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# 4   Zouglou Music and Youth in Urban Burkina Faso

## Displacement and the Social Performance of Hope

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## Introduction

One of the most striking consequences of the recent armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire is the forced displacement of Burkinabé labor migrants and their families from Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso over the decade 2000–10. It is estimated that at least 500,000—and probably more than 1 million—Burkinabé living in Côte d'Ivoire were forced to leave the country during this time (Boswell 2010; Reister 2011), and yet these displacements have received relatively little attention from researchers and humanitarian actors alike.

Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire emerged during the colonial era as closely tied and mutually interdependent parts of a regional mobility regime that fueled the Ivorian miracle economy in the decades after independence. Burkinabé labor migrants thereby provided an essential part of the work-force for Côte d'Ivoire's plantation economy—the world's largest cocoa producer (Beauchemin 2005; Cordell *et al.* 1996). This same interdependence eventually fueled the xenophobic rhetoric and ethnicized politics at the heart of the Ivorian armed conflict, as shifting regimes in Côte d'Ivoire drew ever-tighter boundaries around the notion of Ivorian autochthony in order to exclude northerners and people of immigrant descent from political influence (Dembélé 2002; 2003).[1]

This chapter analyzes the practices and aspirations of young Burkinabé migrants arriving as refugees in Burkina Faso for the first time during the Ivorian crisis,[2] usually accompanying their parents, who had been forced to abandon their migrant careers in Côte d'Ivoire. Born and raised in Côte d'Ivoire, these young migrants faced an entirely different challenge to that of their parents in integrating into a socio-cultural context with which they were unfamiliar and which held specific ideas about and prejudice against the children of the Burkinabé diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire. Through the concepts of hope and displacement, the chapter reflects on how Ivorian Zouglou music became an important cultural vehicle for these young migrants, intent on performing their otherness and quite successful in exploiting that difference in competition with non-migrant youths over access to employment

and other privileges. Zouglou music was a predominant genre in Ivorian popular culture in the 1990s but gained new life in Burkina Faso a decade later, in the context of the Ivorian armed conflict.

In exploring the meanings and uses of Zouglou music in this context, the analysis suggests that this particular musical style served to articulate multiple modes of hope. In relation to their non-migrant peers, the social performance of Ivorian youth culture by young migrants served to evoke a cosmopolitan youth identity that represents the hopes and dreams of many Burkinabé youths—to migrate to the regional metropolis of Abidjan and take part in global flows of urban youth culture, consumption, and privilege. On a more personal level, the lyrics of Zouglou music, together with its shared consumption, inspired a sense of hopefulness and confidence in its listeners in the face of their social exclusion as immigrants in the city.

## Displacement and the Social Performance of Hope

As noted by most scholars reflecting on hope, the notion is difficult to pin down and therefore challenging to use as an analytical concept. However, rather than despair at the concept's complexity, it may be more useful to consider several *modes of hoping* (Webb 2007; Zournazi 2002) in conjunction and reflect on their characteristics and implications. As a point of departure, we may say that hope generally relates to, or even springs from, a sense of uncertainty or ambiguity (cf. Cole and Durham 2008; Crapanzano 2004; Hage 2003; Harvey 2000; Miyazaki 2004). Hoping for something means wishing for a particular outcome of undetermined circumstances and the uncertainty thus implied may relate to both the source and the likelihood of that outcome. As a prelude to delimiting the different modes of hoping relevant to my purposes here, let me briefly consider how uncertainty may be seen as a fundamental consequence of social displacement.

As a number of anthropological studies of forced displacement have shown, the distinction between forced and economically motivated migration is rarely clear-cut. Rather than movement *per se*, displacement has been related analytically to the disruption of subjective senses of belonging (Agier 2011; Bjarnesen 2013; Jackson 2002; Jansen 2008; Lubkemann 2008a). The notion of displacement, from this perspective, has been applied when researching empirically how processes of life-making or belonging may be disrupted or challenged by other actors or by larger structural forces (Lubkemann 2008b, 193; see also Gill *et al.* 2011, 301–302). Approaching displacement as a life-rupturing form of mobility (cf. Barrett 2009, 95) invites a detailed empirical investigation of specific histories and experiences of (im)mobility without the need for overall categorizations of migrants or their movements—in other words, a shift in focus from 'the displaced' as a population towards *processes* of displacement. This perspective also calls attention to migrant aspirations

and the outlooks of refugees, even when the goal of such decisions may be difficult to envisage or articulate (Piot 2010, 20). In this way, the uncertainty created by displacement has been argued to hold the potential for productive as well as detrimental effects (e.g., Hammar 2014). Involuntary moves or 'stuckedness' may have unexpected consequences, leading to new opportunities.

