Lost in Migration

*Aspirations for Individual Freedom and Social
Integration amongst Sub-Saharan Migrants
after reaching Europe*

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Master´s thesis, Sociology
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Summary

The aim of this thesis is to examine the human experiences of people migrating from sub-Saharan Africa to the external southern borders of Europe and to investigate migrant decision-making processes, both throughout their migration routes, but predominantly after reaching European shores. Who are the individuals behind the big figures and statistics typically presented in the western media and in current political debates? And what happens after they reach Europe?

This study is based on ethnographic fieldwork, consisting of data from three different qualitative methods: semi-participant observation (including informal conversations in the field), semi-structured in-depth interviews and documentary photography.

The fieldwork was conducted over a period of 4 weeks on Sicily with young Muslim men from sub-Saharan African countries, who were sharing poor material living conditions on the streets of one of Sicily's largest cities. At the time, they were participating in a migrant driven illegal drug marked in the city center and had only very limited social exchange with non-migrants, except for drug selling purposes. A key focus in this thesis is the experiences of the migrants participating in the illegal drug economy and how they navigate through the social dynamics on the streets. I also investigate what kind of practices and relationships they formed with each other, as well as with other important social actors they met in their everyday life. This topic is so far only scarcely explored in previous migration research and in sociological literature.

The findings section of this study is divided into three chapters, correlating with three categories of research questions I explore. First, I wanted to study the individual migration routes and the biographical backgrounds, to analyze how their past had shaped their present condition, and link their evaluations during their migration routes to theories on "push and pull" factors and migration networks. At the end of this thesis, I will propose a new way of thinking about the "push-pull"-framework, when relating it to negative and positive freedom.

Second, I investigate why the research participants of this study had ended up on the streets and why they apparently were willing to risk potential sentences, penalization and other forms of risks, by engaging in illegal activities in the city center, rather than remaining in the more predictable and safer facilities of the reception center on the

countryside, where they initially were supposed to stay. Here, I have found theoretical contributions and frameworks within philosophy to be helpful. Building on Isaiah Berlins distinctions between negative and positive freedom and theoretical perspectives on integration in social institutions, I argue that the very nature and structures of the reception center as a social institution had led the participants of this study to feel as someone forcefully removed from society and self-governance. By escaping the physical center on the country side with all its restraints, the research participants also escaped the sentiments of being mentally confined and controlled. Freedom and agency were principles, which the research participants were willing to exchange for refuge and predictability, even if that meant becoming a criminal drug dealer, which they again had found ways to justify for themselves. In other words, they gave up safety and shelter to purchase a sense of liberty and freedom, and they did so with a resilient, opportunistic, creative and a determined conviction. Towards the end of this thesis, I make the case that their actions and assessments can be interpreted as considerations between positive and negative freedom.

However, while navigating between severe restrictions in the reception center and appealing independence on the streets, their shared ambition was to become free and legal citizens with all its privileges and opportunities in a European nation, other than Italy. For them, being legally integrated in social institutions meant being able to realize the prospects for a free and validated future. In this sense, freedom exists within social institutions and social integration. Being integrated in this way however, only becomes true for the very few and privileged ones amongst the numerous asylum seekers who each year enter the external European borders.

The participants of this study thus shared a sense of wasting their time if they would not actively have endeavored to change their situation by themselves, as opposed to simply waiting for their asylum application result. However, deprived of asylum, work permits or citizenships, chances for reaching the aspired legal integration for ensuring individual freedom are slight. The forthright reality for numerous irregular migrants with rejected asylum applications on the streets of southern Europe, is likely to become a perpetual state of involuntary immobility, lost in migration.

Acknowledgments

In the process and effort of producing this thesis, I have undoubtedly gained both more real-world insights and theoretical comprehensions, than I could have ever imagined. Mainly thanks to the people involved in this project and for that I feel privileged and grateful. Thus, for the finalization of this endeavor, I owe excessive thanks and recognitions to many contributors for their vital participation, generous support and valued encouragements along the way. First and foremost, I want to thank the participants of this study for openhandedly and genuinely sharing their stories and experiences with me, and for letting me take part in their everyday challenges in the very demanding and vulnerable condition they were in at the time, and for helping me perceive what I didn't understand.

