the host community. Or, these people may move from one country to another more easily because they carry their social media community with them. Similarly, they may decide to return home, and they may reintegrate there more easily, because they have never lost their social interaction with the community. Komito (2011) suggests extending Diminescu's (2008) concept of "connected migrants" to "virtual migrants." The physical locality of these migrants is no longer bounded by their identity. They participate in their home community of friends, relations, and acquaintances in a variety of ways, regardless of where they currently live.

The second heading under which the connectedness of migrants has been studied is the establishment of diasporic communities. Here, ICTs function as a bridge between these communities and their homelands and allow for the maintenance of the sense of identity and community. There have been many studies conducted on the use and importance of ICTs for specific diasporic communities.²

Alonso and Oiarzabal (2012) focus on diaspora creation and diaspora interaction with ICTs. They argue that the Internet becomes a harbor for contemporary immigrants. Even before physical migration, it is a source of information about the new destinations, and after the arrival, it serves to build an interactive link back to the homelands. Even more importantly, the Internet creates a digital communal space consisting millions of communicators (machines and people) that become "the virtual home" for many dispersed communities around the world (Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2012, p. 2). In this space, immigrants reconnect instantly with those at home and with other fellows around the world, regardless of geographical distance and time zone.

² For the use of social media in creating virtual nationhood in the diaspora, see Al Rawi (2017), Adams and Ghose (2003), Bernal (2004), Boczkowski (1999), and Rai (1995); for an understanding of how diasporic public spheres are created through the Internet, see Parham (2004), Ignacio (2002), Chen and Choi (2011), Wong (2003), and Yang (2003); for a comprehensive study on the use of ICTs in the configuration of new communication processes, see Benitez (2012), Kok and Rogers (2016), and Baldassar et al. (2016).

According to Alonso and Oiarzabal (2012, p. 2), “There are no constraints on synchronicity or locality,” meaning that “the Internet offers the possibility to sustain and re-create diasporas as globally imagined communities.” This creates a kind of digital diaspora with a sense of identity and community. In return, technology transforms their previous meanings. Digital diasporas interact with technology as part of our common daily politics. Alonso and Oiarzabal also emphasize the increasing role of ICTs in migrant social networks that have a significant role in the perpetuation of migration. Now, migrants create and maintain social networks efficiently through ICTs. Migrant networks among individuals, groups, and organizations constitute “webs of exchange of information and transfers of knowledge in the physical world as well as in the digital world” (Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010, p. 6).

Dayan (2002) discusses media and migration through identity construction in the diasporic communities. He argues that mass media, films, and photographic exhibits represent only what takes place in the public sphere, for they do not tell how identities are adopted and internalized in the private sphere. According to Dayan (2002, p. 22) diasporic communication is not limited to conventional media: “Thus, instead of exclusively dealing with radio, cinema, television or journalism, one should try to account for other—for example smaller—‘media’, and to focus on the various practices, institutions and organizations that link the different segments of diasporic ensembles to each other.” These media and practices include the production and circulation of newsletters and audio and video cassettes, the exchange of letters, photographs, and home videos, and the constitution of religious communities or cultural associations. As a result, a very wide range of ‘large’ and ‘small’, modern and traditional media interact with one another and operate in diasporic identity constructions.

Bozdag, Hepp, and Suna (2012) support Dayan’s (2002) arguments about the role of diasporic media in identity construction. They argue that diasporic media are the “focus” of the communicative networking of migrants and that migrants focus on their status as members of diaspora through them. Diasporic media can provide information to migrants “about their local environment, their countries of origin, their country of migration and the dispersed diasporic community” (p. 4). Bozdag et al. extend Dayan’s concept of “small media,” to include digital media in a broader sense (websites, e-mail, social

software, cell phone, etc.). Digital media thus become crucial in the totality of media used by migrants.

Bozdag et al. (2012) argue that migrants' everyday lives are increasingly mediatized and diasporic media become an important part of this. Digital media and diasporic mass media are both parts of the process, but the role of the Internet is growing and certain forms of online communication becoming more prominent. These include, in the field of information, forums, mailing lists, and newsletters; and in the field of entertainment, video and music platforms; in the field of civic engagement, blogs, mailing lists, and websites. Similar functions are also fulfilled online in the fields of faith and commerce.

Brinkerhoff (2009) defines diasporas organized on the Internet as "digital diasporas." Diaspora members used to establish physical diaspora communities, but now they can create additional online communities or just display activity online. Information technologies lead to the creation of new diasporic identities with stronger ties both among the diaspora and with the homeland. Analyzing the impact of digital diasporas in the perspective of international affairs, Brinkerhoff (2009, p. 2) argues that digital diasporas have the potential "to foster democratic values, support integration in the host society, and contribute to security and socio-economic development in the homelands."

Bailey, Georgiou, and Harindranath (2007) explore diasporic media cultures, focusing mostly on media cultures constituted by the diasporic mass media. These researchers explain how diasporic communities' traditional political formations and identities are in transformation. Diasporic subjects' transnational lives and their uses of new technologies and media pioneer this transformation. According to Bailey et al., "The symbolic presence and real availability of different media open up new possibilities for expression and representation and thus of imagining the self and belonging within and across space." As a result, diasporic media cultures become a crucial part of self-expression and representation (Bailey, Georgiou, & Harindranath 2007, p. 2). In this context, the influence of diasporic media surpasses that of the diasporic milieu itself, which thus becomes visible to wider audiences.

The third heading under which the connectedness of migrants has been studied concerns the employment of mediatization as a tool to facilitate the migration process. Here,

ICTs—specifically cell phones and smartphones with an internet connection—have been used to manage the passage from country to country.

Schaub (2012) analyzes the use of cell phones in trans-Saharan migration. Since the 1990s, there have been increasing numbers of central and west African migrants attempting to reach Europe through the Sahara and the Mediterranean Sea, a phenomenon that has coincided with the boost in cell phone users in Africa. Schaub explores possible links between the two through fieldwork conducted among Congolese migrants in Morocco. Schaub (2012, p. 127) argues that “mobility is materially and socially organized.” In this sense, there are two considerations. The first is how cell phones interact with spatial, infrastructural, and institutional determinants that enable mobilities, and the second is how cell phones influence migrants’ social networks. For the first consideration, three material factors are determinant: “the region’s communications infrastructure, its urban and road infrastructure and changing migration regimes” (p. 127). Expanding that, mobile phone providers extend cell phone coverage to large parts of the trans-Saharan space, the development of this communication system is complementary to the transportation infrastructure, and EU member states use ICTs to curb migration as a counter effect on mobility.

For the second consideration, regarding social networks, migrants maintain their links to friends and family for at least three purposes:

First, they can provide a source of vital information for the migrant regarding destinations, work opportunities, routes, transportation arrangements and accommodation. Second, they can act as an insurance mechanism when network members need protection or financial assistance, reducing the potentially severe financial and security risks at the different stages of the migration process. Third, it is assumed that migrant networks lower the emotional or psychological costs of the migration project, since its members can provide each other comfort and company (Schaub 2012, p. 128).

Besides their personal linkages, migrants may also develop professional relationships with third persons, such as smugglers who provide information and support for their journey. Cell phones link the migrants to these various actors. As a result, cell phones facilitate migration by reinforcing existing infrastructure and by developing migrants’ networks.

During the refugee ‘crisis’ of 2015, researchers noticed the use of smartphones by migrants travelling from Turkey to northwestern Europe (2018, Dekker et al. 2018, Gillespie et al. Zijlstra & van Liempt 2017). Zijlstra and van Liempt (2017) explore how mobile technology has affected irregular migrants’ journeys. With migration regulations and the securitization of international borders causing an increase in irregular migration, journeys became longer and more fragmented, meaning higher costs for migration. Thus, migrants became dependent on smugglers for necessary information and to guide the choice of destination. At the same time, however, they can be more independent due to ICTs. Thus, “Smartphones, global positioning apps, social media, WhatsApp and Viber have become essential tools for migrants” (Zijlstra & van Liempt 2017, p. 175).

Zijlstra and van Liempt (2017) used trajectory ethnography in their research with migrants travelling from the Middle East to northwestern Europe. They followed their respondents for a long period of time until their destinations. The conclusion they come to is that mobile technologies and smartphones change the dynamics of irregular migration, shaping the decisions on migration routes and destinations and methods to use. Mobile technologies and smartphones widen migrants’ access to online information during the journey, strengthen existing migrant networks, and allow migrants to build new interconnections with other migrants. These interconnections are considered more trustworthy because other migrants do not have an interest in encouraging or discouraging migration. The information coming from those who have already completed the journey is especially valuable for those en route. Smugglers also benefit from mobile technologies and smartphones to promote themselves and to spread information more effectively.

Dekker, Engbersen, Klaver, and Vonk (2018) focus on how Syrian asylum migrants use smartphones and social media information in the process of migration. Their research consists of in-depth interviews with Syrian migrants who have obtained refugee status in the Netherlands. Smartphones and social media are found to be widely used among migrants before and during migration, with the use of smart technologies enabling migrants to develop ‘smart’ strategies for migration. Smartphone capacities go beyond calling and texting, since they offer the Internet connection, Global Positioning System (GPS), digital photography, and various applications that facilitate migration in many ways. However, there are also many challenges in their use.

First of all, the migrants need to employ various strategies with which to evaluate and validate social media information. Dekker et al. suggest that, more than other types of migrants, asylum seekers face “information precarity.” Then, there is the problem of access. Access to the Internet or SIM-cards is not always available during the process of migration. There might also arise problems of connectivity when there is no means to charge the smartphone battery. Furthermore, there are challenges of surveillance. Dekker et al. find that the Syrian asylum migrants they investigated are vulnerable to surveillance of their social media activity by Syrian state or non-state actors. There are also digital surveillance systems at the borders. Smartphones and social media usage puts the migrants at risk during irregular passages of borders (2018).

Dekker et al. argue that asylum migrants develop various strategies to validate social media information and to avoid state surveillance. They use pseudonyms and avatars. They are suspicious of information that comes from publicly available unknown sources. They mostly rely on existing social ties, and they trust the information coming from known social ties, NGOs, and government authorities. They evaluate risks considering encouraging and discouraging information together.

Considerable progress has been made in the investigation of international migration and the relationship to this of media in the three domains of transnationalism, the establishment of diasporic communities, and mediatization as a tool to facilitate the migration process. These research areas do not, however, sufficiently cover the field. Crucially, migration is cultural, and it has cultural elements that are transported along with the ICTs. Migration culture is thus relocated to the Internet. Furthermore, and also related to culture, the research carried out in the three areas has tended not to pay attention to the aspirations, desires, and hope of migrants.

An exception is Burrell and Anderson (2008), who, in their research among Ghanaians living in London, have sought to understand how migrants’ social lives and personal aspirations shape their use of ICTs, such as camcorders, digital cameras, the Internet and cell phones. Transnationalism defines a conceptual framework in which migrants maintain ongoing ties with their homelands facilitated by contemporary ICTs and transportation technologies. Burrell and Anderson confirm the role of ICTs in ensuring

cultural continuity in a transnational sense, but they go beyond this in considering the usage of ICTs to realize migratory aspirations. Migrants use the Internet, say Burrell and Anderson, to explore the world and search for opportunities, information, contacts, and new ideas. Furthermore, migrants' social horizons are not limited to host and home countries as per the assumption of transnationalism, since the Ghanaians in this study are observed to use the Internet to establish new ties beyond their co-nationals, to hunt for information and new ideas outside of their home and host countries. The Internet facilitates the exploratory process.

According to Burrell and Anderson, Ghanaians are mostly voluntary migrants and their aspirations determine how they orient themselves in the world. They express their personal imagination. They are not overly concerned with individual or group identity, but concentrate more on their vision of where they would like to be in the future. They are keen to speak about their aspirations about travelling, starting a business, and becoming powerful. They guide their online and offline activities in terms of their aspirations; they explore possible futures and indulge fantasies about migration; and they expand their horizons and maintain their vast social networks through ICTs. In the context of the present work, therefore, the Burrell and Anderson (2008) study indicates the field to be explored.

To sum up, this section has reviewed research into how migrants make use of ICTs and how, as a result, their daily lives have become mediatized. The existing literature on the issue purports that migrants are mediatized in three different forms or aspects of connectedness in which ICTs are used to fulfill specific goals. Firstly, migrants who have moved from one geography to another employ ICTs to preserve their preexisting connections. Those who live transnational lives are thus able to continue their communication with their families and social networks from afar without interruption. ICTs become important as a social resource in the lives of migrants, and this has the effect of facilitating international migration.

Secondly, migrants' use of ICTs leads to diasporic community formation. In this context, communication in offline communities becomes more effective, while online communities are also formed. ICTs function as a harbor, creating a virtual home for

dispersed communities around the world. In this conception, migrants are considered to gain a sense of identity and community through digital diaspora.

The third way in which migrants and their media usage has been considered is related to migrants' practical uses of ICTs. These technologies can provide a source of vital information regarding practical matters in organizing the journeys of migration, such as destinations, routes, and transportation. Additionally, migrants can gain support on their journeys from their families, other migrants, and smugglers, which they, in turn, can pass on. Thus, the migrants use smart technologies strategically and become more independent in the migration process.

Patently, the literature on aspirations, desires, and hope in migration theory is developing yet remains quite limited. There appear to be no studies that connect mediatization with the aspirations, desires, and hope of migrants. People are exposed to visions of the good life in other parts of the world through their increased access to it through ICTs which fosters their affective involvement and commitment, in part since they know they will be able to employ the ICTs to those ends to which they are motivated. Aspirations, desires, and hope are part of migration culture; they become mediatized as part of the mediatization of culture. And leading lives that become increasingly and acutely mediatized, migrants are forerunners in this mediatization process. Thus, the relationship between these two notions of mediatization and migratory movement needs to be clarified.

As noted, ICTs allow for the circulation of materials that both symbolically and practically feed mobility. In the current literature, the focus has been on practical uses, those related directly to the process of migration. Thinking about the practical uses of ICTs presents only one side of the picture, however, since ICTs are also used by migrants in ways that do not result in concrete benefits. For example, in the popular conception, it may be quite surprising that Syrian migrants who reach the Greek islands should take selfies. And certainly, this event cannot be understood from a pragmatic perspective, indicating an analytic shortfall in the scholarship. Such photographs are but one manifestation in the symbolic space of ICTs of the migrants' affective lives. Indeed, ICTs

become a symbolic space for people's aspirations, desires, and hope around their migration.

The current literature also approaches the mediatization of migrants within the limits of the diaspora. Frames such as diasporic identities and diasporic culture assume that there is a disconnect between those who have migrated and those who have stayed behind, whereas those in diasporas and those back home actually share in the migration culture. The commonality of this as a single culture is extended as it is made visible through ICTs. Both the mobile and non-mobile are experientially involved in the migration culture, living its aspirations, desires, and hope through their communication in the space created by the ICTs.

Finally, the current literature does take social media to strengthen migrant networks and facilitate migration. However, and beyond this, social media has also become itself a channel through which migration culture is transported. Communications and sharing on social media open up a symbolic space in which the cultural elements of migration are circulated. Migration culture has become mediatized in consequence of the mediatization of migrants' lives. According to Hepp et al. (2011), therefore, the culture of migrants must be understood as a media culture. Again, the emphasis here is on the aspirations, desires, and hope expressed through and represented as a function of the space of ICTs.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter, Congolese migration flows are summarized in conjunction with the Congo's history. Socio-political crisis, economic downturn, and armed conflicts are assessed as primary motives of Congolese mobility, but cultural phenomena, it is argued, should not be dismissed. A history of migration to foreign countries, especially to Europe, begets an intricate cultural pattern, with cultural characters that include the *mikiliste*, the *sapeur*, and the businessman. In Congolese culture, these characters are symbols of the good life, displaying wealth and status—and freedom of mobility. Here, these three characters are examined historically and an inquiry made into the question of how they came to represent the good life. Lastly, the interdependence between *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman are emphasized in a cultural configuration stressing mobility.

3.1 MIGRATION FLOWS FROM THE DRC

DRC is a vast country, the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. Located at the heart of the continent with the Great Rift Valley fault-line marking its eastern border, it is nevertheless pinned to the Atlantic in the west, at the mouth of its main river, one of the world's great waterways. Rich in natural resources, the DRC has a population of around 78 million. The DRC gained full independence from Belgium on June 30, 1960, but French remained the official language. Since independence, which itself was a chaotic and violent process, the DRC has experienced numerous political and economic crises. Thus, despite its unusual endowment in natural resources, the country's difficult past caused it to become, as it still remains, one of the most impoverished and least developed in the world.

Flahaux and Schoumaker (2016) explain how economic depression and armed conflict have deeply affected modern Congolese migration. The DRC has long been a country of outmigration, with large flows of refugees to other African and Western countries characterizing Congolese mobility.³ Recently, the entry restrictions and changing visa procedures in some destination countries have made the paths of this out-movement more

³ It was also a migratory destination within Africa, until the 1980s.

complex, leading to new emigration routes and destinations. The characteristic combination of the migrants has also been changing over time. In order to establish the motivating origins of Congolese outmigration, a brief review of the history of the territory is necessary.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the area of today's DRC was home to more than 200 different ethnic groups, which founded several kingdoms and empires. The first known European contact came in the 15th century, with Portuguese traders who also initiated the centuries of slave trade to the West. However, we cannot talk about a European colonization in the region until the Berlin Conference in 1885, when what was named the 'Congo Free State' became the personal domain of the Belgian King Leopold II. In the European 'opening up' and 'scramble for Africa' (which the Berlin conference was supposed to resolve), this annexation of territory in the heart of the continent played a leading role. The ruthless exploitation of the territory, both of its rich supplies of rubber, minerals, and oil and of its native peoples, resulted in the deaths of millions and caused the case of the Congo to become notorious, even in Europe. The other European powers eventually exerted pressure on the Belgian government to remove the territory from the personal domain of the king, which occurred in 1908 (Ngoie 2013). The European population in Congo increased steadily, reaching its highest point after World War II. The years following political independence in 1960 saw a massive repatriation of the Belgians and other Europeans (Flahaux & Schoumaker 2016).

Since independence, politically unstable periods and conflicts have been a recurrent feature. The DRC's post-colonial history is divided into three periods. The period of the First Republic, from 1960 to 1965, saw a dispute between power centers within the country. Two provinces, Katanga and South Kasai attempted to secede, which led to the installation of a people's government in the interior, eastern part of the country. Leader of the independence movement and the first elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, was assassinated at the beginning of this period, in 1961. Lumumba had strongly opposed the continued engagement of the Belgians in the Congo. His murder was a multi-centered plot put carried out by Lumumba's domestic adversaries under the supervision of Belgians, with CIA involvement and UN connivance (Deibert 2013, Ngoie 2013, Haskin 2005).

The Second Republic was founded in 1965 with a military coup that brought Joseph Mobutu to power. Mobutu remained in power for thirty-two years, until 1997. He renamed the country Zaire and selected as the basis of the nation-state an ideological movement he dubbed *authenticité*. Northern countries, especially the US, supported Mobutu in the form of military and financial aid until the early 1990s. The country's economy remained strong into the mid-1970s, mainly through the export of natural resources. However, this development slowed with the 1973 global oil crisis, and the situation worsened in the 1980s (Haskin 2005).

According to Ngoie (2013, p. 3) the incessant economic crisis following political independence has been mainly due to “the neopatrimonial culture of the ruling class,” which includes state corruption and criminality. In the 1980s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) intervened to implement a structural adjustment program, but this did not prevent the Congolese population from remaining among the poorest in Africa. In the 1990s, popular demands for the liberalization of the regime went unfulfilled, and the situation yet further declined. By the end of the 1990s, there was a collapse of the state alongside the now chronic inability to relieve poverty or develop and maintain minimal conditions of education, social services and healthcare provision. Meanwhile, internal population movements were taking place from rural settings towards urban centers. Kinshasa in the west, Kisangani in the northeast and Lubumbashi in the south were the three reception centers for most of the Congolese population in this rural exodus. People moved to the cities in the quest, among other things, for employment and welfare that the countryside could not provide (Ngoie & Vwakyankazi 2011).

Near the end of his reign of power, Mobutu had become the living embodiment of the ruthless dictator with an insatiable greed. Inevitably, this aggravated the deterioration of the population's living standards, despite the immense wealth of the country. Mobutu lost his grip on power when the US began to withdraw its support in the mid-1990s (Haskin 2005). The main opposition leader, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, launched a massive military operation, named the First Congo War (1996-97), supported by a coalition of the states in the region, Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola. The entire territory was taken in rapid time as the rebel force moved on the capital, Kinshasa, and deposed Mobutu in 1997. Thus, the Third Republic was born. Mobutu died of cancer a few months later (Ngoie 2013).

Laurent-Désiré Kabila founded the new government with promises of freedom and changed its name to the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, he soon adopted a centrist state style of rule and demanded the departure of the troops from the countries that had helped him to power. Internal opposition arose, and one year after taking power Kabila found himself faced with a rebellion. What became the Second Congo War began, also called Africa's Great War. It lasted from 1998 to 2003 and claimed more than three million lives from killings, disease, starvation, and other sufferings (Haskin 2005). During the war, in 2001, Kabila was assassinated. As the war continued, Laurent-Désiré's son, Joseph Kabila, became president.

Jason K. Stearns (2012) remarks on how little sustained attention this Second Congo War received from the rest of the world, despite the immense mortality figures. He emphasizes the complicated character of the war, where an overarching narrative or ideology with which it could be presented in simple terms is difficult to identify:

There is no Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin. Instead it is a war of the ordinary person, with many combatants unknown and unnamed, who fight for complex reasons that are difficult to distill in a few sentences—much to the frustration of the international media. How do you cover a war that involves at least twenty different rebel groups and the armies of nine countries, yet does not seem to have a clear cause or objective? (Stearns 2012, p. 6).

The war was notorious for its many kinds of atrocities. Stearns (2011) argues that the constant focus on the horror of the violence reinforces the impression that the Congo is filled with savages. This colonial-type and actually deeply racist view distracts from the history and politics that gave rise to the conflict, including the specific reasons behind the war of state weakness, abuse and failure, which made possible the proliferation of insurgent groups.

Even after the official end of the war, armed conflicts continued in the east of the country, in tandem with political crises and economic deterioration. Berwouts (2017) argues that the conflict had never really ended. The peace process was ill-conceived and misconducted, and the peace agreement it fashioned created a ceasefire and power-sharing arrangement for a political structure incapable of building confidence and that thus cannot sustain stability. Conflict resolution is difficult in the east in particular because of the complexity of the situation there. Berwouts (2017 p. 7) states that there are

at least three layers to the conflict in eastern Congo, namely, the “dismantling of the Congolese state, the extension of the Rwandan conflict in Kivu and the illicit exploitation of Congo’s natural resources.”

In 2006, new elections were organized, and Joseph Kabila was elected president. He was re-elected in 2011. Kabila’s second and constitutionally last mandate as elected president ended in December 2016, but he did not relinquish power, continued to rule unconstitutionally, and elections were not rescheduled until December 2018—whereupon, after a feverish competition, Félix Tshisekedi was elected President of the DRC.

In this climate of violence and political crisis, flows of refugees fleeing the country for neighboring countries has been a continuing feature of the migratory landscape. The story of the Congolese migration to Western countries has a similar history, but with different dynamics. Despite the colonial links with Belgium, there was no significant Congolese migration to Europe until the 1960s (Flahaux & Schoumaker 2016). The first migrants in the post-colonial era were members of the country's elite. Between 1970 and 1980, Congolese people migrated in circumstances of legality, in order to study—there were scholarships and sponsorships for the educated—or to work—typically in the branches of large Congolese state companies. At this time, Belgium was the most favored destination (Ngoie & Vwakyankazi 2011).

During the second period, from the 1980s to the end of Mobutu’s rule and the War in 1997 and characterized by economic crisis and rebel wars, out-migration became a mass phenomenon. This saw a diversification of the destination countries, it gained a clandestine character, and the profile of the migrants journeying to Europe changed. Basically, migrants from less favored socioeconomic backgrounds and with relatively low-level of education started to go to different countries in western Europe, including France (Schoumaker & Flahaux 2013, Ngoie & Vwakyankazi 2011). This roughly brings us to the present, with the addition of the imaginary and practical possibility of destinations extending the range of these, certainly to North America.

The illegal aspect of migration is significant in Congolese mobility. Congolese people imagine several stratagems to by-pass the numerous restrictions and obstacles. One of the

main methods consists of changing nationality or identity in the course of the journey. There is a Lingala term '*kobuaka nzoto*' which literally means 'throw away the body'. It is used when a person assumes a new name and identity during transnational movement until entry in the destination country (Ngoie & Vwakyankazi 2011, p. 29). There is another term, '*ngulu*' ('pig' in Lingala), which designates a migrant travelling with an official group in which he or she has deceptively been integrated, such as a sports team, music band, or religious group, with the intention of overstaying their visa. In 2004, the world-renowned Congolese singer Papa Wemba was charged and convicted in France for providing illegal entry for several Congolese migrants (he had brought them in as members of his orchestra, although they were not). He spent three months in prison in France.⁴

Ngoie and Lelu (2009) argue that the economic climate, conflicts, and bad governance are the main factors in emigration from the DRC since 2000. They describe forms of discontinuity, diversification, and complexity in Congolese migratory systems in the context of globalization. The traditional destinations of Belgium and France remain central, although other countries in Europe and beyond have gained importance. Since the 1990s, the UK as well as the US and Canada have become increasingly popular countries of choice, while from the 2000s, Middle Eastern and Asian destinations have increasingly attracted Congolese migrants, including Dubai, China, Taiwan, and Singapore (Ngoie 2013). Flahaux and Schoumaker (2016) point to the UK, North America, and Australia as mostly secondary movement destinations, a development that is making Congolese migration more diverse and complex over time.

New poles of attraction have appeared in Africa too. Migration to South Africa was boosted after the end of apartheid, for example, while Angola's rapid economic development after the end of its war has started to attract many Congolese. Some countries located between the DRC and Europe, such as Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and Morocco, have also become important destinations (Ngoie & Lelu 2009). Most Congolese migrants do not go out of Africa. Based on the figures for 2000-02, very nearly 80 percent of migrants from the DRC were living in Africa (a little over 15 percent were

⁴ A Belgian court convicted him of the same crime in 2012; he received a suspended sentence this time—of 15 months—and a fine of 22,000 euros (BBC News, 2016a).

in Europe and the remaining five percent mostly split between Asia and North America). At this continental level, Congolese migrants do not constitute a very significant presence. In Africa, they accounted for 4.09 percent and in just Europe 0.21 percent of the total immigrant stock (Ngoie & Lelu 2009).

The DRC has still increasing levels of international migration. Congolese outmigration is characterized not only by the diversification of countries of destination and migration strategies but also of migratory statuses. These include political refugees, students, workers, diplomats, civil servants, artists-musicians, as well as those who live without proper documentation (Ngoie & Lelu 2009). Flahaux and Schoumaker (2013) remark that seeking asylum has become a particularly marked immigration channel among Congolese migrants over the last 25 years. The other channels mostly used are migration for education and family reunification.

France became popular in Congolese migration flows from the 1980s. MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) explain this through the change in French governments and migration policies, since it was in the 1980s that French socialist government eased immigration restrictions, and also, in 1982, thousands of illegal immigrants were given legal status. In fact, many Congolese in Belgium went to France during this period to secure their official status in Europe. However, in the 1990s political right came to power and declared a new policy of zero immigration. As a result, the official numbers of newcomers, irregular immigrants, and political refugees entering into France have decreased.

Census figures show that in the liberal period, between 1982 and 1994, the total number of officially resident Congolese in France increased by some 224 percent (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000). Besides the facilitating policies of the French socialist government, there were also two other factors explaining this increase. One was the severe economic crisis in the Congo at the time and the other the expanding phenomenon of *La Sape* (see below, Section 3.3) (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000).

France is still the most preferred destination out of Africa for people leaving the DRC. Recent estimates indicate that more than 100,000 Congolese migrants live in France and Belgium together and just another 50,000 in all the other European countries combined.

However, there are no official figures concerning Congolese migrants in an irregular situation (Flahaux and Schoumaker 2016). Outside Europe, recent estimates indicate that there are nearly 30,000 Congolese migrants in both the US and Canada (Flahaux and Schoumaker 2013).

Ngoie (2013) gives practical reasons to explain the diversification of destinations. For him, there are countries where Congolese migrants want to reside, while there are other countries where Congolese migrants circulate for transit or business purposes. Flahaux and Schoumaker (2016) claim that while Europe remained the destination of choice for Congolese migrants, its restrictive immigration policies and difficulties integrating into the labor market caused the emerging preference for other destinations. Besides, Ngoie notes that the numbers of illegal migrations has increased due to the restrictions in obtaining a visa from Schengen states. Congolese people may risk their lives in their desire to reach Europe. Ngoie (2013, p. 2) cites a Congolese (Lingala) expression '*Mpoto eza lola*', which means 'Europe is paradise' to indicate the general state of mind.

Another characteristic of the contemporary Congolese migration is the decrease in returns. Before the 1990s, most of the Congolese migrants were returning within ten years following their departure to Europe. Congolese families encouraged their children who were students in Europe to finish their studies and to return. Today, however, families push their children to stay abroad (Flahaux & Schoumaker 2013). Because of the tightening of entry requirements for European countries, the migrants do not want to take the risk of being blocked in the Congo when they return. Migrants make investments and sacrifices to reach Europe. Thus, the chronic instability and economic distress in the Congo tend to limit attempts to return. There is a popular expression 'RIP' standing for *retour interdit au pays* ('return home forbidden') as bitter advice to migrants heading for Europe (Flahaux & Schoumaker 2013, p. 6).

Another important changing pattern in Congolese migration is the feminization of migrant demographics. In the period of 1970-80, the numbers of females who left the Congo for Europe were half those of the males. Recently, however, the numbers of females have caught up and even overtaken males. According to Flahaux and Schoumaker (2013) one of the reasons for this feminine mobility is that the returns have declined,

compelling families to reunify in the countries of migration. However, the migration of single women for other reasons has also increased.

Flahaux and Schoumaker (2013, p. 21) argue that “the large increase of departures and the decrease in returns are most likely related to the deterioration of economic and political conditions in the DR Congo,” commenting also that “in a context of great uncertainty,” migration has become “a key strategy for improving living conditions in Kinshasa.” In other words, the relative security of remittances is keeping people abroad. According to Flahaux and Schoumaker, recent trends suggest that the Congolese diaspora will continue to grow, especially in new destinations such as North America. Even if there is a substantial improvement in the living conditions in the Congo, it will not affect the trends and may even lead to increased migration to developed countries. For example, the growing diaspora in Western countries may fuel further migration facilitated by migrants’ social networks (2013).

Obviously, given that DRC has witnessed economic strife, undemocratic regimes, and enduring armed conflicts, including full-scale wars, all the researchers mentioned in this section link the international migration to these push-factor realities. This is notably applicable to the flows of refugees fleeing from the country for neighboring countries in the time of war. Besides, the period after the 1980s until the end of Mobutu’s rule in 1997 characterized by the economic crisis and rebel wars was when Congolese outmigration became a mass phenomenon with the diversification of the destination countries. In this period, migration was deployed as a coping strategy in time of crisis. At the same time, remittances became a significant provider for many household livelihoods. And it was in this context, according to Ngoie and Vwakyanakazi (2011), that migration acquired a sociological depth and a positive social value affording paradise-like attributions to the developed countries of Europe and North America.

Being in Europe has come to carry its own prestige, and those families with members in the diaspora have become respected in the local DRC community. The discourse on the wealth and glory associated with Europe itself created a motivating culture around mobility and migration. The foundations of this culture were mostly based on legends that

created icons and a lexicon of success. Thus, the cult of *mikiliste* was born and the ideals of the *sapeur* and the businessman gained new meanings in Europe.

Papa Wemba (Figure 3.1), undoubtedly the most famous of Congolese other than its political leaders, actively participated in the dissemination and popularization of this culture of migration. His contribution was to a dynamic combination of youth, culture, and movement that can be considered as the knot and emblem linking *la Sape*, Congolese popular music, and outmigration.

Figure 3.1: Papa Wemba on stage



Source: (BBC News, 2016b)⁵

Earlier research mostly dismisses the cultural effect on migration. Indeed, the popularity of Paris as a destination for migrating Congolese cannot be fully assessed without considering the effect of this performer, who moved there in the 1980s and promoted the city. Thus, Ayimpan and Tsambu (2015, p. 119) link the Congolese presence in France with “an imaginary conveyed through Congolese music.” The young candidates for migration first lived the dream of Europe in the songs as a huge city of lights where life is easy and pleasant, where people only live and shine. And more broadly, it was when the legends of these iconic characters, the *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman met the imagination of the disenfranchised youth in Kinshasa that the culture of migration burst

⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36131322> (Published on April 25, 2016)

into life in the 1980s and then grew in the 1990s. The following sections examine the elements of this migration culture as embodied in the three ideals.

3.2 MIKILISTE

An important term in the lexicon of the Congolese migration culture is '*mikiliste*', which refers to the Congolese migrants who have come to Europe, or 'the worlds' outside of Africa. '*Mikili*' is the plural of '*mokili*', 'the world'. Together with the French suffix '*-iste*', the word '*mikiliste*' was formed, for the one who has access to the worlds. Trapido (2011, p. 205) points out that although '*mikili*' etymologically refers to the world, the term does not imply the entire world, "but rather the collection of *vrai mboka* – 'real countries' – that constitute the rich and, to the *Kinois* [people from Kinshasa], desirable part of the world." Access to a highly mythologized West is thus central to the concept of *mikiliste* as a mode of success, which became prevalent through Congolese popular music of the 1980s.

Joseph Trapido traces the historical trajectory of the *mikiliste* based on his fieldwork in Paris, London and Kinshasa. According to Trapido (2011, p. 204), a *mikiliste* is "a *bon vivant* who lives in, or travels frequently to Europe, wears designer clothes and associates with musicians." A *mikiliste* gathers resources and performs in Europe, but the performance is always intended for the stage of Kinshasa. The performance of the *mikiliste* is completed with a triumphant return, or with the recordings shown on television in Kinshasa. Thus, one may say, the journey of the *mikiliste* is that of the archetypal hero—or heroine—who sets out with dreams and returns in glory.

Prospective *mikilistes* in Kinshasa first become acquainted with Europe through embellished stories and Congolese video clips. Shot in Europe and sent to Kinshasa, the videos show the life of Congolese circles of immigrants with ongoing conversations on the music, fashion, and Europe generally. The journey of the *mikilistes* is, first of all, an

imaginary voyage that takes them from the shallows of Kinshasa to the lights of Chateau-Rouge in Paris, or Matongé in Brussels⁶ (Ayimpan & Tsambu 2015, p. 120).

The magical quality of the European cities is reinforced by the stories told by the returning *mikilistes*. Those stories, according to Didier Gondola (1999a, p. 28), “envision Europe as an immaculate, immense city of light, where magical, mechanical passageways carry people along, where fortunes are easily made. In short, a place where the living is easy.” Gondola refers to a 20-year-old young boy from Brazzaville, capital city of the neighboring Congo Republic (north of the river, previously a French colony). This boy walks the Congolese city with a metro ticket in his pocket, he knows the names of the stations and connections, and his dream is Paris. Gondola believes that *mikilistes* first experience Europe in Africa; before they travel, they are dreamers of Europe. The geographical migration constitutes only the second stage in this process:

Young potential mikilistes spend most of the day-time hours with groups of mastas (friends) where the conversations, recycled a thousand times over, revolve, of course, around girls, and sometimes music, but especially Europe. It is there that they discover how to cheat and get around the Parisian metro, which nightclubs are trendy, and which brand names are fashionable. They learn of the opportunities for lawful integration as well as various illegal schemes to circumvent administrative measures intended to block their entrance into this paradise (Gondola 1999a, p. 28).

Thomas (2003) argues that in the difficult socio-political circumstances of the post-colonial period, dreaming and the imagination emerge as a necessary psychological mechanism to cope with reality. Thomas cites Massala-Massala, the protagonist of Mabanckou’s (1998) novel *Blue-White-Red (Bleu-Blanc-Rouge)*: “We were allowed to dream. It cost nothing. It did not require an exit visa, a passport or a plane ticket” (cited in Thomas 2003, p. 963).⁷ According to Thomas the desire to reach Paris goes beyond the simple physical journey from one geographical space to another, for the impulse is “a quest for self” and “exploration of the individual.” Thomas shows in his analysis of the novel how France is represented as a mythic, imaginary construct in the minds of the young Congolese. As expressed by Mabanckou’s protagonist, Massala-Massala, “Just one word, *Paris*, was enough for us to find ourselves, by enchantment in front of the Eiffel

⁶ Chateau-Rouge in Paris and Matongé in Brussels popular neighborhoods for Congolese immigrants; ‘Matongé’ is a colloquial name, after a downtown neighborhood of the same name in Kinshasa.

⁷ “*Le rêve nous était permis. Il ne coûtait rien. Il n’exigeait aucun visa de sortie, aucun passeport, aucun billet d’avion.*”

tower, the Arc de Triomphe or the Avenue Champs-Élysées” (cited in Thomas 2003, p. 966).⁸

In stark contrast with the dreams, *mikilistes* often live in precarious conditions in Europe, lacking a residence permit, without permanent shelter, and unemployed. Their elegant attire is thus a display of public bravado. The *mikiliste* cannot consider returning home permanently, which is associated with dishonor and failure. Gondola (1999a, p. 34) cites Djo Balard, a popular *sapeur*:

If you're well dressed, all doors are open to you... Africans who live here [in Europe] pay attention to what they wear. If they don't have anything to wear, they dare not return home for their holidays. I know people who haven't gone back for fifteen years!

When *mikilistes* return home for a splendid holiday, they do not talk about the realities of the precarious conditions they are living in. Yet Gondola (1999a) argues that even if *mikilistes-to-be* do learn the realities through French or Belgian television channels broadcasting in Kinshasa or Brazzaville, it does not discourage them; on the contrary, it only intensifies their desire. And certainly, not all of the *mikilistes* live in precarious conditions, some of them do gain a lot of money, one way or another, and spend it in extravagant ways.

The *dédicace* (dedication), when a musician cites a *mikiliste*'s name or nickname on stage or in records, is an important source of reputation for the *mikiliste*. Trapido (2011, p. 205) argues that there is a relation between performance, aesthetic production, and political-economic power. The *mikiliste*'s search for status is rooted in the desire to escape “the psychological stress of being an ‘empty’ or ‘insignificant person’.” Conspicuous consumption of goods thus becomes an aspirational lifestyle. Aiming to ‘make it’, to break into existing hierarchies, the Kinshasa *mikiliste* will imitate the free-spending entertainment practices of the *Kinois* elites who took power after independence. Since that wealth is not available to them, their dream becomes dependent on the migration to Europe (where, in fact, it can mostly only be realized through various clandestine sources of income). Thus, there develops a major disjunct between the *mikiliste* dream and his lived reality; everything is about ‘the look’. Thus, the *mikiliste* sense of self, their power

⁸ “Un seul mot, Paris, suffisait pour que nous nous retrouvions comme par enchantement devant la tour Eiffel, l’Arc de triomphe ou l’avenue des Champs-Élysées.”

and control in the world, become fixated on designer clothing and music patronage. However, their impact has been huge, and the established elites came to adopt *mikiliste* practices, thus moving the subculture from the margins to the center of Kinshasa's social life (Trapido 2011).

Trapido (2011, pp. 207-208) explains that *mikiliste*'s lavish spending and acts of largesse are determinants of the individual's value and rank within an economy of prestige: "It is common to see *mikiliste* returned from Europe throwing handfuls of dollars at street children, while wild generosity, often involving money or designer clothes, is a common way to initiate or cement relationships with women, musicians, or politicians." The throwing gesture is a ritualized way of showing success. As a ceremonial it constitutes completion and not only marks but becomes the achievement. Some *mikilistes* have even managed to return and ally themselves with elites in Kinshasa. Inevitably, however, most find themselves adrift, trapped in the clandestine economy in the European diaspora.

A rather direct, not to say ironic, but certainly important source of this economy is stealing designer clothes. Based on his interviews, Trapido (2011) learnt that in the early 1980s, many Congolese were quite specialized in a variety of forms of shoplifting. Paris was the center for the circulation of the commodities, where the market for these goods was within *mikiliste* social networks. The prices were usually half of the retail cost. If someone was going to Kinshasa, he would go shoplifting for months. That would enable him to do the throwing gesture.

Check fraud, identity fraud, and drug dealing were other criminal activities in the Congolese community in Europe in the 1980s and the 1990s. When France and Belgium responded to these, London became an important new destination; fraud there now was considerably easier so more lucrative. Congolese referred to the 1990s in London as 'the time of easy money' (*le temps de l'argent facile*). The wealth of the Congolese *mikilistes* in London made them 'children of London' (*bana Londres*), as mentioned in the songs of the period: "Soon certain Congolese from London started using this wealth in extravagant ways, attending concerts in Paris, and decisively outdoing their rivals, as they dressed in fantastically expensive clothes and showered money on musicians" (Trapido 2011, pp. 213-214). In the 2000s, the *mikiliste* economy started to decline with the new technologies

of security against theft and fraud in France, Belgium and the UK. When the time of easy money came to an end so, largely, did the patterns of extravagant spending.

Designer clothing and musical patronage make the *mikiliste* the subject of *La Sape* and trade. The following sections examine intersections between the *mikiliste* and other characters of migration, the *sapeur* and the businessman.

3.3 SAPEUR

Cesarine Bolya and Filip de Boeck (2005, p. 111) argue that the body gained a new meaning as “the city’s most public theatre” in the African urban context. Kinshasa is a city where “both male and female bodies are constantly dressing up and taking themselves out into the streets to be seen.” People become both spectacle and spectator, extravagances to behold and commentators on the body and the outfit. The shape of the body, the color of the skin, the style of hairdressing are all factors for assessment of a beauty ideal to be complemented with by the apparel and a posture of confidence. It is in this context that Bolya and de Boeck (2005, p. 111) explain how “it is largely through the body that one generates social capital, the social weight necessary to give one a place and an identity, and validate one's existence in the public arena.” *La Sape* is the culmination of Kinshasa's aesthetic regime of the body as “a veritable cult of elegance” in the context of extreme poverty.

