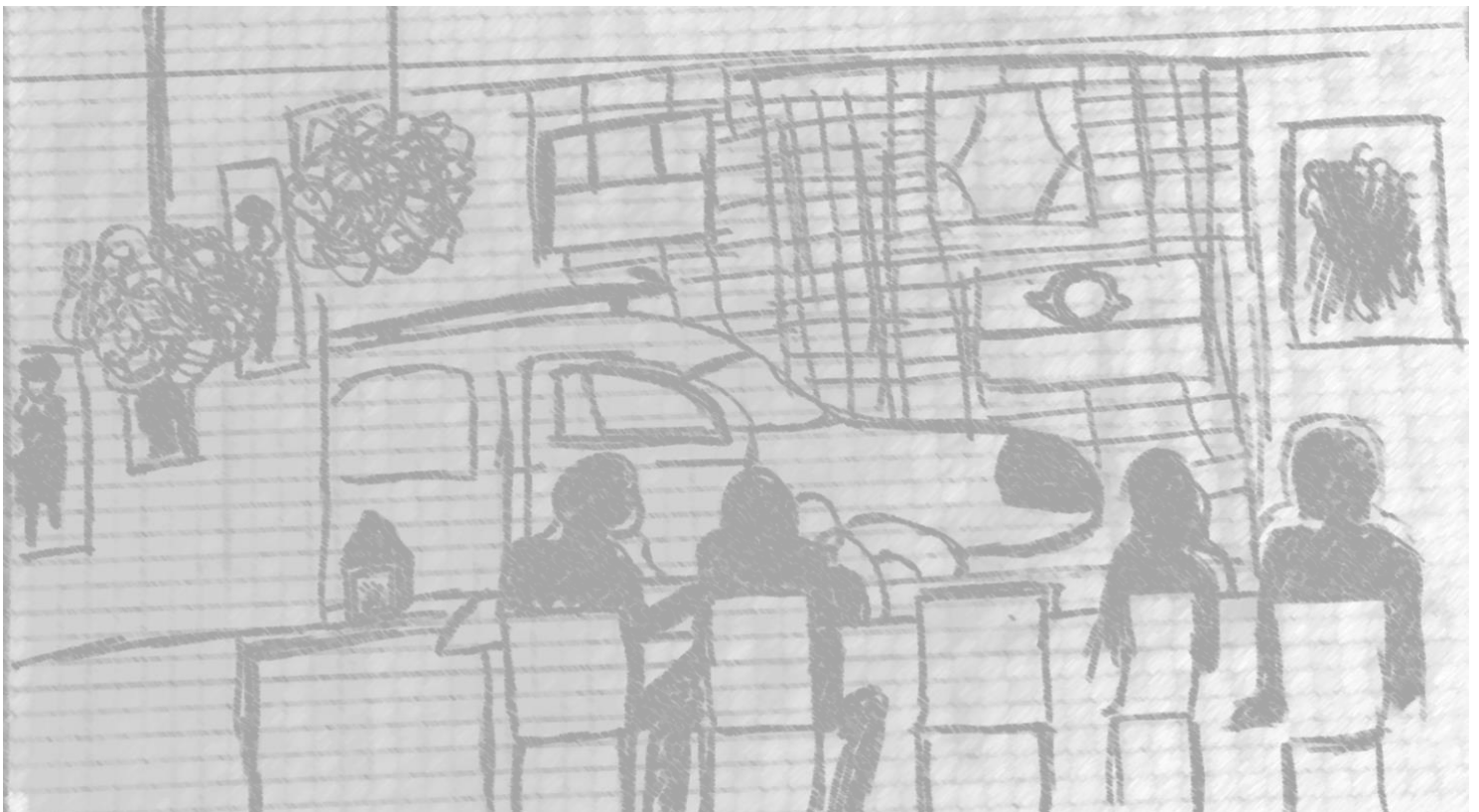


Informality and Cosmopolitanism in peoples' lives: The case of an
African Restaurant in The Hague



Abstract

This Master Thesis is about how informality and cosmopolitanism are entangled in the everyday life of people who share a specific place, in this case, an African restaurant in The Netherlands. The mainstream definition of both concepts is questioned and six different dimensions, three of each concept (informality/cosmopolitanism), are described as the theoretical framework. Through those lenses, the everyday routine of the restaurant is used as a social laboratory where to observe how intercultural encounters work out, how informality binds people together and how relations among different identities build the definition of the restaurant. In conclusion, informality and cosmopolitanism are used with a positive and constructive connotation that move the discussion from the burden to actually the advantage that brings multicultural environments. This research highlights the direct relation between informality and cosmopolitanism and makes it a matter of the everyday life, uncovering relations of power, the struggle among the construction of identities, and at the end, the use of spaces that being local have global questions embedded. This Master Thesis also brings a more dynamic and interactive form to explore the results, in a website (www.informalandcosmopolitan.com).

Key concepts: informality, cosmopolitanism, African restaurant, normativity, power relations, identity, emotionality, mobility, encounters.

Resumen

Esta Tesis de Master trata sobre cómo la informalidad y el cosmopolitismo se mezclan en la vida cotidiana de las personas que comparten un lugar específico, en este caso, un restaurante africano en los Países Bajos. La definición general de ambos conceptos es cuestionada y seis dimensiones diferentes, tres de cada concepto (informalidad/cosmopolitismo), se describen y constituyen el marco teórico. A través de esas lentes, la rutina diaria del restaurante se utiliza como un laboratorio social donde se observa cómo son los encuentros interculturales, cómo la informalidad une a las personas y cómo las relaciones entre diferentes personas con identidades distintas, construyen la definición del restaurante. En conclusión, la informalidad y el cosmopolitismo se utilizan con una connotación positiva y constructiva, por lo que se mueve la discusión de la carga que supondrían a la ventaja que brindan los entornos multiculturales. Esta investigación resalta la relación directa entre informalidad y cosmopolitismo y hace parte a ambas de la vida cotidiana, descubriendo las relaciones de poder, la lucha en la construcción de identidades y, al final, el uso de espacios que son locales y tienen cuestiones globales integradas. Esta Tesis de Master también ofrece una forma más dinámica e interactiva de explorar los resultados, a través de un sitio web (www.informalandcosmopolitan.com).

Conceptos clave: informalidad, cosmopolitismo, restaurant Africano, normatividad, relaciones de poder, identidad, emocionalidad, movilidad, encuentros.

Acknowledgements

I want to enormously thank to the owner of Swingin Safari for letting me be and do my research in his restaurant. It was a pleasure to become part of the place and it would definitely not end with the Thesis. I am also very grateful to the three waitresses that work there. They have been cheering me up in every rainy day and have helped me to understand better the dynamics of the place. To the waitresses and the owner, this Master Thesis would not be possible without you and your kindness. All the informal conversations and situations we have been in, are the foundations of this research. I want to thank too all the usual customers and newcomers, voluntarily or not, they are an intrinsic part of all those reflections. I want to mention my special gratitude to two of the usual, because they literally make me feel “part of the family”.

I also want to highlight the brilliant and tireless work that my supervisor has done throughout the process of this research. He had inspired me and supported all my creative ideas always with enthusiasm. It has been a pleasure to write and rethink the world of informality and cosmopolitanism in our (sometimes demanding) every day. He has been the mirror where to confront myself.

Finally, I want to thank my family and friends, *muchísimas gracias*, without them I would not have been braved enough to stop working and to move to the Netherlands to study a Master. They have been always there to hold me when the road was too bumpy. Thanks to this experience, also my friends have grown in number and nationality, and I am blessed to have them all. *Sin vosotras, esta Tesis nunca hubiera sido posible.*

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Dear reader, before you start reading this Master Thesis I would like to ask you a favour. Since you are going to be reading this document for a while, I think it is important for you to get familiar with the topic in advance in order to extract the most of it.

Please, take a seat. Make yourself comfortable.

Now, I would like you to think of a moment in your life where you felt the stranger in a place. When you felt that you were an “outsider” there. It might have happened in a different country or in a different neighbourhood in your own city. It does not matter.

Then, remember when that feeling went away, when you finally felt that you belonged to the place you were. Remember your thoughts, the smell, the views, the people you were talking to, the sounds that embraced you, even the texture of your chair or sofa. Take your time to recall all the details.

What did it take to change your feelings about the place? What is it that made you feel more comfortable? How would you describe that same feeling to another person? Did it make you feel more safe or that you belonged to that place?

Did it feel “home” at some point?

