

TRANSNATIONAL REMITTANCES AND IRREGULARITY: REMITTING  
PRACTICES OF POST-SOVIET LABOR MIGRANTS IN  
ISTANBUL

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Transnational Remittances and Irregularity: Remitting Practices of  
Post-Soviet Labor Migrants in Istanbul

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## Thesis Abstract

Mehtap Ergünöz, “Transnational Remittances and Irregularity: Remitting Practices of Post-Soviet Labor Migrants in Istanbul”

This thesis examines migrants’ remitting practices, which constitute a much neglected issue in the literature, with the case of Post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in Istanbul based on the data collected through semi-structured interviews with the migrants and discussions with other actors involved in the remitting processes. The thesis sets off from that these migrants invent new informal remitting practices to send money to kin left behind as there are limitations on the possibilities of transferring remittances just like many other daily constraints they have to face due to their legal status in the country and that these practices are not only determined by transnationality and irregularity but also offer a new alternative micro field for the examination of them. By taking the relationship between irregularity and informality as not an automatic one, it scrutinizes the emergence of these informal practices at the juncture of transnationality and irregularity and evaluates them as an informal and also an integral part of the massive migration industry. In addition, regarding the attempts of states and international organizations at attracting the informal remittances of irregular migrants to formal channels, the thesis underlines that as both irregularity and informality emerge under the limitations on the everyday lives of migrants an effective solution for the issue of channelling informal remittances to formal channels would be the abolishment of all limitations on migrants by regularizing their status.

## Tez Özeti

Mehtap Ergünöz, “Ulusaşırı Para Gönderileri ve Düzensizlik: İstanbul’daki Post-Sovyet Emek Göçmenlerinin Para Gönderme Pratikleri”

Bu tez literatürde oldukça ihmal edilmiş bir konu olan göçmenlerin para gönderme pratiklerini İstanbul’daki post-Sovyet düzensiz emek göçmenleri örneğinde, bu göçmenlerle gerçekleştirilen yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakatlardan ve para gönderme süreçlerinde yer alan diğer aktörlerle yapılan görüşmelerden elde edilen veriye dayanarak incelemektedir. Tez, düzensiz göçmen statülerinden kaynaklanan pek çok diğer gündelik kısıtlama gibi para transferleri üzerinde de var olan kısıtlamalar dolayısıyla bu göçmenlerin geride bıraktıkları yakınlarına para gönderebilmek için yeni enformel para gönderme pratikleri ürettiğinden, ve bu pratiklerin sadece ulusötesi ve düzensiz göçmen statüleri tarafından belirlendiğinden değil aynı zamanda ulusaşırılık ve düzensizlik olgularının incelenmesi için de alternatif bir mikro alan yarattığından yola çıkmaktadır. Düzensizlik ve enformellik arasındaki bağı otomatik bir bağ olarak almayarak, tez bu enformel pratiklerin ulusötesilik ve düzensizlik kavşağında ortaya çıkışlarını incelemekte ve bunların devasa göç endüstrisinin enformel bir ayrılmaz parçası olarak değerlendirmektedir. Ayrıca, devletlerin ve uluslararası teşkilatların düzensiz göçmenlerin enformel para gönderilerini formel kanallara çekme çabasını göz önünde bulundurarak, bu tez hem düzensizliğin hem de enformelliğin göçmenlerin gündelik hayatları üzerindeki kısıtlamalardan kaynaklanması sebebiyle enformel para gönderilerinin formel kanallara çekilebilmesi için etkili bir çözümün göçmenlerin statülerinin düzenlenmesi yoluyla tüm kısıtlamaların kaldırılması olduğunun altını çizmektedir.

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During my enrollment in this master program, I have spent some time taking courses in history and anthropology at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History. I am grateful to my professors at the Institute for making me feel that history is not just another laborious discipline but also a joyous endeavor.

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But, of course, all the mistakes you might come across throughout this thesis belong to me only.

To my parents

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Second World War, as international labor migration gained momentum (Castles and Miller 2009, 123), migrant remittances have become much more significant sources of income for emigration (that is, migrant-sending) countries. Remittances, or “money sent by migrants to family and friends on which there are no claims by the sender (unlike other financial flows such as debt or equity flows)” (Kapur 2004, 1), benefit not only immediate relatives of labor migrants, but also whole economy at home. Moreover, as a more stable and “constant source of income than other private flows and foreign direct investments” (Nyberg-Sørensen, van Hear, and Engberg-Pedersen 2002, 55), remittances constitute a key element of the highly debated “migration and development nexus;” a shorthand for the relation of migration to economic, cultural, social and political development possibilities for a given emigration country.

Owing partly to its implications for the migration and development nexus; remittances are currently a matter of enthusiasm in many academic and policy circles; although gloomier views about their overall consequences exist alongside. But, whatever the developmental effects of remittances are, what we observe in essence today is immense amounts of money flowing from migrants all over the world to kin left behind in migrants’ home countries. For example, in the year 2013, officially recorded remittance flows to developing countries amounted to \$414 billion, reaching \$550 billion worldwide (The World Bank 2013, 1). Yet, these figures reflect only remittances transferred through formal and recorded channels

whereas a significant proportion of “these remittances are done through unofficial mechanisms and procedures, via informal value transfer systems and are, therefore, unregulated and uncontrolled” (Panda 2009, 167). Corresponding to the current irregularization of migration and existing alongside formal remittance-transfer channels (like banks and money transfer systems like Western Union and MoneyGram), there is a substantial sector of informal remittance transfers that constitutes the main subject of this thesis.

After the end of the Cold War, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of borders in their new but pauperized successor states, the ex-Soviet peoples also started to make use of this very significant resource of remittances. Just to consider the Tajiki example, in which migrant remittances constitute the 48 percent of total gross domestic product (GDP) (World Bank 2013, 5), reveals the significance of remittance flows for these post-socialist successor states.

Besides Tajikistan; some other post-Soviet states like Kyrgyz Republic (31 percent of total GDP), Moldova (24 percent) and Armenia (21 percent), all of which are either neighbors of Turkey or located in its surrounding region, are highly dependent on remittances and are among the top ten countries in terms of the share of remittances in their GDPs (World Bank 2013, 5).

Yet, what makes remittances important is not only their financial magnitude. As formal remittance transfer methods are not always available to them or too expensive for their use, irregular migrants find various informal ways to remit. To be more specific, remittances and irregular migrants’ remitting practices, that is the channels and ways the migrants employ in order to transfer money to their home countries, produce new social and economic relationship patterns that involve

migrants, remittance receivers, and agencies in the transnational link that binds the immigration country to the emigration country.

However, these various informal ways migrants make use of to transfer their money are virtually non-existent in the literature on migration. In-depth studies of the channels migrants employ in order to transfer their remittances to countries of origin are to a large extent absent from the literature and therefore this specific field remains underresearched.

Much of the literature on remittances has a macro approach and deals mainly with the overall developmental consequences of remittances for emigration countries. Although there are micro studies within this literature, most of them neglect remitting practices and instead focus mainly on remitting behavior and the motivations of remittance-senders.

As for the migrant experience literature, the circumstances is not much different. Even studies on a single migratory movement, which deal with diverse migrating experiences including border crossings, working conditions, adaptation to destination countries and so on, remain virtually silent on remitting practices.

In this thesis, which inquires into remitting practices and remitting behavior in the case of irregular post-Soviet labor migrants who overstay their visas and take up employment in Istanbul, I expose the new economic and social relationship patterns involved in the process and delineate the features of the new remitting practices that emerge in parallel to the irregular and transnational characteristics of today's migration trends. I argue that remitting practices are inextricably linked to existing international labor migration regimes and, consequently, two key features of international migration today, namely irregularity and transnationality, has

reflections on remitting practices. In other words, remitting practices are molded by the migratory regimes in which they are born.

To be more specific, the main purpose of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, it aims at documenting remitting behavior and informal remitting practices of Post-Soviet labor migrants in Istanbul. Secondly, it aims to discuss two significant aspects of the migratory regime in which the migrants are involved, namely irregularity and transnationality, in order to shed light on and make sense of the context and conditions in which these practices emerge.

## Methodology

When researching about the lives of people like irregular migrants who are considered to be illegal and criminal by many people and also by states, unfortunately, it is not possible to have a list of a universe group from which we can sample out a representative group of interviewees. Apart from that, it is not always possible to reach and have them open up to us about their lives. Therefore, the only available method to conduct such a study that depends on the knowledge to be gathered from irregular migrants is inescapably snowballing. The drawbacks of the snowballing method is obvious. As one usually starts from a single source in order to reach more, there is always the danger of ending up with an excessively uniform sample that might damage the representativeness of the gathered data. Yet, despite these drawbacks, the data on which this study is built upon relies on information collected from post-Soviet irregular migrant interviewees selected by snowballing. I

tried to reduce the negative effects of the snowballing method by diversifying my first sources, who were instrumental in my reach to others.

With the snowballing method, I interviewed five male and fourteen female irregular labor migrants from post-Soviet countries in six different districts of Istanbul, and talked to four tourism agencies as well as bus drivers and other employees working in parking lots in Laleli. With irregular migrants I conducted semi-structured interviews the duration of which ranged from twenty minutes to one hour. All the interviews were conducted in Turkish, as all of my interviewees could speak Turkish fluently. The questions that were used in the interviews are presented in Appendix B and Appendix C. Also, a more detailed account of the fieldwork is available in Chapter Five.

Behind the selection of Post-Soviet immigrants from other irregular migrant groups in Turkey lies the higher “in-between”ness of Post-Soviet ones. To be more specific, African migrants in Turkey are mostly transit migrants who want to transit to another, usually European, country and Middle Eastern migrants in Turkey are mostly asylum seekers which are by law required to resettle in third countries. That is, the primary aim or the destined end of many of these migrants is to go some other places. This is not to say that none of these migrants take up employment and work in Turkey. Rather many of them start working while waiting for the process of asylum applications or postpone their transit migration while working in Turkey. Also many of them come to Turkey just to work. But if there is an optimal case to examine remitting practices, it is Post-Soviet irregular labor migrants. Not only due to the purely economic nature of their migratory movement, as there are also labor migrants from Africa and the Middle East besides transit migrants and asylum seekers, but also because their status of being, in Morokvasic’s (2004) terms, “settled

in mobility. That is, their remarkable simultaneous transnational engagement with Turkey and their own countries of origin makes their case an optimal one to examine remitting practices, which are dependent on the sustainment of transnational links. For example, it is known that irregular African migrants do not circulate between their countries and Turkey as frequently as irregular migrants from Eastern Europe do (Brewer and Yüksekler 2009, 668).

In addition to the fieldwork, I tried to cover as many sources as possible on the issue of remittances, some of the aspects of which is still scarcely researched, and tried to provide a full map of both immigration flows to Turkey and of remittances. Besides building upon the available empirical and theoretical literature, I compiled migration statistics from Turkish ministries and other official bodies in order to quantify the phenomenon and thus conjure up a concrete picture of it. Also, the data has been supported by relevant legal framework when necessary.

### The Organization of the Thesis

In addition to “Introduction” and “Conclusion,” which respectively constitute the first and last chapters, this thesis has four chapters. Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature on transnational migrant remittances. More specifically, not only it looks for remitting practices in this literature but also, together with Chapter Four, it establishes the need for more studies on the channels irregular transmigrants employ to transfer remittances. In other words, it opens up space in the migration literature for studies like this thesis. By examining the specific literature on migrant remittances, Chapter Two emphasizes that although there is a substantial literature on



remittances, studies produced in this literature usually deal with the migration and development nexus or remitting behavior of migrants and migrant communities while remitting practices remain virtually absent.

The Chapter Three of the thesis explains two characteristic features of contemporary migration flows in the world, including the post-Soviet migrations to Turkey. These two characteristics, namely transnationalism and irregularity, constitute the context in which remittance flows studied in this thesis take place. The chapter will discuss migrant transnationalism and irregularization processes so as to contribute to our understanding of remitting practices. It argues that remittances and remitting practices are truly transnational phenomena, the informality of which stems from the political and economic contradictions of current transnational migrations that migrants all over the world has to face. To be more specific, the nature of remittances and remitting practices are a reflection of the characteristics of migration flows. Therefore, I hypothesise that the irregularization of migration has effects on remitting practices; that is, in parallel to the irregularization of migration, remittances flow through informal channels, which thereby produce new, informal social and economic relationship patterns that involve migrants, remittance receivers and agencies in the transnational link that binds the immigration country to the emigration country. The argument that the irregularization of migration also creates informality in remitting practices may sound tautological but as it will be further explained in the thesis, the relationship between irregularity and informality is not considered to be a straightforward one by states and international organizations. But, remitting practices are shaped by migration regimes in which they are born. Moreover, not only transnationalism and irregularity helps us to explain informal remitting practices but also these remitting practices provide another micro field in

which we can examine different appearances of transnationalism and irregular migration.

As its title, “Post-Soviet Migrations to Turkey,” suggests, the purpose of Chapter Four is to provide information on the migratory flows from the former Soviet republics to Turkey. The chapter tries to fulfil this aim by dividing its subject matter into four sections. The first section provides an account of Turkey’s emergence as an immigration country since the 1980s and more recently as a remittance sending country by discussing the reasons and dynamics that paved the way for this transformation of Turkey, which has been considered to be an emigration country for a long time. The second section outlines those various immigration flows and patterns that transformed Turkey into an immigration country, while the third section provides a separate evaluation of post-Soviet migrations to Turkey. Lastly, the fourth section looks for remitting practices in the specific immigrant experience literature on Turkey by examining four recently published migration anthologies. Due to the result that emerges from this endeavor, the section, just like Chapter Two, confirms the existence of a gap on remitting practices also in the specific literature on Post-Soviet immigration to Turkey.

Lastly, Chapter Five of the thesis will document remitting behavior and remitting practices of Post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in Istanbul based on my interviews with these irregular migrants, employees of tourism agencies and cargo firms, and bus drivers and other employees working in parking lots; all of whom get involved in remittance transfers from Turkey to Post-Soviet countries. In line with the argument presented in Chapter Three, the point of departure in the chapter is to show that remitting practices are informalized under conditions of irregular

migration. Despite the fact that I deal only with pecuniary, or monetary, remittances, I will present my field observations on transfers of goods as well.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANT REMITTANCES

So send me far from Lombard Street, and write me down a failure,  
Put a little in my purse and leave me free.

— Robert W. Service. *The Rhythm of the Remittance Man*.

The literature on migrant remittances does not provide us with a neat and coherent picture. Unfortunately, what Robert E. B. Lucas and Oded Stark argued in 1985 is still valid: “no comprehensive theory of remittances exists” (Lucas and Stark 1985, 902). What have been written on remittances are usually case studies that may produce incompatible results in different places.

With this caveat in mind, this chapter presents a review of the transnational migrant remittances literature after the Second World War. Based on different directions and subject matters pursued in this literature, the chapter aims to provide a map of the literature and locate remitting practices on this map. Together with Chapter Four, it emphasizes the lack of sufficient studies on remitting practices and argues for the need for more studies on the subject if we are to make sense of the implications of these huge resource flows, not only for emigration countries but also for migrants, immigration countries and their native residents.

## Remittances: Concepts, Debates

Well into the Twentieth Century the word remittance was used in reference to troublesome sons of aristocratic British families, who were sent abroad -usually to British colonies- so as not to cause further trouble in the family. As seen in the epigraph to this chapter, they were called “remittance man” due to their dependence on the money sent by families (New York Times 1914; Service [1907] 2012, 46-48).

Today, it seems that the immobile family and their members abroad have exchanged roles and the origin of the money transfer shifted from the family to emigrant family members as millions are moving in search of better-paid employment opportunities all over the world.

The concept of remittances as it is used in this thesis refers to Devesh Kapur’s definition cited in Chapter One. To restate Kapur’s (2004) definition, remittance is simply money that migrants send to relatives left behind in their country of origin without expecting repayment.

In order to define every aspect of the migrant act of remitting I divide it into two categories as “remitting behavior” and “remitting practice.” What I mean by remitting behavior is the tendencies of migrants toward sending or not sending money back home, their motivations, and gender-related and generational differences behind their decision to send remittances, intervals or regularity of remittances, and the amount of remitted money in proportion to each migrant’s earnings. As for the category of remitting practices I define it as a collection of technical procedures that encompasses all the available ways through which a migrant can transfer money to her/his home country.

However, the literature on remittances suffers from conceptual ambiguity about the use of these terms. The conceptualization I made above and the definitions provided for the terms of remitting behavior and remitting practice are not used in the same way in many of the studies that I used for the purposes of this literature review. One could come across a multiplicity of terms including practice, behavior and pattern and see that all of them can be used randomly and unsystematically to define the same thing even in one single study. In this sense, I hope that the classification and conceptualization I suggest contributes to the coherence of the literature.

The main subject of this thesis is monetary remitting practices, but it should be noted that not all remittances are pecuniary or monetary. For example, one non-pecuniary form of remittance is the cross-border transfer of every sort of goods by an individual migrant. Although it is not the main concern of the thesis, Chapter Five will also share fieldwork observations on individual migrants' transfers of Turkish products to former Soviet republics.

Just like remittances can be non-pecuniary, they can also be non-material. In other words, abstract things like cultural traits, political tendencies, behaviors and ideas can be objects of the migrant act of remitting as well. This kind of remittances was conceptualized and theorized as "social remittances" by Peggy Levitt (1998) with reference to her study on Dominican migrants in Boston and their interactions with relatives in the Dominican Republic.

According to Levitt, social remittances are "a local-level, migration-driven form of cultural diffusion" (Levitt 1998, 926). When a migrant arrives in her/his destination s/he is already equipped with certain social and cultural traits that can be

of help to ease adaptation. Over time, depending on the migrant's socioeconomic situation and opportunities and her/his level of interaction with the host society, these social and cultural assets can stay intact, transform or blend with new ones to produce social remittances. A vast array of social remittance types produced in interaction with the host society can be transmitted to relatives in the locality of origin when migrants return to or visit their locality of origin or through phone calls, letters, video and sound recordings. In the end, transmitted social remittances - whether they are novel dressing styles or new customs, attitudes and ideas- can be rebuffed or absorbed in the emigration area. In case they are absorbed, social remittances transform localities with substantial emigrant populations into transnational communities "where both migrants and nonmigrants enact some aspects of their lives simultaneously, though not equally, in multiple settings" (Levitt 1998, 928).

One further clarification in the meaning of remittances is to distinguish it on the basis of the legal personality of the sender. In other words, remittances can be either individual or collective. The term collective remittances have been used since the 1990s to define the long existent practice of remittance transfers by migrant groups organized by families or hometown associations (Goldring 2003, 6-8).<sup>1</sup> The form of remittances that is the object of scrutiny in this thesis, however, is the individual (and monetary) remittances sent by formally unorganized, individual migrants to their kin in countries of origin.

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<sup>1</sup> For a recent study of collective remitting mechanisms realized through Turkish migrant organizations in Germany: Sezgin, Zeynep. 2011. "Turkish Migrants' Organization in Germany and their Role in the Flow of Remittances to Turkey." *International Migration and Integration* 12: 231-51.

Migration is an interdisciplinary field of research with various aspects concerning multiple disciplines ranging from sociology, history and political science to law and economics (Castles and Miller 2009, 21). However, despite the increasing magnitude and significance of remittances, they were not an issue taken into consideration even by economic theories of migration until the 1980s, when studies that take extended households as their units of analysis emerged.

For example, the neoclassical theory of migration, which has shaped popular judgment on migration and provided the basis of many policies as “probably the oldest and best known theory of international migration” (Massey et al. 1993, 433), does not incorporate remittances into its interpretation of migratory processes.

According to the basic tenets of the neoclassical theory of migration, at the macro level, migration stems from unequal geographic distribution of labor supplies and demands. Simply, in countries where demand for labor is larger than the available labor supply, wages tend to be higher than in countries with the opposite conditions. With the assumption that labor markets function freely without any restriction, the neoclassical theory of migration argues that these wage differentials draw workers from low-wage countries to countries with higher wage levels. In other words, according to this theory, labor market characteristics are the main factors behind migratory flows.

As for what happens at the individual level, microeconomic version of the neoclassical migration theory describes migrants as rational individual actors who can move freely without any restriction just like labor markets operate. Here, not only wage differentials but also different employment rates between countries are taken into account as factors that initiate international migration. The migrant



perceives migration to a specific country (or to a specific locality in internal migration) as an investment that can be decided to pursue based on a calculation of costs and benefits relative to conditions both in the country of origin and other possible destinations (Massey et al. 1993, 434-35). In other words, at the micro level this theory explains migration as the act of an independent individual moving in search of better living conditions. Since migrants are described as independent actors and links that might be sustained with people left behind are not a matter of concern in this portrayal of migration, remittances that might be transferred to relatives and/or friends left behind are not mentioned at all.

In stark contrast with the neoclassical theory of migration, with the 1960s and 1970s, an alternative historical-structuralist perspective, also called world systems theory of migration, emerged. The historical-structuralist theory of migration has its roots in the Latin American Dependency School and Immanuel Wallerstein's world system theory, both of which developed Lenin's conceptualization of world economy as consisting of an exploiting core and an exploited periphery. According to the Dependency School theorist André Gunder Frank, to produce successful development policies for underdeveloped countries we should scrutinize into historical circumstances that have led to their underdevelopment. Due to a widespread neglect of their histories in favor of already developed ones, underdeveloped regions and countries are mistakenly considered to be passing through phases that developed countries have once gone through. However, "the now-developed countries have never been *underdeveloped*, though they may have been *undeveloped*" (Frank [1966]1970, 5). Furthermore, the underdevelopment of these regions and countries is not a consequence of their own economic, political or social failures. Rather, it is a product of underdeveloped countries' centuries-long

participation in the process of world capitalist development through interactions with developed ones, or metropolis, as their satellites. The development potential here for the satellites (now, underdeveloped countries) is not only limited but also non-self-perpetuating as it depends on the metropolis' continuing economic interest in the satellite (Frank [1966]1970, 4-9).

Similarly, in the historical-structuralist understanding of migration, individuals do not move freely and voluntarily in labor migration processes. Rather, there are structural and historical constraints that have created economic and political power inequalities which result in the mobilization of cheap labor from the periphery for use in core countries through the involvement of core country firms and entrepreneurs in the periphery (Castles and Miller 2009, 26; Massey et al. 1993, 444-45). The penetration of capitalist relations into non-capitalist societies create populations who are inclined to migrate overseas. When firms and entrepreneurs penetrate into non-capitalist societies in search of land, labor, new consumer markets and raw materials, the transformations they lead in these areas destroy traditional societal organization and pave the way for emigration. For example, mechanization of agriculture, introduction of fertilizers, land consolidation through the disruption of traditional land ownership patterns, promise of higher wages to peasants in case they work in the production of industrial raw materials, demand for cheap labor in industrial sectors and assembly lines that create employment for women and socialize them for modern consumption patterns without providing necessary income to cover these new consumption patterns; all these create uprooted people inclined to migrate, either internally or overseas (Massey et al. 1993, 445-46). Therefore, according to historical-structuralist views, remittances generated through migration

are just another mechanisms in the perpetuation and reinforcement of inequalities in the world and of underdevelopment in the periphery (De Haas 2007, 5).

However, the New Economics of Labor Migration, or the NELM, theory, which was developed in the 1980s and 1990s and given its name in the title of Oded Stark and David Bloom's (1985) co-authored article that communicated the developments in economic research on labor migration at the time, presents remittances as an integral part of its explanation of migration. At the core of this theory lies the assumption that migration is first and foremost a family or household strategy (De Haas 2007, 6; Massey et al. 1993, 436). In other words, the decision to migrate is not taken by the individual. On the contrary, it is a strategic family act to maximize income and minimize risks and limitations to household well-being through a varied distribution of family's labor resources. Through this strategy, especially in underdeveloped countries where private insurance schemes and governmental protection mechanisms are either insufficient, unreachable or absent, the family can depend on remittances sent by migrant family members in case of economic dire straits like crop failures and drop of selling prices below cost prices in agricultural investments, unemployment and the requirement of capital when an increase in the productivity of family resources is needed (Massey et al. 436-38). Hence, with the contribution of the NELM theory's focus on the household, remittances have been integrated into explanations of migration as a vital aspect of migratory processes.

For the purposes of this thesis, academic works produced so far in the literature on international migrant remittances is divided into three broad groups based on their main object of scrutiny<sup>2</sup>:

- 1) Studies on the developmental potential of remittances for emigration countries and households.
- 2) Studies that deal with the reasons that shape migrants' decision of remitting (or not remitting), frequency and amount of remittances, and generational and gender-related differences influencing the act of remitting. Throughout this thesis, these subjects will be collectively referred to as remitting behavior.
- 3) Studies on the channels migrants employ to transfer their remittances to relatives left behind in their home countries. In other words, these studies deal with the "how" of the act of remitting. In this thesis, the selection and employment of specific channels among many available ones, that is how the migrant sends his/her remittances, will be referred to as remitting practice.