The ambiguity entailed by displacement leads us back to the relation between hope and uncertainty. Inspired by John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy, Susan Reynolds Whyte locates hope in the space between uncertainty and possibility or, as she phrases it, in *subjunctivity*—in the conditional: '. . . it is not just doubt, but hope for a better future that hangs on the ifs and maybes' (Reynolds Whyte 2002, 177; see also Weiss 2004, 14). The mode of hope evoked by the idea of subjunctivity may be said to rely on a sense of optimism in the face of an uncertain future (Hage 2003, 24). Behind this seemingly innately personal capacity, however, lies a fundamental structural condition that is important for an anthropological analysis of hope: '. . . [H]ope depends on some other agency—a god, fate, chance, an other—for its fulfilment . . . [H]ope presupposes a metaphysics' (Crapanzano 2003, 6). In political terms, hope's reliance on the agency of another presupposes an unequal power relationship: some external source of agency is needed to fulfil hope and, whether that source is perceived to be metaphysical or not, this reliance expresses a hierarchical relation between the one(s) hoping and the one(s) granting those hopes. Here, some analysts evoke hope as a resource that is distributed unequally within a population (Ghassan Hage in Zournazi 2002, 155). For example, Arjun Appadurai speaks of 'the capacity to aspire' as a 'navigational capacity' accumulated by those with the privilege of more opportunities to exercise it (Appadurai 2004, 69). In this fairly neoliberal vision, wealth generates wealth, whereas the disadvantaged are left searching for ways to expand their '. . . more brittle horizon of aspirations' (2004, 69).

It seems to me that the social distribution of hope evokes the stratification of a relative dependence on external agency. Those who hope would probably rather not be in such a position of dependency. Here it is important to distinguish between two different modes of hope: hope as a personal disposition and hope as a social predicament. On the one hand, a sense of well-founded optimism may be seen as a resource—what Hage refers to as 'dispositional hopefulness'. '[H]opefulness', he argues, 'is above all a disposition to be confident in the face of the future, to be open to it and welcoming to what it will bring, even if one does not know for sure what it will bring' (Hage 2003, 24). Such a confidence may certainly be nourished by past experiences of success or achievement, as Appadurai suggests. On the other hand, hope may be the last resort in the face of profound uncertainty. The uncertainty caused by displacement may also be seen to be unequally distributed—in refugee research, it is consistently emphasized that neither war nor natural disaster strikes the civilian population on a social *tabula*

*rasa*, but rather accentuates existing inequalities and stratifications (see, eg., Allen 1996; Hoffman and Oliver-Smith 2002; Jansen and Löfving 2009). Being reduced to a state of hoping for the intervention of external agency, whether in the form of humanitarian or of supernatural forces, is anything but a desirable position to be in (Bjarnesen 2009). The predicament of hope reflects social stratification as much as it reflects the accumulation of dispositional hopefulness.

Hope may, in other words, be both an expression of a personal faculty of resourcefulness and a social condition resulting from uncertainty, for example, in the context of forced displacement. However, even the former, more positive, mode of hope—or hopefulness—is an ambiguous state of being. Just as we must understand the external agency evoked by different modes of hope in specific social contexts and particular situations, we must examine analytically how hopes are inspired and articulated by larger social discourses and institutions. Hopefulness may seem to the individual to be an innate capacity, independent of outside intervention but, as Hage (2003) shows, a central function of a society or a nation-state may be said to be that of inspiring 'social hope' in its citizens, by which he means a sense of 'existential mobility', of 'going somewhere' (Hage 2007). Hope, from this perspective, is laced with power and potentially with structural violence, rather than simply being a synonym for optimism: '[W]e have to note how capitalism hegemonises the ideological content of hope so it becomes almost universally equated with dreams of better-paid jobs, better lifestyles, more commodities, etc.' (Hage 2003, 14). Although I would argue that it remains to be empirically tested in each instance, it is significant to relate the passivity implied by this kind of hope to capitalist ideology, since '[t]he power of these hopes is such that most people will live their lives believing in the possibility of upward social mobility without actually experiencing it' (Hage 2003, 14).

This warning is critical to our analysis of the experiences of young Africans, who may be said to generally face some of the poorest odds for achieving such aspirations. In most studies of young Africans, youth agency makes little sense without a consideration of the hierarchical orders that young people take part in. The social position of youth implies that young people direct their efforts towards expanding their social networks and accumulate social recognition by all possible means (Christiansen *et al*. 2006; Durham 2004, 2008; Honwana and De Boeck 2005), leading some to evoke their youthfulness in a context where such a social role is perceived as an asset, and others to emphasize their sense of responsibility and moderation to a different audience.

