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Moving in informal circuits: the trajectories and economic activities of West African migrants in Cataluña, Spain

Master Thesis Human Geography
Globalisation, Migration and Development

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Acknowledgements

This thesis is presented for the fulfilment of the Master of Science in Human Geography degree with a specialisation in Globalisation, Migration and Development. The required research was conducted over a fieldwork period of five months from February until July 2015 in Cataluña, Spain, and for the biggest part in the regional capital Barcelona, forming part of the VENI-research *Fortress Europe as a Mobile Space? Intra-EU Mobility of African Migrants* for the Radboud University in Nijmegen.

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Executive summary

The West African street vendors are a well-known image from the capital of Cataluña. The story behind these young men that are trying to sell goods to tourists and suddenly pick up their huge bags to flee away into the crowd in order to avoid getting caught by police is, however, less well known. The need to survive and take care of family back home causes the migrants to participate in informal economic activities. The search for such activities, which are far more than solely street vending, triggers mobility on various trans-local dimensions that even expands towards a transnational dimension.

We live in a *transworld*, where shrinkage in time and space have caused borders to be blurred and made it easier for humans, goods, money and information to spread faster and even expand towards a transnational level. Migrants who come to Europe therefore also participate in this dynamic world full of mobility. In need of economic means they almost automatically contribute to the flows of goods and money that circulate within a country like Spain, but also within Europe and even back to West Africa. Their creative and innovative ways to generate income causes them to be highly mobile on various mobility dimensions. The migrant in this case can therefore also be called a *transnational citizen*. In order to grasp these dynamic life-worlds a mobility-lens is needed, also when studying a fixed phenomenon like the informal economy in Barcelona and its surroundings.

As Spain has been one of the major points of entry for Europe since a long period of time, the regional capitals have always known large migrant populations. Although the most displayed way of reaching Europe in mass media has been migrants arriving by small boats, also called *pateras*, large numbers travel overland and enter by the Spanish enclaves Ceuta or Melilla, or the last part by boat from Morocco to the Southern Spanish coastal cities. Besides this, a vast amount enters Europe by flight on a visa and subsequently travels towards the desired country of destination. These trajectories into Europe are full of similarities, but also many unique details that influence mobility in such a way that they are interesting to look at individually. Periods of enforced immobility in other countries or unexpected changes in the journey cause trajectories to be changed along the way. These trajectories into Europe always influence the major migratory pattern after their arrival to the continent one way or another as well, but are all unique in their own way.

After having reached the European continent by entering Spain, many West African migrants choose to travel to Barcelona. Some of our respondents motivate this choice by a social contact they had in this city, while many also speak about the opportunities for informal employment or trade in this region to be able to earn some income for themselves and their families in the country of origin. The informal economy of Barcelona, as mentioned before, does not only consist of the street vending business. The *topmanta*, however, is a huge informal sector in which mainly Senegalese men earn their money. The cat and mouse game between police officers and these salesmen has always been present, but during the last months the pressure has increased due to major political- and societal debates surrounding the street vending business.

The West African migrant also participates in other, less visible, informal sectors. Both migrants and locals who are no longer able to find formal employment in the tight labour market of over the last years perform the collection of scrap metals. Strolling around the city with shopping cards to collect scrap metals to earn some money forms part of a larger trading network we have encountered with places of delivery, which subsequently sell it to transporters that make sure the goods are sold or transported to West Africa. It is not only trade in scrap metals or second-hand goods that we encountered. Also drug trade is something where two of our migrants participate in and openly spoke to us about. The trade in marihuana in the city centre is a well-known business that seems rather easy to enter, while another respondent speaks about major hard drugs trading networks that expand over Europe.

Besides this, there are some side activities many migrants perform when a primary business fails due to the season or other reasons. Doing promotion for nightclubs in the city centre of Barcelona is something many respondents have done or still do during evening hours. As they can go whenever they have time, it is a good opportunity to earn some extra money on their own schedules. Also trade in goods is something almost all respondents mention to participate in. When having some extra money, they invest it in second-hand goods or cars in order to sell them in West Africa. Cars often function as suitcases in order to transport both themselves and selling goods towards a country of origin for a holiday. Here, the flows of goods and money becomes clear in terms of a greater transnational network.

Besides these informal activities in Barcelona, we explored the agricultural sector in L rida, as many of our respondents mentioned having worked there for a season or know people who do so. On the countryside of Catalu na farm holders hire labourers both formally and informally. Therefore, there are opportunities for migrants without a working permit as well to have a fairly steady income at the end of the day. Working hours are long and the job is characterized as being seasonal from May to September more or less. The men we spoke to who currently work in such jobs thus move around Spain in order to combine this seasonal work and generate income throughout the year.

When describing the various sectors of the informal economy of Catalu na, it is already clear migrants often participate in various informal sectors at the same time. These take place on various dimensions, as goods have to be purchased within the city or in its outskirts, and are sold in different places as well. Cars are bought in other Spanish cities or even other European countries and subsequently sold in West Africa. Besides the circulation of such goods, the money that is earned with these trading businesses also circulate as the migrants themselves use it, but almost all respondents also state to send a part home as well in order to contribute to the costs of their family and close friends. Remittances in terms of goods, money and information thus circulate amongst various mobility dimensions.

Even more interesting, however, is that the migrants themselves are forced to move around and be mobile as well in order to guide these flows of goods and money or to perform labour to generate income. One can state the West African migrant in Catalu na lives a highly mobile life. While they have already made a journey to reach Europe they are used to relocating and being creative in order to find new ways to improve their lives. Therefore, they are constantly looking for new opportunities to start enterprises, even when this means they have to move to another place within Spain, or even within Europe. This does not mean, however, that in some cases the informal economy is a keep factor for migrants.

Many are well aware they do not have the ability to earn money unregistered in any European country and therefore express the will to stay in Spain and create an income and some savings for themselves there.

In general, however, informal activities trigger mobility. One thus witnesses daily mobility patterns on an intra-urban dimension to purchase selling or trading goods, to sell in the streets, collect scrap metals or perform other informal activities that almost all require them to be mobile. Besides this, the search or sales of goods also takes place on an urban-urban or urban-rural dimension and is mostly characterized by short distances and takes place over a short period of time. Settlement or making a living for themselves in this sense is not a goal. Although the informal economy thus triggers mobility on a short-term basis, it also influences major migratory patterns. Economic opportunities in the sense of trade towards other European countries or to West Africa cause migrants to move over longer distances, which also takes them a longer period of time to travel. Such opportunities in terms of trade or labour over a longer distance or -period of time can also trigger the will to make a living for themselves elsewhere. This is often influenced by social networks they have in a particular place or even just an overall attractive image they have from a country. The boundaries between daily mobility patterns and the larger migratory trajectories are, however, blurred, as migrants often tend to simply look at the opportunities to improve their situation. Here we thus see that their primary motivation to come to Europe returns, as they are in search of economic prosperity and improving the situation for their family and themselves, which also influences many of their mobility choices *within* Europe. Economic opportunities and choices with regard to migration are thus always intertwined.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Walking down the 'Passeig de Gràcia' on the first day of our fieldwork period, looking at the many West Africans that are selling their goods, my colleague and I were fairly hesitant on how to approach one of them. How should you approach a young man trying to survive by earning some money in the most exclusive shopping street of Barcelona, while you want to know basically everything about his personal life? Hesitant, but reassuring ourselves we were well prepared to do this, we approached a man who sold sunglasses, telling him we were two students from Holland interested in speaking to West African migrants who are living and working in Barcelona. After some chitchat we asked him for his name and his place of origin. He replied with a big smile on his face: "Soy Mamadou y soy de Senegal"¹ ("my name is Mamadou and I am from Senegal") (Mamadou, several encounters). A few days later we met in a café, where we drank a cup of coffee, and although he seemed shy at the beginning, Mamadou opened up about his journey and experiences as a West African young man coming to Cataluña, Spain.

"Fortress Europe" is a notion one encounters on many occasions nowadays when interested in migration and mobility processes. While the European Union strived for an internally borderless Europe, it started closing and protecting its external borders even more (Van Houtum, 2010). For migrants the image of a borderless area might have increased their desire to move to such a continent, where one could move around without facing physical borders. The image that appears in European media is migrants crossing high fences, in which Spain's external borders are often the topic of debate (Zapata-Barrero et al, 2007; Van Houtum and Boedeltje, 2009). The trajectories these migrants have already faced before reaching these fences probably influence their aspirations with regard to Europe, as well as influential factors they encounter in the EU on their further mobility choices within Europe (Van Houtum, 2010; Schapendonk, 2011). This research will give in-depth insights into the dynamic role of the West African migrant, currently living in Cataluña, Spain, in the informal economy, as also their migratory trajectories.

1.1 Further background information: migration towards Spain

After having been shut down from the outside world both politically and economically, because of the dictatorship in which it lived for over 40 years, Spain joined the European Community 1985. Up until then, it had not kept busy with migration laws. This changed immediately after its participation in the European Community, forming three major immigration policies within the period of 1986 to 2001.

¹ In order to stay close to a quote, I will always cite the quote in the original language and translate it to English afterwards.

In 1999 the Integrated System of External Vigilance (SIVE) was established with an investment of 150 million dollars for the period of 1999 – 2004, to finance the process of discovering boat migrants until bringing them towards reception centres (Carling, 2007, Zapata-Barrero and De Witte, 2007). Where the European Union formed the Schengen area, opening up its internal borders, its 2005 joined border police (Shamir, 2005:213) had to establish external borders to "protect the fortress." Especially these Southern-European borders, separating Europe from Africa, are known for their high fences and the use of advanced technology. These measures that are taken at Spain's external borders, are highly debated, as migrants crossing the fences are often injured, *besides* the violence that is used by border patrol (Zapata-Barrero et al, 2007:85-87; Van Houtum et al, 2009; Carling, 2007; Ferrer-Gallardo et al, 2014). One could therefore state Spain is a significant player within the European Union's migration- and border policy field. *Fortress Europe* for that matter is portrayed to be closed for all unwanted outsiders (Migreurop, 2010:37). Still, there is vast amount of migrants that succeed in crossing Europe's highly protected external borders:

While in the 1990s, the majority of immigrants crossing the Strait of Gibraltar came from Morocco and headed for Spain, the large majority of immigrants jumping fences in Ceuta and Melilla and arriving at the Canary Islands in *cayucos* come from Sub-Saharan African countries, such as Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and are heading for Europe. The development from *pateras* to *cayucos* at the southern Spanish borderlands therefore not only highlights the capacity of migrants and human traffickers to cross political borders, but also the fact that the southern Spanish borderlands have become European borders, politically, technically and mentally. Once these European borders have been crossed, it is easy to travel on within Schengen Europe (Zapata-Barrero et al, 2007:88).

Spain, because of its location in this matter, is one of the most strategic points with regard to the EU's border policy. The Spanish-African borders consist of many transit zones, which are crucial for migrant in their trajectories towards Europe (Collyer, 2007; Carling, 2007). Especially its enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla, and the Canary Islands, are of significance with regard to African immigration (Ferrer-Gallardo and Van Houtum, 2014; Saddikki, 2010). In trying to control migration towards Spain, the country has extended the SIVE to Fuerteventura, as predominantly Senegalese migrants were changing migration routes due to the heavy protection measures at its enclaves and the Canary Islands. Now, even more dangerous routes are taken, while coming through legal manners or by land in any case, has been made highly difficult for the vast majority that wants to enter. It started coast patrols along the coasts of Mauritania and Senegal to be able to detect boat migrants earlier on route. Under pressure of international human rights organisations it has increased its concern over human rights, although these are still of debate (Zapata-Barrero et al, 2007:88-89).

The fact that the migrants can travel on within Europe, as Zapata-Barrero and de Witte state, when having overcome the borders, might even be more interesting for European countries. The myth of an 'invasion' from Africans migrating to Europe has created a politicisation of the migration debate and its management for many years now (de Haas, 2008). The further mobility choices migrants make might not only be influenced by a certain

destination they want to reach. These provisions are fairly blurred by the processes of mobility and immobility during their trajectories (Schapendonk, 2011). The open and borderless zones for migrants became clear when in October 2006, a route from Barcelona to Milan was discovered through which migrants passed to enter Italy (Lindahl, 2009:20). Due to its membership in the EU, however, Spain is focusing on the European responsibility for the last years as well. Where the EU previously pressured Spain to protect its external borders, it has been Spain that is asking the EU to see Spain's external borders as a European responsibility. This has proven to be a crucial factor for the following years, deciding who should take responsibility with regard to migration policies on a European level (Zapata-Barrero et al, 2007:89-90), as one can also notice in current debates about migrants arriving to Greece, Italy and also Spain.

With heavy conflict situations, but also further developmental problems, in various parts of the world, migratory flows towards these three European countries have increased and the Southern European countries are asking for the European Union to take measures. This August 2.4 billion euros was promised to those countries as a form of aid for the so-called 'migrant-crisis', where Italy will receive 560 million euros, Spain an amount of 522 million euros and Greece 473 million euros (Middleton, 11/08/2015). By spring 2016 we are all aware of the major numbers of, predominantly Syrian, refugees entering through Turkey and coming to the Greek islands. The European Union is in a constant debate about which measures should be taken by which member states in order to divide the pressure of receiving such amounts of asylum seekers. Within this matter regarding migrants from several parts of the world there are of course differences within refugee status and persons that decide to come to Europe on other, mainly economic, grounds. Nevertheless, the debates seem to have been blurred by its politicization and one might say people have lost track of who this migrant *is*, *why* he/her decides to leave his/her home country in the first place and *what* he/she does when having reached Europe. Therefore, it is highly necessary, to give 'the' migrant a face again, who might not flee from their country because of a conflict situation, but because of a need or desire for a better life, income or adventure.

The major numbers of refugees coming to Europe over the last year puts pressure on European decision-making with regard to migration, which also affects non-political migrants.

1.2 Research Goal and –Questions: the role of the West African migrant in the informal economy of Barcelona and the impact on intra-EU mobility

Forming part of the VENI-research *Fortress Europe as a Mobile Space? Intra-EU Mobility of African Migrants* for the Radboud University in Nijmegen, fieldwork was conducted over a period of five months (Schapendonk, 2014). As research assistants within this larger research, Master-students Saskia van Ooijen and I gathered data in Cataluña, Spain. Within this overall focus on the mobility of West African migrants in Europe, an individual focus was selected. Other students have done research into similar themes with regard to the mobility of West African migrants within Europe, conducted from Lombardy, Italy and de Randstad, the Netherlands. While doing fieldwork, the group worked together in comparing research methods, sharing data and comparing results, which gave deeper insights into similarities and

differences within the different research sites. Eventually this VENI-research will be continued for another few years, where other Master-students will participate in similar assistant functions.

Within my individual Master research about migrants' opportunities and restrictions in European spaces, I chose to focus on the role of the West African migrant in the informal economy of Barcelona. The organisation of the informal economy is of interest, which consists of the different kinds of labour, goods and capital that have been encountered during the fieldwork period. Also, the business- and social networks that are involved in the process of obtaining labour or products are of value to the mobility process. The trans-local character of the informal market is significant to the organisation of this economy and its impact on the mobility of the migrant. The question whether informal economic activities take place only within the city or also between various cities, between urban-rural dimensions or even beyond borders, is valuable in order to understand the further mobility processes of the West African migrant.

Exploring the organisation of the informal economy of Barcelona and its various mobility features, impact the intra-EU mobility one way or another. It could be a so-called "keep factor" for migrants to be successful within Barcelona and its surroundings. At the same time, it could give them the means or networks to move to another place within Spain, but also within Europe (Van der Velde and Naerssen, 2010). This last concept of this research is the one I will work towards while exploring the first mentioned main concepts; the choices of the West African migrant with regard to onward mobility within Europe. The aim of this research is to gain better insights into the role of the West African migrant in the informal economy of Barcelona, the organization and mobility aspects of this economy *and* its impact on their intra-EU mobility. This, in order to be able to gain new insights into how mobility choices of these migrants are established and for what reasons, once having reached the European continent, which could help to face migration phenomena and –politics better.

Below one encounters the main- and sub questions that will serve as a structure for this research.

What is the role of the West African migrant in the informal economy of Barcelona and how does this impact their intra-EU mobility?

- Migration history

Which path has already been taken to enter Europe and which places have been visited after this?

The trajectory migrants have taken to reach Europe and transgressing- or restrictive factors they have faced are of importance, as it has influenced their experiences with regard to their image of Europe, as also further mobility choices in which I am interested.

- Organisation

How is the informal economy in Barcelona organized generally and with regard to social- and business networks?

There are various gross categories one can study within the informal economy. Within these categories, social- and business networks have proven to be of great importance. A distinction that will be made within the organisation of the informal economy in this research between:

- Street vending
- Collecting scrap metals from the streets ("buscar chatarra")
- Trade in other products (cars, trucks filled with goods towards Africa)
- Promoting nightclubs (flyering or bringing tourists to certain clubs)
- Working in agriculture (based on trip to Lérida, Cataluña)

- Trans-locality

On which trans-local dimensions does the informal economy in Barcelona take place, with regard to humans, goods or money? So, where do the migrants go themselves in terms of labour? Where do they purchase their goods for further trade? Or where do goods or money from them onward? Possible mobilities are:

- Intra-urban
- Urban-urban
- Urban-rural
- Beyond borders

- Migration aspiration

How does the informal economy influence the migration process? Has it already influenced their path before coming to Barcelona? And is it a keep factor for Barcelona and its surroundings or is it a trigger for onward migration?

This concluding question is central to this study, as it combines the concepts of mobility and the informal economy. The threshold approach will be used to explain the factors that might transgress or restrict migrants from their migratory aspirations.

1.3 Societal relevance: the migrant's own choices with regard to the informal economy and further mobility

Mobility from a migrant's perspective

Within this research into the role of the West African migrant in the informal economy of Barcelona and its influence on the intra-EU mobility, I would like to gain further insights into the everyday life practices of the migrant. Thereby, the different everyday phenomena that this informal labour market consists of will be taken into account, as also the different networks that are connected within such an organisation. This is interesting, as ethnography within the informal economy can bring to light everyday practices, struggles and experiences of the West African migrant. Within this research the migrant's own choices, preferences and experiences will be central. The focus will therefore not be completely on structures in society that might hold migrants back in living in Barcelona or moving forward, but more on what they are able to choose, do and perform within their so-called 'status' of being a migrant. It is considered important within this study to bring back the person in itself that we call 'a migrant' within all of the highly economic- and political debates. This focus is different from other research in which one focuses more on how specific societal structures 'border' migrants within their living- and working conditions in Europe (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014:37). In relation to Barcelona and the informal economic activities taking place in this city, the focus will also be on how the migrant influences the city in this sense. Again, one notices that there is no classic image of the urban structures influencing the migrant's choices or lives, but more or less the other way around, as informality also characterizes Barcelona's urban systems. By not focusing solely on (b)orders that might hold migrants back in living their lives, one can change views to the migrant as an 'influencer' of his/her own environment, in this case a Spanish city and their own mobility patterns. This alternative viewing point from the migrant's own choices within the urban environment, influencing his/her surroundings and choosing his/her own path with regard to mobility within a borderless zone, is thus crucial in this study and will bring to light details to how and why mobility choices are formed or realized.

Migration policies

This research, therefore, also discusses the integration policies both from within Spain, as also on a European policy level. Spanish legislation with regard to the regularisation of migrants will be further explored in chapter 4.1. European migration policies, however, are impossible to exclude from the discussion when researching a migration theme nowadays. With the end of the Stockholm programme in 2014, the post-Stockholm agenda for 2015 is being established. With the phrase "An open and secure Europe: making it happen", this agenda should provide for an effective policy of migration and mobility, in which maximizing the benefits of migration and integration and a credible approach to irregular migration and return have formed a first goal. Also, it will work towards a common European asylum system, in which the EU wants to create boundaries in which member states should operate, consisting of a Consolidation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), responsibility and solidarity in terms of complying with the rules of the *EU acquis*, the prevention and handling of crises and addressing external challenges and legal routes to access asylum in the EU. Furthermore, it critically discusses the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) (European Commission, 11/12/2014, European Migration Network, 13/03/2014). Hence we see the dynamics of the responsibility with regard to policy-making on a national-, or Spanish- in this case, but also on a European level. This study in which the West African migrant's choices with regard to intra-EU mobility are central, therefore brings results 'directly from the streets' which should be addressed within mobility policy-making processes to come to a clearer understanding of what drives migrants to certain choices and what, as a consequence, should be the way in which policies could contribute to or treat intra-EU mobility. In this case, the starting point of reflection is thus the migrant, instead of treating him or her as a victim of the political- or societal system or, more specifically, as a victim of the EU migration- or border policies. This way, I hope to be able to go back to *who* the migrant is that politicians are constantly debating about and *what* in reality he does in a particular European place.

1.4 Scientific Relevance: the informal economy through a 'mobility-lens'

The Mobility turn

Although movement and/or mobility is always included in the concept of migration, it was previously more common to look at the migration processes on fixed locations, the place of origin and the place of destination (Schapendonk and Steel, 2014:262; De Haas, 2010:247). Though the increasing trend of migration was highly visible, social sciences was not yet focussed on human *movement*, or it was even *a-mobile*, with a strong preference for migration effects, which took place on fixed locations (Adey, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2006:208). Sheller and Urry's (2006) critique on such research was mainly that it viewed states as containers for societies, rather than involving the current age of migration and information, which we live in. Within this concept one has to bear in mind both movement of humans, but also of materials, ideas and capital, as also stated Castagnone and Toma (n.d.:2):

International migration is still mainly analysed as a one-time, one-way movement from an origin country A to a permanent destination B. Yet migration trajectories are often more complex, as migrants may travel through and successively settle in several countries.

With the so-called transnational turn, the debate about im/mobility arose. While migrants are now presumed to be interconnected in between various places of origin and –destination, and also transit zones (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014:41; De Haas, 2010:247), the mobility process might be of higher value for understanding both international and intra-EU migration. The cross-border migration, but also the disappearance from borders within the European Union and the strengthening of its external borders, all may have contributed to the im/mobility of migrants (Van Houtum, 2010, Schapendonk, 2011). For that matter, the outbound borders of the European Union could now be considered as fence-off borders, rather than places of cross-border interactions, as also on other continents as between the United States and Mexico (Van der Velde et al, 2010:220). Though, once the migrant has reached "Fortress Europe", he/she can fairly easily move around, with regard to the absence of physical borders (Van Houtum, 2010), which we will further explore in chapter 6.

The focus on human movement (Adey, 2006; Merriman, 2014) and trajectories migrants follow becomes increasingly important. An approach focussing on human movement instead of on fixed locations within a migration process, called the mobilities approach, is of strong value while examining the im/mobility of migrants. As stated by Schapendonk and Steel, it analyses "(1) the ways in which im/mobilities are produced in transnational processes, (2) the ways mobilities come with power differences in terms of access and speed, and (3) how these power differences are reflected in mobility experiences and mobility relations" (Schapendonk and Steel, 2014:264). By not solely looking at fixed locations, but more at trajectories migrants follow, one could find transit places, nonlinear trajectories research had not yet encountered before, or other features that may influence the mobility process (Schapendonk et al, 2014:268). Within this study, the reasons why migrants make certain mobility choices are therefore examined through such a mobility approach. Especially its first pillar, which focuses on the *production* of mobility, is crucial to this particular research. This consists, thus, of various elements, in which the influence of the daily life practices of the migrant on these choices is examined, mainly focussing on his/her economic activities and elements tied to these networks.

Another approach, which is of interest to doing research into the im/mobility of migrants, is the threshold approach. With this approach one can look at a migrant's reasons for leaving or staying in a certain place, but also reasons to go or not to go to a certain destination, as also a certain trajectory threshold one could encounter (van der Velde et al, 2010:221 – 223). This, again, is of value to this research, as it examines the thresholds within the daily lives of the migrant or within the probable migration trajectory that could therefore form keep- or stay factors and influence the process of the production of mobility.

In this research I will argue the fuzzy borders one encounters between such thresholds, as they might be unclear or highly influenced by elements of luck or chance (Gladkova & Mazzucato, 2015), through which a dynamic- and mobile view is needed in order to grasp the highly mobile lives of migrants in the transworld of today. It might be obvious by now, that these approaches focus more on the im/mobility of migrants also, and maybe especially, when reaching a borderless continent. Where classical debates about migration mainly revolved around the matter of effects it had on the place of origin and the place of destination, one is now also interested in the trajectories the migrants follow in between and which factors could influence or even change the choice of destination along the way. For that matter, doing ethnography with several migrants, focussing on their economic activities, could be one of the factors influencing their reasons to stay or leave a place or the desire to move to a certain place, which produces mobility.

Understanding the dynamics of a migratory trajectory cannot solely explained by studying fixed locations. Mobility in itself needs to be studied.

