

A Moving Place

A study about the socio-spatial consequences of West-African mobility and place in Lleida, Spain



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Student: Bram Bos (s4204298)

Supervisor: dr. Joris Schapendonk



**Radboud
University
Nijmegen**

Illustration on cover: Migrants at Plaça del Gramàtics in Lleida, painted by Marjolijn Bos-Zwolsman (2017), based on picture by the author.

**As this thesis covers some sensitive topics (as feelings and irregularity of migrants), I used fictive names for my respondents, in order to guarantee the respondents' privacy. The real names are known by the author.*

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Bram Bos

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Executive summary

Many people in Europe are aware of the high number of migrants who reach Europe, it is even one of the most important contemporary political issues in the European Union. It is clear that Europe is an attractive continent for many Africans, including West-Africans, on which we focus in this thesis. But what can we say about the life of this West-Africans after they have arrived successfully at mainland Europe? Migrants are often seen as numbers, who can cause problems in European countries. However this master thesis strives to get more insight into the personal emotions and feelings of these West-African migrants.

This thesis focuses on the life of West-Africans in the city of Lleida. Lleida is a province city in Catalonia, Spain. Spain became an important and popular immigration country throughout the last two decades. Many migrants can work in the construction and agricultural sector in Spain, as well as in other (informal) economies in tourist areas throughout Spain. Sometimes, migrants work in different places during one year. Migration is often not just a process from place A (home country) to place B (destination), but consist of more complex mobilities and processes. This mobility process and the following complexities is an important topic in this master thesis. But more important: what are social and spatial consequences of this mobility for the place of migrants, in this case Lleida? What are the feelings of migrants concerning their living place or places within Spain? This emotional feeling towards place(s) is known as a sense of place, which also is the most important concept in order to investigate the feeling of West-African migrants in Spain. This sense of place often says something about the extent of integration of migration in new living places.

Hence, the relation/interplay between mobility and (sense of) place is the main topic in this thesis. However, mobility and place often are seen as enemies. For example: more mobility leads to a decrease in the uniqueness of each place; places become the same. People feel no emotional attachment to this (non) place, they do not have a 'sense of place'. At the other hand, due to more mobility, people can also experience more places, and therefore feel multiple sense of places. This multiple sense of place can in particular be the case for migrants. Mobility can not only influence the sense of place and uniqueness of places, but can also influence a place in itself, in a spatial way. The rise of phone shops and money transfer shops in migrant neighbourhoods are examples of such change in place due to the arrival of migrants. It is clear that West-African mobility in one way or another ends in Lleida for some migrants, at least for the respondents in this master thesis. I researched their sense of place and the influence of mobility on the place of Lleida, especially within the specific migrant neighbourhood in Lleida. Therefore I first needed to know the mobility processes of these West-African migrants. It became clear that these mobility processes are often more complex than people think. Many of the West-Africans in Spain are definitely not living in one, singular place, they circulate between different places. This circulation is often between places in which the migrants can work in the agricultural sector. Lleida is one of the most important agricultural regions in Spain. Many migrants therefore can work on the *campo* between the months of May and September in Lleida. After the harvest season comes to an end they go to other places within Spain, to work during different harvest seasons, which is often in the south of Spain. Sometimes they go back to their home country too during a year. Some migrants are living in three or four (or even more) places during one year. The factor work is the most important reason for this circular mobility. Migrants who had a permanent job in Lleida were less mobile than the migrants who were following the harvest season.

The West-African mobility in Spain often ends in Lleida, mainly during the harvest season. This arrival causes some socio-spatial changes in Lleida, but also within the life and social

environment of migrants. In April, there were not many migrants in Lleida and the migrant neighbourhood. Migrants were not out on the streets, and were mainly inside their (quiet) houses. Economic activities were taking place in shops, there was only some drug trafficking on the streets. Within the month of May, more West-African migrants settled in Lleida and prepared for the harvest season. This led to several changes in the month of June. Informal economic activities increased considerably and it was way busier in the neighbourhood in which migrants met each other. There was also more police on the street, in order to prevent problems. Moreover, there was a considerable change in the social environment of migrants. In the month of April it was quiet in for instance their apartments, but during the harvest season there were many more people.

The last topic concerns the role of place in relation to the West-African mobility and the place of Lleida. It became clear that the emotions and feelings of place of migrants were really diffuse. Some liked it to be mobile, others did not. However it is evident that the instrumental use (the place dependence) of the respondents is quite high, since many are merely in Europe to earn money. Their relation with a place is then only built on this instrumental use, the job, and not built on emotions. All of the respondents still felt a high emotional sense of place with their home country in Africa. Although many migrants initially said that they did not like Lleida and other Spanish places they lived in, all of them had some positive experiences in Spanish places. Mostly because of the contacts with other African migrants. They all had some favourite places in Lleida to be, like their houses or a café in the neighbourhood.

The three topics in this thesis had some 'rhythms' which can be seen as a conclusion. First the rhythm of mobility. Many West-Africans have their own one year mobility rhythm, by moving between different Spanish places and their home country in Africa. This mobility rhythm causes a change in the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida. This arrival of migrants in Lleida led to a socio-spatial change in the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida. Informal economic activities, as for instance prostitution and clothes trading, do increase in the migrants neighbourhood during the harvest season. After the harvest season, these activities decrease considerably within the migrant neighbourhood, as a high number of the circular migrants leaves the area. As the sense of place is often based on an instrumental attachment to a place, by having a job, it also is not striking that many migrants had different feelings (sense of places) in several periods. You can mention this a 'rhythm in feelings'. By having a job or visiting their home country, a migrant can feel better in a place.

This brings us to the last concluding point of this master thesis. An important aim was to contribute to the integration debate of West-Africans in Europe. It is clear that these West-African circular migrants in Lleida are, in general, not well integrated within the Spanish or Catalan society. This assumption however is often based on an integration in a singular place, which is associated with integration. But many West-Africans are integrated in their 'life of mobility'; within the economic (agriculture) system. For many of the respondents I spoke it is really common to be mobile and to live in several places during a year, even if this has its negative aspects. Because of their strong (circular) mobility, they might not be speaking Catalan or Spanish perfectly, and therefore are not integrated well within the Spanish or Catalan culture. But does this matter, as their strong mobility is very welcome and needed for the Spanish farmers? Despite that West-African migrants are in general not well integrated in Lleida, they are definitely integrated in the Spanish agricultural economic system, in which they are so desperately needed.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

I am Alain from Senegal and I am 28 years old. I will tell you something about my life in Spain. Today, it is a sunny day in May, 2016. Now, I am in Lleida, a Catalan city. Two years ago I went from Senegal to Spain. I studied in Dakar, at the University. I had many friends there. We played FIFA and football a lot, but nevertheless I decided to go to Europe, to 'buscar la vida', to find a better life. My brother was already living in La Coruna, a place in the North of Spain. It was easy to go there. I reached Spain by plane, by using a tourist visa. This was very easy compared to some other Africans, who need to take a long overland journey in Africa before reaching Europe. It was nice to live in La Coruna, but I needed to earn my own money at a certain point. That is the reason why I went to Valencia and Lleida, to work there on the 'campo'; the agriculture.

I have been in Lleida for some days now. It is my first time here. It is strange. Everything is so new and different here. I want to work in Lleida, in the agriculture, and this month we are trying to find a job. People said to me that many other Africans will arrive this month, just as I did. I am looking forward to this period. It is exciting. I know just one person. His name is Camile and he is also from Senegal. Yesterday, I saw him and he was talking with someone from the Netherlands... At the end of the day, that person also came to me. He said that he liked Akon, the Senegalese-American singer. It was funny, because I was listening to the same songs. Together we listened to a few Akon songs and after that I went home. (Reconstruction story, based on diary, 02/05/2016)

The Dutch person at the end of the reconstructed story of Alain refers to me. Being a student and researcher during my master, I talked a lot with West-Africans in the same setting as displayed in Alain's story. Alain, one of my main respondents in Lleida, is one of many West-Africans who entered Europe in the last years. Their mobility often does not end when they reach Europe, as some migrants cross national borders within Europe as well (Schapendonk, 2010, Nekby, 2006; Toma & Castagnone, 2015). Many African migrants who entered Spain end up having lower skilled jobs in sectors such as agriculture or construction (De Haas, 2008). The city of Lleida in Catalonia is a good example of this mobility of West-Africans. This master thesis will give in-depth insights into West-African mobility and the link between this mobility and the place of Lleida.

1.1 West-African migration to Europe

According to De Haas (2008), irregular migration from Africa to Europe has received extensive attention. Since the 1980s, the migration from people of the Maghreb region (i.e. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauretania) to Spain and Italy has increased because of higher demands for lower skilled labours in those countries (De Haas, 2008; Castagnone, 2011). Since 2000, however, more and more people from the sub-Saharan region have migrated to Europe. Especially young people migrate from West-Africa to Europe, due to unemployment and lack of perspectives in their home country (Kohnert, 2007). An estimation of the International Organization for Migration (2005) states that around 4.6 million Africans are living in the European Union. One third of those 4.6 million registered Africans are from West-African countries. According to Kohnert (2007), many of those West-Africans are living in France (274.538), England (249.720), Germany (154.564) and Italy (137.780), but Spain has also become an important destination for West-Africans in the last decades. The majority of the West-Africans in Europe comes from Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal (Kohnert, 2007). More recent data also shows that Europe is still a popular destination for West-Africans. Many European citizens are

aware of the attractiveness of Europe to West-African migrants, because of all the news messages they see about dying migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. Spain and Italy in particular are popular destinations for West-Africans. Many African migrants enter Spain by crossing the Mediterranean sea illegally, or to enter the Spanish enclave Ceuta or Melilla. To illustrate: in the year of 2015, 11624 people entered Spain in Ceuta or Melilla (RTVE, 2016). The majority of them are from Sub-Saharan countries.



Figure 1. West-Africans who arrive in Spain by boat (El País, 2016).

Furthermore, Eurostat (2015) shows that in 2015 around 68.135 West-Africans applied for asylum in the European Union, compared to 37.650 West-Africans in 2013. However, this number only covers legal migration, whereas there are also migrants who do not officially apply for asylum. Data of Eurostat (2015) point out that, in 2014, about 52.000 West-African 'illegal' migrants were living in Europe. The exact number of illegal migrants, however, is difficult to find.

1.2 Spain as an immigration country

Spain in particular has become an important destination for West-African migrants (Kohnert, 2007). For a long time, Spain was a country of emigration rather than immigration (Paz, 2012; Alonso & Blasco, 2007). Until the 1970s, it was mostly an agricultural society and the economic and living conditions were not very well. Many Spaniards migrated to other Northern-European countries or the United States (Paz, 2012). However, since the 1970s and 1980s, Spain became a more attractive destination for migrants. Many places in Spain are attractive to migrants, like the touristic areas that are mostly situated along the coastline of Spain. There are many (informal) jobs available to the migrants in the agricultural and construction sector, in different parts of Spain. These are all reasons for migrants to come to Spain (Alonso & Blasco, 2007). According to data of the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE), there were about five million migrants living in Spain in the year of 2008 (Gabardo & Santiago, 2008). The foreign population in Spain significantly increased in the last decade, as Figure 2 displays.

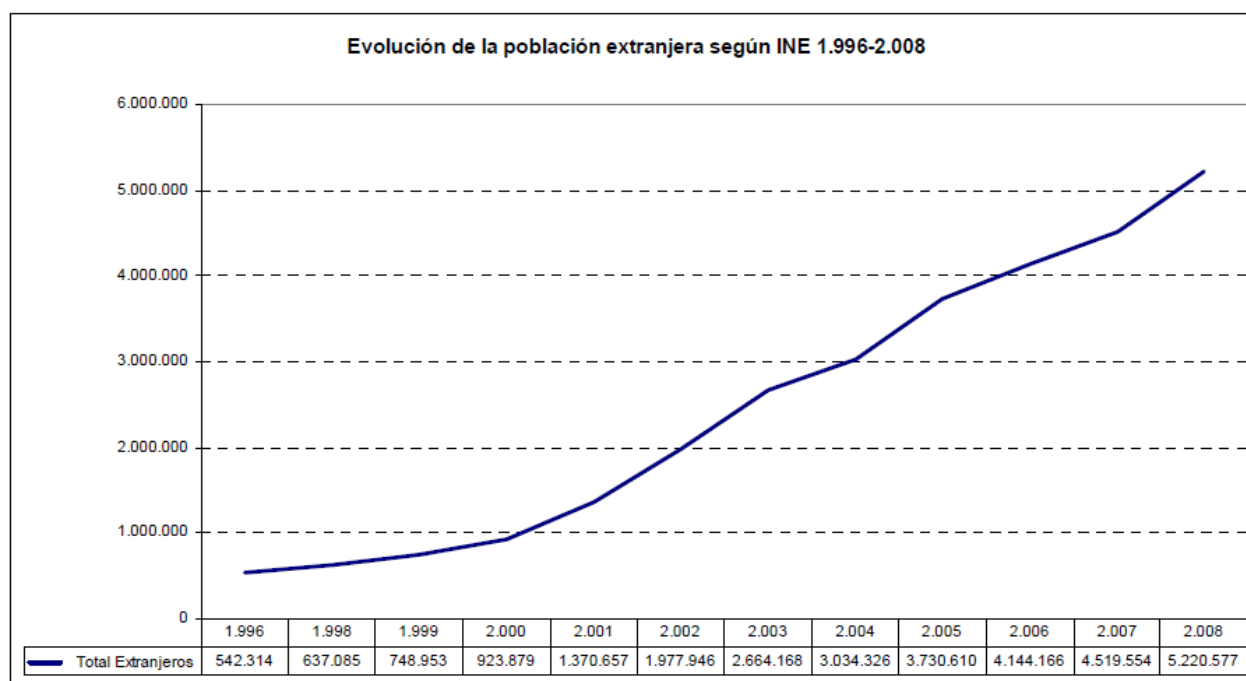


Figure 2. Foreigners in Spain between 1996 and 2008. (Gabardo & Santiago, 2008, p.2).

Moreover, in the year of 2012, Spain counted 5.7 million foreigners. Around 19.2% of those foreigners came from Africa, which is about 1.1 million people. The majority of those 1.1 million Africans were from Morocco, but this also includes persons who have the Moroccan nationality as a second nationality (Romero et al, 2012). From the group of West-Africans, the majority was from Senegal (63.000) and Nigeria (45.000). The number of West-Africans in Spain is still increasing. For instance, in the year of 2015, 3.800 new migrants arrived in Spain by crossing the Mediterranean sea (IOM, 2016). The majority of these boat migrants were from sub-Saharan countries.

Most of the migrant population in Spain, based on data of Spanish municipalities, is living in four areas, namely Catalonia, Andalusia, Madrid and Valencia (Christophes, n.d.). About 70% of the foreigners in Spain lives in one of these four provinces, as Figure 3 shows.

Residentes extranjeros
Distribución por comunidades autónomas

	Población (1)	
	Personas	%
España	3.730.610	100,0
1 Cataluña	798.904	21,4
2 Madrid	780.752	20,9
3 Com. Valenciana	581.985	15,6
4 Andalucía	420.207	11,3
5 Canarias	222.260	6,0
6 Región de Murcia	165.016	4,4
7 Baleares	156.270	4,2
8 Castilla - La Mancha	115.223	3,1
9 Aragón	96.848	2,6
10 Castilla y León	91.318	2,4
11 País Vasco	72.894	2,0
12 Galicia	69.363	1,9
13 Navarra	49.882	1,3
14 La Rioja	31.075	0,8
15 Asturias	26.797	0,7
16 Extremadura	25.341	0,7
17 Cantabria	20.547	0,6
18 Ceuta	3.037	0,1
19 Melilla	2.891	0,1

Figure 3. Division by regions of foreign people in Spain (Christophes, n.d., p.96). (*Residentes extranjeros* = foreigners, *distribucion por comunidades autonomas* = distribution foreigners by municipalities).

1.3 Catalonia and Lleida

The research for this master thesis took place in the region of Catalonia, in the north-east of Spain. Catalonia has a population size of 7.5 million people (OECD, 2010). Catalonia is one of the most populous regions in Spain, because 16% of the Spanish population is living there. Moreover, Catalonia is one of the most well-developed regions, as almost 19% of the Spanish GDP is earned in Catalonia (OECD, 2010). The GDP per capita in Catalonia is even higher than the European average. The economy in Catalonia is very diversified; most of the people (66.8%) are working in the tertiary sector, but also the manufacturing and agriculture sector are important economic drivers for Catalonia. This strong economic prosperity cannot be seen independent of the migration towards this Spanish region. As displayed in Figure 3, Catalonia is the region in Spain with the highest foreign population. The Catalan population increased due to foreign immigration in the period between 2001 and 2008, despite having a decline in domestic population. In the year of 2008, Catalonia counted about 1.1 million people who were born abroad (OECD, 2010).

Figure 1.1. Population growth and immigration in Catalonia

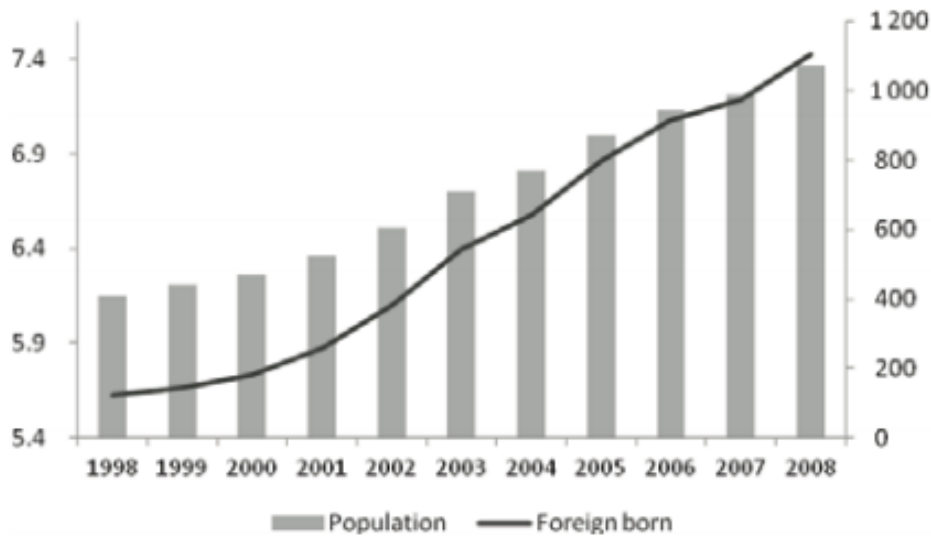


Figure 4. Population and immigration in Catalonia (population in millions at the left, foreign Catalan population to the right (x1000)) (OECD, 2010, p.43).

The data in this thesis was obtained in the city of Lleida, situated in the west of Catalonia. Lleida is the Catalan name, but in Spanish the city is called Lerida (in this thesis the name Lleida will be used). Around 139.000 people are living in the city of Lleida and the population in the region is about 400.000. The city and region of Lleida is an important agricultural and industrial region in Catalonia (OECD, 2010; Fundaci3n BBVA, 2008). For example, 12.1% of the economy in Lleida is based on agriculture. This may seem quite a low number, but it is still two times higher than the average of Spain and five times higher than the average of Catalonia (Fundaci3n BBVA, 2008). Lleida counts many migrants too, also from West-Africa. In the city of Lleida there are 28.000 foreign people, which is 20.2% of the total population (Ortiz, 2015). In the year of 1998, only 1.1% (1.226 people) of the population in Lleida consisted of foreigners. Hence, it can be concluded that many migrants settled in Lleida in the last eighteen years, which is illustrated by Figure 5.

Tabla 1. Evolución de la población extranjera en Lleida, 1998-2014

<i>Año</i>	<i>Población total</i>	<i>Población extranjera</i>	<i>% Extranjeros sobre total</i>
1998	112.207	1.226	1,1
1999	112.207	1.420	1,3
2000	112.194	2.074	1,8
2001	113.040	3.031	2,7
2002	115.000	4.983	4,3
2003	118.035	7.656	6,5
2004	119.935	10.115	8,4
2005	124.709	15.406	12,4
2006	125.677	17.239	13,7
2007	127.314	19.371	15,2
2008	131.731	24.016	18,2
2009	135.919	27.753	20,4
2010	137.387	28.798	21,0
2011	138.416	29.055	21,0
2012	139.834	29.887	21,4
2013	139.809	29.491	21,1
2014	139.176	28.086	20,2

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de INE, Padrón municipal.

Figure 5. Increased foreigners in the city of Lleida (Ortiz, 2015, p. 1903). (*Año* = year, *poblacion extranjera* = foreign population, *extranjeros sobre total* = foreigners of total population).

From these 28.000 foreigners, about 5.000 people are coming from sub-Saharan countries (Ortiz, 2015). Most of them are from Senegal, Nigeria and Gambia (Fundacion BBVA, 2008; Ortiz, 2015). This sub-Saharan population in Lleida also increased in the last decade, as in 2003, there were just around 2.000 sub-Saharans living in Lleida. The number of West-Africans in Lleida might even be higher, as the numbers of Ortiz (2015) are based on registered migrants, who have a residence permission. Including the irregular migrants would enhance the total number of West-Africans in Lleida. Many of the West-African migrants are living in the centre of Lleida, according to Ortiz (2015). More than 50% of the population in this neighbourhood are foreigners and therefore this area is called the ‘migrant neighbourhood’.

1.4 Research aim: ‘Relational’ (sense of) place and West-African mobility in Lleida

Together with five other Human Geography master students I was involved in the VENI-project of Joris Schapendonk in the year of 2015-2016, about the mobility of West-Africans in Catalonia, Lombardy and the Randstad. All students chose their own specific topic for their master thesis, but all were linked to this mobility of West-Africans in the different European regions.

In my thesis, I chose to focus on the relationship and interplay between the term ‘place’ and ‘mobility’ in Catalonia, in the city of Lleida. The two terms are linked to each other (Baerenholdt & Granas, 2008). Mobility can change a place, but a place also can change mobility. If people do not like a place, they might become mobile and decide to visit other places or live in other places. Lleida is a city with many foreigners, also from West-Africa (Ortiz, 2015). In that sense it is interesting to study the interplay between mobility and place there, as the high number of foreigners there might suggest that mobility was or is present (and visible) in Lleida. This thesis will especially look at the West-Africans in Lleida. It attempts to understand the extent to which West-Africans move within and beyond Spain. To what extent do these West-Africans have mobile lives and how is this potential mobility influencing the place of Lleida in a social and spatial way?

The term place first needs some elaboration. In science, the term ‘relational’ place has

obtained more attention in the last decades. According to Massey (2005), the term 'relational place' means that a place is constituted and formed by different processes and built up by different heterogeneous entities. A place can only exist by having relations with other entities, things and places. In this master thesis, the term relational place will be used, because place will be 'related' to the concept of mobility in this thesis. Therefore, Lleida will not be investigated as a place on its own, but as a relational place (i.e. as a place always connected to other places through the mobility of people).

Furthermore, in this master thesis I wanted to focus particularly on the migrant's personal stories about their potential mobile lives and experiences with living in Europe, maybe with living in different places as well. For example, the story of Alain in the introduction: How is it to live in different places such as Senegal, La Coruna, Valencia and Lleida and what are his experiences with this mobility? This personal migrant relation with a place is called a 'place attachment' or 'sense of place'. According to Kohlbacher, Reeger and Schnell (2015), a successful migrant integration is often dependent on this sense of place of a migrant with the new living area. To be able to say something about the West-African migrants' integration in Spain (or Europe), we need to understand their feelings with place(s) in Spain. Luthra, Platt and Salamonska (2014) investigated the life and integration of circular migrations in their living places and they stated:

"Although firmly attached to the destination country labour market, circular and temporary migrants tend to show weaker levels of subjective orientation towards the receiving society and perceptions of its hospitality, and have lower levels of social and residential integration" (Luthra, Platt & Salamonska, 2014, p.5).

Thus, if West-Africans in Lleida are very mobile and circular migrants, they might have less feelings of integration in Lleida, Spain or Europe.

All in all, the aim of this thesis can be formulated as:

To gain in-depth insights into the interplay of mobility and place in the context of West-African migrants in Lleida (Spain), in order to contribute to societal and scientific discussions on migrant integration in the EU.

To achieve this research aim, the next **main question** is formulated:

What are the socio-spatial consequences of the interplay between West-African mobility and place in the city of Lleida?

To answer this main question, there are three sub topics formulated:

What are the immobility and mobility patterns of West-African migrants in Lleida?

Before we can understand the socio-spatial interplay between mobility and place in Lleida, we first need to grasp and analyse this specific West-African mobility. To what extent are West-Africans in Lleida mobile, and if so, what are these mobility patterns? Or are there many migrants in Lleida who are immobile? In any case, all the West-African migrants were mobile in the past, during their journey from Africa to Europe. What were their experiences and trajectories during this journey?

To what extent does the mobility of West-African migrants influence the place of Lleida and the migrant neighbourhood in particular?

This question will give insight into the interplay and coming together of mobility and place in Lleida. In what way is mobility visible in the city of Lleida and especially in the migrant neighbourhood? The migrant neighbourhood is central in this question, because here most of the West-Africans cluster together (Ortiz, 2015). In this part I will describe to what extent this place, the migrant neighbourhood, was changing (or not) during my fieldwork period there (between April-July) and what the role of West-African mobility is in this possible change. This influence will be analysed using three dimensions: social, economic and spatial influence of (West-African) mobility on the place of Lleida.

To what extent do West-African migrants feel a sense of place with Lleida and other places they lived in?

How do mobile persons experience places? How do migrants experience their life in Lleida and the other places they might have lived in? What is their attachment, or non-attachment towards this place? These questions will be answered by using four dimensions: place identity, place dependence (instrumental use), place experiences and sense of community. Investigating this sense of place will give insight into the lifeworld of migrants and into the relation and use between the migrants and Lleida, in order to say something about their integration in Spain/Europe.