In relation to the aspirations of Burkinabé labor migrants, the overall dream of upward social mobility and an idea of a globalized middle-class consumer lifestyle were certainly present in the narratives of those still hoping to leave Burkina Faso for Côte d'Ivoire and of those who had been forced to return. However, capitalism takes specific structural and discursive forms in specific contexts and, in the relationship between Burkina Faso and Côte

d'Ivoire, it has been shaped by the colonial division of labor, by which the former has been constituted as a reserve of cheap manual labor for the plantation industry of the latter (Amin 1967; Cordell *et al*. 1996). In this particular case, the hopes of aspiring migrants in Burkina Faso have been inspired by the successful returns of several generations of migrants, who were able to acquire the right to cultivate land in Côte d'Ivoire and accumulate enough wealth to retire back home. In this way, the narratives of aspiring migrants during my fieldwork in 2009–10 articulated the hopes of stepping in the footsteps of past generations of migrants—what Miyazaki characterizes as an 'inherited hope' (2004, 139). In Miyazaki's understanding, hope works as a driver of social action; a *method* for inspiring agency, and this method '. . . is predicated on the inheritance of a past hope and its performative replication in the present' (2004, 139). The inherited hope of aspiring Burkinabé migrants was based on the history of Côte d'Ivoire's social, cultural, and economic superiority in the eyes of aspiring Burkinabé labor migrants. The standardized contents of the narratives of aspiring migrants in Burkina Faso, then, did not stem from a global homogenizing force of capitalism, but from the specific institution of circular labor migration between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, developed and maintained in its fundamental structure since the early twentieth century.

These introductory remarks on hope and displacement have served to outline several aspects, or modes, of hope that will be relevant for understanding how Zouglou music and its adherents in urban Burkina Faso coped with uncertainty. For young adult involuntary migrants in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso's second-largest city, uncertainty arose primarily from their persistent sense of displacement—a predicament that had followed them on their travels from Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso during the Ivorian armed conflict. The following section traces the origins and shifting sociopolitical affiliations of Zouglou music. After this brief historical contextualization, the chapter continues by analyzing the modes of hope evoked by Zouglou lyrics, and by the shared consumption of Zouglou by young urban refugees in Bobo-Dioulasso.

## Generation Zouglou

Originating in the academic circles of Cocody University in Abidjan, Zouglou emerged as a musical genre around 1990, in the context of Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny's last years in power and the political transition from a one-party state to multiparty democracy (Blé 2006, 170). The often satirical prose of the lyrics was initially an expression by university students of their dissatisfaction with the political elite and the experience of exclusion and marginalization by the well-educated youth (Konate 2002, 784–785). In this way, Zouglou served its originators as both a source of insight into the societal transformations taking place in Côte d'Ivoire and a source of belonging mobilized by a sense of shared struggles and identity

(Blé 2006, 170). The name Zouglou itself is usually said to stem from its meaning in the Ivorian Baoulé language, designating a shapeless mass but used as a derivative for a garbage heap or trash can (Adom 2013, 32). Another interpretation refers to the Bété phrase *zou glou*, meaning 'bury us' or 'reject us'—both linguistic references connoting abjection and marginality from the establishment and a rhetorical sense of hopelessness.

During the 1990s, the messages of Zouglou lyrics developed from being primarily concerned with the hardships of life as a student to reflect on larger issues of being an urban resident and on the escalating political crisis and armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. In this way, as I explore in more detail below, its emergence is intimately linked with the advent of a new urban slang and its accompanying urban youth culture in Abidjan during the same period (Konate 2002, 783; Newell 2012). From its highly localized point of departure, in other words, the messages of Zouglou gradually encompassed the frustrations and desires of a whole generation of young Ivorians (Blé 2006, 176).

Zouglou's image of being the voice of Ivorian youth (see also Konate 2002, 792) appealed to political actors on both sides of the divide that gradually widened during the 1990s between the proponents of Ivorian autochthony and its various opponents. Zouglou's origins among university students in Abidjan included the involvement of the influential FESCI student union, whose figureheads during the 1990s included men who would become dominant in Ivorian politics a decade later—on opposing sides of the political divide (Konate 2003). Charles Blé Goudé, as President Laurent Gbagbo's 'street general'[3] and mobilizer of the *Jeunes Patriotes* youth militias throughout the troubled decade of 2000–10, became a known patron of and investor in the production of Zouglou (Koffi 2013). Even the reconciliatory messages—evoking an end to armed conflict and the shared responsibility of power holders on both sides of the political divide—of some Zouglou artists in the latter years of the Gbagbo regime were promoted on national TV and radio in an attempt to diffuse the resentment of the youth of the opposition (Blé 2006, 180).