Looking at informality through a 'mobility-lens'

The main focus while studying the mobility choices the West African migrant in Barcelona makes, will be on his/her role in the informal economy. This combination of the informal networks and mobility processes are seldom connected, as informality appears to be place-based. Castles, de Haas and Miller state that "irregular employment is particularly common in low-skilled jobs in low-productivity sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, construction, catering and certain services" (2014:250) The role of migrants within the 'informalization' of certain economic sectors, especially in global cities nowadays, is therefore interesting, as there is a high demand for cheap labour in advanced countries and –cities since economic polarisation (Sassen, 1994: 2289). Within this study, the seemingly fixed informal sector of Barcelona will be looked upon from the mobility perspective, focusing on its trans-local character and how this is established within Euro-African spaces to gain in-depth insights into the migrants' life-worlds. Also, the mobility from goods and money will be researched, as these are embedded within the transnational character of mobility (Portes, 1999). For that reason, both concepts of intra-EU mobility and the role of the West African migrant in the informal economy of Barcelona and its surroundings will be combined. Within this research one encounters this combination of place-based and mobility-like research. Especially this combination of concepts is interesting for further research into how mobility is produced and how one should 'react' to migration processes within politics or society.

i. Ethnographic sketches: concepts come to life

Thinking in migration concepts does not appear to be difficult, as we all have certain images or subthemes of which we think when talking about mobility. What often is forgotten, as explained before, within the politicisation of the mobility debate, are the faces that belong to such discussions one sees in our daily sources. Going back to the streets, talking to the people that are usually the subject of such debates and listening to their personal- and unique stories, demonstrates this is what we should focus on as a strong basis for political- or economic decision-making. That position is exactly what I came across during this research. Being prepared by reading and writing about mobility, the informal economy and social- and business networks in migration, it was interesting to see how these phenomena came back in society and in the stories of our respondents.

Especially interconnectedness between the current life-worlds of the migrants and their home countries was interesting and comes back within every personal story, as well within trade of goods and money, as we will see in further chapters as well. Mobility, in this sense, is hard to avoid, and even more interesting to use as a lens throughout the whole process. Being a migrant in Europe does not solely mean having travelled from South to North, but these stories show a highly mobile everyday life, living in between various cultural-, religious-, and literal worlds. Being able to focus on a certain link, in this case the West African migrant in relation to the informal economy, brought about new views for me on many seemingly everyday phenomena and being even more aware of such processes in an urban space due to the concentration I was able to put in during a longer period of time.

Because of the preparation in terms of literature research, but also because of the advantages of doing ethnography and blending into a research subject in real life, theoretical concepts came to life in every detail possible. The informal economy became more visible, although we have all witnessed it at some point in time, was something I immediately looked different at now, with more concentration, as I was also able to spend more time on it. Besides this, the inside details and experiences from close respondents gave me a deeper outlook on the phenomenon and made it more lively and more accessible in understanding such a complex economy. The concept of social networks that is described in the following chapter I also encountered as being strongly integrated in all of the life-worlds of my contacts, which makes it a vital concept for this research. By diving into life-worlds and connecting with these persons myself, social networks were easily noticed and to be analysed. Nevertheless, it also showed me theoretical concepts do not always apply like you would like a model to be applicable, as one is dealing with human-oriented topics and categorizations in this sense are almost never favourable, as also in this case. With this combination of theoretical orientation and the real life details of the ethnographic research, I hope to create an overall- and as much possible detailed look at the informal economy in relation to intra-EU mobility.

Chapter 2 – Where mobility, the informal economy and social networks meet

This research focuses on three main concepts: mobility, the informal economy and social networks. In order to understand the life-worlds of respondents with regard to these theories, they will be blended in the end to see how these concepts come to realisation in the lives of migrants and how they influence each other. This chapter aims to explain the core discussions revolving the three main concepts this research is built upon. Although these are broad debates, I will only highlight the most interesting features as these in combination with a vast amount of my own empirical findings will function as the basis for the further analysis.

2.1 A mobility approach to migration

"Contemporary immigrants can not be characterized as the "uprooted." Many are trans-migrants, becoming firmly rooted in their new country but maintaining multiple linkages to their homeland" (Glick Schiller et al, 1995:48).

Starting their work in 1995 with this sentence, the point of Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc might say enough about the position a migrant now takes in the world as a *transnational citizen* (Castles, 2000). Although one moves from a country of origin to a new place of settlement, this does not particularly mean all links are broken. Nowadays, it even means they become more mobile and will have linkages to more places in the world. With the before described so-called *transnational turn*, one could state we now live in a *trans-world* (Ernste, Van Houtum and Zoomers, 2009), in which even inhabitants of remote areas are familiar with the concept of migration and are more capable of being interconnected in between various places (de Haas, 2010; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999). Mobility research in this sense plays an important role, with regard to migration processes within global systems. Motivations, destinations and aspirations might not be prescheduled anymore and such unexpected factors of influence are to be researched in order to grasp the realities of mobility in a trans-world. With the diffusion of the set of categories within migration, also the type of migrant has blurred, as political, cultural, or economic motivations to move could be highly interconnected (Collyer and De Haas, 2010; Schapendonk, 2011:17-24). The shifting societal environment and increasing possibilities to be mobile and interconnected causes migration patterns to have changed. With the *mobility turn* (Sheller & Urry, 2006), one should study the process of mobility instead of only origin- and destination places, to be able to research those elements that impact further mobility of migrants in today's trans-world.

Büscher and Urry (2009) argue that with this renewed mobilities paradigm, in researching such themes also the dynamics between the empirical, theory, critique and engagement have changed. These enhanced mobility processes through the shrinkage of both space and time, have not only facilitated the movement of human beings, but also in terms of goods, ideas and capital through remittances and cross-border trade (de Haas, 2010).

The use of multiple focuses in migration research is thus necessary in order to grasp the essence of a phenomenon in the mobile world we live in, as also explained by Allison Hui:

"Drawing on Dogan and Pahre's work (1990), Urry (2000, 210) suggests that 'innovation results from academic mobility across disciplinary borders, a mobility that generates what they call 'creative marginality'. The diversity of assumptions, precedents, frames and approaches informing interdisciplinary engagement support creative interactions with varied audiences, methods, empirical sites or theoretical precepts. The promise of such interdisciplinary engagement between migration and mobilities researchers has been long noted (Blunt 2007; Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006; King 2012)" (Hui, 2016:67).

The diffusion of borders also requests a "diffusion" of borders in research methods and – lenses, as also a mobile way of researching seemingly fixed phenomena in certain places in order to understand the life-worlds of migrants today. These have become more mobile, dynamic but also fuller of social networks and the influence of information from many different persons, places and experiences. All of these elements create a trans-world in which the migrant lives as well, which cannot be denied when studying themes related to migration or even less when researching migratory patterns in itself.

This research therefore focuses on the mobility processes embedded within the informal economy of Barcelona, as also how this influences the actor's choices with regard to further mobility and the current position of the migrant in the urban economy is to be seen in a wider migration trajectory with movements and future aspirations. Aspects of influence, like economic opportunities and social- or business networks are considered within this research in order to understand choices, motivations and aspirations with regard to these mobility patterns.

2.2 The informal economy

Often, labour amongst migrants is found within the informal labour market, due to not being in possession of a working permit yet or because being employed is hard when living under the status of being a migrant in Europe. Besides this, entrepreneurship amongst migrant communities is well known in terms of trade. Saskia Sassen describes the informal economy as:

"[...] those income-generating activities occurring outside the state's regulatory framework that have analogues within that framework. The scope and character of the informal economy are defined by the very regulatory framework it evades" (1994:2289).

Michael Pacione, who refers to it as the 'black economy', gives another description:

"The black economy involves the paid production and sale of goods and services that are unregistered by or hidden from the state for tax, social security and/or labour-law purposes but which are legal in all other aspects" (2009:348).

Although 'the informal' is often considered taking place on a local- and small scale, the emergence of international trade has showed that it can go beyond the cross-border context (Cantens, 2012). Therefore, there will also be room for the mobility of migrants, goods *and* money throughout the research, as this is also embedded within mobility, both within Spain as beyond borders. Sassen furthermore addresses the prejudice that exists in literature regarding this topic, that it is mainly constructed by Third World immigration. She *does* describe an important labour part of this informal market is filled by migrant workers, but also mentions one should not simply exclude the role of former regular companies or –workers that want or need to avoid certain regulations to gain profit or stay on the market of advanced countries in economically weak periods of time (Sassen, 1994). For that reason, this research will mainly focus on the part of the migrant's role in this informal economy, but also social- or business contacts that are involved within these economic activities, that might be of influence to the mobility processes. With regard to business networks these could also imply (previously) formal companies forming bridges between the formal- and the informal sector (Cantens, 2012:5). As the labour-, but also trade markets have expanded towards an international dimension and borders diffuse with regard to economic opportunities, one also encounters the diffusion of borders between informality and formality, which is called a "grey area" (Ødegaard, 2008; Cantens, 2012:4). This area might expand throughout time as we witness a shrinkage in time, space and, now also, formality standards.

With increasing globalisation processes in which borders diffuse, there is a so-called global commodity, in which networks or chains link individual workers and companies to each other. This global commodity operates under both formal- and informal arrangements, spread across borders over various countries (Carr & Chen, 2002:6). This shows trade does not only take place within a country, but also beyond borders and that migrants could even contribute to a further transnationalisation of economies through their social business networks (Cantens, 2012; Castles, 2000). The shipment of goods and money, for that reason, are also valuable when researching the informal economy in relation to mobility, as already mentioned before. This is also embedded within the concept of remittances, as migrants send goods or capital towards their regions of origin. Processes of technological innovation have made it easier for migrants to send or receive goods or capital from other regions, as well as their countries of origin, which shows transnational processes (Portes, 1999). It is therefore interesting to see how this so-called global commodity network represents itself within the informal economy of Barcelona in relation to other parts in Europe or countries of origin in West Africa.

The informal status the economy has that will be illustrated in this research, however, does not imply it does not have any regulations. According to Thomas Cantens (2012) it is *structured* around social networks, which guarantee transactions that are not governed by law. That business relations, unwritten rules and structures exist within the various informal sectors will be displayed in chapter 5 in the description of the urban economy of Barcelona and its surroundings.

Despite the heterogeneity within the informal economy, there are several basic employment categories to be found that were put into a schematic design by Carr & Chen (2002:4):

- Employer:
 - Owners of informal enterprises
 - Owner operators of informal enterprises
- Self- Employed:
 - Own-account workers
 - Heads of family businesses
 - Unpaid family workers
- Wage Workers:
 - Employees of informal enterprises
 - Casual workers without a fixed employer
 - Homeworkers (also called industrial outworkers)
 - Domestic workers
 - Temporary and part-time workers
 - Unregistered workers

Although it might be helpful to be able to fall back upon some basic categories when studying a dynamic economy like an informal sector, one has to keep in mind some persons could be categorized within several of these dimensions, as the activities within informal employment are often mixed or vary over time. Activities or roles of human beings are, therefore, not always possible to be categorized, as they remain dynamic and active within their own lives. Because of the before-called global commodity of today, migrants are forced to perform an even more mobile and dynamic role within the informal economy in order to be able to generate income. They have to stay interconnected, maintain business networks and travel themselves to make sure goods and money keep circulating, which will provide for their income as well. Because of the multiplicity of the role of migrant in this transnational market, I will not refer to the categories Carr & Chen have designed literally, as it is more useful to base upon the multiplicity of this role found within the fieldwork period. The distinction between the interdependency and self-ownership within this informal economy as in the categories that Carr and Chen use, however, will definitely return within this analysis, which I will come back to in chapter 6.

2.3 Social-/business networks

The social- and business networks linked to informal, economic activities form an influential part on the intra-EU mobility of the West African migrant. Migration network theory tends to explain such processes of influence related to social networks:

Migration network theory explains how migrants create and maintain social ties with other migrants and with family and friends back home, and how this can lead to the emergence of social networks. Such networks are meso-level social structures, which tend to facilitate further migration (Castles et al, 2014:40).

Within this concept the influence of interpersonal ties on the path migrants choose or develop in the country of destination is of great importance. For that reason, also combined with the concept of the informal economy, it could be the case that the choice of place within Spain or even further on in Europe is highly influenced by contacts between several persons. This network can consist of friendship and pleasure, but also opportunities in labour or housing. These contacts are often characterized by a similarity in country of origin. Where a larger diaspora community is already present, migrants from the same origin tend to move there as well. "Migrant pioneers" are thus of importance, as they are considered to be the first to move to a certain place, where after people who have the same (former) nationality will follow (Somerville, 2011). The influence of social networks is, however, partial within migration research, as it might not explain the whole mobility process, but as Collyer (2005:700) expresses: "Social network theory in migration has never claimed to explain the origin of migration and this is not the test that is being applied to it here. Rather social networks explain the path-dependency of migration systems – their perpetuation once the initial factors that produced them have altered." The path-dependency feature Collyer describes will definitely return within further chapters of this research, as it displays the importance to research overall migratory patterns with the help of several conceptual ideas, like the search for economic means or social networks. In order to grasp the larger migratory patterns, such dynamics of the life-worlds of a migrant in today's world have to be studied, as they highly influence these trajectories along the way.

Collyer (2005) differentiates between family ties and non-family ties, as this is an important distinction within the concept of social networks for mobility studies. Previous 'chain-migration' through family members migrating to certain places because of their networks in these destinations, has been restricted through changes in legislation, which made it harder for family members to reunite in receiving countries. Non-family ties, consisting of friendships, or even 'weaker' ties, have therefore become even more important and are of higher value for this particular study: "these non-family ties are clearly important. Without them migration to a strange new city with a language that was unfamiliar to almost all respondents when they arrived would be extremely difficult" (Collyer, 2005:713). In this group so-called 'strong' or 'binding' ties are useful for maintaining resources, but within these networks there is an obligation to reciprocate exchanges and services to one another. 'Weak' or 'bonding' ties could contribute to gaining certain resources, but the network is less dense. Although the group seems to share characteristics at first sight like place of origin, language or religion, there is no regular or binding interaction between its members. Especially in seeking labour, social ties within networks can therefore result in both expected- and unexpected opportunities. The first group, Han Lin (2005) calls 'expressive', which means the purpose of these ties is to maintain and preserve already existing, shared resources. This contact is thus more intensive, while the second group of networks is called 'instrumental', which means that the purpose is to obtain additional or new resources.

The notion 'weak ties' seems to deny the importance they have in reality within the lives of a transnational migrant today, as they can change migratory patterns in a significant way.

Nevertheless, one should not underestimate the importance of these weaker ties in order to change migratory patterns for humans on the move, as they might influence trajectories in terms of labour opportunities or simple social encounters (Granovetter, 1973; 1983). While the increasing migration restrictions to Europe make stronger ties less attainable, weaker ties have become more valuable amongst migrants (Collyer, 2005:715), which is especially interesting when observing the obtainment of labour:

Networks expand over time to encompass new geographic and work site locations, often through "the strength of weak ties" [...] whereby information about employment opportunities is passed from one acquaintance to another. These acquaintances provide an information bridge between more dense network clusters (Wilson, 1998:394).

Because of this, one will encounter in what way the social networks from West African migrants are used when trying to be employed or start a business. There will also be a reflection on whether these ties are weaker and more focused on temporary contact and the possible obtainment of resources or that family- or stronger ties are also present in relation to the informal economy. In the end, it will be valuable to see whether these networks contribute to the mobility that is produced in relation to possible income in other places through networks.

2.4 Concluding remarks

A mobile view towards the way in which a particular group of migrants survive in Europe in the trans-world where we live in nowadays, is valuable in order to understand their dynamic lives. Within the process of understanding these life stories, one has to study their mobile livelihoods, as also the elements of influence that are embedded within these processes. Even those persons seemingly without freedom of movement due to a lack of residence documents, have to move around in order to be able to earn money these days. Therefore, a fixed phenomenon like an informal economy now takes place on trans-local dimensions and triggers mobility. To be able to form part of such a dynamic economy, these participators are in need of goods, starting capital, but also networks in order to properly earn something or create new chances in a constantly changing environment. It is thus impossible to study such interconnectedness between trans-local dimensions without observing the role of social networks within this topic. Therefore, both strong- and weak ties will be mentioned in order to illustrate their role in decision-making with regard to mobility. Especially those networks that trigger mobility in terms of employment will be emphasized in order to understand the importance of the relation between social- or business networks and migrant entrepreneurship. The combination of the informal economy, social- and business networks, all reviewed through a mobility-lens, is thus central within this research.

The informal economy will be displayed by studying its various sectors. Within this analysis, one will encounter the motivations why migrants choose to enter particular sectors, the way in which activities that belong to a sector are performed and some overall similarities and structures I have encountered while collecting findings.

This analysis will, however, be profoundly focused on the stories we have collected in order to illustrate the details that are of significance in understanding the role of the migrant in this economy. As previously mentioned, the focus will be on the way in which informality triggers mobility, as also informality displays itself on trans-local dimensions in the global commodity that exists today. One will also encounter the grey areas that were described in terms of blurred boundaries between formality and informality, as also the multiplicity of the role of the migrant within this economy. The shrinkage in time and space thus has thus created a whole new mobility paradigm, which influences all migrants and their major migratory patterns.

ii. Ethnographic sketches: respondents become friends

Writing a research plan, thinking in concepts and theories, prepares one partly to do fieldwork. Nevertheless, although being advised about it by professors at university, collecting data in Barcelona showed to me, it becomes personal. Doing ethnography within migration studies and talking to migrants themselves consists of talking, listening and connecting, which subsequently can be linked to concepts or theories one has thought about before. The process of collecting such data, however, shows the importance of the human aspects and doing research directly from the streets.

Professionalism and social skills should be combined in such a way to be able to collect the data that is needed, and preferably more interesting details, and still remaining the researcher one is at that moment. Nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid social connections, as this is a crucial part of ethnography as well. Saskia and I invested in our contacts by speaking to them on a regular basis and that way also being linked to friends or family one of the respondents wanted to introduce to us. A good example is Mamadou, with whom we had a personal interview first, as he was one of the first persons we approached in our fieldwork period. By staying in touch via the telephone, he eventually invited us over for a lunch or dinner at his house. A few weeks later we planned the visit and went to his house, when he and his roommates could not work, because of heavy police controls.

Mamadou lives in a three-bedroom apartment with five young Senegalese men. We entered the house and everyone was extremely friendly and happy to meet us. One of the men was already cooking the Senegalese dish "yassa", which is made from rice with fish or meat and a large amount of onions. We encountered a relaxed atmosphere in the house, as it took many hours to prepare the meal and people were walking in and out of the house, while we were just sitting down and talking to everyone. This way, we met new people, while we learned about habits and ways of living of the Senegalese in Spain as well. A funny detail is how the young men are very proud of their cooking skills, as they are forced to cook for themselves when arriving in Europe. Although they are used to the women in their families preparing meals in Senegal, they are proud they learned it themselves as well and are even more pleased to do it for guests. West African hospitality became clear this way, as also our friendships with people who we initially approached for 'collecting findings', became stronger. After this we were able to speak to Mamadou on a regular basis, greet many of his friends in the streets as well and get to know even more about their daily lives in Cataluña (Mamadou, several encounters). It is interesting to see that when one invests in such contacts, one also receives this effort and kindness and this brings about new advantages in doing research, while you are enjoying yourself at the same time. Although you can read about these features when exploring literature about doing ethnography, the way in which respondents become real contacts with whom you spend time and connect on a personal level as well, surprised me still.

Chapter 3 – Diving into life-worlds through ethnography

3.1 Ethnography

The concept of the informal economy and its mobility elements were explored through doing ethnography. As an open atmosphere is needed to gain knowledge about the migrant's daily activities, also within the economy, one has to create an open and trustworthy relationship with the respondents. As stated by George, E. Marcus: "Ethnography is predicated upon attention to the everyday, an intimate knowledge of face-to-face communities and groups" (1995:99). Especially the direct interaction with the research field and –subject is of importance in this research (Crang, 2003). Specifically for the part of this research in which the trans-local character of the informal economy of Barcelona will be presented, it was highly valuable to be involved in the daily activities of migrants, which displayed so-called trajectory ethnography on a small scale (Marcus, 1995; Schapendonk, 2011). To accompany several migrants in their economic activities, buying their goods or going to the second-hand stores where they sold their collected materials, has brought to light interesting findings that would not have been possible without connecting with these people intensely.

Steven Jordan and David Yeomans (1995) speak about the dynamic of the researcher with regard to its research subject and –process. As the use of qualitative methods, and especially in doing ethnography, results in the researcher being close to the topic and subject, it brings about its own interpretation. They state that reflexivity is needed when the researcher has intensive contact with his/her respondents, to be aware of the researcher's own background and possible impact on the interpretation of results. The friendship-like contact we had with some of our respondents therefore has logically changed our view on the migration theme, but also the struggles these men face. Coming close to these persons and seeing them as friends has thus brought us many interesting findings with regard to their life-worlds, but also demonstrated the way in which we will need to be reflective on our own interpretation of these outcomes. In this chapter, therefore, I will reflect upon the ways in which fieldwork was conducted to show the dynamics of doing ethnography during a five-month period in Spain.

3.2 Respondents, sampling and access

"The" West African migrant?

The group of respondents was formed by West African migrants, with a specific focus on migrants from Nigerian- and Senegalese origin.² But also persons from other places within West Africa were included, namely from Gambia, Mali, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone.

² See Appendix 1 for overview of all of our respondents and their personal data.

The legal status of the migrant was not of importance to the selection process, as both regular and irregular migrants are of value to this study, because the lack- or possession of papers influences their trajectories in different ways, which are all interesting to fully understand the dynamics of migratory patterns. Together with my interview partner, Saskia, we collected 49 conversations and had more intensive contacts individually with a number of them; to experience daily activities, have more informal conversations and that way learn more details. We both stayed in contact with several respondents over a longer period of time to experience and learn more about their lives on a deeper level. Saskia had more intensive contact with Mamadou and I remained in contact regularly with Aly, a vendor who sells on the touristic hotspot the mountain of Montjuïc and who showed me around to get to know various aspects of the sales on the streets. We also met Ibrahima several times and spend time with him on a more regular basis. This also influences the illustrations I will use most within this research, as Saskia and I saw various respondents more often than others. Where we only spoke with several of them on one occasion, we remained in contact and visited, for instance, Mamadou, Aly, but also Ibrahima, Mustafa and Chima more often during the months we resided in Barcelona. Therefore, I will return to their stories on a more regular basis as well, as we have gathered more details about their daily lives and activities.

As a balanced representation is needed when wanting to be able to gain an in-depth picture about 'the' West African migrant in Barcelona (Clifford et al, 2010:233), there was a preference for contacting both men and women, to also involve gender, as this could bring interesting similarities or differences (Carling, 2005). Nevertheless, it has been proven difficult to encounter West African women in Barcelona, as they are less visible there than men. Manoli Moya, coordinator of the Red Cross of Barcelona, actually confirmed the vast majority of West Africans settling in Barcelona, is to be characterized as young male migrants. The most visible group of African women in Barcelona consists of Nigerian women, prostituting in the city centre every night (Moya, 19/05/2015). As they find themselves in a vulnerable situation, it was hard approaching them. Therefore we thought it was more useful to contact some organizations that particularly help women, but they were difficult to reach as well. Because of these difficulties with regard to access, as also the big amount of interesting information from the male side, we decided to particularly focus on the male West African migrants along the way. Nevertheless, this changes the way in which we speak of 'the' West African migrant in Barcelona, as our insights into the migrants' life-worlds are based on men. Therefore, I will also refer to the West African migrant as a 'he' within this research, as our findings are based on stories of male migrants.

Gaining access to West African communities

In doing research with a group of persons who fulfil a vulnerable position in society, coming from different cultures, many ethical questions come to mind. Therefore, we had to be aware of our position as young, white female researchers asking sensitive questions in order to describe our interests clearly, but carefully.

We had to consider the vulnerability of the migrants due to their position in society being a migrant, as also their lack of documents and the possibility of distrust towards us (Düvell et al, 2009; Heckatorn, 1997; Van Liempt & Bilger, 2009; Markova, 2009). This, however, has not formed a major problem during our fieldwork period. Although some of the men we approached seemed a little in shock at first, they did not seem to distrust us after we explained the project. We experienced a number of the young men was primarily interested in a meeting because two young females approached them. Nevertheless, in almost all cases this changed when explaining more extensively what we were doing and talking to them about the project once we met later on. Apart from two to three men, all of the people we approached in the streets responded positively and were interested in talking to us. The men were happy to be 'heard' for once, as some of them mentioned, this does not happen often for them in Europe. Therefore, they were open and, as it seemed, honest with us. It seemed that being two young female researchers has made it relatively easy for us to make the first contact. And although at times it was hard to convince the respondents we wanted to talk to them with a research agenda, it has been an advantage in accessing the community. Nevertheless, in further contact, they expressed it was mainly feeling respected by being listened to, which made them willing to talk to us.

Giving the migrants a voice, already made them feel respected and willing to work with us.

After the first few attempts to contact with street vendors, Saskia and I decided it was smarter for us to work together. In the first place we felt more comfortable approaching these men with the two of us, as we often got requests on a more personal level. During our conversations, a part of the respondents asked us about our relationship status, being married or not. It was not always sufficient to express we were in a relationship, as they continued approaching us romantically, but in most cases the men respected our answers and did not speak to us or ask about this topic again. It was, however, always one of the first things they would ask and Saskia and I therefore felt more at ease going to first meetings together. In the second place we experienced our cooperation was successful, due to a variety in language skills. Having a Bachelor's degree in Spanish languages and cultures, I was able to communicate well with the migrants who spoke this language, while Saskia was able to use her level of French with those who did not dominate Spanish yet, but did speak French coming from countries where it is spoken. Working together with Saskia has brought about a major level of comfort within this exciting period of time, as we were able to present ourselves as researchers better this way and still connect with the young men we spoke to on a personal level, without feeling too much pressure. Besides this, it helped us practically in fieldwork situations, where we had to wait for respondents many times or walk around certain parts of the city for many days. Doing this together made sure we had fun and it created constant interaction, while being at work. As Saskia and I gathered our findings together, I will vary in speaking about "my" or "our" respondents within this research.