1.5 Societal relevance

This master thesis is about the non-instrumental dimensions of migration. Non-instrumental factors are symbols, feelings and emotions and motivations of persons (Dietrich, 2015). People who are migrating also have certain emotions and motivations that shape their being. These emotions, feelings and motivations are very important in this master thesis. This thesis looks deeper and further than only paying attention to the push and pull factors (reasons to migrate) for a migrant to move between different places. The non-instrumental, emotional factors in this thesis have to do with the migrants' feelings about their mobility (their journey from Africa to Europe) and about their living place or places; about their (non)sense of place. This term sense of place/place attachment is quite broad and it covers many topics like identity, community and place experiences in a place (Lewicka, 2011). As Kohlbacher, Reeger & Schnell (2015) stated, sense of place or place attachment feelings say something about the integration of migrants in a new living place (or places). Are migrants happy in their living place in Spain and are they actually willing to integrate within the Spanish society? By giving attention to this emotional aspect, this thesis is about the 'soft side' of migration and mobility. People in the European Union know the news messages about the (West) African migrants who have been entering Europe in the last decades, but this thesis tries to explicate migrant stories and thoughts. Migrants are not just a number, but they get a voice in this thesis.

This thesis is socially relevant, because it pays attention to this soft side of migration, about the (non) sense of place(s). It also contributes to the discussion about integration of (West-African) migrants in the European Union, in this case within Spain; within Lleida. By investigating the sense of place and mobility of West-Africans in Lleida, I do not only contribute to the integration debate of migrants within Europe, but also to a change in the stereotypical image of African migrants which some people in Spain have. This is underpinned by a study of the United Nations (UN). The United Nations noticed xenophobia and intolerance among Spanish citizens towards migrants. Especially

vulnerable groups, like illegal migrants, are confronted with this xenophobia and intolerance (UN, 2013). The UN also perceived a negative stereotype of migrants in the Spanish media. This is also made clear in a paper by Checa and Arjona (2011). They said:

“Consequently, Spaniards believe that the continual arrival of foreigners has a negative effect on the national culture, and money should not be allotted to their integration, nor should they be legalized” (Checa & Arjona, 2011, p.146).

Furthermore, data collected by Checa and Arjona (2011) shows that the hostility towards immigrants in Spain has increased over a 10-year period. In addition, the role of the Spanish media is momentous in forming the images Spanish people have of immigrants. In the Spanish media, words like ‘migration invasion’, ‘avalanche’ and ‘wave’ are often used. Because of this, Spanish citizens sooner see the downside of immigration. Immigration is then seen as a problem rather than a modern phenomenon or as a challenge for modern society (Checa & Arjona, 2011).

This thesis may initiate a change in these stereotypical thoughts by gaining insight into the complexity of the life of migrants in Europe/Spain. For instance, by investigating personal migrants’ stories concerning mobility and sense of place, we understand the potential problems and emotions better which migrants may face during their stay in Spain and Europe. As a result of those personal, in-depth stories, we can also understand their social integration within Spain and Europe better. This might lead to a change in the way people in Spain see these migrants.

1.6 Scientific relevance

Combining mobility and place

This master thesis contributes to geographical discussions on the relation between mobility and place. The terms mobility and place first needs some explanation, so we can understand the added value of this master thesis concerning this two concepts.

Firstly, the term ‘relational places’ was introduced by Massey (2005) as places that only exist in a wider range of connections, intersections, interplays with other entities. This relational place approach is being used more and more in science and this master thesis builds further on that idea. People are coming or ‘thrown’ together in places, but sometimes they are also involved in other practices at the same time, like mobility or migration (Massey 2005; Cresswell, 2006). Therefore, places are not just containers in which things occur separately (Massey, 2005), but people/things/places are constantly in intersection and involved in multiple processes of ‘construction’ and ‘negotiation’ (Bærenholdt & Granås, 2008). Before the term ‘relational place’ arose, places were seen as bounded entities.

Secondly, not only places were investigated as bounded entities, but mobility was often seen as a fixed and bounded entity as well. Migration scientists often looked to migration effects in a singular, fixed place (Adey, 2010). They investigated economic and social effects in a place, caused by migration, but rarely looked to the mobility process in itself and the movement of people and trajectories among such journeys and migration processes. Consequently, these scientists supposed that migration is just a process from place A to B; to a certain destination. However, we now live in a modern, mobile era (Adey, 2010), in which it is more difficult to grasp mobility in such a way and just look at a specific located place. It is clear that in this modern age, people are more and more mobile and live in more various places (Relph, 2008; Adey, 2010). People are moving around or visiting

places much more easily. Therefore this mobility (process) in itself is an important topic to investigate (Adey, 2010).

This master contributes to both the relational place debate, by understanding the place attachments of West-Africans, and to the mobility debate of West-Africans, by understanding their mobility and their mobility trajectories. However, this master thesis goes one step further than that. If places are relational places, and the mobility process in itself also has become more important and less fixed, it is also interesting and important to understand and investigate the relation between these two concepts; between mobility and place. These concepts are often investigated separately and the terms mobility and place have often been seen as enemies (Bærenholdt & Granås, 2008; Cresswell, 2006). Cresswell (2006) describes this hostility between the terms mobility and place:

“Rather than being evidence for a non-ideal arrangement of spaces (as in spatial science), mobility is suspicious because it threatens the quite explicit moral character of place—threatening to undo it” (Cresswell, 2006, p.32).

Hence, the authenticity of places, mentioned by Relph (2008) and Arefi (1999), can disappear because of growing mobility, which is an important reason for seeing the terms place and mobility as enemies. This master thesis does not take this hostility between mobility and place as a starting point, but tries to grasp the interplay between these two concepts. It might be that mobility and place have a positive influence on each other, instead of being enemies. For instance: being on several places also can cause for broader and more place experiences, which not only are negative experiences. If there is a relation between mobility and place, how exactly does it look and how do these concepts come together in Lleida? Furthermore, this master thesis will take a look at these concepts in a social and spatial way, as displayed in the main question. As Bærenholdt and Granås (2008) described it:

“The social sciences need to acknowledge the ambivalence and contradictions involved in these ways of life as something that has always been present and has now taken other forms..... Being along paths and routes of travel, between and across significant places, mobility and place come together in people’s practices” (Bærenholdt & Granås, 2008, p.8).

Hence, the coming together of mobility and place in people’s practices is an important factor in this thesis.

Sense of place and migration

This master thesis is also scientifically relevant concerning the contribution to the sense of place or place attachment debate in migration studies. Pascual-de-Sans is an important author on the topic of sense of place and migration. He states that it is important to study sense of place in the migration debate (Pascual-de-Sans, 2004). Every migrant has had an experience with being mobile (i.e. their journey from home country to new living country) and therefore with living in different places. Because of that, they have diffuse experiences with different places. This is an interesting fact in relation to sense of place, since it might have an influence on the sense of place of a person. According to Pascual-de-Sans (2004), the study of mobility is inseparable from the study of permanence, of sense of place:

“In this context, it is essential to look at the role of place in migration. It would offer an overall understanding of the bonds established by people –individually and collectively – with the places where they live and lived, through which they pass, about which they think”. (Pascual-de-Sans, 2004, p.350).

This thesis looks at the role of place in migration. The term transnationalism is often used in migration studies to describe the ability of migrants to develop and maintain (social) relations with both their place of living and their home country (Vertovec, 2001). Therefore, these migrants may experience transnational place attachments or sense of places (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). Migrants are living in networks that connect both their home country and place of living. As a result of that, some migrants are able to live dual lives and therefore experience dual sense of places (Vertovec, 2001). In other words: their sense of place can be bi-local. Although much attention has been paid to this bi-local sense of places (transnational lives), what can be said about more complex sense of places, based on more complex mobilities? For instance, some persons have lived in more than two places being a circular migrant and they can therefore experience a sense of place with more than two places, which is called a multiple place attachment or multiple sense of place. Manzo and Devine-Wright (2014) state that attachment studies almost always describe or investigate a single bond people have with a place, instead of paying attention to probable multiple sense of places. By conducting this research, I do not only pay attention to the singular place attachment of West-African, but also to this potential multiple sense of places. Respondents in this master thesis may have lived in different places (maybe more than two places) and perhaps they maintain relations with more than two places at the same time. By combining multiple sense of places with migration, I contribute to a wider debate concerning this topic.

Chapter 2: Relationality, mobility and sense of place

This chapter aims to explicate the contents of these concepts further: West-African mobility, West-African sense of place and the interplay between these two concepts. The starting point of this theoretical chapter is to display the way we see and use the term place in this thesis (part 2.1). After that, the term sense of places is described in part 2.2. The chapter ends with descriptions in the literature about the interplay between mobility and place.

2.1 'Open places'

During the last decades there has been an ongoing discussion in geographical and sociological literature about the approach of the term place. This discussion is mainly about the difference between the approach of spaces as open versus closed entities. In the 1960s and 1970s, scientists such as Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) and Edward Relph (1976) described the term place often as bounded; as given. According to them, a place is a unique entity, with its own identity and historical continuity. As a result of that, a place, for example a living place, is stable (Lewicka, 2011). However, around the 1990s, there came more awareness of the openness of places in the world, which was partly driven by increased mobility (Relph, 1976; 2008). Scientists such as Doreen Massey and David Harvey defined place as 'open crossroads', in which things come together, and which is a meeting place for diffuse relations (Massey 2005; Harvey, 1996; Milligan, 1998). They introduced the term 'relational places'. Doreen Massey described this relationality of places in her book *For Spaces* (Massey, 2005). The term 'relational place' refers to a place that is constituted and formed by different processes and built up by different heterogeneous entities (Massey, 2005). Doreen Massey states that places and spaces only consist *through* its relations with other entities. If these relations would not exist, the space or place would not exist either. These relations can be natural, social, political, economic and cultural. The interaction between these processes are what makes a place. These interactions can be global (think of globalization processes), but can also take place on a tiny, very specific scale, like local cultural elements. However, a place is not only determined by one relation, but always by more than one relation at the same time, which is called the multiplicity of relations. As Massey (1994) said:

"The 'spatial' then, it is argued here, can be seen as constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales, from the global reach of finance and telecommunications, through the geography of the tentacles of national political power, to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household and the workplace" (Massey, 1994, p.4).

These processes or relations exist simultaneously. A place or space is never ending, because it only exists by means of relations and relations are 'processual'; constantly in process. Therefore, places and places are constantly under construction and they are never finished or closed. Sometimes, specific relations disappear, while at the same time new ones appear. Hence, according to Massey (2005), named spaces, such as London or Newcastle, do not have a permanent essence, but are changing constantly. If you choose this relational place approach, this would also be the case for Lleida. The place of Lleida is then not permanent, but changing constantly and driven by relational processes. When studying the interplay between mobility and place in Lleida, it is important to be aware of this relationality. The work of Massey (2005) is quite philosophical and epistemological and

less methodologically underpinned. That also is the main point of critique on her work. As Pierce, Martin and Murphy (2010) state:

“Her project is primarily epistemological, focusing on spatial thinking, despite its simultaneous ontological contributions to theorising place; she does not always offer a great deal of guidance for translating her stimulating metaphorical vocabulary into an operational, empirical research methodology” (Pierce, Martin & Murphy, 2010, p.58).

When reading the literature concerning the relational place approach, I can understand this critique. However, when studying the interplay between mobility and place in Lleida, it is important to be aware of the openness of places. The relational place approach is also important to keep in mind when studying the literature of place attachment/sense of place, which will be described in the next part.

2.2 Sense of place

The potential social consequences in Lleida concerning the interplay between mobility and West-African mobility are investigated using the term place attachment: the bonding of people to places (Altman & Low, 1992). Another word for this place attachment is sense of place. The terms place attachment and sense of place are often used interchangeably. However, some scientists use the term place attachment as a dimension of sense of place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Lewicka, 2011). Within this master thesis I also use place attachment as a dimension of sense of place and the term sense of place as the central point. As already mentioned in the introduction (part 1.4) successful migrant integration depends on the sense of place of a migrant (Kohlbacher, Reeger & Schnell, 2015). But what is this sense of place exactly, how can you ‘measure’ it and how has the term relationality, as described in part 2.1, influenced this concept in the recent years?

In the last two decades, place-related studies and journal publications increased considerably. The term place and sense of place has become more popular in sociology, environmental psychology and geography (Lewicka, 2011). Place-related studies were first done in the 1970s by human geographers such as Relph (1976), Tuan (1977; 1979) and Seamon (1980). Their work was mainly about the difference between space and place. It is Yi-Fu Tuan (1977; 1979) who introduced the term sense of place. He stated that a person can develop or get a sense of place for a certain place because of (emotional) experiences with that place, which could be positive or negative (Tuan, 1979). Furthermore, Yi-Fu Tuan (1979) made a distinction between place and space. Space is just a space without emotional bonding for a person. Space can become a place, when an individual is emotionally attached to that specific place.

Not only place experiences contribute to a sense of place. According to Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) and Bramstom, Chipeur and Pretty (2003), a sense of place is ‘created’ by four things: place attachment, place identity, place dependence and sense of community. The last dimension, sense of community, was added by Bramstom et al. (2003). To measure or investigate the sense of place of West-African migrants in Lleida, I made use of these dimensions. I will explicate them now:

Place attachment

Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) take the term place attachment in itself as a dimension of sense of place. In doing so, they make use of the definition of place attachment by Fried (2000). He stated that the place attachment of a person consists of meaningful and emotional experiences of a person in a certain place. A person will develop place attachment, because of experiences and (personal) relationships in places. On the other, if a person experiences negative events in a place, he or she will not develop place attachment. Additionally, Yi-Fu Tuan (1979) mentioned the importance of (particularly emotional) experiences of a person in a place to develop a sense of place. Positive experiences can contribute to a sense of place, whereas negative experiences can contribute to an absence of sense of place, which can be called negative place attachment. However, not much attention is paid to these negative place attachments in literature (Lewicka, 2011; Manzo, 2003). The term place attachment is often associated with positivity. But it is understandable that places can also become meaningful due to negative, tragic experiences (Jeremy & Robinson, 1989), which can be described as a negative place attachment or sense of place. The term non-place (experience) was introduced in the 1990s (Augé, 1995). This means that the meaning of places, positive and negative, has disappeared in some way due to the rise of modernity. Place attachments are lost because of more modern technologies and mobility. Places then become non-places, like highways or airports for example (Arefi, 1999; Buchanan, 1999). These places have all become the same and therefore have no authentic meaning for persons. When studying the sense of place of West-Africans in Lleida it is important to be aware of these different place attachments (negative and positive) and non-place (experiences).

Hence, experiences (either positive or negative) are an important reason for developing place attachment, but the concept of time is also part of the dimension of place attachment. The time a migrant has spent in a certain place might influence their sense of place. This is underpinned by Jorgensen & Stedman (2001). The longer a person has been living in a certain place, the more likely it is that such a person experiences a sense of place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Stedman, 2006).

Place identity

The term place identity was introduced by Harold Prohansky (1978). According to him, a place identity is:

“A sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of, broadly conceived, cognition about the physical world in which the individual lives” (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983, p. 59).

Place identity is about the relation between an individual and the psychical and social environment. It has to do with personal feelings, values, goals, beliefs and preferences (Prohansky, 1978). A person can feel fine and have a sense of place within a certain place because he or she has the same norms, values and habitats as the other inhabitants in their living place. However, a person can also find his or her identity in a natural landscape, as Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) found in their study. Over the last years, many other scientists came with a definition of place identity. Roberta Feldman is one of those scientists. She (1990) states that place identity is about behaviour, norms, values and attitudes of an individual with relation to their place of living. Especially the term behaviour is new in comparison to the thought of Prohansky (1978). According to Feldman, a place identity means a feeling of home, a feeling of comfort and the feeling of being yourself in a place (Feldman, 1990). Can

you as an individual 'be yourself' in your place of living? Or do you have the feeling that you should adapt to your environment?

Manzo & Devine-Wright (2014) state that because of interactions with other persons, an individual can be a part of a community and identity. The terms place identity and place attachment influence each other, because having special experiences can make a person feel better in certain places and identities. How is this place identity for West-African migrants? Being mobile also means facing different identities and cultures. To which identity/identities do they feel attached? Moreover, attachment with the culture and identity in a (new) living place are important factors for a migrant's sense of place (Ahmad, Castaneda, Fortier & Sheller, 2003). The question is in what way this is also the case for West-Africans in Lleida. What is their identity and their feeling with the Spanish/Catalan society? Do they, for instance, still strongly identify with their home country in African or do they already feel like an inhabitant of Spain?

Place dependence

Place attachment and place identity are about the feelings and experiences individuals have in a certain place. The dimension of place dependence, however, covers the *instrumental* use of a place; the instrumental bond of people with places (Rogers, 1984). Place dependence is about the dependency of a person to reach his or her living goals in a living place. Jorgensen & Stedman (2001) define place dependence as:

"Thus, place dependence concerns how well a setting serves goal achievement given an existing range of alternatives ('how does this setting compare to others for what I like to do?')" (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001, p.234).

Dependent place relations are often based on a job and not influenced by mental or emotional connections, as Cross (2001) described. Place dependence is about the functional meaning of a place for an individual, also in comparison with other living places. For instance, is an individual dependent on a place to earn their money or to perform their hobbies there? If a migrant gets the feeling that in other places they will have more opportunities to reach their living goals, the chance that they become mobile will increase, according to Manzo & Devine-Wright (2014).

Sense of community

This term is not used by Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) to measure the sense of place of a person. However, Bramstom et al. (2003) added the dimension of sense of community to measure the sense of place. According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), sense of community is:

"A feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.9).

This sense of community is largely based on identity and personal contacts and by sharing the same culture as other community members. As the place identity dimension already covers the cultural and identical aspects of persons in a living place, the term sense of community in this thesis particularly describes personal contacts. Does a migrant have many personal relationships in a place? Does a migrant really feel part of a community? For many persons, a sense of being part of a community is a very important reason to stay in a certain place (Lewicka, 2011). Concerning the place

attachment of migrants, Ahmad et al. (2003) also stated that a diaspora organisation or community contributes to sense of place in a new living area for migrants. By being part of a diaspora organisation, a migrant can feel part of a group within a new living area. This diaspora communities often consist of people with the same nationality, but naturally a migrant can also have a sense of community with people of other nationalities in their new place of living.

2.3 Mobility and Place

In this master thesis, the terms mobility and place are being investigated as related concepts instead of enemies. What is known in the literature about this relation? If we assume this relation between mobility and place exist, we see that mobility makes and influences places, but that places also 'facilitate' mobility. As this master thesis strives to grasp the socio-spatial consequences of the relation between mobility and place in Lleida, we also need to know what has already been investigated on this topic.

Influence of mobility on place

As explicated in the scientific relevance (part 1.6), mobility and place are often seen as enemies (Cresswell, 2006). Kirsten Simonsen (2008) underpins this by claiming that because of more and easier mobility possibilities for people, erosion of place is taking place. More and more of our lives take place in places that could be anywhere; that look, feel, sound and smell the same. The unique part of each place has sometimes disappeared, causing some to become non-places (Augé, 1995). People do not feel emotional connected to those non-places anymore. As Mahyar Arefi (1999) said:

"Modernism disrupts the emotional attachment to place. Implicitly, sense of place spawns the seeds of placelessness" (Arefi, 1999, p.184).

Edward Relph (2008) directly made a connection between these non-places (he calls it inauthenticity of place) and mobility, as easier mobility makes these non-place experiences possible. In that sense mobility has a negative influence on the place experiences of people; mobility leads to diminishing (emotional) sense of places. This assumption, namely that mobility and (sense of) place are enemies, also has positive implications. Being mobile means more place experiences, which may lead to more place attachments; a multiple sense of place (McIntyre, McHugh & Williams, 2006; Pascual-de-Sans, 2004). Migrants can have a multiple sense of place by living in several places. Without being mobile, having such multiple sense of place is not possible.

Being more mobile can also have a social consequence for migrants. As Schapendonk (2012) stated before, this physical mobility of migrants leads to a constant change in the social place of a migrant in social networks. Among other things, being mobile means being mobile in your social network (Poros, 2008). Mobility has a constant influence on a migrant's place(s) in a community. The migrant's social network is dynamic too, as they are evolving during the migration process/journey (Cummings, Pacitto, Lauro & Foresti, 2015). Strong former ties can become less strong by moving to other places, whereas at the same time new contacts in new places can become strong ties.

Changing the way of place meaning and place experiences (i.e. multiple sense of places and non-places) and changing places in social networks are social consequences of the influence of mobility on place. Mobility can also have an influence on the space itself, which will be investigated in Lleida as well. How can mobility change a place spatially, for example a neighbourhood? Some cities, or neighbourhoods, changed spatially by the arrival of migrants. That is the case in, for instance, migration hubs in Africa, such as Gao (Mali), Kano (Nigeria) and Agadez (Niger). These are

places on well-known migrant routes from West-Africa to Europe and changed over time because of the presence of migrants (Schapendonk, 2012). In such migration hubs migration-related economies have grown, with smugglers, cyber cafés and phone houses. Brachet (2005) gave an example of a spatial change in a place, driven by migration. He stated that Dirkou, a place in the north of Niger, has mutated from a small village to a big city, as an effect of growing migration from sub-Saharan countries towards North-Africa and Europe. Public services and police stations, for example, increased in Dirkou. But are such economic and spatial changes, driven by mobility, also visible in European cities? A nice example is the city of Genoa, Italy. The central historical neighbourhood has changed drastically since migrants from first South-America, but later on from Africa, settled in the historic neighbourhood (Scarpa, 2016; DeLuca, 2012). Former Italian shops (with traditional local food) in this city centre, especially in the part Sottoripa, were replaced by Moroccan and other African shops, who sell kebab or cheap Chinese products. Furthermore, many Africans, especially Senegalese migrants, contributed to the rise of the informal economy in Genoa (DeLuca, 2012), where Africans are selling sunglasses and umbrellas on the streets. Hence, migrants in Genoa caused a change in the economic landscapes in specific neighbourhoods within the city. Not only the economy changes in neighbourhoods with a relatively high number of migrants, police enforcement and prevention can also increase in such migrant neighbourhoods, as a study of Davies and Fagan (2012) of cities in the United States displays. These are just some examples of how mobility can change a place in an economic and spatial way.

Influence place on mobility

The examples above show how mobility (mainly migration) can change a place in a social and spatial way. Mobility and place, however, do influence and construct each other. In other words, place also facilitates or discourages mobility.

What is the role of place in becoming mobile? According to Martin van der Velde and Ton van Naerssen (2011), people need to overcome three ‘thresholds’ before becoming mobile in a place: a mental, locational and trajectory threshold. The mental threshold is about the mental differences between the current living place and destination. The social network or social infrastructure of a person in a place is important in this threshold. If a person feels (mentally) attached to a place outside their place of living (which might be across the border), they may eventually become mobile and decide to migrate. Van der Velde and Van Naerssen (2011; 2015) state that a lack of a sense of place (and a sense of place with another place) may be a reason for persons to become mobile and migrate:

“The fact that family members and friends live on the other side of the border will contribute to the creation of a migrant feeling of ‘home far away from home’ or of a ‘here’ in the ‘there’”
(Van der Velde & Van Naerssen, 2011, p.221).

Transnational or diaspora communities can contribute to such sense of place with places far away (Faist, 2000). People ‘back home’ might be triggered by stories of family members or friends who are living in foreign countries, which eventually leads to their mobility. This social network is one of the most important factors of the mental threshold approach. After this mental threshold has been dealt with, the locational threshold needs to be overcome. According to the authors, this concerns a rational process between the advantages and disadvantages of the place of origin and the place of destination (Van der Velde & Van Naerssen, 2015). These locational factors are comparable to the

instrumental place factors (think of economic opportunities in a place), which are be similar to the place dependence dimension (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). If a person has a good job in a certain place, the chance he or she becomes mobile will decrease. For instance, sub-Saharan migrants who initially wanted to go to Europe, stayed and settled in North-African countries because of (sometimes unexpected) job opportunities there (De Haas, 2008). But on the other hand, if persons have the feeling there are better economic opportunities in other places, the chance they become mobile increases. The last threshold is the trajectory threshold. Once they are mobile, migrants may face problems during their journey and mobility. They lose money or contacts in places during their journey. This may influence further mobility. This also counts for the infrastructure and transport opportunities in a certain place. If there are several (good and cheap) transport opportunities in a city (like a train station) for migrants, the chance that they will move further will be much bigger (Schapendonk, 2012), which is especially the case in transit cities during migrant journeys. But also the social infrastructure is important in such places. Migrants might meet new people in new places, like smugglers or employers who can give them a job, who contribute to further mobility or immobility.

2.4 Concluding remarks

In this thesis, places are seen as 'open' and relational places. The rise of relationality also has its influence on the sense of place debate. The way that people experience a place has changed, because of increasing incomes, increased mobility and better technological conditions (Relph, 2008). People are less bound to a place than before. People can feel attached to places far away, that they might not even visit (Relph, 2008). Being more mobile also means having more place experiences, as Pascual-de-Sans (2004) states:

"The impact of new places often seems to erase the presence of former places; however, the latter do remain, as layers hidden under the newer contributions. The old layers are still there, and are the foundations upon which the newer ones are built" (Pascual-de-Sans, 2004, p.350).

Hence, people's experiences in places are always dependent on the former place experiences elsewhere. When studying the sense of place of West-Africans in Lleida, it is important to be aware of this relational sense of places.

This (relational) sense of place in itself is investigated by the four dimensions explained in part 2.2. The place attachment is investigated by paying attention to both positive and negative experiences and feelings of West-Africans in Lleida. Are they happy, are they feeling comfortable and emotionally connected to Lleida? What kind of things and places do they like or dislike? The place identity dimension was analysed by asking about norms, values and culture in Lleida, also concerning the potential differences between the culture in Spain and their home country in Africa. How do the West-Africans feel, more European or African? Can they be who they want to be in Lleida? The place dependence dimension concerns the extent of the instrumental use of Lleida (Rogers, 1984). What is the migrants' aim by being in Lleida? Therefore, I paid attention to the migrants' jobs, as this might be an important instrumental use of places. This dimension is mainly about the utility of Lleida in comparison to the possibilities of other potential living places. The sense of community dimension mainly pays attention towards the personal relationships of migrants in Lleida. Does the migrant have many friends or family members in Lleida? And if so, are these friends Africans too or do they come from Lleida itself? A diaspora, or another migrant organisation like a church or mosque, can also be an important reason for a migrant to have a sense of place in a new country (Ahmad et al.

2003). Therefore I asked migrants about their community feeling among other Africans in Lleida.