However, it should be noted that despite the emergence of a vast literature on international migrant remittances, theoretical convergence aside, there is no terminological unity and consistency in this literature. The classification above and

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<sup>2</sup> Apart from these three different subjects examined in the literature on remittances and corresponding to the rising importance of expatriates in the eyes of sending states, there is a thriving literature on migrants' interaction with and participation in political processes in their countries of origin. A very recent addition to this literature is the subject of remittances and its role in the sustained relationship between politics in countries of origin and emigrants. For two such studies that examine the relationship between politics and remittances respectively in the cases of dual citizenship and elections, see: Leblang, David. 2011. "Harnessing the Diaspora: Dual Citizenship, Migrant Remittances and Return" University of Virginia. Department of Politics. Manuscript. O'Mahony, Angela. 2013. "Political Investment: Remittances and Elections" *British Journal of Political Science* 43(4): 799-820.

definitions provided for the terms of remitting behavior and remitting practice are not used in the same way in many of the studies that I used for the purposes of this literature review. My conceptualization of remitting practices and remitting behavior is an attempt at providing unity and coherence to the available literature.

### Developmental Effects of Remittances

In 1965, *International Migration Digest* published excerpts from an article written on the economic effects of migration from the perspective of immigration countries (Bettini [1964] 1965). The author of the article, Emilio Bettini, reported that immigration countries perceived remittances as a “passive,” i.e. negative, consequence of migration, and that emigration countries discouraged remittances because they wanted emigrants settle down in destination countries. However, he argued, remittances are beneficial to migrant families left behind for humanitarian and personal development reasons (Bettini [1964] 1965, 95).

On the one hand, with its focus on classical immigration countries Australia, Canada and the United States of America, Bettini’s article looks like a last remnant of a bygone era in which migration meant complete settlement in the destination country with no links perpetuated with the country of origin. On the other hand, with its welcoming attitude toward remittances and against the background that in the past the purpose of money sent by migrants was mainly to cover family’s transportation expenses when they wanted to migrate and settle down where their migrant household member is (Leblang 2001, 2), Bettini’s article signifies that there is change in the overall perception of migration and remittances in the early 1960s.

Indeed, “external migration during the two decades from 1955-1975 ... began ... to represent a typical feature of the post-war development.” (Abadan-Unat 1977, 31). Known as the “migration and development nexus” in the current literature, the issue of migration-induced development potential of migrant sending areas has been a widely discussed topic in the period from the Second World War onwards. Although they are not the sole developmental factor in migratory movements, migrant remittances played a significant role in the emergence of optimistic approaches to the relationship between development and migration; especially in the most recent rise of a celebratory tone.

Hein de Haas (2007) provides us with a periodization of the research and policy-oriented remittance literature of the post-Second World War era. According to him,

... it is possible to distinguish four periods in the post-Second World War thinking on migration and development. While the ‘developmentalist’ optimism dominated in the 1950s and 1960s, large-scale pessimism prevailed in the 1970s and 1980. This changed with the emergence of more nuanced views in the 1990s and the current rediscovery of remittances, and the concomitant resurgence of optimism on migration and development in recent years (De Haas 2007, 3).

In the first period from the 1950s through the 1960s, optimism about migration and development dominated research and policy circles (De Haas 2007, 3).

Developmentalism was a characteristic of the post-Second World War period (Keyder 1993, 9). In the aftermath of the war, development came to be associated with producing sound state policies on the way to economic growth. It was believed that with proper state policies and through import substitution-cum-industrialization and in-transfers of capital, impoverished countries would achieve economic

development, get modernized and catch up with the affluent Northern countries. This understanding, that is developmentalism, took hold in different forms in many places ranging from the Soviet Union to the United States and from Western European countries (Wallerstein 2004, 1) to the capitalist underdeveloped countries of the time (Pamuk 2008, 239).

It is within this context that “the migration optimists” emerged and “large-scale labour migration from developing to developed countries began to gain momentum” (de Haas 2007, 3). Labor migration was expected to restore balance between “labour-rich-but-capital-poor origin areas and oppositely endowed destination regions” (Gamlen 2014, 3) and celebrated as an essential component of modernization. Its effects on development were positively discussed with reference to remittance flows and the decrease in labor surplus of sending countries (Castles and Miller 2009, 50).

One of the most well-known figures of this period is the economist Charles P. Kindleberger, who was also an important figure in the Marshall Plan that aimed to help war-torn European countries recover. Kindleberger’s perspective on the migration and development nexus was “mainstream in the 1950s and 1960s” (Gamlen 2014, 3).

According to Kindleberger, “reduced costs of communication, fixed exchange rates, lower tariffs, and the rise of such institutions as the international corporation have increased economic interdependence to a higher level than before” (Kindleberger 1969, 302) and therefore economic development is no longer a national matter that has no bearing on other states (Kindleberger 1969, 302). Similarly, as migration stems from international inequalities, the “problem of

economic development ... cannot be divorced from the problem of migration” (Kindleberger 1978, 26).

For Kindleberger, migration alleviated the unemployment problem in source countries by redistributing it to countries of destination while at the same time increasing worker’s wages and investment by firms in innovative technologies in emigration countries. Under the circumstances created by emigration, rather than paying higher wages, companies preferred to invest in new technologies, which would lead the country to economic development. (Kindleberger cited in Gamlen 2014, 3-4). Kindleberger believed in unrestricted migration and objected to constraints on migration as he considered them to be harmful not only to the optimum allocation of labor but also to that of income (Kindleberger 1978, 26).

At the policy side, migrations realized through guestworker agreements of the time perfectly reflect Kindleberger’s view on the alleviatory effects of migration on socioeconomic problems. Indeed, economic motivations were a defining aspect of the migratory movements between 1945 and 1973 (Castles and Miller 2009, 105) and “one of the most important features of Western European post-war economic growth has been its dependence on the use of immigrant labour” (Paine 1974, 1).

At the time, many Western European countries, including Austria, Belgium, France, United Kingdom, West Germany and Sweden, were in need of flexible labor due to the common socioeconomic problem they had. Their problem stemmed from the demographic fact that their populations were comprised of more people with higher education and earlier retirement. This, in turn, resulted in labor shortages in non-prestigious lower level positions (Paine 1974, 9). As a solution, they chose to



meet their demand for labor by importing labor migrants through bilateral agreements from developing Mediterranean countries like Greece, Italy and Turkey.

The guestworker scheme was a novel migratory flow as it was a “policy” of the migrant-receiving countries and up until that time migrations from the Mediterranean to Western European countries were not initiated by host country governments (Paine 1974, 5). The scheme was contemplated as a win-win project. According to the plan in the minds of the parties to bilateral guest worker agreements, emigration from the developing countries would relieve them off their surplus labor while migrant remittances would provide them with the much needed foreign currency. Moreover, the emigrants would return with new skills and further contribute to the development of their home countries by putting their newly acquired skills to use.

Yet, the oil crisis of 1973-1974 brought “a period of worldwide economic downturn, industrial restructuring and increasing unemployment” (de Haas 2007, 4). With the accompanying policies of labor importing countries, guestworker migrations had come to an end by the end of 1973 (Paine 1974, 150). The shocking economic effects of the oil crisis on petroleum importing Western countries were reported by these countries as the reason for the termination of labor migrant imports but, according to Suzanne Paine (1974), the crisis was not just a factor in itself but also it provided these countries with a pretext to end these migrations in the face of growing opposition and social and political problems it created (Paine 1974, 1). So ended the guestworker schemes; and the first phase of migration and development optimism in the Post-Second World War world came to an end.

This turn of the tide regarding the migration and development nexus found its reflection in the literature as well. Fuelled by one theoretical and one empirical factor, the negative effects of migration on emigration countries came to the fore in discussions. A paradigm shift to historical-structuralist views, which regarded migration and capitalist penetration as destructive to the economic development of already impoverished countries, emerged and coupled with more and more empirical studies that strengthened this understanding. So that, by the late 1960s, those widespread optimistic views about the migration and development nexus had already begun to be challenged by more pessimistic views emphasizing that migration was not only depriving underdeveloped countries and regions of their skilled human capital via “brain drain” (i.e. emigration of educated and trained people) and “brawn drain” (i.e. emigration of young and physically able workers), but also it was leading to inflation through conspicuous consumption of remittance-receiving households and through these countries’ continuous dependency on remittances. (De Haas 2007, 4-5). In other words, the criticisms directed by the pessimists cluster around the depletion of the most skilled and productive segments of society and the expenditure of remittances for consumption rather than investment. The common point that they all make is that migration and remittances have improved the socio-economic condition only of the households who have sent migrants abroad.

Among the abovementioned migration and development pessimists of the time, W. R. Böhning (1975) can be cited for his negative views on the developmental effects of remittances. Writing against the background of “temporary” labor migrations from the Mediterranean countries to Western Europe and criticizing the optimistic accounts on emigration from underdeveloped countries in the 1960s, W. R. Böhning argued that there was a potential conflict between private benefits of

remittance receivers and remittances' costs to society even though they were a favorable supplement for the receivers and a significant foreign currency resource for the country (Böhning 1975, 252).

According to Böhning, in the rural segments of migrant-sending societies, migration, even if only temporary, can produce detrimental results for development not only through the drain of healthy and young workers, that is, through brawn drain; but also through the remittance receiving kin's reluctance to cultivate their lands as remittances decrease their further income needs (Böhning 1975, 260). Under these circumstances, as unproductivity becomes habitual in a way that halts innovation, more and more young people will have reasons to migrate. Furthermore, the increase in the income of migrant-sending households and the new tastes and consumption patterns that may be transmitted by migrants (a form of social remittances as defined by Peggy Levitt) can result in inflation and excessive importation of foreign consumer products. These inflationary results of remittances, for Böhning, are relevant for the urban sectors as well (Böhning 1975, 266). As a result, "what is brought in with one hand, i.e. hard foreign currency that could be used to create employment, is taken away with the other" (Böhning 1975, 262).

During the 1980s and 1990s, both pessimistic views like Böhning's perspective and optimistic views regarding the relationship between migration and development had come to be challenged by more refined approaches like the ones proposed by the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory (De Haas 2007, 6) that was briefly outlined in the previous section.

The NELM theory has significant parallels and commonalities with the livelihood approaches that emerged in late 1970s with the argument that migrants,

unlike what dependency theorists argued, are not “passive victims of global forces,” instead migrants are actively working toward improving their life conditions within the constraints they face. In livelihood approaches, human agency is attributed a central role in the sense that migrants are defined as actors who can produce strategies in order to vary their chances and improve their life conditions under structural constraints. This point is where the NELM theory and livelihood approaches come closer. According to de Haas, the emergence of these two perspectives is related to a paradigm shift in social sciences at the time, which resulted in efforts for the reconciliation of structure and agency based approaches. This is why de Haas evaluates these two approaches under the title of pluralist perspectives, as both of them argue for a multiplicity of factors impinging on the relationship between migration and development (De Haas 2007, 6).

The NELM theory, which shifts the focus from the individual to the household as already told above in the section on migration theories, does not only pay central importance to remittances and but also provides a more nuanced micro approach unlike the previous optimists and pessimists.

Looking from the NELM perspective, J. Edward Taylor (1999) criticizes the two extremes stating that the reality lies somewhere in the middle between optimistic and pessimistic views and argues that due to three problems we cannot see the real effects of remittances on development clearly: Firstly, the isolation of the individual migrant from the household and community contexts interferes in understanding the effects of migration and remittances in their totality. Secondly, it is overlooked that remittances can contribute to economies through consumption as investment can be made by non-migrant sending households in view of increasing demand by migrant-sending households for consumption goods. Thirdly, the search for a one-fits-all

answer for the effects of remittances is a mistaken effort as development prospects induced by migration and remittances vary from country to country and region to region due to various factors including domestic political and economic dynamics and features of different migratory processes (Taylor 1999, 64-65). Therefore, according to the NELM perspective what we need in our attempts to measure the real effects of remittances on development is to obtain a more meticulous approach that evaluates the issue in its entirety by taking households and community contexts into consideration as well as internal dynamics of regions and countries examined.

About migration and its developmental impacts, there is currently a great deal of excitement that is stimulated by remittances. “A wave of summits, forums and reports on the potential positive linkage between migration and development has swept through governments, think tanks and international organizations around the world over the past 15 years” (Gamlen 2014, 2).

For de Haas, with the 2000s, we have experienced an overall reversal from pessimistic approaches in thinking on migration and remittances, which is manifested in the upsurge in publications with generally positive views (de Haas 2012, 8). The reason of this “neo-optimism” about migration and development (de Haas 2012, 10) is partly that worldwide remittances have reached striking amounts - like \$550 billion in 2013 (The World Bank 2013, 1).

At a subtler level, remittances raised attention due to at least five reasons (Kapur 2004, 3). First of all, remittances are significant financial sources in the sense that they forego in amount official development assistance to developing countries (de Haas 2012, 9). Secondly, remittance flows are distributed unequally in a way that the poorest countries remain devoid of these huge resources while developing and

middle-to-high income countries benefit from these flows. Thirdly, remittances constitute the most stable financial resource that countries can make use of in cases of economic crises and shocks. Fourthly, for small countries with weak economies, like small island states, remittances are the only sources of income. Lastly, as remittances provide an alternative development financing through immigrant individuals' themselves without costly bureaucratic expenditures and corrupt government officials who might illegally draw off money, they provide a new development mantra to discussions on development which are already susceptible to trends or buzzwords (Kapur 2004, 3-7).

Due to the spectacular growth in remittances and their emergence as “the new development mantra” (Kapur 2004, 7) governments and international organization like The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) flock enthusiastically to the migration and development nexus. However, criticisms toward the actual reasons of this recent excitement abound. In these criticisms, the recent rise of interest in the migration and development nexus with the contribution of remittances is associated with neoliberal agendas that aim to pass on the burden of economic development from states to migrants. In the words of de Haas, who defines this understanding as neo-optimism, it has ideological sources that “overemphasized the power of markets and individuals to bring about political-economic change and social transformation” (de Haas 2012, 19-20).

However, what is forgotten in this “neo-optimism” is that the impacts of remittances on development are not separate from contexts and structures that remittances flow to. For example, the method used most frequently by governments and international organizations to increase developmental effects of remittances, namely attempts at channeling remittances from informal remitting practices to

formal ways, ignore the fact that migrants would not invest in economically risky areas even if they are presented with incentives (de Haas 2012, 19). According to Allan Gamlen (2014) these criticisms directed to this most recent rise of excitement about migration and development starts in this lengthy debate a new phase which he calls “the new migration and development pessimism” (Gamlen 2014, 13).

All in all, remittances have always been a major issue of debate in terms of its developmental effects and both policy-makers and scholars have written extensively on the subject. Yet, in the final analysis, whether remittances contribute to development depends not only on different contexts that migration and remittance flows take place, but also very much on how development is defined and by whom. As long as it is defined solely in terms of macroeconomic parameters, increased well-being of migrant families will continue to be disregarded.

### Remitting Behavior

As already defined above, the studies I collect under the heading of remitting behavior explore one or more of these elements: the reasons that shape migrants’ decision of remitting (or not remitting), frequency and amount of remittances, and generational and gender-related differences influencing the act of remitting.

While intensive debates on the relationship between migration, development and remittances continued alongside, with the 1980s the behavioral dimension of remitting started to attract attention from the research community. The interest in these aspects of remittances that I mentioned was stimulated by econometricians who

shifted the temporal, i.e. the intergenerational, concern of bequest studies to a spatial focus. Inspired by intra-family money transfers from the elderly to younger family members that are examined in bequest studies, researchers began to examine intra-family long-distance money transfers (Lucas and Stark 1985; 902).

A recurrent theme in these studies, which are written mostly by econometricians, is whether migrants send money to their families out of altruism or self-interest. A migrant acting with purely altruistic motivations remits to her/his family just because s/he cares about them. In other words, within the altruistic framework the migrant remits because s/he derives utility out of the increase in the income, and therefore per capita consumption, of the people s/he left behind (Lucas and Stark 1985, 903).

At the other end of the spectrum, pure self-interest of a migrant lies as the other possible motivation behind the act of remitting. Several reasons are discussed in the literature as they can lead a migrant to remit with self-interested motivations. For one thing, the migrant might expect to be considered as an heir to the family heritage. Or, the migrant might send remittances as an act of exchange in which s/he pays for family and kin's care of chores s/he cannot attend to. In other words, if the migrant has investments in her/his place of origin, s/he might remit to family and friends to make sure they would look after the investments while s/he is away. Lastly, if the migrant has the intention to return her/his home country someday s/he might remit to invest in land, housing and livestock or to improve prestige, influence and relations with those left behind (Lucas and Stark 1985, 904).

However, purely altruistic and purely self-interested motivations are not realistic in the sense that they do not explain "the extent of remittance and its



variability, through time and across persons” (Lucas and Stark 1985, 904) and therefore they are too strict to reflect the actual motives behind a migrant’s remitting behavior.

For this reason, from the NELM point of view, Robert E. B. Lucas and Oded Stark (1985) developed an eclectic theory that they call “tempered altruism” or “enlightened self-interest” by locating the migrant-sending household at the center of their theory in line with the NELM perspective’s understanding of migration as a household strategy. According to them, the pure altruism approach is too simple to explain complex “household arrangements ... within an extended family.” (Lucas and Stark 2007, 902) whereas the pure self-interest argument cannot explain why remittances accumulate within families rather than in other social contexts in which migrants may have stakes. For this reason, in remittance relations between migrants and their families left behind “altruism is tempered” with migrants’ self-centered motivations while “self-interest is enlightened” by care and attachment felt for families (Lucas and Stark 1985, 914-15).

Apart from the motivations behind remitting, more recently, various factors have been researched for their impacts on remitting behavior in an effort to discover the “determinants of remittances.” Among the determinants considered are gender, generation, pattern of migration (for example, whether it is temporary or permanent), the extent of crime in the country of origin, and source country policies toward remittances. Below you will find a review of selected examples of such studies on remitting behavior.

The discussions of gender as a determinant of remitting behavior arise from the fact that there has been a steady increase in the migration of women independent

from male household heads and other male relatives since the 1990s. For women have become significant remittance senders, this phenomenon, which is termed the feminization of migration, has been analyzed for its implications on remittances. In these analyses, it is argued that as remittances are circulating within gendered networks the issue is never independent from gender (Kofman 2006, 1-2).

In an illustrative study on the remittances of female and male migrants from the Philippines, which is a country with almost equal number of emigrants from both sexes, Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2005) make a gender-based comparison of remittance flows to the country. According to their findings, while men remit 60 percent of their earnings, women remit only 45 percent of their earnings and therefore men contribute more to households they left behind. Assuming that living expenses are the same for women and men everywhere and attributing this result to 1.5 fold earning disparity between men and women in the case of the Philippines, they suggest that the widespread view of women as better remitters is wrong (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005, 56-63). Moreover, by making this argument, they emphasize that it is income disparities between sexes and not gender by itself that creates differences in remitting behavior.

As a contribution to studies on the implications of migrants' generational differences as a determinant, Fokkema, Cela and Ambrosetti (2013) undertook an analysis of the remitting behavior of second generation Moroccan, Turkish and former Yugoslav migrants in Europe and discussed it with reference to the above-mentioned duality of altruism versus self-interest and their modified intermediate version, that is the tempered altruism/enlightened self-interest model proposed by Lucas and Stark (1985). Resting on the studies of transnational migration scholars arguing that transnationalism can be seen among second-generation migrants,

Fokkema and others assert that second generation migrants remit as well (Fokkema, Cela and Ambrosetti 2013, 541-42). Accordingly, they hypothesize that theories designed to explain first generation migrants' motivations behind remitting can shed light on that of the second generation (Fokkema, Cela and Ambrosetti 2013, 549).

Then, based on their data of 4,040 people sampled from a survey conducted in 2007-2008 among second generation Moroccan, Turkish and former Yugoslav migrants in Europe (Fokkema, Cela and Ambrosetti 2013, 550), the authors arrive at the conclusion that the second generation's remitting behavior is shaped firstly by altruistic motivations stemming from emotional links with their parents' country, and secondly by the exchange motivation in which the migrant expects the remittance-receivers to attend to her/his investments in the country of origin (Fokkema, Cela and Ambrosetti 2013, 562). One unexpected and interesting result of their study is that when second generation migrants remit out of altruism to their families in countries of origin, the concern is not only the well-being of the remittance-receiver household, but also their own "desire to invest in ancestral country" (Fokkema, Cela and Ambrosetti 2013, 563).

A similar study that coupled the issue of altruism with another determinant is Carlos Vargas-Silva's (2009) work on the effect of crime on remitting behavior in Colombia, a country with high crime rates. Regarding that remittances decrease as well-being of the households left behind increases, Vargas-Silva argues that at first sight altruistic motivations seem to be more significant in a Colombian migrant's remitting behavior. Therefore, he first hypothesizes that remittances would increase if welfare of a household declines as a result of a criminal incidence (Vargas-Silva 2009, 234, 243). However, in this case, he sees that as household well-being decreases remittances decrease as well. Therefore, he arrives at the conclusion that at

least when the determining variable is taken as crime, self-interested motivations seem to be the decisive factor (Vargas-Silva 2009, 243).

The form of migration is another determinant that attracts the interest of remittance researchers. For example, Dustmann and Mestres (2010) analyze the relationship between remittance flows and permanency of migration in Germany in the period between 1984 and 1994 by referring to a survey conducted at the time with six hundred immigrant households (Dustmann and Mestres 2010, 62-64). In other words, they examine the ways return plans impinge on resident migrants' remitting behavior in Germany. Based on their analysis, they suggest that differences between remitting behavior of permanent and temporary migrants are remarkable in terms of migrants' inclination to remit (Dustmann and Mestres 2010, 65). In their sample, they found out that temporary migrants have a much higher probability to remit. Moreover, if migrants shift their migration intentions from eventual return to permanent stay, there occurs decrease in remittances (Dustmann and Mestres 2010, 67).

As for the effect of source country policies on migrants' remitting behavior, Thomas Straubhaar's (1986) study on Turkish guest worker migrants in Germany is a good example. In this study, Straubhaar explores the remitting behavior of migrants with investment purposes and measures the effect of economic incentives by the Turkish state aiming to attract remittances of migrants in Germany in the period between 1963 and 1982 (Straubhaar 1986, 730-37). According to the results he arrives at, what shaped Turkish migrants' remitting behavior were not the economic incentives provided by the state. In contrast, their remitting behavior was determined first by their income situation in Germany, and second by political stability in Turkey. Economic incentives had the third place among their preferences. In other

words, rather than responding to incentives, the migrants' remitting behavior reacted more to political order and stability (Straubhaar 1986, 737-738).

### Remitting Practices

In their 2013 article, Carling and Hoelscher develop a model to explain the relationship between migrants' integration to countries of residence and transnationality through the example of remitting; a truly transnational practice conditioned by both local and transnational dynamics (Carling and Hoelscher 2013, 939-40). According to them, like in all transnational practices and as shown on Table 1, migrants' act of remitting depends on the migrant's capacity and desire to participate, which, in turn, are shaped transnationally and locally (Carling and Hoelscher 2013, 941).

According to their model, the act of remitting is mostly a result of the interplay between (1) the economic integration of a migrant to her/his place of residence through employment and (2) her/his continued ties with the country of origin. While the first is a locally determined factor on which the capacity to remit depends, the latter is a transnational one conditioned by the migrant's desire – the priority s/he gives to remitting home among many other ways to use money (Carling and Hoelscher 2013, 939-41).

Table 1: Carling and Hoelscher’s (2013) Conceptual Explanation of Migrants’ Participation in Remitting. Reproduced from Carling and Hoelscher (2013).

		Intermediate Determinants	
		Capacity	Desire
Spheres of Influence	Local	Economic Integration	Socio-cultural Integration
	Transnational	-	Ties to the country of origin

However, as it is visible on the table Carling and Hoelscher use in order to better explain their model and arguments, these two factors are not the only ones that determine the relationship between integration and transnationalism in the example of remitting. There are two additional aspects of remittances that the authors do not make use of in constructing their argument. The first one is socio-cultural integration with the place of residence. For Carling and Hoelscher, the effect of this factor is not determinate on the act of remitting. As for the second one, it is not even defined or showed on the table. But, they believe “what might be placed here is the availability of transfer services, to which potential remittance receivers have access” (Carling and Hoelscher 2013, 941). In other words, the neglected factor is remitting practices. For them, the reason is not just that their data set does not provide information on the subject but also that the subject itself “is of marginal importance” (Carling and Hoelscher 2013, 941).