The *la sape* movement of good-dressing and elegance started in today's Congo Republic (Congo-Brazzaville) in the early 20th century and then spread to today's DRC (Congo-Kinshasa). It rose to prominence as a conspicuous cultural element in Congolese migrant communities in Europe at the end of the 1970s. Back in the homeland, it came to lead fashion tournaments in which highly fashionable designer clothes were displayed in competition. Displaying this European haute couture in Kinshasa represented access to Europe itself, as desired by many young people in “mythical proportions.” Thus, today’s *sapeurs* connect themselves to the legacy of the four or five generations of Congolese dandyism (Gondola 2010).

The origin of '*la sape*' was as an acronym, for the fictitious *Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes*. From the first, therefore, it was imagined, and specifically as a combination in style, of a fashion in clothes and movement of elegance. Linguistically, it was rooted the French slang, '*sape*' for 'dress' and the transitive verb '*se saper*', 'to dress fashionably', which appeared in 1920s Paris referring to the fashion enthusiasm in the city. Associated terms include '*sapeur*' for a person who practices *La Sape*. Sources refer to *sapeur* as Congolese dandy too. *Sapeurs* also took other names over time, such as '*Parisiens*' 'cracks' and 'playboys' (Gondola 2010, p. 174). In this research, other terms are also identified, as creative inventions of the new generation of *sapeurs*: '*Sapologie*' (the science of *La Sape*), '*sapé comme jamais*' (dressed up like never before), and also '*équilibre*' (balance).

According to Gondola, *La Sape* dates back to the early colonial period of the French Congo, today's Republic of Congo, where Brazzaville was the main residential area for the colonizers. Europeans there mostly their houseboys' paid second-hand clothes rather than monetary wages, and these European clothes soon became a source of prestige. As early as 1910, there were Brazzaville locals who dressed up with one layer over the other to show off their wealth. Thus, Gondola (2010, p. 159) argues, "colonial subjects encountered European modernity first through fashion."

In the 1920s, the Congolese elite was not only comprised of houseboys but also clerks, male nurses, small-scale entrepreneurs, and white-collar workers of the emerging colonial economy. Aspiring to more than just the second-hand clothes, they started to order their own. Friends and acquaintances living in France bought and shipped the latest fashion items to them. They spent their monthly wages extravagantly to buy expensive clothes: "Congolese youths fervently competed to recreate identities for themselves through European clothing" (Gondola 2010, p. 160). In the 1950s, *La Sape* was in full force in both of the Congo's capitals, Brazzaville and Kinshasa. Nightclubs and beer halls became popular due to the emergence of Congolese rumba. These venues were platforms for young and talented musicians who were also trendsetters for would-be *sapeurs*. Kinshasa's musical culture was crucial in marketing *La Sape* among the Congolese youth.

La Sape fully developed its mystique in the postcolonial years. In 1960, both Congos gained the independence that was followed by economic chaos. Young Congolese moved to European cities but were unable to find what they were expecting and, moreover, faced discrimination. Thus, Gondola (2010) argues that *La Sape* became a refuge in a hostile environment that enabled young Congolese to forge new identities away from home. While *sapeurs* from Brazzaville adopted a classical style of European haute couture—especially business suits, cotton shirts, silk ties, and leather shoes—*sapeurs* from Kinshasa adopted an eccentric style, rejecting all sorts of dress strictures. Most of the *sapeurs* were residing in Europe without lawful documents, doing menial jobs and living in squalid housing in suburban ghettos. In the 1990s, they would return to Kinshasa or Brazzaville during summer vacations to flaunt their wardrobes, thereby confirming their new status. *La sape* consists of three levels of clothing that serve to forge an identity:

First, real clothing, which presents the sapeur as an individual who suppresses a real identity to acquire a borrowed one. Second, the griffe (expensive designer labels), which authenticates this oneiric migration, adds the finishing touches to the usurpation. Third, the spoken (and even sung or danced) clothing makes the sapeur the actor and conjurer of this identity. If the value of the real clothing is contested, and if the authenticity of the griffe is threatened, the spoken clothing reaffirms the illusion of an ego-screaming by presenting an enactment of words, gestures, and attitudes (Gondola 1999a, pp. 25-26).

Gondola argues that *La Sape* carries a political statement that is directed towards the West, the former colonizers, as well as towards the authoritative structures of the African state. President Mobutu's campaign of "authenticity" following his 1970s election victory proposed a conscious distancing from European influences. As an alternative to European male attire, with the suit, shirt, and tie, Mobutu designed a short-sleeved suit worn without a tie, the *abacost*. This style was promoted the political elite of the country, so in that sense, *La Sape* was also a form of resistance against political authority and the "dictatorship of *abacost*" (Thomas 2003, p. 959). Gondola (1999a) argues that the egotistical and hedonistic dimensions of *La Sape* are part of its political statement.

Similarly, MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) argue that the ostentatious, competitive consumption of the *sapeur* lifestyle indicates an oppositional, counter-hegemonic culture. *Sapeurs* search for excitement in their risky anti-social activities, such as theft, drug-dealing, and setting up unlicensed bars (*nganda*): "They spend conspicuously on fashionable clothes, and on the consumption of alcohol and rounds of

free drinks in these bars. They assert their forms of identity and status” (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000, p. 7). Their exclusion from opportunities to better their lives led them to reject the value system of mainstream society, so they created a world of their own where they could achieve status on their own terms.

According to Gondola (2010, p. 172), “*La Sape*, with its exuberant flamboyance, may well serve as a lightning rod for the Congolese disenfranchised youth to map out their itinerary from Third World status to modern cosmopolitanism and to cope with their social dereliction.” Through *La Sape*, the *mikiliste* body is exposed to the cities of light in Europe, thereby escaping not just the economic chaos of African cities but also the stigma of poverty that went with it. Through *La Sape*, the individual enters the realm of passion, dreams and imagination:

The mikiliste dresses precisely in order to blur social lines and make class values and social status illegible. The sapeur is an illusionist. La sape is there to conceal his social failure and to transform it into apparent victory. He dresses as if he were a CEO even though he is a janitor (Gondola 1999a, p. 31).

The victory of the *mikiliste* is acquired through the expensive designer labels (*griffes*) that authenticate his appearance and make the dream come true. If the *sapeur*’s success is questioned, the *griffe* speaks for itself. The most prestigious brand names become totemic symbols that guarantee the success: “Without *griffes*, the *mikiliste* would be powerless, bare and vulnerable” (Gondola 1999a, pp. 33-34).

Sapeurs immortalize their success through photographs. Gandoulou (1989) explains that *sapeurs* have their photos taken in places that symbolize Paris, including luxury stores as well as the famous tourist landmarks. These photos serve to construct the migrant’s image as a *sapeur* for the stage of Kinshasa or Brazzaville. Thus, the *sapeur* photo is “both a presentation of the self and a construction of social identity in the migration experience” (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000, p. 66). The subjects meticulously arrange all the details in the photos, including the decor, the place, and the people in it to create the memory (of an event or a group of friends at a particular moment):

The photograph captures a fugitive moment, in which the most important thing is to show off one’s physical image and elegant clothes; this is what has been achieved by means of all sorts of risks and sacrifices... [It is most often taken in] nightclubs, concert halls, party rooms, at the stadiums, and marriages, anniversaries, baptisms, reunions, etc. (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000, p. 67).

Ayimpan and Tsambu (2015) argue that *La Sape* phenomenon should be assessed with its connection to musical migration when the stars of Congolese popular music hit the road for Europe, temporary or permanently. It was in this context that Papa Wemba became a national idol when he disembarked for France. He entered into the leading community of his compatriots in exile, including *sapeurs* such as Stervos Niarkos, Modogo Gian Franco Ferre, and Henri Papa Enrico Coveri. These names were often mentioned in Papa Wemba's songs as a display of fraternity. Papa Wemba's participation among this new generation of dandies permanently attached the popular Congolese music to this movement of fashion and elegance. Together with the musicians who followed his path, Papa Wemba became the idols of *La Sape*, and in return, they advertised *La Sape* in their songs (Ayimpan & Tsambu 2015).

Having recorded an album in Paris—*Matebu* (1980)—Papa Wemba was able to return to Kinshasa after six months in complete triumph, which inspired the succeeding generation. The songs in this album were mostly about the life of the *mikiliste* and the successful return to Kinshasa. Parisian *sapeur* Stervos Niarkos wrote several of the songs on the album. These songs introduced the culture of *La Sape* to a large audience. The names of popular high fashion designers were mentioned repeatedly in the songs. Not only French but also Italian and Japanese designers were exposed to public regard like saints: “In terms of the popular Congolese songs, the movement of elegance in clothes slowly acquired a cult status, becoming a symbolic ‘religion’ with its Pope, its high priests, its priests and its loyals” (Ayimpan & Tsambu 2015, p. 121). The *sapeurs* were nominated to these titles according to their position in the community and their names mentioned in the songs jointly with the titles. Stervos Niarkos was the prophet. In 1989, he released *La Religion ya Kitendi* (The Religion of Kitendi), a song that indicated the fetishization of *kitendi* (cloth Kikongo language). As Gondola (1999) points out, *kitendi* is more than just cloth; the body is made sublime and regenerated by this covering.

After his return to Kinshasa with the new album, Papa Wemba gave his first live show on national television. His success came in a period when poverty was rising sharply, and this show was a landmark of the alliance between the music and *La Sape*. Thus, Papa Wemba's fashionable costume in the show complemented with J. M. Weston shoes became the stuff of legend and a subject of admiration in the public eye. Ayimpan and

Tsambu (2015, p. 121) describe how Papa Wemba's achievement inspired other Congolese musicians to promote *La Sape* and evoke the *belle vie* in Paris and Europe in general. The development of this imaginary urged the young on a journey to Europe, the migration fueled by their aspirations, desires, and hope to become somebody. Although very differently expressed, the motivation was similar for those taking the route of trading and business.

3.4 BUSINESSMAN

With the civil violence and economic crisis in which the formal institutional structure collapses and in the absence of a functioning legal and judicial apparatus to sanction contracts, people rely on trust in their social networks. They use personal relationships to negotiate the chaos and create their own order amidst disorder. They operate in the 'second' economy to find and develop opportunities to better their lives. The Congolese traders in Paris who were the subject of MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga's study made at the end of the 1990s, all came from Kinshasa or Brazzaville: "They had traded first in these cities, then between their two countries, and thereafter with other African countries, with Europe and, in some cases, southeast Asia, the United States and other parts of the world" (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000, p. 5). These traders' opportunities have been limited because of the political and economic crises in their countries, and the discrimination in Europe. Thus they have created their opportunities in the second economy, outside the official regulated channels of trade.

Colonization was based on the assimilation of elites through education. This made the civil service the valued profession, with trade considered dishonorable. In Congo-Kinshasa, even before colonization, people preferred farming to trading. In the period of colonization, the Belgians promoted an intermediate class comprised of people of mixed race, and Portuguese and Pakistanis dominated commerce. Before the 1970s, being a trader was ridiculed; people wanted to be in the public (state) sector rather than private. But this attitude has changed due to the political and economic crises. First, the purchasing power of civil servants was gradually eroded. Then, in the period when the

businesses were indigenized, traders became wealthy through a process of redistribution. Thus, trade became a valued occupation (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000).

The Congolese economy started to decline in the mid-1970s, and by the 1990s, it was in ruins: “The manufacturing sector was one of the weakest in Africa, agriculture was long neglected in government policies, and food imports had quadrupled since 1970” (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000, p. 29). The figures show that in 1955, 39 percent of the population was registered as employed, but by the early 1990s, this number had dropped to just five percent. With unemployment and low wages, the general population had to find means for survival or some supplementary income outside the formal system. When artisanal mining of gold and diamonds was liberalized in the 1980s, people started to dig and smuggle these precious materials across borders. In return, they brought the goods needed in the country. By the 1990s, this second economy of smuggled imports and exports was larger than the officially recorded economy. The traders established unlicensed small-scale enterprises in petty trade, in retail, and small services (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000).

The economy has improved since 2003, and particularly since 2010, but livelihood remain extremely difficult. The informal sector continues to represent a major part of the national economy, and most families make a living through this type of activity—which is also related to international mobility. Nearly half of all informal activities in the DRC occur in the commercial sector, with the other half is in agriculture, industry, and services. In Kinshasa, the percentage of commerce is even higher. There, commercial activities represent 60 percent of the informal economy. Notably, half of the informal sector jobs are held by women; they make up the majority (55 percent) of ‘self-employed’ workers (Ngoie & Lelu 2009).

When women began to expand their economic role in the household and became involved in commerce, trade capacity increased. They traded with neighboring countries, west Africa, Europe, and other centers in the world, such as Dubai and Hong Kong. In the 1980s, both men and women went back and forth conducting trade on a scale previously unseen. When there is a decline in trade opportunities in one place, trade moves to other,

new and lucrative destinations. The direction of trade flow may change rapidly depending on the information network (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000).

MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) argue that the way the traders organize their trade depends on cultural factors and that commodities play a crucial role in structuring identity among Congolese migrants in Europe. In the 1970s, *La Sape* was the most effective cultural phenomenon that encouraged young people to trade and to go to Paris. Moreover, not only did *La Sape* introduce a new motive for migration, but *sapeurs* began to trade in order to finance their journey. In this period, France thus became accessible to those with small means. By the end of the 1970s, other Congolese traders were also engaged in extensive international commerce.

When French policies towards immigration were tightened, the number of irregular African immigrants increased. These undocumented immigrants did not have many options other than informal business. Those with resident permits were also involved in second-economy activity to evade the high costs of establishing an enterprise in the official economy. MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) emphasize these traders' agency. They do not passively accept the structural conditions that are full of obstacles, but instead make determined efforts to better their lives. Informal trade is not only a simple coping mechanism or survival strategy, it is also a tool to resist exclusion from opportunity and a perspective through which to aim for their desire of wealth and status.

At the end of the 1990s, the Congolese traders in Paris were importing African foods and other ethnic goods from Africa and exporting back "electronic and other manufactured goods and appliances, second-hand cars and spare parts, and clothing and accessories." They also travelled to different European countries to buy clothing and other goods in order to sell in Paris. Some travelled worldwide to obtain goods to sell in Paris or Kinshasa. Now, as then, they organize their worldwide trading enterprises through "personal ties based on kinship, ethnicity, nationality, and friendship from workplace and locality," with such ties being "mobilized at all stages of trade" (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000, pp. 11-12).

The field of MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga's research was mainly the Chateau Rouge area in Paris, where Congolese immigrants preferred to live and trade. In Chateau

Rouge, the African population dominated the European, and this was also where Congolese immigrants were entertaining and consuming. Goods and services were provided by the traders, meaning that the consumers were buying goods within their specific cultural framework. The consumption reflected the lifestyle of Congolese immigrants. Commodities in demand were African foods, wax-print cloth, accessories, beauty products, and video cassettes of popular African music. The designer-label clothes necessary for the *sapeur* and *mikiliste* lifestyles were also found in Chateau Rouge. Beer and other forms of alcohol were consumed abundantly in the *nganda* bars, (unlicensed Congolese bars), while the most frequently used services were those of photographers, hairdressers, and seamstresses along with financial transfer services, taxis, and repair garages. Some of the clandestine services included providing squatter housing and manufacturing false papers (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000, p. 59).

In this local migrant economy, the traders mainly sold their goods in five places: “the customer’s home, the street, *nganda* bars, football stadiums and shops.” MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga refer to these places as arenas, arguing that Congolese traders strive to prove themselves and be successful in those places (2000, p. 70).

MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) remark that before independence in Kinshasa, the word ‘work’ implied only salaried employment. A market vendor was not considered to be working she was just ‘fending for herself’, which refers to the commonly used verb for the Congolese, ‘*se débrouiller*’. However, in Paris in the 1990s, ‘work’ implied trade and any form of earning money, including activities outside the law, such as “unlicensed trade and services, and drug dealing, trading in stolen goods and other activities known as ‘bizness’” (p. 54). ‘Bizness’ and ‘co-op’ were the most common terms to define commerce outside the law, the former referring generally to business activities and the latter to co-operation” (p. 56.).

MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) argue that the goal “to improve one’s life by whatever means available” leads to migration; the migrant expects that the new society will offer “possible escape from poverty and other negative social, economic, political or psychological experiences” (p. 55). Traders told MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga explicitly that they were in France to “become someone” and to change their status.

Clothing, music, and the terms used to refer to migration create a cultural unity for these traders: “This unity is further reinforced by the interpenetration of the ideas of *la Sape* and *mikiliste*” (p. 58). Thus the *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman are linked to each other in a culture of migration.

This chapter has addressed the DRC as a country of economic struggle, anti-democratic governance, violence and war. Thus, migration has become a strategy to cope with incessant crisis. In an atmosphere where the order provided by formal institutional structure collapses, people create their own. Their exclusion from opportunities in the Congo as well as in Europe, leads them to create their own world where they can achieve wealth and status. They reject mainstream society’s standard of judgment and develop their own value within an economy of prestige around the ostentatious lifestyle of *mikiliste*, extravagant clothing of *sapeur*, and informal trade of businessman. Access to a highly mythologized West is considered essential to be able to actualize the dream of prosperity and glory. The desire is ignited in Kinshasa through the popular Congolese music, the triumphant return of the *mikilistes*, the video recordings showing the lives of *sapeurs* in Europe and the attractive goods that the businessman brings to Kinshasa.

In this chapter, the culture of migration has been historically examined through those characters of *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman. These characters are interdependent. For instance, an immigrant in Europe, or *mikiliste*, may develop a passion for *La Sape* as a practice to display wealth and status, and a *sapeur* may start trading to finance his passion for clothes and become a businessman. A trader in Kinshasa may decide to go to the West with their earnings and thus become a *mikiliste*. A person may carry all these characters as cultural aspects of his migration. Increasingly also since the 2000s, this nexus of aspirational types embedded in the migration imaginary has been joined also by women, too, so we might talk now also of a broader culture that includes the female *mikiliste*, the *sapeuse* and woman trader-entrepreneur.

4. MIKILISTE AND SAPEUR

Dying without seeing Europe is a serious sin that God cannot forgive.

Congolese saying expressed by Jonathan (oral interview, April 13, 2018)

I hit the road to fulfill my dreams. I've been telling my father since childhood that I had to leave the country. My biggest dream has always been to go to Europe. This has always been the case since I can remember. My life is Europe, because I like everything that's in Europe. Even if you're poor, you can have an idea and a vision for things. You can think of becoming great. I want to be a great man someday. I want the world to talk about me, the way they talk about the other great sapeurs.

Timothe (oral interview, April 10, 2019)

In this dissertation, the *mikiliste*, one of the main characters conceptualized, is defined as someone who has opportunities and freedom of mobility. For the *mikiliste*, the issue of transit migration emerges when Turkey is evaluated according to whether or not it is able to provide these opportunities and freedom of mobility. The first section of this chapter discusses transit migration theory and its critique. Then, sub-Saharan Africans in Turkey are evaluated in this context, and the way in which the situation of the Congolese differs from other sub-Saharan Africans is examined. Lastly, the data collected from fieldwork is analyzed using a critical approach to transit migration theory.

In the second section of this chapter, the questions of who the *mikiliste* is and what it means for him/her to go to Europe are addressed using the findings of the fieldwork. Then, dreams materialized through the *mikiliste* are evaluated in terms of their truthfulness. In the third section, the character of the *sapeur* is considered in the light of the findings of the fieldwork, aiming to understand the connection between the desire to dress well and migration. The fourth section of this chapter investigates the mediatized lives of Congolese migrants passing through Turkey. In the context of the *mikiliste* and the *sapeur*, these mediatized lives function more and more in the spaces of ICTs. Then, through the analysis of certain digital media content, the material feeding both symbolically and practically into the ICT mobility is demonstrated. The general findings of this chapter are summarized in the conclusion section.

4.1 TRANSIT

4.1.1 The Issue of Transit

The term ‘transit migration’ refers to the phenomenon of migrants crossing one or more countries before reaching their destination and thus in a position in the process of an ongoing migration. In this position, the migrant is in a breakpoint, intending to continue his/her journey. From the perspective of European interests, the fear of illegal migration has made the issue of transit migration a cause of concern. Transit migration is often identified with irregular migration, with human smuggling and organized crime, and certain countries, such as Turkey, are regarded as transit countries for irregular migrants who want to reach Europe. This view needs to be problematized in the light of recent critique of the conceptualization of ‘transit’ as well as ‘migration’.

Düvell (2006) records that many multilateral and intergovernmental agencies have focused on the issue of transit migration through conferences and policy action plans since the early 1990s, but there is not a commonly agreed definition. According to Düvell “the concept appears to be as politicized as it is blurred; its emergence is not free from political motivation, and its use is often politically loaded, if not negatively connoted” (p. 4). He argues that the aim to create a clear-cut category fails to explain the complexity of the migration phenomenon, which actually requires deeper scrutiny. Meanwhile, “over time, transit migration has turned into a political discourse” (p. 6). The countries on the periphery of the European Union are considered transit countries and held responsible for unwanted and often irregular migration. Thus, the concept of transit migration is an imposed category by the EU in order to put political pressure on those countries to block the movement in some way (Düvell 2008).

Düvell (2006, p. 25) argues that transit migrants are not usually in transit out of choice. “Often, the choice of transit, or the choice of a final country of destination, only occurs in course of a migration trajectory,” he asserts and suggests that migration should be interpreted as “a continuum with different stages.” According to Düvell (2008), migrants’ perceptions and motivations can change over time. Transit countries can become destination countries. Similarly, the opinion about the destination country can change as

a result of experiences after settlement. Düvell (2006) emphasizes fluidity and hints at the possibility of calling this phenomenon ‘global mobility’ instead of ‘transit migration’. However, he does not leave the idea that there should be a final country of settlement.

Collyer, Düvell, and de Haas (2012) point out that the use of the label of ‘transit’ in the European neighborhood is limited to particular types of migration, that is, those that are Europe-bound. Thus, there is a degree of Eurocentrism in the use of the term in its implicit assumption migrants in the countries on the fringes of Europe are, in fact, intending to make for Europe as their intended destination. Collyer et al. (2012) argue that this is an erroneous idea; it ignores the fact that many of those ‘fringe’ countries are also important migration destinations in their own right.

Papadopoulou-Kourkoula (2008) criticizes previous studies that have approached the issue through a dichotomous perspective of transit/non-transit. She advocates an integrated approach that links the transit to the broader migration process. According to her, transit migration is “the situation between emigration and settlement that is characterized by indefinite migrant stay, legal or illegal, and may or may not develop into further migration depending on a series of structural and individual factors” (p. 4). She argues that individual migration strategies are shaped by both macro-level structures, such as policies and social networks, and micro-level factors, such as intentions. She also remarks that intentions are evolved and adapted to the realities encountered on the way; sometimes they are even vague. Thus, the migrant may not even have a clear idea where they want to go.

According to Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, both observers and migrants themselves cannot know the duration of their stay in a specific place. They cannot even know whether a particular stage in their journey will be temporary or not. She argues that “this approach challenges the traditional linear view of migration as a structured process, characterized by distinct phases such as departure, journey, arrival, integration” (2008, p. 5). Even as she calls attention to the ambiguities of the migration process, however, Papadopoulou-Kourkoula still tries to characterize the moment when the transit phase ends and becomes settlement. Thus, she justifies the idea that there should be a final settlement, in a sense a final destination.

Critics of transit theory emphasize that the migration process is not unidirectional and linear and involves many uncertainties. They identify uncertain aspects, such as how long the migrant will stay in a certain place, from which point he/she will cross over and to where, and which location will become permanent in terms of residency. While these uncertainties relating to the transit place are accepted, there nonetheless tends to be an assumption that there will be an end to the process, when a final residence will transpire. However, according to this dissertation, there is no data showing that the assumed permanent place is any different from what is accepted as a transit place. In terms of evidence, there is only that of the intention in the mind of the person in motion.

It is generally accepted that intentions can vary for the transit place, but it is assumed that the permanent place of settlement will indeed stay permanent. If there is still a move after the final destination, then it is argued that the permanent place becomes a transit place. This is described as a process where the search for a new permanent place of settlement continues. Once again, this dissertation asserts that when a permanent place of settlement is no longer considered to be permanent, it is not because it transforms into a transit place but because the migration in and of itself has changed. Perhaps it is not necessarily possible any longer to speak about migration in terms of the fixities of 'departure', 'journey', 'arrival' and 'integration'; the analysis has to itself move on, towards a process of global mobility that has the potential to be ongoing.

According to the data collected here from the interviews conducted, the migrants do not see Europe as a target destination where they will stay permanently and become integrated. They dream of a life where they will be free once they receive European citizenship and passports. They are open to many different possibilities, which include staying in the country of citizenship, going to another country, returning to the Congo, or developing a mobile lifestyle based on international trade. What is important is to have access to resources and the freedom to be mobile. Settling in one location or not is another story.

The generally accepted migration scheme used to depict Turkey as a transit country for sub-Saharan African migrants with the intention to reach European countries (Suter 2012, Brewer and Yüксеker 2006, Icduygu 2005). However, some scholars argue that Turkey

cannot be seen as a transit country in this case and that the presence of sub-Saharan Africans is mostly due to the commercial opportunities and export potential of Turkey (De Clerc 2013, Fait 2013, Şaul 2013).

Nicolas Fait (2013) argues that the categories such as ‘transit migrant’ or ‘transit migration’ cannot explain complex experiences, political contexts, and global realities; to him, this is the discourse of European securitization policy. Based on his fieldwork in Istanbul, he concedes that there are some experiences that fit the category of transit migration, but notes that there are also a considerable number of experiences that do not. Thus, he concludes, Turkey cannot be simplistically categorized as a stepping-stone country for the generalized sub-Saharan African migrant experience. As an alternative to the discourse of transit migration, Fait argues that the sub-Saharan African migrants often move in stages that are “intended and unintended, different statuses, with changing motivations and evolving (and declining) opportunities” (p. 34). The journey is usually fragmented with changing plans. To him, researchers should emphasize the migrants’ highly adaptable and varied strategies.

Studies of the migratory presence of sub-Saharan Africans in Istanbul explain it in terms of many factors, including Turkey’s ‘Africa Opening’, Africa’s economic growth and trade opportunities, and the export potential of Turkey. According to Şaul (2013), first of all the road to Europe is not closed. Those who want to go can save up the money and do so. Thus, transit theory is insufficient to explain the presence of African migrants in Istanbul. Second, there are the changing opinions and goals of people over time. The presence of sub-Saharan Africans in Turkey cannot be explained by their inability to go to Europe and as a result, an unwilling stay. Şaul argues that the inverse is also possible. There may be those who come with the intention of staying in Istanbul but who, over time, develop new ambitions and want to go different places. Assuming that all migrants in Istanbul come with the intention of going to Europe is to overlook many other realities. Indeed, “when looking at the reality of migration, it should not be considered surprising that people who make big sacrifices to attain a better life look out for other opportunities and choose new targets as their knowledge increases” (Saul, 2013, p. 101).⁹

⁹ Translation by the author.

Those who come against the concept of transit and support a progressive approach to migration often continue to uphold a linear process with final destination. However, as Şaul observes, people reevaluate their conditions and look out for new opportunities that may cause them to set off again. Mobility does not only occur from places considered transitory, it can start from anywhere. Some people move after many years of living in a certain place; unfavorable conditions or good opportunities may arise, leading them to hit the road again.

Limited conceptual and political molds such as ‘illegal migration’ and ‘transit migration’ assume that individuals throw themselves from one geography to another at the cost of putting their lives on hold. This is why all stops are considered transit. However, the individuals doing that stopping are cosmopolitan, fighting for their desires and aspirations, including a good life and freedom of mobility. They are determined people taking risks in order to fulfill themselves, to access “the worlds” (*mikili*), to make the most of possibilities and to even attain the apparently and virtually impossible. The aspirational aspect of migration requires of us an understanding of the process as going beyond a simply physical reaching and moving from one geography of home through another of transit to the other as destination (which is closed off).

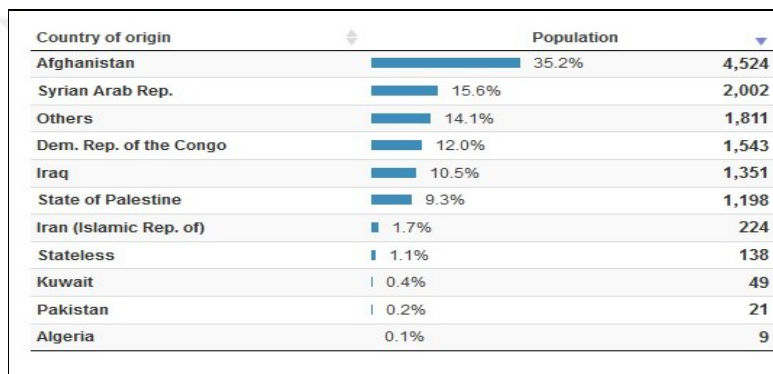
4.1.2 Transit in the Congolese Case

The issue of transit has come up quite often in the interviews conducted for this dissertation. During the two and a half years of fieldwork, some of the respondents crossed over to Greece illegally. Some continued on from Greece and went to France. During this process, some of the Congolese included through participant observation have gone to Belgium, Germany, or Sweden. There are also those who have shared their intention to go to Europe, and not stay in Turkey.

Figure 4.1 presents the statistics published by the UNHCR Greece regarding the illegal entrance of migrants to Greece from the Aegean Sea. It can be seen that citizens of the DRC are in third place, with 12 percent, after Afghans and Syrians. Research conducted on sub-Saharan African migrants in Turkey and the fieldwork conducted for this dissertation identify the Congolese as a smaller group in Turkey, compared to some of

the other sub-Saharan African communities. Thus, the numbers of Congolese crossing over to Greece is relatively high—higher than those for Nigerians or Senegalese, which have the largest sub-Saharan African communities in Turkey. The citizens of these countries are not even included in the data shown in Figure 4.1. This supports the previous research (De Clerc 2013, Fait 2013, Şaul 2013) showing that the presence of sub-Saharan Africans in Turkey cannot be explained through transit migration—but it also indicates that the situation of the Congolese is exceptional. The case of Turkey as ‘transit country’ need to be problematized for sub-Saharan migrants generally, but within that, for those from the DRC, this is not such an important perspective.

Figure 4.1: Nationalities of sea arrivals to Greece in the first half of 2019



Source : (UNHCR, 2019)¹⁰

Theo is 26-years-old, he believes that most Congolese see Turkey as a transit country. He says that the Congolese come to Turkey with the intention of crossing over to Europe. Some find the living conditions difficult and want to cross over. Others find a way to make a good living. But, according to Theo, even those people end up crossing over to Europe. The biggest reason for this is that Turkey “is not culturally ingrained in the mind of the Congolese, the way Europe is; as the place everyone goes to” (THEO, oral interview). For the Congolese, these places are not Greece or Italy, which are also transitory until France or Belgium are reached. Theo states that even if a Congolese person has been living in Turkey for ten years, they still feel the obligation to go to Europe. One of the reasons is the common language, but the main reason is the established notions of what and where Europe is considered to be in the minds of cultural characters such as *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessperson. According to Theo, if you are living in

¹⁰ At <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

France, Belgium or Switzerland, it is only then people will consider you to be in Europe. It is only then you have an effect on others. Even if you earn a better living in Turkey, you will not earn the same prestige as living in Europe.

Theo believes that the Congolese really care about what others think: “Perhaps you live in the *banlieue* of Paris. But if no one knows this, then there is no problem. When you take photographs in front of the Eiffel tower, or dress up and pose on Montparnasse, you become a *mwana na Mpoto*. That is what people see” (THEO, oral interview). Here, there is reference to another of the migratory imaginaries, the *mwana na Mpoto* (child of Europe), someone who is comfortable in the good life of Europe. Most Congolese are attached to cultural ideals of being in Europe, such as music and fashion. “For example, is there a Congolese musician coming to Turkey for a concert? Who will this person sing for? What will this person earn? Are there *sapeurs* in Turkey?” (THEO, oral interview). For Theo, this is a cultural issue, and each country has its own mentality. This is why, he says, the Congolese crossing over to Europe are high in numbers compared to other sub-Saharan African migrants in Turkey.

Joseph is 48 years old and has been living in Turkey for the past seven years. He believes that all Congolese hit the road with the desire to see Paris, Belgium, and London. According to Joseph, Istanbul is seen as a transit place, but after a couple of months, there are some who evaluate the opportunities and decide to stay. Blaise, who is 26 years old, says he has been in continual touch with his friends in Kinshasa since coming to Istanbul. According to Blaise, his friends do not have any interest in Turkey, and they do not ask any questions about it. Instead, they constantly ask him about the crossing to Europe and whether or not this route is open. Jeremy is 41 years old and wants to go to France but is waiting for the right moment: “I live in Turkey at the moment, but this is only temporary. I did not come here to settle” (JEREMY, oral interview). Leonard who is 27 years old also wants to go to France. He says from the outset he came here planning to cross over to Greece by boat and from there continue his journey.

Rebecca, 44 years old, has been living in Istanbul for five years. She says that she has noticed the issue of transit in the Congolese church she regularly attends. According to Rebecca:

Sometimes we become nostalgic at the church. Someone we've come to know for a long time, who we have become friends with, stops coming. We ask around and we are told that the person has crossed over. There are constantly people that come and go. When we remember the old ones, we become nostalgic. I've been here for five years. There are also those who have been here longer than I, and who have, after all these years, crossed over. There are those who come here and leave within two, three days. These people say they are not interested in this place. They don't come to stay in Turkey. They have their ambitions. No-one can stop them (REBECCA, oral interview).

At 34 years old Judith is a regular at another Congolese church where she sings in the choir. She says that the choir and the church band are constantly changing because people are always coming and going: "Everything is temporary but God allows for things to continue. Someone goes, another one comes" (JUDITH, oral interview). According to the fieldwork results collected, it can be argued that the cross-over from Turkey to Europe is an important topic for the Congolese community. These cross-overs are also a source of income for those staying in Istanbul. Those coming from Kinshasa in order to cross over to Greece stay as tenants in the houses of the Congolese settled here and who also provide the connection to smugglers for the newcomers to be able to cross over—from which they get a commission. As a result, some of the respondents state that they have been misinformed by their contacts regarding the living conditions and the difficulty of crossing over to Greece before coming here.

Naomi believed that she would cross over to Greece on a luxury yacht just a few days after coming to Turkey. She thought the journey would be 30-minutes long, just like the journey between Kinshasa and Brazzaville. That was what she had been told. Her contacts in Turkey were hiding the truth about the crossing. It was only after having arrived in Turkey that Naomi found out that the journey lasted more than two hours and was undertaken on an inflatable boat. She regretted having come. By the time of the research interview, she had become used to the idea of crossing over by inflatable boat and was saying she would go on the journey despite everything.

Some people come to Istanbul with the intention to transit but change their minds and return to the Congo or decide to stay in Turkey. Rachel was interviewed two days before she returned to Kinshasa: "I've been here for eight months and I am very disappointed. I came here to go to Europe. I was informed that the passage is dangerous, but now that I

am here, I saw that people actually have died. This affected me a lot. I want to return to the Congo” (RACHEL, oral interview).

Elie’s girlfriend had come to Turkey one year previously; she crossed over to Greece and from there went to France. This is how Elie knew about the conditions. However, his girlfriend thought the crossing would be easy; that was the notion she had come to Turkey with. When she came here and found out the journey would be made on an inflatable boat, she was shocked. Yet she still did not realize how dangerous it was until she actually got on the boat. She was so afraid during the crossing that she cried her eyes out and wanted to turn back. Elie says his girlfriend was lucky because she managed to cross on her first try. Elie himself has tried to cross to the Greek island of Chios three times from Izmir, and was caught each time in the middle of the sea. After being caught, he was returned to the (Turkish) mainland, detained in a repatriation center, and later released. Elie wants to cross over to Greece as soon as possible and head to France, where his girlfriend is waiting for him.

For those wanting to cross over to Greece, not only is the journey by inflatable boat dangerous, but there is also the risk of being deported. Elie was just released each time he was caught. However, not everyone is so lucky and people do get deported, especially during certain periods. Sami was 30 years old when I met him. He had come to Turkey in 2017, where he stayed for five months. With a group of mostly Congolese migrants, he tried to cross to the Greek island of Lesbos from Çanakkale but was caught and sent to the Ayvacık repatriation center. He was kept there for a couple of weeks, after which he was deported. Sami states that the deportation was destructive for him:

I sold everything I had, in order to come to Turkey. When I returned to Kinshasa, I had lost everything. My money, my house, all my belongings... I did not want to see anyone, of fear they would make fun of me. I rented a house in another neighborhood. I stayed in the house until I managed to get another visa (SAMI, oral interview).

When a Congolese person goes to Europe but is later deported and has to return, this is a cause of major loss of prestige. There is a term “*Parisien refoulé*,” literally meaning “Parisian who was turned back,” which is a kind of mocking. Sami was able to survive in Kinshasa with the economic support of his father, who lived abroad, however, and later on, he was able to obtain a new passport under a different name. At the time of the research interview, Sami had been in Istanbul for seven months. He had not given up on

his dream to go to Europe, but he did not want to take the risk of making the boat crossing again. He was researching other methods to get to Europe and meanwhile evaluating the job opportunities here and saving up money. Sami states that most Congolese come here with the idea of crossing over to Greece, but when they are unsuccessful, or other opportunities appear here, they may give up and stay put. As stated in the critiques of transit theory, people's motivations can change over time, including positively or negatively in respect of their initial destination.

Jerome has been in Turkey for one month. He came here in order to transit but decided to stay put when he encountered the life-threatening perils of the passage to Greece. His initial destination was France, where his sister lives. His cousin who is in Greece now, had suggested he pass through Turkey. They talked about all the details on WhatsApp calls, and his cousin arranged everything for him through his contacts in Istanbul. Even before his arrival, Jerome had sent the money for the crossing via Western Union to the smugglers who would transport him to Greece. He recounts the story:

When I came to Istanbul, I stayed in the house of somebody who had contact with organizers. In that house, many people were waiting to hit the road. It was very crowded and it wasn't hygienic, so I told the contact person to send me immediately. When we made it to the open sea, it was scary for me. Then, after more than an hour in the sea, the Turkish police boat came and stopped our boat, they also destroyed our motor. People were crying and screaming. We had to get onto the police boat. When we landed, I decided not to take this boat again (JEROME, oral interview).

After this incident, Jerome remained in custody for a few weeks. When he was there, one day he heard that another boat on the same route had sunk with many deaths, including many Congolese people. This affected him very much. When he came out of prison, he decided to stay in Istanbul and prepared his application for a residence permit. He stated his intension to start up a small business with his contacts in the Congo—he did not want to die on the sea and leave his daughter orphaned. However, a year after the research interview, Jerome did cross over to Greece by boat, and from there, headed to France. When asked why he had left Istanbul, he replied that living conditions there were difficult and that he was unable to make his business work. So, evidently, he made the perilous voyage once again—it appears that his desires and dreams emerged as stronger than his fear. This also demonstrates how intentions and conditions can change over time, and repeatedly.

Migrants coming to Turkey with the intention to make the crossing over but who end up staying do not only do so due to obstacles. Some are attracted by opportunities that present themselves and decide to try their luck in Istanbul. Florian is one of those who stayed—he has been in Istanbul for over 10 years now. He says that when he came here, he was planning to go to Cyprus; everything was ready, he was just killing some time in Istanbul. Then, one day, when he was wandering in Aksaray (a commercial district in the city), a Senegalese woman came and spoke to him in French. She asked for help. This woman was a trader who had come to Istanbul to buy merchandise. She knew where the stores were, but she needed help for transportation. Florian accompanied the woman for two days. At that point, he was not aware that what he was doing is a job that is an important source of income among African migrants in Istanbul. When Florian left the woman at the airport, she gave him 50 dollars, which was the first money he had gained in Istanbul. Wanting not to forget where the stores were, the next day he made a second tour of the places the woman had taken him to. When he went into one of the stores, the salesman welcomed him and paid him a percentage based on the woman's purchases. Florian still narrates this story with excitement, even after ten years:

I was puzzled, I went to all of the places to collect my money. They call it 'sakal'.¹¹ In just one store, she bought 35 pairs of shoes. In every store, she bought a lot of merchandise, so I gained a high percentage. At the end of the day, my pockets were full of money, which led me to change my plans. I said to myself: 'I'm not going to Cyprus; I'm staying!' (FLORIAN, oral interview).

Florian believes that chance is also an important factor for a migrant determining his route. In his case, the fortuitous encounter has led to his doing this job of agency between customers and stores for a decade, gaining experience all the time (although he has never made the amount of money that he gained on that very first day). Florian thinks that this incident was a lucky coincidence that encouraged him to stay and changed his life.

The respondents sometimes refer to 'bad luck', which may also be determining in the mobility trajectory. Augustin has been in Istanbul for one year with his boys of eight and sixteen years old. Intending to go to New Zealand, they left the rest of the family in South Africa, but events and circumstances brought them to Istanbul. Augustin had studied at the Faculty of Medicine in the DRC. When he finished university, the country collapsed

¹¹ *Sakal*: the commission provided by Turkish shopkeepers to trade guides (lit. 'beard').

in political turmoil and ongoing civil war. He got married and then left his wife in the Congo to go to South Africa to work for a better life for his wife and unborn children. There, he applied for asylum and worked four years as a security guard. At the same time, he learned English and took two years of classes for the accreditation of his medical diploma. At the end of 14 years in South Africa, he was well established with his wife and five children, owning a house and two cars and running a doctor's office of his own. When asked how he became a migrant again, he states that it all started when he opened a Facebook account:

When I opened a Facebook account with my real name, I started to find my friends from medical school who were dispersed all around the world. We took each other's numbers and started to make phone calls on WhatsApp. I also found a close friend of mine who had been a doctor in New Zealand. When he told me how much money he earned a month, I didn't believe him because he was earning four times more than me. When I didn't believe him, he even sent me the photo of his salary check on WhatsApp. What's more, he told me that his case wasn't exceptional and I would even earn more than him in New Zealand because I was specialized (AUGUSTIN, oral interview).