As explained in this chapter, mobility and place influence each other in several ways. I have chosen to use three indicators to grasp the interplay between mobility and place in Lleida: the economic, social and spatial impact of mobility on Lleida. To what extent is Lleida changing (or has it changed) in a social, economic and spatial way, driven by mobility? The economic dimension focuses on the economic activities in Lleida, including migrants' shops and presence or absence of informal activities. The social dimension focuses on the (change of) social connections, activities and experiences of migrants in their living place(s). In line with this social and economic changes, I will also take a look at the spatial impact of these economic and social indicators. The spatial indicator especially focuses on security (such as presence of police and potential risks), the amount of crowdedness and the ambiance in the migrant neighbourhood. The next chapter will discuss the methodology of investigating these dimensions and indicators of sense of place and mobility in Lleida in more detail.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Ethnography in migrant neighbourhood

The research for this master thesis was conducted using the method of ethnography. Martyn Hammersley described ethnography as follows (2006):

“Ethnography involved actually living in the communities of the people being studied, more or less round the clock, participating in their activities to one degree or another as well as interviewing them, collecting genealogies, drawing maps of the locale, collecting artefacts, and so on” (Hammersley, 2006, p.4).

The basic principal of ethnography is to have direct interaction with the research field and subject (Crang, 2003; Van Hulst, Koster & Vermeulen, 2015). In order to understand the actions of the ‘subject’ in the field, you need to be present in it. Nevertheless, it is important not to get too much involved with the research object, as this can influence the interpretation of the research results. This requires a dynamic attitude from the researcher when doing ethnographic research (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995). In my fieldwork period (which took three months, from April-June), I tried to get involved with the West-African population in Lleida. By being out in the field a lot, I tried to form strong relations with the respondents, in order to understand their life worlds, mobility and sense of places better, as Marcus (1995) advised.

The ethnographic fieldwork took place in the migrant neighbourhood (or *centro historico*) in Lleida, very close to the city centre. The population in this neighbourhood counted 11.000 in 2006 (Gobierno de Espana, n.d.). This area is one of the most historic neighbourhoods of Lleida and as a result of that, the buildings are of low quality. Consequently, the rent prices are quite low in comparison to other parts of Lleida. This leads to the presence of many migrants, West-Africans among others, in Lleida’s city centre. Within the last twenty years, the foreign population in this neighbourhood has increased considerably. In 2014, it made up for more than 50% of the total population as shown in Figure 6 (Ortiz, 2015). This number might even be higher, as it only includes legal inhabitants. The neighbourhood is a popular meeting place for many migrants from outside this neighbourhood.

This migrant neighbourhood of Lleida is considered a deprived area by the Spanish government, as the infrastructural and socio-economic circumstances are generally bad (Gobierno de Espana, n.d.). According reports from the Spanish government, there also are some illegal prostitution activities and drug-related businesses going on in the neighbourhood.

Within this migrant neighbourhood, I was mainly present at three central points: Plaça de Cervantes, Plaça del Gramàtics and Plaça del Dipòsit. I met and spoke to most of my respondents in one of these places. These places are closely situated and I used to walk between them almost every day. They are shown in Figure 6 to 12.

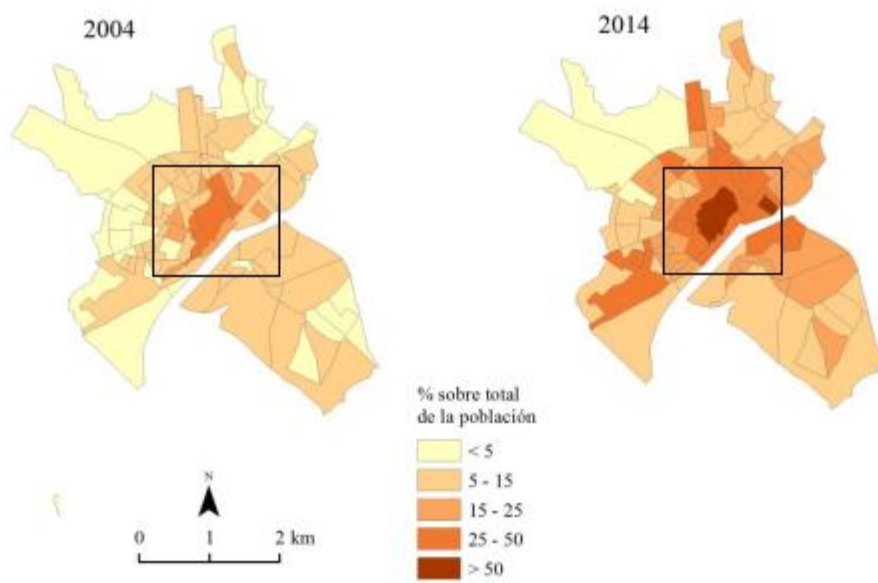


Figure 6. Increased foreign population in migrant neighbourhood Lleida (% of total population) (Ortiz, 2015, p.1906).



Figure 7. Picture from the fieldwork area; migrant neighbourhood (Picture made by author).





Figure 10. Plaça de Cervantes (photo made by the author).



Figure 11. Plaça del Dipòsit (photo made by the author).



Figure 12. *Plaça del Gramàtics* (photo made by the author).

3.2 Approaching respondents and sampling

All respondents in this study were people from West-Africa. As this thesis covers some sensitive topics (i.e. feelings and irregularity of migrants), I used fictive names, in order to guarantee the privacy of the respondents (the real names are known by the author). The majority of them were from Senegal, but I also spoke to people from Gambia, Nigeria and Cameroon (see Appendix 1 for a detailed list of respondents). When approaching these West-Africans, I did not make any distinction between West-African nationalities or gender and neither I did look at the status of the respondent; legal or illegal. In total, I interviewed 31 West-African migrants living in Lleida. I had conversations with many more (an estimated 50), but with these 31 migrants I spoke the most and was able gain an in-depth insight into their lives in Spain and Lleida in particular. Thirty of this 31 respondents were male. During my fieldwork period, I had some struggles approaching women. Some women from the Nigerian church, which I often visited, were not able to have an interview with me due a lack of time (or so they told me). Other women in the migrant neighbourhood were known as prostitutes and I had some doubts about approaching them, as it might have been risky for my own safety. It was a pity I was not able to talk to more women, as it could have given me opportunities to compare results between men and women.

Approaching first respondents

When doing ethnographic fieldwork and research, it is important to be present in the field (Crang, 2003), in this case the migrant neighbourhood. To get access to the West-Africans in Lleida, I wanted to be present in their living area. I immediately went to this neighbourhood in my first days in Lleida, trying to get an image of the neighbourhood and to look for my first respondents as well. After every

fieldwork day I wrote some things down in my diary. The next quote is based on my first day in Lleida:

I started my first day in Lleida by walking to the centro historico of Lleida. It was a strange feeling to be new in a city. I entered the migrant neighbourhood. I expected many Africans, but this was not really the case. After I walked through some empty streets, I entered a square (Plaça del Dipòsit). There were around 20 people, probably West-Africans. I was feeling strange, how could I approach them and how would they react? I was not feeling totally comfortable, but after sitting on a bench for a while, I decided to walk to two persons at Plaça del Gramàtics. I said 'bonjour' and I shook their hands. I asked them (in French) about their nationality and names, which were Adrien and Camile. I said that I was in Lleida for my education and that I was writing a book about the integration of West-Africans. They reacted positive, and they told me some things about their lives, about having no job and their hard circumstances in Spain. At the end I got their mobile phone numbers and we agreed to talk later on in the week again. I felt happy after this first conversation; this could be my first respondents, already on the first day! They were very friendly and open to me, which gave me more confidence and a comfortable feeling. (Based on diary notes, 01/04/2016).

The first fieldwork days were important to adapt to Lleida and to get used to approaching migrants in Lleida, like Adrien and Camile. Sometimes I still felt nervous, but in general I was lucky with the persons I met. On my second day I met a friendly person from Mali, Maurilio, who helped me with finding a Nigerian church, which I would visit almost every Sunday. More importantly, I met Armand from Senegal on April 7th. I will never forget this first encounter, as Armand would become one of my most important respondents during my fieldwork period:

I was at Plaça de Cervantes, this Thursday in April. I saw two, probably older men, sitting in the sun. I went to them to say hello, and I shook their hands. Their names were Armand and Laurent. I asked them if I could ask them some questions about their life in Lleida and Armand immediately said: "Yes, of course, you can ask anything you want, we have time". I did not immediately know what to ask, but I started with general questions about Senegal and Lleida. Armand invited me to sit down on the bench too, between them. It was a special feeling, sitting between two men from Senegal. It is a moment that I will never forget. After 30 minutes, Armand said that he had to go to buy something, but he also gave me his number and he told me that he was at Plaça de Cervantes every day, so I could always meet him there to ask further questions. (Based on diary notes, 07/04/2016).

After these first days, I tried to be present in the field, the migrant neighbourhood, daily. I thought that it was important to see the migrants (and therefore respondents) a lot, as this would help the migrants to trust me. Building this trust-relation is an important feature of doing ethnographic fieldwork (Gobo & Molle, 2017). The first weeks I tried to get and, most importantly, stay in contact with just three people: Camile, Maurilio and Armand. By visiting them almost every day, they were comfortable talking with me and I got to know them very well.

Snowball sampling

Having these first strong contacts, it was very easy to get further access to the West-Africans in Lleida. Many of my respondents were connected to Armand and Camile and they visited the same places (Plaça de Cervantes, Plaça del Dipòsit and Plaça del Gramàtics), just like I did. Mostly, Camile and Armand introduced me to their friends, which really helped me with talking to and interviewing

many other respondents. I got access to 15 respondents, just by having intense contact with Armand and Camile. All of them were from Senegal, and they were all acquainted with each other. When it came to contacting the Nigerians and Cameroons, I also made use of this way of sampling, which is called snowball sampling (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). To illustrate my way of 'reaching' them, I made an overview of all respondents, see Figure 13.

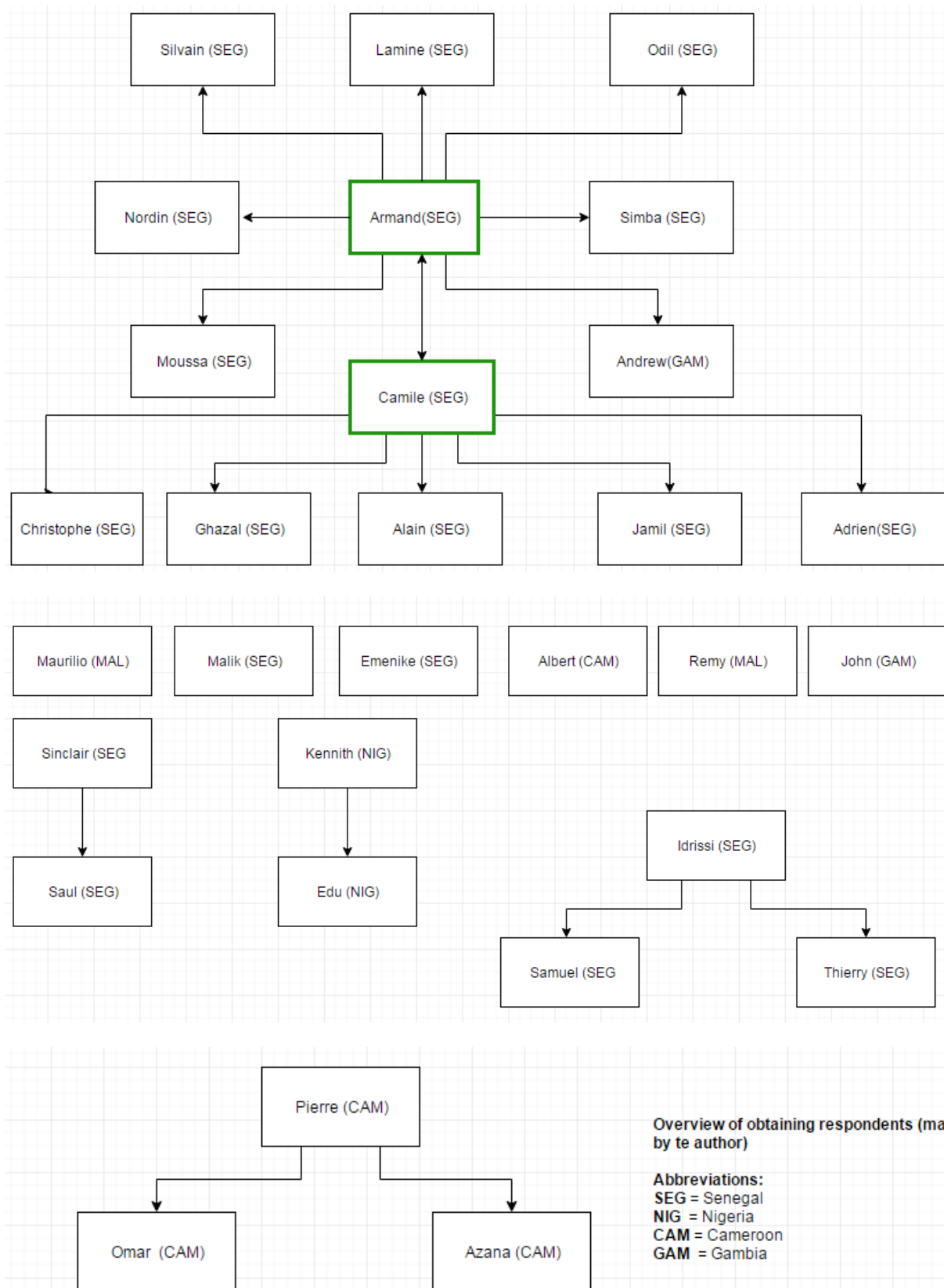


Figure 13. Overview of obtaining respondents (made by the author).

The use of this snowball sampling was really effective during my fieldwork period in Lleida. By having different contacts, I also had access to different groups in Lleida (i.e. people from Senegal, Nigeria and Cameroon). Though this snowball sampling seems good (cheap, simple and cost-efficient) in comparison to other methods (Atkinson & Flint, 2001), it also has some disadvantages. By using the method of snowball sampling, the representativeness and validity of the results might be compromised. The respondents are not randomly drawn and what respondents follow partly depends on the first participants (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Van Meter, 1990). Consequently, respondents often share the same thoughts, as they might be friends or acquaintances (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Another disadvantage is that more hidden persons cannot be part of the sampling, as they are not connected to the social network of your first respondents (Van Meter, 1990). Nevertheless, I think this was the right way to obtain in-depth data from West-Africans in Lleida. Using this method was easy and I could get fast access into the West-African community. I was there for just three and a half months, so I needed to be fast in finding respondents. Furthermore, snowball sampling is very suitable for studying life worlds of groups who are often located outside the mainstream social research, within more 'obscure' situations (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). As this master thesis also concerns terms of illegality and sensitive feelings of migrants, snowball sampling was most suitable for my research as well (Lee, 1993).

Building trust-relation and remaining in contact

Building trust-relations between me and the respondents was very important during my ethnographic fieldwork in Lleida. The majority of my respondents were really open to me, although some were cautious in the beginning. To overcome this, I always just sat beside them first, asking simple questions, like their name or country of origin. Most of the first conversations were about general topics, not about my research, but about football (FC Barcelona and Real Madrid) or music (Akon, Youssouf N'Dour), for instance. These were nice conversations and it helped them not to see me as a researcher. After a while they felt more comfortable and that was when I could ask them about the topics concerning my research. Having trust-relations also made it easy to get access to the social environment (i.e. houses) of some respondents, especially in Armand's case. He invited me several times into his house, where only (seasonal) migrants from Senegal were living. This was very interesting, as it gave me more insight into the influence of (circular) mobility on the place of migrants (see Chapter 5).

Once I had this trust-relation with respondents, it was important to stay in contact with them. In general, I had the mobile phone numbers of almost each respondent. This made it easy to talk to them on WhatsApp or to call them, even when I was at my home. Some respondents called me when they had not seen me in the neighbourhood for a while. The most important thing, however, was to just be physically present and show my face. In the month of June, when I walked through the migrant neighbourhood, I knew and recognized many people and they recognized me. While in the beginning of my fieldwork period I was only talking to some specific people, I was talking to several people on the same day at the end of it, which made these fieldwork days very productive. To illustrate this, I wrote about such a day in June in my diary:

It was a warm day today and many migrants were working on the campo (agriculture). I started my day by buying a fresh cola in the shop of Samuel and Idrissi and I also talked with Samuel for some minutes. I went outside his shop, to sit down in the shadow. Thierry was there too (a man from Mali who I met before), and I talked about his economic activities in the neighbourhood and his future

mobility wishes. I wrote some things down in my mobile phone after these conversations and I ate something. After that, it was already around 5.00 p.m. and I went to Plaça dels Gramàtics. I greeted many people during my walk to that place, like Saul, Malik, Laurent and John, who often are at the same places every day, between the shop of Samuel and the Plaça del Gramàtics. Many people in this neighbourhood know me since I came here ten weeks ago, which is special and nice to experience. I was sitting at Plaça del Gramàtics and many more migrants came to that place at the end of the afternoon. I talked with Camile, Armand, Alain and Christophe, all for about 15 minutes I think. After those conversations I went to a Moroccan shop to buy some tea, together with Armand. I was tired of all the conversations, but I went home satisfied. (Based on diary, 13/06/2016).

This story above shows a normal fieldwork day in June. In this month I was still in contact with Armand and Camile, like I had been all the time I was in Lleida.

3.3 In-depth interviews, small talks and observations

Collecting the data I used three methods to get insight into the interplay between mobility and place in Lleida: in-depth interviews, small talks and observations. In this part I will explicate these research methods which I used in Lleida between April-July 2016.

In-depth interviews and small talks

As the topics of this master thesis are quite detailed and specific, in-depth interviews were the most appropriate manner to collect data in Lleida. I conducted interviews in two different ways: by having in-depth recorded interviews and by having small talks. With four persons (Pierre, Edu, Kelly and Omar) I had a semi-structured, recorded interview. Within those interviews, I discussed several topics, which were their mobility, sense of place, future mobility, the link between these concepts and their integration. The other open interviews were not recorded, but I could make notes during these interviews. I had such interviews with seven of my respondents (Azana, Armand, Remy, Laurent, Sinclair, Alain and Camile) and they were structured the same way as the recorded ones.

The rest of the migrants' data was collected by doing small talks with migrants. Such small talks have been recognized more in social sciences in the recent years. There are several benefits of using small talks in your methodology, one of which having to do with the concept time. According to Thomas, Chataway and Wuyts (1998), interviews should be done in a shorter period of time, nowadays. If you conduct a formal interview, you only talk, for example, with a person for two hours and then you leave and probably do not see each other again. However, by having more frequent small talks with one person, you get more involved with someone and his or her social environment and routines. Furthermore, there is too much focus on control and the structure of your fieldwork, according to Driessen and Jansen (2013). They argue that having small talks can make you more comfortable with the environment of your fieldwork and the local expressions that are used, which makes small-talks an attractive manner of doing ethnographic fieldwork. Furthermore, they state that through small talks you can get an insight into the culture of a respondent, by discovering rituals, jokes, secrets and double meanings in the conversations. Despite the relevance of small talks, this method is still not used very often in social sciences, because researchers doubt whether this method is valuable. First of all, you cannot record the small talks, as they are informal. A second argument against the use of small talks concerns an ethical note (Driessen & Jansen, 2013). For instance, do you tell your respondent your goal of the conversations? According to Driessen (1998), it is important that the people with whom you have a conversation know that they are talking with a

researcher. Despite the disadvantages of using small talks in fieldwork, I often chose to use this method in Lleida. Many of the topics concerning my master thesis were about sensitive things, such as the migrants' mobility (sometimes without papers) and feelings about their lives (integration and identity). Then, the method of small talks is really suitable. By having several informal meetings with migrants, the distance between me as an investigator and the respondents partly disappeared. I used the method of small talks, by visiting the respondents a lot and within each conversation trying to ask them about one specific topic (their mobility, work, sense of place and identity, for instance). At the beginning of every first encounter, I told them that I, being a student, was writing a little book about 'African migrants' integration in Lleida'. After saying that, most of the respondents were really accepting and willing to talk with me. Every small talk conversation took about 15-30 minutes. After such a conversation I walked away and wrote down the most important answers of the respondents, at least the answers concerning my topic. Thereafter, when I arrived at my home, I wrote these things down on my laptop. Hence, after some encounters (a minimum of four meetings with each respondent), I had (almost) all the information I wanted from the respondent. I experienced these small talks as a comfortable way of obtaining data in the migrant neighbourhood. Sometimes I did not feel comfortable to use my notebook and make notes of conversations. When using this notebook, I had the feeling that some migrants might not tell me what they wanted to tell. I think that not using a notebook in these small talks led to more purity of the migrants' answers.

When I came back in the Netherlands, I carefully read all the interviews, and underpinned the most important and relevant quotes concerning. I did not make use of a coding program as *Atlas.ti*. By reading all the interviews in detail, I really was able to pick up the most relevant data in order to answer my research questions.

Observations

Doing observations is also a suitable manner of conducting data when doing ethnographic fieldwork (Whitehead, 2005). Observations can give insights into behaviours, activities, events, objects and emotions of respondents (Whitehead, 2005). Besides interviews and small talks, the method of doing observations was also important during my stay in Lleida, as it helped me in two ways.

Firstly, doing observations helped me to get insight into the potential social and spatial consequences between the terms mobility and place within the migrant neighbourhood. What things in the migrant neighbourhood changed (or did not) during the several moments when I was present there? If this migrant neighbourhood changed, how? And what is the role of mobility in this potential change? This data was just collected by doing observations. Sometimes, I was just sitting in the neighbourhood and looking around me. I wrote these things, the economic and social activities in the neighbourhood, but also the ambiance and crowdedness, down in my mobile phone. I also made several photos of the migrant neighbourhood during my fieldwork period. After a period, such as two months, I could compare the stories in my diary and was able to say something about a possible (spatial and/or economic) change in the neighbourhood.

Secondly, observations helped me to understand the social environment, activities, behaviour and emotions of migrants better. The in-depth interviews and small talks helped me, for the most part, to understand the migrants' stories. However, I felt that doing observations, through visiting their living places and doing the same activities (watching football matches, drinking African coffee, eating together, visiting the mosque and Nigerian church), gave me more awareness and profound insights into their life worlds. Most often, I combined the two methods of doing interviews

(small talks) and observations. For instance, this was the case when I watched a football game together with Maurilio:

Today I had an agreement with Maurilio to watch the match of Barcelona-Real Madrid together. I went with my bicycle to a café called Sportium. I called Maurilio that I had arrived and he came to me. Together we entered the café. There were almost only Africans inside, I did not see any Spaniards, except for the café owners. People were watching the game with a lot of tension, probably because they had a bet on it. Betting on sport matches seems quite popular, as I saw many Africans with bet receipts in their hand. During the match, Maurilio was sometimes talking to me or to other Africans. He really liked football and was rather fanatic during the game (he prefers Barcelona instead of Real). It was a strange feeling to be a white person in a café with mainly Africans, I never experienced this before. Although it was a café, visitors were not drinking a lot, the majority was just visiting the café to watch the game. After the match I went to the house of Maurilio, as he had invited me there. It was a dark house, with two old sofas; the light was not working, he said, because he and his roommates did not have a job now in April. We talked about his family in Mali and he showed me some pictures of his wife and daughters. He became quiet and also emotional, by seeing his daughters on the pictures. We stayed for about 15 minutes in his house, and after that we drunk something in a bar, where we talked about his mobility and experiences in Lleida. (Based on diary, 02/04/2016).

By watching a football match together and visiting his house, I was a little bit part of the life of Maurilio. I experienced an activity he likes to do and I saw the house he had been living in for some months. This helped me to understand his lifeworld, his living area, better. During my fieldwork period in Lleida, I had several days like the one I had had with Maurilio. For instance, I ate together with Armand, Camile and Alain in their house, but I also invited them into my house twice. I also visited the mosque and Nigerian church, as many of my respondents visited those places (especially the mosque). Doing observations was the most important research method during those visits.

3.4 Ethical experiences and limitations

Ethical problems

This way of conducting research also brings some challenges concerning ethical discussions. The building of trust-relations seems quite a good way to investigate the topic in this master thesis, but it also causes some problems. By being strongly related to respondents and becoming friends with them, your research can be influenced. Your closeness to the respondents, can lead to biased information and compromised findings (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003; Kloos, 1969). Within Lleida, I also had some strong relations with respondents, like Camile, Kelly, Alain and especially Armand. An important aspect of doing ethnography is to be dynamic as a researcher and being close to the respondent, but this can also means taking some distance from a respondent. Sometimes, I might have been too close with respondents. When they told me about their lives, about their struggles and dreams, I really felt respect for them. Based on this relationship with my respondents (i.e. friendship), I sometimes felt like giving them something back, especially when some respondents were asking for financial support. This ethical issue is about the dynamic between 'giving and receiving', as Lammers (2005) described it. In other words: Can you help a respondent financially, in

order to get more information of that specific respondent? For me, that was difficult sometimes. During my fieldwork period I decided to support some respondents financially at certain moments, but that was mostly by having a drink in a bar, eating together or buying some small material things for them. As Eugenia Markova (2009) stated, emotional involvement with some respondents is inevitable in doing research on sensitive topics or groups. I definitely faced this emotional involvement. Consequently, I also faced some ethical problems such as giving financial support to respondents or not, which I had to think about during my fieldwork period.

Limitations fieldwork

The first problem I dealt with during this fieldwork period concerns the language which is used. Most of the first interviews were in English or French, but after some weeks I talked more in Spanish. I learned already some Spanish before my departure to Spain, but once in Spain I learned it quite fast, because I talked it a lot with my roommates and other informal contacts. Thus, after five weeks, I was mainly talking in Spanish and English. Although the communication was good in general, it is still a point of critique as using a different language to collect your data can influence the quality of it (Price & Murnan, 2004). Especially when doing qualitative in-depth interviews (which I did), language is very important to understand the thoughts and arguments of respondents. Spanish and English not only were a second language for me, but also for the majority of my respondents, which naturally has an influence on the quality of those conversations and interviews.

Another limitation concerns the use of small talks. Although it has several advantages, it also has some limitations. The most important limitation concerns the 'loss of information'. When having informal interviews and conversations, I did not always write down notes, in order to keep the trust-relation between me and the respondent. Although I wrote down important quotes after those conversations, it was impossible to remember everything. Therefore, some qualitative information has been lost that might have been relevant for my thesis.

The setting of my conducted interviews and small talks might also be a limitation in this thesis. Most of the interviews took place in the migrant neighbourhood itself. Some places in this area were very busy and noisy, which had some influence on the interviews that were conducted there. Sometimes, I had a nice conversation with somebody when suddenly another person interrupted us, which led to the end of the conversation. Furthermore, I had some interviews with respondents while their friends were sitting close to us and could listen to our conversation. Although this sometimes led to nice group discussions, it naturally has its influence on the quality of my personal interviews. A respondent might not have told me all his personal feelings because of the presence of his friends. It is not possible to prove this, but sometimes I really had the feeling that a person did not honestly tell me everything. Although that is understandable, it might have affected the quality of my data.

