“All these countries are not easy”

Materiality and infrastructure
in the context of
WestAfrican im/mobility in Europe

Master thesis Laura Günther
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Author: Laura Günther

Studentnr.: s4528050

Supervisor: Dr. Joris Schapendonk

Radboud University Nijmegen

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Front page photo: Scenery at a place in Brescia, after an interview (own photograph).

Title: Statement of Amaniel. It is an allusion to all the countries that my interviewees crossed despite all the hardships and different kinds of discrimination along their trajectory. All exchange partners crossed several countries.
Acknowledgment

Even if the writing process of a master thesis seems to be a lonely process, there were many people involved, sometimes more effective in the background. At this point I want to dedicate some special attention to all those without the thesis would not have come to an end at this moment.

First of all, I want to express my distinguished appreciation for the supervision of this master thesis. Thank you very much Joris for always inspiring and motivating me, thank you for intensively discussing some critical points. After every exchange about my topic, I felt much better and surer about my progress. Not only the finished master thesis, much more the whole research process, linked to your VENI-research on “Fortress Europe as a mobile space? Intra-European migration of West African migrants within the EU” enriched my study period at the Radboud University in Nijmegen a lot!

Special thanks to Hanne and Luca, my lovely hosts in Munich and Brescia! What would I have done without staying at your wonderful places, discussing and sharing progressive ideas as well as kitchen receipts?! Thank you to all my friends and family, who were there, interested, open-minded and motivating, when I was struggling with certain issues. Feeling supported by many people, in an emotional as well as in a financial way, was surely a vital support.

Also in remembrance of Francesco Branchi.

Last but not least my biggest thank you to all the persons I met during the research and new friends! All this research would not have been possible without your openness to share your often so emotional stories. Thank you for having the will, the patience and the leisure to let me, and all those who read this thesis, be part of your stories. I hope that all the exchanges and debates we had were also inspiring and enriching for you. In my eyes, you are the biggest heroes of survival, all the optimism under these conditions, you deserve my deepest respect. Un grand merci à vous and stay blessed!

Dear reader, thank you for the time and the interest that you take in reading this work. I hope you enjoy it and can follow the theoretic approach and conceptualization.
Abstract

In this work, I analyze the im/mobility of West African migrants in and towards the European Union and try to illustrate irregular migrant’s reality in a nuanced and differentiated way. Current discussions on quota and illustrations of an alleged ‘refugee crisis’ objectify and anonymize migrants. Taking the ‘mobility turn’ as a theoretical starting point that accounts for the various, non-linear spatial movements, I analyze the multi-dimensional interrelations of different kinds of materialities and infrastructures in regard to im/mobility. The inherent question of this analysis is their effects: are they effective in a restrictive or in a facilitating way? In how far do these change their meanings along the trajectory? Which narratives do they generate? The materialities and infrastructures that irregular migrants use and encounter often basically differ from that one that ‘ordinary EU citizens’ would use and encounter when they are mobile within the European Union. And sometimes, they are remarkably the same. The trajectory of irregular migrants takes place under a peculiar premise. Consequently, it is important to pay attention to the societal und politically precarious position of irregular migrants.

My empiric, bi-local ethnographic research in Munich and Brescia, brought many new findings and insights. It has become clear that materialities like maps or jewelry are deployed for mobility and can point and shape the way. Luggage is influential on status and identity. Material infrastructures like transportation as well as immaterial infrastructures like social networks or the common European asylum system can both encourage and restrict mobility.

German: „All die Länder sind nicht einfach“ – Materialität und Infrastruktur im Kontext westafrikanischer Im/Mobilität


Keywords: Mobility, West African migration, materiality, infrastructure, migration regime, fortress Europe
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List of abbreviations

BAMF – Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge; Ministry for Migration and Refugees

CEAS – Common European Asylum System

CIR – Italian Council for Refugees

EU – European Union

IOM – International Organization for Migration

NGO – Non-governmental organization

TFEU – Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

TCN – Third-country national

UNHCR – United Nation Refugee Agency
List of interviewees that appear with their name in the master thesis
Because this overview can be very helpful for reading the thesis, I put it at the beginning and not to the affidavit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nickname in research</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Route to the place of encounter</th>
<th>Place of encounter Munich (M) Brescia (B)</th>
<th>Extra comments &amp; remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdoul</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Senegal – Morocco – Spain – Germany</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Abdoul beautifully decorated and furnished his room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abeeku</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Senegal – Sardinia – Senegal – Sardinia - Germany</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>He often speaks Italian instead of French, while recording the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Senegal – Italy</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Always easy to see him somewhere at any Piazzas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliou</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Senegal; Central Mediterranean Route; Italy</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Aliou said that he cannot read and speak French so well because of his rural origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaniel</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>Central Mediterranean Route – Munich – Italy Germany</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I exchanged a lot with him, also on facebook. Our first appointments took place rather late because of Ramadan. He first liked to drink something before telling his stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>ca. 45</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Benin – France – Italy – France – the Netherlands – Italy</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>He is a shy person and waits e.g. outside of the train station to not be surrounded by many people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danyo</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>Senegal, crossing West- and North African countries – Turkey – Greece – Balkan Route - Italy</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>He showed me many places in Brescia and lead me around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erjon</td>
<td>Ca. 20</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Senegal; Central Mediterranean Route; Italy</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>His favourite place is the Shopping Center in Brescia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femi</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Nigeria – Spain</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>He wants to keep secrets about his trajectory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanta</td>
<td>Ca. 50</td>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>Ivory Coast, Brescia</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>She is the only one that I meet who was never illegalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gari</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Mali – Libya – Italy</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>He loves to play and watch soccer, for this reason the interview time is limited, but then he stays longer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ismael, Flangue, Traore, Cissé</td>
<td>Between 19 and 27 years</td>
<td>Ivory Coast and Mali</td>
<td>Central Mediterranean Route</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>I aimed at asking all of them for single interviews. For the first appointment, however, they appeared all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The taken notes represent their expressed attitudes that are similar, even if the story in their country of origin differs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age (indicated)</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamal</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Central Mediterranean Route – Germany</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Plays keyboard and thus earns some extra money. He is very religious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josef</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Nigeria – Greece; flight to Germany</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Wherever he is, he attends Catholic church services. He volunteers at a package company.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Kossi    | 35              | Senegal     | Senegal – Turkey – Italy – Sardinia - Germany | M      | He still often writes me on 
| Maria    | 45              | Nigeria     | Nigeria – Cape Verde – Las Palmas – Italy | B      | She is married with a pastor. I meet her when she distributed littlepaper with prayers. |
| Nlandou  | 52              | Congo       | Flight Congo – Francfort               | M      | I met him coincidently in Munich city center. Then, he has a sudden transfer to a faraway place. |
| Pakka    | 28              | The Gambia  | Central Mediterranean Route, Italy – Switzerland – Germany | M      | He is the only one who mentions the wish to go back to Italy. |
| Pierre   | 17*, respect. 27| Senegal, grown up in Congo | Central Mediterranean Route, Italy - Germany | M      | I visited his villa as youth asylum shelter in Munich several times. |
| Simba    | 16*, respectively 26| The Gambia | Central Mediterranean Route, Italy - Germany | M      | Pierre is the best friend of Simba. They spend almost every day together. |
| Suleiman | 25              | The Gambia  | The Gambia, crossing West- and North African countries – Turkey – Greece – Balkan Route – Germany | M      | Whenever we exchanged he wants to invite me for chicken with peanut sauce and potatoes.      |
| Thomas   | 32              | Nigeria     | Nigeria – Greece; Balkan Route to Germany | M      | Elliot invited me to his shared room in Kirchseeon.                                     |
| Zinedine | 26              | Nigeria     | Nigeria; Central Mediterranean Route; Italy – the Netherlands – France – Germany | M      | I went for a long walk with him.                                                         |

More persons have been met in Brescia and Munich but do not appear with their names in this thesis.

* This is the age they indicated when claiming asylum. However, their ‘real age’ is older, what they told me.
1. Introduction

While waiting at the train station in Verona Porta Nuova to catch the train to Munich Central Station, there is a perceptible excitement in the air. Photos are taken in front of the yellow travel plans on the passageway to the platform 6 from which the ‘EuroCity’ leaves, phone calls are hastily done and little luggage is taken in plastic bags, backpacks and suitcases. I get excited too – less about my journey but rather about the journey of my fellow travelers from African countries. My travel fellows have a ticket and a seat reservation, like me. And even if we sit next to each other, chat and exchange names and stories, their journey takes place under a very different premise. I know that in 6:28h I will likely be in Munich, but will my co-travelers ever be reaching Munich?

For me, having a German passport, the freedom of movement within the European Union is a matter that is taken for granted. Indeed, freedom of movement is one of the main achievements of the European Union (EU) and mobility is a prevailing paradigm of the present-day European Union. However, this paradigm is not automatically applied to third-country nationals. Whereas European citizens face incentives to be mobile within Europe in many different ways, undocumented migrants are rather denied mobility. Especially migrants without regular papers are politically refused intra-European mobility. It is a fact that the conceded freedom of movement of undocumented migrants differs a lot from that one of European citizens.

Even though migration is not a new phenomenon, we are living in the “Age of migration” (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2013). This year, we have reached a level of flight and migration that is unprecedented in history and even exceeds the numbers after World War II (UNHCR, 2015). In 2014, 626,000 people applied for asylum in the EU; in 2015, an enormous increase could be witnessed. In Germany, for example, during the first semester, the number of asylum demands increased by 135.7% in comparison with the year ago. The trend will continue upwards (BAMF 2015). These numbers already seem high, but the number of people leaving their home is even higher. Many more migrants risk their life on a dangerous journey without even reaching the EU. We are getting used to tragic pictures and reports about the adversities of people’s flight over the Mediterranean Sea or along the so-called Balkan route.

These (voluntary and involuntary) migratory movements connect to words such as “crisis”, “mass migration”, “fortress Europe”. This terminology and the numbers do not appropriately reflect the reality that many migrants face. A certain scenario is drawn that is highly undifferentiated and simplified, let alone the impossibility to grasp the dynamics and the context of migration.

These days there is almost no other topic that is so controversially discussed and polarizing people and politics as flight and migration – on a national as well as on a European level. Definitely, the European migration regime is challenged with the given situation of high immigration numbers. Regarding the status
quo, it gets clear that the European migration policy does not exist anymore. The given legal framework, especially the disputed Dublin Convention, is suspended under the current conditions. The Dublin Convention determines the European Member state that is responsible for examining asylum demands of people who seek protection. Concretely it says that the member state that the asylum seeker first reaches is responsible for his or her asylum demand. The convention contributes to the goal of the European Union to establish a common European asylum system (European Commission, 2015).

A new political solution is sought after more urgently than ever before. However, national interests differ a lot and that makes it more complicated to find a common European consent. A common practice of many of the geographically marginal countries of the EU is to build new fences, like the one recently built in Hungary. Building physical barriers and using NATO barbed wire rather shows the ongoing militarization of borders instead of finding an adequate long-term answer that takes the context and the causes of migration into account.

Whereas the Schengen area, which almost all EU-countries joined, symbolizes and idealizes the freedom of movement and mobility, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) has an immobilizing character. The European migration system is full of paradoxes throughout different levels. In this thesis, the given European legal and national frameworks play an important role. However, they are no absolute and determining factors concerning mobility and immobility of migrants. I rather try to look at the movement of migration that takes place along the interplay between autonomy and control, between local and translocal, between fluidity and materiality, between mobility and barriers, between escape and escort, between hide and help. The different kind of “in-betweenness” are ubiquitous companions throughout a migrant’s trajectory. The trajectory takes place beyond predictable corridors and paths. It challenges common categories, theoretical concepts as well as political orders that approach ‘migration’.

The thesis is based on an empiric, bi-local ethnographic research in Munich and Brescia, two important places of migration in Germany and Italy. My target group are irregular migrants from West African countries. The various encounters and exchanges with migrants and refugees at these sites are an essential epistemological source that allowed me to gain deeper insights into migrants’ life and reality.

This Master thesis is part of a bigger research project; the VENI-research of Dr. Joris Schapendonk, aiming to better understand intra-European mobility of (undocumented) West African migrants. So far, not much is known about the mobility patterns and dynamics of West African migrants once they reached the ‘fortress Europe’. Being part of a research team lead to many fruitful discussions and exchanges, especially during the time all of us spent on the chosen research location in the Randstad, Catalonia and the Lombardy. First,

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1 After some reflection I consider the term ‘irregular migrant’ as the best term to apply throughout my thesis for certain reasons. In my eyes, ‘irregular’ fits better than undocumented as migrants are, according to my experience, always documented, for example by NGOs, rescuing coast guards or other persons. Thereby, ‘irregular’ is a socio-political label constructed by European migration policies. Someone who does not have the right paper is not per se an irregular person but has to travel irregularly because of European entry requirements and is thus irregularized.
I will present my research objectives, central research questions and the scientific and societal relevance of this thesis.

1.1 Research objectives

With this work, I follow two different objectives, an empirical and a theoretical one. My theoretical objective of this study is to contribute with my gained insights to a broader scientific debate within migration and mobility studies in a sensitive way. Theoretically based on the mobility (Hannam et al., 2006) turn and especially its material dimension, I want to enrich discourses on different dimensions of mobility: mobility regimes (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013), materialities (Burrell, 2008; Walters, 2014), infrastructures (Star, 1999) and resulting experiences. All these dimensions have combined effects on the mobility and immobility of irregular migrants from West African countries towards and within the EU. The risky trajectories are full of losses and deprivation as well as appropriation and changing meanings of co-travelling things. When looking at intersecting materialities and infrastructures, the inherent questions are in how far and which materialities and infrastructures facilitate and restrict, accelerate and slow down and shape the experience of im/mobility.

My research objective lies in the recognition of a material and immaterial dimension of im/mobility on the trajectory of irregular migrants from West African countries to foster a deeper understanding of migrants’ experiences and mobility dynamics (Basu & Coleman, 2008; Walters, 2014; Burrell, 2008). The ‘material dimension’ includes physical objects and materialities as well as material infrastructures like transport and housing. The immaterial dimension refers to the given asylum system, social networks and other non-physical things. I do not aim to draw a general picture of the intra-EU mobility practices of West African irregular migrants. I attempt much more to present a nuanced and sensitive analysis of the im/mobility of irregular migrants while living in precarious conditions, as far as this is possible in the frame of a master thesis. Even if the term ‘infrastructure’ suggests the conclusion that I would apply a big structural approach, I attempt to look at the agency of irregular migrants within the European migration regime by following a more actor-centred, lifeworld-oriented approach.

Empirically, my research objective is to provide an in-depth analysis of mobility dynamics and mechanisms of irregular migrants from West African countries, moving from Northern Italy to Munich and further. These gained insights are based on my own, four-month lasting qualitative research in Brescia and Munich. Trying to understand mobility practices, the applied bi-local ethnography is an appropriate methodological approach: It enables to get in contact with migrants from various places from different perspectives, to look at migrants’ narratives drawn on im/mobility at these two sites, to exchange and share experiences with my interview partners. And, of course, it requires of me in the role of the researcher to stay mobile and experience both research environments and the multiple interconnections in-between.
1.2 Research Questions

Having the empirical and theoretical research objectives in mind, I formulated three research questions that guide this project:

I) What are the materialities that irregular migrants take and acquire as well as use and lose on their trajectory and how do these impact their experience of im/mobility?

Human mobility is always related to the movement of materialities. These can accompany the trajectory for a certain part and can influence mobility dynamics as well as cause immobility. Materialities are also meaningful in relation to status and identity of the migrant.

II) What are the material infrastructures along the trajectory of irregular migrants and how do these the impact their experience of im/mobility?

Mobility is always grounded and facilitated by material infrastructures. Motorways, transportation, housing and many more things shape the experience of the trajectory and are pivotal for the im/mobility of irregular migrants. This is especially peculiar, as irregular migrants do not have the same access to many allegedly taken for granted infrastructures. Complex organizational skills are required throughout the trajectory.

III) What are the immaterial infrastructures along the trajectory of irregular migrants and how do these impact their experience of im/mobility?

Immaterial infrastructures refer to a broad range of things like social networks, labor, the asylum system and politics that constitute the framework of irregular migrant’s im/mobility. These may be effective in the background but nevertheless pivotal.

I approach these questions not from a place-based perspective but aim at looking at relevant, emerging issues that occur within Europe and especially the EU. It is a look from between and beyond Brescia and Munich from where I experienced and captured the narratives.

This tripartite approach, applied at both research sites, will be further operationalized then by single, concrete questions like ‘how do migrants travel?’ These research questions do not only aim at being descriptive but also at going beyond and looking at the meanings of infrastructures in the daily life and the meaning of a further im/mobility of the migrant.
1.3 Relevance of this thesis

Why actually this thesis?

With this thesis, I aim at contributing to a broader scientific debate and also at questioning the possible societal relevance.

Scientific Relevance

In this work I look at im/mobilities, materialities and infrastructures of irregular migrants from West African countries in the context of the European Union. Taking the ‘mobility turn’ (Urry, 2007; Sheller, 2011) as a theoretical starting point, the approach of this thesis can do justice to the multiple and differentiated im/mobilities that shape the trajectory of irregular migrants. In combination with the recognition of a material dimension – which means that all mobilities are grounded and inter-related with the movement of things – a more concrete understanding of mobility dynamics and mechanisms is possible. How do migrants travel, by which means and what does transport mean? Which networks are effective in the background? What do migrants carry, what not? Which infrastructures are restrictive, which ones emancipatory? The research on mobility, associated materialities and infrastructures holds great potential to look at restricting and facilitating elements of mobility.

Within the focus on the materialities and infrastructures of mobility, I see a vital contribution to migration studies. Walters (2014) for example says that especially vehicles and transport are still on the fringe of research interest – wrongfully. Taking transport into account opens new windows to deeper scientific insights to mobility and migration. Transport does not only accelerate and facilitate movement; these “mobile zones” can be sites for political actions and generate particular narratives and experiences. Being mobile is never an empty act, rather a “highly materialized and emotional undertaking” (Burrell, 2008).

There are factors and elements that are crucial for migrants’ im/mobility like the asylum system and the issue of transport that has to take national transfer systems into account which exist in Italy as well as in Germany. I follow an approach that looks at the agency of migrants without ignoring socio-political framework conditions, which can undoubtedly be repressive for irregular migrants.

Methodologically, the use of the two-sited ethnography is a big gain to approach the above-mentioned topics. It enables to better understand the different types of mobilities and infrastructures and their individual, context-dependent meaning from different perspectives and thus to get a broader, more profound understanding.

Societal relevance

These days we experience very high immigration numbers in Europe, numbers that exceed even the numbers of refugees and migrants after World War II. Every day, there are new reports around the current ‘refugee crisis’. Undoubtedly, the topicality of this work is very high.

This work has not been able to keep pace with reality when migration-related events were evolving and overturning week by week. Thus, scientific analyses to better understand the complex current situations are
needed. Already in 2009, before the migration debate was so overheated and central in media, a report of the OECD outlines that “[f]ew issues excite controversy like immigration, in part because it touches on so many other questions – economic, demographics, politics, national security, culture, language and even religion. That’s why it’s important to go beyond the rhetoric and get to the facts and realities of international migration” (Keeley, 2009, p. 8).

The high immigration numbers are not the only societal legitimization of this research. Regarding migrants’ missing political representation this work may help to increase public awareness on their marginalized, precarious situation. When reporting about others, high ethical standards have to be respected. Moreover, gained insights of this work can serve policy makers to orient their principles towards a more liberal, on humanistic values oriented policy approach. An essential insight of this work is that changes on a structural level on different scales are needed to improve the living situation of irregular migrants in the EU sustainably.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Before proceeding to the next chapter, I want to present the structure of this thesis. The next chapter aims at unpacking the (so titled situation of the) European refugee crisis by looking beyond the simplistic stories of a ‘mass invasion’ and underpin it with some figures. In doing so I take two different perspectives: First, I look how ‘fortress Europe’ is politically constructed beyond its territory and then inside at the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), the legal framework of the EU-European asylum and migration politics. Then I will downscale this perspective and outline relevant points of the asylum procedure and migration politics in Italy and Germany.

In the next chapter, I will present the ‘conquest’ of the mobility turn in migration studies, give a review of current trends and perspectives in this interdisciplinary research strand and work towards a conceptual framework of this thesis by special regard to im/materialities and infrastructures. Afterward, the methodology of this work will be discussed. It helps to understand the research procedure that is influential on the presented research results. In this chapter, I pay special attention to research ethics and reflect upon my own research position (e.g. being white, female).

Having presented the socio-political situation at each research site and the conceptual framework and methodology, I come to the main part: the discussion of my empiric research results, using the trichotomy of my research question.
2. Looking behind the migration crisis

In a retrospective view of the year 2015, flight and migration were omnipresent and all-dominant topics. The public attention was provoked by tragic incidents and pictures of an ‘exodus’ towards Europe. The first ‘awakening’ incident was in April when during one week more than 1300 people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea (Hess et al., 2015). The year 2015 is likely to enter history books as the year of the ‘refugee crises’.

The high number of arrivals of people fleeing war or searching better opportunities over the Mediterranean Sea reached appalling levels in 2015. During the year, migration routes were changing dynamics and intensity. The main Mediterranean route shifted from the ‘Central Mediterranean Route’ mainly from Libya to the Italian island Lampedusa, to the ‘Eastern Mediterranean Route’, crossing from Turkey to the Greek island Lesbos. However, a differentiated look is revealing: Whereas there is an increase in the total number of people trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea, there was a slight decrease in people who left North Africa to Italy, from 170,000 in 2014 to 150,000 people in 2015. According to UNHCR figures, a total of 1,008,616 people crossed the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 and over 3,771 people officially lost their lives or were missed – besides all the uncounted ones. Over one-third of all people who cross the Mediterranean Sea are from Syria (UNHCR, 2015).

Figure 1: Routes and number of people crossing the Mediterranean Sea (http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php).

2% of all the people who cross the Mediterranean Sea are of Nigerian origin, 1% is from Gambia and 1% are originally from Mali.

Totally, 626,715 asylum applicants have been recorded in all of the 28 EU countries in 2014 (Migration and Home Affairs, 2015, p. 6). In 2015 (until December 21), the IOM counted roughly 1,005,504 irregular
arrivals; only 3% of them came by land (IOM, 2015). The counted immigration numbers increased compared to the previous year by 60%.²

Numbers and figures on migration should be seen from a very critical angle, for several reasons. They can be used to heat up debates and misused to feed certain ideologies. Furthermore, arrivals and migrants might be double-counted. Especially when people move from Greece, where they are counted, to Western and Northern Europe along the Balkan route, they leave the EU and enter it again in Hungary where they are re-counted (Sigona, 2015).

However, the mass mortality on the outer borders of the European Union is not a fateful tragedy but rather the consequence of European politics aiming to restrict migration, to control flight corridors and migration paths (Hess et al., 2015). The current upgrading of the outer borders reinforces the European isolation. Regarding missing legal entry opportunities – which contradicts the universal right to claim asylum – Europe approvingly accepts that refugees and migrants have to take higher risks in order to enter Europe. Migrants are surely not indifferent to a changing geography of borders and to political situations in European countries.

In the following, I want to look at the construction and functioning of the European migration and border regime. After looking ‘beyond’ the European territory, I change to an ‘inward looking’ perspective. Finally, I will analyze asylum and migration in the countries and locations of my research. For the reader, this provides an overview of the complex constitution of the EU-European migration regime.

### 2.1 Looking beyond: the construction of the border and migration regime of the EU

“The EU external border is now the deadliest border on earth.” (Ferrer-Gallardo & van Houtum, 2012, p. 297)

The above-quoted statement is in so far right, as the crossing of the territorial borders of the EU is full of very dangerous risks, regarding, for example, the boat crossings on the Mediterranean Sea. Nevertheless, a central element of the European Union is an ongoing process of exterritorialisation of its outer borders. Borders are in this context not only physical lines. The EU expands its border and migration regime more and more beyond its own territory aiming to restrict and prevent irregular entry even far before reaching its territory (Hess et al., 2015; Müller, 2010). As a consequence, the EU cannot be properly confined by a physical line, its notional border gets much more delocalized towards the global South and more and more ubiquitous (Belina, 2002). And border and migration controls are just consequently shifted towards the new spaces of EU borders. The EU tries to transfer the responsibility of migration control to other countries, those of origin and transit, by offering financial and cooperative incentives (Dünnwald, 2015b). An immanent tension arises between the compliance of human rights and protection of migrants and the strategic interests and practices of the EU.

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² I provide these numbers to give a rough estimation on what institutions like the UNHCR or Frontex counts and not to deliver absolute and reliable data. There is a bigger inconsistency in numbers when looking at the immigration numbers in the EU and in Germany. Does Germany receive all migrants in the EU? The numbers convey this assumption. This is rather not the reality.

³ I use the term ‘EU-European’ to specify that it is not the geography of the continent but the politics of the European Union.
Though migration from Sub-Saharan Africa is in percentage rather a marginal phenomenon, it is associated with poverty migration and for that reason de-legitimized (De Haas, 2007). This leads to an illegalization of African migration that allegedly justifies an elaborated and repressive system of control (Dünnwald, 2015b). The categorization of an ‘illegal migration’ is itself a discourse produced as a tool of migration restriction (Müller, 2010, p. 64).

The discursive illegalisation of migration is just one instrument to control, discipline and prevent migration from Sub-Saharan African countries. There are many more that are comprised under ‘migration management’. This euphemistic term reflects migration and border politics of the EU that reaches and includes totally 15 transit countries and countries of origin (Dünnwald, 2015b). In the following part, I want to outline practices and politics of control and deterrence including the central agent Frontex.

First to mention is the use of modern technologies such as radar, infrared and satellite technology to collect and gather data and to “allow different forms of observation and detection” as well as statistical risk calculation (Broeders & Dijstelbloem, 2016, p. 242). The elaborated, technological system of the EU border space leads to a ‘militarization of borders’ (Dünnwald, 2015b). The most popular example is the physical enclosure of Ceuta and Melilla. On the first sight, it seems as if these fences reduced irregular entry along this path drastically. This might be true; however, appearances are deceptive. Migration changed its routes but did not decrease in numbers (Papastergiadis, 2000).

Other instruments of migration control are of political nature. Readmission and partnership agreements aim to “enable the peripheral EU member states to return illegally entering/staying third-country nationals to their countries of origin or transit” (Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014, p. 153). These agreements are signed bilaterally between member states of the EU or the EU and third countries. The inclusion of other countries in the systematic control of borders and migration is more and more linked with ‘development aid’. Countries of origin and of transit are obliged to cooperate in the exchange for development aid; the better the cooperation and the bigger the concessions the bigger the share of development aid. Morocco, for example, receives about 800 Mio Euro for keeping migrants away from the coast and the Spanish enclaves, no matter by which means (Dünnwald, 2015a). The establishment of huge detention camps in transit countries can be attributed to the EU. It is not easy to find more precise data about these earmarked financial flows of the EU to countries of origin and of transit.

The former Libyan head of state Gaddafi was relatively well paid from Italy and the European Commission to stop migration towards Europe; nowadays there are no institutions for cooperation in the war-torn country. Libya is for people who take the Central Mediterranean Route, among them many West Africans, the main transit country and the last big hub before reaching Europe. Therefore, the EU negotiates with Tunisia and Egypt to ‘close the gap’. (Dünnwald, 2015b). There are several implemented ‘mobility partnerships’, for example with Tunisia (Pro Asyl, 2014). These are euphemistic as they do not
foster mobility between the EU and Tunisia but rather immobilize people. Effectively, it is about a facilitation of readmissions and a better cooperation in the fight against ‘irregular migration’\(^4\).

Either in the crossfire of critics or highly praised is Frontex, the ‘European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union’ (Frontex, 2015) which is considered the central agent of the European migration and border regime. “Founded in 2004, the agency has an explicit mandate to assist in the application of existing and future measures regarding the management and surveillance of external borders as well as to coordinate operational cooperation in the field of external border management” (Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014).

Ongoing points of a critic of this agent are expressed by many NGOs and comprise essentially three central points. First, Frontex is not subject to any parliamentary control. Its practices often violate fundamental human rights and international law. Especially the push-back actions are sharply contested. Frontex ignores thereby that some boat people might very well be candidates for asylum. Second, Frontex has no sufficient democratic legitimization and is thus only accountable to its own administrative apparatus, which leads to a lack of transparency in its functioning and effects. The last point of critics is that Frontex became a too independent executive organ of the EU by underpinning democratic principles like the separation of power (Georgie & Kasparek, 2007). Despite all, the European Commission has just passed a law that provides Frontex with even more power and further competences like a constant military force (Zeit Online, 2015).

In the following, I outline the reasons for the construction and the commonly depicted legitimization of the illustrated European migration and border regime. The fundamental transformation of the EU in the course of a communitization of border and migration politics is oriented to a security paradigm. And irregular migration seems incompatible with security; it is associated with (Islamic) terrorism that is considered as a central risk to national security (Dünnwald, 2015b; Schapendonk, 2011, p. 44). The production of security is nowadays, when terrorist attacks seem like a permanent threat, a legitimization for itself. Security is commonly accepted and an ‘apoliticized’ issue (Belina, 2002) with which we are “obsessed” (van Houtum, 2010).\(^5\) It is valued more than international protection and the rights of refugees. The visa policy of the EU just reflects this general suspicion, it is “a chief means to select ‘worthy’ from ‘unworthy’ guests” (Trauner & Kruse, 2008, p. 6). A ‘negative’ and a ‘positive’ list constitute the basis of this division that generally denies access for some and allows it to others. The nationality appears to be a risk factor that excludes (Belina, 2002).\(^6\)

The EU has established a repressive system by illegalising migration, upgrading and militarizing its border spaces and by including transit and origin countries in practices of control, deterrence and defense. The objective of the EU is to keep irregular migrants away from its coast and to discourage them from crossing the Mediterranean Sea. The metaphor ‘fortress Europe’ can in this context be seen as a political objective.

The EU has become a “global border machine” (van Houtum, 2010, p. 957) that establishes a “[g]lobal

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\(^4\) These days, there are several mobility partnerships with other North African countries like Morocco and Algeria adopted. To display the details here is beyond the scope of this thesis.

\(^5\) For a more detailed conceptualization of ‘security’ in the context of nation states Belina provides deeper insights (Belina, 2002).

\(^6\) In the next chapter the EU visa policy will be taken under focus again, more in the light of the mobility regime.
Apartheid of the EU’s external border regime” (ibid.). By referring to the introductory statement it can thus be said: Not only the European border but the entire (non-EU territory) of the EU-European border and migration regime are a very deadly and extremely restrictive border and control space.

2.2 Looking inward: asylum and migration in the European Union

After having de-constructed the European migration and border regime, I want to change the outward-looking perspective and look inwards on ‘migration and asylum’ in Europe. The outlined legal framework of the EU-European migration and asylum politics is here reduced to the essentials. For migrants, it constitutes the immaterial infrastructure that gets part of their experienced reality and that can have a fateful character.

European migration and asylum politics are not easy to understand with all its directives and agreements, different responsible institutions, conflicting interests of member states, humanistic declarations of intent and its attempt of “balancing responsibility and solidarity” (European Commission, 2015). Indeed, many paradoxes between political representation and political action may appear.

It should be kept in mind that the European migration and border regime reflects a long negotiation process and a long fight for refugee rights. Emancipatory claims and interests of migrants are sometimes anchored in human rights postulates and can hence influence juridical norms and court decisions. However, relevant political protagonists also use these laws to fight unwanted migration. The illegalization of irregular migration and migrants forms a constitutive element of the production of constitutional normality (Lehnert, 2015). Article 78 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states: “The Union shall develop a common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection with a view to offering appropriate status to any third-country national requiring international protection and ensuring compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. This policy must be in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 and the Protocol of 31 January 1967 relating to the status of refugees, and other relevant treaties.”(Council of the European Union, 2007).

Thereof can be deduced that “[a]sylum is granted to people fleeing persecution or serious harm” (European Commission, 2014, p. 3).

The ‘Common European Asylum System’ (CEAS) is the system of jurisdiction responsible for asylum seekers and refugees in the EU. The CEAS has existed since 1999 (European Commission, 2014). Since then it has often been re-negotiated and changed in some elements (Lehnert, 2015). This CEAS is based on five directives and regulations that aim to harmonize and strengthen the EU-European cooperation. On a
national level, there are often persistent weaknesses in its implementation. In so far, the directives do not
confirm the reality of asylum seekers in the EU.

The ‘Asylum Procedures Directive’ aims to "harmonize procedural guarantees" (UNHCR, 2005) and to
"uphold the quality of asylum decision-making in the Member States" (ibid.) throughout the asylum
procedure launched by the third-country national in the EU. With this directive, a fair and efficient
procedure for people seeking international protection should be guaranteed that includes the right to a
personal interview, the right to receive information and to communicate with the UNHCR, the right to
consult a lawyer and the right to appeal.