With regard to the different nationalities within the West African migrant community in Barcelona, it was noticeable the Senegalese migrants were very visible on the streets, as they form the vast majority, if not all, of the street vendors. As already mentioned, these were recognizable and easily approachable. Besides this, our first contacts helped us make contacts via their friends, colleagues or family members within the Senegalese community.

This way, Saskia and I got to know many of the Senegalese men living in Barcelona. Informal encounters like being invited to a dinner in one of their houses has made it possible to observe their daily activities while not working, their habits in terms of eating together with many members of the community and the way in which they help each other both when working, as at home. After having easily gained access to the Senegalese community, we had some difficulties meeting respondents with other nationalities, as they do not work in the streets as much as the young men from Senegal. Hearing for some of our Senegalese contacts about neighbourhoods where mainly Nigerian migrants would live, we expanded our city centre view to outskirt neighbourhoods of Barcelona. There, we actually did meet migrants from other West African origin, after which we could start speaking to and learning about other experiences as well, as their trajectories and activities in Europe differed from those of the Senegalese.

After we heard many stories about seasonal work in agriculture during summer time and dr. Joris Schapendonk encountered this as well during his visit to one of these cities, we decided to include a short visit to Lérida at the end of June. This would broaden our perspective a bit further, because it is another big sector of the informal economy that brings to light new dynamics to the topic of the informal economy, as well

There are no specific neighbourhoods in which certain nationalities reside. The West Africans mostly live in "barrios" outside of the city centre.

as it triggers new mobility choices. As we found a link between respondents that currently reside in Barcelona, but at times travel to settle in Lérida for a certain period of time to work, the trip has proven to be highly interesting, as we made this move ourselves. In Lérida, we encountered men who resided there more permanently, but also men who were there only for this particular season in terms of available labour. In Lérida, we neither had difficulties in reaching the West African migrants, as they were spending their free time mainly on the streets in small groups. As it was a short visit at the end of the fieldwork period, we spoke to many people in a short period of time, through which contacts were shorter, but we got to know a vast amount of information about the lives and economic activities that take place in this particular city, also as it seems more of a temporary destination.

Ways to remain in contact

We remained in contact with most of the respondents mainly by telephone. Although I did not know whether it was necessary at first, it appeared all West African migrants in Barcelona possessed a mobile phone with a Lycamobile card, with which one can call other Spanish Lyca numbers unlimitedly for free and people outside of the country for a lower rate than with other phone companies. In the first weeks of my research, I did not own a card of this telephone company, besides my regular Spanish number, and contacts let it ring just one time to make sure I returned their call or did not call at all. Because of this, I decided to purchase a Lyca SIM-card as well and the contact with respondents became better, more flexible and on a regular basis.

Other ways to stay in contact were mainly by showing our faces regularly at places where the migrants worked, hung around or ate. We passed by the different groups of street vendors countless times in the fieldwork period of five months. Having interviewed at least one person from every 'selling group', Saskia and I were well known after just a few weeks already. When we approached a new, possible respondent many from there on out, reacted in the sense of "yes, I know who you girls are", or something similar, suggesting they had already heard about the two women trying to talk to the street vendors. This helped us, as their colleagues had already informed them we wanted to talk about serious topics and were genuinely interested in their life stories, which created a certain feeling of trust beforehand already. Therefore, we made sure we continued showing our faces there, but also in other neighbourhoods where we met contacts or at, for instance, a Gambian restaurant in Raval where many Africans ate as well.

3.3 In-depth interviews, conversations and observations

The significance of small talk

Spain is an important first point of entry in Europe for migrants. As stated before, the focus in this research was on Barcelona and its surroundings, while it has the image of being the paradise for immigrants within Spain. Besides, the informal economy in this city is probably best known through the image of street vendors, but also shops, agriculture and other visible sectors of the informal economy (Illas, 2012:116). The research is built up by data collection through in-depth interviews, as the personal experiences and choices of the migrant are central to this study. These interviews were all open or –semi structured, mainly because the topics possibly involve sensitive elements for the respondents, for which an open atmosphere is needed (Clifford, French & Valentine, 2010; Crang and Cook, 2007). As already mentioned before, there was a need to create an informal atmosphere in order to gather the desired details about the life-worlds of these persons. Therefore, Saskia and I experienced a number of the interviews more like conversations than interviews, as there was a mutual interest in our lives, the respondents were always able to ask us questions as well, that we consequently answered openly. Small talk was therefore of great significance in order to create such a trustworthy environment, as also to be able to talk about more serious topics. Switches between small talk and sensitive phenomena were easily made by our respondents, through which it became easier every conversation we had to establish such an atmosphere by simply talking about small- and seemingly unimportant things in life, but therefore highly important for this research, as also a well-established contact with my respondents (Driessen & Jansen, 2013).

Observations also formed a huge part of the process of getting to know more about the various elements of the lives of West African migrants in Barcelona, although I experienced along the way many details were not visible at first sight through which our conversations with the participators themselves were more valuable for new findings. The observations have taken place within particular 'migrant neighbourhoods', but also at, for instance, squares where there is high economic activity. This was not only to make contact with possible respondents, but also to observe the different features involved within the informal economy of Barcelona (Clifford et al, 2010; Crang and Cook, 2007).

For example, the 'game' between the police and the street vendors is something that is highly known amongst almost everyone who has visited Barcelona, but through observing the phenomenon on different places and talking to the street vendors themselves about it, it has brought me to new insights about the topic that will come to light later on, as it is important to show what kind of pressure it puts on the street vendors when police officers are chasing them away all the time.

Documenting- and analysing data

Due to the conversational way in which we built up our interviews, we chose not to record them. Because of this, a vast amount of information probably has been lost. Nevertheless, we were able to create and maintain an informal- and open atmosphere to talk *and* write down most of the statements the migrants made, as Saskia and I worked together. Depending on the language preferences of a respondent, one of us led the conversation, while the other participated, but focused on writing down most of the details with regard to their life stories and trajectories. When someone preferred speaking French, Saskia led the conversation, while I wrote down what they were talking about and I spoke to the respondent when they preferred speaking Spanish. This way, we were still able to document most of the interesting details that were stated, as also some quotations. In order not to lose more data, we made sure we documented most details from the conversations in interview guides in a Word-template soon after the meeting took place.

While analysing the data for this research, I collected and compared the various interview guides we made one by one and wrote down the differences or similarities for usage in this documentation. I chose not to use software programs like Atlas Ti, as we did not have extensive interview transcriptions that we would have if we recorded the conversations. As they were not as extensive in length, I was able to collect and compare the data of interest for specific subtopics by myself.

3.4 Concluding remarks

Looking back upon a fieldwork period of more than five months, one could say it was an overall learning process. Although it is obvious one looks for answers to specific questions, doing ethnography has showed that it takes more than that. One develops, not only as a researcher, but also as a person, by being in contact with new people, by interacting with them for various purposes and by being surprised by unexpected situations or unique life stories. The element I will cherish most from performing this research is probably the contact we made with some of the interviewees. 'Interviewees' therefore is not the correct word, as they have become more to us than just respondents. They took us into their lives without hesitation and became close friends, with whom we remain in contact via telephone or social media. Although this is common in ethnography, as you dive into the life-worlds of other human beings, it is a unique experience, which contributes to your own personal life as well.

Doing research into mobility through ethnography causes the need for a researcher to be mobile as well, as you dive into exactly those dynamic elements of the respondents' lives. Getting to know more about trajectories cannot solely be done by listening to stories from the past, but are also to be followed within their current daily lives. Especially these daily, small-scale mobility features have proven to be interesting in order to grasp the events and choices of the trajectories on a larger scale as well. Most significant for this overview was the way in which we learned to talk to the respondents. Although we always made sure to collect certain data along the way, we had to be in a proper conversation in order to create the desired atmosphere that is needed to let people open up about vulnerable stages in their lives. The importance of small talk, as Janssen and Driessen (2013) emphasized already, is therefore illustrative for this specific research. Although a conversation in an informal setting in itself may appear to deny the significance of interview structures, it has proven to be the best way for collecting data in this particular research.

iii. Ethnographic sketches: complicated and unexpected trajectories

Although we all see, read and hear about the at times dangerous and long trajectories migrants have faced to reach the European continent, all of our respondents' travelling histories amazed me. Not only the risks they have taken to enter Europe undocumented create this mixed feeling of interest, sadness and amazement, but also the similarities and many differences amongst the interviewees prove one should not solely talk about "boat refugees" or other regularly-used terms in mass-media when speaking about migration.

The men I have talked to, who have travelled by boat towards Europe, all speak about a hard journey in an emotional way. They are touched and heavily influenced by it, one could say, as they all express it is an experience they would not wish on another person. The risks they all want to face for a better life, have scared them as never before, as also the ignorance of time and place when being on the middle of the sea. Not having experienced such a journey, it is obvious I was touched by the stories that were told, as also the amazement it gave me towards their positivity in life, even after the conclusion that, in many cases, their arrival after being on a boat for more than a week risking their lives, Europe does not give them what they thought it would before leaving their home countries.

It is not, however, solely the stories of the migrants that have travelled by boat that made me think about the risks, efforts and time that are involved in reaching Europe. Travelling by land might not get that much attention in European media, while many respondents have managed to reach Europe that way. This does not mean these trajectories are less hazardous in terms of safety, the risk of being sent back or any other element that makes the journey of undocumented migrants difficult. The stories of men like Guy or Osas, who have been travelling for a long period of time before having entered Spain, therefore surprised me heavily as they show the time, effort and money that goes into crossing countries by land without, at times, proper documents.

Another, and the last, gross category I encountered within the different ways of travelling from West Africa to the European continent, was the documented one, namely by visa. All of the respondents who were in possession of a visa for a European country, travelled by plane. Although these stories were fairly shorter in terms of difficulties and length, they showed me reasons and motivations in further mobility choices after their visas possibly expired. It might be clear by now that hearing about the different ways of travelling, as also the direct, personal experiences, is a vital part within this research and it touches one as an interviewer to see- and hear the person behind these stories we hear about in the news. The struggles, emotions and overall experiences migrants face during their journey to enter Europe, are therefore crucial in the description of mobility patterns of a particular group, like the West African migrants in Spain.

Chapter 4 – Trajectories of West African migrants towards Cataluña – Spain

As Cataluña, and especially its capital Barcelona, has been known for its economic prosperity throughout years, but also its fairly tolerant position towards migrants, it has been a place where migrants who arrive in Spain primarily choose for this region to live in. The relatively easy way of obtaining residence papers in Spain also contributes to this image, as also the small number of controls migrants experience, is what makes it so attractive, so our respondents state. But before being able to choose where to live within Europe, they have already experienced a journey to reach the European continent, some longer than others, some succeeded in a direct trajectory, others in a fragmented way, but all had a journey that has impacted their life and intra-EU mobility one way or another. Therefore, the way in which they have reached the European continent and their experiences in that destination is essential when studying the mobility patterns of West African migrants. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the diversity in the trajectories West Africans face in order to reach Europe and the way in which this journey influences the rest of their major migratory pattern in the first period of time they are in Europe.

There were three main categories that we have encountered amongst our respondents in their ways of travelling. The first is, the most debated way, by sea towards, in this case, the Canaries. Secondly, a significant part of our interviewees has travelled by land, mostly through various West African countries to eventually arrive in Morocco, where they cross to Spanish grounds via Tanger or the Spanish enclaves Melilla and Ceuta. Lastly, there are also respondents that have travelled by plane, as they were able to get a visa for Spain, or another European country, after which they continued their journey to Spain. Many migrants have travelled to other places since their arrival in Europe as well, either for social visits, touristic activities or to try and make a living for themselves there, which are discussed as well, as this shows the dynamics of the movements of a migrant.

4.1 Migration regulations and regularisation

Although Spanish' regulations with regard to migration have been constantly changing over the last few years due to its place within the European Union, the country is still known for its fairly easy way to obtain residence documents. When analysing the stories of our contacts, it is interesting that only two of them chose to apply for asylum in Spain, due to the conflict situation in Ivory Coast. The rest of our respondents chose to try and obtain residence papers via the standardized migratory legislation. An explanation for this is the Spanish laws with regard to obtaining residence documents, as stated by Vanessa Tomàs, coordinator of el Servicio de Atención a los Inmigrantes, Extranjeros y Refugiados (SAIER).

An undocumented migrant can obtain a temporary residence-paper, which primarily lasts one year, when (1) having been registered on a legal, domestic address for the municipality for a period of three years. In addition, they will have to be able to show a (2) pre-contract ("oferta"), which indicates that they will be hired for a minimum period of one year after having been given their residence- and work permit. After this period of time, this paper can be more easily renewed for another year, which consequently will lead to a residence permit for five years (SAIER, 19/03/2015). This way of obtaining a residence permit is known amongst the West Africans as easy in comparison to how other European countries have regulated this with undocumented migrants. Especially because the pre-contracts that are required in order to obtain legal documents, are available on the informal market. Falsified documents that state the person will be hired for a minimum of one year regularly cost a few thousand euros. Mamadou told us he bought these pre-contracts for a few times now in his attempts to get his temporary residence document (Mamadou, several encounters). Abdoulaye also explained he bought his pre-contract for €3000,- from a Spanish man, for which he obtained a one-year residence permit. This residence document expired in October of 2015, but Abdoulaye states it is easier to renew it and only costs more or less €150,- (Abdoulaye, 07/04/2015). It is thus evident the laws are being by-passed, as it had created a new activity in the falsification documents on the informal market.

Also, Spanish laws with regard to marriage to a EU-citizen are known to be less restricted and provide residence papers faster. An undocumented migrant can also receive residence papers when he/she is married to a EU-citizen. When one is (1) married according to the Spanish law and registered correctly, the undocumented partner will receive his/her papers after being able to show (2) they have lived together with their partner for a minimum period of one year.

<p>Married according to the Spanish law + Proof of living together for a minimum of one year = a residence permit for one year</p>
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Is this is the case, the document will be arranged. When it involves a European citizen, there is no need to live up to a certain standard of income, like in certain other European countries. Nevertheless, when one marries a non-European citizen or someone who is awaiting their passport, he/she does have to show they can provide for themselves and the person that will be living with them after marriage to be able to provide for a document for his/her partner. Although these laws create opportunities faster than in other European countries, Vanessa also states that these are constantly changing, even more under the pressure of European law-making with regard to migration (SAIER, 19/03/2015). It is common knowledge amongst the migrants that marrying a EU-citizen is one of the fastest ways to obtain residence documents. We have met several men who say they actually met someone casually and fell in love, after which they got married and were in possession of their documents because of this. Ibrahima, for instance, married his Polish girlfriend in Spain, through which he obtained his legal documents (Ibrahima, several encounters). Also Ablaye was able to receive his residence papers due to his marriage with a Spanish woman. He met her in Africa and moved here because of her (Ablaye, 18/03/2015). Nevertheless, there are also examples of the sham marriages that are always a hot topic when speaking about ways of getting legal documents. Bassirou was in the middle of this process when we were in contact. He participated in a sham marriage, through which he eventually got his residence papers (Bassirou, 06/04/2015).

Tony also expressed being married to a Spanish woman for his documents, although this did not work out as planned, as she had different expectations and forces him to pay a certain amount of money in order to get divorced now (Tony, 18/05/2015). Although it remains a fairly unclear area of when a marriage is based on a profound bond, it *is* clear it is a fast and rather easy way to receive documents in Spain.

After ten years of being in possession of a residence permit, one can apply for the Spanish nationality. Although this seems like the ultimate goal, several of our respondents expressed they do not aim for this. Aly, Ibrahima, Emmanuel and Chris, for instance, all mention they are not in a hurry for applying for a passport. Although they are able to do so already, this does not have priority in their busy schedules. It is well known that one has to invest in terms of time and paperwork in order to eventually receive the nationality, while they are able to travel and work under the same conditions with their five-year residence permit, which one gets after the short-term documents in the beginning. Although obtaining a passport is what often seems like the ultimate security, the migrants thus seem more occupied with the benefits residence papers give them in real life (SAIER, 19/03/2015; Aly, several encounters; Ibrahima, several encounters; Emmanuel, 29/05/2015; Chris, 02/06/2015).

Below one finds an overview of the number of respondents 'categorized' by their way of reaching Europe:

Table 1. Ways to reach Europe	49 Respondents in total
By sea (undocumented)	9 respondents
Overland route (undocumented)	14 respondents
By visa (documented)	26 respondents

In the following sections we dive into the different stories of these respondents, divided by gross categories, which all contain similarities, but also show exceptions to the main characteristics. It should thus remain clear these are all illustrative stories, which are all unique, as trajectories show the unexpected or diverse elements of travelling within migration (Poeze, 2010).

4.2 By sea to the Canaries

The most horrifying time of his life, explains Ibrahima, was when he was on a boat for nine days, without knowing where and when this journey would end. Longing for adventure and in search of a better life than in his home country, this Senegalese man simply stepped on a boat, not knowing what was in front of him. Despite many technical problems and being stuck on the water for four days without moving, Ibrahima was lucky enough to survive and reach the Canaries. There, he was happy to be received in a detention centre... (Ibrahima, several encounters³)

³ At times I refer to my meetings with a specific respondent to have taken place on "several encounters." I do this, as the reconstruction of those stories is based on meetings I had with them over a longer period of time. Because of this contact during several weeks or months, we spoke to each other on several occasions, while the contact with several other respondents stopped after one meeting or solely via telephone or social media.

Although the tendencies have changed over the last years, as the borders at the Canaries have increased their protection measures, many of the West Africans we spoke to have reached Europe by a journey by boat towards one of these Spanish islands. A 2013 balance from the Spanish Internal Affairs department shows the immense descent in the number of irregular migrants arriving at the Canaries of 99.4 per cent in the period of 2006 to 2013. In 2006, 31.678 undocumented migrants reached the Canaries, while only 196 persons arrived at the islands in 2013 (Gobierno de España, 29/04/2014). As already mentioned before, this way to cross to Europe has been showed in the media for many years and has the horrifying connotation of people dying while trying to reach another continent without documents (Carling, 2007). From Senegal, a boat was often taken directly from Dakar or Mbour. The duration of the journey from Senegal varies from seven to ten days, depending on if- or which problems they encounter. As one also notices in the current news features in which boats have to be rescued off coast because they are suffering from motor- or even worse problems through which they are not able to make it to shore, is also something our respondents have spoken about. Aly, to name one, was on a boat that was ruptured after a few days, which needed to be fixed. Although they could maintain the gap to continue, they would not be able to reach the European islands. For that reason, they chose to see wherever the sea took them. They eventually arrived in Morocco, where they were sent back to Senegal as soon as they arrived (Aly, several encounters). The safety concerns that are risked in order to reach Europe are thus highly visible within this trajectory. Consequently, physical- and mental problems are also often mentioned when talking about this form of travelling. Mamadou, for example, had never experienced being on a boat before, through which he was sick the first four days of the journey, which took eight days in total (Mamadou, 19/03/2015). Several respondents name especially the lack of knowledge of time and place while on the boat, as the worse factor about the journey by boat, besides the risk. One does not know where he finds himself at a particular moment and in what particular place at sea. This means there is also a lack of knowledge on how long one still has to be on the boat before reaching land again (Aly, several encounters; Ibrahima, several encounters).

When having arrived at the Canaries, the majority of our respondents say to have been awaited by the Red Cross and/or police. Periods of being in a detention centre vary from a week to a month. It is noticeable that many of them, when asked about their opinion about the centres, have not experienced it as something negative or a prison in particular, although their immobility in fact is enforced. Ibrahima, a man who has experienced many different places and people and can talk about this in a beautiful way, states he felt relieved and lucky, as they were taken care of with food, water and safety, which was all he could asked for after the journey he had just survived (Ibrahima, several encounters). Immediately after arrival in these centres, fingerprints are taken. The respondents also state a physical examination is done to avoid diseases are spread. From there on out, the usual procedure is that there were military planes that took groups of migrants from the detention centre towards several Spanish cities on the mainland, like Madrid, Barcelona or Valencia, where they stayed in another centre or with the Red Cross, until they were able to reach their family and they could go to a place where they knew anyone.

Nevertheless, the way in which a case is examined legally remains unclear for the respondents themselves as well. Ibrahima especially explains he still thinks about the seemingly arbitrary order in which is decided whether a migrant can be moved to the mainland or not. In his case, a part of their group was sent back to West Africa, while another part was transported to the mainland. He has not seen a lawyer, so he says, which means he has never known the reason why he was not deported. He now devotes it to "el destino" or simply destiny, which has given him the luck to move on (Ibrahima, several encounters). This shows that we tend to understand mobility by more concrete intentions, aspirations or plans, but that there are also elements that influence migratory patterns that are less explainable, both for the researcher as for the migrant him-/herself.

Although all of the other stories consider a trajectory that enters Europe at the Canaries, we have encountered one respondent, Henry, who left Nigeria by a container ship, but entered Europe through Denmark. Believing he could gain a better life in Europe but also considering "sometimes you just think you have to change the environment", he took a job where he had to work on a ship for three months, after which he would be brought to Europe. After having lived in Arendal, Denmark, for eight years, having a residence permit and a steady job for this whole period of time, the cold triggered Henry to leave Scandinavia and move to a Southern European country. Henry can be characterized as a young man who positions himself in a fairly formal way and prefers to talk on a serious note. Especially his time in Denmark is something he describes seriously as being hard because of racism and climate circumstances to which he could not adjust (Henry, 29/05/2015).

Table 1.1 Respondents who have arrived to Europe over sea

1. Saliou (Senegal)	Senegal – Mauritania – Canaries
2. Mamadou (Senegal)	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries)
3. Ibrahima (Senegal)	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries)
4. Assane (Senegal)	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries)
5. Henry (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Norway (Arendal)
6. Moussa (Senegal)	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries)
7. Idrissa (Senegal)	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries)

4.3 Overland route

Starting from Cameroon, Guy travelled through Nigeria, Niger and Libya. In Libya he stayed for over eight months, working. Despite living a regular life and being employed constantly, the main objective, so he says, still was Europe, through which he decided to continue his journey to Algeria and eventually Morocco, where he was forced to live in the woods at the Spanish border with Melilla for eight to nine months, a period that he explains was extremely difficult. Being caught jumping the fence countless times, being in jail for some weeks, deported to Oujda and having to walk back to the border, Guy says it was hard to keep faith. Nevertheless, he succeeded in crossing the border with Melilla by a bay in the sea, where the fence at that time was broken. After such a rough and dangerous journey, Guy says he would have expected to encounter paradise, but Europe let him down on this (Guy, 09/05/2015).



Well-known photograph from the contradictory setting of the border at Melilla, Spain (*El País*, 21/11/2015)

Another route we have encountered within our conversations with the migrants from West Africa, have showed us that many travel by land and consequently enter Europe by crossing the border from Tanger and Gibraltar or –Algeciras, or via one of the Spanish enclaves Melilla or Ceuta. Although some Senegalese men also entered Europe via land, the majority of those who travelled by land came from other West African countries. The journey has been explained to be long and dangerous, especially with regard to health, as many state they did not fear controls on the road. Although this is a route one does not see in the news nowadays as much as the journey by boat, it takes more time and money. A significant part of the interviewees who passed such a trajectory by land, have paused their journey to reach Europe to live and work in another Northern African country for some time, from a few months to a few years even. What caught attention, is that the ultimate objective always stays Europe, despite living and working in good conditions in the countries where these respondents have spent some more time.

Eventually 16 of our respondents travelled towards Europe via other Western- and Northern-African countries, to eventually enter via Morocco. Six persons managed to cross the border at Melilla or Ceuta, while nine other persons took a boat in Tanger or Laayoune towards Spanish harbour cities like Tarifa or Algeciras. In both cases, respondents describe periods of time where they needed to maintain patience awaiting opportunities to cross a border at a certain moment in time. In these 'in-between phases' most of them worked in the informal economy or were hired at construction sites to provide for themselves or save up for further steps in the journey. Two of the respondents have travelled overland as well as by sea to be able to enter Europe by the Canaries. Moses and Toumani both travelled through several Western- and Northern African countries to eventually reach Morocco and arrive in Europe by boat from Laayoune. These trajectories show a longer period of time before reaching the Canaries, as well as higher amounts of money that are spent, as more traffickers and means of transport are involved. The exact differences are hard to state, but most of the migrants travelling directly from their home country speak about €500,- up to €1000,- for their crossing, while the amounts of travelling to Morocco and crossing afterwards are accumulated and probably up to a few thousands euros (Moses, 22/05/2015; Toumani, 29/06/2015).

Which is interesting is that a part of these migrants in these longer journeys also speak about meeting- or receiving their wives in this area as well and travelling onwards with them, and in some cases, also their children. Osas, a big Nigerian man who we met through Chima, is very talkative and likes a debate about the situation migrants face in Europe. He told us about his experiences trying to reach Europe, which took a longer period of time travelling through- and crossing many countries, as also travelling with his wife and eventually even his young son. Starting his journey in 1999, he travelled to Libya, where he lived and worked for two years. As his eventual objective was to go to Canada, he travelled to Egypt in order to get a visa there. This was harder than Osas thought it would be, so he moved back to Libya. In 2002, he moved from Libya to Morocco by truck, which cost him 200 dollars. They crossed the border at Debdeb by foot. They were with a group of 50 people and everyone had to pay 20 dollars to cross the border. From Oujda, they walked to Benuki, where they could jump the cargo trail towards Fez. In Fez, he paid a man 100 dollars to bring him to Rabat, where he stayed for two years. In 2004, he went back to Nigeria for three months. Now, he took his girlfriend with him the same way as he came for the first time and they arrived in Rabat again in January 2005. In total, Osas lived in Morocco for ten years, which puts into perspective the often-used connotation of the so-called transit migrant (Düvell et al, 2014), as it shows that transit phases can last for years as well. Osas had a Ghanaian friend just outside of Rabat who fixed and cleaned shoes, so he stayed with him for some months to learn and in 2006 he was able to be a shoe maker/shiner. They tried to cross from Laayoune to las Palmas in 2006 for 700/800 dollars, because this was cheaper than going from Tanger. His wife, their 11-/12-month-old son and himself tried to cross, but did not succeed at that time and had to move back from Oujda, where they were left, to Rabat. It took Osas up until June 2010 to be able to let his wife and son cross from Tanger to Tarifa, after which he followed their steps in 2012. Osas' journey into Europe thus demonstrates the tumultuous and unexpected enforced- or voluntary mobility that is involved in reaching another continent without being in possession of the right documents, as it also demonstrates one only very partially explains migratory processes by counting the countries that have been crossed (Osas, 18/05/2015).