3.5 Concluding remarks

By combining various research methodologies (observations, in-depth recorded interviews and small talks), I was able to get a good and detailed insight into the lifeworlds of West-Africans in Lleida. The observations helped me to see the spatial and social influence from mobility on the place of Lleida, whereas the (in-depth) interviews gave me the opportunity to get an insight into the migrants' personal feelings in Lleida and their sense of place. I had the feeling that I was an insider within the migrant neighbourhood, as I knew many people during my stay. This might have been the case because I was a migrant too. As Markova (2009) described it:

"In other cases, a researcher can earn their 'insider's' status not only through a shared ethnic origin and language but simply through being a foreigner in a place, a migrant like the subjects of one's research" (Markova, 2009, p.143).

By being new in a country and city, I also experienced a way of being a migrant. Because I stayed in Lleida for a temporal period, I was partly in the same situation as my respondents, although the reason of my stay was quite different than the migrants' reason to be in Lleida. In a way, I was a research object too. This made my research quite unique, because I experienced living in Lleida for a short time, including building up social relations and feelings concerning the city, just like the (seasonal) migrants did. Respondents were also open to me, maybe because of the fact that I was a foreigner too. Although the distance between researcher and respondent was sometimes vague, which could be a downside of my research method, these social relations also contributed to the quality of my data and my personal experiences. Furthermore, this study gave me more insight into the lives of people that I had never encountered before; persons which I had only seen on the (dreadful) news messages in the Netherlands. By hearing their personal stories and seeing their lifeworlds, I was able to get close to these persons, which definitely was an extraordinary experience in my life.

Chapter 4: Analysing mobility of West-African migrants in Lleida

Chapter 1 of this thesis stated that Spain has changed from an emigration country to an immigration country in the last three decades (Alonso & Blasco, 2007). All the West-African respondents in this master thesis had had an experience with a journey from their home country to Spain, the immigration. But also within Spain and Europe they might have been mobile and have had several experiences with mobility or immobility. These mobilities of West-African migrants are important in order to grasp the sense of places of migrants in Lleida (and therefore the interplay between mobility and place). Hence, the experiences, reasons and trajectories of their mobility and journeys all have influence on the migrants' landing, stay and place experience within Lleida, which is based on the relational approach of the place of Lleida. Their behaviour in and relation with Lleida is influenced by this mobility. In other words: What kind of aspirations, experiences and (social) networks do they take with them when reaching Lleida? Therefore it is important to get an insight into the mobilities of my respondents in Lleida first. What are the mobilities of these migrants and what can be said about their experiences during their journeys? The main goal in this chapter is to write down the different forms of migrant mobilities to reach Europe and also about the mobilities within Europe itself.

4.1 Mobility towards Europe

One of the first topics of each conversation with my respondents was about the journey from their home country in Africa to Spain. How did they experience their journey and which routes did they take to reach Europe? After my conversations it became clear that I could make a distinction between two ways of reaching Europe: respondents who entered Spain by plane using a valid visa (first part) or by crossing the Atlantic Ocean or Mediterranean Sea illegally, without a visa card (second part).

4.1.1 Using visa and obtaining residence permission

The majority (seventeen out of 31) of my respondents reached Europe in a legal way, by using a visa. Before we will display some personal migrant stories, it is important to notice that there are different visa for Europe, which is based on the Schengen treaty and Schengen visa info (2016): tourist visa, transit visa, business visa, student visa, working visa and national visa for family reunion. A visa, except for the transit visa, is valid for 90 days. After that period you need to apply for a residence permission or permit. If you refuse, you will be in Europe illegally (Vickstrom, 2014). Seventeen (out of 31) respondents used a tourist (13), national (2) or student (2) visa to enter Europe. I did not encounter persons who made use of the business, transit or working visa. Some of my respondents went to France with their visa, but the majority just went immediately to Spain by plane. The people with a tourist visa all overstayed their visa and were at a certain moment illegal in Spain. The other four respondents, who made use of a student or national visa (Kelly, Edu, Pierre and Omar) did not overstay their visa, but they immediately got a residence permission after using their specific visa. In this section, I will look at the specific types of visas (national, student and tourist visa) which are used. The national visa for family reunion was used by two Nigerian men, Edu and Kelly. They were reunited with their family, or at least with a family member in Spain. Kelly's father, who is now the priest of the Nigerian church in Lleida, has lived in Germany for a while, since the year of 1995. Later on, around 2005, he decided to go to Spain, first to work in the agriculture and later on as a deliverer of products in Lleida. During that time, he arranged everything concerning the papers for Kelly and for his mother, brother and little sister as well. The student visa was used by two Cameroon men

who are studying in Lleida, Pierre and Omar. They both also have a residence permit now, because they successfully applied for a residence permit during their first period in Spain. That permit does not allow the student to work in Spain, only to study there. Omar told me that he wanted to work as a teacher in French in a village in the province of Aragón, but after a while he was forced to quit this job, because it became clear that he did not have the valid papers for it. After that announcement he went back to Lleida to continue his study in Spanish and French language again.

What can be said about the persons who used a tourist visa, as many of my respondents (13) made use of this type of visa? How does this situation look like? To illustrate this I will tell the story of Silvain, a 39 year old man from Senegal. In the month of April I approached Silvain during a conversation with Armand at Plaça de Cervantes. He was very open to talk about many topics, including his journey to Europe:

Silvain (aged 39) is a person from a small village in Senegal, in the region of Dakar. He had a small farm with some animals and he has a wife and three daughters, aged 17, 9 and 4. Eleven years ago he decided to go to Europe, to find a new life; a better life. He was fortunate to get a tourist visa for France, because for many people it was hard to get such a visa, according to Silvain himself. He went by bus to the capital of Senegal, Dakar. From the airport of Dakar he took a plane to Paris. Immediately after his arrival in Paris he went to Marseille, because he already had some contacts from Senegal over there. He stayed for some days in Marseille but soon went to Catalonia by train to work there in the agriculture. It was not a problem to reach Spain with his visa. He said: "I lived for about three years in Spain illegally after overstaying my visa. I lived in Catalonia, but also in other parts of Spain, to work in the agriculture. In the beginning, I worked illegal, but after three years I succeeded in applying for my residence permission, because I had a contract from a farmer. In general, if you can show that you have been living in Spain for three years, you can get a residence permission, or you must have a kind of contract with a farmer or another employer. Being illegal in France was not an option for Silvain: "In France it is far more difficult to get a job. It is also possible to illegally get a job in Lleida, far more easier in comparison to cities like Barcelona and Madrid. I only had a visa for France for about 90 days, so the chance to get a job was very low, especially in the legal industry" (Silvain, Senegal, 12/04/2016).

Many respondents who used a tourist visa did it in the same manner as Silvain, by overstaying their visa. Currently, many (labour) migrants from West-Africa in Lleida have a residence permission like Silvain, because they are working or they have worked in the agricultural sector in Spain for a long time. For West-African migrants in Spain it is very important to have a labour contract to obtain a residence permission, as Silvain said (Gobierno de España, 2015; Benoit & Crawford, 2005). In Lleida I also spoke with Abderraffie Ettalydy, a Moroccan person, who has his own migrant organisation, which is especially focused on people from Morocco. He also works at the University of Lleida and is specialised in migrants organisations in Catalonia. He is well acquainted with the agricultural working conditions in Lleida, including the process of obtaining a residence permit as a migrant. He told me that you can obtain a residence permission if you can demonstrate that you have been living in Spain with a labour contract for three years. This is the case since 2005, which is also underpinned by a document of the government of Spain (Gobierno de España, 2015; Benoit & Crawford, 2005). Some migrants really had struggles with obtaining such a labour contract. For instance, some migrants faced fake contracts, like Thierry from Mali. In June I asked him why he did not have a residence permission for Spain, because he had already been living in Spain for about 11 years, so normally it would have been possible to have a residence permission. He said:

"I do not have a residence paper, because I was not lucky. I needed a contract and I also had one, but that contract was fake, it was not real. I found this later, I did not know it. For that reason I could not get a residence permission now" (Thierry, Mali, 21/06/2016).

In the month of June he had a lawsuit about this fake labour contract. He had no residence permission because of this fake contract and therefore it was also difficult for him to visit Mali again. He wanted to prove that he was not guilty. Unfortunately he lost this lawsuit. The example of Thierry shows that the difference between being illegal and legal as a migrant is rather fragile. Thierry, for instance, felt safe by having a residence permit, but at the same time he was involved in criminal activities, concerning fake contracts. This example also shows that being illegal in a country is not always the migrants' fault.

Although a considerable part of the labour migrants (like Thierry) experienced difficulties with obtaining an original residence permission, it is very easy for some migrants, as the farmers in Lleida just need them. The agricultural sector is very comprehensive and of great importance for the economy of Catalonia and Spain (Fundación BBVA, 2008). In the beginning of the 20th century, 80% of the economy of the province of Lleida was based and dependent on the agriculture, but in 2001 this dropped to 12.1% (Fundación BBVA, 2008). Although the figure of 12.1% seems quite low, it is still two times higher than the average of Spain and five times higher than the average of Catalonia (Fundación BBVA, 2008). Seasonal migrants and workers are very important for the agriculture industry in the province of Lleida, because they are cheap in comparison to employees from Spain. The Spanish agricultural industry cannot exist without the cheap African labour migrants (Arango, 2012). For Spanish farmers it is vital to have legal labours and many farmers in Lleida want legal migrants instead of illegal migrants. However, they can pay illegal migrants less, as the risks to be fined by the government has increased considerably in the last few years. Some farmers needed to pay between 3.000 and 60.000 euros for a fine, which are mentioned 'employer sanctions'. Many farmers do not want to take this risk to get an employer sanction, so they give contracts to migrants to enable them to get a residence permission. These assumptions from Abderraffie Ettalydy about the so-called increased 'employer sanctions' are underpinned by an article on the website of the *Financial Times* (Benoit & Crawford, 2005). This article claims that the aim of the Spanish government is to avoid exploitation of migrants labours in the agriculture, domestic service and construction sector. Punishing the employers is a measure to avoid this. In addition, the government itself also has their advantages with legal work instead of illegal work, because the tax income of the Spanish government rises with more legal work (Benoit & Crawford, 2005; Reyneri, 2001). It seems that these measures of the Spanish government are functioning in general, as many farmers now want to have legal workers. Almost all of my respondents who entered Europe by a visa now have a residence permission, except for Armand and Thierry. Having a residence permission is very important for labour migrants, because then they can get a job more easily and travel between their home country and Spain, to visit their family in their home country.

4.1.2 Reaching Europe illegally

In the part above we described the respondents' way of reaching Europe in a legal way, by using a visa card and travelling to Europe by plane. Fourteen of my respondents, however, entered Europe in an 'illegal' way, without using any valid papers. These respondents went to Europe by boat, sometimes after a long, overland journey in Africa itself. Such journeys are often in the spotlights in European press, because they are full of risks and every year Africans die on the Mediterranean sea.

Fortunately, Africans are rescued by the Spanish or Italian marine sometimes, as an article in the Spanish newspaper *El País* (Codina, 2016) displays (see Figure 14).



Figure 14. Showing rescued migrants from Sub-Sahara in the summer of 2016 (Codina, E. In: *El País*, 07-09-2016).

The phenomenon of such irregular, overland, migrant journeys from Africa to Europe has strongly increased since the 1990s, when the Southern-European countries introduced visa requirements, which made it more difficult for Africans to make use of a visa to reach Europe (De Haas, 2008). Most often, this overland journey takes place in some steps, from place to place. Migrants are sometimes also working in places to earn money for the rest of their journey (Collyer, 2005; De Haas, 2008). During these journeys, migrants make decisions, experience things, change motivations, which makes this journey in itself very important to display. In this part of Chapter 4 several stories of respondents who entered Spain in such an 'illegal' way are described. At the beginning of every conversation I often asked about their journey, about the countries through which they passed and about their experiences during this journey and in different places. This enabled me to make the next table about the journeys from their country in Africa to Europe, see Table 1 on the next page.

Journey	Number of respondents
Mali-Mauretania-Morocco-Algeria-Libya-??-mainland Spain	1
Senegal-Canary Islands	3
Senegal-Mali-Ivory Coast-Portugal-mainland Spain	1
Mali-Algeria-Morocco-Ceuta-mainland Spain	1
Senegal-Morocco (by plane)-Canary Islands or Senegal-Mauretania-Canary Islands	3
Gambia/Senegal-Morocco (by plane)-mainland Spain	3
Mali-Mauretania-Canary Islands	1
Gambia-Algeria (by plane)-Libya-??-mainland Spain	1

Table 1: Irregular journeys from respondents from Africa to Spain.

Gazhal (aged 36, Senegal) is one of the respondents who reached Europe following an irregular route. I spoke to him at a sunny Sunday afternoon, on May 22th. One of the first topics was his route from Senegal to Spain:

Gazhal lived in Senegal in Dakar, together with his wife. About his journey to Europe he said: "I left Senegal eleven years ago, which was in 2005. The first part of my route was from Senegal to Morocco. I took a plane from Senegal to Rabat, which is on the northern coast of Morocco. It was really not difficult to reach Morocco, it was very easy. But within Morocco I needed to wait for a while to reach Spain, which definitely was my aim. I lived in Rabat for one and half year, which was quite a long time, because it was the first time that I was away from home for a long time. Within that one and a half year I went home once, to visit my wife and other family members. During that time I worked in a factory, where I had to pack some products like shoes, and had to bring them to a big truck. The work was hard and they paid me very little, but I needed the money for the journey to Spain and for my family in Senegal, because I was responsible for maintaining them. I lived together with other people from Senegal, who were working there in the same factory as me. With them I wanted to enter Spain. During my stay in Morocco I was also looking for somebody who could bring me to Spain, by boat". After one and a half year he succeeded in finding a person who could bring him to Europe. What was his experience with that journey by boat to Spain? He said: "The journey by boat took about eight hours. The journey itself was not difficult, I felt safe during the journey. But I was still happy to reach Spain. Not the journey itself, but the living conditions in Morocco were tough. Life was hard, because it was the first time I was alone in a place, without family. After reaching Spain I went to Malaga and from that place I went to Bilbao. After two years I got a residence permission, which was hard to obtain because I needed a kind of contract to get this. But after two years I got my

contract and therefore my Spanish residence permit. After that I went to Lleida to work here in the agriculture for some period” (Gazhal, Senegal, 22/05/2016).

Countries in North-Africa, the Maghreb countries, are like transit zones for many West-African migrants (De Haas, 2008; Fargues, 2009). West-African migrants stay there for a while and after some months or (sometimes) years they move on towards Europe. Mostly, they use this period to earn money for the rest of their journey to their destination in Europe. This is called a ‘step-wise’ migration (Cross, 2013; Castagnone, 2011). Some migrants, however, also saw Libya as a migration destination or as a second best destination after their first choice Europe (De Haas, 2008). The Gambian persons John and Andrew had the same experience as Gazhal with working in a transit place/country, Morocco (John) and Libya (Andrew) in their case. Andrew for instance went from Gambia to Mauretania and from Mauretania he went to Algeria and Libya. He did not say many things to me about this journey from Gambia to Libya, but he was very open about his period in Libya which was during the time of Kaddafi. In total, he lived in Libya for eight years, which is quite a long time. About his period in Libya he said:

“Pfooe, it was heavy there. The work in the factory was good, I earned enough money with it. But the people were horrible. Once, I walked through a place, and children began to throw eggs to me. They spilled over my body. The parents of those children were only watching. I said to them why they did not say something to their children. They said that it are just children.. Yeah, those kind of things. The police can also catch you and you will go in prison without any reason. There is a prison, with about 1000 people, all black. Without a reason they are sitting in those prisons. It is terrible there, I never want to go back” (Andrew, Gambia, 25/04/2016).

Some other respondents were very mobile within Africa before reaching Europe by plane, not by boat. An example of that is Andre, a man (57) from Cameroon. I met him at Plaça del Dipòsit. He was my first contact coming from Cameroon and I was happy to talk with him, because he was an interesting person. He described his long overland African journey before reaching Europe (see Figure 15 for an overview):

“So, thirteen years ago I left Cameroon. I went left Cameroon by car, with a friend of mine. At first, we went to Nigeria, to the capital of that country, which is Lagos. This journey took about three weeks. Sometimes we had to stop during our travel, to rest or to get more information about the journey. Within Lagos I worked for about six weeks in the construction sector, to earn money. I used this money for the rest of my journey and to send some money to my children and wife in Cameroon, so they could eat and go to school. After those six weeks in Lagos I went to Ivory Coast. I passed Benin, Togo and Ghana and then I arrived in Abidjan, which is in the south of Ivory Coast. There I worked in the construction industry too for some weeks. After that I went to Mali, to Bamako. I did not stay there for a long time, and I did not work there. From Bamako I went to Dakar by train, because that was very easy. In Senegal I lived for two weeks and then went from Senegal to Mauritania by car. In Mauritania I asked for a visa for Spain. I got this visa and with that visa I went to Las Palmas by plane. So with that visa you are like a tourist. You can go, but after three months you need to go back to your country. So I went to Las Palmas and from there I bought a ticket to Cadiz by boat.

Within Cadiz I went to Barcelona by train. The journey in total took about two years, but I worked a lot during my journey” (Andre, Cameroon, 26/05/2016).



Figure 15. Albert's journey to Spain (made by the author).

1. Yaoundé, Cameroon
2. Lagos, Nigeria.
3. Abidjan, Ivory Coast.
4. Bamako, Mali.
5. Dakar, Senegal.
6. Nouakchott, Mauretania.
7. Madrid (by plane with tourist visa).

Although Albert used a tourist visa to enter Europe at the end, he is a nice example of a migrant who used a complex overland journey before reaching Europe, which is why I wrote his story in this part of Chapter 4. Most of the respondents who entered Europe in an illegal way went directly from Senegal to the Canary islands or from Senegal to Mauretania and from there to the Canary Islands. It was an emotional experience for some of them, for instance Laurent, a 45 aged man from Senegal. He said:

"I went from Dakar to Tenerife, on the Canary Islands. The journey was very scary, I had never been on a boat before, I could not swim. I couldn't sleep, and I constantly had a headache. There was little or no food at the end of the journey. And the journey took over 6 days (for others sometimes 10 days, so he was lucky). Fortunately, all the passengers of the boat reached Tenerife. The smugglers are only thinking of money, they are not human. We were with about 120 people on that boat..." (Laurent, Senegal, 19/04/2016).

All the respondents who entered Spain in an irregular way of course did not have any valid papers in the beginning, but the majority of them succeeded to get their residence permission for Spain after three years or less. In that sense, they are in the same situation as migrants who entered Spain by using a tourist visa and by overstaying that visa. These groups both need to apply for a residence permission after overstaying their visa (see part 4.2.1).

4.2 Mobility in Spain

Once arrived on the European mainland, West-African migrants sometimes see new possibilities to become mobile again, now within the European Schengen-zone (Schapendonk, 2010). Van Nieuwenhuyze (2009) calls this *continuing mobility* within Europe. Migrants are sometimes mobile between different places within Europe and they move between these places every year. This is called circular migration, which is defined as:

Repeated migration experiences between an origin and destination involving more than one migration and return. Effectively, it involves migrants sharing work, family, and other aspects of their lives between two or more locations (Hugo, 2013, p.2).

This circular migration in Europe is often based on labour or family, as Hugo (2013) states as well. After describing the mobility from the migrants' home country to Europe in part 4.1, we will now describe this specific circular mobility within Europe, and mainly within Spain, after the migrants reach their destination Europe. What does this (continuing) mobility within Spain look like and what are the reasons for this (circular) migration?

The majority of my respondents who reached one of the Canary Islands needed to stay in a reception centre there for some days. One of them was Odil, a 48 year old man from Senegal. He went from Morocco to the Canary Islands and he stayed in a camp for about 35 days. He said:

"I stayed in a camp over there (in Canary Islands). It was nice, there were showers, clothes and towels, it was far better than in Morocco. There was no protection or something there, I really had to survive you know, and I needed to get in contact with smugglers. I did not like my period there. When I reached Madrid by plane from the Canary Islands, I went to Valencia by train. I worked there for a while and then went to Lleida, to work there too, so that was my first time when I was here in Lleida". (Odil, Senegal, 21/04/2016).

Respondents who entered the Canary Islands all went by plane to Madrid or Barcelona, but the majority did not stay in Madrid for a long time. Most of them went directly to Barcelona, Lleida or Valencia. The most important reason was to work, in the construction or agricultural sector there. Almost all of these respondents were very mobile after their first stay in a place like Barcelona, Lleida or Valencia. Twenty-five of my thirty-one respondents had lived in other places within Spain in the last two years. The reason for this mobility mainly was work. All of the respondents worked in the other places in Spain and the majority of the jobs were in the agricultural sector. In Spain there are some regions with a high number of agricultural jobs, which are in Lleida and Vilafranca del Penedès in Catalonia; Jaen, Granada, Almeria and Huelva in Andalusia; Murcia in the province of Murcia; Logroño in the province of La Rioja and Valencia in the province of Valencia. Lleida itself is one of the most fertile places within Spain and within Europe as well (Guia de las Mejores Frutas y Hortalizas, n.d.). Many diverse fruits are growing on this fertile ground, like nectarines, peach, apples and pears. The province of Catalonia produces 50% of the total amount of apples and pears in Spain and 30% of the total amount of nectarines and peaches (Guia de las Mejores Frutas y Hortalizas, n.d.). Within

Andalusia and Valencia there are more mandarins, lemons and mineolas growing, whereas Logrono is known for its grapes. The main agricultural regions in Spain are shown in Figure 16.



Figure 16. Map of main agricultural regions within Spain (made by the author)

1. La Rioja: Logrono, mostly grapes.
2. Catalonia: Lleida (nectarines, peach, pear, apple). Vic: Grapes.
3. Valencia: mandarins and oranges
4. Huelva: orange, olives, mandarins
5. Jaén: Oranges, grapes, olives, mandarins

There are some differences in the harvest season between these main agricultural regions. For example, the harvest of mandarins and lemons is in the months of October, November, December and January, which is in the south of Spain in the provinces of Andalusia, Murcia and Valencia. In the months of May until September it is the harvest season in the North of Spain, mainly in the provinces of Catalonia, La Rioja and Aragon. Roughly there are two harvest seasons: one in the south of Spain and one in the north of Spain. Migrants who work in the agricultural sector are moving between and within these regions.

Christophe is an example of a mobile migrant within Spain, a 37 old man from Kebe Ansou, a village in Senegal. I spoke with Christophe in the month of June, because that is when he arrived in Lleida. He was a friend of Camile and he was willing to talk to me at Plaça del Gramàtics. He told me the following things about his mobility:

Christophe arrived in 2003 in Spain. He said: "In the beginning I lived in Barcelona for some months, but after that I travelled through Spain, looking for jobs. All of those jobs were in agriculture, except

for Barcelona, where I worked in the tourist sector. I went to Logroño, to work there in the grape industry. I also went to Jaen and Valencia to work in the mandarin industry there. Subsequently, I returned to Catalonia. Sometimes I was also living in Barcelona, when there was no work in agriculture. In Barcelona I was selling things to tourists. In the end, around May, I was in Lleida again, to work there in the agriculture, like I do now". His reason for his mobility is work and in all the places he stayed he had a job. He added: "I also visit Senegal sometimes. I went in the months of March and April to Senegal this year, to visit my wife, my mother and my son. It was great! But I returned to Lleida in the beginning of May, to look for a job. After my period here in Lleida I will return to Barcelona or go to Logroño in September. It depends, if there is a chance to get a job in Logroño I will go there, if not, I will go back to Barcelona, or even Senegal, if I have money". He is travelling a lot, but did he also visit other places in other European countries? He said: "No, I only lived in Spain. There are people here, African migrants too, who are visiting many places in Europe, in Switzerland, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium or the Netherlands, but I did not. It depends on whether you have money. If you have money it is nice to visit other places, because then you can meet some more people and perhaps find a job. Maybe I also want to go to the United States, to visit my brother, but that really is expensive, so I think it will be really difficult to go there. I will just stay here in Spain, without any problems. I do not care for moving a lot during one year" (Christophe, Senegal, 22/06/2016).



Figure 17. One year mobility of Christophe (made by the author).

1. Barcelona (March-April): informal economy, waiting to go to Lleida
2. Lleida: working agriculture (May-August): nectarines, pears and/or apple
3. Jaén (September-December): Working in mandarins
4. Senegal (December-February): Visiting family in home country Senegal

My respondents were not only mobile between several provinces in Spain, but also within Catalonia itself they were sometimes very mobile. Some respondents worked in one place for some weeks and after that they moved to another place in Catalonia, to work there again. One of them was Odil, a 48 year old man from Kaolack in Senegal. In the month of June he was working in Montblanc, a place in the south of Catalonia, near Tarragona and Reus. In July, he went to Vic, in the North of Catalonia. He worked there till December 2016 and then returned to Lleida, to stay there again, waiting to get a new job. Once in every two years he goes back to Senegal, but in 2016 he did not. The one-year mobility of Odil is outlined in Figure 18 below.