The ‘Reception Conditions Directive’ regulates certain necessities for a dignified standard of living for
the third country national seeking international protection during the examination of the asylum claim. It
addresses access to housing, food, health care – both medical and psychological –, and employment. It sets
minimum standards and includes even stricter regulations for vulnerable persons (European Commission,
2014, p. 5). It touches some very concrete issues on the detention of asylum seekers like for example that
“access to employment must now be granted within a maximum period of 9 months.” (ibid.). This directive
is especially often in the centre of critics as the material reception conditions are inadequate in many EU
member states.

The ‘Qualification Directive’ aims to “improve the quality of the decision-making and ensure[s] that
people fleeing persecution, wars and torture are treated fairly, in a uniform manner.” (European
Commission, 2014, p. 6). It specifies the reasons for granting international protection. The first important
step is the recognition of the asylum seeker as a refugee or as a beneficiary of subsidiary protection.
Subsidiary protection is limited in time and complicates family reunion in contrast to asylum.

The surely most known and most controversial convention of the CEAS is the ‘Dublin Regulation’, the
backbone of the migration regime within the EU. “Every single asylum application lodged within EU
territory needs to be examined – each EU Member State must be able to determine if and when it is
responsible for handling an asylum claim” (European Commission, 2014, p. 7). The ground of the EU
member state on which the migrant first sets his feet is responsible for the asylum claim. Hence, migrants
cannot choose in which EU member state they make their asylum claim. Logically, countries that are on the
outer borders are exposed to a much higher responsibility to examine asylum claims, especially Italy,
Spain and Greece. The Dublin Regulation restricts essentially the mobility of refugees and asylum seekers and
does not lead to a fair shared responsibility among EU member states. In 2015, the (temporary) opening of
borders along the Balkan route was considered as a suspension of this regulation and shows the struggle for
new EU responses to the ‘refugee crisis’.

The ‘Eurodac Regulation’ is based on a European-wide database of fingerprints of asylum seekers, the
‘Eurodac-Database’. When someone makes an asylum application, no matter in which member state, the
fingerprints are automatically transmitted to the central system. Eurodac helps member states to determine
the responsibility for the examination of the asylum claim by comparing the fingerprint in the database.
Since recently, Europol and national police forces have been able to access Eurodac to identify fingerprints.
for investigations on the detection and prevention of crimes and terrorism (European Commission, 2014, p. 8). Together, the Eurodac and the Dublin Regulation build the basis for an intra-European deportation system.

Despite the outlined legal framework, the European Union seems strongly challenged. The European Union struggles a lot with the issue and is far away from finding a new consent to deal with the rising number of refugees and a fair, solidary distribution among its member states. Re-settlement and intra-EU relocation programs, referred to in Article 78 (3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union are not working properly (European Commission, 2015).

2.2.1 Immigration and asylum in Italy and Germany

In the geography of West-African migration within Europe, Italy and Germany are two important countries, not to say that they form a central migration and mobility axis in Europe. In the following, I want to look at the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in these countries. The situation in and the choice of the research sites Brescia and Munich will be illustrated in the methodological part. Furthermore, it should be noted that the described asylum procedure applies to adult persons, i.e. people over eighteen years. For minors another system applies that has usually higher standards, concerning for example housing and language classes.

The situation in Italy

Due to its geographic position, Italy receives many migrants who cross the Mediterranean Sea. Since 2011, Lampedusa has functioned as the main arrival point for boat people (Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014). Based on data provided by the President of the National commission for Asylum, the Italian Council for Refugees (CIR) states that until 1st November 2015, 139,937 migrants have reached Italy. These were 8% less than in the same period the year before. 100,982 migrants have been registered. Until mid-December 2015 (data update: 11/12/2015) 79,900 asylum requests were submitted in Italy and 66,000 requests were examined with the result that 42% of all persons who requested asylum obtained some form of protection. Of these 42%, 5% received refugee status, 15% subsidiary protection and 22% humanitarian protection (Consiglio Italiano per il Rifugiatio, 2015). Looking at the numbers, it can be concluded that not all migrants claim asylum; they might not do so at all or just not in Italy. As said by the CIR, mainly Syrians and Eritreans refuse to fingerprint. The total decrease in numbers of migrants arriving in Italy is also due to the “significant reduction in the number of Syrians” (ibid.). Whereas in 2014 42,000 Syrians arrived, there were only 7,000 in 2015, which can be explained by the opening of the Balkan route that absorbed most of

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7 In the event of one or more Member States being confronted by an emergency situation characterized by a sudden inflow of nationals of third countries, the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, may adopt provisional measures for the benefit of the Member State(s) concerned.

8 The gap between arrivals and registration in numbers did not become clear. Presuming, NGOs and other institutions counted more arrivals without registration.
the Syrian migrants. Looking at the changing geography of migration in Italy, the following figures show that Africans are the majority of immigrants in Italy in 2015:

| Figure 3: Applications and grantings of protection status from January till September 2015 in Italy (http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/Italy/statistics). |

How does the asylum system function in Italy? Disembarked boat people are subject to medical screenings. Migrants who arrive in Italy and who intend to claim asylum can do so at the Border Police directly upon arrival or at the Immigration Office of the Police, the so-called ‘Questura’. The procedure for the initial registration of the asylum claim is the same at both institutions. It starts with a process of identification and registration that entails fingerprinting and photographing, which is called ‘fotosegnalamento’. The way of submitting the claim can be either orally or in written form by the concerned person. It can be done in the applicant’s own language or with the aid of a mediator (Asylum Information Database, 2015b). When applying for international protection, it is advised to state reasons for the application and, if available, to provide documents that help to identify the person. Furthermore, the applicant is required to indicate a residence for further correspondence with the Questura. In Rome and other big cities, it is sufficient to show a residence issued by an NGO while in other cities the issue of the required residence can be difficult (UNHCR, 2013). The Questura provides the applicant with a photocopy of the application and immediately transmits it to the competent ‘Commissione Territoriale per il Riconoscimento dello Status di Rifugiato’, the ‘Territorial Commission for the recognition of refugee status’ (Ministero dell’Interno, n.d.). There are seven of these Commissions in Italy (Gorizia, Milan, Rome, Foggia, Siracusa, Crutone and Trapani). My interviewees told me about further Commissions that are currently established. When the Questura confirms that the submitted documents and information are the right ones, the applicant gets a temporary residence permit that is valid for three months and has to be renewed until the Commission decides about the case. When the migrant arrived in Italy without an ID proof or in case the application is based on elements that have to be verified, the applicant is hosted in one of the Identification Centres for a maximum...
of 20 days. If the applicant is without means of subsistence, the applicant has the right to ask to be hosted in a municipal reception center during the period of the examination of the application (Ministerio dell’Interno, n.d.).

As soon as the status of protection is given, the applicants are left on their own and expected to get by on their own. “Formally, people with protection status have the same social rights as native Italians” (Swiss Refugee Council, 2013, p. 46). The UNHCR outlines that integration chances are “severely limited and one of the biggest problems in the Italian Asylum System” (ibid.). Italy lacks programs for local social integration and emergency sleeping places. Regarding the current economic situation, it is almost impossible to find a regular job. Often migrants end up working on the black market in precarious situations like for example on big tomato plantations. Even ‘affirmative action’ programs could not improve the situation. In Italy, the municipality of residence is responsible for social welfare and the provision of social housing. Due to the severe underfinanced social sector services are often just cut off (Swiss Refugee Council, 2013). Homelessness and dependency on soup kitchens concern a large number of protection beneficiaries.

In Italy, a national transfer system exists to relieve places that receive large numbers of migrants, like on Lampedusa where a majority of boat people arrives. Migrants are transferred by public means of transport, often accompanied by police authorities, to places which have higher hosting capacities, usually in the Northern part. In 2015, the European Commission announced ‘hotspots’, referring to places where many migrants embark. The ‘hotspot’ approach aims as “operational solutions for emergency situations” to establish an intra-EU relocation. Hotspots have been systematically upgraded and extended in its reception capacities. On Lampedusa for example, about 1,500 people can be accommodated (Asylum Information Database, 2015b). In cooperation with Frontex and Europol, the identification, registration and fingerprinting are systematically done at these spots. Italy accommodates four hotspots.

**The situation in Germany**

In 2015, Germany received with about 1.1 million recorded refugees as many refugees and migrants as never before (BAMF, 2015). However, ‘only’ 476,649 asylum applicants were recorded. 441,899 of them were initial applications and 34,750 were subsequent applications. There was an increase of 135% in asylum applicants compared to last year with 202,834 applications (BAMF, 2015, p. 4). The gap between the number of refugees and the recorded asylum applications exists because it often takes several months until refugees can submit their asylum claim. In the left chart, the number of asylum applicants is shown for each month in 2015. There was in immigration peak in October and November. The diagram on the right shows the countries of origin.
It can be seen that migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa except Eritreans do not make up a notable share and are just counted under “further countries”. This results from political decisions taken in 2015 to let in refugees from Syria by opening the borders along the Balkan route and suspending the Dublin Regulation.

According to Article 16a of the German constitution, persons persecuted on political grounds shall have the right of asylum. In Germany, third country nationals (TNCs) can apply for asylum either at the border, at the ‘Border Police’, on German territory at the ‘Federal Office for Migration and Refugees’ (BAMF) or at...
airports also at the BAMF (Asylum Information Database, 2015a). Other official bodies like the police refer the asylum seeker to the BAMF as well.

When a person seeking protection arrives in Germany and addresses an official body, basic data are taken and handed out to the protection seeker. Then it is first checked which federal state the competent one is. If necessary, the asylum seeker is transferred to the reception center (‘Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung’) of another state. The initial distributions to the federal state are according to the federal state’s responsibilities of certain countries of origin (“Herkunftsländerzuständigkeit”) and a quota system, the ‘Königsteiner key’, which regulates the distribution among the sixteen federal states by taking into account the tax revenue and the population number.

The reception center organizes the accommodation, medical checks and supplies the asylum seeker with basic needs and informs the closest branch office of the BAMF about the new arrival (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2014). The asylum seeker stays in a reception camp for a maximum of three months, then in an ‘accommodation center’ (‘Sammelunterkunft’) that is colloquially called ‘asylum shelter’.

Because of missing capacities of the BAMF, it can take several months until the ministry records the application for international protection. So people often first get a paper that is called ‘Bescheinigung über die Meldung als Asylsuchender’ (confirmation of the registration as asylum applicant) (Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration, 2015).

When people submit their asylum application, the BAMF checks first whether Germany is responsible for the asylum application and whether the applicant has been politically persecuted or not in the country of origin. To do so, fingerprints and photos are taken in a personal hearing and several questions are asked about the family, the origin and the trajectory. The asylum applicant has the right to of support, for example by a mediator, trustee or a lawyer and gets a photocopy of the protocol (Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration, 2015). After the act of registration, the applicant gets a new paper called ‘Aufenthaltsgestattung’ (a temporary ID) that serves as a temporary ID. If the person changes the address while being in the asylum procedure, the competent branch office has to be informed. The final decision on the application is delivered in written form. Whatever the decision may be, it includes the right to appeal. If the decision is negative, the person is supposed to leave the country or has to face deportation. If the decision is positive, the person is supposed to leave the accommodation center within a certain period of time and has the right to employment. In many cities and communities, the tense situation on the housing market makes it very difficult for a person granted protection to find an affordable new accommodation. The relatively good economic situation in Germany provides jobs, however especially in the lower wage sector.

A peculiarity to mention in Germany is the law of ‘residence obligation’ (“Residenzpflicht”). It is a law that does not allow asylum seekers to exert their freedom of mobility across German territory while they are within the asylum procedure. They must only move within their municipality. This is very much criticized even in the Basic Rights Report as a racist regulation for foreigners (Stoffels, 2002). It depends on the Federal-State to regulate or suspend the ‘residence obligation’. Whereas the trend of a suspension was
2.3 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, the construction of fortress Europe has been critically examined from different perspectives on different levels. It becomes clear that the European border and migration regime is created by discourses around ‘security’ that are on a European and national level cemented in laws, restrictions and regulations. Despite all the regulations and agreements with transit countries and countries of origin, it seems as if there is a structural disorder in an over-structured European bureaucratic system. There are many myths and political generalizations involved like for example that one that West-African migration is per se poverty-driven. Irregular migrants challenge traditional border demarcations. The level of analysis has been scaled down from the European context over the national level of the researched countries Italy and Germany to the concrete research locations Brescia and Munich. All scales are interrelated with and impact each other, i.e. on a local level the European migration regime is effective. Even if the examples of Brescia and Italy are commonly discussed as a contrast to Munich and Germany⁹, there are also many common features, like the domestic system of transfer. The im/material dimension of mobility of irregular migrants is strongly shaped by the rules, regulations and bureaucracies of the European migration and border regime. The socio-political context with all its regulations forms a shifting landscape for irregular migrants, including gaps, differences, overlaps and similarities. In the empiric chapter, different manners and strategies how irregular migrants navigate through this landscape are illuminated.

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⁹ Common views are for example the ‘over-bureaucratic Germany’ or Italy that does not register irregular migrants and neither offer shelter.
3. Conceptual framework: Im/mobility, materiality and infrastructure

« Pour moi, la mobilité c’est normale quoi. » (Respondent in Brescia)

In this chapter, I aim to outline in short what the ‘new mobility paradigm’ is all about, provide a review on the history of migration studies and then connect these two to get rid of stereotypical, problematizing migration models. Afterward, I am going to work towards a conceptual framework of this thesis by considering especially a material and infrastructural dimension of mobility. The issue of the justice of mobility is thereby taken into consideration.

3.1 The ‘mobility turn’ in social sciences

There is hardly any other image that is as powerful and influential in the 21st century as ‘mobility’. Without mobility, the nowadays sense and effects of globalization would not be the same. Mobility is the ‘sine qua non’ of globalization (Sheller, 2011). People, technology, information, capital and goods are moving around the globe in a different, faster and more complex way than ever before (ibid.). Whereas research on mobility is not a new subject, for example in transport studies, in recent years a distinct ‘mobility turn’ has been identified in many study fields (Cresswell, 2006, p. 738). The ‘mobility turn’, or the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (Sheller & Urry, 2006) has reached many study fields such as geography, anthropology, tourism and migration studies (Adey et al., 2014). Issues of mobilities became center stage. The social life is reconfigured as mobile on many different scales. Social relations are performed as well as sustained through mobilities. Mobility is linked with (forced) movement, fixity and infrastructure (Urry, 2007).

Indeed, the mobility paradigm does not insist on fluidity and liquidity, but rather suggests a new set of questions, pays more attention to empirical facts and to moments of being en route (Adey et al., 2014; Sheller, 2011).

There are multiple aspects of mobility. The movement of people in the sense of migration, a spatial mobility, is one of the major, controversial issues nowadays. Even if migration has existed since humankind, the dynamic and intensity of migratory movements has increased enormously during the last decade, regarding the topicality and increased numbers of worldwide migrants. The ‘mobility turn’ has reached migration studies and fosters a more dynamic thinking of migration.

3.2 A review on the development of migration theories

There are many theories trying to understand the multiple motivations of migration from different perspectives. Often, research focused either on the context of leaving the country of departure or the context of settling in the country of destination.

There are some misleading assumptions and dichotomies that were and are prior in migration studies. First, migration was long time seen as an on- off event, a linear process between two fixed points, assuming a final destination. Moreover, migration scholars often have a ‘Eurocentric bias’ (Castagnone, 2011) overstating migration to Europe and assuming a permanent settlement with little or no return (ibid.).
Migration has never been assumed to just happen, but as something that always has a cause (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 17f.). Since the 1960s, there have been two dominant perspectives on migration, each based on a certain ideological thought. On the one hand, there is the voluntarist, neoclassic approach based on the contested ‘push and pull’-model that seeks internal reasons that ‘pull’ people to move and external forces that ‘push’ the migrant out from the given circumstances. This model risks seeing migrants as ‘desperate’ and ‘poor’. However, especially in the case of African migration to Europe, migration is considered as a socially desirable act; it is a positive impulse to life. Many researchers speak about a certain ‘adventurism’ (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 23). The ‘push and pull’-model does not take the culture of migration into account that sees migration in its own right. On the other hand, there is the historical-structuralist perspective focusing on global inequalities. The uneven distribution of economic and political power and the global division of labor lead to an unequal access to resources for people from ‘peripheral regions’. Consequently, the migrant moves are driven by structural inequality and less by free choice (De Haas, 2008, p. 7f.).

In the countries of destination, research on migration was and still is linked to debates on ‘integration’, legal issues and the supposed consequences for the labor market in the ‘host societies’ (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 3f.). Nowadays, a definite moment and place of arrival are not anymore considered as clearly given regarding the multiple moments and places of (temporal) stay and multiple states of in-betweenness – a process that many migrants experience (Schapendonk, 2011). This is more and more taken into account by a new pluralist view on migration and mobility. Thinking in national categories was more and more criticized within the context of migration and mobility. ‘Methodological nationalism’ (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Fortier, 2014) is the “ideological orientation that approaches the study of social and historical processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-states” (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013, p. 185) and cannot grasp current mobility dynamics. Since the 1990s, transnationalism has been growing in popularity, and immigrants have become transmigrants (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995). Transnationalism emphasizes cross-border flows, established networks and practices of migrants who are engaged in and connect at least two countries; transmigrants contribute to the creation of transnational spaces and identities (Bauböck & Faist, 2010). In a world in which new communication technologies enable information to travel around the world in fractions of a second, transnationalism brings a large potential to better understand certain patterns of globalization and migration.

Looking at the map of migration in our globalized era, it can be noticed that old models are very much challenged regarding new paths and the intensity of migration. Mapping movement and mobility goes far beyond old dichotomies like internal versus external, economic versus political, legal versus illegal, forced versus voluntary, temporary versus permanent migration, push- and pull-factors and rational calculation versus economic determinism (King, 2002).

Early patterns of population movements occurred in a more structured way like the brutal transatlantic slave trade, settlement and displacement throughout colonialism or the early industrial labor migration.
They still can be traced on a map with unidirectional arrows (Papastergiadis, 2000). In the era of globalization, a “decoupling of the historical paths” (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 23) occurs. The diversity and multi-directionality of paths and complexity of forms increase. Mapping the status quo of migration, a series of arrows in various directions and irregular dynamics would be necessary. The patterns and narratives of migration have changed extremely and do not stop to do so (Papastergiadis, 2000).

The formerly given divide into in- and out-migration countries is blurred, especially when looking at countries like Morocco that are out-, transit and immigration countries at the same time (Castles et al., 2013). Migration destinations are becoming more diversified and noticeably dissociated from old colonial and linguistic linkages. Senegalese do not only move to France but also to Italy and the United States (Schapendonk, 2011). But still, the complexity of migration is growing not just randomly, regarding e.g. Chinese migrants in Africa. New bilateral partnerships, agreements and geopolitical interests influence the directionality and intensity of migration. Also growing obstacles impact the flows of human mobility, no matter whether changing visa policies or physical barriers like fences. Mapping the changing patterns and dynamics of migration, “old routes [and] new borders” can be identified (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 57).

Although globalization happens to be the era of glorification of movement and mobility, there is an increase of manifold restrictions imposed on border crossings, entry and settlement. A tendency of immobilization can be noticed (see point 3.4). Methodological nationalism is therefore in the field of tension between obsolescence and recognition of the restrictive character of nation-states in the context of migration.

3.3 The mobility turn: its opportunities and limits in migration studies

“Not migrants and immigration, but mobility and movement.” (Sirkeci & Cohen, 2013)

The quote above is a clear statement to look at migration through the lens of mobility and movement instead of fixity and stasis. Our thinking of migration is still dominated by a “sedentarist metaphysics” (Cresswell, 2006). However, the mobility turn does not replace a sedentarist notion with a nomadic one. It goes beyond this binarity. The fact that mobility is always linked with immobility and moorings as well as movement and stillness (Hannam et al., 2006) and not equally accessible already refers to the limits of this new paradigm (Ahmed et al., 2003; Hannam et al., 2006). A big gain of this new paradigm in migration studies is the discursive shift of focus: from the moment and context of leaving and arriving at analyzing the trajectory. Insofar, it does not seem surprising, even if it is a paradox, that migration scholars have long time overseen the journey of a migrant and all associated stages of ‘in-betweenness’ as an analytical object of study (Schapendonk, 2011). Migration has mainly been seen as a matter of arrivals and departures, of uprootings and re-groundings (Ahmed et al., 2003). In other words, the roots were dominating over the routes of migration (Schapendonk, 2011). Shifting the focus to the process of being en route, the time of travel becomes important and is not considered as dead time anymore. Questions of what happens underway are becoming popular. This includes questions about the concrete material tools and used
infrastructure, the established networks, the organizational skills applied throughout the journey as well as certain travel events that may accelerate or slow down the movement. In her study on post-socialist migrants, Burrell provides an insight of the ‘furnishing of journey and border times and spaces’ (2008). It becomes clear that this is not an empty experience, but a very materialized and emotional undertaking. The inter-relatedness of movements of people, things and infrastructures effects and shapes the trajectory inevitably in numerous ways (Basu & Coleman, 2008). The way people move particulates the mobility. Walters (2014) sees mobility from the angle of routes and vehicles and accounts thereby for the politics of mobility. Also, a trajectory can be seen from a viewpoint of ‘[s]hifting between [p]laces and [s]tatuses’ (Schuster, 2005), hence ‘geographic’ and ‘status’ mobility are interlinked.

It was earlier noticed that mobility is a new paradigm of our globalized era which in turn does not mean that all things are mobile. In contrast – there is rather a tendency of immobilizing and problematizing migrants (Sirkeci & Cohen, 2013), noticeable when looking on European migration and asylum policy.

3.4 The global order of im/mobilities

«Mais tu es une vraie voyageuse! Moi, je ne peux pas, je dois rester ici. Peut-être je viendrai te voir un jour. » (Erjon, Brescia)

This is a phrase expressed by one of my respondents in Brescia when telling him about leaving back to Germany and then to the Netherlands. Again it becomes clear that while I am encouraged to move, others are denied mobility.

Our hypermobile decade is marked by both preventing people from movement and forcing them to movement. Whereas in Western societies, there is a dominant discourse about a very high, non-controllable influx of immigrants, we could also, and maybe instead, ask why there aren’t more people moving; especially when considering mobility as a central paradigm of our modern societies. Only 3% of the global population lives out of the country of birth (Sirkeci & Cohen 2013). However, even if it was theoretically possible, many people face high barriers and hindrances to be mobile. Mobility has an intrinsically political dimension. The access, the right and the possibilities to move across borders are globally seen very unevenly distributed. Even if “mobility has become the most powerful and most coveted stratifying factor” (Carling, 2002) in times of globalization, not all people around the globe can be equally mobile. Many people are deprived of this opportunity.

Bauman opposes the “vagabond beyond remedy” and the “perfect tourist” (Bauman, 1996), both prototype figures of globalization. These opposed human beings that are associated with mobility reflect “a principal division of the postmodern society”. The first is associated with movement, however in a less voluntary way, whereas the tourist is associated with the opportunity to voluntarily move around. Not only mobility but rather the freedom of choice about mobility indicates the rank in the societal hierarchy. Yet, my target
group is seen in the light of the vagabond\(^{10}\). The freedom of mobility is limited when it comes for example to the legal access to the EU. Here, “a powerful, security-obsessed distinction between travellers” (van Houtum, 2010, p. 954) from the EU and those from other countries is constructed “based on the fate of birth” (ibid.). On a ‘negative list’, serving as an instrument of distinction, citizens from Muslim countries and the global South experience severe difficulties and hindrances to gain access to the EU, whereas citizens of countries of the ‘positive list’ can relatively freely access the territory of the EU. It can be stated that mobilities are always “multiple and differentiated” (Adey et al., 2014, p. 14). Mobility relates to and reflects global power hierarchies. It is not equally accessible to all people worldwide. Many scholars were focusing on the different relations and hierarchies of subjects and objects towards mobility. Globalization shapes and changes mobility patterns in different ways. However, the dialectic relationship between mobility, immobility and moorings did not generally change to the benefit of the first (Hannam et al., 2006). Doreen Massey (1991) states a ‘power-geometry’ by arguing against a homogenously unfolding time-space compression of globalization. Some people’s mobility is accelerated by globalization, for others it has a slowing down and repressive character. Thus, some people’s movement is possible due to the immobility of others (Adey, 2006; Schapendonk, 2011).

For example, the free movement of persons in the Schengen area for its citizens means a certain immobilization for non-citizens aiming to enter this political construct at its outer borders. This interdependency is what the metaphor ‘fortress Europe’ also refers to. Mobility can thus be seen also as a means to transgress power structures through both material and metaphysical domains (Adey, 2006). Concerning the limits of mobility, Carling outlines “that migration must be analyzed in the light of restrictive immigration policies” (Carling, 2002, p. 4). He questions whether we really live in the ‘Age of migration’ (Castles et al., 2013) or maybe rather in the ‘age of involuntary immobility’ (Carling, 2002). Regarding the numerous, unfulfilled travel dreams – even between Italy and Germany – migration theory should include a reflection on why so many people who wish to migrate are not able to do so. How does it come to the migration of some and non-migration of others? Carling drafts a model that distinguishes between the aspiration and the ability to migrate. The ‘aspiration/ability-model’ tries to explain features of migration and non-migration. Aspiration signifies simply the wish to migrate and ability means the realization of this wish by “overcoming the various barriers” (Carling, 2002, p. 26) and constraints of migration. Many people are not able to materialize their aspirations and are stuck in immobility, at their home or in transit. The increased immobility within migration regimes has led many scholars to use the term ‘im/mobility’ when writing on mobility and migration. So far, the aspiration has been given little attention and an analytical distinction was often only drawn between forced and voluntary migration. It is

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10 See also the work on the backpacker and the undocumented migrant, both mobile actors but under a very different premise (Schapendonk, Liempt, & Spierings, 2014). Backpackers are seen as temporally moving, undocumented migrants as permanently. Politically, backpackers are wanted, undocumented migrants unwanted. Migrants face harsh control and border policies that backpackers are likely not to experience.
important to state that migration is usually an interplay of choice and constraints, of aspiration and ability. In turn, voluntary immobility should not be denied in its legitimization. Globally, it can even be stated that migration aspirations seem to grow while the ability is decreasing (Adey, 2006) despite the allegedly connecting character of globalization even across borders. Globalization highlights differences between locations instead of reducing them. These geographical differences can be used and a benefit drawn from. Possibilities could be acquired that are not present at home. However, the involuntary immobile are denied this opportunity as they lack the freedom of mobility (Carling, 2002).

3.5 Materiality, infrastructure and mobility

“A refugee is someone who has nothing” (Amaniel, Munich)

When exchanging with Amaniel, he emphasizes a distinct difference between a migrant and a refugee by referring to belongings. In his eyes, a refugee has nothing and a migrant possibly has things.

Inevitably, when people move, things are moving too. Looking at the inter-relatedness of the mobility of peoples and materialities gives various and rich insights into the practices and experiences of im/mobility (Burrell, 2008). For this reason “a stronger focus is needed to deal with the ways in which the ‘mobility of people, material objects, and information relate to each other and can be thought together.” (Pfaff, 2010, p. 345)

These days, when we hear about migration, it often focuses on ‘materialities’ like the erection of physical borders. Even within the Schengen zone, an area defined by free movement, the construction of material borders like fences is seemingly a dominant ‘solution’ to deal with migration. For a long time, the erection of fences has only been localized at the outer borders of fortress Europe, as can be seen for example in the long tradition of Spanish fences at its enclaves Ceuta and Melilla. A fence is not a trivial thing; it crucially impacts the routes of migration.

Every movement is located and grounded through spatial fixities (Cresswell, 2006; Burrell, 2008). Places, borders and territory do not get obsolete through the mobility turn (Cresswell, 2010). The opposite is true; fixities, moorings and frictions are needed as something to push off from (Adey, 2006).

A focus on the materiality of mobility was not always evident; it was fostered by an explicit ‘material turn’ in social sciences (Adey et al., 2014). The material turn brings material things in the center of attention and thus tries to get a new perspective on socio-cultural processes. The epistemology of materialities questions the interrelations of things and humans and even attributes materialities a certain subjectivity and power to act. The material turn also reached geography. Pfaff, for example, followed a mobile phone from East Africa to the United Kingdom (‘follow-the-thing geography’) to “shed light on the spatial and cultural practices in which the object is embedded” (Pfaff, 2010, p. 341). The threefold relationship of human – mobility – materiality is a main empiric concern of this work.
Combining mobility with materiality completes the understanding of complex mobility processes because of inevitably “intersecting itineraries of mobility and materiality” (Basu & Coleman, 2008, p. 313). Human movement is linked to material movement, of diverse and numerous material encounters as well as material deprivation; mobility can be seen as a process of shaping, exchanging, performing and transgressing certain materialities and infrastructures. “Mobilities, we might say, are often rooted in networks because they follow and are facilitated by infrastructures that carry or mediate mobile subjects and things.” (Adey et al., 2014, p. 10).

In the preceding chapter, the ‘power-geometry’ was described as unequal access to mobility; in relation to materiality it becomes even more concrete: through the access to infrastructure, global hierarchies are expressed and experienced. None of my respondents could easily access an airplane (in exceptional cases some were transferred from Sicily to Northern Italy) and even accessing a cross-border train is very difficult. However, every mobility is not only related to material moving but also dependent on infrastructure. Through the deprivation of a certain kind of infrastructure like airplanes that is associated with the kinetic elite, irregular migrants use and are even more confronted with self-organized and risky infrastructures, what ‘we’ might see as ‘informal infrastructures’ in the hand of smugglers.

On a migrant’s journey, intersecting materialities and various types of (im)material infrastructure have many different dimensions and meanings. The materiality and infrastructure approach enables to account for many things like vehicles, borders, people and networks (“People as infrastructure”, Simone, 2014). Furthermore, the weather, the vastness of the sea and the ‘paper regime’ can be subsumed under materiality and infrastructure. All these things create certain narratives linked to mobility. (Im)material infrastructure shapes the experience and memory of the trajectory (Basu & Coleman, 2008). To consider the assemblage of things and physical and immaterial infrastructures that facilitate and restrain, shape and affect the (experience of) mobility, I use the term ‘im/material infrastructure’. First, I simply quote materialities which are (temporarily) personal things like material belongings and which accompany the journey for a short or longer period of time. These things are co-mobile that means they are carried and kept by the migrant. In this category I include for example luggage, address lists and personal gifts, these materialities are very meaning-laden. The meaning can change and be influential throughout the whole journey.

Then I distinguish material infrastructures. Here I subsume different kinds of ‘camps’ as well as roads and transport like vehicles, carpooling and railway systems. These infrastructures stay either fix in place or move along with the migrant and may function as an accelerator of mobility. Migrants encounter, use and acquire, transgress and emancipate from these infrastructures. The property structure is definitely not that one of the migrant, he or she uses and acquires this infrastructure for a short or longer period of time. The migrant shifts either within the public, the private or intersecting spheres.

Third and lastly, I distinguish the immaterial infrastructure like the issue of labor, language, the state including its assets, asylum systems, services and laws, (diaspora) organizations and certain events. In addition, the weather or the vastness of the sea belongs to this category – even if some things like the sea may seem without any structure. This category may be difficult do delimitate, it encompasses all
immaterial structures that a migrant (temporarily) is engaged with, both actively and passively. The approach “people as infrastructure” of Abdoumaliq Simone (2014) allows to also including people and social networks that are especially popular in migration and mobility studies. It is said that social networks lead to useful information and help to reduce costs and risks of migration (Müller, 2010). Networks, consisting of actual and possible contacts are an important resource for migration and form precious social capital (Schapendonk, 2014).

Multiple, differentiated and intersecting materialities and infrastructures can be very powerful for the migrant’s experiences and trajectory, both in a repressive and liberating as well as in a deferring and an accelerating sense. Often, these ‘abstract phenomena’ materialize, but still, reducing them as just materiality would neglect the systemic relevance of a materialized element of the respective system. For example, the issue of labor is much more than just a working permit or contract.

3.6 Concluding remarks

The interest in different and multiple mobilities is central to this thesis. It has become clear that mobilities cannot be understood and empirically analyzed by themselves, but require a look at their material groundedness and companionship. A trajectory inevitably materializes in various forms and many moments which mark the experience of the migrant. “[I]ntersecting trajectories of people and things are mutually constitutive” (Basu & Coleman, 2008, p. 317). Every distinct journey is shaped by the im/material infrastructure and every migrant shapes, in turn, the surrounding and embodied im/material infrastructure.