Interesting is the way in which migrants describe how the people they travel with get certain roles during the journey. There is often someone who makes decisions along the way for a group, besides smugglers or other intermediary persons, as there are also people needed in terms of technical issues, or even social interactions. Maseck, a very shy man, started opening up during the conversation we had with him. Nevertheless, he maintained a formal and polite manner of speaking and tried looking us into our eyes too much. As a devoted Muslim man he says he has a hard time living in a European country because of different values on many topics. Nevertheless, he spoke to us about his journey in a fairly open way. Interestingly, he told us about the nickname he got in Tanger, as he has been working on boats almost all of his life. His knowledge of boats, fishing and the sea, made the people he travelled with call him 'Le Capi', which is an abbreviation of the French word 'Le Capitaine' or 'The Captain' in English. In order to make sure they would arrive safely in Tarifa, Maseck took the lead during the boat journey of a night. He instructed people who had never been on sea before to stay inside of the boat and keep calm, while he was also in charge of the compass and the overall estimations in terms of the state of the sea. Maseck emphasizes the way in which many people, while living in a border area like the North of Morocco, manifested themselves in a certain role due to knowledge or experiences they brought from their countries of origin. Therefore, it was easier to travel in groups, as they contributed to yje skills of one another, which made the journey safer in the end (Maseck, 21/03/2015).

Within this research we have solely encountered one case in which a West African migrant has travelled partly by land, but through a different route. It is noticeable that this is a trajectory encountered in the last years, as also the recent arrival of this interviewee shows. Bassirou, a vendor of handmade goods like djembes, who walks around the city centre always wears a big smile and has a positive attitude. Being analphabetic and coming from a poor background, he feels a major pressure from back home, as he is the only one who can make sure his mother has money to buy food. So when a friend of Bassirou asked him to join him to Turkey, were they would be able to enter Europe, the decision was made quickly. As Bassirou was struggling in providing for his mother and siblings while living there also, he decided to take the chance and he flew to Istanbul with his friend. One month later, they crossed the border by foot to Greece in a larger group. He lived in Tessaloniki for three years, which Bassirou experienced as a highly difficult period in his life, due to economic struggles and racism. This last reason mainly motivated him to join an acquaintance with Italian residence papers to Italy, after which Bassirou travelled onwards to Mataró in Cataluña (Bassirou, 06/04/2015). Within Bassirou's trajectory we thus encounter a way to enter Europe, or even Spain, in a different matter than via the popular routes at the Spanish external borders from the 90's and early 2000'.

Table 1.2 Respondents who have arrived to Europe over land

1. Pape (Mali)	Mali – Algeria – Morocco – Spain (Melilla)
2. Maseck (Senegal)	Senegal – Mauritania – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Tarifa)
3. Amina (Senegal)	Senegal (Dakar) – Morocco (Rabat) – Morocco (Nador) – Spain (Andalucía, unknown which city)
4. Bassirou (Senegal)	Senegal (Dakar) – flight to Turkey (Istanbul) – Greece – Italy – Spain
5. Guy (Cameroon)	Cameroon – Gambia – Nigeria – Niger – Libya – Algeria – Morocco – Spain (Melilla)
6. Tony (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Mauritania – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Ceuta)
7. Osas (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Lybia – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Tarifa)
8. Moses (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Mali – Algeria – Morocco (Laayoune) – Spain (Canaries)
9. Emmanuel (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Niger – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Tarifa)
10. Pastor Andrew (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Benin – Togo – Burkina Faso – Mali – flight to Morocco – Spain (Ceuta)
11. John (Ghana)	Ghana – Togo – Ivory Coast – Burkina Faso – Nigeria – Niger – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Algeciras)
12. Uche (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Niger – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Algeciras)
13. Demba (Mali)	Mali – Gabon (Libreville) – flight to Morocco – Spain (Melilla)
14. Aziz (Burkina Faso)	Burkina Faso – flight to Tunisia (Tunis) – Libya – Tunisia (Tunis) – Morocco – Spain (Ceuta)
15. Toumani (Mali)	Mali – Algeria – Morocco (Laayoune) – Spain (Canaries)
16. Habib (Mali)	Mali – Algeria – Morocco – flight to Barcelona – the Netherlands

4.4 By visa to Europe

As stated, one does not read many spectacular details about the trajectories migrants take when they are able to get a visa and enter Europe legally, but these journeys can still be highly dynamic (Poeze, 2010).

Nevertheless, it is a route taken by many and the place where they go by plane is not often their end destination. Besides this, entering Europe with documents does not mean the migrant automatically lives without fear of being undocumented, as in most cases they move to other places, overstaying the visas and losing their safety which is called having documents. So in this section, I will discuss some of the intra-EU mobility involved, but these mobilities are more or less passing through mobilities through Spain. The intermediate phases of transit may differ, however, in terms of location, time and experience.

To Spain

Victor's dad had been working and living in Barcelona since Victor was seven years old. In 2008 his father tried to get his family towards Spain as well, so Victor and his three siblings flew to Barcelona that same year. His mother could not come yet, as his parents were not considered legally married by European legislations, but just through a traditional Nigerian ceremony. In 2013, his father and siblings moved to the United Kingdom. As Victor was still studying in Barcelona he decided to stay for a while. At the end of 2015, however, Victor informed me through Facebook that he had been able to get his visa for the United Kingdom. In January 2016 he joined his family in London and started studying and working there again (Victor, 17/06/2015).

Eleven respondents came directly to Spain by flight. This were touristic visa, but also for studying or on the basis of social networks, like relatives already living in Europe. They mostly stay with family or –friends and are able to establish daily activities, as they enter documented. In Spain, children automatically obtain residence papers if one of their parents has a residence permit as well. Nevertheless, it depends on each case, whether the child is also permitted to work with this particular paper.

<p>The husband, wife or child of a person with a residence permit in Spain, automatically obtains documents as well. This does not always include a working permit.</p>

That migrants that enter Spain, or another European country, by visa, appear to have a fairly straight trajectory, might not always be the case. Boubacar, a young man from Guinea-Conakry, entered Europe by a visa for France in 2004, as his brother lived there for many years already. To survive, Boubacar worked in informal jobs in construction or in the production sector. Eventually he was taken into a detention centre for eleven months, while he was caught working without documents, after which he was sent back to Guinea in 2006. Being back in his home country, but in desire to fulfil his dream to improve his life in Europe, he was able to get a visa for Spain again. Boubacar himself was not able to explain well how this was possible in a short period of time, so it remains unclear which factors have brought him a Spanish visa so fast. One can only explain this by stating it is one of the 'paper acrobatics' that remained unclear within his story about his trajectory. After having arrived in Spain, he stayed with a friend in Blanes, after which he came to Barcelona in 2007 (Boubacar, 08/06/2015). Boubacar's story thus shows that entering Europe documented does not always mean a linear movement from A to B, where there are no unexpected changes.

Periods of enforced immobility, while being detained, as well as being sent back to the home country, show that a trajectory can be changed by a lack of documents in case of those entering documented as well.

Table 1.3 Respondents who have arrived to Europe by a visa for Spain

1. Ablaye (Senegal)	Senegal – Spain
2. Aly (Senegal)	Senegal – Spain
3. Abdoulaye (Senegal)	Senegal – Spain
4. Isaac (Ghana)	Ghana – Spain
5. Chris (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Spain
6. Boubacar (Guinea-Conakry)	Guinea-Conakry – France (visa) – Guinea-Conakry – Spain (visa)
7. Victor (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Spain
8. Chuks (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Spain
9. Seydou (Ivory Coast)	Ivory Coast – Mali – Spain (asylum)
10. Souleymane (Ivory Coast)	Ivory Coast – Mali – Spain (asylum)
11. Mame Cheikh (Senegal)	Senegal – Spain
12. Karim (Senegal)	Senegal – Spain

Entering Europe through another European country than Spain

Being on an airplane from Dakar to Paris, entering Europe with documents and without problems is something even more invisible when reading, listening or seeing news about migration. Mustafa experienced a safe trip this way, not having to worry about surviving a risky trajectory. Nevertheless, he was not happy, as he was basically forced by his older brother to enter Europe and having to make the family proud. After having been in Paris for some time and overstaying his tourist visa, he went to Barcelona by bus in search of informal jobs, where he has been living ever since, struggling as a street vendor for the success he should bring his family in Senegal (Mustafa, several encounters).

The majority of our interviewees, who ended up in Spain by a visa, have entered Europe on a visa for another European country. We have heard especially persons flying to Paris. An interesting connection is to be found in the number of respondents travelling from Mali to France by visa, which consists of seven persons. This might be explained by colonial links that cause language, social networks and other factors to contribute to the relative easy way in which West Africans obtain their visa for France. The periods of time they spent in the countries where they enter vary from solely a few days to a year. Eventually, they choose to start travelling before their visa expires, to be able to travel in relative peace. The motivations these migrants give with regard to their choice for Spain are mainly based on economic grounds, mostly because of the existence of a big informal sector, or through social networks.

Table 1.4 Respondents who have arrived to Europe by a visa for another European country

1. Djibril (Senegal)	Senegal – Mali – Cameroon – Italy
2. Mustafa (Senegal)	Senegal – France
3. Aliou (Senegal)	Senegal – Italy
4. Ousmane (Senegal)	Senegal – Italy
5. Birama (Gambia)	Gambia – Italy
6. Alex (Nigeria)	Nigeria – the United Kingdom
7. Matthias (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Germany
8. David (Ghana)	Ghana – Nigeria – Germany
9. Chima (Nigeria)	Nigeria – France
10. Amadou (Mali)	Mali – France
11. Sekou (Mali)	Mali – France
12. Lamine (Gambia)	Gambia – Mali – France
13. Brian (Nigeria)	Nigeria – Germany
14. Salif (Mali)	Mali – France

4.5 Mobility after arrival

Within Spain

The most common motivation one encounters in the visits our respondents have made within Spain, is an economic one. Employment and/or trade are significant motives in travelling throughout Spain, as one will also notice in further chapters of this research, for which there will not be a major elaboration on this theme at this point. What is important to notice, is that these visits are characterized by temporary periods of time and that migrants tend to return to certain places due to business- and social networks in terms of obtaining labour. Most migrants express they are not in fear of controls within Spain, through which also undocumented persons can move around easily.

Almost every interviewee has visited other places within Spain, as they have entered via other cities, went there for economic reasons or because of the need to arrange paperwork. Especially Madrid has been visited by considerably everyone, as most embassies are based in the Spanish capital, for which the respondents needed to visit it to arrange their documents. It is clear this indicates a short visit, purely for its legal objective. Social networks can also motivate these short visits, as one notices a lot amongst our respondents.

Within Europe

Places that have been visited throughout Europe since their arrival are highly linked to the fact if a migrant is documented or –undocumented. Every respondent that has residence papers have travelled to one- or more other European countries.

Short visits are characterized by touristic motivations or the will to visit family or friends, which expresses social intentions to travel. The most visited countries are France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Nevertheless, several interviewees have also tried to make a living for themselves in another country within Europe. John's journey through Scandinavia is a good illustrative case, as he moved to Sweden, after having lived in Spain for twelve years. Obtaining his residence permit after three months and working a formal job for many years, it was hard for John to get unemployed and stay motivated. For that reason, and in search of income, he decided he needed a new environment and had heard he would be able to get employed in Scandinavia. In a period of three years, he travelled through Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, being helped by other Africans, while searching for employment. Every time he moved to another country, he was forced to live in the streets. However, John expresses he was always helped by, mainly West-, Africans in terms of a temporary job or housing. Despite his efforts, he was not able to make a stable living for himself, through which he decided to return to Barcelona in 2012 (John, 04/06/2015). John's case demonstrates he is mobile in terms of documents, but through a lack of economic means he remained was enforced immobile for a while, although social networks helped him to move further at times. It remains clear John has intended to move to another part of Europe on a more permanent basis. What one also encounters is a more circular movement, in which migrants move around Europe, mainly for business, but do consider Barcelona as their home place in Europe, where they always return. In chapter 6 we will further explore the mobility of the West African migrant after their arrival in Europe.

4.6 Concluding remarks

The detailed and diverse trajectories of our respondents show one should never forget to speak to the source in order to respond correctly to political- or societal discussions, like migrants entering Europe undocumented. The overall images that exist within media or political debates considering migration towards Europe, often fail to show the detailed stories of the people of debate. Whether the migrant came to Europe regularly or irregularly influences the trajectory, but the research findings presented here show the journey of, West African- in this case, migrants is still filled with unexpected changes or new developments along the way, depending on legal status, social elements, economic circumstances or own choices with regard to mobility.

The diverse backgrounds and social networks migrants bring towards a metropolis and their need to generate income in informal ways creates the 'informal space' of a city like Barcelona. Although West African migrants often have to overcome many obstacles in order to enter the European continent, they contribute to European spaces in significant ways. Their innovative ways and mobile lifestyles guide the city and its surroundings and make tourists have images of the Rambla de Catalunya filled with West African or Asian street vendors. It is therefore impossible to look at such a journey to enter a continent without looking at the further major trajectory that follows and activities that are embedded within these processes in order to move on and succeed.

iv. Ethnographic sketches: while at work

Approaching people at work was hard at times, as Saskia and I did not want to interfere in them earning money or simply in their daily routines, but it was the easiest way to find West Africans in Barcelona, especially the ones that perform informal, economic activities. As described in chapter 3, even when at work, they mostly responded calm and open. Nevertheless, there were indeed hectic moments, approaching one of the vendors on the Rambla de Catalunya or at the MareMagnum shopping centre, while chaos followed when police arrived into the scenery and the vendors gave us their phone numbers quickly and ran away. Also in the sector for those who collect scrap metals, we often felt like we disturbed someone in doing their job. One of our first attempts in approaching someone was when it was heavily raining and we saw a young West African pushing a shopping cart with scrap metals inside of it. Saliou, nevertheless, responded calmly and open to talk to us another time.

But it were not only these visible sectors of the informal economy in which we encountered the West African migrant. From the respondents we had already spoken to, we heard some talking about working at farms or agricultural sites during the harvest of fruits and vegetables, especially during summer. We planned a short-term visit to Lérida at the end of our fieldwork period in June and travelled by bus. Lérida, at approximately three hours from Barcelona, is a small town, where temperatures during these times are extremely high as it finds itself in the hinterland. From Aly, one of our close contacts, I received two telephone numbers from two of his best friends, who resided in the agricultural area. We thought it would be harder to find people of West African origin in a town like Lérida in comparison to the metropolis of Barcelona. This we found out, however, was not the case as West Africans are highly visible and present in the central parts of the small town. Within three days, we did thirteen interviews, mainly in the streets, as we now did not have the luxury of planning interviews on convenient times later in the week. This, however, also made it easier, as the people we met in the streets were clearly not working at the moment of the encounter on one of the farms, which made us approach them without interfering their work. This brought about interesting situations, while we were speaking to them and hearing personal stories on benches, at times surrounded by many other migrants and in unexpected settings.

The high temperatures in which we were working ourselves, made it even harder to believe these men were working ten to twelve hours a day in the sun in the agricultural field up to seven days a week. Their will to talk to us, but also their happiness about having a steady paycheck, amazed us, as circumstances were far from ideal. Despite of their long working days, we were invited to some dinners and personal encounters and it was touching to experience how they were willing to make time for us, apart from their busy daily schedules while working and living in Lérida, even more while it was the period of the Ramadan.

Chapter 5 – The West African migrant navigating the informal economy of Catalunya

Now is a critical time to for business to investigate informality. Informal is not on a list of choices, it is reality that is there... We are all living in emerging economies now – John Tackara at the Informal Economy Symposium in Barcelona in 2012 (www.theinformaleconomy.com, 19/10/2012)

The informal economy, characterized by incoming-generating activities that are outside of the defined regulatory framework (Sassen, 1994; Pacione, 2001), is a phenomenon almost every visitor of the Catalanian region has encountered. Although some sectors within this irregular economy are highly visible in the streets of Catalunya, others are less likely to be seen by a tourist or short-time visitor. The image of, mainly West African or Asian, vendors in the streets of the larger cities or coastal atmospheres of the region is one of the most well-known phenomena from informality. The West African migrant forms a big part of the many vendors that are present in Barcelona's streets and at its beaches, but that is not the only informal activity in which one encounters the young men coming from this part of Africa. It is, however, important to keep in mind that with the high employment rates in Spain over the last few years, the availability of jobs in the informal sector has also decreased, as expressed by many of our respondents. Especially in factories and the agricultural sector, where employers are in charge of hiring people, available places have gone done and the migrants state they now have to compete with a huge number of Spanish labourers in search of employment as well. The boundaries between formal- and informal employment have been blurred even more due to the tight labour market in the Southern European country.

Another fairly visible sector one could mention when talking about the role of the West African migrant in Catalunya's informal economic spheres is the activity in which a person collects scrap metals from the streets, which he later hands in at bigger selling points. Nevertheless, there are also less visible sectors of the informal economy, like being employed at one of the many farms of Catalunya, mainly centred around the city of Lérida, where even undocumented migrants are assured of a certain paycheck at the end of the day. Besides these daily activities, trade is an additional income generating activity that in most cases is performed cross-borders between home- and destination countries. These five gross categories will be explored within this chapter: street vending, collecting scrap metals, doing promotion for night clubs, trading in products and working in agriculture. Although we also heard many respondents mention working informally in factories or in construction, we were not able to get detailed stories, as these jobs are often highly temporal or even day jobs. Besides this, it is now not as easy to enter these two sectors anymore, as it is mostly formal labour contracts that are established there.

The viewing point towards the informal economy in this chapter will be a mobile one. The aim is to show a seemingly fixed phenomenon, like an informal urban economy, might be more dynamic and mobile, as migrants shift around goods and money in order to provide generate income.

As was explained before, the mobile world in which the migrants live and move, applies to all sectors of society. Where informal, economic activities were previously characterized by taking place on a small- and local scale, we now know it forms part of activities over wider distances, even beyond borders at times (Cantens, 2012). One easily notices some mobile dimensions within informal activities, as also in other jobs. Nevertheless, in this project there is a special focus on the combination of this informal economy of Cataluña and mobility. This interest could be categorized by several dimensions like: intra-urban, urban-urban, rural-urban and cross borders, which will be kept in mind when analysing the informal activities through a mobility-lens.

5.1 Street vending

Mamadou, the young man we approached on one of our first fieldwork days, explains selling in the streets of Barcelona is solely to be able to survive. Constantly being on the run for police, defending your friends, while trying to make a living, is hard. It helps them, however, to be able to live in Europe and help their family in Senegal at the same time, which is what they originally started their journey to Europe for (Mamadou, 19/03/2015).

Purchasing goods

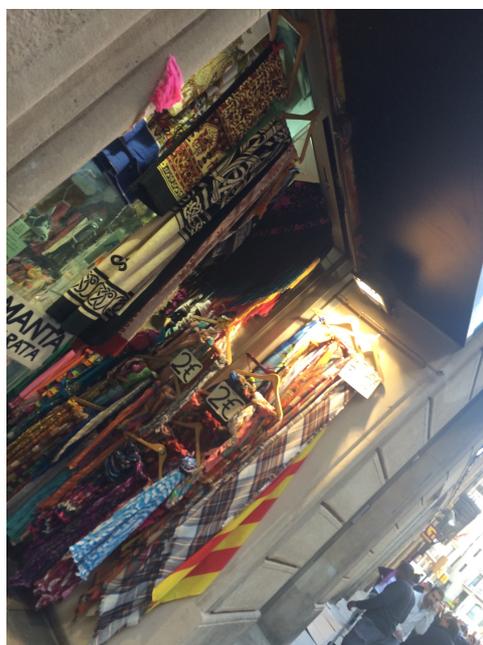
The young men that sell in the Barcelonese streets or at its major touristic attractions are generally Senegalese young men. The commonly used term of "top manta"⁴ is therefore known by many people, both from within as from without Spain, as being performed by West Africans. Djibril, the first respondent I spoke to by myself, was at the start of the street vending business in Barcelona. He is now a shop owner in el Barrio Gótico, knows almost everyone from the neighbourhood who passes by and wears a huge smile on his face whenever I visited his shop. Having travelled from Senegal to Mali, to Cameroon, a visa led Djibril to Italy in the year of 1990. He only lived in Italy for a few months, when two friends and Djibril decided to move towards Spain, as they heard there was a huge rise in the demand for labour due to the Summer Olympics that were held in Barcelona in 1992. At that time, there were only some vendors at the beaches of Barcelona and its surroundings. Djibril did this for several months as well, but disliked "disturbing" people, as he calls it, while they were resting. For that reason, Djibril and some of his friends decided to move their vending activities towards the city centre, as this was another place where they would be able to encounter some tourists at least.

When we asked Osas (Nigerian) why he does not want to sell on the streets for instance, like the Senegalese, he says "it's a case of mentality. Nigeria is like America from West Africa. Senegalese feel like they are rich when they have €300,- in their pocket and don't need more. A Nigerian man always wants to find new ways to gain a better income" (Osas, 18/05/2015).

⁴ Translated by Oxford Dictionaries as "trade in pirated goods" (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/translate/spanish-english/top-manta>), but in Spanish refers to the overall activity of street vending, using the blankets on the ground to exhibit their selling goods.

This led him to sell on the streets for over ten years. In the meantime three friends opened up a store, trading in decorative and only handmade goods from the continent of Africa (Djibril, 09/03/2015).

Most of the migrants who arrive in Barcelona already knew the informal sales activities in the city are easy to enter because of family or friends that participate in this sector (Kothari, 2008:507). They explain one simply starts by buying some selling goods at one of well-known stores for street vendors to buy their products. One can categorize the origin of the selling goods of the Senegalese street vendors we spoke to into the smaller shops in the city centre or the wholesalers in Badalona. It is important to stress the link between formality and informality within this theme (Ødegaard, 2008; Cantens, 2012), as many small, mainly touristic, shops in central parts of the city like Liceu or Drassanes, also have a back corner in which they sell to street vendors for lower prices. Most of these are in possession of Pakistan- or Bangladesh migrants who sell to tourists themselves as well. Accompanying Aly numerous times while buying sunglasses in Liceu at different places, it was clear prices varied from €0.80 to €2,- per pair of sunglasses. The prices depend on its design on popularity, as also for regular customers in these shops. Nevertheless, it is evident customers pay two to three times as much for one pair of sunglasses in comparison to the street vendors. This can be explained by the fact that the street vendors buy in gross amounts, but also by the notion of business-networks with these shops. In the first place, the vendors buy in gross amounts in comparison to regular customers, because of which the shop-owners are able to lower the prices. Because of these favourable prices and comfortable contacts, vendors return to the shops regularly, which creates an unregistered business-contact that might lead to further price reductions or favours in terms of other selling goods.



Well-known store in Liceu to purchase selling goods (Own photograph, 27/03/2015)

Another area in which many of the Senegalese street vendors buy their goods to sell is Badalona. Badalona, which could be called one of Barcelona's suburbs, is easily reachable by public transport and located closely to Barcelona's biggest migrant neighbourhood, which is Besòs Mar. It is characterized by its industrial image, but it also has a small centre. Most significant, however, is the part of this district in which one encounters several wholesalers, most ruled by Asian entrepreneurs. These formal enterprises sell to private retail companies and all have different focuses in products. While one wholesaler sells accessories, like jewellery, sunglasses and souvenirs, others focus on bags, clothing or electronics. Most of the shops carry signs that state one should buy in large quantities and with the condition of being able to demonstrate an official admission of the local chamber of commerce.

Nevertheless, these conditions are not always followed, as also the Senegalese vendors are able to buy goods at these wholesalers, as also in smaller amounts of a few pieces at a time. The first person that took my co-researcher and me to Badalona's stores was Mustafa. After our interview in a café, he offered to take us to the wholesaler when he needed to buy new bags. Afterwards, I was able to join Aly a few times to the stores as well. Both men showed us around several shops, where one also notices the business contacts, as they return to the same stores and negotiate about prices or quantities (Mustafa, several encounters; Aly, several encounters). Accompanying Mustafa in buying new bags, Saskia and I experienced he mostly visited one or two of the same stores, where he knew the shop owners well. Networks in this sense are highly important, as purchase prices can vary between these wholesalers as well. When establishing stable contacts by returning to such a store frequently, cost prices often become more beneficial for the buyer. Logically, price ranges also depend on the quantities that are purchased (Mamadou, 19/03/2015; Mustafa, several encounters; Aly, several encounters). The contact between the West African young men and the people who work at the wholesalers



Front image of a wholesaler in Badalona (Own photograph, 07/04/2015)

runs smoothly overall, although there is inconvenience about prices and/or quality at times, which is difficult to overcome due to language barriers and two parties trying to make fast money (Aly, several encounters).