After that conversation Augustin was unable to sleep well and started to think about going to New Zealand. He had been already worried about his children's future in South Africa due to the increasing xenophobia there and high crime rates against African migrants. So he decided to take the plunge and try to go to New Zealand. He left his job in his private office, he went to Johannesburg, and he dedicated one year to obtaining the necessary documents. However, he could not manage to do that, and all of the family savings were now spent. Then, his contacts told him that he could go to New Zealand through Thailand and then Australia. He handed over his office to somebody else, sold his car, and took two of his children with him to Thailand. Unfortunately, things did not go well.

Augustin and his children could not move on from Thailand, they were robbed, and then had to leave, so they went to Malaysia, where they stayed for a few months. Subsequently, Augustin lost his hope of reaching New Zealand and decided to go instead to Ireland. The father and children came to Istanbul to take a direct flight to Ireland. This had been possible with their South African passports, but when they came to Istanbul, they learned that it was no longer the case. Their money finished, Augustin worked in construction for three months in order to continue his journey. Then they went to the Georgian border, intending to take the flight to Ireland, but they could not enter Georgia and returned to

Istanbul. Augustin states that he regrets hitting the road but that he does not want to return to South Africa. Returning is failure.

The story of Augustin is a good example of the role of aspiration in migration. We see in this example how, even after 14 years of settlement and integration in a society, a migrant can hit the road again with new desire. And we see how the loss of hope can change the narrative, and yet how it can maintain the journey through adversity.

4.1.3 Transit versus Mobility

Thus far, examples have been given of people wanting to cross over to Greece and from there to western Europe, through Turkey. It has also been demonstrated that motivations over time show changes in response to various (positive or negative) factors, with some people who aimed to leave staying, and vice versa. Journeys, stops, and destinations can alter again and again for many reasons. Luck (or ‘fate’) can play an important part in changing motivations. And, as reported, this may also occur due to information gained and ideas shared on social networks tied to ICTs.

Now, arguments will be made drawing on the fieldwork that mitigate against the assumption of unidirectionality, even if the movement and stopping is transitory or progressive. In this section, examples are given of people living in different places for long periods of time and who, over time, have evaluated the conditions and continued to different places. Then, countering the assumption that Europe is a final destination, examples are presented of people who have stated that they would continue on their journey after reaching Europe. Lastly, the importance of a multi-directional conception of mobility, as opposed to a single destination-based migration idea is discussed.

Patrick, who is 49 years old, was born and raised in Kinshasa. He has been living in Istanbul for two years. Patrick left his country during his high-school years to go to Congo-Brazzaville. He stayed there for three years and then returned to Kinshasa. When he was twenty years old, he went to Nigeria, with the goal of going to the United Kingdom. He engaged in trade during the year he spent in Lagos. He went to the UK with a fake passport and applied for asylum. After 15 years in the UK, his application was

rejected and he was deported back to Kinshasa. He did not stay long in Kinshasa, however, and went to China. He states “You have to search for money everywhere” (PATRICK, oral interview).

Patrick lived in Guangzhou for four years and engaged in trade. He stayed in China without the required paperwork. He was not able to be as successful in business as he hoped and thus returned to Kinshasa. By now, he was 40 years old. He stayed in Kinshasa for 7 years, where he was able to continue in trade due to the contacts he had made in China. In 2017, he learnt about the job opportunities in Istanbul and, with the hope of earning a better living, came here. At the time of the research interview, Patrick was a salaried employee at a workshop without paperwork and also sending merchandise abroad. He says he does not have the idea of crossing over to Greece. He says he knows Europe and the UK and does not like it there. People who do not have the proper paperwork cannot find decent work over there. On top of that, getting the proper paperwork is very difficult. It is easier to be in Istanbul, even without paperwork.

Patrick likes the trade opportunities in Turkey. After earning enough, he wants to go back to Kinshasa and open up his own store. He wants to get a residency permit in Turkey so that he can conduct business by going back and forth among Istanbul, Dubai, and Kinshasa. In this case, he says, he will come to Turkey two or three times a year, staying for two or three weeks at a time.

Franck has been living in Istanbul for five years. He manages a freight company. Franck states that after Turkey, he might move to Mozambique. He thought of this idea as a result of the good income he has been getting from the construction works of which he was a partner. Remi says that when the economic crisis hit Angola, Angolans could live with it but the Congolese living there preferred to leave before they had to deal with the consequences. It is difficult from the perspective of final destination and place of integration to explain why Congolese people living in Angola for over ten years should have decided to leave.

As for Theo, after Turkey, he went to France to complete a master’s degree. He is thinking of moving to Georgia after that and establishing his own business. He has a Georgian girlfriend. After visiting Georgia, he noticed that it was a suitable place to establish a

design company. He thinks he can earn a good living there. According to Theo, the design industry is saturated in Turkey, there are already a lot of design companies; in France, there is too much bureaucracy and it is difficult to conduct business in a comfortable manner. Another example is 39-year-old Justin. He has lived in various countries at different times in his life. Justin left the DRC for South Africa. After living there for two years, he returned to Kinshasa and stayed put for ten years. Then he left for Angola, where he lived for three years before returning to Kinshasa. This time, he stayed only two months while he obtained a visa for Turkey. Now, he has been in Istanbul for a few months. He states that Istanbul is a city of business for him. He wants to discover the opportunities. If he can succeed he will stay, if not he will probably continue towards Europe.

Antoine is 42 years old. He has been in Turkey for eight months. Like Justin, he also went to South Africa at the beginning of the 2000s. When he left Kinshasa, all of his brothers and sisters were already dispersed around the world. After 15 years, he was well adapted to his life in South Africa, but, like Augustin, became scared by the increasing xenophobia against African migrants. Thus, he decided to return to the DRC after fifteen years, with the expectation of finding out about new routes and places that would lead to his new aim in life, to gain an education in visual design. In the DRC, he conducted online research and he called his friends and family members around the world to get their opinions about a future destination relating to his new aspiration.

A friend of Antoine's living in America suggested Sao Paolo, Brazil—he might be able to go to the US from there for a visual design education. Antoine applied for a Brazilian visa, which was rejected. Getting a visa for the US or Schengen Area was very expensive, so his sister's husband living in France suggested he go to Turkey, as he knew someone who had received a visual design education in Turkey, plus which it was cheaper. Thus, Antoine came to Istanbul. If his plan works, he wants to study in Istanbul.

Antoine explains that the history of Congolese migration has been directly linked with the history of Congolese political life: “Especially after the 2000s, everybody has been wanting to leave the Congo. Where you go doesn't have much importance. If it works in

the place where you go, you stay; if it doesn't work, you look for another place" (ANTOINE, oral interview).

Some of the Congolese migrants who come to Turkey do so with the intention of staying, typically to do business. This is the subject of the next chapter. Another important proportion of Congolese migrants in Turkey plan to go to Europe but not end up there. Many of the respondents who shared their plans to cross over to Europe from Turkey also stated that they would like to go to other places after that. The Eurocentric notion of transit migration theory that considers countries such as Turkey to be buffer zones, a step in the journey to Europe, also ignores those people who want to go other places after arriving in Europe. While crossing to Europe from Turkey is a more widespread choice among the Congolese as opposed to other sub-Saharan African migrants, this still does not demonstrate Europe as a final destination.

David is 40 years old and has been living in Istanbul for one month. His wife and children have been in France for five years. His wife, whose sister has been living in France for many years, was able to use the sister's documents to fly to Paris through a connecting flight from South Africa. She took the children with her and was later able to secure the required documents in order to reside legally in France. She tried to get her husband into France through various methods, such as a family reunification and an invitation letter, but these attempts were unsuccessful. When they could not succeed in getting a visa through legal means, they tried unofficial methods of obtaining a Schengen visa, through agents. They spent a lot of money on this but were unsuccessful in. As David puts it, "The road to a Schengen visa in Kinshasa is closed" (DAVID, oral interview).

David states that the only option he has in order to be reunited with his wife and children is to cross over to Greece from Turkey and then go to France from there. He is not interested in job opportunities in Turkey. He wants to be on his way as soon as possible. However, while David is sacrificing a lot of effort and money to go to France, taking a dangerous route in order to do so, he does not intent to live there. He would like to go to America. He aims to remarry his wife once in France and after that, apply for asylum in order to receive an official residency permit. He believes he will be able to receive his paperwork due to his wife. Then, after getting his paperwork, he wants to go to the US

with his family. David has a professional sports background, and he believes that there are better opportunities in the US in sports, such as in training. “France is no good,” he states. “There are too many people in Europe, too many migrants. The opportunities are limited” (DAVID, oral interview).

Mimi is 32 years old. She has been in Istanbul for two weeks. She wants to go to Europe but does not know anyone there. She has an older sister in Canada, and actually, that is where she wants to head. However, she states that it is very difficult to go to Canada. That is why she wants to go to Europe, in order to get the proper documentation, and then make for Canada. Her family and sister helped her gather the money for the journey. However, her family believes she went straight to Europe, they do not know she is in Turkey. Mimi is nervous about crossing over to the Greek Islands on water: “Crossing over by sea is very risky. If my family knew, they would call me all the time and disturb me. They would try and stop me from crossing over. That’s why I am not telling them I am in Turkey” (MIMI, oral interview). Mimi states that she does not want to stay here, because she does not believe there is anything she can do here. She wants to leave immediately.

Another respondent who aims to go to France from Turkey and then on to Canada is Leonard. He is 27 years old and has been in Istanbul for six months. “When I have my French residency permit, I will go to Canada,” he states. When asked why Canada instead of France, he explains that he has a friend in Canada who convinced him to go there. Leonard has friends everywhere, and he is constantly in touch with them via the Internet. His friend in Canada has told him: “Canada is looking for a lot of workers now. Once you get your documents from France, I will send you an invitation letter and you will come here to Canada, where you will begin work immediately. You will make a better living here than in France” (LEONARD, oral interview).

Leonard says that he has to work a lot in order to earn money for himself and his family. He would like to go to a place where there are not a lot of Africans and Congolese people. He prefers Anglophone countries, he does not want to be among the Congolese in France. The Congolese do not get along, he says, they are jealous and gossip about one another. That is why he does not reveal that he is in Turkey. He wants to give the impression that he went to France straight from Kinshasa. If people knew he was in Turkey, they would

guess that he was going to cross over to Europe by boat, leading them to belittle him; “It is shameful for us,” they would say. But he is results oriented: “Even if I cross by boat, I will get there. All roads lead to Rome” (LEONARD, oral interview). Aspiration, we may say, is assisted by determination.

Another respondent who says that he wants to go somewhere where there are not a lot of Congolese is 30-year-old Sami. He wants to go to France, where he will get his documents and then head to Britain. Sami states that the reason why he wants to go to the UK is not economic; it is just that he likes the UK. He also likes Switzerland. As to why he does not want to stay in France permanently, he says “France is like the Congo, there are too many Africans. I don’t like that. I want to live with white people. Black people are nice, but I have lived with them all my life. I want a change” (SAMI, oral interview).

In addition to holding European countries as final destinations and those surrounding as transit countries, standard transit theory also takes migration to be unidirectional, a process that has a beginning and an end. As a terminology or discourse, that of migration carries a lot of implications gathered over time, and it is understandable that researchers now prefer to label this form or state of movement as ‘mobility’. In addressing the ambiguous nature of the concept of transit in this chapter, the conception of migration with a clear beginning and an end, completed with the process of integration is also problematized. Issues with the beginning and end are equally bound up with the middle, of course, and thus the idea of transit. Some of the respondents provide inspirational insight on this issue. Pablo, for example, unequivocally states that the passage from one country to another is multidirectional:

Just there are people who go to Angola and South America and then pass to Europe from there, so there are those also who go to Europe and from there to Canada and America. Many of the Congolese in the UK and Ireland today went there from France and Belgium. There are also those who go to Europe from Turkey, but then end up coming back to Turkey (PABLO, oral interview).

Like Pablo, Rebecca also indicates that multidirectional migration is a normal thing nowadays: “There are migrants all over the world. There are problems in every country. Everyone goes to other places” (REBECCA, oral interview).

Alice is disturbed by the agitation the Western media creates around African migrants. She says that Europeans only look at the world from one point of view:

Europeans migrate to Africa as well nowadays. I believe this is mutual. There are those who leave Turkey and move to Angola or to the Congo. You go where you can make a life. They come to Turkey from the Congo because they find something to do here. This is mutual. The Angolans go to Portugal, Portuguese go to Angola. Turks go to the Congo, the Congolese come here. South Americans go to Switzerland, the Swiss go to South America. It's a mutual process. People all around the world go where they can find a way to make a living. This is the situation today (ALICE, oral interview).

As the multidirectional nature of movement provided in the examples above shows, the relatively high number of Congolese, as opposed to other sub-Saharan African migrants, crossing over to Greece from Turkey and from there heading to France only appears to serve as an example that strengthens the transit migration discourse, it is argued that; in fact, this is not the case. First, this concept of transit migration is associated with peripheral countries outside of the EU, such as Turkey, but EU countries, such as Greece, Italy, and Spain, are also transited. Second, a country such as France is seen as a destination country for migrants in Turkey but it is not necessarily considered so by them. Once there, even this 'destination' is resituated as a starting point for other and new destinations. In fact, several respondents stated their plan to go to the UK, Canada, or the US after receiving their legal papers from France.

One of the issues that is underlined most often among those wishing to pass to Europe from Turkey is that they will receive the documents—long term residency or citizenship—that will allow them to be free. Most of the time, what they mean by 'freedom' is the freedom to be mobile. For example, Naomi states her dream for the future in such terms: "We always want to be free. I am free here but it is limited. There isn't a total freedom. When you don't have your proper documentation, you're limited. That's why I want to go to France and get my documents. Then I will be free. I'll be able to go where I want to go" (NAOMI, oral interview).

In this dissertation, it is argued that freedom of mobility is an important motivational source for migration. Another respondent, Eric, states that he earns a good living in Turkey but that he feels blocked here; thus he wants to go to France to get his documents:

“I want my documents in order to be mobile,” he says. “For example, if my mother dies now, how can I go back to Kinshasa?” (ERIC, oral interview).

These people who feel blocked in the Congo, cannot find the freedom of mobility they are searching for in Turkey, either. Elie also states that he wants to go to France after Turkey. When asked where he sees himself in five years, he simply states: “I want to be mobile” (ELIE, oral interview). Thus, going to France and gaining residency permit or citizenship is not seen as a part of the integration process but rather as an open check for mobility. This situates migration not as a process with clear starting and ending points but as a process with the potential to be ongoing, a state of mobility in and of itself. It will further be argued that this state of mobility cannot be represented by the ‘African migrant in crisis,’ trope but rather by that of the *mikiliste*.

4.2 MIKILISTE

4.2.1 Who is *Mikiliste*?

The meaning of the word ‘*mikiliste*’ has been explained (above, Section 3.2), quite whom this term represents is open to argument. The respondents did not give common or clear responses as to where and who the *mikiliste* is. The term ‘*mwana na Mpoto*’ (child of Europe) in Lingala has been introduced in this chapter, and it can be used as synonymous with ‘*mikiliste*’; another such term is ‘*djika*’. Everyone agrees that those living in Europe are *mikiliste*; however, opinions diverge as to whether or not Congolese living in Turkey, US, Canada or other places outside of Africa can be *mikiliste*. Some of the responses include:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Étienne | <i>Those living in the EU countries, America, Canada, and Turkey can be considered mikiliste (oral interview).</i> |
| Pablo | <i>Someone who lives there all four seasons, especially the winter. Mpoto (Europe) and mikili are the same things. The United States are also Mpoto. Mpoto is everywhere outside of Africa (oral interview).</i> |
| Youssef | <i>For a Congolese, Mpoto is France, Germany, Belgium, and the UK. As a concept, Mpoto is those four countries. Mpoto is only Europe. That’s why Turkey is not Mpoto. But the term ‘mikili’ is different. Those living in Turkey, US and Canada can be considered mikiliste (oral interview).</i> |
| Edouard | <i>Mikiliste are those living in Europe and who like La Sape. We do not call them ‘mikiliste’ anymore, we call them ‘djika’. It’s the same thing (oral interview)</i> |

- Jeremy *Especially those living in France, in Paris. But those living in Turkey are also mikiliste. We are mikiliste. When they call me by phone, they ask me "Hello mikiliste, how are you?" I am already considered to be in Europe (oral interview).*
- Timothe *Someone living in Europe. If I return home, I would be considered a mikiliste (oral interview).*
- Sami *Mikiliste is someone who lives in Europe. We do not call the Congolese living in Asia, China, or Dubai mikiliste (oral interview).*
- Theo *Mpoto is France and Belgium. But mikili for anywhere outside of Africa. Mikiliste-djika is an ideology first and foremost. This is the ideology of being in Europe and having freedom of mobility. The ideology of dressing well (oral interview).*
- Eric *Mikiliste are those living in Europe. Mikili are the countries of white people. But Turkey is not exactly mikili (oral interview).*

According to Youssef, a *mikiliste* must prove themselves to be in Europe through the photographs shared on Facebook. He states that you can often see photos of *mikilistes* posing with white people or with white people in the background. However, someone living in South Africa can also share photos with white people. That is why, according to Youssef, the biggest difference in being in Europe, is the snow. It does not snow in Africa, but in Europe it snows—so people coming to Turkey or going to Europe await the snow, because they have to put up a picture of the snow on their Facebook profiles. That is how they prove they are *mikiliste*.

Youssef states that there are differing opinions on whether Turkey is part of Europe or not; those living in Turkey are told that they are not in Europe. One of the main reasons for this is because Turkey is not part of the Schengen Area and does not allow for the freedom of mobility provided by the residency permits of European countries. Another reason is that life in Turkey is not easy. The Congolese imaginary that life in Europe is easy is 'proven' by the photographs shared on Facebook. According to Youssef, a Congolese person who cannot attain an easy life in Turkey, will want to continue on to Europe in the hope of finding one.

Jeremy states that it is not easy to be a *mikiliste*. It is difficult to leave the country and get a visa for European countries: "Almost everyone's ambition is to go to Europe. Everyone wants to check out Europe, the US, at least once. Even if you spend a couple of weeks or a month in Europe, you become a *mikiliste*. You will return to the Congo as a *mikiliste*" (JEREMY, oral interview).

Being a *mikiliste* brings with it many responsibilities. According to Jeremy, when those living in Europe return home, they need to be well prepared. They have to take presents with them, and they have to dress well: “If you have gone to Paris, then you have to come back with at least two suitcases of clothes. You have to bring different styles of clothing and shoes with *griffes*. Everyone is like that. You have to” (JEREMY, oral interview).

According to Étienne, becoming a *mikiliste* makes you feel superior to those who have stayed at home. That is why, when *mikilistes* return home, “they act big-headed.” When a *mikiliste* returns home, people believe that person to have made a living. If they have not, then they have to stay there and continue searching for means to make money. People have expectations from a *mikiliste* returning home. They want money. They want to be given clothes. If you cannot meet these needs, then you are not a real *mikiliste*. Étienne states that this is why there are people who go to Europe and are unable to return home for 10 or 15 years. As Étienne recounts, being a *mikiliste* entails prestige, but also brings with it responsibility.

Timothe defines himself as both a *mikiliste* and a *sapeur*. For him, being a *mikiliste* does not only come from living in Europe. When someone returns to Kinshasa, they should be able to wear things that people cannot find or things that are extremely expensive to buy over there. If you do not fulfill certain criteria, then people will talk behind your back and make fun of you: “Look at that *mikiliste*. He has nothing. Look at his sandals. Aren’t those sandals 30 dollars? Our peanut vendor has the same ones. He is dressed so cheaply” (TIMOTHE, oral interview).

This will be the type of banter that goes on behind the returning *mikiliste*’s back if he does not dress in the proper manner. It will turn into a war. Next to this, the *mikiliste* has to bring presents to his/her family, friends, and acquaintances. Everyone expects something from the *mikiliste*. When a *mikiliste* visits Kinshasa, they have to leave all the clothes there as presents upon their return to Europe. They should distribute everything and get on the plane in just a pair of jeans, t-shirt, and sandals. This is very important for the prestige of a *mikiliste*: “You return but your name stays behind in Kinshasa” (TIMOTHE, oral interview).

According to the respondents, the term '*mwana na Mpoto*' usually represents just those living in European countries. '*Mikili*', on the other hand, represents a wider geography outside of Africa, so the Congolese living in these regions are called '*mikiliste*'. This is not only a geographical term, however; it also holds other meanings, including freedom of mobility, access to the 'worlds' and their possibilities, and a rich life. The *mikiliste* is expected to wear nice and expensive clothes as well as to generously distribute everything he/she owns when visiting the Congo. If the expectations are not met, the prestige of the *mikiliste* is compromised by criticism and mockery.

4.2.2 The Desire to go to Europe

Going to Europe has an important symbolic meaning. All desires and aspirations as well as the request for a good life find expression in this one concept. It comes to represent the ideal living space of the *mikiliste* and the *sapeur* who have access to the 'worlds' beyond the geocultural limitations of the African continent.

According to Benjamin, going to Europe is one of the biggest desires of the Congolese. There are people who do not eat or drink and save up all their money in order to go to Europe. Benjamin states that these people think it is risky to do anything in the Congo with the money they have saved up. According to him, the only risk the Congolese take is to go abroad. Eric also believes everyone has the dream of going to Europe. "When we turn 20-25, we want to go to Europe," he says, "The problem is whether or not you have money to do so. You want to go at least once to see it" (ERIC, oral interview). He said that he came here with the idea of crossing over to Europe from Turkey, and many people had the same idea as him.

Sarah also states that she has wanted to go to Europe ever since she can remember: "Everyone has ambitions," she states. "They make us dream of Europe" (SARAH, oral interview). She thinks Europe is nicer than Africa and that life is easier. She plans on going to Greece from Turkey, and then to France from there. Chris has also wanted to go to Europe since he was young. As a child, when he saw European cities on television, he would think how nice and clean they were. He remembers thinking that he wanted to live with white people. Chris also wants to go to France after Turkey.

Rebecca states that singers in the 1980s and 1990s made Europe popular by advertising Europe: “Everyone wanted to live like in those ads. They saw Europe to be colorful. In Europe, you dress well. You are well in Europe” (REBECCA, oral interview). This is why, according to Rebecca, the Congolese want to go to Europe.

They say to themselves ‘Ah Paris! The Champs Elysées! I want to see those places!’ They say there are boutiques that sell luxury items. They want to see these places. ‘I want to see Belgium; I want to go to Switzerland. Ahh, Lausanne! Ahh, Geneva! I want to see it all. I want to stay there’ (REBECCA, oral interview).

Rebecca states that the Congolese know all of this because the ones who went there previously advertised the places in this manner. That is why they do not want to stay in Istanbul. She says that there are people who, even after staying in Istanbul for seven or eight years, still head to western European countries: “They have the advertisements for Paris, Brussels, and London in their minds” (REBECCA, oral interview).

Jeremy played guitar in Papa Wemba’s orchestra for some time. He believes that the strong desire to go to Europe is reflected in Papa Wemba’s songs:

He gives us courage to leave. He promotes Europe. When you listen to his songs, you tell yourself that one day, you too will be in Europe. You will do anything to get to Europe. Even if my family does not have the means to send me there, I will do anything in my power to go there (JEREMY, oral interview).

For Jeremy, these songs give strength to those blocked in hardship in Kinshasa. They motivate people to go to Europe. He also says that there are people in Kinshasa who have never been to Paris but who wander around with the Parisian metro pass in their pockets (above, Section 3.2). Jeremy thinks this is sign of a huge desire.

Elie, too, believes that most Congolese dream of going to Europe. He says the reasons for this are the suffering in the Congo and the lack of opportunities. Everyone wants to go to Europe to find the opportunities. For Elie, this has turned into a culture: “We are used to this idea of moving around. It has become a culture. We are used to it. When you turn 17 or 18, you straight-away start thinking about leaving the country. Families also support this idea” (ELIE, oral interview).

Leonard states that for many, Europe means money: “Europe is the Euro. Europe is money. *Mpoto eza lola* [Europe is paradise]. Paris especially is paradise.” According to Leonard, when people go to Paris and talk about Paris, this makes everyone else want to

go there as well. When someone goes to Europe, all the family, friends, and acquaintances start having expectations. They constantly call and ask: “How it is over there? Can you send me 50-100 euros?” Leonard laughs and says, “They think money grows on trees here” (LEONARD, oral interview).

All these examples demonstrate how ideas surrounding Europe and wanting to go to Europe have become culturally embedded. Edouard also states that the Congolese want to go to Europe for a better life:

People leave to get rich. You need three to five thousand dollars to come to Turkey. For many in Kinshasa, this is a huge amount of money. It's a matter of deciding to hit the road. Time is the medicine for everything. Of course, this money is not going to fall from the skies. You can look for it, but you can save up. Yes, it's a matter of decision. If you concentrate and are well organized, you can do it. You can find the amount that you are searching for and hit the road (EDOUARD, oral interview).

Edouard explains that his belief in and determination about going to Europe have saved him from being deported. Edouard was caught crossing to Lesbos from Çanakkale on an inflatable boat with a group of migrants and brought back to the Ayvacık repatriation center. When they arrive at the center, they are asked their names. Edouard said his name was ‘Nako Katisa Kaka’, which means in Lingala, ‘I will still cross’. When asked how he came up with this, he states that it was his first attempt at crossing, and when he failed and was brought in to the gendarmerie, he realized how serious the situation was, which really demoralized him. In order to give himself some strength, he told himself ‘*Nako katisa kaka*’ and ‘*Nako kende lisusu*’ (I will go again). When asked his name by the gendarmerie, he thought about giving a fake name like everyone else, and he gave ‘Nako Katisa Kaka’. The officials wrote down the name without understanding it. Throughout the four months he spent there, all procedures relating to him were made under this name.

At the repatriation center, Edouard states that everyone else was in a state of acceptance and talking about going back to the Congo. He, however, refused to give in to the situation and would say to himself “If you want to go back to the Congo, go ahead; I will go back to Istanbul” (EDOUARD, oral interview). He says that the time he spent at the repatriation center in Çanakkale was very difficult, but ultimately, it was an experience that strengthened him.

When someone has a dream, he cannot stop before that dream is realized. I want to go far; further than this. If you keep the recording of our interview, you will see

everything I say today will become a reality in the future. If I told anyone about the suffering I went through, they would not believe me; they will not understand. That person has not undergone what I did. You can be there and see it; but you cannot know what I am living through. This prison experience has taught me a lot. What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger. I am stronger today than I was before. I am very, very strong now (EDOUARD, oral interview).

Edouard refused to sign the documents that would lead to his deportation. He pretended to be sick. There were more than 100 migrants at the center, the majority of them Congolese. The state issued a discharge document used in lieu of a passport (*tenant lieu de passeport*) to those migrants by getting in touch with the consulates. The migrants were made to sign the papers which would lead to their deportation and then deported in small groups. Within one or two weeks, everyone was deported. After that, another group was brought in, which in turn was also deported. Edouard thought that they could not deport a sick person so he pretended to be sick throughout the four months he spent in the repatriation center. He was taken to the hospital twice. And throughout the process, he kept reminding himself of his desire to go to Europe and the belief that he would. He would tell himself: "It is not possible. I will not go back. This is not the deal we made with God. Those who will go back, will go back. I cannot go back" (EDOUARD, oral interview).

In this manner, Edouard succeeded in becoming the only Congolese person to escape the wave of deportation and, as he hoped, was able to return to Istanbul. The interview conducted with him took place just a month after he had been released from the repatriation center. During the writing process of this dissertation, Edouard reached Athens. Edouard's story is fueled by desires and aspirations for mobility. His determination and bravery illustrate well the futility in trying to block the routes to Europe. Movement means life, freedom, and a purpose in itself.

Edouard believes that it is not worth worrying or complaining in life; everything takes its course:

What is life like? Time is not a problem. Time belongs to God. Do you know what you will be doing tomorrow? You don't know, but God does. Life is like time. Everything will reach its destination. It will happen; your day will come (EDOUARD, oral interview).

In her fieldwork with African migrants in Istanbul, Mardesic (2014, p. 104) recognizes that many migrants persuade themselves that “one day, it will be fine.” She calls this internal coping mechanism for obstacles a “one-day strategy.” Migrants believe that they should accept today’s situation and sacrifice in order to achieve a better future. One day it will be alright, everything will have been worthwhile.

The thought that everyone has their own time has been expressed by other respondents as well. Rebecca speaks about the boat accident of 2017, where people died crossing from Çanakkale to Lesbos. This accident really had an effect on the Congolese awaiting to cross from Istanbul. It was the first time such a huge number of Congolese people had died in a boat accident. According to Rebecca, people were scared—but this did not stop them from hitting the road:

The day they took out the bodies of the dead from the water, a bus of 30 people hit the road from Istanbul in order to cross over from Izmir to Chios. These people would say to themselves ‘Their day has come, but ours has not’. Everyone has a turn; everyone has a day. That is what they told themselves, and they did end up crossing (REBECCA, oral interview).

Jeremy similarly states that people have the belief that “everyone lives their own luck.” In 2017, when the Congolese died in the boat accident, Jeremy was still in Kinshasa, in the midst of preparations for his departure to Turkey. He heard about the accident on social media. When asked how this type of news affected those who wanted to use the same route, he replies that it does not have an effect: “Everyone has their own luck. People want to live in different places. They have lost hope that the conditions in their own country will change. Instead of staying put and dying, they prefer to die on the road” (JEREMY, oral interview).

As the examples testify, preventions such as not giving visas, shutting down passage routes, increasing border security, holding migrants hostage in repatriation centers, and even deportation are ineffective in preventing passage to Europe. Even the danger of death is not enough. The wave of human desire cannot be denied. It is the desire to attain one’s dreams, and it pushes back against all obstacles placed before it—or will die in the attempt.

As indicated by the words of Edouard, this hope for the future and inner conviction about one's fate is supported and strengthened through religious belief. As of 2019, there are at least five church communities led by Congolese pastors in Istanbul. These Pentecostal-oriented Protestant churches operate from rented hotel foyers, apartments, or garages with the status of an association. Ceremonies are conducted in Lingala and French. Here, support mechanisms are established related to the difficulties experienced by members of the community away from home. One of the important topics that comes up during ceremonies and meetings is the crossing to Greece, and the pastors provide active directions on the matter. They underline the importance of praying collectively and providing regular financial support to the church for an open and accident-free crossing. During prayer meetings and private gatherings, people can request pastors to conduct a personalized prayer for a particular crossing. Certain pastors give advice on which months are better and worse for crossing. Rebecca, mentioned (above) as an active member of such a church, notes that those who died in the 2017 accident never came to church and she did not know them: "Prayer is very important. We would be lost without prayer" (REBECCA, oral interview).

In this section, the social and individual aspects of the desire to go to Europe as a symbolic desire to attain opportunities, the 'good life' and freedom of mobility have been examined. This process works through the individual's desires, beliefs, and determination, as a cultural structure in which pastors, singers, and families are present in the imaginative. Eric, who states "You want to go at least once to see it," provides the insight that global mobility cannot be understood through a materialist approach alone. The role of desire needs to be taken seriously; aspiration may be *the* critical factor. As Sarah concludes: "Everyone has ambitions. They make us dream of Europe."

4.2.3 Dreams, Lies, and Reality

Jeremy says that even though he mentions the difficult living conditions in Turkey to his friends and family, they do not believe him: "For them, you are already *mikiliste*. You live very well. There cannot be difficulties here. Even if you tell them, they don't accept it. Only if they live it themselves will they see" (JEREMY, oral interview).

According to Jeremy, social media fortifies this belief. In the photographs shares, people are eating well, living well. Once in Europe, after a while, people start sharing photographs in which they are well dressed. The Congolese back home write positive comments such as “You got so beautiful, you got so handsome,” or “Your skin color is clearer. You gained weight. You look fancy.” Their belief that Europe will bring about such changes in a person is confirmed.

Concerned with the other side of the apparent success story, the darker realities, Pascal explains how famous people and musicians, such as Papa Wemba, advertised Europe in the 1990s. They reflected life in Europe as one filled with adventures, a good life. In the same manner, the Congolese in Europe today do not reflect how their lives there really are. They are misleading people. Through their social media posts, they continue the false advertisement, that the life in Europe is the best, that everything is attainable in Europe. According to Pascal, this is done to garner a sense of superiority.

Pablo adds another reason to explain why people do not reflect the difficulties and show conditions to be different from what they actually are, which is because they do not want people at home to think of them as failures. Expectations in relation to *mikili* and Europe are so ingrained that if someone tells them that conditions are difficult, people will believe that it is that person’s *own* failure and will start belittling them. This is why, Pablo says, the diaspora is reluctant to tell the truth. He believes that people want to grow and be great, so this is how they prefer reflecting themselves and their lives.

Arnaud believes that people who share photographs of themselves in nice clothing when they are in Europe and Turkey aim to say “I am in good conditions; I am living well.” The same is valid for photographs taken and shared in restaurants; these photographs serve to say “I am eating well.” All of these make those who are still in the Congo jealous. They too want to go to those places, dress well, eat well, and live well. Remi underlines the same issue. He says that Facebook posts affect migration, and that he understood this when he came here:

I saw the conditions in which the Congolese live here. For example, they are a bunch of people staying in a single room, sleeping on floor beds. But the people living in these conditions then dress well and take photographs outside that they share. People ask the person “How is it over there? Are you doing ok?” the response is always “I’m

good. You should come here too.” Then the friends also want to come. When they do, they realize that the conditions are not what they seemed to be, but they enter the same game. They get dressed and share nice photographs. When people ask them about the conditions, they say they are good. It goes on like this (REMI, oral interview).

Arnaud states that there is no point in telling the truth about the living conditions in Europe because people will deny them, obsessively even, accusing the person:

If you tell a Congolese person not to come here because there is suffering, they will never believe you. They will say you are a bad and jealous person. If you prevent a Congolese person from going to Europe, they will call you a witch and say ‘I’d rather go there and suffer than stay here’ (ARNAUD, oral interview).

Étienne says that when he told his siblings and neighbors the reality, he was met with reactions like “He is telling me not to go, but he has gone,” and “You’re telling me not to go, but you’re doing ok, you’re dressing well” (ÉTIENNE, oral interview). They saw him as a selfish person. They thought he wanted to be the only one in Europe and so he was preventing the others from leaving.

Similarly, Pascal advised one of his friends not to come to Istanbul during a visit to the Congo. His friend already had a good job in the Congo. “You live well there, you dress well,” his friend told him. “Here, life is hard; clothing is expensive.” In response, Pascal told him that clothes aren’t all there is in life, there are ambitions. His friend became angry with him and retorted “If it’s really so difficult over there, then come back and come live with us.” In the research interview, he affirms that the realities of Europe and Turkey do differ from what the Congolese believe. However, “Whatever the case may be, people want to come and see the reality with their own eyes,” he acknowledges, recognizing that “They do not believe if someone else tells them these facts” (PASCAL, oral interview).

In the past, the symbolic power of Europe and *mikiliste* was strengthened by Congolese singers. Today, it is through the social media posts of the Congolese abroad that this is continued. People reflect their situation much better than it is so that those at home do not think of them as failures. According to the respondents questioned in this research, when the negative aspects of living abroad are shared, people just do not believe them. Ideas about *mikili* are so culturally ingrained that people resist the truth. And of course they do

not want to believe, for they still harbor their own aspirations, even if they are met vicariously through the gossip of wonder and success.

4.3 SAPEUR

4.3.1 “Dressing Well is our Culture”

In the desire to become *mikiliste*, described in terms of access to the ‘worlds’ and opportunities, one of the most important components is the ability to attain nice, expensive and fashionable clothing. During the fieldwork conducted for this dissertation, the desire to dress well has been observed in several different contexts. One of the most important contexts is the subject of the next chapter, the clothing trade. First though, the focus is placed on the interest and desires relating to clothing, as one of the cultural elements that feeds mobility.

The most extreme point concerning the idea of dressing well can be considered the extravagant clothing style of the Congolese *sapeurs*—and *sapeuses*—that is La Sape. In the historical background chapter, it has been explained how musicians were representatives of the characters of the *mikiliste* and *sapeur*, which they have promoted as objects of desire. The respondents have stated that this effect is still ongoing. Musicians today, however, promote the idea of ‘Fashion’ as opposed to La Sape. Whichever it is called, there is no doubt that dressing well for the Congolese is a source of dignity and prestige—and that the desire to dress well is the most important factor in the migration culture.

Remy states that Congolese always gave a huge importance to dressing well and that it is difficult to find a Congolese person who is not well dressed. He says that this is how they have seen it done growing up, that a dirty and ragged looking Congolese is criticized by others. Youssef, after spending three years in Turkey as a student, visited the Congo and realized certain things he had not before, when he lived there. Everyone was trying to dress well and commenting on one another’s clothes. They would stop Youssef in the street and say “You’re dressed so well. Wow! Did you come from Europe?” (YOUSSEF, oral interview). The link made between dressing well and living in Europe is quite clear.

Arnaud owns two clothing stores in Lumumbashi (the second largest city in the DRC) and states that there are two types of *sapeurs*. The first group always wears expensive brands, and the other group does not wear the most expensive clothes but always dresses well. Arnaud counts all the Congolese as at least in the second group: “It is our culture. It also gives prestige.” According to Arnaud, the Congolese who go to Europe hoping to attain nice clothes easily are often met with disappointment:

If you want to dress well, you have to work and earn money. Clothing in Europe is expensive. You buy the shirt of a brand for 200 or 300 euros. A Congolese person might earn 1200 euros a month. At the end of the month, they'll spend it all on clothing. If they see some clothes that they like, they'll save their money for two or three months to buy them... This is our culture (ARNAUD, oral interview).

Eric is proud to say that all Congolese dress well and spend a lot of money in order to do so. He also says “This is our culture.” Eric believes that even if a Congolese person only has 100 dollars, they may invest it in their apparel: “If a Congolese person has a lot of money, they will definitely be interested in *La Sape*. That’s how Congolese people are. They like dressing up, luxury, and cars” (ERIC, oral interview). He states, however, that he is not this way and that he shops more economically.

According to Youssef, there are criticisms of Papa Wemba and his entourage because they lead to the degeneration of youth through the emphasis on clothing. For his part, he believes that it has become cultural and will not change. Youssef says that a Congolese person can even be distinguished from other Africans in Istanbul just by looking at the way that person dresses: “I’m a student in Istanbul. Even I prefer to spend 70 liras of the 100 liras in my pocket on clothing. I will always want to buy new clothes and wear new things. Dressing up is a cultural heritage for us” (YOUSSEF, oral interview).

Youssef says that in days gone by, clothing only came from Europe to the Congo and it was difficult to get hold of. Now though, thanks to traders going to places like China, Dubai, and Turkey, there are a lot of knock-off items reaching the Congo that people can afford:

In the past, for example, you would be sitting around in the neighborhood with your friends. Let’s say one of them has a piece of clothing from Europe. That would be a very valuable thing. Either he had a relative in Europe who sent it or else a mikiliste on holiday in the Congo left it behind for him. That person will be proud of his clothes. He’ll show them off to everyone, everywhere. He will say things like ‘It came from Europe; my friend sent it’. He’ll feel like a king (YOUSSEF, oral interview).

This example demonstrates that attaining clothes coming from Europe seems to replace physically going there. For of course, in reality, the most Congolese do not make the journey.

Rubin compares the Congolese with the Turks. He says that Turks go out with dirty shoes, unironed shirts, and their cars are dirty. This really shocks him. If someone in the Congo goes out in this manner, he/she will be warned by others. Even though there is poverty in the Congo, everyone owns at least two clean shirts, a clean pair of pants, and a pair of good shoes:

For us, it's a culture, a familial ritual, so we're used to it. When we were growing up, our families would organize our pants and shoes. If we were dirty, they would warn us. The same would happen at school. Everyone is aware of one another's clothes.

Clothes are like an umbrella that masks the fact that you've got problems. You may not have anything to eat, to drink, or any money at all. But to keep your dignity, you have to dress well. You need to dress well to keep your confidence up and speak with people (RUBIN, oral interview).

As can be concluded from the respondents, dressing well, whether related to *La Sape* or not, is very important for the Congolese. It has taken on a major cultural aspect. Tellingly, in an interview about *La Sape*, Papa Wemba explains how he was first inspired by his parents getting dressed up on Sundays: "They were always well put together, always looking very smart" (BBC News, 2016a). Dressing well allows for someone in difficulties to keep their pride and hold their head up in the public arena, while for someone wealthy, it becomes an important tool to increase prestige.

4.3.2 *La Sape* versus "Fashion"

The respondents often underline the difference between dressing well and being a *sapeur*. However, instead of defining *La Sape*, they speak about its history and legends, generally in a disconnected manner. Jerome states that *sapeurs* can be distinguished by the brands of clothing that they wear; there are specific brands that are identified with *sapeurs*. For example, if a person does not own clothing from Yohji Yamamoto, then that person cannot be considered a *sapeur*. The *sapeurs* from Congo-Brazzaville usually prefer flashy suits, while those from Congo-Kinshasa like to wear extravagant clothes:

They find different things, things that normal people wouldn't wear. A normal person, a guy, wouldn't go out wearing a skirt. These are clothes for fashion shows. But no,

sapeurs wear these types of clothing especially. For example, J.B. Mpiana still calls himself a sapeur. He's a famous singer. He wears the whole catalogue of Yohji. He wears everything you can find in the catalogue. J.B. doesn't only buy them with his own money, rich Congolese buy him presents and he says their names in his songs (JEROME, oral interview).

Jerome's J. B. Mpiana example shows once again how singers and musicians play a leading role in the *La Sape* (*sapeur*) and Fashion (fashionista) waves. Jeremy, one-time guitarist with Papa Wemba, states that the Congolese expect singers and musicians to always be dressed well. According to Jeremy, not dressing well is a source of shame for singers. The people compare the way the stars dress and who wears the most expensive clothes. Those who do not dress well are criticized. Jeremy also makes a link between the desire to dress well and migration. According to Jeremy, the Congolese want go to the source of where the clothes come from, which they believe to be Europe and America. He also says that for singers and musicians who, like him, are always in the spotlight, going abroad in order to dress well and fashionably is obligatory.