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1 Introduction

Fences: The reception center called CARA di Mineo on Sicily has a strict policy of not allowing any kind of foods, goods or drugs from the outside. Here, two of the research participants were smuggling various supplies into the center in a brief moment, when none of the armed guards were watching. The center is idyllically located on the countryside with a noticeable scent of oranges from its surrounding acres of orange plantations. The barbed wire fence separates the lingering waiting for those held inside from the freedom on the streets and divides constraints and safety from appealing excitement and risks in the outside world.

It is a late Saturday evening. Almost exactly one year after conducting my fieldwork on Sicily, I am now back, walking on the same streets, in the same Sicilian City. This time to join a Norwegian border control vessel as a photojournalist, which participated in the European Union's border and coast guard operation. The house owner of the Bed & Breakfast I stayed at was a well-known Sicilian DJ and on this particular Saturday, he and his colleagues had arranged for a social experiment. They had organized a gig in "the ghetto" as he called it, in the nightclub called "One Love". The exact same nightclub as I had met the research participants of this study precisely one year earlier. He said that no other DJs or musicians before him had dared to play there and that his girlfriend and family were somewhat worried for him being in that part of the city.

On that late evening, on my way to the nightclub, I could suddenly remember why I at the beginning of my fieldwork had found this particular area of the city to be a bit frightening. I met two young men smoking cannabis joints in the dark. The smell of trash and urine from the streets, combined with sweet-smelling cannabis was typical for this area. The men seemed like they could have been part of the same network as my research participants, so I asked them if they were also going to the same nightclub, and they were. Hence, I joined them and mentioned a few names to check if we had mutual acquaintances (i.e., my former research participants). It turned out, they knew these persons, and were well-informed about the participant´s whereabouts and what- and how they were doing. Even if some of them already had moved to different cities and others had resettled in new countries months ago.

To me, this demonstrated the efficiency and resourcefulness of the migrant networks on the streets and how well they were organized in such disordered circumstances. The social value and functions of these migrant networks as well as the navigation within them will be emphasized and analyzed throughout this thesis.
Moreover, my key focus is the human experiences of people migrating. What makes someone leave their country and their loved ones and risk their lives for an uncertain future on a distant continent? What happens after they reach European shores? How influential are migrant networks for their ability and ambition to migrate? And how and why did the research participants of this thesis end up in the illegal drug marked on the

streets after reaching Sicily? These questions will be the leading research questions in this thesis.

I spent the rest of the night and early morning hours with these young migrants and their friends. And the unnerving social DJ-experiment turned out to be a great success.

A Brief Overview

The story of human civilization has typically been the story of geographical resettlements and territorial movements. From the earliest registrations of human activities, there is evidence of mobility and migration (Brochmann 2006: 9). While migration to a large degree has defined the narration of humankind, never has the global migration patterns been more complex and dynamic. According to the 2015 edition of the annual United Nations (UN) Global Trends report, there has never been recorded a higher level of displacement and migration as of May 2016 (UNCHR 2016b). Even though most migrants do not immigrate to Europe on a global measure, the escalating and accelerating trend also includes the rising number of people risking their lives when crossing the Mediterranean Sea. In 2015 alone, more than 1 million migrants arrived on European shores by boat (UNCHR 2016b). During that same year, 3 770 people drowned or were reported missing in the Mediterranean (UNHCR 2016: 32a). Numbers from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) indicate that more than 43 000 migrants and refugees have reached Italian shores so far, this year (during the first 5 months of 2017), with most arrivals at the ports of southern Italy. In the same time period, more than 1 150 people have lost their lives while attempting to reach Europe so far, this year (NRC 2017). This route, however, has long been popular. Already in 2008 almost 40 000 individuals were registered close to Malta and Lampedusa (Frontex 2017). And as of 2014, the number of refugees and migrants who have lost their lives while trying to reach Europe since the year of 2000, exceeded 30,000 (The Migrants Files 2014). Such statistics can be challenging to interpret and comprehend as humans and not numbers. This thesis, therefore, aims at contributing with qualitative insights in individual's experiences.