Despite its affiliation with the Gbagbo regime and the *Jeunes Patriotes*, then, Zouglou in Côte d'Ivoire gradually came to be seen as the voice of the disenfranchised, yet politically aware, Ivorian youth, evoking a shared sense of national belonging and injustice rather than a specific political allegiance. In the remainder of this chapter, I illustrate how Zouglou was re-appropriated by young Burkinabé citizens who were forced to leave Côte d'Ivoire during the armed conflict and had settled in Bobo-Dioulasso. Given its former affiliation with the xenophobic *Jeunes Patriotes* militias, it may seem paradoxical that this particular musical genre became a rallying point for these young migrants but the analysis shows that Zouglou in Burkina Faso became associated with a cosmopolitan youth culture rather than a localized political message by virtue of Abidjan's standing as the preferred destination for aspiring Burkinabé migrants, and its image as a gateway to globalized popular culture and connectivity.

## Displacement, Uncertainty and Hope in Zouglou Lyrics

Musical performers in the booming Ivorian entertainment industry have come to represent a combination of cosmopolitanism and modernity to their audiences across the French-speaking countries of West Africa. In music videos by Ivorian artists, the most prestigious sites of global modernity—Paris, New York, London, Tokyo or Dubai—have become familiar backdrops to the choreography of the performers. The hopes of many young Ivorians are nourished by such displays of participation in global flows of mobility and consumption.

One Zouglou group in particular incarnated this hope of global cosmopolitanism by naming themselves '*Espoir 2000*' ('Hope 2000')! Once they were successful enough to become featured on Ivorian television, their own hopes had already been realized and the name came to be interpreted as representing the hopes and dreams of young Ivorians in a more general sense (Adom 2013, 103). The mode of hoping represented by the group *Espoir 2000* is, first and foremost, an expression of the social distribution of hope. Hope, here, is a resource that successful musicians redistribute to their audiences through their lyrics, music videos, and, in rare cases, band names. The underlying power imbalance, of course, consists in the very slim chances that members of their audience will experience a similar upward social mobility and, in this way, despite the best interests of the performers, the redistribution of the hope of success may be said to defuse tension and lull consumers of these messages into the passive 'waiting time of hope' (Crapanzano 2003, 5).

As noted in the previous section, however, Zouglou artists were not just concerned with displaying their own success; they also contributed to a social critique, originating in the circles of university students but eventually gaining traction among youths across the country. For example, Zouglou artist Soum Bill did not hesitate to berate the Gbagbo regime in the midst of armed conflict, lamenting, 'We no longer know who to count on, down with the politics of the belly'[4] in his 2004 song '*Nos problèmes*' ('Our Problems')—quoted in Adom (2013, 90). The expression 'politics of the belly'—whether inspired by Bayart's seminal work (Bayart 1993) or from the emic conceptualizations from which it is derived—implies a predatory and corrupt political rule wherein political elites feed on the resources of common citizens. The song thus berates the corruption of the political elite under Gbagbo's rule.

Befitting of social juniors in this context, however, most Zouglou artists have been somewhat vague in placing the blame for their generation's sense of despair. For example, *Espoir 2000*, in the song *Abidjan*, chose to appeal to their leaders rather than blame them for the predicaments of the young population, urging the political elite to fulfil the hopes to which God had not responded. Here, the shifting external agency affecting the circumstances of those hoping is spelled out: the hopers remain dependent on others to alleviate their misery but, having directed their hopes towards God in vain,

they now address the power holders instead. The recognition of the authority of the power holders as social seniors in relation to the musicians who evoke the role of social juniors, it should be noted, may be a fairly rhetorical maneuver, as it is shown to be in other confrontations between elders and their social juniors (see, e.g., Argenti 2007; Ottenberg 1971). In another song, the same group does not hesitate to impose its own clear-sightedness on the state of Ivorian politics, implying that politicians treat the population as sheep! Finally, the despairing sentiments towards divine intervention expressed in the song *Abidjan* do not prevent *Espoir 2000* from composing a celebratory hymn, thanking God for their own fortunes.