Another characteristic of *sapeurs* (mentioned above, Section 3.2) is that they make their names heard and become famous through dedications. As well as the *dédicace* of a musician saying the person's name in a song, there is also the *dédicace* made in the television theatre, on television, and delivered through digital media programs. *Dédicaces* are sometimes made due to friendly relations and other times in return for presents and money. Leonard says that the *dédicace* serves to make one feel superior to others and to honor a person. Leonard is a television theatre actor. Due to the relationships he has developed there, certain musicians have made *dédicaces* to him in their songs. Leonard, in his turn, has made *dédicaces* to people in his own theatre plays. Leonard would like to be famous in the future and to live a luxury life like *sapeurs* and *mikilistes*. "When someone makes a *dédicace* for you, you become famous," he says. When Papa Wemba sings and makes *dédicaces*, I feel good" (LEONARD, oral interview).

Youssef also states that having a *dédicace* made in your name is something desired by all Congolese, something valuable. This is an important tool to make a *mikiliste* and *sapeur* better known:

The person goes to Europe, works, and with all his money, he buys clothes. In order to become famous, he gives these clothes to singers. Then, that singer, says his name in one of his songs. If he doesn't have the money to buy the clothes, he steals them.

Think about the normal people in the Congo. They have financial problems; they have no money; they have nothing. Then they see that someone has gone to Europe, and there are songs about him. This increases desire. He thinks that he also has to go to Europe and have his name appear in songs. Dédicace still happens quite a lot. They sometimes give singers 4000 or 5000 dollars. For your name to be mentioned, you have to give money or something valuable. The others think 'There is life there. There is life in mikili, in Mpoto' (YOUSSEF, oral interview).

As can be seen in the examples, getting a *dédicace* in one's name and becoming a *mikiliste* and *sapeur* hold major prestige. All these characters and the idea of becoming famous formulates a cultural structure that tempts the Congolese to go abroad.

Jerome states that a *sapeur* always has to wear original brand clothes. He says that if he becomes rich in the future, he would like to wear the original pieces of known brands. He says that he will not only buy clothes, but will also buy houses, cars, and luxury items. He would like to buy original watches the most. He constantly goes to the stores and scrutinizes them. There is a lot of difference between original watches and their copies, he explains. The original ones are very nice. He also adds that wearing original items makes one feel very good: "I wear original items. You might not notice they are originals, but there is a difference for me and for other Congolese people. I become happy because I know it's original. I know its worth" (JEROME, oral interview).

Respondents state that the ideology of *La Sape* diminished after the 2000s. The number of people more critical towards *La Sape* and *sapeurs* increased due to the different attitude of the new generation of singers. The main critique is that while *sapeurs* spend huge amounts of money on their clothing, they do not think about their families back in the Congo, for whom and where they do not make permanent investments.

Leonard recounts the story of his two uncles who live in Paris. One is a *sapeur* and invests all the money that he earns on clothing and entertainment. His other uncle saves up his money and with that money he has so far bought a house in a parcel of land and two buses in Kinshasa. The *sapeur* uncle did not bring anything to anyone upon his return to Kinshasa or do anything permanent for his family. He then disappeared without a word. His family never heard from him again. Leonard says that because of such stories, people become more critical of *sapeurs*.

The most important name that has received criticism is that of Papa Wemba. Leonard and other respondents have stated that even though Papa Wemba is the most famous star from the Congo, due to his indulgences as *sapeur*, he has not been able to leave behind a significant heritage to his family. According to Youssef, this is why new singers such as Fally Ipupa and Ferré Gola, criticize the older generation singers regarding *La Sape*.

Edouard says that new generation singers are going through a sort of modernization. They no longer wear extravagant clothing like in the days of Papa Wemba. For example, Fally Ipupa underlines the fact that he is not a *sapeur* and defines his style as Fashion. He argues that it is possible to look clean and stylish with a quality t-shirt, jeans, and sports shoes. According to Edouard, there are still singers who are *sapeurs* nowadays but their number has diminished:

In the past they wore expensive clothes and showed off their clothes. It was a performance, and they were also competing against one another: 'I dress better than you', 'This cost 10,000 euros'. Not only Papa Wemba, there was Stervos Niarkos who also invested all his money on high-end brands. He even went to prison because of clothes. He died in prison in the end, and didn't leave anything to his children (EDOUARD, oral interview).

According to Sami, Fally Ipupa's Fashion wave has replaced the *sapeur*. Nowadays, young people still like to dress well; they try to wear expensive and brand clothes, but they are not as extravagant as *sapeurs*. Sami says that *La Sape* is not over but its influence has shrunk compared to the period of Papa Wemba. During that period, everyone—singers and young people—were concentrated on *La Sape*.

Many respondents mentioned the effects of the Fashion wave, led by Fally Ipupa, on the new generation. Fashion is still a new and developing concept. For the purposes of this dissertation, though, it is not so important to distinguish the two, *La Sape/sapeur* and Fashion/fashionista, since they both value the desire to dress well and thus contribute to the motivation for and inform migration culture. Furthermore, the *sapeur* character, who represents the most extreme point of being well dressed, has not been replaced culturally. In social media and digital media contents, the *sapeur* or '*être bien sapé*' (being very *sapé*) is still synonymous with being well dressed. The effects of *La Sape* and old generation of *sapeur* singers still continues.

Romain thinks that the most important difference between Papa Wemba and his generation as compared to the new generation of singers is the clothes and dreaming of Europe. *Sapeur* singers such as Papa Wemba motivate young people to wear things they never thought they would wear. The effects of new generation singers like Fally Ipupa are not as strong:

We usually dress normally. The sapeur singers make young people dream outside of the norm. They make young people dream about wearing things no-one else would wear; no-one else would think about wearing. Wearing exceptional things. Being extravagant. Fally wears expensive clothes, he is in sync with actuality, he wears collection items but he never makes us dream. Papa Wemba would do that (ROMAIN, oral interview).

In parallel with Romain's statement, Timothe remembers how Papa Wemba's songs made him dream when he was in Kinshasa:

*When I would listen to his songs, I would tell myself that I had to go to Europe and live that adventure. When listening to *Dernier Coup de Sifflet* for example, I would dream of myself in Europe. A cigar in my mouth, wearing expensive clothes, sandals, and ladies surrounding me. I imagined myself with a bottle of champagne! (TIMOTHE, oral interview).*

Timothe believes that in order to understand the reality described in Papa Wemba's songs, one had to go there. He says that only God know when he will attain his dreams, so he prays:

*I am waiting for my time. I believe I will make my dreams come true when my time comes. I'm proud of being a sapeur. Everyone knows that I am a sapeur. I am proud of being part of the religion Kitendi. I have always been interested in clothes, since my childhood. My mom would dress well and she would dress me well too. Being a sapeur has been my dream since childhood. I love *La Sape*. I always pray to God to give me more money. That way, I can buy more expensive clothes, because I really like clothes (TIMOTHE, oral interview).*

As can be seen in the Timothe example, the desires relating to the *sapeur* character and going to Europe to live a luxury life of a *mikiliste* are closely related. The lessening effects of the *La Sape* wave can be seen in a change in the clothing style, but the desire to dress well, fashionably and with expensive clothes continues, under whatever guise. Luxury remains a concept related to Europe and *mikili*. As Jeremy has stated, people want to go to the source of the clothes. Theo also brings attention to this topic: "For example, Louis Vuitton has the same store in the Congo. But people do not shop there. They think the items sold are fake. They do not believe that Louis Vuitton is something to buy in the Congo; it should be bought from its source" (THEO, oral interview).

Jerome thinks that *dressing well is the strongest component of the issue of migration and desire*:

It doesn't matter if it is La Sape or Fashion: for the Congolese, Europe equals dressing well. A Congolese person living in Europe is someone who earns money, dresses well, and wears original brand names. This's the thing that attracts people the most. It has a huge effect on people migrating (JEROME, oral interview).

According to Jerome, the most effective tools in communicating this effect are songs, clips, social media, digital media, and videos showing the lives and clothing of the *mikiliste* and *sapeurs* on television. The mediatization of Congolese migrants through the characters of the *mikiliste* and the *sapeur* are considered in the following section.

4.4 MEDIATIZATION OF THE MIKILISTE AND THE SAPEUR

4.4.1 Mikiliste, Sapeur, and Social Media

Congolese social networks have been reinforced and have become much more complex with the mediation of technology and digital media. In the fieldwork for this dissertation, the agency of ICTs in the Congolese social networks has been quite apparent. ICTs create an imaginative space around the characters of the *mikiliste* and *sapeur* that encourages mobility. In this space, desires and aspirations for a good life create the cultural ground for mobility. The information, visual, audio, and written elements circulating on social networks feed the culture of the *mikiliste* and *sapeur*. Next to the role played by ICTs in this imaginative space, they also serve as a practical tool that allows for mobility by connecting people to one another and enabling them to be well informed. While it is not new that social networks provide migration information, the development of ICTs has allowed for a more rapid and efficient spread of information through the Internet and smartphones. This now becomes part of the Congolese's interaction zone. They are able to compare the conditions and opportunities in different places, the possibilities for mobility, and the routes to take in an up-to-date fashion. ICTs allow for the circulation of materials that both symbolically and pragmatically feed mobility.

Recently, the Congo has become the prominent site of demand for ICTs in Africa, especially in smart phones and internet connection. For the younger generations, the Internet represents an essential condition of being connected to the world. Youssef states

that the use of smart phones and the Internet in the Congo are rapidly increasing. It is very prestigious to have a smartphone and internet connection in the Congo, he says:

For example, here, we put our smart phones in our pockets. But, in the Congo, we have to keep our smart phones in our hand because it is an indicator of prestige. People keep their phones out whether they have Internet or not. They wear their head phones and pretend to be speaking even if they have no minutes loaded on their phones (YOUSSEF, oral interview).

Youssef says that many young people have the dream to go abroad. In order to make this dream come true, they believe they can make the required contacts via phone and the Internet. Love interests are also important. Finding a Congolese partner living in Europe is another contact to make. This is also possible with the Internet. Youssef says that there are those who find partners in Europe while in Turkey and are able to continue on their route due to the financial support they receive from them.

Youssef says that when someone comes here, the whole family is interested and constantly in touch:

When we go abroad, we become like a representative of the family. We're expected to make a living and to help those who stay behind. When that person leaves, the whole family is interested. The person has to be in touch with their family every day. They have to talk, to learn. They have to tell them what's going on, how things are going (YOUSSEF, oral interview).

Thus, ICTs both serve as a necessary tool to establish connections with the required people in order to go abroad and continue communication with those at home once abroad. The social network surrounding the character of the *mikiliste* is made possible with ICTs.

Blaise started to use social media in 2010, when one of his closest friends went to Italy. His friend recommended him to open a Facebook account so that they could stay in touch. In those years, Facebook had only recently become popular among the youth in Kinshasa. Blaise opened up an account. He remembers that they used Facebook to keep in touch and to share photographs: "A friend I grew up with goes to a developed country for example. When you look at the photos they put up, you get a nice feeling. You're happy. This gives you the courage and motivation to follow the same steps" (BLAISE, oral interview). Blaise says that in those days they would go online in cyber cafes but that now smart phones are more common.

Joseph says that the photographs shared on social media by Congolese people living abroad stir up the desire of the youth in Kinshasa to go abroad as well. According to Joseph, young people think “I should go, just like him/her.” They start dreaming about hitting the road. However, life is never like in the photographs. Most of them are disappointed when they go abroad.

Jean states:

Today, thanks to social networks, it is much easier to be in contact with those who are far from you than those who are close to you. I'm on Facebook and WhatsApp every day. When I look at the photographs people post on Facebook and on WhatsApp, I see that those in Europe eat well, dress well; they are well. That is what their posts are about. When you see this, you think that there is a life over there (JEAN, oral interview).

Jean, who is 42 years old, thinks that especially young people are affected. That is why he did not share photographs on Facebook when he came to Turkey. When his wife asked for a photograph, he sent her one via WhatsApp. His nephew who saw the photograph started calling him up and saying “Uncle, it is so nice. Please take me there” even though the image was rather plain.

Like Jean, Jeremy and Pablo prefer not to share their photographs from Turkey on social media. Pablo says that when he shares photographs, his relatives believe him to be in a better state than he is and start requesting things from him. It is in order to avoid this that he does not post any photographs. However, he cannot resist changing his WhatsApp profile photograph often. Jeremy is waiting to be in France before posting any photographs on social media:

I don't share anything because I'm in Istanbul. What do we earn here? We earn nothing. When you start sharing a lot of photographs, people will think you are living in good conditions, that you became a boss. They'll say 'Look how he's living there; look how he dresses.' (JEREMY, oral interview).

On the other hand, Jeremy believes that those who go to Europe need to prove it by sharing photographs. For example, someone in Paris must share a photograph in front of the Eiffel Tower; otherwise, no one will believe him.

There are also some recurring motives in the interviews. Most of the respondents linked their interest in ICTs, especially smart phones and Internet with their will to migrate.

People need to have a smart phone and be connected. Jerome says that before he went on the road, people suggested him to get a smart phone. “It’s difficult on the other side” they said, “You should have a smart phone” (JEROME, oral interview). Pascal explains that at home, everybody looks at their phones all the time. Jean says that on his first day, when they arrived home, the first thing they did was to get him connected to the Wi-Fi, and he called his wife. Jerome explains that he has been on WhatsApp almost all the time since he arrived in Istanbul. Mimi once refused to talk. She was very upset, on the verge of tears, because her smart phone had not been working since the day before. She simply said, “I don’t want to talk. I’m disconnected” (MIMI, oral interview).

Remi thinks that beyond the symbolic effect the Internet has on mobility, the main effect is that it allows us to be connected everywhere and allows for the possibility to access information. Remi is in touch with his friends who have left to different parts of the world. He asks about their lives and living conditions. He is able to ask about which roads are closed or opened, who got what type of document from where and how, who had problems and at what point. He knows all the details of these procedures. He draws his route according to the information he receives through these contacts, and he decides on what he will do next in accordance. Congolese migrants and ICTs are mutually bound. Congolese hold ICTs as the bond of social networks and the tool for mobility. Thus mobility becomes cultural, a digitally mediatized one.

4.4.2 Digital Media Platforms

Benjamin says that the Congolese call themselves “*soso pembe*” (white chicken), because the white chicken is found all around the world. Benjamin says that with internet media, you are able to get news from Congolese people all over the world. For example, a couple of days before the interview, Benjamin watched a news item on an online digital platform about a Congolese person who had become popular through his music in Japan and was now dressing like a Japanese person. According to Benjamin, even if a Congolese person goes abroad and stays 15 years, they will still stay in touch with other Congolese, at home and abroad. From this point of view, it is easy to see how the role of ICTs might be increasing.

All the respondents underline that social media and digital news platforms are important tools in bringing together the Congolese diaspora. Joseph worked in television in Kinshasa before coming to Turkey. When he came to Turkey, he began making news videos for online digital platforms with his camera. These digital platforms have reporters in important centers abroad where the Congolese have settled. Joseph prepared a video of the lives of the Congolese living in Istanbul for one of these platforms. The video was not only broadcast online but also distributed on Congolese television. He produced many videos with a Congolese woman who had on-camera experience with interviews in responses to current affairs. Joseph also created a Facebook page where he posted news and ads about the Congolese in Turkey. He says that there are such Facebook pages and groups created by the Congolese communities all over the world.

Joseph explains that the Congolese usually follow European-based digital platforms but that there are reporters in many different places. Apparently, the use of the Internet in Kinshasa is rapidly increasing, especially among the youth. Wi-Fi is expensive, so it is not common in homes, and internet users usually connect at internet cafes or with limited internet packages that they load to their smart phones. This type of content is more often consumed by the Congolese abroad since watching videos and music clips on online platforms uses a lot of megabytes. The Congolese in Kinshasa use the Internet for communication purposes, such as phone calls or messages; their usage also includes social media.

For Joseph, the most important characteristic of these diaspora-based digital media platforms is that they include news regarding the political opposition not seen on mainstream media. Digital media platforms and social media campaigns played a major role in the pressure exerted by the opposition that led to Joseph Kabila being forced to hold elections in December 2018 after ruling the country for 18 years, when, as a result, he lost power.

In the same manner, Benjamin states that the Congolese mainly use digital media platforms and social media as sources of information. Digital platforms such as Congo Mikili, Tokomi Wapi, and Lingala Facile are mostly watched by the diaspora. According to Benjamin, “professional channels in the Congo have to make a compromise with the

government. Otherwise, the channel is shut down. If you want to work, you have to make the propaganda of the ruling power. There is no such thing as objective news” (BENJAMIN, oral interview).

Another respondent, Theo, agrees with Joseph’s statement about digital media platforms and social media connecting Congolese all around the world. However, he complains, in order to receive more views, these platforms create content with sensational news, paparazzi news, luxury life in Europe, and gossip about singers. Another important point Theo brings attention to is that the tradition of *dédicace* in songs continues on digital media platform videos. Usually, at the beginning or at the end of each video, the names of the sponsors of the video and the platform are included. Theo thinks that these videos are only produced so that the names can be cited. Rich *mikilistes* pay money for these videos or pay musicians so that their names are mentioned in these clips. This demonstrates how the *dédicace* tradition, only present in songs in the past, has been carried into digital media platforms. Theo states that Congolese businesspeople have gone into the business of digital media broadcasting for personal fame and prestige. Youssef also states that Congolese living in Europe engage in the digital media broadcasting business in order to become famous and make their names heard. They do not actually gain any economic benefits from this job.

Youssef thinks that digital media platforms and social media do not only allow access to independent information but also link Congolese culturally to one another:

A person has gone to Europe. Perhaps this person doesn’t have their documents yet. Perhaps they will get their papers in ten years. There are things that they miss in the Congo. There is a nice life here, a nice house, but we miss home. Everyone goes through this. I come here, I make a living—I want to go back, to see the city (YOUSSEF, oral interview).

According to Youssef, those who do not have the chance to go back watch videos on YouTube. Videos showing Kinshasa, its people, the food, and the ambiance of the city are viewed incessantly. Ironically, all the production equipment for the videos produced in the Congo come from Europe.

On the reverse side of this cultural tie are those still in the Congo watching videos about life in Europe/*mikili*. Timothe explains this situation. Videos about the life of *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and singers living in Europe and North America are broadcast on Congolese TV

special programming at the weekend. The digital media platforms abroad have links with the television channels in Kinshasa and send their non-political content to television channels in the Congo. According to Timothe, watching videos online is expensive in the Congo, a luxury, in fact. Thus, broadcasting videos about the life in Europe on Congolese television allows for these videos to be consumed by a larger part of the population. The life in Europe is advertised and the promotion of the *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman characters becomes continuous.

Naomi remembers that she watched a digital broadcast on television in Kinshasa about the *sapeurs* in Europe. She found out about the name of certain avenues in Paris as well as the location of the Yohji Yamamoto and Christian Dior boutiques. Naomi says that these broadcasts show the life of the Congolese all around the world and are an important source of entertainment for the Congolese. She was not able to watch these videos on her smart phone when she was in Kinshasa as it used up too many megabytes. However, when she came to Turkey, she started watching them on her phone: “Since there is Wi-Fi here, we can watch the content online. We watch the broadcasts of the diaspora as well as those in Kinshasa. We live in the Internet constantly. There is no life for us without the Internet” (NAOMI, oral interview).

According to Youssef, people follow what is happening in Europe, the way people dress, and *sapeurs* through videos on YouTube. These videos are shared on Facebook news and actuality pages, which have a lot of followers. Youssef says that in order to prove their superiority over other groups, *sapeurs* produce videos or invite digital platform broadcasters to produce videos on what they own. Youssef refers to a video (Figure 4.2) showing the Congolese *sapeur* group *Les Léopards de la Sape*, originally based in Kinshasa. This video was produced by a popular digital channel, Kitokoyakongo, during the group’s visit to Paris.

Figure 4.2: Congolese sapeur group *Les Léopards de la Sape* (YouTube video still)



Source: YouTube¹² (published February 18, 2015).

Youssef describes how *La Sape* competitions between individuals or groups have been carried to YouTube. For example, there was competition between the two famous *sapeurs* Norbat de Paris and Akim Prince de Lausanne. At their end, both invited program producers from digital platforms to make videos about them, demonstrating their superiority, which are then broadcast on Congolese television. Similarly, there is a broadcaster who makes videos about the *sapeurs* in America and sends the videos to Kinshasa, where they are aired on television. Youssef says that these videos stimulate the desire of the Congolese to go abroad:

This type of content is shown on television in the Congo. People prefer watching this type of content instead of the news. People are fed up of politics. They prefer watching this type of content. The sponsors in Europe participate in its production. They become sponsors only so their names are said. When their names are said, they become happy. People watch this content at the weekend. How mikilistes and sapeurs live in Europe, in the USA, how they dress... they see that their lives are better over there. It creates desire. They want to go, too (YOUSSEF, oral interview).

Timothe says that *sapeurs* are everywhere because of the Internet. He watches new broadcasts about *La Sape* regularly on YouTube. Altercations between *sapeurs* have been carried onto Facebook and YouTube. *Sapeurs* invite the producers of digital platform programs to their homes, and on camera, they show what they own. They try to prove that

¹² At <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR9EaYFfaQ0&t=525s>

they are better than the other *sapeurs*. Timothe describes himself as a *sapeur*. He thinks that one of the most important characteristics of *sapeurs* is to be assertive:

A person can have possibilities, maybe a lot of money, he may get out of his latest-model jeep. Even if I do not have enough, I can still get out and say 'I am better'. La Sape is most of all a stance. That is where greatness lies. The places they live are not great. Most sapeurs in Paris do not have their documents. The social state deposits a salary every month. They do little jobs. They buy clothes with all their money. Then they produce videos. They express with great confidence 'I am great, I am like this and I am like that'. To be a sapeur, you should be able to defend yourself. You have to be a bit full of yourself (TIMOTHE, oral interview).

Gaspard also states that there is a constant state of competition among the Congolese, who are always trying to go one better on the other. The message is “I live better than others, I dress better than them” (GASPARD, oral interview). Gaspard also says that the Congolese like showing off what they have. With platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, they are able to show off to the whole world. He mentioned a YouTube video of a Congolese *sapeur* showing off a jacket costing 19,000 Euros. In the past, a *sapeur* could only show off his belongings to his direct environment, whereas now, thanks to the Internet, he—or she—can be on display for the whole world to see.

Youssef also mentions the video of a *sapeur* living in the Congo that he watched recently. This *sapeur* has never gone to Europe but knew all the brands by memory. In the video, Youssef states that the *sapeur* recites each letter of the alphabet with the name of a brand: “A—Armani, B—Balenciaga, C—Comme de Garçons, etc.” (YOUSSEF, oral interview).

4.4.3 Digital Media Content

It has been argued that the cultural aspects of migration have become operative in ICTs, to these channels and in these spaces where signs and their meanings have been carried and reshaped. Rather than a media culture, this can be described in Hepp’s (2011) words as “the culture of mediatized lives.” In this section, content examples from digital media are examined in order to demonstrate the increasing mediatization of migration culture surrounding the characters of *mikiliste* and *sapeur*.

The smuggler is one of the characters of migration who is operating both symbolically and practically in the realm of ICTs. When looking from the perspective of loaded terms

such as ‘illegal migration’ and ‘migrant smuggling’, the smuggler can be viewed as the ‘bad character’ of the migration process. However, when the Facebook page of a smuggler who has thousands of migrant friends is observed, it can be seen that from the point of view of the migrants, the smuggler is a ‘good character’.

Arthur is an African smuggler living in Izmir. He has mediated the crossing of many Congolese from Turkey to the Greek Islands using inflatable boats. He was taken into custody in 2019 along with other suspects, after the Turkish police conducted operations simultaneously in different places. The video records of the operation taken by the police are shared with the press. This video, which becomes a news item on television and is broadcast on the Internet, is circulated among the Congolese living in Turkey. With the news, an air of mourning overtakes the homes of Congolese migrants waiting to make the crossing.

Sometime later, Arthur gets out of prison. In order to let his environment know that he is free, he shares a photograph on Facebook. This photograph is taken in a shopping mall in Izmir, with him and his wife holding shopping bags and posing for the camera. This photograph had received 1080 likes and 435 comments as of August 2019. The likes and comments were mostly from Congolese migrants who follow him. From reading the comments, it is clear that Arthur’s freedom was greeted with joy and he was perceived to be a hero. Additionally, comments about Arthur’s wife and children highlight his humanitarian side.

Some of the comments are as follows: “The warrior of the earth,” “The king of the Schengen; how can you detain the father of fathers?,” “Respect the king of dingy. God is with you. You are always the king,” “The leader of leaders,” “Here is the King of Basmane,” “The Mayor of Izmir,” “The king of kings,” “Godfather,” “President,” “May God bless you,” “I cannot forget you,” “Father, thanks to you I am in Europe. May God protect you,” “I am proud of you,” “Father, may you live a long life,” “The man with a big heart; the king of kings,” and “Your children have grown? Kisses to all of you.”

As can be seen from the likes and the comments, Arthur is a popular character on social media. The work he does is met with love and respect. Arthur operates in the symbolic space of ICTs and uses their strength to make contacts. He is not alone. Among the others

who utilize the Internet and social media to make connections with regards to crossings is another Congolese man by the name of Julien. He also advertises on Facebook that he mediates crossings from Izmir to the Greek Islands. In the ad, he provides the information of the crossing fees as well as the arrangement to take his clients from Istanbul to Izmir by plane.

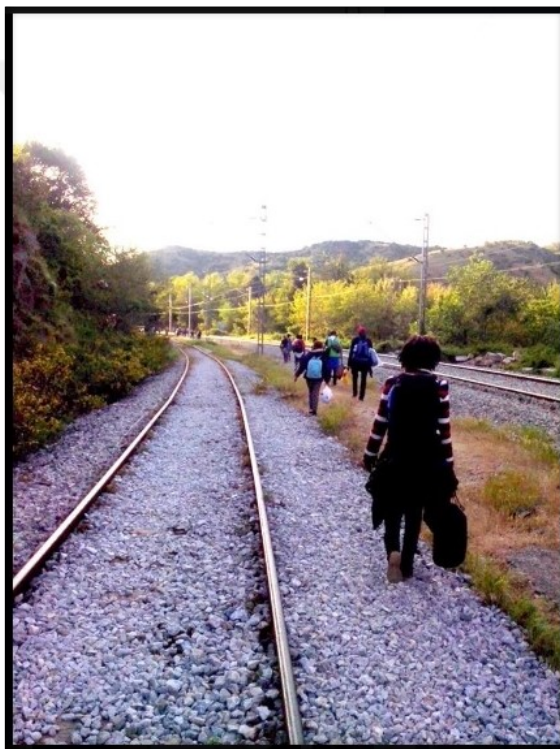
Migrants, too, share their routes and their crossing of borders on social media. A Congolese woman by the name of Claire shares a video on Facebook of a part of her illegal boat crossing. In the video, a boat full of migrants can be seen on the water in the early hours of the day, all looking happy. Claire says, “Goodbye Turkey, we are now in Greece.” Then she asks the other women on the boat to say something. They also say “Goodbye Turkey” and “Thank you God. Thank you Greece.” A Congolese man by the name of Noe shares a happy souvenir photo with his friends as soon as they arrive on the Greek Island and via WhatsApp sends it to his friends who have stayed in Turkey.

In the 2017 Çanakkale-to-Lesbos boat accident in which many migrants, the majority are Congolese, lost their lives, only two women survived. Some of the photographs of those who died were in circulation on Facebook and everyone shared their condolences. Congolese all over the world heard about the accident, shared the news, and commented on it. Some of the respondents state that they heard about the accident from their relatives and friends living in Europe. Congolese digital media platform correspondents headed to Lesbos the next day to interview the surviving women. The interview was one of the most shared videos on social media at the time and was much commented on. Those who had lost a close one headed to the island. They also produced digital content that they shared on Facebook. Migration culture exists in the form of digital content that people as fluid, informal, and temporary communities or community-like virtual occurrences talk about, follow, and share.

Another migrant who shared his journey is a Congolese by the name of Lukas. In the summer of 2015, when a record number of migrants entered the EU, Lukas crossed over to Greece from Turkey, and then, getting through each border one-by-one, arrived in France. He shared photographs of the places he stayed and the things he went through along the way. The journal-type posts making the narrative of his journey received

messages of support, which gave him reassurance. A photograph of a group of migrants walking on train tracks was shared on a public setting on July 26, 2015, with the caption “All roads lead to Rome” (Figure 4.3). During the research conducted for this dissertation, this motto has appeared more than once. For the Congolese, it appears as though it has morphed into the slogan “all roads lead to Rome [for everybody]”. Many examples like this can be identified that demonstrate the culture of migration and its increasing mediatization with each passing day.

Figure 4.3: The photo shot and shared by Lukas on his Facebook account



Source: Facebook (uploaded July 26, 2015).

The social media posts of migrants do not only include posts about their physical journeys but also express and reflect on their internal journeys. Kept in and released from a repatriation center after being caught while attempting to cross over to Greece, Elie has shared posts on Facebook that reflect his disappointment as well as the dangers of the road. Nonetheless, belief and desire to go on can clearly be read in these posts as well. In this state of mind, a selfie posted on August 14, 2018 reads

The past has not been easy, and the future will surely not be either. But even if one has to die, I have decided to die by moving forward. #GodControlsEverything

Elie is successful in a subsequent crossing, passing from Turkey to Greece and then from Greece to France. Three months after the earlier post, on November 17, 2018, he shares a selfie from Paris, which reads

Life is unique, you have one life, one chance, one occasion to live and do what you want, to accomplish everything you dreamed of. Don't let others screw you up. No!!! Screw their expertise. Save your soul, stay far away from negative spirits, energy-stealers, killers of happiness, destroyers of dreams. You are alive!!! You are breathing, you are here, you can do it better than anyone else who has done it before. Because it is you. #HappyWeekendtoAll #GodControlsEverything #Ferrari

This post where Elie speaks about going after one's dreams, cannot be thought of independently from the journey. This post is liked and commented on by many of his Facebook friends. The comments are supportive. This type of example demonstrates how the desires and aspirations that precipitate mobility are represented culturally on social media. A YouTube video referenced by respondents is worth examining here, also.

In this video, a *sapeur* who goes under the name Akim Prince de Lausanne is seen purchasing a jacket with diamonds from the Versace store in Geneva costing more than 19,000 Euros. Akim wants to document his purchase because there is a competition among *sapeurs* to see who will buy the most expensive jacket. He invites Noly Tambu, the producer and presenter of Congo Top News, a digital platform based in Paris, to Geneva. Noly Tambu arrives with a camera and meets Akim and his two other *sapeur* friends. The period before the purchase, the purchase itself and the aftermath are filmed and a 38-minute video is prepared. The video is broadcast on the YouTube channel and Facebook page of Congo Top News. Another digital platform takes three minutes of the video from the shopping part and broadcasts it under the title 'A Congolese *sapeur* buys a 19,000-Euro jacket'. Several of the respondents here mention these two videos, which they have either seen on YouTube or Facebook or on a local television program in Kinshasa.

Program presenter Noly Tambu meets with Akim and the other *sapeurs*. Before the shopping begins, the presenter hands over the microphone to them. During the interview, the camera pans over each of their outfits, from top to bottom. One of the *sapeurs* states that no-one would believe them if they bought this jacket and said it was worth 19,000 Euros, which is why they chose to invite a program presenter that people trust to make

the video. Akim, who is the one purchasing the jacket, wants to present himself for those who do not know him. He states that he is superior to all *sapeurs*. It is true that Akim is one of the best known Congolese *sapeurs* today. His name can be heard in the songs of the most famous Congolese singers. Akim is also known for taking part in the video clip of the song by the famous singer Maitre Gims about Congolese *sapeurs*, *Sapés comme Jamais* (*Sapés* like Never).

Akim states that he did not start the tradition of buying the most expensive jacket, that was the important *sapeurs* of the older generations, such as Modogo Gian Franco Ferre, and that he is continuing this tradition. “People think that I am out of money when I buy this jacket,” he boasts. “No, I’m not out of money when I buy this jacket. Let’s not talk too much, let’s do it.” Akim, his *sapeur* friends, the presenter, and the cameraman head to the Versace store to buy the jacket. In the store, they ask the price of the jacket over and over again in front of the camera to the sales clerk. Afterwards, Akim wears the diamond jacket and approaches the camera, demonstrating the price tag. “You don’t believe me when I say this is not a trick?” he challenges the camera. “So now, you can see for yourself. Film this. Is it done?” And again, “This diamond jacket cost 19,000 euros.” Akim then counts the sum and hands the money to the salesclerk (Figure 4.4). The camera repeatedly zooms in on the money. When the purchase is complete, the jacket is packaged, and the group leaves the store.

Figure 4.4: Akim Prince de Lausanne (YouTube video still)



Source: YouTube¹³, (published on February 5, 2016).

¹³ At <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ttbzr3z5x1M&t=1116s>

At the exit of the store, the presenter holds the microphone out to the *sapeurs* once again. One of them states that Akim has purchased the world's most expensive jacket and that when he shared this on Facebook, the post was met with jealous and doubtful comments. He says that once people see the video, they will see it is not fake. Akim is the last to address the camera; he reminds us that he has purchased the world's most expensive jacket and declares that if there is any other *sapeur* able to make the same purchase, then he will quit being a *sapeur*. He further asserts that other *sapeurs* can only buy the Chinese knock-off of the jacket.

This video shows the mediatization of old practices, such as when *sapeurs* would meet in public spaces and uphold performative competitions about who was superior. The practice of Congolese *sapeurs* of wearing clothes with their price tags is now corroborated with photographs, videos, and live broadcasts. Social media and digital media platforms are used to prove the value of the clothes as well as serve as a global podium to show them off. This public display as status statement is both a performance and communicative act, a social sharing. This is not a podium only for famous *sapeurs*, but for everyone.

4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter began by laying out transit migration theory and summarizing critical sources. It was then demonstrated that Turkey should not be regarded simplistically as a transit country for sub-Saharan Africans. A body of research explains the presence of sub-Saharan Africans in Turkey as affected by many different factors, such as Turkey's Africa Opening, Africa's economic growth and Turkey's trade opportunities and export potential (Fait 2013, Şaul 2013). It is argued that the occurrence of transit cross-over into Europe for Africans is much lower than assumed. The same factors are valid for the Congolese, but statistical data show that going to Europe is more commonly observed among this group than other sub-Saharan Africans. Based on this data, yet still approaching transit theory critically, a new theoretical explanation has been developed.

Motivations regarding movement in places considered to be transitory can alter for people in both positive and negative ways. In the case of Turkey, as much as there are people

who give up the crossing because of the difficulties and dangers, there are also those who stay because they discover opportunities. Roads, stops, and destinations can change and shift repeatedly due to information gained and idea flows and luck or lack thereof. Alongside this, there are also those who live in different places for many years and move from one place to the next without having had any intention of leaving. Even critical approaches to transit theory assume linearity with a final destination and a permanent settlement at or marking the end of the road. However, multi-directional perspective can be applied to transit places as much as final destinations. Just as someone who has been living in one place for a long time can all of a sudden decide to move, so can someone assuming to be on the move stop and settle—for a while, indefinitely, for a lifetime.

The desire to reach Europe does cause Congolese migrants to risk their lives. The common Congolese expression '*Mpoto eza lola*' (Europe is paradise) expresses the ideal of a type of El Dorado, the belief that it is located and the hope that it will actually be found in Europe. In a similar vein, the saying "Dying without seeing Europe, is a sin that God cannot forgive" is especially popular among the young Congolese. Both of these aphorisms load Europe with a certain divinity. In the second one, seeing Europe is not just a wish but an obligation. However, it only mentions seeing Europe, and not living there.

In some of the interviews reported in this chapter, people have expressed their desire and intention to go to Europe or the United States just to take a tour. However, it is understood that what is wanted, in fact, is freedom of mobility, and going to Europe is a tool for that. Many respondents who state that they want to go to France from Turkey, also say that they plan on going to Canada, the US, UK, or back to the Congo once they receive the documents that will allow them that freedom of mobility, to come and go as the please or as they can or as circumstances dictate that they need to.

Although all desires and aspirations may seem to symbolically be represented in the desire to go to Europe, Europe reflects much more than just a geographical space. Believing they will be free once they get their documents from Europe, the respondents state that they do not want to be restricted. They want to be able to go wherever they want. Thus, the aim of the transit is not just to go to Europe, but more importantly, to gain freedom of

mobility. The *mikiliste* is the objectification of these desires, and his claim is to a freedom of mobility; it is someone who can access the ‘worlds’. The *sapeur* extravagance then represents a pinnacle of mobility where this is understood as a cultural access, expressed through lifestyle choice and extended even to ridiculously priced garments.

Similarly, transit migration theory has generally assumed a linear process, with a clear beginning and ending and with stopping points along the way (the ‘transit’)—yet, that may not be the case. Nowadays, when talking about migration, it may be better to talk about a multidirectional mobility. Especially where freedom of movement is an end in itself, then there may be multiple and mutable possibilities and an ever-present potential for continuation, to hit the road again. The character of this mobility is not the ‘African migrant’ but the *mikiliste*.

The *mikiliste* represents one of the cultural aspects of migration. While historically, those who live in Europe have been called ‘*mikiliste*’, today the definition of the word has changed; it means a person who can access the ‘worlds’ and their opportunities. The *mikiliste* is a cosmopolitan character who has the freedom of mobility. While ‘*mikili*’ means ‘the worlds’, it is not just a geographical term, but also a cultural one. Being *mikiliste* echoes in the imagination of Congolese people, in their desires and aspirations for a good life. The *mikiliste* who has access to the worlds, shows off their wealth in many different ways, but primarily in nice clothes and by distributing goods as a largesse upon returning to Kinshasa.

Mobility is cultural and fueled by desires, aspirations and hope. The urge to become *mikiliste* is realized through a decisiveness combined with determination. “When someone has a dream, he cannot stop without making that dream come true,” Edouard says. “I want to go further, further than this” (EDOUARD, oral interview). This decisiveness and determination also shows hope for the future and belief that one day, everything will be good, a positive motivation. Leonard says that when people go to Paris and talk about Paris, everyone else also wants to go to Paris. Theo says that Turkey is not the culturally ingrained idea of Europe, and that this is why people leave Turkey, even if they make a good living. The culturally ingrained image of Europe has to be realized through an embodied experience—going there, living the life—at least once. Thus, by

doing so, the *mikiliste* is freed from this desire. The freedom of the *mikiliste* is thus psychological as well as physical. And it is grounded in possession of the documents that allow for mobility. He/she is no longer limited to Europe. Indeed, the imaginative nowadays is more global.

With the mediatization of mobility, the content relating to clothing is circulated on social networks that incorporate all Congolese in the world of ICTs. The desire to own nice, expensive, fashionable clothing as well as the desire to go abroad is solidified. Jonathan, who has only been in Istanbul for ten days, does not share his photographs on Facebook because he first needs to buy clothes and become more beautiful. This discourse surrounding Europe and *mikili* operates from expectations with regards to how a *mikiliste* should look. Newcomer *mikilistes* fulfill this expectation and continue and develop the discourse through the circulation of its scripts with words and images on ICTs.

In the past, the culturally ingrained cult of the *mikiliste* and *sapeur* was fed by singers. Nowadays, it is fed by ICTs. ICTs become a symbolic space for aspirations, desires, and hope. They also create the tools and the methods required for the connections to reach these desires and aspirations—in this case mobility, and dressing well. The *mikiliste* and the *sapeur* operate in ICTs in every aspect. Photographs taken in front of the Eiffel Tower that carry the message ‘I am in Paris’, or of those taken in the snow, which mean ‘I am now a *mikiliste*’; photographs where the migrant is well-dressed, with modern city symbols, such as metros, skyscrapers, and shopping malls; and even videos of crossings by boat from Turkey to Greece, telephone calls about how to get a visa, how to get a residency permit, or which transit routes are open, messages sent and received by smugglers—all these fall into the space of the *mikiliste* on ICTs.

5. BUSINESSMAN

Early academic studies on African migration to Turkey had a sustained focus on asylum claim and transit migration, which was an inadequate perspective (Suter 2012, Brewer & Yüksekler 2006, Icduygu 2005). However, later works noticed and explored other aspects of African lives in Turkey, such as migrant commercial activities and entrepreneurship (Baird 2015, Şaul 2014, Şaul 2013). In this section, the theoretical framework of “mixed embeddedness” (Kloosterman et al. 1999) will be used in order to explore African migrant entrepreneurship in Turkey. Although structural forces foster entrepreneurship in Turkey especially in Istanbul, there are limitations that require migrants to use their agency creatively in order to forge strategies for self-employment.

Earlier works on African migrant entrepreneurship focused mostly on the Nigerian community and the cargo business, which is located at the top of the tree in terms of opportunity structure (Baird 2015, Şaul 2014, Schapendonk 2013). Earlier works also either predated or just failed to observe the role of ICTs in commercial activities and entrepreneurship. The fieldwork conducted for this dissertation within the community of Congolese migrants in Istanbul exemplifies how a community with limited resources creates strategies for informal self-employment by means of ICTs. While ‘being a businessman/businesswoman’ echoes in the imagination of Congolese people as part of their aspirations and desire for a good life, nowadays, ICTs both nurture these desires and offer practical tools to realize them.

In this opening section, first the theory of mixed embeddedness in migrant entrepreneurship are introduced, then structural forces in sub-Saharan migration and entrepreneurship in Turkey are discussed. After that, politico-institutional forces in foreigners’ labor and entrepreneurship in Turkey are explained. Previous studies on sub-Saharan African labor and entrepreneurship in Istanbul are reviewed to situate the Congolese case in the general framework.

5.1 MIXED EMBEDDEDNESS

In order to frame commercial activities and entrepreneurship of the African migrants and particularly Congolese migrants in Turkey, the main arguments of the prevalent theoretical literature on migrant entrepreneurship should be discussed. The context of the theories and discussions on the subject is the ever-increasing global mobility generating a growing number of self-employed migrants, or migrant entrepreneurs. Rath and Schutjens (2016) believe that in the near future, extensive discussions on migrant entrepreneurship will come to the forefront because this is increasing rapidly and diversifying across a variety of different dimensions, forms, and phases. As migration intensifies all over the world, it affects more and more geographical territories and classes of people.