What I initially noticed when I first started exploring the topic of migration to Europe's southern borders in 2014, was how the Norwegian media typically presented numbers

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and facts when reporting on migration to Europe as well as the tragic losses of life at sea. By that time, more than 23,000 people had lost their lives while trying to reach Europe since the year 2000, according to the database The Migrant Files (Grensund & Grosso 2014: 7). This databank was collectively formed by a consortium of journalists from over 15 European countries, as a result of nonexistent official statistics of people dying in attempts to cross European borders (Grensund & Grosso 2014: 7). No EU-Institution had up till then registered such numbers and the public concerns and interest in these migration patterns were slight. The superficial coverage and the ostensibly lack of interest in who those people actually were and what kind of aspirations that might encourage such risky crossings made me interested in striving for a better understanding on this matter. My interest then became to examine the personal experiences and the social aspects of the individual behind these big figures and numbers. During the following years however, the public attention and media portrayal of these questions changed profoundly and it has been interesting to witness how the Norwegian public discourse concerning migration has transformed, since 2014. From modest public engagements to passionate commitments. Now this attention once more seems fading, although the migrant situation is as challenging and concerning as ever.

Nevertheless, while the migrants and refugees who cross the Mediterranean Sea are once again no longer are as prominent in the daily news reports, the larger political debate is arguably more evident than ever before. The impact of the refugee emergency was perhaps most evidently identifiable when numerous European nations in 2015 responded by increasing border controls and imposing restrictions and limitations for entrances (UNHCR 2016: 34). This tendency has already for some years been criticized by activists and has become an increasing concern amongst social researchers for threatening migrant's rights and for forcing them to take risky decisions (Aas & Gundhus 2014: 1). Consequently, international migration has become disputably the most heated and polarizing political topic in the western world. An escalating number of people favor more demanding and stricter citizenship policies, and the notion that non-western immigrants contribute positively to society is gradually fading (Johansen, Uglevik & Aas 2013: 14). It therefore seems to me especially crucial to highlight and

analyze migration decision-making by some of the voices that in fact constitute the migration statistics, which ultimately is the intention of this study.

Crossing Borders

Only a small fraction of the world's population enjoys unlimited legal mobility rights across international borders (Kohsravi 2011: 4). For most people, borders regulate their movements and designate social and cultural differences (Kohsravi 2011: 4). Whereas certain aspects of global mobility such as tourism, business collaborations and exchange students typically are highlighted as progressive and positive tendencies, migrant mobility is largely considered a problematic concern by the national states (Johansen et al. 2013: 15). In Europe, the political argument has typically been that since the border control within the European Union (EU) has been reduced, the regulations of the external EU border must be enhanced (Johansen et al. 2013: 12). Thus, due to the limited and decreasing alternatives for non-European refugees and migrants for getting legally and safely to Europe, many feel compelled to cross European borders illegally, this being their last and only option. When crossing the Mediterranean Sea, refugees and migrants are depend on smugglers who arrange either overloaded inflatable rubber dinghies or old unseaworthy fishing boats for the dangerous crossing (Frontex 2017). Equipped with insufficient fuel and poor engines, the migrants then are reliant on being rescued. Most European border control operations therefore in reality become Search and Rescue (SAR) operations (Frontex 2017).

Before the Arab Spring, which started in December in 2010, many migrant workers from sub-Saharan Africa had Libya as their final destination due to the country's various job opportunities (Frontex 2017). This was also the case for several of the research participants of this study. Some had ended up in Italy after being forcibly expelled as a result of Gadhafi's regime. After 2013 the number of people escaping Libya and fleeing to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea increased severely, which also resulted in a rising incident of capsizing and drownings (Frontex 2017). In 2013, Italy launched the rescue program called Mare Nostrum – meaning our ocean, after a major tragic accident

where at least 360 people drowned (Elster 2014). At that time, this was the largest maritime tragedy in the Mediterranean since the second world war.