Yet, without remitting practices included, one would not have a complete picture of the relationship between integration and transnationality explained through the act of remitting. As will be seen in the Chapter Five of this thesis in the case of

business partnerships between Moldovan and Turkish people who run tourism agencies that conduct remittance transfers to Moldova, remitting practices are created by relationship patterns in which integration in the country of residence and transnationality increasingly conflate.

The omission of remitting practices is not unique to Carling and Hoelscher (2013). In-depth studies on remitting practices are considered to be negligible by many in the scholarly research community. However, policy circles and some researchers influenced by them pay special importance to remitting practices. Due to the magnitude of remittance flows through informal channels, policy-making institutions and intergovernmental organizations are examining these practices carefully and looking for ways to attract remittance-senders to formal transfer channels provided by official financial institutions. Defining development in macroeconomic terms as overall growth of the finance sector, they argue that remittances transferred through official channels contribute to development more than informally transferred remittances do. It is by the effort of these institutions, we get specific information on the informal remitting practices of individual migrants in different places.

One such endeavor came from the World Bank through publications on specific “remittance corridors” within the established migratory systems between country pairs. An example of these publications is an in-depth study of the remittance flows from the Serbian diaspora in Germany to Serbia (De Luna Martinez, Endo and Barberis 2006). The point of departure of the study is that half of all remittances sent to Serbia from Germany (\$2.4 billion total remittances) are transferred through informal channels despite the availability of official and licensed institutions for money transfers (De Luna Martinez, Endo and Barberis 2006, 3). The

study does not make a distinction between migrants working with and without work permits due to non-availability of data on irregular Serbian labor migrants in Germany, and implicitly assumes that all the remittances mentioned are sent by regular migrants.

Serbia, formerly a constituent republic of Yugoslavia, was one of the countries that provided Germany with guest workers based on a bilateral agreement signed between Yugoslavia and Germany in 1969. As part of the agreement, Yugoslav banks opened branches and offices in Germany by offering money transfer services in return for minimum or no cost to facilitate remittance transfers from Germany. This mechanism worked very well until 1992, when the United Nations imposed economic sanctions on Serbia and Germany closed offices and branches of Serbian banks. From then on, the Serbian community in Germany started to use informal ways to remit. Today, even after the termination of economic sanctions they still make use of these informal channels due to the decreasing credibility of Serbian banks in the eyes of the Serbian diaspora (De Luna Martinez, Endo and Barberis 2006, 10).

Hence, in addition to services provided by banks and the money transfer system Western Union, the Serbian community in Germany transfers their money through two informal remitting practices. Their first informal option is to give the remittance money to bus drivers commuting between Serbia and Germany to entrust to the receiver in Serbia in return for a fee charged from the sender. This practice emerged when the economic embargo on Serbia was still in force. At the time, bus drivers were the only service providers in the remittance market and they made great profits as they set the price at the ten percent of the amount remitted. After the embargo, formal remitting channels were reestablished and bus drivers could not



protect their old, advantaged status in fixing and setting prices. Currently, they charge around three percent of the amount remitted (De Luna Martinez, Endo and Barberis 2006, 24). As for the actual workings of remitting through bus drivers:

In the Munich-Belgrade line, a bus leaves Munich at 6 PM on Thursdays and 4:30 PM on Fridays. A sender gives a bus driver an envelope with money after counting the amount of money in front of the driver. The bus driver takes the money and contacts a recipient by a cellular phone when the bus comes near to a destination where a beneficiary is located. A sender, a bus driver, and a recipient do not exchange any code or number for confirmation (De Luna Martinez, Endo and Barberis 2006, 24).

The second informal option available to Serbs in Germany is hand delivery. In this simple practice, the sender entrust their money to friends or relatives returning to or visiting Serbia. As it will be showed in Chapter Five of this thesis, Post-Soviet irregular migrants in Istanbul utilize both of these informal remitting practices too.

The policy makers' desire to attract remittances to formal remitting channels served as the stimulator of a few existing research-oriented and econometric case studies in remitting practices. For example, in their study on the remitting practice preferences of Moldovan emigrants abroad, Siegel and Lücke (2013) ask "what policy interventions are more likely to promote formal transfers" and define three sets of variables that determine a migrant's choice between formal and informal remitting practices, which are classified into three groups as well.

The determining sets of variables defined by Siegel and Lücke are 1) socioeconomic situation of the migrant and the remittance-receiving household, 2) characteristic features of the migratory process including legal status, length of stay and identity-related familiarity of the destination country 3) financial factors including the household's possession of bank accounts, the regularity of remittances

and the main motivation in the selection of a specific transfer channel (Siegel and Lücke 2013, 122, 130).

As for the remitting practices, they are defined by Siegel and Lücke as 1) formal remitting services provided by banks, money transfer systems like Western Union and post offices, 2) informal practices like entrusting money to bus/minibus drivers or train conductors for delivery to relatives and friends, and 3) personal transfers by migrants themselves or kin and friends (Siegel and Lücke 2013, 127).

By using data they compiled from a 2006 nation-wide survey of households in Moldova, where migration is a “mass phenomenon” and every one household out of three receive remittances (Siegel and Lücke 2013, 121), they find that formal services (banks, money transfer systems and post offices) are used as the main transfer channels in almost half of all remittance transactions between migrants and households, whereas informal services and personal delivery are used respectively by one fifth and one third of all remittance transfers (Siegel and Lücke 2013, 127-28).

In response to the question why half of these transactions do not take place through formal ways, Siegel and Lücke argue that the main determining factor is first and foremost the overall transnational circumstances of migrants. To be more specific, in the sample they use, migrants who use the remitting practices grouped by Siegel and Lücke under the second category of informal services are usually irregular migrants who have been residing in high-income countries for more than one year without bank accounts, whereas migrants who use the third category of remitting practices, that is personal delivery are residing in the Commonwealth of Independent

States<sup>3</sup> for less than one year and do not remit regularly. Although the main concern of both migrant groups is the cost of remitting; different migratory processes, many factors that condition the process (like the country of destination, length of stay and visa status) and the resulting transnational abilities of a migrant are more significant in determining which remitting practice would be available and more convenient for the migrant (Siegel and Lücke 2013, 137-38).

Against this background, Siegel and Lücke imply that in order to attract migrants who prefer the informal ways to formal ways and who are usually irregular migrants, what should be done before reducing transaction costs is that formal service providers should be more tolerant in their identification demands regarding that the irregular migrants are tolerated by the host countries as well. (Siegel and Lücke 2013, 139). This argument sounds doubly exploitative. Irregular migrants are already open to many possible ways of exploitation, as they are considered “illegal.” The involvement of banking firms or other financial service providers in remitting transfers of irregular migrants by turning a blind eye to their legal status can be protective against possible abuses and corrupt behavior by people who operate informal remitting practices. However, while many states already profit from the cheap and unprotected labor of irregular migrants without any attempt to regularize their residence and employment, this act of banking firms would be a further exploitation of the migrants’ already disadvantaged status.

All in all, despite the existence of a huge literature on the developmental effects of remittances and migrants’ remitting behavior, there are too few studies on the remitting practices of migrants, and unfortunately these studies are usually

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<sup>3</sup> A loose confederation, established in 1991, that includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, all of which are former constituent republics of the Soviet Union.

quantitative ones stimulated by international organizations' or governments' policy-related desires to know and regulate remittance markets rather than scholarly reasons looking for in-depth knowledge. Therefore, this thesis intends to contribute to this under-researched field by documenting the remitting practices of Post-Soviet irregular labor migrants Istanbul.

## Conclusion

With the aim of providing a glimpse on issues, themes and discussions in the literature on transnational migrant remittances, this chapter presented a review of selected studies divided into groups according to their main subjects of inquiry. Remittances have been a significant source for migrant families and a matter of excitement for emigration countries. Although not always optimistically, the effects of remittances on development have been tirelessly discussed for more than sixty years. The motivations behind migrants' act of remitting have constantly occupied the minds of migration researchers. Also, currently, there is a growing interest in the relationship between domestic political processes in emigration countries and migrant remittances.

However, the channels that migrants employ in order to transfer their remittances, that is remitting practices, have not been paid proper attention. What is more, the few existing studies on the issue are stimulated by the intergovernmental economic institutions and governments' desire to formalize informal remitting practices. Without any attempt at inquiring into the emergence and dynamics of these informal remitting practices that influence the lives of many people including

diverse migrant groups and destination country residents who operate the informal remitting mechanisms sometimes together with immigrants, the unconventional links established between different countries through migrants' transnational existence remain obscure. Furthermore, without examining informal remittances in the everyday lives of migrants, that is without understanding remitting practices in relation with the daily lives of irregular migrants who employ them, it is not likely that states and international organizations would succeed in formalizing informal remittance flows.

Therefore, apart from providing an overview of remittance studies, the chapter also opens up space for the study of this under-researched phenomenon; a purpose that it shares with Chapter Four, which looks for remitting practices in the literature on migrant experiences in the context of migrations from Post-Soviet states to Turkey while providing an account of Turkey's immigration story. However, before turning to the issue of post-Soviet migrations to Turkey, it is imperative to understand the two characteristics of contemporary migration flows in which these remitting practices emerge, namely transnationalism and irregularity which the next chapter discusses.

## CHAPTER THREE

### TRANSNATIONALITY, IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES

Transnationality and irregularity are two significant features that we observe in many contemporary migration flows. Even if these characteristics are not completely novel, their level of intensity presents us with more complex pictures in various aspects and stages of migration. The actual movement from one country to another, the assimilation process into a society of destination, or the life afterwards in the country of destination may all take shape in line with these two features. Remitting practices are no exception. Therefore, while the act of remitting should be examined within the context of current transnationality as an act that transcends national boundaries, it also provides another context to look at the phenomenon of transnationality.

Furthermore, the irregularization of migration presents us with another puzzle. Regarding that significant portions of worldwide remittances flow through informal channels, the question is whether (and, if yes, how) irregular migration, has an impact on how remittances are transferred. Is there a parallel between a certain migrant's legal status and her/his preference of remitting practice? Or, in cases where irregular migrants cannot transfer their money through available official or formal transfer options due to legal constraints, how does the money flow?

Obviously, the methods available for remittance transfers, that is, remitting practices, depend on the context in which migrants live in destination countries. Yet, in order to examine whether the irregularization of migration has any effect on the remitting practices employed by migrants, as the Chapter Five of this thesis will try

to do in the case of Post-Soviet irregular migrants, we need to delve into the issue of irregular migration.

All in all, an examination of remitting practices requires understanding these two characteristics of current migratory flows, while at the same time remitting practices also offer a different optic to look at transnationalism and irregularity as they provide us with a chance to look at the micro level to understand the emergence and development of transnationalism from the grassroots.

To this aim, based on the examination of migrant transnationalism and irregularization of migration, this chapter offers a theoretical framework for understanding informal remitting practices. Moreover, “migration industry,” a key term coined by Robin Cohen (1997) and recently developed by Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen (2013), is presented as the category in which informal remitting practices that emerge at the juncture of transnationality and irregularity should be evaluated.

### Migrant Transnationalism

“Migration research in the era of globalization” argues Stephen Castles, “is a transnational undertaking” (Castles 2007, 352). Indeed, since the late 1980s and especially in the 1990s, there has been a rapid increase in the use of the transnational approach by migration scholars. Although transnationalism is not a novel phenomenon - the term transnational has been in use since the early Twentieth Century (Kivisto 2001, 549) - it gained popularity with the contribution of several

scholars including American anthropologists Michael Kearney (1991, 1995) and Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller and Cristina Szanton-Blanc (1994, 1995). Today, as a key feature of migration, transnationality obsoletes the traditional explanations that perceive migration as the movement of a migrant who leaves one country for another resulting in a once and for all integration process into the destination country.

The aim of this section is to explain migrant transnationalism, as a key feature of remitting practices examined in this thesis for not only migrants themselves but also their money is transnationalized in the process, so as to discuss the context in which these remitting practices emerge. To this aim, first, the section provides the definitions and discussions provided for the phenomenon in the literature, second, it proposes informal transnationalism as a subcategory of transnationalism among many other forms it can take; an example of which is provided by informal remitting practices employed by migrants.

Transnationalism falls into the area of interest of various disciplines at different levels of analysis. Therefore, before delving into the issue of migrant transnationalism it would be useful to mark the general boundaries of the concept. Similarly, distinguishing it from two kin concepts, namely globalization/globality, which is a closely related contemporary phenomenon, and internationality is a necessary first step.

In the case of internationality our duty is much simpler as it refers straightforwardly to affairs that are inter-national; that is, these affairs are either state-level relations occurring between nation-states like diplomatic relations or they build upon these inter-nation-state affairs. Student exchange programs are a



manifestation of the international, not only because they are supported and promoted by nation-states, but also because they are strictly governed by nation-state policies. For example, in the case of student exchange relations, usually after the end of the term in exchange, usually for two years, students are banned from entering the country on employment visas for one of the aims of these exchange programs is to raise qualified human capital for the countries in need of this resource. Therefore, inter-national affairs do not pose a threat to nation-state borders. Rather, these are realized within the confines of nation-states for nation-states.

As for globalization, according to Jan Aart Scholte (2005) globalization as we experience it today corresponds to the advancement of supraterritorial relations between people, resulting in a break with the understanding of the world as a territorially divided geography. Therefore, globality corresponds to a condition in which the earth is a social space in itself and not solely the sum of territorial entities like countries and regions. (Scholte 2005, 60-61). Similarly, for Michael Kearney globalization refers to “social, economic and demographic processes that take place within nations but also transcend them, such that attention limited to local processes, identities, and units of analysis yields incomplete understanding of the local” (Kearney 1995, 548).

Despite overlapping with globalization, transnationalism has a more narrow meaning and scope. In contrast to the delinking from territoriality within a global space in the case of globality, “transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states” (Kearney 1995, 548). However, transnationalism and globalization are not unconnected from each other. In one sense, transnationalism is one manifestation of globalization (Vertovec 2009, 2) and the advance of global capitalism.

Both globalization and technological advancements that have also paved the way for its emergence have played a significant facilitating role in the emergence of transnational migration and activities. A key factor behind the current scope and intensity of transnationalism is the technological innovations in communication and transportation (Portes et al. 1999, 223; Vertovec 2009, 3). Cheapening air travel, telephone lines, Internet and e-mail have greatly facilitated staying interconnected and engaging with happenings in distant places while leading lives in different localities.

Although he does not use the word transnational migration, this role globalization played in the emergence of current migrations is outlined by Stephen Castles (2002) in an optimistic tone with reference to a definition of globalization as a kind of overarching structure that determines the nature of migration. For him, international migration is a systemic factor in globalization, just like it was previously in colonialism, industrialization and nation-building. Migration exists in every society at every time, yet its characteristics alter in relation with the economic, social, technological and cultural developments of the time (Castles 2002, 1144-46). And under conditions of globalization -which, for Castles, refers essentially to a shift in the spatial configuration of the world (in Manuel Castells's terms) from a "space of places" to a "space of flows" where goods, capital, services, ideas, cultural products and people flow through transnational networks- a significant feature of migration is that it challenges the sovereignty of the nation-state through novel migration patterns including temporary or circular migrations realized through frequent back-and-forth movements across borders, more diversified and increasing migration flows, informal networks and transnational communities (Castles 2002, 1146).

Furthermore, transnationalism marks the beginning of a new period in the reconfiguration of the capitalist nation-state. After the “End of Empire,” or in the transnational era that began with the collapse of colonial empires following the Second World War, the old pattern of international labor migration reversed as a new global economic order emerged (Kearney 1991, 57).

Prior to the War, that is, in the “modern period ... in which the colonial powers, constituted as nation-states [were] clearly differentiated from their colonies,” the laborer remained in his/her own land -the periphery- to produce to the advantage of the colonizer nation-states -the core- (Kearney 1991, 53-54). Yet, the post-war period has a transnational character.

In the years following the Second World War, with the “End of Empire,” the core had to withdraw from its periphery through decolonization, leaving the former periphery incapable of hiring all of its labor force (Kearney 1991, 57). A parallel development in the late Twentieth Century has been the global restructuring of capital and accumulation patterns in which all parts of the world have been included in a single system of production while investments have concentrated in cities or regions that emerge as global communication and organization hubs instead of whole national economies. The emergent “global cities” or countries that are centers of global capitalism have become destination countries for people of former peripheries, whose living standards had significantly deteriorated after their post-colonial states were penetrated by foreign capital, resulting in growing foreign debt. (Saskia Sassen cited in Basch et al. 1995, 50; Basch et al. 1994, 24-25).

As the surplus workforce is flowing to the developed core countries, which are also the centers of global capitalist economy, this flow leads to the

transnationalization of identities and the “peripherilization of the core” since the work force of the periphery has started to be absorbed in the core (Kearney 1991, 57), resulting in the condition Kearney describes by saying “the arms of the core have now come back onto itself.” (Kearney 1995, 554).

The transnationalization of identities mentioned above is also a consequence of a rising racist discourse in Europe and the United States, places that possess many such centers of global capitalist economy that attract migrant workers. Feeling economically unsecure and threatened in places where there is racist prejudice against them, migrants are compelled to sustain their transnational links with countries of origin. Moreover, their incorporation into nation-state building plans of both sending and receiving countries helps to reinforce transnationalism, resulting in “the paradox of our times,” that is the simultaneous rise of transnationalism and nation-building processes (Basch et al. 1995, 50, 62). When coupled with the available technologies of communication and transportation, migrant transnationalism becomes easier to sustain.

The end result of these circumstances, namely transnationalism, for Michael Kearney, defines the current condition of the nation-state. According to his own definition of transnationalism, it is “a blurring, ... a reordering of the binary cultural, social, and epistemological distinctions of the modern period” and its practical meaning relates to the existing sorts of identity and organizations that are unconstrained by boundaries of nation-states, like transnational corporations (Kearney 1991, 55).

As it is visible, the problem with Kearney’s otherwise insightful definition is that it does not take into consideration the contradiction of transnationalism rising at

the same time with nation-building processes. Instead, he describes the current condition as one in which disciplines of “history and anthropology has entered a post-national age” (Kearney 1991, 55) in the sense that these disciplines require a new approach in their inquiries due to the decreasing capabilities of nation-states.

Moreover, Kearney’s definition of transnationalism is a general and all-encompassing one that incorporates both highly institutionalized entities and more loosely organized migrant communities. However, more specific and migrant-oriented definitions that try to capture different aspects of migrant transnationalism have been suggested by scholars who study transnational processes migrants experience. These are more elaborate and detailed conceptualizations as they consider both different levels of analysis and various features of migrants’ transnational activities.

One exemplary approach that differentiates between different levels of analysis is by Alejandro Portes, Luis E. Guarnizo and Patricia Landolt (1999). According to them, contemporary migration flows enable us to speak of an emerging transnational social field which is constituted by persons who live their lives across boundaries of nation-states and by their repeated and continuous cross-border economic, political and social activities. In this sense, transnationalism includes “occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation” (Portes et al. 1999, 218-219). For them, the appropriate level of analysis for transnationalism is the individual and her/his supportive social networks. Behind their preferential treatment of the individual as the main unit of analysis lies the methodological assumption that by departing from the study of transnational individual we can trace one by one the features of transnational networks, business enterprises and wider umbrella structures

and institutions including local or national governments under current transnationality (Portes et al. 1999, 220).

Yet, their reasoning is not only methodological. By perceiving transnational activities and organizing of individual migrants as a counter-action against government policies and global capitalism, they regard the individual as the main initiator of transnationality, and transnationalism as essentially a grassroots phenomenon later capitalized on by states that are trying to make use of the potential benefits of their transnational expatriates (Portes et al. 1999, 220). Although the emergence of transnational corporations is not specified in their analysis unlike the rise of state interest in transnationalism, they provide us with a working typology that classifies different transnationalisms based on two axes: the sector of social life (economic, social or political) and level of institutionalization (high or low) (Portes et al. 1999, 221).

The sector of social life refers to the content of transnational activities conducted by transnational actors in the emerging transnational social fields. Firstly, the activities can be political as in grant of dual nationality by states or fundraising for political causes in countries of origin by immigrant communities. Secondly, they can also be socio-cultural ones that might include the organization of cultural events by foreign embassies or of folk culture events by immigrants in countries of destination. Lastly, they can also be economic activities that can be exemplified by the involvement of multinational companies in overseas markets or by the small-scale cross-border businesses established by immigrants. The first example given for each sector of life corresponds to “high” level of institutionalization in which the undertakers of transnational activities are highly institutionalized entities like states

and multinational companies; whereas the second of each refers to “low” level of institutionalization that can be seen in transnational activities initiated by migrants and migrant communities. In the literature, high transnationalism and low transnationalism are also known respectively by the names of “transnationalism from above” and “transnationalism from below” (Portes et al. 1999, 221-22). In our case, remitting practices of migrants and migrant communities fall into the category of low economic transnationalism. However, Portes and his colleagues’ conceptualization and classification of transnationalisms does not provide us with enough tools to make sense of informal remitting practices that emerge in countries of destination.

In another approach that was one of the first to deal with migrant transnationalism in the 1990s, Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1994, 1995) direct their attention completely to migrant transnationalism and make a more detailed analysis of the phenomenon. For Basch and her co-writers, transnational migration is a process in which migrants build and maintain simultaneous relations in a fashion that links the societies of emigration and immigration together. The lives of these migrants, who the authors refer to as “transmigrants,” “depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders” (Basch et al. 1995, 48). These interconnections are multiple in the sense that they span economic, familial, organizational, political, religious and social relations (Basch et al. 1994, 8). As transmigrants settle and get involved in political, economic, social and daily life in countries of destination while at the same time maintaining crossborder relations and transactions; they are “simultaneous[ly] embedded in more than one society” (Basch et al. 1995, 48).

Despite the value of analyses proposed by Portes, Basch and their colleagues, a more specific and comprehensive treatment of migrant transnationalism that might be of help in our attempt at understanding migrants' informal remitting practices has been developed by Peggy Levitt (2001a, 2001b), who has also proposed the term social remittances that was mentioned in Chapter Two.

Peggy Levitt's is a practice-based analysis of transnational migration. Transnational practices take place in transnational social fields constituted by cross-border social networks that involve migrants -both frequent and occasional movers across boundaries- and those who do not move but live in a transnationalized context. For Levitt, one does not have to move to become transnational or to engage in transnational activities (Levitt 2001b, 197-198). Therefore, residents of the Dominican village Miraflores, where Levitt focuses her study on transnationalism, are "transnational villagers" due to their transnational interactions and exchanges with co-villager migrants in the United States, adaptation to imported values and practices and flow of social remittances in the form of ideas, behavior and social capital (Levitt 2001a, 11).

Similarly, not all migrants are necessarily transnational. Some of them might prefer not to engage in the transnational activities that are available in the transnational social fields they are involved in. Some of them may move frequently to manage their cross-border political, economic, social or religious relations, while some others may move less frequently and still others may not move at all (Levitt 2001a, 9).

Transnational social fields emerge when migration between a sending and receiving country reaches so intense levels in magnitude, duration and impact that the



established social networks evolve into them. Even if these transnational social fields may come into existence initially only with economic interactions, later they can grow to include religious, political and social dimension of life. The existence and completeness of religious, social and political institutions within transnational social fields, which these institutions create and are created by, determines the availability of channels that migrants can sustain transnational practices (Levitt 2001b, 197-198).

Levitt explains the origins and emergence of these institutions no further than saying that these institutions and transnational social fields create each other in a circular manner. Yet, to the extent that social networks which mature into transnational social fields are constituted by transnational practices of migrants, we can conclude that transnational social fields both generate and are generated by transnational practices that migrants and non-migrants conduct across borders, institutions emerging in the meantime.

The omission of the origins of mentioned institutions might be a result of the level of analysis which Peggy Levitt chose to explain transnationalism. In contrast to Portes and others' focus on the individual, for Levitt, transnationalism should be analyzed at the community level; in between "high transnationalism" (from above) and "low transnationalism" (from below). For her, individuals cannot be considered out of the transnational community context as transnational practices are a function of and made possible by organized social groups. Communities are not only mediating entities between levels of high (e.g. states, various international organizations) and low (e.g. individuals) transnationalism, but also they provide a more sound way to explain transnationalism as they are the mechanisms that increase and diversify transnational practices that might be conducted by migrants. Furthermore, they enable us to include those left behind into our analyses as

transnational migration significantly effects not only the migrant but also those who are left behind in countries of origin (Levitt 2001a, 7).