Until recently, migrants from less-developed countries have been assessed as low-skilled cheap labor at the lower end of the market doing unwanted jobs in advanced economies. Against this, immigrants who start their own business began to attract attention. Kloosterman and Rath (2003) showed how they surmount barriers, create their own jobs and acquire a niche for themselves at an intermediate position between the working immigrant and the indigenous entrepreneur. Thus, although those who choose self-employment are still a minority, migrant entrepreneurship becomes significant.

Rath and Schutjens (2016, p. 96)) give three reasons for the importance of migrant entrepreneurship. Firstly, it has a meaningful economic impact in terms of “innovation, market change, and larger economic outreach”. These entrepreneurs exploit new markets and develop new ways of doing business. Secondly, their business has generally transnational characteristics that influence both the host and the settlement country and other countries. The effect of the economic activity goes beyond trade. And thirdly, the rate of migrant entrepreneurship is growing faster than the general rise in entrepreneurship. Its impact is disproportional in quantitative terms also.

Rath and Kloosterman (2000, pp. 669-671) discuss five research perspectives to explore immigrant entrepreneurship. The first perspective emphasizes the agency of the immigrant as an economic actor. Accordingly, immigrant entrepreneurs find vacancies in

the market through innovations in products, or in production-methods, or in marketing. Thus, they obtain a monopoly until their innovation is copied by others. The second perspective highlights the “social embeddedness” and the “social capital” of entrepreneurs, since they use their social networks for economic success. The third perspective explores immigrant entrepreneurship by locating its position in general business networks and value systems. The fourth perspective links the economic activities of immigrants with the general transformation of urban economic structure, especially with the boom in the urban service economy. And the fifth perspective emphasizes the political-institutional framework around the labor market and entrepreneurial activities, examining how state rules and regulations affect immigrant decisions concerning employment and entrepreneurship.

These five perspectives can be regrouped along the spectrum of agency versus structure. As expressed by Rath and Schutjens (2016, pp. 96-97), “While the actor—the migrant entrepreneur—actively and often purposefully decides upon, undertakes and adapts business practices and strategies in the realm of economic market realities (structure), the reverse is also true.” Agency-oriented approaches give importance to individualistic characteristics and human capital, such as educational background and personal proclivity towards self-employment. Social networks and social capital are also mentioned as determining factors for entrepreneurial success, which are relevant also to the case of Congolese migrant agency in economic activities in Istanbul.

Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) argue that different sources of social capital have both positive and negative influences on immigrant economic adaptation. Social capital is more intangible than material or human capital (referring to qualifications such as education or experience as well as wealth in the form of physical possessions, etc.). In this conception, the migrant’s embeddedness in a supportive ethnic network is not taken into consideration. On the other hand according to social capital theory, immigrants who share a similar migration history, cultural repertoire, and a common language partake in a bond of “bounded solidarity” and “enforceable trust”. As this group solidarity and the intra-group expectations can be appropriated as a source to be drawn upon for entrepreneurship, “A solidary ethnic community represents, simultaneously, a market for

culturally defined goods, a pool of reliable low-wage labor, and a potential source for start-up capital” (Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993, p. 1329).

The trust in the community is a source of flexibility as it provides opportunities for operating an informal business without formal contracts. However, even if solidarity and trust in a community are necessary for economic success in an emergent network, these resources are not equally distributed in the community and there will always be abuses of solidarity sentiments and trust obligations.

As Rath (2002) explains, entrepreneurs mobilize social networks for economic purposes: “For them, networks are instrumental in acquiring knowledge, distributing information, recruiting capital and labour, and in establishing strong relations with clients and suppliers” (p. 10). However taking advantage of social networks is not a mechanical procedure; the entrepreneur’s social networks may not have the capacity to bring gain, or structural forces may affect the context unexpectedly. Thus, there is a “complex and dynamic process, and success is not guaranteed” (p. 11).

In contrast to the agency-oriented perspective, structure-oriented approaches focus on push-and-pull factors leading to self-employment. For instance, blocked mobility may push immigrants from less-developed countries to entrepreneurship where they are exposed to discrimination and racism or do not have access to social networks that can help them to find jobs suitable to their skills and interests (Rath & Schutjens 2016, Kloosterman & Rath 2003) Blocked mobility is a push factor towards self-employment. There are also structural pull factors, such as the global transformation in the economy of cities or encouraging institutional frameworks.

Saskia Sassen in her book *The Global City* (1991) argues that a group of cities are dissociated from the nation-states and operating in a similar way in the context of contemporary globalization. The restructuring of capitalism causes this transformation, complemented by global capital flows and the mobility of labor. Particular places are shaped by global forces as global cities where there is a decline in manufacturing industries and a development in service economy. Sassen argues that this economic restructuring promotes immigrant entrepreneurship that aims to feed the demand at the low-end of the service sector.

Politico-institutional context is another structural force underlined in the immigrant entrepreneurship literature. Research in this area stresses the general rules and regulations that encourage or discourage entrepreneurship at national and local levels. For example, Rath and Schutjens (2016, p. 100) refer to “start-up incentives, zoning policy regulations, tax benefits, qualification requirements, and anti-competition guidelines” as examples of both state and private institutional determinants.

The above perspectives refer to agency and structure approaches as different forms of embeddedness. However, studies by Kloosterman, van der Leun, and Rath suggest the concept of “mixed embeddedness” to combine agency and structure perspectives (Rath 2002a, Kloosterman & Rath 2001b, Kloosterman et al. 1999). They discuss the social embeddedness of the immigrant entrepreneurs in a context shaped by structural forces, such as the opportunity structure and political-institutional forces in play. Through the perspective of “mixed-embeddedness,” multiple factors of both supply and demand should be assessed emphasizing the complex interdependency between the structure and the actor.

Kloosterman et al. (1999) in their article ‘Mixed Embeddedness: (In)formal Economic Activities and Immigrant Businesses in the Netherlands’ present the concept of “mixed embeddedness” and its relationship with informal economic activities in an illustrative case of Turkish and Moroccan Islamic butchers. The argument is made here that a specific immigrant group’s participation in entrepreneurship is determined by the complex interaction between socio-economic and ethno-social characteristics of the group and the opportunity structure. “The state of technology, the cost of production factors, the nature of the demand for products and the institutional framework” together form the opportunity structure and determine how such businesses operate (Kloosterman et al. 1999, p. 253).

Kloosterman et al. note that immigrant entrepreneurs starting their own business generally set up shops situated at the lower end of this opportunity structure. In most cases, these entrepreneurs are lacking in financial and human capital, which pushes them to markets with low barriers of entry. They open shops in specific segments where small-scale, labor-intensive, and low-skill production is possible. Their survival in the market depends on

the interplay of different forms of embeddedness that also enable them to involve in informal economic activities without governmental control. This informality is only possible through the trust mechanism generated by the social capital of the immigrant entrepreneur (1999, p. 262).

One of the most important factors determining the segments in which these businesses develop is market conditions. According to Kloosterman et al. (1999, p. 258) these market conditions and economic trends themselves are also dependent on the institutional framework that affect “opportunity structures at national, sector and local levels.” Thus, the mixed-embeddedness approach deals with immigrant entrepreneurship by considering the complex constellation of different types of embeddedness.

The mixed embeddedness approach overcomes the deficiencies of earlier monocausal theoretical models of immigrant entrepreneurship. However, there is also some criticism of the model. In her article ‘Understanding the Diversity of Immigrant Entrepreneurial Strategies’ (2007), Oliveira argues that the role of personal resources is neglected in entrepreneurship theory. In her conception, personal resources, including education, age, business and work experience, personal savings, language knowledge, migratory experience, legal status and aspiration levels affect immigrants’ economic options (2007, p. 66). In other words, there is an under-valuing of what may be identified as the intersection of material, human, and social capital at the level of the individual.

Oliveira argues that the interactive model of mixed embeddedness is inclusive in many ways but with certain limitations. Even if the context and the ethno-cultural boundaries do not provide opportunities or advantages for business, immigrants mobilize their personal resources in the start-up process. Oliveira gives the example of Cape Verdean entrepreneurs in Portugal. Their business activities depend on their personal savings rather than financial help from family, friends, or ethnic group. When their reasons for operating a business are enquired about, Cape Verdean respondents refer mostly to specific reasons oriented to them as individuals, such as “I wanted to be independent”, “I knew the business sector well,” and “I wanted to have a better life” (53, 36, and 24 percent, respectively) (Oliveira 2007, p. 66).

These types of individual reasons combine personalized holdings of and access to various capitals, but they also bring out the crucial dimension of an individual's aspiration. Thus, it may be argued, the individual component should be more strongly articulated as personal sources in entrepreneurship theories. The findings on Congolese migrants' commercial activities are congruent with Oliveira's position, as can be discerned from my respondents' personal stories revealing their desires and aspirations to be discussed further.

5.1.1 Structural Forces

The entrepreneurial presence of the sub-Saharan African population in Turkey has been increasing since the 2000s. This section analyzes structural forces relevant to that, focusing on Turkey's Opening to Africa policy and Africa's recent economic growth.

Turkey's relations with Africa underwent a radical change after 1998 with the acceptance of Africa Action Plan and opening to Africa strategy as part of a multidimensional foreign policy. There was a gradual revival in relations, reaching a peak after 2005, when Turkey announced 'the year of Africa'. Özkan and Akgün (2010) associate Turkey's growing interest in Africa with two factors. The first is related to Turkey's disappointment in the extent and pace of its integration with the EU, and the second is the growing economic potential of Africa, which has attracted other emerging powers. As a result of these two factors, Turkey started to look for new strategic partners and new markets in Africa.

From the beginning of the opening process, Turkey sought to strengthen its diplomatic power in Africa through high-level official visits and the launch of 30 new embassies. A total of 39 Turkish embassies are currently functioning on the continent. During the same period, African diplomatic missions in Turkey have also risen, from 16 to 32. Between 2004 and 2015, the annual trade volume between Turkey and African countries quadrupled. Meanwhile, Turkish Airlines started direct flights, with 46 destinations in 28 African countries (Özkan 2016).

Turkey's relations with Africa started with a strong focus on humanitarian assistance and then developed with an increase in trade and economically driven activities in the fields

of infrastructure, food security, healthcare, and human capital. Finally, Turkey's intervention was complemented by high-level political engagements addressing state-building and security issues alongside the diplomatic activities. Another aspect of this involvement with Africa was the state's collaboration with civil society organizations and business sectors to achieve its objective of becoming an active global actor (Özkan 2016, Özkan & Akgün 2010).

One pillar of the Opening to Africa policy was cooperation in the field of culture and education. A special office attached to Prime Ministry, the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities, has awarded thousands of scholarships for African students who want to study in Turkey. These scholarships, which have been continuing at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level since 2012, cover the placement of students at a university, one-year Turkish language courses, accommodation, monthly scholarship, health insurance, and plane tickets (Türkiye Scholarships, 2019). The Directorate for Religious Affairs of Turkey has also developed a scholarships program to educate imams in its International Imam Hatip High Schools launched in Turkey. Further, Turkish civil society organizations have opened many schools and Koran courses in Africa, which has contributed to the visibility of Turkey in the continent, reinforcing the perception of the country as a major player in Africa.

Özkan (2016) explains that after the Second Africa-Turkey Summit, in 2014, the phase of opening to Africa finished and a new phase of normalization started. Turkey is presently using the opportunities created to consolidate its strategic partnership in Africa and develop a more systematic approach to the development of political, social and economic relations. Fieldwork conducted with African migrants in Turkey show that Turkey's Opening to Africa policy has made the country more visible on the continent, contributing to Turkey's prominence as a migration destination in a multifaceted way (Şaul 2013, Fait 2013).

When discussing the structural forces affecting sub-Saharan African migration to Turkey, the rising economic growth rates in Africa should also be taken into consideration. African economic development gained momentum after the 2000s, and Africa became the world's second fastest-growing region after Asia. Mahir Şaul (2013), one of the earlier

scholars to remark to this point, argues that migration increased together with the rise in incomes and, moreover, that the rise in Turkey's production and export capacity is feeding migrant aspirations with entrepreneurial ambitions. According to Şaul (2014, p. 143), "West and Central African migration is primarily a middle-class movement of urban traders and white-collar workers who want to improve their condition." Thus, migrants from Nigeria, a leading country in sub-Saharan African economic development, have been pioneers in the entrepreneurship environment in Turkey.

The growth rates of the DRC also showed positive development after the 2000s, rising above the average of sub-Saharan African growth rates. With a growth of 9.47 percent of its annual GDP in 2014, the DRC attained its highest growth rate of the last fifty years (The World Bank Data, 2018). The economic improvement of the DRC, along with the increase in Turkey's production and export capacities, have affected the migration of Congolese with commercial aspirations to Turkey. However, although the DRC takes part in Africa's overall growth trend, it still has one of the lowest figures on the continent for per capita GDP. Thus, the realities of the migrants coming from the Congo to Turkey both conform to and diverge from Şaul's (2014, 2013) perspective, as discussed below.

Overall, the commercial activities of Congolese migrants in Turkey are limited in comparison to other migrants from sub-Saharan African countries, due to their lower economic capital. The relatively small purchasing power in the DRC negatively affects the volume of trade. Various politico-institutional factors further render the desired mobility of the Congolese impossible. As a result, the crossings from Turkey to Europe continue, leading to an interruption in their commercial activities in Turkey.

5.1.2 Politico-institutional Forces

The subject of this section is the policies, laws, and regulations informing Africans' living, working, and business setting in Turkey, posited here as politico-institutional forces. In the context of African migration and settlement, institutional forces mainly include visa policies, asylum procedures, and residence and work permit policies and practices. As Turkey developed as a migration destination, respective institutions promulgated new laws and regulations following the settling of migrants and refugees in

the country, especially during the last decade. First, the institutions, laws, and implementations regulating foreigners' residence in Turkey are discussed.

In 2013, due to the exigencies arising from the influx of refugee-migrants into Turkey in the wake of the civil war in Syria, the Foreigners and International Protection Law No. 6458 (Official Gazette, 2013) was adopted. This law aims to bring asylum and migration management on a sound legal basis and to ensure that the rights of migrants and international protection seekers are harmonized with international standards. Following this law, a Directorate General of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior was established and began its operations in domestic and foreign centers (Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 2015).

With this law, the entry of foreigners in Turkey and the visa and residency systems regulating their lives here together with the asylum system administering the rights and obligations of refugees and asylum seekers was redesigned and its implementation inaugurated by the Migration Management. As a result of the Syrian influx and the facilitating implementations, such as the establishment of the central online application system and the lowering of residency fees, the number of foreigners officially residing in Turkey (i.e., with a residence permit) rose from 313,692 in 2013 to 938,482 in 2019, an almost threefold increase (Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 2019b).

Parallel with the increase of orderly migration to Turkey, the number of refugees and escapees—thus, migrants seeking international protection—has increased (Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 2019a). From its inception in 2013 until 2018, the Migration Management jointly carried out the processes of international protection applications with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). However, in 2018, the UNHCR transferred its duties related to the registration, referral, and evaluation of international protection applications to the Directorate General of Migration Management. Foreigners wanting to apply for international protection in Turkey now go to the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM) in the cities upon entry to the country. The PDMMs initiate and undertake registration and further processing of international protection applications.

International protection applications are received throughout the country, while permanent stay in some cities, including Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, is not allowed under the legislation (UNHCR, 2018). Foreigners applying for international protection reside in Turkey under temporary protection until their applications are concluded.

As described above, the legal stay of foreigners in Turkey is made possible through international protection applications or residence permit applications of which the process is governed by PDMMs. The laws and practices regulating the procedures permitting the foreigners to legally work and set up businesses in Turkey entail another set of rules.

According to the International Labor Act numbered 6735 (Official Gazette, 2016b), in order to employ a person of foreign national identity in Turkey, it is mandatory to obtain a work permit from the Ministry of Labor, Social Services, and Family. Employers must apply for a work permit on behalf of the foreigner. In order to apply for a work permit, the foreigner is required to have a residence permit with validity. The permits are issued annually for the foreigners to work in a specific business and are canceled when the individuals leave. Foreigners who complete eight years of legal work are eligible for permanent work permits, a condition which is difficult to fulfil. In addition, the Law No. 4817 on Work Permits for Foreigners (Official Gazette, 2003) establishes difficult criteria for workplaces wishing to employ foreigners, such as meeting minimum size and volume conditions and employing five Turkish citizens for each foreigner. This makes it difficult for foreigners to find workplaces that can obtain work permits. These restrictive criteria do not apply to those who have been married to a Turkish citizen for at least three years or have children by a Turkish citizen, and nor do they apply to those working in the education sector or home services (Ministry of Labor, Social Services and Family, 2019)

With the Regulation on Working Procedures of International Protection Applicants and Holders of International Protection Status (Official Gazette, 2016) issued in 2016, provision has been made allowing foreigners under protection to work with a work permit in Turkey. According to this regulation, the employer can apply for a work permit on behalf of the asylum seeker for a specific job and workplace, provided that the asylum seeker resides in the satellite city. However, the number of foreign workers under temporary protection in a workplace may not exceed one tenth of the total number of

employees. Thus, facilitation arrangements are put into practice with complicating criteria.

As previous studies have shown, the difficult criteria for work permits and the reluctance of employers to register their employees appear to be an obstacle to the formal work of African immigrants (Şaul 2013, Brewer & Yüksek 2006). The situation of foreign entrepreneurs who want to start their own business in Turkey is the subject of further laws and regulations.

Direct Foreign Investments Law no. 4875, introduced in 2003 (Official Gazette, 2003b), has the purpose of encouraging foreign investors to make investments in Turkey. The law ensures foreign investors to be equally treated and affords them the same rights and liabilities as local investors. The principles of the law include repatriation rights, which allow the investor to freely transfer net profits abroad from their commercial activities and transactions in Turkey. Foreign investors also have the right to employ foreign personnel, who will be issued appropriate residence and work permits. However, the same limitations on the numbers of foreign employers in proportion to domestic employers hold for the foreign enterprises, too.

With the Presidential Decree on the Presidential Organization (Official Gazette, 2018), the Investment Office was established as one of the offices of the Presidency with a special budget and administrative and financial autonomy. The purpose of the Investment Office has been declared as encouraging foreign investment in Turkey in order to increase its amount, as deemed necessary for the country's economic development (Basın İlan Kurumu, 2018). The Invest in Turkey website, which is established under the Presidency Investment Office, provides all kinds of information and data that will contribute to the increase of investments for the attention of foreign investors. According to Invest in Turkey's official website, Turkey has introduced many reforms and investment incentives in order to enhance the investment environment. Setting up a business has become easier due to the elimination of red tape and minimizing of costs and procedures (Invest in Turkey, 2019).

The Invest in Istanbul platform, which was established as part of the same process, offers one-on-one support and guidance to foreign investors wishing to do business in Istanbul

with its website and offices. The platform is coordinated by Istanbul Development Agency in partnership with many institutions gathered under the same roof in order to facilitate bureaucratic steps to start up a business in Istanbul (Invest in Istanbul, 2019).

As described, therefore, Turkey follows a multi-faceted program aimed at increasing and realizing its foreign business and labor potential. The first pillar of this is the plans, arrangements, and implementations made to attract large and small foreign investors to the country and facilitate their establishment of businesses in Turkey. The other pillar is the legal arrangements made by Turkey to include the migrant population in the formal workforce, which increased in numbers as Turkey became a migration destination. The positive impact of this multifaceted program on the working conditions and business possibilities of foreigners is undeniable. However, the constraints imposed by the system also continue to create barriers, particularly in the employment conditions and in the circumstances of conducting business for sub-Saharan African migrants. Nevertheless, although African migrants tend to be employed in informal work (which forms an important part of the Turkish economy), the number of those entering formal work is on the increase as well.

5.1.3 Sub-Saharan African Labor and Entrepreneurship

This section looks at the motivations and circumstances of the sub-Saharan African migration to Istanbul together with the environment shaping the migrants' conditions of working, trading, and conducting business based on the previous field research.

Şaul (2013) estimates the universe of sub-Saharan African migrants to be 70,000 people, based on a field study conducted in 2011-12. He also estimates that around half of this number consists of West and Central Africans. Saul's observations point to the conclusion that the majority of this estimated 35,000 West and Central African migrants are from Senegal or Nigeria. His estimation of the number of Congolese migrants from the DRC is about 1,000 people. Although there are no resources to reach the net numbers of the sub-Saharan African population in Turkey, it can be presumed that this figure is much higher today.

Şaul (2014, 2013) argues that migration of people from West and Central African countries to Istanbul is largely related to trade. Some destinations, such as Istanbul and Dubai, have become more accommodative of African migrants' entrepreneurial aspirations than the classical migration destinations of developed countries (Şaul & Pelican 2014). One part of the migrant's commercial activities is the guidance service for merchants who come from Africa to purchase goods, and another part is the commercial activities and business start-ups that the migrants carry out on their own accounts.

Starting from the 1990s and accelerating after 2000, we see that Istanbul has become more attractive for African merchants for buying goods and in this context has acquired an equivalent position to cities like Dubai and Guangzhou (Şaul & Pelican 2014). The merchants who commute between Turkey and Africa are influential in the spread of knowledge about the country, in its becoming considered as a production center and growth into a seat of attraction. (Şaul 2013).

In his fieldwork on sub-Saharan African migration, Şaul investigates the decision process of the migrants coming to Turkey and their knowledge levels of the country before coming. Most of the migrants indicate that they had an idea about Turkey before they left home. They state that the migration decision is a very important decision affecting their lives, debated among family members, close friends, and business associates whose opinions and support play a role in the process. Şaul (2014, p. 96) confirms that "the migrants are a heterogeneous set, not only in ethnic, religious, gender, and national terms, but also in levels of education, and even such factors as class standing." Some migrants come here with already established opportunities and connections. Some must start from scratch.

Previous field studies have found that migrants worked in low-skilled jobs, especially during the first period after their arrival, which they called '*çabuk*' or '*çabuk çabuk*'.¹⁴ Working in textile production, bag and shoe workshops, waste collection, office cleaning, removals, construction, and various types of small workshops are the most mentioned informal jobs. Wages can be paid daily, weekly, or monthly. Sometimes the employer

¹⁴ '*Çabuk*' means 'quick' and 'hurry up' in Turkish, with the repeated '*Çabuk çabuk*' used for emphasis; the migrants receive this instruction from their supervisors.

fails to pay the worker the full amount owed or even does not pay at all (Mardesic 2014, Şaul 2014, 2013).

Şaul (2013) finds that African migrants do not set their hearts on these low-wage jobs, do not have the intention of gaining mastery, and that they work because they consider these jobs as temporary. There are also more exceptional jobs, such as clerking in shops making sales to African merchants where African people can use their language skills, or jobs such as taking part in commercials and movies or playing football. Among the African migrants, there is only a small number of professionals working with a work permit. They usually work as English teachers in colleges and private schools. In addition, there are Africans working with work permits in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or hospitals and clinics that try to attract international customers.

Şaul (2013) underscores that the hope of most migrants is self-employment. In some cases, the migrant prefers an independent source of income that they can earn on their own, even if they can get a better salary in a paid job. The most visible group in the field of self-employment consists of Senegalese street vendors. Many Senegalese start this business with their small capital as soon as they arrive in Istanbul and, depending on the season, sell products such as watches, belts, and wallets in different parts of the city.

One of the most important kinds of self-employment for African migrants is to provide guidance and mediation to merchants from Africa. Şaul finds that after spending a period of time in Istanbul and gaining experience—accumulating a certain social and cultural capital—African migrants start or are aiming to start this kind of guidance and mediation work (2013). Merchants from Africa who come here to buy goods work with a local African guide. The guide welcomes the future client at the airport, places him/her in the hotel and provides him/her with service in the process of supplying and shipping the products. The success of a guide depends on improving their social circle both in the local labor market and among the merchants. The guides receive a fee from the merchants for their services, but their main earnings are commissions collected from the stores and wholesalers where the merchant conducts purchases—as seen in the fortuitous case of Florian (above, Section 4.1.2). Gaining more clients means more shopping and higher commissions, giving the job an entrepreneurial edge.

According to Şaul (2014), the guides charge additional commissions per kilogram delivered by the clients from the freight companies. The second step for the guides with a good circle of customers is to become partners with a freight company. Based on his 2010-11 field survey, Şaul estimates that there are several hundred large and small freight companies delivering goods to Africa, some of which belong to African migrants, and that this is a business area that is open to growth. Accordingly, African migrants first entered the cargo business as partners with the Turkish people and then began to open their own companies. Since the number of Congolese freight companies increased from none in those years to at least six today, it can be estimated that Şaul's figures have multiplied similarly, more or less. These officially-established freight companies are, at the same time, exporters, and at the end of each year receive a tax refund on the invoiced value of goods exported. Nigerians lead the cargo business.

Another sector where African migrants stand out as entrepreneurs is in restaurant and bar management. There are also small businesses, such as barbershops, groceries, and tailors. Some of these are licensed, while others operate illegally. The latter are mostly situated discreetly, in the basements or top floors of buildings, holding on to their business as old customers bring new ones. Nigerians are also prominent in this area.

In his analysis of Nigerian entrepreneurship in Istanbul, Baird argues that newly transformed commercial spaces offering small-scale, informal trading opportunities attract entrepreneurs to Istanbul. He explores how migrants are shaped and shape by diverse economic contexts in the city. Nigerian migrants motivate positive economic change through their entrepreneurial activities in a context of structural constraints of a limited legal framework and ethno-racial "distinction" (Baird 2015). Baird focuses on time. He explores how migrants use time as a resource that enables opportunities for entrepreneurial advancement; how migrants start their own businesses based on their experiences and ties built up over time; and how collective experiences, new skills, and knowledge accumulated over time are passed on to newcomers and reshape their opportunity structure. Finally, prolonged stays in Istanbul improve the conditions for migration and immigrant entrepreneurship and lead to upward socio-economic mobility for the migrants.

5.2 FINDINGS

5.2.1 *Çabuk* Jobs: Low-paid Work

The working conditions of the Congolese living in Istanbul are what defines whether or not they will stay in the city. The situation of those who have come with the intention to go to western Europe, through Turkey and Greece, depends on whether or not they have enough money to pay for the crossing. Even if they do have the money for this, luck comes into play as an important factor. There are those who try to cross over but are caught and so have to stay put in Turkey for an indefinite amount of time. They run out of money, so they have to begin to think about working. Some are able to pass through this period without having to work with the support of their relatives in the DRC and Europe. This group is mostly made up of women.

Even though the goal is to leave, there are those that need to find the means to cover the costs of the crossing. There are equally those who are expected to support their families in the DRC when they step foot outside of the country. Thus, they look for informal, low-skilled jobs where the learning period is short and the labor high—the *çabuk* or *çabuk çabuk* jobs, which they regard as temporary. Employers are aware of all this, which creates reciprocal disloyalty. The bosses give poor employment conditions and the workers offer no commitment. The Congolese are usually paid weekly or monthly at the jobs they work. Migrants prefer weekly payments. This way, they minimize the risks of not getting paid or being paid less than what was agreed upon. Certain workshops do not have a steady flow of labor and the employer may ask the workers not to come in certain weeks. This creates interruptions in the flow of income of the migrant.

The Congolese living in different countries are in touch with one another. This allows for the communication of conditions among themselves, where they actively evaluate and compare their circumstances and opportunities. This interaction influences migration decision mechanisms. They have information regarding the living conditions before they arrive in Turkey. However, the person with whom the migrant is in contact with is usually someone who will benefit from the migrant's arrival at Istanbul. The new arrival will be a source of income for the contact person—staying in their household and/or functioning

as a point of contact for the crossing to Greece—so there is a tendency for them to embellish the living conditions. This creates disappointment. Migrants come to Turkey and see that the expenses are high, the working conditions difficult, and the pay much lower than expected.

Similarly, of course, migrants in Turkey are also in contact with their relatives and friends living in Greece or western Europe. They are able to receive up-to-date information. For example, if a migrant wants to go to western Europe through Greece but finds out that working opportunities in Greece are limited, then it is possible for him/her to delay departure. The migrant will stay in Turkey in order to save up the money that will help survival in Greece and continuation on the journey. Thus, the ICT facilitation operates as a tool within the employment and migration structure according to the motivations of the agents participating in it.

The people who have been interviewed for this dissertation usually had negative comments regarding *çabuk* jobs, but there are some who compared them to the lack of employment in the DRC and thus were still happy. At least they were able to find a form of employment, however bad it was. The fact that those who did not have any legal paperwork could also find employment was received positively. In this sense, the informal structural makeup becomes a positive characteristic.

Joseph has been living in Istanbul for seven years. He works in commerce but recommends newcomers to take *çabuk* jobs upon arrival. He says that the money earned in *çabuk* jobs is no less than the money earned by someone who has just arrived in Paris:

You cannot work without the proper paperwork in Paris so you work with someone else's. You have to give the person providing you the papers with a commission each month. At least here in Istanbul, whatever you earn is yours. The expenses here are fewer than in France so in that sense, you can also save up money (JOSEPH, oral interview).

Pablo, who has been in Istanbul for two years, also states that *çabuk* jobs create a basis for the new life in Turkey and that every Congolese should go through this process. Pablo worked *çabuk* jobs for ten months: “It is difficult to work in Europe without the paperwork permitting you to do so, but here you can start with *çabuk* jobs as soon as you

arrive. You can send your family in the Congo 50 dollars within the first week” (PABLO, oral interview).

Çabuk jobs can be found through the recommendation of other Congolese living in the same quarters, which is the reason why there is a concentration of Congolese people in certain regions and lines of work. This research has determined that there is a concentration of Congolese workers in the printing houses in the neighborhood of Topkapı, for example, and the textile factories and workshops in Sultangazi and Esenyurt. As of 2019, according to the difficulty of the job, *çabuk* jobs bring in 1000 to 1500 Turkish liras a month. The average income is something around 300 Turkish liras (TL) a week, or 1200 TL a month. However, the Congolese evaluate their incomes according to the American dollar (USD) and compare them to the incomes in Europe. Due to the depreciation of the Turkish lira against hard currencies over the last five years, the income received in *çabuk* jobs are no longer satisfactory. At the time of writing, the weekly 300 TL equates to around 50 USD, thus to an (insecure) monthly salary of some 200 USD. As a result, jobs such as trade guiding and order and delivery work, where the income is received in dollars, have gained in value.

The respondents have voiced complaints regarding the long hours, the hard labor and the low incomes of *çabuk* jobs. Marcus believes that *çabuk* jobs are no different from slavery. “This is not what I am looking for,” he declares (MARCUS, oral interview). Respondents have also pointed out that working in these *çabuk* jobs for long periods can lead to serious health problems, including hernias, hemorrhoids, and impotence in men. Such comments are frequently repeated among respondents. In addition to the jobs themselves being difficult and tiring with stressful working conditions, the Congolese do not value them for long if at all and may see themselves more as businesspeople. There are some who decide that they cannot do the job after a single day of work and quit. Fabrice has been in Istanbul for three months. He says, in a self-assured manner, “You cannot find Congolese people working in *çabuk* jobs for years and years here” (FABRICE, oral interview).

According to Fabrice, Congolese people work in *çabuk* jobs for a certain period of time and then take their savings and go to Greece or move on to jobs in the trade industry. His claim is corroborated in the findings of the research conducted here. Other than the low

income rates, there are other psychological and cultural reasons for why the Congolese do not like working in *çabuk* jobs. Yannick states that there are a lot of Congolese working *çabuk* jobs but that they do not prefer this: “The Congolese like being clean, looking presentable and respectable” (YANNICK, oral interview).

Yannick states that he used to live a good life in the Congo. He had a house on a parcel of land and a brand new Mercedes. He says that he has left all those things behind in order to come here. Thus, he believes that working in *çabuk* jobs is not for him. Moreover, according to Fabrice, *çabuk* jobs are not for the Congolese because they are not used to working under the supervision of another. They are forced to use their phones in secret when they are in the bathroom. When they receive a phone call or speak to someone around them, their supervisor gets angry. Even if the supervisor does not see or hear them, there are those who report back to him. Fabrice states that the trade-guide job is comfortable, that they eat and drink with clients. He says they do not like being under the management of someone else and prefer being free. Some Congolese hide the fact they do *çabuk* jobs because they believe it is beneath them and it would hurt their dignity if people knew. Being successful abroad is identified as being a businessman/woman. Those working in *çabuk* jobs thus see this as a transition period until they realize their dreams of owning their own businesses.

Those working *çabuk* jobs have limited time for a social life. After long working hours, they only have time to see the people with whom they are living. Thus, weekend getaways and Sunday church are opportunities for newcomers to expand their social environments. Through socialization, newcomers learn the details about life in Istanbul, including other economic possibilities in the city, like becoming a trade guide and doing order and delivery work. They come to believe that once they meet the required conditions, they will be able to transition to these jobs, where they will earn better incomes that will, in turn, pave the way for their dreams.

5.2.2 *Müşteri* Jobs: Trade Guides and Commissioners

Remy has been in Istanbul for 15 years and is one of the prominent members of the Congolese community. He states it was at the beginning of the 2000s, when the numbers of Congolese migrants began to increase, that *müşteri*¹⁵ jobs started. The Congolese living in Europe coming to visit their relatives are encouraged to do shopping. Those who learn that there are nice clothes for good prices tell others and the number of people coming to shop increases. Remy points out that this line of business was able to take off because the Congolese care about their appearances and attach great importance to what they wear.

Yves has been living in Istanbul for 22 years and is one of the oldest members of the Congolese community in Istanbul. He reiterates the point that the Congolese in Europe became aware of the clothing opportunities in Turkey due to those living here, underscoring that this is the main motivation for them to visit Turkey. However, the trade-guide job was started by those coming from Africa, and the Congolese learnt the job from the Senegalese. In the past, there were a lot of store owners coming from the Congo, and they would purchase quite a lot of products. There are also store owners among those coming from Europe, although most of them conduct sales from their homes. There are others who come to shop for themselves, their families, and friends. Yves compares the time when he had first arrived to today and states that the adaptation period today is easier than it used to be. “Newcomers find an already-established environment when they arrive,” he explains. “They can immediately canalize themselves to *müşteri* jobs or order and delivery work” (YVES, oral interview). As Yves has pointed out, the reason why newcomers are able to easily adapt to Istanbul is that there already is a settled Congolese community and a common system of experiences. However, another reason is the advantages and job opportunities provided by ICTs that enable people to be well-informed and connected.

Müşteri jobs entail the provision of guidance to those who have come to Turkey to purchase products. They involve self-employment and also an entrepreneurial aspect. There are no written rules regarding *müşteri* jobs, yet these have become institutionalized

¹⁵ Congolese migrants refer to trade guide work as ‘*müşteri*’, which means ‘client’ or ‘customer’ in Turkish.

within the Congolese community over time, as the older and experienced practitioners have transferred their knowledge to the newcomers. Stores and wholesalers are part of the system. Despite the fact that Fabrice's arrival to Istanbul can be considered relatively new and that he works in a textile workshop, he proves to be a rich source in understanding how well-established the *müşteri* jobs are and how knowledge is transferred from the older generation to the new. Even though he does not do this job, he has knowledge of many details and aspects of the business.

According to Fabrice, those who do *müşteri* jobs are essentially providing guidance to clients coming from Europe or the Congo regarding the products they want to purchase. One job lasts for three-to-four days, for which the client pays 100 dollars. Also, since the guide is bringing in clients, the store owners give him *sakal*.¹⁶ When the guide enters the store with a client, the first thing he should ask the owner or manager is whether or not there is *sakal*. This way, the vendor will include the *sakal* fee as commission when pricing. During the bargaining for the goods, the guide should stay neutral and not take sides with the client, although the guide can provide direction, facilitating the process so that the client makes the purchase. Once the shopping is completed and the deal done, the store-owner writes down the name of the guide and details of the client's purchase. Once the client leaves, the guide goes to the stores and takes his cut. Those who do *müşteri* jobs also go to the hotels of the clients and place the products in suitcases. Afterwards, they accompany them to the airport and stay with them until check-in. Those who are doing this job need to know a bit of Turkish. Apparently, the Turkish store-owners are honest and provide the guide with their cut of the deal without a problem.

Fabrice learnt about these details through friends as he too wanted to get into the business. He hoped to ask for the time off at the workshop if he could find a client. He thinks that even though the money for the days he does not work will be cut, it will not be too big of a problem. Among the respondents, those who found clients would indeed take time off from their workshop jobs in this manner, and even if it meant there was a risk of losing that job. In this manner, by increasing the number of clients, they could gradually switch over to full-time *müşteri* work. Since most respondents state that their ultimate goal was

¹⁶ The commission given by Turkish shopkeepers to Congolese guides is called '*sakal*' or '*çorba*'. '*Sakal*' literally means 'beard', and '*çorba*' means 'soup'.

to become businesspeople, it was through this gradual process that their businesses would grow.

Edouard worked in a variety of factory and workshop jobs for a year before going into *müşteri* jobs. He learnt this job from his elders and the pastor at the church he attends having been called in to help when clients would come. It was thus that he learnt the stores where the Congolese shopped were located, and eventually, he started up on his own: “You don’t get many clients to start with, but when you do have clients, you earn the money you would normally earn in one week in two days,” he explains. Edouard uses his contacts in Kinshasa as well as the social web to do his business. Asked whether he would return to factory or workshop work if the *müşteri* work did not work out, Edouard responds: “I don’t think so. I’m not the type of person who goes back. I try different things. The clothing business, orders from clients. I’m an honest and trustworthy person, and I believe this will make my work go smoothly” (EDOUARD, oral interview).

Joseph states that those going to Europe from Turkey also do these jobs. He has met a lot of people who have come to Turkey with nothing and saved up enough to continue on their journey through this job. He has taught the job to many people who have stayed with him, and many of them are in Paris now, he says.

While *müşteri* jobs are conducted by men in most sub-Saharan African communities, women are also known to be part of this business within the Congolese community. Louise does both *müşteri* jobs and order and delivery work.¹⁷ She says that she puts the products she buys in a small suitcase with wheels and hauls it around the city. Actually, another Congolese female guide takes her two-year-old child in a stroller along with her when she is taking her client around. When guides require help, they bring along newcomers who are eager to learn the job. Thus, the new guide candidate learns about the stores, the types of products sold in each area, and how to receive a commission. The newcomer takes very little money from the guide, however.

Eric came to Istanbul four years ago, with the hope of going on to Europe. At that time, the smugglers were asking for 1200 euros to cross over to Greece. Eric did not have that

¹⁷ Order and delivery work: see below (Section 5.2.3).

kind of money, so he had to stay put and start working in order to save up for the crossing. He found a job as a sales clerk in a store that made sales to the Congolese in the central district of Laleli. This job is relatively easier and more profitable than *çabuk* jobs. Furthermore, since he is already part of the industry, it provides a good opportunity to move into trade. Once Eric started to earn money and saw the trade opportunities in Istanbul, he decided to stay and see what he could do. While working in the store, he extended his contact network through the Congolese clients who came to shop there. After working in the store for a year, he started *müşteri* jobs and order and delivery work. The owner of the store he worked at also helped him out by providing his number to those who needed a guide. When a client was satisfied with his guide work, he provided details to his own connections. Thus, Eric's clients increased and he was able to build his business.

Müşteri jobs and other trade-related activities are interrelated and are approached by the people doing them through an entrepreneurial perspective. Louise has been living in Istanbul for 14 years and has undertaken *müşteri* work as well as other trade-related activities. Like most other respondents, Louise voices her desire to be free and her own boss. According to Louise, being a guide is being one's own boss: "You don't have to wake up at dawn and start working. You decide on the time you'll start. You can lead the way. You can take the client to places where you'll get a good *sakal*. You can rest on the days you do not have clients" (LOUISE, oral interview).

Guides use their individual human and social capital in order to increase the number of clients that they have as well as the amount of commission they receive. This provides a level of control to *müşteri* jobs. If the guide is able to convince the client, then he or she is able to send back certain products under his or her name. The client sells these products for the guide and sends them back the money. In this manner, the guide is able to reach places and people they would not otherwise be able to in order to conduct trade. Furthermore, when a guide finds nice products at an affordable price, they buy it to later sell them to their clients. *Müşteri* jobs go hand-in-hand with commerce.

Another trade opportunity that the guides come across is related to the orders placed by clients. Once the client has a trustworthy guide, they no longer have to come to Istanbul to

conduct purchases and can place orders from afar. In this manner, they can avoid transportation and accommodation costs. When the guide calculates the cost, they include their profit margin. As a result, they are now a businessman or businesswoman. In any case, it is the same people who are conducting a variety of trade-related activities such as *müşteri* jobs, order and delivery work and freight brokerage. In the following sections, before going into the detail of trade-related activities, the commercial motivations behind the respondents' coming to Turkey and their family experiences will be examined.

5.2.3 Commercial Motivations

Cultural ideas, traditions, and habits all have an influence on the Congolese person's decision to migrate and to live and work in Turkey. As described in Chapter Three, the small trade and commission economy born as a result of the economic crisis and unemployment in the Congo, has become a part of Congolese culture. Congolese migrants carry this culture with them wherever they go. Trade is not only perceived as a way of survival but also as a gateway to better conditions and accomplish one's dreams.

At least one family member of most of the respondents was engaged in trade, either in the DRC or abroad. While some simply cook and sell food at their doorsteps, others conduct trade through import-export arrangements. Most respondents explained that their mothers engaged in trade and that is how they were able to afford school fees and thus complete their education.

Chris' mother sold bread and donuts on their doorstep and in neighborhood markets. Patrick's mother would kill animals and prepare the flesh to sell as raw meat at the markets. Franck's mother managed a huge beverage warehouse. She bought beverages in bulk and then sold them to restaurants, bars and other places. Naomi's mother sold the shoes her brothers would send from Italy. Theo's mother owns a clothing store in Kinshasa. The clothing, bags, and shoes she sells in her store are imported from China and Dubai.