Mobility deals with different questions and perspectives, ranging from mobility regimes, materialities, infrastructures and experiences. Within the European mobility regime, irregular migrants are somehow between agency and systemic restriction, but never only victimized. From another perspective, a trajectory can also be seen as a series of events. One event influences, and maybe only makes possible, the next one. Complex organizational challenges are required. The temporal dimension plays an essential role when being an irregular migrant from a West African country. Often, it has been emphasized by my respondents that not only place or a localization matters, but especially the (right) time is crucial for doing a certain route.
4. Methodology

« Mais tu fais quoi? Tu travailles pas? »
« Mais la recherche c’est mon travail. »
« Ah bon, je comprends pas. » (Mansour)

This is a kind of dialogue that I experienced every now and then. In this section, I will explain the methodological approach that I applied and what I did during the research time. It was indeed work for me.

4.1 Overall framework: Combining my individual research with the VENI-project

Being part of the VENI-research project of Joris Schapendonk titled “Fortress Europe as a mobile space? Intra-EU mobility of West African migrants” was exceptional. Normally, an integral part of the one-year master program in human geography is a four-month research internship that results in the master thesis. In my case, my research internship took place directly at the research site that had to be among the research regions of the VENI-project. My choice was the region of Lombardy. In order to work out an individual topic as well, I had the idea to make a bilocal project and also do research in Southern Germany. Consequently, I chose Brescia and Munich as my research sites (the choice for these two sites will be explained below). The travel time in-between was used as a reflection time. The duration of the field research was four months. I started in March 2015 with a one month stay in Munich, went two months to Brescia and then closed my empiric research in Munich at the beginning of July. The reason for this research chronology was the idea to start in Munich in a familiar environment and then trace back the trajectories that migrants cover until they reach Germany. After a month, I went to Italy in order to understand migrants’ life realities, to see how mobility dynamics evolve and to hear migrants story in this context. I considered finishing my empiric research period in Munich as useful as it might have allowed me to meet migrants that I got to know in Italy again in Munich after they moved across the Alps. Even if this theoretical assumption hardly worked out, in reality, traveling myself between Munich and Brescia by train and car, the most common way of traveling among my respondents, was enriching, not only to catch the excitement and to experience border controls and the distance by myself.

We were five master students joining the VENI-project working on similar topics in the regions of Catalonia, Lombardy and Randstad. We all scheduled our research period similarly. Thus, a regular exchange during the research process was possible and very fruitful. We all left to our research places at the beginning of March and stayed until mid-July. We had group meetings and discussed relevant issues before each of us was leaving to the self-chosen research site. For the VENI-project, it was important to have common research questions and to respect a certain type and structure of interview. During the field research, we stayed in contact with each other and had some exchange via e-mails. A shared dropbox folder allowed us to see the documentation of the research and the first results. Everybody of us also had individual meetings during the research with our supervisor even at the research site. After coming back
from our field of research, we discussed our research results. The results differed a lot among the study regions, which was surprising and interesting at the same time. It helped to understand our own research results better and put them in a wider, European context. All these regions are in translocal ways connected through migrants’ spatial practices. We could clearly see that the different local or national policies have a strong impact on migrants and their political status and asylum procedures. This definitely has an impact on migrants’ mobility.

4.2 Applied methodology: bi-local ethnography

The research is designed around the two different locations Brescia and Munich. The applied methodological approach is a bi-local ethnography, based on principles of the multi-sited ethnography. Ethnography is defined as “[t]he description and interpretation of a culture or social group. [...] The purpose is to provide an in-depth study of a culture that includes behavior, interactions, language and artifacts. The aim is to understand another way of life from the native point of view by focusing on ordinary, everyday behavior.” (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 2). It requires from the researcher a high personal commitment within the field. ‘Multi-sited’ means to extend the ethnographic research field in several locations. Marcus’ publication on multi-sited ethnography, which appeared in 1995 in the Annual Review of Anthropology, remains the foundational oeuvre (Coleman & von Hellermann, 2011, p. 2). However, the dichotomy between multi-sited research and stationary research is not as clear as commonly assumed. All fieldworks are to a certain extent “a composite of styles” (Falzon, 2009, p. 19). Multi-sited ethnography is often used for translocal and transnational approaches, especially in migration and mobility studies; it is thus seen as a “mobile ethnography” (Marcus, 2011, p. 18). This allowed me to exert mobility in the frame of my research and to experience the journey with all its peculiarities like the beautiful panoramic view and the excitement of the border controls. Of course, my travel was not ‘illega[lized]’ because of my German passport. The emergence of multi-sited ethnography and its growing application reflects the increase in movements of people, flows of goods and symbolic flows like lifestyles and ideas within the globalized world (Falzon, 2009; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011).

“Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography.” (Marcus, 1995, p. 105).

In this research, I look at two cities with a special meaning for migrants. Both cities facilitate movement as well as staying. These locations are seen in conjunction with each other by migratory movements and joint (im-)material flows and connections. I do not necessarily aim to encounter the same people at the two sites. Doing fieldwork on two sites enables me to understand the dynamics of networks, departures and arrivals from different perspectives. Additionally, moments of ‘in-betweenness’, not only in a spatial sense, can be
better accounted for. The topic can be traced through multiple spaces and moreover, it can be looked at changes of the topic across time and space. The topic is neither spatially confined nor place-bound. The limits of multi-sited ethnography may be a lower knowledge of research sites because of time restrictions and a possible less intense commitment. It possibly takes a lot of time at every site only to find access to the field. In my case, the field access worked out relatively well and the place changes were short caesuras that were useful reflections about my proceedings and first findings. If I had stayed longer than two months at each site, of course, I might have had even deeper insights, but two months were a good time frame to navigate through the field and to have numerous and rich encounters11. I did not intend to compare the research sites, which is also a common criticism of multi-sited ethnography. This can be problematic insofar as the researcher’s attention is mainly paid to comparable things and less to the uniqueness of encounters at each site.

The emergence of multi-sited ethnography goes along with a changing paradigm concerning the relation of the local to the global. Previously, the ‘local’ has been seen as embedded in a global frame within which local social phenomena can be compared and contextualized across different spaces (Coleman & von Hellermann 2011, p. 4). However, the contrast of the ‘local’ to the ‘global’ in a globalized world has been criticized and conceptually overcome by many scholars. Massey, for example, argues that locality in the era of time-space-compression is not just a geographic, static place. Every locality comprises certain (im/material) global elements. There is a need for “a global sense of the local [and] a global sense of place” (Massey, 1991). Places do not have any methodological boundaries that enclose them. They “do not have single, unique ‘identities’; they are full of internal conflicts.” (Massey, 1991). But still, the uniqueness and importance of places cannot be denied (Massey, 1991). Consequently, it is not an objective of multi-sited ethnography to draw a picture of the global, but instead to recognize a sense of the global within the study of local processes. Applying this thought to my research, I definitely do not aim to analyze the ‘refugee crisis’ in Europe. However, the researched sites are part of and reflect a global (migration) system. And this ‘global’, in turn, affects the local in different ways. Migrants represent this way of de-localization very well, as they are on the one hand carriers of their incorporated culture and, on the other hand, they do not automatically step into a completely different culture at their (temporary) place of settlement, regarding, for example, the given networks, translocal spaces and diasporas (Munck, 2008). The period of ‘place-focused concept of culture’ (Amit, 2000, p. 13) and the conceptualization of linking “collective identity, place, social relations and culture together” (ibid.) is in sciences considered as overcome. This requires from the researcher a high degree of reflection of his/her own positioning and involvement. This is what Amit calls “critical introspection” (2000, p. 13). Not to forget that the field is shaped “by the researcher's professional and social circumstances, the interconnectedness of the research sites, as well as the [...] multiple multi-sited field visits.” (Moraes, 2014, p.7). The research results and the insights from the fields are always to be seen under this premise.

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11 It should not be forgotten that the intense immersement at each site and the partially emotional stories may also set certain time limits for the researcher.
4.3 Doing interviews and observations

In the frame of multi-sited ethnography, there is a variety of possible methods (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 3). During my empirical research, I applied narrative interviews, observations and documentary methods. The narratives in my qualitative in-depth interviews were the life stories of migrants. The narrative inquiry methodology seeks to make people, especially of marginalized persons like migrants, tell their stories. This methodological approach has the underlying assumption that everyone has a story to tell about his or her life. It is important that the setting of the encounter encourages and stimulates the migrant to tell the personal story. The framing of the research was a crucial moment for catching the attention. I realized more and more that a rather easy way of presenting the research lead to a more likely and more open engagement. The interview is unstructured and goes beyond a mere question-response dialogue. Nevertheless, I have some guiding questions in my mind. The focus is put on mobility-related aspects of my interviewees’ biography. Usually, my respondents were informed about my research project before the ‘interview’\(^{12}\). Often, we met each other beforehand, which was useful for gaining trust. The interview can be divided into different phases that require from the interviewer the appropriate and right questions and a good competence of listening (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2007). Firstly, I tried to create a pleasant atmosphere and a safe space. At the beginning, I asked more general questions about the age, the country of origin and the family. During the main narration, I tried to avoid interruptions. When I felt that the main story was told, I came back to some points of the story and asked for more details. The questioning phase often automatically leads to a concluding talk. There can be a smooth transition. Here, I have often been addressed by my interviewees and asked about my life and the research. When any respondent had a special issue to talk about, I tried to dedicate enough time to this as well. Often, long ‘informal’ talks followed the more or less ‘official’ interview. For this reasons, I aim to avoid such a distinction: ‘Official’ and ‘informal’ talks are both important sources of gaining confidence and insights. Especially when considering the ethnographic approach, a broader understanding of data collection and gaining information is required. I experienced very insightful moments while going for a walk, sitting around, cooking together and sharing stories and spending time with my respondents. Driessen & Janssen emphasize the signification of small-talk. I realized that this “hard work” and “central ingredient of working in the field” (Driessen & Jansen, 2013) is worth to pay more attention to. Often, I got the most controversial information during small talks, like for example the ‘real age’ of Pierre, Simba and Traore.

After having the consent of my respondent, I recorded the interview to better keep and memorize the data in all its details. However, only a few interviewees agreed on being recorded with my capture device. Using a recorder emphasized the difference between ‘official’ and ‘informal’ even more.

Another empirical method that has been applied to collect empirical data is **participant observation**. This key instrument of ethnographic research combines both participation and observation in various forms.

\(^{12}\) I do not aim to draw a strict distinction between ‘interview’ and ‘meetings’ like going for a walk, as both are important sources of insights. Nevertheless, the interview can be considered as the time when I took notes or recorded the story.
(Delamont; Atkinson, 1999, p. 3). The range of involvement is large; it can vary from being completely part of the field, being an observant participant to only being a participant observer of “actions/interactions, behavior and listen to conversations while simultaneously observing the context (particularly the time and location) in which these actions are undertaken.” (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 3). I surely assumed all roles, ranging from a high involvement until being a participant observer.

Especially observations on the train stations, mainly in Munich, but also in Brescia, were very enriching for my research. While waiting at the train station for the Eurocity train that comes from Italy, always on platform 11, I felt that it is very useful for the research to see who arrives or who does actually not arrive. Among the latter, many women from West Africa traveling on their own can be seen. Catching the moment of arrival was always very full of excitement – for all involved people in the scene: the arriving passengers, the police, the train stuff and me as well. Observational schedules and diaries can help observation. The arrival of trains from Italy was, for example, part of my observational schedule. My research diary was an essential tool to document striking incidents, take notes during and after interviews and to generally reflect the ongoing research. Now, it is an essential data basis.

4.4 Selection and Sampling

The target group of this research for my master thesis and the VENI-project are irregular migrants from West African countries. This is, of course, a very heterogeneous group. What they have in common is first of all their hardship and effort to reach Europe from their West African country of origin. Their motivations, their stories, their aspirations and hopes can differ a lot. They are as heterogeneous as human beings can be. I tried to encounter mainly recently arrived irregular migrants as I had the impressions that the issue of mobility is still more striking in their life than for those who have already been settled for a longer period. For this reason, I deliberately went to locations like the reception center or language classes that are important for newcomers or asked for friends who had just arrived. ‘New arriving’ is a very context-dependent category. In Munich, it means that they have arrived here within the last year and now stay in reception camps or asylum shelters. However, they might have been in Europe for a while, in some cases already for many years. One respondent lived on Sardinia for many years and then had the sudden idea of moving on to Munich, where he can be considered as a new arrival. All in all, I had 27 in-depth encounters to which I pay special attention in this thesis, besides all the other also valued acquaintances. The biggest national groups that I encountered were Senegalese and Nigerians.\footnote{See the list in the appendix for further information on the interview partners.}
4.5 The choice for Brescia and Munich and the interrelations of these cities as research sites

*Brescia is little Senegal and Munich is the Central Station for Germany.* (Statement from my research diary).

My two different research sites are Brescia and Munich. The advantages of researching on two sites are to follow a topic through different spaces and times and to catch different perspectives from different points of a trajectory, which leads to a broader understanding of mobility dynamics. Both cities, Brescia and Munich, play an important role in the context of migration in and between Italy and Germany, not to say that they lie in the center of the European migration question concerning for example national responsibilities and (re-) introduction of border controls within the Schengen zone.

4.5.1 Munich - a central migration hub

Munich is the capital as well as the populously and economically biggest city of the German federal state Bavaria. Due to its geographic position, i.e. the proximity to the South-Eastern borders, the city is the main entrance point to Germany for many migrants. Migrants who take the train from Italy to Germany generally arrive in Munich, also due to the railway terminus. Munich is also an important crossroad when looking at the highway system: There are the ‘Balkan route’ and the ‘Brennerautobahn’, both are considered as main migration routes towards Western Europe. These routes connect and then continue towards Munich. Munich hosts the biggest reception camp of Southern Germany, which is the ‘Bayernkaserne’ (Sozialreferat Landeshauptstadt München,

![Figure 7: Munich and Brescia on the map (google maps; own processing)](image)

![Figure 8: Countries of origin of asylum seekers in Bavaria in the year 2015 (Sozialministerium Bayern; August 2015)](image)
Many border crossers without regular papers are first brought to this place. The high influx of irregular migrants is an ongoing and polarizing issue. Still, reliable data are not easy to get\textsuperscript{14}. Upon my personal inquiry, the integration commissioner of Bavaria even says that “the high number of immigrants makes it impossible to have reliable data”\textsuperscript{15}. Most of the ‘irregular migrants’ enter Germany via Austria (ibid). On the 27\textsuperscript{th} of July, the police recorded over 1,000 irregular border crossers a day in Bavaria for the first time, a record that would soon be broken (Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 2015). In September 2015, Munich was the center of worldwide attention when people enthusiastically welcomed refugees. Totally, 180,000 asylum seekers arrived in Munich in 2015, in the precedent year, there were ‘only’ 39,000. A yearly increase of 361\% is recorded (Rahmsdorf, 2015). One-third of irregular immigrants come from Balkan countries, which were recently declared as a safe third country, which means that it is unlikely that their asylum demand gets accepted (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2015, p. 5). There is a big pressure to keep up with housing construction. Even most villages that surround Munich host asylum shelters.

The high signification of Munich in the context of migration can be seen in a facebook post by one of my respondents. He sees the Central Station in Munich as “Germany Central Station”. Arriving in Munich stands for an arrival in Germany, for being in a “good country” – what many of my respondents emphasized. Almost all new arriving migrants are first sent to the big reception camp “Bayernkaserne”, which lies in the northern part of Munich. Here, they stay an average of 5 weeks and are confronted with the first bureaucratic tasks and medical checks until they have their transfer. In this respect, Munich has the function of a spatial filter. After the stay in this camp, migrants are transferred to asylum shelter that can be anywhere. For this reason, both the arrivals and the departures are on a constantly high level. There is hardly any other point that has such a high fluctuation of migrants.

\textsuperscript{14}See also chapter II “Behind the European migration crisis” for a discussion on numbers and figures.

\textsuperscript{15}Answer received the 29\textsuperscript{th} September 2015 after a personal inquiry.
4. 5.1 Brescia – a migrant place

The choice for Brescia was also due to the special function of the city for migrants. Even when I told one of my respondents in Munich that I considered to go to Lombardy and was not sure yet whether it should be Milan or Brescia, he said “Go to Brescia, there are most people like me. In Milan, you do not find them anymore. There are only older migrants” (Pakko). Furthermore, people from the Lombard region recommended me Brescia instead of Milan or other cities. Brescia hosts many African diasporas. There is a very big Senegalese community because of which Brescia deserves the name “Little Senegal” (BBC, 2014). Also, other big African communities, like Nigerians or Ivoirians are based in Brescia. The visibility of Africans and a certain African infrastructure, like Afro shops, restaurants and cultural associations is high. There are many shops and meeting points.

Even if West African migrants are quite visible in the town’s infrastructure, they are not the biggest minority in the province of Brescia that counts 1.200.000...
inhabitants (Menonna, 2015). Senegalese people – those with citizenship status – only represent 4.8% of the inhabitants. Other groups, like Romanians or Indians, are still bigger.

In 2013, there were in total 179,250 foreigners living in the province of Brescia, 7% of them counted as ‘irregular’. This percentage was much higher for example in 2002 when 27% of all migrants were irregular. In Brescia, many migrants thus live clandestinely, as some of my interviewees also reported to me. In this respect, the city is very different to Munich, where most migrants are registered and willing to demand asylum. Many of the migrants in Brescia are waiting for a labor contract and then hope to get a temporary residence permit.

Whereas Munich can easily be seen as migration hub due to its (symbolic) function as an entry point for Germany and a very high mobility dynamic and fluctuation among irregular migrants, Brescia is a rather central area and a hot spot for migration. I call it a ‘migrant place’. The established networks have a high recipient capacity for new arrivals. Here, rooms and labor can be found more easily within the informal economy. An informal market for labor permits and a well-known informal taxi-system exist. Besides the function as a point of arrival, Brescia also facilitates further mobility. For some migrants, it is a good transit point. It lies on the railway line to Munich and close to Milano. Brescia’s function as ‘migrant place’ can also be seen in the newly established commission for asylum interviews. So far, there has only been an asylum commission in Milan.

### 4.5.1 The interconnectivity of Munich and Brescia

Brescia and Munich are two cities separated from each other by 308 kilometers linear distance or 465 kilometers by highway and at least 6:28h by train. However, the distance between these two sites is understood in a relative, translocal way. The cities are not separated by a specific geographic distance, but stand in a certain relation to each other and are connected through social networks, flows and the

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**Tabella 3.1 - Stranieri irregolarmente presenti nella provincia di Brescia secondo l’area di provenienza. Tassi per cento presenti, anni 2001-2013**

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*Nota: Escludendo la componente comunitaria, il tasso di irregolarità est-europeo è al 1° luglio 2013 in provincia di Brescia del 7 per cento.*

Fonte: rielaborazioni su dati Osservatorio Regionale per l’integrazione e la multiemietà.

**Figure 12: Percentages of irregular migrants among different regions.** The columns are not the percentage of all groups, but they refer to the whole group of e.g. Asians. We can see the percentage of irregular Subsahara Africans that is 8% in 2013 whereas in total only 7% of all foreigners are irregular.

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**Figure 13: Railway line between Milan and Munich, Brescia on the way (http://www.treni-internazionali.com/News/Cnl/MilanoMunchen.html)**
railway. These two cities are connected by local-to-local relations that create translocal spaces. Currently, the move northwards is taken far more often than the other way round. The translocal approach is useful for not staying methodologically trapped in a national context and helps to better understand cross-border flows and movements. It emphasizes “the relational dimensions of space created through mobility.” (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 379).

For migrants who cross the Alps northwards, the distance is not only a physically given fact but also culturally and economically crucial. There are many borders to cross, linguistic borders, paper borders, etc. The journey can last longer than a simple 6 hours ride by car or train. For example, Abeeku had to hide from the police ‘somewhere’ in between. It took him three days to arrive in Germany.

4.6 Gaining contact in Munich and Brescia

The uniqueness of every research site requires different approaches and strategies to finding access and gaining contact. In the following section, I illustrate my access strategies.

For staying in contact with respondents I created an account on facebook to facilitate the exchange of messages and pictures. Some respondents also showed me their virtual networks of friends which are also a big gain for the research.

4.6.1 Gaining contact in Munich

In Munich, I can distinguish between four different approaches: Firstly, I visited a German language class in Kirchseeon (no. 1 on the map below), a little town about 25 kilometres east of Munich. These classes were organized by volunteers. My continuous presence led to a good basis of trust. In the end, I also became an instructor of German language at this place due to my continuous presence. Here I met Josef, Noël, Femi and Abdoul.

Secondly, I frequented places of (temporary) accommodation. I went to two different asylum shelters in Eggharting and Zorneding (2a and 2b on the map) in the surroundings of Munich, as well as to the Bayernkaserne, a big reception camp (2c on the map below). In the asylum shelters, I met Amaniel I, Thomas and Suleiman. The reception camp Bayernkaserne lies in the northern part of Munich. Many of my respondents called it after the closest metro-station ‘Kieferngarten’. Here, I met Abeeku and Kossi. Thirdly, I once went to a Senegalese Hip-hop night that took place in a popular event house in the city center of Munich. Here I made acquaintance with Simba and Pierre. Lastly, I went to a
‘One-World’-house close to the central station that offers juridical consultation hours for asylum seekers. That is where I met Amaniel. All four different approaches together gave me a good and vast sample. It should be noted that whenever I went to these places, I met and talked to many more people. It also happened that I met someone in the Bayernkaserne who then had a sudden transfer to other places, which made it impossible to meet again.

Figure 15: My research sites in Munich (google maps; own processing).

4.6.2 Gaining contact in Brescia

Before going to Brescia, I already had a contact from one of my respondents in Munich. He advised me to contact one of his friends living there. However, in the end, this turned out to be a rather loose, single encounter and the snowballing from Munich to Brescia did not work out properly. In Brescia, I tried to get in contact with people from my target group while walking around in the historic city center and at the train station. I frequented visible African places like Afroshops and a Senegal restaurant. Being introduced from one person to another one was self-perpetuating; however, this can lead to a biased sample in terms of nationality, political status or experience. Therefore, I applied several access strategies. Still, the snowball system was very useful. I asked respondents to whom I had a good basis of trust whether they have friends who would like to join the project. I asked for instance for the contacts of the room mates in an asylum shelter. This is how I met Gari or visited an Italian language course which one respondent, Danyo, told me a lot about. Danyo introduced me to many people and places. At the presented language school (no. 4 on the map of Brescia) I encountered Traore and Erjon.
Furthermore, I got a list from ‘Centro Migranti’ in Brescia with different associations like the “Burkina Faso” association that I contacted and whose president became one of my respondents. In a similar way, I meet other interviewees.

Being in a ‘foreign’ country at an unknown place may evoke some preferential treatment with offered help and information to get along with the unknown system. This is what can be called as ‘the foreigner card’. It created sympathy as I was perceived as being on ‘their side’ and open for complaints about ‘the other’ Italian society. Playing the foreigner card led me to some contacts. I gained the contacts of Base when I asked for a copy shop or met Christian when I asked for the way to the train station. The concentration of migrants in Brescia is very high in one quarter in downtown and cannot be overseen (no. 1,2 and 3 on the map below). In Brescia, I had many contacts in the end just from doing my daily life activities. The big network and the umpteen acquaintances were insightful, but also brought some side effects. One day for example I talked and interviewed an alleged ‘bad guy’ who was thrown out of a house because he started to drink alcohol even though he considered himself an avowed Muslim. Apparently, people were more critical and asked me about him.

In both cities, I had a few closer contacts that were inspiring for a deeper insight in migrants’ life. It was definitely a trump when I could tell about my own experience in West Africa. Even though there are in my perception far more people with West African background in Brescia than in Munich, it was not easier to approach them. One of my respondents even said «il est un peu ordinaire de demander comme ça dans la rue» (Danyo). I had big concerns here about a constant racial profiling. The reflection upon the concept of ‘migrancy’ was here more complex due to the long immigration history to this place and also because of my own position. I was most of all a migrant. Many of the persons that I met during the field research are much longer in Brescia than I am or even longer than I live.

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16 In Brescian context, the word ‘migrant’ is a very delicate issue. Many people of African descendence are born here, may have little contact with their relatives in African countries or may actively engage in transnational activities. Fact is, in Brescia, there are many second-generation families.
Figure 16: Research locations in Brescia on the map that I used during the research (Map given by the touristic office in Brescia; April 2015).

4.7 Ethics in research on irregular migrants

Research on irregular migrants means researching on a relatively ‘vulnerable group’ (Bilger, Van Liempt, 2009, p. 15). It refers to social groups that are stigmatized, have a low social status and little power or control over their lives and that may suffer from violations of human rights (Duvell, Triandafyllidou, & Vollmer, 2008, p. 11). It requires high ethical commitment, reflexivity and sensitivity from the researcher throughout the whole research. Nevertheless, it is important to concede a certain agency to irregular migrants. Research on irregular migrants reflects “the tension between the distinctiveness of migrant’s current situation” and the “underlying normality of the people” (Bilger, Van Liempt, 2009, p. 3).

When thinking about ethics in research on irregular migrants, two dimensions are relevant: positionality and power. This raises ethical questions in my own research, like for example ‘Can a woman understand men’s experience?’; ‘can Whites study Blacks?’; ‘the colonized study the colonizer?’(Merriam et al., 2001, p. 405).
The positionality of the researcher is relational and context-specific to the researched subjects. The power relation between the researcher and the researched subjects is also influenced by the society of the research context. It is crucial in forming and defining the relationship between researcher and respondents. Commonly, the researcher’s position is assumed as being either insider or outsider. However, this binary divide is not appropriate and a more nuanced analysis of the relation is necessary regarding the multiple relations and settings of the research situation in my case (Merriam et al., 2001; Carlin et al., 2013). An ‘outsider researcher’ is usually considered as being part of the majority society whereas the ‘insider’ “is a member of the migrant group under study” (Carling et al., 2013, p. 1)\(^{17}\).

I am without a doubt in an outsider position towards my West African respondents. My bilocal approach is challenging this binary divide in the way that I am in Italy not part of the majority society, which is the case during my research in Germany. However, I am still in a very privileged position, regarding, for example, my own positioning within global power structures and thus constituting components like race, class and citizenship. Consequently, the communication situation during the research is an inherently asymmetric one. Concerning language, I don’t speak Italian but I am fluent in French. This ‘outsider’ linguistic situation was similar to some of my respondents in Italy. In Germany, the linguistic position changes. My function as German class teacher and letter translator clearly show this. In Germany, the way of encountering and the framing of the research was a very important moment because of higher skepticism. This skepticism disappeared when a trustworthy impression of my person was conveyed. The fact is that both, the insider- and the outsider-position, are related to certain potentials and challenges and have their limits of scope. Whereas insiders may have facilitated access due to cultural and linguistic skills, the strength of being an outsider is “to make explicit and explain the things that are taken for granted within the group.” (Carling et al., 2013, p. 3).

My research position as an outsider can be ideologically interpreted as exploitative and neo-colonial as well as being a potential “assistance with the immigration process, either in terms of securing legal residence or for migrating in the first place.” (Carling et al., 2013, p. 7). It might be impossible for a white researcher to dissociate completely from legal authorities.

The difference between outsider and insider is not a purely methodological one, but has a political dimension (Carling et al., 2013). Whereas insider research is, or can be, emancipatory, the questions and justifications in research constellations like “[w]hite researcher – black subjects” (Agyeman, 2008) are in how far dis-empowered groups are “‘[given] a voice’ to those who would otherwise not be heard” (ibid, p. 77). Especially in Munich, I had the impression that my voice is taken much more seriously in certain formal procedures, e.g. when I tried to exempt an asylum shelter from media license fees\(^{18}\).

\(^{17}\) However, the migrant groups under study are often defined by applying ethno-national criteria. This leads to the distinction of being part of the majority society (that can however be relatively heterogeneous in itself) or of a distinct minority like for example ‘Senegalese migrants in Italy’. This drawn distinction risks to prioritize the ethno-national origin while leaving out other, maybe even more important, dimensions of identity. This is a point of criticism that is approached by Wimmer and Glick Schiller in their ‘methodological criticism’: Still, the nation state is the dominant framework for research questions and research perspectives (Glick Schiller, 2010).

\(^{18}\) In Germany, every household is supposed to pay media license fee, except when they are exempted, which is the case for asylum shelters. The municipality has to declare the residence as a ‘collective accommodation’ for asylum seekers.
The insider-outsider debate is often linked with a debate of advocacy in research. I think that personal advocacy in the field of migration does not necessarily need to be separated from the research if there is enough reflection upon the personal actions and the influence on the research, even if it risks to overstate and misrepresent certain findings “to achieve certain political outcomes” (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2009, p. 6). According to Marcus, the ethnographer can take the role of a “circumstantial activist” (Marcus, 1995, p. 113). In my eyes, it can under certain conditions even increase the societal relevance of the research in favor of the migrants.

Also, gender relations play a role in the research. Markova (2009, p. 149f.) sees her role as female researcher, accrued with her rather young age, in some points as challenging and admits that there is an impact on the research. This is an issue that is also relevant in my field research. On the one hand, there may be ‘expectations’ from male respondents. Whether the often-posed question for the marital status can be seen under this lens cannot clearly be affirmed. It should, however, not lead to a general suspicion but instead, just be considered human curiosity. Gaining trust is a mutual process. Both, the respondent and the researcher, are vulnerable in surely different ways. I should also have trust and feel comfortable, for example when visiting migrants in asylum shelters. To gain comfort in these ‘other’ places, I tried to get to know my host beforehand and to see the common areas and other fellow lodgers instead of just stepping directly into my host’s tiny, private room. Generally, it was very interesting to see the living conditions of my respondents.

The issue of equality and reciprocity in migration studies is challenged by feminist scholars. Traditionally, assistance to and support of the respondents has been denied. Nowadays it is often argued that the researcher has some moral implications and a rejection of requested help may even be harmful to the respondents. The discourse changed and mutual benefit and equality have priority – even if it can never be completely reached (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2009, p. 13). I tried to negotiate mutual benefit and equality in my research in an appropriate way. One essential element in doing so is to devote enough time to the encounters and to provide space for having a reciprocal exchange. This implies understanding the research not about ‘the other’, but to research in a participant way and to consider the respondent as an interlocutor as well. Common activities like going for walks, playing Frisbee or discovering the city together is in this regard a big contribution. In Munich, supporting my respondents was easier because I am familiar with the German administrative system. I noticed that support was especially needed with bureaucratic challenges of everyday life. Receiving letters in German or procedures like arranging a medical appointment became difficult without support. I could have harmed people by denying this kind of support.

Irregular migrants may be less aware of the risks involved in a research that concerns themselves due to their disadvantaged social, legal and economic position (Duvell et al., 2008, p. 12). Therefore, it is necessary to explain the methodical details and objectives of the research and emphasize the protection of the respondents and to have consent. Personal data, including the name, should be anonymized. Even if the respondent may have agreed on recording the interview or on dissemination with the name, there can be unexpected consequences that I should conscientiously keep in mind. In contrast to other scientific works
aiming to give policy recommendations can, in this case, be more delicate and even harmful for my interviewees. For this reason, it can be denied.

Finally, I try to keep the importance of ethics in research on vulnerable groups like irregular migrants and possible dilemmas in mind to not harm anybody and negotiate these throughout my research process in order to avoid an ethic gap between my empiric research and the stated principles. However, even if I try to commit to a strict ethic code, there are no absolute principles that can always be applied one-to-one. The research consists of face-to-face encounters. And these may be unpredictable: “fieldwork, like friendship, requires a number of social lies to keep interaction flowing fairly smoothly” (Markova, 2009, p. 146).
In the train from Verona to Munich I sit with my laptop on my knees and my Eritrean neighbour is watching the document that I write. We often smile to each other. Then I start to show him some photos of my time spent in Italy. When I close my laptop we introduce each other officially with our names. They write me their names in Amharic letters. I was asking my travel companions whether they have a charger for a Samsung mobile phone because I urgently had to arrange my arrival in Munich and I lost my one. The Eritrean women sitting in front of me coincidentally had the right one. Soon, different materialities come to fore. And while moving through the mountainous landscape and the sunset along the railways, we are approaching different national borders behind which stand different asylum regulations. These are associated with different hopes and promises.

The materialities that come to fore during the train ride, the railway systems and the asylum systems with it’s often paradox regulations – all that and much more shapes the mobility of migrants in certain ways. The railway will be discussed from the perspective of transport together with the issue of housing under ‘material infrastructure’ and the asylum systems will be analysed under ‘immaterial infrastructure’ in the following parts. The gained empiric insights are the focus of attention. I start with an illumination of materialities. I will outline the different dimensions and effects of materialities. The research question of this part is:

What are the materialities that migrants take and acquire as well as use and loose on their trajectory and how do these impact their experience of im/mobility?