All of these abovementioned approaches contribute to our understanding of migrant transnationalism. Yet, according to a criticism directed to transnationalism by Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004) in their powerful critique, the definitions provided for transnationalism in the literature are often contradictory. Taking the definitions provided by Portes et al. and Peggy Levitt; Waldinger and Fitzgerald argue that while the first portrays “a transnational condition of being” the second one describes practices which are inherently “more erratic and less intense” than the first. (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004, 1180). I perceive a problem here with Waldinger and Fitzgerald’s approach to Portes and his colleagues’ definition and do not find the two definitions as contradictory. In the case of migrant transnationalism, limiting it to “occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contact over time across national borders for their implementation,” as do Portes et al. (1999, 219) does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that a transnational migrant is in a transnational condition in every moment of her/his life as a migrant. Rather, it is the recurrence of transnational activities and practices that create that condition of being transnational as in Levitt’s argument. For example, in my sample of Post-Soviet irregular migrants, there are migrants who migrate circularly and/or remit periodically despite having lived in Turkey for the last ten years. Plus, migrants’ regular dual engagement with more than one nation-state context and the sustainment of these interconnections across borders emerge as the significant aspects of migrant transnationalism in all of the three approaches.

However, due to at least two reasons Peggy Levitt’s is more enabling to explain remitting practices including the ones that are devised and operated in

receiving countries in cooperation with native residents. First of all, Levitt's practice-based focus enables us to examine remitting practices in itself as one factor that makes migrants transnational, as these practices constitute and are constituted by transnational social fields established between, say, Turkey and Moldova or Georgia. Secondly, the inclusion of those who do not move into her analysis of transnationalism enables us, though with a shift of spaces from the sending country to the receiving country, to situate the condition of native shipping firm operators in Turkey (or better in Laleli district of Istanbul) who assist Post-Soviet migrants in their remittance transfers not only by engaging in more than one nation-state in their business operations, but also by learning to speak one or more Slavic languages in the course of constant relations with post-Soviet migrants and establishing business partnerships with them without having to move to anywhere.

Nevertheless, there is one aspect of this kind of transnationalism that we cannot explain with Levitt's analysis; and that is the irregular and informal characteristics of the kind of transnationalism that we observe in Post-Soviet migrations to Turkey. Indeed, most of the time, the approaches to transnationalism presented above implicitly assume the regularity of migration to and settlement in receiving countries. This is exemplified by that irregularity of migration within transnational contexts is not considered as a distinct form of transnationalism. For example, in Steven Vertovec's (2009) outline of different accounts of transnationalism that are applied "conceptual tuning" in the literature based on empirical variations, various aspects of transnationalism -including its level of institutionalization, regularity as well as motivations and reasons behind transnational living- have been presented (Vertovec 2009, 18) while informality is not considered as a factor. However, as the following sections will show, along with

transnationalism, irregularity and informality are significant features of contemporary migration flows. Accordingly, irregular migration and informality deserve at least some particular interest in studies of transnationalism.

The Post-Soviet migrants that constitute a primary focus of this thesis and the native shopkeepers with whom they interact and engage in remitting practices, about whom you will read in Chapter Five, provide an example of informal migrant transnationalism, which is closely related to the irregular nature of the Post-Soviet labor migrations to Turkey. Departing from this, an examination of irregular migration is in order.

### The Irregularization of Migration

From the beginning of this thesis, instead of defining Post-Soviet migrants in Turkey, who enter, stay and/or work without formal authorization as illegal migrants or undocumented migrants, which are also frequently used alternative terms in the literature, I have preferred calling them “irregular migrants.” The obvious problem with using the term illegal migrant is that this term criminalizes persons’ themselves while attempting to label their deeds that violate nation-states’ border regimes and laws.

As for the term undocumented migrant, despite being a useful concept that refers to the migrant who lacks necessary legal documentation like visa, residence permit and work permit, it does not capture all the possible ways that a migrant can unlawfully exist within the boundaries of a state of which s/he is not a citizen. Not all

irregular migrants are completely undocumented. A migrant can be undocumented only in some of the three aspects of her/his existence in a destination country: Entrance, residence and employment. (Atasü-Topçuoğlu 2012, 504). For example, some labor migrants have residence permits while lacking work permits. Also, not all migrants enter destination countries by crossing borders without any legal document. Many migrants, just like the ones I interviewed for this thesis, enter destination countries legally on tourist visas, find employment and overstay, and hence fall into an irregular situation. Therefore, although they do not obsolete the nation-state perspective as people who are just moving in a common world are still defined with reference to a status of “regularity” the provisions of which are defined by nation-states, the terms “irregular migrant” and “irregular migration” are more comprehensive and analytically useful in defining various possible conditions of migrants even if they are not terms that are free from nation-state bias.

As comprehensive as it is as an analytical concept, global irregular migration is also hard to capture empirically and statistically not only due to its undercover nature but also partly to a different kind of comprehensiveness stemming from uncomparable and noncorresponding definitions provided by each state, institution or person trying to count irregular migrants. One problem stems from the inclusion of asylum seekers in some calculations. Even though asylum seekers might enter destination countries through irregular ways, in many cases, once they are in the country of destination they would be in possession of entitlement to apply for protection by international law unlike irregular migrants (Koser 2010, 181-3; Kraler and Reichel 2011, 99); and while they enjoy their protection in the course of asylum applications they may fall into irregularity once again in case their applications are rejected (Koser 2005, 57).

So, irregularity is also an unstable category. In addition to asylum seeking, irregular migrants may become regular through many different ways including receiving states' regularization policies and marriages (either authentic ones or marriages of convenience) with citizens of receiving countries. Similarly, as already mentioned above, a regular migrant can end up being irregular. This shifting character of irregular migration brings us to the clash between the measurement of migrant stocks and of migration flows.

(Irregular) migrant stock refers to the quantity of (irregular) migrant population in a country of destination at a given time, while quantifying migration flows provides us with information on the number of arrivals. When calculating irregular migration in a certain country, these two different methods would produce incompatible results due to circular migration patterns that are realized through back and forth movements between countries and the possibility of change in the status of some migrants from regular to irregular and vice versa. Yet, even if we assume that there is no change in the status of migrants, the result would still be incompatible due to deaths and departures (Koser 2010, 182). Another problem that adds to this is that data on irregular migration, either overall or regional and country-based, is not collected regularly and periodically. Therefore, as data on the worldwide scope of irregular migration do not go beyond fragmented, time-lagged and mostly incomparable estimations, we should be extremely careful with the available data.

Yet, despite these limitations, in order to have a grip on the issue of irregular migration, we need at least some approximate numbers. According to the United Nations, in 2013, the population of international migrants living in countries other than their own reached 232 million people in stock numbers, which makes the 3.2

percent of the world's population (United Nations 2013). However, this number reflects only the recorded migrants.

According to an estimation provided by Franck Düvell (2011) of the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society at University of Oxford, irregular immigrants add by 10 to 20 percent to the total population of migrants (Düvell 2011, 60). As for the more moderate estimate of the International Organization for Migration, that ratio is in the range of 10 to 15 percent (IOM 2010, 29). Based on these estimations, we can safely conclude that at least 10 percent of all the recorded migrant population in the world equals the population of irregular migrants, which corresponds to 23.2 million people. Despite being a significant amount, compared to the overall population of the world, it might seem miniscule. Yet, when distributed to countries that host these migrants, numerical and political seriousness of the issue emerges more clearly. For example, in the United States, the population of irregular migrants in 2009, again in stock numbers, was around 11 million, while in the European Union between 1.9 and 3.8 million irregular migrants resided in 2008. In Turkey, various estimations indicate that the number of irregular migrants is between 150,000 and 1,000,000 (Kirişçi 2007, 93).

Although these are proportionally small numbers, by themselves even with the lowest estimation they suggest that a significant number of people live and, as labor is an inextricably linked part of any migratory flow regardless of the primary reason behind the movement (Akalın 2012, 89-90), obviously work in countries other than their own country of citizenship irregularly; or “illegally” as some might prefer to call. Furthermore, irregular migration exhibits a rising trend. As the overall population of migrants increases, the number of irregular migrants increases as well (Massey and Capoferro 2004, 1076; Bade 2004, 351; Koser 2005, 54).

For Castles and Miller (2009), together with transnationalism, irregularity constitutes a defining feature of current migrations as the two disputably challenge the sovereignty of nation-states for “the extensiveness of irregular ... migration has probably never been greater than it is today” (Castles and Miller 2009, 3) while for Franck Düvell it is a structural and global phenomenon that we observe everywhere from the end of the Twentieth Century onwards (Düvell 2011, 60, 65) just like transnational labor migration has become a structural feature of today (Kearney 1991, 59).

But, why irregular migration has become such a significant phenomenon? Why irregular migration occurs and increases despite restrictive measures and policies of nation-states? The rest of this section will try to respond to these questions by discussing the increase in irregular migration flows, which I refer to as the irregularization of migration. It argues that the irregularization of migration is a result of a contradiction between economic concerns and political stance of nation-states and that it does not constitute a challenge to nation-states unlike what Castles and Miller (2009) are quoted to refer above. Moreover, this contradiction does not constitute a paradox per se (Calavita 1998, 560-1). On the contrary, irregular migration is an inextricably linked part of the globalized free market economy with post-Fordist production and accumulation patterns that require labor flexibility and global competitiveness. Based on this, the argument that this section develops is that irregular migration is a desirable phenomenon for nation-states who appropriate it to meet their demand for cheap, unprotected and therefore more profitable labor sources.

Below is a discussion of the rise of irregular migration from the late Twentieth Century onwards with the cases of the European Union and the United



States of America for they are two foci of immigration. A thorough analysis of Turkey's irregular immigration policy and its relations with the dynamics of the labor market is beyond the purposes of this thesis. Moreover, it would be an excessively ambitious project as Turkey has met irregular migration only recently and there is a serious deficiency of data availability. Yet, the conditions that structure the immigration atmosphere in the European Union and the United States of America are, I believe, relevant to developing capitalist countries like Turkey. My selection of these cases is due to that they provide a most crystallized example of the irregularization of migration, which is a phenomenon that is seen everywhere in the world, for being immigration magnets with advanced capitalism.

At the onset of increasing irregular migration in the late 1980s and 1990s (Bade 2004, 350-351), the securitization of migration and restrictive migration policies in the European Union both at the state and union level, and in the United States of America paved the way for the rise of irregular migration to these highly developed countries.

In Europe, from the 1950s onward the immigrant population kept growing and converted Europe eventually into "a continent of immigration," the migrant receiving states of which became increasingly concerned about its cultural, economic, political and social ramifications (Bade 2004, 340). With the late 1960s and 1970s, immigration policies changed character from rather liberal ones to those with a more restrictive stance, although the reason behind this change was not yet a public concern or fear about social and political life in Europe. Rather, as in that period guest worker migrations were the dominant migratory pattern, the reason was the changes that occurred in the labor market and a desire to protect domestic work force socially and economically (Huymans 2000, 754).

Yet, with the 1980s, due to rapid increase in the immigration of refugees and asylum seekers, this restrictive migration policy stance aggravated and the political discourse increasingly associated immigration with the disruption of social order, culture and welfare while immigration has become politicized and emerged as a top question in migrant-receiving European countries. In the meantime, as immigration came to be framed as an internal security issue, xenophobic and racist tendencies revived in certain parties and movements. Accordingly, this period was the beginning of the institutionalized handling of the issue of immigration at the union level, which is a phenomenon referred to as the Europeanization of immigration. European member states began cooperation on developing and coordinating immigration policies by making use of functional organizations like police forces. (Bade 2004, 345; Huymans 2000, 754-56).

As the European Union (formerly the European Communities) advanced integration and expansion since the 1950s, the perception of “stranger,” or better the perception of who constituted the stranger, has changed accordingly. While it was Southern Europeans in the 1960s and Turks in the 1970s; with the 1980s immigrants from the Third World filled that category. Fear of migration flows from Eastern Europe has not yet materialized at the time as the world was still divided into two blocs, but when the Cold War was over a protective stance against immigration was already in place (Bade 2004, 346-47) for the priority of common migration policies was the restriction of flows into the Union (Huymans 2000, 756). Hence immigration has completed a transformation into a matter of internal security and so emerged the so-called “Fortress Europe,” amalgamated within and strictly segregated from the outside. As it became harder and harder to enter highly developed European countries, those “outsiders,” who were in search of better lives while fleeing from

political or religious and/or economic hardships, turned to irregular ways to enter and stay in these countries, thereby producing new migratory patterns that oscillate between regularity and irregularity (Bade 2004, 351).

In the United States of America (USA), the case is not much different. The border with Mexico, which is the main source of irregular immigrants to the USA, is rigorously patrolled. Indeed, paradoxically, it is both the most fortified and the most frequently crossed borderline in the world (Andreas 2013, 291). The budget that the United States spends on the high-technology policing and fencing of the border with Mexico is millions of dollars (Kearney 1991, 57). The Secure Fence Act, which passed from the US Congress in 2006, authorized the construction of seven hundred mile long new fences along the borderline at a cost ranging between \$1 million and \$3 million per mile (Andreas 2013, 322). In the same year, the United States concluded a \$2 billion contract with Boeing for the establishment and running of a high technology border surveillance system at the borderline (Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013, 2). But this strict patrolling of the area was not an ever-existent attitude toward irregular migrants. Rather, just like in the European Union, it reached its current form and scale in the 1980s and 1990s.

The entrance of Mexican immigrants into the United States started during the the Great Depression (1929) and crisis-ridden subsequent years. It gained legal grounding with the Bracero guest worker program that was put into force in 1942 to meet the cheap labor demand with the import of around 4.5 to 4.6 million (Andreas 2013, 296; Garip and Asad 2013, 8) Mexican agricultural and railroad workers, while curbing clandestine movements into the country. Yet, it did not produce the desired result and instead led to more clandestine entrances. Furthermore, as employers and the Mexican workers they hired under the Bracero scheme got used to

and benefited from the scheme, they maintained the already established employment pattern even after the Bracero Program was brought to an end in 1964, with the very significant difference that the workers were now irregular (Andreas 2013, 296-7).

Until the 1980s, there were not any additional precautionary border mechanism against the irregular cross-border flows. However, as the number of irregular migrants increased and the sectors that employed irregular workers expanded to include not only rural and seasonal agricultural sectors but also permanent service and construction sectors in urban areas, the existence of irregular migrants started to occupy public opinion as a problem. The public concern forced the government to take initiative and hence resulted in a massive increase in the law enforcement efforts along the border by the federal administration as a response to this politicization of irregular migration flows. From then on, both the budget and personnel of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, with which Border Patrol is affiliated, started to increase immensely: A budgetary increase from 1.5 billion in 1993 to 4 billion in 1999 and an increase in the number of personnel from 3,389 in 1993 and 7,231 in 1998; not to mention the technological equipments that have been added to the toolbox of Border Patrol for the surveillance of borders. It continued to increase even more after the 9/11 attacks on the United States (Andreas 2013, 299-301). However, what happened in the end was more diversified and ever developing irregular methods of entry into the country either with the agency of ever more equipped smugglers or via tunnels beneath the border (Andreas 2013, 322-4).

All in all, unlike immigration countries' reflection that migration is an outcome of individual migrants' acts (Sassen 1996, 68), both in the European Union and the United States of America, the cause of the increase in irregular migration is not so much migrants' own preference toward evading laws as it is immigration

countries' harsh limitations. It is striking that the commonality of the countries that apply these most restrictive mechanisms on the movement of people is not only that they are highly developed immigrant magnet countries but also that they are the ones who have stake in the free international movement of money and goods secured through free trade agreements.

The result is seemingly a paradox in which free cross-border flows of capital, goods and information are supported and encouraged, while the movement of people is stubbornly kept restricted by states. In *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*, Saskia Sassen (1996) attributes this contradiction to the relationship between global economy and nation-state in the transnational era under conditions of economic globalization and explains it as a clash between the denationalization of economic spaces and renationalization of political discourse, as a significant nexus of which emerges immigration (Sassen 1996, 59).

According to Sassen, economic globalization creates “a new geography of power” in which actual territories become denationalized for economic globalization is embodied in these territories in the form of institutions and processes that are delinked from state regulations, as exemplified by offshore investments of firms. In other words, the global processes and enterprises take place in national territories. However, with this denationalization of territories, nation-states are not declining in importance or in power. Rather, a significant feature of the new geography of power is that states have collectively experienced a change in their perception of what their role should be in economy and are commonly inclined to promote the development and strength of global economy, and also that “the hypermobility of financial capital at the global scale is situated in various national territories” (Sassen 1996, 5-6). In this sense, nation-states embrace global economy rather than being damaged by its

expansion. Additionally, with a shift to a post-Fordist accumulation pattern, states have turned their attention to international competition and production for worldwide demand while establishing flexibility of labor and production as the norm and sacrificing full domestic employment for global competitiveness (Jessop 1994, 257-8).

However, according to Sassen, in stark contrast to the denationalization of economic spaces, under the conditions of globalization, we simultaneously observe a renationalization of political discourse in the very same states. As immigration is not only a field of discourse but also one of policy, it emerges as the area where the contradiction between the denationalization of economic spaces and the renationalization of political discourse crystallizes. To be more specific, in the field of immigration, state policies are framed within the sovereignty discourse and therefore enforcement attempts target the border and the individual migrants for the observance of regulations so as to protect the sovereignty of states from transgression (Sassen 1996, 68).

For example, at a press conference in 2004, George W. Bush, the then-president of the United States, stated that he was against amnesty to irregular immigrant workers since it paved the way for US citizenship and that it propelled further “illegal” immigration, hence, the breach of American laws. Also, he added that America was a welcoming nation, but they would not grant citizenship as the “reward” of breaching the laws of America (New York Times 2004). Thus, the president framed irregular migration as a matter of sovereignty that emerges in the form of the violation of the laws of their nation-state.

In the American case, one reflection of the renationalization of political discourse as a counter-action against the denationalization of economic and social spaces emerged in the form of cultural policies such as the enforcement of the usage of English as official language in the Southern states (Kearney 1991, 59-61). However, despite fearing the cultural and social diffusion of the irregular migrant workers into the American society, neither the government nor the American market can resist the charm of cheap labor. As they admit low wages, irregular immigrant workers, who cannot retain a legal personality within the borders of the receiving state, can more easily find employment than a regular migrant (Ticktin 2006, 37). Furthermore, due to being considered criminal already, in case of abuse they cannot reach any channel to claim their human rights. In other words, as “closed juridical doors” (Ticktin 2006, 37) provide any industry with the much-needed cheap workers, irregular immigrants are a very profitable and desired resource for the receiving country.

Indeed, when the level of expenditure on the militarization of the borders considered, the existence of irregular migrants in the United States seems absurd. Furthermore, from the budget of the Immigration and Naturalization Service only 2 percent is spent on the enforcement of employer sanctions (Andreas 2013, 303) in a way that suggests the real intention of the US immigration policy about the surveillance of the borders is not keeping the irregular migrant workers out of the United States, but instead creating the sense of criminality in them and forcing to accept low wages and hard work without complaint.

In this sense, the restriction of immigration is a way of disciplining the worker for a more profitable market in the country (Kearney 1991, 58-59, 61). States

in general, and the United States of America in particular, prefer undocumented immigrant workers who are disembodied from their rights. They are cheap and can easily be employed in the black market without any concern about rights. The “illegal” and fearful existence of migrant workers is what matters most to states. After all, “the objective interest of firms for which profit depends on a low-wage labor force is to import immigrants in the most legally tenuous position” (Portes 1978, 474). Undocumented, unprotected and criminalized labor means the cheapest, most submissive and therefore the most profitable labor. Furthermore, while a “legal” worker burdens the state with more responsibility, an “illegal” one relieves the state of its social burden, plus brings extra profit.

As irregularity is preferable to states, they find ways to create and sustain the irregular status of migrants so as to marginalize and keep them at the lower sections of the economy and society as exemplified by the study of Kitty Calavita (1998) on the Spanish immigration law. Immediately after accession to the European Communities, presently the European Union, in 1985, Spain passed its most extensive immigration law. Yet, while the economy was developing in a way that required more and more flexible labor that could be provided preferably by cheap immigrant labor from Third World countries, membership in the EC and its immigration policies exerted constraints on this pattern. Therefore, the resulting immigration law of 1985 exhibited contradictory features by promising for the rights and liberties of migrants in the preamble while restricting them in the main text (Calavita 1998, 530).

Basically, the law made it extremely difficult and sometimes impossible for irregular migrants to get regularized and to maintain regular status afterwards. For



one thing, there are various work permit types most of which are granted for very short periods of legal employment and require a waiting period for renewal that might reach the level of eight months with bureaucratic delays. Furthermore, as work permits, residence permits and employment contracts with employers all depend on each other, there are cases in which long delays in the issue of work permits may result in the expiration of residence permits, rendering the issue of another work permit impossible (Calavita 1998, 550-1) and resulting in the complete irregularity of migrants.

However, apart from the legal and bureaucratic obstacles, there are more structural factors that keep irregular migrants continuously irregular. That is, when irregular migrants get regularized they cannot continue their work because employers prefer more precarious and unprotected workers since, as Alejandro Portes succinctly put it, “the more rights immigrants acquire and the more they come to resemble the native proletariat, the less useful they are as a defense against labor demands” (Portes 1978, 474). So, not only in Spain but also in cases where legal regulations do not make any negative effect on immigrants’ status, it is structurally difficult for the regularized labor migrant to maintain this status.

All in all, the irregularization of migration since the late Twentieth Century is a function of the restrictions that states impose on migrants’ movement and overseas employment. In other words, contemporary irregular migration is a phenomenon created not by migrants’ themselves but by nation-states in parallel to the requirements of their economic structures. For this reason, as Kitty Calavita (1998, 560-1) indicated as well, the contradiction between the economic and political attitude of nation-states on migration does not constitute a paradox.

The fact that people need and want to migrate in pursuit of better lives and that it becomes possible for many of them only through irregular ways due to state restrictions on the movement of people tells us about another issue that has burgeoned just like irregular migration in the last decades. It is the massive migration industry that provides both states and migrants with facilitative services they need in their entanglements with migration, including remittance transfers of irregular migrants.

### The Migration Industry and Remittance Flows

Similar to irregular migrations and transnationality, migration industry is not something novel in human history. Of course, providers of transportation via ships, trains or planes have always been facilitators of migration just like migrant smuggling have always been a classic example of profiting from the migration of other people.

Between 1882 and 1924, when migration from Europe to America peaked, steamship companies and labor agents played a significant role not only in facilitating the crossing and employment afterwards in America for migrants, but also in that America received more immigrants than it would normally have because, in order to increase their profits, the steamship companies and labor agents presented to their would-be customers an exaggeratedly optimistic portrayal of life in America (Light 2013, 262). Also, there were three other sectors the existence of which depended on the sustainment of migration to America: immigrant banks and

merchant-turned-bankers who provided money transfer and deposit services to immigrants; sex traffickers that benefited from the demand of immigrant men, who outnumbered immigrant women; and keepers of ethnicity-based saloon owners who provided immigrant men not only with alcohol but also with solidarity and sociability that was very much needed in the new homeland (Light 2013, 265-70). Furthermore, in 1977, historian Robert Harney not only had already observed those people and institutions, including lawyers, innkeepers and notaries, who all made profit from the migration nexus between Italy and the United States, but also coined the term “the commerce of migration” (Koser 2005, 39).

However, in the last few decades, in parallel to the intensification of transnationalism and irregularity, the migration industry has rapidly expanded and developed. Indeed, as Ninna Nyberg-Sørensen and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen indicated in their co-edited book that bears the name *Migration Industry and the Commercialization of International Migration*, almost every aspect of migration has commercialized and “migration has become business, big business” (Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013, 2). Furthermore, “the migration industry today has become fundamentally embedded in the current migration regimes. Social networks and transnational linkages mean that the contemporary migration industry emerges as part of any established migratory movement” (Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013, 8). In addition, the irregular nature of many present migratory movements, which are often propelled by the support of migrant networks (Düvell 2011, 61), necessitate information and assistance that are provided by informal agencies set up by current or former migrants as well as native residents of destination countries as will be exemplified in Chapter Five. Therefore, there is an informal aspect to migration industry. As Georg Menz (2013) indicated:

Though the activities of other components of the migration industry may well be illegal ... the entrepreneurial risk-taking Schumpeterian spirit of its key protagonists ironically sits very well with the broader zeitgeist of a neoliberal age. There are thus economic activities, often highly lucrative in nature, that are associated with migration processes and that are either sanctioned by the state and consist of outsourced devolved activities or involve activities that aim to counteract state regulations by circumventing physical and legal barriers (Menz 2013, 109).

This section intends to describe the migration industry and locate informal remittance transfers as part of that industry as conceptualized recently by Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen by dividing it into five sectors based on the actors that are involved and the services they provide (Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013, 9-10).

The first set of actors Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen identify consists of large companies that provide border management technologies and services to states usually at a global scale. These companies include defense contractor firms like Boeing and Finmeccania among the clients of which exist respectively the United States of America and Libya. In the second set, there are agencies and companies that provide services to migrants to facilitate their regular and sometimes irregular migratory processes. For example, those firms who conduct application process and deal with paperwork for migrants in guest worker schemes (Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013, 9) and companies that work with consulates in processing visa applications belong to this group.