Chapter 1. Introduction

This Master Thesis is about how informality and cosmopolitanism are entangled in the everyday life of people who share a specific place, in this case, an African restaurant in The Netherlands. It tackles different definitions of both concepts. In one hand, informality has been for long time conceived as a negative consequence related to globalization. Therefore, whereas many authors see informality as a process mainly focused on the economy of a country (Portes & Haller, 2005), I aim to portray it as a variety of expertise and capabilities that forge social, cultural and noneconomic alliances while relying on others (Kothari, 2008). On the other hand, cosmopolitanism has been framed as the collateral positive effect of the same global phenomenon. It is often portrayed as a social-cultural identity that derives from a specific economic positionality (the global elite). Hence, this Thesis also questions the construction of such elitist identity of the cosmopolitan through the same restaurant. In this sense, it aims to open the debate on what cosmopolitanism and informality imply in the arena of knowledge, the construction of the “other” and the will to build meaningful relations with different people and cultures.

The first time I passed by the Swingin Safari Restaurant, I was a bit overwhelmed by the formality of the room that could be seen from the outside. Some families were about to have dinner or they were already eating and they all dressed with colourful dresses, nice skirts, beautiful shirts and, some men, even suits. I was wearing my old jeans and a regular T-shirt, so I felt a bit uncomfortable to enter. In fact, that day, I did not enter because of the feeling of being an outsider not dressed properly for the occasion. But the place caught my attention. I still do not know if it was because of the way the chef was welcoming the people or the amount of physical differences among the customers. But I could already see that there was something else behind the formal setting that could be experienced. Something I am going to explain along this Thesis.

To articulate the entangled reality in the restaurant, to point to the relations of informality and cosmopolitanism, I felt that written words were too limited. I felt I needed a playground that allows for more visuals, for music, for more dynamics, that are not easily described and captured by words only. I wanted to make it easy for other people to get into the restaurant and not just to read but also to feel it. Therefore, I invite the reader not only to read the theoretical framing, the methodological choices and conclusions I abstracted from my work. I invite the reader to leave this thesis and enter the world of a restaurant through a website: www.informalandcosmopolitan.com¹

This website should be considered my empirical ‘chapters’ that lead to specific conclusions.

¹ If this link does not lead you to the website, it is because the domain has expired. Please try with: www.wix.com/carlalalcoverro/informalandcosmo

1.1 Contextualization

In order to understand the setting of this African restaurant in the Netherlands, it is crucial to explain the context of the country and its European surroundings. The situation in the Netherlands and other countries are not two separate realities. Far from that, the majority of the countries that form the European Union has lately experienced the rise of political right oriented parties with populist discourses in their elections. Those parties claiming to reinforce national identities, usually go hand-by-hand with policies that aim to restrict migratory movements, mainly from outside European countries. Those political parties have become more popular during the last elections of countries like Austria, Germany and the Netherlands (Mudde, 2017).

Even though the Netherlands has been an emigration and immigration country since the sixteenth century, it was not until the 1960s that the country became greater in numbers of immigration compared to the proportion of people emigrating (Zorlu & Hartog, 2001). Although the European immigrant population has been the majority arriving to the country for the past twenty years (CBS, 2018), since 1960, the patterns of emigration in decolonised countries –mainly African and Asian- have diversified, reaching countries like Spain and the Netherlands more often than before (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). It is important to take this historical fact as starting point because during the last few years, some newspapers and other social media have been covering the arrival of migrants and refugees to Europe as if it was a new phenomenon of “waves” of population arriving (Huggler, 2017).

The different discourses on migration during the last two decades have become crucial in order to distinguish different social policies in all European societies. The different statements that have been very popular in various media have provoked xenophobic and solidarity reactions towards migrants at a local level. Those reactions are also important in order to disentangle the idea of cosmopolitanism further in this Thesis. On the one hand, cosmopolitanism can be seen as a survival tool once arriving into a foreign country or city for strangers, and on the other, it can be also the emotional tie that someone with a migrant background can develop with a place, for example, an African restaurant in a non-African country.

The perception of migrants by mainly European societies has been changing from that of a *work force*, mainly when colonized countries were becoming autonomous states, to the *illegals attempting to profit* from their economy (Pickerill, 2011). These discourses marked by ideas like fear or invasion of the *unwanted* have created a public discourse that links people with a migrant background to informal activities, among others, and therefore, a threat to European legislation, order and security. Lately, the migration topic has found more political and social attention, although not always portrayed as a positive issue to celebrate. Migration has been used as the main reason to securitize the European Union borders and build this *fortress Europe*. From the 1990 Convention Applying the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985, immigration has been regularly linked with terrorism and transnational crimes, creating an atmosphere of distrust and fear (Huysmans, 2000). Even this explanation of the securitization of the European Union has been challenged by some authors already (Boswell, 2007; Neal, 2009), it is a

fact that borders have been translated in more dangerous routes for the people attempting to enter into Europe. Moreover, despite the promise of integration under the umbrella of policies aimed to promote “multiculturalism” the reality in most of the so called, Western countries, has failed. It has enhanced religious and ethnic phobias, resulting in the condemnation of first and second generations to be “ethnic minorities” or to be racialized and stigmatized in any other way (Fassin, 2011).

At the same time, the idea of people being mobile and part of everywhere, but at the same time coming from nowhere, have recently lived a revival that goes beyond the conceptualisation of universalism and relativism, responding to a World that is more and more interdependent (Giri, 2006). The meaning behind being a “citizen of the world” – the cosmopolitan dream ?? – is to recognize what unites humanity and reinforce the similarities among different cultures, religions and peoples. But this intrinsic core is confronted by the homogenization of cultures, whereas the simple act of encountering other forms of societies in big metropolis tend to indigenise their forms of living, reinforcing the absorption of larger polities to smaller ones (Appadurai, 1990). This Thesis aims to dive further into how the binaries of insider/outsider, formal/informal, migrant/citizen, the cosmopolitan/local are contested in the space of a single restaurant.

1.2 Motivation

This Thesis starts with the desire of portraying a different reality to the definition of informality and cosmopolitanism. It begins finding myself in a different country that the one I was born. It starts in the Netherlands, studying about *Globalization, Migration and Development*. It has as a baseline several definitions of informality that are attached to a negative perception of it, also mostly linked to Southern countries (Watson, 2016). It moves beyond the impulse of de-constructing the idea of a chaotic south and reinforcing the good side to a concept that helps, most of the times, people to survive, economically and/or emotionally. It evolves into looking for a place where nationality would not be determining the type of relationships someone build with the people around. It brings a sense of cosmopolitanism, far from Western and capitalist conceptions, whereas the type of international encounters that people experience, build different identities that make them connect beyond national boundaries. It mentions the need of being cosmopolitan in order to survive, but also the (un)privileges and power attached to it.

The main motivation to write about informality and cosmopolitanism focusing in a setting as an African Restaurant in The Netherlands is to observe the social entanglement that occurs in the everyday life of a place. How the dynamics among people from different backgrounds share the same space and forge social and cultural accords while doing so. How these relations also transform in time and depend on the people that maintain them. In that sense, this single place offers a micro laboratory where to observe how intercultural encounters work out, how informality binds people together and how relations among different identities build the definition of the restaurant. I analyse the contextual framework of transnational lives and how those articulate another type of cosmopolitanism that will be described further in this Thesis and confronted with the mainstreamed definition of it. In doing so, I “look down” by

dividing into the details of everyday life of different livings, not counting on their ethnicity group (Law, 2004). In this way, the use of a single site methodology allows me to strategically study a multi-sited situation putting the people who have participated in the process of migration and their own processes of interaction while living in a new place (Gielis, 2011) at the centre. Instead of looking into larger scales on globalization and the consequences of the cosmopolitanism in larger ecosystems, I look into the ways people take decisions that are entangled by nature with other cultures.

1.3 Societal and Scientific Relevance

First, regarding the societal relevance of the Thesis, it pretends to visualize the effects that informality has in the spaces that are built based on it, as well as how it affects onto peoples' lives. Those spaces are intertwined with other realities that live with or from formal spaces. The connectivity that arises from those spaces with the people who creates them becomes a key point during the research. The emotional side of the informality is investigated as well, regarding the symbolism of those spaces as well as the informal economic activities that take place. Therefore, the emotionality related to the process of migration as well as the emotionality connected to places and cosmopolitanism itself arise in the debate further on this Master Thesis (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015; Schiller, Darieva, & Gruner-Domic, 2011). To contribute to the ongoing debate about spaces in Cultural Geography, during the research I advocate for Massey's definition of place as a "constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" but also connected to a major global sense (Massey, 1994, pp. 154–155). I aim to show how those social alliances become the place itself whereas neither the restaurant nor the time of the day determines what is going to happen there. I portray a sense of personality on the place that will change because of the people that is there and not because of the owner's decision.