When ‘searching’ for people who are seemingly moving with all their belongings that they might have in Europe, then we often associate people having these colourful plastic bags. There might be only a few things that represent the travel mode as well as these bags (Basu & Coleman, 2008). Inside of these bags, that can indeed also be trendy leather bags or backpacks, many things are concealed that shape the experience of the trajectory. What things do people choose to take on the trajectory to Europe? What are the things they acquire and get rid off? How are the things carried? The fact that “journeying for migration is not the same as other, more casual or everyday modes of travel” (Burrell, 2008, p.357) and has a life-changing impact, makes some choices, like for example that for luggage, more essential. When people leave, their intention to go to Europe is often as uncertain as the duration of being away. In so far, a bag with peculiar things that might be needed for staying in Europe is not packed, let alone that it can easily be taken on difficult parts of the trajectory like the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea. Luggage in its physical sense accompanies movement and is shaped and changed along the way. In the context of West-African migration, geographic movement can arise suddenly and can be voluntary as well as unwillingly, which lead to many unexpected situations also in terms of luggage. The story of Erjon illustrates that not every movement is planned in a long term.

I meet Erjon, who is about 23 years old, in Brescia on the way to his Italian language class. We exchange some words and our contacts for another meeting. For our next appointment, he wishes to go to the big shopping centre “Freccia Rossa”. Ironically, this is also the name of Italian speed trains. His wish for
further migratory movement can be seen with a twinkle, regarding the name of his favourite Brescian place. He assures to love this place because he can catch free wifi. He also likes to watch the stores, even if he says that he could never afford to buy anything. He often feels bored and would like to move further, but he first wants to wait for his papers. Erjon came along the ‘Central Mediterranean Route’, arrived in Sicily and was transferred to Brescia, where he lives in a converted hotel.

Erjon says that he actually never had the intention to come to Europe. But at a certain moment in Libya, he was supposed to leave and head to Europe. His boss refused him the payment of his salary and told him that the price of his work would be the passage to Europe. So he just did what his boss wanted him to do and left. He emphasizes that he felt very indifferent about going to Europe. Erjon tells that so many people in Libya would be unwilling to cross the Mediterranean Sea but because of missing opportunities to return to their countries of origin they rather leave to Italy instead of staying in these very bad conditions in Libya to which many people refer to with terms like “a system of modern slavery”. Erjon says that when he left he was forbidden to take anything with him on the boat, except his worn clothes and two bottles of water. He had to leave even a precious necklace from his uncle behind. In the following sections, I will outline a variety of materialities that are very different in their form and function, and even more different in their multiple effects.

5.1 Materialities on a train ride to Munich

The bi-local ethnographic approach allows traveling with people between the two research sites as a form of engagement (Urry, 2007). The train organizes private mobility through public mobilization (Urry, 2007). It is important to consider the travel time as a special experience and not as dead, but much more as used time and space, even if some passengers may sleep (Burrell, 2008). Coleman and Basu describe train rides as “emotion contained in modernized motion” (2008, p. 325). The train ride from Verona to Munich, a very popular route of my respondents, is very special to me as it allows me to directly catch the movement. Researching on mobility is often linked with a call for new, mobile methods to “respond and prove sensitive to the demands of the mobility turn” (Adey et al., 2014, p. 16). With this mobile, not place-bound ethnography I try to do justice to this call. During the train ride, different materialities become visible and are embedded in stories.

After entering the train and having found my seat number, I am glad and excited to see that my seat neighbors in the four-person compartment are Eritrean travelers, two men and a young woman and besides the corridor in the four-person compartment are two Nigerians, a man and a woman and a young man from Sudan. All of them want to move to Germany and have never been there what quickly gets clear in a short discussion at the beginning of the journey when asking each other about destination and origin. This train ride was very insightful on the multiple, intersecting materialities of irregular migrants in the EU. The moment of being in the same mode of mobility with others was surely a special one. Interestingly, it is both a moment of progress and continuation, but also a moment of reflection and questioning.
5.1.1 A contact list – navigating by social relations
For a while of being in the Eurocity-train towards Munich, I think we were already in Austria and the atmosphere became relatively relaxed, almost exuberant, I am involved in vivid discussions and gesticulations. My seat neighbour takes out a very little paper and shows it to me. The paper is maybe four by eight centimetres and a little bit creased. I can see that it is a list of names and mobile phone numbers. Many of the numbers with the Italian code +39, some also with the German +49. And I think most of them with the typical starting numbers of the mobile phone provider ‘Lyca mobile’. This list is a very crucial artefact of a journey of irregular migrants. I was invited to also add my name and my number. There were already about six, seven or eight other contacts on it. He shows me on the list a contact the he unstoppably tries to call during the train ride and intends to meet in Munich – unsuccesfull.

The single contacts on the little list form together a broad transnational network which seemingly provided a feeling of certainty and pride. It includes contacts that my seat neighbour had met before in person and others whom he still may re-meet or just have as a contact back-up. The list connects departures and arrivals, the future and the past. Considering mobility as moving from one contact to the next (I cannot be sure whether he really knows the contacts personally), this little list of names and numbers can be influential on the directionality of movement. The ride to Munich seems relatively well prearranged, even if the contact in Munich cannot be met as soon as assumed during the train ride (or at all) because of controls and the announced ‘police intervention’ at the train. On the one hand, the list can accelerate the journey, e.g. if a contact leads to a motivation and the necessary information to move. On the other hand, it can slow down the movement when a contact leads to a (temporary) moment of rest when a meeting and an exchange of essential information happens. The tiny contact list reflects social, transnational capital as well as a strategy of travel.

5.1.2 A map of Europe – looks from above on directionality and mobility
Another interesting thing on the Italian-German train ride was a little map of Europe, printed on an ordinary paper sheet that the Sudanese travel companion, who sits at my neighbour compartment, rolls out of his little black backpack. This map of Europe with a little part of Northern Africa becomes thereupon the center of attention. He passes it on to my compartment. On this little map are some red dots, manually added. These points represent places that my Sudanese companion crossed and others to which he intends to move. However, the conversation in English is not very easy. I do not understand who exactly added these red dots and why exactly these. I think to understand that a friend added these dots as recommendations of places and possible contacts. The declared destination of him is Sweden.

Napoli and Brenner are for example marked in red, disproportionately big. In contrast to the address list that I consider as a socially-oriented, network-based navigation of mobility, the map is a geographic spatial orientation where the geographic location is in the foreground. He moves alone, possibly embedded in a social network and geographically guided by the map. On this map, the mobility is seen from an above-perspective and it counts to cover the distances between places. However, the distance between the red dots
are not mere, empty lines, they are full of meanings and associated with experiences while moving, to which he also refers.

My Eritrean neighbours want me to show them some things. They ask me about the geographic position of Switzerland. When I show the contours of Switzerland on the map, they ask me why this is such a small country; and the same question again for Denmark. I first point on Munich as our approaching destination, which seems not very interesting, and then I tell that they just have to cross the country northwards. While we are on the train, we are in a relative position to these countries; we are moving and getting further away from Switzerland, moving closer to Denmark, which lays still relatively far away. The little geographic size of countries like Denmark and Switzerland provokes astonishment. This reaction emphasizes the perceived randomness of lines within a map. National, geographic mapping is seemingly a contrast with the cognitive mapping of Europe by irregular migrants.

Geographic mapping based on nation states does not account for, or is even in contrast, to different associations and rumours linked to country imaginations. Rumours and imaginations rather impact people’s mobility. To me too, in this situation the contours of countries in Europe seem like an artificial construction. I cannot really explain why these countries are so little. Every contour on the map represents a border with new risks.

When I was sure that we are already on German territory, I said “bye bye Italy, bye bye Austria.”. Then I am asked “this Germany?”. Thereby, ‘this’ can have a broad range of individually charged meanings and perceptions of Germany that are surely much more diverse as the notion of a nation state. The map provides besides the geographic overview of national contours also an overview of spatial possibilities of mobility. Thereby it does not show the connectivity or the reachability respectively of places that are as important as the mere distance. Moving between villages in the surroundings of Munich can take as much time as traveling from Verona to Munich.

I cannot estimate the impact of the discussion about the geographic map on the spatial behaviour of my respondents. It might have been a confusing perspective as well as an emancipatory one. Surely, the contact list as a social map is just as valuable as the geographic map. In the end, both allow to retrace and organize mobility.

5.1.3 Ticket or passport?

When entering the train in Verona Porto Nuova, almost all passengers hold the tickets in their hands to check and search for the number of their obligatory seat reservation. It took a while and some intervention of the train attendant until everyone finds the right seat. These tickets are the claim to access the train. However, the train ride takes place within a transborder context. When we cross the Austrian-German border, but still on the move and not arrived yet, I said “bye bye Italy, bye bye Austria”. There was visible relief about being in this auspicious country. The next stop is Rosenheim, which is the first one in Germany. This stop is announced to last longer because of “police intervention”. Arrived in Rosenheim, the announcement comes true. When policemen enter the train from different entrances they controlled several
people for any ID or passport, me and my travel companions included. My African fellow passengers showed their tickets. A policeman only says in a harsh way “You are arrested” while crossing his arms in front of his body to emphasize his words with a gesture of handcuffs. There is a sudden big shock among my seat neighbours. Some quickly stand up, others pretend to sleep. My seat neighbours nevertheless show their rain tickets. In the eyes of the policemen, the ticket is not the right paper to show at this moment. For my African travel companions, this might be seen from another perspective; hence, a ticket symbolizes the right of mobility. However, they were supposed to exit the train. The common train ride is over. My African seat neighbours have to leave the train with all their little belongings.

Indeed, the ticket is an entitlement and a claim; it allows travelling with a booked seat. In the train as a public space, in which the migrant puts himself, the borders are not effective on the movement of the train as such. All of my African co-travellers paid the same amount of 75.50 €. In the eyes of my respondents, who were often referring to this price\(^\text{19}\), this is not only the price for the train ride but the price for entering Germany, the next rite of passage. Along the railway between Verona and Munich, there are rather the high mountains that have a slowing down character on the movement. The crossed borders are however the political context in which the movement takes place. And where borders are, mobility regimes come to fore. The mobility regime of the EU does not allow all people to move equally free. Borders, as well as train stations, legitimize through certain discourses and practices controls and require the availability of passports. And passports are in mobility regimes of different values (Wang, 2004). Let alone the fact of not having a passport. When considering the justice of mobility, materialized in the passport, from the perspective of irregular migrants, there is a systematic disadvantage. Irregular migrants often travel without any passports, however not without a ticket as ‘mobility permissions’\(^\text{20}\). This may lead to finding and inventing new strategies to get access to mobility. In so far, considering a ticket as a cross-border travel license can be a creative strategy. It signifies the self-creation and self-legitimization of cross-border mobility and forms emancipation from a restrictive mobility regime.

International, as well as intra-EU mobility, is for irregular migrants also a game with different identities or changing components of the standardized identities in the passports, and if it is only another date of birth, another origin to have higher chances to stay. This means that saying to be from Mali instead of Burkina Faso would increase the chances of staying in a certain country. Newly provided and temporary IDs delivered to people by the state who are within an asylum procedure in turn cement an identity. In one of the following sections, “the story of a golden fingering” is a good example of this. Not to forget that a ticket can also be an authorization for playing, like for example in Lotto.

Coming back to the issue of the ticket applied in the sense of a passport: Why should we believe rather the identities that are categorized in passports? Aren’t these in regard to the relativity and the possible

\(^{19}\) This is the price when buying the ticket at the ticket counter. I always paid less when buying the ticket online. Some of my respondents spent some days in Verona until they had the needed amount of money. It shows that a trajectory is organized step-wise and not always clear and requires money in order to materialize the mobility.

\(^{20}\) Essential parts of the trajectory are however not taking place in the public, official transport system, like or example the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea as ‘boat people’.
‘inventedness’ of identity in the context of asylum and migration obsolete? The solution of traveling with a not identity-related ticket may be consequent and clever.

At this point I want to outline a part of the story of Maria and her daughters: Maria from Nigeria stayed at Las Palmas with her two daughters. Her husband is pastor of a Pentecostal Church in Brescia. First, Maria quit Las Palmas to Brescia while her daughters had to stay on the island because they did not have any papers. Their residence permit expired in 2012 which excluded them from cross-border mobility. After a while, Maria tried out to make the daughters come. “We just bought the flight without documents.” And surprisingly, her daughters succeeded; they could take the plane just with the ordinary plane ticket, not to say instead of a passport, regarding the importance of an ID especially in airways. There were seemingly no strict controls. Retrospectively, Maria describes it as a “miracle”, supported by “God’s goodwill”.

The example shows that moving by train or by plane is both not purely a matter of documents, but also a matter of controls and luck. In both cases, the train and the plane ticket provide access to mobility, even if the ‘exit’ of the mode of public mobility has different consequences and is between a broad range of voluntary and imposed by controls. Mobility in Europe is from the provider side a standardized service for which a certain sum is necessary but why should the identity matter?

5.2 The fateful list of transfer: “you don’t care about the name, only where it is”
(Thomas)

Thomas lives in an asylum shelter in the outskirts of Munich. I meet him at a German class. He is 32 years old and originally from Nigeria. In Nigeria, many years ago, he jumped on a container boat in Port Harcourt “just to leave the country”. He did not know where the container ship would take him. He immediately had to hide on deck to not be just “thrown into the water”. He spent the whole time on board without leaving his hiding place and thus cannot estimate how long the passage lasted. When he arrived in a port, he just heard from a worker on the vessels to “run run run”. The first person he and another ‘stowaway’ saw was a guy from Pakistan whom they first asked where they actually are. After knowing that they are on an island in Greece, they went to the police and had a transfer to the mainland. Thomas spent some years in Athens where he was also kept in detention. He shared a flat with other Nigerians and tried to make a living by delivering newspapers and other advertisements. He came along the Balkan route to Germany and covered large parts by walking. He describes me his daily excitement during the time that he spent in the ‘Bayernkaserne’ in a very vivid way. Every morning he and many others went to a place where a list is put indicating the numbers of those people who will be transferred the very same day or in the near future. There is at some mornings an attached list that gives information about people’s transfer. Thomas says that there was “no list for two weeks” then he saw his number and “then the supervisor came for a sudden transfer today.” He says that the name of the place is not considered as important. Nobody knows the names of the indicated places anyway. “You don’t care about the name, only where it is.” He describes me that after the check of numbers of persons on the list, the second thing to do is to look with smartphones on ‘google maps’ where the destination of the transfer place lays. Those without smartphones
are aided by fellows. Seemingly everybody hopes to stay in the commuter area of Munich, i.e. to be transferred to a place that is within reach by regional trains. Thomas says that this is so “exciting because in this camp you can’t do it.” In the hope of improving his chances to be transferred to a nearby place, Thomas worked in the laundry service for a little bit more than 1 € per hour. He believes that this is the only possibility to exert influence on his fate that is announced on the list. And he considers himself happy to have been transferred to a place that is not too far from the city centre of Munich.

Even if it is only an ordinary, bureaucratic list, it is very meaning- and fateful. This list is crucial for migrant’s near future. From the perspective of irregular migrants, it stands for the German asylum system that impacts the future to a certain extent. It allows for mobility, even if it is not self-arranged. From the state perspective, the decision-process of the targeted place is relatively random; it is according to the ‘Königsteiner Schlüssel’ (see chapter II). For the migrant, the reasons for the transfer to a certain place do not become obvious. Prayers for a special luck are expressed to influence this decision. Not only Josef refers to the list as “magical” and “a system like Lotto”. Amaniel says

“like a transfer is a form of luck. And I can’t say, it is a form of luck, just like lottery […]. Somehow they just come today, they will transfer me tomorrow, nach Moosfeld. Someone will spend in Moosfeld four months before he gets transferred.” And further one he argues “so, it’s just like in Lotto. If you are in a camp, like you have the transfer, they transfer others far away from München. So others will stay in München, but they will be in a house.”

Not only the place matters, also the kind of asylum shelter, whether a container or a ‘real’ house (see next chapter on ‘housing’). Interestingly, these are hopes for a place that is unknown before going there and knowing it. Likely, irregular migrants who are in the ‘Bayernkaserne’ have not been on the outskirts of Munich. It is much about rumours that influence of people’s hopes, prayers and decisions. This list of transfers is a starting point for a state-arranged mobility and immobility respectively. The ‘Residenzpflicht’ and current trends in politics towards an immobilization of asylum seekers even increases the fatefulness. People who seek international protection are not allowed to leave the assigned municipality. Thus, the given resources and infrastructures at the allocated place constitute the new environment and influence people’s life essentially.

5.3 Materialities as instruments

In the in so far provided examples, materialities accompany and legitimize from the perspective of the migrant the journey like the train ticket, the geographic map or the contact list. The list of transfer in the reception centre is very meaningful for the migrant because it constitutes the chance of further im/mobility and a new era in an asylum shelter. Now the angle will be changed and the perspective will be put on things that help on the road. Luggage, or certain items of it respectively, is not just something that is taken along, but it can be strategically applied as an instrument to facilitate and fasten movement. It will become clear, that there are different types of luggage.
5.3.1 Things that carry things
Materialities are vital companions along the trajectory; the packed things and belongings can be an issue of survival, no matter at what geographic point of the flight. A good example is Pakka. He came via Switzerland to Germany, after a relatively short time in Italy. He is for almost a year in Munich. One of his favourite activities is to go out to night clubs. He feels “annoyed” by the German bureaucratic system and would like to return to Italy, where he says that he could “work and move more freely”. Pakka lives in an old house that is converted as asylum shelter in Eglharting, close to Munich. He says that he only could travel relatively fast because of a jacket with a hidden inner pocket that he used to keep his money safe. He demonstrates me the way he opened his jackets to ‘bandits’ in the desert in Libya and Niger while hiding with one hand the little zip and saying that he does not have any money with him. Even if the jacket is attached to a purpose, it is in this sense considered as more important, as there would have been no other tool for keeping the money safe. The jacket is carried and a carrier of things at the same time.
Also, when being on the move in Europe, carrying things to carry and hide things is a question of survival. Danyo, who came along the Balkan route from Greece to Italy wand walked large parts of it, says that he always wore a leather belt in which he could hide some money. This was a very useful utensil: «tu as besoin des trucs pour cacher». Without the little money, he could not have paid the guide. And without the guide, he probably would not have been able to do the long hike without being caught or kept in detention. He had to pay the guide for each country again. Distances covered by vehicle were even more expensive. He says that if the guide or others had known about the money that he wore, he would have risked to be robbed by the guide or others from the hiking group.
A trajectory requires high organizational skills. Materialities are strategically applied and used. Without certain instruments, the material organization of the journey would be much more complicated. Even if these ‘carriers’ like the jacket or the leather belt are not useful as tools themselves, a high personal meaning is attributed to them not only because of their pure function. Danyo still keeps the leather belt even if he does not intend to move further.

5.3.2 Organizing materiality and mobility
Concerning the inherent process of dealing with, leaving or acquiring luggage seen as materiality, the story of Kossi and Abeeku is very insightful. I meet these two travel companions from Senegal when they were walking along a big alley in an industrial area next to the ‘Bayernkaserne’. We approached each other and exchanged contacts so that I could meet each of them again on an extra day what they found a nice idea when I told them about my research. Both of them were living in Sardinia for at least 3 years with regular residence permits, traveling every now and then to mainland Italy, had friends, housing and (seasonal) work there. As far as I know, they could have come to Germany in a regular way, however without working permission. Nevertheless, I would see this ‘trial’, as they call their departure to Germany, in its

21 At this time the borders along the Balkan route were not yet open and the Balkan route not such a common thing. All my respondents who did the Balkan route (Omar, Mansour, Thomas) did it in 2014.
own right; it is likely not to be explained by a Western logic and can be understood in many different ways. It can mean to just try out to reach Germany, to try out to settle for a certain period of time, to find labour, to claim for asylum or all things at the same time.

After many years in Italy, both got tired of Italy and decided to make a trial in Germany which means for Kossi and Abeeku to claim for asylum in Germany. No sooner said than done. They quickly organized their movement.

Kossi: «En Italie il n’y a rien. Donc je vais en Allemagne pour chercher du travail. [...] I don’t like Italy.»

The motif of labour is very strong in their narrative. Abeeku got the advice to leave from his friend who is also kind of father for him as he took care of him when he left Senegal with only 13 years. This friend, with whom he lives, has an unlimited residence permit in Italy.

Abeeku: «Moi, parce que moi, vue que l’Italie, il n’y a pas de travail. Il y a des difficultés. Mhm, et moi, c’est des idées. Je parlait avec mon ami qui a dit ca, qu’il faut partir en Allemagne.»

Looking at the story of Abeeku and Kossi from the angle of luggage is interesting. The trial to make it in Germany goes – so far – along with material deprivation. Both of them leave their personal belongings in Italy when moving to Munich. Not just at any place, but each of them dropped it at a friend’s place where they could take the left things again. This shows both that they accumulated materialities in Italy and had reliable friends. None of them had to just leave anything behind in the sense of throwing things away so that they never could re-take it. It is not like the story of Danyo and Suleiman who leave some belongings behind in the sense of throwing them away. Their established social networks are helpful for organizing their mobility in terms of materialities.

Abeeku: «J’ai laché en Italie. L’argent j’ai laché en Italie.»

Me: «Et qu’est-ce que tu as ramené ici ?»

Abeeku: «Une valise.»

«Combien de choses, c’est une grande valise ?»

«[...] Seulement les habits. Moi, j’ai laché beaucoup de choses en Italie. Parce que moi, j’ai laché le téléphone et la télé. Moi, le téléphone, le computer, tout ca j’ai laché en Italie.»

Kossi tells me that he left all his things at a friend’s place in Rovato, a little town which lies on the railway between Milano and Verona. Also in his case, the first reaction to materialize the decision move to Germany, is to get rid of his own belongings.

The material deprivation might be puzzling as it is not according to the Western logic of material accumulation. From a Western perspective, they leave their ‘settled life’ and risk a societal downgrading that goes along with material renunciation. Arrived in Munich, they are supposed to stay at the reception centre and sleeping there in big halls, whereas they formerly had their own four walls. Their reduced belongings reflect their suddenly gained status as persons seeking international protection as well as the risk to lose things, a risk that irregular migrants permanently face along their trajectory. Keeping the story of Amaniel about the material difference between a refugee and a migrant in mind, Kossi and Abeeku also consider themselves as persons eligible for asylum when they arrive in Munich Central Station without
having their material belongings with them. Besides, their example clearly shows that intra-European mobility can arise as a sudden decision, no matter how (material) life was before.

5.3.4 The story of a golden finger ring

While doing the ethnographic field work, some narratives on single materialities were very powerful and influential. Kossi’s narration of a finger ring as a vital artifact and its broad effects show how much things reflect, guide and shape the experience of im/mobility.

When I meet Kossi on an extra day, we went to the English Garden in Munich. Here, we were sitting in the shade of a big tree and Kossi starts telling the story of his golden finger ring(s) that he demonstratively shows. When he left Senegal, he got “une bague très précieuse” from his mother to stay blessed and fortunate. She knew that he is leaving to Italy for a boxing match. Since this moment, he almost always wore it. His fights were successful (he showed me photos on his Smartphone). When looking around in Italy after some years, he was visiting Bergamo where he made some friends from the Pakistani community. From one Pakistani friend he bought a rather cheap finger ring, emphasizing that it was also a golden one (what I can see). This ring will become fateful: When he took the decision to move to Germany, he took off his mother’s ring and left it at a friend’s place in Rovato and started wearing the ‘new golden ring’. Arrived in Munich, he was asked together with other fellow West African travelers whether someone is married. Thinking of his golden ring, he was seemingly the only one who said ‘yes’, hoping to get a preferential treatment and have a faster registration procedure. Since then, the ring is charged with this meaning and he always wears this ring. In his documents that he shows to me, seemingly amused, the note under marital status “married”. The ring is an instrument with changing meaning applied within the asylum system.

From this story, several insights can be gained. Firstly, it shows that materialities can be interchangeable, even if on the outwards, there is no change. Nobody else could know about this change. Secondly, the new ‘Pakistani’ ring was first only an outer changing; speaking about the symbolic of the new ring (like the fortunate that it is supposed to bring) can only be speculative. However, it did not have per se the function as a wedding ring. Only the changing context and the suddenly gained new status of an asylum seeker were the premises to load the ring with the new meaning and change the marital status on paper. The changing systems support the tactful game with the finger ring. The interplay of agency and state system allow the changes of meanings of the finger ring. Not only Kossi himself, only the German asylum system makes this ‘game’ possible and thus shows its artificial construction of categories like ‘marital status’ that allows attributing things like a finger ring a potential other procedure.

Thirdly, in this case, it is interesting that an exchange of rings happened and the mother’s ring was not taken for the move to Germany. As aforementioned, a trajectory goes along with different economic statuses that are reflected in luggage and other material items. The relatively good economic status of Kossi that he supposedly had in Italy is left behind when coming to Germany with only a fraction of his belongings – and without the precious ring of his mother. It expresses, in this case, the economic new
begin, especially when taking the fact into account that he came legally and with savings to Italy. Referring to the words of Amaniel about luggage, it can be retained that “certain forms of materiality can also constitute the experience, however, certain forms of materiality can also provide powerful ways of indexing the status and/or agency of the” (Basu & Coleman, 2008, p. 323). Fourthly, the ring as a gift, as well as a self-bought thing, traces and symbolizes links between people who are separated by space but connected through kinship, friendship or simply commercial ties. These social links are not spatially limited and materialize symbolically in the ring.

Fifth and lastly, each of these two rings is meaningful in its own way. The mother’s ring served to bring fortunate and to remind him of his family, origin and former times; the new ring symbolically stands for the new trial and his not-truly given but pretended ‘marriedness’. If one day Kossi may go to pick up his things in Rovato, there might be still the options to change the ring – and their meanings or acquire a new one or get rid of all.

5.4 Materiality, experience and identity

Luggage is not just anything random that accompanies mobility. It will become clear in this part that it has a crucial impact on status and identity of the migrant. Amaniel is from the Gambia and now living in an asylum shelter close to Munich. I meet Amaniel at a cultural centre that offers free law consultation. He frequents this law consultation because he is worried of his stay in Germany as his fingerprints were taken in Italy, where he is supposed to stay according to the rules of the Common European Asylum System. He very often describes his situation simply as “Scheisse”.

Amaniel is 21 years old and originally from Serekunda, a big city in the Gambia. He tells

“Serekunda is bigger than Banjul. So I was there with my uncle, that is where I study. So, like this is happening in Africa. So, many of my friends left the country. So I decide for leaving home, for a better life, you know? So I decided to leave Africa.”

Finally, he experienced “such a hard and long way” through Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Libya, Sicily, mainland Italy and now Germany, where he arrived by train. In-between, he was often running out of money, slaved away and was kept in detention. He comes to speak about the difference between a refugee and a migrant by referring to luggage. Amaniel was having some personal belongings that he had to leave behind when entering the boat to Italy. According to his own estimation, at this very moment, his status shifted from being a migrant into being a refugee. However, there are other factors too, and luggage is not an all-determining factor on such a definition and self-perception.

Amaniel: “A refugee is to me, there is a difference, you know. Because, a refugee, like me, I am a refugee, so a migrant is someone who left his country just to... okay. The difference is that, ahem, a refugee came to a country, like how refugees are, coming to Italy and Germany. They came there with nothing. You understand? So migrants they can come with something. You understand?”

Me: “Today I have also seen many people coming by train from Verona; they arrived in Munich Central Station, maybe 40, 50 people, also having nothing.”
“You see, you see.”

With his last appeasement, he approves and verifies my presumption as an empiric proof. For him, having the ‘insider perspective’, these people who arrive on the train without carrying any belongings are definitely refugees. His perspective stands in contrast to a political way of dealing with people who arrive without the right document. From a political perspective, the way people arrive and the issue of carrying any belongings is left out; it is mainly looked upon the country of origin whether a person who arrives without the right document deserves the term ‘refugee’ or not.

Moreover, Amaniel’s observation provides further insights into his own identification as ‘refugee’ which signifies a self-positioning within the broad field of how people without the right documents can be labelled and classified. He delimitates himself from a migrant, who is societally better positioned. His constant fear of deportation to Italy would not be experienced by a ‘migrant’, according to his own distinction. Taking his distinction into account, the classification of ‘illegalised people’ in Western countries like Germany and Italy seems arbitrary. There could be more diversified approaches in asylum politics respecting besides the country of origin also the issue of belongings.

Many of my respondents, not to say almost all who crossed “the River”, were telling me stories about the boat crossing of the Mediterranean Sea as a literally dispensable moment on their trajectory. It marks the moment of a new phase, seen from a material as well as from a political perspective. Materially, everything had to be left in Libya. Politically, the concept of “asylum” and all associated procedures start when entering ‘fortress Europe’ and the term ‘refugee’ can be applied.

5.5 A trajectory from the perspective of material loss and accumulation

A trajectory can be seen from the perspective of a changing political and economic status as well as a process of acquisition and deprivation of things. Amaniel illustrated the link between a refugee and materiality in its definition. The status can quickly shift and so does also the issue of material belongings.

5.5.1 Leaving things behind

The sense or non-sense of a certain item of luggage has to be seen in its context. Depending on the peculiarities of the taken trajectory, the composition of the luggage is and has to be peculiar. Looking at the given examples, a trajectory can also be regarded in terms of the changing inter-relatedness of things and movement (Basu & Coleman, 2008). Danyo was telling about his different geographic and economic stages on his trajectory to Italy by referring to the composition of his luggage that represents all his belongings:

He arrived with very little things in Turkey, accumulated some stuff, and had too much when working in Greece on an olive plantation every now and then for three years. Before crossing the Balkans, he selected some few things. Before his departure, he acquired new shoes that were advised as ‘necessary’. He is telling that the ‘contact person’ told to take adequate equipment and especially good walking shoes. At a certain moment on the route along the Balkans, he left all his things behind because they were too heavy:

«Une fois, j’ai laissé tous mes affaires dans la brousse, c’était trop lourd ». He does not specify what things exactly these were, however, he describes it as an act of liberation in the middle of nowhere in any
forest. Whereas Danyo went along the Balkans to Italy, Suleiman took the Balkan route to Germany. When I was visiting Suleiman in the asylum shelter on the outskirts of Munich, he was showing me his black military shoes, obviously proud and saying that these shoes were his best company on the way, due to these he could do it. Whereas the left behind things represent a material deprivation of the trajectory in terms of luggage, the shoes are a metaphor for the long and energy sapping march. They symbolize both successes and the hardship of journeying. These shoes can also be seen from the angle of instruments. They are not just any carried luggage but used as an instrument that enables to move. Now, these shoes are nice and neat. They even could indicate the readiness of further movement. Suleiman dreams of going to the US, where his father is working for the embassy. To always continue is a dominant pattern in his narratives.

5.5.2 New material acquisitions
The story of Amaniel underlines again that West-African mobility can be revealing from the perspective of materialities: it is a both story of material losses and deprivation, of changing status and identity along the trajectory. Especially when leaving things behind, no matter whether in Libya or somewhere in Europe (which will be more in-depth illustrated in the following), and arriving at a place with very little things, the self-perception of a refugee is emphasized. The putaway things were signs and remembrances of the past that only marginally and partially touch the new life. This is one side of the story. Besides the losses and deprivations, a trajectory or a (temporary) settlement also relates to (temporary) new material acquisitions and belongings. Especially in Munich when visiting asylum shelters this became visible. The room of Abdoul and the ‘youth room’ of Pierre\(^22\) illustrate that besides and despite all the losses many new material things appeared in life, especially when stages of ‘in-betweenness’ were over and a (temporary) settlement takes place.

Abdoul came to Germany after having spent over one year in Spain, where he worked without any documents or asylum claim on a vegetable plantation. He travelled by bus, passing France without putting his feet on French territory. He furnished his room\(^23\) with a new carpet, porcelain, chairs, murals and other things that he got from people who participate in a helping circle. The furnishing of Abdouls room also reflects his social interactions, not to say to a certain extent his social capital. Nobody else who lives in the same asylum shelter had so many contacts with people from ‘outside’.

I meet Pierre together with Simba at a Senegalese night in Munich city centre. Pierre grew up in Senegal, Simba in the Gambia. Both of them speak Mandinka and have a common destiny concerning their trajectory to Germany. In Simba’s words, they are “best brothers” and spend almost every day together even if they live in asylum shelters in opposite parts of Munich. Before visiting him, Pierre already tells me about his relatively good economic situation. He gets relatively much pocket money as pretended unaccompanied minor refugee. Simba affirms that. Indeed, when I come to his place, accompanied by Simba, I am impressed by the good localization of the urban villa in which he lives and the furnishing of

\(^{22}\) Pierre was saying that his ‘asylum age’ is 17. Quickly after having exchanged some words he is telling me that he is aged 27.

\(^{23}\) I mention especially him as he was the one who took care for the beauty of the room even if he shared it.
his single room. In Pierre’s room were nice pieces of furniture, a television and, in his perception, the most precious new belonging, a big laptop. These things can also express the new gained economic power and status. Other symbols and signs like photos of the family in Senegal or posters of Senegalese HipHop-stars were installed to connect the left country with the presence and express a form of transnational belonging (Basu & Coleman, 2008).

5.6 Mobility, products and commerce
When approaching the Central train station in Brescia, Maria provokes my attention because she is distributing little sheets with religious messages. We come to talk with each other. I suggest meeting again another time when she is having more time.