The third group of actors identified by the authors comprises much smaller establishments set up by migrants due to their desire to commercialize and profit from their already acquired knowledge on specific migration routes and processes. The kind of services they provide range from route-specific transportation facilities

to legal advising for migration and asylum and to informally provided facilitation of irregular migration and employment by intermediaries (Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013, 9).

A fourth group identified by the authors is clandestine, untaxed, that is informal facilitators of migration like human smugglers and illegal enterprises that profit from the abuse of migrants like human traffickers. Lastly, a fifth group is migration-oriented organizations and associations as well as non-governmental organizations working in the field of migration (Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013, 10). Yet, this last group is not profit-driven.

Among the many tax-evading informal enterprises that irregular migrants turn to for their cross-border irregular movements and transfers of money and goods, informal remittance transfers constitute a significant segment of the growing migration industry. Many diverse actors including travel agencies, minibus operators, bus drivers all of whom assist irregular migrants, including those Post-Soviet irregular migrants in Istanbul, for the unauthorized, that is informal, transfers of remittances to these migrants' families and friends in countries of origin seem to fit in the third and fourth categories provided by Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen. However, these actors differ from the third category in that they might be established not only by former migrants but also by native citizens of the receiving country or by collaboration between the two.

As for the fourth category, it conflates illegal human traffickers who abuse migrants with this kind of tax-evading enterprises that capitalize on the fact that due to their status irregular migrants may not always benefit from legally available money transfer methods. This is not to say that the mentioned informally functioning

enterprises never abuse or scam irregular migrants. Rather, as these enterprises usually do not go beyond tax evasion and the violation of nation-state borders, the criminality of which is disputed in the more philosophical treatments of the subject like Joseph H. Carens's (1995) "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders," they cannot be considered in the same category with human traffickers who pose a direct threat to the humanity of migrants. In contrast, they are intrinsically different from human traffickers as they are migration service providers working within the migration industry with the nuance that they are informal. Furthermore, regarding that in 2013 the amount of officially recorded remittances reached \$550 billion in sum (World Bank 2013,1) and that according to Stephen Castles's estimation informal remittances might add by 50 percent or more to recorded remittances (Castles 2010, 12), they are a massive part of the migration industry.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I tried to establish a framework for the examination of informal remitting practices. To be more specific, I examined the circumstances that conditioned the emergence of these informal practices. Migrant transnationalism and irregular migration, both of which thrived worldwide since the 1980s, have played significant roles in the emergence of informal remitting practices respectively by creating the environment in which informal cross-border remitting practices take place and by making it a necessity to create these informal mechanisms. In other words, I argued that informal remitting practices, which constitute a crucial part of the migration industry, capitalize on the irregular status of migrants and as their

success depends transnational networks, transnationality is a significant aspect of it. Thus, informal remitting practices, like those of the post-Soviet labor migrants, whose immigration flows to Turkey constitute the subject of the next chapter, emerge at the juncture of transnationality and irregularity. Furthermore, these remitting practices enable us to examine transnationality and irregularity as they provide an alternative micro field for the examination of these two phenomena.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### POST-SOVIET MIGRATIONS TO TURKEY

When one takes a walk in affluent neighborhoods of Istanbul, like Etiler and Ulus where I conducted part of my fieldwork, chances are high that the stroller would come across people speaking Georgian, Ukrainian or Romanian while walking dogs or returning from grocery shopping. If the stroller does what I did once and asks a person s/he randomly selected for an address, the response might be a blank face and mumbles that may sound very Slavic, like the one I received long ago. More so, a brief visit to Laleli, now a truly transnational district of Istanbul, would leave the shocking reflection that one has arrived in a different country, with banners in Cyrillic alphabet everywhere.

Indeed, labor migration to Turkey from former Soviet Republics have been a notable, and predominantly irregular, migratory flow that has begun in the 1990s after the dissolution of the Soviet Union as the ex-Soviet people subsequently acquired the opportunity to emigrate freely. Turkey's demand for labor in certain sectors like child and elderly care, construction and domestic work, which was limited to workers of Turkish citizenship until recently, promised these migrants a chance to escape poverty in their newly established and pauperized republics.

According to 2011 statistics of the Turkish Police Department's Division for Combating Illegal Immigration and Human Trafficking (*Yasadışı Göç ve İnsan Ticareti ile Mücadele Şube Müdürlüğü*), in that year 42,821 irregular immigrants<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Kemal Kirişçi for sharing these statistics with me.



were apprehended.<sup>5</sup> Of this population, 7,049 people were citizens of countries that were formerly within the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> Yet, only 26,889 of the apprehended migrants were deported (Toksöz, Erdoğan and Kaşka 2012, 47).<sup>7</sup> That is, not all apprehended irregular migrants are deported by the authorities.

Although it does not specify the data by nationality of apprehended irregular migrants, according to the more up-to-date data provided by *Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü* (the Directorate General of Migration Management), which has been recently established by the new *Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu – YUKK* (the Law on Foreigners and International Protection) that has come into force fully on 11 April 2014, the number of apprehended irregular migrants was 39,890 in 2013 (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü 2013a). Of course, the population of apprehended irregular migrants does not give us a clear idea about the scale of irregular migration to Turkey. While data on irregular migration is problematic almost everywhere in the world as it is indicated in Chapter Four, Turkey has a notorious deficiency in collecting data on migration. Regarding irregular migration to Turkey estimations range from 150 thousand to one million (Kirişçi 2007, 93; Erder and Kaşka 2012) and warn us to be extremely careful about the available data just like in the case of data on worldwide irregular migration. However, whatever the

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<sup>5</sup> The Division for Combatting Illegal Immigration and Human Trafficking gives the sum as 44,415. However, this amount includes 1,594 Turkish citizens who were apprehended while trying to exit Turkey with forged passports. Therefore, the number of non-citizen irregular migrants apprehended in 2011 was 42,821.

<sup>6</sup> The number of apprehended post-Soviet irregular migrants by nationality in 2011: Armenia: 518, Azerbaijan: 1068, Belarus: 50, Estonia: 6, Georgia: 1649, Kazakhstan: 235, Kyrgyzstan: 542, Latvia: 9, Lithuania: 16, Moldova: 491, Russia: 1270, Tajikistan: 30, Turkmenistan: 309, Ukraine: 631, Uzbekistan: 231.

<sup>7</sup> The number of deported irregular migrants from some post-Soviet countries by nationality in 2011 (including those deported for involvement in prostitution): Azerbaijan: 1292, Georgia: 4268, Kyrgyzstan: 614, Moldova: 680, Uzbekistan: 1389, Russia: 566, Turkmenistan: 3299, Ukraine: 496. (Toksöz, Erdoğan and Kaşka 2012, 48).

actual number is, as told above, Post-Soviet irregular migrants constitute a significant portion of it (Erder and Kaşka 2012, 116).

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the emergence and development of Post-Soviet irregular labor migration flows to Turkey. Indeed, Turkey's transformation into an immigration and transit country, and more recently a remittance-sending country, is a parallel development with these post-Soviet labor migrations that constitute a significant portion of immigration flows Turkey receives. Therefore, the first section of this chapter provides an account of Turkey's transformation from an emigration and remittance-receiving country to an immigration, transit and remittance-sending country. The second section overviews different immigration flows directed to Turkey. The third section focuses specifically on post-Soviet immigrations while the last section looks for remittances and remitting practices in the literature on immigrant experience in Turkey.

#### Dual Transformation:

##### Turkey as an Immigration and Remittance-Sending Country

Turkey had been considered to be solely an emigration country for a long time (İçduygu 2014, 222; Kirişci 2007, 91). In the emergence of this perception, the labor migration of Turkish citizens to several developed countries like Austria, Belgium and Germany under the guest worker scheme in the 1960s as well as the early Republican policy that restricted immigration only to people of "Turkish descent and

culture” (Kirişci 2000, 4), who were not considered “foreign,” played a tremendous role (Tolay 2013, 57).

In the early years of the new Turkish state, the population of the fledgling Republic created crucial problems for the founders. Not only its uneven distribution and deserted villages threatened agriculture (Erder 2014, 122) but also it was left too small after successive wars, forced migrations and population exchanges. Moreover, the population was ethnically and culturally too heterogeneous that it was a serious challenge for the founders of the new nation-state to establish a sense of national identity in the citizenry (Kirişci 2003; Kirişci 2007, 93). Within this context, the 1934 Law of Settlement (*İskân Kanunu*), which constituted both the basis of the abovementioned immigration restriction and the general framework of Turkish immigration policy, was passed. In addition to regulating immigration and agricultural efficiency (Erder 2014, 100), it was designed also as an instrument for the formation of a national identity. Indeed, between 1923 and 1960, migration was a crucial political tool of the state (İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 10). With this law, immigration into Turkey was limited only to people of “Turkish descent and culture” (Kirişci 2000, 4; Kirişci 2007, 96) but then, in practice, only to Hanefi Muslim ones, in a way that explains the exclusion of Christian Orthodox Gagauz Turks and Shi’a Azeris from the prerogative of immigrating into Turkey at the time (Kirişci 2000, 6). One of the end results of this policy of allowing the immigration of people only of “Turkish descent and culture,” according to Juliette Tolay, is that the term immigration is not associated with the arrival of foreigners in the psyche of Turkish citizens (Tolay 2013, 57).

Apart from this, guest worker migrations from Turkey to developed Western European countries and Australia, which started in the 1960s, strengthened the idea

that Turkey was essentially an emigration country (İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 13). In the post-Second World War context, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, Western European states were in need of external labor forces. Indeed, these countries initially preferred countries of Southern Europe to meet their demand for labor by concluding bilateral guest worker agreements and turned to other neighboring states only when Southern European labor sources fell short of meeting the demand. For example, despite Turkey's attempts at securing a similar guestworker agreement, West Germany had turned down this advance on the grounds that Turkey was not a European country. Yet, upon Turkey's diplomatic protest, Germany agreed to conclude an agreement with Turkey in 1961, though it was a low-key agreement compared to the ones signed with South European countries especially in terms of workers' rights (Akgündüz 2014, 9). Later, Turkey signed similar agreements with other Western European countries including Austria (1964), Belgium (1964), Denmark, France (1965), the Netherlands (1964), Sweden (1967), Switzerland and the United Kingdom (İçduygu and Kirişci 2009, 3; Akgündüz 2014, 1; Kirişci 2007, 91).

Just like the guest worker scheme offered a solution to the problems of Western European countries, Turkey desired to be included in the scheme for it offered a promise of development and modernization (Akgündüz 2014, 16). First of all, although it did not prove temporary in the end as many of the guest workers preferred settling down in the receiving states with their families (İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 13) and many aspiring guest workers migrated to Europe with tourist visas to overstay and work irregularly (Abadan-Unat 2007, 7), the scheme gave Turkey the chance to temporarily remove the unskilled and semi-skilled labor surplus and thereby alleviate unemployment. Second, it was contemplated that the exported

workers would come back with newly acquired skills, which would be put into use to enhance industrialization (Kirişci 2007, 91). Lastly, remittances sent by the guestworkers would be, and actually was, a valuable source of foreign currency (Abadan-Unat 2007, 10-11; İçduygu 2012, 13; İçduygu and Kirişci 2009, 3; Akgündüz 2014, 2). Moreover, the guest worker scheme was considered to be “an unmissable opportunity to join the European political and economic society” (Akgündüz 2014, 2).

When the guest worker migrations, on which Turkey pinned her hopes, came to an end in 1973-74, about 1.3 million workers had migrated under the scheme. Indeed, the migration continued through family reunifications, refugee flows and irregular migrations (İçduygu 2012, 15), and resulted in the emergence of sizable Turkish communities in the receiving states, especially in Germany (Toktaş 2012, 6). Accordingly, this specific migration flow has left so significant traces on the collective memory of Turkish citizens that a stereotype of *Almancı* (an awkward term that refers to Turkish guest workers and their families in Germany) emerged, survived until today and appeared occasionally on TV series, movies and the like. Therefore, the guest worker migration scheme has always accentuated Turkey’s emigration country status.

All in all, today, the perception of Turkey as an emigration country is still so strong that many people believe there is no immigration into Turkey not because they are completely unaware of foreigners living in the country, for visual and written media provide reports of them, but because they perceive these flows as isolated occurrences and Turkey as essentially a place to leave, not a place to come to (Tolay 2013, 57).

Nevertheless, from the 1980s onwards, Turkey has also become a country of immigration as a result of immigration flows of various kinds that brought regular, irregular, transit migrants and asylum seekers from various countries (İçduygu 2004, 89). One of the most striking features of these immigration flows is that, unlike the previous ones in the history of the Republic, they are diverse not only in the ethnicity of migrants but also in the forms of movement that these migrants undertake (Pusch 2012, 168; Erder and Kaşka 2012, 116; İçduygu 2014, 222; İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 14-15). Furthermore, unlike the previous ones, these immigration flows do not stem from state policies of creating a homogeneous nation. Rather, multifarious circumstances contributed to this transformation. In a nutshell, besides the transformations that Turkey has gone through and the liberal visa policy it follows (Kirişci 2008, 3), these immigration flows emerge mainly as consequences of social, political and economic transformations and developments in the neighboring and surrounding regions of Turkey (İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 15-16).

On the Turkish side, at the macro level, Turkey's shift to free market economy in the 1980s and correspondingly increasing economic interdependence with the outside world that put Turkey on the way of becoming what Richard Rosecrance calls "trading state," a state that builds foreign dealings with other states on the basis of commercial relations rather than military and territorial concerns (Kirişci 2009, 38-41), contributed to Turkey's emergence as an immigration country that attracts diverse immigration flows in relation with intensified economic relations and connections with the world. Corresponding to this trend toward becoming an immigration country was Turkey's liberal and flexible visa policy, which originally aimed to encourage short-term visits in order to boost tourism revenues (Erder and Kaşka 2012, 116) but paved the way for shuttle trading and irregular labor migration

(Kirişci 2005a, 351; Kirişci 2005b, 353) while the support and investment incentives given to the tourism sector helped attract short-term migrants some of whom would later turn into European retirement migrants. Indeed, according to Erder and Kaşka (2012, 115-6) this liberal visa policy had its roots in the tourism policy of the 1960s that advocated short-term opening of borders for tourists. Later, with the 1980s, further liberalization of the visa regime came under the initiative of Turgut Özal, whose imprints today's liberal visa policy still carries. Liberalization of the visa regime in Özal's term is closely related to the special importance that was paid to the improvement of relations with post-Soviet republics where "our cognates lived" while Turkey dubbed itself as a regional power (Eder 2007, 136-7). In the 1990s, this liberal and flexible visa regime was enhanced with the introduction of sticker visas (*bandrol vize*) that could easily be obtained at the border gates (Kirişci 2005b, 351-2).

As of 11 April 2014, with the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection, Electronic Visa Application System, shortly e-Visa, has replaced sticker visas. That is, Turkey currently offers e-Visas that can easily be obtained by entering required information and making necessary payments via credit cards and taking a printout on <http://www.e-visa.gov.tr>. Moreover, while Turkey provides visa-free entrance to nationals of numerous countries ranging from Albania to Denmark, Uzbekistan to Ukraine for 90, 60, 30 or 15-day stays; nationals of some countries that need visas to enter Turkey are exempt from visa fees. For those who are not exempt, visa fees are cheaper when applied through the online system than through Turkish consulates.

As for the developments at the micro level that led to the emergence of Turkey as an immigration country, decay in the already inefficient welfare policies,

urbanization, increasing workforce participation of women, who are traditionally seen as responsible for care and domestic work, the dissolution of traditional extended family patterns that previously filled gaps in domestic work and care needs in families and the resulting care deficit in urban areas and a massive informal economy played significant roles in making Turkey a destination of irregular labor migration (Eder 2007, 132; Toksöz and Ünlütürk-Ulutaş 2012, 90).

Yet, transformations that occurred in Turkey's neighboring and surrounding regions also significantly contributed to this process. The collapse of socialist regimes in the Soviet Union as well as in Eastern Europe and the subsequent and painful transition processes to open economies in the newly established states, and political turmoil in the Middle East and Africa have all unleashed migration flows that Turkey, which is not only in the geographical proximity of these countries but also of developed European states that some migrants prefer to relocate by transiting, had her share. Furthermore, deepening European integration, the abolishment of borders within and the simultaneously increasing restrictions to immigration into the European Union (Kirişçi 2005b, 343-4) that resulted in a highly restrictive border structure that is expressed through the term Fortress Europe were and still are effective in drawing attention to Turkey's suitability as a destination country that is both easy to enter and bountiful in employment opportunities especially for irregular migrants who aim to collect money and return.

Hence, as Turkey is increasingly attracting many labor migrants, despite having been treated as a remittance-receiving country up until today, it is also becoming a remittance-sending country, although the literature on Turkey as a source of migrant remittances is extremely scarce. However, Turkey's transformation into a remittance-sending country does not stem only from its becoming of an immigration



country. Rather, as Bettin, Paçacı-Elitok and Straubhaar (2012) outlined, it is also related to both relative and net decline, from the late 1990s onwards, in remittance inflows that “have been a fundamental external source of capital for the Turkish economy” since the 1960s (Bettin, Paçacı-Elitok and Straubhaar, 134). For example, the perception of the new generation Turkish migrants in Germany has shifted from seeing Turkey as the “home country.” In addition, Turkey’s economic downturns in the late 1980s and the fact that most Turkish migrants in Germany are currently self-employed and preferring to invest there in their own business combined with the decrease in interest rates and increase in taxes that the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey applied on two special accounts it offered to workers abroad for the deposit of savings (the foreign currency deposit account with credit letter and the super foreign currency account) and resulted in significant decreases in remittance flows to Turkey (Bettin, Paçacı-Elitok and Straubhaar 2012, 149-51). Indeed, on 8 October 2013, the Central Bank published a press release on its website and announced that foreign currency account services for immigrant workers would be terminated from 2014 onwards for they wanted to focus on their principal task of “central banking,” while emigrant workers’ foreign currencies declined in significance in terms of the bank’s fiscal policies (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Merkez Bankası 2013). Currently, Turkey is becoming less a remittance-receiving country and more a remittance-sending country due to its emerging role as a country of immigration.

All in all, Turkey has experienced a dual transformation since the 1980s and especially in the 1990s. That is, today Turkey emerges not only as an immigration country that attracts diverse forms of migration from the surrounding regions but also as a remittance-sending country.

## Patterns of Immigration to Turkey

Surely, it is not always possible to distinguish between different migration flows because it is hard to identify and differentiate complex driving forces behind them. For example, with the exception of retirement migration, labor is always a significant part of all migratory flows for migrants need to work in order to sustain their lives wherever they go. Also, migration can be very fluid and turn into one form from another quite easily (Pusch 2012, 174; İçduygu 2006, 1) as exemplified by cases in which tourist visas simply expire, asylum seekers become irregular migrants when they continue staying in countries where their asylum applications are rejected or irregular migrants apply for asylum and become regular. However, for the sake of clarity in analyzing the various types of migration flows that contributed to Turkey's emergence as a country of immigration, it is necessary to differentiate between forms that immigration into Turkey takes. Accordingly, refugee flows, transit migration, regular migration and finally irregular labor migration to Turkey will be discussed in the following pages.

The chronological first of these new immigrations that bring “foreigners” into Turkey is refugee flows, and the flow of Iranian refugees with the Islamic Revolution in 1979 is usually considered in the literature to be the first of them (Tolay 2013, 27). While only 4,448 people applied for asylum in Turkey in 1997 (İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 65), in 2013 this number rose to 30,311 (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü 2013a).

In fact, despite being party to the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, Turkey, who was an ally of the Western bloc in the Cold War context, registered a reservation that enabled her to maintain a geographical limitation to the

Convention and thereby offered the asylum right only to refugees from Europe so as to provide it only to those who fled communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Kirişci 2007, 94; Kaya 2008, 3).

However, with the 1980s, Turkey's migration landscape changed as a result of the arrival of refugees escaping political instabilities in the Middle East and while the geographical limitation remained intact Turkey has become an asylum country. These refugees included Iranians who fled the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Afghans that left their country due to the Soviet occupation, and many Iranian and Iraqi people whose lives were destabilized by the Iran-Iraq war that lasted from 1980 to 1988 (Danış, Taraghi and Pérouse 2009, 445-6). In response to these flows, Turkey softened its approach to asylum and, instead of an immediate deportation, cooperated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the resettlement of the refugees in third countries (Kirişci 2007, 94-5; İçduygu 2004, 92). Another refugee flow in this period was the flow of many Kurds from Northern Iraq upon Iraq's attack on Kurdish villages and use of chemical weapons in Halepçe (Halabja) in 1988 (Mannaert 2003, 3). However, in addition to the irregular stay of some of the refugees in Turkey, out of a security concern about the possibility that members of the insurgent *Partiya Karkaren Kürdistan – PKK* (Kurdistan Workers' Party) could enter Turkey along with Kurdish refugees, in 1994, Turkey passed an Asylum Regulation with highly restrictive measures that improved only in the late 1990s (Kirişci 2007, 95).

During the 1990s and 2000s, Turkey continued to receive refugees also from Africa and the Balkans. Afghan, Bosnian, Kosovar, Somalian and Sudanese refugees made their way into Turkey when they faced political instabilities in their countries or regions (Kirişci 2005a 372-3, 377; İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 31). More recently,

due to the civil strife that broke out in March 2011 in Syria, with whom Turkey has its longest border, many Syrians fled to Turkey and still either dwell in “guest” refugee camps provided for them or move to cities in Western Turkey where they either beg on the streets or take up employment in the massive informal sector of Turkey (Özden 2013, 5). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, currently there are 736,137 registered Syrian refugees in Turkey (UNHCR 2014).

The geographical limitation told above is still present in the Article 61 of the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection. However, the Article 62 regulates the condition of non-European asylum seekers by providing temporary refuge until they are resettled in a third country while the articles 4 and 63 establish the non-refoulement principle for people who would be under threat of death, persecution and violence when repatriated even though their condition is not covered by the articles 61 and 62 (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü 2013b, 3, 27). Hence, Turkey’s asylum-receiving status is further enhanced both by subsequent refugee flows and the state’s relatively liberalized approach to refugee protection.

A second form of immigration that is directed to Turkey is the irregular transit migration of people from neighboring and surrounding countries. For these migrants, Turkey serves as a bridge or as a corridor that links them to their destinations that are usually in Europe. Many of these transit migrants come from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Syria, and between 1995 and 2006, 180,000 citizens of these countries were apprehended (Kirişçi 2007, 94). Some of them directly move to their destinations while some prefer to spend some time in Turkey. While some of them are refugees who would not be granted asylum in Turkey due to the geographical limitation, some believe they would have better

employment conditions in Europe. Affordable smuggling services and proximity to Europe lead these migrants to try their chances at crossing borders of Turkey that would usher them into Europe (Düvell 2013, 279). This seems to be a reason why Turkey demands visas and residence permits of Schengen and OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries or of the United States of America from nationals of many African, Asian and Middle Eastern states including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Iraq, Kenya, Mali and Pakistan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014).

Regular migration is the third pattern of these new immigration flows that Turkey has been experiencing since the 1980s. Regular migrants in Turkey constitute a heterogeneous group that includes foreign spouses of Turkish citizens and their offspring, retirees, executive personnel of foreign companies operating in Turkey, teachers, diplomats and other professionals from various countries. (Kirişçi 2007, 94; Pusch 2012, 182; İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 23; Kaiser 2003, 271-2; Kaiser and İçduygu 2005, 173-4).

In addition to resident foreign diplomats in Turkey, many high skilled professionals from various developed states including the European Union countries and the United States of America either work individually in Turkey or are employed in multinational corporations that conduct business in Istanbul and other major cities. The opening of the Turkish economy to international flows of goods and capital and its integration with the world economy beginning in the 1980s paved the way for the arrival of multinational corporations, banks, and along with them many foreigner professionals (İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 15). Also, foreign spouses of Turkish citizens reside and/or work with regular status in Turkey (Pusch 2012, 182).

According to the Division for Combating Illegal Immigration and Human Trafficking,<sup>8</sup> in 2011, the top four countries whose nationals were granted work permits were China, Russia, Ukraine and the United States of America.<sup>9</sup> As for the 2013 statistics of the Directorate General of Migration Management, in that year 44,307 people were granted residence permit for employment purposes. Regarding that the number of apprehended irregular migrants only was 39,890 and the total number of people granted residence permit for any purpose was 313,692 in the same year (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü 2013a), it becomes more clear that regularly employed foreigners is only a small part of the overall immigration flows Turkey receives.