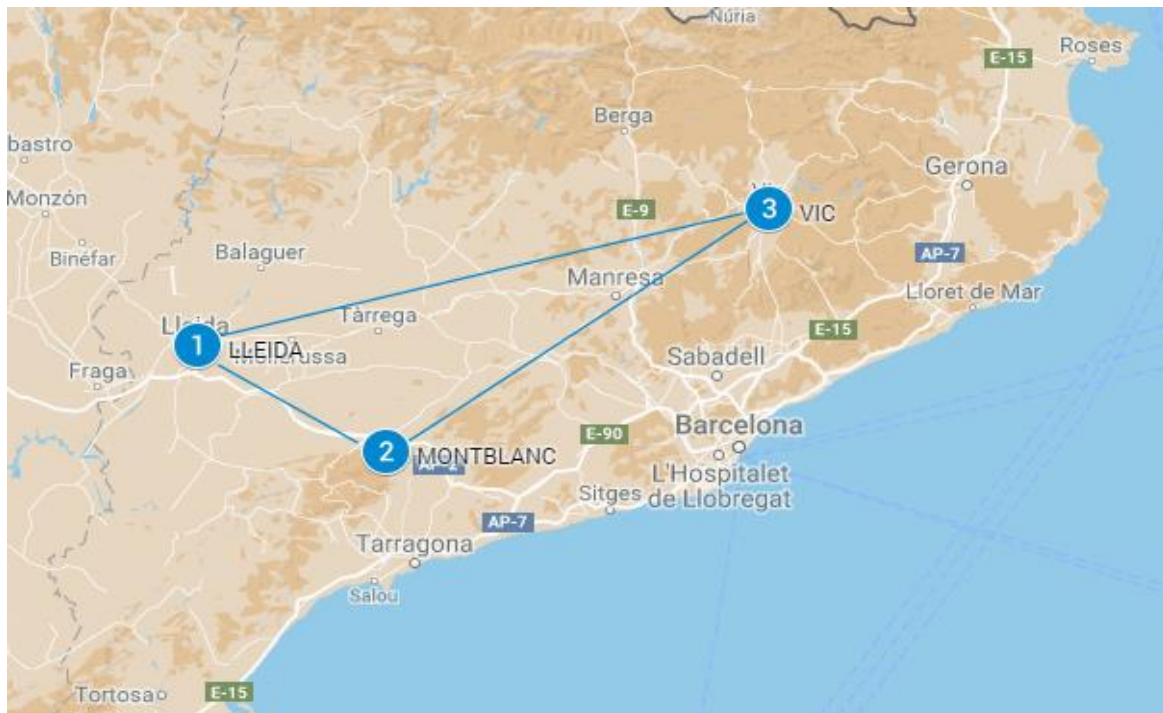


Figure 18. One-year mobility from Odil

1. Lleida (October-May): Looking for a job, sometimes going back to Senegal
2. Montblanc: (June-July): Working in the nectarines
3. Vic: (July-September): Working in the grapes and working in meat factory
4. Lleida (October): Back in Lleida, looking for other jobs, maybe going to other places in Catalonia or Senegal.

The examples of Odil and Christophe shows the strong presence of the unending, circular mobility of these West-Africans migrants within Spain. The respondents in my research who followed the harvest season did not live in one place for longer than four months, because sometimes they also visited their home country in Africa (see part 4.4). Some periods they lived in a province capital, like Jaen or Lleida, and at other moments they stayed in small villages during their working period in the agriculture. These stories of Christophe and Odil are representative for all the stories of my mobile circular respondents within Lleida. Why are these persons so mobile? In almost every case they said that the aim of their stay in Europe is to “*buscar la vida*”, to find a better life and to earn more money. To earn this money they simply need to be mobile, to be sure of an income. Simba, who can be called a circular migrant too, also explained this to me:

'I have been living within Spain for ten years now. I have lived in many, many places. Almost all places in Spain haha; Barcelona, Valencia, Jaen, Huelva, Lleida and Logroño. Every year I move a lot between places. I am looking for money. If I can go, I go. Of course it is difficult that I cannot live for a long time at the same place, but I am looking for my life, I need money, nothing more, so I go to another place inshallah' (Simba, Senegal, 02/06/2016).

The majority of my respondents are like Simba and think the same way as he does. Their strong mobility is an outcome of their wish for a better future, and more importantly, a better future for their relatives in their home country in Africa. Migrants do not only build up a new life for themselves in a new country, but also a future for their family back home (Bærenholdt & Granås, 2008; Sørensen & Olwig, 2002). The mobility of these persons (like my circular migrants in Lleida) is very important for their families, because it makes it possible for these families to economically survive (Sørensen & Olwig, 2002). If they can go to another, a better, place to work, they will go. As Camile told me:

“After this working season I will go to Jaen, in Andalucía, I will work there too. Many people here are doing that, moving from place to place. I stay around two or three months in every place. I can leave this place within 5 minutes. My luggage is in the Albergue (a hostel for migrants). If I can work in another place, I will go immediately. I am not dependent on this place. If I can earn money elsewhere, I will go” (Camile, Senegal, 22/05/2016).

Examples of this show the immense mobility of many of my respondents. It seemed that they have lived in so many places that they sometimes forget what places exactly. Some respondents told me a few weeks after my first encounter in what kind of places in Spain they had lived and very often they added places later on in other encounters.

4.3 Mobility within Europe

West-African migrants are not only mobile within Spain, but sometimes also within Europe. Once arrived on the mainland of Europe, West-African migrants sometimes see new possibilities to become mobile again within the European Schengen-zone (Schapendonk, 2010, Nekby, 2006; Toma & Castagnone, 2015). With their residence permission they can easily travel between the European Union countries. This is also possible without a residence permission, although the risks of travelling in the European Union without a residence permission are quite higher. These intra-European mobilities and underlying reasons are described in this part of Chapter 4.

The majority of my respondents only lived in Spain, following the harvest season. But I also found five respondents who were mobile between European countries. Most of my respondents' mobility within Europe was between the countries Spain, France and Belgium. I did not speak with persons who worked in Italy, although many of my respondents said that there were some West-African migrants within Lleida who came from Italy and were in Lleida to work. Malik, a 42 year old man from Senegal, is an example of respondents who worked in other places within Europe. Malik's son is living in Gerona (Catalonia), so some months he lives there as well, to be with him. His wife also lives there, but they separated some years ago. From Gerona he is going to Lleida and after Lleida he often is going to work in Sudanell, a small village near Lleida. After that period he is going to Belgium. He has worked in Belgium, but also in Finland. In Belgium, he worked in Antwerp. He explained:

"I worked in a meat factory within Antwerp. Every year I went to that place again and sometimes I stayed there for some months. But after some months I needed to leave, because I could not get a residence permission for Belgium, so I always went back to Spain, to work there in the agriculture again." About his time in Northern Europe he said: "Yes, it was nice. But also cold, especially in Finland. I was there in November, but it was so cold. I went to Huelva (Andalusia) after that, and I could walk in my t-shirt there. It was better in Huelva haha. Belgium was nice as well. It's the capital of Europe, Brussels was nearby and I also visited Breda sometimes, to smoke something. Yes I enjoyed my stay there but I always needed to leave because of my papers" (Malik, Senegal, 06/06/2016).

Within periods that there are no jobs in Spain, Malik is going to Belgium. He would like to live in Belgium for a longer time, but he also knows that it is very difficult to get a residence permission for that country, so he always goes back to Spain. Malik's one year mobility is outlined in Figure 19.

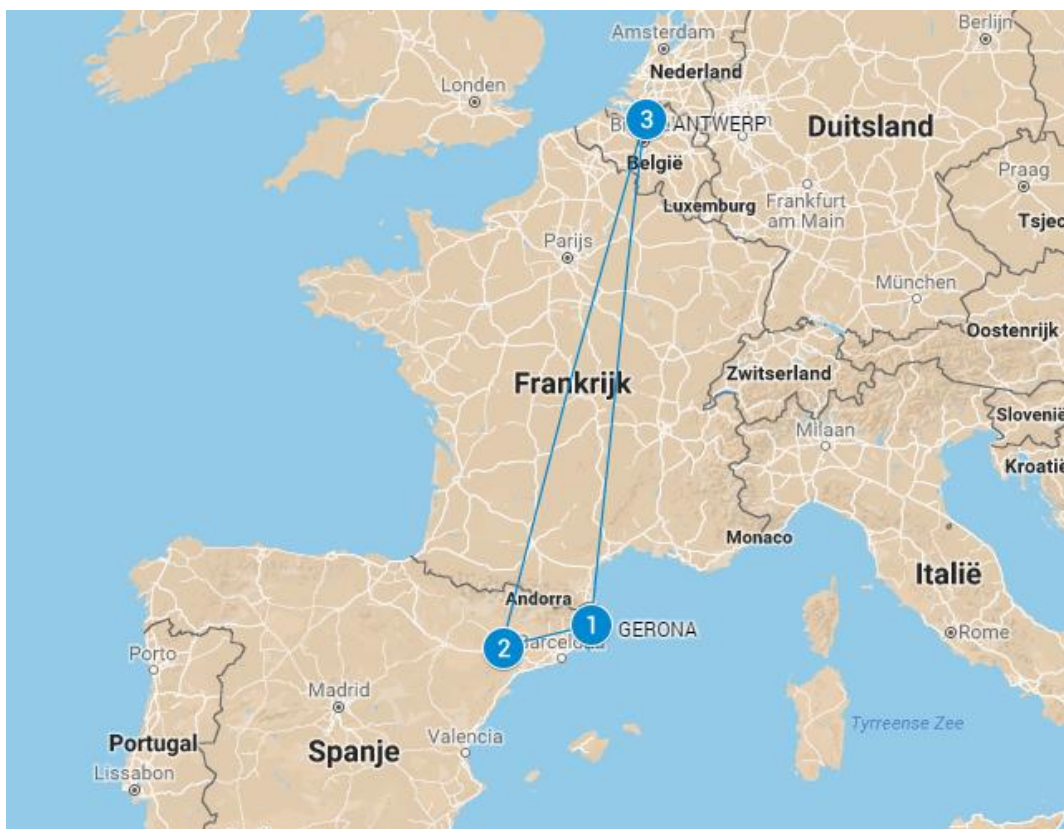


Figure 19. Mobility of Malik (made by the author).

1. Gerona (February-April): Living with his son, sometimes working in tourism industry and visiting friends in Tarragona.
2. Lleida and Sudanell (May-September): Looking for a job in Lleida and surroundings. In June: Working in Sudanell, a village beside Lleida.
3. Antwerp (October-February): Working in a meat factory in Antwerp

Another circular migrant within Europe is Bamba, a young man from Senegal. He told me that he generally visits Belgium in the months of February and March. He works a lot in the construction sector there and after that period he goes back to Lleida again, because the harvest season has started in Catalonia then.

Not only work, but also visiting family, is a reason for mobility within the European Union (Toma & Castagnone, 2015). Eight respondents have family contacts in other regions in Europe, particularly in France. An example of that is Remy, a 24 year old man from Mali. He was living in a village near Lleida in the month of April (when I spoke to him) and one day I saw him at Plaça del Dipòsit, a place where many people from Mali meet. On another day I talked with him in the bar Musical Piazza, which is at Plaça de Cervantes. He said that he has one little brother in France, and sometimes visits him, like he did in August. Some more respondents had family members within Europe too, especially within France, who they sometimes visited. One of these respondents is Samuel, a person who has his own shop in the centre of Lleida. Together with his nephew Idrissi he goes to France to visit his brother and to do some business. He told me:

“Within Europe I only went to France, to visit my family over there and to buy things. Many Africans go to a market in Paris to buy things for their shop in France, Italy, Spain or Africa. We sometimes send it to Senegal as well. It is a big business”. I asked him about his stay within France, where he visited his brother or did some business with buying clothes and other stuff for his shop in Lleida. Why did he not stay there? He said: “I would love to stay in France, but it was not possible, because I did not have a residence permission. Therefore I could not work and I went back to Lleida”. (Samuel. 18/05/2016).

Having family in other regions is an important reason for migrants to be mobile within Europe, just like looking for a job. Many of them try to find a job, but as they are restricted by having no papers, the majority goes back to Lleida at a certain point. Having sufficient money is an important factor in finding a job in order to visit their relatives abroad. If they do not have enough money, it is not possible to visit them, as they say.

4.4 Mobility between Europe and Africa

Moving between Europe and their African home country is popular among my respondents. Twenty of the respondents sometimes visited their home country in Africa, always during the period that there is less work available in Spain. Figure 17 in part 4.2 is an example of this mobility. Sometimes they stay in their home country in Africa for three or four months. With a residence permission it is possible to travel between African and Europe, but without it, it is not possible. Armand, for instance, does not have a residence permission, and has not seen his wife, sons and daughter for eight years. So having a residence permission really is an obligation before travelling back to Africa. Seventeen of my respondents visited their home country at least once since their arrival in Europe, usually to visit their family and friends.

John, one of my respondents from Gambia, also visits his home country every two years. He said that it is very important for him to see his children there, so they understand that he is their dad. All of these 17 migrants who visit their home country are an example of circular migration. Many of them have made a lot of trips between Spain and their home country and within the country itself. This also is underpinned by Steven Vertovec (2007), who stated that, every year, migrants are moving within the same pattern, from their home country to Europa, within Europe and back again to their home country. An example of that is Sinclair, who has lived in several places in Spain, but also visits his home country Senegal:

“Every year I try to go back to Senegal. In general, for about three months, but last year I was there for over five months. It depends on the amount of money I have or whether I can get a job in Spain. It is like vacation. It is really nice. For sure, I would like to go back to Senegal in the future, to live there with my wife and family and to get children. But in the next five years I will be staying here in Europe, and sometimes go back to Senegal to visit my family” (Sinclair, Senegal, 08/05/2016).

Many of my respondents are circular migrants like Sinclair. Dayton-Johnson et al. (2007) state that this specific circular migration takes place every year or every two years. The forms of employment can also change during these period. Some respondents in my fieldwork experienced this; they have worked in the construction, industrial, tourism and agricultural sector. Some scientists state that circular migrants can get better jobs in their home country or current country, after earning much money, because of their circular migration (Vertovec, 2007). However, other scientists state that this is not the case, as the pattern of circular migration is always the same and it is hard for these migrants to jump out of this pattern. Circular migrants tend to remain stuck in low labour jobs, like seasonal agricultural jobs (Vertovec, 2007). This last statement is more applicable to the case of my respondents in Lleida. They all are working in agriculture in Spain, year after year. The majority of them did not have other jobs outside the agricultural sector during their stay in Europe. Although some respondents had other jobs during the year, these were always lower skilled jobs. Some respondents for instance wanted to study, but that is too expensive for them and therefore impossible.

4.5 Immobility within Spain

The majority of my respondents are very mobile within Spain or Europe or between Europe and Africa. Of course that is not the case for every respondent. Some persons had only lived in Lleida since their arrival in Spain, which is the opposite of the circular migrants I mentioned, who had lived in other places in Spain (or Europe) for a long time. Some respondents were really ‘immobile’ in Spain, although every person is mobile in some way, with moving around in a village, visiting shops, visiting family members or going on vacation. In that sense, immobility does not exist (Kellerman, 2012). Therefore, Kaufmann (2002) made a distinction in spatial mobility, between *reversible* and *irreversible* spatial mobilities. Reversible spatial mobilities are mobilities like visiting family, tourism activities and cycling in a place. The irreversible mobility is the residential mobility and migration (Kaufmann, 2002). In this chapter we look to residential (irreversible) mobility, to migration. What reasons are there for persons to be residential immobile? Literature mentions several reasons for people to stay in a certain place. Economic reasons are important, for instance when a living place give people opportunities for a secure income, which is called *location-specific advantages* (Schewel, 2015). The reason to stay in a place is usually more rational underpinned, but Schewel (2015) also mentioned some social and cultural reasons to stay in a place. These are a feeling of attachment to a place, religious and spiritual values who are common in the living place and the presence of family and community in a home. The reasons for residential immobility mentioned above are common with the threshold approach of Van der Velde and Van Naerssen (2010), as already displayed. What reasons for residential immobility can we see in the stories of my respondents in Lleida? Important factors for respondents to stay in the same place for a long time, in this case Lleida, are working security, family ties within a place or following an educational program. An example of immobility in Lleida is the story of Azana, the only woman among my respondents in Lleida. Azana is a woman

from Cameroon and I met her in her shop in the city centre of Lleida. I knew her because of my other Cameroon contact, Pierre, who is a student from Cameroon in Lleida. On Sunday June 4th I went to her shop to talk with her. I talked for about 1,5 hours with her in the shop. Azana told me her story. See Figure 20 for an overview of her immobility. She said:

“In 2006, I went to Spain by plane. My husband stayed in Cameroon and unfortunately he died four years ago. We have one son, his name is Freddy and he is nine years old. I immediately went to Lleida and I stayed there with my aunt, who already lived here in Lleida. After some time my aunt went to France, but I stayed in Lleida”. Did she not live in other places? She said: “No, I have only lived in Lleida, but I sometimes go back to Cameroon to visit people, except for this year. Many migrants are moving to other places to work in the agriculture but I did not, because I had a job here in a factory. That was different from the other migrants who were working in the agriculture, which is more uncertain. For them it's more necessary to travel to other places within Spain. If you need the money, you indeed need to move between all the places in Spain, but if you have a stable job like me, you can stay. After some time I opened this shop, so I could not move anymore to another place even if I would love to”. So the shop of Azana is an important reason to be immobile, but she also addressed another factor to be immobile. “My son is now going to school here, why should I leave? He has friends from Catalonia, from Lleida. Maybe when he is a little bit older we will move together, but I am not sure yet” (Azana, Cameroon, 04/06/2016).



Figure 20. Immobility of Azana in one year

1. Lleida: all year long in Lleida, having her own shop in the central migrant neighbourhood (sometimes visiting Cameroon for a month).

Other respondents who are more immobile are studying in Lleida, like Kelly, Edu, Pierre and Omar . They cannot leave because they are studying in Lleida and they also do not want to because of other reasons, for example relationships and a sense of community within Lleida itself. Although these persons are settled well in Lleida, it does not imply that they are not mobile at all. Like Kaufmann (2002) said, every person is mobile, at least within their living place, by attempting spatial activities. Kelly, Edu, Pierre, Azana and Omar are also doing such activities. For instance, the girlfriend of Edu lives in Barcelona, so many weekends he is with her in Barcelona. Another example of mobility of these young men is Kelly. He is a famous singer in the city of Lleida, and with his reggae band KOERS he travels a lot through Catalonia and within other parts of Spain. Omar , for instance, likes to visit the mountains to walk. These examples show their mobility, but nevertheless these respondents are quite immobile when it comes to their residential mobility.

4.6 Concluding remarks

The West-African migrants in this master thesis project all have their own forms and patterns of mobility. This chapter displayed that the majority of the respondents are like circular migrants, moving a lot between various places in Spain, all related to their seasonal, mainly agricultural jobs. Having a job or not is the most important reason for circular migrants to be mobile in such a way. This chapter shows that migration from West-African migrants to Europe is not just a simple journey from place A to B, but consists of many complex mobilities within the migration itself, from place A (home country) to B (Spanish mainland), and further on within Europe. Migration is then not seen as a one-way journey after leaving a home country, but also consists of (unending) circulation between places (Ahmad et al. 2003). We clearly see this circulation of mobility in Lleida. Many of those West-African migrants had experienced negative or positive things during this mobility and which has an influence on their stay in Lleida itself. The destination B (Lleida in this thesis) is definitely influenced by their trajectories and mobilities in the past.

It can be stated that many of my respondents live complex mobile lives, with periods of having and not having a job. All of the mobilities of the respondents somehow landed in the city of Lleida, in Catalonia. Some people are coming back every year, whereas others live in Lleida permanently. The stories in this chapter give us an insight into the experiences concerning this mobility and will therefore help us to understand the socio-spatial interplay better between mobility and place in the city of Lleida, which the next chapter aims to describe. Thus, when reading the next chapters, it is important to have in mind the mobility stories explicated in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Social-spatial impact of mobility on Lleida

5.1 Introduction

As the respondents' mobility patterns in Chapter 4 showed, many migrants, in one way or another, arrive in Lleida at a certain moment. Lleida is an attractive place to live for West-African migrants in Spain, due to the high demand for workers in the agricultural sector in summer (Ortiz, 2015). However, as the stories in Chapter 4 showed, many migrants are not living permanently in Lleida, but more on a temporal basis. Every year they stay in Lleida for some months. Normally, seasonal migrants arrive in Lleida in the second part of April, May or the beginning of June. They stay there until September, when they go to other regions in Spain for work, which is mainly in the agricultural sector too.

The migrants' arrival and departure in Lleida might influence the place of Lleida and there might be a difference between the periods in Lleida when seasonal migrants are present and when they are absent. In what way can this arrival change a place? To give an example: two studies done in the United States by Airries and Miyares (2007) and Gonzalez & Kemp (2016) displayed that migrants can cause a change in the economic landscape of a city or neighbourhood. They state that immigrant-related economic services, for instance, money transfer shops and travel agencies, have increased in migrant neighbourhoods in American cities. This is an example of how migration can change a place in an economic way, namely by changing services and the rise of an informal sector in a city or neighbourhood. Mobility can not only influence the economic landscape, but may also have an impact on the migrant social network; their social place (already explicated in theoretical chapter). Social ties with their home country can become less strong, while at the same time strong ties with new friends can be formed (Poros, 2008). Hence, by landing in Lleida, a social network can change. These social and economic dimensions both have an influence on the spatial environment and they can change places physically (Adey 2010; Bærenholdt & Brynhild Granås, 2008). Social places, such as migrant houses, can change by the arrival of new migrants and new economic activities. For example, there might be more and different kind of shops, such as phone-shops, in a neighbourhood. During my stay in Lleida, I looked at three dimensions within the migrant neighbourhood, in order to grasp the interplay between mobility and place: the social, economic and spatial activities and ambiance in the neighbourhood (as Chapter 2 explained). A division has been made in three periods: Lleida before (and during) the arrival of seasonal migrants (April – May, part 5.2), during the stay of seasonal migrants (June-September, part 5.3) and after the departure of seasonal migrants (October-March, part 5.4). Each part starts with the social dimension, followed up by the economic dimension and at the end the spatial dimension will be analysed.

5.2 Lleida before arrival of seasonal migrants (April- May)

Social dimension

The majority of my West-African respondents clustered together in the migrant neighbourhood. Some migrants were sitting on benches, but the majority of them were inside their houses, in the Albergue (which is a shelter centre, see below) or in cafés. Some West-African migrants already were in the city of Lleida before the arrival of seasonal migrants, despite the fact that there were not many jobs available for them in that specific period. Why were they in Lleida, while they could also live in another place in Spain, like Barcelona? Many respondents said that Lleida is a cheap city in comparison to, for example, Barcelona, Madrid or Valencia. This is a reason for migrants to live in Lleida even if they do not have a job there.

Moreover, as seasonal migrants change their job quickly, they sometimes also live in a place during *job-seeking periods* (Reyneri, 2001). Most of my respondents in Lleida lived there in such a job-seeking period. These respondents use the months of April and May to get in contact with some (former) farmers, other West-Africans or by visiting working offices to be informed about the working possibilities in Lleida. It became clear that April and May are really important for some migrants, especially new migrants, who are in Lleida temporarily. Alain can be considered a new arrival. He was trying to get in contact with farmers in the first weeks of May. He visited a working employment agency office in Lleida, but the chances to get a job by visiting that office is quite low, because almost all of the migrants visit them. You are more likely to get a job if you can get in contact with a farmer directly or through friends, as Camile nicely expressed to me. On May 13th he said:

"I am looking forward to work. The boss from the agriculture company will call me this Sunday if he needs me this Monday. I know him because of another person, a friend. That is almost always far more easy, to get in contact with a boss via another person I know, so without a working office. For example: the farmer asks a labourer to find two other boys to work on his land. Then this boy asks me and so on. That is far more easy". (Camile, Senegal, 13/05/2016).

Obtaining a job by using a friend is one of the most successful ways of get a job. This is also underpinned by a study of the National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) in the United States. They stated that 69% of the seasonal migrants in the United States found their job via friends or relatives (NCFH, 2012). Hence, the month of April and May is important for migrants to get in touch with friends who have a job at or strong ties with a farmer in Lleida. Therefore, it is important for them to be physically present in Lleida, to be flexible concerning social contacts too. This period can be seen as a 'transit phase' for migrants. In general, there is not much work available in other places in Spain. So, if seasonal migrants do not have a job in another place, they may decide to move to Lleida.

What are other social activities and experiences of migrants in Lleida in this period? Migrants were a lot in their houses during this period, but they also met at some important places within the neighbourhood, like Plaça del Gramàtics, Plaça del Dipòsit and Plaça de Cervantes. The Albergue was another important place for many of my respondents in the first two months (see Figure 21 and 22). It is a hostel for migrants in Lleida and a special place for migrants who have struggles, no sleeping

place or no food. The Albergue is situated in the migrant neighbourhood, near Plaça del Gramàtics. It is possible for migrants to sleep there for about fifteen days, but after that you need to go. Each migrant can get a breakfast and dinner for free every day, which is what the boss, Omar Andrade, said in an interview to me. The Albergue is an important social meeting point within the neighbourhood, especially in the months of April and May. Migrants can watch (Spanish) television in the Albergue, there is a religious room where people can pray, there are medical facilities for the migrants, they can follow language courses and migrants can store their luggage there. Many of my respondents made use of this facilities. People are meeting each other inside the Albergue in April, to rest or to watch television. This really is important for them.



Figure 21. Religious room in the Albergue (photo made by the author)



Figure 22. Sleeping room in the Albergue (photo made by the author)

Moreover, many migrants spend their time in Wi-Fi-zones or drinking something in the bars in the neighbourhood. As Schapendonk and Moppes (2007) stated, the use of internet is very important for

migrants to stay in contact with their friends and family abroad, both during the migration journey and once they reach their final destination in Europe. Therefore, it is not striking that many of my respondents in Lleida were in places with free Wi-Fi a lot, such as the cafés, the Albergue and Plaça del Gramàtics. Respondents often talked with their relatives, especially using WhatsApp. The migrants' houses are other important places during this period. An example of that is the house of Armand, which I visited regularly during my stay in Lleida. In my diary I wrote about my first visit to Armand' house:

After talking at Plaça de Cervantes, we (Armand and I) walked to his house, because he invited me to join his meal. It was an old apartment, near the main square of Lleida. I entered the house and the first thing I saw were boxes with clothes, which Armand is collecting. We entered the living room. There was a space to pray, three sofa's and one little table. There was also a television (with a channel from Senegal). The bathroom was old, but everything was functioning and there was warm water. There were three sleeping rooms in the apartment and in every room there were around three beds. Armand had three roommates in the month of April, all from Senegal too. I spoke with one, whose name was Nordin. We ate a meal from Senegal together and talked a lot during the meal (Based on diary, 19/04/2016).

Although the apartment of Armand was old, it was functioning, had a nice ambiance and the roommates were friendly. Living in an apartment like Armand' in April is not normal for all migrants. Some respondents, like Maurilio, lived in an apartment without light and water. Some migrants even slept on the streets in the month of April, as they did not have enough money to pay for a room. One of them was Camile. About his life in Lleida in April he said:

"I am sleeping in the Caixa bank, on a small carton. It is tough, but you know, it's life. But I do not suffer. On a day, it is okay, I am optimistic". I also asked him if he could not sleep in a house of a friend of him, from Senegal. He said: "There are already many people living there. Furthermore, they cannot do that, as the owner of the house might become angry. The owner is often very strict, because there is not many space in the houses. Now, I am looking for a room. I need 85 euro. A friend of Tortosa is helping me, he has given me 60 euros, I need still 25 euro. Then I can pay the rent for a month. Now it is cheap, but in June and July it is far more expensive, because then there are more people here. So I try to get a room now, in this month" (Camile, Senegal, 22/04/2016).