“We Africans we love commerce!” assures Maria during our second meeting. The story of products is another story of materiality. Maria is Nigerian and I guess she is about 45 years old. She followed her husband who is a pastor to Brescia after some longer stays in Cape Verde and Las Palmas. In-between she visited Munich and Lisbon. She is having two daughters, eleven and fourteen years old. They are also in Italy now, which was not always the case. The family resides at a house on the outskirts of Brescia. Maria always tried wherever she was to keep a small business running. Before she was in Brescia, she used to sell products like beauty cream, jewelry and electronics. Whenever she was moving across countries, she went for shopping by trying to take advantage of the geographic distance by crossing different national economic systems as well as supply and demand structures in countries like Cape Verde. She is saying that buying products in different countries and re-selling them in Cape Verde and Las Palmas motivated her to move.

At the same time, it legitimizes her cross-border mobility and is made affordable. When considering her mobility, she is in a privileged position because her husband moves a lot to conferences and gets invitations to parishes in several countries in Europe. She once had the opportunity to accompany her husband to Munich. She strongly associates this journey with the shopping of new products, an accumulation of different kind of materialities. When she went to Germany she is telling me that she was very busy with a check of the given market and the purchases. She is still visibly happy when she tells me about the found beauty products at the Lidl-market: “I bought wonderful beauty products and cream at Lidl. I was so happy.” Moreover, she bought many electronics in the area of the Central train station – “they have good products” –, which I also know and we can share our knowledge and experiences about this place. Our geographic, experienced networks are intersecting at this place in the stories.

When she was still in Germany, she started applying the beauty cream. This was assumingly a lasting impression on her; “Back in Cape Verde, they could not recognize me because of my German skin!”. The beauty cream affected her self- and outside perception in a positive way. The electronics she acquired were also influential on her re-settlement in Cape Verde. “I made lot of money, I was happy!” The range of products she buys and re-sells reflects her geographic mobility. She intervenes in transborder commodity chains which she extends to Cape Verde. Finally, she is saying that the experience in Munich of having such a broad range of good products would motivate her to travel again to Munich.
Whereas the previous stories show that materialities accompany im/mobilities and reflect and shape several stages of in-betweenness, I tried to illustrate with the story of Maria that materialities may be incentives for exerting mobility. These things are actively-chosen in regard to their economic profits. The trade of products makes special sense when connecting two countries with different economies. Borders that separate and confine economic systems are in her case used: She involves them actively in her business strategy. Her business is linked to certain places. Moving forth to an unknown place with a precarious status to sell and negotiate products is rather an uncommon practice. Therefore, non-restricted movement and a certain financial basis are needed.

5.7 Concluding remarks
“To talk of migration and materiality gives only part of the picture that we wish to present; rather, we might just as easily say migration through materiality since the one is impossible without the multidimensional yet vital presence of other” (Basu & Coleman, 2008, p. 328). In the previous part, I aimed at working out, based on the insights of my ethnographic research, multiple dimensions of materialities and their various effects on the experience of im/mobility. Some materialities often emerged in certain narratives and discourses or came to light. Along and throughout the trajectory of irregular migrants, the relationships to materialities changes (Burrell, 2008).

Materialities can be seen from very different perspectives in many different contexts. There is no movement without material frictions and material co-travelling things. Every bigger geographic movement has its material implementation. Material luggage or belongings are not just any weight to carry. Luggage is, even in its absence, very symbolic for im/mobility. The composition of luggage allows profound insights on status and identity.

There are things that are helpful and even vital on the trajectory, other things are used and tactfully applied as instruments to carry other things. But also the way of material organization of the trajectory is very individual and insightful. There are things that are (temporarily) left behind as well as newly gained and acquired ones, other things are hidden. Materialities like products for trade can also be an incentive to travel, connected with a business strategy. But also confrontations with materialities such as the list of transfer in the reception centre in Munich are essential and fateful. It is not just any paper. The given examples of materialities show the broad range of intersecting materialities and mobilities and their impact on migrant’ im/mobility. Materialities shape, accelerate, slow down or prevent mobility. For example, left behind things can be seen as an act of liberation that accelerates the journey; contact lists can have an accelerating effect if any contact wants to be reached as soon as possible and provides vital information. Materialities are loaded with different, also very temporary and individual meanings and are influenced by their context. At certain stages of the trajectory, the meaning of certain materialities can dramatically change what the example with Kossi’s finger ring illustrates. Also, a trajectory goes along with different economic stages. As mobility is also a costly matter, economic power and recovery are interchanging. Materialities index in many cases status and identity of the migrant.
Mobility can be seen from its materiality, these twos are not opposed. The experience of im/mobility is also an experience of materialities. Materialities change and are negotiated throughout mobilities. And in turn, the directionality and meaning of mobilities can be influenced by materialities. Mobility is both, material deprivation as well as acquisition. Materialities can reflect transforming identities and status; they may be associated with tradition and belonging as well optimism and new begin. Some materialities in the context of mobility of irregular migrants differ from that of European citizens, others are just the same but may be differently carried, differently applied in mobility processes and differently meaningful.

6. Material Infrastructure

Studying infrastructure is “in a way a call to study boring things?” (Star, 1999). Despite the first objection, mobility is so closely linked to material infrastructures, especially transport and housing, that a study of material infrastructure is essential for better understanding complex dynamics of mobility processes (Walters, 2014). The main question of this part is:

What are the material infrastructures that migrants encounter on their trajectory and how do these impact their experience of im/mobility?

All im/material infrastructures and materialities form an integral part of a broader infrastructural assemblage that shapes the im/mobility of the migrant and effects the experience. Here, a focus will be put especially on transport and housing. These two elements are not only central along a trajectory; they are the condition to cross borders. They are the ‘hardware’ through and along which movement occurs.

6.1 Transportation as material infrastructure

Long time, infrastructures were only marginally studied or seen as a pure ‘metaphor’ (Star, 1999). A focus on infrastructure was never self-evident, especially not in mobility studies (Adey et al., 2014). Especially in migration studies, infrastructures were considered as “inaccessible and unknowable” (ibid., p. 11). In many narratives, the concrete modes and ways of travelling are described as ‘only accessible to insiders’. Irregular migrants usually never have their own vehicles, except their feed. For this reason, transportation is a more delicate issue. When asking some interviewees for their ways of travel, the answers did not disclose many information: “[i]t is a secret [of blacks] how to find a bus.” (Zinedine) or “it is a secret and not for people like you” (Jamal). Thomas from Nigeria describes the ‘African exclusiveness’ as well. When he arrived in Budapest, he told me “You hear to look for a black person. A black guy, no Pakistani guy. Only a black guy can tell the direction and help you.” With this statement, he refers to the situation when he arrived in Budapest, where people brought him to, and is searching for a ride to Germany. At the Central Station “there were black people, too.” They gave him some information and Thomas could for the same night find a transportation leaving from Budapest to Munich24. A trajectory, no matter by which means of transportation or by walking, is full of risks of being controlled. Besides the right moment of traveling the

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24 Here, I want to emphasize again that Thomas travelled before the Hungarian border fence was erected and before the Balkan route was ‘open’. 
mean of transportation is crucial for making the journey. Especially at night and in ordinary cars, crossing borders and moving without controls is easier. Thomas’ driver had an “ordinary van” and left at night so that he arrived early in the morning at Munich Central Station. Transportation is always embedded in a broader system, where public and private sphere intersect. For example in Thomas’ case, the publicly available road infrastructure is used by private cars. Here, “the embodied interaction between car, driver and passenger as mutual imbrications of practices, habits, feelings, sensations and affects that we might associate with the feeling of car travel” (Adey et al., 2014) come to fore. These vary according to the mean of transportation. There are, according to the peculiarities of the trajectory, different possible means of transportation which go along with varying requirements of public infrastructure and varying degrees of accessibility. The following graphic visualizes this:

![Figure 17: Different means of transportation in relation to public infrastructure and accessibility for irregular migrants (own drafting).](image)

No conclusions can be drawn from the used transportation on the agency of the irregular migrant; it is always given to different and varying extents. And little can be said about the economic power or the social capital.

Josef, 39 years old and from Nigeria, who lives in Kirchseeon, which is about 40 minutes away from Munich by regional train, arrived by a big ferry boat in Greece and continued after a longer stay in Athens to Germany by plane, serviced by ‘Lufthansa’, with a newly gained identity proof. Movable transportation systems go hand in hand with grounded infrastructure like airports. At the airport, Josef’s identity was
controlled and from the border police considered as ‘false’. So he was from the moment of arrival on an ‘asylum seeker’.

Abdoul and Femi came from Spain to Germany with a direct bus, from Bilbao and Madrid respectively Munich. Both of them took a bus from a European-wide operating company. Abdoul says it was « quelque chose comme ‘Eurostar’». The bus with this promising name brought him directly to Munich ‘Hackerbrücke’, the central bus terminal. Abdoul says that he tried to never step out from the bus while they were crossing France in order to not be controlled. He says that he has done actually ‘nothing’ while being en route. In many exchanges cross-border bus rides were neither told as ‘dead’ travel time nor as explicitly used time.

Transportation is a is a “major facilitator of a new life somewhere else” (Burrell, 2008, p. 360) and thus, a mean to cross borders. The trajectory that is covered by any means of transport is by many irregular migrants perceived as a long border space that goes along with a constant excitement whether the targeted destination will be reached or not. The border space reaches from the left point until the reached point, many different kinds of borders have to be passed, in a political, economic, cultural and cognitive sense. There is also a shift in status (Schuster, 2005). For Abdoul, the end of the bus ride from Spain constitutes rather the possibility to call the police and say ‘asylum’ than the meaning of the exact geographic place, as long as he is somewhere in Germany. He emphasizes that he knows the number of the police by heart.

Whereas in former time the state provided the technical conditions for mobility facilitation, nowadays there are more private providers, either they substitute formerly public services like private train companies on public railways or are a supplement to public transport services like the relatively new infrastructure of remote buses in Germany. Non-state providers can be more exclusive; access to infrastructure “is not deemed to be a universal right” (Adey et al., 2014, p. 11). When Kossi came back to Munich, after his transfer from the Bayernkaserne to another place (which remains unknown to me; see next chapter) to re-meet me, I told him that he could take a cheaper bus. However, he denied saying that he thinks he would not succeed and, therefore, prefers taking the train as usual. Booking a private bus is more complicated, concerning the purchase of the online-ticket. When Amaniel came to visit me in another town of Germany, he was calling me several times to help him out. It was the first time for him to travel by remote bus. The booking process with many remote busses in Germany is not easy; it requires an online-payment and the dealing with a QR-code or ticket printing. Amaniel was calling me, at least, half an hour before his departure from the bus terminal in Munich full of excitement saying that he is already on the board of the bus. The moment of boarding was seemingly the most critical one. At this very moment, a distinction is drawn between the inside and the outside, those with access authorization and the ‘other’ ones. Being inside of the bus evokes the feeling of being part of the ‘travelling elite’. Amaniel describes me that he was sitting next to a German guy with whom he chatted and who let him watch a movie on his laptop, but in the end, he fell asleep and, fortunately, woke up in time. He tells that he did not see the

25 When I was travelling, I also experienced that non-German citizens were denied access to buses.
26 It was an offer from my side, in so far I reflect my role in this case also as a mobility facilitator.
landscape that he passed. The experience of traveling was grounded by the bus and motorways, however, Amaniel’s experience did not relate to any specific ‘outer’ things. Burrell states that traveling by bus is in so far peculiar as it shows much more the “social stratification” because here “people’s personal migration biographies are publicly performed and observed” (Burrell, 2008, p. 326). Amaniel’s socio-political status becomes disclosed when showing his ‘Aufenthaltsgestattung’ while boarding.

European-wide operating bus companies connect new places that would not have been within reach if only considering railways. Abdoul could probably not have traveled as fast from Bilbao to Munich if there was no direct bus. A new relationality and reachability between places in Europe are created that directs irregular migrant’s trajectories. Some cities, like Verona and Munich, become important places in their function as mobility crossroad.

However, rides with bus or train are not the only way of moving. The chain of different modes and means of transport along a trajectory is very individual and endless varieties can be noticed. Thomas tried to hitchhike along the Balkan Route, he got a ride in a car of young people, together with his female Nigerian friend, and arrived with them in Budapest. The spontaneous car ride fastened his mobility and gave him confidence. There is a noticeable trend among irregular migrants to also use car-pooling. This can be seen as a platform that institutionalizes hitchhiking. They have some evident advantages that were often emphasized: it is the cheapest way of travel, it connects places that are far away from railway and motorway, it is less ‘official’ and controls, not only for tickets, do not take place systematically, especially police controls are less an always possible event when exerting mobility. Car-pooling is relatively easy to organize and the time and exact place of departure can be negotiated. Pierre and Simba, from Senegal and the Gambia, found out these facts and visited friends from their first youth house in a nearby town, surprised about the fast and non-binding organization. It allows for spontaneous actions. The flexibility and openness of car-pooling make it according to my experience especially a tool for rather short-term distances and commuting but less for bigger, transborder movements. Femi used it to complete his journey from Ulm, where he arrived by bus from Spain to Munich which has been recommended to him for ‘asylum’. The price of car-pooling seems especially cheap when considering car rides that irregular migrants take for example along the Balkan Route. Danyo took a car every now and then, always managed by his guide; in relation to the distance, these rides were much more expensive. He had to pay 600€ for traveling from Serbia to Croatia and again 600€ for the way from Croatia to Italy, with certain walking distances in-between. Car-pooling offers broad and easy access and an affordability; it is a more democratized way of moving. In so far, the concept of ‘irregular’ transport is questioned. Thomas paid for his night ride from Budapest to Munich 200€, with car-pooling it would have been around 30€.

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27 ‘Irregular transport’ can in this context delineated from car-pooling mainly by the high price. This might be the price for the higher risks because it involves the crossing of borders with those who are politically limited in their freedom to cross borders. Both is first of all the service for a fixed price to take someone in the car and drive from A to B. And of course, drivers who offer their ride on ‘blablacar’ might not take everybody who wants to choose. The criteria of selection might be discriminative.
Along some parts of the trajectory, there are neither public transports nor private providers along public infrastructures. This is the case between Libya and Italy, between Africa and Europe when the Mediterranean Sea, the “River”, has to be overcome. Here, not only political barriers like national borders have to be passed; the Mediterranean Sea is itself an enormous physical barrier. This part of the trajectory marks in many narratives very emotional and dramatic moments. It is a route with seemingly no ‘outer’ infrastructure except the Sea itself and the weather. The dependency on the boat is absolute. The departure is a very new start and a life risk. Here, the transportation is also a question of status and identity and impacts further movement. Those who arrive by boat are called ‘boat-people’. Those who came by boat are after their rescue and documented at the moment of arrival. Travelling by boat is so far the most extreme mean of transportation concerning the socio-political status. No ‘normal’ EU-citizen would ever be required to do this. Moving by boat is not a self-chosen characteristic of irregular migrants; it is not voluntarily done but the consequence of deterrence and missing entry opportunities into ‘fortress Europe’. Nevertheless, the high effort to reach Europe can be a challenge and a motivating factor. It might be associated with braveness and a special merit. For example in the story of Amaniel a certain pride on surviving the boat trip despite his dizziness and the storm can be noticed. He repeatedly tells me his experience. He took the passage in February when the sea is stormier than the rest of the year and felt nausea. He wanted to sit on top of the boat, assuming this would be a safer position.

Infrastructural access is in indeed pivotal along the trajectory of irregular migrants. The effort to organize miles and miles of physical movement is enormous. It requires high and sophisticated organizational skills and is also a matter of luck. Every movement requires its peculiar means of transportation that generates different experiences and interactions with people. The economy of mobility is an additional financial burden. Exclusive systems of transportation – some are excluding irregular migrants like airways; others are only for them like ‘irregular transportation or the passage of the Mediterranean Sea – even increase the effort and the price of mobility. The EU-European mobility regime comes to fore that disadvantages irregular migrants in their freedom of mobility.

6.2 Housing as material infrastructure

Another material infrastructure that I want to illuminate besides transportation is housing. When movement occurs, the question of housing emerges consequently. Housing is directly linked to the feeling of arriving and staying but also to the general physical comfort and questions of integration. Housing is also a political issue. The kind of housing indicates the status within the asylum procedure. The less determined the status of the irregular migrant by the state, the less access to housing systems is given. Being incognito or in a state of movement means no provision of shelter at all.

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28 Exceptions are those who took a plane. The majority of the met irregular migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea by boat, mostly the Central Mediterranean Route and some came from Turkey to Greece by boat. Thomas and Josef came hidden in containers from Nigeria to Greece.
For example, along the Balkan route, the exertions of the movement are even higher because of missing shelters. Danyo says that he was eleven days without real sleep in Serbia because outside it was too cold to sleep. In his memory, it is an experience that he will never forget and that exhausted him extremely. Because of this experience he has negative connotations with mobility in Europe and does not want to continue anymore.

Focus places of migration, like Brescia, host social networks that provide housing for new arrivals. However, it takes time until the contact with someone in the network is established. Danyo slept three nights at the train station in Brescia until he found a sleeping place at someone’s place. Indeed, at the train station, between the railways and the building, every night many people spend their night.

The train station that is classically associated as a transit building becomes a place with another function and meaning. The train station is, in this context, not a non-place that is interchangeable, alienated and lacks identity and peculiarity according to the concept of Augé (1995). A train station is rather a place of performance and individual practices. There are meanings and experiences attached to it.

Afro came with an allegedly faked working permission to Italy. He tells that an Italian tourist in Senegal told him that he could come to Rimini to work at a restaurant and would, for this reason, get a working contract for a working permit. So he paid him lots of many and bought a flight. When Afro arrived at the airport in Milano Malpensa, he directly headed to Rimini but never found the person to meet or the name of the restaurant. So, he went to Brescia because he heard about that place when he was still in Senegal. Now, his working permit is expired and he does not have a new contract yet.

It took Afro some weeks to have a place in a shared room in Brescia historic centre that cost 150€ per month. The house is inhabited by West Africans and Pakistani. However, the original advantage of the social network turns out to be a disadvantage in his case. To be provided with a shelter goes along with certain unspoken expectations and codes of behaviour, such as to not consume alcohol. When Afro was seen in the streets with a bottle of beer, he had to leave the house. Since then he lives in the streets of Brescia. Now, he says, it is even harder to find work in Brescia. The housing was inscribed to a certain social position and acceptance that he lost when he had to move out of the house.

Along a trajectory, several ‘camps’ appear, all relate to different meanings and experiences. Some are seen as a place where accommodation and food are offered; other camps are seen in a more negative way and are involuntarily immobilizing. Most negatively regarded are detention camps which are always an involuntary experience. They deprive irregular migrants of their freedom of mobility. Suleiman was several times kept in detention during his 18 months in Bulgaria, was taken to court three times and has numerous experiences of being handcuffed. In his memory, this was a very degrading experience. When he escaped the third time from a detention camp, he tried even harder to leave Bulgaria as soon as possible – successfully.

Not only in Europe irregular migrants risk being in detention camps. All along the trajectory detention may happen. Amaniel was kept in detention in Libya. He outwitted the staff and organized his escape. His
escape story is indeed heroically. It taught him to strongly believe in overcoming all obstacles. The involvement of other detained migrants is a good metaphor for the benefit of cooperation.

“They transfer him [some other guy] to our room [in the detention camp in Dragan]. So when he just came, he just stepped in. So, and that night we were chatting. Everybody was chatting. Everybody was laughing, we forget that we are in a prison. Anybody was... it was so funny! So in the morning, they ran all the boys in the room. They told us that this, above, in the terrace. You know, terrace? There is a legal above the terrace, four big holes. So, he told us that this one, this place is an escaping place. Maybe we can try. Yeah. But the boys were afraid. So if you go to a particular group and tell them "tonight we can escape here". The group will say "Okay no problem, no problem", so he will go to another group and just random groups like that. You understand? So when you go back to his position, all the boys started saying "oh, it is not safe, is not safe. If you try to escape, they cut you, they will kill you." We have seen someone who tried to escape, they throw hot water on him. So, the guy just heard about it. They just took out and said "don’t be a chicken man", like you know (big laughter)... yeah, it was not nice. He said to us that, you know, you would not try this just now. But I know if we all stayed here until we get fed of, no one will tell us to try this escaping place. And he was so right. Yeah. There was a day, everyone was fed off in the prison. So we can’t continue like that. They don’t deport us, they don’t release us. They are just, they are like sick.”

Me: “And then? You together escaped?”

“Yeah, we all escaped.”

“And did you have to jump down?”

“No no no no. The first were eight boys, they escaped. So on that night, I was sleeping. I did not know anything about their escape. I was in the room, so they escaped. So in the following day, I heard about it and I thought “wow”! So today, we must escape, we must try this. So four of us will just stand. Stand and hold each other like this (demonstrates a gesture). Two other boys we stand on top of the four boys. So, they also hold each other. So another one goes on top again. Like the three step.”

“Wow, seems very acrobatic.”

“So, he will cut the hole. You understand? So, you... he will go up to the wall, and when he goes up, we will give him our blankets. You know blankets? So he will just lay on the hole on top, give us the blanket down, and we will take the blanket. So it is a big hold, it is a big group.”

“Wow, a challenging organization!”

“So if he helps one person to get off, so that boy will go and stand to the other’s hold. So if that boy helps one person again, the other one will go to escape the next boy. So we tried to do that. So I think, we all escaped on the... There were only 16 persons left out of 74!”

This story of detention becomes a story of escape and of liberation.
In Italy as well as in Germany, the material infrastructures of ‘camps’, mark often the first experiences in the newly entered country. Most ‘boat people’ spend their first days in camps in Sicily. In Germany, almost all new arrivals who claim asylum first stay at the ‘Bayernkaserne’, a big reception centre to which people refer to also as ‘camp’, even if it is likely to differ from ‘camps’ in Libya. Some stay some days, others some months.

The experience of this material infrastructure is very individual and part of a broader experience. Whereas some like camps, others cannot stand it. This is due to the fact that studying material infrastructure is never the study of only a “thing” as such; it is relational (Star, 1999). And relationships may per definition occur in the background and become “real in relation to organized practices.” (Star, 1999, p. 380). The experience of the camp is never one of the camps as such; it is always related to issues and questions like food, the possibility of activities, other encounters and the irregular migrant’s physical condition. It can be a time of rest or associated with uselessness. Within camps, there are complex organizational structures. In the ‘Bayernkaserne’, there are medical checks taking place, clothing is distributed, the opportunity to work in the laundry is given and certain papers are provided. The dwellers of camps establish their networks. In the ‘Bayernkaserne’ the deal with German SIM-cards is very popular. They are the first things that Abeeku and Kossi bought in Germany. For Pakka, the experience of staying in a camp in Southern Italy is dominated by “every day the same Pasta pomodoro with chicken wing”. He finally got bad stomach pains, which was one of the reasons that reinforced the idea to go to Germany. When I arranged interviews with people in the ‘Bayernkaserne’, the time of meals was seemingly important. The predetermined mealtimes provide a rhythm of the day. The camp as a material infrastructure provides certain possibilities. Amaniel says that the ‘Bayernkaserne’

“is a good camp. Yeah, because you have everything. There is a field to play football, they give good food, you know. They have cafeteria, you can go there and drink coffee. No, Kieferngarten²⁹ is a nice place. It is a nice place.”

All possibilities, no matter whether food or other leisure activities, are framed by the camp. The camp shapes all embodied experiences and in turn, individual meanings, attitudes and norms are inscribed to the camp.

Every stay in a camp is a starting point for possible further movements. The subsequent accommodations after reception camps are - according to the German and Italian asylum system - asylum shelters. The way between reception camp or reception centre and the assigned asylum shelter is either done by the asylum seeker, guided for example with a train ticket and the targeted address, or the asylum seeker is taken there by bus. Large distances from Southern Italy to asylum shelters in Northern Italy are covered by plane, always escorted by police.

The asylum shelter is not any material infrastructure. It is pivotal for further experiences and the life of the irregular migrant who has now become an asylum seeker and immobilized. The asylum shelters seemingly

²⁹ ‘Kieferngarten’ is the name of the closest metro station. It is used synonymously for ‘Bayernkaserne’.
matter in its physical substance. The story of Amaniel about his perception of an asylum shelter illustrates the high signification.

Amaniel: „So when I was in the camp, I heard that, you know, that others live in a container. I was wondering “How can someone live in a container?”
Me: “[…] And finally you are in one also.”
“Yeah, how will it be like, how will it be like? The container? How will it be? I was asking myself and was chatting with my friends. And my friends were like “let us just pray”. So you will follow us having a container. You know?”
“Yeah, shit.”
“And unfortunately, ah, we were three in the camp, so we were three friends in the camp. So the twos, they got a normal house. And I am living in a container. So I was the first passenger to be transferred.”
“So, you were the first transfer?”
“Yeah, among the three. So, when I get the transfer [...], so I was seeing one boy going to the house. I asked him “What, they transfer me here? Can you take me to the house?” I was showing the address. He told me “Yeah, I am going there.” So we left. I was following him with my bags, walking behind him. So, I was seeing one building, and I say “wow, maybe this is the building.” And this is the house where I were. So we just go and then, the building like this. So, we just take a call, I show the containers, so... So there were two rooms. I sat and wait. I was wondering. I asked him “Are you living here?” He told me “yes”. I told him “Is here a camp? Will we be transferred again, to a normal house? He told me “No, this is your place now.” So those two weeks, only one week, throughout that one, you know, I was so stressed, yeah. Finding myself in a container [...]. So, for me I was thinking there is something higher than me, you understand?”

The fact of living in a container is in this sense also the question of a new living place, of having a home. For Amaniel, the container is dissociated from the idea of home. However, after a week he got used to it and the first astonishment and feeling of unease disappeared.

“One week, I was so stressed, I found myself in a bad moment. But after, he came, to made up the situation in the container like, you get used of the container, to adopt the life of the container. So now, I already adapt.”
“And now you are happier?”
“Yeah, now I am happier. I am happy. That is the best. I am happy now.”
“And you would not change container against a house anymore?”
“If I have a house, of course I would. Hahaha! Wow!”
6.3 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I tried to give insights in the material infrastructures along the trajectory of irregular migrants and their effects and meanings in relation to im/mobility. It can be said that transportation is the main facilitator of mobility. Housing is a broad term that includes different kind of camps, like detention camps and reception camps, self-organized accommodation as well as state-provided asylum shelters. The material infrastructure of housing is only the substrate that is relational to the migrant. And these relations are rich of very individual inscriptions, meanings and associations. The mobility of irregular migrants is not as self-evident as the mobility of EU-citizens; it requires higher efforts. Housing, understood in a larger sense, is not opposed to trajectories; it is part of it. A trajectory is a chronological and spatial juxtaposition of different means of transportation as well as the experience of different kinds of housing. The trajectory of irregular migrants can even be seen from the angle of changing transportation and housing.

Irregular migrants face high difficulties in accessing infrastructures of mobility. The movement does not take place only in a unidirectional sense and only aimed at reaching a certain destination. Spontaneity and flexibility influence the directionality and the dynamics of mobility that are furthermore influenced by transportation and housing.

Transportation connects places and thus creates a relational map of places in Europe. Private transport fills out and expands this map. The socio-political context leads to an ‘illegalization’ of certain movements, especially cross-border ones. When outlining transportation of irregular migrants, the ‘exclusiveness’ of the transport issue should be taken into consideration. If outsiders like me in the role of the researcher know irregular migration paths, this could increase the risks and efforts to travel.

Irregular migrants face high risks, costs and efforts along their trajectories in terms of transportation. There are different means of transportation that can be identified. There are transportation structures and vehicles like boats that are uniquely for them. For this reason, the relevance of studying transportation is high. Irregular migrants do not possess their own vehicles. They use a broad range between more or less institutionalized, between public and private transportation which are also intersecting; a range within which the irregular migrant shifts. The used means of transportation are plane, train, bus, cars. No conclusions can be drawn from the used transportation on the agency of the irregular migrant; it is always given to different and varying extents. And little can be said about the economic power or the social capital in relation to the chosen transportation. It depends largely on the peculiarities and challenges along the trajectory.
7. Immaterial Infrastructure

“Infrastructure is commonly understood in physical terms” (Simone, 2014, p. 407). Extending the notion of infrastructure to the immaterial and social sphere enables us to better understand the socio-economic and political framework and complex effects of irregular migrants’ im/mobility. There are many immaterial things that come to light and are effective in the background on the im/mobility of irregular migrants. The guiding question of this chapter is:

**What are the immaterial infrastructures along the trajectory of irregular migrants and how do these impact their im/mobility?**

I focus on aspects of social networks, trends and rumors, the question of locality and the political context of the asylum system.

7.1 Social networks, rumours and mobility trends as immaterial infrastructure: “Italy is only a gateway to Europe” (Pakka)

Social factors play an important role in the context of im/mobility of irregular migrants. The study of social factors in migration studies is commonly approached by the study of social networks. These are seen as the “aggregate of the actual and potential resources” (Schapendonk, 2014, p. 1) that provide information and help to reduce the risks and costs of mobility (Müller, 2010, p. 61). These networks create for example informational and transport structures that are detached from state structures. During my research, the role of social networks in regard to mobility was often emphasized. Social networks have generally a guiding character. Contacts can be conducive and desirable for mobility, others are hindering and undesirable – this can also change, what the story of Christian exemplifies.

Christian from Benin, about 40 years old, is for many years already in Brescia. I meet him when I asking for the way to the train station in Brescia. He also needs to go there. So we quickly start talking and continue walking together. He lives on the outskirts of Brescia and does shift work in a bigger company. We exchange our contacts and meet again some days after our first encounter. He starts telling about his life – a story marked by the role of social contacts. He reports that in former times he moved a lot because of many friends and remote contacts. His starting point in Europe was Paris, where he arrived over 15 years ago. He knew someone in Brescia, so he visited the city. He stayed here for a while, found work and settled. He did not care a lot about any papers. He often extended his working contracts and thus got a new permission. Once, a remote friend told him to go to the Netherlands. So he went by train to Amsterdam via France and waited there for the friend who suddenly did not reply anymore, even if he ‘called him exhaustingly often’ 30. After three days in a hotel, he went back to Brescia. Now, Christian says that he prefers to not actively engage in social networks anymore because he too often felt disappointed by others, invested too much energy and costs and now has to look to get along on his own. He says that he wants to mainly concentrate on his job.

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30 In his own words he says: “J’ai appelé fatigue!”.- a typical Beninese expression.
His attitude towards social networks changed enormously during the last decade. And moreover, the story of Christian illustrates that social networks are not only facilitating mobility by reducing its costs and risks but can also be discouraging from mobility.

Or, respectively, migrants can look to leave some social contacts behind by moving quickly further. Danyo says that especially in Greece and at many places along the Balkan route, there is an atmosphere of general mistrust. He rather tried to leave his country fellows as soon as possible. Networks of country fellows do not automatically imply solidarity, mutual support and friendship. When speaking about to the Nigerian community in Athens, Thomas says “friends are not always good; they may lead you to trouble.” At certain points of the trajectory, a certain ‘black solidarity’ seems to be very strong. In Budapest, Thomas was advised to look for ‘any black person’. When he saw a black guy, the guy could immediately help him out for issues of further transportation towards Germany. A trajectory also changes in terms of social contacts and their importance. At some points, Thomas perceived social contacts as hindering, at other points essential for further proceeding. A trajectory is never only individually done. There are always other people involved to exchange information, to arrange transportation, to motivate each other and to spend maybe parts of the same way together.

Contacts of a social network can be personal as well as impersonal and virtual. Virtual social networks can be as well very powerful, either for moving or for socializing when being at a certain place. And likely, they will gain further importance in the age of the Internet and new media. When Thomas was still in Athens and wanted to leave but did not know yet where he should head to, he exchanged information about Germany with someone that he knew ‘only from facebook’. He was advised him Germany. Also, when being immobile, like Josef who lives in an asylum shelter in Kirchseeon, virtual contacts are important. Josef is in daily contact with a ‘sister’ from Nigeria whom he does not know in person. Still, she became his closest contact. He affirms that he does not have any close contact in Kirchseeon where he lives, not even from his asylum shelter. And so, he does not feel so lonely.

In the context of irregular migration, the dealing with and passing on of contacts is seemingly a commonly applied strategy to facilitate movement. A contact of somebody who knows a person with similar intentions or knowledge of a certain place or journey can become part of someone’s network. These contacts are approached when needed without further commitments. Simba from the Gambia, who came along the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy and then by train to Germany speaks about a “follower” that he has in Italy and who also aims at coming to Germany, they keep exchanging with each other about Germany. These contacts are of high temporary meaning. Networks with ties from remote friendships and kinships are often spread across Europe. Simba remarks that he also has a ‘brother’ in Barcelona. The distinction in ‘brother’ and ‘follower’ can indicate different forms of relationships with varying degrees of trust and familiarity.