To be able to buy their selling goods, the vendors can thus stay on the intra-urban level of Barcelona or move towards the bigger stores in Badalona as one of its suburbs. Besides these places to obtain goods, there are also different dimensions on which one notices trade in relation to the street vending business of Barcelona. When exploring the street vending business and all of its assets, one notices the products are assembled material at times (Mcfarlane, 2011), as the vendors purchase certain goods but complete it by adding other details in order to sell it successfully. A good example of such processes in which the vendor is also a manufacturer in a certain sense is that the wholesalers in Badalona sell bags without marks. Mustafa, however, is very clear that it is nearly impossible to sell bags without marks to tourists, as they are primarily looking for bags with a mark for a low price. Due to significant fines that the wholesaler could face when being caught in selling imitation goods, the young vendors therefore get marks, mostly in plastic or metal, from other Senegalese traders in Italy, which they subsequently stitch to the bags. In an Alexander von Humboldt lecture, Professor AbdouMaliq Simone spoke about this role of "stuff" in an urban space and its link to the infrastructure of a city (08/09/2014).

The process in which the West African migrant, in this case, works with goods and produces them into further completed selling goods, designs the urban space in a mobile way, as also the products that flow within this space. The flow of goods in this sense is thus highly present, as we see the flows of market plates by mail as packages on a cross-border, intra-EU dimension (Mustafa, several encounters). Nevertheless, several respondents also mention that at times the wholesalers offer these imitation bags or –sunglasses as well, but they are forced to be careful in order not to be caught and receive major fines, through which this is a hidden business in most cases (Mamadou, 19/03/2015; Mustafa, several encounters; Aly, several encounters).

This cross-border link, in which the Senegalese migrants in Barcelona use their contacts in Italy to facilitate their trade within Spain, is interesting when talking about the mobility of goods in relation to these informal, economic activities.

A direct link of trading in particular goods beyond borders is also made by, for instance, Bassirou, who talks about the original, wooden African products, mainly necklaces or djembes, which come via mail from Greece, Italy or directly from Senegal, through Senegalese contacts. When Bassirou asks for a certain product, he transfers the money through one of the many money transfer agencies that in the city, after which the product is sent to Barcelona. The circulation of money and goods in this case is thus clear, which shows it does not only take place on an intra-urban dimension or even within the same country. His story also characterizes the way in which former experiences of mobility can influence their lives in further stages of their trajectory, as Bassirou still uses his contacts from Greece and Italy to purchase his selling goods for Barcelona (Bassirou, 06/04/2015). These transnational economic networks that specifically young urban populations form are interesting in this sense, as described by AbdouMaliq Simone, as "with limited institutional anchorage and financial capital, the majority of African urban residents have to make what they can out of their bare lives" (Simone, 2004:428). This can thus be witnessed within the networks the West African young men in Barcelona create as well to be able to survive.

Street sales

When having purchased the goods, it is a matter of social networks of where to sell, as most of the Senegalese vendors work in groups and move around certain parts of the city. Mamadou, for instance, mainly sells in the shopping area of the Passeig de Gràcia, Plaza Catalunya and the Rambla (Mamadou, 19/03/2015), while others, like Mustafa, only sell at the shopping centre of MareMagnum and boulevard-area of Barceloneta (Mustafa, several encounters). Besides these most visited places of Barcelona, also specific touristic 'hotspots',



Quick inside view of a wholesaler in Badalona (07/04/2015)

like the mountain of Montjuïc, are attractive for street vendors to sell. Aly sells, together with other Senegalese and Pakistan young men, on the mountain where tourists come to visit the castle and afterwards take some pictures of the overall view one has over the city (Aly, several encounters). It remains obvious that places that attract a vast amount of visitors, preferably tourists, are most beneficial for the vendors. Here, we thus see the way in which mobility can influence a city in its everyday sense. Both tourists and migrants, prototypical groups of travellers, who have been on the move or still are, influence the street image of the city, as well as influence dynamics of trade and the flow of money and goods on certain dimensions of mobility. We see the flow of goods on an intra-urban level, whereas the migrants purchase and try to sell their goods within Barcelona or its region. When these products are bought, one could research the places they go to, but given the diversity in nationalities amongst tourists in this metropolis, one might state that goods could be followed on a cross-border dimension too after the purchase. In terms of money one also sees these flows, as migrants gain on their purchases of selling goods by money that tourists bring to Barcelona, which in many cases is used for further purchases of selling goods, but a big part is also sent to home countries, like Senegal, in which we, again, notice mobility of goods or money on a cross-border dimension. Several mobilities become entangled this way.

The street sales, as one might call it, are an interesting phenomenon to follow, as the young men are highly aware of which items sell good and which do not and they are able to adjust their knowledge to different nationalities and ages. Despite their different educational backgrounds in their home country, most of them are able to become sales men by experiencing and learning, from their selves, but also from their "hermanos" ("brothers"), as they name each other in most cases. Aliou, is a good example, of this, while we met him when he just arrived in Europe six months before and was just selling at MareMagnum shopping centre for a few months as well. He did not know other languages than Wolof and French, so it was hard for him to communicate with customers, and also us as interviewers, in English or Spanish. As he appeared to be a shy and vulnerable young man, we noticed a difference in attitude when selling in the following months, as also his language skills improved in our short visits after our interview (Aliou, 25/03/2015). An open and, sometimes, noisy way of approaching tourists is also something the vendors need, as there are many vendors present, selling the same items as well. Therefore, there is real competition in price and –personality one might say, to be able to sell some of the products one bought at Liceu or Badalona. Nevertheless, most of our respondents mention the overall positive and friendly atmosphere amongst the salesmen, as they feel like they have to be bonded and work together at times to be able to live well in Spain. Ousmane even sells in the streets, although he also has a formal job. He teaches West African dancing- and music lessons, which occupies him many hours. His father, therefore, was not happy when Ousmane started as a street vendor with some of his Senegalese friends. Nevertheless, Ousmane says he enjoys the contact with his colleagues and customers, as he only works during morning hours and earn a bit of extra income this way (Ousmane, 08/04/2015).

The prices for which the vendors sell logically depend on what type of product is sold. Souvenirs are cheapest, as they are bought for €0.20 to €0.50 and sold for €1,- to €2,-, while bags are purchased for €7,- to €15,- and sold for €15,- to €35,-, depending on the size and whether they carry a mark.

With the competition that is present, one might think it is most beneficial to sell bags, as it is easier to earn a larger amount of money, when having to sell fewer products (Aly, several encounters; Ibrahima, several encounters; Mamadou, several encounters; Mustafa, several encounters). Nevertheless, Mustafa explains these are harder to sell to tourists, as it is a higher amount they should pay than for a simple souvenir, but also because of their weight (Mustafa, several encounters). This last argument is one the street vendors have to take into account, as they are not settled for their whole workday, but have to be mobile and on the move constantly, as their informal activities still attract the attention of local police countless times everyday. During the summer months, Mamadou expresses to be able to earn around €3000,-, from June to September more or less. In the remaining months, it highly depends on the weather and events that take place in the city. Some days, he is able to sell for €50,-, while another winter day he does not sell anything or just one pair of sunglasses for a few euros (Mamadou, several encounters). This topic will return later, while this highly influences the mobility choices the vendors make with regard to seasonal employment. *Moving and the cat and mouse game*

"Soy mantero, pero también refugiado" ("I'm a vendor, but also a refugee"), states the headline of the biggest Spanish newspaper *El País* in September of 2015.



Photograph in the previously mentioned article in *El País* (Congroestina, 08/09/2015).

As it has been a common image in the major streets or touristic attractions of Barcelona, one could think street vendors have become fairly regularized within Spanish society. Nevertheless, they still face major problems with police and subsequent judicial problems. This is also why a number of Senegalese migrants in the area choose to work in another sector explicitly, as they prefer other working circumstance instead of the pressure of being chased around all day (Saliou, 07/03/2015; Maseck, 21/03/2015; Bassirou, 06/04/2015). This 'cat and mouse game' one easily notices when walking through Barcelona's famous areas, in reality is a tiring experience for the vendors. Especially in the city centre, the vendors are constantly chased away by police officers. The salesmen mostly run into metro stations, as they can avoid the huge amount of peasants that way and exit at another side of the road.

Police officers often try to surround a group of vendors by positioning themselves strategically at various metro exits or sides of the road. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that most of our respondents who sell mention the police in uniform often do not take their goods. They fear civil police more, while they are harder to notice and are often on a special assignment to catch street vendors. Therefore, the vendors usually have one "vigilante"⁵ who positions himself on the corner of the street or an important cross section. This person takes notice of police arriving and mostly has an eye for civil police as well. He informs his colleagues about the arrival by whistling or simply waving, after which the whole group picks up their goods, a process in which they help each other, and subsequently run away. Not only do the salesmen lose their selling goods when caught and are obliged to pay a fine, but they also have to face a judge. Although this, in most cases, does not lead to major legal consequences, many respondents mention it is depressing and it takes away time to sell and earn money, as they have to wait to pay for a whole new set of goods. I called this a 'cat and mouse game', and it is thus something, which makes it even harder for the migrants to earn their money by not harming anyone, but by strictly selling goods. Mamadou illustrated the way in which they often try to stay polite towards police, but that this constant pressure of having to flee when just being positioned to sell, can lead to explosive situations. In 2014, he stood face-to-face with a police officer and panicked while the officer wanted to take his goods. In the heat of the moment, he states he hit the policeman in his face, which led him to be taken into custody. He was convicted to a one-year prison sentence, but as it was his first felony, this was dismissed and he had to perform a specific amount of hours picking up garbage in the city centre for the municipality. Also, just a few days before our visit to his and his friends' house, their group got into a heavy confrontation with police. While they entered a metro station after having seen one of the officers, they followed them into the station, which normally does not happen. Being closed in by police, the group became violent and started shouting and even threw rocks from the railway towards the officers. Some of them were caught, while others could get away. Mamadou, being a well-behaved and shy young man, mentioned he was ashamed of their actions, but did explain consciously that it is a reaction towards the hard way of working by the pressure of the police, through which emotions at some point become accumulated and violence could be used in a situation of feeling oppressed (Mamadou, 19/03/2015).

Being present in Barcelona for a long period of time now, the position of street vendors is thus still vulnerable and highly discussed. Violence between the salesmen and police therefore has also been of debate many times. This summer the discussion exploded again when Mor Sylla, a Senegalese street vendor in Salou, died when police entered an apartment of street vendors. The question of where responsibility lies and whether police officers forced Mor into fleeing from the window or that it was simply himself panicking, remains unanswered. Nevertheless, the death of this young man gave a renewed impulse to the discussion about "la topmanta" (selling in the streets with goods on blankets), as also violence of police against these vendors (*El País*, 12/08/2015). Especially in Barcelona the new municipality with Ada Colau has focussed on how to regulate the phenomenon of "los manteros" (street vendors who work with blankets).

⁵ "Vigilante" is the term that is used in Spanish, which could be translated as a watchman.

Saskia and I remained in contact with Mamadou through social media and he updated us during the last few months about the difficulties him and his colleagues experience due to the major debate that has begun again. He explains they face direct consequences due to an increase of controls, as also heavier fines when being caught. He repeatedly expressed his frustration towards the topic as he is convinced they are only trying to make a living for themselves without harming anyone else (Mamadou, several encounters; contact via Facebook Messenger). Where one side in the political discussion calls for tougher consequences and more control to try and prohibit the "manteros" from selling, the other side, including the vendors themselves logically, manifest themselves to call for support in being able to survive by earning money in the streets. Entrepreneurs in Barcelona argue their enterprises, mainly shops, are damaged by the selling activities in the streets. Where they have to pay significant amounts of taxes to be able to start and maintain their enterprises, the "manteros" are able to work without papers and without paying taxes (*Antenna3*, 11/10/2015). The main argument the vendors use in favour of the "topmanta" is they are able to survive, without harming anyone.⁶ This means that, although they work informally, they do not harm society or any of its inhabitants by trying to earn money. The criminalisation of their work, however, brings about even more difficulties through which their position becomes more vulnerable (*El Diario*, 17/11/2015). Here, one could include the spatial justice debate, where although one could argue the street vendors do not fulfil their taxes payments to the city, they still form a major part of the infrastructure of the city that humans create (Simone, 2004).

The manifestations sides, opponents- and those in favour of "la topmanta" have organized during the last months have brought about interesting encounters and results.⁷ The street vendors have established a syndicate, called *Sindicato Popular de Vendedores Ambulantes*⁸, to be able to fight for their rights as labourers, although they do not work formally and fulfil their legal duties as traders. The group fighting for the rights of the street vendors, as also the syndicate itself, mostly try to inform and contact people directly in the streets, as also through social media.⁹ In the streets, for example, they speak at the Rambla, give speeches or simply demonstrate in large groups. Through their Facebook pages, they try to inform people who are interested in their activities by sharing news features, photos and videos. Ada Colau Ballano is currently constructing a new initiative through which souvenir vendors, "manteros" and "lateros" (mostly Pakistan men who sell soda out of cans) can obtain a "licencia municipal" to sell (or an urban licence), which permits street vendors to sell legally at certain market places in the city.

⁶ Facebook page from those in favour of street vending: <https://www.facebook.com/traslamanta/>

⁷ Facebook page of those in favour of the street vending business, with the name "Tras la Manta", freely translated as "Standing behind-" or "In favour of Street vending": <https://www.facebook.com/traslamanta/?fref=ts>,

⁸ The Spanish name of the syndicate the street vendors have established, which means "Popular Syndicate of Street Vendors" (translation mentioned in article from www.telesur.tv.net, 30/11/2015). The Syndicate also maintains a Facebook page since March of 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/SindicatoPopulardeVendedoresAmbulantes/>, where they post news, photos and videos of their activities.

⁹ A video of a few members of the syndicate rapping, guiding text: "ni robo, ni pego, ni mato, sobrevivir no es delito ¡Esto es el Sindicato! [Malamara](#) y [Sindicato Popular De Vendedores Ambulantes de Barcelona](#) estrenan canción ayer en Can Masdeu." Translation: "I don't steal, I don't hit, I don't kill, surviving isn't a crime. This is the syndicate!" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kd-Es_qmLQ&feature=youtu.be, 04/04/2016.

This last element creates a new dimension to the discussion where areas will be especially used as a market place for these former street vendors who used to work informally (*La Vanguardia*, 17/10/2015; *NOS*, 28/10/2015).

Although it might seem like things are improving for the street vendors, the debate remains heated, as opposition is still present. When diving into this discussion, themes like a "just city" and "spatial justice" come to mind as well. Susan S. Fainstein (2005; 2009; 2012; 09/10/2014) focused on equity as being one of her main pillars in creating a just city. She addresses equity should be a goal within providing housing for all citizens, as this contributes to equity, as there should also be a focus on "giving priority in economic development programs to the interests of employees and small businesses, and lowering intra-urban transit fares" (Fainstein, 2005:13). Iris Marion Young (1990) focused on inequality through oppression, as she differentiates in several forms of possible oppression in a society that, in my view, are highly applicable to the spatial justice debate. She focuses on social justice only being possible when there is freedom from oppression, which means there should not be institutional constraints on self-development and freedom from domination, which develops self-determination. In this reading, there should not be stigmatized social groups, as groups in relation to other groups are vulnerable to oppression. When citizens are considered as individuals, oppression is not likely to occur as much. Social justice, thus, does not require the melting away of differences in society, but institutions that embrace those differences and promote reproduction of- and respect for differences amongst possible social groups in society without oppression (Young, 1990). Most applicable may even be Mustafa Dikeç' research into the societal problems of the *banlieues* in Paris (2001; 2005; 2013) and the revolts that took place and especially impunity of the police in this context. The way in which the French government tried to keep the citizens from the *banlieues* quiet to keep the order is considered to be an example for the impunity of major government institutions and the criminalization of minor groups because of this (Dikeç, 2013). As Dikeç stated in the Alexander von Humboldt lecture (12/01/2015): "voices were turned into noises", through which the debate about the revolts shifted towards a certain side, in which the youth was considered the delinquent and nothing had to be blamed upon the reaction of French armed forces. This duality in actions from local politics and its armed forces is to be encountered as well in the treatment of the street vendors at this moment. Within the first months of 2016, the street vendors in Barcelona have experienced an increasing amount of police controls, as explains Mamadou via Facebook to Saskia and me. The authorities of Barcelona are open about the increase of these controls, as also about the rise of fines for people who buy from the street vendors¹⁰, which indicates the debate remains heated despite new measures that are currently being constructed by the municipality of Barcelona in favour of the street vendors.

¹⁰ Spanish article that explains recent developments with regard to the increasing fines for buyers and the police pressure in relation to street vendors: http://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/barcelona/Ayuntamiento-Barcelona-incrementara-multas-compradores_0_492751643.html, 09/03/2016

5.2 Collecting scrap metals ('buscar chatarra')

He says to be happy to do something that makes him earn money to be able to survive in Europe and at the same time send an amount to Senegal at times. Saliou, however, also expresses searching for iron or other scrap metals six full days a week is physically hard and it is hard to gain significant amounts of money. Besides this, the way in which people look at him makes him sad, especially when someone who passes by offers him a few euros. He states that is exactly the reason why he searches for 'chatarra', so he does not have to be a beggar or dependent on anyone else (Saliou, 07/03/2015).

Rolling shopping cards

Men and women walking around the city with a shopping cart to collect scrap metals from the large bins is a familiar phenomenon in Spain nowadays. It is not an informal economic activity that is automatically linked to migrants, as also Spaniards, especially over the last years, have been forced to earn money by handing in scrap metals.¹¹ Amongst the West Africans we spoke to, several collect scrap metals in the city centre of Barcelona to survive in Europe and to be able to send some money home.

We encountered Saliou, a young man living in Barcelona for over eight years, on a day that is difficult for those 'buscando chatarra', as it was raining heavily, through which there is not much to collect in the streets and it is physically harder to work all day. With his head down, Saliou tries to search for metals, which he subsequently sells to one of the many enterprises that collect and trade these metals or products. This way, Saliou is able to provide for himself in Cataluña, as also for his family in Senegal. He expresses he even finances his sister's university career, of which he is very proud to be able to do so (Saliou, 27/03/2015). Also Lamine collects scrap metals six days a week, in order to take care of his wife and five children who live with him in the neighbourhood Florida. Being a 50-year old man, Lamine says walking around the area every day is physically and mentally hard. Although he had been walking around the city for some hours that day, he still made time to talk to us and go for a coffee. On a bad day Lamine says to earn just a few euros, while it is possible he collects for €40,- on a good day. Usually the total is €15,- up to €20,- per day, which is not nearly enough to take care of his rather big family with young children. As he has residence papers for many years now, he receives €60,- per week from the municipality in order to take care of his children (Lamine, 15/06/2015). The activity does not provide for a good amount of money, but is very well known amongst de migrants, as it easy to enter. One does not need a starting capital to be able to buy the first goods to sell. The only tool a starter needs is a shopping cart to be able to be mobile all day and transport the goods while searching for more trading products. Mobility in this sector is thus central and cannot be avoided.

¹¹ Video from España Directo on RTVE, that explains the basics about collecting scrap metals in Spain in from the 19th of July of 2009, also talking about the persons who do so: <http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/espana-directo/espana-directo-malvivir-chatarra/547634/>

The collectors move by foot and mostly walk around busy neighbourhoods in central parts of the city, as these collect most goods. In general, they work six days a week, while the enterprises to hand in goods are closed on Sundays. All kinds of metals, but also other usable goods like furniture or domestic electronic devices, are of use for the collectors' business.

There are many points in Barcelona where collectors know they can hand in their goods and receive money for it. Maseck explains he delivers his metals at a big "house", owned by a Gambian man, who purchases all of the metals and goods from the collectors, which he subsequently sells to shops, or people who are in search of second-hand products. Coming from one of the wholesalers in Badalona with Aly, he took me to a Senegalese friend who also owns such a house for collectors and thus is a so-called intermediary in the trade of scrap metals and second-hand products. It concerned a regular terraced house, with a large storeroom at the first floor. It seemed rather unorganised, with piles of products from which not all goods were visible. Abdulay, the intermediary in the chain of trade in second-hand goods, explained this was because most of the time contacts ask him for certain products, which he then provides for. Aly also says he does this regularly, for instance when in need of a fan for summer, he calls Abdulay to arrange one, which is available a few days later through the many contacts Abdulay has amongst the collectors (Aly, several encounters). Here, we thus notice networks are also significant in this sector of the informal economy, as it belongs to a larger trading process for which connections are needed on various dimensions, besides the urban one. This sector thus also displays how products are assembled materials and the collectors in this case form part of a larger process of manufacturing on an urban – or even larger-scale – dimension (Mcfarlane, 2011; Simone, 08/09/2014).

The importance of networks for collectors

Although I illustrated earlier that one does not need much to enter this particular sector of the urban economy, social networks seem valuable in many cases, as migrants help each other, mostly relatives or friends, by introducing others into the economic activities and also into the large depots that collect the scrap metals. Maseck for instance entered Spain, while his brother already lived here for a large period of time. It was this relative that also introduced him into collecting scrap metals to be able to earn money without being in possession of a residence- or working permit. Maseck was introduced in how to do things around town by his brother, as well as by some Spanish contractors. He addresses construction sites, where he then stays for as long as they want to collect their iron or other materials that they do not need anymore. If these are not available he just walks around the city to collect. Contacts like these contractors who call him to help at new construction sites are thus vital for him at this moment in time to be able to earn money to survive, but Maseck also emphasizes the fact one of these persons might help him to obtain a residence permit by offering a contract later on (Maseck, 21/03/2015). Here, we thus see once again where formality and informality meet. Formal enterprises are in contact with informal entrepreneurs in order to improve their formal activities as well.

5.3 Trading

We met Ibrahima as a street vendor in Barceloneta, nevertheless he says to be a trader in reality. During his first few years in Europe, he travelled through many countries to trade in several goods, as he still does whenever he has the money. Going for vacation to Senegal is always combined with the trade in cars, as he buys a second-hand car in Spain or another European country, which brings him to his home country and is sold there. This car, most of the times, is filled with electronica or other goods, which are subsequently sold for more in Senegal (Ibrahima, several encounters).

The trading practises performed by street vendors have been elaborately explained before. These, however, leave out other activities regarding the trade of goods that we encountered in the life stories of our respondents as well.

Trade in trucks or cars

The activity of buying a car and selling it, mostly in one of their home countries in West Africa, is something we have heard about from almost every respondent. It appears to be an unwritten rule, that when a person returns to their country of origin to visit, they first buy a car which also is their transport to this specific country and which makes them earn money later on by selling it. We did not encounter this economic transaction with a specific nationality from within West Africa, as all respondents, from Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, etcetera, have spoken to us about this trading activity. The men look for a car that is offered on the Internet and pick it up in Cataluña, or even another Spanish region. We had a conversation with Salif, a Malian man of 52 years old, who was highly critical towards our research methods and did not let us talk much. Throughout the conversation we were struggling to get some answers, while he got a little more at ease later on. He mentioned he buys a car for €1000,- in Spain, which he sells for more or less €3000,- in Mali. This provides for good amounts of money for him next to income out of labour in Spain and this makes it more valuable to visit family and friends in his home country at the same time (Salif, 29/06/2015). For Senegalese men a requirement is that the car they buy is from 2007 or younger, as it can solely enter the country on these terms. Aly travelled to Madrid in May to purchase a Peugeot 207 for about €2000,- which he is able to sell in Dakar for an amount of €5000,- more or less, but which him also brings there, as he explains. Cars that make them earn even more money are second-hand taxis from Spain, which are sold in Senegal and registered and used as independent taxis in the place of destination as well by the buyer. These cars are not only filled up with goods by Aly, but also by his friends. Moussa, one of Aly's best friends we met in Lérida, mentioned he buys goods for his family as well, which he lets Aly transport to Dakar for him (Aly, several encounters; Moussa, 28/06/2015). To transfer such vehicles towards West Africa, also means they have to face controls.

The search for income through informal activities always proceeds, also when migrants go for a family visit or holiday.

Mainly at the border with Mali and Senegal itself, respondents told us, they have to pay certain amounts of money to border security, both formal- as informal amounts, to be able to cross in a European car. This informal amount, which one could call corruptive money, is also paid by offering certain European goods that are asked for by these officers. This kind of "suitcase trade" belongs to a broadening of the trading area, as well as a broadening perspective on mobility for traders: "the migrant worker has been replaced by the hawker, the commercial traveller, the smuggler or the long-distance trader. The term "migration" no longer applies to what are often back and forth or circular movements, exploration of new worlds or caravan treks between older migrant settlements with occasional returns "home"' (Peraldi, 2005: 47). This so-called luggage trade is characterized by new and fragile forms of interdependence that links small and medium scale businesses through multiple networks of rapidly changing international transactions (Eder et al, 2003; Peraldi, 2005).

Aly also introduced me to Kamu and his younger brother Déme, who he was in business with. Kamu, around 40 years old, has lived in Spain for over ten years and has been trading in trucks, cars and goods ever since. He spoke Spanish very well and was a loud and happy man who was constantly joking around. Working with several Senegalese young men who search for good offers and buy goods for him, Kamu makes sure he fills up a large truck every month, which he then brings to Senegal. The cars and goods that he ships within the truck are sold to contacts in Dakar and the trailer part of the truck is also sold. At times the truck itself, when the opportunity presents itself, is also left in Dakar with new owners and Kamu comes back to Barcelona by flight. Within this business, from which Kamu and his recently arrived brother Déme live, many migrants are involved. Several contacts regularly search for goods and sell them to Kamu, while others only occasionally do this or only send goods towards their relatives in Dakar through Kamu. Also the "chatarra"-business is included within this next step of trade, as Aly and Kamu purchase many of their goods from the wholesale points, where collectors hand in their found scrap metals and –goods, like that from Abdulay (Aly, several encounters).