Moreover, I seek ways to refine the link between migration and the host country to analyse the relation exposed daily by the media of this nexus between informality and the country who "suffers" from it. In order to do that, I use critical informal and cosmopolitan lenses to focus onto the different systems and identities created by people with a migrant background in the country they live (Mazzucato, 2008). I also describe how informality by people with a migrant background is also feeding formal spheres and contributing to enrich the country in several ways –economically, culturally, emotionally...-. As many other scholars, I contribute to challenge the approach in the urban informal sector that framed informality as a set of survival activities executed by people outside of the society (Harding & Jenkins, 1989) and forgot to tackle the economical and emotional survival opportunity that informality *per se* represents.

Notwithstanding, I contribute to speak out about the experiences that informality carries on the people who live from it. This insight provides an emotional angle that is intrinsically connected to diverse forms of living and sometimes even survival, as informality it is not just an economic aspect that pretends to be an outsider of the neoliberal system. During the analysis I focus on the ties that people have with the space. How the relations and deals among customers with very different professional background engage in informal relations and pursue even economic outcomes with it.

This research contributes to project upfront the multiangle approach on transnational encounters, using cosmopolitanism and informality as the pillars of those interactions, refusing to only use an ethnocentric or racialized approach in order to revendicate as well people's agency independently from their background (Dahinden, 2012).

In sum, the relevance of this thesis has three dimensions. First, the scientific relevance of this Thesis persuades to add another dimension, more connected to social theories, to the ongoing debate of the migrants' informal economy and the proliferation of security discourse linked to it in European countries (Castles, Miller, & De Haas, 2014). By using feminist (Spike Peterson, 2012) and decolonial (Mendieta, 2009) lenses to analyse the data found during the research, I bring into the debate counterarguments to the criminalisation of informal activities and the Eurocentric perception of cosmopolitanism. This approach also allows me to take into account the emotional survival of people that otherwise could fall apart of the society. Moreover, it helps to understand other spaces or places that might be created alike in different countries.

Secondly, this Thesis is a preliminary attempt to express a critical reading of informality in urban spaces, where informality breaks the status of phenomenon to be converted into an everyday ordinary praxis framed in the extraordinary living of people in the margins. Creating informality is viewed as an act of everyday citizenship (Dickinson, Andrucki, Rawlins, Hale, & Cook, 2008) whereas citizenship is defined by legal rights forcing then illegal rules for the *not yet* citizens. The everyday motion then becomes an ordinary practice where combined with globalisation requires local, national and even transnational activities, making the extraordinary a much more blurred definition. Then, this enacted citizen is based on daily interactions within a specific place that shapes its possibilities and social mobility. Therefore, I also aim to contribute to disentangle the ordinary and extraordinary within spaces of informality.

Finally, this Thesis builds further research on the emotional impact of living in the margins of the society. It also contributes to uncover a scientific side of those spaces that are not often counted as a part of the country but also build in a way the urban spaces of a city. As Abdoumalik Simone stated about the capacity of the residents of Jakarta interweaving different temporalities "This interweaving of temporal rhythms creates spaces of manoeuvrability and experimentation, concretizing the capacity of residents to make the city" (Simone, 2015b, p. 227). In the case of this Thesis, customers work along different realities and merge their experiences in a place like a restaurant, contributing every day with a different but similar rhythm that creates an emotional experience on every person who enters, sometimes unnoticeable for clueless eyes.

1.4. Research Objective

This Thesis intends to uncover how different shadow circuits of interaction among people in a restaurant happen, evolve and lead to informality and cosmopolitanism intertwined in one place. To contribute to the debate on informality and cosmopolitanism looking for perspectives detached from the mainstream definition of both concepts. In doing so, it aims to enhance our understanding of the relation

between informality and cosmopolitanism. This research therefore is embedded in wider discussions on experiences of places, globalization and power.

1.5. Research Question

How are informality and cosmopolitanism produced and intertwined in an African restaurant in The Hague?

In order to answer this question, there are several sub-questions that need to be answered. These are related to six dimensions discussed in the theoretical framework regarding to informality and cosmopolitanism. They will be further explained in the next chapter:

Dimension 1: Power and Normativity

- What relations of power are found among the people that create the place?
- How is informality represented in the everyday life of the restaurant and how does it cohabit with norms?

Dimension 2: Identity and Emotions

- What types of alliances (social, cultural and noneconomic) are made in the different spaces² among the people and the restaurant?
- How are identities built and how do they evolve in the restaurant for the different people that come to the place?

Dimension 3: Encounters and Mobility

- How do encounters (deals, interactions and conflicts) in the restaurant draw different shadow circuits and borders in different spaces?
- What types of interventions and/or encounters are voluntary and have an impact on stereotyping the others and/or us?

² Clarification: in those questions and along the Thesis, spaces are related to the various nooks inside a place, being this place the African restaurant in The Hague.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework starts with two separate concepts, informality and cosmopolitanism. Each of these concepts are further unpacked by three dimensions. These six dimension in total will function as the analytical bridge between the concept of informality and the concept of cosmopolitanism. Those dimensions are found during the analysis of the fieldwork and they help explain the subtle routines of people in the restaurant under study. They complement each other and bring altogether a more comprehensive point of departure to understand how informality and cosmopolitanism are mixed in a restaurant. Although the dimensions are linked to one of the two concepts (informality/cosmopolitanism), they must be interpreted as strongly intertwined. The everyday practices and patterns in the restaurant do not reveal themselves along clear cut categorical lines. Hence, it is the interrelation between the dimensions that help to explain the dynamics on the ground.

This Master Thesis projects people and spaces as complex subjects that are made by multiple circumstances and emotions, leaving ethnicity and the migrant background aside, in order to move on into a discourse that acknowledges the complex ramification that builds the self (Amelina & Faist, 2012). It intends to portray the different identities that one person can have depending on the time and space that shape their being. In line with Dahinden's claim to "de-migranticize" (Dahinden, 2016) migration studies – as in moving the focus of nation-state and ethnicity epistemology towards a more transversal perspective of migration in more disciplines of social sciences – I aim to build cosmopolitan reflections that are going beyond the presumed 'migrant background of people'. It thereby creates space for a critical reflection on the role of ethnic stereotypes that play out in the daily life of an African restaurant in The Hague.

First, informality deals with the economical and emotional aspects of informal relations among people. The three dimensions that are subsumed under informality are: 1) the normative perspective of informality, being the opposite of the formal where norms are followed and constructed; 2) the emotional point of view, for the conceptualisation of breaking spaces of intimacy while being informal. It incorporates specific emotive performativity as well as experiences of being 'unusual' in time and space; and 3) the mobility produced by those informal experiences in the restaurant. It articulates the way the construction of a place is constantly on the move through the transgression of norms and the multiplication of emotions.

The second concept cosmopolitanism is strongly connected to what people experience through these dimensions of informality. The three dimensions that are attached to the notion of cosmopolitanism are: 1) the power relations, being part of the construction of someone's respect to others and also to the place itself; 2) the identity build through cosmopolitanism, and how power relations affect the spaces of the restaurant as well as someone's identity or perception of that identity; and 3) the encounters that are grounded in cosmopolitanism, being part of the (de)construction of stereotypes and relations among very different people.

2.1. Informality

“The informal economy is not a set of survival activities performed by destitute people on the margins of society” [emphasis added] (Castells & Portes, 1989, p. 12)

Informal experiences can be disseminated in two different paths. On the one hand, there is the economic aspect of informality that the International Labour Office would define as “all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements” (International Labour Organization, 2002, p. 53). My Thesis, however, goes beyond this economic dominance of thinking about informality. Therefore, I put emphasis on the second path that is sensitive to the daily experience of informality in everybody’s lives and places. This side of informality accounts for the emotional ties that people have to places and to people. Those ties are (re)produced in different ways and may change in time but are not strictly tight to laws or legislation. It also recognises the different rhythms of every day’s life of citizenship (Dickinson et al., 2008) that have different shapes and people involved but at the same time follow a pattern which can be disclosed and endless in time.