Camile's story, and the house of Maurilio, showed that some respondents really have bad circumstances to live in, especially in the month of April and May. Not having a job has a direct influence on their living conditions in this way.

While some of my respondents have lived elsewhere in Spain, many others spent a few months in Africa. Bamba, a person from Senegal, is a respondent who arrived at the end of April, after having stayed in Senegal for some months. He wore African clothes and I after I met him, I walked with him through the city. He greeted a lot of people during this walk, mainly Africans. He knew them from former working periods in Lleida and the migrant neighbourhood. He was greeting this people happily, sometimes even with a hug. The period of April and May is the time of re-connecting, the time when migrants see each other again after a period of absence. This revival of seeing old friends is an example of the dynamic social networks of migrants during their journey to

and stay in Europe (Poros, 2008; Cummings, Pacitto, Lauro & Foresti, 2015). Sometimes, they see old friends again, but they also get new friends.

Economic activities

Now, we will take a look at the economic activities in the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida in the months of April and May. There were few (informal) economic activities on the streets self. Hence, there can be expected that most of the economic activities are taken place in shops and cafés. However, near the Plaça del Dipòsit there were some informal economic activities. Informal economic activities are activities where people do not pay taxes and which is not controlled by the government (Shapland, 2003). As Sassen (1988) and Shapland (2003) state, many of the informal activities in the United States take place in migrant communities and neighbourhoods, for example in the so-called Chinatowns. Examples of informal economic activities are illegal street vendors and trading, drugs negotiations and prostitution. Within April and May there were not many informal activities in the neighbourhood, except for some drug negotiations. When I passed the Plaça del Dipòsit, dealers sometimes asked me to buy some stuff. Sometimes I felt a little bit uncomfortable in those places, because people were watching me. The dealers were not only men from West-Africa, but also from Morocco or Algeria. There was some prostitution in the neighbourhood as well. Some African girls were walking around with their wallet, looking for clients, while others were working in old houses. Except for the drug negotiations and prostitution, there were not many other informal activities in the neighbourhood going on in this period of time.

Many other economic activities took place in shops in the neighbourhood, several of which are open permanently during the year. Most of them were owned by West-African migrants. Three of my respondents also had their own shop. I mentioned Azana before in Chapter 4, who had a shop in the centre. The other shop was owned by Idrissi and Samuel, who are nephews. They are both from Medina-Gounass, which is in the south-east of Senegal. During the month of April and the beginning of May, I spoke a lot with them in their shop. It is situated outside the epicentre of the migrant neighbourhood. The shop has a size of 40 square meter. There are many varied things, like clothes, bags, food and drinks, but also music and jewellery. When there are no clients, Idrissi (and later on Samuel) is sitting on a chair behind the cash disk. It is quiet in the shop, far more quiet than the bars or cafés in the same neighbourhood. However, some people are hanging around before the shop, which makes it a bit of a meeting place. Many things in the shop are from Africa, but also from other regions in Europe. They sell African clothes and luggage bags, suitcases. These suitcases are intended for migrants who are visiting their family in Africa or are going to other places in Spain or Europe. The things Idrissi and Samuel sell in their shop are influenced by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. The mobile, circular migrants sometimes need new suitcases, which is why the shops in the centre neighbourhood offer these things. Offering suitcases is an example of how mobility can influence a place, in this case, the shops in the centre. The supply of a shop is changed because of the presence and arrival of migrants. If there were no migrants, there would not have been suitcases in Idrissi's shop, or at least less than now.

Building on this, Blommaert and Dong (2007) stated that in neighbourhoods with a high density of migrants, specific facilities for migrants grow, such as employment offices and phone shops. Within the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida, there are many little shops with mobile phones and possibilities for money transfer. Using a mobile phone was very important for all of my respondents. They were using it almost constantly, especially in the Wi-Fi-zones in the neighbourhood. Almost every respondent had two mobile phones, one for WhatsApp and Facebook

and the other to call people, mostly within Spain itself. Therefore, West-African migrants need cheap but well-working mobile phones. In total, there are around four shops in the centre neighbourhood where you can buy mobile phones, three between the Plaça de Cervantes and Plaça del Dipòsit and one close to Plaça de Gramàtics. These shops mainly exist because of the demand from migrants for such mobile phones. In these shops there are also 'old' mobile phones without internet, which are used by migrants to call. This is another example of how mobile persons can change an economic landscape. The money transfer shops are also visible in the neighbourhood, see Figure 23. I counted around four of them. In these shops, migrants send money to their relatives back home.



Figure 23. A closed money transfer shop in the centre neighbourhood (photo made by the author)

Spatial dimension

As mentioned before, many migrant activities take place inside buildings, like the shops, cafés and the Albergue. Although people are inside the buildings a lot, they are sometimes outside, on the streets. Based on this, what are spatial features in the neighbourhood, in the way of security, ambiance and level of crowdedness?

First of all, we will discuss the security in the migrant neighbourhood. Davies and Fagan (2012) stated that police enforcement and prevention has increased in New York migrant neighbourhoods, while there has actually not been a significant raise in criminal rates. This is interesting, concerning Lleida as well. Are there differences in security and security measures in the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida, especially between the different periods within a year? In April and the beginning of May, there was not much police on the street, probably because there were not so many people hanging around then compared to June and July. However, every day I spent in the migrant neighbourhood I saw some police cars driving around. Sometimes, while I was sitting at the same place for some hours, I saw the same police cars driving the same route in the migrant neighbourhood. Usually, they were driving around, but sometimes they stood still to watch some people or approach them (see Figure 24). There were rarely cases of violence or problems, although some respondents said that in the weekends and nights there were more struggles in the

neighbourhood. There was one moment when I felt a little bit unsafe, which was when the police arrested a migrant who had a gun.

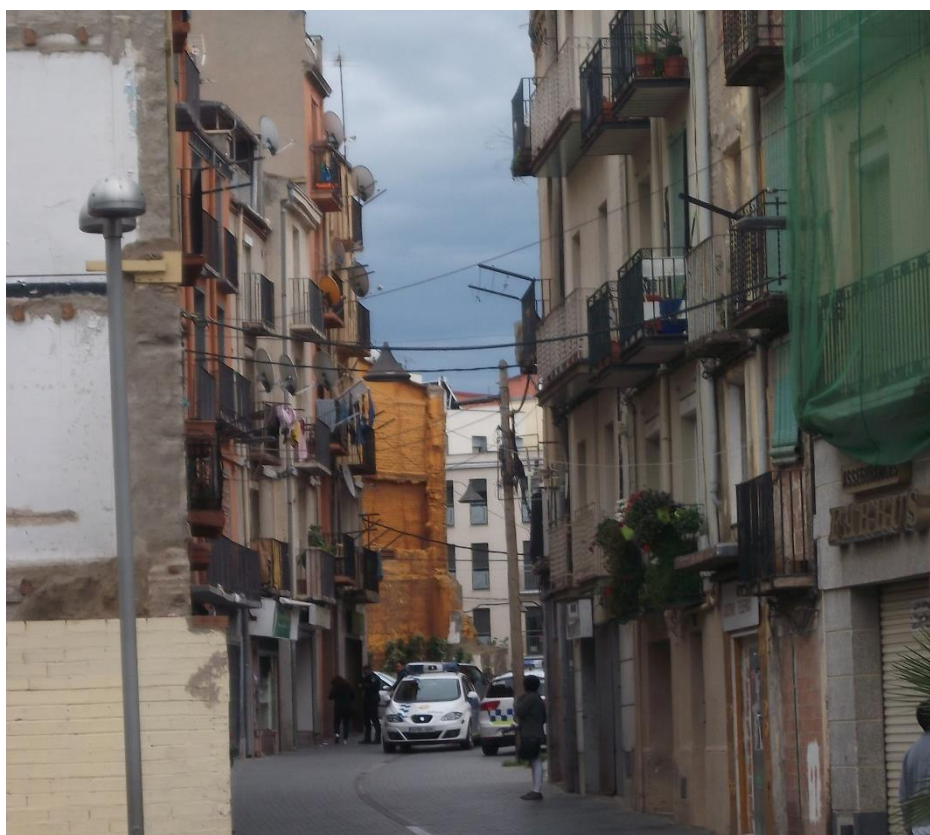


Figure 24. Police in the migrant neighbourhood (photo made by the author).

All in all, it was not very busy in the migrant neighbourhood places in April and the beginning of May. Not many people were on the squares, about ten people at each place (Plaça del Gramàtics, Plaça del Dipòst or Plaça de Cervantes) in general.

At the end of April, you could feel that the ambiance in the migrant neighbourhood was changing. People were talking about new migrants, I saw new arrivals and new faces in the neighbourhood and slowly it became more busy. You could feel that people were waiting for a new 'period' of the year, the time of working in Lleida. Migrants also prepared themselves for this new period, by looking for a job or a room and by buying new mobile phones. Migrants were talking about work possibilities, new, cheap rooms and the arrival of old friends who they knew from former years in Lleida or had met in other places in Spain. It is a relatively quiet period in this part of the city, but it is important nevertheless, because it is the preparation period for the new agricultural season.

5.3 Lleida during stay of seasonal migrants (June-September)

After the months of April and May I was already used to the migrant neighbourhood and to the city of Lleida. I especially got used to the migrant neighbourhood, as I was there almost every day. Many respondents told me that the months of June and July are very different from April and May, so I was very curious in what way Lleida, and especially the migrant neighbourhood, would change in this month. It was different doing my fieldwork in this period in comparison to April and May, because it was far more busy in the neighbourhood. In the month of June and the first week of July, I spoke with fourteen more people and I stayed in contact with eight from my first seventeen respondents

from April and May. Within the month of June I spoke with 22 people in total and at the beginning of July. Thus, I conducted most of my data in this period.

As explicated before, there is a high demand for seasonal workers in the agriculture in the surrounding of Lleida between June-September. Many migrants who had not had a job in April and May found one in June or July. To illustrate this, fifteen of my seventeen respondents that I have met at the beginning of my research (April/May) have found a job at the end of June or the beginning of July. The other fourteen respondents (in total I spoke with 31 migrants) also had a job in June/July. Only Armand and Moussa did not have a job in this period, because Armand was trading in clothes and Moussa could not work since he suffered from back problems. There are many more West-African migrants in Lleida in these three/four months during the harvest season. This has an impact on the city, especially on the city centre neighbourhood.

Social dimension

The social environment of my respondents was changing during this period in June. Some migrants saw old friends back again, or they got to know new people and made new friends. Alain for example introduced me to a friend he met at work, a Gambian person whose name was Mustapha. They worked together in the same *campo*. I spoke with him on Saturday June 11th, when we were watching a football match together. When they were free during the weekends, they sometimes met each other in the migrant neighbourhood. The period of June is a time of more social connections for many of my respondents. If they have leisure time, which is rare, they often meet their friends in the migrant neighbourhood. Nordin, a roommate of Armand, also did this. I saw him on a Saturday afternoon in the migrant neighbourhood and he told me the following:

"I like to visit this place (Plaça del Gramàtics) in the weekend. I can watch and talk to people, I know people and I can just rest. I can also think of other things, it feels more free to be here instead of being home" (Nordin, Senegal, 16/06/2016).

The migrant neighbourhood is an important place for migrants to meet people, which is also the reason for the bustle in the migrant neighbourhood in this period. The majority of my respondents like this bustle, the social meeting function of this neighbourhood. Some people, however, also had some troubles with the increasing crowdedness in June and July, in comparison to the tranquillity of April and May. An example of that was Saul, a timid person from Tambacounda, Senegal. He said:

"I like Lleida, because I have been living here a long time, I know a lot of places too. But I live in the city centre with three other people, also with Sinclair (another respondent). During the nights it is really noisy and busy. I do not like that. Sometimes I cannot sleep, because of the noise" (Saul, Senegal, 07/06/2016).

Another respondent, Simba, also had some struggles with the increasing noise in the migrant neighbourhood during the months of June and July. He said that in the evenings it is always so busy that he goes home around 20:00, trying to avoid the crowdedness. But at the same time he also knew that if he wants to meet people, he needs to stay in the migrant neighbourhood.

In part 5.2 we shortly described a migrant house, which was Armand' house. Did it changed between the first visit and a visit in June? Based on diary notes, I will describe his house in June and the way it changed in comparison to April:

In the month of June, I went to the house of Armand four times. It had really changed in that period. The atmosphere in June was very different compared to my visit to his house in April. In April, there were not more than five people there. In June, there were many West-Africans present, about 12 in total. In June, people were cooking in the small kitchen, many clothes were lying on the ground or in boxes and people were using the bathroom a lot, because they all worked in agriculture during the day. In April, I was eating together with other roommates. In May and June, however, they were eating more separately, because they all arrive home at various times, according to Armand. The house was also more of a meeting point than in April, because there was a television and good quality Wi-Fi, which is sometimes hard to get for migrants in Lleida. In April/May this Wi-Fi was already present, but in June/July it was used by other persons, who did not live in the same apartment as Armand. These persons, all from Senegal, visited the house of Armand to make use of this Wi-Fi. Armand asked them some euros for using the Wi-Fi, which was not a problem for the working migrants. Sometimes there were around 15 people in the house of Armand, including the visitors who were using the Wi-Fi. Some two months before, Armand was only sharing this place with four other persons. Armand likes the period of the harvest season, not only because he can earn more money with his roommates, but also because he likes the atmosphere more. He does not like the atmosphere in his house in winter. He said:

"In winter, I live here alone, or with two or three other people, and it is cold in the house. The heating is very expensive and hot water too. Therefore we do not have it. We are wearing more clothes. We do have warm water all the year, that is okay. All other Africans are living in other places, to work, for example, in the olive industry. In that period it is boring. I like the summer more, when there are also more negotiation opportunities, which makes life easier" (Armand, Senegal, 13/05/2016).

The example of Armand's house shows that a social environment is really changing during one year, with considerable differences between seasons. This also has an impact on their social life, feelings and experiences, as Armand explained above.

A similar example of a social (and spatial) change driven by mobility took place in the Nigerian church. I went to this church almost every Sunday. In the months April and May, there were around 50 or 60 people. But at the end of May and in June, more and more people attended the service, about 80 at the end of June. People arrived from other places and went to the church when they were free of their work. Once, the priest George (the father of my respondent named Kelly) welcomed two persons in a service who had arrived in Lleida the day before. They were happy to see each other again and thanked God that they had arrived safely in Lleida. Moreover, during one of the bible study sessions in the Nigerian church in June, I met a person from Cameroon, who visited the church for the first time. He had come in Lleida to work, which he shortly explained to me. It is clear that social, transnational places like the Nigerian church change because of mobility, driven by seasonal labour.

Economic dimension

The examples above are social changes in Lleida, forced by mobility. What are economic changes in the migrant neighbourhood during the months of June and July? Like said in part 5.2, economic activities in the months of April and May mainly took place inside buildings, such as shops and cafés. In June, however, many more informal economic activities happened in the neighbourhood, mainly

outside the buildings. Prostitution is the first example of an informal economic activity in the migrant neighbourhood, which increased in the month of June. According to a report of the International Organization for Migration by Pinto-Dobernig (2006), a number of West-African women end in the illegal prostitution in European countries, including Spain. This illegal prostitution by Africans was also visible in the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida. In April and May, there were already some prostitutes in the neighbourhood, but in June this number increased. Some migrants said that these women travel together with the harvest season to other places in Spain and in April I saw two women arriving in the neighbourhood.

Prostitution is one example of increasing informal economic activities in Lleida because of the arrival of migrants. But there were also other informal activities in the migrant neighbourhood. A bright example of that is the story of Armand. In the month of April, he was collecting clothes. These clothes were standing in boxes in the corner of the living room in his house. The majority of these clothes, as I learnt later, was there to be sold to migrants in Lleida. What I could hardly know from my engagements with Armand in April, revealed to me in June. Armand is a trader of clothes in Lleida. Many of the West-African migrants in Lleida know Armand for this economic activity. If migrants need second hand clothes for their work, they can go to Armand, and they also know where to find him. Armand's life in June-September is really different in comparison to his life in April and May. During that period he only buys clothes, but does not sell them. From June till September, his house does not only lodge more people (social dimension), but he is also having more economic activities. Within this summer and harvest period, every week has its own structure. During the working days (Monday-Saturday morning), he buys second hand clothes. This always took place at Plaça de Cervantes. A typical negotiation went as follows:

Two women came to Armand at Plaça de Cervantes, with a small shopping car. In that shopping car were some bags with clothes. The two women, one old (60+), the other young, started to show clothes to Armand. It were trousers, shoes, blouses and t-shirts. They were talking in Spanish. The two women probably were from Romania or Bulgaria. Armand was checking the clothes, if they were not damaged, and looked at the quality of the clothes. He also asked if it were clothes with a brand. Eventually, he bought three short trousers, for three euro in total. He showed me the trousers. He said that he would sell the trousers for 10 euro a piece in Senegal or here in Lleida. (Diary, 17/05/2016)

He only sold clothes during the weekends, because then the migrants, who were out working during the week, were in the city. Another difference between the working days and the weekends was the place of Armand. While during the working days he was mainly at Plaça de Cervantes, on Saturday afternoon and Sunday he was at Plaça del Gramàtics. In that place most of his potential clients were and the chance to sell his clothes was higher there. In general, he sat there all day long, from the morning, around 10:00 a.m., until 09:00 p.m. Armand had all kind of clothes, but mostly working clothes and sport shoes. He also sold cigarettes, for 20 cent per cigarette. I wondered if this was profitable, but there were more people in the migrant neighbourhood trading in cigarettes. Selling his clothes was really a spectacular event to see. In the weekends I was at Plaça del Gramàtics a lot, so I could clearly see (and enjoy) this scene. He was always having discussions with possible buyers about the price. He said that in trading there are no friends. Sometimes people walked away after hearing the price of Armand, but after a while they came back, again to negotiate. It was sometimes like watching a theatre play and other West-African migrants also enjoyed this. Once, I bought something from him and he was laughing all the time and saying that there are no friends in doing

business.

Some other people also traded in clothes, bicycles or mobile phones, mostly meant for migrants. Especially trading in mobile phones seemed to be popular, although I thought that many of those mobile phones were actually stolen. Sometimes these sellers were very young, around 15 years, and mostly came from Eastern-European countries. They addressed people whether they wanted to buy the phone and they began shortly negotiating about the price. If people were not interested, they immediately went to another group of migrants and approached again them to talk about the specific mobile phone. These sellers were walking around more, in comparison to Armand, who always stayed at the same place. These informal economic activities all took place outside on the streets, in small groups, and almost always within the migrant neighbourhood. This is really different than in the month of April and May. The sellers gave another dynamic to the migrant neighbourhood. Sometimes, the streets near Plaça del Gramàtics felt like a small open air shop. For many of the migrants this was a normal phenomenon. Not many people were watching these negotiation activities, as it was really common.

Spatial dimension

More migrants in the months of June till September lead to more informal economic activities in the migrant neighbourhood and to a change in the social environment of many respondents in Lleida. How does this influence the ambiance and space in the migrant neighbourhood?

First of all, there is, of course, the simple fact that there are much more people in the neighbourhood. The squares were full of people (all migrants), buying and selling things, watching football matches in the bars and talking with each other. The places were crowded. Sometimes I could not even sit down at Plaça del Gramàtics, because there were so many migrants. There is a lot of noise in the neighbourhood, because the streets also are small. People were sometimes shouting to each other, partly influenced by the use of alcohol or drugs. There is a consistent rhythm in the neighbourhood concerning the noise and bustle. During a working day it is quiet in the neighbourhood, as the majority of the (seasonal) migrants are working on the *campo*. Sometimes I went to the migrant neighbourhood in the morning and there were about seven or eight people at the Plaça del Gramàtics, for instance. All of these persons would like to work, but were not able (like Moussa, with his back problems, see page 66) or did not have a job yet. The atmosphere in the migrant neighbourhood during a working day in June is the same as the atmosphere of a normal day in April or May. In the evening, however, about 07:00 p.m., it begins to be more busy. People come home around 06:00 p.m., then take a shower and eat something. After that they go to the migrant neighbourhood, where they sit down outside, to use their mobile phone (because in their houses they often do not have Wi-Fi) or to talk. The places are full of people at around 08:00 p.m. Alain does this as well. About a normal working day he said:

"At 7:00, I go to my work, which is about 30 minutes from Lleida, by car, with other people. We work from 08:00-13:00, than we have a one-hour break to eat. After that, we work till 17:30/18:00. Then we go home, where we arrive at 19:00. I take a shower and eat, and then I go to the city centre to talk with people etc." (Alain, Senegal, 22/05/2016).

The migrant neighbourhood is the place to be for the migrants when they are free. The most busy day of the week by far is Sunday. It is the only free day for every migrant. People who are working in the villages surrounding Lleida also come there on Sunday, to meet people or to buy some things.

Sinclair is such a person. I met him on my second day in Lleida and we kept in touch, but it was difficult to see him a lot, because he was living and working in a village near Lleida (around 10 kilometres from Lleida). Every Saturday evening he went to Lleida. He was a roommate of Saul and he slept in the same house. On those Sundays he visited people and bought some eating products for the village. I wrote about one of my busiest days in Lleida in my diary:

Today it was Sunday (June 26th), and it was the most busy day I have seen during my stay here in Lleida. There were many, many people in the migrant neighbourhood. At the beginning of the day I talked with Saul, but that was near the shop of the Morocco people, where it is relatively quiet. After that I walked to the Plaça dels Dìposit and Plaça del Gramàtics. There were many people, like Armand, Camile, Jamil, Malik, Laurent, Christophe and Moba, a roommate of Armand. People needed to keep standing, because there was no place on the benches. There was also more rubbish in the neighbourhood and there were many cars and bicycles. People from the villages near Lleida are coming to the centre to buy things or visiting people. Sunday is by far the most busy day of the week in the migrant neighbourhood. Informal economic activities also increases in these days. I saw more people selling things like clothes and people were buying more things in the shop (sometimes food for a week in the villages). I also saw people buying clothes in a car. The car was like a shop, people were trying shoes etc. It was funny to see.

Did I like the atmosphere? It was okay, I was more cautious though. I do not know why, because most of the people are very friendly. Maybe it was because I was used to the fact that it was not very busy in the neighbourhood, therefore it was maybe strange. But the difference between a normal day in April and a Sunday in June is very big!! Some migrants do not like that, as I can imagine. Armand also told me that in July and August it is twice as busy as it is now....Unfortunately, I cannot experience that period (Diary, 26/06/2016).

I took the following photos (Figure 25-29) on this busy Sunday in June:



Figure 25. Bicycles of migrants who are visiting Lleida in the weekend from their village (photo made by the author).



Figure 26. Square full of cars, used by migrants to visit Lleida on Sunday (photo made by the author).



Figure 27. Plaça del Dipòsit on a Sunday afternoon in June. People are hanging around and talking with each other in the shadow (photo made by the author).



Figure 28. Plaça del Gramàtics in April, where, in general, five people were sitting (photo made by the author).



Figure 29. Plaça del Gramàtics in June, more than 10 people in general, sometimes 30 on a Sunday (photo made by the author).

Another spatial consequent of more people in the migrant neighbourhood is the increasing presence of police. The police are more observing and walking or driving around, sometimes in undercover cars. Some are also riding on bicycles, which really is a difference compared to the month of April. It is noisy and crowded in the neighbourhood and there is sometimes more tension. The police are addressing people sometimes, about trading drugs or just to ask some questions. In the evening, there is more police present in the neighbourhood, because there are more people on the streets. It seems that the statement by Davies and Fagan (2012) about the increased prevention and enforcement of police activities in neighbourhoods because of the arrival of migrants, is also visible in Lleida.

5.4 Lleida after stay of seasonal migrants (October-April)

In general, seasonal migrants in Lleida are working in agriculture until the end of September or half way through October. In the months of June, July and August, they mainly work in the nectarine industry, whereas in September and October, they work with apples and pears. In this period after the harvest season, I tried to get in contact with some respondents as I had left the field at July 9th. In December 2016, I talked with them again using WhatsApp. I spoke with Odil, Armand, Edu, Laurent, Silvain, Sinclair, Alain, Camile, Moussa, Maurilio, Idrissi, Samuel, Kelly, Albert, Pierre, Oskar, Remy, Azana and Saul. My main question was: In which place do you live now and do you have a job there? I did not have the mobile phone numbers of the other eleven respondents I spoke with in Lleida or they were not responding to my messages. This resulted in Table 2.

Name	Place of living June 2016 (during fieldwork period)	Place of living around October 20 th , 2016	Place of living around December 6 th , 2016
Odil	Montblanc, Catalonia (working in agriculture)	Vic, Catalonia (working in a meat factory)	Osona, Catalonia, (working in a meat factory)
Armand	Lleida (trading in clothes)	Lleida (trading in clothes)	Lleida (collecting clothes, less selling)
Alain	Lleida (working in agriculture)	Logrono (working in grapes)	La Coruna (with his brother, looking for a job)
Camile	Lleida (working in agriculture)	Lleida (waiting for another job)	Mogón, Jaen (working in agriculture)
Moussa	Lleida (no job)	Fraga, Catalonia (working in agriculture)	Lleida (no job)
Maurilio	Logrono (working in agriculture)	Balaguer (working in agriculture)	Balaguer (working in a factory)
Idrissi	Corbins (Catalonia, working in agriculture)	Lleida (working in a shop)	Medina-Gounass (Senegal)
Samuel	Lleida (working in a shop)	Lleida (working in a shop)	Lleida (working in a shop)
Kelly	Lleida (studying)	Lleida (studying)	Lleida (studying)
Edu	Lleida (studying)	Lleida (studying)	Lleida (studying)
Pierre	Lleida (studying)	Lleida (studying)	Lleida (studying)
Omar	Lleida (studying)	Lleida (studying)	Lleida (studying)
Remy	Village in Catalonia (working in agriculture)	Mali	Mali
Azana	Lleida (working in a shop)	Lleida (working in a shop)	Yaoundé (visiting family at the end of December, going back to Lleida in half January)
Saul	Lleida (waiting for a job)	Lleida (working in agriculture)	Lleida (no job)
Sinclair	Village near Lleida (working in agriculture)	Village near Lleida (working in agriculture)	Lleida (no job)
Albert	Lleida (no job)	Lleida (no job)	Lleida (no job)
Silvain	Villafranca	Lleida (waiting for a job)	Jaen (working in agriculture)
Laurent	Villafranca	Lleida (waiting for a job)	Jaen (working in agriculture)
Jamil	Lleida	Villanueva del Arzobispado, Jaen	Villanueva del Arzobispado, Jaen (working in agriculture)

Table 2. Living place of nineteen respondents in the months of June, October and December 2016

As Table 2 shows, many migrants are living in several places during the time between June and December. More than the half of the persons I spoke lived in two different places or more. Some respondents were staying in Africa, others went to live in different places in Spain.