Ibrahima also explains that within his first years in Spain, he was a trader. Being a highly social man with a relaxed attitude, made us understand he could connect to people from different backgrounds easily. He solely focused on purchasing small, but also bigger products, like cars, within Spain, as also beyond borders. He travelled throughout Europe in order to find good deals and made sure they were transported at low rates towards West Africa. As he had been a trader or "business man" in Senegal as well, he loved this way of living, as he also prefers a highly mobile life. The only problem this provides is the insecurity in terms of income. He states there were months where he earned a vast amount of money, while other periods of time sales were almost impossible, which is why he started street vending in order to fill up his monthly income (Ibrahima, several encounters). We thus see a large network in which many persons in different roles contribute to one stream of trade going from Spain towards Senegal, in which we encounter flows of goods and money on various mobility dimensions, intra-urban, urban-urban, but eventually also beyond borders. These networks were also mentioned within the so-called global commodity, where networks link individual workers or companies to each other.

The flows of money and goods that are created on a trans-local and cross-border dimension, based on formal- but also informal structures contribute to such a global network of economies (Cantens, 2012; Carr & Chen, 2002:6). It is fair to state that the West African migrants thus contributes to a transnational economy, in which borders are diffusing in terms of trade as, even without high means, one is able to cross international borders to make sure goods or money are transferred.

Trade in drugs

Although cannabis clubs are present in Spain, and especially Barcelona, they are different from Dutch coffeeshops that are open to the public. In Spain, special members, who can only be introduced by already existing members to keep the policy as strict as possible, can enter the clubs. As debates about legalising smoking cannabis in Spain are always present and the ones against it still are in a vast majority, one could say they are trying to find ways to reduce the illegal sector in this particular good. One notices this in the rising amount of cannabis clubs, as well as the permission of new rules and regulations with regard to these cafés (*The Guardian*, 04/08/2014).

The preventative ways, in which Spain is trying to relieve growing illegal trade and ease their measures with regard to soft drugs, does not mean this sector is completely gone from the informal market. It is even well known amongst migrants, also the West African ones, that it is easy to sell this good and make fast money. We had a conversation with Birama, who we met while he was seated in the city centre of Barcelona trying to sell drugs. We met him in Besòs Mar, where we went for a coffee on a terrace. Birama was quiet and seemed occupied smoking cigarettes during the entire conversation. He spoke about his former marihuana addiction, which he has now replaced with regular cigarettes. Although he did not open up, Birama told us with some hesitation about the nights where he has some spare time from his temporary work in factories or in the agricultural sector, on which he goes to the city centre of Barcelona and sells marihuana. Although one might think differently, Birama states plantations in the area of Barcelona are the ones that provide for the selling goods and it is easy to get access to the intermediaries who trade in this business. Although it is an informal trading sector, this does not mean it is loosely organised. As it is a well-organised system, Birama does not fear his papers will get in jeopardy when he gets caught selling illegal drugs (Birama, 24/05/2015).

Boubacar also informed us about his activities in drugs trade in Barcelona, although he takes them to another level, while he even arranges deals beyond borders, as also in hard drugs. Having close relatives living in Paris, Boubacar went there by flight in 2004. Working in the informal sector in construction, factories and whatever other job was available, Boubacar got to know an easy- and fast way to make money in drugs trade as well. He travelled around Europe in order to make deals and lived in Zurich for a while. There, he was caught and had to serve a prison sentence for nine months. He states, however, the drug-trading network in Europe is huge and impossible for both national- and international forces to destroy. He expresses he now only performs as an intermediary between dealers and traffickers, as he does not want to be sent back to prison again. Nevertheless, this does not mean he has a small role in this major network.

When his relatives in Paris ask for certain amounts of soft- or hard drugs, he says he is able to arrange this within a few days and the drugs will be transported within a week. Boubacar told us about these activities in a proud way and says to be content about his life style, as he is able to earn a vast amount of money this way (Boubacar, 08/06/2015).

5.4 Promoting night clubs

As sort of a last straw in order to make money, when employment is almost impossible to find, Uche goes to the Rambla by night to hand out flyers to tourists to go to one of the major night clubs the city has or to convince people to go to a certain club and bring them towards one of the touring cars that will bring them there. He does not earn much, but it is something, so he says (Uche, 06/06/2015).

A small, but important, side-activity many West African men perform in Barcelona, is handing out flyers on the Rambla or taking people to busses that will bring them to certain night clubs. When walking around this central area of the city after 10pm more or less, it is almost impossible to pass the men and women trying to hand you flyers or take you to certain nightclubs or casinos. Although it does not seem like a major detailed informal sector, it is impossible to leave it out, as a number of our respondents have mentioned to have done it in the past or still do it, whenever they are in need of some extra money.

With regard to the flyering, it is easy to start, as there are some West African men who buy huge piles of flyers from night clubs like Pacha or Choco, for which they hire some other West African migrants to hand them out by night. Although it is mentioned that this does not provide for vast amounts of money, many of the men who do this, enjoy interacting with the tourists and they can do it at hours at which they cannot perform other economic activities. In order to get tourists to go to a certain club, one needs to convince them a bit more. Omar, Barry and Uche all do this and are sociable and open persons who like talking to many people. They try and offer tourists a certain arrangement in which entry and consumption are included, in order to get them to a certain nightclub. Per person they are able to earn about €2.- to €3.- and they usually get about ten people to join them (Barry, 03/05/2015; Omar, several encounters; Uche, 06/06/2015). This is thus an activity, which brings about some extra money, next to other informal activities during evening hours, but it can also provide for a small amount of income when unemployed. Here, we encounter the multiple roles the West African migrant can fulfil in the informal economy in order to generate income, which I will further explore in chapter 6.

5.5 Working in agriculture

Working in agriculture for several years and having an employment contract has brought Toumani his residence permit in Spain in 2005. This Malian man has travelled between Huelva, Jaén and Lérida, all Spanish cities that are known for their agricultural atmospheres, which he always did in search of labour. His residence- and working permit, however, do not serve him well yet, given he lost his stable job at a chicken farm, through which he is currently unemployed. The uncertainty of this situation forces him to work on whatever estate they want him for just a short period of time, which at times means he has a job for only one day (Toumani, 29/06/2015).

Although all sectors of the informal economy discussed in this research might be of temporary duration, the activities within the agricultural sector could be characterized as seasonal work by definition. In the area of Lérida, but also Huelva and Jaén, Spanish farm holders often choose to work with migrants, both documented and undocumented. Amongst the West African migrants in Cataluña therefore seasonal work at one of the many estates in the area of Lérida is attractive. It mainly revolves around the crops of fruits and vegetables and the migrants work long days on the countryside in the open air. Although days are long and salaries are not great or steady, Moussa and Idrissa mention the reassurance of having *some* money at the end of the day feels more stable than doing trade for instance, where people never know when sales will be good or bad. Idrissa mentions the average salary is €7,- per hour, while he now only gets €5,-, as it also depends on the type of crops or density on the labour market.

The interesting element within this sector of employment is that we have encountered both formal- as informal labour agreements. A vast amount of migrants that are in possession of residence papers, can work with a formal contract, which gives them more security in terms of rights. This does not change, however, that most of these contracts are only designed for temporary labour periods. Because of this, they still have to move around wherever new crops are grown and where there is a high need for labourers. Besides this formal way of being employed, we also encountered it is still very possible to be hired at the countryside although one does not have a working permit yet. Irregular migrants are also able to work at some of the farms without a formal agreement. These men do mention, it is even harder, as they can be fired in just one minute. Moussa, a contact that we got through Aly as they are best friends, broke his ankle the day we arrived in Lérida. Moussa was very content to receive us, as we were contacts from Aly. He spoke Spanish very well after a long period in the country and was joking around, despite his injury and him losing his job. He was namely working with the same landlord for several seasons now, but this does not assure him being employed. Having worked for two months with this man already since April, he was fired the day he broke his ankle, as a labourer who is not able to work for a period of time is replaced immediately. This thus shows it also brings about the insecurity that comes along with being hired informally. Toumani's story above, however, shows a residence permit does not always assure being employed within the agricultural sector.

He even expresses he works informally at times as well, as many landlords prefer working without a contract and they know the young men want to work anyway (Toumani, 29/06/2015). Also Habib expresses he works informally at times, despite his working permit for Spain (Habib, 29/06/2015). In the agricultural sector we thus find the "grey area" (Ødegaard, 2008; Cantens, 2012:4), where the formal and informal boundaries are unclear and seem to mix.

5.6 Concluding remarks

The West African migrant participates in various sectors of the informal economy of Cataluña. The street vending business that was discussed thoroughly, as we interviewed a vast amount of migrants who participate in this sector, is highly visible in Barcelona. Also the collection of scrap metals is easily noticeable when spending some time in this metropolis. In the less visible sectors like trade and the agriculture, however, we also encountered many West Africans earning their money. In every described sector one can encounter flows of goods and money that are interesting, as they shows the various dimensions on which the migrants transfers these items, both on a trans-local level as on a transnational dimension. Especially the way in which goods are put together as fragments in order to be easier to sell or by a higher price, is interesting to get a complete look at the variety of the role of the migrant in larger trading processes. Even more significant, is that the migrant in this sense, contributes to the mobility of goods and money on more dimensions as well. Local traders and shop owners are involved, as also second-hand storeowners, manufacturers and subsequently sellers again. But they also produce mobility of goods by selling to tourists, as also to traders who ship goods towards countries of origin, as described earlier. This shows it is necessary to look at this economy as through a mobility-lens, in order to grasp the flows of goods and money related to the role of migrant in the trans-world of today. Mobility becomes entangled through the migrant-tourist connection, like also goods-people- and money-informality are connected. All features built up towards an organised economic system that, although unregistered, provides for significant flows of goods and money.

Networks hugely contribute to this way of making a living for one self. Having arrived in a new place, a contact can introduce one into an economic sector in terms of explanations or other contact, or they might even help them with a starting capital. Besides this, these contacts mostly consist of business networks instead of social networks. They are often "useful" contacts that are of a temporary nature and easily forgotten once one moves on from a certain economic activity, –group or place. Most evident is that these networks last as long as it is financially necessary or new employment opportunities might arise from them. It is not to see that they are that shallow that social encounters are excluded within these bonds, but the majority shows they are linked to their economic activities and necessities. Although strong ties often help each other in order to start off easier, most contacts can be characterized as weak ties that are easily forgotten when moving on again (Collyer, 2005).

The migrant in this sense is partly able to make his own choices with regard to economic development and mobility, regardless of a lack of papers or other constraints due to their "status" of being a migrant. Nevertheless, this does not mean there are no constraints, as one notices in the huge control elements in, for example, the street vending business.

There, we see the migrants move around and sell informally, but one also notices constant temporal forced mobility due to police controls and the danger of being fined or taking into custody. Now, more than ever, this control over free movement is visible, as the debate is heated and politics are obliged to take measures to show their attention to the discussion in every way possible. The need to fight for their position in society fits into the "spatial justice" debate I discussed based on the Alexander von Humboldt lectures. Although a part of the West African population in Barcelona might live in Europe without legal documents, they are also denied generating income in an informal sector. This informal economy, however, forms a huge part of the urban economy and overall urban spaces. The migrants prove they are still able to give an answer to the opposite voices and are fighting back. The syndicate for the street vending business they have established last year illustrates their will to speak up and fight for their rights.

v. *Ethnographic sketches: building a future through informality*

As Saskia and I planned to "follow" one or two contacts more thoroughly, I made sure I stayed in contact with some of the respondents myself on a more regular basis. After the interview, Aly and I met several times, showing me around the places where he purchases his selling goods, where he thereafter sells them and he informed me extensively about other activities, in both Spain and Africa, which he performs in order to earn money for his family and himself. Spending more time with one particular respondent has made me realize even more how these young men think and dream. Aly explains none of them come to Europe solely for fun and that, although their activities might seem unorganised or highly influenced by social contacts or luck, they all have end goals they want to achieve by every little step they take in Europe.

This applies to Aly's own life as well. Although he did not plan on coming to Europe long beforehand, he immediately had some major goals he wanted to fight for after having arrived. These major goals are mostly characterized by being able to care for others. By saving up money in Europe, he wanted to be able to provide for his mother in Dakar and later on for his wife and son as well. This care, however, is also shown through the support he gave to his younger brother, who stayed in Turkey for some weeks on a visa for playing professional soccer, after which Aly let him travel on his passport and residence papers to Greece and later on to Spain. This support, however, is also to be noticed on a smaller scale as I spent time with Aly and some of his friends as well, who all help each other out when they are in need of money, goods or moral support. A good example is that one of his friends in Barcelona recently lost his father. His father had to be buried, which had to be paid immediately by this friend, as he is the oldest son of the family. A street vendor himself, he was not able at that moment to pay this amount of money and Aly lent him this without asking questions.

In the longer run, Aly expresses he wants to be able to live in his house in Senegal, where his mother, wife and children will live as well. Although it is work in progress, which progresses in small steps whenever Aly sends some money to the builders to do a new job, he is happy he is able to support everyone in his surroundings and still built on his life goals. Aly therefore also states it is "kind of funny" the overall image of street vendors seems to be negative and that outsiders do not expect them to be able to provide for themselves properly or for them to be "severely poor" even. Maybe not every street vendor is able to provide for his family or himself well, but Aly says with the right choices and many years of hard work, one is able to live well "or even better" like people in formal jobs. Aly even shows a bit of an attitude with regard to this topic, as he is convinced one can work informally and earn money better when not having the responsibilities of a formal job, like he has had for several years in the past in Spain. Nevertheless, he is highly aware of the fact that this formality is needed at times, as he is now able to apply for his Spanish passport after ten years, but he has to deliver a contract with a formal employer. This shows that within the large process of planning and dreaming own choices and structures from society are always to be encountered combined.

Chapter 6 – The West African migrant: the "entrepreneuring" migrant or migration as a career path

During this research one has had a look at informal, economic activities of the West African migrant by studying the mobility features that are embedded within the urban economy of Barcelona and its surroundings. In chapter 4 migration trajectories have been explored in order to illustrate the turbulent trajectories the West African migrant has already faced before coming to Europe. In chapter 5 we have encountered flows of goods and money on several dimensions and we shortly discussed the ways in which the migrant himself moves around to guide these flows as well. As the focus in the previous chapter was on the mobility of goods and money, we will now mainly focus on the mobility of the persons themselves. We already included this in chapter 5 partly, as the migrant moves around for his daily activities regularly. In this chapter, however, we would like to look at this daily mobility more extensively, as also at the migratory mobility patterns that we encountered and the diffuse lines between those two forms of movements. Here, major mobility patterns of the migrant, but also their role within the transport of goods and money are thus linked in order to grasp the overall tendencies with regard to the mobility of the West African migrant. The question that comes to mind eventually within the subthemes of this research is whether the migrant therefore is triggered to move by his economic opportunities *or* if it is these specific economic activities that keep him in Cataluña. Migrant entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that can be understood in various ways, but it is certain it is highly present in Europe. What would thus be interesting is to explain more thoroughly whether the West African migrant in this case sees migration as a career path in itself or that he moves because of opportunities to make a living somewhere else.

Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp (2009) explain the choices for certain places with regard to this formal migrant entrepreneurship by focusing on certain push- and pull factors, like immigration policies, reasons for migratory flows and the existence of a co-ethnic community in the region of destination. In the case of Cataluña, one could also look at these features. Although it might seem useful to speak in terms of push- and pull factors, which I have considered while structuring this thesis, my findings show it would not cover elements of huge influence on trajectories, like coincidence, chance (Gladkova & Mazzucato, 2015), social networks (Collyer, 2005), but also restrictions like a lack of papers (Schuster, 2005). It might seem like these features could be explained through the push- and pull model or the threshold-approach, as they were mentioned in previous chapters, but it is exactly the mix of these terms within the trajectories that make many phases of the journey unexplainable by just one element of influence or that they even remain unexplained completely. Therefore, the role of the West African migrant in the informal economy and the influence of this role on his mobility will be explored by illustrations of the tumultuous trajectories our respondents have faced or might face in the future.

6.1 The multiple roles of the West African migrant in the informal economy

Being a street vendor in Barcelona is what he prefers, as he likes the interactions with tourists, as also with his colleagues. Nevertheless, the guarantee on a certain amount of money at the end of the day is what makes Moussa travel to other cities, like Lérida, Huelva and Jaén, to work in the agricultural sector. Not being in possession of a residence- or working permit in Spain, although having lived there for over ten years now, he is able to make a living by combining the street vending business, seasonal work at the countryside, as also trading in goods towards his home country. Moussa will go wherever employment takes him, although he is highly restricted by his lack of papers, but his history shows the West African migrant can be active in several sectors of the informal economy at the same time (Moussa, 28/06/2015).

The dynamic daily activities of our respondents demonstrate that the street vendor is often to be found in other sectors as well, like the agricultural one, when sales are bad or when they prefer a steady income. Ibrahima, who mostly sells on the streets, as mentioned before, was hired at an agricultural company close to Barcelona in one of the last weeks of my stay in the city. He is brought to his work by a bus on Monday and sleeps there during the week. On Friday, Ibrahima returns to Barcelona, as this is where he feels at home and where his friends live. Although a vast majority of the vendors sells on the streets throughout the whole year, another part searches for other activities in winter, as sales are best during summer (Ibrahima, several encounters). The fact that the same person, depending on frequency or time period, can perform various informal economic activities could also be encountered while reading Saliou's story. Saliou, living in Barcelona for over eight years, collects scrap metals in the streets of the city. Six days a week throughout the whole year, as long as rain does not prohibit him from walking all day, he searches for goods. Nevertheless, he moves to Rosas, a coastal city in the North of Spain, to sell on the streets and beaches as many tourists reside there over the summer months (Saliou, 07/03/2015). This thus shows these changes in ways of making a living vary over time, can return during certain seasons or preferences, and subsequently lead to mobility between various places as well.

We also witness the temporary switch in economic activities in the agricultural sector of Cataluña. As explained, the jobs on the countryside, as researched in Lérida, are only temporary in most cases. Depending on employment opportunities due to a particular season or harvest, migrants choose to move around and see where they could be hired. For this reason, like in Moussa's case, we witness that many street vendors move towards places like Lérida, Jaén or Huelva to work for agricultural companies. These movements are complex, as one for instance notices circular movements, where a respondent comes to one of the countryside cities from Barcelona, but returns to the capital of Cataluña every summer to sell. In some cases, however, these patterns prove to be interrupted by periods in other cities, wherever there are new opportunities for employment, which implies one can neither solely speak about circular movements, but a criss-cross pattern of mobility.

Another way in which we see the multiplicity of the role the West African has in the informal economy of Barcelona is that he is highly active in other parts of trade, such as trade within Spain, but also trade towards home countries. As street vendors visit the wholesalers for their own selling goods a few times a week, they also have a vast amount of knowledge about new products and good prices, which they can use to earn money by purchasing and selling these goods both on the streets, as towards other places nationally and internationally. Nevertheless, also collectors of "chatarra" have told us they purchase cars or goods that are shipped towards Africa and travel around with this trading purpose. This "side-activity", as one might call it, is thus familiar amongst almost all migrants as a good way of earning money. This does not only provide flows of goods and money, but also creates mobility of the migrants themselves, who move around to purchase and sell cars or other goods, both on a national- as transnational dimension.

6.2 The informal economy and the production of mobility

We displayed the different forms of employment that are performed by West African migrants in the informal economy of Cataluña. Inevitably, mobility is produced due to this variety of economic activities, but like the flows of goods and money, mobility of humans can also take place on various dimensions. The informal economy has proven to be a huge motivation for a number of our respondents to even come to Barcelona and its surroundings. Aliou arrived in Madrid, but was not able to find employment there. Due to his lack of papers, he came to Barcelona in order to make a living for himself with the help of informal labour (Aliou, 25/03/2015). Where it is a region that is attractive because of the informal economy, however, these informal activities are also a huge trigger for mobility from there on out.

Entrepreneurs on the move within Spain

Since his arrival in Spain in 2006, Idrissa has been travelling constantly between various places within the country motivated by job opportunities. As he has been living and returning to Granada since 2006, he considers this city to be his settling place. Nevertheless, every few months he changes by travelling to Jaén, Huelva, Lérida and Barcelona to live and work in one of these cities for a certain period of time. Idrissa says he is constantly on the move, as employment is the most important element for his choices with regard to migration (Idrissa, 28/06/2015).

Mobility is constantly triggered by chances for employment, as show the stories of our respondents. This does not always concern onward mobility across borders, as a number of them have not even left Spain since their arrival. To start off with the street vending business that was described in chapter 5, one could say it is a mobile job in itself. Where the flows of goods and money within this sector are mobile on a trans-local, national and cross-border dimension, the persons themselves are also forced to be highly mobile. The vendors are constantly moving around in search of the best places to sell, as also to avoid being interrupted or even caught by police in doing their job.

Besides this mobility on an intra-urban level, however, we also came across migration towards other places beyond the level of the city, in search of new opportunities to sell. On a smaller scale, street vendors that usually sell in the city centre of Barcelona, at times move towards more crowded areas like beaches in- or outside the city during summer season. On a larger scale, this seasonal change of place is noticed when they move to other coastal cities like Rosas or Salou, where more tourists are to be encountered who are eager to purchase goods (Saliou, 07/03/2015; Mamadou, 19/03/2015; Ibrahima, several encounters; Aly, 27/03/2015; Moussa, 28/06/2015). Within this particular sector of the informal economy one already notices mobility on both an urban as an urban-rural or urban-urban dimension.

Idrissa is also one of the examples that have not yet moved towards other parts of Europe since their arrival, as he has only left Spain to visit Senegal three times, since he received his residence permit in 2010. Although he would like to see more of Europe in terms of pleasure, but also work opportunities, he says he is now pleased with the way in which he can earn sufficient money in Spain itself. As illustrated in his story, this does not mean he is immobile. He lives a highly mobile life, in which he does not settle in one place for more than a few months at most, but finds enough opportunities within the country, as he keeps searching for temporary jobs. He *does* express the aspiration to move, particularly to Belgium or the Netherlands, as he thinks finding employment in one of those countries should be easier. He searched for images on the Internet, and the green environment attracts him: "me gustan las fotos, miro en Internet y en Holanda es más verde" ("I like the photographs, I watch them on the Internet and in Holland everything is greener"). The insecurity, however, is what keeps him travelling throughout Spain at this moment, as he knows when and where he is able to be employed or to earn money independently in this particular country due to former experiences (Idrissa, 28/06/2015). As already mentioned before, migrants do not face many police controls when travelling through Spain. Although the Spanish borders and its controls have tightened over the last years, our respondents overall do not fear controls during the journey once they have settled more or less.¹² Therefore, migrants easily travel within the country by public transport between larger cities like the main national bus company, called ALSA, as also between these larger cities and rural areas like Lérida or the South of Spain. With regard to mobility that is triggered by employment in the agricultural sector, we thus logically witness migration on an urban-rural dimension. Even more interesting in this regard is the way in which Ibrahima, explained in chapter 6.1, works and resides in a rural area during the week, while he returns to the city every weekend. Here, one notices a circular movement, driven by both labour and pleasure, as he explains he wants to meet his friends in the weekend, but also driven by economic motivations once again, as he often sells on the streets on Saturdays and Sundays as well (Ibrahima, several encounters).

¹² The European Commission speaks on their website about the way in which migrants should be able to demonstrate certain papers at the border, when entering, but only state one "*could* face controls of identity when travelling through the European Union. Tony explained he has been stopped at the Spanish-French border in 2014, when he travelled to Paris by bus in order to visit his family (Tony, 18/05/2015). Although the common image might thus be that there are no controls in reality, there is always the possibility of being caught and sent back (http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/que-no-hacer/como-entrar-en-la-ue/cruzar-las-fronteras-de-la-ue_es, 09/12/2015)

As discussed in the previous chapter, trade is something almost all respondents participate in one-way or another, besides their usual activities in the informal economy. Purchasing goods and making sure they arrive at a place of destination triggers the migrant to be mobile, as they look for favourable prices that are not always to be found in Barcelona itself. As described, buying cars often happens in the area, mainly in Catalunya, but migrants also move towards larger cities, outside of the province, like Madrid or Valencia to be able to get one for a good price and get the highest amount of profit possible when selling it in West Africa. Persons like Kamu and Déme, who are occupied in this trading sector daily, have cars or trucks with which they can pick up these cars easily (Aly, several encounters). Respondents who do not own a car, however, are forced to travel by another means of transport to reach a city to purchase a vehicle. The mobility that is triggered through independent trade is thus temporary and does not imply a new place for settlement, but rather a short-term trip with the single goal to purchase certain goods or perform transactions. It is, however, always intertwined with other mobility processes on a larger scale and even on a transnational dimension.

Car trade:	internal
mobility,	intra-EU
mobility and transnational	become
mobility	
entangled.	