Even though Mare Nostrum partly was financed by the EU, it was an Italian-led operation. And when the Italian government did not have the capacity to continue the financing any longer, EUs border and coast guard agency Frontex replaced Mare Nostrum with an operation called Triton – a reduced patrol mission which operates within a smaller area and includes fewer ships (Elster 2014). Whereas Mare Nostrum actively searched and rescued migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea and rescued over 150 000 migrants and refugees, Triton had a stricter border control mandate. This raised public debates regarding migrant responsibilities and on the ethics of border control and surveillance principles versus rescue and protections principles

Regulations for Asylum Seekers

According to UNs Global Trends report for 2015, approximately 2 million individuals submitted applications for asylum or refugee status in 2015 and a total of 3,2 million people were waiting for their application results (UNHCR 2016: 3). The leading receiver of new applications was Germany, followed by the United States of America and Sweden (UNHCR 2016: 3a). Italy received almost 40 000 asylum applications during the first 3 months of 2017, of whom 85% were male and 15% were female (UNHCR 2017).

In 1999, the member nations of the EU, established the Dublin-convention with the key policy being that asylum seekers were legally restricted to apply for asylum in only one amongst the EU-countries (Brekke 2011: 8). Asylum seekers should, according to this convention, have their cases processed only in the country where they first had been registered (Brekke & Brochman 2014: 146). In order to ensure and share information regarding the asylum applications amongst the member nations, the EU established the EURODAC-register in 2003. Moreover, for the Dublin convention to be functional, there has to be shared common definitions of refugees and migrants, as well as the degrees of protection for the different reasons given when applying for asylum or protection.

The Dublin-convention has been largely criticized as it seems to only increases the disproportioned burden sharing Europe when it comes to receiving migrants (Brekke

2011:9). Particularly the southern border countries, such as Italy and Greece have been especially affected by the Dublin-convention policies.

Jan-Paul Brekke and Grete Brochmann (2014: 146) make the case that the noteworthy national differences when it comes to receptions conditions and social rights for migrants encourages where migrants and refugees aspire to end up. This was also true for the research participants of my study. They all planned to move to countries like Germany, Switzerland or Sweden. Similar to Brekke and Brochmann´s study from 2014, the research participants of this thesis were also aware of the legal aspects of being a migrant or a refugee in Europe and were familiar with the Dublin-convention. They all seemed very well informed about the national variations in reception conditions and which European countries that had more strict asylum policies compared to the more liberal ones. Such information was communally shared amongst the participants within their migrant networks.

Research Questions

The aim of this study is on the one hand to examine the human experiences of people migrating from sub-Saharan nations to Europe by analyzing their narratives. On the other hand, this study attempts to analyze the aspirations and considerations of asylum seekers, after reaching European shores. Based on ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in 2014, the study consists of data from three different qualitative methods: semi-participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews and documentary photography. From the very beginning, I wanted the structure of this study to be as inductive and grounded in the empirical material as possible in order to derive the findings and analysis directly from the research participants´ experiences and insights. The research questions therefore originated from the indications and inclinations from my fieldwork. Based on my curiosity on the biographical backgrounds of the research participants and their individual migration routes to Europe, I wanted to explore the significance of their migrant networks for their decision-making processes. Furthermore, I wanted to understand why the participants had ended up on the streets and why they were willing to consciously risk potential sentences, penalization and other forms of risks, by engaging in the illegal drug marked in the city center, rather

than remaining in the more predictable and safer facilities of the reception center on the countryside, where they initially were supposed to stay. Lastly, I wanted to examine their hopes and aspirations for their future in Europe. My key research questions are as follows:

1) How influential were migrant networks for the individual research participant´s ability and ambition to migrate?