Jonathan's mother buys clothing, shoes, and bags from Congo-Brazaville and sells them in Kinshasa. Sometimes she brings in orders from China and Dubai. She sells these

products either at markets or from her doorstep. Recently, she has been able to import products from Turkey thanks to Jonathan. Jonathan's uncles are engaged in trade too. His wife stays in Kinshasa with their two children, where she is also engaged in small-time trade, selling beverages in front of their doorstep. In the future, she also hopes to sell the clothing Jonathan will send from Turkey.

Edouard's mother separated from his father when he was still a child. His mother tried to trade in Kinshasa but was not successful. As a result, she went to Angola to try out other things and discover new horizons. For many years, she managed a restaurant that sold alcohol. Edouard stayed in Kinshasa with his aunt until he finished high school. He was able to get by with the money his mother would send from Angola.

Edouard's mother's departure to Angola as a hope to try out different things and discover new horizons appears as a common pattern. It is part of the search for a better life. Trade and entrepreneurship are major aspects of this search. In this context, Turkey is not at all just a place of passage to Europe for the Congolese, for it also holds potential possibilities for engaging in trade. Thus, it becomes a reasonable destination to consider. A considerable number of respondents state that they have come to Turkey with ideas related to trade.

Before moving to Istanbul five years ago, Franck had a clothing store in Kinshasa. He received his first information about Turkey through traders coming from the DRC to Istanbul. He was interested by the fact that everyone was saying that the quality of the clothing and accessories coming from Turkey was quite good. He examined the products and was impressed. This was why he wanted to come to Istanbul and experience the industry himself. He first arrived with 8000 dollars. He stayed for a week, purchased products, and returned. Three months later, he came to stay for a whole month and conduct a more thorough research of the business. Every three-to-four months, he would come and stay for a month. He realized he could do business here and decided to move permanently. Afterwards, Franck established the first official cargo company among the Congolese in Istanbul. He is still in business today.

Rebecca has been living in Istanbul for five years. Before moving here, she came to Turkey to research trade opportunities. She stayed for 45 days on her first trip and was

impressed to see that the clothes and accessories were of high quality and an affordable price. She returned to the Congo with three suitcases and hand baggage filled with goods, which she was immediately able to sell. She displayed the items in her home. She remembers the people who came by to check them out remarking that they were “excellent.” At that moment, she decided to quit her job and move to Turkey in order to conduct trade by sending clothes to the DRC.

Judith has been in Istanbul for two years. Before moving here, she was thinking about something new to do with her life. She never thought about crossing over to Greece. Her cousin, who was already living in Istanbul, told her that there were job and trade opportunities in Istanbul, and she decided to move. Judith states that she is someone who can easily adapt to new situations and environments. She says about her migration journey: “You have to have an open mind; you have to be brave” (JUDITH, oral interview). Judith works in a textile factory at the moment. At the same time, she conducts trade through orders she receives from Europe, North America and the Congo. She believes she is learning the trade and would like to continue on this path.

Timothe has been living in Istanbul for one-and-a-half years. He underlines the fact that so many people wanting to buy clothes from Turkey creates job opportunities for them. He describes the reason as to why he came to Istanbul:

They told us there was a lot of clothing in Istanbul. People from all over the world come here to buy clothes. You can purchase Dsquared jeans that are normally worth 500 dollars for 30-to-50 dollars. We call Turkey boulangerie.¹⁸ Just like a boulangerie makes bread, Turkey makes clothes. Everyone comes here to buy clothes (TIMOTHE, oral interview).

Yannick, who has been in Turkey for the last three years, used to own a clothing store in Kinshasa. He learnt about trade from his mother, who would buy semolina, dry salted fish, and palm oil in bulk and sell them in retail. Yannick began his business life by selling slippers and shoes with his mother. At one point, he opened the branch of an insurance company. Following that experience, he went to the port town of Matadi located in the Bas-Congo region, where he bought and sold second-hand cars that his friends would send from Europe. After a while, this work stopped being lucrative, so he stopped and

¹⁸ ‘Boulangerie’: French for ‘bakery’.

opened a clothing store. He bought the clothes he sold from Congo-Brazzaville. When he came to Turkey, his idea was to stay and send clothes to his wife so that she could sell them in Kinshasa. Eventually, when the job was settled, he had aimed to go back and forth between Kinshasa and Istanbul and make his business grow, but his wife did not want to stay in Kinshasa, and nine months later, she also moved to Istanbul. Now, his brother is managing the store. Yannick sends products to the brother, who takes his share and sends the remainder to Istanbul via money transfer. He says that he is satisfied with his brother's performance and that the business is going well. The only thing he complains about is the high costs of shipment. At the moment, Yannick is searching for investment opportunities that can create partnerships between Turkey and the Congo. He has an entrepreneurial project to produce home textile products in the DRC.

Other respondents have also underlined the fact that one of the factors that affected their decision to come to Istanbul was that Turkey was a business country. They compare Istanbul to other trade centers in the region and around the world. They state that while Turkish products are more expensive than those in Dubai and China, for example, they are of better quality. In this respect, it could be said that trade and migration to Turkey are similar and the continuation of trade and migration to Dubai and China. Boris, who has been in Turkey for two years, categorizes those who come to Turkey for trade as commercial migrants. He believes these migrants come from and are continuing the tradition of going to Congo-Brazzaville and Angola for business and trade. "The Congolese like to search and discover," he says (BORIS, oral interview).

Boris' opinion with regards to the Congolese's desire to discover is in line with earlier examples of Edouard's mother's desire to open up to new horizons and Judith's comment on needing to have an open mind and to be courageous. Going, searching, trying, embarking on adventure are all concepts with cultural echoes for the Congolese. In practice, these concepts find body through migration and trade. Also of note is the example of parents and the heritage of trade. Respondents usually continue the commercial ventures they see in their families; they start in the DRC and continue in the places they migrate. Then, trade and entrepreneurship become not only means to stay alive but extend to ways of life and also to tools with which to attain desires and

aspirations; a concrete action of hope. Leonard states that he will explain how someone who has nothing can become rich:

If you are serious and concentrate on your job, even if it is selling peanuts, you will make money. If you save up and are on the path of God, then you will be compensated. You can buy peanuts with that money too. And this is how you grow. After the peanut business, you can move on to other jobs, and make partnerships (LEONARD, oral interview).

Respondents also share ups and downs, impossibilities and heartbreaks during their trade and entrepreneurial journeys—but their stories always end with new beginnings, new adventures, and future projects. Remi lived in Angola for ten years before coming to Turkey. He states that it is very difficult to find a Congolese person working in a salaried job in Angola. While there are some material reasons for this, it is mainly a choice: “Congolese people like business; they prefer selling, engaging in trade rather than staying in one place and receiving a steady salary” (REMI, oral interview).

The Congolese envision their modest beginnings in trade and entrepreneurship will reach spectacular results. As for going abroad, it is seen as a stepping stone in the struggle for a better life. Arnaud has been engaged in trade for the last 30 years. He states that going abroad is part of the entrepreneurial culture:

We Congolese don't believe that our country is a good place. Actually, there is life there, but we find the quality of life low and believe we have to get out of there and go to Europe. As soon as we have a little money from trade-related activities, we think that continuing trade in the Congo is putting that money to risk. That's why we think it's best to go to Europe with the money (ARNAUD, oral interview).

Arnaud's words are a good example of how migration itself is seen as an investment. Respondents who have engaged in trade in Congo and then sold their stores and personal belongings in order to go abroad have done this consciously, as part of their entrepreneurial decision-making plans.

5.2.4 Trade-related Activities and Order and Delivery Work

Commonly, the first avenue respondents have taken in order to begin trade in Turkey is to buy clothes with the money they have saved up and to send it to their relatives to sell. Some are successful in this venture, while others have difficulty getting back the money

for the clothes. Migrants utilize their social networks and their family relations for this business. Solidarity and trust, both important parts of social capital theory, are reasons why the circumstances of certain migrants can rapidly ameliorate. However, when situations in which trust is exploited occur, then the labor spent on accumulated material capital can disappear in a flash.

Étienne has been living in Istanbul for six years. The first year he was here, he tried to conduct trade by sending products to Kinshasa. He worked in a textile workshop for four months where he saved 500 dollars with which he bought clothes, bags, and shoes. He sent all of these goods to a friend so he would sell them. His friend sold the products but did not send any money back to Étienne. Thus, four months of Étienne's labor went to waste. According to Étienne, his friend believed that he was now living under good economic conditions as he was in Turkey. His friend had no idea about the difficult conditions under which Étienne had worked in order to save that money.

Rebecca has never thought about conducting trade by going back and forth between Turkey and the Congo. Airline tickets are expensive, which means that most of the money saved up goes on buying that ticket. This is why she decided to settle in Turkey, send products to the Congo, and conduct her trade in this manner. Rebecca has been deceived many times and experienced difficulties in retrieving the money for the products she sent back. Once, she sent a 32-kg suitcase full of clothes to Kinshasa. Her aim was for the products to be sold in a large workplace where her friend worked. However, her friend told her that she was unable to collect the money for the clothes she had lent to people, so she could not send her any money. Despite the many deceptions Rebecca faced, she did not give up; she just stopped working with the people who caused her to suffer a loss. She is now trading with some new contacts she has made. Rebecca has always dreamed of becoming a successful businesswoman. Anyone who is serious about their work can become successful in Istanbul, she says.

Along with her trade-related activities, Rebecca also works as a salaried employee in a Turkish restaurant in the central neighborhood of Beyazıt. She is very satisfied with this job and the salary, where she has been working for three years. She works six hours a day and has the weekends off. Since the restaurant is in the commercial district, she gets off

at four in the afternoon and still has time to conduct her other trade-related activities. After work and on Saturdays, she wanders around the Grand Bazaar and the Laleli region in order to find products she can buy and send to the Congo, or else she procures the products for an order she receives from abroad. Turkish vendors know her and are polite towards her. They give her a discount whenever she buys in bulk:

I wander around after work. I look at the products. I buy certain things. For example, they sell wallets for 15 liras, but they sell it to me for 10. So I buy 10 of them and bring them home. They sell these wallets for 10 dollars in Kinshasa. If they are sold at a company, this can go for up to 20 dollars even. If they ask for a discount, then you say 15 dollars. You can sell these small products for cash; it is not a problem to get the money back (REBECCA, oral interview).

Rebecca gives these products to people who have come from Kinshasa to make purchases and who will return. They put them in their suitcases and deliver them to her sister, who sells the wallets from her home.

My sister gives the wallets to her daughters who, in turn, show them to their friends. Their friends buy the wallets. They show them around in their circles. They say things like 'Look! These are nice wallets coming from Turkey. They're high-quality Gucci and Louis Vuitton!' This information travels from ear to ear and the products are quickly sold. Trade is very important for the Congolese in Istanbul. For example, if I get 200 or 250 dollars from the wallets, I also send belts and in one go, I earn the same amount as a month's salary. I receive the money within a week. If I shop four Saturdays in a row, that makes a lot of money. If they make a sale of 400 dollars, I tell them to keep half and send me the other half. My sister also looks after my daughter. My sister is a widow. She has three children, and with my daughter, that makes four. I provide for them. 50 or 100 dollars coming from outside is very important for the Congolese (REBECCA, oral interview).

Rebecca also has acquaintances and cousins living in Germany, the UK, Canada, and France. When there are clothing items that they like, they send a photo to Rebecca via WhatsApp and ask her to research the items for them, "Can you find these for us or are there similar designs?" is what they ask her. Rebecca sends them the photographs of the items she finds. She gives them a price by adding her share on it. If the clients find the prices affordable, they put in an order. They send money via money transfer systems such as Western Union or MoneyGram. Rebecca procures the orders and sends them via post or shipment. She explains how easy the process is through an example:

I have a friend who got married two weeks ago. He asked for a groom's suit for the wedding. He sent photos of the type of thing he wanted. I looked around and found something for him. I took photos and sent them to him. He really liked it. He told me to buy it. He sent the money, and I purchased the suit (REBECCA, oral interview).

Rebecca emphasizes the ease of the process using ICTs. Indeed, Congolese people who have been in Istanbul for a longer period of time indicate that most of these job opportunities appeared due to the spread of smartphones and applications such as WhatsApp and Facebook.

Rebecca's example demonstrates how even those working in salaried jobs want to conduct trade-related activities in parallel. Those who have monetary savings buy clothing and other items in order to send them to people they trust so that they can sell them in their names. However, those who do not have monetary savings use ICTs and money transfer systems in order to receive orders from transnational social networks, which they procure and send via shipments. In this manner, they are able to engage in trade.

Chris is another person who is trying to continue trade-related activities while at the same time working in a salaried job. He has been in Istanbul for six months and plans on going to France afterwards. He is working in a textile workshop in the neighborhood of Sultangazi and earns 1100 Turkish liras a month. Lunch is provided by the workplace. The workers there do not receive extra money when they do overtime, but nor do they have cuts from their weekly salaries when they do not come in. Chris started trade a while back by sending products to his brother in Kinshasa. He started to get involved in this business after work on Saturdays and Sundays. Sometimes, he does not go into work one day during the week and goes to buy and look at products. He has sent products to his brother in Kinshasa three times in two months in this manner. His brother is a chauffeur for a company in Kinshasa. The products are for his family, and he sells to people he is connected with.

Chris received 200 dollars from the first sale, with which he bought three suits. He received 300 dollars for the second order, with which he bought women's shoes and bags. For the last order, he was sent 600 dollars, and with that he bought men's leather shoes, watches, and t-shirts. Chris adds 5-10 dollars to each item for his profit. The shipment reaches Kinshasa in four or five days. The shipment payment can be made in Istanbul when the items are sent or in Kinshasa when they are received. Chris once sent a client in Switzerland two bags worth 40 dollars. He found out from a friend who has been living

here for longer how to procure the items and where to make the shipment from. Chris says that his plan to go to France is on hold at the moment. “Life is everywhere,” he explains (CHRIS, oral interview). He would like to open up a store in Kinshasa in the future. He tried in the past but he was not successful. Otherwise, he also has the dream of owning a small enterprise.

The amount of money sent by Chris’ brother has increased each time, as well as the number of items requested. This demonstrates that the system is profitable. The establishment of a trust mechanism between the brothers has also allowed the business to grow. Moreover, the two-bag order from Switzerland also demonstrates that the likes of Chris play a unique role in satisfying the desires of others by procuring various small orders. Previous research on the foreign trade conducted by African migrants through Turkey has been interested in the volume of that trade (Baird 2015, Saul 2013). In that research, the bulk trade conducted by Nigerians stood out. While it has been noted that in the Nigerian freight companies are filled with large parcels, the Congolese freight companies contain a variety of parcel sizes. A complex system where people can acquire what they desire, even if it is only two bags, is established as a result of the possibilities presented by ICTs, which the Congolese utilize to develop global social networks.

Louise is 47 years-old and has been in Istanbul for 14 years. When she came to Turkey, her aim was to cross over to Europe. However, the few attempts she had to cross over were unsuccessful, and she decided to stay in Istanbul. She met her husband, also one of the oldest members of the Congolese community in Istanbul. In the first period, Louise worked in salaried jobs, but afterwards, she began doing trade-related activities, such as sending goods abroad, working as a trade guide, and purchasing orders. During the interview conducted with Louise, there were many big and small packages laying in the corner of her living room. These are products that she will be selling, she explains, as well as other orders from clients. As Louise has been in Istanbul for many years, she is able to provide comparative information regarding how trade has changed with the introduction of smartphones. She states everything has become easier with the Internet.

Louise has been sending products such as clothes, shoes, and bags to her sister and her contacts in Europe for a long time and has developed trustworthy contacts. In fact, she

has never had problems receiving the money from her sales. In the past, she would send products to her contacts in Europe and wait for them to sell the goods. She did not know which would be popular and sell quickly over there, so the process was rather slow. It took time for products to sell and for the money to come to her. Now, she sends photographs of the products via WhatsApp, and people tell her which products to buy. Sometimes, her collaborators also send her photographs of new products which are in fashion and make requests for her to send them similar items. The process has become much more dynamic. Louise states that the importance of Facebook and WhatsApp has increased drastically in the past five years and these have become an inseparable part of the trade now.

Other than the products she sends over to be sold in her name, she also procures orders for clients. She has clients all over the world. She wanders around and checks out the products and then sends photographs of the variety on offer to her clients via WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. Clients pick out the products that they want from the photographs. Sometimes the clients send her photographs as well showing the types of models that they are searching for. Money for the orders coming from Europe is transferred via online money transfer systems, from the Congo it is sent through Congolese freight companies, which also conduct money transfers. Depending on the country of destination, Louise sends the orders in a variety of ways. There are problems with regards to sending copied brand-name products to the EU, as these tend to get held up at customs. This is why she sends products to EU countries through a Congolese cargo company based in Istanbul that is able to send the products without any problems. There are no problems at the Canada, US, UK, or Ireland customs. For these countries, she sends the order by normal post.

When Louise does not have orders coming in, she still wanders in commercial districts to conduct research and buy products under her name. She buys the models that she likes. After a purchase, she takes photographs of the items and shares them on Facebook. Her clients and friends that follow her can see the photographs and comment under the models that they like. They ask for the price and sizes available and order the items that they like. Louise sends the photographs of these items to non-Facebook users via WhatsApp. Louise explains this sales method, laughing:

I even use Facebook live to conduct sales now! I start the live feed, and people start asking me about the clothes I am wearing. I walk around the store and buy what I like. If they are sold in series, then I buy in series. I take one for myself and sell the others. I use myself as a model as well (LOUISE, oral interview).

An inspection of Louise's personal Facebook page reveals that it was opened in January 2010. She did not share a lot in the first years. Louise put photographs of products for the first time in November 2013. That was when she began using Facebook commercially. The first photograph she shared was of 16 pairs of Fendi and Gucci brand of women's boots, in a shoe store. The interview with Louise was conducted on May 1, 2019, and in the five and a half years since the initial photograph, she had shared 4,664 photographs. There is no obvious shift in the content of what she has shared throughout the years. Accordingly, the 1184 photographs Louise has shared in the last year—May 2018-19—is used as a sample for categorization here.

In the last year, 30.5 percent of the photographs Louise has shared have been of clothing items, shoes, and bags. Most of these were photographs that Louise took in the stores or in her house, with her smartphone. There are also photographs taken by a photographer hired by store owners who send them to clients. Most of the photographs are of copied items from world-famous brands. The items carry these brands' logos and tags.

27.5 percent of the photographs Louise has taken in the past year were taken in the living room of her house, where she herself is modeling the clothing items. The photographs are usually taken in front of her black and silver colored curtains with the Versace logotype or in front of the glass case also located in the living room and right next to the curtains. Louise is seen in a combination of clothes, bags, and shoes. Her hair is meticulously coiffured, her makeup is applied, and she has chosen jewelry to go with the clothing, including accessories such as glasses and head scarves that complete the ensemble. The Facebook posts include a group of photographs that include poses from the front, the back, and close-up of the details of the accessories. For each ensemble, she shares between five and twenty photographs. While Louise is modelling the items, as a matter of fact, the items belong to her. In that sense, she is not really a model. While Louise does not define herself as a *sapeuse*, the comments made underneath her photographs regarding how well the clothes are matched together, their fashion style and their brand consciousness suggest that Louise is seen as something of a *sapeuse* or fashionista.

Louise states that she dresses up on Sundays to go to church, when she wears new clothes, new shoes, and a new bag and takes photographs for Facebook. She receives orders from these posts. 13.5 percent of the 1184 photographs Louise has shared over the past year were taken outside her house. The photographs feature Louise by herself, posing in order to show off the clothing items. The photographs may be taken on the street, in a store, at church, or at an event. They are similar to those taken at home and can be evaluated similarly. These also include several different shots highlighting the details and different angles of the clothes and the accessories. While these photographs show what Louise owns as a *mikiliste*, they also function as a catalogue that creates a desire for her clients. Here, the different aspects of the *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman—or rather the *mikiliste*, *sapeuse*/fashionista and businesswoman—fuse together in one integrated whole in the virtual space of Internet sharing for aspiration as a market and facilitated by ICTs.

21.5 percent of the photographs shared by Louise were taken outside of her home and with other people. Other than the order and delivery work Louise does, she is also a trade guide, and these photographs include shots of the days she spends with her clients; at the airport, on the metro, in the hotel lobby, at stores and shopping malls. However, unlike the other photographs, these do not focus on selling the clothing items themselves. Instead, the photographs concentrate on Louise's experience as a guide who has many clients in a commercial center like Istanbul. These photographs aim to increase Louise's visibility as a trade guide in Istanbul by tagging her clients in order to gain new ones, as well as new orders. Other photographs of Louise with people also include images with her friends from her church group and with her husband and friends from weddings.

Outside of the four categories of photographs analyzed above, there is only a small group that include different characteristics (7 percent of the total image number). Thus, over 90 percent of the 1184 photographs Louise has shared on her personal Facebook page over the past year aim to promote her entrepreneurial activities in Istanbul. Louise's identity as *mikiliste*, *sapeuse*/fashionista and businesswoman for the last 14 years in Istanbul becomes effective through smartphones, the Internet and social media. The photographs Louise shares on her personal Facebook page bring together her various identities and create the material that feeds the symbolic value of these identities and the desire they evoke. By negation, the content could be taken to imply the deprivation in Africa in

contrast to the richness of the Worlds. However, the symbolic value on which *mikiliste* and *sapeur* identities are established, in which one has possessions abroad that the Congolese in the Congo cannot attain, is fortified by the spectacle put up on Facebook that undermines the distinction and fulfils its own end, since through this spectacle, the possessions are rendered attainable through orders and deliveries. And in this case, the unattainable West is accessed through Turkey.

Migrants like Louise who have been involved in trade-related activities for a long period of time have an established social network and clientele. For Louise, smartphones, the Internet, and social media help increase the volume of her trade, render her more visible and allow for the job to progress more easily. Louise's commercial ventures rely on her social and human as well as material capital, which are operationalized within the realm of ICTs. Thus, we see how these different forms of capital come together through the individual, enabling the technologies to create remarkable effects in the lives of Congolese migrants who have newly come to Turkey, with limited capital. They allow for the migrants' lives to improve rapidly, just as their development enabled Louise's trading to move faster, become more dynamic, and realize greater profits.

Jonathan has been in Turkey for barely ten days and says that his phone has barely stopped ringing. Everyone has been calling to ask about the country. Despite being a newcomer, Jonathan is already taking in orders for clothes from his country. When asked how he managed to enter the business so rapidly, he explains that he used to act as a middleman in Kinshasa for people who needed a Turkish visa, so he was able to meet businesspeople going back and forth between Turkey and the Congo. Before coming to Turkey, he acquired information regarding life and job opportunities in Istanbul. He knew about *müşteri* jobs, order and delivery work, and commercial centers such as the Grand Bazaar and Aksaray before setting out. As soon as he arrived in Istanbul, he asked one of the Congolese people he was staying with to take him to the Grand Bazaar. By posting the photographs he took that day, he took the first step in his business life.

After settling in, the first photograph Jonathan posted on Facebook was a profile picture of a suit from a store in Laleli. The comments written by his friends under the photograph show that they saw the photograph as a sign of Jonathan's relocation to Istanbul. Thus, a

photograph of clothing on Facebook is seen as a sign of a person's departure from Africa. At the same time, this photograph of a suit shared on Facebook becomes an attainable commodity that can be ordered and delivered. Thus, it serves a dual purpose of trading communication that Jonathon is engaged in the market and the suit is on it. In the same manner, even though Louise does not mention anything about sales, the photographs she shares on Facebook when modelling the new clothes she buys have comments by others indicating a desire to purchase these clothes. The order and delivery services offered by the Congolese living in Turkey find body on social media sites such as Facebook, where the person's clothes become a commodity.

Timothe, who has been living in Istanbul for one and a half years and doing *müşteri* jobs as well as order and delivery work, started doing business via WhatsApp when he first arrived. At that time, he had no savings:

I knew nothing when I came here. I was staying in Kumkapı. I asked around about the work that was available. They didn't help me out. Sometimes the Congolese are not very nice. They don't share with you when they discover an opportunity. When I ran out of money, I asked for money from my mother. When I went to Western Union to collect the money my mother had sent me from Kinshasa, I ran into an old friend from school. We exchanged numbers to see each other at a later date. I tried çabuk jobs but quit soon after. I was very demoralized, and so I called my friend. He took me to Ebuka.¹⁹ He told me not to sit at home. He said there are stores, there are bazaars. He told me to get out and take photographs. We toured around with him. He showed me the stores. I took lots of photographs that day (TIMOTHE, oral interview).

Timothe also presents himself as a *sapeur*. He used to be an actor in Kinshasa, as well as engaged in small-time trade-related activities: "I am an expert on clothing," he claims. When he lived in Kinshasa, he would ask a businessman to buy him clothes when he went to China and Dubai and gave him money for that. Then, he would sell the clothes to people in his circle. When he started taking photographs in Istanbul, he got in touch with his contacts and started to take orders:

I called everyone one by one. I told them that here in Turkey, the clothes are high quality, very nice and cheap. I called everyone and send them messages. I told them that the sports shoes they bought for 100 dollars cost 30 dollars in Turkey. They asked for photographs. They asked about the models they saw on the Internet. I went around the stores and looked for the models they were inquiring about. I send them photographs. If they like them, they ask for the price. I tell them the price. We haggle a little bit. They send me money through Western Union. I do the shopping and packaging. I send it via regular post or cargo shipment depending on the situation.

¹⁹ A restaurant managed by a Nigerian, located in the Kumkapı neighborhood of Istanbul.

The Congolese and the Africans in general have a lot of cargo companies (TIMOTHE, oral interview).

The first order Timothe received one and a half years ago was a small, 50-dollar order from a friend. He called his friend in Kinshasa to tell him that the polo t-shirts he paid 15-20 dollars for were three dollars in Turkey and sent him photographs. The friend then sent him 50 dollars and ordered the t-shirts. His friend was very satisfied when he received his shipment. He advised the people around him to shop with him and they started sending buying from him. Timothe believes that people trusted him since he is a *sapeur* and has good taste in clothing. Most of his orders come from France, Belgium, and Kinshasa. There have also been orders from the US and Canada. The week before the research interview, he had sent a client in the US an order of sports shoes, hats, beanies, jeans, belts, and t-shirts. At the time of the interview, he was working on another order. He had sent photographs of shoes and suits and was awaiting the money from the client. In time, Timothe also acquired clients who came shopping in Istanbul. He began working as a guide for them. Now, he has clients or orders on a weekly basis:

I go out every day; I wander and take photographs. I leave my number with the stores. They send me photographs when there's a new model or a new brand. I send these photographs to my clients. For example, there's a store near the Grand Bazaar that sells the products of Versace. The store owner sends me photographs of the new models through WhatsApp (TIMOTHE, oral interview).

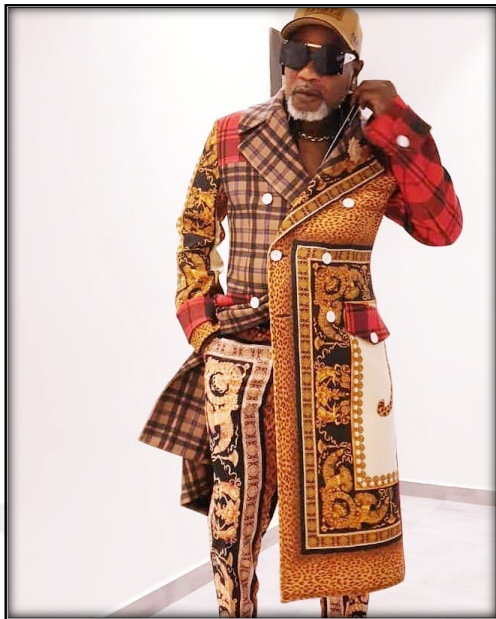
As can be seen through the example of Timothe, migrants who do not have any financial funds and who do not have a social circle in Istanbul are still able to conduct trade due to the possibilities offered by ICTs. In the limited structural forces available, ICTs come to the fore, and migrants such as Timothe can maximize the possibilities. Here, the migrant demonstrates their agency. Another example is Sami. He has been in Istanbul for seven months. He found work as a sales clerk at a clothing store in Laleli that only sells to the Congolese. Along with this job, Sami also does order and delivery work. Every day, he takes photographs at his workplace and sends it to his friends and acquaintances via WhatsApp. He receives messages or phone calls all day long and orders from all around. During the interview conducted for this dissertation, Sami shows a video he received on WhatsApp where a client from the USA shows him that she has received her shipment. Sami states that because he works at the store, he is unable to work as a guide and can only take orders and deliver them. Since he works at a store that sells just to the

Congolese, he has been able to expand his commercial circle. He takes the number of clients who come there and keeps in touch with them via WhatsApp. He sends them photographs of the new models that come into the store and tries to get clients to order them.

Eric, who has been living in Istanbul for four years, utilizes WhatsApp to receive orders. However, in order not to bother his clients by sending them too many photographs he shares photographs in the WhatsApp Status section. The photographs shared in this section stay active for 24 hours, then disappear. Those who see the photographs and are interested send him messages. He sends his clients photographs upon request. For example, if a client asks him to send photographs of suits and bag models, then Eric wanders around and snaps pictures of new models that he sends to his client and gives him a price. Eric is a member of the WhatsApp group of certain stores. When the stores take delivery of new items, they share them in the WhatsApp group. Eric chooses the models he believes his Congolese clients will like and, in turn, shares them on his WhatsApp Status, or else sends them directly to his clients who request direct messages. During the interview, Eric receives some photographs on the WhatsApp group of a bag store, which he shows. He states that, while it takes time to accumulate clients in order to guide work in Turkey, it is easier to conduct order and delivery work via WhatsApp, even for a newcomer. You can start doing that as soon as you arrive, which allows for newcomers to adapt to the market more easily. Those who start doing this job can expand their commercial circle through positive feedback.

During the interview, one of Eric's clients sends him a photograph of the famous Congolese singer Koffi Olomide via WhatsApp. He asks him whether he would be able to find the jacket the singer is wearing in Turkey (Figure 5.1). Eric believes he will be able to find a copy of the jacket, which has been designed by the leading fashion house Versace. He states that he receives these types of messages quite often. His clients send him photographs of international or Congolese stars wearing certain items for Eric to locate a copy.

Figure 5.1: Koffi Olomide wearing a jacket of Versace



Source: Personal Archive

At the heart of the order and delivery work the Congolese do in Istanbul, lies the locating of knock-offs of expensive, high-end fashion-brand clothing items and accessories. Despite the fact that the production, sale and export of these products are illegal, the system turns a blind eye to its production and sale up to a certain point. Migrants who work as guides enable foreigners coming to shop in Istanbul to attain these products, while migrants who conduct order and delivery work play an important part in exporting the products. Pascal, who has been in Istanbul for eight years, states that the Internet has accelerated and facilitated trade:

We have been able to receive orders from all around and deliver clothes all around thanks to the Internet. When a new clothing collection comes out here, we take photos and send them to our clients via WhatsApp. For example, when there is something I like, I send it to all my friends in Kinshasa or in Europe or the UK. If they are interested, they can tell you what they need. They don't even have to come here. It's also profitable for them. For me, Turkey is a country for business (PASCAL, oral interview).

As mentioned by Pascal, due to the possibilities offered by the ICTs and the migrants living here, clients do not have to come all the way to Turkey in order to obtain these clothes. You do not need to be a businessman. Anyone can reach a Congolese migrant in Guangzhou, Dubai, or Istanbul and put in order, even for a single bag or a pair of shoes. Fueled by desire, this process is facilitated and made possible by the Internet. It allows for people to obtain the knock-off copies of the expensive brand-items they covet. This

type of trade is possible without the need for any major investment and still allows for a profit. It allows for an income that will lead to a bigger business, while also enabling mobility. ICTs feed desires while serving as a tool for their attainment.

Alice is 42 years old and has been living in Switzerland for 21 years. She works for the airport ground services but also conducts trade. She has been coming to Istanbul to buy clothes for the past ten years: “If someone finds nice clothing at an affordable price from somewhere, this information spreads quickly among the African community,” she explains. In the last few years, she has been coming once every two months. She brings back three suitcases or so filled with orders as well as items for her own family. An interview was conducted with Alice during one of her trips to Istanbul. She sells the products that she buys to her circle in Zurich. Alice also states that she herself likes to dress well and she models the products that she buys on Facebook:

When I come here, I'm in constant contact with my clients in Switzerland. They ask me what I find here. I send them photographs through WhatsApp or post them on Facebook. They send me money. I'm always on the phone dealing with these matters; my phone never shuts up! Today, the Internet means visibility. It is visibility for many things. There was no visibility before the Internet. Now you can promote many things. But if you want more visibility and want to conduct sales via Facebook, you also have to pay Facebook (ALICE, oral interview).

Alice also has a YouTube channel where she conducts digital broadcasts with commentary and interviews regarding up-to-date matters. Many people follow her YouTube channel, and she also shares the videos on Facebook. This allows for the creation of a clientele. Through the example of Alice, it can be observed that migrants' transnational relations and social networks have become closely integrated with ICTs. Being mobile, dressing well, becoming a businessman/woman, and being visible are interconnected desires that find a space on ICTs, which in turn play a crucial role in enabling these desires to take shape.

5.2.5 Turkish Store Owners

Zafer owns a store in Laleli. He has been selling leather shoes for men to the Congolese in bulk and retail for 12 years. These shoes are his company's own production and, over time, he started to make shoes that fit the tastes of the Congolese. Zafer's relation with

the Congolese started 12 years ago when a Congolese guide brought a Congolese client from Britain to his store. This client brought three or four different types of boots and leather shoes of the J. M. Weston brand, a brand that *sapeurs* like very much. He wanted to purchase 300 pairs of these models in Istanbul. Zafer told him that it was possible for him to produce this amount in a month, and they made a deal with the client. Zafer remembers there being about ten Congolese guides back at the time. Afterwards, they all found out about his store and started to bring in their clients. Now, Zafer guesses that there are around 400 Congolese working as guides. Some 95 percent of their clients are also Congolese.

Zafer states that most business people coming here to buy products are women, but the guides that bring them to his store are men. Half of the clients come from the Congo, the other half are Congolese people living in Europe and North America. Those who need to buy a lot of products come themselves. Those who order smaller amounts do so via WhatsApp or Facebook using the Congolese who already live here. There are those who also want to make orders directly to Zafer, without a middle man. If these orders are for large quantities, then he is interested. Zafer has also started to use the Internet specifically for business. He bought a smartphone four years ago and has learnt how to use it just due to the Congolese business.

Zafer believes that the biggest obstacle facing the trade with the Congolese is the expensive shipment fees. One kilogram worth of products costs 11-12 dollars to send to the DRC. This limits what the Congolese can buy. Unlike some other store-owners, Zafer has not created a WhatsApp group for his store. He only sends photographs to those who call him and ask to see his models. “Those who come into the store take photographs with their smartphones,” he says. “There isn’t a single person who comes into this store and who doesn’t take a photograph.” During the interview, a client comes into the store and begins taking photographs: “Now this person has received an order. He’ll take photos and send them immediately, asking if this is what the client is looking for. If the client likes it, he’ll buy. If we gave money to advertising, we wouldn’t be able to advertise like this. It wouldn’t be possible” (ZAFER, oral interview).

Zafer has had Wi-Fi in his store for three years now. He says that all stores have Wi-Fi nowadays. He had to get it because clients who came in always asked for the Wi-Fi password. They connect to the Internet to make phone calls regarding sales and send the photographs they take in the store instantly via WhatsApp. The clients come in with guides to the store. The guides also do order and delivery work. Thanks to the Internet, these orders have increased in recent years. “They take photographs of the shoes in the store and share and send them all around the world,” Zafer comments. “There’s nothing left for us to do in this respect” (ZAFER, oral interview).

Sadi is the owner of a clothing store in Laleli. He does bulk and retail sales and has been working with Congolese clients for the last ten years. He says that the Congolese like nice, high quality, and stylish clothes. “They don’t buy everything,” he adds. Over time, Sadi has changed the style of the clothing he stocks:

It’s only the Congolese who buy my products. I can’t sell them to anyone else. These products aren’t bought by Turks, Romans, or Russians. When I started to earn good money, I began bringing in products that would please them. I work with producers as well. They like wearing the clothes by Versace and Yohji Yamamoto. Since I’ve been working with them for ten years, I know the type of clothing they’ll like and wear (SADI, oral interview).

He states that the guides coming in with clients have changed a lot in the last ten years. “There are permanent guides as well, but many of the people I know and have worked within the past are now in Europe,” he explains. “We’re still in contact, and they also ask for products from over there.” Sadi has even learnt Lingala. “I’ve given ten years of my life to the Congolese!” he jokes.

Sadi has Wi-Fi in his store, but he himself does not use the Internet to make sales. He does not want to have to deal with orders one at a time: “I don’t have a lot to do on the Internet. My clients come to the store to buy their products. Anyway, the Congolese come into the store and take photos to send all over. They find the clients, so I don’t have to use the Internet” (SADI, oral interview). Like Zafer, Sadi states that in the past, he made sales to clients who would come in with guides, but this has changed in recent years, and now they sell to Congolese migrants who take orders from abroad. These orders coming from abroad have increased due to the use of smartphones and the Internet. The increase has been directly caused by the usage of ICTs by migrants, since it is they who are able to

develop methods to create desire and accordingly a system of order and delivery. The accumulation of experience within the community allows for social relations of trust to develop, which allows for new clients to join in the system.

Another store-owner interviewed for this dissertation owns a clothing store in Beyazit, where he conducts bulk and retail sales. Metin has been selling to the Congolese for the past eight years. He has also learned how to speak Lingala. He sells the knock-off models of high-end fashion brands in his store. He sometimes encounters problems because the sale of these products is illegal: “There is pressure on us, there are controls. I had to pay a fine three times because I got caught. But there’s nothing to do. Congolese want brands. They wouldn’t buy this belt, for example, if it didn’t say ‘Dior’ on it” (METIN, oral interview).

Metin has had a personal Facebook page since 2009. He says that on his Facebook page he has 3000 Congolese friends. Like the other store-owners, Metin states that the business has changed completely since the advent of the Internet, smartphones, WhatsApp, and video calls. During the interview, a customer came in and requested to connect to the store’s Wi-Fi. Later, the customer conducted a video call and showed the suits at the store, item by item. Metin states that technology allows for a more inclusive sales process:

People can see the products one-by-one and make their selection based on that. Their options and their reachability have increased. In the past, they’d say ‘Send me some Versace t-shirts’. The model didn’t matter. Now, we have 100 different designs for Versace t-shirts. The clients request the photographs of all the models; they examine them one-by-one. For example, a client will see something somewhere; he takes the photographs and sends it to us, asking for the same one. Or they see a model worn by a Congolese singer and they ask for the same one. When they find the same model, they are very happy. The original would cost 9000 or 10,000 euros, for example. The original of this shirt would cost like 2000 euros. Here, we sell it for 25 (METIN, oral interview).

When there is a model that a lot of people request, they produce it. They find the original models shown to them in photographs on the Versace web page. There are specialized pattern designers for this job. They look at the photographs on the web page in detail and make the production.

Yunus owns a big bag store in Laleli. He has been working with Congolese clients for 15 years. He makes products as well as conducts retail and bulk sales. He says that the Congolese found out about his store through word of mouth. “They ask one another where

they buy their products, and they say ‘I bought it from Yunus’,” he explains. “This is how the news spreads and the industry is established.” Over time, he changed the type of products he stocked to suit the taste of the Congolese. He mostly produces the knock-off models of high-end fashion brands. Like Sadi and Zafer, Yunus has learnt Lingala. Such language abilities seems develop as a skill of the trade, now including the Congo connection. Yunus employs a Congolese shop assistant with his three Turks, and the majority of his clients now are Congolese:

There were Russians before the Congolese. The Russians would buy in bulk. We’ve been conducting business with the Congolese the longest. This industry wouldn’t take the Congolese seriously in the past. When the Russians slowly pulled out, everyone started to chase the Africans (YUNUS, oral interview).

Old clients no longer want to work with middlemen and have to pay commission to them; they want to buy directly from the store. Yunus prepares these orders with his assistants and sends the shipments out. However, those who want to buy smaller amounts of product or who want to shop at several different stores, still need the help and assistance of the Congolese who live here. Due to the volume of requests, he has shared the number of his clients among his assistants. Yunus states he has been using WhatsApp quite intensely for the past three-to-four years to conduct sales. The store has a WhatsApp group, where he shares the new arrival models:

They ask us if we have new models. They also send us photographs of certain models and ask us if we have them. Whenever there’s a new model online, they know about it and start asking. We answer straight away, it’s our job. We have to follow what’s going on online. Louis Vuitton has a new model. We have to research that. They already know about all new models. Rihanna has a new bag or Obama wore the new Givenchy. Whenever new models are seen on singers and famous people, they immediately start asking for them (YUNUS, oral interview).

It is worth noting the statement made by Yunus regarding the requests about the new models that have hit the Internet. This dissertation argues that migration is fed by aspirations, desires, and hope and that these concepts find life in ICTs. The process is twofold. Online, people may see Rihanna’s new bag, to use Yunus’s example, but they also see their old acquaintances who are now in Europe and dressing well. In essence, what they are seeing is bodies that have access to other worlds. This is what they desire. In this sense, ICTs become a symbolic space for their aspirations. In another sense, though, ICTs create the tools and the methods required for the connections to reach these desires and aspirations. They have an effect in the material world. In the context of the

Congolese migration culture, someone attains the desired bag, and someone else attains the required money to continue their journey and/or the dream of becoming their own boss.

5.2.6 Zacharie

Zacharie is 36 years old. He was born and raised in Kinshasa. After living in Istanbul for two years, he moved to France, crossing over from Greece. He was able to receive a residence permit as a result of his asylum request. After that, his first international travel was to Istanbul. The interview conducted with Zacharie took place during his ten-day trip to the city. He had already been living in Paris for two-and-a-half years. I knew Zacharie from the time he had lived in Istanbul and had been following his posts on Facebook.