After working in some Catalan villages during the harvest season, some persons shortly (for one or two weeks) went back to Lleida, waiting for the start of the Andalusian harvest season. This is again like a transit period, between the different Spanish harvest seasons. For example, Laurent went back in October to Lleida after having worked in a village in Catalonia. The job there was finished and he was waiting for the harvest season in Andalusia. In the meantime, he stayed in Lleida, just like his friend Silvain. They were there for three weeks and after that they would go to another place in Spain, which is probably Jaen, Andalusia. In December, Silvain and Laurent indeed went to Jaen.

In the month of October, these respondents were thinking of mobility and it is normal to become mobile again after the harvest season in Lleida. Some persons, like Idrissi and Remy, went to other places in Europe in the meantime. Remy visited his brother in Nantes, France and Idrissi tried to go to Paris. Because he had no return ticket in Paris to go back to Spain, he could not enter France, he went back to Lleida. After this visit to France, they both went back to their home country, Mali and Senegal. Azana, the shop owner, also went back to Cameroon, even though she had not planned this in June, when I interviewed her.

Social, economic and spatial dimension

I have not done any observations or in-depth interviews in this period, so I cannot describe the atmosphere of the migrant neighbourhood in detail. Based on assumptions and stories of Armand, it can be expected that it will be more quiet in the migrant neighbourhood. As Armand said to me on WhatsApp in December:

“It is very quiet now in Lleida, people are gone, especially to Jaen or to Africa. In my house there are three people now, all from Senegal. Sometimes I buy some clothes, for the next summer, but in general I am not doing any negotiations. It is cold, a little bit boring too, but I am waiting for the next period. In April and May, the people will come back, then the negotiations are starting again. After the next year I will go back to Sokone (Senegal), insallah’ (Armand, Senegal, 06/12/2016).

Migrants are sometimes losing social contacts in this period, like Armand. One of his best friends Laurent is now in Jaen, as Table 2 shows. Armand is more alone now. There are seldom agricultural jobs available in Lleida in December, at least that is what Armand said. Some migrants, however, are working in a meat factory, like Odil (in Osona/Vic) and Maurilio (Balaguer). The social environment of migrants can change again in this period, for example the house of Armand, which is quiet after a busy summer. The informal activities in the migrant neighbourhood probably decrease in this period and the economic activities again mainly take place within buildings, the shops and the bars, which are visited by permanent inhabitants of Lleida. The situation in Lleida in October might be similar to the situation in April.

5.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter emphasized the social, economic and spatial influence and interplay between mobility and place in Lleida, especially within the migrant neighbourhood. The mobility patterns of West-African migrants, which are described in Chapter 4, in one way or another land in the city of Lleida. It is clear that this settlement of West-African, circular migrants has an influence on the place of Lleida, the migrant neighbourhood in particular. This arrival of seasonal migrants, their mobility, causes some socio-spatial changes in the migrant neighbourhood, for example, the increase of informal activities, like prostitution and the trading of clothes and mobile phones. Migrants' social environments, like houses, social networks and meeting places, also change during the different mobile periods. This socio-spatial change of Lleida is like a rhythm, driven by the movement of people. This change in the migrant neighbourhood takes place every year. Therefore, it is important to look at the word 'change'. Can you say that something is changing if it is the same every year and occurs every year at the same moment? People in Lleida, especially in the migrant neighbourhood know what will happen in the different periods of a year. This dynamic or rhythm of the migrant neighbourhood is quite normal and in that sense it is not a change. It would be a change if circular migrants suddenly do not come to Lleida anymore. People are used to this mobility-driven change and they are not surprised by it, because it is the same every year.

Chapter 6: Sense of place in mobile places?

After describing Lleida, and the migrant neighbourhood in particular, as a mobile place in Chapter 5, built up, changed and influenced by migrants, we will now look at the experiences of these respondents within Lleida. This creates better insights into the level of migrant integration. Do the (circular) migrants feel a sense of place regarding the city of Lleida and if so, what places within the city does it concern?

The majority of my respondents have had experiences with many places, but does that also mean that they feel attached to those places; do they have a multiple sense of place as Vertovec (2004) states? During my fieldwork period I found various and diffuse answers on questions concerning sense of place. There were people who had mixed feelings about their living place(s), while others were very positive. To order these diffuse kind of (emotional) answers I made a distinction between three 'types' of sense of place among my respondents. A multiple sense of place (6.1), Lleida as a non-place experience (6.2) and a permanent sense of place in Lleida (6.3).

6.1 Multiple sense of place

The majority of my respondents are very mobile within Spain and between Europe and their home country in Africa, as Chapter 4 displayed. Therefore, migrants can experience *transnational place attachments* (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). Migrants are often living in networks that connect both their home country and place(s) of living. Built on this, migrants are able to live dual lives and may therefore experience dual (bi-local) sense of place. (Vertovec, 2001). However, as it is illustrated in the previous chapter, the mobility histories and mobility rhythms of my respondents may include more than two places. What are bi-local and multi-local sense of place and which factors are important to feel home in these places

After having done my interviews, it is clear that the majority of my respondents still experience a sense of place with their country in Africa. Respondents were talking a lot about their 'home'. Home is the place and symbol of continuity and order, rootedness, self-identity, attachment, privacy, security and comfort (Lewicka, 2011; Moore, 2000; Case, 1996). If the respondents were talking about home, the majority meant Africa. The majority of them were very positive about their home country, except about the economic or political situation. Feeling home in a place also depends on feeling comfortable and the feeling of sharing the same values and norms as the environment, which is called the place identity (Feldman, 1990). One question during my fieldwork was: Do you feel African or (a little bit) more European? All answered that they felt more African, except for the students Pierre, Edu, Kelly and Omar, who also felt Spanish in some way. Without exception, my respondents all missed their home country. Many of my respondents also had the feeling to stay in contact with their African identity, even during their stay in Lleida. They sometimes visited transnational places within Lleida. The concept of transnational places is derived from the term transnationalism, which is "the process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al., 1994, p.6). These transnational activities happen in places, which you can call transnational spaces or places. Transnational places in Lleida were usually African cafés and shops, where people could get African drinks and listen to African music. There also were some religious transnational places, like a Nigerian church, which I also visited a lot during my stay in Lleida. I wrote a lot about this church in my diary, which led to the next text box:

Box 1: Feeling Nigerian in Lleida



Figure 30. Nigerian church in Lleida

The Nigerian church is situated just outside the migrant neighbourhood. The seats are very simple and the light is very bright, as you can see in the photo above (Figure 30). The visitors of the church are all from Nigeria. Most of them are families and there are also many children.

How does it look like, a normal service? In general there are around 50 Nigerians, sometimes also more, around 70/80, on special events like a wedding or a baptism. The service starts around 12:00. But then there are very few people, around 10. They start with praying, for about twenty minutes. During these first twenty minutes some people are entering the church. The first hour of the service is called 'a teaching'. In that period, a member from the church is holding a kind of a lecture, about a certain topic. At 13:00 or 13:15 the music session starts. This praising of the Lord is also an important part of the service. People are dancing a lot and singing happy. They look happy at these Sunday's services. After the music, the sermon starts, which is around 14:00/14:15. Often priest George is doing the service, but on other days his wife, Juliet, is doing it. The church is really evangelic, there is many attention to emotions. Jesus is everything for them, He is the one who saves you from hell, dead and evil.

Discipline is very important in the church. You need to have respect for God, for Jesus and for your parents. There is a kind of 'porter' who watches the children to see whether they behave. Sometimes he even points to them with a stick.

You could say that the church is a transnational place. It really could have been a service held in Lagos, as Kelly and Edu also told me. In general, the Nigerian visitors in the church are badly integrated in Lleida and they only live with Africans. As Kelly said to me:

"They (the other church visitors) are more Nigerian than me. Because I am very well integrated here with the people, and my mentality and my habits is mixed, a mixed culture, from Nigeria and Spain or Europe. I am more integrated with the people here in Spain than the people from church are. See the people in the church as they walk home. Many of them do speak the language poorly and so I find myself a little bit different from them" (Kelly, Nigeria, 11/05/2016).

Moreover, people are wearing beautiful African clothes. They are trying their best to look very well on Sundays. The Sunday is a very important day to them. Women are wearing beautiful dresses and the men sometimes African clothes, but not always, that depends a bit. On Sundays, the visitors feel like they are in Nigeria, not in Lleida. It really feels like Lagos or any other place in Nigeria. People like it, but therefore they do not integrate well, as Kelly said.

Furthermore, many respondents said that they wanted to live in Africa in the future. These thoughts of returning to Africa, are also described by Vermeulen (2016). He said that the majority of the sub-Saharan migrants in Europe want to go back to their home country in the future, whereas many inhabitants of the European Union think that they want to stay there. Many respondents also visited their home country every year or once in every two years (sometimes even more often). In this way, they are maintaining their attachment to their home country. Respondents felt really happy visiting their relatives in Africa. Sinclair is one of the respondents who felt home in Senegal. Every year he attempts to go back to his family in Senegal. He said:

"If I am leaving Senegal, I always have to cry, to say goodbye to my family is difficult. But it's life. I want to have a future and here in Europe I can earn money. Every year I try to go back to Senegal. In general for about three months, but last year I was there for over five months. It is like vacation. It is really nice. For sure I would like to go back to Senegal in the future, to live there with my wife and family, and to get children. (Sinclair, Senegal, 08/05/2016).

Many other stories of my respondents are similar and comparable to the story of Sinclair. The circular migrants in my fieldwork period all felt very comfortable with the identity and community in their home country, even if they were living in Spain. But the place dependence, which includes the possibility to obtain your living goals in a place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), is quite low in their home country in comparison to their living place in Europe, usually Spain. Many respondents had economic problems (which means, no job) in their home country. Therefore, they were forced to go to Europe, to find a better economic life for themselves and for their relatives back home. Their sense of place with places in Spain (and Europe) is based for a large part on this economic, instrumental, attachment.

It seems that these various forms of attachments (place dependence, place identity and sense of community) can exist in a scattered matter. A migrant can have an emotional attachment with his or her home country, based on identity and sense of community, but at the same time have an economical place attachment (place dependence) with places in Europe, in this case, Spain. This

was also found in a research done by Rogers (1984), who stated that Yugoslavian migrants in Austria felt an instrumental attachment (place dependence) to their host country, which was Austria, because they were working there. At the same time, they felt attached to their home country, which was mainly a sentimental attachment, based on place identity and sense of community (Rogers, 1984). This was the case for many of my West-African respondents in Lleida too. However, this does not imply that some migrants did not feel emotional sense of place to some places in Spain. Among my respondents, some persons really felt home in Spanish (or other European) places, as well as in the Spanish culture.

An example of that is Alain (see Figure 31). He liked La Coruña very much, because he had some friends from Spain and Africa over there and his brother. He liked it more than Lleida and was talking a lot about La Coruña during our conversations. About La Coruña and the differences between it and Lleida he said:

"All my friends are in La Coruña, but I also know some Senegalese people here in Lleida already. As an Afric

an it is easy to get in contact with other people from Senegal here, they all speak the same language as I do, for example. In La Coruña I also have friends from Africa, but also Spanish friends. I know them from the language course. In Lleida I do not have Spanish friends. The people in La Coruña are very 'amable' (friendly), that is different with what I have seen here in Lleida, they are closed here. I miss La Coruna. (Alain, Senegal, 11/06/2016).



Figure 31. Me and Alain at Plaça de Gramàtics (permission from Alain to use this photo).

Alain's sense of place with La Coruna is more based on friends, family, (positive) experiences and identity and is not based on an economic attachment, because he does not have a job in La Coruña. With Lleida, however, he does have an instrumental attachment, because he had his job during summer time there. The story of Alain is a bright example of a migrant's multi-local sense of place. However, Alain is quite a young respondent in my fieldwork. He has not lived in so many places in Spain as the other circular migrants I met during my fieldwork period. Therefore, I will tell the story of Malik. Malik is probably one of the most mobile respondents in Lleida in my fieldwork. As mentioned before, he had lived in Belgium, Finland and in many other places in Spain, from Andalusia to Valencia, and from Tarragona to Bilbao. In all places he had worked and in that sense he

had an economic (instrumental) sense of place there. But what about an emotional attachment to those places? Which of them are his favourite, emotionally speaking? After I asked him this question, he immediately said that he liked Tarragona and Montblanc, but especially Tarragona. He said that he had many friends over there, all from Africa too. Some of his friends have a car and then they buy alcohol and go to the beach. He really liked the beach. He had had nice experiences in those places with his friends, therefore he liked it. He added that he liked Andalusia, Belgium and Bilbao too, because of the atmosphere and the people there. About Andalusia and Belgium he said:

"I also like Andalusia. In Andalusia the people are friendly, they are greeting each other and they are more open towards migrants, that really is a difference with Lleida. I. Antwerp was nice too, Brussels was nearby and I also visited Breda sometimes, to smoke something, yes I enjoyed my stay there but I needed to leave because of my papers" (Malik, Senegal, 06/06/2016).

Having nice experiences (smoking in Breda, visiting the beach in Tarragona), a sense of community and a place identity (Andalusia) are the most important reasons for Malik's sense of place in several places within Europe.

Reading the respondents' interviews, sense of community seems to be the most important reason for respondents' multiple sense of place in Spain. Almost all of the (circular) respondents had some good friends in Spanish places. Sometimes they see each other every year at the same place, for instance, by following the harvest season in Spain. The majority, however, only had friends from Africa, often from the same country and did not have many friends from Spain. Some respondents felt a really strong sense of community, especially during the working periods in villages. To describe such a situation, I will tell the story of Idrissi (who was also mentioned in part 4.3.1). In April, he was the owner of a shop in the migrant neighbourhood, but lived in a village near Lleida, called Corbins, from June to September. He invited me there, so I went to that village with my bike. I wrote the experiences in my diary:

Today I went to Corbins (10 km from Lleida), to visit Idrissi. He is living there for four months to work in the agriculture. This is his 11th year in Corbins. He lives there with eleven people in total. We sat down on the sofa and we talked and in the meanwhile I shook hands with his roommates. It was very special to be there. We watched Senegalese television. They just had worked for five hours (08:00-13:00). Somebody was preparing the meal, others were sleeping. After the meal I walked with Idrissi through the village. It was very quiet. He walks to the same place every day, a small, green park just a little bit outside the village. He likes that. He showed me the river, a small park and the church. During our walk we saw nobody, it was very quiet in the village. What a contrast with the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida! I asked him if he liked the village more than Lleida or not. He said: "It is quiet here, I like that, there are no problems, I have been here every year in the last 11 years. Within Lleida there are sometimes problems in the city centre. Here in Corbins is no trade in drugs or marijuana or something. I like that about this place and I like this place more than Lleida". I asked him if he was happy within Corbins. "A little bit. I like to live here together with the Senegalese people, they are all from the same city as I (Medina-Gounass), that feels very comfortable, they are like brothers for me". (Based on diary, 19/05/2016).

The example from Idrissi shows that a feeling of sense of community is very important for and present among many respondents in Spain. Every year, Idrissi is living in the same village with the

same people in the same building. This shapes a sense of place with that specific place, which is based on sense of community and place dependence (having a job).

Another person with a multiple sense of place is Christophe, another mobile person I have met in Lleida. For him it is custom to be mobile every year. He is used to being mobile and to live in various places. He said that he has his African friends and other contacts in every place (sense of community), besides his (temporal) work, of course. He strives to see the positive side of living in so many places. He said:

"I do not have problems with living in different places. I also like that, because you can understand people, you can see the world, that is nice. I talk with you now for example, now I can learn something from the Netherlands, that is what I like" (Christophe, 22/06/2016).

Although Christophe told me that he found no problem with living in so many places, he also had his preferences of places to live in. He liked Barcelona the most, because he had had a nice job there in the informal economy and his best friends were living there as well. It seems that Christophe is feeling attached to mobility in itself. The story of Christophe brings us to the description of Gustafson (2001), who investigated the relationship between place attachment and mobility among Swedish citizens. An outcome was that some respondents were happy with being mobile, because they could have new experiences, feelings of freedom, knowledge and personal growth (Gustafson, 2001). This was also the case for Christophe, who, for a great part, liked to be mobile. He felt 'in place' while he was on the move. It seems that many circular migrants are quite integrated in the system of mobility.

Box 2: California as a sense of place, without 'being' there

Can people experience a sense of place with places which they have never visited before? In the modern era we live in, people can 'visit' a lot of the world and 'see' many places (Relph, 2008). People can establish a sense of place with a certain place, just by seeing it online (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010; Pascual-de-Sans, 2004; Lewicka, 2011). Droseltis and Vignoles (2010) described these as imaginary places, places people think about but have never visited. Nevertheless, they can feel attached to those places. During my fieldwork period, I found one striking example of such an 'imaginary sense of place', which comes from Alain. During our conversations, he was talking a lot about California, about Los Angeles and Las Vegas. He likes rap music a lot, especially the music of Tupac. He is a famous rapper who was killed in 1996 in Las Vegas, but is still very popular around the world. Alain was listening a lot to his music, also in the migrant neighbourhood, and he watched many Tupac clips on YouTube. He is very much influenced by his music, which contributes to Alain's wish to go there in the future:

"I would like to go to the United States, to California. I like music, rap music. I like the music of 2pac. He has lived in California. I saw many videos of those places he lived in (the Westside neighbourhood). I like it, I was also a rapper and I want to go there too" (Alain).

He showed me a lot of videos of Tupac, about the neighbourhood there in Los Angeles. He also tried to speak English to me, although he had many struggles with it. Moreover, he was expressing this fascination by wearing specific clothes from the United States, as is nicely displayed in the picture below (see Figure 34). The fascination of Alain with California is a nice example of imaginary sense of place.



Figure 32. Me and Alain, with his t-shirt of the United States, which is an expression of his attachment to the United States (Los Angeles). (Photo made by the author. Showed with Alain's permission)

6.2 Lleida as a non-place experience?

In part 6.1 we displayed that circular migrants can have so many experiences and attachments to places that we can call this a multiple sense of place. The sense of place with (other) places described in that part was generally positive, mainly based on emotions, strong communities and identities. However, it is important to notice that people can also experience a feeling of a *non-place*, which already is described in chapter two. The notion of non-places is derived from the contrast between space and place, which is discussed by Tuan (1979). The 'space' in itself is the physical entity, but exists without emotional relationships within it. A space can become a place by having (emotional) experiences within the specific place. Then, a space can also become a sense of place (Tuan 1979; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Based on this, the term non-place was introduced by Augé (1995), as chapter two described already. This leads to the questions: What are negative experiences of West-African migrants in Lleida and in what way does this contribute to the migrants' experience of Lleida as a non-place? Can we use the term non-place in Lleida at all?

Before zooming in on the respondents' stories, it is first interesting to describe a result from Bærenholdt and Granås (2008) who stated that the seasonal migrants in the fishing industry did not experience an emotional sense of place with their living place in Iceland. On the contrary, they only felt attached to the place(s) in their home country. They were not emotionally attached to the Iceland identity and community and they were also not willing to be attached to this place (Bærenholdt & Granås, 2008). Having a job is the most important thing for many of these seasonal migrants. Bærenholdt and Granås (2008) described that these migrants only perceive the locality merely as a physical context of work (Bærenholdt & Granås, 2008). Building up an emotional relationship with a place is simply not their aim. Camile also described this feeling, which many of the respondents I talked with shared:

"I do not have a connection with this place (Lleida), neither with another place in Spain, because the aim of my stay in a place is different than for example your aim here. I am here to earn money, to go back to Senegal or to Northern Europe. I also do not want to actually establish a connection. To feel home in a place, you need your family, a job and money, friends and a house. I do not have my family here, nor a house or money. So no, I am not happy here now" (Camile, Senegal, 21/04/2016).

Nineteen out of my 31 respondents had, in general, the same thoughts as Camile, about their lack of an emotional attachment to Lleida. I found many of these answers in the months of April and May, among my first respondents. They had quite mixed feelings about living in Lleida. Most of them did not have a job, they were doing nothing and they missed their home country a lot in that time. They really had a feeling of unhappiness. Based on these statements there can be said that Lleida is a non-place for them in this period. However, once they got a job, their feeling of happiness already was a little bit different. Simba said this to me nicely. In April and May he did not have a job, but later on, in June, he almost had one and he said:

"My boss can call me this week, tomorrow or another day, because now there is still no work, that is hard. For all of us it is difficult to live now without having a job. We are here to work, not to do nothing. If we have work we are more happy. If we do not have work we are less happy" (Simba, Senegal, 12/06/2016).

It seems that the difference between the experience of Lleida as a non-place or a place is quite dependent on having a job. This sense of place has to do with the term place dependence. Place identity and sense of community are other important dimensions of a sense of place. Talking about the Spanish and/or Catalan identity was also an important topic during my conversations in Lleida. Many respondents did not feel home in the Catalan culture and did not have any contacts within Lleida itself. The respondents who had mixed feelings about Lleida had some racist experiences in Lleida. Many migrants neither had Spanish contacts or friends. The life of these persons only consisted of having contacts with Africans and looking for a job or working. They lived in the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida and rarely visited other places within Lleida, which could also contribute to experience of Lleida as a non-place. A nice example of that was given during a conversation with Camile. I said to him that on the top of the cathedral (the *Seu Vella*) you really have a nice view of Lleida and its surroundings. This is 500 meters from Plaça del Gramàtics, the favourite place of Camile. But during his life in Lleida he had never been to that place! This was striking to me, as for me it was quite normal to 'discover' Lleida, to see new, important and pretty places of the city. By visiting beautiful, historic buildings, or by walking through the city of Lleida, I tried to build up an emotional relationship with Lleida. How different was this for Camile, who just had other ambitions with his stay in Lleida. Having or developing an emotional attachment to Lleida really is not his aim. His aim was to just find a job and earn money to maintain the life of his mother in Senegal. Enjoying the neighbourhood, the city of Lleida, is not his aim, so therefore he is not doing things, like visiting the *Seu Vella*.

Box 3: If you just want, you can integrate in Catalonia and Spain!

Although many respondents had mixed feelings about the Catalan society, there were also some positive migrant perceptions of the Catalan society. Odil (Senegal, see Figure 33) became a little bit angry hearing such answers from Africans. He said that you can really integrate in Spain and Catalonia, but that you just need to have the motivation for it. You can achieve many things, just by doing it by yourself. For instance, Odil listens to Catalan and Spanish radio, talks with his Catalan neighbours and takes part in community activities with other Catalan people. Many Africans in Lleida are not doing that, and therefore, in his view they do not integrate in the Catalan society well. He said:

“I am integrated well I think, which is different in comparison to other African migrants, at least the ones from Senegal. They (the other Africans) are not talking to Spanish people and they do not even try this. The Africans in Lleida therefore do not understand the Spanish and Catalan people here. They think that Spanish people are scared of them, but that is not the case, at least not in general! For the integration of migrants it is important to talk with each other. If you do not talk, you cannot understand each other” (Odil, 21/04/2016).

Feeling home in a place is dependent on the migrants’ personal motivation, as Odil said it.



Figure 33. Odil in his house in Vic (photo made with permission).

In principal, you might think that many respondents are negative about Lleida, about their life in Europe, mainly based on respondents’ stories above. Therefore, you might think that these persons experience Lleida as a non-place, in which they do not feel an emotional sense of place. However, after asking more in-depth questions, it became clear that all of the respondents had also had some comfortable experiences and contacts within Lleida, Spain and Europe. This sense of place then often is based on a sense of community. This often took place in the migrant neighbourhood. Many migrants clustered together in places where they could find the same people from their home country, which led to a ‘segregation’ in the migrant neighbourhood. To illustrate: The majority of the

"I feel connected with the other Africans in Lleida, for example with my roommates. I am living together with ten other people from Senegal, and I am like the boss of the house, I do manage everything. But I like to talk with them and to help them with struggles" (Armand, Senegal, 22/05/2016).

These examples show that, although many migrants had mixed feelings concerning Lleida as a living place, they all tried to make something of their stay in Lleida in one way or another. At least with their friends or a (small) community, which always includes people from Africa and their home country. They attempted to make a 'place', even if it was in a marginal way. Only people can make a space a place, speaking in the terms of Tuan (1979). This was really the case for the respondents in Lleida. Often, this process of making a place happens unconsciously (Schwarz, 2016). Migrants in Lleida made something of the place of Lleida, whether this took place in a conscious or unconscious way.

6.3 Permanent sense of place

The first two parts of this chapter showed that many migrants in my fieldwork period in Lleida had a diffuse sense of place in many (various) places, also regarding Lleida, even if they did not say that immediately. Some felt home in several places, in the mobility process itself, while others felt home in their home country in Africa. Everybody felt a sense of place concerning their home country in Africa. However, I also found some striking stories about persons who felt really home in Lleida and felt less attached to their country in Africa. According to place attachment and sense of place studies the factor time is very important to establish a strong bond with a place (Kaltenborn & Williams, 2002; Stedman, 2006). When people have been living in one place for a longer period of time, the chance of having a sense of place is more present. During my fieldwork I found five stories of people who had a permanent sense of place in Lleida. This sense of place is emotionally grounded in particular, but also concerns place dependence, identity and community. These respondents are Edu, Kelly, Omar, Pierre and Azana. The thing that they all had in common is the fact that they live in Lleida permanently. They did not change their living places in the last year and they are only mobile when visiting people or undertaking activities in the surroundings of Lleida. Moreover, all of them had been living in Lleida for more than one year and some even for about eleven years.

As the factor time is an important factor for a sense of place (Stedman, 2006), it is not startling that these persons experienced a strong sense of place with the city of Lleida. Because of their time spent in Lleida they were able to build up strong emotional ties within the city. However, as mentioned before, the dimensions for sense of place are place identity, sense of community, place dependence and place attachment, which are the experiences in a place (Jorgenson & Stedman, 2001). The respondents with a sense of place in Lleida all had strong social ties within the city, especially with the people from Lleida itself, the Catalan people.