Contacts can occur quickly and casually, especially at focus places of migration like Brescia. Fanta is originally from Ivory Coast but for a very long time in Brescia. She came to Italy because of her husband, whom she got to know in Ivory Coast and who already lived in Brescia but travelled to Ivory Coast every
now and then. Fantà’s store is a classical point of contact for many new arrivals to gain contacts for further travel; it serves as a job market as well as for integration purpose. Here, various intersecting networks localize. Danyo often frequents her place. Here, he found by word-of-mouth advertising a job as a security guard in night clubs. His job, his Italian language skills and his social network constitute an immaterial infrastructure which gives him the feeling of being well integrated “je suis bien intégrée ici, je veux juste avoir une vie simple”. He says that he would like to stay in Brescia, even if he heard and believes that Germany and France are better countries. Social integration leads to a higher place attachment that dissuades people from moving. Since he arrived in Brescia, Danyo never left the town, not even for a single day trip. Other interviewees who seemed well integrated through different kinds of social engagement at their place did neither express any motivation for further mobility.

Even if many interviewees mention the signification of social networks for moving, this cannot be seen without the context at the place of stay (Staniforth, 2014). Moving forth to another place can simply be according to the logic of Aliou who expresses « Si tu n’ as pas de travail tu bouges ». Aliou did so everywhere along the trajectory, in Niger as well as in Southern Italy. Kossi explains his movement from Italy to Germany similarly: « En Italie il n’y a rien. Donc je vais en Allemagne pour chercher du travail ». Mobility is motivated by the hope of finding better opportunities. Economic factors are often intertwined with social ones. Difficulties in gaining a foothold and dissatisfaction about the employment, the economic situation or issues of housing increase the motivation to leave.

Language as an influential factor can also be a guiding factor. Pierre, for example, emphasizes that he originally intended to move onwards from Italy to France or Belgium as he imagined it as easier to build up a new sense of home in a francophone country. But then he just heard about others who intended to go to Germany and also did so. Social contacts can facilitate and direct movement but should not be overstated in their meaning.

Additionally, the role of circulating rumours, recommendations and place-names within certain networks or just caught as casual information seems very powerful in mobility processes. Afro came to Italy with a working contract in a restaurant in Rimini. However, he found out that this contract was faked: “C’est la trahisson. J’ai perdu tellement d’argent.” So he went to Brescia because he heard about this place when he was still in Senegal. The image and the name of Brescia are his guidance for mobility.

Often, it was referred to recommendations about certain places that cause and guide movement. Femi says that some Senegalese recommended Munich and ‘Kieferngarten’ to him. So he went there and tried it out. Thomas came to Germany because he heard that this is a good place. When I had an interview with four African refugees in Brescia, they all reported that Germany must be a good place and ‘easy to adapt’. Abeekeu moved because his friend just advised him, even if he did not have any idea about Germany.

A recurring metaphor in many irregular migrants’ narratives is that “Italy is a gateway, you can go further” (Pakka). For many irregular migrants onward mobility seems an always given opportunity, even if it does

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31 This is the story of many women from West-African countries that I meet in Brescia. I mention Fantà, even if she is not an irregular migrant, because of her store that is in my eyes the most important contact place for (irregularized) West Africans.
not materialize in all cases. Pierre and Simba argue that only Germany represents Europe for them, Italy is too African, especially at places that many irregular West African migrants cross, like Rome or Naples. ‘Moving northwards’ also seems to be a popular thing that has to be regarded as an effective trend. Amaniel shows me pictures on his Smartphone of other irregular migrants who worked with him on a huge tomato plantation in Foggia. He reports about it as if it was a self-evident matter that almost everybody moved to Germany. And those who are still there are likely to follow. For arranging his move northwards he used the others as a contact for practical questions about the trajectory but did not re-meet them. All these ‘recommendations’, advises, alleged matters of course, rumours and trends that circulate within social and virtual networks are an immaterial network that functions as guidance and motivation. The resulting expectations of places and countries may differ a lot from the reality. Not seldom, this leads to a high frustration, especially concerning work. The created perception does not match the experience. In Germany, the ban on employment has far-reaching consequences, what the following statements of Amaniel illustrate:

“Yes, I was thinking. Yeah, when I was in Italy, I was thinking about Germany. Yeah! I was thinking about Germany, also thinking how to get work. Because if I call some of my friends here, they will tell us, or they will tell me, you know, in Germany they have work. Yeah, I left Italy […] for check for a work. But I have, unfortunately when I get here (big excitement in voice), I was in a camp, after that they transferred me to my living place soon. So I was working for two weeks in one restaurant. So after this story was, I went to Landratsamt […]. So, scheisse. So now, how I wake up is how I sleep. So, now I want to start schooling. Is better I think. Is better than, you know, sleeping, waking up in the morning, having stress on yourself...Me, if I don’t do anything, I will just be in my room, throughout the night, maybe watching TV or having my handy on my hand, finger. So I will just wake up late. I wake up late, I found that I am not doing anything, you know. So in the future, I want to be a responsible man. I hate myself.[...] No, not only because I am lazy. You know, I am a grown-up man. So I have to wake up in the morning and do something.”

According to his statement, work seems to underline a certain picture of masculinity and strength which is then often questioned. This picture reflects one commonly expressed attitude: Whereas in Italy there is no work, in Germany you must not work. During my field research, however, I experienced that it is, on the contrary, easier for irregular migrants to find little job in Brescia than in Munich. There are more opportunities like working in a restaurant, charging of containers in Bergamo that will be sent to Dakar or vending in the streets and at beaches especially during the touristic season.

7.2 The Asylum System as immaterial infrastructure: “I don’t want to be an asylum seeker” (Amaniel)

The mobility of irregular migrants takes place within the tension field of self-determination and structural constraints that result from the political context of asylum. The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) with all its directives (see chapter II) is influential on an individual level.
In many cases, the Asylum System has an immobilizing effect. Claiming asylum is not a simple demand; it is a long procedure even if law regulations limit the duration. In Germany as well as in Italy, there is a backlog of claims and the processing can last very long. The duration of the asylum procedure is a time of waiting and uncertainty for many asylum seekers. It has a paralyzing and immobilizing effect. A common attitude is «d’abord les papiers, après je vais voir» (Gari). Nevertheless, some are moving further by ignoring the immobilizing asylum laws. It is commonly referred to the asylum claim as just a ‘paper’. Many feel in a state of mental stress when thinking about their papers; the asylum system can be perceived as a constraint. Ismael says «on est obligé de suivre». Some irregular migrants like Ismael, Flangue, Traore and Cissé that I meet together in Brescia are not so sure whether they claimed for asylum or not. They just know that their fingerprints and their names were taken upon arrival in Sicily. And they had been transferred to Brescia, where they live together and attend the same Italian language class. The fingerprint is an often emerging issue. It reflects the registration within the asylum system. The moment and place of the fingerprint is seemingly crucial. It can mean the end of European mobility or, respectively increase the risk of cross-border movement. The issue of fingerprint results in a hiding game and a division in those whose fingerprint is taken and others who are still free. Kossi laments that despite a court process in Italy, which took place close to Milano, his fingerprint has not been taken yet and he could easily travel around in Germany. Moving despite a taken fingerprint increases the level of stress at the new destination when national borders are crossed. Amaniel’s fingerprint was taken in Italy, now he has a lawyer.

“Oh yeah, I make an asylum, because, ahm, I fingerprinted my hand in Italy. This is where I first fingerprinted my hand. And in Germany right now here, it is so hard. Because they have said that they have seen my hand in Italy.[...] Yeah, so, that is the Scheisse for me. But I have taken a lawyer, so maybe we can try and fight it all. Maybe.”

A fingerprint in another country may lead to intra-EU deportation, depending on the country. In order to avoid deportation, Amaniel tries to integrate the best possible way. He is very motivated to learn German and to work. He started school and was elected class speaker. Despite his efforts and fights to stay, he had been deported to Italy. Amaniel was not about to let this happen and re-travelled to Germany. When he was caught at the Austrian-German border, he had been imprisoned for three months in Germany32. It is seemingly difficult, if not impossible, for irregular migrants to emancipate from the immobilizing political structures. Whereas for Amaniel the registered fingerprint is fateful and dominating his life decisions, Suleiman considers himself as lucky because of political exceptions. Suleiman’s fingerprint was taken in Bulgaria but he knows that he is less likely to be sent back there because of many human rights violations in Bulgaria that lead Germany to a stop of deportation in this EU-country. He also has a lawyer and says that he feels a little bit nervous because of it but still believes that he could stay. Also, Thomas left his fingerprint in Greece but he knows that Greece is also exempted from the Dublin Regulation. For him, this information “gave strength” for his ongoing trip to Germany.

32 This is the story that Amaniel told me on 3. February 2016, when he suddenly called after some months without any contact. It was the very same day he got out of prison.
The CEAS does not allow spontaneous mobility actions. Moving from Italy to Germany, for example, is not possible as a spontaneous move with the prospective of staying just a few days. All irregular migrants are automatically ‘absorbed’ by the asylum system. The subsequent registration processes including the transfer systems immediately starts. When I was in Brescia, some of my respondents expressed the wish to just explore Germany a little bit. If they did so and were controlled by the police, they could not easily come back to Italy anymore.

For some, ‘asylum’ is a blessing, for others a curse. Abdoul only traveled from Spain to Munich in order to say ‘asylum’. As soon as German borders are crossed, ‘asylum’ can be a magic word that equates to a new trial in life. Abeeku and Kossi are good examples of this, moving to Germany after some years in Italy. For others, however, ‘asylum’ becomes an involuntary system and the status of being an ‘asylum seeker’ was never intended. Femi came via Spain to Germany and says “I never heard about asylum. I only wanted to make money. [...] I am kind of confused, I do not have anybody.” He says that he cannot explain in detail how he came to Germany. He spent over half a year in Spain. Now, Femi is in an asylum centre close to Munich and seems to be indifferent about many things and where he should go in his future. He just attends every now and then Church services and German classes that are offered by helping circle.

On an individual level, the asylum system can be very exhausting. Pakka, who came from Italy to Munich, says that he feels very restricted and tired about the German asylum system and all related issues like sharing a room. He toys with the idea of returning to Italy. He says “I never wanted to be an asylum seeker”. In Italy, he sees more opportunities.

Asylum systems on a national level can foster as well as limit mobility. The ‘Residenzpflicht’ obliges the asylum seeker to stay in the community of his assigned accommodation. An allocated asylum shelter means staying, even if it is only temporary. On the other hand, the state-driven mobility through the transfer system may increase the mobility space.

Indeed, the asylum system is a construction of European politics that divides asylum seekers either in ‘refugees’ or as ‘economic migrants’ and thereby obscures the “broad spectrum that exists between forced and voluntary migration and suggesting that the latter is motivated solely by financial concerns.” (Staniforth, 2014, p. 5). For beneficial hope, the changing of age and of origin country is an applied strategy. Changing elements of the identity is an emancipatory response to the rigidness and paternalism of the European asylum system.

7.3 Concluding reflection: transfer transportation, directionality and locality: « Ce sont eux qui décident? » (Erjon)

Almost all of my interviewees argued that their intentions of moving onwards and the according directionality were not clear at the moment of entering the EU. However, the fact that movement is likely to be exerted was not questioned as such. Europe is in many irregular migrants’ eyes a mobile space, despite its limits and invisible borders. Mobility is individually negotiated, can arise from a certain mood, be influenced by certain events and social contacts or can suddenly emerge when seeing new financial and
social opportunities or constraints at the abode. The particularity of the question of movement and its directionality is the exploring character of it. The movement is mostly directed to unknown places.

One of the things that surprised me most during my field research was the expressed feeling of ambiguity by many irregular migrants towards directionality and locality\textsuperscript{33} once they found themselves within the asylum system. As if the asylum system of some countries was a destination as such. A central element of the asylum system is a state-driven transfer from the first reception camp to subsequent accommodations, which is usually a transfer to an unknown location.

Transfer systems cannot be easily categorized as restricting or facilitating factors of movement. In Italy as well as in Germany, they can be both, depending on individual notion. Transfer, arranged by state, leads to a mobility that is pre-determined in its direction, destination and date of movement. It anticipates personal decisions of mobility that might be overwhelming anyway when moving to unknown directions.

Whenever I spent hours in Munich at the train station, I could see single people as well as little groups holding a train ticket in their hand, often nervously going up and down the train platform, sometimes approaching other people for information. They were waiting for the train indicated on their tickets. The ticket is their guidance of the transfer to asylum shelters or other reception centres, sometimes very far away and in other federal states. Once I exchanged with a group of young men from Sudan, Nigeria and Eritrea who asked me curiously how their assigned cities – they had to split up to two different places, namely Braunschwerig and Dortmund – would be “are these good places?”. They had no clue about their destination and would probably not have come here on their own but in this situation, it was neither bad nor good.

Other transfers, like that one of Kossi from the Bayernkaserne to his new asylum shelter somewhere in Bavaria and from which he does not know the name, happen via a bus that is only hired for transfer purpose and that is accompanied by police. Especially if many people leave from one place and are supposed to go to the same new place, extra buses used.

Transfer can be a joyous expectation as well as simply accepted as the next step within the asylum system. State-arranged mobility does not allow the conclusion that the agency of the (formerly) irregular migrant is not given anymore. On the contrary, even if the state anticipates with the random transfer the decision of im/mobility, it can be a scheduling and a calculation from the irregular migrant of coming to new places. Taking the example of irregular migrants who come by self-arranged mobility with the train from Verona to Munich, they are often aware that the state provides subsequent transportation and accommodation. Individually planned and state-arranged mobility can intertwine and supplement each other. The mobility of irregular migrants who arrive in Germany is in many cases an ensemble of self-arranged and state-arranged mobility.

On the one hand, transfer facilitates and guides movement and directionality. On the other hand, the transfer system limits the freedom of mobility. Both perceptions are possible and can change. Irregular

\textsuperscript{33} In this context I use on purpose ‘locality’ instead of ‘place’. Locality refers more to a specific place in relation to others and not just as a place anywhere where a living is possible.
migrants who have already been part of the Italian asylum system can emancipate themselves from the given structures by leaving them. After arriving in Germany, the asylum system provides care and onward, transfer-based, mobility. The direction and duration of the trajectory consist of different kinds of mobilities. Emancipation from and involvement in state structures are alternating.

Abeeku and Kossi, for example, came to Germany to see what happens, where they might arrive and what the future might bring in this country. State arranged mobility throughout the transfer system can also lead to a state of completely leaving one’s own fate and mobility in the hand of ‘the state’. Erjon, for example, was rescued by the Italian marine, was brought to Sicily where he stayed three days in a camp. Subsequently, he had to take a bus during 24 hours, was then escorted to a plane with others, landed in ‘Milano Malpensa’ and was finally taken to Brescia by the police. After five months he was supposed to change his room. His mobility in Europe was never self-initiated, but he doesn’t mind. He says «C’est le policier. Ce sont eux qui décident. Ils décident tout». Whereas Erjon believes in the power of decision by the state, many respondents in Germany, like Thomas and Amaniel especially, rather believe in luck and a system of lottery: “Like a transfer is a form, is a form of luck”.

According to my experiences, the interplay of state-arranged and self-organized mobility leads to a new mapping and perception of places. When I tried to arrange some appointments, this was not always easy. I tried to organize a meeting with Nlandou from Congo whom I met at the ‘Bayernkaserne’ and by coincidence again in Munich city centre. He had a relatively sudden transfer and the meeting was not possible anymore.

I once had an appointment with a ‘brother’ of an acquaintance from Italy whose name is Almame and who stays according to his own disclosure in Munich. So for me, the locality of this appointment was Munich, for Almame the locality was relative. We arranged to meet in Munich Central Station at platform 1 to be sure not to miss each other. When we were calling each other before, he already said that he would come to the train station because he does not live far away. But we could not find each other during our first attempt. At the arranged second date I waited at platform 1 and when he did not show up, I called him a couple of times. But we never saw each other although he affirmed to be at platform 1 at this very moment. He even passed his phone to other Germans so that we could be sure that it was not a misunderstanding. He even passed his phone to other Germans so that we could be sure that it was not a misunderstanding. And indeed, we were both at platform 1. After a while, I desperately left. Only when I had an appointment with Amaniel, I asked him to call his country fellow. They immediately started chatting with each other in ‘Mandinka’ and Amaniel cleared up the misunderstanding saying that he was in Mannheim instead of Munich. For Almame, being in Munich or not was maybe not so important. Both were just big cities. In Munich, there are several train stations and maybe Munich is because of its high significance anyway a metaphor for being in Germany.

Kossi expressed with his facebook-post that for him, Munich is the epitome of being in Germany. “Munich Central Station – Germania Stazione”. When I tried to re-meet Kossi, he was transferred to somewhere else, seemingly not too far away. I suggested visiting him at his new location. He responded saying that he prefers coming to Munich instead of me traveling to his place, as he cannot describe me where he is and
does not know the name. Finally, he came to Munich for a day. When Kossi eventually arrived in Munich, we took the metro several times together. Within the metro, the feeling of time and distance is not the same as moving ‘above’. The metro stations are huge, confusing places with different arrows and colours and the mass of people is anonymously passing by. There are no given points of orientation. After an exhausting day that we spent together I accompanied him back to the Central train station for his departure to his asylum shelter. Here he posed me the question how many and which cities we were visiting this day and whether they all belong to Bavaria. He assumed that at every time we went underground and back to daylight, we were in other cities. In the end, he was seemingly surprised that we were only moving around in Munich. Orientation and mapping of a new place of arrival are individually different. As an irregular migrant, other indications and guiding elements may be more important than for me. The transfer system relativizes the idea of distance. Whereas many irregular migrants may be concerned about how to cover the long distance for example from Greece to Germany, the distance in the frame of the transfer system, no matter how long it lasts, is not something that has to be arranged; it does not cost more the longer it is. A transfer by bus to a nearby place can last as long as a transfer guided by a ticket with a speed train to a further away place. The distance covered by transfer is, however, not an indicator of the satisfaction with the living situation per se. What counts more when arriving at a new location is a good housing (see the example with the container of Amaniel), the reachability and relationality to other places and the existence of certain im/material infrastructures. This is in contrast to Afro’s way of navigation: he moved to Brescia because he heard about it in Senegal. But he decided to go there on his own. Both, a state-allocated place as well as a self-targeted destination can be starting points for further movement, even if the state seeks to prevent it. Mobility always has an exploring character.
8. Conclusion
In this thesis I tried to analyze the dynamics and mechanisms of im/mobility of irregular migrants from West African countries within the European Union. To sum up, I want to summarize the proceeding and central findings of this thesis. These have to be seen in the frame of possibilities and limits of the project ‘master thesis’.

Often, irregular migrants leave classical paths along their trajectories in and towards the European Union. This fact requires also from the researcher to look beyond pre-given paths of neoliberal and/or structural migration models. For this reason, I aimed at finding adequate, innovative methodologies, theories, approaches and concepts to do justice to the non-linear, complex migratory movements and stages of immobility. Methodologically, the applied bi-local ethnography is useful to account for the numerous changes and unpredictability along irregular migrant’s trajectory. It allows tracing certain issues that may re-evolve in different contexts from different perspectives. The empiric findings in Brescia and Munich constitute the basis of this work. The ‘mobility turn’ in social science is the theoretic starting point for further reflections on mobility, materiality and infrastructures around which the applied three-fold approach of ‘im/material infrastructures’ has been conceptualized. It accounts for materialities, material infrastructures and immaterial infrastructures.

First, different materialities that are meaningful and influential on the movement and index status and identity of the migrant were illuminated. Some materialities accompany the trajectory, some may, in turn, be incentives to exert mobility; others are applied as instrument. Secondly, it has been focused on different kinds of transportation and accommodation as material infrastructures. The more ‘public’ the transportation is, the bigger the exposition towards controls. It has been shown that mobility regimes reflected in transportation can be very exclusive. Irregular migrant’s transportation intersects with public transportation in Europe but can also be organized independently from the pre-given structures. The issue of housing is especially peculiar. A trajectory can be seen from the perspective of transportation and accommodation. Reception camps and asylum shelters are, as well as temporary homelessness, part of the experience of im/mobility. The material infrastructure is full of individual symbolic inscriptions and charged with meanings. The immaterial infrastructure takes social networks, mobility trends, rumours and the European Asylum System into account. A central element of the asylum systems in Italy and Germany are the systems of spatial transfer. State arranged transfer mobility is very influential in mobility processes in Italy and Germany and leads to a new relation to locality and directionality. Allocated destinations are sometimes considered as a form of ‘lottery’. Transfer does not necessarily happen without the agency of the irregular migrant and is not opposed to self-organized mobility but can be even a strategy to enhance the scope of mobility. Transfer mobility is integrated into the trajectory and covers short and long distances.

All three illustrated dimensions of the ‘im/material infrastructure’ are interrelated and supplement each other for a holistic understanding of the context of irregular migrant’s im/mobility. One dimension cannot exist and depends on another one. For example, the illustrated fateful list of transfer is a fateful thing, is put
in the material infrastructure of the reception center that is a materialized infrastructural element of the German asylum system. The irregular migrant is affected by all these three dimensions. ‘Im/material infrastructures’ can both, facilitate and restrict, accelerate and slow down movement, depending on the individual context and ambitions.

Even if the approach of ‘im/material infrastructures’ seems to be very structural, I tried to emphasize the agency of the migrant. Throughout the work, it became clear that mobility takes place between an individual action framework of personal aspirations and restrictive political structures with manifold obstacles. Migrant’s cross-border movements reflect a momentum of autonomy against political institutions that aim at controlling and regulating the very same (Müller, 2010). Irregular migrants do not move according to central mobility logics and challenge the border regime of ‘fortress Europe’ that is based on deterrence, quantification and visualization. This regime is a braid of different stakeholders, discourses, materialities, struggles and movements. Undoubtedly, we experience a comeback of borders even within the Schengen zone that initially propagated a frontier-free zone. However, throughout this work, it becomes apparent that borders are instable, versatile and contested by irregular migrants (Hess et al., 2015). The ‘fortress Europe’ is negotiated and reclaimed as a ‘mobile space’.

Migratory mobility requires patience and resilience, optimism and a bold faith in a better future. Destinations and personal objectives are constantly re-set and re-negotiated. Im/mobility has a lot to do with opportunities, imaginations, materialities, infrastructures and networks. It can be emancipation from given precarious circumstances as well as restricted by these. Every new contact and every new place can offer new possibilities and influence personal aspirations. The given circumstances lead to creative and spontaneous strategies and tactics that are exemplified in some episodes. A success of the ‘project of migration’ must be evaluated differently at different moments regarding the many ‘ups and downs’ not only in a spatial sense.

Research on delicate issues such as irregular West African migration in the European Union raises many questions and concerns. Throughout this work, research ethical concerns has been taken into account and dealt with, attempting at least to do no harm. Debates within the research team of the VENI-project of Dr. Joris Schapendonk, the frame in which this thesis is written, were helpful and inspiring.

8.1 A final anecdote about researching irregular migrant’s im/mobility

In autumn 2015, I passed by in Brescia again and re-met some of my West-African acquaintances. Among others, I intended to meet the four young men that once appeared all together for a group interview and discussion. On the basis of some statements during the exchange about mobility-related aspects, I tried to imagine who would be a probable stayer, who a probable mover and who could maybe even become a frequent mover. I thought I would be able to draw some conclusions based on declared intentions, economic and social capital in Europe, euphoria and concrete curiosity for life and job opportunities in Germany. Surprisingly, those, from whom I assumed that they would rather stay, were not in Brescia anymore. And especially someone else, whom I thought would surely move, was still in Brescia.
During my research, I often attempted to understand im/mobility dynamics of my respondents. However, this example shows that mobility is not always exerted when it seems probable and possible. Aspiration and ability may differ and change quickly. The focus should be rather put on the freedom of mobility to not overstate mobility as a pursued goal of West Africans. When writing on and advocating for mobility of irregularized persons, the longing for a settlement at a place for a shorter or longer period and establishing a home should not be denied, especially if exhaustion after energy-sapping acts of mobility occurs. Re-orientation and reflection, triggered by certain events, are also part of people’s trajectory. Immobility is not only a consequence of mobility restrictions but can as well as mobility be a sudden decision or an aspired state. Decisions are not visible and can be due to interpersonal relations, individual preferences or favorable opportunities or trends to abstract destinations like ‘good Germany’. Immobility and mobility might seem opposing; however, both are interconnected elements of a trajectory. Also, when being mobile, stability can be aimed at; when resting, a longing for further movement can occur.

8.2 Further prospective in regard to central findings
With this master thesis, I attempted to find certain answers. At the same time, new questions and ideas about future research emerge. In the following, I outline and suggest some:
Firstly, different types of mobility can be identified which could be analyzed in further research. There are many intersecting, multidimensional elements and various modes and ways of mobility as well as intertwining im/material infrastructures that form the trajectory of (irregular) migrants. Further distinctions and combinations could be drawn along the identified mobilities:

- Self-organized mobility and transfer mobility
- ‘Informal’ and ‘formal’ mobility
- Boat, train and bus, car and walking mobility
- Large scale, cross-border and daily life mobility
- Collective and individual mobility
- Destination-oriented and ‘open-end’ mobility

Secondly, further research can dedicate more attention to the question in how far materialities, material and immaterial infrastructures relate to and depend on each other. Immaterial infrastructures materialize in many more different ways than presented in this thesis; material infrastructures can be further analyzed in regard to their interplay, symbolism and meaning. Also, material cultures and material implementations of mobility can be illuminated from many more perspectives.
Thirdly, the effect and use of the transfer system from the perspective of the irregular migrant or asylum seeker respectively can be further researched upon. The arranged transfer mobility with the purpose of immobility seems to be a paradox but from the perspective of the transferred person meaningful or possibly restrictive concerning the freedom of mobility. There are many relevant issues related to transfer such as the changing perception and mapping of directionality and locality.
Lastly, ethic concerns and methods to research upon migrancy should be further reflected and developed. There is an inherent power asymmetry between researcher and irregular migrant. Knowledge production within this area is full of suspense. It should be thoroughly and critically reflected, regarding the benefit and purpose of research. There is a constant risk of producing ‘controlling knowledge’ on which the mobility regime of ‘fortress Europe’ is based (Karakayali & Tsianos, 2007). New methodologies and research cooperations, involving different groups over a longer period of time, hold a big potential to foster the autonomy of irregular migrants instead of victimizing them despite the restrictiveness of the given situation in Europe. Evolving new perspectives, for both research and practice, of human mobility is essential. This thesis showed that borders cannot be hermetically closed and Europe cannot be isolated. Much more a complex system of limitation, differentiation and partial inclusion of migrant’s groups arises (Bojadzijev & Karakayali, 2007).

I reach Munich Central Station with a delay of an hour. Since the announced ‘police intervention’ in Rosenheim, my African fellow travelers are not on the train anymore. The border controls prevented them from further movement for a certain period of time. Despite all, they reached ‘this’ country Germany. In their imagination, it might have been an abstract destination and their first experience differs from their expectations. Even if they reach Munich soon and will be at the same place like me, we will never live in the same reality and be equally free to move and travel around.
7. Bibliography


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**8. Affidavit**

I hereby confirm that my thesis entitled “*All these countries are not easy. Materiality and infrastructure in the context of West African im/mobility in the EU*” is the result of my own work. I did not receive any special support or help from commercial consultants. All sources and materials applied are listed and specified in the thesis. No further sources or aids have been used except the explicitly stated ones.

Due to the peculiarity of the ethnographic approach I assure that I used the gained insights from the empiric research conscientiously. I do not aim to quote my research diary, that is surely an important basis, but to quote my West African respondents.

Furthermore, I confirm that this thesis has not yet been submitted as part of another examination process neither in identical nor in similar form.

Halle (Saale), 08/06/2016
9. Appendix

Overview Appendix

1. E-Mail from the minister in charge of integration in Bavaria (p. 89)
2. Transcription of interview with Amaniel (p. 89)
3. Transcription of interview with Abeeku (p. 107)

1. E-Mail from the minister in charge of integration in Bavaria.

Concern: Zahlen Asylsuchende Bayern

Von Integrationsbeauftragter@stk.bayern.de Datum 29.09.2015 14:50

Sehr geehrte Frau Günther,

http://www.sozialministerium.bayern.de/migration/asy/index.php#zugang
http://www.bamf.de/DE/Infothek/Statistiken/Asylzahlen/asylzahlen-node.html

Mit freundlichen Grüßen
Martin Neumeyer, MdL
Integrationsbeauftragter
der Bayerischen Staatsregierung
Postfach 220011
80535 München

integrationsbeauftragter@stk.bayern.de
www.integrationsbeauftragter.bayern.de
www.facebook.com/integrationsbeauftragter
2. Transcription of the interview with Amaniel

8. July

I had an appointment with Amaniel at 9pm, actually at the Karlsplatz, Stachus. However, I would have had an appointment with someone else, many hours before. However, this turns out to be an error…

So I call Amaniel and tell him that I am still at the Central train station. He quickly says that he can come there. So I explain him our meeting point: In front of platform 24, where there is also the Yormas shop which sells relatively cheap things.

I suggest to enjoy the warm summer night and take the metro to the Isartor to sit outside there. Amaniel first buys some water, the first water that he can drink during the whole day, a very hot day, regarding Ramadan. And when we arrive at our destination, we still buy some ice-cream.

Then we went down on the ‘museum’s island’, sitting down on a gravel bank, surrounded by many other people, students, barbecue events, tourists. Next to us is a couple, busy with each other. I have the impression that Amaniel feels a little bit uncomfortable to see this, because he is saying that during Ramadan you should not see these things. However, he wants to stay.

While we are sitting there, there is a big thunder storm coming and it gets dark. We go, when the first drops are falling, but then it does not really start raining yet. I meet Amaniel two times. I explain him my project and my research.