Dimension 1, normativity

The normative perspective of a place is related to the activities that are framed by “informal institutional boundaries” (Webb, Tihanyi, Ireland, & Sirmon, 2009, p. 493) understood as “norms, values, and beliefs that define socially acceptable behaviour” (Webb et al., 2009, p. 495). Usually, large groups in society perceive what is defined by formal institutions (i.e. laws and/or regulations) as acceptable. This social acceptability is also confirmed by informal institutions (i.e. social groups) making a match between enforcement and legitimacy. Unlikely, due to personal experiences or contextual elements, for some groups of people, something that is defined as illegal by formal institutions may appear as legitimate and acceptable by the informal ones, causing incongruences between both dimensions. In this gap, informal economies can grow and potentially lead to inconsistencies between what formal and informal institutions define as acceptable, even for small groups of people (Webb et al., 2009). Formal economy occurs with this informality in a lot of cases, side-by-side, not just benefiting from it but also competing with it. This is one of the reasons why informality remains invisible to the system, leaving outside of institutional framework or social practices its functionality and potentiality (Tsoni, 2013).

The acceptability and awareness around informality changes dramatically in every place and/or setting. The role that is played by society in the process of public decision-making of what is acceptable or not has a great impact in major issues as migration or environmental responsibilities (Webb et al., 2009). The definition of what is acceptable or legitimate can eventually become the legislation that rules a society. Even if a group of people disagrees to what the majority conceives about a specific issue, it can become part of the law and therefore the norm. This separation can be the justification to do some activities that might not be legal but consider legitimate as in this case, informal ways of living. The acceptability and legitimation of those will depend on the support

given by the society and this will probably change over time together with popular discourses. Hence, there is a big difference between informal and illegal activities. While the first is more likely to be left out at the mercy of their participants, it is dependent on social ties and it can be discussed in terms of legitimation. The latter is most likely protected by private personnel and ensured with clear rules, not in strictly need of legitimation from other groups in the society (Portes & Haller, 2005).

The informal sector has been taken along the years as synonymous of poverty or as the excluded sector that it is meant to appear in less developed economies (Portes & Haller, 2005). But indeed, this negative conception has been challenged by numerous authors (i.e. Hart, 1990) and informality is nowadays often investigated without judging if it is good or bad. Portes and Haller highlight one of the main problems of the informal sector, that is the lack of a “higher” supervision that can ensure the rights or at least, try to protect workers from labour and even human rights violations (Portes & Haller, 2005). But paradoxically, the informal sector is also seen in formal structures that profit this supposedly lack of supervision. Examples are numerous, such as the UAC Gala sausage’s roll in Nigeria that use independent street hawkers or the supply chain of a lot of retailers like Zara that contracts informal workshops in order to produce fast fashion clothing (Neuwirth, 2013; Portes & Haller, 2005).



Dimension 2, emotionality

Emotionality in a place means to develop its particular identity so that people can decide what actually makes them feel home (Beatley, 2004), providing the space to forge social and cultural ties. Is in this debate of defining which type of experiences or spaces are familiar to someone where emotions towards a place can grow.

Informality on the streets has been a main public battle of many cities – especially when it concerns street vending activities. One of the factors that makes this war against street vendors or informality rather common is the pursue of an “unimaginative and unidirectional urban ideal” (Neuwirth, 2013, p. 68). For instance, officials in Mumbai that wanted to emulate Shanghai or Lago’s State Governor who officially pointed Dubai as an inspiration for their urban development plan of the city (Neuwirth, 2013). Examples alike are showing as well the little (if any) spaces left for citizens to create their own way of living. As Neuwirth claims, cities –and I would add any type of place – have the right to explore their particular sense of what they want to mean. Because informality is also a variety of expertise and capabilities that forge social, cultural and noneconomic alliances while relying on others (Kothari, 2003). Even more, informality (re)create places by different actors that converge in the same time and space and bring with them multiple experiences.

On the other hand, in every city, there are also the so-called *generic places*, like restaurants, parks, supermarkets or hotels, that have suffered a process of homogenization during the last decades, leaving apart the sense of being a *particular place* aiming to professionalize and comply with global standards (Ley-Cervantes & Duyvendak, 2017). Those type of locations have specific social purposes that forces people to spend some time and mostly to interact with other people, creating the

perfect combination to provoke feelings of any type. Nowadays, those places have accomplished a generic look that can foster an immediately familiar feeling, no matter if you are in Morocco or in New York City. In light of this process that is helping globalization to move forward from a societal dimension, some authors are already claiming that *particular places* need to be reborn in order to provide healthy and unique experiences that can bring back a sense of commitment with a place.

Looking for this generation of emotions within a place, people search for symbolic boundaries that can reflect not just one identity but also a collective one. Therefore, by recreating habits and traditions in some places (Ahmed, 1999), walls are meant to separate realities, doors are meant to open up the possibility to travel geographically to places that will make people to remember and to feel somewhere else closer to their souls. In that sense, emotions are also on the move (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015). People who arrive in a place come with different feelings that might change the people who is already there or the other way around. In other words, there is a lot of social relationality within the concept of 'relational places' (Massey 2005). Restaurants are part of those social places where people not only go to because of their functionality – as “somewhere to eat.” People also go to a restaurant in order to be in a social and cultural place – a place to be. Some restaurants have those noneconomic interactions between people where symbolic actions are more important than the rationalization behind them, being the main driver the emotion that makes you feel what you do (de La Pradelle, 2006).



Dimension 3, mobility

The dimension that describes the mobility of informality as something partially invisible connects with the idea that Schmoll and Semi named as “shadow circuits” (Schmoll & Semi, 2013, p. 378), which refers to “sets of interactions within a circulatory territory, (...), following distinct routes and flows and sharing primarily non-ethnic cosmopolitan identities. The making of shadow circuits corresponds to an ongoing process, which deals, interacts, conflicts and, most astonishingly, sometimes conflates with the muscular, mainstream, side of globalisation.” (Schmoll & Semi, 2013, p. 380). They distinguish between the surface of those circuits, the ones that become ethnicised and more visible to the society in general –mainly translated into different cuisines as the mainstream show of multiculturalism – and those aspects which remain hidden, that are mainly the non-ethnic agency of people with a migrant background that creates a cosmopolitan attitude as a need to trust “others” or as a decision *per se* (Schmoll & Semi, 2013). This differentiation and lack of recognition of the hidden parts of informality might make policymakers to entrap people into a sole identity and group, for example ethnic, camouflaging all those forms of cosmopolitanism.

The invisible dynamism of those who participate in regular moves inside a place, are particularly marked by their historical and cultural background. The same space can be perceived by someone openly shared to people and at the same time for another person, a taboo to enter or to participate in their daily activities. In a place like a restaurant, those spaces could be the kitchen or behind the bar counter. Thus, mobilities are bounded and take part in the “(re)production of social hierarchies” (Cresswell, 2012, p. 651). At the same time, in most of western societies those places are also determined

by law or regulations in order to comply with certain standards of quality. It leaves then less capacity for people to find holes were to exercise their freedom. Taking freedom as the chance that someone can have to act fully based on its identity, meaning interact with others with no shame for how others identify themselves, and, the freedom that makes a restaurant a place where to be free (Semi, 2008).

Moreover, informal economical activities like other types of informality are blessed with the strength that opacity can give. The fact that informality is not established by someone or determined previously, means that it is also more resilient to changes in their everyday. If disaggregated, informal circuits are perfectly organised in the spatiotemporal rhythm of a place, and they will not be eradicate by external circumstances because they do have the capacity to resist and transform into something else even if in the surface this something else looks chaotic (Gidwani, 2015). To move beyond informality as something from the margins, we need also concepts that move away from marginal positions. The lens of cosmopolitanism then serves as such conceptual lens.

2.2. Cosmopolitanism

“Adopting a cosmopolitan identity can also be a resource and strategy required to survive in conditions of social and economic vulnerability, discrimination, and exclusion and can be maintained despite these” (...) “Such kinds of expertise are rarely acknowledged as constituting a form of cosmopolitanism but are instead more likely to be interpreted as solely a ‘survival’ or ‘livelihood’ strategy” [emphasis added] (Kothari, 2008: 501)

The meaning of cosmopolitanism is dualistic in transnational studies. It can be explored on one hand, through the idea of a global citizen who has local as well as individual rights and practices an open relation with other cultures. This definition is predominantly attached to elitist and Eurocentric characteristics of cosmopolitanism (Helliwell & Hindess, 2015). Or, on the other hand, cosmopolitanism can also be seen as a strategic and temporary openness towards others, where global and local are forcedly entangled by the present, arising from insecurity and fear (Kothari, 2003), among other needs and emotions. In this sense, cosmopolitanism will be more a characteristic mainly for transnationals who face vulnerability in one or different sectors of their lives, such as social, economic or legal conditions. But it is not by any means that all transnationals have a cosmopolitan orientation, even their encounters and practices might be indicators of it. It goes beyond the mere classification of people and become a potentiality to rework social interactions as well as question the construction of the “other” (Kothari, 2003).