An example of that is Kelly, who was born in Nigeria, but went to Spain when he was 11. His entire family (i.e. parents, sister and brother) lived in the city of Lleida and he was studying at the University of Lleida. Furthermore, he went to high school in Lleida, played soccer and made music within the city. Because of that, he knew a lot of people and had a lot of friends too, almost all of whom were from Lleida itself. Furthermore, he spoke Catalan and Spanish very well. People were always surprised when hearing him speak in Catalan, which is what he told me. Because of his sense of community in Lleida he really felt one of them, an inhabitant of Lleida, of Catalonia. The place identity is also strong, although that does not imply that he did not dislike some things in Lleida (the

party life, for instance, and the disrespect of youngsters towards older people). On the other hand, he liked some aspects of the Nigerian culture as well, such as the respect Nigerian youngsters have for older people and people's discipline. Generally speaking, however, he was more comfortable with the norms and values in Spain (and Europe), because he had lived there most of the time and all his contacts consisted of people from there. He was not thinking of going back to Nigeria and was very clear about his intention to live in Spain. He had had many nice experiences in the city of Lleida, by having a Catalan girlfriend and most importantly, his music group KOERS, a reggae band which is really popular in Lleida, especially among students. These experiences really contribute to a permanent sense of place in Lleida. One question raised during our interview was whether he saw himself as a migrant from Nigeria. He immediately said:

"No, I do not feel like a migrant. Because I would say the culture of the people here is also my culture. My culture in Nigeria, I retained some things of the Nigerian culture, but the white culture also is my culture now. I do not feel a migrant" (Kelly, Nigeria, 11/05/2016).



Figure 35. Kelly and I. (photo made by the author, published with permission by Kelly)

Kelly also had never been back to Nigeria since he arrived in Lleida and he had only stayed in Lleida itself. This was the case for Edu, a friend of Kelly, as well. Edu told many things similar to the story of Kelly, although Edu also felt a sense of place to Barcelona, because his girlfriend lived there. A difference with Kelly is the fact that Edu still felt Nigerian as well, more than Kelly, who mainly felt like a Spaniard. Edu said that he was influenced by both cultures and that he liked them both.

Other persons with a permanent sense of place in Lleida were the Cameroon students Pierre and Omar. However, they actually had a semi-permanent sense of place with Lleida, because they both still felt a strong sense of place to Cameroon (later on we will describe this in more detail). Pierre and Omar were in Lleida for a master's degree (Pierre) and doctor's degree (Omar). Pierre had been in Lleida for 1,5 years and Omar had been there for about four years. When we talked about

their sense of place they both said that they generally liked it in Lleida and Spain, but that it was still so much different from Cameroon. Omar and Pierre liked the city and the Spanish people too. They both had friends which they met at their university and they also knew other people from Cameroon in Lleida. Their sense of community was in Lleida high and they also identified themselves with the Spanish society, for a great part. I asked Omar what he liked about the Spanish society. He said:

“In Spain, generally, I like the plurality of people. It is one country but a lot of different people with their own culture. It is a mix. It is something that I like, diversity of people. I like the music here as well haha. For example, I like the disco and the rumba Catalan, which is a special form of music from Catalonia. And the people are friendly here” (Omar , Cameroon, 28/06/2016).

This place identity, however, is different than the place identity from, for instance, Kelly and Edu from Nigeria in one way. Pierre and Omar had been in Lleida for just a few years and most of the time they had lived in Cameroon. Therefore, they still felt strongly connected to the identity in Cameroon, compared to Kelly, who felt more like a Spaniard. Pierre said that he felt more like a person from Cameroon, although he also liked the Spanish culture. He said that he would never lose this Cameroon identity and feeling. Although Pierre and Omar really like Lleida, they also need to stay in contact with the Cameroon identity in Lleida, for example by visiting transnational places (introduced already in part 6.1) like African cafés. To illustrate: Pierre and Omar went a lot to Quatre Cantons, a bar in the migrant neighbourhood with a strong African ambiance. Almost always I was the only white person in the café, which was quite strange in the beginning. People could eat some African food, drink African drinks and there was always African music. The only things that reminded me of Europe were the newspapers and the Spanish or French television. For some migrants it really is important to have this African feeling in a place, as well for Pierre. In the weekends there is always an African party there, which Pierre and Omar sometimes visited. Then, they feel connected to Cameroon and the Cameroon identity. Pierre said:

“Sometimes, we (Omar and Pierre) go to a pub like Fissure or La Boite (Spanish discos in Lleida) and we dance together with Erasmus students, on music from Spain or Europe. And sometimes we go to a Spanish concert, than it is Spanish again and then I miss Cameroon. Because I grew up in that country with my music, with African music, and sometimes I need to be connected to that. I need to go to a African party like in Quatre Cantons or another African party to listen those music, to shake my body. And then it is like my own country you know. I like those moments” (Pierre, Cameroon, 23/06/2016).



Figure 36. Bar Quatre Cantons

The strong connection with the Cameroon identity does not mean that Pierre is not feeling home in Spain. Pierre also had many comfortable experiences within Lleida. For example, he had parties with other foreign students and went on weekend trips. This led to an emotional sense of place in Lleida:

"I feel connected to the city, yes. Because last week I was in Pamplona, for three days. I wanted to go back to Lleida when I was there. In Pamplona it was nice, but I wanted to go back to Lleida. When I saw the Seu Vella in Lleida (cathedral), I was happy" (Pierre, Cameroon, 23/06/2016).

Omar and Pierre still felt a strong sense of place with Cameroon, in that way it can be said that they have a bi-local sense of place (Vertovec, 2001), with Lleida and Cameroon. There are clear differences, however, between them and the other, circular migrants. Because Pierre and Omar lived in Lleida permanently, they were more able to 'develop' or build up a permanent and deeper sense of place in Lleida, with their own community. That way, they got used to the Catalan identity. They were also practicing the Catalan language, for instance, which many other circular migrants cannot do. In that sense, the factor time is really important for this difference.

6.4 Concluding remarks

Having an attachment or sense of place to a place is dependent on many things. Everyone also has their own reasons for and stories about their (non-)sense of place. However, after looking at the migrants' (non-)attachment to Lleida, it became clear that these (circular) migrants all attempt to make a place, also within Lleida. They are not living in a vacuum in Spain. Every migrant has his/her preferences among different places they lived in and also within one specific place. The strongest sense of place is mainly based on sense of community, by having friends and family in a place. This sense of place can also be found in transnational places like a church or African bar. Moreover, the migrants' (non-)attachment to places is often based on relations with other places. Their experiences and relations in other places all have an influence on the sense of place in Lleida and on the way they 'use' Lleida. Furthermore, the factor time is also quite important for having a sense of place, which is mentioned by Lewicka (2011). Time is important for the migrant's sense of place in two ways. Firstly, it has an influence on the degree of integration. The more time spent in one place, the bigger the chance to integrate well, as the examples of Edu, Kelly, Pierre, Omar and Azana showed. Spending

more time in a place led to more positive experiences and therefore to an emotional feeling concerning Lleida. Secondly, time has an influence on the attachment in the way of having a job, at least for circular migrants. During one year, the sense of place of a migrant may change. Many migrants were happier during the harvest season, as they were able to reach their goals of their stay in Europe, which is to earn money for their family back home. This instrumental attachment (Rogers, 1984) is really important for these migrants, but it is dependent on the time of the year.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to get an insight into the interplay between West-African mobility and place in the city of Lleida. An important method of investigating this, was to make use of the relational approach of places. Places are products of processes and relations between all kind of entities, as Harvey (1996) described it. The place of Lleida is not a 'container' in itself, in which things occur (Anderson, 2008), but it consists because of diffuse relations between entities. To grasp this relation between the place of Lleida and mobility of West-Africans, we described the migrants' mobility patterns (Chapter 4), the migrants' social, economic and spatial influence on the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida (Chapter 5) and the (non-)sense of place of West-African migrants concerning the place of Lleida (Chapter 6). In each chapter, I found some 'rhythms' or patterns concerning the topics of mobility, place and the relation between place and mobility of West-African migrants in Lleida. These rhythms will now be described in detail.

7.1 Rhythm of mobility

All of my respondents have had experiences with being mobile, because of journeys to Europe and Spain and also within Spain or Europe. Chapter 4 showed us that the mobility patterns and trajectories of West-African migrants are quite diverse and consist of many different entities, such as positive or negative experiences during a journey, mostly based on the different travelling methods. The majority of my respondents went to Europe using a (tourist) visa. Generally speaking, they experienced less troubles concerning this journey. Others, who entered Europe after a (long) overland journey in Africa, often stayed for some periods in places in Africa, mostly to work or to facilitate the further journey. At the end, all of my respondents entered Europe. However, within Spain, the mobility of most of my respondents did not stop. The mobility and migration of West-African migrants is not only a one-way journey after leaving a home country, but mainly consists of 'circulation between places' (Ahmet et al. 2003). The majority of my respondents still lives in different Spanish places during one year, as most of them are working in Spanish temporal and seasonal jobs, mainly in agriculture. The aim of their migration, a better life for themselves and their family back home, asks for this circular mobility.

Mobility often takes place in rhythms, as Adey (2010) described it. You might think of daily mobility rhythms which involves going to supermarkets or to the university or school by bus. In general, people do not think about these mobilities, but when such mobility rhythms are broken down (by delays for instance), people become aware of their importance. The West-African mobility in this master thesis also takes place like a rhythm, although it happens on a larger scale than daily city mobilities which Adey (2010) described. West-African migrants often go in the same places, each year again. This circularity is the rhythm of their mobility and it is therefore very important to understand their being in Spain. This rhythms in circular mobility of West-Africans also are very important for Spanish farmers, as these migrants fill up (agricultural) jobs. Thus, if these circular rhythmic mobilities would be broken down, Spanish farmers, and the Spanish economy, really could feel the consequences. The existence of these rhythmic mobility patterns therefore really are essential. Based on this importance, it then also is an economic capital or resource to be strongly mobile, as many of these circular West-Africans migrants are. There can be stated that being part of such rhythmic circular mobility is a 'mobility capital', an economic asset (Moret, 2016). Being so mobile as a migrant then cause for some economic advantages, for some assets. Circular mobility then is not just an economic resource or mobility capital, but also is a way of living. It is an unending

process, an unending rhythm. Mobility in this sense is really 'integrated' in the life of these circular migrants. Migrants are often thinking about going to other places, even though this has some negative aspects, for example by losing social contacts or the struggles to integrate within a place/country. Although some migrants struggled with this ongoing mobility, they accepted it one way or another. They had to be mobile in order to reach their living goals, by earning money for themselves and their family back home. Staying in one place in Europe often is not enough in order to reach this goal. Hence, these circular migrants accept the main role of mobility in their life.

7.2 Rhythm in space

During the year, circular migrants land in the city of Lleida, and in the central migrant neighbourhood in particular, one way or another. The majority of them arrive in the month of May and stay there until September. The rhythm of their (circular) mobility, mentioned above, brings them to Lleida. The city of Lleida is therefore strongly related to this West-African mobility. The relational aspect of Lleida in terms of mobility only exists because of relations with other aspects. The place of Lleida is strongly related to the agricultural sector and its seasonal jobs. This economic relation is related to the mobility in Lleida, as circular migrants settle in Lleida temporarily during the harvest season. As addressed in Chapter 5, the interplay between mobility and place of Lleida is quite visible in the migrant neighbourhood. It is changing in the different periods and there is a difference between the period with and without temporal migrants. Migrants bring their own experiences, habits, cultures and experiences with them. Therefore, they cause a change in the space. The migrant neighbourhood is changing economically and socially and therefore also spatially, through the presence or absence of migrants. Informal activities, for instance, grow and the social environments of migrants change, as the example of Armand's house showed. The space in itself is changing, from a quiet neighbourhood in April towards a (global) melting pot of migrants and nationalities in the month of June and July. The arrival of seasonal migrants then brings its own rhythm to the migrant neighbourhood. After the agricultural working season, the quietness returns in the migrant neighbourhood. It seems that this change happens every year. Therefore we can call it a rhythm in space. The rhythm of the migrants' mobility also contributes to the rhythm of the migrant neighbourhood. In that sense we maybe can speak of 'relational rhythms' instead of relational places. This conclusion opens the door for detailed studies that take rhythms instead of places as the point of departure. It maybe is more important to investigate first the rhythms in itself, after we can say something about a place, or about mobility. Taken rhythms as a starting point then will help us to understand better place-related processes, as the change in the migrant neighbourhood in Lleida explicated.

7.3 Rhythm in feelings

Being a circular migrant means living in various places between periods. This means that many migrants and respondents in Lleida had had many experiences and relations with other places. Lleida, and the migrant neighbourhood within Lleida especially, is one of the several places circular migrants live in during a year. Living in so many places on a temporal basis can also lead to difficulties in sense of place to those places. Between my respondents, there were some differences visible concerning a sense of place in Lleida. Permanent migrants, in general, experienced a more emotional sense of place to Lleida in comparison to the circular migrants, whereas the majority of the circular migrants felt more attached to their home country in Africa. The circular migrants spoke more about the 'instrumental' sense of place with relation to Lleida. The majority of them got their feeling of

happiness only by having a job. This instrumental attachment (Rogers, 1984) is an important outcome of this master thesis. Based on this, the sense of place feelings of migrants may change during a year. In periods when they do not have a job, migrants can feel a non-sense of place, but when they do have a job they will experience an (instrumental) sense of place. Thus, besides the spatial change in the migrant neighbourhood during the harvest season, the feelings of attachment of migrants can change between different periods and different places. In 1992, Brown and Perkins also described this dynamic of place attachments:

“Place attachments are not static either; they change in accordance with changes in the people, activities or processes, and places involved in the attachments. They are nurtured through continuing series of events that reaffirm humans’ relations with their environment” (Brown & Perkins, 1992, p. 282).

The change in sense of place among circular migrants is an example of this dynamic. There even can be spoken of a ‘rhythm of feelings’. In periods without a job, migrants are more negative, missing their home country more and feeling more unhappy, whereas these feelings can change during the working season in Lleida. Thus, for qualitative migration research in general, we might argue that researchers should pay better attention to the specific times they speak to their respondents. The instrumental attachment seems the most present dimension of sense of place of the West-African migrants in a (relational) place as Lleida. The term sense of place is often related to positivity, to happiness in a place (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Guiliani & Feldman, 1993; McAndrew, 1998). However, Manzo (2003) also gave some attention to ‘negative’ sense of place.

Some respondents did not feel an emotional sense of place in Lleida or other places in Spain or Europe. Many migrants had mixed feelings about living in Lleida and about Europe in general. They had had bad experiences sometimes, such as living under bad conditions or experiences of racism. Sometimes they said that they did not like the Spanish people and culture. These are examples of negative sense of place, as Manzo (2003) describes this. Therefore, it can be stated that Augé’s term of *non-places* (1995) does not apply to West-African migrants in Lleida, as all migrants had a sense of place in Lleida, whether it is a positive or negative attachment. For migrants it was difficult to have these negative attachments, but they found it hard to get rid of these feelings. While for some mobility was something positive, others felt the ‘obligation’ to return to places (i.e. in the harvest/working season). In that sense, they are ‘forced’ to move to certain places, which does not contribute to a certain form of stability in their life. But they cannot do anything else, because they want to reach their living goals. Being a circular migrant in that sense brings some forced mobility with it.

7.4 The way we see integration

An important aim of this thesis was to contribute to societal and scientific discussions on migrant integration in the European Union (see page 15). Integration is often seen as a phenomenon in one particular place or society, which the following quote illustrates:

“Understood in the broadest sense, migrant integration is a multi-layered, complex process of becoming part of the society. Scholars point to four main benchmarks of migrant integration: spatial concentration, language assimilation, socioeconomic status, and intermarriage”. (Hübschmann, 2015, p.4).

Often, the term integration is about the assimilation of migrants in new countries and new societies, by learning the language and taking over (the majority) of habits and norms and values from that specific society (Hübschmann, 2015). This thesis tries to take a different look at this definition of integration. Built on the mobility and sense of place stories of my respondents in Lleida, something can be concluded about the integration of West-Africans in Spain, in Lleida in particular. Living in places for a short period of time as a circular migrant can be difficult for migrants. Many respondents therefore experienced struggles to integrate well in Spanish and Catalan society. These struggles are understandable, as time is important to establish a bond with a place and to integrate (Kaltenborn & Williams, 2002; Stedman, 2006). Other respondents, who had been permanently living in Lleida for some years, were integrated really well in that society. Being in a place temporarily means that a migrant has less time to develop strong social ties with people, which is needed to integrate in a new society. This also is underpinned by a study of Luthra, Platt & Salamonska (2014). They state:

“Although firmly attached to the destination country labour market, circular and temporary migrants tend to show weaker levels of subjective orientation towards the receiving society and perceptions of its hospitality, and have lower levels of social and residential integration” (Luthra, Platt & Salamonska, p.5).

When you take integration in one singular place as the point of departure, you would see that my respondents are not integrated well within the Spanish or Catalan society. Many migrants are integrated in multiple places and in their ‘life of mobility’; in the system of circularity. For many of my respondents, it really is common to be mobile and to live in several places during a year, even if this has its negative aspects. Within their living places, they all try to adapt in a certain way in their (new) place. It is interesting to see how these circular migrants adapt in all the (new) places they live in. Their strong mobility in the past (and future) probably contributed to some specific skills and competences in order to adapt rapidly in living places, when it is on a temporal basis. Although I did not investigate these skills of circular migrants, this can be an important topic concerning further research.

In (Western) society, integration is often seen as staying in one particular place. Using this definition makes it quite easy to say that the West-Africans are not integrated well in the Spanish society. On the other hand, the Spanish (agricultural) economy is, for a great part, dependent on the willingness of these West-Africans to go to several places (Arango, 2012) and live in various places during one year. Because of their strong (circular) mobility, they might not speak Catalan or Spanish perfectly and not be integrated well within the Spanish or Catalan culture. But does this matter, when their strong mobility is very welcomed and needed by the Spanish farmers? Although West-African migrants are generally not integrated well in Lleida itself, they are definitely integrated well in this agricultural economic system in Spain, where they are desperately needed. This assumption causes a change in the way we see and use the term integration in Western society. Integration then not only means integration in one, particular place or society, but also integration in terms of ‘living in different places’; integration in an economic system that requires mobility. Using such a concept of integration, people may look differently towards the integration of West-African migrants in Spain, but also within Europe.

Recommendations for further research

Based on my findings in Lleida, several topics related to this master thesis might be investigated further. Some recommendations for further research will be described shortly.

Other seasonal migrant nationalities and gender

The West-Africans are not the only migrants who are working on a temporal basis in various places within Spain. People from Morocco, Romania, Hungary, Colombia, Poland and Bulgaria are working a lot in the Spanish agricultural sector as well (López Sala, Molinero, Jolivet, Eremenko, Beauchemin, Samuk & Consterdine, 2016). It could be interesting to take a look at those different nationalities, for instance, the group of Eastern Europeans. Do these persons also have certain rhythms concerning their feelings and mobility? And if so, is it possible to compare these rhythms with the West-African circular rhythms? Other nationalities might have more possibilities traveling within Europe and getting legal papers compared to the West-Africans. This might lead to better integration, also based on the fact that Eastern-Europeans may be more used to the European culture and identity. What is their mobility and place attachment within their living place(s)? By gathering data about this group, some differences might be found compared to other groups of migrants.

Moreover, when collecting data for this master thesis I mainly talked with men. Azane was the only woman I talked to in Lleida. Although the majority of the West-African migrants are male, it could be interesting to take a look at the mobility and place experiences of West-African women. Some of these women end up in the prostitution sector in Spain (or other European countries). Others are mobile between different places during one year, just like the men who are working in the agricultural sector. It would be interesting to map the mobility of these female West-African migrants, in order to compare their mobility to that of the circular migrants I spoke with in Lleida.

Other Spanish and European cities

This master thesis was conducted in the city of Lleida. The spatial change of a neighbourhood was quite visible in this city, which was largely influenced by the mobility of migrants. Does such a change in places also happen in other rural capital cities in Spain? For instance, in the city of Jaen also live many seasonal migrants, especially around autumn and winter. Does that place change in the same way as Lleida is changing between the periods of the presence and absence of migrants? Do economic informal activities also grow in such places during the arrival of migrants? Moreover, the southern part of Spain is known for their openness towards migrants, at least that is what many respondents said to me. Is this really the case and is the feeling of integration in such places more present? These are questions that might be interesting to do further research on.

This is not only the case for Spanish agricultural cities, but also for cities in Italy. Italy is also a popular destination for West-Africans, to work in the agricultural sector there. Are West-African migrants also mobile between different places within Italy?

Final note

In writing this master thesis I aimed to get a wider and more in-depth insight into the life of West-African migrants within Lleida, Spain. While writing these last sentences, I read an article about the arrival of 350 migrants in the Spanish enclave Ceuta, who jumped across the fences (NOS, 2017). The majority of these 350 migrants were from Sub-Saharan countries. These persons had happy faces when reaching mainland Europe in February 2017. But at the same time, I was thinking about their future. It is really likely that these persons who reached Ceuta will end up in the same rhythmic life like many of my circular respondents had in Lleida, by working in the campo in Lleida or Andalusia.

While the new migrants in Ceuta celebrated their arrival in Europe, Camile send me a message:

“Three days ago, I finished my work in Jaen, Andalusia. After that I went to Lleida, so I am now in Lleida for one day. I even saw Armand today after three months” (Camile, 19/02/2017).

At this moment, Camile will probably be looking for a job again and will be meeting other Africans in the migrant neighbourhood, as he has done for the last couple of years. It shows that the rhythms which are described in this thesis are still taking place, even during the time you are reading this thesis!

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Appendix

Overview respondents and their mobility

Name (country, age)	Route to Spain	Intra-EU mobility
<i>Maurilio (Mali, 35)</i>	Mauretania-Morocco-Algeria-Libya	Worked in Barcelona, Madrid, Balaguer and Almeria for several periods
<i>Camile (Senegal, 34)</i>	Senegal- Canary Islands – Spain mainland	Tortosa, Barcelona, Jaen and Andalucía
<i>Adrien (Senegal, 53)</i>	Senegal-Mali-Ivory Coast-Portugal-Spain	France, but also Jaen, Murcia and Barcelona
<i>Lamin (Senegal, 34)</i>	Senegal-Madrid	Lived for five years in Olviedo (Asturia)
<i>Remy (Mali, 24)</i>	Mali-Algeria-Morocco-Ceuta-Spain	Valencia and Lleida
<i>Dioma (Senegal, 34)</i>	Senegal-Mauretania-Morocco-Spain	-
<i>Armand (Senegal, 46)</i>	Senegal-France-Spain	Montblanc, Jaen, Murcia, Barcelona, Lleida
<i>Laurent (Senegal)</i>	Senegal-Morocco, Morocco-Tenerife- Spain mainland	Jaen, Albacete, Andalucía, Lleida
<i>Sinclair (Senegal)</i>	Senegal-Mauretania-Canary-Spain	Valencia, Lleida, Fraga and Andalucía
<i>Andrew (Gambia, 40)</i>	Gambia-Algeria-Libya-Spain	Libya and Lleida, rest unknown
<i>Silvain (Senegal, 40)</i>	Senegal-France(Marseille)-Spain	Catalonia (Lleida) and Jaen and other villages Andalucía
<i>Idrissi (Senegal, 44)</i>	Senegal-Barcelona (plane). Barcelona-Lleida.	Lleida, Corbins
<i>Mapienda (Senegal)</i>	-	-
<i>Odil (Senegal, 41)</i>	Senegal-Morocco-Canary Islands-Spain mainland	Lleida, Montblanc, Villafranca, Valencia
<i>John (Gambia, 40)</i>	Gambia-Morocco, Morocco-	Barcelona, Valencia and Lleida

	Spain	
<i>Nordin (Senegal)</i>	-	Finland, Stockholm, France, Spain
<i>Bamba (Senegal, 32)</i>	Senegal-Barcelona	Lleida, Barcelona, Belgium
<i>Emenike (Senegal)</i>	Senegal-Canary Islands	Logroño, Madrid, Granada, Barcelona, Mallorca and Jaen
<i>Alain (Senegal, 29)</i>	Senegal-Barcelona	La Coruna, Valencia, Lleida
<i>Samuel (Senegal, 57)</i>	Senegal-France-Spain	Valencia and Lleida
<i>Moussa (Senegal, 39)</i>	Senegal-Morocco, Morocco-Spain	Barcelona, Fraga, Lleida
<i>Kelly (Nigeria, 23)</i>	Nigeria-Madrid	Lleida
<i>Gazhal (Senegal, 36)</i>	Senegal-Morocco (by plain). Morocco-Spain by boat	Jaen, Lleida, Huelva and Bilbao
<i>Saul (Senegal, 51)</i>	Senegal-Barcelona	Huelva, Lleida, Madrid, Barcelona, Jaen
<i>Albert (Cameroon, 57)</i>	Cameroon-Nigeria-Ivory Coast-Mali-Senegal-Mauretania-Las Palmas-Barcelona	Almeria, Lleida and Montpellier (France)
<i>Jamil (Senegal, 38)</i>	Senegal-Barcelona	Jaen, Barcelona, Madrid, Lleida, Huelva
<i>Azana (Cameroon, 32)</i>	Cameroon-Madrid-Lleida	Lleida only
<i>Malik (Senegal, 42)</i>	Senegal-Barcelona	Lleida, Huelva, Tarragona, Barcelona, Andalucía, Almeria, Cordoba, Basque country
<i>Edu (Nigeria, 22)</i>	Nigeria-Madrid	Lleida
<i>Christophe (Senegal, 37)</i>	Senegal-Barcelona	Lleida, Logrono, Barcelona, Andalucía
<i>Pierre (Cameroon, 22)</i>	Cameroon-Barcelona	Lleida
<i>Simba (Senegal, 38)</i>	Senegal-Tenerife, Tenerife-Madid, Madrid-Lleida	Jaen, Lleida, Valencia, Barcelona
<i>Thierry (Mali, 45)</i>	Mali-Mauretania-Las Palmas-Madrid-Lleida	Andalucía, Lleida

<i>Omar (Cameroon, 26)</i>	Cameroon-Madrid	Lleida and village Aragon
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