Another small sub-group of regular immigrants in Turkey is retired Europeans who buy properties and settle in seaside resorts of the Aegean and Mediterranean regions. Their population in Turkey is estimated to be around 20,000 (İçduygu 2014, 229). Known as international retirement migration (IRM) in the literature, the phenomenon refers to the movement of retired elderly people to overseas places where they consider it suitable to spend the rest of their lives either permanently or for several months of the year. Initially, the typical destinations of international retirement migration from Europe, which has become a significant phenomenon since the 1960s, were other Mediterranean countries like Italy, Malta and Spain. Yet, in the 1990s Turkey has also become one of these destination countries and, with the contribution of low property prices and tourism investments that turned Turkey into a favored holiday country for Europeans, it begun to attract

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<sup>8</sup> Like the previous data from the Division for Combating Illegal Immigration and Human Trafficking, I owe these statistics to Prof. Dr. Kemal Kirişçi to whom I also owe many thanks.

<sup>9</sup> The case of Russia and Ukraine is especially interesting because they were also among the top 15 countries whose nationals were apprehended in the same year due to irregular residence, employment, arrival or departure.

these “settled tourists” from various countries including Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Russia (Balkır and Kırkulak 2009, 123-6; Kaiser and İçduygu 2005, 225-227, İçduygu 2014, 229).

However, in 2003 when property acquisition by foreigners were facilitated through amendments in the Title Deed Law (*Tapu Kanunu*), both in public and in the media a certain nation-wide anxiety emerged. This anxiety has been nurtured by political conspiracy theories that presented the new regulation as something that would pave the way for the occupation of Turkish territories by foreigners and was countered by more pragmatist viewpoints which argued for the economic advantages that “resident foreigners” would provide to Turkey (Durgun 2012, 523); while at the local community level, one-on-one encounters add socio-cultural tensions to the already existing political anxieties and economic pragmatism (Durgun 2012, 532). In the year 2008, only in Antalya 24,000 properties were owned by foreigners while that number was 11,000 in Muğla and 9,000 in Aydın (İçduygu 2014, 228).

When we came to 2012, only for certain states that would be determined by the Council of Ministers, further amendments abolished the reciprocity principle that previously allowed property acquisition only to nationals of states that offered the same permission to Turkish citizens. According to the data provided by the Turkish Statistical Institute (2014), in 2013 foreigners purchased 12,181 properties, and in this year Antalya emerged as the top choice with 464 purchases and was followed respectively by Istanbul (243 purchases), Sakarya (119 purchases), Muğla (75 purchases) and Aydın (70 purchases) (Turkish Statistical Institute 2014). Therefore, among all those concerns and tensions, the number of properties purchased by foreigners in seaside resorts and accordingly of retired immigrants continue to increase, thereby strengthening Turkey’s position as an immigration country.

Another regular migratory pattern that is directed to Turkey is the flow of foreign students usually at the college level. In 2013, 50,682 people were granted residence permits for educational purposes (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü 2014). Currently, within the framework of the Erasmus exchange program, students from European universities can spend one or two semesters in Turkish universities. Also, Turkey maintains the Great Student Exchange Project that has begun in 1992 with the aim of strengthening relations with Turkic states, Turks abroad and related communities (İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 23). Within the framework of this project, there were 12,320 students studying in Turkey on state scholarship by November 29, 2013 (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 2014, 217). Those students who are on state scholarship are required to return their own countries after completing their studies.

However, it is reported that a significant number of these students either drop out school or overstay in Turkey, hence turn into irregular migrants. Subsequently, along with irregular migrants from countries in the former Soviet Union who constitute the theme of the next section as the main subject of this thesis and also the last of the immigration patterns sketched here, they become part of the burgeoning informal workforce of Turkey (İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 24), which constitutes more than 40 percent of the whole labor market (Erder and Kaşka 2012, 120). In fact, as Gülay Toksöz, Seyhan Erdoğan and Selmin Kaşka (2012) provide a detailed report of them, there are irregular labor migrants coming from other surrounding countries from the Middle East and Africa in addition to those from post-Soviet countries. However, as this thesis concerns with post-Soviet irregular labor migrants, the next section is specifically on the immigration of them to Turkey.



## Post-Soviet Migrations to Turkey

In 1990, just after the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) set about opening itself economically and politically to the outside world and provided its peoples with a “wider exit door” (Shevtsova 1992, 242) under Mikhail Gorbachev, the number of Soviet citizens who emigrated from the Union since 1948 was 1,130,000 and 40 percent of them had left between 1987 and 1989. The emigration flows that took place after 1985 were also essentially different from the previous ones in that they were not politically motivated but fuelled by economic strains (Shevtsova 1992, 241-2). Moreover, the dissolution of the Union did not bring an end to emigration but both intensified and diversified the flows and “created a whole new migration situation in the post-Soviet space” (Tishkov et al. 2005, 1). As the republics turned into nation-states with “titular nations” and newly emerged national minorities, the first emigration flows from the disbanded republics were repatriation of the emergent minorities to their origins, refugee movements and internal displacements (Zayonchkovskaya 2000, 343).

These ethnic emigration flows prevailed in the first half of the 1990s and was superseded in the second half by migratory movements that are determined by “purely economic factors” (Tishkov et al. 2005, 1-2) for the transition had brought home high inflation, unemployment, low salaries, decreasing standards of life but also the chance to move freely, go abroad, and unlike no-return exodus of the Soviet times, the chance to come back (Morokvasic 2004, 8).

This chance has been used since then as an economic shield in the form of shuttle-trading, which according to Yüksekler constitutes a “collective response to the

lack of a secure international trade regime after the collapse of socialism” (Yükseker 1999, 54) and a labor migration pattern that is not only a mainly temporary and short-term movement (Zayonchkovskaya 2000, 343-4, 352) but also one that is dominated by women (Morokvasic 2004, 8), who emerged as one of the most economically disadvantaged groups during the transition process by which they were disproportionately impacted (Gülçür and İlkaracan 2002, 411).

Currently, “every third family in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and every tenth family in Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan” (Tishkov et al. 2005, 27) rely on remittances sent by their relatives working in various countries including Turkey, which constitutes one of the main destinations preferred by Post-Soviet labor migrants (Zayonchkovskaya 2000, 353).

The arrival of Post-Soviet immigrants to Turkey corresponds to the early 1990s, when Soviet suitcase or shuttle traders called *chelnoki* in Russian (Yükseker 2007, 63; İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 16), came regularly to Istanbul, usually to its Laleli district, where numerous stores and producers wholesaled leatherwear, clothing and shoes, in order to purchase merchandise that they would sell in Russian outdoor markets (Yükseker 2007, 63). Indeed, shuttle trade in Istanbul is an activity that has started with Polish traders and Romanians in the 1980s (İçduygu 2006, 4). Laleli’s emergence as a hub in shuttle trade (Eder 2007, 32) and other activities that irregular migrants conduct lies in these years when it served as a hotel area in close proximity to shopping quarters in Sultanahmet. Later, as the demand increased, the shopping zone expanded to include Laleli and as shuttle traders came to be replaced in the second half of the 1990s by irregular labor migrants, the district has become a pivot of irregular migrants (Yükseker 1999, 59; İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 16) while

the participation of immigrants in the Turkish labor market became significantly visible (Lordođlu 2007, 4).

In this sense, the relations cemented with shopkeepers by shuttle traders, who can be defined as “the harbinger of irregular migration” (Toksöz and Ünlütürk-Ulutaş 2012, 91), made a crucial contribution to the emergence of “an informal transnational economy” and since then transformed Laleli into “a constantly changing marketplace which is highly informal as well as transnational in character” (Eder and Öz 2010, 82). Currently, Laleli not only has clothing stores, restaurants and hotels that serve post-Soviet irregular migrants but also tourism agencies, shipping firms, a bus terminal and a small parking lot that assist them in their transnational exchanges and interactions other than shuttle trade, including remittance transfers that further contribute to the informal transnational economy in Laleli.

As for the magnitude of the post-Soviet irregular immigration to Turkey, we know that 8,607,462 people coming from the former Soviet republics, except Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia who are now members of the European Union, entered Turkey in the year 2013 while another 903,061 entered Turkey only in the first three months of 2014. Regarding that the number of arrivals rose from 256,936 in January 2013 to 1,320,837 in August and decreased to 301,485 in December, we can conclude that most of these people are short-term migrants coming to Turkey for touristic purposes (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı 2014).

However, we also know that a substantial proportion of them are “pseudo tourists[ts]” (Erder 2003, 164). Among these “pseudo-tourists” are the abovementioned suitcase traders that are “turned a blind eye” by the Turkish state

(Yükseker 2004, 49), whose number has decreased compared to the 1990s. Also, there are circular migrants, who start working irregularly within the period of stay provided by their tourist visas and turn back to their countries before their visas expire, only to re-enter later. In addition, it is widely known that there are many who overstay their visas, take up employment in sectors like agriculture, construction, textiles, entertainment and domestic work, and hence fall into “illegality” (İçduygu 2006, 2-3; Erder 2003, 164-65).

Even if they are not circular, all of these post-Soviet irregular labor migrants intend not to settle down but to earn and collect some money before returning after a while and have better life standards in their own countries with the money they earned (Pusch 2012, 171; Erder and Kaşka 2012, 116; İçduygu 2006, 7). Indeed, according to Morokvasic, short-term and temporary migration flows with the aim of employment or trade “have become the most widespread pattern in the post-1989 European migrations” (Morokvasic 2004, 8)

Although it is extremely difficult to ascertain how many irregular migrants participate in the labor market of Turkey, we know that 56 percent of 336,478 irregular migrants apprehended between 2001 and 2005 had migrated to find employment (İçduygu 2006, 3, 19). As for the works they undertake, Post-Soviet irregular migrants in Turkey are informally employed in sectors like domestic work, child and elderly care, textile, construction and in places like footwear ateliers, bakeries and various shops where they work as sales clerks (Toksöz et al. 2012, 92-3).

As it is seen, irregularity is a tremendously significant characteristic of the Post-Soviet labor migration to Turkey. Due to its irregularity, the immigration flows

builds upon and reproduces themselves through extensive social networks that immigrants have established over time. However, it should be noted that it is neither that these immigrants create irregularity on purpose nor that the informal economy was initiated with their participation in the first place. Rather, the liberal visa policy that Turkey applies for these people is essentially aimed for short-term visits, as it has been a strategy to boost tourism revenues, and while it is quite easy to obtain short-term tourist visas, getting long-term residence and work permits can be extremely difficult for these people (Erder and Kaşka 2012, 118). That is, the reason of irregularity is not migrants' own choice as it is a consequence of the legal framework of migration.

Although in 2003 the ban on the employment of foreigners in the domestic work sector, of which immigrants -and mainly those from the former Eastern bloc (Toksöz and Ünlütürk Ulutaş 2012, 92)- occupy a significant share, was abolished and from 2012 it has been facilitated for immigrants to become formally employed in Turkey, there are still difficulties including quotas and high costs, taxes and fees for employers that make it not very likely for irregular labor migrants to regularize (Kirişci 2008, 6-7; Erder and Kaşka 2012, 118; Toksöz et al. 2012, 100).

Also, while the application process is simplified and facilitated for prominent professionals, big corporations, bureaucrats, high-ranking universities and high schools that employ foreigners, it is still highly bureaucratic, cumbersome, time-consuming and arbitrary for other employers that the first priority of the authorities seems to be not to grant permission by encouraging the applicants to give up (Kirişci 2008, 7). The problem is further aggravated by that the initiative of granting work permits to migrants is left to their employers since, currently, work permit applications can be made only by employers.

Accordingly, irregular migrants are in a way compelled to work in the informal sector, which is not small either. As Erder and Kaşka summarizes, in the case of Turkey, “a vast informal sector, extensive communal networks, unregulated migration regime and restrictive rules for foreigners” (Erder and Kaşka 2012, 115) dominates the immigration landscape and makes irregularity a commonplace experience for immigrants (Erder and Kaşka 2012, 118).

Table 2 documents that in the last decade until today immigrants in Turkey have acted on a slippery legal ground. Constantly changing laws, new regulations that can be restrictive or loose from time to time and diverse problems that emerge in the implementation of these laws and regulations combine to bring about a constant legal ambiguity like in the case of Spain presented by Kitty Calavita (1998) and create constantly changing vulnerabilities in the everyday lives of migrants.

Furthermore, the degree of ambiguity reaches so intense levels that can be exemplified not solely by the fact that only about half of all apprehended irregular migrants in Turkey are deported (Toksöz, Erdoğan and Kaşka 2012, 47), but also by the Article 9 paragraph 6 of the latest Law on Foreigners and International Protection that endows the Directorate General of Migration Management with the authority to cancel entry bans, which are mentioned in the other paragraphs of the article, for overstayed migrants when desired. So, not only regularity but also even irregularity is made ambiguous by law.

Table 2: Legal Changes Regarding the Treatment of Immigrants. Compiled from Alp 2004, Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü 2013b, Today's Zaman 2012, Ukrayna İzmir Fahri Başkonsolosluğu 2012, Expat Guide Turkey 2013, Resmî Gazete 2009 and Resmî Gazete 2003.

Law/Regulation	Date	Changes Regarding Immigrants
<p>Law on the Work Permits for Foreigners, Law Number 4817</p>	<p>Published in the Official Gazette on March 6, 2003 and went into force on September 6, 2003.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It abolished the Law Regarding Trades and Services Reserved to Turkish Citizens in Turkey, Law number 2007 dated 1932, which extremely restricted the number of jobs permitted to foreigners in Turkey, and expanded the category of jobs that foreigners can be legally employed in, including domestic work.</li> <li>- With this law, the authority to grant work permits has been transferred from the Under-secretariat of Treasury to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.</li> <li>- Work permits are granted on businesses' and households' (in the case of domestic work) initiative. Based on this law, foreigners' work permit applications are made only by their employers even if the migrants has not arrived in Turkey at the time of application.</li> <li>- The applications are currently required to be made on the website of The Ministry of Labor and Social Security.</li> <li>- A migrant, if s/he is in Turkey at the time of application, has to have a minimum of 6 months residence permit for the work permit to be granted.</li> <li>- In case a migrant quits her/his job, the work permit becomes invalid.</li> </ul>

<p>An amendment to the Article 5 of the Turkish Citizenship Law, Law Number 5901</p>	<p>February 12, 2003</p>	<p>- With an amendment to this law in 2003, the right of foreign national wives of Turkish citizens to immediate Turkish citizenship has been abolished and replaced with a three-year waiting period for entitlement to citizenship as a precaution against marriages of convenience.</p>
<p>An amendment to the Law on Residence and Travel of Foreigners in Turkey, Law Number 5683</p>	<p>Accepted on October 10, 2011 and went into force on February 1, 2012.</p>	<p>- With the amendment, foreigners who have tourist visas can spend 90 days in Turkey in every 180 days without need for residence permits.</p>
<p>A regulation for a one-time only amnesty and 6-month-long residence permit for irregular migrants who had started to overstay their visas before 28 May 2012 and applied for the amnesty before 15 August 2012.</p>	<p>May 28, 2012</p>	<p>- With this one-time only regulation, foreigners who had been in violation of their visas and residence permits before 28 May 2012 were given the chance to receive a residence permit of 6 months with the condition that they pay overstaying fines and residence permit fees. Those who could not benefit from the regulation were given the chance to be exempted from entry bans in case they left Turkey before 31 December 2012.</p>
<p>Law on Foreigners and International Protection (YUKK), Law Number 6458</p>	<p>Accepted in April 11, 2013, went into force in April 11, 2014.</p>	<p>- This Law, YUKK, encompasses all the regulations that govern international migration in Turkey.</p> <p>- The law transfers the migration related authorities of the Turkish Police Force to the newly established Directorate General of Migration Management.</p> <p>- The law limited the entry ban for all migrants who have overstayed visas and applied to authorities in order to leave the country to a maximum of 1 year and granted the Directorate General with the authority to cancel entry bans for certain periods. Therefore, <i>Çıkışına</i></p>



		<p><i>Teminen İkamet Tezkeresi</i> (Residence Permit for the Purpose of Ensuring Exit for Foreigners), which allowed foreigners to reduce their overstaying fines and entry ban by half, is currently defunct. In line with the authority that the new Law granted to the Directorate General, currently overstayed migrants can leave Turkey by paying only their overstaying fines without being punished with an entry ban.</p>
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Yet, there is also another aspect of these migrations flows. As already told above, labor migration flows from the former Soviet republics in the post-transition period are overwhelmingly feminized; that is, these migration flows differ from previous, traditional movement patterns in that they are initiated and numerically dominated not by men but women, a trend İçduygu argues to be global (İçduygu 2006, 12). Indeed, in parallel to this trend toward the feminization of migration, post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in Turkey are overwhelmingly women (Pusch 2012, 183; İçduygu and Biehl 2012, 26; Toksöz and Ünlütürk and Ulutaş 2012, 107) and in the media this situation was once reported with reference to Istanbul as “a centre of the illegal woman labor market” (İçduygu 2006, 5). Yet, this situation cannot be evaluated only with reference to the composition of emigration flows from the former Soviet republics in isolation with the dynamics of the labor market in Turkey.

As told in the first section of this chapter, Turkey went through a socioeconomic transformation in the 1980s in relation with the liberalization of the economy, increasing urbanization, rising female participation in the labor market, dissolution of traditional extended families and retraction in welfare policies that were already inefficient. While the increasing labor force participation of women is valid to a significant extent only for upper-middle class professionals (Toksöz and

Ünlütürk Ulutaş 2012, 91), the result was a “care gap” problem (Eder 2007, 132; Toksöz and Ünlütürk Ulutaş 2012, 90-1).

Moreover, as immigrants are compelled to work in informal sectors for it is quite difficult for them to benefit from formal employment opportunities due to bureaucratic difficulties about work and residence permits and reluctance on the part of employers, who are responsible to conduct the regularization process of their foreign employers in the current system, to regularize them; the immigrants are bound by the needs and dynamics of the burgeoning informal market in Turkey. The sectors with higher shares in this informal market are domestic and care work, construction, textiles, food services, sex industry and entertainment, all of which except construction prefer female workers. Therefore, female immigrants are offered more employment opportunities in Turkey in a way that explains the feminization of migration. Furthermore, this structure of the labor market contributes to the perpetuation of irregular migration of women and further enhances the feminized characteristic of irregular labor migration from post-Soviet countries to Turkey.

All in all, as Turkey’s labor market is quite suitable to the employment of irregular and woman labor, Turkey is still a significant destination for Post-Soviet immigrants. Yet, there are various other reasons that make Turkey such an appropriate destination for post-Soviet migrants. The fact that the migrants can find more job opportunities and earn better wages in Turkey than in their own countries is one reason (Pusch 2012, 171). Yet, there is more to it than a simple comparison of wages. First of all, as already mentioned, Turkey has been applying a quite flexible and liberal visa policy since the 1980s. Regarding that while Turkey was liberalizing its visa policy, the European Union’s borders have become strictly closed and more difficult to enter for these migrants (Eder 2007,137), as Tishkov and others indicated

by saying “a new iron curtain has been erected on the western borders of the CIS” (Tishkov et al. 2005, 3), Turkey has emerged as an ideal option with its proximity to the post-Soviet space that makes it cheaper and easier to travel (İçduygu 2006, 8). Secondly, there is an established pattern and social networks that are in place due to the almost a quarter century long history of post-Soviet migrations to Turkey since the time of the suitcase traders. Lastly, in the case of Gagauz Turks, speaking Turkish is another factor that makes Turkey a preferred destination (İçduygu 2006, 8; Eder 2007, 131-2).

Then, what does make these post-Soviet irregular labor migrants appealing to employers in Turkey? It seems that the reasons for the employment of irregular migrants instead of Turkish citizens depends on the sector in question while its necessity and efficiency is emphasized by many employers (Toksöz et al. 2012, 103). For example, in the domestic and care work sectors, especially if there are children to be cared, employers usually prefer live-in workers whom they can flexibly have in the home all day and night and even if they are hired only as care workers they can be burdened with all domestic “daily chores” (Akalın 2007, 215). However, native workers are not interested in this work pattern as they have their own families to care whereas irregular labor migrants are eager to work for they are already away from their own families (Toksöz et al. 2012, 100). So, as it is visible, irregular migrant workers also fill gaps in the Turkish labor market (Erder and Kaşka 2012, 125). Another reason is that employers find immigrant workers more “tolerant, disciplined and hard-working” as well as “more educated and qualified” and think that “they provide better services” without complaining (İçduygu 2006, 10; Toksöz et al. 2012, 100-1) and therefore, they probably find them also more exploitable. Lastly, it should be added that, as post-Soviet irregular migrants make up a populated immigrant

community and concentrate in certain districts like Laleli, stores in those places need foreign language speaking employees and hence the immigrant community also produces its own employment opportunities and joins business partnerships with citizens of Turkey.

Yet, even if these migrants develop close relations with citizens of Turkey and other immigrants, almost all of them are, in the words of Morokvasic, “settled in mobility” (Morokvasic 2004, 7) as they lead transnational lives with their simultaneous involvement in two countries by migrating temporarily and frequently moving back and forth. The main purpose of these migrants is to save money in order to ameliorate life standards both of themselves and their families left behind. As it will be documented in Chapter Five, almost all of these post-Soviet migrants remit frequently to their families for their subsistence. Yet, it is not always possible for irregular labor migrants to leave work and travel to their own countries in order to give what they earned to their families. Also, currently there is a limit on how much money immigrants can carry with them on departure. At a maximum, the money they are allowed to take with themselves cannot exceed \$5,000 in value, either in Turkish Lira or any other currency if they cannot prove either that the money was with them on arrival or that they obtained it through banking transactions (Gümrük ve Ticaret Bakanlığı 2013). Moreover, because formal ways like banks and money transfer systems in Turkey may not always be available to these immigrants due to their status as irregular migrants, it remains a question how irregular labor migrants send their remittances, that is what remitting practices they employ to transmit money to their home countries. In Chapter Two, we have seen that in the general remittance literature, remitting practices are an overlooked phenomenon and it seems that it is not very different in the specific migrant experience literature on

Post-Soviet, or other, labor migrants in Turkey. As will be shown in the next section, which overviews the literature on migrancy experience of post-Soviet irregular migrants in Turkey by focusing mainly on four recently published prominent anthologies that are either specifically on immigration to Turkey or encompasses both emigration and immigration flows, there is no single study on this remitting practice aspect of Post-Soviet irregular migration to Turkey and all we know about them is only some fragmented information that we get from general migration reports.

## Remittances and the Literature on Migrant Experiences of Labor Migrants in Turkey

In the last two decades, we have witnessed a remarkable increase in the scholarly interest in immigration flows to Turkey. Obviously, this interest is closely related to the increasing magnitude and diversity of flows that transformed Turkey into a new immigration country.

In line with this growing interest, many studies have been conducted to make sense of these new immigration flows. Several migration research centers have been established, migration research has gained momentum and various aspects of these immigration flows have been addressed while many theses and dissertations are written, reports are prepared by migration scholars in cooperation with nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations, many books and also

anthologies and compilations are published.<sup>10</sup> However, almost nothing have been written on Turkey's emergence into a remittance sending country. More so, although the migrant experience literature on labor migrants has diligently provided thorough information on these immigrants' arrivals, departures, migratory patterns, employment conditions and also salaries, little has been provided on what immigrants do with their salaries. Therefore, remittances from Turkey and immigrants' remitting practices have remained neglected topics whereas a vast literature is available since the 1960s and 1970s on remittances to Turkey.

In order to provide a map of studies on migrancy experience of immigrants in Turkey and spot the location of remittances and remitting practices on that map, it might be of help to look at four recently published prominent migration anthologies that cover immigration to Turkey, with an eye on remitting practices.

The earliest of these anthologies is *Land of Diverse Migrations* (2009) by Ahmet İçduygu and Kemal Kirişci. The volume is divided into two parts as "Emigration from Turkey" and "Immigration to Turkey" that bring together eight studies that are in fact research projects conducted within the Migration Research Program at the Koç University. The second part on immigration includes three reports on immigration to Istanbul that focus respectively on Iraqi, Afghan, Maghrebi and Iranian migrants; African migrants and asylum seekers; and Moldovan domestic workers.

The last chapter by Selmin Kaşka (2009) is a multidimensional study that documents various social, economic, cultural and legal aspects of the lives of

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<sup>10</sup> For a detailed review of developments in immigration research in Turkey, see Tolay, Juliette. 2012. Discovering Immigration into Turkey: The Emergence of a Dynamic Field." *International Migration*. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2435.2012.00741.x

Moldovan domestic workers in Turkey. She discusses these aspects of immigrant life with the data she collected through interviews with 38 people including immigrant domestic workers, employers, travel and employment agency representatives, and officials in two Turkish ministries and the Embassy of Moldova, and also one officer from the worldwide money transfer services provider Western Union. Kaşka also touches upon the issue of remitting practices, though not by using this phrase. Indicating that Moldovan migrants save their earnings and send to their families back home in order to cover various expenses including education, weddings, property purchases and so on, and citing a newspaper report from the year 2000 that puts the annual remittance flow from Turkey to Moldova at \$35-40 million, she informs us that Moldovan domestic workers transfer their money usually through minibuses drivers operating in *Dadaş Otoparkı* (Dadaş Parking Lot) in the district of Laleli, who offer this service in return for a 2 percent commission, and sometimes via Western Union (Kaşka 2009, 766-9).