Amaniel: You have to ask maybe a particular question. #00:00:23-8#

I don’t have really particular questions. My interest is in you story in general. And whenever you want you can also ask sth. I see you are an interested person. So maybe you can first tell how old you were and what you were doing when you left Senegal. #00:00:49-6#

Okay. When I was leaving Senegal I was 21 years old before I took the journey to come to Europe. And also I was living with my parents in Senegal. #00:01:10-5#

Which region are you? #00:01:13-1#

I was in Luge (?). If you find it in a map you will see #00:01:21-3#

Can you write down? He does it… #00:01:26-0# and spells it again. #00:01:40-4#

So my parents are living there. Since we are now young, I travel to our neighbouring country, to Gambia, to my uncle. So it is where I do my schooling. #00:02:05-8#

And that is why you speak English? #00:02:07-1#

Yeah. I had... So I did my schooling also. This is where I went to an installation school. In the Gamby. #00:02:25-6#

And in which city? Banjul? The capital? #00:02:36-0#

No, Serekunda. #00:02:40-1#

Ah, it is the biggest city? #00:02:43-3#

Serekunda is bigger than Banjul. So I was there with my uncle, that is where I study. So, like this happening in Africa. So many of my friends left the country. Decide for leaving home, for a better life, you know. So, I also decided to leave Africa. #00:03:12-3#

And did they all leave the way to Niger, and Libya? #00:03:19-5#

What? #00:03:20-6#
What was their way to Europe? Passing through Niger? Like, the Senegal, then you have Mali, from Mali Burkina Faso, Burkina Faso to Niger, and Niger to Libya. So Libya you take the boat to Italy. #00:03:42-9#

Such a hard and long way. #00:03:45-8#

Yeah, and all those countries are not easy. #00:03:48-7#

I imagine. #00:03:50-2#

And, so you decided to leave when you were 21, and did you save money before? #00:04:00-4#

Like yeah, I was saving money for myself. But it was not enough, because I was going to school. So the little contract I was doing when going to school, so I worked maybe some hours, so... I saved some money. So when I used my money, the money I saved using to travel to... I think the money got finished in Burkina Faso. You now. #00:04:30-7#

How much money was it? #00:04:33-0#

It was in Gambia.... I was having like 3.000. It will be 15€. #00:04:46-8#

And in Burkina Faso "finito". #00:04:51-2#

Finito, So I have to work in Burkina Faso, have to work there to get some money to fast go to Niger. From Niger, I have to work to go to Libya. So Libya is easier to have money. Because Libya is a rich country. #00:05:12-6#

More or less. I heard stories that it is very hard, you get exploited, etc. #00:05:20-3#

Yeah yeah, all those happens. But maybe if you get a good boss in Libya, you are safe. Because from your house he will drive you to work. From work he will drive you to your house. So, others they do go to work from morning to night. You know, they are both... they will just chase them away with their gun, with their stick. So you won’t say nothing there because you have no right there. And ahm,,, Libya. There is no law there know. So anyone can do what people feel like. The other Libyans, they can kill all the foreigner and they will become nothing.. #00:06:24-4#

But it should not be like this. #00:06:28-2#

Did you arrive there with friends? #00:06:31-7#

Yeah, I make friends on the journey, you know. I met new people, so I made friends. #00:06:40-8#

And you stick together with other Gambians and Senegalese people? #00:06:43-9#

Yeah. #00:06:43-9#

And how long did it take you from Gambia to Libya? #00:06:47-9#

Yeah, almost, it takes me, seven, no nine months. Yeah, many months, I can’t really remember. (laughter) #00:07:00-2#

And did your parents know that you are leaving and heading to Europe? #00:07:05-3#

No, I did not tell them. #00:07:07-8#

Not even say Good bye? #00:07:11-3#

Yeah, I did not tell. Because I know it is a journey of risk. #00:07:13-8#
Yeah, you risk a lot. #00:07:15-2#

Yeah, I risk my life, so. I knew if I tell my mom, she would not be comfortable, you know? #00:07:20-1#

Yeah, also with... because even when I was in the Gambia, there were many boys from Senegal and Gambia who could not make it to Europe, so they loose their lifes in the desert, in the river, so ... that was the reason for my... I just decided to go. But I was telling my mom that I was going for an academy. You know. Our school, for maybe three months. Because before I started the journey I was doing an academy in one town in the Gambia for three months. So I came back. Yeah. So I went to Senegal, made up my mom, so. Even my uncle I did not tell my uncle that I am going. I just told them I was going for an academy. School is taking me. #00:08:39-7#  

And then, where did you arrive in Libya? In which city did you work? #00:08:39-7# Tripoli? #00:08:47-9#

Yeah. #00:08:48-8# #00:08:47-4#

And how long did you work there? #00:08:51-0#

Tripoli, I spent there only 4 months, because I was locked up in a prison. Before I got in to Tripoli I was in a small village called Draga. So Dragan is a very little village, because there was no asmas. You know asmas? you know, when you say gangsters. #00:09:24-8#

You know? #00:09:24-8#

And how long did you work there? #00:08:51-0#

When you say Libyan gangsters. So maybe I should explain, we call them asmas. Asma, the young boys. So in Dragan there was no asmas. You can walk freely. You can go out even in the night, yeah. You can listen to music in your house, that was no problem there. But after that many boys heard about this Draga. So they decide to come to travel. Everyone decide to travel to look for money, to pass Libya, so to Tripoli. Because Dragan to Tripoli is one day or two days. #00:00:33-4#

And you always stay in a house with Gambian or Senegalese? #00:00:37-7#

Yeah, and Maliens, Nigers, you know. The house is like... you can’t just call it a house. Because you know in Libya is a desert, the rain is not that much in Libya. I don’t know how to call it, but it is not a house. A house. If you lay down like this, you cannot lay down comfortable because there are many people. #00:01:09-7#

Is it so overcharged? #00:01:10-8#

Yeah, you are with your rips like this, so this is the way it will be (demonstrates it) till the morning, you cannot move. But look, for example. So, when the police heard that there are many refugees in Dragan, so others, others, you know walk on the night. You know Libyans respect their women too much. So maybe they were afraid that you know the boys will flee their women. Because there were many refugees there. Like there are many migrants there. You can’t call them refugees. Because Libyans they don’t keep refugees. Migrants yes. So after one day suddenly we all who were in the house were surrounded by the police who came there. Yeah. So when they surround, other boys escaped, so the police understand, they keep us. They (xxx) towards the situation there, how boys will escape. So when they came there they ask us "Don’t be panick", so they gather all of us in one place. So the leader of the police was the one that panick. They said to us "You came here for our own safety". Because we heard that there are asmas coming to this village. You know, to trench you, to take your money away from you. It is not ... Before you know, there were two asmas, Brusnak a boy. So, they just dumped the boy on his hand, so.

You were telling about the police, coming to the house. #00:03:16-1#

Ah yeah. So they gathered all the boys. After that they are not going to punish because they are police. We heard that asma boys were coming here. They trenchen you to take you, your money, to smash away your money. You then have to be worried. So you got to do is not to leave your house when it is a... when the sun is set. Yeah, sunset you don’t have to leave your house. Because it is not safe, you know. That was their plan. But we did not know that they would come for us, the following sunday. So, we were there following sunday they came. They came with many
troops, with many police. They position each other. No one could escape from that place. There was only one boy who escaped because he was in toilet. So when he heard the noise, he went to toilet, so he was the only one who escaped out of 112 people, I think. After they gathered all of us and they drive us to their police station to their village. They lock us there without food on that night. So in the morning they give us each one bread. So we ate it. They were not saying nothing, they were taken our data, our names. You know, they were not telling us that we will send you back to your country or we are going to sentence you guys in jail. We don’t know nothing about it. So they drive us for their second capital, called Sabha. It is the riskiest. So they drive us their. After, when we reached there in the prison. So, luckily for us. Because it was not a prison, it was a deportation house. #00:05:39-2#

A huge one? With many people? #00:05:42-9#

Yeaaah! Sooo many people. More than 2,000. Because each room there is a big room. Each room will have about 70. In our room we are 74 in numbers. Yes. #00:06:01-6#

Wow. #00:06:04-1#

And so luckily, it was not hard in that deportation camp. We spent one month there. It was not hard there. You don’t go out. You only stay in the house. So we don’t get food. We always eat food. You know, Libyans they have money, so. #00:06:23-6#

At least they gave you regularly food. #00:06:27-7#

Yeah, they gave us regular food. Yes, they give us regular food every day. So none of us was crying for food in the deportation camp. But it was not easy. A month, you leave your country inside of something. #00:06:44-8#

Yes, you don’t expect this. #00:06:46-0# Did you hear about this deportation camps before? #00:06:50-1#

Nein. When I was in Dragan I did not hear about it. But my friends were saying they keep photos tomorrow, you know otherwise, next year. You know, the Libyans will come and they scamp all of us and write our names. So, we will just be there the same day and tomorrow we are going back. So we decided, one day, there was a Gambian who came from one prison room to our room. They transfer him to our room. So when he just came, he just stepped in. So, and that night we were chatting. Everybody was chatting. Everybody was laughing, we forget that we are in a prison. Anybody was... it was so funny! So in the morning, they ran all the boys in the room. They told us that this, above, in the terrace. You know, terrace? There is a legal above the terrace, four big holes. So, he told us that this one, this place is an escaping place. Maybe we can try. Yeah. But the boys were afraid. So if you go to a particular group and tell them "tonight we can escape here". The group will say "Okay no problem, no problem", so he will go to another group and just random groups like that. You understand? So when you go back to his position, all the boys started saying "oh, it is not safe, is not safe. If you try to escape, they cut you, they will kill you." We have seen someone who tried to escape, they throw hot water on him. So, the guy just heard about it. They just took out and said "don’t be a chicken man", like you know (big laughter)... yeah, it was not nice. He said to us that, you know, you would not stay this just now. But I know if we all stayed here until we get fed of, noone will tell us to try this escaping place. And he was so right. Yeah.There was a day, everyone was fed off in the prison. So we can’t continue like that. They don’t deport us, they don’t release us. They are just, they are like sick. #00:09:06-7#

And then? You together escaped? #00:09:11-1#

Yeah, we all escaped. #00:09:12-4#

And did you have to jump down? #00:09:14-5#

No no no no. The first were eight boys, they escaped. So on that night I was sleeping. I did not know nothing about their escape. I was in the room, so they escaped. So in the following day, I heard about it and I thought "wow"! So today, we must escape, we must try this. So four of us will just stand. Stand and hold each other like this (demonstrates it). Two other boys we stand on top of the four boys. So, they also hold each other. So another one goes on top again. Like the three step. #00:00:13-2#

Wow, seems very acrobatic. #00:00:12-9#
So, he will cut the hole. You understand? So, you he will go up to the wall, and when he goes up, we will give him our blankets. You know blankets? So he will just lay on the hole on top, give us the blanket down, and we will take the blanket. So it is a big hold, it is a big group.

Wow, a challenging organisation!

So if he, ahm, helps one person to get off, so that boy will go and stand to the other’s hold. So if that boy helps one person again, the other one will go to escape. The next boy. So we tried to do that. So I think, we all escaped on the...

There were only 16 persons left out of 74!

Wow, huge escape. You did very well.

And they did not follow you?

Did he hit you?

No, no no. So, when I was running, my left leg hit something. Maybe a big stone or a block, so I got a big injury from that on my food.

But still you were lucky.

Yeah, yea. I can walk and do anything. But nearly my one, ah, how to call it? Ah, my left toe, second toe, nearly. ... I was so lucky, you know, that the wound did not reach my muscle. So, it was healed in Italy, when I live here. So, it’s a long story, I can’t tell you all. Such a long story” And it is very hard, it’s so lang, very long.

Wow, yes I see.

Hey, in Libya, I experienced a lot.

Brave you.

And then you escaped from Sabha to Tripoli?

Sabha, yeah. So when I escaped from Sabha, I just stay in Tripoli. Because I can’t go to work. So my leg was pain. So I was not even feeding myself. It was the boys feeding me, you know. So, when my leg just got better, I just tried to work. Maybe a little bit. It is better to have a fair to Tripoli. So, when I left to Tripoli, I was staying there four months. To work on my boat fare, boat faire...

What did you work?

You don’t have like a... how do I say it? Profession. Others are working there as a profession, mechanic. But, I don’t, I don’t do any electric work in Libya. So maybe I will just go to unfinished buildings. I work there, I work in the garden, you know. So, there is a place where we stand. Many boys used to stand. We call it Tchaklas. So, if any arab one needs work, you know, so he will just call me with his head car, standing. So he comes. When he comes, the boys will just, like a...
And how much money did you have to save for the passage to Italy? #00:05:44-7# Yeah, it was around, ahm, 600 Dinar. Yeah. 600 Dinars. #00:05:59-5#

How much is it in Euros? #00:06:00-9#

I don’t know, maybe 400€. #00:06:08-1# And, four months? #00:06:12-1#

Yes, four months. #00:06:13-2#

And then, there is a passage man who takes the money and arranges everything? #00:06:19-7#

Yeah, there is a businessman there who takes the money from you. We call him "Kockso" in Libya. So, he is the one who will arrange the boat. He will arrange the boat, he is the one who pays the captain of the boat. Yeah. #00:06:41-8#

Ah. And could you choose the date when you want to leave? #00:06:50-2#

I can’t choose for myself. He is the only one who chooses. Like we will be there, he will come to your house, we call it in Libya "fuai". He will come there and say "My people will go this day". So, you understand? So, he will tell you who will go to stay. If he has your number, he will call you. They say you got this. So today, go to a chak-place (this workplace) and wait there. There will come a car there, the car will pick you to the river side. So when you reach to the river side, you are taken to maybe a small room. So you sit there until 1 o’clock in the night. 2. So, the boat will depart from Libya. #00:07:42-1#

And, did you regret something when you were in Libya? #00:07:48-0#

No. I never regret because I was the one who choose for myself to come. So I never regret. So even when I escape from the prison they shoot us, they shoot us, a gun, so, we escaped, so luckily the blood does not touch the boy. So, luckily on that day it was raining also. So, I had somewhere, I had somewhere, you know, it was a, like a barrage, an ami-camp where you see old war materials, you know, war weapons. Yeah, you know, I slept there. So on that day I was like moscitos were biting me everywhere. I did not sleep. So I was thinking "Why do I come to this journey, why do I keep this journey?". I say to myself "No, I am the only one...." #00:08:55-1#

So, you were doubting, but you were also having a clear destination? #00:08:54-4#

Yeah. So I was having courage to myself. I knew very grace, since I started this. #00:09:05-0#

Is it raining? #00:09:08-6#

Oh, no no. I think it starts. #00:09:11-0#

We stay here under the bridge or? This bridge here was... But maybe. #00:09:21-8#

Or should we go somewhere else (me)? #00:09:21-8#

Yeah.

End

Then we sit on a bench on the island and still chatting. He was telling me how he crossed the Mediterranean Sea. He was saying that he was so afraid about the trip and he gets badly sea sick. The weather and the sea was very very stormy. So he was feeling very bad. Fortunately he could sit on top, however hardly able to hold. He had to puke. All the people were very afraid and were praying. He also sent his prayers. Fortunately they were rescued. He is also telling, that not everybody survived this trip, the boat was going badly from one side to the other side.
When Amaniel gets a phone call from his friend, we decide to go. There is a friend, living in Munich, who is cooking for him. His friend is also doing the Ramadan. On the way back, we are still trying to arrange a next meeting. He also wants to finish his story. His story about his experiences in Europe.


Setting

I meet Amaniel at 10pm at the train station. I was there first, and then quickly went away for searching toilets. He was calling me precisely at 10pm asking where I am. This time Amaniel wished to come later because he is doing Ramadan. So last time when we met, he was saying that it was a little bit hard to talk so much without eating.

So, together we take the metro, going two stations, until Isartor. It is already night. Here, we were sitting down at another place than last time. There are less people around. We are going down to the gravel bank, down at the river Isar. Here, there is an empty table with chairs that are obviously not supposed to be there. We are the only ones at the gravel bank.

While going there, we exchange a lot. I really enjoy to talk to Amaniel, as he has such an impressive talker, rhetorically talented. His way of telling seems very authentic to me, I sometimes can really feel with him. He has an excellent sense of humor and such a positive attitude towards life. He is telling me, what he misses very much, besides a work and his family: In Gambia he loved to dance, especially breakdance! They put three benches in a triangle next to a DJ. It was always a crowded, big party. Then, everybody who wanted to could buy a song for about 10 cents. When it was then his or her song, this person was supposed to go to the middle of the triangle and (break-) dance. The person in the middle could invite others to dance with him or her. The people around were also celebrating and shouting. Especially now during Ramadan, he does not go out at all.

We are chatting a lot about leisure time, until I switch on the recorder. Also in between, I switched it off sometimes. The introduction is that he notices that he can tell so much…

Me: I know, if you start, to fresh up your memories, then more and more comes. #00:00:09-2#

Yeah, so,... #00:00:12-0#

(We are talking about the trains we will have to take back, each of us in another direction. We meet late because of Ramadan, Amaniel first wanted to have sth. in his stomach. We have almost one hour, at midnight we have to leave). #00:00:38-2#

So, like when I arrived in Sicily.... (sigh)... so, when the big boat rescued us, so we spent two days in the big boat. #00:01:03-6#

Two days, until you got to the land? On sea? #00:01:08-5#

Yeah, on sea. It was wild. So.... The mediterranean Sea is very nice, very big. So we spent two days in the big boat. So we arrived in the morning, so... Then. #00:01:28-1#

Do you remember the date? #00:01:27-4#

I did, I left Libya on the 5th february. 2014. So, I arrived in Sicily on the 7th. BEcause the boat take us two days. BEcause when they rescued us, they transfer us to the big boat. So we spent one night at the big boat. The following morning we arrived. But we did not exit the big boat until the evening. You understand? #00:02:14-4#

Ah, you were in the port and they let you wait? #00:02:14-4#

Yeah, they let us wait, because there are many people to arrange. SO others were arriving there.... you know, their names, their birthdays, their country, so. Then you just proceed. There was two guys sitting. I don’t know how to call them. So you just go, write our name, our date of birth, our country, so after that they transfer us to a bus in that ... was it evening? So, we went to a hotel in Sicilia. We spent a night there. So in the morning we take a bus again to Foggia (spells it). #00:03:03-0#
In Sicily? #00:03:06-2#
No, in Süditaly. Puglia, the region. So when we get there, we take us to a camp a refugee camp. So we were there. It was so hard there. Because, before, every day they pay maybe 2,50€. #00:03:32-5#

You get in cash? #00:03:34-7#

No, not cash, we get it on every two days. Like every two days they will give us one packet of cigarettes. #00:03:42-5#

Really, cigarettes? #00:03:43-7#

Yes. And that costs 5€. So, if you are not a smoker, you sell you cigarette. You then have 5€. #00:03:54-3#

Really? That is strange, it is unhealthy. They should not push you to smoke. #00:03:57-4#

Yes, that is how it is in Italy. Even if you are not a smoker, you get it... #00:04:07-2#

And what have you done? Did you sell your cigarettes? #00:04:07-2#

Yes, I sell my cigarettes. So, my cigarettes. So they give us daily food, in the morning, evening, afternoon. So, that is how we live there. Until I left there generally. Because in Italy it is not easy. #00:04:34-8#

And you decided to leave? #00:04:36-4#

Yes, because I cannot really sell the cigarettes without walk (laugh). So I came here maybe here. Maybe just, maybe here I can have a better future. #00:04:52-8#

You were thinking about Germany, when you left? #00:04:52-8#

Yes, I was thinking. Yeah, when I was in Italy, I was thinking about Germany. Yeah! I was thinking about Germany, also thinking how to get work. Because if I call some of my friends here, they will tell us, or they will tell me, you know, in Germany they have work. Yeah, I left Italy to here for my, for check for a work. But I have, unfortunately when I get here (big excitement in voice), I was in a camp, after that they transferred me to my living place soon. #00:05:29-2#

But, like, in between. How much time did you spent in Puglia? #00:05:33-1#

Ahm, I tell you last time: Ten months. #00:05:38-7#

And then you took a bus or train to Milano? #00:05:44-1#
I took a train, not bus. #00:05:45-6#

From Southern Italy? #00:05:45-6#

Yeah, and the money you earned from selling the cigarettes. Not only the cigarettes, sometimes, you know, I was doing the Pomodori. You know pomodori? #00:05:56-1#

Tomatoes. #00:05:56-4#

Yeah, so in Foggia, there is the biggest pomodori-plantation. So, if it is time for pomodori, like right now, this month we are, July to August, is the time of pomodori. So maybe you can go to pomodori, you can go and walk there for a day, you can earn maybe 50, 60, 70, yeah.. So if you work on that. Maybe it only lasts for some weeks, I think. So, you can try and save your money. #00:06:39-5#

How much did you earn in total? #00:06:42-8#
In Pomodori? #00:06:43-7#

Yes. #00:06:43-7#

Like, I have money so, but I saved 350. #00:06:51-8#

Oh, good money. #00:06:54-6#

Yes, 350€. #00:06:55-5#

And at this time, did the police or government give you papers? #00:07:00-0#

In Italy? #00:07:03-3# You know, they give others papers. Other don’t have papers. #00:07:07-1#

And you did not get some? #00:07:11-2#

No. #00:07:07-0#

And you did not make an asylum demand? #00:07:11-2#

Oh yeah, I make an asylum, because, ahm, I fingerprinted my hand in Italy. This is where I first fingerprinted my hand. And in Germany right now here, it is so hard. Because they have said that they have seen my hand in Italy. #00:07:30-1#

Ah, shit. #00:07:30-1#

Yeah, so, that is the Scheisse for me. But I have taken a lawyer, so maybe we can try and fight it all. Maybe. #00:07:40-0#

Oh, good luck. #00:07:43-9#

So, that’s it. If you fingerprint your hand in Italy. So Germany, they will see it. For others they won’t see it, they can’t see others. It is just here, they see. Just that’s it. #00:08:00-0#

Ah. #00:08:03-8#

An unfortunately also, I came here. So I was working for two weeks in one restaurant. So after this story was, I went to Landratsamt (or any other administrative institution, unclear pronounciation), they were the one in charge of us, they were the one in charge of us. I asked them why? Why can’t I work any longer? They told me... because Senegal there is no problem. #00:08:30-7#

Ah, shit. #00:08:30-7#

So, scheisse. So now, how I wake up is how I sleep. So, now I want to start schooling. Is better I think. Is better than, you know, sleeping, waking up in the morning, having stress on yourself...

Me, if I don’t do anything, I will just be in my room, throughout the night, maybe watching TV or having my handy on my hand, finger. So I will just wake up late. I wake up late, I found that I am not doing anything, you know. So in the future I want to be a responsible man. I hate myself. #00:09:10-3#

No, stop. #00:09:13-1#

Yeah, that’s it. I hate myself. #00:09:18-0#

Because you are lazy? #00:09:21-7#
No, not only because I am lazy. You know, I am a grown-up man. So I have to wake up in the morning and do something. #00:09:27-1#

Yes, you need activities. So if I wake up there is no activity to do, only to drink, eat, sleep. So, that is scheisse. #00:09:41-3#

And, your way to Germany was by train? From Verona? #00:09:54-8#

Verona, in Italy? You say? #00:10:00-0#

Yes, how did you come to Germany? #00:00:16-7#

In Germany I can’t explain actually. Because in Puglia, in Freggia where I was, I can’t walk not so good, because we are in a bush. In a bush, you understand? So, I just don’t go out, to town. I have never been to Roma or Napoli or any other place. All those ten months, I stayed in the camp. I have never travelled, so I don’t know Verona, I don’t know, so... When I was leaving Italy, I left on the night. #00:00:54-2#

By train? #00:00:54-2#

By train, yeah. #00:00:55-4#

And from which city did you leave? #00:01:01-1#

We take a bus from Foggia to, .... I don’t know where. Where do we go? I take the train to, yeah. I don’t remember. #00:01:22-9#

YOu took the train to the north, and then another train to Germany? #00:01:28-8#

To Süd. You know, I am in Süditaly, in Foggia. #00:01:31-5#

Yeah, but from South to the North in Italy, and then you changed? #00:01:39-0#

Yeah, from South... #00:01:39-0#

And how was it, on the train? Did they control you? #00:01:43-5#

Yeah, but so luckily they did not control me. #00:01:44-9#

Really? #00:01:46-0#

Oh, yeah, I escape. Others escape, others did not escape (laughter of joy). So. #00:01:54-1#

And when you arrived to Munich Central Station, the police took you? #00:02:00-5#

No, the police did not take me. #00:02:01-7#

What have you done when you arrived? #00:02:05-1#

Because I did not arrive in München Central Station. I arrived in a ... Karlsruhe. You know Karlsruhe? So, after Karlsruhe I just asked some people how to get to the asylum, asylum… what? #00:02:27-3#

Asylum center? #00:02:27-3#

Asylum center, yeah. So when we get there, they write us a letter. We told them we are from Senegal. So they gave us a letter and a date, and a bus ticket, and a train ticket to München here. So from Karlsruhe we came to
München. And we seek asylum in München. In Kieferngarten. #00:02:54-0#
You remember the date when you arrived in Germany? #00:02:59-0#

I left Foggia on the 4th december, the 4th december. So I arrived in Germany on the 7th. #00:03:24-0#

Ah, okay. In winter time, so it was cold here? #00:03:29-1# It was
so cold man. #00:03:31-9#

Did you have warm clothes? #00:03:33-3#

Yeah, I came along with warm clothes. Because before I left there, I call my friends. And they told me it is
so freezing here. #00:03:43-1#

Ah, so you have friends here? #00:03:44-0#

Yeah. #00:03:46-7#

And they said "come over"? #00:03:45-3#

Come over. But they are not in München here. #00:03:50-7# Where
are they? #00:03:50-7#

They are around Stuttgart. #00:03:58-6#

Do you know them from Gambia? #00:03:59-2#

Yes, I know, they are Gambians, yes. That is why they are around Stuttgart. Because Gambians they don`t live
around München. If you say you are from Gambia, they will take you to Karlsruhe or Mannheim. #00:04:11-0#

I did not know this. #00:04:14-0#

Yeah, so if you see here, ahm, they are Senegalese, Maliens, Nigerians. #00:04:21-9# Okay. And
did you have an idea about München or Karlsruhe? #00:04:28-9#

Before I get here? No. I just came here like that. #00:04:36-5# Ah, try
out something new? #00:04:36-5#

Yeah, yes. #00:04:43-6#

That is also a reason. And what did it mean for you? And can you imagine to visit more other countries in
Europe? #00:04:53-8#

Actually now, I am ... I am thinking before I leave here for other countries, before I start, I start again. SO it will
take time. So I rather stay here. Rest here and wait maybe. In near future. So, if I get work here or if I get strong
here, I can go to other countries without any difficulties. Because I don`t want to go to any countries now, hiding
myself. #00:05:35-0#

Yes. #00:05:35-0#

Yeah, that is scheisse, you know? #00:05:37-9#

Yes, I imagine. #00:05:37-9#
Yes, I don’t want to hide again. So I have been hiding since I left my country to Europe, Italy. And again hiding, coming to Germany. So I don’t want to hide again now.

And, what is your lawyer saying? 

My lawyer? Actually he is saying that we should wait, in six months. So now, two months have already been gone. So maybe waiting four months. We should wait, wait for the court. So after we will go to Court, so if I have a good solution, to the problem, if I have a good idea, I will stay. I don’t know.

I hope for you!

They will chase me away, you know.

Scheisse.

Scheisse, so if they chase me away to Italy, that will be another error. Wow.

Don’t think about it.

For me, yes. That is life.

It is unfair.

Because if I get to Italy now, there is nothing there, nothing for me. I can’t go to tour camp again, they would not, they won’t give me shelter again. So, it will be...

Don’t think about it too much. I hope you can stay here. I was in Brescia. Did you hear about it?

Brescia, what is Brescia?

It is a city in Italy, there are many Senegalese people.

Ahm, Brescia. I don’t know Italy much, actually. I know only Foggia, only the camp and Foggia town. Only the...

And this is not so nice?

Not so nice, yes.

And for you - once you were saying that a migrant is different from a refugee. What is for you the difference?

What?

Like the difference between a migrant and a refugee?

A migrant and a refugee, the difference?

Yes, for you?

A refugee is, to me, there is a difference, you know. Because, a refugee, like me, you know me, I am a refugee. so a migrant is someone who left his country just to.... okay. The difference is that, ahm, a refugee came to a country, like how refugees are, coming to Italy and to Germany. They came there with nothing. You understand. So migrants, they can come with something. You understand? So.

Today I have also seen many people coming by train from Verona, they arrived in Munich Central
station, maybe 40, 50 people, also having nothing. #00:09:09-

You see, you see. #00:09:22-

Okay, you see, how is life better? #00:09:25-

I can't say though. Because how I want it, I did not have it. Because I want to wake up and have sth. to do. #00:09:34-

Oh, shit, I imagine. #00:09:37-

Yeah, that is my main problem. So, #00:09:50-

So, a sense of life, activity is missing? And the future? Or back to Gambia. #00:00:15-

Yes, for sure. Because my parents are there, my family. So it will be, like, I like to go and visit them. And also if I have work and help them. #00:00:31-

And are you in contact with your parents? #00:00:32-

Yeah, (don't) I call them. #00:00:40-

And they are proud of you? #00:00:40-

Yeah, and they also pray for me. So, I have to save their prayers. I hope they will receive my prayers. #00:00:57-

Ah, yes. And probably a good message would be if you do the language course and succeed with the Berufsschule, with the exam. #00:00:58-

Yeah, for sure. #00:01:09-

And where you live now, I think a container is not a good living place? #00:01:13-

Ah, that also. So, it is just like in Lotto. If you are in a camp, like you have the transfer, they transfer others far away from München. So others will stay in München, but they will be in a house. Others will stay, they have a house outside München, but that is just like us. But they will be in container. So when I was in the camp, I heard that, you know, that others live in a container. I was wondering "How can someone live in a container"? #00:01:45-

Ah, scheisse. And finally you are in one also. #00:01:50-

Yeah, how will it be like, how will it be like? The container: How will it be? I was asking myself, and chatting my friends. And my friends were like "let us just pray. So you will follow us having a container." You know? #00:02:04-

Yeah, shit. #00:02:04-

And unfortunately, ahm, we were three in the camp, so we were three friends in the camp. So the twos, they got a normal house. And I am living in a container. So I was the first passenger to be transferred. So.. #00:02:23-

So, you were the first transfer? #00:02:23-

Yeah, among the three. So, when I get the transfer, I went to Hedwig (?), so I was seeing one boy going to the house, I asked him: "What, they transfer me here. Can you take me to the house?" I was showing the adress. He told me "Yeah, I am going there". So we left. I was following him with my bags, walking behind him. So, I was seeing one building, and I say "wow, maybe this is the building". And this is the house where I were. So we just
go and then, the building like this. So, we just take a call, I show the containers, so ... So there were two rooms. I sat and wait. I was wondering. I asked him. "Are you living here?". He told me "Yes". I told him "Is here a camp?", will we be transferred again, to a normal house? He told me no. THs is your place now. So those two weeks, only one week, throughout that one, you know, I was so stressed, yeah. Finding myself in a container... And when I get the transfer, the following morning, like the Helferkreis were telling about Caritas. So, they are called Caritas. So the leader of the Caritas came, he called for home, he is someone there, for a meeting. So he was telling them: "But I don’t know what kind of problem". So, for me I was thinking there is something higher than me, you understand? So, they call for a meeting, I went there, I heard that you know, they were saying "what the boys do in the town, I don’t know"... something like that. I was so horrified. So I just left the building, I just left the meeting. They were saying "where are you going?". "I don’t know, I am going". So they did not see me again.

You never went there again? Nein, I never went there, because I was stressed.

Ahm, how long did you stay at Bayernkaserne? I was staying in Bayernkaserne, in Kieferngarten, four days. So from Kiefergarten to Moosfeld, ahm, U-Bahn, before Messestadt Ost. Am Moosfeld-camp.

Is it another camp? Yeah, is another camp before you get transferred. So I spent there one month. I don’t know, three weeks, or... maybe two months. After they transferred me.

And if you describe how it was to live in these camps in Kieferngarten? Yeah, Kieferngarten is a good camp. Yeah, because you have everything. There is a field to play football, they give good food, you know. They have cafeteria, you can go there and drink coffee. No, Kieferngarten is a nice place. It is a nice place.

And Moosfeld? To me, Kieferngarten is better than Moosfeld. Because Moosfeld is just in one building, just like a, ... Before, it was a working-building, a working place. So the children did not come. So, Moosfeld is better, because Kieferngarten is not open, just one building. You can’t do some activities, you just ... you can’t go anywhere to have fun.

But it is close to Munich also? Yeah, it is close to Munich.

And, why did they transfer you from Kieferngarten to Moosfeld? Because, I don’t actually know. Maybe, Kieferngarten, every day, refugees come there. So, there is not enough space. There are many camps different from Kieferngarten. If you go to Kieferngarten, they transfer others to... ahm Allach. You know Allach? Allach, before Dachau. There is a camp. And Moosfeld, there is a camp there. Yeah, so....

And you know from your transfer because they put lists? Or how do they do it? Do you get a number?