2) How did the research participants end up in the illegal drug marked on the streets after reaching Europe?

3) What kind of hopes and aspirations do they have for their future in Europe?

By chronologically answering these central questions in the three analytical chapters of this thesis, this study attempts to provide thorough understanding and insights about migration decision-making processes, both when migrating to Europe, but mostly after reaching European shores.

Conceptual Clarifications

Before continuing to the following chapters, it can be helpful with some definitions and clarifications of the terminologies and concepts used in this thesis and how they best should be understood. The controversial nature of migration as a research topic makes the choices of words and definitions a delicate exercise. In the public discourse and political debates there is an ongoing fight for words and definitions in this field (Johansen et al. 2013: 15). The way we talk about migration matters because different words offer different associations which again influence meanings and values of politicized arguments. The immigration critics tend to make use of words and names that attach immigrants to criminality, such as "illegal immigrant", "unauthorized migrants" or "economic migrant". Their political opponents on the other hand typically use descriptions like "undocumented refugees" and expressions like "no human is illegal" (Johansen et al. 2013: 15). Defining migrants as motivated by economic gain as opposed to oppressed and persecuted victims, has become a common dispute. It would

be beyond the scope of this chapter to deliberate further on migration discourses and definitions, so I will hence rather present some explicit terms used in this thesis and briefly clarify how they best should be understood in the context of the following chapters. I have decided to use terms and definitions that are close to the terminologies the participants of this study used about themselves and among themselves.

The term "*migrant*" will be used for individuals immigrating or emigrating across international borders before applying for asylum. In 2015, the UNHCR encouraged using "refugees and migrants" when labeling people crossing the Mediterranean Sea, instead of one or the other (Carling 2017: 2). Jørgen Carling (2017: 2) argues that there are two contrasting views when it comes to defining migrants, which he calls inclusivist and residualist. Where inclusivist defines migrants as someone who has changed their country of residence, regardless of motive (including refugees), residualist views migrants as someone who traveled or moved to another nation for any other reason than to seek protection and refuge. In this thesis, I will use the term migrant in an inclusivist interpretation.

Furthermore, defining a person as a "*refugee*" as opposed to a migrant can have critical consequence. When differentiating between these two categories, one could use the motives for departure to determine the distinction (Carling 2017: 3). But an obvious challenge is that such motives and motivations can overlap and be blurred for the individual migrant (Carling 2017: 3). I will henceforth be using the label refugee for individuals who are forcibly displaced as result of war and conflict. However, it should perhaps be noted that these categories should not be understood as too rigid in this thesis, as some of the research participant started by being a migrant to Libya and became a refugee when escaping Gadhafi's regime in Libya.

I will use the term "*asylum seeker*" for individuals who are waiting for their application results and "*rejected asylum seekers*" for individuals with denied applications. At the beginning of my fieldwork, all research participants were asylum seekers. Some had however already got refused their applications, but were appealing with legal aid from lawyers who volunteered in such cases, in order to reapply. During the fieldwork, one of them was granted asylum.

"*Research participant*" is typically a more common term in anthropology, perhaps more so than in sociological and criminological scholarship. Nevertheless, I decided to label the respondents in this study as research participants since other terms such as "informants" in my ears sounded slightly more illegitimate, especially considering the context of police and the illegal activities.

I will further clarify definitions of freedom, street capital and street masculinity in the theoretical chapter.

Structure and Outline of the Thesis

In the next chapter, I will present the different qualitative methods used during my fieldwork, clarify my ethical choices as well as how the empirical material is being used and analyzed in this study. In the succeeding chapter, I will present the theoretical framework for analyzing my data as well as related previous migration research. I will emphasis on theories on push and pull factors, migrant networks, concepts of freedom as well as identity, street masculinity, street capital, neutralization and integration. In the subsequent three analytical chapters, I will provide answers to my three key research questions in this thesis. In the last chapter of this thesis I will propose prospects for further research and present some closing remarks at the end.