Reflecting a final mode of hoping, *Espoir 2000*'s song *Abidjan* is mainly concerned with a critique of the lack of employment opportunities and housing in the city, satirically changing the national motto '*Union, Discipline, Travail*' ('Unity, Discipline, Work') into '*Union, Discipline, Chômage*' ('Unity, Discipline, Unemployment'). These lyrics reflect the aspirations of many young people in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and beyond of being able to escape the social moratorium of youth (cf. Vigh 2006, 96) through employment and wage earning which, in turn, allows for the possibility of establishing oneself as a social adult. Remembering Hage's discussion of the relation between hope and capitalism, then, these aspirations are not utopian in the sense of being politically radical hopes for societal transformation or a structural redistribution of resources (cf. Argenti 2007, 246; Malkki 2001, 329) but, rather, conservative hopes of taking part in the privileges of a globalizing middle class—primarily through work, housing, consumption, and marriage. Zouglou is not decidedly, or even primarily, a social critique, although commentaries on the political leadership are part of the subject matter of the lyrics. The central image of Zouglou is to speak truthfully about life as a young person in Côte d'Ivoire and, by extension, about African youth. Having considered the shifting political affiliations of Zouglou in Côte d'Ivoire, and the diverse modes of hope evoked by a selection of its lyrics, the following section reflects on the role of Zouglou for young urban refugees in Burkina Faso.

## Zouglou and the Social Performance of Hope in Sarfalao

In the middle of the smoke-filled room where Youssouf, Félix, and a varying number of other young men sleep, Jo dances slowly with his eyes closed, while singing along to the lyrics that are pouring out of a stereo lit by a fluorescent blue backlight on the control panel. He has taken off his white t-shirt, and his body is glistening with sweat from the heavy heat of a Sunday afternoon in Sarfalao—an informal neighborhood in Bobo-Dioulasso which has attracted large numbers of self-settled refugees from the Ivorian civil war during the past decade (Bjarnesen 2014). Alassane explains to me that Jo is 'inspired' (*inspiré*) by the music, which describes a kind of trance where the

listener is drawn into the music and forgets about his surroundings. He says that this is how a *zouglouman* draws hope and courage from Zouglou to endure the hardships of everyday life and face the world with his eyes open and his back straight.

In addition to their appreciation of Zouglou, these young men—all in their late twenties—shared an experience of having been born and raised by Burkinabé parents in Côte d'Ivoire. Their Ivorian upbringing was obvious to their Burkinabé neighbors in Sarfalao: they spoke French with a typically Ivorian accent, knew relatively little Dioula, the local *lingua franca*, and dressed in a style inspired by American hip hop, in this context associated with Ivorian urban youth culture. Although Alassane and his friends came to Burkina Faso with their families when they were forced to flee persecution during the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, they quickly found each other in Sarfalao, where they were all coping with the social exclusion by their new neighbors. To the long-term residents of Sarfalao, the mass arrival of refugees from Côte d'Ivoire during the period 2000–05 put increased pressure on housing and livelihood opportunities, and local youths were provoked by the attitude of the migrant youths, whom they perceived as arrogant and flamboyant.

The attitude of local youths was, however, ambivalent, since the urban youth culture displayed by the new arrivals to the neighborhood represented the regional metropolis of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire's financial capital, to which many dreamed of migrating once the political situation in Côte d'Ivoire had stabilized.[5] The local youths perceived of the newcomers as '*diaspos*'—a term originating in the circles of university students in Ouagadougou as an abbreviation of 'children of or from the diaspora' (Zongo 2010, 35), referring to the tendency for Burkinabé migrants in Côte d'Ivoire to send their children to Burkina Faso to continue their education during the politically unstable decades of the 1980s and 1990s. In Sarfalao, the term was used to remind migrant youths of their otherness in two different social contexts, as both not quite Ivorian (in Côte d'Ivoire) and not quite Burkinabé (in Burkina Faso). Another term applied to migrant youths was '*ivorien vers*' (literally, 'Ivorian towards'), taken from the terminology of Burkinabé identity cards, where a person unable to state his or her precise date of birth would be listed as being born in an approximate year, stated in the identity papers as, say, *vers 1975*—literally 'towards', meaning 'around' or 'approximately' 1975. In other words, the term *diaspo* was intended by local youths to signify their neither/nor status as approximately, but not quite, Ivorian or Burkinabé.

It was in the face of this experience of being doubly excluded or persistently displaced that migrant youths found a sense of community with other migrants. Whereas migrant hometown associations typically center on more-delimited places of origin—sometimes specific towns, in other cases a more regional delimitation—migrant youths in Sarfalao paid little attention to the specific origins of other migrants. The common denominator for a sense of belonging to the group was, first and foremost, an experience of

otherness and exclusion in relation to non-migrants in the city and, secondly, a familiarity with Ivorian urban youth culture, expressed through their dress, taste in music, and use of Ivorian *nouchi* slang. The sense of persistent displacement conveyed by the term *diaspo* resonated with the young migrants, who gradually came to embrace it and ascribe it with more positive connotations. This re-articulation of the connotations of the term *diaspo* sprang, to a great extent, from the sense of belonging and hopefulness that Zouglou inspired. For example, the popular song '*Quel est mon pays*?' ('Which is my country?'), by Ivorian Zouglou artists Yodé and Siro, explicitly addressed the sense of neither/nor experienced by the migrant youths, now self-identifying as *diaspos*: 'In Burkina they say "There's an Ivorian"; in Côte d'Ivoire, "There's a Burkinabé"'.