Apart from this reference of Kaşka to Moldovan immigrants' money transfer methods, the issue is not evaluated in another place in the immigration part of the compilation.

In 2010, another compilation titled *Türkiye'ye Uluslararası Göç* (International Migration to Turkey) edited by Barbara Pusch and Tomas Wilkoszewski was published in Turkish. As the book's title suggests, the anthology comprises only immigration to Turkey by dividing the subject into three parts. The first part discusses the social and political conditions that shape immigration to Turkey while the other two sections focus respectively on labor migration to Turkey and communities of immigrants of different nationalities in Turkey. In total, the compilation has 15 articles written by both more experienced and also younger

migration researchers who evaluate various dimensions of their subject matters. However, despite its comprehensiveness and insightfulness, there is neither a chapter nor a passing reference to remittances and remitting practices of immigrants in Turkey.

In 2012, two notable anthologies on migration in Turkey were published. One of them is a Turkish volume titled *Küreselleşme Çağında Göç* (Migration in the Age of Globalization), which is edited by Gülfer Ihlamur-Öner and Aslı Şirin-Öner of Marmara University. The second one, *Turkey, Migration and the EU*, is an English compilation edited by Seçil Paçacı Elitok and Thomas Straubhaar.

In fact, *Küreselleşme Çağında Göç* (2012) is an anthology contributed by 27 authors and it is not composed only of studies on immigration to and emigration from Turkey but also on migratory phenomena in different countries including Italy and Israel. Furthermore, the themes the book covers are not limited to specific migration routes and flows. Rather, the book is divided into thematic sections that include works on methodology in migration research, migration policies, forced migration and internal displacement, citizenship, integration, assimilation, identity, migrant networks and diasporas. Yet, unfortunately, there is no chapter on immigrant remittances and remitting practices. Even in chapters specifically related to immigration to Turkey, remittances are not mentioned. The issue is referred to only in some of the more general, thematic articles like the one by Derya Özkul, where she underlines that in many countries which are in need of external financial sources like remittances, these monetary transfers by migrants are seen as significant components of development plans and closely monitored by states (Özkul 2012, 488).



As for Seçil Paçacı-Elitok and Straubhaar's (2012) co-edited volume to which 14 authors contributed, as its title suggest it has a focus on the interplay between the process of Turkey's accession to the European Union and immigration and emigration flows in Turkey. Within this framework, the book compiles pieces on Turkey's immigration policies, feminization and irregularization of immigration to Turkey, transnational activities of immigrants as well as high skilled migration from Turkey. On the issue of remittances there is one chapter co-written by Giulia Bettin and the editors (2012), which I have cited and benefited from in this thesis. Yet, this article makes its insightful contribution not to remittances from Turkey, but to the vast literature on remittances to Turkey by discussing the reasons that led to a decrease in these flows. However, the issue of remittances from Turkey are passingly referred to in the contributions of Pusch (2012) and Toksöz and Ünlütürk-Ulutaş (2012), whom I have cited in the thesis as well, within the context of transnational informal links and spaces immigrants establish in order to facilitate their activities and also as a tool that serves immigrants to sustain connection with their beloveds left behind.

All in all, despite the existence of a comprehensive and expanding literature on emigration and immigration in Turkey, there is an apparent gap in the immigration literature regarding remittances and remitting practices of immigrants.

## Conclusion

Turkey is not anymore solely an emigration country. It is attracting massive and diversified migratory flows from its neighboring and surrounding regions and hence

it is also an immigration country. A significant portion of these immigration flows that Turkey receives are irregular labor migrations by nationals of countries that were formerly within the Soviet Union, who migrate not to settle down but to save money, meet various expenses of their left-behind families living in poverty back home, and eventually return. In this sense, remittances constitute an inextricably linked component of these migration flows. Also, as these migrants are overwhelmingly irregular and therefore considered to be “illegal” by authorities, a question emerges as to how these migrants make international money transfers to their families left behind in the face of legal and bureaucratic constraints they have to tackle due to their “illegal” status.

However, the issue of remittances and remitting practices of irregular migrants, which are a significant aspect of the transnational lives led by post-Soviet, and also probably by other, immigrants in Turkey as well as a critical part of a burgeoning migration industry worldwide, have not been subjected to a detailed examination in the literature and all we have is passing references in the specific migrant experience literature. Therefore, just like the issue of remitting practices is highly neglected in the general and macro remittances literature, its treatment is not much different in the specific and micro literature on Post-Soviet, and also other, immigrants in Turkey. It is for this reason that Chapter Five documents the remitting practices, and also remitting behavior, of Post-Soviet irregular labor migrants, tries to take, probably a first, step in the way of filling this gap in the literature and also scrutinizes the relationship between informality, irregularity and transnationalism in the everyday lives of these migrants.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### REMITTING PRACTICES OF POST-SOVIET IRREGULAR LABOR MIGRANTS IN ISTANBUL

In this chapter, by inquiring into remitting practices of irregular post-Soviet labor migrants who overstay their visas and take up employment in Istanbul, I document the economic and social relationship patterns involved in the remitting processes and delineate the features of these remitting practices that emerge in parallel to the irregular characteristics of contemporary transnational migration flows. I argue that, apart from transnationality, one of the two key features of post-Soviet immigration to Turkey, namely its irregularity, has reflections on remitting practices. Therefore, along with these post-Soviet irregular migrants' remitting behavior, I document the informal remitting practices which are invented at the juncture of transnationality and irregularity by migrants who aim to transfer their earnings to kin left behind.

The chapter is organized in three sections. Based on my field notes, the first section gives a description of the process of accessing to the field and data collection as well as information about my interviewees. A more detailed presentation of information on my interviewees is also available on Table 3. The second section shares my observations on the remitting behavior of post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in Istanbul. Lastly, the third section documents and discusses the remitting practices that post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in Istanbul employ in order to transfer their savings to families in countries of origin.

## Gaining Access to the Field and Interviewees

The data on which this study depends is collected through semi-structured interviews, which consist of fourteen questions, I conducted with five male and fourteen female labor migrants coming from four of the former Soviet republics: Georgia, Moldova, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> None of these labor migrants had work permits, and only two of my female interviewees (Miss R and Miss S) had residence permits. Hence, all of my interviewees were irregular migrant workers at the time of interview.

In addition to post-Soviet irregular labor migrants, I talked to four tourism agencies (Agency A, B, C and D) all of which are operating in Laleli and run by citizens of Turkey; although I had difficulties in one them (Agency D) as our interaction was not a successful one as it resembled outright rejection and dismissal more than talk.

The fieldwork consisted of two phases, the first of which was conducted for a graduate seminar paper in the course of ten days between the 10th and 20th of May 2012. The second phase was conducted in March 2013 with the aim of reinforcing the argument of the paper and converting it into a thesis by expanding its scope. In both stages, all of the interviews were conducted in Turkish and the selection of interviewees was totally coincidental, as I had not aimed to interview migrants specifically from these four countries. Because I selected my sample through

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<sup>11</sup> See the Appendix A and Appendix B for the list of interview questions and Table 3 in this chapter for detailed information on my interviewees.

snowballing, in order to avoid uniformity in the sample, I diversified my first sources that helped me to reach interviewees.

Despite its drawbacks, snowballing is the only available data collection method for research on people and activities that are considered to be “illegal.” Accordingly, in reaching my irregular migrant worker interviewees, sometimes I asked my acquaintances if they knew any irregular labor migrant in Istanbul, sometimes I met them in groceries and tourism agencies, and sometimes I asked foreign-looking domestic workers that walk their employers’ dogs on the streets of Etiler and Ulus whether they could spare some time to answer my questions. Eventually, I ended up interviewing nineteen post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in six districts and neighborhoods of Istanbul: Ataşehir, Beykoz, Etiler, Laleli, Ortaköy and Ulus. In addition, I have paid periodic visits to the field until the final draft of the thesis was ready.

Also, I had the chance to observe how migrant domestic workers spend time on their days off in Laleli, where one of my interviewees, Mrs. F, took me to introduce to her domestic worker niece there on a Sunday morning at the crack of dawn, the last day of the first stage of my fieldwork. In Laleli, Mrs. F and I went to one *iş hanı* (a conglomeration of shops in a multi-storey building) where many female post-Soviet domestic workers in Istanbul come together on their days off, chitchat in small garment shops as if they are home, and do shopping.

Indeed, I was expecting to see a café or a similar place in the *iş hanı* to hang out while waiting for Mrs. F’s niece but she took me to a tiny garment shop run by a middle aged Turkish man on the first floor of the building. Mrs. F conversed with this shopkeeper and called him *ağabey* (older brother) in a way that suggests they

know each other for a long time. After half an hour, several more post-Soviet women came to the shop and either participated in the conversation or started up another one in small groups while trying on or buying clothes and drinking tea. Mrs. F's niece Miss M was also in this recently arrived group of migrant women. However, other women in the group were not pleased with me in the shop and asked Mrs. F what I was doing there. I tried to explain my purpose but they rejected talking to me. A couple of minutes later, Miss M and I moved to the next shop, whose personnel were also called *ağabey* by these migrants, for interview because it was quieter in there.

When I asked Miss M why they meet in the *iş hanı* every time, a passing-by shopkeeper heard my question and said that the shopkeepers were treating them well and showing sympathy, while Miss M approved him. The mentioned *iş hanı* seems to have transformed into a transnational “hangout” of irregular migrant women who need a space to while away their days off without spending money on conventional meeting places that would require them to order things and pay.

The duration of my interviews with Post-Soviet irregular labor migrants ranged between 20 minutes and 1 hour. During the interviews that lasted more than it was required for my questions, the immigrants were so aspired and happy to tell me about their hometowns, the level of unemployment there, and their ideas on being foreigner in Turkey, that I continued the conversation. The spots of our interviews were bus stops, small garment shops, groceries, cafés, migrants' rooms in their employers' houses, and sometimes living rooms, kitchens and gardens of their employers. Various details ranging from the amount of their salaries, deportation histories to remitting behavior and practices of each of the post-Soviet irregular labor migrants I interviewed are presented in this chapter on page 133 in table format for the sake of clarity.

Three of my five male interviewees are single, in their late-teens early twenties, and are not domestic workers. They are Mr. C, Mr. H and Mr. K, all of whom are from Turkmenistan. As for the other two interviewees, Mr. J who is in his thirties and Mr. L who is in his forties, both of them are from Moldova, and they are married and working as domestic workers with their wives in big houses located in gated communities. Mr. L's wife is also among my interviewees.

As for my fourteen female interviewees; while Miss G is from Ukraine, Mrs. D is from Turkmenistan, and Mrs. O is from Georgia, the rest of them are all from Moldova. Eight of my female interviewees are married and their ages range between 35 and 50: Mrs. B, Mrs. D, Mrs. F, Mrs. L, Mrs. N, Mrs. O, Mrs. P and Mrs. T. Five of them are single and all are in their twenties: Miss A, Miss G and Miss M, Miss R, Miss S, whereas one of them, Mrs. E, is a widow in her sixties.

In the *iş hanı* where Mrs. F took me, I discovered the Agency A on the second floor and had the opportunity to talk to a Turkish employee, whom I revisited in March 2013. In addition to selling air tickets, the tourism agency, like many of its counterparts in the same district, used to arrange appointments at the Foreigners' Office (*Yabancılar Şubesi*) of the Police Department in Istanbul for those irregular migrants who have overstayed their visas when they desire to leave Turkey by obtaining a Residence Permit for the Purpose of Ensuring Exit for Foreigners (*Çıkışına Teminen İkamet Tezkeresi*) which gave foreigners the right to stay for 15 days before departing from Turkey and reduced both the entry ban and overstaying fines by half. Each appointment was arranged in return for around 30 Turkish Lira at the time of my visit, and scheduled at a time approximately seventy-five days later. Without this residence permit that could be obtained from the Foreigners' Office, irregular migrants had to pay all of their overstaying fines at the airport, besides

being forbidden to enter Turkey for as long as they overstayed their visas. But, when they acquired the permit before departure, both the overstaying fine and the entry ban, that is the duration they would have to spend abroad, were reduced by half.

However, due to the recent abolishment of this residence permit type and currently inactive entry ban regulation of the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection, the agencies cannot provide this service as irregular migrants can pay their overstaying fines on departure without being subjected to entry bans.

In addition to having arranged at the Foreigners' Office for irregular immigrants at the time, the Agency A provides assistance to migrant women who are married to Turkish citizens in case they have any legal issue. Indeed, the employee in the Agency A boastfully mentioned to me about their Russian-speaking lawyer whose office was their next door in the *iş hanı*.

Moreover, Turkish citizens and people from post-Soviet countries establish business partnerships in offering services for transnational undertakings of post-Soviet immigrants, including remittances. Three of the agencies that I visited have at least one post-Soviet immigrant personnel: a Moldovan in each of the Agencies A and B, and an Uzbek in Agency C. Also, these agencies have Turkish citizen employees who can speak languages spoken in the post-Soviet space like another Turkish employee in the Agency A, who could speak Romanian which he started to learn first in his interactions with the migrants in Laleli. In this sense, what Peggy Levitt (2001b) argues for the relatives and friends that transnational migrants left behind holds true, though with a shift of spaces, for the native citizens of the receiving country who interact with transnational migrants, as without even moving



to anywhere the native Turkish citizens in Laleli get transnationalized in these interactions.

When I asked the first employee I talked to in the Agency A if they were also sending money abroad for their irregular migrant customers, because I have heard from some of my Moldovan interviewees about a so-called “office” that both arranges appointments and transfers money and goods to Moldova as fast as Western Union at a much cheaper price, the worker in the agency told me that each tourism agency like themselves was specialized in different “sectors,” that theirs was only arranging appointments at the Foreigners’ Office, and that the neighboring agencies on the same street were specialized either in transferring money, sending goods, or arranging appointments. Yet, I heard and observed later that Agency C, for instance, provides all of these three services, though.

While we were talking in the Laleli office of the Agency A, almost ten irregular migrant women came in the small office room. While I was shocked by the sudden arrival of ten women at that early hour in the morning, the employee told me that in fact he “could find one-hundred” domestic workers if I wanted to talk, and then asked all those women how they send their money. Moreover, he mentioned to me about the most interesting remitting practice I have ever heard, and those women approved the story, details of which I present in the third section together with other remitting practices that irregular post-Soviet migrants in Istanbul employ.

After this one, I visited two more agencies (Agency B and Agency D) on the same street. Although the second one was torn between providing and not providing information to me in a not very kind way, both agencies declared that they were assisting migrants in all three “sectors” and openly accepted that they get involved in

remittance transfers of irregular migrants to their countries of origin. However, I could receive full information about this process that constitutes a big, informal component of the migration industry only in the fourth agency I visited. The owners had not arrived yet since it was Sunday and early in the morning; and in the bureau there was only the teenager who told me about the process.

### Remitting Behavior of Post-Soviet Labor Migrants

As I have mentioned in Chapter Two, I define the migrant act of remitting by dividing it into two components as remitting behavior and remitting practices. In my classification, remitting behavior corresponds to the tendencies of migrants toward sending or not sending money back home, their motivations, gender-related and generational differences behind their decision to remit, intervals and regularity of remittances, and the amount of remitted money in proportion to each migrants' earnings.

My interviews with post-Soviet irregular labor migrants indicate that their remitting behavior is influenced by the migrant's age, type of employment, her/his having kids left behind, and even by the distance of her/his workplace to Laleli, whereas the gender factor in migration, does not make a visible effect on remitting behavior patterns in my sample since, male or female, all of the labor migrants that I interviewed, except Mr. C, transfer considerable percentages of their earnings as they migrate with this aim in the first place.

The only, and indirect, effect of gender in my case is that females, all of whom except Miss R and Miss S work as live-in domestic workers, earn much more than males, who are rarely employed as domestic workers unless they have wives to work together; and as domestic workers, women do not spend much money as they meet all of their daily needs in their employers' houses. Therefore females are able to remit more than their male counterparts do. Yet, in my sample, the reason does not seem to be real or perceived gender-based differences between men and women in the care they show for those left behind. Rather, in the case of my interviewees, it is the labor market dynamics and the nature of available positions for two sexes as domestic work, that is the employment pattern, emerges as the primary determinant behind the difference between remitting behavior of men and women. However, the feminization of migration and the gender aspect of migration flows are much wider issues on which my data does not allow me talk definitively. Therefore, I will limit myself here only with this brief report on my interviewees.

In my sample of irregular labor migrants coming from post-Soviet states, only Mr. C from Turkmenistan, who is working as a gardener in a retail plant nursery does not send money to his home country. He had been in Turkey only for two months at the time of interview; had overstayed his visa by one month and he was not considering to remit because in fact he wanted to study at a Turkish university. But he could not apply for it at the time since he did not have money. So, his aim was to work and save money in order to study in Turkey. He was living in a rented home together with a friend, and his siblings were also working in Istanbul. Mr. C's young age and his corollary desire for studying in Turkey at a university are significant factors that shape his remitting behavior.

Therefore, age is important in determining irregular labor migrants' remitting behavior for it directly shapes the aim of labor migration, and unlike older migrants a younger migrant may have different projects in mind other than sending money and leaving after a while. Even if we cannot make an all-encompassing generalization drawing from only one case, at least it enables us to point to this relationship between age and remitting behavior as a tendency.

As a second factor, even if the gender factor does not change the remitting behavior in my sample because, regardless of sex, all post-Soviet irregular labor migrants except those like Mr. C, aim to send money since the very beginning, as one of my interviewees responded my question as to whether they send money to their home country by saying "Sure, what else are we coming for?" it does indirectly determine the amount of money remitted in the context I studied. Both female and male post-Soviet irregular labor migrants send significant portions of their earnings. Yet, domestic work sector is well paid compared to others like gardening and construction.

For example, among the migrants I interviewed during the first stage of my fieldwork, the least paid female domestic worker was earning \$600 per month, whereas the gardener Mr. C was earning 800 Turkish Lira. Considering the fact that all domestic workers I interviewed are live-in, that is they do not have to pay rent for housing while at the same time meeting their daily needs in their employer's houses, which is impossible for those who are not domestic workers, makes the difference more visible between the amounts of money being sent by two groups. Therefore, since it is not much likely for a male to be employed as a domestic worker if he does not have a wife to work together in big houses, women are able to remit more. In this

sense, type of employment and the market dynamics for that job in the host society are highly related to remitting behavior.

Thirdly, having kids left behind is another important factor that shapes the migrant's remitting behavior. It simply shortens the period between two money transfers. For example, Mr. L, who is working as a live-in domestic worker together with his wife, told me that they send at least the half of their monthly salary every month for their son, whereas Mr. K, a single shopboy, remits to his mother in Turkmenistan almost the same percentage of his income but with intervals of two to three months.

Lastly, remitting intervals are also determined by the distance of migrant workers to Laleli as exemplified by the case of Mrs. T, who works as a care worker in a district of Istanbul that is quite far from Laleli, which is, along with many other functions it provides as a hub of informal transnational economy, also a remittance transfer center for the post-Soviet migrants in Istanbul. Although she would like to send money to her children in Moldova more frequently, she remits once in two months because she does not want to spend much on transportation.

### Remitting Practices in Laleli, Istanbul

In Chapter Two, I defined the category of remitting practices as a collection of technical procedures that encompasses all available ways through which a migrant can transfer money to her/his home country. Drawing on my sample interviews, I argue that the factors that are decisive in the preference of one practice over another

are in the first place the migrant's legal status, that is being a regular or irregular migrant and working formally or informally, and in the second place it is the size of the migrants' co-ethnic or co-national group in the receiving country and their level of organization, or the existence of the migrants' relatives and friends in the host country.

Accordingly, I further argue that the irregularization of migration also brings the informalization of remitting practices and the relationship patterns in Laleli that conflate integration in the country of residence with sustained transnationality are the driving forces in the emergence of these informal remitting practices.

Labor migrants coming from post-Soviet states employ diverse ways to send their money and despite having lived in Turkey for many years they lead transnational lives not only by frequently moving between their countries of origin and Turkey but also by engaging in recurred transnational engagements with their remittance transfers. The invention of these different remitting practices is a direct result of their status in Turkey as irregular migrant workers. In this sense, the irregularization of migration is inextricably linked to remitting practices. Irregular migrants, who stay and/or work irregularly in Istanbul without formal authorization, cannot transfer or save their money via bank accounts because they do not have taxpayer numbers that are required for banking transactions. Due to this limitation they have only one formal option, which is money transfer systems like Western Union and MoneyGram. Yet, despite being used from time to time, they are too expensive for frequent remittance transfers with which many irregular labor migrants finance the needs of their left-behind families. Moreover, as already mentioned in Chapter Four, because there is currently a \$5,000 limit on the amount of money

foreigners can carry with them while exiting Turkey, it is not possible for irregular migrants to collect the money and take with themselves to countries of origin.

This situation is further aggravated by entry bans for overstayed irregular migrants. Although currently entry bans are not applied since 11 April 2014 for the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection provides the Directorate General of Migration Management with the authority to cancel entry bans anytime it desires, the entry bans that would be applied for overstayed migrants are regulated in detail in the law. If the overstayed migrants depart country voluntarily by paying their overstaying fines, the entry ban can be maximum one year; but if they are apprehended, the duration of the entry ban can be up to five years. By law, these entry bans can be reintroduced anytime, which makes it arbitrary, and continue to force migrants to stay irregularly in Turkey and face limitations in their everyday lives for longer terms before departing for a different kind of long-term exile.

For all these reasons, the irregular status of these post-Soviet labor migrants translate to informality in remittance transfers as they invent informal ways to transfer their remittances; and all these circumstances signify not only that irregular migrant status directly effects the informality of remitting practices but also that irregularity and informality are constructed and sustained by the initiative of state laws and regulations in the first place. In other words, just like in Europe, the United States of America and many other states with high irregular migration inflows, migrants' irregularity in the case of Turkey is not something that is created by migrants but by states themselves. Accordingly, the informality of the remitting practices that irregular migrants invent in order to transfer their money are in fact a result of state policies but they are also significant financial sources that states and international organizations are trying to attract to formal channels. In this sense, the

relationship between the irregularity of migration and the informality of remitting practices should not be taken for granted, at least under the conditions of current worldwide enthusiasm about migrant remittances.

However, for the migrants, the possibility of inventing these informal remitting practices is not only dependent on the existence of a co-ethnic or co-national community or close relatives and friends in the host country but also on the level of integration with the native citizens of the country. Informal remitting practices reflect not only a form of informal transnationalism, which is “from below” or “low” in Portes and his colleagues’ terms (Portes et al. 1999, 220), but also a successful economic integration with the country of destination.

The post-Soviet labor migrants whom I interviewed during my fieldwork made use of four different remitting channels. However, it should be noted that these practices are not used in a mutually exclusive way, and one migrant can employ any of them from time to time.

As mentioned before, tourism agencies in Laleli, which are referred to as the “office” by post-Soviet irregular migrants, used to arrange appointments in the Foreigners’ Office for irregular migrants when they wanted to return home by obtaining a Residence Permit for the Purpose of Ensuring Exit for Foreigners and reduce their fines and entry bans by half, besides selling flight tickets. Currently, the tourism agencies cannot provide this service for entry bans are not applied and these specific residence permits have been abolished as they are not listed among the granted residence permit types in the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection.



Yet, on the business cards of such tourism agencies in Laleli one would see that they also offer visa and shipping services and that they have offices in major cities located in the Post-Soviet space, including Chisinau, Donetsk, Kiev, Moscow, Odessa and Simferopol. Moreover, although it is not written on those business cards, the tourism agencies also assist irregular migrants in transferring money in a way that the receiver in the home country can get the remitted money almost instantly.

After asking two agencies on the same street with the *iş hanı* in which the Agency A is located, during the first phase of the fieldwork, finally I could learn about the whole procedure in the Agency C from a teenager.

As all of these tourism agencies have bureaus in post-Soviet states, especially in Moldova, when an irregular migrant comes with the demand of transferring money to a certain person, say in Chisinau, the agency communicates this demand to their bureau that is closest to the recipient, and then the recipient takes the money from that bureau. Agencies get around 5 percent commissions from each transaction. If bureaus run short of cash, the agency in Istanbul sends money with their own drivers. When I thanked the teenager in the office because I could finally learn, he said that the other agencies hesitated to tell me about it because “it is not legal.” Then I mentioned again that I was a student, and that I will not use the agency’s name related to this issue, he replied: “even if you do, you cannot prove it.”