Dimension 1, power relations

The dimension of power relations refers mainly to the capacity to define what is valuable and how this definition affects peoples' lives. Cosmopolitanism has become the representation of cultural capital, socioeconomic status, and consumer power, all of

them pretty much related to the greater dichotomies that ruled societies for centuries as a coloniser and a colonised (Kothari, 2008). The so-called by Gaudette “cosmopolitan capital” (Gaudette, 2013, p. 302) is just one example of the classical connotation that remains in the definition of a cosmopolitan subject, as it entails the physical availability to be mobile between national borders, questioning which are the passports that would have this privilege. Nevertheless, the cosmopolitan capital can be also understood as the skills that someone acquires and help him/her to adapt to new places, but also to create encounters that mingle between the “here” and “there”, being a form of agency for the people who have it (Weenink, 2008).

The classical definition of cosmopolitanism as a will to be open to others cultures and peoples, also blurs the construction of those who are defined as *others* (Kothari, 2008), mainly because it could be easily connected to the same colonial roots that were given privileges to western subjects. Without acknowledging this power relation in the definition of cosmopolitanism is difficult to imagine a way of including those who are identified as others as possible subjects of it. At the same time, it is necessary to understand the boundaries that define colonised and coloniser subjects and how those are reinforced by the differentiation of their surroundings, like if this “cosmopolitan capital” could be taken or given. In the case of the restaurant, these power relations are intrinsic to the definition of the place as an African place. To represent the other inside a country brings up into the debate who is the cosmopolitan subject.

At the end, cosmopolitanism is a way of narrating the world (Mendieta, 2009). An African restaurant in The Netherlands can be seen as a cosmopolitan place, or in the contrary, can be perceived as a failure of integration in the country. The main differentiation is the recognition of this (in)visible capital as something that adds or diminishes a city or a country. Hence, this appreciation by society allows people to feel empower or ashamed. Who has the power to categorize, or the chance to reinvent accordingly, are the people who is able to adapt and keep moving the wheel in the way they needed. But the rest, will find another way that will imply dealing with others, trusting people and use all the intangible power that they could have at that time. As Gaudette already proposed, cosmopolitanism should be think as an “status” that can change in time and not as something static that can be acquired or kept (Gaudette, 2013).



Dimension 2, identities

To unfold the construction of peoples’ identities and places, should be taken into account their relation with their past and present. Moreover, their projection into the future, mixing expectations from others and themselves, their own valuable knowledge and desires, and definitely, in an economic world as we live in, what the global market needs. But in order to create one or diverse identities, we need to begin by having access to those social options from where to imagine other possibilities, as we start by fulfilling those predetermined identities, like father, teacher or Christian, that have already a set of norms, stereotypes and requirements (Appiah, 1997). From then onwards, our identity can be questioned and rebuild through live.

Opening up the interpretation of cosmopolitanism questions which forms of knowledge, capabilities or skills are identified as globally valuable and which are renegade from globalisation. It questions assumptions that the globalised market has done (i.e. who can be a high skilled migrant and who cannot). It portrays the search of postcolonial subjects to find “new” identities or designations that could match what the society is looking for but that easily could be linked with a colonial past (Diouf & Rendall, 2000). Therefore, identity needs to be conceived also as a reproduction or a contraposition of power relations among people. It also helps to further research any place in the sense of which type of cosmopolitanism have participated in the informal process of creation.

To define the multiple identities that one person can have and find the intersection of all those binaries before mentioned, the narrativisation of peoples’ experiences allows to understand the different meanings of border in their daily lives. The experience of invisible borders between people, shapes everybody’s identity, as it is the demarcation of spaces and the interaction within the society the two factors that will emphasize the most the acceptability of the identity reproduce in each moment. Hence, to study the composition of this identities it is important to go back to Bauman’s work on 1997 where he stated that “all societies produce strangers, but each kind of society produces its own kind of strangers, and produces them in its own inimitable way” (as cited in Tsoni, 2013:154). This conceptualization of what is “the stranger” and how this is socially constructed can be studied from different perspectives, as historically have been demonstrated, collectives identities tend to dominate, trying to control or shape others identity (Appiah, 1997).

To understand the construction of identities, emotions – as discussed above – are important to unravel how people entangled with the outside world and react to it (Lynn & Ho, 2009). Identity is not something static, because it transforms in every aspect depending on what is created in the inside world of a person and how is being perceived by the outside world. Therefore, there are among multiple forces these two that are mainly pushing and pulling in order to build a self. This self will try to answer both demands or simply accept being left out of them, but when it comes to people that is excluded from the normative rule, then the number of stereotypes and demands grow. Thereafter, this before called strangers can be (un)intendedly forced to take a pathway that leads to a cosmopolitan identity, rooted to their own selves and following their norms and beliefs but enclave in one or more categories by the society that makes them live a very different everyday life (Schiller et al., 2011). But there are different questions at play, like: what is expected in a place, what is the imaginary of the people that surrounds you about you or, even your ethnic group? In that sense, cosmopolitanism interferes directly in the identity of each person where the political or societal system can impose which of them will be accepted or not. This affects possible relations that will be further built in their life experience. Due to the idea of ethnic-based interactions that are seen as the surface of informal relations, formal and informal institutions might reinforce stereotypes against others and also interfere in the construction of a subject owns identity, influencing its profession and future choices. For example, someone who is expected to develop a sense of Africanism because s/he is a son or daughter of African parents, even s/he is born in Europe, will be conditioned to fulfil what the society expects from him/her. In this case, it may well relate to having a job that is connected

to African culture, cuisine or development projects. But at the same time, to question this decision of using the stereotypes around Africanism, implies to challenge the legitimisation of the stigmatize group to take profit of their own stereotype (inspired by Desportes, 2006).



Dimension 3, encounters

The conceptualization of encounters without physical borders and the construction of the “other” goes hand by hand with the creation of a space as Massey (1994) described it. The relation between people and the perception of each other produce symbolically the place, the movement of their interactions and encounters generate the atmosphere as well as give emotionality to this same place (as discussed above). Taking cosmopolitanism as a way of living, the encounters among people should be seen as moments of understanding, a learning process were someone can acknowledge differences without meaning frontiers to interact or collaborate or even love each other.

Cosmopolitan lenses should not negate the differentiation of identities coming from culture, religion or even gender of the people that participates on an encounter (Schiller et al., 2011). They should focus on the capacity of finding commonalities among the differences, viewing meaningful encounters as another tool to move far from your country without moving physically. As “cosmopolitan patriotism” (Appiah, 1997) defends, should be possible to relish ones’ culture without giving up of enjoying others’ identities, from different backgrounds and beliefs, conceiving cosmopolitan rooted people. Sharing perspectives from people that belongs to different identities should create spaces of exchange and respect, instead of justifying those perspectives through the encapsulation of people with a migrant background or the ones that not apply to the normative definition (Leurs & Ponzanesi, 2018).

At the same time, someone can also feel the pressure when it is not fulfilling the stereotyped moral expectations during such encounters (Faria & Mollett, 2016). At the end, encounters – being voluntary or not – have the potential to lead to get to know better the person they meet and their own self. The bright side of encountering is that even if it is to reinforce the stereotypes, it gives people space and time to start a dialogue most of the times about non-important issues. But *generic places* as previously explained, have also tended to move disadvantaged people from them, looking for cultural conversion instead of the creation of different identities in places like restaurants (Knox, 2005). Hence promoting the homogenization of spaces, provoking on people to look for the same exact camouflage while being there, collaterally patronizing societies to produce encounters that reinforce similarities instead of dealing with differences.

Withal, there is an uneven power relation between the subjects participating in an encounter and it needs to be dealt among them. As the dimension of power relations already have said, and as Kothari (2003) points out, the subjectivity of the other is usually articulated by Western/Colonial subject positions. The use of border narratives is important to reconfigure mental limits and to challenge this hierarchical power relations (Tsoni, 2013). But in this case, the narrativisation of the use of spaces in the

restaurant is key to analyse the type of encounters and the intrinsic alliances of power that are part of them. As in every part of the restaurant, invisible borders created also different spaces to encounter the other giving a different connotation or even perception of that person of what s/he represents. For example, meeting someone at the door will not be the same as facing the same person when leaving the toilet.