The themes of *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman are embodied in real people. In order to demonstrate the system that ties these themes together, it is worth looking at Zacharie's story as a whole. This dissertation underlines the cultural resources of mobility, in which respect Zacharie's dreams of going to Europe, becoming a great man, and attaining the possibilities that world has to offer synthesize being well dressed and using trade as a lifestyle that requires struggle but which also promises growth. This lifestyle is increasingly positioned in the world of ICTs. The findings with regards to the cultural aspects of migration and the symbolic and instrumental usage of ICTs are discussed through Zacharie's story and Facebook posts.

Another aspect of Zacharie's story that stands out is that it allows to position Istanbul as a multi-faceted space. While this dissertation focuses on the Congolese living in Istanbul, it provides findings identifying that it is neither theoretically or methodologically possible to limit migrants to one specific location. Zacharie's journey starts in Kinshasa, it moves on to Istanbul, then from Istanbul to Paris, but now once again comes to Istanbul. Istanbul is not only a migrant center or a transitory space; it is positioned as a multifaceted mobility stop, one that includes Zacharie's return.

Brazzaville and Soyo, which are places where Zacharie lived before moving to Istanbul, and Paris where he lives now, are also positioned as stops of mobility. Zacharie

remembers that his dream as a young man was to move to Europe. However now, he has no intention of staying in Paris; he wants to move to Toronto at the first opportunity. On the other hand, he is making plans to establish a business in Istanbul. By taking a closer look at Zacharie's story, the traces of migration culture and its aspects can be examined more closely.

Zacharie has dreamt of being a successful businessman since his childhood. He explains his interest in trade:

I've been doing trade on a small scale since the age of eleven. I lived with my parents and they took care of me. There was nothing missing at home, but I was always interested in trade. My mother taught me how to do trade. During the summer holidays, in July, my mother and I would go to the wholesale market and buy mandarins, biscuits, and such. I would sell them in front of our home. Everyone sells stuff in front of their houses in Kinshasa. School and trade went hand-in-hand for me. If I have a product, I can easily convince people to buy it from me. I have a knack for it (ZACHARIE, oral interview).

When Zacharie's father died, his father's family took all of his father's belongings, and Zacharie went through a very difficult time and fought to survive, along with his mother. At one point, Zacharie was selling the food his mother cooked. There were times when they could not afford bread. "I always asked myself how I could get out of the situation, thinking about what kind of activities I could do outside of school that would allow me to make money," he says (ZACHARIE, oral interview). As a result, Zacharie started to sell biscuits and cigarettes at a stand after school and during his holidays.

When he was 17 years old, he went to the Matadi Port in the Bas-Congo region during the school holiday on his own. With the money he had saved up from selling biscuits and cigarettes, he bought six small televisions and returned to Kinshasa. He sold the televisions, and he better understood the logic behind trade, which motivated him to engage in further trade. When he saved up enough money, he decided to go to Congo-Brazzaville to buy clothes. He went with his friends and stayed for five days during his first trip. Thus, Zacharie made his first international move, and when he returned, he sold what had he bought there.

With the money Zacharie had made from this cross-border sale, he returned again to Brazzaville. This time, his goal was to move there and discover the commercial opportunities available. Zacharie states that there are a lot of migrants from Kinshasa in

Brazzaville and that they were all engaged in trade. When he moved there, he had to take a year off school. He sold the beverage a woman made on the street. He earned more in Brazzaville than he had in Kinshasa. After a year, he bought clothes, shoes, and bags with the money his earnings and returned to Kinshasa.

Zacharie would like to write about his life in the future. Many respondents voice the opinion that they wish to live lives worthy of novels, which may be interpreted as a belief in the dream of a worthy life. Zacharie says the following regarding his life experience and the struggle he had during the early days of his youth:

My life is a mystery. I have gone through inexplicable moments. I always thought to be great one day. What made me better? I knew how to express myself; I knew how to read. I read a lot, I watched a lot of documentaries. I look at the lives of great men. I always thought of myself as a great man like them (ZACHARIE, oral interview).

After his Brazzaville experience, Zacharie decided to try his luck in Angola. He attempted to enter Angola as a fugitive but was not successful on his first try, so he had to return to Kinshasa. In Kinshasa, he met and became friends with a Congolese woman living in Angola. He went once again with her and was able to enter illegally, into Soyo. He stayed in the city for a while and tried his hand in trade. Afterwards, he decided to go to the capital, Luanda, hoping to find better opportunities. The passage from one region to another in Angola was policed, and on the road to Luanda, his bus was stopped. When it was discovered that he was in Angola illegally, he was sent him back to the Congo. After this, Zacharie no longer had any desire to go to Angola. He went back to school.

At that time, Zacharie's sister, who had completed her university studies, became a manager at the Vodacome company. She arranged for a job for Zacharie there. After working at that job for a while, Zacharie realized he could not move forward in a salaried job. He quit and returned to trade. This time, he was very successful, and, at the age of 24, he was able to rent his own apartment.

Zacharie states that he always dressed well and this provided advantages for him in life. He learnt about the importance of dressing well from his father. His father had been a high-ranking official and always wore suits with a shirt and tie. Also, Zacharie comes from Yolo, a neighborhood in Kinshasa where a lot of musicians reside. Papa Wemba worked with the musicians of their neighborhood. Zacharie says that Papa Wemba learnt

about dressing well from the musicians of the neighborhood. When Zacharie started to make a living from trade, he started to dress as well as the important men in his neighborhood. His conditions started to improve. He remembers this period of his life as a moment where he tried to live in a heavenly manner:

I hung out with musicians. I bought clothes from them. I went out with beautiful mixed-raced girls. I've managed to achieve success, despite all the difficulties I've gone through. If I had money, I spent it with my friends. I cannot accept someone suffering in front of me; this is how I have been raised (ZACHARIE, oral interview).

Zacharie states that his dream of going to Europe started to take shape during that period. He remembers how he used to talk about how to go to Europe with his friends:

We all thought we should go to Europe one day. Europe is better. Europe is always Europe. We met musicians from Europe, and we wanted to be like them. Europe is very special for us, but, to go to Europe you have to have a relative, someone who's important and has a lot of money. If you don't have the means, you won't be able to go. Europe is a big desire for all Africans. I said to myself that I am a man and I must put up a fight and one day go to Europe (ZACHARIE, oral interview).

During this time, Zacharie concentrated on accomplishing his dream to go to Europe. He managed to save the money necessary for a Schengen visa through his commercial ventures and the support of his rich girlfriend. However, the middleman with whom he had made an agreement swindled him, and he lost most of the money he had saved up for the visa. After this, he started to save up money again, and he later learnt through a friend that a group of musicians and dancers were going to Izmir for a dance festival. He managed to become part of this group even though he himself was not a dancer or musician. In this manner, 13 people were able to get a visa to Turkey and they came to Istanbul in 2013. He had many difficulties during his first period in Istanbul. He had spent all his saved up money, so he had to start anew. He spent time with his Congolese friends and spent a lot of time at internet cafes as he did not own a smart phone. He asked for help from his acquaintances in the Congo and in Europe.

The type of jobs and the transitions from one to another Zacharie made in Turkey constitute a good example in order to understand the ways in which the jobs and entrepreneurship described in this section are related to one another. Zacharie is able to stay in the job environment in Istanbul thanks to his experience in commerce and the social capital he has managed to obtain and sustain from the DRC. First of all, he asked

the Congolese he met in Istanbul what type of work he could do here. They told him about *çabuk* jobs but that he would not be able to sustain such a job. He insisted. The next day, he tagged along with his housemates, who were going to work in Sultangazi. There, he asked the workshops if there was any work for him and he found a job in a textile workshop. He started work in the middle of the month, but at the end of the month was not given his two-week wage. The boss was not a nice person. Zacharie was unable to stand up for himself well as he did not speak Turkish. As a result, he bought a book in order to learn Turkish. He found a job where the boss was more understanding. He saved up the money he earned there and started trade. He recounts this period:

I worked in çabuk jobs for five months in Sultangazi. I saved up money for three months and I bought Weston shoes. I bought five pairs and sent them to my sister in Kinshasa. My sister sold one pair for 200 euros. A month later, she sent me 1000 dollars. When I managed to come to Istanbul, my family started to trust me more. I'm very lucky to have the family that I have. I put together the money sent from Kinshasa with the money I earned during my fourth month at the workshop. This time, I bought ten pairs of shoes along with shirts and suits from Fernando. I sent them to Kinshasa. My sister was a manager at a company at the time, so she had a circle of people to sell the things to. She managed to sell everything I sent her and sent me the money (ZACHARIE, oral interview).

Zacharie worked in a textile workshop for five months. After receiving the money from the sales from his sister, his confidence was boosted and he quit his job. He started to learn how the trade-guide and order and delivery work functioned:

I got along very well with my elders in Istanbul. I respected them. I was always well dressed and clean. People respected me too. When they had clients, they would call me. When they passed on their clients to me, I made sure to make them feel at ease. When things went well, that person would recommend me to someone else. I would go out every day whether I had a client or not. I would wander around commercial districts and look for clients. I spotted people who seemed to be looking for something and asked them if I could help them. I managed to find many clients like this (ZACHARIE, oral interview).

Zacharie states that he was able to expand his circle because he is serious and trustworthy. His clients started to request him to shop for them rather than them having to come all the way to Turkey and pay for a plane ticket. He purchased a smartphone during this period. He states that the only way of procuring the orders for his clients is through the use of a smartphone and the internet: “You can’t do this job without the Internet,” he states. “You wander, take photographs and send them, and they also send you photographs.” Zacharie says that knowing how to dress well has given him an advantage in finding clients and receiving orders:

When I started to have money, I bought new clothes. I wore them and took photographs that I shared on Facebook. As I know how to dress well and look pretty good, thank God, this grabbed people's attention. I wore the suits and the shoes before sending them over to my sister for sale and took photographs. People would see these photographs and ask about them. I got clients and orders through the photographs I posted through the year. My Facebook friends and likes increased (ZACHARIE, oral interview).

According to Zacharie, dressing well and the trade of clothing itself are interrelated. He also believes that dressing well and being clean has led to a change within the Congolese community in Istanbul:

When I arrived in Istanbul, people would only dress well when they had to go to an event or for Sunday church. They would buy clothes that they'd put aside and say that they were keeping them for when they went to Europe. I was against that. I set up a system where you'd dress well every day (ZACHARIE, oral interview).

Zacharie recounts his story with great pleasure. For him, his story is a success story since he now lives in Paris legally. He feels successful. His return trip to Istanbul seems to be like a move to crown his success. When he is in Istanbul, his old friends and community meet him with great enthusiasm and interest. When Zacharie states that he himself established a system where dressing well became a daily matter, he is surely exaggerating his effect on this Congolese community, but that is the measure of the success that he feels.

As Zacharie started to expand his clientele and experience, he took on high-commission jobs. He took a female client from the Congo to a company in the neighborhood of Cerrahpaşa, which sells medical products and devices. The client bought a large number of products from this company, which Zacharie had previously dealt with. This purchase earned Zacharie the same commission he would normally earn in several months. He decided to use the money for his twin sister living in the Congo to pay for a Schengen visa to go to Europe and found a middleman to procure the visa in Istanbul. One of his clients who owns a clothing store in the Congo and who would come to Istanbul to buy clothes was married to a general who also worked as a middleman for visas. When Zacharie mentioned that he wanted to buy a Schengen visa for his sister, his client told him that her husband could help and to call her when he had the money. In this way, he was able to get a Schengen visa for his sister from the Italian consulate. His sister went to Italy by plane and then to France. After only two years in Turkey, Zacharie's success

in being able to send his sister to Europe was seen by his family and his social environment as prestigious.

After having organized his sister's trip to France, Zacharie was once again able to concentrate on his own goals. With the illegal migration wave to Greece in 2015, which allowed for further passage to western Europe, Zacharie was encouraged to hit the road. He realized that the journey, which was open and easy to go through at the time, might eventually close down, so even though he was successful and earning a living in Turkey, he hit the road to fulfill the next stop in his dream, Paris. At the end of the summer of 2015, Zacharie crossed over to Kos Island from Bodrum on an inflatable boat. From there, he went to Athens and was able to reach Paris soon afterwards. Before hitting the road, Zacharie had prepared two suitcases filled with the clothes he wanted to take to Paris. He sent one of the suitcases to Switzerland with one of his clients. He left the other one with a friend in Istanbul, who would send it to him once he reached Paris. Many Congolese crossing over from Turkey to Europe do this.

The fact that a person preparing to go on a dangerous journey via inflatable boat, with no guarantee of survival, organizes the transportation of the clothes that they want to wear, demonstrates not just that person's faith that they will reach the destination but also that the move itself is inspired by desire. The notion of what a Congolese person should look like in Europe is established in the cultural unconscious, creating a *mikiliste* cult that shapes expectations for the Congolese migrant. Wearing branded and fashionable clothes becomes a must for being in Europe. It becomes as important as mobility itself. Zacharie's clothes are on their way to Europe before he even is. His desires and aspirations are interconnected and establish the cultural ground of his mobility.

As noted, Facebook posts are an important part of Zacharie's trade-related activities in Turkey. They are a tool that allows for the marketing of desires in the context of the *mikiliste* cult. The character of the *mikiliste* is the subject of desire; this person is dressed in a clean and fashionable manner in the photographs, with Western cities featured in the background. The accessibility of these clothes to potential clients in the Congo who do not have mobility and accessibility satisfies in one aspect the desire to attain the Worlds. As for the potential clients from Europe and North America, being able to purchase high-

end expensive clothes for a cheap price from Turkey allows them to fulfill their *mikiliste* status.

I have been following Zacharie's personal Facebook page for the last five years. For the analysis, both the photographs that are still on Zacharie's Facebook page from his time in Istanbul as well as those that are no longer on his page but which have been saved and recorded and added to my archive have been utilized. It is worth taking note that the deleted photographs are from Zacharie's first period in Istanbul.

Zacharie sees his life and experience abroad as a success story that only ameliorates over time. The plausible explanation for the deleted photographs is that his appearance and clothes do not fit the criteria he has set for himself today. The photograph albums on Zacharie's Facebook page are a reflection of his identity as a *mikiliste* as well as his success. Zacharie's photographs from his time in Istanbul are the main focus of his Facebook page, but he has been continuing to adhere to the well-dressed character of the *mikiliste* living in Western cities during his time in Paris. His photographs in Istanbul were also fashioned to function as a source for clients to make orders. Thus, he wore different clothes more often and the number of photographs were higher in number. As a matter of fact, since he has been living in Paris, Zacharie has re-shared some of his well-dressed photographs from his time in Istanbul.

Zacharie is alone in almost all of his photographs. While most of the photographs are situated in urban spaces, there are also some that have been taken in the rented apartment he lived in the neighborhood of Esenyurt. As he himself says, these are photographs that he shared to model clothing items in order to attract orders. The photographs taken at home are mostly of him wearing the suits, shirts, and leather shoes that he would send to his sister for her to sell. Thus, Zacharie is the model for the clothes in these photographs. As a matter of fact, during the interview, Zacharie state that he uses his good physique, given by God, in order to do the modelling. In one of these photographs, Zacharie is seen revealing the brand tag from the inside of the jacket with his hand, a movement that is associated with *sapeurs*. Another pose is taken from behind; the photograph shows the back of a jacket on which is written 'Emporio Armani' and where there is a black and white print of a man dressed in a suit who has two women hanging on him. Unlike Louise,

Zacharie only posts one photograph for each combination of clothing. If someone is interested in the clothes or the shoes, he will send more photographs to that person via private message on Messenger.

The photographs Zacharie has shared on his Facebook page are mostly located in urban spaces. Zacharie states that he makes sure to dress well every single day, and these photographs appear to be from his daily life. His clothes fit the seasons in these images. He is wearing suits, shirts, and leather shoes. He is also seen wearing shirts with stone, stapler, and brand-prints, jeans and sports shoes. There are also photographs of him with sportswear; tracksuits with brand-prints, sports shoes, and hats. These photographs show that Zacharie owns branded and fashionable clothes and also underline the fact that he no longer is in Kinshasa but in a big Western city. The photographs are located in big stores, hotels, in front of shopping malls or airports, at the bus stop, at the entrance of the metro or on the metro. There are photographs of him in the crowds of Istiklal Avenue and Taksim Square.²⁰ In the backdrop of certain photographs high-rise apartments, plazas and business centers and highways can be seen. These photographs foreground the metropolis and big-city textures, aiming to prove that Zacharie is a *mikiliste* able to reach out to the world outside of Africa. Photographs taken at the seaside and in the snow also serve this purpose.

Zacharie has a self-assured expression in these photographs. He sometimes combines four or six photographs that show off a variety of clothes matched with one another. These photographs, which merge Zacharie's clothing collection into one photograph, are praised by his followers. Most of the comments praise Zacharie's look: "Always classy," "Always clean and well-dressed," "Always in shape," "Really, you look great," "This is class," "Nothing to say," "The model of Europe," "It looks expensive," and "Here is the *sapeur*" are some of the oft-repeated comments. There are also comments that praise the struggle Zacharie has made in order to reach the place he is today: "Always doing well," "Here is the *mikiliste*," "Europe is always Europe," "Zacharie is the symbol of courage," "Zacharie is the boss of all bosses," "Businessman," "Thank you Jesus," and "Victory" are also much repeated comments. Zacharie's posts and the comments made about them

²⁰ Close by each other, these are at a heart of the metropolis and central areas of Istanbul nightlife.

demonstrate the cultural aspect of mobility. And the *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and businessman characters he has embodied were operationalized on ICTs.

5.2.7 Commercial Aspirations

The future plans of the respondents often include becoming a successful businessman/woman and to be mobile. Another commonly repeated goal is to become rich through trade and, as a result, to return to the DRC and make economic investments or do charitable work such as opening an orphanage or school. There are also those who simply state a desire to be rich and visible; their well-dressed and luxury lifestyles give them access to singers, who mention their names in their songs.

While some respondents indicate that they would like to stay in Turkey and continue doing trade and earning money, most of them state that, when the time comes, they would like to go to Europe or North America. Once they acquire citizenship and a passport for one of these countries, then they aim to lead a mobile life. Indeed, they describe a mobile lifestyle inspired by international trade, one quite beyond the linear movement between country of origin, transit spaces and country of destination. This ideal goes beyond being a migrant; it involves becoming a cosmopolitan person. And it usually also encompasses the aspiration to be an international businessman/woman.

Şaul and Pelican (2014) explain the presence of sub-Saharan Africans in non-European destinations such as Istanbul, Guangzhou, and Dubai through the trade opportunities offered in these regions as well as the entrepreneurial aspirations of Africans. The research conducted for this dissertation has determined that migrants with commercial motivations coming to Istanbul see Turkey as a country with business opportunities and conduct such activities accordingly. Respondents underline the job opportunities in Turkey, as well as the importance of working informally. This may not be possible in other places, especially in Europe. Some respondents make the conscious choice of staying in Istanbul and continue their business ventures. So, how can we explain the fact that Turkey is still seen as a crossing site for the Congolese who have commercial aspirations? This, it is argued here, is due to the fact that Turkey does not provide the mobility opportunities they envision, to which they aspire.

Congolese who have lived in Istanbul for three, five, or seven years and who have accommodated to the work-life, attaining many opportunities, still go to Europe or think about doing so. These people have not given up on their dream of becoming businesspeople. However, staying in Turkey for long years does not entail that they will receive Turkish citizenship—the system is designed as such. Anyway, Turkish residency permits and passports do not afford the mobility opportunities of European countries. In this sense, migrants feel restricted. Thus, respondents state that after Turkey, they want to go to Europe, America, or Canada in order to acquire citizenship, and, after that, they will be able to become mobile and conduct trade freely wherever they want, including Turkey. Most respondents were happy to get to know the trade environment in Turkey and hoped to continue their trade relations in the future, even if they no longer live here.

Eric has been living in Istanbul for four years. He does guide and order and delivery work and also receives rent from the Congolese staying at his house. He also earns a commission by acting as a middleman between smugglers and people wanting to cross over to Greece. Eric has been taking care of his family in the DRC with the money he earns in Turkey. He has also financed his wife's trip to Turkey and crossing to Greece. He plans on joining her in Greece soon and is currently trying to save up money in Istanbul to start a new life in France. When asked about his future dreams, he replies:

I like travelling the world, I want to do business. The only thing missing for that is the paperwork that will let me move around freely. I could never work for someone else. When I have my paperwork sorted, I'll be independent. I only want to work for myself (ERIC, oral interview).

Eric says that once he is in France, he will take a salaried job in order to save up money to conduct his own business once again:

When I get my paperwork, I will come to Turkey and buy clothes from here that I'll take to the Congo, and I'll go to Germany and buy second-hand cars. I'll take them to Africa and sell. I'll go to China and Dubai. If you are doing business, you shouldn't have limits. It shouldn't just be about clothes, but also cars, car-parts or household goods. If one of them doesn't work out, you'll try the other. Business is in my blood! (ERIC, oral interview).

If everything goes according to plan and Eric becomes rich, he plans on opening up a company in the Congo:

I will invest in the Congo. It might be a construction company. Then I can return to my country. As I'll have a French passport, I'll be able to go where I want when I

want. If I have enough money, I don't have to stay in Europe; I'll return to my country. I'll go to Europe for work, to sign contracts with white people. I'll do the work I have to do and return to my country (ERIC, oral interview).

Eric's mobility is fed by his desires and aspirations. Living in the Congo becomes a desirable option only once he has become a successful and rich businessman with French citizenship, allowing him to be independent and mobile.

Timothe wants to go to France in the future, to open up a clothing store in Paris, like the son of one of the most well-known *sapeurs*. After that, he might open a branch of this store in Kinshasa. When he opens his store, he will buy the clothes to sell there from Turkey. He thanks God he was able to come to Turkey:

I want to send clothes everywhere in Europe for as long as I live here. Once I get to Europe myself, I'll come back here to buy clothes and sell there in my store. I know someone who owns a big store in Paris. They had a program with Papa Wemba. He buys the suits and shirts he sells in Paris from Turkey. Turkey is a boulangerie, everyone comes here. Even Congolese singers come here. One of my friends at the Atatürk Airport ran into Fally.²¹ They took a photograph together. Fally has his own clothing brand. He makes his clothes in Turkey. I can create my own brand one day, too, and make the items here in Turkey. Maybe I can work as a stylist for a big fashion house. Famous brands give good money to stylists (TIMOTHE, oral interview).

Timothe's remarks reiterate the importance that clothing production and trade in Turkey has gained for the Congolese. He describes Turkey as a place that needs to be returned to. He trusts his expertise with regards to clothing and believes this will allow him to make a living. He has multifaceted desires and aspirations which demonstrate that he does not position himself in relation to the restrictions traditionally associated with African migrants in Europe. Even though Paris is central to Timothe's future aspirations, he does not limit himself to Paris.

Franck has been living in Turkey for five years. He owns a cargo company. "In Turkey," he says, "the state doesn't help you but there are many opportunities for those who work well and hard." In Franck's opinion, it is difficult to conduct business and become rich quickly in Europe because everything is tightly controlled. He thinks that the Congolese' desire to go to Europe is due to misinformation and believes the true place of opportunities is the USA. Franck says that if someone is really good at what they do, they can become rich in an instant, like Marc Zuckerberg. He points out that the biggest brands today are

²¹ Fally Ipupa: one of the most popular Congolese singers.

American and gives Facebook, WhatsApp, and Amazon as examples. Franck's choice of examples for wealthy person and top global brands demonstrates that his perspectives are not independent of global culture. They also reveal his relationship to that global culture through the world of digital media, just as his argument concerning today's brands invests him in the world of desire. Limiting concepts and routinized tropes like 'African migrants' and 'transit country' that are used in migrant studies actually render invisible the ICT-driven aspirations that are part of a shared global culture today.

Rebecca has been living in Istanbul for five years and has engaged in many trade-related activities. At the moment, she is planning on staying in Turkey. Even if she does end up leaving one day, she thinks she will come back to Turkey. "It's not my time yet, I'll be here for a while" she states. "One day, the time will come to leave." Rebecca would like to go to Canada and Atlanta in the future. When she was in the Congo, she met pastors from Atlanta. They told her Atlanta was a beautiful place. Even if she does go to Atlanta though, she declares her intention to return to Turkey to conduct trade. Some of her friends who have gone to Europe from Turkey regret it because they were able to earn a lot more from trade-related activities in Turkey:

We're comfortable here, even if it's not home. It's important to take advantage of the trade opportunities and to appreciate what we have here. It is freer compared to other countries. For example, in Europe, they ask for a receipt for everything... Turkey is a necessary passage for us. You have to like it. You have to have a vision for the future. I can leave, I can stay somewhere else, but I will always return (REBECCA, oral interview).

Even though Rebecca believes she can become a successful businesswoman in Turkey, the lack of mobility and the sense of restriction is unbearable, hence the desire to leave one-day. She believes she should be able to go see Atlanta if she wants to. This is not a struggle to make a living only; it is a struggle to realize all types of desires and aspirations, as well as to be free.

Jeremy believes that mobility is the engine that drives dreams to come true. He states that even if Kinshasa were to be richer, even if money came into each household, this would not limit movement abroad; on the contrary, it would increase:

The dream of every African is to see Europe. If people had the money, they'd go. People want to be international. They'd go to Dubai or Istanbul. They'd buy products. They'd open up a store. They'd conduct business everywhere. Perhaps they wouldn't

permanently move there; home will always remain home. They'd go to Europe. People want to be successful. They want to be able to travel freely (JEREMY, oral interview).

As the example of Jeremy shows yet again, mobility and business function both as a goal and as a tool to reach desires.

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

A mixed-embeddedness approach deals with immigrant entrepreneurship by considering the complex constellation of different types of embeddedness. One of them is politico-institutional forces. This chapter has examined the positive impact of the African Opening and the economic growth of Africa in the decision-making process to migrate to Turkey and the willingness of migrants to engage in international trade. The lives, careers, and the legal positing of the commercial endeavors, including their negative and positive effects for the Congolese migrants living in Istanbul, can be summarized as follows.

First, there is the legal situation for residence, employment, and business activities and the impacts of this. The number of migrants staying in Turkey with a residency permit increased with the establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Management and the facilitation of the procurement of the residency permits. Now it is simply sufficient to have a non-expired visa in order to apply for a residency permit. Newcomers find out from their fellow countrymen about this possibility. Usually, through the intermediation of a Congolese, the application is made with the help of a Turkish agency. Even though the fees for the residency permit have decreased, however, those aiming to cross over into Greece are unwilling to spend 250-300 dollars on a permit. Sometimes, a new migrant does not have the money to commence the procedure. Once the amount of money required has been saved up, their visa usually has already expired, which prevents them from making the application.

Among the Congolese migrants living in Istanbul and those interviewed for this dissertation, those with a residency permit constitute a minority. Lacking a residency permit, they take up informal jobs in the 'second' economy. They are not under pressure from the police or authorities though, and rarely does one come across news of a migrant that has been deported. However, due to the fact that those without a residency permit

cannot travel outside of Turkey, their lives and commercial endeavors are limited. Those who have residency permits are able to go back and forth to the Congo in order to conduct their commercial ventures and other businesses.

Another way to stay legally in Turkey, other than applying for a residency permit, is to apply for asylum. Many of the Congolese living in Istanbul do not come from conflict zones and are not political asylum seekers. However, in order to receive legal status in the countries they go to outside of Africa, which tends to be a major aim, an application for asylum can be a methodological approach. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to discuss that system, which does not allow irregular migrants another method of becoming regular other than the option of international protection. What has been observed as a result of the in-depth interviews and participant observation conducted for this dissertation is that the Congolese migrants are in Turkey under different motives. The international protection application system in Turkey does not allow applicants to stay in Istanbul, they have to go one of the designated satellite cities. This is evaluated as a major disadvantage by the Congolese who want to stay in Istanbul. This is the reason why the asylum request is sometimes only made once, because after that they do not go to the cities where they have to live and provide signatures on a regular basis. If the city designated is close, then they go there to give the signature every two weeks or once a month. Those who do not provide their signatures on a regular basis are unable to renew their international protection ID cards after the expiration date. Their desire to live in places outside of their legally registered regions causes their status to become illegal. Respondents have stated that before the Syrian civil war, some Congolese who applied for asylum in Turkey were relocated to third countries such as the United States and Canada. However, in the last five years, there has been no Congolese migrant who has received refugee status in Turkey and relocated to a third country. The lack of acceptance of applications from Turkey and the length of time it takes to process a file has itself led to illegal crossings to Greece and other European countries in order to make asylum applications there. There are certain international protection applicants among the respondents, but they do not actively follow up the process. They do not have any hope that it will end positively.

Regarding the formal employment situation, there was only one respondent who had a work permit. This person was Franck, who established an official cargo company in 2014 with an initial investment capital input of 60,000 dollars. Other Congolese cargo business owners either establish their offices informally or they become partners with an already-registered Nigerian cargo company. There are a lot of migrants who study at universities in Turkey and some of them commence work professionally upon graduation, although such migrants were not among the respondents for this dissertation. While many of them do not have work permits, there are also some who do.

The Congolese in Turkey mostly work in the textile industry, much of which operates on an informal basis. Even though a Congolese migrant may have a residency permit, gaining a work permit tends to be difficult. First of all, an employer who will conduct the application and manage the process needs to be found. This is not an easy task. The difficulties arising from the system described in this section make the employers unwilling to take part in the process. Besides, they are already motivated to hire cheap labor without proper conditions of employment.

While the legal positioning of the migrants influences their position with respect to the work that they are doing, it does not create a major difference to their goals. However, if someone wants to conduct business with the DRC, by physically going back and forth to the country, they must have a residency permit. There are variations within these technical positions. Someone who is residing in Turkey informally can later apply for international protection. Someone who has international protection may lose hope in the process and return to the DRC, in order to get a visa for Turkey once again and apply for a residency permit.

Aside from the politico-institutional factors influencing the lives and the endeavors of Congolese migrants in Istanbul, Turkey's transformation into a global textile manufacturer and sales center has also had structural effects. Certain countries, such as China, Turkey, and India, are shaped by their histories and contemporary global forces as textile production centers. Turkey is one of the biggest suppliers to the EU and USA textile market. In this context, migrants provide a cheap labor force in the textile industry. They also become a part of the export force through their commercial guidance and their

own commercial endeavors. Those Congolese who are employed in salaried jobs mostly work in shoe, bag, or clothing factories and workshops. Many others conduct commercial guidance, entrepreneurship supply work for the products produced within this industry.

Previous research concerning sub-Saharan Africans has concentrated on the commercial activities of guides, cargo owners, and Senegalese street vendors. The cargo business includes both the migrant owner of the company and his/her commercial endeavors, as well as the guides who bring clients to the cargo company and receive a commission per kilo sent. It is underlined that Nigerians dominate the industry, while also trying to determine the volume of the business (Baird 2015, Schapendonk 2013). Although less significant in terms of quantities shipped, there are also innumerable entrepreneurial endeavors ongoing, such as restaurants, bars, hairdressers, markets, tailors, and stores, that provide services for African migrants, as well as a range of employment opportunities (Şaul 2013).

The examples generally provided in the mixed embeddedness approach to migrant entrepreneurship concentrate on physical initiatives, such as stores and workshops that conduct production or sales. The argument made is that in a restricted structural environment, those entrepreneurs feed demand in the lower end of the sector. This dissertation radically expands that perspective on entrepreneurship through investigation of the commercial activities of the Congolese. For example, compared to other sub-Saharan Africans, the Congolese are behind when it comes to opening up cargo offices and stores. Nonetheless, this does not mean they are lesser entrepreneurs. The Congolese usually come to Turkey without any significant economic capital, and the number of Congolese crossing over to Greece are relatively high. This is why they do not want to invest in permanent endeavors. Moreover, they are not aware of the possibilities and inspiring practices provided by the government of Turkey to foreign investors. And yet, as this research shows, they are highly involved in business-making.

Social embeddedness constitutes the other leg of mixed embeddedness, and this aspect brings to the fore the entrepreneurial activities of the Congolese in Istanbul. Congolese migrants in Istanbul use their social networks for economic success. Their global social networks operate through ICTs, such as smartphones, the Internet, WhatsApp, and

Facebook, which are interconnected. Indeed, ‘connectivity’ is a key word here. Congolese procure their clients for their entrepreneurial endeavors that they then engage in and develop through these social networks.

As expressed in social capital theory, the Congolese have a supportive ethnic network and they share a similar migration history, cultural repertoire, and a common language. However, as is also mentioned in the theory, while social networks are important sources for entrepreneurial success, they do not provide a guarantee for success. For example, some respondents have large social networks, but, due to their limited buying power, are unable to transform their contacts into economic gain. Structural factors such as economic crisis and exchange-rate fluctuations also cause obstacles in the opportunities provided by social networks. Trust within the Congolese community is a source of flexibility, however, which provides opportunities for making informal business without formal contracts. There are sometimes abuses of solidarity sentiments and trust obligations that are damaging to the emergent entrepreneurial activities within the Congolese community, but overall, solidarity and trust are important ingredients in their economic success.

Cultural forces are also one of the determinants in the decision to migrate and to engage in business. Many of the Congolese migrants have small-scale trading backgrounds in their families and in interviews affirm the national character to trade. Notwithstanding their generally low levels of economic capital, in this respect of survival experience and street-level business skills along with aspirational expectations around entrepreneurship, migrants from the DRC can draw on deep resources. Specifically and additionally, the aura around the characters of migration—*mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman—urges individuals to chase after the same dream. The small commercial and brokerage ventures that exist in the Congo are typically maintained there, by partners, siblings, and other friends and family members, as well as continued in Istanbul.

Brokerage is an important source of income for Congolese migrants in Istanbul. Other than the commercial commissions received in guide work and the cargo business, there is also an established brokerage system among the migrants. Newcomers are immediately included in this system and allow for its continuation. For example, welcoming someone at the airport can result in a 20-30-dollar payment, depending on the local distances from

the airport involved. Furthermore, for a newcomer to be received in a home in Istanbul, a 100-dollar fee must be provided to the Congolese house owner who will provide him/her with a place to stay. Renting a house from a Turkish house owner, and then sub-renting the space out to Congolese is also quite profitable; there are Congolese who conduct this type of business with two or three houses. Some of the Congolese in Istanbul who have been here for a long period of time also act as brokers/middlemen between those wanting to cross over to Greece and smugglers. Those who help newcomers during their residency permit application procedures by taking them to Turkish agencies also receive a commission. Thus, for those Congolese who are settled in Turkey, services provided to newcomers represent an important source of income.

In the entrepreneurial activities of the Congolese, structural factors can sometimes be encouraging and at other times discouraging. Thus, they are motivated to use their agency in order to create strategies for self-employment. They are actively engaged economic agents. In difficult not to say embittering working conditions and with sometimes extremely limited resources, they show great determination to make better lives for themselves. The agency-oriented approach gives importance to individual characteristics as a form of human capital, such as a personal proclivity towards self-employment. Oliveira's (2007) aspiration levels, described as personal resources, can also be added as intangible resources. This research emphasizes the importance of agency and determination in the Congolese migrants' attempts at becoming businesspeople. Being a businessman/businesswoman echoes in the imagination of many Congolese as part of their desire and aspirations about a good life. Migration and entrepreneurship are in this sense intimately tied to one another and serve the same purpose.

Kloosterman et al. (1999) argue that a specific immigrant group's participation in entrepreneurship is determined by the complex interaction between socio-economic and ethno-social characteristics of the group and the opportunity structure. The state of technology" is listed as one of the determinants of the opportunity structure. In the context of Congolese entrepreneurship in Istanbul, it has been observed that ICTs are the crucial element of the opportunity structure. ICTs are key to the realization of dreams. They enable and become a symbolic space for people's desires and aspirations, and they also create and function as the tools and the methods required for the connections to reach

these desires and aspirations. Thus, they provide an entrepreneurial atmosphere that allows for the Congolese migrants in Istanbul to improve economically and to follow for their desire and aspirations, typically related to a bigger business or further mobility as a key element in the imaginary of the good life.



6. CONCLUSION

The topic of this dissertation is the motivations behind migration of Congolese (DRC) migrants and their use of ICTs. A mixed-methodological approach including in-depth interviews, participant observation and digital ethnography was implemented to research the topic. The dissertation firstly showed that migration is cultural and fueled by, among other things, the aspirations, desires, and hope of migrants. Secondly, it showed that, in Congolese case, the cultural aspects of migration materializing in the desire to become a *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman become mediatized through ICTs.

The theories of economic rationality and completely involuntary displacement dominate migration research. A new perspective is needed in the conception and examination of the motivating forces that induce and disrupt migration. In this context, notions of aspirations, desires, and hope should be foregrounded in migration theories. The narratives of mobility should be interpreted according to the subjectivities of its principle agents, in particular by drawing attention to the attitudes and emotions of migrants.

Migrant aspirations refer to the conviction that leaving would be better than staying. This includes generalized wishes and preferences as well as thoughts and feelings about potential mobility. People aspire to things that they think migration can help them achieve. Aspiration refers to intentions and plans about future actions that are assessed as potentially valuable. In the conception of desire, meanwhile, the possibilities are considered good in that they are desired. Using desire as a basis for theory about migration implies paying attention to how movement is encouraged by a range of conscious and sub-conscious influences. The concept of hope, on the other hand, has an element of realism that involves evaluations of the possibilities of realization of a desired alternative to current reality.

Aspirations, desires, and hope have a social grounding. Individual attitudes to migration cannot be separated from those manifested in the social context. Migration transforms a society and its structure, a transformation that becomes institutionally embedded as a culture of migration which, in turn, further generates the aspiration to migrate. The perspective of aspirations, desire, and hope draw attention to the crucial role of emotion

in any culture of migration. The literature reviewed in the theoretical chapter consider the notions of aspirations, desire, and hope separately. However, it is not really possible to separate these emotions out from one another in migrant narratives; they are all intertwined and co-exist. Thus, as can be seen in the fieldwork conducted and reported in the main chapters of this dissertation, participants recount their stories through all three. These emotions intensify the cultural aspects of migration which are symbolized in the desire to become a *mikiliste*, *sapeur* and/or businessman in Congolese case.

Aspirations, desires, and hope are ignited with the contemporary access to communication, media, and transportation technologies. People's global awareness of other lives and other possibilities in other parts of the world is improved through the developments of ICTs. The cultural aspects of migration aspirations, desires, and hope are mediatized parallel with the mediatization of migrants' lives. Focusing mainly on the practical benefits of ICTs, the existing literature on the relation of migrants with overlooks the mediatization of migrants' emotions and attitudes. The research conducted for this dissertation confirms the practical benefits in migrants lives, especially in migrant entrepreneurship, of the mediatization; however, it argues that this perspective does not cover the field. Besides their practical role, ICTs operate (in) a symbolic space for aspirations, desires, and hope about migration aiming at a good life.

Previous studies on the connectivity of migrants through ICTs approach the subject can be grouped into three main categories. The first focuses on how migrants maintain and activate remote relations on a daily basis. Connected migrants, connected networks, and connected transnational families are subject of this heading. ICTs have become crucial for migrants and non-migrants who live geographically separated but able to remain connected through transnational ties. Thereby, migrants are able to maintain strong identity bonds of emotion, of closeness, loyalty, and affiliation with their families and homelands. ICTs serve as a new resource of social capital among migrants that facilitates migration.

The second category focuses on the ICT role in the formation of diasporic migrant communities and diasporic media. Researchers argue that ICTs become a harbor, a virtual home for many dispersed communities around the world. Communication in the diasporic

offline communities become more effective with ICTs, while online communities are also formed. Additionally, ICTs facilitate the formation of diasporic media that inform migrants about their homeland and the dispersed diasporic community. These formations create a kind of digital diaspora with a (new) sense of identity and community.

The third category covers research that focuses on how ICTs facilitate the migration process. These technologies can provide a source of vital information regarding practical matters in organizing the journeys of migration. ICTs change the dynamics of migration, shaping the decisions on migration routes and destinations and methods to use. Migrants can also gain support on their journeys from their families, other migrants, and smugglers, which they, in turn, can pass on. Thus, ICTs facilitate migration by reinforcing existing infrastructure and developing migrant networks.

During the fieldwork conducted for this dissertation, the usage of ICTs in ways that fit these three categories has been often encountered. In the interviews, the Congolese migrants underlined the fact that they always stayed connected with their families and social networks through ICTs. The applications WhatsApp, Messenger, and Viber were found to be particularly prominent tools of connectivity. Alongside these, it was observed that Congolese living in different places created diasporic communities through the Internet, using Facebook groups and other websites. Respondents explained that diasporic digital media produces content that creates a sense of identity and community for the Congolese people living in different places around the world. Lastly, examples relating to the functional use of ICTs during the process of migration were also witnessed. Migration routes, destinations, and migration methods were discussed and decided upon on social networks, with new ICTs allowing for this process to work more effectively. The thrust of this research, however, is to argue that the effect of ICT's on migration goes beyond and is by no means limited to these three areas of usage.

Crucially, migration is cultural, and it has cultural elements that are transported via the ICTs. Previous research carried out in the three categories has tended not to pay attention to how the aspirations, desires, and hope of migrants find, create, and develop a space on ICTs. As noted in the main chapters, ICTs allow for the circulation of materials that both symbolically and practically feed mobility. In the current literature, the focus has been on

practical uses, those related directly to the process of migration, but looking exclusively at the practical uses of ICTs presents only one side of the picture. ICTs also become a symbolic space for people's affective motivations around their migration. Furthermore, those who have migrated and those who have stayed behind share the same migration culture, living its desires, aspirations, and hope through their communication in the space created by the ICTs. In this context, social media has become a channel through which migration culture is moved and expanded. Communications and sharing on social media open up a symbolic space in which the cultural elements of migration are represented and circulated.

In this dissertation, ways are conceptualized in which the aspirations, desires, and hope of Congolese migrants are (re)presented in the characters of the *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman. In order to understand how these characters operate, their historical backgrounds were explained and linked to the current fieldwork conducted. It is also revealed how these characters, which are instilled in the Congolese migration culture, become mediatized through ICTs.