When I revisited the same agencies almost one year later in March 2013, I was more unwelcome than in my first visit and the agencies were less willing to talk. The employee in the Agency A complained about the fierce competition between agencies established by Turkish citizens and by Moldovans. According to him, Turkish citizens’ share in the informal remittance sector is too small since the

immigrants do not trust them and instead prefer remitting through the assistance of their co-ethnics or co-nationals.

For this reason, those migrants like Moldovans, Georgians and Uzbeks, who have a substantial co-ethnic community in Istanbul, have started off their own shipment offices.

Another, but less organized and simpler way that post-Soviet irregular migrants who have a substantial co-national community in Istanbul can employ just like the Serbian migrants in Germany do in order to transfer their remittances in the Germany-Serbia “remittance corridor” (De Luna Martinez, Endo and Barberis 2006) is to send money with co-national bus and minibus drivers commuting between Turkey and their home countries by leaving off in parking lots or a bus terminal in Laleli. For example, Moldovan minibus drivers conduct their business in a parking lot called *Dadaş Otoparki*, which is quite small and easy to miss between the surrounding buildings.

These minibus drivers assist their co-ethnic irregular migrants in sending money and diverse Turkish products that the migrants purchase for their families in countries of origin as well as transporting migrants’ themselves. The items that immigrants send to their families include clothes, shoes, pasta, rice, mature cheese, baklava, hazelnut cream and even ice cream, about which nearby ice cream shops advertise in three languages that they sell their ice cream in special boxes that keep it fresh for thirty six hours. The cost of shipping these goods and many others that migrants send to their family members in Moldova is determined based on the dimensions of each package and a small package with dimensions of about thirty to twenty centimeters is shipped in return for 15 Turkish Lira. If the shipped items are

food or pre-owned and used items the cost is lower, but if they are labeled, brand new items the demanded price is higher due to payments that should be made at the customs.

Indeed, these minibus drivers have played a significant role also in shuttle trade of the 1990s. Today, irregular labor migrants, in addition to shuttle traders whose number has significantly decreased compared to the 1990s, make use of the services of minibus drivers by entrusting their remittances. In return for the remitting services they provide, the minibus drivers get around two percent of the money being sent. Some of the migrants I interviewed said that in fact they do not trust these drivers but they prefer to send their money with them because it is cheap, while some others argued that they trust their drivers because they come from the same village.

Interestingly, it is not only Moldovans that get organized in this way. In another parking lot in Laleli, called *Emniyet Otoparkı*, which is a big and crowded bus terminal with numerous transportation and tourism agencies, provides the same services mainly for Azeri and Georgian irregular migrants, who are -just like Moldovans- a big irregular migrant group in Istanbul.

As for a more well known money transfer method which is not informal; the worldwide money transfer services like Western Union and MoneyGram are much more expensive channels for irregular post-Soviet migrants in Istanbul. Currently, Western Union transfers amounts up to \$100 in return for \$15 (Türkiye Ekonomi Bankası 2014) and MoneyGram transfers the same amount for \$12 (Deniz Bank 2014). In both of them, the costs decrease proportionally as the transferred amounts increase. Regarding that minibuses offer the same service in return for the two percent of the remitted money and tourism agencies in return for five percent, these

money transfer systems are too expensive alternatives for irregular migrant workers. However, the irregular migrants who do not have a sizable or organized ethnic community or close relatives and friends, like Turkmen migrants I interviewed, have to send their money with Western Union or MoneyGram. Also, in cases of emergency when families in home countries need money immediately, the migrants use money transfer systems.

Those migrants who have friends and relatives from their hometowns in Istanbul sometimes send their remittance with these relatives and friends when they exit the country. However, friends and relatives may also expect commissions in return, if they are not very close. Also, due to the limitations on the amount of money foreign nationals can carry with them on departure; this hand delivery practice, which is another common practice with Serbian remittance senders in the Germany-Serbia remittance corridor, can be possible only when migrants remit relatively small amounts.

Lastly, in a conversation with the employee in the Agency A, I heard about an unusual remitting practice and all irregular migrant women that were in the tourism agency's office at the time approved that it was true when I looked unconvinced. The main actor in this remitting practice is a Moldovan woman to whom irregular post-Soviet migrant call *abla* (older sister) and refer to as "Irina *Abla*."<sup>12</sup> "Irina *Abla*" is a rich, old Moldovan woman, residing in a hotel in Laleli. Irregular migrants from her hometown in Moldova come to her to entrust their remittances for transfer. Then, just like in the case of tourism agencies, Irina *Abla* communicates the transfer demand to her son or husband in Moldova, and

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<sup>12</sup> Irina is a fictitious name I chose to refer to this Moldovan woman.

subsequently the receiver of the remittances finds Irina *Abla*'s "representative" there and gets the money from him. For this transaction, Irina *Abla* gets four percent commission.

So, as it is visible in these four remitting practices that post-Soviet labor migrants in Istanbul employ, in the face of legal obstacles like non-availability of banking services, the irregularization of migration has coupled with the legacy of an informal economy in Laleli that shuttle traders of the 1990s created and has made a decisive influence on the invention of these different remitting practices by post-Soviet irregular migrants who come to Turkey in the first place with the aim to work, save money and remit. The conflation of transnationalism and a successful economic integration with Laleli and its native business actors, as well as the existence of co-ethnic and their level of organization helps these remitting practices to take shape and flourish. However, at the roots of these informal remitting practices lie not these characteristics of irregular post-Soviet migrations to Turkey, but migration policies that pose limitations on the daily lives of migrants,

## Conclusion

In this chapter, while documenting the remitting behavior and practices of irregular post-Soviet labor migrants in Istanbul, I tried to show that the migrant act of remitting and specifically their remitting practices are molded by the existing migration regimes in which migrants act and that the state policies and limitations which constitute migration regimes that make irregularity a common place experience for migrants also create informality in remitting practices of these

migrants. The attempts of states and international organizations to formalize informal remittances by attracting them to formal channels in line with their recent enthusiasm about these significant financial sources, do not succeed because the migrants have cheaper and already established remitting practices as they are not eager to solve the problem by focusing on its root cause, which is the limitations that migrants face in their everyday lives due to their irregular, or “illegal,” status.

Also, I argued that as these informal remitting practices, which are products of a conflation between sustained transnationality and successful economic integration with the host society and also a massive and informal component of the migration industry, emerge under conditions of transnationality and irregularity, they produce a new and strong form of transnationalism from below which is informal even though studies on migrant transnationalism usually start with an implicit assumption that all transnational migrants are regular. Therefore, as we should keep in mind that informality is an integral part of the global economy and not a marginal phenomenon, informal remitting practices contribute to our understanding of transnationalism, irregularity and the relationship between them by providing an alternative field for their study.

Table 3: Interviewees

#	Inter- viewee	S e x	Country	First Arrived Turkey X Time Ago	Ever Deported?	Job	Salary	How much of the earning is remitted in what intervals?	How is the remitted Money used by the receivers?	Preferred remitting practice
1	Miss A	F	Moldova (Gagauz)	2 years	No. In Turkey since arrival.	Domestic work and child care	\$700 per month	Remits all of her salary once in 2 to 3 months after deducing her own expenses	For household expenses and education expenses of her sibling. The rest for savings.	“Office”
2	Mrs. B	F	Moldova (Gagauz)	5 years	No.	Domestic work (worked in Bursa for 3 years before Istanbul)	\$700 per month	Remits most of her earnings once in 3 to 6 months	For the needs of the family, paying for bills, university education of her daughter-in-law	“Office”
3	Mr. C	M	Turkmeni s-tan	2 months	No.	Gardener	800 TL per month	Does not remit.	Does not remit.	Does not remit.
4	Mrs. D	F	Turkmeni s-tan	4 years	No. In Turkey since arrival	Domestic work	\$600 per month	As much as her son in Russia and husband in Turkmenistan needs. (not regularly)	Education expenses of her son and needs of her husband.	Western Union

Table 3: Interviewees. Continued.

#	Inter-viewee	Sex	Country	First Arrived Turkey X Time Ago	Ever Deported?	Job	Salary	How much of the earning is remitted in what intervals?	How is the remitted money used by the receivers?	Preferred remitting practice
5	Mrs. E	F	Moldova (Gagauz)	13 years	No. She has been in Turkey without interruption for the last 5 years.	Domestic work	\$600 per month	Remits every month if there is need at home. Otherwise, saves and sends collectively. Once saved \$5,000 and remitted for the wedding of her child.	Wedding expenses of her five sons. Household expenses. Maintenance of home. With the remitted money, the family built a new bathroom and new windows	Mostly with minibuses, sometimes with friends.
6	Mrs. F	F	Moldova (Gagauz)	10 years	No. Frequently moves between Moldova and Turkey once in 4 to 6 months.	Elderly care	\$600 per month	Send \$500 every month (Because she is live-in, she can meet her daily expenses in the home of her employer).	Household needs, bill and education expenses of her two children.	Minibus of friends (to Moldova for her daughter), Western Union (to Russia for her husband)



Table 3: Interviewees. Continued.

#	Inter-viewee	Sex	Country	First Arrived Turkey X Time Ago	Ever Deported?	Job	Salary	How much of the earning is remitted in what intervals?	How is the remitted money used by the receivers?	Preferred remitting practice
7	Miss G	F	Ukraine	8 years (usually stays for 9 months and then leaves for 3 months or so)	Deported once because she did not accept "friendship" demand of a policeman.	Domestic work	\$600 per month	The remitted amount depends on the needs of the household back home. Previously, she send money for the construction of a home for the family and for her sibling's wedding.	Household needs.	Friends.
8	Mr. H	M	Turkmenistan	2 years	No. In Turkey for the last two years.	Gardener and part-time construction worker	210 TL per week.	Remits \$300 per month.	Savings.	Western Union
9	Mr. J	M	Moldova (Gagauz)	3 years	No. Overstayed for the last 2 years.	Domestic worker in a house with his wife	\$1300 in sum (together with his wife)	For their child, they collect \$200-\$300 of their monthly salary and sends once in a few months.	For the needs of their child. The rest of their earnings is saved in Turkey.	Minibus, "Office" or friends.

Table 3: Interviewees. Continued.

#	Interviewee	Sex	Country	First Arrived Turkey X Time Ago	Ever Deported?	Job	Salary	How much of the earning is remitted in what intervals?	How is the remitted money used by the receivers?	Preferred remitting practice
10	Mr. K	M	Turkmenistan	1.5 years	No. Did not leave the country since his arrival.	Shopboy	1000 TL per month.	Remits \$400-\$500 once in 2 to 3 months.	His mother spends the money for household needs.	Friends or Western Union
11	Mr. L	M	Moldova (Gagauz)	3 years	No.	Domestic worker in a house	1200 TL per month	Remits at least half of the money they earned with his wife every month for their son with Mrs. L	For the needs of his son.	Friends or Western Union
12	Mrs. L	F	Moldova (Gagauz)	3 years	No.	Domestic worker in a house	1200 TL per month	Remits half of the money they earned with his wife every month for their son with Mr. L	For the needs of her son.	Friends or Western Union
13	Miss M	F	Moldova (Gagauz)	10 months	No.	Domestic work	\$600 per month	Sends at least half of her salary every month.	Household expenses of the family.	Friends

Table 3: Interviewees. Continued.

#	Interviewee	Sex	Country	First Arrived Turkey X Time Ago	Ever Deported?	Job	Salary	How much of the earning is remitted in what intervals?	How is the remitted money used by the receivers?	Preferred remitting practice
14	Mrs. N	F	Moldova (Gagauz)	10 years	No.	Domestic work	\$650 per month	Remits depending on the needs of the household. Once in 1 to 3 months. She used to send less in the past. But with her child at university now, she sends more.	Household expenses and education of children.	Minibuses and "Office"
15	Mrs. O	F	Georgia	1 year	No. In Turkey since the first arrival.	Elderly care	\$600 per month	Remits most of her salary once in 2 to 3 months.	Household expenses.	Friends and banks.
16	Mrs. P	F	Moldova	2.5 years	No. Frequently moves between Moldova and Turkey.	Domestic work and childcare	\$600 per month	Remits \$300-\$400 once in 2 to 3 months.	Household expenses, maintenance of the house, expenses of children.	"Office"

Tablo 3: Interviewees. Continued.

#	Inter-viewee	Sex	Country	First Arrived Turkey X Time Ago	Ever Deported?	Job	Salary	How much of the earning is remitted in what intervals?	How is the remitted money used by the receivers?	Preferred remitting practice
17	Miss R	F	Moldova	10 years	No.	Was unemployed at the time of the interview. But she did not specify previous jobs.	Unemployed.	In the past, she used to remit every month sometimes all, sometimes a big proportion of her salary.	For the household needs of the family.	Minibus and "Office"
18	Miss S	F	Moldova	9 years	No.	Sales clerk at a clothing shop.	1000 TL per month.	Remits half of her salary every month.	For the needs of her parents.	"Office"
19	Mrs. T	F	Moldova	7 months	No.	Elderly care and domestic work	\$650 per month.	Remits most of her salary every month.	Household expenses and for the education of children.	"Office"

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

The remittances of transnational migrants are currently a celebrated financial resource flow that reaches billions of dollars every year, without even including remittances that flow through informal, unauthorized remitting channels established by irregular migrants themselves in the face of legal limitations on their desire to send money to people they left behind in countries of origin, just like many other aspects of their daily lives are limited by their legal status.

The various informal remittance transfer channels that irregular migrants invent by combining transnationality with their economic integration into countries of destination, which I define as remitting practices for they comprise all the available ways that a migrant can transfer her/his money, constitute the main subject of this thesis examined in the case of post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in Istanbul.

To this aim, the second chapter that followed the introduction provided a review of the literature of the post-Second World War period on transnational migrant remittances. Based on the aspects of remittances the works produced in this literature examined, the review divided it into three groups as studies on the developmental effects of remittances, remitting behavior of migrants and remitting practices. The chapter argues that while many studies were written on the developmental effects of remittances and migrants' remitting behavior, remitting practices have been overlooked in the macro literature on remittances. A reason behind this is the rising optimism and enthusiasm about migrant remittances as they

reach impressive amounts that carry the potential of development for remittance-receiving countries. Yet, it is surprising that those governments and international organizations that try to formalize informal remittances by attracting them to formal channels and the scholarly community do not pay close attention to informal remitting practices.

The third chapter examined three concepts that are essentially related to informal remitting practices, namely migrant transnationalism, the irregularization of migration and the migration industry. The chapter presented transnationalism as the context in which remittance transfers emerge and as one of the two defining features of informal remitting practices for the success and continuity of remitting practices depend on the transnational links sustained with countries of origin. In this sense, not only migrants, but also their money becomes transnationalized as it is the object of transnational relations in remitting practices.

The irregularization of migration is the second defining feature of informal remitting practices after transnationalism. By defining irregularity not as something migrants undertake, the section on the irregularization of migration argues that irregularity is created by states and their laws and policies due to the clash between their political and economic concerns about migrant labor. Later on, the active creation of irregularity by states starts to get its driving force from the profitability of cheap and unprotected nature of irregular migrant labor.

As informal remitting practices emerge at the juncture of transnationality and irregularity and they create a form of transnationalism which is informal and from below, they also constitute an immense and informal part of the migration industry, which is a vast collection of sectors that profit from the migration of other people

even though remitting practices are not mentioned in the literature that deals with the migration industry.

The fourth chapter is designed as a background chapter for the examination of informal remitting practices of post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in Istanbul. The chapter first discussed Turkey's emergence as both an immigration and a remittance-sending country from the 1980s onwards by exploring the reasons and conditions that propelled this dual transformation. Second, it presented an overview of various patterns of immigration that Turkey receives before turning to the discussion of post-Soviet irregular migrations. Lastly, by examining four recently published anthologies on international migration in Turkey, the chapter underlined the existence of a lack of studies on remitting practices of migrants in the specific migrant experience literature just like in the case of macro remittances literature.

Finally, the fifth chapter presented my study on remittances of post-Soviet irregular labor migrants in Istanbul with an evaluation of the issue with reference to the concepts presented in Chapter Three. It emphasized that the informal remitting practices employed by post-Soviet irregular labor migrants are not only a significant, informal part of the migration industry and an example of informal transnationalism from below, but also a reflection of the combination of transnationality and successful economic integration with the country of origin due to the business partnerships established between native citizens and these migrants.

With this study, I tried to see how irregular migrants set up informal ways to transfer their remittances, how they circumvent the limitations imposed upon them in their daily lives and what this suggests for the informal economy in Laleli, an economic center of transnational migrants in Istanbul.

At first sight, it is obvious that an issue like remittances does not constitute a traditional subject of political science. Therefore, a thesis written on remitting practices by someone in political science might be seen as unusual and maybe weird. But, perceiving remittances solely as flows of money and remitting practices solely as sociological encounters overlooks the different conditions that remittances may create in terms of power relations between states and peoples as well as the business oriented transnational belonging types developing from the grassroots, which remitting practices carry the potential of creating and enhancing.

Behind the selection of post-Soviet migrants instead of another immigrant group in Turkey is that, while today the level of transnationalism that immigrants experience have reached significant levels thanks to advanced technological communication facilities and globalization, a most remarkable case of migrant transnationalism is the migration patterns of irregular labor migrants from the former Soviet countries. The transnational peculiarities of their migration flows, including shuttles between two and sometimes more countries, dispersed families and frequently mobile lives, couple with another significant aspect of these flows, which is the purely economic motivation behind their movement and, in this sense, makes post-Soviet labor migrations an appropriate case for the examination of remittances.

Also, as the migration of these post-Soviet peoples are irregular migratory movements and as they are considered “illegal” by the strict migration policies and laws of nation-states, their primary aim, that is saving money in countries of destination and remitting to home countries, turns into another “illegal” endeavor and is countered and tried to be prevented by legal obstacles to flow of remittances through official and more secure mechanisms like banks, a policy which also targets money laundering activities.



In order to overcome these obstacles to remitting and realize the primary aim of their migration, these irregular migrants invent informal ways of remitting with the support of their social networks and by cooperating and doing business with the citizens of destination countries. In this sense, the irregularization of migration and remitting practices are highly related phenomena.

This relationship between irregularity and informality is the reason why I argued in the introduction that remitting practices are molded by migration regimes in which they are born. As remitting practices are truly transnational phenomena, the irregularity and informality stem from the political and economic contradictions of contemporary transnational migrations that migrants all over the world has to face. Politically they are not wanted, economically they are needed; and the result is irregularity which forces migrants to lead lives in informality.

After a while, as already mentioned above, in many cases like in the United States of America and many others, employers and government officials deliberately encourage irregular migration for it becomes a more profitable labor source like argued by Michael Kearney and Peter Andreas. Moreover, as these migrants are considered to be “illegal” by the strict migration policies and laws of states, the migrants’ primary aim of saving money and remitting turns into another “illegal” endeavor and it is countered and tried to be prevented by legal obstacles to flows of remittances through official mechanisms like the \$5,000 money quota on departure and the requirement of taxpayer numbers for money transfers through banks in the Turkish case, precautions which also target money launderers.

This is why the irregularization of migration also creates informality in remitting practices. This might sound like a tautological argument, but I do not think

so. We know that currently there is a massive migration industry and a big proportion of it is informal remittances, which nowadays governments and international organizations try to formalize by attracting the money of irregular migrants to formal channels. Just like they understand migration-induced-development in macro terms rather than looking for how individual migrants and migrant families benefit from it, they do not say anything on the regularization of migrants while talking about how to formalize remittances. In this sense, irregularity and informality is not an inseparable pair. For governments and international organizations, migrants can be irregular but their remittances can be formal. Therefore, at least under these circumstances, the link between irregularity and informality is not tautological because irregular migrants can be contemplated to remit through formal channels in case the formalization attempts of states and intergovernmental organizations become successful. Therefore, what should be done is to meticulously redefine irregularity and informality and not to see them as an inseparable pair for the actors that desire to benefit by encouraging the formalization of what is informal do not consider doing the same for what is irregular as seen in the case of migrant remittances. The formalization of irregular migrant remittances without an attempt at the migrants' regularization would be a double exploitation of them.

But, in practice, the encouragements fall short of directing irregular migrants' money to formal channels because they are still expensive for migrants who have already established their informal channels. Simply, like in the case of post-Soviet migrants in Istanbul, the migrants are turning to informal ways due to the legal limitations and expensiveness of formal remitting mechanisms. Yet, there is more to it because building on the legacy of informal business in Laleli, the migrants and

Turkish citizens perpetuate their business by relying on transnational relations and it seems that even if a policy suddenly facilitates the outflows of money, they might continue to contribute to the informal economy in Laleli due to trust relations they have already established. In other words, as states are trying to formalize remittances we see at the micro level that irregular migrants solve their problems regarding remittance transfers by themselves. That is, trying to attract irregular migrants' remittances to formal channels does not work as long as states and international organizations do not consider the regularizing migrants. Without regularizing the migrants' status, these actors are not likely to succeed in their attempts at formalizing irregular migrant remittances.

As remittances flow through informal channels, in parallel to the irregular nature of migration and despite the formalization attempts of states, remitting practices remain not as economic and bureaucratic transactions but also gain a social and political dimension that transcends national borders and, while producing informal social and economic relationship patterns that involve migrants, remittance receivers and agencies in a transnational link that binds immigration and emigration countries together, they eventually create an informal transnationalism from the grassroots which again seems to challenge nation-states. This is why remitting practices create another alternative micro field to look at transnationalism. Without asking and understanding the remittance aspect of the issue, our notions of transnationalism and irregularity would not be sufficiently elucidated.

Moreover, the mentioned social dimension of the issue also poses many questions regarding the meaning of remittances not only for receiving countries but also for different groups of migrants. For example, apart from the frequently asked question whether there is a difference between men and women in terms of their

remitting behavior regarding that the feminization of migration is a significant feature of contemporary migrations, the question how remittances send by female migrants impact their status and position in society vis-à-vis males and what kind of consequences would remittances have for the empowerment of women in different contexts remain to be answered.

## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN TURKISH

1. Hangi ülkeden / hangi şehirden geliyorsunuz?
2. Ne kadar zamandır Türkiye’de çalışıyorsunuz?
3. Türkiye’ye tek mi geldiniz, yoksa ailenizden ya da tanıdıklarınızdan birileri de var mı şu anda Türkiye’de?
4. Ülkenizde eşiniz, çocuklarınız ya da anne ve babanız ile mi yaşıyordunuz?
5. Türkiye’de ülkeye giriş ve çıkışlarınız nasıl oluyor? Vize aşımı sorununu nasıl hallediyorsunuz?
6. Giriş ya da çıkış yaparken ne tür sorunlarla karşılaşıyorsunuz? (“Rüşvet”?)
7. Sizce Türkiye’de ve/veya İstanbul’da sizin gibi çalışma izni olmadan çalışan aşağı yukarı kaç kişi vardır? (Sizin ülkenizden? Genel olarak?)
8. Son zamanlarda çalışma izni alınmasının kolaylaştırılmasıyla birlikte çevrenizde çalışma izni alanlar oldu mu?
9. Sizin çalıştığınız iş kolunda çalışanlar ortalama ne kadar ücret alıyorlar?
10. Türkiye’den kendi ülkenize para gönderiyor musunuz?
11. Kazancınızın ne kadarlık bir kısmını gönderiyorsunuz?
12. Hangi aralıklarla / kaç zamanda bir ülkenize para gönderiyorsunuz?
13. Para göndermek istediğiniz zamanlar hangi yolları kullanıyorsunuz?
  - a. Elden mi gönderiyorsunuz? (Evetse, nasıl?)
  - b. Banka aracılığıyla / havaleyle mi gönderiyorsunuz?
  - c. Western Union ve MoneyGram gibi para transfer sistemleriyle mi?
14. Türkiye’de işinizden kazandığınız parayı nasıl kullanıyorsunuz?
  - a. Ev almak için mi?
  - b. Beyaz eşya, mobilya gibi ürünler için mi?
  - c. Biriktiriyor musunuz?

## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH

1. From which country/city are you coming from?
2. For how long have you been working in Turkey?
3. Have you come to Turkey alone? Do you have family members or friends in Turkey right now?
4. Were you living with your spouse and children or parents in your home country?
5. How do you make your arrivals and departures? How do you handle problems regarding visa overstay?
6. What kind of problems do you experience during your arrivals and departures? (Bribery?)
7. In your opinion how many people work in Turkey and/or in Istanbul without work permits? (From your own country? In general?)
8. Do you know anyone who received work permit after the recent facilitative regulations?
9. How much money do people earn in the sector you work?
10. Do you send money from Turkey to your country?
11. What share of your earnings do you send?
12. With which periods do you send money to your country?
13. What channels do you use to transfer your money?
  - a. Hand delivery? (If yes, how?)
  - b. Banks?
  - c. Money transfer systems like Western Union and MoneyGram?
14. How do you use the money you make in Turkey?
  - a. To buy property?
  - b. To buy household appliances and furniture?
  - c. Do you collect your money?

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