2.3. A Bridge between Informality and Cosmopolitanism

Starting from different concepts (informality/cosmopolitanism) and the related dimensions, we now build cross-overs between the separate domains. I link power relations with normativity, identities with emotionality, and encounters with mobility. Each pair of dimensions create the lenses to look through all the data collected. Even if sometimes one situation can be described and seen through more than two lenses, I decide to pair them because their interaction was more recurrent along the analysis of the data collected. To build a bridge between informality and cosmopolitanism already with their dimensions, supports the positive interrelation of both phenomenon and brings a more holistic comprehension of the everyday routine in the restaurant.

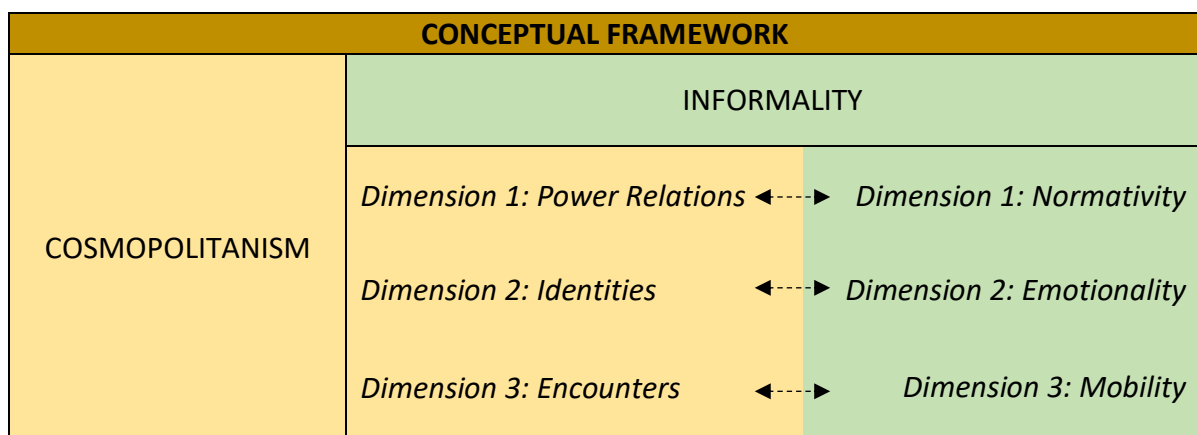


Figure 1: An interrelated conceptual framework

Chapter 3. Methodology

To talk about informality and cosmopolitanism in a restaurant implies to describe peoples' lives and feelings while being in that place. It is then by an ethnographic approach that the whole picture can be reveal and studied from those different dimensions before mentioned. Compared to quantitative methods that tend to reduce a regular phenomenon to numbers, leaving aside the insights of an everyday act (Sharon & Zandbergen, 2017), ethnography seeks to grasp all the factors and details that conform those everyday events (Sedlmair, Meyer, & Munzner, 2012). Thereafter, one of the main characteristics of this Thesis is the descriptive tone used, together with a deep analysis of the data, that also pursues to provoke a review of the presumptions and judgements on the readers (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). The value added of this thesis lies on the theories used and the accuracy of the examination of the data collected (Hammersley, 1990).

Ethnography allows us to use different qualitative methods to enrich from different perspectives something that is happening in situ (Silverman, 1998). Even if some of the ethnographic techniques assume that there is an objectivity attached to normal activities that can be observed by the researcher (Sedlmair et al., 2012), this study has used observations as another point of view that is complemented by what the interviewees answered. The focus is on what people do and how their face-to-face interactions can be interpreted (Silverman, 1998) in order to disentangle informality and cosmopolitanism, but as Sedleimar (2012) advocates, "it is neither feasible nor desirable to capture everything" (p.2438). Despite the tendency of social fields as anthropology and sociology "to build up a detailed understanding of life and practice" (p.2438), this research spotlight daily practices of informality and cosmopolitanism, leaving aside other matters that are also part of the reality studied.

This research is a single-sited study of a restaurant because seeks a deep engagement with the place (Cresswell, 2012) and it is located in The Hague, the third biggest city in The Netherlands (Misachi, 2018). Cities are growing in importance as the spatial places that built them are the terrain of confrontation and concentration of tensions between local and global, as well as other binaries (Tsoni, 2013). Cities have become a "plural field of multi-layered patchworks, a component in an extensive regionalization of both coordinated and disjointed production, inhabitation, and governance" (Simone, 2015a, p. S15). This is why using a single-site approach allows to dig deep in how the ordinary and extraordinary are entangled in one place that confronts very diverse realities. The focus on one site shows the different rhythms made by the place itself and all the spaces that conform it, the everyday life of the people who own the restaurant but at the same time is trapped in its moves and times.

The restaurant is the place where everything happens and is in its different spaces where we can find a whole social and spatial structure. As Gielis (2011) indicates, strategically single-site research can be very useful to understand multi-sited context specially regarding transnational experiences. In this case, the restaurant is the location where the research starts but the experiences inside are related to the outside world. It is the place made through the use of different people "where instant decisions and the active

negotiation of (the) space” (Cresswell, 2012, p. 647) is a constant interaction among customers and workers. As this study is, among other dimensions, about emotions and identity, it is very much connected to the surrounding lives of the customers that are influenced by their experiences everywhere. To do single-site research allows me to go deeper and to analyse the microcosm created in the everyday life of the restaurant (Gielis, 2011). It also shows how micropolitics can be transformed in time and space (Cresswell, 2012), maintaining the characters that participate in a place.

3.1. Methodological Choices and Implementation

Because of the intrinsic ethnographic approach of this thesis, the methods used are non-participant observation, participant observation, and interviews. Although the results are mainly based on the non-participant and participant observation, they are also nourished with four interviews that proportionate most of the contextual information and uncounted informal conversations during the participant observation. Due to the nature of the research and methods use, also because of the way the analysis has been done, this Master Thesis could also be seen to some extent as an “analytic autoethnography” (Anderson, 2006). Because of my implication and self-reflection during the process of collecting data, being part of the place and doing an analysis of my point of view, it is important to recognize this blend of typological ethnographies that at the end have enrich the results. The fieldwork included in this Master Thesis was done in the same African restaurant in The Hague³.

The journey started looking for a restaurant where to conduct the thesis. I researched on the Internet and asked different people around in order to know places that were connected to the so-called African culture. Once the restaurant was chosen, the non-participant observation began. I decided to ask for the permission of the owner to conduct my thesis as soon as I decided the place. First, I was an outsider of the restaurant, a *newcomer*, and I set invisible borders with other customers in order to scrutinize the mundane. The non-participant observation lasted for two weeks. I went there four days and I spent about three hours each day just watching. I tried to interact the minimum with the waitresses and other customers, although sometimes it was hard because they were very nice. I was always with a notebook where I could write all my observations. While I was writing, I decided to draw part of the restaurant in another page of the notebook, just in case someone was interested on knowing what I was doing. And it happened. The first day that I was sitting in one of the tables at the corner, the waitress came and asked to me what I was doing in that notebook. I show her the drawing of the restaurant and she thought I was talented. She even asked me to take a picture and post it on her Snapchat. The coming days, if she was working, every time I left the restaurant she would ask me to see the notebook.

³ The first idea was to study as well an African restaurant in Barcelona in order to know different realities of informality and cosmopolitanism. At the end, it was decided that it will be out of the scope because the data collection in Barcelona was not sufficient to extract in-depth results from it.

During the non-participant observation was easier to keep track on what I was seeing. I was relatively well positioned, always sitting on tables for the newcomers, I could look around and write everything. After the first hour being there I was unnoticed, and I realized that because the waitress one day used my table to leave some dirty dishes from another table for quite some time. She did not even justify herself, she just came after a while and took them to the kitchen. I tried to have always some food because it was less suspicious to be in the space of newcomers for that long having dinner. There, I also noticed that newcomers mainly came for food and not just for drinks, so I adapted to the routine of the place because my intention was to be unseen. The data was there, I just captured everything I could see, listen and experience. I tried to be descriptive but every now and then a reflection came from what I was writing. During that period I did not know the dimensions I was going to use, therefore I could not classify my thoughts that ease. This phase could not last more because my relation with the waitresses was moving faster than expected. As they saw me there for that long, going always first to the chef to say hello and bye, they were also asking me more about my life and about what I was doing there. It happened naturally that one day when I arrived, every usual customer who was sitting in the bar counter said hello to me as well. They did not know me, but they saw me saying hello to the waitress and the chef. That day I decided to sit closer to the bar counter, ask just for a drink and to not open my notebook. I decided to start my participant observations.