2 Context: The Streets of Sicily

A home in homelessness: Inside a forsaken former cement factory building, the research participants found shelter during the nights. To get inside, one has to either crawl under a fence close to a main road, when no car is passing and nobody is watching, or climb over a tall fence close to the railroad, when no train is arriving. This was where they prepared and shared traditional African meals, smoked cigarettes or cannabis joints together, listened to reggae music and played soccer on the rooftop. This place offered a contrasting disparity to the reception center, but at the same time it was a place characterized by ambivalence. The appealing freedom and liberty also came with acute costs and struggles. But most participants of this thesis preferred the enduring uncertainty rather than the rules of the reception center and were willing to pay the price for a sentiment of freedom.

In this chapter, I will describe my introduction to the field, how I met the irregular migrants and refugees living on the streets, who were to become the research participants of this study, as well as providing brief descriptions of the two divergent places the research participants where navigating amongst.

Entrance to The Field

The initial aim of this study was to interview a few English-speaking migrants after their arrival to Italy about their perspectives on- and ambitions for migration. The Italian Red Cross is usually the agency receiving and taking care of the migrants and refugees when they arrive on Italian shores. I therefore decided to contact the international headquarter of the Red Cross to ask for assistance and for possibilities to team up with the Red Cross personnel on Sicily in order to conduct my fieldwork and possibly join an existing project. They told me to contact the Sicilian Red Cross directly and gave me some contact information. But as the staffs on Sicily were unreachable, I decided to meet up at their main office on Sicily in person. After a couple of attempts, I met with volunteers working on a newly established project within the Red Cross called Family Reunion Link (FRL). Their task was to reunite recently arrived migrants with their family members elsewhere in Europe and to make sure that families and siblings travelling together would not be separated when they arrived on Sicily.

Since the Italian island of Lampedusa was "closed" for migrants at that time, as all the islands reception institutions were overfilled, the Italian marines now shipped all newly rescued migrants and refugees to different ports on Sicily. The Red Cross staff working on reuniting families did not allow me to participate in their assignment due to confidentiality considerations and the sensitive nature of this task. Instead, they recommended me to talk directly to migrants on the streets. They suggested I should go to the train station during the evening hours and approach migrants living on the streets and introduce my project and myself to them. So that is what I started doing the following nights.

The Red Cross staff also gave me three addresses for diverse organizations, which all work with migration- and refugee issues on Sicily, in case I would have difficulties

finding respondents on my own. Most of the people I met during these evening walks were from Senegal and spoke French and barely any English. After a while, my only prerequisite for recruiting potential research participants for my study was that they were more or less young migrants or refugees who spoke relatively fluent English.

Meeting the Research Participants

On one of these evenings in search for appropriate participants, I passed a big piazza with a church in the center. Most of the piazza served as a parking place. On the other side of the square there were small groups of migrants or refugees, who I thought possibly could be potential respondents for my study. Two of them went inside a small local shop. I followed them in order to ask if I could ask them some questions. But once more, they didn't speak any English. I had hitherto considered how to articulate the questions, just in case it would turn out that they actually were not migrants or refugees but legal Italian citizens. And so, to not appear prejudiced in any way, I tried to find an approach of asking about migrations as a universal phenomenon, regardless of the nationality to the person I was approaching. Usually, however, the conversations started and ended by me asking if they spoke English.

As I went back to the piazza, the groups had already left. I began to search for them, without really knowing where I had ended up. Now, it was already passed 10 PM, and dark. After crossing the piazza and walking for a block or two, I met a man carrying a big black plastic bag on his shoulders. He seemed to be in a hurry. I told him I was a student from Norway working on a project on migration and if I could ask him some questions. He looked worried and asked "What do you want? I don't have time!" and disappeared. I continued walking in the same direction, and finally ended up at a place, which seemed to be a poorer part of the city. Only few streetlights here and there, a strong smell of urine and trash, garbage on the streets and people shoving shopping carts with their properties in them. Outside a closed commercial building, I met a young man who stood alone with his smartphone. He was using the company's free Wi-Fi to Skype with his family in his home country. I approached him and asked if I could ask him some questions and started talking with him for a couple of minutes. After a short chat, the young man gave me his contacts so that we could arrange an interview in the following