Earlier research has tended to address the DRC as a country of economic struggle, anti-democratic governance, violence, and war. Thus, migration has become recognized as a strategy to cope with incessant crisis. In an atmosphere where the order provided by formal institutional structure collapses, people create their own. Access to a highly mythologized West is considered essential to be able to actualize the dream of prosperity and glory. At the same time, remittances became a significant provider for many household livelihoods. It is in this context that migration has acquired a sociological depth and a positive social value affording paradise-like attributions to the developed countries of Europe and North America. The discourse on the wealth and glory associated with those countries created a motivating culture around migration. Thus, the cult of *mikiliste* was born and the ideals of the *sapeur* and the businessman gained new meanings in Europe. Earlier research mostly ignores this cultural effect on migration.

Like the *sapeur* and the businessman, the *mikiliste* is a cultural character that operates as a symbol of the good life in other places of the world, displaying wealth and status. *Mikiliste* refers to the Congolese migrants who have come to *mikili*, meaning Europe or

the rich world outside of Africa as a utopic. It became prevalent as a representational mode of success through Congolese popular music from the 1980s. The magical quality of the European cities is reinforced by the stories told by the returning *mikilistes*.

The adventure of the *mikiliste* starts with the dream of Europe; the actual (physical) migration only comes later. A *mikiliste* who goes to Europe yet is unable to attain the life they have dreamt off, keeps this reality a secret when they return to the Congo for holidays; in this manner, they allow for the imaginary regarding the *mikiliste* to persist. The *mikiliste*'s lavish spending, especially on designers' clothes and acts of largesse, are determinants of the individual's value and rank within an economy of prestige. The search for prestige and reputation for the *mikiliste* leads to the important tradition of *dédicace* (dedication) in which a musician cites a *mikiliste*'s name or nickname on stage or in records.

It has been observed in this research that the Congolese migrants' aspirations, desires, and hope are materialized through the character of the *mikiliste*. The cultural perspective laid out in the historical background has been justified, and the same themes were seen to be continuing today. Congolese migrants live in a specific migration culture where their desires are materialized through the character of the *mikiliste*. Leaving the Congo and going to Europe or other wealthy countries is a desire that begins to take form at an early age. It is an idea in which families, pastors, and the community at large are a part.

Because Turkey is not a country that reflects the culturally installed ideal of the *mikili*, the Congolese migrants do not stay put there most of the time. But their movement through the country is not only for this reason, since mobility is an end in itself. For this, entry to Europe affords a passport to move, in all senses of the expression. In fact, the aspirations and desires the respondents voiced in the framework of the *mikiliste* character can be listed as follows: freedom of mobility, being seen wearing good clothes, becoming well-known thanks to the *dédicace* made in their name, having a spectacular return to the Congo, supporting family in the Congo, and having the financial possibility to distribute money and gifts in the Congo. The *mikiliste* who sets out to gain status in a specific prestige economy hopes that one day their turn will come.

The *sapeur* is another symbolic character of Congolese migration. A *sapeur* is one who practices *la Sape*, which is a movement of good-dressing and elegance. *La Sape* started in what is today's Congo Republic north of the river in the early 20th century and later spread south to today's DRC. It rose to prominence as a conspicuous cultural element in Congolese migrant communities in Europe at the end of the 1970s and has continued since. Congolese musical culture was crucial in marketing *la Sape* among the Congolese youth, with prominent Congolese musicians who migrated to Europe promoting *la Sape* and the life in Europe in their songs.

Sapeurs spend enormously on fashionable clothes in high-end brands. They return to Kinshasa during summer vacations to show off their wardrobes, thereby confirming their new status. Additionally, *sapeurs* immortalize their success through photographs. They have their photos taken in the events or in the places that symbolize modern cities of Europe. In these photos, they aim to show their physical image and elegant clothes. They send these photos and similar video recordings to Kinshasa to fix their prestige. *La Sape* also leads fashion tournaments in which highly fashionable designer clothes are displayed in competition.

This dissertation has observed the aspirations, desires, and hope of Congolese migrants as materialized through the *sapeur*. The place of this character of the *sapeur* in the historical continuity of migration culture has been revealed. The desire to be seen and be known, pertaining to the *mikiliste*, has also been observed for the *sapeur*. In fact, these characters are closely intertwined. *La Sape* represents the ultimate in showy but elegant, high quality dressing, and its main practices still continue. The research conducted for this dissertation shows that, for the Congolese, dressing well is an important source of dignity and prestige—and that the desire to dress well is an important factor in the migration culture. In the popular conception there is an indissoluble bond between dressing well and living in *mikili*. Thus, people want to go to Europe or North America where they can find the source of fashionable modern clothes and the opportunities to buy them. *Sapeurs*, especially *sapeur* singers, encourage people to dream of the *belle vie* (good life) in other parts of the world.

The businessman is another symbolic character of Congolese migration, the third of those investigated for this research. In the DRC prior to the 1970s, the civil service was the most preferred (rewarding and esteemed) profession, but this attitude changed due to the incessant political and economic crises as the purchasing power of civil servants was gradually eroded and trade became a valued occupation. In an atmosphere of collapsing formal institutional structure, traders have operated in the 'second' economy, outside the official regulated channels of trade, to find and develop opportunities to better their lives. This is essentially the home root of this Congolese expression of the businessman archetype.

Initially when Congolese moved to European cities, especially after the 1980s, they were unable to find what they were expecting and, moreover, faced discrimination. However, they did not passively accept these structural conditions but instead made determined efforts to better their lives. In this context, they headed towards the domain of informal business, as they had done in the Congo. Informal business was not only a simple coping mechanism but also a tool to resist exclusion from opportunity and a perspective through which to aim for their desire of wealth and status. The lifestyle of the *mikiliste* together with the obsession of clothes and music of the *sapeur* created a cultural background for the business. The consumption reflected the lifestyle of Congolese immigrants and commodities played a crucial role in structuring their identity. This cultural atmosphere encouraged young people to do business and to go to *mikili*.

In the research conducted for the dissertation, it is observed that respondents usually continue the commercial ventures they see in their families; they start in the DRC and continue in the places they migrate. Then, trade and entrepreneurship become not only means to stay alive but extend to ways of life and also to tools with which to attain desires and aspirations; a concrete action of hope. The informal trade economy expressed in the historical perspective forms the backdrop for the current entrepreneurial attempts. In the eyes of informants, becoming a businessman/woman requires courage to search for new horizons and the will to throw oneself into new adventures. Congolese migrants live in a migration culture where their desires are materialized through the character of the businessman/woman. The desire to migrate and the desire for upward social mobility by becoming a businessman/woman meet on the same plane; the entrepreneurial culture is a

part of the migration culture. The respondents envision that by going abroad to do business, their modest beginnings in trade and entrepreneurship will reach spectacular heights.

In the limited structural framework of Turkey, the Congolese migrants demonstrate agency and prompt their social networks in order to engage in international trade. They do not find it appropriate for themselves to work in low-salaried jobs, precisely because these jobs do not feed their hopes for the future. The trade conducted by the Congolese in Istanbul is basically fed by the desire to dress well. The fact that copies of world-famous brands are produced in Turkey makes it an important center for trade. Congolese migrants in Istanbul play a unique role in satisfying the desires of others by procuring various small orders of desired clothes and accessories worldwide. And ICTs play a crucial role in this today, enabling a flexible and immediate, customer-driven supply of goods wherein, often enough, the migrant entrepreneur models the produce at the site of purchase (retail or wholesale outlet). The disruptive influence of digital communication and technology on traditional business models observed generally in contemporary life is acutely observed in the inherently fast-moving and mobile world of the migrant entrepreneur operating at a small and micro-scale to connect international supply chains to home markets.

The mediatization of migration and migrants through ICTs in turn mediatizes the culture of migration, providing a historical continuity. This migration culture is fed by aspirations, desires, and hope and now materialized in the Congolese case through the characters of the *mikiliste*, the *sapeur*, and the businessman. Against the historical backdrop of these three characters, the fieldwork reported here showed how the practices of these three characters become operative through ICTs.

The grouped conceptualization of aspirations, desires, and hope expresses the emotions and the subjectivities of individuals, thus providing a different perspective from, additive and thus corrective to the materialist migration theories. At the same time, these concepts not only have an individualistic form but also a social one. Migrant aspirations, desires, and hope are shaped by discourses that promote certain lifestyle as good life in collective imaginaries. The affluence of the West and the deprivation of Africa represents a reality but it is also a discourse. This discourse is pervaded by global media and affects every

corner of the world. Migration to the North first of all arises from this discourse, which creates aspirations, desires, and hope. In the case of the present work, it is revealed that this discourse is not only shaped by global media but also maintained by ordinary people sharing the same migration culture. In the space of ICTs, Congolese migrants and the Congolese who are still at home serve to maintain this discourse of a good life in rich countries through the cultural characters of Congolese migration, *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman.

Through ICTs, Congolese migrants are able to communicate, to speak about, show and share their lives abroad. This material is circulated via ICTs for consumption by all Congolese. A *mikiliste*, *sapeur* or businessman who has left the country, shares written, visual, and auditory posts on social media that continue the discourses around these characters. The fieldwork done here shows these posts as fitting into three main types. The first comprises posts about ‘being there’.

A *mikiliste* who has gone to a Western country has to prove it through photographs. The tradition of sending a letter and picture postcard that advanced to taking photographs and videos to send to the Congo has now been transferred onto social media. In these photographs and videos, the *mikiliste* poses in front of symbolic emblems that demonstrate the texture of modernity of these Western countries. There are photographs that include snow, sea, or public transportation, such as the metro and train – all symbolic of having made it to the faraway world beyond Kinshasa. Photographs of shopping malls, luxury stores, skyscrapers, and large markets all aim to show that the *mikiliste* is now ‘there’. Posts of photographs taken on the roads of migration can also be placed in this group as they too demonstrate the migration experience of the *mikiliste* in terms of a cultural geography.

The second type of posting, or self-presentation on social media is related to ‘living well’: “I eat well, I drink well, I have fun, and I dress well” is the overriding message. Photographs and videos of the *mikiliste* dressed in the latest fashion eating and drinking in restaurants and generally enjoying life at various events such as house parties and nightclubs all aim to demonstrate that the *mikiliste* is doing well, is living the life. These images are presented with written and auditory material aiming to fulfill the same goal.

In the past, the symbolic power of Europe and *mikiliste* was strengthened by Congolese singers, through the image they were able to project through their media presence. Today, it is through the social media posts of the Congolese abroad that this is continued by ‘ordinary people’. Everyone has access to the means to reflect their situation online through ICTs so that those at home do not think of them as (if) lost and possible failures. A single photograph or set of photographs taken in front of the Eiffel tower, with the latest fashion clothes has the symbolic power to erase all doubts. Posts relating to living well on social media are received in terms of migration culture in the context of the *mikiliste*. For example, comments by people under such photographs say “Here is a *mikiliste*,” “This is a *sapeur*,” and “Europe is always Europe,” all referring to migration and the characters of migration.

The third type of posts on social media can be gathered under the heading ‘being visible’. In this context, it has been shown how the *dédicace* tradition, only present in songs in the past, has been carried into social media and digital media platforms. *Mikilistes* and *sapeurs* want to appear on platforms that are followed and viewed by many, where their names or their nicknames are voiced and they become visible, while Congolese businesspeople have gone into the business of digital media broadcasting for personal fame and prestige. The digital media platforms abroad have links with the television channels in Kinshasa and are thus able to get their content to TV in the Congo. This way, they are able to reach a wider audience, and the *mikiliste*, *sapeur*, and businessman attain a visibility that at once both promotes and achieves their aspirational activities.

Clothing is the most important theme for the *mikiliste* and *sapeur* on social media posts that aim at this becoming. Migrants sport the latest, fashionable and up-market clothing as an important course of prestige in which they are the brand, as it were. The photographs and videos are designed to foreground the clothing. In a game of one-upmanship, *sapeurs* also share ‘selfie’ videos and invite digital platform broadcasters to produce videos on what they possess. In the past, *sapeurs* could only show off their belongings to their direct environment, whereas now, thanks to the social media and digital media platforms, they can be on display for the whole world to see. There is also the digitalization of old practices, such as when *sapeurs* would meet in public spaces and engage in performative competitions about who was superior. The practice of Congolese *sapeurs* of wearing

clothes with their price tags displayed is now corroborated with photographs, videos, and live broadcasts. Social media and digital media platforms are used to prove the value of the clothes as well as serve as a global podium to show them off. This is not a podium only for famous *sapeurs*, but for everyone, and all facilitated, of course, by the accessibility and mobility, in general the usefulness, of ICTs.

Social media are an important part of trade-related activities in Turkey. They are a tool that allows for the marketing of desires in the context of the *mikiliste* cult. The character of the *mikiliste* is the subject of desire; this person is dressed in a clean and fashionable manner in the photographs, with Western cities featured in the background. The availability of these clothes to potential clients in the Congo who do not have mobility satisfies one aspect of the desire to attain the world outside of Africa. It enables a realization of the dream at the level of the non-migrant contributing to the overall perpetuation of the migration culture.

Here, the positioning of Turkey as a mid-range ('developing') economy plays a further role as potential clients from Europe and now North America are able to purchase high-end expensive clothes for a cheap price, which in turn allows *them* to further fulfill their *mikiliste* status. The migrant as businessperson can satisfy their desire to own and show off the expensive apparel. This also speaks to migration theory more widely that has tended to assume unilinear reproductions of movement and travel rather than evolving, agent-driven, multifaceted creations of the migratory phenomena. Turkey, in this case, for the Congolese, as studied here, is not just a peripheral station en route to the West. Istanbul is not just a pause in the movement but also becomes an important destination in its own right, to which migrants return and which they maintain even after they have 'made it' in the rich countries. This then becomes a part of the realization of their aspiration for mobility itself, as a part of the good life.

The order and delivery services offered by the Congolese living in Turkey find a place on social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. The clothing exposure there converts the products to commodities. They function as a catalogue that both feeds and further creates desire among the networks of potential clients. As a result of these platforms, even a newcomer can start to conduct order and delivery work as soon as they

arrive, which allows them to adapt to the market more easily. ICTs enable and become a symbolic space for people's desires and aspirations, and they also create and function as the tools and the methods required for the connections to reach these desires and aspirations. The incorporation of the ICT into migration is an adaptive response to the socio-economic environment, we may say, but also involved in the reproduction of affective culture, that is, of the Congolese aspirations, desires, and hope.

Inevitably, this dissertation has certain theoretical and methodological limitations. One is that discussions relating to identity in the context of transnationalism in migration studies have been largely kept outside the scope of the work. Similarly, the mediatization of migration's effects on identity discussions has not been included. In fact, it was observed that the respondents of the research did not express themselves in terms of identity and belonging. Instead, they expressed themselves in terms of what they had done in the past and what they planned to do in the future, and thus through their desires and aspirations and their hope. And thus, the dissertation was directed towards this type of concern.

As indicated in the methodology section, certain *methods* used in digital migration studies have been left outside of the dissertation. For example, the 'digital-media-centric digital approach' adopts computational methods such as digital mapping and network analysis to evaluate the digital connectivity of migrants. Useful though such techniques may be in providing one type of supportive empirical evidence, this dissertation takes as its starting point the position that the mediatization of migrants cannot be evaluated independently from their daily lives, which points to the priority to analyze their media usage through an ethnographic perspective in which the precise mapping of routes and connections is arguably less important than a qualitative sense of how these operate and, moreover, are seen to operate (i.e. how they are actually experienced by the migrants themselves and how this affects the migration culture).

The research methods selected for this dissertation also have their own limitations, of course. Specifically, the data employed to support the findings obtained in field research were only collected from social media and digital media platforms although the usage of ICTs by migrants corresponds to a wider area. For example, personal telephone calls and communications conducted via WhatsApp and Messenger are also elements of the

mediatization of migration culture, as has been indicated by interviewees mentioning the content of their communications via these channels. However, since such communications are private, it was not possible to access their content; hence, they were not analyzed.

This dissertation has suggestions with regards to future research. First, limiting the framework of the study to Congolese migrants living in Istanbul is a restriction that can become a short-coming. Indeed, that was why the scope of enquiries was widened to include Turkish shop owners and Congolese who come and go to and from Istanbul but live elsewhere. These efforts can be usefully extended. Future studies on Congolese migration culture should go beyond the peripheral one-stop of migration approach to include other places (territorial sites) as well as include Congolese who stay in the Congo (i.e. the non-migrant aspect of migration culture should be valorized).

This dissertation has argued that the basic arguments are not related to one specific culture but to *world culture*. Thus, the fact that migration is cultural and that it is fed by aspirations, desires, and hope and that it is already hugely and becoming increasingly mediatized—importantly as operative through ICTs—can be evaluated in other contexts, locations, and cultures.

REFERENCES

Books

- Alonso, A., & Oiarzabal, P.J., 2010. The immigrant worlds' digital harbors: An introduction, in *Diasporas in the new media age, identity, politics, and community*, pp. 1-15, Alonso, A., & Oiarzabal, P.J., (Eds.). Reno, Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press.
- Appadurai, A., 1996. *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalisation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Appadurai, A., 2013. *The future as cultural fact: Essays on the global condition*. London, New York: Verso.
- Bailey, O.G., Georgiou, M., & Harindranath, R., 2007. Introduction: Exploration of diaspora in the context of media culture, in *Transnational lives and the media: Re-imagining diasporas*, pp. 1-8, Bailey, O.G., Georgiou, M., & Harindranath, R., (Eds.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Basch, L.G., Glick Schiller N. & Szanton Blanc C. (Eds.), 1994. *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Bauman, Z., 1998. *Globalisation: The human consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Berwouts, K., 2017. *Congo's violent peace: Conflict and struggle since the Great African War*. London: Zed Books.
- Boeck, F.D., & Bolya, C., 2005. Fashion in the African metropolis, in *Beyond desire*, pp. 109-112. Ghent: Ludion.
- Bozdag, C., Hepp, A., & Suna, L., 2012. Diasporic media as the 'focus' of communicative networking among migrants, in *Mediating cultural diversity in a globalised public space*, pp. 96-116, Rigoni, I., & Saitta, E., (Eds.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Publishing.

- Brinkerhoff, J., 2009. *Digital diasporas: Identity and transnational engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Castells, M., 1989. *The informational city: Information technology, economic restructuring and the urban-regional process*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Cohen, J.H., 2004. *The culture of migration in southern Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Dayan, D., 2002. Media and diasporas, in *Television and common knowledge*, pp.18-33, Gripsrud, J., (Ed.). London, New York: Routledge.
- Deibert, M., 2013. *The Democratic Republic of Congo: Between hope and despair*. London, New York: Zed Books.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F., 1983. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fielding, A., 1992. Migration and culture, in *Migration processes and patterns. Volume 1. Research progress and prospects*, pp. 201-212, Champion, A. & Fielding, A., (Eds.). London: Belhaven Press.
- Gandoulou, J.D., 1989. *Au coeur de la Sape: Moeurs et aventures de Congolais à Paris*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Gurak, D.T., & Caces, F., 1992. Migration networks and the shaping of migration systems, in *International migration systems: A global approach*, pp. 150-176, Kritz, M., Lim, L.L. & Zlotnik, H., (Eds.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Haskin, J.M., 2005. *The tragic state of the Congo: From decolonization to dictatorship*. New York: Algora Publishing.
- Hepp, A., 2013. *Cultures of mediatization*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press.
- Hepp, A., Bozdag, C., & Suna, L., 2011. Mediatized migrants: Media cultures and communicative networking in the diaspora, in *Migrations, diaspora, and*

information technology in global societies, pp. 172-188, Fortunati, L., Pertierra, R., & Vincent, J., (Eds.). London: Palgrave Publishing.

Hugo, G.J., 1981. Village-community ties, village norms, and ethnic and social networks: A review of evidence from the Third World, in *Migration decision making: multidisciplinary approaches to microlevel studies in developed and developing countries*, pp. 186-225, Merwe, J., Taylor, I. & Arkhangelskaya, A., (Eds.). New York: Pergamon Press.

Ignacio, E.N., 2002. Filipino ka ba? Internet discussions in the Filipino community, in *Contemporary Asian American communities*, pp. 89-101, Trinh Võ, L., & Bonus, R., (Eds.). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Kloosterman, R.C., & Rath, J., 2003. Introduction, in *Immigrant entrepreneurs. venturing abroad in the age of globalization*, pp. 1-16, Kloosterman, R.C., & Rath, J., (Eds.). Oxford, New York: Berg.

Kleist, N., 2017. Introduction: Studying hope and uncertainty in African migration, in *Hope and uncertainty in contemporary African migration*, pp. 1-20, Kleist, N. & Thorsen, D., (Eds.). New York, London: Routledge.

Lechner, F.J., & Boli, J., 2005. *World culture: Origins and consequences*. London: Blackwell.

Leurs, K., & Prabhakar, M., 2017. Doing digital migration studies: Methodological considerations for an emerging research focus, in *Qualitative research in European migration studies*, pp. 247-266, Zapata-Barrero, R., & Yalaz, E., (Eds.). Cham: Springer Open.

Mabanckou, A., 1998. *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge*. Paris: Présence Africaine.

MacGaffey, J., & Bazenguissa-Ganga, R., 2000. *Congo-Paris: Transnational traders on the margins of the law*. Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press.

- Madianou, M., & Miller, D., 2012. *Migration and new media: Transnational families and polymedia*. New York: Routledge.
- Miller, D., & Slater, D., 2000. *The internet: An ethnographic approach*. Oxford: Berg.
- Oliveira, C.R., 2007. Understanding the diversity of immigrant entrepreneurial strategies, in *Handbook of research on ethnic minority entrepreneurship*, pp. 61-81, Dana, L.P., (Ed.). Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar.
- Ozkan, M., 2016. Turkey's political-economic engagement with Africa, in *Emerging powers in Africa*, pp. 217-31, Merwe, J., Taylor, I., & Arkhangelskaya, A., (Eds.). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, A., 2008. *Transit migration*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J., 2016. *Digital ethnography: Principles and practice*. London: Sage.
- Piore, M.J., 1979. *Birds of passage: Migrant labor in industrial societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Portes, A., & Walton J., 1981. *Labor, class, and the international system*. New York: Academic Press.
- Rath, J. (Ed.), 2002. Unraveling the rag trade. Immigrant entrepreneurship, in *Seven world cities*. Oxford, New York: Berg.
- Rath, J., & Schutjens, V., 2016. Migrant entrepreneurship: Alternative paradigms of economic integration, in *Routledge handbook of immigration and refugee studies*, pp. 96-103, Triandafyllidou, A., (Ed.). London, New York: Routledge.
- Sassen, S., 1991. *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Stearns, J.K., 2012. *Dancing in the glory of monsters: The collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa*. New York: Public Affairs.

Todaro, M.P., 1976. *Internal migration in developing countries*. Geneva: International Labor Office.

Vertovec, S., 2009. *Transnationalism*. London, New York: Routledge.

Zlotnik, H., 1992. Empirical identification of international migration systems, in *International migration systems: A global approach*, pp. 19-40, Kritiz, M., Lean Lim, L., & Zlotnik, H., (Eds.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.



Periodicals

- Adams, P.C., & Ghose, R., 2003. India.com: The construction of a space between. *Progress in Human Geography*. **27** (4), pp. 414-437.
- Al-Rawi, A., 2019. Facebook and virtual nationhood: Social media and the Arab Canadians community. *AI & Society*. **34** (3), pp. 559-571.
- Ayampam, S., & Tsambu, L., 2015. De la fripe à la Sape. *Hommes et Migrations*. (1310), pp. 117-125.
- Bal, E., & Willems, R., 2014. Introduction: Aspiring migrants, local crises and the imagination of futures 'away from home'. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. **21** (3), pp. 249-258.
- Baldassar, L., Nedelcu, M., Merla, L., & Wilding, R., 2016. ICT-based co-presence in transnational families and communities: Challenging the premise of face-to-face proximity in sustaining relationships. *Global Networks*. **16** (2), pp. 133-144.
- Benitez, J.L., 2012. Salvadoran transnational families: ICT and communication practices in the network society. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **38** (9), pp. 1439-1449.
- Bernal, V., 2004. Eritrea goes global: Reflections on nationalism in a transnational era. *Cultural Anthropology*. **19** (1), pp. 3-25.
- Boczkowski, P.J., 1999. Mutual shaping of users and technologies in a virtual national community. *Journal of Communication*. **49** (2), pp. 86-108.
- Bredeloup, S., 2013. The figure of the adventurer as an African migrant. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*. **25** (2), pp. 170-182.
- Burrell, J., & Anderson, K., 2008. 'I have great desires to look beyond my world': trajectories of information and communication technology use among Ghanaians living abroad. *New Media & Society*. **10** (2), pp. 203-224.

- Caglar, A. & Soysal, L., 2003. Introduction: Turkish migration to Germany- Forty years after. *New Perspectives on Turkey*. 28-29, pp. 1-18.
- Carling, J., 2002. Migration in the age of involuntary immobility: Theoretical reflections and Cape Verdean experiences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **28** (1), pp. 5-42.
- Carling, J. & Collins, F.L., 2017. Aspiration, desire and the drivers of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **44** (6), pp. 909-926.
- Carling, J. & Schewel, K., 2017. Revisiting aspiration and ability in international migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **44** (6), pp. 945-963.
- Chen, W. and A. S. K. Choi, A.S.K., 2011. Internet and social support among Chinese migrants in Singapore. *New Media & Society*. **13** (7), pp. 1067–1084.
- Collins, F. L., 2017. Desire as a theory for migration studies: Temporality, assemblage and becoming in the narratives of migrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **44** (6), pp. 964-980.
- Collins, F.L., Sidhu, R., Lewis, N., & Yeoh, B.S.A., 2014. Mobility and desire: international students and Asian regionalism in aspirational Singapore. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. **35** (5), pp. 661-676.
- Collyer, M., Düvell, F., & de Haas, H., 2012. Critical approaches to transit migration. *Population, Space and Place*. **18** (4), pp. 407-414.
- de Clerck, H. M.-L., 2013. Sub-Saharan African migrants in Turkey, a disregarded migration reality. A case study on Senegalese migrants in Istanbul. *Ankara University SBF Dergisi*, **68** (1), pp. 39-58
- Dekker, R., & Engbersen, G., 2014. How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. *Global Networks*. **14** (4), pp. 401-418.

- Dekker, R., Engbersen, G., Klaver, J., & Vonk, H., 2018. Smart refugees: How Syrian asylum migrants use social media information in migration decision-making. *Social Media + Society*. January-March, pp. 1-11.
- Diminescu, D., 2008. The connected migrant. An epistemological manifesto. *Social Science Information*. **47** (4), pp. 565-579.
- Fait, N., 2013. African migrations toward Turkey: Beyond the stepping stone. *Ankara University SBF Dergisi*. **68** (1), pp. 21-38.
- Fawcett, J.T., 1989. Networks, linkages, and migration systems. *International Migration Review*. **23** (3), pp. 671-680.
- Gillespie, M., Osseiran, S., & Cheesman, M., 2018. Syrian refugees and the digital passage to Europe: Smartphone infrastructures and affordances. *Social Media + Society*. January-March, pp. 1-12.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C., 1992. *Transnationalism: A new analytic framework for understanding migration*. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. **645**, pp. 1-24.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C., 1995. From immigrant to transmigrant: Theorizing transnational migration. *Anthropological Quarterly*. **68** (1), pp. 48-63.
- Gondola, D., 1999a. Dream and Drama: The Search for Elegance among Congolese Youth. *African Studies Review*. **42** (1), pp. 23-48.
- Gondola, D., 1999b. La sape des mikilistes: théâtre de l'artifice et représentation onirique. *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*. **39** (153), pp. 13-47.
- Gordano, C., 2013. Mobile phones in migrant contexts: Commercial discourses and migrants' appropriations of ICT in Spain. *Observatorio Journal*, Special issue: Introducing media, technology and the migrant family, pp. 129-151.

- Harris, J.R. & Todaro, M.P., 1970. Migration, unemployment, and development: A two-sector analysis. *American Economic Review*. **60** (1), pp. 126-142.
- Hernández-Carretero, M. & Carling, J., 2012. Beyond “kamikaze migrants”: Risk taking in West African boat migration to Europe. *Human Organization*. **71** (4), pp. 407-416.
- Hiller, H.H., & Franz, T.M., 2004. New ties, old ties and lost ties: the use of the internet in diaspora. *New Media & Society*. **6** (6), pp. 731-752
- Horvath, I., 2008. The culture of migration of rural Romanian youth. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **34** (5), pp 771-786.
- Kandel, W., & Massey, D.S., 2002. The culture of Mexican migration: A theoretical and empirical analysis. *Social Forces*. **80** (3), pp. 981-1004.
- Kloosterman, R.C., Van der Leun, J., & Rath J.C., 1999. Mixed embeddedness: (in)formal economic activities and immigrant business in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. **23** (3), pp. 252-65.
- Kok, S., Rogers, R., 2016. Rethinking migration in the digital age: Transglobalization and the Somali diaspora. *Global Networks*. **17** (1), pp. 23-46.
- Komito, L., 2011. Social Media and Migration: Virtual Community 2.0. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*. **62** (6), pp. 1075-1086.
- Lee, E., 1966. A theory of migration. *Demography*. **3** (1), pp. 47-57.
- Mar, P., 2005. Unsettling potentialities: Topographies of hope in transnational migration. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. **26** (4), pp. 361-378
- Massey, D.S., 1990. Social structure, household strategies, and the cumulative causation of migration. *Population Index*. **56** (1), pp. 3-26.

- Massey, D.S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J. E., 1993. Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, **19** (3), pp. 431-466.
- Massey, D.S. & Garcia Espania, F., 1987. The social process of international migration. *Science*. **237**, pp. 733-738.
- Ozkan, M., & Akgun, B., 2010. Turkey's opening to Africa. *Journal of Modern African Studies*. **48** (4), pp. 525-46.
- Parham, A.A., 2004. Diaspora, community, and communication: Internet use in transnational Haiti. *Global Networks*. **4** (2), pp. 199-217.
- Portes, A., & Sensenbrenner, J., 1993. Embeddedness and immigration: notes on the social determinants of economic action. *American Journal of Sociology*. **98** (6), pp. 1320-50.
- Rai, A.S., 1995. India on-line: Electronic bulletin boards and the construction of a diasporic Hindu identity. *Diaspora*. **4** (1), pp. 31-57.
- Rath, J., & Kloosterman, R.C., 2000. 'Outsiders' business: A critical review of research on immigrant entrepreneurship. *International Migration Review*. **34**, pp. 657-81.
- Schapendonk, J., 2013. From transit migrants to trading migrants: Development opportunities for Nigerians in the transnational trade sector of Istanbul. *Sustainability*. **5**, pp. 2856-2873.
- Schaub, M.L., 2012. Lines across the desert: mobile phone use and mobility in the context of trans-Saharan migration, *Information Technology for Development*. **18** (2), pp. 126-144.
- Sjaastad, L.A., 1962. The costs and returns of human migration. *Journal of Political Economy*. **70**, pp. 80-93.
- Stark, O., & Bloom, D.E., 1985. The new economics of labor migration. *American Economic Review*. **75**, pp. 173-178.

- Stark, O., Taylor, J.E., & Yitzhaki, S., 1986. Remittances and inequality. *The Economic Journal*. 96(383), pp. 722-740.
- Şaul, M., 2013. Sahra Altı Afrika ülkelerinden Türkiye'ye iş göçü. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*. **68** (1), pp. 83-121.
- Şaul, M., 2014. A different *kargo*: Sub-Saharan migrants in Istanbul and African commerce. *Urban Anthropology*. **43** (1,2,3), pp. 143-203.
- Şaul, M., & Pelican, M., 2014. Global African entrepreneurs: A new research perspective on contemporary African migration. *Urban Anthropology*. **43** (1,2,3), pp. 1-16.
- Thomas, D.R., 2003. Fashion Matters: La Sape and Vestimentary Codes in Transnational Contexts and Urban Diasporas. *MLN*. **118** (4), pp. 947-973.
- Trapido, J., 2011. The Political Economy of Migration and Reputation in Kinshasa. *Africa*. **81** (02), pp. 204-225.
- Wong, L., 2003. Belonging and diaspora: The Chinese and the Internet. *First Monday*. **8** (4) [online], <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1045/966> [accessed 21 October 2019].
- Yang, G., 2003. The internet and the rise of a transnational Chinese cultural sphere. *Media, Culture and Society*. **25** (4), pp. 469-490.
- Zijlstra, J., & van Liempt, I., 2017. Smart(phone) travelling: Understanding the use and impact of mobile technology on irregular migration journeys. *Int. J. Migration and Border Studies*. **3** (2/3), pp. 174-191.

Other Publications

BBC News, 2016a. Papa Wemba, Congo music star, dies after stage collapse, 24 April [online], <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-36123214> [accessed 29 Sep. 2019].

BBC News, 2016b. Papa Wemba, What made Papa Wemba so influential?, 25 April [online], <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36131322> [accessed 29 Sep. 2019].

Baird, T., 2015. Nigerian entrepreneurs in Istanbul, Turkey: Spatial and temporal dimensions of mixed embeddedness. *International Migration Institute (IMI) Working Paper, Paper 115*. Oxford: University of Oxford.

Basın İlan Kurumu, 2018, Cumhurbaşkanlığı ofisleri kuruldu [online], <https://www.bik.gov.tr/cumhurbaskanligi-ofisleri-kuruldu/> [Accessed 6 July 2019].

Brewer, K. & Yukseker, D., 2006. A Survey on African migrants and asylum seekers in Istanbul. *MiReKoc Research Projects 2005–2006*. Istanbul: Migration Research Program at Koc University (MiReKoc).

De Haas, H., 2011. The determinants of international migration: Conceptualizing policy, origin and destination effects. *IMI Working Paper No. 32*. Oxford: International Migration Institute.

Düvell, F., 2006. Crossing the fringes of Europe: Transit migration in the EU's neighbourhood. *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) Working Paper, No. 33*. Oxford: University of Oxford.

Düvell, F., 2008. Transit, migration and politics. Trends and constructions on the fringes of Europe. *IMISCOE and COMPAS Summary Paper*. Oxford: University of Oxford.

Flahaux, M. L., & Schoumaker, B., 2016, Democratic Republic of the Congo: A Migration History Marked by Crises and Restrictions [online], Migration Policy

Institute (MPI), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/democratic-republic-congo-migration-history-marked-crises-and-restrictions> [accessed 6 September 2019].

Icduygu, A., 2005. Transit migration in Turkey: Trends, patterns, and issues. *CARIM Research Reports 2005/4*. Florence: European University Institute and Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Invest in Istanbul, (2019), About us [online], <http://www.invest.istanbul/about-us/> [Accessed 5 July 2019].

Invest in Turkey, (2019), Establishing a business in Turkey [online], <http://www.invest.gov.tr/en-US/investmentguide/investorsguide/Pages/EstablishingABusinessInTR.aspx> [Accessed 6 July 2019].

Mardesic, S., 2014. Bringing agency back in: The case of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Istanbul, *Thesis for the M.A. Degree*. Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences

Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 2015, The institution, about us [online], https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/about-us_912_956 [Accessed 5 July 2019].

Ministry Of Interior Directorate General Of Migration Management, 2019a, International protection [online], https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/international-protection_915_1024_4747_icerik [Accessed 5 July 2019].

Ministry Of Interior Directorate General Of Migration Management, 2019b, Residence permits [online], https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/residence-permits_915_1024_4745_icerik [Accessed 5 July 2019].

Ministry of Labor, Social Services and Family, (2019), Çalışma izni değerlendirme kriterleri [online], <https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/uigm/calisma-%C4%B0zni/izin-degerlendirme-kriterleri/> [Accessed 5 July 2019].

Ngoie, G.T., 2013. Congo (DRC), migration, 1960 to present, in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, Ness, I., (Ed.). New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell

Ngoie, G.T. & Lelu, D., 2009. Migration en République Démocratique du Congo. *Profil National 2009*. Geneve: International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Ngoie, G.T. & Vwakyankazi, M., 2009. Country Paper: The Democratic Republic of Congo. *African Perspectives on Human Mobility Programme*. Lumumbashi : Université de Lubumbashi/Katanga

Official Gazette, 2003. Yabancıların Çalışma İzinleri Hakkında Kanun, no. 4817, 27 February 2003. OG no. 25040, 6 March [online], www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.4817.pdf [accessed 1 April 2019].

Official Gazette, 2003b. Doğrudan Yabancı Yatırımlar Kanunu, no. 4875, 5 June 2003. OG no. 25141, 17 June [online], www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.4875.pdf [accessed 1 April 2019].

Official Gazette, 2013. Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu, no. 6458, 4 April 2013. OG no. 28615, 11 April [online], <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6458.pdf> [accessed 1 April 2019].

Official Gazette, 2016. Uluslararası Koruma Başvuru Sahibi ve Uluslararası Koruma Statüsü Sahibi Kişilerin Çalışmasına Dair Yönetmelik, OG no. 29695, 26 April [online], <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160426-1.htm> [accessed 1 April 2019].

Official Gazette, 2016b. Uluslararası İşgücü Kanunu, no. 6735, 28 July 2016. OG no. 29800, 13 August [online], www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6735.pdf [accessed 1 April 2019].

Official Gazette, 2018. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Teşkilatı Hakkında Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kararnamesi, no. 1, RG no. 30474, 10 July [online], <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2018/07/20180710.htm> [accessed 1 April 2019].

- Schoumaker, B. & Flahaux, M.L., 2013. Changing Patterns of Congolese Migration. *MAFE Working Paper 19*. Paris: Programme sur les Migrations entre L'Afrique et L'Europe (MAFE)
- Suter, B., 2012. Tales of transit: Sub-Saharan African migrants' experiences in Istanbul, *Thesis for the Ph.D. Degree*. Malmö, Linköping: Malmö University and Linköping University.
- The World Bank Data, 2018, Democratic Republic of Congo GDP growth [online], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=ZG-CD> [Accessed 5 July 2019].
- Türkiye Scholarships, (2019), Türkiye scholarships, about us [online], <https://turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/en/page/about-us/turkiye-scholarships> [Accessed 5 July 2019].
- UNHCR, 2018, Registration and refugee status determination with UNHCR [online], <https://help.unhcr.org/turkey/information-for-non-syrians/registration-rsd-with-unhcr/> [Accessed 5 July 2019].
- UNHCR, 2019. Operational portal refugee situations, Mediterranean situation Greece [online], <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179> [Accessed 30 June 2019].
- Vause, S., 2012. Différence de genre et rôles des réseaux migratoires dans la mobilité internationale des Congolais (RDC) : étude des tendances, des déterminants et des conséquences de la migration, *Thesis for the Ph.D. Degree*. Louvain : Université Catholique de Louvain, Centre de Recherche en Démographie et Sociétés.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: Table 1 - The List of Interviews

Interview Number	Date	Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Where they were living at the time of interview	Where they were living by 1.11.2019
1	20.1.2017	Florian	45	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
2	21.1.2017 7.3.2017	Antoine	42	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
3	23.1.2017	Gaspard	32	M	Istanbul	Athens
4	26.1.2017	Justin	39	M	Istanbul	Paris
5	2.2.2017	Joseph	48	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
6	8.2.2017	Vincent	52	M	Istanbul & Kinshasa	Istanbul & Kinshasa
7	9.2.2017 20.6.2018* 17.7.2019	Theo	26	M	Istanbul	Amiens
8	17.2.2017	Augustin	48	M	Istanbul	Athens
9	21.2.2017	Benjamin	26	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
10	7.3.2017	Blaise	26	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
11	10.3.2017	Jean	42	M	Istanbul	Zagreb
12	15.3.2017	Eliott	51	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
13	20.3.2017	Pascal	42	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
14	20.3.2017	Matthieu	30	M	Istanbul	Paris
15	22.3.2017	Rachel	35	F	Istanbul	Kinshasa
16	27.3.2017	Felix	38	M	Istanbul	Paris
17	27.1.2018 10.7.2019	Etienne	38	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
18	3.2.2018	Edouard	26	M	Istanbul	Athens
19	4.2.2018	Jeremy	41	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
20	5.2.2018	Pablo	40	M	Istanbul	Izmir
21	15.2.2018 28.3.2018	Leonard	27	M	Istanbul	Paris
22	16.2.2018	Youssef	26	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
23	16.2.2018	Jerome	25	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
24	17.2.2018	Naomi	39	F	Istanbul	Athens
25	18.2.2018	Elie	25	M	Istanbul	Paris
26	10.3.2018* 1.5.2019	Yves	50	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
27	27.3.2018	Rubin	36	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
28	27.3.2018	Romain	36	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
29	29.3.2018*	Denis	44	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
30	30.3.2018	Zacharie	36	M	Paris	Paris
31	31.3.2018*	Ibrahim	27	M	Istanbul	Istanbul

32	13.4.2018*	Jonathan	34	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
33	18.4.2018*	Yannick	43	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
34	21.4.2018*	Franck	33	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
35	25.4.2018*	Remy	47	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
36	1.5.2019	Louise	47	F	Istanbul	Istanbul
37	4.5.2018*	Frederic	36	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
38	5.5.2018*	Christopher	40	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
39	31.3.2019	Alice	42	F	Zurich	Zurich
40	15.6.2018*	Judith	34	F	Istanbul	Istanbul
41	16.6.2018*	Patrick	40	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
42	27.6.2017 12.6.2018*	Rebecca	44	F	Istanbul	Istanbul
43	13.7.2018*	Boris	32	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
44	22.7.2018*	Chris	31	M	Istanbul	Chios
45	18.8.2018*	Fabrice	40	M	Istanbul	Kinshasa
46	8.4.2019	Remi	38	M	Istanbul	Chios
47	10.4.2019	Timothe	39	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
48	11.4.2019	Sami	30	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
49	12.4.2019	Sarah	32	F	Istanbul	Istanbul
50	14.4.2019	Eric	38	M	Istanbul	Istanbul
51	15.4.2019	David	40	M	Istanbul	Chios
52	15.4.2019	Mimi	32	F	Istanbul	Chios
53	16.4.2019	Arnaud	49	M	Istanbul & Lumumbashi	Istanbul & Lumumbashi
54	18.4.2019	Nelly	31	F	Istanbul	Istanbul
55	21.4.2019	Jacqueline	28	F	Istanbul	Istanbul

Labeled (*) interviews were conducted with Mahir Şaul.