During the participant observation period that lasted for a month and a half, informal conversations with different customers and workers provided me with a multiangle view of the place -among a variety of other topics. Informality was very much present in the process of collecting data, as the relations with people inside the restaurant were naturally flowing due to the time I was spending there. I was always sitting between the bar counter and the following two tables, where usual customers always sit. My first conversation was actually about football and the men who were sitting in the bar counter invited me to join them there. After that, when another usual customer was coming in, first they looked at me surprised, then they said hello to everybody else and came to me to say hello and asked me what I was doing there. I noticed that my sole presence was something they wanted to understand, therefore, the data I was capturing involved also what I was doing or saying. During that period, I kept track of my observations using my phone. I was always writing different notes like if they were messages to myself. People never asked me what I was doing because the use of the phone nowadays in places like a restaurant is very common. It was harder to remember every detail like when I was doing non-participant observations because frequently I could just have time to write three or four words that later on, when I arrived to my house, I would need to translate into sentences and put them the contextual information. That, together with the notes from my notebook during the non-participant observations, are what I consider the diary of this exceptional journey into the everyday routine of the restaurant.

Once the participant observation started, becoming part of the crowd, the *family*, took me some days but definitely, gave me a different point of view of the mobility inside the place, the uses of the spaces and even the type of encounters that were happening. As Clifford, Cope, Gillespie, & French, (2016) remark “the power of participant-observation

lies in its intimacy with, and grounded perspective upon, the places, practices and people studied” (p.170). Patterns among customers and workers were even more disclosed during the period of participant observations and some of them were also questioned during the informal conversations, adding valuable information to my perceptions. This is one of the reasons that participant observation became the backbone among other sources to disentangle the reality. Through these informal relations I could also ask for interviews to some of them. People who was particularly important because their intimate relation with the restaurant. Some of the ones that could uncover hidden information like those invisible ties that are part of the everyday decisions inside the place that might come from years ago.

Interviews and informal conversations therefore were key to understand the context and draw an historical line of the place. Even if non-participant and participant observations were rich in experiences, talking with people who was part of the place allowed to question different events and set a time line. Like the story of a person, the place has also changed from one year to another, and that is something very difficult to capture in a short period of time. For that reason, firstly I explained the purpose of the thesis and then interviews were conducted and recorded. The people was selected based on their availability and role in the restaurant. The interviews were semi-structured but I never took the questions out of my notebook, as I did not want to be reading neither the other person feel intimidated by a list of questions. As they were recorded I could focus on the non-verbal communication of the person, and also make the atmosphere a bit less “academic” and more “real”. The interviews were transcribed. All the participants agreed of being part of the study by being recorded but they preferred to remain anonymous.

3.2 Analysis

During the non-participant and participant period of observations, the data was collected and processed. The analysis began while being in the place, all the reflections and disaggregation of information was constant. At the end of every day of observations, when I was writing the diary I could reflect on what happened minutes ago, and the analysis was already there. When the participant observation began, it was harder to keep up with the analysis because there were so many inputs every time I went to the restaurant, but also it was being richer in terms of data. From this period of analysis I came up with the six dimensions before mentioned. While re-reading my notes, and trying to find an answer for the specific questions, I started to see some patterns that could be divided in those categories. Thereafter, I revise again all the data categorizing the information, and this is how I ended up pairing the dimensions.

I used a colour coding to ensure that every event or piece of information was interpreted and registered, sometimes meaning that was important for more than one dimension. After the coding, I scrutinize the results and paired the dimensions from informality and cosmopolitanism that were being found together more often. It meant that sometimes one event was looked through more than one or two dimensions, but the most recurrent links were the ones that I chose to pair. During this last period of interpretation of the data gathered, there were unexpected similarities that made

possible the design of some characters as the people that could represent the customers and workers that frequented the restaurant in the everyday life of the place (Clifford et al., 2016). The non-participant and participant observation period gave me a panoramic of the people that were part of the place, their roles, their main demeanor, their probable moves and interactions in the different spaces. In those informal conversations I could reaffirm and sometimes correct those visions. It needs to be stressed that those prototypes as the people they represent, should not be understood as fix and static, they change over time and this is just a photograph of what I experienced.

At the same time, from my observations I could see patterns in the use of spaces marked by invisible borders in the place. Some of the observations were also confirmed by informal conversations with other people in the restaurant, and by the interviews. Those spaces included mainly one table or more and the chairs around. It was fantastic to keep track on how people was moving around the restaurant, how those invisible borders were acting as real barriers between people, and how those barriers were also swiped by unknown or positions of power. I stand for the idea that every place is build by physical walls and invisible walls, the last ones being made by the people that use the space and living in a continuous struggle to survive or be removed. The last ones made possible to disentangle shadow circuits, were people need to interact with each other to negotiate until where those walls can arrive and how thick they can be.

3.3 Reflections & Ethics

In contemplation of what implies doing a qualitative research, it is very important to recognize how myself could have affected the data collection and to it analyses. From the beginning of the research, I spoke privately with the owner of the restaurant to ask for his permission. I found unethical to conduct a thesis in a private place without explicit authorization. Being aware that it might affect to his conduct towards me or around me, his position in the restaurant - as he is all the time in the kitchen- made possible to mingle with other customers and workers introducing myself to them, and not disclosing such information until necessary.

Doing a self-reflection of how could I affect, I am a woman, white, from a European country who does not speak the native language either of the country where the research is conducted neither of the countries of origin of the people interviewed. I am young for European standards, unmarried and a student. All this affected to the relationships I built with the people in the restaurant. On the one hand, there is a power relation involved between a customer and a worker in a restaurant that it was not until I became part of the *family* that I could transform it into a more equal relationship. On the other hand, in every ethnographic research can be found the inherent power relationship involved between the researcher and the subject of analyses, involving politics, ethics, hierarchies and much more (Dyck, 1993).

In the everyday life, there are encounters that come with prejudices that cannot be controlled and also can create differentiation on the behave of people towards me. Being aware of this, I tried to build relationships based on a common ground, relating to

my own experiences and being aware all the time about my position in the conversation. There are limitations regarding what people do or do not do while you are there because of the conceptions they have or the role they want to play. Being alone for so many hours in the restaurant sometimes was a bit harsh, as people who have drunk two or more glasses than needed could be a bit irritating. Hence, the results may also be affected due to me hesitance to play along in some situations.

During the period of interpretation of the data collected, my vital history influences the way I analyse and perceive what I observe, what I focus on and how I disseminate the information. In order to avoid those bias, I built an extensive literature framework to be able to use theoretical lenses to disclosed and interpret the data. It helped me to focus on a colour code that I could refer to.

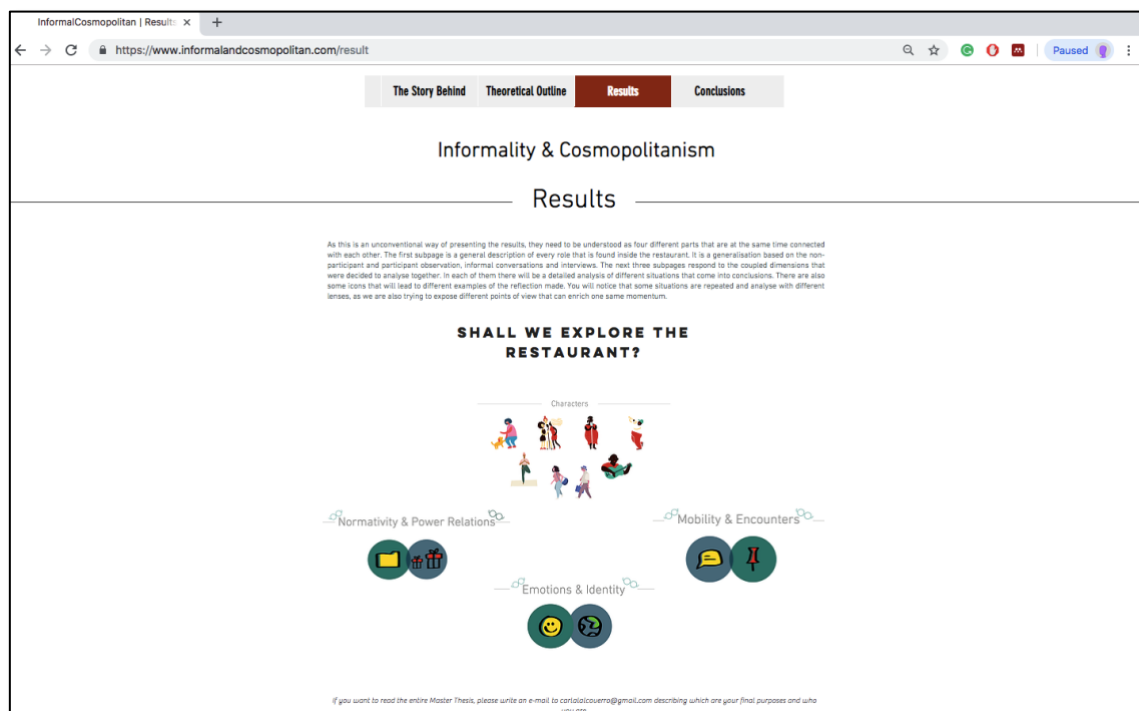
Chapter 4. Results

Results are presented on a website that I designed. The website has three main parts divided by:

- The Story Behind: a piece of the interview with the owner about the history of the restaurant.
- Theoretical Outline: a summary of the theoretical framework
- Results: a first introduction that is subdivided by:
 - Characters
 - Normativity & Power Relations
 - Emotionality & Identity
 - Mobility & Encounters
- Conclusions: a summary of the conclusions

In the section of results, there are different icons that will lead to more information. Please, take your time reading and discovering the experience of being closer to Swingin Safari.

www.informalandcosmopolitan.com⁴



⁴ If this link does not lead you to the website, it is because the domain has expired. Please try with: www.wix.com/carlalalcoverro/informalandcosmo

Chapter 5. Conclusions

The main aim of this Thesis was to uncover how informality and cosmopolitanism are produced and coexist in an African restaurant in the Netherlands. Along the analysis of the interrelated dimensions, we have seen that informality is actually the key to live a different cosmopolitanism from the one mainstreamed, and interact with people and cultures that meet in unexpected ways, in unexpected places. It is the type of informality that interferes in our everyday routines and proposes us to be more open to each other, not because we are interested, just because it is part of our spaces and places. This informality provides ample opportunities to rise up cosmopolitan attitudes with meaningful encounters that can build bridges to a more holistic way of understanding others' cultures. In other words, to change our stereotypes for experiences and facts.

We have detached both terms from their mainstream definitions. Informality has been moved from the negative connotation of chaos and irregular economic activities, to the positive side whereas is understood as a tool to rework power relations and to make possible meaningful encounters between people and cultures. Cosmopolitanism has shifted from an experience reserved just for the elite towards a capital that brings agency to the people that is considered to live in the margins to maneuver in their daily live and (re)build their identities. To use positive and constructive connotations of those words move the discussion from the burden to actually the advantage that brings multicultural environments. It highlights the direct relation between informality and cosmopolitanism and makes it a matter of the everyday life, uncovering relations of power, the struggle among the construction of identities, and at the end, the use of spaces that being local have global questions embedded. As Kwame Appiah (1997) portrayed, cosmopolitanism should not happen at the expenses of individual autonomy, neither as a museum for someone to go and enjoy it once in life. It should be freely sustained and recognize as an "endless source of insight and pleasure" (Appiah, 1997, p. 635), treating others as humans and leaving outside the door our differences unless they are worth to discuss and learn.

Going through the subquestions that were stated in the first chapter, the first interrelated dimension was about power relations and normativity. In this respect, we have seen how power is a constant struggle among the people that build the place. We found in informality the possibility to question the power relations that normativity can impose, but also the regular relations in everyday life. Waitresses, the chef and all type of customers have relations of power that change over time through informal practices and experiences.

Once unknown customers arrive at the restaurant, they get to know the place and are being presented with an experience, there is already a position of power determined by the normativity. The chef, the waitresses, and the usual customers let them be. After days of coming, the power is shifted and they start to feel in the place, like if it was own by them, with a bright and a downside. Between the waitresses and the chef, it also happens that the power relation takes part in different identities and roles that they play every day. The use of spaces also shape those power relations and build invisible borders that through encounters can be rethink. At the same time, informality cohabits

with unspoken norms proposing the possibility to question those when setting the importance to here and now. Normativity is part of the routine but it is in this repetition where informality can coexist easier because it implies a disruptive role of shaking others around.

For the second interrelated dimension – emotionality and identity – we have gone through the (re)creation of identities and emotions inside the place. The discussion of the imaginary around African and European cultures brings this noneconomic alliances into the place, giving the possibility to discuss the stereotypes attached to both ethnicities, enriching the conversation from their experiences. Remittances from colonization are also challenged by this everyday dimension, putting the used to be colonized subject in a position of power to decide how to take advantage of the African-European imaginary. Once inside the restaurant, the use of the different spaces gives information about which identity we want to bring and what are we looking for. Our identity and needs are also filters of which type of emotions we will be able to evoke while being there because it will be different when we are unknown customers than usual ones. After being part of the place for a longer period of time, we will develop a sense of home, but it will also bring power with it that it is not necessarily enriching informality or cosmopolitanism, although definitely helps people to connect with the place and between each other. Identities are a mixture of those standards definitions of roles, for example, a mother or a teacher, and what we decide to choose to be in life (Appiah, 1997). Hence all those identities are also in a continuous struggle inside the restaurant. Identities are also influenced by the people who arrive, by those previously spoken alliances. There are unsaid norms that also create invisible borders for people to transform their initial identity, the one that they decide to bring. But in the end, those norms are perpetrated by other people, therefore, it is in their hands to work on those unphysical borders to let people be also what they decide they want to be.

Lastly, the third interrelated dimension – mobility and encounters – shows that hidden circuits, being maintained as the norm, are those unspoken decisions among people towards each other and the spaces inside the restaurant. At the same time, the same circuits can be challenged by encounters. Meaningful encounters can actually make move us physically and mentally. Depending on what we are looking for, encounters can interfere in our decisions regarding the construction of our own identity and impact us emotionally. On the other hand, mobility inside the place is very different from person to person, as spaces can have different meanings being framed by normativity. Even if we have drawn a map with invisible borders, the people in the place are the ones who rebuild those borders day after day. Thereafter, through informal interactions between people those same borders could be rethink and changed. Borders did not mean segregation in terms of lack of interaction, it meant the recognition of power structures beyond what the place was offering. Power relations would have been unfolded in very different ways if the place had a different architecture, in the social and physical senses. But it is important to stress that the lack of walls allowed emotions to flourish and the redefinition of those borders in an endless debate among the people living the place. As entering into the place was already a voluntary act with consequences in the way we perceived others and the imaginary we put into this others. In the end, we can be confronted with our own judgements and it may feel involuntary, but at the same time,

to decide to work on them requires our voluntary act. Hence, feeling cosmopolitan and traveling the world may not imply that we are working on our stereotypes regarding the construction of the other. On the contrary, physically moving could reinforce our ethnonational preconceptions if we look for reasons to confirm what we believe in. But moving to other places trying to forget our expectations, being open to experience whatever it takes, is a very direct way to open a debate with our judgements and to question our own beliefs (also how they were build).

To conclude, there is a need to dig deeper into how informality is beyond economical alliances and so much embedded in this interaction of cosmopolitan capital. Indeed, economical structures help informality to find the way through normativity and offer the possibility to have meaningful encounters of cosmopolitanism. If we do not move studies beyond the mainstream definitions of words that are being used in a globalized everyday routine, we will keep enclosing people in the margins in descriptions that – instead of empowering people – trap people in a position of need and disadvantage. And differences should not mean division, as borders should be reconsidered as spaces to encounter, deal, and interact between people, being recognized as moments of power struggles and challenges of our (non)ethical limits (Wilson, 2017).

If we try to imagine the global in a local, this restaurant has been a place where borders were set by unspoken deals that created hidden circuits by norm. But the people have moved beyond those boundaries, sometimes taking the lack of knowledge about them as an excuse, sometimes because an encounter forced them to do it. But if we are able to rethink a place like a restaurant, we should be able to rethink how we organize countries, cities or villages. Every place we occupy has the possibility to be adapted and help to keep individual freedom in a sense of togetherness. Instead of seeing informality as something pushed into the margins, we need to put it in the center as a possibility of being here and now, maneuvering through life with a cosmopolitan attitude. This would allow to open the debate in others fields were negative connotations of other concepts can be rethink, to move beyond what has been considered obvious and dig deeper in what can be hidden at first site. At the end, this Master Thesis is a call also to stop forgetting the other side of the coin when speaking about the margins. It is a call to (re)imagine public and private spaces as social laboratories where the global is already happening and challenging our everyday perceptions going sometimes unnoticed.

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