The informal economy is thus a huge trigger for mobility for the West African migrant in Spain, as the opportunities within the diverse sectors are well known amongst the majority of the migrants. Once they arrive in the country, they are often introduced into one sector and get to know about other opportunities through friends, family or simply compatriots. Especially the agricultural sector is to be discovered through advice from friends, as we have heard from almost all interviewees in Lérida, after which they choose to give it a try and go to such a particular place to opt for work. Besides this, there are also cases in which they help each other by introducing them to their countryside chiefs, like Moussa and Idrissa do to each other in the various agricultural areas where they move to every few months. This shows that mobility can be produced by a combination of the influence of social networks as also an opportunity to employment. Mobility within Spain is thus driven by informal economic activities, which proves to be for settlement, but also on a temporary basis. Job opportunities in the rural area, for instance, can be considered of a more permanent character, whereas mobility triggered by the search for trading goods is of temporary nature, characterized by short visits or even one-day trips. It is, however, hard to detect when a migrant chooses to move and settle somewhere more permanently or that it is strictly temporary. In most cases, these plans are not predefined as our respondents mention, but they simply move and see how things develop after their arrival and starting a new job or business.

Entrepreneurs on the move within Europe

In the light of the origin of this research, it was also highly interesting to ask whether the respondents moved or would like to move towards other countries within Europe as well. Having explained the relative freedom in which, even undocumented, migrants can travel within Spain, documented migrants are also able to travel through the Schengen-area of Europe. Although it is also well known that those with a lack of residence papers for a European Union member state, cross borders without being caught in controls.

The overall majority of our respondents, who mentions to have visited other European countries, have done this as a social visit, in order to see friends or family who live there. Their motivations, however, lack clarity at times, as it is often a combination of visiting acquaintances and to see whether new employment opportunities arise. The social visits consist of both strong and weak ties, as it often considers family or friends from countries of origin, which is described by Collyer as strong ties. Weak ties, however, are also common triggers for visits, as they go to contacts they established during their journey or know through other, closer, ties in the country of origin or even –destination (Collyer, 2005).

Emmanuel, a young Nigerian, has travelled throughout all of Europe with his Nigerian association from Barcelona. Due to his status of being a migrant, he got many opportunities, so he says (Emmanuel, 29/05/2015).

These social networks prove to be of significance in the search for employment, as they are often able to introduce them into a sector or to another person who can help them. Matthias lives in Barcelona, but has difficulties finding jobs for longer periods of time. Therefore, he travels to Germany every few months in order to work there for some time. As he has friends in various places in Germany, they inform him about possible employment opportunities in the area, after which Matthias goes there, stays with his friends and has an income for some months. Furthermore, he expressed his wish to return to Scandinavia or to the Netherlands: “Barcelona is very accommodating, but I need a job.” Brian has a friend in Amsterdam who could help him. Moreover, he thinks that the Netherlands is a nice country, because there are many blacks and probably less racism than in a country like Norway. (Matthias, 18/05/2015). Here, one thus notices the way in which social networks remain of significance and also trigger mobility in combination with the informal economy.

Chima came to Europe by flight and arrived in Paris first. As he did not like France, he stayed in Norway for a while, after which he moved to Barcelona due to some Nigerian contacts who went there as well. They informed him about the opportunity to marry a Spanish woman in a sham marriage and obtain residence papers that way. When we met Chima, however, he was in between jobs, his family back in Nigeria took care of him in order to survive, he did not feel at home and he did not receive his papers yet. In the summer of 2015 he obtained his legal documents. A Nigerian friend, who moved to Sweden with his Swedish wife, had a job as a chef in a hotel restaurant and was able to offer Chima employment as well. Therefore, Chima decided to go to Sweden in September of 2015. Nevertheless, things did not work out exactly the way as planned, as his Nigerian friend returned to Nigeria, which left Chima without a room and job. Chima, however, found a room through some new contacts and started a business in car parts, which he ships to Nigeria in the end. One notices, when reading his story, mobility choices are not always completely defined beforehand, which causes dependency on certain social, apparently fairly weak, networks (Collyer, 2005) or simply chance (Gladkova & Mazzucato, 2015). This was already discussed in relation to mobility within Spain, but takes place on a larger scale as well, with regard to choices for moving to another European country. Although researches often intend to build on facts or clear reasoning, the findings show respondents also move to other European countries without having clear plans or opportunities.

One could say they move on the basis of trial and error. It is, however, obvious within the number of stories we collected, and economic motivations are almost always included, although they are often combined with the wish for a new adventure or environment. Mamadou, for instance, expresses he now has the possibility to move to a French coastal city, where a Senegalese friend lives. Although he would rather not leave Spain, as he enjoys his relative freedom in this country, he only wants to change his place of settlement when he has the guarantee to keep selling informally. His friend told him they could sell on the beaches together, which appeals to Mamadou, as he would like to live in a country where he can speak French (Mamadou, 19/03/2015). Tony also informed us about his attempt to make a living for himself in Austria in 2009. He went there, without any contacts or clear opportunities with regard to labour, which caused him to be without a place to stay and without a job. He returned to Spain after a month, as it appeared impossible to find some way to earn his money in Austria. This abrupt and unplanned trip thus shows the way in which some mobility choices are not motivated by clear transgressing factors. He now wants to go to Berlin, although he does not know anyone there. He states that "you cannot go somewhere because you know someone. You take a hotel and search for a black man who helps you" (Tony, 18/05/2015).

This will for migrants to move is also motivated by the tight labour market in Spain over the last few years due to the European recession and the high employment rates in the Southern European country because of it. Tony mentions "When I have money, I'll even leave next week, do black work and get asylum in Germany [...] because a friend told me Germany helps immigrants. Spain is kaput now." The

Matthias went to Oslo and got an informal cleaning job. He was hospitalized due to the exposure to chemicals. When he returned, his boss already replaced him and he lost his job (Matthias, 18/05/2015).

changing societal- and economic environment in Europe therefore might trigger mobility even more, as the pressure on labour, both formal and informal, has risen. "Thousands of people entering Italy now, but they all want to go to Austria or Suisse. Nobody wants to stay in Spain here. We want to go to a country where they speak English." Furthermore he explains that the situation in Spain is not only bad for migrants, but as well for the locals themselves, through which there is even less space or opportunities for migrants: "the Spanish people do not drive the good cars here. It's the Chino people who come with money from their country. The Spanish suffer more than us" (Tony, 18/05/2015). A vast amount of respondents stated very clearly that they will leave the country if they are not able to find proper employment within the next few months, which shows the last few years of unemployment and unavailability of informal jobs as well, has caused the patience of many migrants to disappear and their will to either try and make a living for themselves in another European country or even to return to their home country in West Africa (Assane, 29/04/2015; Tony, 18/05/2015; Moses, 22/05/2015; Pastor Andrew, 03/06/2015; Amadou, 15/06/2015; Sekou, 15/06/2015; Lamine, 15/06/2015; Aziz, 28/06/2015; Toumani, 29/06/2015; Habib, 29/06/2015; Karim, 29/06/2015; Salif, 29/06/2015). Although the highly present informal economy in Spain causes migrants to come to Spain, the changing informal environment causes a huge desire to move elsewhere in order to make a living for themselves more stable.

Link to home

It might be obvious when discussing the theme of West African migration towards Europe, these persons return to their home countries when they have the possibility every once in a while as well. Nevertheless, they do not always return to their home countries with just this social purpose, as they often combine pleasure with business. As mentioned in chapter 5, as also in chapter 6.1, we encountered trade takes place on various dimensions, both on a more local dimension but also beyond borders. A transnational level predominantly implies trade from- and towards West Africa, *and* mainly the specific countries of origin of the respondents. For this paragraph, I will base my story on a good example by a close friend, Aly. As already explained, Aly showed me around his activities as a street vendor in Barcelona. Most of the time he sells on a touristic hotspot that is called the mountain of Montjuïc. While he showed me how mobile he is in searching for selling goods on the urban dimension of Barcelona and Badalona, he also included me in his search for a good car to sell. Aly actually moves back to Dakar, his place of origin, every year, when the touristic season in the capital of Cataluña come to its end. This means he lives in Spain from more or less February until September, while he spends the winter months in Senegal. This does not indicate Aly does not work during these months he is outside of Spain. He actually combines his businesses by collecting selling goods in the months he *is* in Spain that he subsequently is able to sell in his home country. Purchasing a car is crucial to these activities, as he travels by this vehicle to Dakar and it functions as a suitcase, as he transports the majority of his bought goods in it, which shows once again how migrant traders perform suitcase- or luggage trade (Eder et al, 2003; Peraldi, 2005).

Every December he joins a market in Dakar, where he hires a stand, in which he sells goods that he bought in high quantities, which varies from beauty products, to clothes, to car parts. Within Aly's story one thus notices the transnational lives some migrants live, in terms of mobility, but also in terms of goods and money flows. Aly will maintain a strong bond with his country of origin, as he links the two places he lives in for ten years already. He is used to this manner of living and does not aspire to change this, as he enjoys both countries and the variety it brings to his life. With the money he earns in Spain, he is actually building a house in Dakar for his mother, wife and son, but he thinks he will not live there permanently when it is finished, as he would like to keep working in Barcelona to create new opportunities for his family and himself in Dakar. Aly might thus be the best example for "an entrepreneur on the move", who moves driven by economic opportunities on all dimensions we discussed within this research. Demba is another person who expresses his ideal situation will be when he is able to live bi-local. He is currently filling up trucks with goods that he drives to Mali, his country of origin. In the future, he would like to keep doing so and expand his trading business. This way, he will be able to live for a period of six to twelve months in Mali, after which he will return to Spain for a while, where he can start collecting goods again (Demba, 21/06/2015). These are thus highly interesting ways of living in an ultimate transnational way as *transnational citizens*.

6.3 The informal economy as a keep factor

With the plan of selling in the city centre of Barcelona for a period of ten years, Abdoulaye would like to reassure his future in Senegal. By participating in the street vending business seven days a week, he is able to survive in Spain, while sending half of his monthly earned money towards his family in Dakar and saving up for his permanent return to his country of origin. He expresses this is the only reason why he lives in Europe, and particularly Spain; to earn money by selling in the streets. Therefore, the informal economy is a keep factor for Abdoulaye to stay in Barcelona (Abdoulaye, 27/04/2015).

Although it is clear by now that a significant part of the West African migrants we spoke to are highly mobile for various reasons, a vast amount of respondents also expressed not having any plans to move in the next five years. Their motivations for staying in Cataluña vary from a lack of papers to simply feeling at peace in this particular region in Spain. The informal economy, however, is also a factor that makes some of the migrants stay in Barcelona. The organisation of the informal activities one is able to perform in Barcelona and its surroundings, contributes to the mobility choices migrants make, as this region is characterized by the various sectors in which one can participate irregularly. As it has shown to attract migrants towards the region because of this reason, it is also a keep factor in some cases. This is mainly formed by the huge amount of tourists that come to this particular city throughout the whole year.

The freedom of informal labour in Spain

Mamadou says this is even the reason why he is *forced* to stay in Spain, as he knows this is the only way he is able to have an income. Although he would like to visit Northern European countries like Germany or the Netherlands, he is aware that the informal sector in such nations are smaller, less visible and harder to enter. Besides this his lack of papers also keeps him in Spain, as he explains the lack of major controls he has experienced during his years in this country, while he has heard about fierce controls and detention centres in other European Union-member states. He says he want to feel free and live without fear (Mamadou, 19/03/2015). Maseck also expressed this sense of freedom in earning money, as he searches for scrap metals in Barcelona. He knows this business is not as organised in other European countries, while it forms part of a huge network of trading businesses in Spain (Maseck, 21/03/2015). This combination of factors in which especially freedom seems to be a huge motivation, is something more respondents mentioned when talking about staying in Spain. Freedom in the sense of freedom of movement, without living in a constant fear of being caught and detained, but also freedom in performing informal activities in order to earn some money. Pastor Andrew, a Nigerian pastor we spoke to, formulated this as: "I love Spain, because there is no pressure" (Pastor Andrew, 03/06/2015). This pressure due to several causes, which goes from detainment, towards racism, but also the unavailability of jobs is thus a major factor in what keeps one in Spain.

Nevertheless, the political- and societal debate from the last few months that was displayed before with regard to street sales might put enormous pressure on the way of working for the group that is working in this particular sector. This probably influences the sense of freedom in their work patterns for the street vendors we spoke to and might even have an impact on their mobility choices in the future.

While informal economic activities can thus be a huge trigger for mobility as explained in chapter 6.2, we also see Barcelona remains a home destination within Europe at times. Some frequent movers due to employment- or trading opportunities return to Cataluña, as they feel like it is their place of settlement. Ibrahima has been in possession of his residence papers for a vast number of years now. Through his trading business he has seen many other places in Europe as well and has contacts in almost every part of the continent. He even expresses he "will never settle down", as he is the kind of man who needs to be mobile in order to feel good. Nevertheless, later on in our period of contact, he expresses to see Barcelona as his home in Europe. Due to his knowledge of how to earn money in the region, it remains easy to do so when he returns. Besides this, he says Barcelona feels more like West Africa than other European countries, as he experiences moving around, cultural- and social elements to be more like in his country of origin (Ibrahima, several encounters). Also Emmanuel explains he sees Barcelona as his home, although he travels around Europe constantly. He has been an intermediary for a real estate company for quite some time now, for which he has to visit private companies all over the continent to do business. Besides this, he also travels in function of his Nigerian association to meet up with West African associations in other European-, but also West African countries. Although he moves around frequently, he still feels like Cataluña is where he wants to be settled down within Europe (29/05/2015).

The informal economy in many stories seems to be considered as just a starting point in the migratory pattern. Respondents explain they have started selling in the streets due to a lack of papers and the need for income. Nevertheless, many of the street vendors we spoke to are now in possession of residence papers. Unfortunately, the Spanish- or even European labour market is so tight during the last years, that it remains hard to find formal employment. Besides this, I have already highlighted examples of respondents who prefer to stay in informal atmospheres as it gives them a feeling of being independent workers. This is an interesting process we came across, where their participation in the informal economy firstly is considered to be an intermediate stadium in the larger migratory trajectory, while it subsequently develops itself into such a stable factor that it becomes a keep factor for the region they are working in. While Moses is an MC at African parties all over the region, he does not want to stay in Spain, due to the lack of well paid, formal jobs. He even got a study grant for the university of Barcelona, but will not use it, because he is afraid he will get so established he will never leave: "the more I'm studying here, the more I'm staying here" (Moses, 22/05/2015).

Local initiatives also try to help migrants get a better future in Spain. Mescladis is a café downtown working with migrants and educating them into being a cook or waiter. Besides this, they help their staff in their legal cases, as they also support broader initiatives in order to raise awareness for the vulnerable position of migrants in Spain and Europe (Mescladis, 10/04/2015).

Settlement due to employment and other factors

Working in one of the many flower stands on the Rambla de Catalunya, Ablaye is happy with his working place. He remains, however, unclear towards us about the formality of his employment contract. Although he is in possession of his residence papers for some years now, due to being married to a Catalan woman, he says it is hard finding a good- and steady job in this period of time in Spain. For that reason, he is content the owners of this particular flower store expect him to watch the shop a few hours per day. Obviously, it is his wife who keeps him in Barcelona at this point, as she is from this region and is a teacher in Girona. But Ablaye also expresses he likes living in a crowded and international metropolis like Barcelona. He has seen many other European places with his wife because of visits with touristic motivations over the last years, but seems content with this living and working the way he is able to do now in the capital of Cataluña, even without the formality and assurance of steady employment (18/03/2015). Henry also expresses to be glad to stay in Spain, although he is not happy about his informal job. He works eight hours a day, but is exploited to the point where he sometimes gets paid only four hours a day. Having lived in Norway for a while, however, he appreciates what he has in Spain, due to the culture and climate. He explains he was constantly ill, while in Norway, as his body could not resist the cold. Therefore, he came to the South of Europe and Spain reminds him of Nigeria in terms of climate, but also the free and spiritual way of living. As these factors make him feel more at home, he is able to resist the hard work he has to do to earn some money, as also the insecurity this brings along, which makes him wanting to settle here (Henry, 29/05/2015).

Another particular case is interesting in observing the informal activities and its consequences for the West African migrant that we already described before partly, which is that of Djibril. Arriving in Spain in 1992, attracted by the huge rise of demand for employment due to the Summer Olympics in Barcelona, he was at the start of the street vending business, as explained in chapter 5.1. His activities within the informal economy have helped him gain contacts, but also capital, to be able to open and maintain the shop he now owns in the Barrio Gótico in Barcelona. His family, but also the shop he adores, are keep factors for his living area (09/03/2015). Djibril's story thus shows informal activities can lead to greater stability which could result in being a keep factor for a particular place in order to maintain this stability. He is an entrepreneur who developed within his years of informally trading and selling and is now able to trade formally and settled down in a shop. Chris did the same thing, while he started off working without papers in several informal jobs, while he was in training in some barbershops. Eventually he was able to open his own barbershop in Torrassa, where we met him. He has now hired two women, so the threshold for all neighbours is a little lower to enter the shop. Although his wife still lives in Nigeria, she has a good job there and they travel to see each other for some years now. Due to his well-established business he want to stay in Barcelona (Matthias, 02/06/2015).

We also spoke to four men who work at the Mercabarna¹³ under the conditions of a formal contract, which causes them to be financially stable and not wanting to leave the region automatically (Brian, 16/06/2015; Chuks, 17/06/2015; Seydou, 20/06/2015; Souleymane, 20/06/2015). In all cases, however, this does not mean they do not perform any side-activities anymore. Djibril is logically still in trading processes with West Africa, as he imports hand-made goods from several countries in that particular region. Matthias also mentions he would like to keep doing business with his home country Nigeria, while he is setting up a wine-business. He has already filled up two vehicles with several sorts of wine, which he would like to transport and sell the next time he goes to his home country (Djibril, 09/03/2015; Matthias, 02/06/2015). The other names mentioned also state they send products to West Africa or even take a vehicle filled with goods with them when they visit their home country in order to earn some extra money, despite their stable employment circumstances.

6.5 Concluding remarks

The West African migrant shows that, in general, he does not have a single role in the informal economy of Catalunya. In this research the multiplicity of this role becomes clear, as all respondents seem to be active in various sectors, which were described before, of the urban economy of Barcelona and its surroundings. In chapter 2 we spoke about the heterogeneity of an informal economy one has to keep in mind. Carr & Chen have designed a table of categories to be able to name the role of a participant of such an economy. One could very well use these categories to name the roles of the participants, but my findings show one actor can also perform several roles at the same time. It is thus hugely important to keep these blurred boundaries between the various sectors and roles within the informal economy in mind, in order to grasp the real life-worlds of the persons participating in this particular economy (Carr & Chen, 2002:4).

Whether their role in the informal economy triggers the mobility of the West African migrant or is a keep factor for the Spanish region is not to decide specifically. Firstly, it definitely triggers mobility in numerous ways. The daily mobility that is created because of the dynamic characteristics of almost all sectors causes the migrant to be highly mobile on an intra-urban- and sometimes urban-urban dimension. Short-distance mobility is created through trading opportunities, as also their movements towards rural areas like Lérida. The one-day trips towards other cities in order to purchase goods for further sales are common amongst almost all West African migrants and is not motivated by terms of settlement. Movements towards rural areas like Lérida, however, are from a more permanent nature, while they stay there for a few months, depending on labour opportunities. Nevertheless, the migrants themselves do not see this as major moves, but more like a change of environment for a while in order to earn some money when their activities in Barcelona cannot provide this, as Lérida is considered to be close to the city of Barcelona.

¹³Mercabarna (Mercados de Abastecimientos de Barcelona SA) is the company that administers the Food Unit that is made up by the city of Barcelona's wholesale markets as well as by a large number of companies involved in the production, sale, distribution, import and export of fresh and frozen products (http://www.mercabarna.es/presentacio/en_index.html).

Moves towards other places in Spain or other European countries *are* considered more like major changes in their trajectories, as they tell about these events thoroughly. These journeys, however, do not always seem to be planned or based on clear opportunities, which causes them to be dynamic, considered a failure or a huge success at times.

Even more important is the fact that the West African migrant seems to see mobility as a need to get to new economic opportunities, rather than mobility being the goal in itself. Their turbulent trajectories, however, show their movements are too dynamic to be called a "tool." Mobility in itself contributes to the creation of new opportunities in many cases. Short-distance, as also short-term, migratory movements the respondents perform in relation to economic activities do not seem to differ that much in terms of concrete opportunities or plans in comparison to their major migratory patterns. Most mobility choices are made based on solely a few factors, as a social contact or a trading possibility, but it can influence their place of settlement or further mobility choices in a great manner and in long distances. The trial-and-error based mobility patterns therefore at times show the blurred boundaries that exist between minor- and major mobility patterns.

Chapter 7 – Concluding remarks: moving in informal circuits as a transnational citizen

While research into migration patterns, focuses on the effects of movement on fixed locations, this research shows *mobility* research is needed in order to grasp the dynamic and mobile lives of migrants these days. As we find nearly all societal phenomena to be mobile nowadays a dynamic approach is of significance to understand all features of research related to migratory patterns of today (Hui, 2016). While the European Union has opened up its internal borders that allow human mobility, this also causes for migrants on the European continent to create flows of money and goods on a trans-local dimension. Although the external borders of Europe over the last few years have been closing again, migrants keep crossing them physically, but also by maintaining linkages by social- and material remittances towards, for instance, home countries. They are now *transnational citizens* (Castles, 2000), which causes them to be mobile in all kinds of ways, also after having reached their country of destination in Europe.

The trajectories of West African migrants while trying to reach Europe are full of struggles, but are also transgressed by many factors. Whether certain elements, like institutions or social networks, restrict or transgress mobility in this journey shows they influence the trajectory one way or another. Employment in this case, definitely guides these patterns of mobility, as the migrant is, logically, in need of providing for his basic needs as well as for their families in countries of origin. One could even state it is the biggest motivation, as an economic motivation is often the trigger for a West African young man to move to Europe. After having arrived, they are thus in a constant search for ways to fulfil this ultimate goal, which is taking care of their families back home, or even creating a better future for themselves there as soon as they are able to return. This causes them to be mobile on a daily basis, but also within Europe, in order to find bigger chances in terms of employment. In the end, however, a mix of elements of influence creates highly interesting migratory patterns for the transnational migrant of today, as their dynamic trajectories might change the main ideas we have with regard to a transnational citizen, who usually moves between a place of origin and destination. This research shows that the mobility patterns of the West African migrant are far more complex and even their daily schedules are full of mobility. These mobilities are not only encountered with regard to human movement, but also in terms of goods, money and information sharing. Therefore, we see the lives of a transnational citizen nowadays are mobile on more dimensions than two places, as also with a variation in motivations and periods of time of settlement.

7.1 Overcoming many barriers in order to reach "el paradiso"

"Migration is like a kid that's locked up in a room. They will always try to open the door to see what is behind the door [...] As long as Europe keeps closing its curtains, Africans will fantasize and want to know what is behind the curtains" (Brian, 16/06/2015).

The trajectories our respondents from West African origin have faced vary in a number of ways. As I illustrated in chapter 4, these mobility patterns differ in terms of transport means, the periods of time it takes them to reach a certain place and many more personal- and unforeseen elements one can only find by describing their personal stories. Based on my findings, however, I have tried to illustrate some overall conclusions about the general trends one encounters when exploring the trajectories of the West African migrant. The majority of Senegalese migrants have tried to reach Europe by boat. The journey by a *patera* proves to be highly dangerous physically, as also mentally tiring, as there exists little knowledge with regard to safety concerns, duration of the journey and even the assurance whether they will ever reach land again. In this case, one finds the importance of transgressing elements during the journey like traffickers, social networks who help or institutions who are able to transgress the mobility trajectory in some kind of way. Migrants from Nigeria, the other major country of focus in this research, told us to have travelled by land mostly. Travelling through various West African countries, sometimes by truck, sometimes by jumping the fences in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla and sometimes by boat, to reach Europe. Their journeys are often characterized by longer periods of settlement in various places to earn money or gain new transgressing contacts for their eventual goals. Then, there are a number of respondents from various West African countries who have entered Europe by visa. Some have entered by another European country, like Italy or France, but some also came into Europe by directly entering Spain. Although their journeys seem fairly easy in terms of physical danger or the chance of being rejected at a border, their major mobility patterns show they still move around and change destinations after their arrival to wherever employment opportunities or social networks arise.

Borders have to be overcome in order to reach Europe and although many expect freedom of movement within Europe many barriers to mobility are to be found. Nevertheless, the mobility patterns of the respondents in this research have proven they are mobile, with periods of enforced immobility, caused by both structural restrictions, like a lack of papers, as also economic barriers, which make it hard for them to travel without the needed economic means. Although this research has shown the lives of the West African migrant in Catalunya are full of mobility, this thus does not specifically mean there are no mobility barriers to be found. The notion of a transnational citizen brings along certain rights in order to move around freely, which is not always the case for all of our respondents in all stages of their migratory lives. Due to the restrictions they face in terms of human movement, we are not able to call all of them a transnational citizen. So although I speak of the West African migrant living a mobile life, a number of our respondents have not even moved beyond borders yet after their arrival in Spain. Nevertheless, they *are* all active one way or another in transnational spheres in terms of goods and money. Activities in trade or sending remittances causes their lives to consist of transnational mobilities, although they do not find themselves in this position of moving around like some other respondents. For many migrants their mobility within Spain is based on seasonality, flexibility and temporality, which might not even cause the aspiration to increase these patterns beyond borders, as they can provide for themselves within this country.

For other non-movers, however, aspirations to move to other nations have been created by the information of friends and family members who are already on the move or even by overall images that exist from certain places within Europe. The gradual difference in mobility patterns amongst the respondents proves that even when being restricted by structural mobility barriers, the migrant of today finds ways to participate in activities that go beyond borders, even when human movement is (not yet) a topic.