For the *diaspos*, the song's lyrics provided little by way of a social critique but simply stated that these experiences were made on a wrongful ascription of identity on the basis of appearances. Its force lay rather in its recognition of their own predicament, in the precise articulation of their own experience of persistent displacement. Other Zouglou songs dealt with themes that also resonated with the *diaspos*. Alassane told me that Zouglou was not dance music for parties but was intended to inspire reflection in the listener. Many songs were about hope, about not being corrupted by money, and about valuing friendship. These lyrics helped you to hold your head up high and be proud, Alassane explained. You could tell a *diaspo* from a Burkinabé by his taste in music, he claimed—if someone walked proudly, as if listening to Zouglou, he was bound to be a *diaspo*. He might even be dancing in the street in broad daylight—something you would never see a Burkinabé do. This was an attitude which the *diaspos* had brought with them from Abidjan, he said. In Abidjan there were plenty of *zougloumans*[6] and this was the style that Alassane and his friends had brought with them.

At one point Nico, who had arrived in Burkina Faso during the war and had made a career as a singer of Zouglou and other Ivorian musical styles, explained a song by saying that its message was that money changes a person and makes you forget what is important, such as friendship. He said the lyrics were meant to make us understand that the life of the rich—the politicians and 'the bosses'—was not worth striving for. I asked who the 'we' referred to in this context and he said that it was for 'us, the weak'. He said that Zouglou was about getting good advice from people who knew how it was to be 'small'. He translated the following song, about a man who leaves his car at the site of an accident in Paris, despite having the law on his side in placing the blame for the collision. Nico explained the message as being that, if you go to Paris (or some other place) without papers, you do not have rights and you would be thrown out of the country by the authorities if you stay. This was a fitting example of how the Zouglou songs also provided advice on situations that people like Nico knew nothing about but which represented their aspirations. They were songs to make you think and retain your focus. They were songs that inspired hope. Hope, in this way, evokes

Hage's notion of dispositional hopefulness: through the shared consumption of Zouglou, the *diaspos* inspired each other with optimism and faith in the future by creating a space of inclusion in the face of persistent displacement.

Nico had come to embrace the role of *diaspo* as a cultural style—a role that he had only become aware of through his stigmatization in Burkina Faso. In Côte d'Ivoire, listening to Zouglou and speaking *nouchi* slang had been a popular youth cultural style, even in the town of San Pedro, where he grew up—informed by music videos and by friends and acquaintances with access to Abidjan. In Burkina Faso, Nico's speech, mannerisms, and musical preferences stood out and, through sharing these tastes and dispositions with other young migrants, he gradually came to perceive his labeling as a *diaspo* as a source of pride and distinction, rather than as a derogatory label assigned to him by envious and narrow-minded non-migrant neighbors. As a re-defined social marker, *diaspo* came to represent a cosmopolitan youth cultural style, brimming with energy, satire, and wit (Bjarnesen 2014).

A social performance (cf. Goffman 1959, 77; see also Argenti 2007, 11), in this way, is not about pretending but about embodying a social role. As Alassane expressed it above, the embodiment of *diaspo* youth culture in Sarfalao was intimately linked to the internalization of Zouglou, starting from its consumption in an enclosed space where the listener is gradually 'inspired' by letting the music and its lyrics fill him. As Alassane describes it, the music is carried with him out onto the streets, where his posture and attitude make him look as though he is (still) listening to Zouglou. By embodying the spirit of Zouglou, the *diaspos* performed an attitude of confidence and hopefulness that gradually came to define their sense of community and resourcefulness, in contradistinction to the local 'Burkinabé' youths. In this way, the *diaspos* practiced what Miyazaki calls 'the method of hope', replicating the inherited hopes of generations of Burkinabé labor migrants through their social performances (Miyazaki 2004, 139).

As a self-conscious promotion of a social role, performing *diaspo* youth culture may be understood, in this way, to be relying on the same playful performances that Sasha Newell has described as 'the bluff' in his work on the *nouchi* youth culture in Abidjan (Newell 2009, 380). In Côte d'Ivoire, *nouchi* slang had been developed as a subversive language of the youth, serving as a coded language with which to critique the power holders through satire. Originally, this use had lent itself to Zouglou as well, allowing artists to express opinions that might otherwise have been censored by the authorities (Adom 2013, 56). In Sarfalao, however, whereas *nouchi* slang served exclusively as a tool of counter-exclusion—a coded language designed to leave the uninitiated guessing as to what was really being said—the role of Zouglou eventually became more than just a subcultural signifier, shared by the *diaspos* in opposition to non-migrant youths. In fact, Zouglou became the first of a series of subcultural styles that found its way into local communities, serving more as a bridge between the *diaspos* and their neighbors than as a vehicle for exclusion or stigma.