Like a transfer is a form, is a form of luck. And, I can’t say, it is a form of luck, just like lottery, like you said. Somehow they just come today, they will transfer me tomorrow, nach Moosfeld. Someone will spend in Moosfeld four months, before he gets transferred. But most of all, others spend there four months, the more you spend, ah, the more your duration is longer, so you get the opportunity to have house in München, yeah, because
many of them, some spent there four, three months. So they end up having houses in München here. So others who came today, they get transferred tomorrow, they have houses outside München. Maybe one hour drive, one hour thirty minutes, two hours. #00:07:52-8#

And, did you. From Karlsruhe to München you took the train with others? #00:08:09-9#

From where? #00:08:12-6#

From Karlsruhe. #00:08:12-6#

Yeah, I took the train. #00:08:15-1#

Alone? #00:08:16-9#

No, not alone, because I did not come alone. I came on .. you know, some Senegalese boys. And then they trusted you that you arrive? Or did the police accompany you? #00:08:26-0#

No, we came alone, because they give us, ahm, an adress.. Yeah, and a train ticket. #00:08:36-1#

And how did you find the adress? #00:08:36-1#

Because I asked. Because before, we were not having a phone to check the map, google map. So we just asked, and we don’t know the situation here, we don’t know the streets. The sign boards, you know. #00:08:59-3#

And the Android phone, you bought here? #00:08:59-3#

Yeah, I bought it here. #00:09:01-0#

From your first savings? #00:09:05-1#

No, not my first savings. #00:09:03-2# Because when I was in the camp, they were paying me 156€, so it is less then, before you get your house. So I spent in the camp two months, and waiting for my house. I bought this phone around march. My second bill. You know, in my house. #00:09:30-1#

And, now you share a room? #00:09:33-0#

Hm? #00:09:36-6#

You share the room? Are you two people? #00:09:36-6#

Yeah, two people. #00:09:39-0#

Another Senegalese? #00:09:39-0#

No, he is a Somalian. Very good brother. Yeah, I am having a best brother, a Somalian. #00:09:49-4#

And you chat a lot with him? #00:09:52-3#

Chat? Yeah, he is a best bro. Because he never disturbs me, never. I don’t know how to explain, but no, he is a cool man. Because, we have a good relationship. Because he is having a family. You know, he is having a wife, and I don’t know, two kids or three kids. But he is still young. My brother, he is young. #00:00:41-3#

The family is in Germany? #00:00:45-6#
No no no. In Somalia. Saffer, his name is Saffer. I have never seen someone like him. Someone who can be so peace and life. Yeah. #00:01:04-3#

Wow, is he 23 years also? #0001:10-2#

He is maybe around 29. #00:01:14-4#

Wow, then you are lucky, within the system of lottery. #00:01:22-8#

(Laughter) Yeah. #00:01:29-2#

But in my eyes, I know a container camp and a house in Kirchseeon. And I have to say that I think the container is better, because the house is so disgusting, it is so stinky, there are mushrooms, and I think you get polluted. #00:01:43-8#

Yeah. #00:01:43-8#

It is such an old house, it sucks. I think there are good houses. #00:01:45-4 #00:01:51-0#

Maybe if they are giving, you know, they don’t give all good houses. Others they have houses. Like a dog house, a house that they prepare, they maintenance. So, it is just a matter of luck, bro. Those, one week, I was so stressed, I found myself in a bad moment. But after, he came, to made up the situation in the container like, you get used of the container, to adopt the life of the container. So now, I already adapt. #00:02:34-0#

And now you are happier? #00:02:35-2#

Yeah, now I am happier. I am happy. That is the best. I am happy now. #00:02:40-8#

And you would not change container against a house anymore? #00:02:43-9#

If I have a house, of course I would. Hahaha! Aua! #00:02:51-9#

How many people are living in your container? #00:02:53-6#

Like we are having two containers, so. I think in our container, is it (counts silently) 26. #00:03:26-6#

And you cook together and have common activities? #00:03:28-7#

No, not in common. Everybody cooks for him, yeah for himself. Because there is no woman there, only men. #00:03:38-1#

What actually about women? #00:03:42-8#

No, there is no woman in our container. #00:03:43-6#

And, when you were for example crossing the Mediterranean Sea or Libya? Because I am wondering, what about women? #00:03:54-6#

Yeah, there were women there, and kids. #00:04:01-0#

In Libya? #00:04:04-3#

No, they are not Libyans, they are Syrians. So, much of the movements crossing the Mediterranean Sea, they are Syrians, or Palestinians, and the Nigerians. With their kids and the grown old man, all women. So they all cross the Mediterranean Sea. #00:04:30-0#
And Senegalese women? I have... #00:04:36-7#

Some Senegalese came, but you count them. You only count them. Not that much. Maybe women in Senegal, those women who are stubborn, they just take the journey. #00:04:53-3#

Those who are stubborn they come? #00:04:56-9#

(Laughter) But not that much, you can just count them. And, not much. #00:05:00-7#

Yes, I am wondering. Because I did not see women arriving with the train. #00:05:10-0#

But the Eritreans, and the Somalian women, oh! You just see them. #00:05:17-4#

They are coming, the women. #00:05:16-7#

Yes, the Eritreans and Somalians. #00:05:25-5#

And they travel in groups? And West African people travel more alone? #00:05:31-2#

Yes, Westafrica, we come alone. But, the others, they come together. #00:05:41-0#

So, there is a lack of women? #00:05:50-0#

Hm? #00:05:50-0#

There is a lack of Senegalese women here? #00:05:50-0#

Yeah (laughter). Senegalese women, you just, you don’t want to maybe, you and... #00:06:06-6#

I think also the journey is so hard, that also physically, women can’t do it. #00:06:09-7#

Physically yeah, sometimes it is very hard physically. Not sometimes. The journey is hard though. Physically, yeah. But others, they don’t get any difficulties, you know. But as more there leave their country, they will just take the journey smoothly, without any difficulties. They just take a bush, or even crossing the desert, they will not find any difficulties. Getting into Libya, no difficulties. You understand? So, crossing also the Mediterranean Sea, no difficulties. Because if you are crossing, sometimes, the River, the Mediterranean Sea used to be like this. The water will just flow like this, smoothly. When the weather is good, so there is no difficulties. You will just be in the boat, everyone will be chatting. You are gonna make it ”tool bass” to Italy. Yeah, they call it ”tool to Italy”. But when we were coming, the water was like this. The water, pffh, when the boat get like this, we all go this direction (demonstrates it). Yeah, the arabs will be like ”Allah”, you know. Calling God’s name, praying. So, it’s so shock. #00:07:29-5#

Yeah, but I think that it is such a long way, that you always have barriers and hindrances on your way. Also, in Italy, I found, in Brescia where I lived, I did not meet women from Senegal. There were two Senegalese restaurants and there were women cooking. #00:07:59-2#

There were women cooking, aha. They can cook. #00:08:02-8#

Yeah, they can.

End

After the interview, we went together to the train station, continuing to chat. I ask him whether I can offer him some travel reimbursement (the journey from Dachau is not the cheapest), he refuses. Then he is telling me especially, that Dachau is too far away from Munich, in his eyes. There is nothing to do. While we were waiting for our trains, he is showing me photos of his friends that he has on his phone. Also from his friends in Italy with whom he was working “doing the pomodori”. He is saying, that all of them are now in Germany somewhere. Some went together. He was rather one of the latest who left. It seems like a trend in my eyes, following the other, heading northwards, trying out, hoping to find a better work. It can’t be explained in my eyes with usual models, of course there is the network and an adventurous, emancipatory element involved in it.
Amaniel’s regional train is coming earlier than mine. We quickly take a photo and saying goodbye and good night. This time he directly goes back and not to a friend to have dinner (or food in general as it is Ramadan) like last time.

We were calling and writing each other sometimes, just a little and nice update. He called me to spread his good news that he was among the few ones who succeeded with the “Deutschtest” and can now attend the Berufsschule, to become a mechanicien. I congratulated him.

Now, I unfortunately don’t have any news from him anymore. He does not pick up his phone nor does he respond to my e-mails. I worry that he might have been deported…

3. Transcription of the interview with Abeeku


I meet Abeeku when he was walking around on the big street in an industrial area next to the “Bayernkasern”. He was accompanied by another guy. At this moment I approached them, or they approached me, I don’t remember well anymore. He was saying that he is waiting or his medical check and then his transfer. So, we rather should hurry up with meeting another time. For the interview we meet two days later after our first encounter. We meet at the entrance of the Bayernkaserne, he comes out of the courtyard that is ‘protected’ by security. He means that he can show me the space, however I am not sure and rather deny. So we go about 500 meter where there is a lawn to sit down. I introduce the research project and asks whether he minds to be recorded. As it can be noticed, the interview is first halting, it is difficult to ‘get a flow’.

Okay, maintenant ca marche. Et tu dois pas dire ton nom là-dessus. Et j’essaye de prendre quelques notes aussi. Bah, j’ai pas vraiment des questions prédonnés, est-ce que tu peux raconter... tu peux te présenter ton age, la situation familiale, et de tout. #00:00:37-5#

Ah okay. Mon age? C’est 29 ans. Ma famille, qu’est-ce que tu dis? #00:00:56-0#

Oui, la famille. Ton père? #00:00:55-0#

Mon père en Côte d’Ivoire, ma mère au Sénégal. Ma soeur, ma grande soeur au Sénégal. #00:01:09-9#

Et tu es né au Sénégal? #00:01:09-9#

Oui #00:01:09-9#

Dans quelle région? #00:01:10-0#

Ah, Dakar. #00:01:14-9#

Okay. Et tu es déjà allée en Cote d’Ivoire? #00:01:21-4#

Non, pas encore. #00:01:24-1#

Et tu as fait l’école? #00:01:33-3#

Oui. #00:01:36-1#

Le bac? #00:01:37-3#

Non, le bac encore non. En troisième... Peut-être ca fait longtemps. #00:01:50-8#

Tu as eu quel age? #00:01:52-9#

Ahm, 26....13 ans (?). #00:01:57-8#

Parce que avec le système scolaire, en France, je ne connais pas très bien. #00:02:02-8#
Et après tu as décidé de travailler encore? #00:02:11-8#
Oui, encore le travail, oui. #00:02:13-8#
Qu’est-ce que tu as fait? #00:02:16-9#
Hm, pour le moment rien, rien. #00:02:21-3#
Et après l’école? #00:02:27-1#
Je suis parti en Italie. #00:02:32-5#
Et qu’est-ce que t’as motivé de partir? #00:02:37-1#
En Italie? #00:02:36-2#
Oui. #00:02:38-4#
Hm, je sais pas. C’est vrai, là-bas, pour aider ma mère, mon papa. Pour trouver un travail. #00:02:58-7#
Et tu es parti tout seul? #00:03:02-4#
Avec mon ami. #00:03:09-6#
Et tu as économisé pour le voyage? #00:03:13-9#
Hm, non. Tu te rappelle quand tu es parti? #00:03:25-2#
Quand on es parti? #00:03:25-2#
Oui, le moment quand tu disais au revoir à tout le monde. #00:03:26-5#
Oui, oui, je me rappèle encore. #00:03:27-7#
e #00:03:28-7#
Et tu as eu 13 ans, ou c’était plus tard? #00:03:35-0#
J’avais 13 ans. #00:03:39-5#
#00:03:39-5#
Wow, c’est très jeune, on est encore un enfant. #00:03:41-9#
Ah, oui encore. #00:03:51-4#
Et, après tu es parti au Niger ou au Maroc? #00:03:59-1#
Non, encore au retour au Sénégal. Moi, j’ai fait l’Italie deux ans et retour au Sénégal. J’ai fait vacances au Sénégal. #00:04:19-5#
Et comment tu es allé en Italie? #00:04:17-4#
En avion. #00:04:24-3#
Ah, okay. #00:04:24-3#
Aussi la deuxième fois en avion. #00:04:32-5#
Et tu es allée où en Italie? #00:04:34-3#
Ah, Sardegna (???). #00:04:47-0#
Avec ton ami? #00:04:52-0#
Oui, avec mon ami. #00:04:52-0#
Et qui a payé ça? #00:04:52-0#
Mon papa. Mon papa, il a envoyé de l’argent. #00:04:56-3#
Et tu as passé combien de temps en Italie pour la première fois? #00:05:09-7#
Ah, ça fait deux ans. #00:05:14-1#
Ah, avec 13 ans, jusqu’à 15 ans? #00:05:13-5#
Deux ans et un moi. #00:05:27-7#
Et tu as eu le permi de ..? #00:05:30-5#
Permi non. Pero (il réalise qu’il parle italien, il rit), moi, le condi (???) ouai, mais permi non. #00:05:42-8#
Et tu a conduit? #00:05:47-9#
Oui moi je conduit bien. Mais, il n’y a pas de permi. #00:05:52-2#
Et avec le papier en Italie? #00:05:53-0#
Non, au Sénégal. Là-bas, chez mon père. #00:06:03-4#
Et après deux ans, tu as vécu à Cagliari avec ton ami aussi? #00:06:07-7#
Oui, avec mon ami aussi. Ca fait, avec... #00:06:15-2#
Et vous avec loué un appartement? #00:06:19-9#
Oui, on louait un appartement. #00:06:24-5#
Et il y a avait des autres avec vous? #00:06:26-4#
Non, il y a ...non. Seulement deux, moi et lui. #00:06:36-2#
Tu as eu la chance, de lui connaître. #00:06:41-9#
Oui oui. #00:06:46-3#
Et après tu es retourné pour voir ta famille? Rentré au Sénégal, après deux ans? #00:06:58-4#
Oui, je suis rentré après les deux ans. #00:07:00-9#
Et tu as eu gagné beaucoup d’argent? #00:07:05-1#
Oui, nous avons gagné un peu d’argent. #00:07:09-0#
Combien? #00:07:09-0#
Hm, 3000€, 3.500. #00:07:20-3#
Wow, tu as bien travaillé. #00:07:20-3#
Oui. #00:07:25-0#
Et tu as donné ça à la famille? #00:07:28-9#
Oui, j’ai donné. #00:07:28-9#
Wow, c’est très généreux. #00:07:30-4#
J’ai donné, mais pas tout. #00:07:36-0#
Ah, tu as gardé un peu pour toi? #00:07:36-8#
Oui, j’ai gardé un peu. #00:07:34-9#
C’est bien aussi, tu prend soin de toi? #00:07:43-8#
Et, tu as passé combien de temps au Sénégal, quand tu es y allé? #00:07:49-0#
Hm, trois mois. #00:07:59-1#
Et, après tu as décidé de partir encore une fois? #00:08:04-7#
Oui oui, je suis retourné en Italie. #00:08:08-5#
Tu as acheté un autre billet? #00:08:08-4#
Oui oui. Ah, non. Moi, ça fait aller et retour. Aller retour. #00:08:18-3#
Ah okay. Et pourquoi au Sardegna? #00:08:30-5#
Parce qu’il est là, mon ami. #00:08:29-3#
Et c’est un ami que tu connais de ton école, ou bien? #00:08:43-1#
Non, mon ami, je connais depuis au Sénégal. C’était au Sénégal. #00:08:51-1#
Après tu es revenu, et vous avez habité ensemble encore une fois. #00:08:58-1#
Oui oui, encore une fois. #00:09:02-2#
Et tu as passé encore combien de temps? Tu as eu quel age la deuxième fois? #00:09:07-4#
La deuxième fois. Avec 13 ans je suis allé an Italie, 15 ans au Sénégal. Alors 15 ans. Encore en Italie. #00:09:33-2#
Et ton ami a le même age? #00:09:40-6#
Mon ami est un peu grand. Il a 32 ans. Il a une fille. #00:09:50-4#
Ah, il a déjà un enfant. #00:09:50-6#
Oui, une fille. Il est déjà marié. #00:09:55-9#
En Italie? #00:09:55-9#
Non, au Sénégal. #00:10:00-0#
Et il retourne aussi au Sénégal, chez ta famille? #00:00:26-8#
Mon ami? Oui, il retourne au Sénégal. Un an. Un an en Italie, un an au Sénégal. #00:00:42-8#
Quand j’ai été à Brescia, au nord d’Italie, parce que j’ai passé deux mois en Italie, et quand j’ai été là, j’ai
rencontré aussi des personnes qui bougeaient beaucoup entre les deux pays, l’Italie et le Sénégal. Oui oui. #00:01:01-7#

Et toi, qu’est-ce que t’a amené en Allemagne? #00:01:07-5#

Moi, parce que moi, vue que l’Italie, il n’y a pas de travail. Il y a des difficultés. Mhm. Et moi, c’est des idées. Je parlais avec mon ami qui a dit ca, qu’il faut partir en Allemagne. #00:01:36-3#

Et il t’a dit qu’il faut partir? #00:01:39-2#

Oui, il a dit qu’il vaut mieux de partir en Allemagne. #00:01:41-6#

Ah, okay. #00:01:43-2#

Lui, il m’a dit "okay", no problem. #00:01:50-4#

Ah, c’était son idée? Ou il a seulement confirmé ton idée? #00:01:51-4#

Oui, mon idée. #00:01:56-1#

Et qu’est-ce que tu as entendu d’Allemagne? Pourquoi tu as pensé que c’est un bon pays? #00:02:00-1#

Hm, bah. Je ne sais pas. #00:02:07-6#

Non? #00:02:08-9#

Oui. #00:02:11-3#

C’était quelqu’un qui t’a raconté ca? #00:02:12-8#

Quoi? #00:02:20-5#

Que l’Allemagne est un bon pays? #00:02:20-5#

Un peu, parce que moi, cette chose, c’est en Allemagne, des choses, encore, je connais pas. #00:02:44-5#

Aha. #00:02:47-7#

Mais quand tu as pris la décision de partir, comment tu as fait avec l’organisation? Tu as pris le bateau pour aller en Italie? #00:02:58-6#

Non, j’ai pris le train. Moi, j’ai pris le bateau à Cagliari - Genova. Genova, il a pris le train pour Milan. Encore, Milan à Verona. Verona encore à Brennero. Brennero encore à Innsbruck. Innsbruck encore à Germany. #00:03:39-5#

A Munich? #00:03:39-5#

Oui. Moi, trois jours la route. Trois jours, trois jours. #00:03:45-6#

Ah, oui, trois jours. Trois jours à la route, pour arriver ici. On ne dort pas. Nous dormait pas. Parce que le train, quand ca arrive à Verona, il y avait déjà beaucoup de personnes. Et il n’y avait pas de place. Aha. Et moi, j’ai dort à la station. Pour dormir. #00:04:17-4#

Ah, tu as attendu trois jours à Verona aussi? #00:04:18-6#

Moi, trois jours dans la rue. Trois jours au voyage. Trois jours de voyage. #00:04:28-7#

Oui, entre Verona et München? #00:04:28-7#

Puis, München. #00:04:32-9#
Et tu as acheté un ticket? #00:04:35-3#

Un ticket? #00:04:39-6#

Un billet, oui? #00:04:39-6#

Oui oui, j’ai acheté un billet. Et, est-ce que tu es descendu du train de Brennero à Innsbruck? #00:04:57-3#

Non, il faut changer. Oui, j’ai changé trois fois. Trois, quatre fois. Trois jours à la gare, pour venir en Germany. #00:05:12-5#

Et la police t’a contrôlé? #00:05:12-5#

Oui oui, ils ont contrôlé. Et il a chassé. #00:05:17-9#

Mamma mia. #00:05:21-0#

Et qu’est-ce qu’ils ont fait avec toi? Ils sont venu dans le train? #00:05:27-5#

Oui, oui oui. Ils sont venu dans le train. Mhm. #00:05:37-5#

Et quand ils ont vue que tu n’as pas de passport...? #00:05:43-2#

Oui, ils ont demandé le passport. Moi j’ai dit ah, moi, j’ai pas passport. Il a dit "sort!". Alors, il parlait avec moi un peu. #00:06:00-2#

Ah, okay. Et tu es descendu? #00:06:03-3#

Oui, et je descends. #00:06:04-3#

Et c’était où? #00:06:11-9#

La police, il m’a donné un papier. Un papier pour rentrer à München. #00:06:21-8#

Et c’était dans quelle ville? A Brenner? Ou Innsbruck? #00:06:25-6#

Non, Roch... Ros... #00:06:32-4#

Rosenheim?

_ #00:06:32-4#

Ah, oui, Rosenheim. #00:06:37-5#

Ah, et tu es descendu là? #00:06:36-8#

Oui, il a descendu là. quarante minutes, encore retour à... la Stazion de train. #00:06:47-4#

C’était encore le même train? #00:06:49-5#

Oui, oui oui. #00:06:57-3#

Okay, et ils t’ont donné une feuille? #00:07:00-8#

Oui, ils m’ont donné un papier pour... pour rentrer à München? #00:07:07-7#

Et qu’est-ce qu’ils t’ont dit? Tu dois aller à la police à München? #00:07:10-9#

Oui, il faut aller à la police, au bureau. #00:07:13-7#

Et comment tu as fait? #00:07:19-5#
Il m’a demandé le passport. Moi, c’est pas de nom. Il n’y a pas de passport. #00:07:25-3#

Quand tu es arrivé ici? #00:07:28-1#

Oui. Oui. #00:07:39-4#

Il y avait des autres africains dans le train? #00:07:45-1#

Non, seulement moi. #00:07:47-3#

Et, tu as eu peur? #00:07:51-2#

Non, je ne pleure pas. Je pleure pas. #00:07:56-0#

Et tu as eu peur? #00:07:56-0#

Hmm, peur? Non, un peu. Un peu. #00:08:04-6#

Ah oui. Tu ne sais pas où ça t’amène? #00:08:06-8#

Parce qu’il y avait une personne qui parlait italien anche. Moi, je parlait avec lui. Moi, non, je ne pleure pas. #00:08:17-0#

C’est courageux. #00:08:20-6#

Ah, oui. #00:08:23-2#

Et alors, c’était la police qui t’a accueilli à la gare? #00:08:25-1#

Mhm, oui. Il m’a porté dans le bureau. #00:08:34-3#

Et ils étaient gentils? #00:08:34-5#

Mhm, oui oui. C’était un peu calme. Il y avait une femme gentille. Je la trouvait gentille. #00:08:52-5#

C’était un bon accueil. #00:08:58-1#

Et dans la police, ils t’ont posé des questions? #00:08:59-3#

Oui, ils m’ont posé des questions. Ils m’ont posé des questions, comme pourquoi tu es arrivé à Germania. Moi, j’ai répondu “pour trouver un travail, pour aider ma famille”. Anche... cosi, finish. #00:09:20-3#

Et est-ce qu’ils ont pris ton, ton doigt? #00:09:22-3#

Non, non non non. Ils n’ont pas. #00:09:26-0#

Ah, probablement ils vont le faire. #00:09:30-1#

Non, ils ne font pas. #00:09:32-5#

Et ils t’ont renseigné à propos des options que tu as? #00:09:35-5#

Hm,...? #00:09:39-0#

Que tu peux faire la demande d’asile, et ça et ça... #00:09:38-8#

Oui oui, il m’a dit qu’il faut aller à l’asile. A l’asile. Parce que toi tu ne connais pas le système, tu ne connais aucun coin. Il m’a dit ça. Ils font ça à l’asile. #00:00:19-5#
Et après, ils t’ont envoyé ici? #00:00:22-6#
Oui, ils m’ont envoyé, oui. #00:00:26-7#
Et ils t’ont donné un ticket? Ou? #00:00:28-3#
Non, non ils n’ont pas. #00:00:28-3#
Ils t’ont déposé ici? #00:00:30-8#
Seulement à la station. #00:00:41-0#
C’était quelle station? #00:00:45-0#
Quel nom? Non, je ne connais pas, non. On ne regarde pas. #00:01:07-5#
Et ils t’ont donné un ticket pour le métro? #00:01:12-2#
Oui, il m’a donné... Non, seulement un papier. Seulement un papier? #00:01:21-8#
Et tu as trouvé le chemin tout seul? #00:01:21-3#
Oui oui, pour l’asile. #00:01:27-8#
Et comment tu es arrivé ici? #00:01:29-9#
A l’autobus. #00:01:32-4#
Ah, okay. #00:01:36-7#
Et là, il y avait des autres? #00:01:39-3#
Oui, il y a deux cent... dans l’asile. #00:01:49-5#
Combien? #00:01:49-5#
Ah, il y avait becaup de personnes. Beaucoup. #00:01:57-8#
Et voilà, c’était quelle date que tu es arrivé ici? La date? #00:02:08-4#
Hm, la date, le trois. Le trois juillet. #00:02:27-7#
Et, ca t’a étonné que tu as besoin de ca et ca? Les papiers? #00:02:31-0#
Oui oui. #00:02:35-2#
Tu as pensé que tu peux y arriver et travailler? #00:02:38-3#
Oui! #00:02:40-8#
Oui, je crois qu’en Allemagne c’est pas facile du tout. #00:02:44-5#
OUi, c’est pas facil. Pour trouver le document c’est pas facile. #00:02:50-7#
Et il faut le document pour travailler. #00:02:48-9#
Oui, on ne l’a pas. #00:02:55-3#
Malheureueusement. Mais asil, la première fois il va donner un document de trois mois. Quand on finit, il va donner autres documents, pour un an. Un pour travailler. Il a demandé cosi. #00:03:22-9#
Oui, c’est dur. #00:03:27-6#
Mais ils ne donnent pas des documents pour voyager au Sénégal. Ils ne donnent pas ca. #00:03:36-5#
Donc, tu dois rester ici. #00:03:37-9#
Oui, moi, encore, je reste ici. Avec les documents. #00:03:46-2#
Et tu préfère de rester ici? Ou tu voudrais partir, en Italie ou...? #00:03:46-8#
Ici, non, je ne parte pas. Moi, je suis là. #00:03:52-8#
Et tu as des autres idées où aller? #00:03:56-8#
Non, non. #00:03:56-8#
Comme en France, ou ...? #00:04:01-9#
Non. #00:04:06-2#
Et qu’est-ce que tu as pris avec toi même? #00:04:11-5#
Le document de l’Italie, j’ai. Il y a. #00:04:16-2#
Tu l’a avec toi? #00:04:17-3#
Non, je l’ai laché en Italie. A mon ami. #00:04:15-4#
Ah, okay, j’ai laché là-bas. J’ai un passport de ..., quand je vois la police, il y a des problèmes. #00:04:34-4#
Ca dépend. #00:04:33-3#
Oui. #00:04:38-0#
Des fois, ça peut faciliter. #00:04:42-1#
Abeeku: Quand je vois la police, je dis que je vais retourner en Italie. #00:04:47-1#
Et en Italie, est-ce que là ils on t déjà pris tes doigts? #00:04:49-8#
Oui oui oui. #00:04:52-5#
Oui, ca c’est un problème. Une fois que tu es registré... #00:04:55-5#
Parce que moi ça fait en Italie encore quoi. La police ça va subito. Il m’a demandé, je vais retourner en Italie. #00:05:12-9#
Ah, c’est merde. #00:05:13-8#
Abeeku: Oui oui. #00:05:20-9#
Quand ils ont dit ça? Ils t’ont déjà contrôlé à Milano ou à Genova? #00:05:25-2#
Non, à Genova. Aha. Et après Milan. Non, premier Genova et après je suis allé à Milan. Je retourne. Mais ça c’est trop trop longtemps. #00:05:46-4#
Combien de temps ça t’a pris? #00:05:48-3#
Moi, trois jours à la route. #00:05:57-0#
Trois jours à la station de Verona. Et un autre jour je dors à la station de Brennero. Encore un autre jour à (incomprehensible? Rosenheim?) pour dormir à München. #00:06:28-4#
Et tu as eu assez d’argent pour payer le ticket? #00:06:31-4#
Oui, oui. #00:06:34-6#
Et ici, tu as encore? #00:06:36-6#
Non, encore pas. Rien? #00:06:39-5#
J’ai lâché en Italie. L’argent j’ai lâché en Italie. #00:06:42-7#
Peut-être c’est mieux... #00:06:48-6#
Mais moi, je le prend, 350€ pour le blardin (?). Il a dit quelque chose, il a dit qu’il va payer. Il a dit que Verona à München, c’est un peu hmmm. 76,50€. Il a payé. Il a payé le bateau. 51€. #00:07:16-7#
Le bateau? #00:07:18-2#
Oui, 51€ Cagliari - Genova. 51, zero deux, pour aller à Milan et retourner à Milan. 11€, 7€. 11€ le retour et 7€. #00:07:43-1#
Et seulement à Genova on t’a contrôlé? #00:07:42-3#
Non, on me trouvait pas. Parce que moi, j’ai des documents d’Italie. #00:07:49-0#
En Italie tu as eu le permis de séjour? #00:07:52-1#
J’avais le permis de séjour moi. #00:07:53-4#
En Italie? #00:07:55-8#
Oui, moi en Italie le permis de séjour. #00:08:04-8#
Et ton ami en Italie, tu lui a dit que tu es bien arrivé? #00:08:06-4#
Mon ami en Italie? Il a la carte de séjour. Carte interminale. #00:08:15-7# No finish. #00:08:15-8#
Et tu es en contacte avec lui? #00:08:19-4#
Oui oui. Tu as dit que tu es bien arrivé? #00:08:21-8#
Oui oui, il a dit... je suis bien arrivé. #00:08:27-7#
Et tu as encore le numéro italien? #00:08:31-4# #00:08:37-5#
Non. #00:08:37-5#
Mais tu as le numéro allemand. #00:08:37-5#
Numéro allemand oui oui. #00:08:39-3#
Ou tu as acheté? #00:08:41-2#
Il a acheté à un numéro allemand le premier jour. J’arrive et il a acheté un numéro. Un Leica. #00:08:50-0#
Ah, dans quel magasin tu as trouvé? #00:08:54-7#
Non, je trouve qn, dans le centre d’asil. Quelqu’un de Sénégal. Donc quelqu’un. #00:09:09-5#
Et tu as payé pour ca? #00:09:15-8#
Oui, j’ai payé 10€. #00:09:18-0#

Pour un numéro? #00:09:21-7#

Oui. Et tu regrettes d’être venu jusque là? #00:09:48-6#

Des regrets? Non non.. Je ne regrette pas. #00:09:53-8#

Et ta famille est au courant que tu es en Allemagne? #00:09:53-8#

Oui oui. Ma famille est, parce que moi, premier jour, ils ont demandé à mon ami. Mon ami a rappelé et ils ont dit ça.

Et elle est fière de toi? #00:00:11-6#

Oui, elle est fière de moi. #00:00:11-1#

Wow, c’est bien. Et tu l’as appelé aussi? #00:00:13-7#

Oui oui, j’ai appelé, hier j’ai appelé. #00:00:22-8#

Et elle est inquieté? #00:00:22-8#

Oui, elle s’inquiète. #00:00:25-1#

J’imagine. #00:00:29-6#

Elle donne des conseils? #00:00:29-6#

Ah oui, quels conseils? #00:00:29-6#

Pour dire que... il faut, pour dire que quand je travaille, il faut respecter les personnes. Encore, je sais pas comment dire. #00:00:55-8#

Je crois que des conseils sont importants. #00:00:55-8#

Oui. c’est important. #00:01:08-0#

Et là, à l’entrée, tu prends des repas? #00:01:13-0#

Hm, ... #00:01:15-4#

Comme le petit déjeuner, le déjeuner, ... ? #00:01:17-6#

Oui oui, je le prends. #00:01:18-7#

Et qu’est-ce qu’on vous prépare? #00:01:22-4#

Hm, beaucoup de choses. Aujourd’hui du riz, ils ont préparé de la viande, chaque jour... #00:01:38-1#

Et c’est bon, la cuisine? #00:01:40-5#

Oui, c’est bon, seule, des des le jambon. C’est comme ci comme ca. Parce que quand moi, ca donne plus, ca donne pour le... (I don’t understand this here anymore) #00:02:21-1#

Ah, j’imagine, après tu peux changer la chambre? #00:02:21-1#

Oui, je peux changer la chambre. Seule, parce que personne est dans la chambre, une seule personne. Ils donnent l’argent. #00:02:39-9#

Et tu reçois de l’argent? Ils t’ont donné de l’argent? #00:02:41-6#
Non, encore ils ne donnent pas, pas encore. Quand on finit le docteur, ça donne l’argent. Chaque fin de mois. #00:02:52-5#

Donc c’est un peu malheureux que tu dois attendre. #00:02:53-8#

Oui. #00:02:55-4#

Et tu sais combien d’argent on va te donner? #00:02:54-8#

350€. #00:03:02-4#

Pour le mois? #00:03:00-9#

Ah oui, chaque mois on donne ca. #00:03:06-9#

Mais c’est pas mal. #00:03:06-9#

Non, c’est pas mal. #00:03:09-8#

Après tu dois probablement acheter tes propres repas? La nourriture? #00:03:15-1#

Oui. #00:03:17-2#

Et comment ça se passe pour le transfert? Il y a une liste? #00:03:21-7#

Oui oui, il y a une liste. Quand on met ton numéro, quand on voit ton numéro, il va aller. #00:03:32-2#

Et tu vas… La liste est actualisé tous les jours? #00:03:34-8#

Oui oui. Chaque jour. Et demain matin tu vas y courrir…? #00:03:39-6#

Oui oui, demain matin. Moi, aujourd’hui, à cinq heure le matin il est allé pour faire, pour fera.Ra. Ra, online, tu connais? #00:04:00-9#

Non, je connais pas. #00:04:05-4#

Ra, hm…. chaque personne fais ra…. Il a fait rar à docteur, il y a beaucoup des personnes. #00:04:29-7#

Ah, et demain tu vas y aller encore? #00:04:29-3#

Oui, demain… Aujourd’hui moi, j’ai eu mon numéro. Comment il s’appelle? Il y a beaucoup de personnes. Et avant hier, il y avait beaucoup de personnes, et encore on ne finit pas, le docteur. Aujourd’hui le docteur il a pris du sang. Aujourd’hui il m’a demandé “Viens demain”. On va continuer demain. #00:04:56-6#

ALors il y a deux listes. Il y a une liste pour le docteur et l’autre liste pour le transfert. #00:05:03-3#

Oui, et l’autre pour le transfert. Maintenant, aujourd’hui c’est le liste pour le docteur. #00:05:11-3#

Okay. Et probablement tu dois attendre pour le docteur et seulement après il y aura ton nom sur la liste avec les transferts? #00:05:21-9#

Oui, oui oui. #00:05:23-6#

Et, après tu espère de rester à Munich? #00:05:27-8#

Oui, oui oui. Je serai à Munich. #00:05:32-3#

Mais tu sais pas du tout où on va t’envoyer? #00:05:36-3#

Hmm…? #00:05:38-7#
Tu as une idée, tu sais où tu vas aller? #00:05:42-8#

Non, moi, quand je... avec moi, il va aller. Nous, c’est, chaque jour à München. Et comment on fait chaque jour à München. #00:06:01-3#

Ah, okay, donc tu sais pas encore ce que le futur t’aménera. #00:06:08-8#

Et tu as une valise ici? #00:06:12-8#

Oui, une valise. #00:06:12-3#

Et qu’est-ce que tu as ramené ici? #00:06:16-2#

Mes habits. #00:06:20-3#

Combien de choses? C’est une grande valise? #00:06:23-0#

Ah, normal. #00:06:27-6#

Et quelque chose de ta famille? Une photo de ta mère? #00:06:32-1#

Non, il n’y a pas de photo de ma mère. Seulement, les habits. Moi j’ai laché beaucoup de choses en Italie. Parce que moi j’ai laché le téléphone et la télé. Moi, le téléphone, le computer, tout ça j’ai laché en Italie. #00:06:58-3#

Ah, wow. Alors là tu as encore la chambre avec tous les affaires au mois. Okay. Tu as encore des questions à me poser? #00:07:22-6#

Non....

In the end, he accompanies me to a bus station and waits with me some minutes until we say good bye.