7.2 Making a living in informal circuits

Within this research, I have tried to illustrate the role of the West African migrant depends on their country of origin, mostly because their business contacts coincide influenced by this element as well. The most evident example is that, besides Pakistan vendors, the majority of street salesmen originally come from Senegal. As some of the respondents whom we were in contact with on a more frequent level came from Senegal and were active in this informal sector, we were able to gather many details with regard to this highly debated part of the informal economy of Barcelona and its surroundings. While many say to feel fine with selling in the streets and enjoy the contact with customers, the heated political- and societal discussion with regard to this topic makes it hard for the young men to perform this way of working. The vendors are forced to be constantly mobile in order to avoid getting caught by police officers. This stressful and risky way of working gives them a feeling of despair, as pronounced by many, while they are only trying to make a living for themselves and their families. Other informal sectors, like collecting scrap metals, working for night clubs or trading in goods are of lesser debate, through which many respondents perform these to stay out of trouble or to add to their overall income. In these sectors one also encounters persons from other West African countries, although Senegalese participate in these parts as well. All of the sectors are mobile in themselves, as respondents move around in order to collect- or sell goods. This thus shows the importance of a mobile perspective into a seemingly fixed phenomenon like an urban economy, while the people, but also goods and capital circulate amongst various dimensions. Shortly mentioned, this includes flows of goods, money and humans on an intra-urban level, but also on an urban-urban-, as also on a transnational dimension.

In the case of the West African migrant in Cataluña, one thus can conclude a vast part of remittances comes from informal activities. The informal economy is locally highly present, while it displays itself in many parts of Barcelona, both visible as invisible for outsiders. It is highly flexible, as the participators work for themselves mostly and decide what to do or invest in. They also move around the various sectors that have been displayed, as a vast majority participates in more informal businesses at the same time. This multiplicity of their role in the urban economy is of significance as it emphasizes once again their will to earn money whatever way possible, as also the creative manner in which they are able to do so and find new ways to take care of themselves. Due to this dynamic and informal way of establishing businesses it seems like there is a lack of organisation, but there are to be found some structural patterns and unwritten rules, which make it an organized economy on a trans-local dimension. There are certain overlapping economic, social and political ideas that create these informal spaces.

And although the word *informal* might seem to imply *unstructured* or *unorganized* due to the lack of institutional interference, the Barcelonese informal urban economy proves otherwise. This way, the participants of this economy also contribute to the image of Barcelona as a metropolis, as they influence the street atmosphere and connotation outsiders have from the city or broader area.

Their contribution to 'place making' in this sense should give them a certain right to the city as well. This is, however, constantly of debate as I illustrated in chapter 5. The migrants feel huge pressure these days due to the increasing interference of the council of Catalunya in the informal sector. Primarily the street vending business causes immense discussions in the area about the rights of both documented and undocumented migrants in general, as well as their right to the city and their manners of achieving income informally. Having spoken about the "spatial justice" debate before (Alexander von Humboldt lectures, 2015), this is a theme that will be difficult to avoid in the discussion about the rights of the street vendors to take their place in Barcelona. Although it obviously has never been a formal labour sector, it seemed to be fairly tolerated in terms of real repercussions for the vendors. This is, however, drastically changing now debates surrounding the position of the salesmen have become heated again and the municipality of Barcelona takes measures. The fines with regard to selling informally have been increased for both the street vendors themselves, as also people who purchase goods from them. Therefore, the number of controls from armed forces has increased significantly as well, which puts even more pressure on the salesmen to keep moving in order to avoid getting caught. This has even come up to the point where the salesmen could no longer enter the metro stations recently due to a blockade by armed forces.¹⁴ One might state this thus decreases the mobility opportunities for vendors in the informal economy, as they are constantly driven into a corner more and more. Nevertheless, the major increase of governmental interferences has also triggered the migrants to use their voice, supported by many Barcelonese citizens. The constant manifestations that has led to the establishment of a syndicate, for instance, might be of even greater importance, as it shows they are willing to fight for their rights in order to earn money without participating in other, according to them, more harmful informal sectors or even crimes like stealing or robbing. An important consideration within this debate is also the fact that not all salesmen reside in Europe undocumented and therefore sell in the streets, which is one of the major stereotypes considering this topic. It is well known in this sector, that also documented men decide to start or continue street vending after having obtained legal residence or working documents, as street vending provides for their income, they can work independently or due to the difficulties to enter a formal job nowadays. Although one could thus conclude participating in informal circuits provides for an income, it remains a debated topic in any society, even if it is highly present and seemingly tolerated like in the area of Barcelona.

¹⁴ Tras la Manta, the organisation supporting the street vendors in their battle, called for help several times over the last weeks as salesmen were blocked by police officers and could not enter public areas like a metro station or crowded areas, while carrying around their selling goods: <https://traslamanta.wordpress.com/2016/04/20/comunicado-la-calle-es-de-la-gente-no-de-la-policia/>, <https://www.facebook.com/traslamanta/?fref=ts>.

The West African migrants are able to move around fairly free, but the risk of getting caught is still incorporated into this economy in many ways possible, which creates a constant fear and pressure in this employment field.

7.3 Economic opportunities produce mobility

"Me gusta Barcelona, pero me gusta más donde hay trabajo" ("I like Barcelona, but I like more where there is work") (Idrissa, 28/06/2015).

The activities of the West African migrant in the informal economy influence their own mobility patterns in a great manner. Short distances are crossed when in need of purchasing or selling certain goods, while long distances are conquered to make a new living for themselves somewhere else. While the activities on a local dimension are highly mobile, we also found informal trade or employment beyond borders. Their role in informal spaces thus certainly triggers the intra-EU mobility of West African migrants currently living in Cataluña. The economic activities they perform provide for daily mobility in order to be able to keep up with the pace of life in the metropolis. Moving around to purchase- or sell goods, trade or maintain business networks creates highly mobile daily schedules, which go beyond the dimension of the city, but extend towards rural areas or other Spanish cities. Mobility within Spain is considered to be "safer" by the migrants, as they can obviously travel without crossing national borders and they often speak the language, which means they are able to participate in new economic activities with fewer restrictions. Mobility within Europe is often triggered by a social connection they have in the country of destination, which might introduce them into new opportunities to employment there. This does not exclude the way in which they leave somewhere based on trial and error. Especially general images the migrants have of certain countries, like the examples of Holland being "nice and green" and "tolerating towards migrants" (Idrissa, 28/06/2015) or the large Nigerian community that exists in the United Kingdom can be leading in mobility choices without specific social connections. Interesting is thus the way in which almost all mobility choices are somehow linked to economic opportunities in new places of destinations, whether they have been prepared or not.

Although it might seem like I divide the two types of mobility patterns, namely daily mobility and the larger, overall migratory trajectories, the stories and way of motivating movements of our respondents show these are often intertwined. There does not seem to exist a huge difference between short- and long distance movements for the migrant himself, as also the temporal factor of staying somewhere shortly or settling down influenced by economic adventures. This could be caused by the lack of proper plans before going somewhere, so the "trial-and-error" based manner of moving, as also by being guided or even being depended on certain social contacts that help them move or once they get to a new place of settlement. Being dependent on various elements thus creates certain insecurity, which leads them to move and see wherever the journey takes them further. It is, however, obvious when researching the life stories of our respondents that economic motivations are always major triggers for mobility, whether they are well planned or fairly spontaneous. When discussing future plans for movement, the most common sentence we heard was to achieve an income "we will go wherever there is work."

This emphasizes once again the blurred lines the migrants consider in terms of short-distance- or long-distance moves, as they are often solely focused on employment opportunities, rather than the move in itself. One cannot, however, deny the importance of travelling for the West African migrant, as it is not always just a *tool*. It is, as stated before, a manner of travelling on the basis of chance, luck or dependence of others in many cases. This way, the journey in itself, people who they meet, stages of immobility and many other features, contribute to the place of destination and changes that might take place along the way. The way in which this ethnographic research was built up, looking at a phenomenon linked to migration through a mobility-lens is thus as an addition to an approach like the threshold approach in order to see the result of all transgressing elements or barriers that influence a trajectory. Living a mobile life between various places seems to have become a habit for many migrants. Therefore, they also "like" this dynamic way of living and do not consider settlement to be perquisite for a good life. Mobility is therefore almost a way of living, as mobility has offered them many opportunities to develop, through which they consider it to be a crucial part of their lives in order to succeed.

Although I argue that the urban informal economy is a huge trigger for mobility on many dimensions, one cannot deny it also creates security that makes a person want to stay. Therefore, the informal economy at times also creates certain opportunities in a specific place, which subsequently makes it a keep factor for some people. As it is hard to be formally employed in Europe, when one is in possession of documents as well as being undocumented, the relative freedom of the urban economy of Cataluña creates assurance for income to a specific point. As seen before, this includes many restrictions due to constantly heavier controls, the obligation to be highly mobile and work many hours a week. Nevertheless, many respondents express they are aware the informal economy in Cataluña offers them more opportunities than other European countries could do. It is important to consider that in the case of the West African migrant the keep factor is often of a temporary nature. Respondents who have expressed wanting to stay in Spain in order to earn money in the informal sectors, mostly see their stay in Europe as a phase in their life in order to create a better future in their home country again. Participation in an informal business as a keep factor is thus almost always linked to return migration towards a country of origin. This could be, however, also included within the overall mobile lives these young men lead and form part of their major migratory mobility patterns. Aly's story has illustrated this, as he has been living in between two places literally for several years now. Although he always thought he would return to Senegal permanently, he thinks he will maintain this way of living, as he is used to it and likes living in between two countries. A permanent return might thus be formulated as an end goal, but their mobile way of living as a migrant between Africa and Europe might create them to stay mobile between various places in the future as well. The place of settlement, in this case, might change from Europe to a country like Senegal, although boundaries between places of settlement will be blurred.

7.4 Where Intra-EU mobility and informal circuits meet

Many of our respondents like the mobile lives they are able to live on this continent, but this does not mean Europe is free of disappointments for them. "El paradiso" is what most of them before coming to Europe often expect, but the overall majority expresses life on the European continent has not brought them what they thought it would in terms of economic prosperity, as also the tolerance towards migrants. The search for economic opportunities therefore takes place on various mobility dimensions, which makes the West African migrant travel all over Spain, but also to other places in Europe and Africa. It seems like the mobile lives they live have become a habit for them and that this does not form a problem, as they often consider home still to be West Africa. The desire for a steady place of settlement is therefore fairly small, as economic welfare is considered to be of greater importance in order to take care of themselves and their families, which in many cases was the biggest motivation to come to Europe, as well as being the ultimate goal of their major migratory trajectory. The increasing pressure for the European Union to close its external borders due to the major numbers of refugees coming to Europe, probably also influences the ability to move for the West African migrants currently already living in one of the European countries. Although they might not have come here because of a conflict situation in their home country as other political refugees, controls have been tightened and intra-EU mobility might become increasingly difficult for them as well in the future. This will influence their migratory patterns in a significant way, as we have noticed their trajectories are often highly mobile and take place all over Europe and Africa, often influenced by economic activities. Mobility choices that are now taken on the trial-and-error basis or solely based on one social network might have to be considered more before really moving, as risks will become higher due to greater mobility restrictions. Although the lives of our West African respondents have been highly mobile as we have been able to see in their life stories, major decisions from the European Union might influence the mobile lives these young men live directly as well.

Therefore, research into such mobility patterns is most valuable when being able to speak to the persons themselves directly in order to grasp the way in which political decision-making changes the lives of people in a vulnerable position in society. Especially in the case of the West African migrant, being mobile is considered to create chances and new opportunities in terms of labour, starting new businesses or gaining social- or business networks. Therefore, a mobile way of living is of huge significance in order to achieve the major goals with which the migrants in general have come to Europe.

Recommendations

This research into the economic activities and mobility patterns of the West African migrant currently living in Cataluña, Spain, has brought about findings that could trigger further research or details to consider within policy-making processes. I will keep it short, as the debate surrounding mobility research is still constantly changing and concrete recommendations from such a focused research as this one are difficult to take towards a large scale. By mentioning the main arguments that could be considered related to this research, I hope to conclude this study with ideas for the best focuses for research and policy-making related to this topic.

For further research

The focus of this thesis was the West African migrant in Cataluña. Although we succeeded in reaching a good amount of respondents, accessing a community has proven to be a challenge at times. Therefore, an interesting focus for further research could be to study the role of gender within this research topic (and within any ethnicity group), as it would definitely display a different view to the informal economy, but also the motivations and choices with regard to migratory patterns. As explained in chapter 3, the difficulties in reaching West African women have caused us to focus on male migrants. Nevertheless, this should be considered in order to be able to study the informal economy *completely*. This would require ethnography of a whole community, maybe even solely focusing on one nationality in order to be able to include a wider public from one subject group.

Besides this, I have tried to study the role of the West African migrant in the informal economy through a mobility-lens. This way of looking at a certain phenomenon in relation to a particular group of migrants has brought about findings that would have been drastically different when not considering mobility within this research. It would have missed the dynamic processes that take place within the economy and the mobility it produces that is highly significant for the major migratory trajectories of the migrants as well. Although I have tried to stress the importance of the trajectory focus in migration research by referring to other theories like the threshold approach or categorizations like that of Carr & Chen (see chapter 2 and 6), it requires a deeper level of research into mobility theories and –approaches than I was able to do in this research to be able to properly find the most useful way of studying mobility themes. The usage of several approaches on one study could be of value in order to be able to form conclusions about how these approaches contribute to mobility research nowadays.

For future policy-making processes

Mobility driven by informal economic activities should be considered as a big part of the migratory patterns of West African migrants in Europe. The findings I have tried to illustrate in this research show that West African migrants in Spain are constantly looking for new

ways to generate income. As obtaining working documents is fairly difficult in many European countries nowadays, a large number is obliged to move in informal circuits in order to succeed in terms of earning money. Although I understand policy-making depends on many elements these days, as on a large scale the European Union is currently trying to find ways to cope with migration towards Europe, while trying to take into account the separate opinions of EU-member states as well, I think it would be valuable that ethnographic mobility researches in general could be considered. As mentioned before, we tend to forget the source of migration debates as they are highly politicized, which causes we think in large groups of people instead of unique life stories when debating migration policies.

The life stories I have illustrated here show that, although one can detect similarities, they are all unique due to unforeseen elements along the way. Intensive researches into the dynamics of such trajectories, as also further choices that are made after their arrival should be studied in order to properly understand the life worlds of migrants in Europe. Understanding these lives, in my opinion, could contribute to the humanisation of the debate again in order to maintain the focus of this discussion, which is trying to make policies that smoothen overall migration processes for both countries of destination in this case, but also the migrants themselves in order to avoid them taking more risks every time. Closing both external- and internal borders in this sense will definitely paralyze highly mobile migrants who are trying to make a living for themselves *or* will make them take greater risks in order to cross borders. To avoid such consequences politics on both local- and transnational dimensions should refer back to researches that got information from the streets and the persons of debate. This would be best in order to avoid losing sight of what the debate revolves around and to be able to react properly.

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Appendix 1 – Overview Respondents

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
1. Saliou (Collects scrap metals)	07/03/2015	Senegal	Senegal – Mauritania – Spain (Canaries) (by boat)	Enforced immobile due to lack of economic means and documents, but when employment presents itself, he will definitely move
2. Mamadou (Street vendor city centre)	19/03/2015 / Dinner at his home on 07/04/2015 / Several encounters to chat while street vending	Senegal	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries) (by boat)	Wherever he is able to be a street vendor, he will go. He has a friend in a coastal city of France who invited him
3. Ablaye (works at a flower shop on the Rambla de Catalunya)	18/03/2015 / Several encounters at the flower shop to chat	Senegal	Senegal – Spain (by visa)	Will probably stay in Spain as his wife is from Catalunya and has a stable job
4. Maseck (Collects scrap metals)	21/03/2015	Senegal	Senegal – Mauritania – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Tarifa) (overland and	When he does not get his residence documents within three years, he will return to

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
			by boat)	Senegal
5. Mustafa (Street vendor at Mara Magnum)	21/03/2015 / Took us to the wholesalers in Badalona on 24/03/2015 / Several encounters to chat while street vending	Senegal	Senegal – France (by visa)	Wants to stay in Barcelona, as he can provide for himself here through street vending
6. Ibrahima (Street vendor at Barceloneta and works in agriculture)	23/03/2015 / He took us to a reggae bar on 27/03/2015 / Dinner at his new house on 04/04/2015 / Several encounters to chat while street vending	Senegal	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries) (by boat)	He will go wherever employment or trade takes him, but Barcelona will always feel like home in Europe
7. Aliou (Street vendor Mare Magnum)	25/03/2015	Senegal	Senegal – Italy (by boat)	Enforced immobile due to lack of economic means and documents, but when employment presents itself, he will definitely move
8. Amina (Street vendor at Mare Magnum)	26/03/2015	Senegal	Senegal (Dakar) – Morocco	Amina wants to stay in Spain, as she

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
			(Rabat) – Morocco (Nador) – Spain (Andalucía, unknown which city)	thinks she will find a job there easier than in another country, as also a residence document
9. Aly (Street vendor at Mont Juïc)	27/03/2015 / Several encounters, took me to the wholesalers, invited me over to some friend, etc.	Senegal	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries)	Will keep on travelling between Spain and Senegal like he does now, living in between two places
10. Aliou (Street vendor at Mare Magnum)	25/03/2015 / Several encounters to chat while street vending	Senegal	Senegal – Italy (by visa)	Enforced immobile due to lack of economic means and documents, but when employment presents itself, he will definitely move
11. Abdoulaye (Street vendor in the city centre)	27/04/2015	Senegal	Senegal – Spain (by visa)	Will stay in Barcelona because of the street vending business to be able to return to Senegal in a few years

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
12. Ousmane (Street vendor in the city centre)	08/04/2015 / Several encounters to chat while street vending	Senegal	Senegal – Italy (by visa)	Will stay in Barcelona as his family lives there and he has both a formal and informal job
13. Assane (Street vendor in the city centre)	27/04/2015	Senegal	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries) (by boat)	Will not stay in Spain much longer. When he does not receive his documents soon, he will return to Senegal, otherwise he will leave to another European country like the UK, Germany or France
14. Birama (Sells marihuana in the city centre or works day jobs)	24/05/2015	Gambia	Senegal – Italy (by visa)	Although he would like to leave Barcelona he does not know where to go yet and is not actively making plans
15. Alex (Has a formal job)	08/05/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – the United Kingdom (by	Wants to stay in Barcelona because of his

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
16. Guy (Currently unemployed)	09/05/2015	Cameroon	visa) Cameroon – Gambia – Nigeria – Niger – Libya – Algeria – Morocco – Spain (Melilla) (overland)	wife and son Enforced immobile due to lack of economic means and documents, but when employment presents itself, he will definitely move
17. Tony (Currently unemployed)	18/05/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Mauritania – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Ceuta) (overland)	Enforced immobile due to lack of economic means and documents, but when employment presents itself, he will definitely move
18. Matthias (Works day jobs)	02/06/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Italy (by visa)	Already moves to Germany every few months when there is work. Whenever employment will arise for a longer period of time he will definitely

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
				move elsewhere
19. Osas (Currently unemployed, works day jobs as a painter etc.)	18/05/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Lybia – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Tarifa) (overland and by boat)	Osas would like to await his papers in Spain
20. Moses (Works as an MC)	22/05/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Mali – Algeria – Morocco (Laayoune) – Spain (Canaries) (overland and by boat)	Is waiting for his passport which he applies for this year, when he has this, he would like to move the UK
21. David (Loads and unloads trucks and is the financial secretary of a Ghanaian association)	23/05/2015	Ghana	Ghana – Nigeria – Germany (by visa)	David would like to stay in Barcelona as he has his job and life there
22. Isaac (Master student at University)	23/05/2015	Ghana	Ghana – Spain (by visa)	His Master ends in July, but he doesn't know yet what exactly to do afterwards. He could leave for Ghana or leave

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
				Spain to go to another country and do another Master
23. Chima (Was unemployed in Spain, started a car components business in Sweden)	22/05/2015 / Lunch at his house on 04/06/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – France (by visa)	Has moved from Barcelona to Stockholm in the winter of 2015, where Saskia visited him
24. Henry	29/05/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Norway (Arendal) (by container ship)	Henry would like to stay in Barcelona, as he has an informal job there that provides for his needs and he feels at home
25. Emmanuel (Associate for a real estate company and is the coordinator of the Nigerian association of Barcelona)	29/05/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Niger – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Tarifa) (overland and by boat)	Travels around Europe for his work, but will probably stay in settled in Barcelona
26. Chris (Has a barbershop in Barcelona)	02/06/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Spain (by visa)	He would like to stay in Spain as he owns his barbershop

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
				here
27. Pastor Andrew (Currently unemployed)	03/06/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Benin – Togo – Burkina Faso – Mali – flight to Morocco – Spain (Ceuta)	Waiting for his passport that will come this year, will leave for the UK or Denmark
28. John	04/06/2015	Ghana	Ghana – Togo – Ivory Coast – Burkina Faso – Nigeria – Niger – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Algeciras)	He is prepared to move wherever a job presents itself
29. Uche	06/06/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Niger – Algeria – Morocco (Tanger) – Spain (Algeciras)	Will wait for his documents in Spain, but is enforced immobile now
30. Boubacar (Trades in drugs on a transnational level)	08/06/2015	Guinea-Conakry	Guinea-Conakry – France (visa) – Guinea-Conakry – Spain (visa)	Would like to keep travelling and living between Spain and France, for which he both has residence papers
31. Amadou	15/06/2015	Mali	Mali – France	For now he

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
(Currently unemployed)			(by visa)	will go wherever employment takes him, but he would like to wait for his passport as well. When he gets this, he will definitely leave to a country like Germany he says
32. Sekou (Currently unemployed)	15/06/2015	Mali	Mali – France (by visa)	When he does not get a job soon, he will leave to another European country in search of employment
33. Lamine (Collects scrap metals)	15/06/2015	Gambia	Gambia – Mali – France	He would like to move to the UK with his family if he does not find a job soon, as he can no longer survive with the money they have now
34. Brian	16/06/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Germany (by visa)	Will stay in Barcelona, as he has a

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
				formal job and his family there
35. Victor (Works in a hospital and studies)	17/06/2015 / Contact via Facebook Messenger	Nigeria	Nigeria – Spain (by visa)	Has moved from Barcelona to London in the winter of 2015 to join his family, as I stayed in contact with him through Facebook
36. Chuks (Currently unemployed)	17/06/2015	Nigeria	Nigeria – Spain (by visa)	Wants to stay in Barcelona, as this feels like home and his wife and kids live there as well
37. Seydou (Works at the Mercabarna)	20/06/2015	Ivory Coast	Ivory Coast – Mali – Spain (asylum)	Wants to stay in Barcelona, as he has a stable, formal job which grants him many advantages
38. Souleymane (Works at the Mercabarna)	20/06/2015	Ivory Coast	Ivory Coast – Mali – Spain (asylum)	Wants to stay in Barcelona, as he has a stable, formal job which grants him many

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
39. Demba	21/06/2015	Mali	Mali – Gabon (Libreville) – flight to Morocco – Spain (Melilla)	advantages He would like to search for a job in another European country, but has a working permit that is only valid for Spain so will probably stay
40. Mame Cheikh (Works in agriculture in Lérida)	27/06/2015	Senegal	Senegal – Spain (by visa)	When he receives his passport (next year probably) he will leave Spain for another European country, but has no concrete plans yet
41. Aziz (Currently unemployed in Lérida)		Burkina Faso		Will go wherever employment takes him
42. Moussa (Currently unemployed in Lérida)	28/06/2015	Senegal	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries) (by boat)	Although he was hired in agriculture, he lost his job the day we met him due to an injury. Moussa would like to move,

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
				but is still awaiting his residence papers after ten years in Spain
43. Idrissa (Works in agriculture in Lérida)	28/06/2015	Senegal	Senegal (Dakar) – Spain (Canaries) (by boat)	Currently travelling throughout Spain for work and will go wherever employment takes him in Europe
44. Toumani (Currently unemployment in Lérida)	29/06/2015	Mali	Mali – Algeria – Morocco (Laayoune) – Spain (Canaries) (overland and by boat)	He feels forced to stay in Spain, as he has a working permit for this country that is not valid for other European countries
45. Habib (Currently unemployed in Lérida)	29/06/2015	Mali	Mali – Algeria – Morocco – flight to Barcelona – the Netherlands (overland and by visa)	He is waiting for his passport, after which he will leave to the UK or the Netherlands, countries where he has friends
46. Karim	29/06/2015	Senegal	Senegal –	Karim is

Name and main occupation	Date of conversation	Origin	Trajectory into Europe	Aspirations for coming five years
(Currently unemployed in Lérida)			Spain (by visa)	"done" with Europe. As soon as he collects some money for a flight to Senegal, he will return to his family
47. Salif (Currently unemployed in Lérida)	29/06/2015	Mali	Mali – France (by visa)	Within five years he would like to return to Mali, as he owns a vast amount of land there where he can work on. He would come back to Europe for holidays
48. Pape (Currently unemployed in Lérida)	29/06/2015	Mali	Mali – Algeria – Morocco – Spain (Melilla)	Enforced immobile due to lack of economic means and documents
49. Djibril (Owns a store in handmade African goods in el Barrio Gótico)	09/03/2015 / Several encounters to chat while visiting his store	Senegal	Senegal – Mali – Cameroon – Italy	Will stay in Barcelona, as he has his family and store there