Nico was involved in a musical group consisting entirely of *diaspos*, who would meet and play music around a shared pot of mint tea in the afternoons. The group's musical skills soon caught the attention of a neighbor, who was arranging for the celebration of his newborn son's baptism and who eventually hired Nico and the others to play at the party. The group thus rose to local fame and would play at weddings, funerals, baptisms, and other social events in the neighborhood, thereby earning both a livelihood and a legitimate place in the community. In a similar way, *diaspo* youths gradually became attractive to local radio stations because of their cosmopolitan French vocabulary, whereas the outgoing and fun-loving attitude associated with the *diaspo* social performance proved useful for local politicians in need of a visible and dynamic youth wing at political rallies and important meetings. During President Blaise Compaoré's electoral campaign in 2010, Nico and his friends could be seen riding around in the back of an open truck, singing songs in support of the same man who, in a speech following a series of riots at the university campus in Ouagadougou in 2005, blamed young migrants from Côte d'Ivoire for the increasing disorderliness of university students!

The relative success of *diaspo* youths in acquiring access to local elite networks and livelihood options in these different ways confirmed to the *diaspos* that their otherness could be used as an asset and further inspired the consolidation of a self-aware social performance of *diaspo* youth culture. During the last few months of my fieldwork, new steps were being taken to form an NGO named *Diaspora et dévéloppement* (Diaspora and Development), inspired by the success of *diaspos* in using their otherness to get ahead in the competition over scarce livelihood options. In this way, the performance of the defiant hopefulness at the heart of *diaspo* youth culture gradually became a key livelihood strategy, reflecting the *diaspos*' overall hopes for a secure income. This, in turn, would provide them with a way out of the informal neighborhood and into more gentrified areas of the city, with prospects for consumer goods such as a television set, a refrigerator, a motorcycle, and fashionable clothing, and, finally, with the possibility of getting married and raising a family. Zouglou, in this way, became one of the vehicles through which *diaspo* youth culture was gradually re-defined as a vibrant and cosmopolitan social performance in Bobo-Dioulasso. More than any other musical style originating in Côte d'Ivoire, Zouglou came to define the *diaspo* subculture in Bobo-Dioulasso, and, most importantly, to symbolize at one and the same time its singularity and its adaptability to the social life of the neighborhood.

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Zouglou music became a central source of hopefulness for young adult migrants in Bobo Dioulasso, in the face of social exclusion and in spite of an uncertain future. Through their shared

consumption of this music, *diaspo* youths found a space in which to articulate and reshape a new collective identity against their persistent displacement. Nevertheless, Zouglou did not serve to mobilize the *diaspos* socially or politically in the way that rock music is said to have been a driver of social critique in the cultural youth revolution in the Europe and America of the 1960s (cf. Hobsbawm 1995, 325–327). Zouglou had served as a social mobilizer in a different context—first in the university circles of Abidjan and, later, as part of a larger pro-Gbagboist movement of articulating 'true Ivorianness' (*ivoirité*), juxtaposed with the unauthentic urbanites from the hinterland and from countries like Burkina Faso and Mali (Newell 2012). The paradox of why this very same style of music would become the flagship in the refashioning of *diaspo* youth culture in Bobo-Dioulasso has been shown here to relate to several modes of hoping. For the *diaspos*, Zouglou inspired their social performance of hope, which proved to be a useful strategy in catching the attention of the local elite and enabling access to their networks in the city.

Zouglou music became an important vehicle for simultaneously distinguishing and integrating *diaspo* youths in their new neighborhood in Bobo-Dioulasso. Despite Zouglou's paradoxical political roles in Côte d'Ivoire, young migrants in Burkina Faso who had experienced the increasingly violent xenophobia of the Gbagbo regime first-hand developed a special bond to this particular musical genre for several reasons. Firstly, Zouglou was, to the *diaspos*, a favorite style during their upbringing in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1990s—before the *ivoirité* rhetoric targeted them as 'strangers' and, in a sense, turned Zouglou against them. In this way, Zouglou became associated with a pre-displacement nostalgia for life in Côte d'Ivoire prior to the armed conflict which eventually led to their forced 'return' to their parents' country of origin. Secondly, the shifting political affiliations of Zouglou in Côte d'Ivoire were understood by the *diaspos* as an expression of the unavoidable obligation of social juniors to align with authority figures—an expression of the *débrouillardise*, or social navigation, that all youths must engage in (see, e.g., Christiansen *et al*. 2006). Furthermore, although Zouglou became affiliated with the Gbagbo regime in Côte d'Ivoire, its lyrics still carried universalist aspirations of instilling hopefulness in young people, and was famously vague in its commentaries on the political situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The distinction between the interpretative possibilities of the music in its own right and its use in social mobilization is essential for appreciating how Zouglou became so important to youths displaced by its proponents among the political leadership in Côte d'Ivoire. Third, in Burkina Faso, Zouglou carried the inherited hope of generations of Burkinabé labor migrants of seeking their fortune in Côte d'Ivoire. The *diaspos* thus exploited their otherness by evoking the cosmopolitanism associated with Ivorian urban youth culture—as a 'stepping stone to modernity' (Newell 2012, 42)—regardless of the fact that *nouchi* youth culture in Abidjan was explicitly articulated in contradistinction to the figure of the uncultivated youth from the village and its extension to the poorer neighbors of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea.

In this endeavor, the consumption of Zouglou was not only a social performance directed at non-*diaspo* youths but also a collective practice that brought *diaspos* together and inspired hope in the listeners through the act of sharing their appreciation, as well as through the messages of the lyrics. The consumption of Zouglou thereby illustrates the general point that the performance of *diaspo* youth culture—as any social performance, in Goffman's understanding—cannot be reduced to the self-conscious impression management of the actor but is a multi-faceted social practice that may provide a deeply felt sense of belonging and hope while simultaneously serving as an identity-marker of other social roles.

Mobilizing *diaspo* youth culture in Sarfalao, in this way, may be seen as one among several strategies in the pursuit of social recognition and access to networks of privilege. Despite oppressive social hierarchies and debilitating material conditions, these social practices are oriented towards possible futures within their structural limitations. By conceptualizing the actions and expectations of *diaspo* youths as enactments of hopefulness, we might avoid the idealizing tendency of the concept of youth agency (cf. Durham 2008) and move towards an approach that treats the hopes and dreams of the people we study as central to social dynamics and processes of social change.

This expression of youth agency should not be seen as revolutionary. Most young people seek ways in which to benefit from and fit into existing orders, rather than turn them upside down (Durham 2008). The concept of hope, in this context, allows us to appreciate two aspects of youth agency that may otherwise be neglected: first, that youth aspirations, to a great extent, rely on external agency—social seniors for the most part—and, second, as Hage argues, that the relatively standardized discourses of these aspirations warrant consideration of the larger structural forces that influence and shape young people's hopes of partaking in a globalized vision of middle-class prosperity.

This understanding of youth agency and the conservative nature of hope are also expressed in the roles and lyrics of Zouglou. Zouglou's main message is not that authority can be challenged or overturned—it is as subservient as it is subversive—but that there is room for reflection; that the immense uncertainty of youth in Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere can be articulated and scrutinized. This articulation inspires hopefulness: a sense of control and oversight in an otherwise uncertain and disorienting social terrain that enables the envisioning of potential futures. The main appeal of Zouglou lyrics is not to inspire hope for structural transformations or even for individual fortune but, rather, to instill hopefulness in the disenfranchised—'us, the weak', as Nico phrased it.

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## Notes

1. Of course, these identity boundaries were notoriously hard to define, given the centuries-long history of population movement that renders most residents in present-day Côte d'Ivoire the descendants of migrants (Geschiere 2009).
2. The term refugee is used here to emphasize the involuntary and war-related circumstances of this movement, in a context where similar routes have been traveled by labor migrants for generations. Throughout this chapter, the term is not used with the intention of raising debate about the legal status of these migrants in relation to international humanitarian law.
3. Charles Blé Goudé and Laurent Gbagbo are both currently indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity (AFP 2014).
4. 'On sait plus sur qui compter ô'/'A bas la politique du ventre'.
5. During the time of my fieldwork, Côte d'Ivoire was preparing for the presidential elections which were held in October–November 2010. The dramatic aftermath of the elections, in which the two main candidates—Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara—both claimed victory, led to renewed instability and the displacement of several hundreds of thousands of people during the period December 2010–April 2011 (see Banégas 2011; Bassett 2011; Strauss 2011). The hesitation by aspiring migrants in Bobo-Dioulasso to initiate new journeys to Côte d'Ivoire, at a time when a peace agreement had officially been in place since 2007, proved well-warranted.
6. '*Zougloumans*' is the French plural of '*zouglouman*', as used by my informants.

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