week. I decided to walk a bit further and suddenly ended up in an area with even fewer streetlights and stronger smell. People were standing in small groups on the streets, surrounded by abandoned houses. A couple of minutes later I found myself outside of what seemed to be some kind of an unofficial red-light district with sex workers on every street corner. Apparently, the only Italians around were costumers and I felt a bit misplaced, thinking that most people probably saw me as a potential client. Two young men were walking on the other side of the street. I crossed the street and approached them "Excuse me? Do you speak English? I am a student from Norway, working on a project about migration. Could I ask you some questions?" The two boys told me they were from Somalia and that they had arrived on Sicily by boat a couple of weeks ago. They had modern and trendy looking clothes on, clean shoes and caps. They talked and gestured in a style, which reminded me of the way American hip-hop artists frequently are portrayed. During our conversation, a man was climbing up a tall fence in front of one of the abandoned apartments nearby. The boy standing to my left said "You see? That's how they do it. Some people live up there." Little did I know then, that I some days later would be spending many days and hours with migrants and refugees in that exact apartment.

We continued chatting and I asked them how they had ended up here. Minutes later a tall man with a black winter jacket, blue jeans and blue tuque passed us. He then turned around and came back. He had obviously overheard our conversation and started to interrupt the boys I was talking to. He seemed a bit high or drunk, so I did not give him too much attention at first. He kept interrupting with a low and deep voice, claiming he spoke better English than them and that I should rather discuss these questions with him instead. He said he was from Gambia and that people from Somalia do not speak English very well. He kept talking about a Nigerian nightclub, which supposedly should be close somewhere and that I should follow him into a narrow street, to what looked like an unofficial red-light district, in order for me to meet with his friends, other migrants and refugees who supposedly were more fluent in English than those two boys I was talking to were. I thought he was a bit annoying and I did not understand what exactly he wanted. He kept saying that I should not be afraid of him and that white people often are scared of people like him. He said, "The Italians have told you not to talk to us, right?" I said no and told him that I was not afraid. After a while, the two boys

said they had to leave. Before they left I asked them if they knew if such a nightclub nearby existed. They said yes, but did not seem too convincing. After giving it some thought, I decided to take the risk, thinking I might regret it later if I did not. After all, I was not carrying any valuable belongings on me, except for the keys to the Bed & Breakfast, where I was staying during my fieldwork.

It was already passed midnight when I followed "Ousman"[1] from Gambia into a shady pathway. We passed two female sex-workers who were standing on the corner. An Italian looking man, maybe in his fifties was driving his motorbike and slowly passing a female sex-worker. The walls and streets strongly smelled like a mixture of cannabis, urine and trash. We first walked strait, then to the right, then to the left and then to the right again, and suddenly there actually was an entrance to a nightclub. I felt relieved when stepping inside. There was loud reggae music, smoke from cigarettes, cannabis joints, blue and green neon-lights and a sign saying, "One Love". Some of Ousman's friends were sitting on wrecked white plastic chairs, leaning onto the wall, drinking beer and sharing and smoking joints. They made a chair free for me and I shook everyone's hand. Ousman explained them about my research project and they welcomed me and right away and started telling me about the life inside the center. Norway seemed to be a country that interested them. The clientele of this nightclub consisted of male migrants and refugees as well as female sex-workers. All seemingly, from sub-Saharan countries.

The frontrunners of this group seemed to be "Ibrahim". I talked to Ibrahim and Ousman for the rest of the evening. The two of them were the closest friends in the group and also seemed to be the front figures in the larger crowd. Ibrahim said that what I do is important work and that he wanted to help me out. Ousman being the one, who introduced me to the rest for the group, probably gave my project and me researcher and as a person more credibility and integrity. In my opinion, it was crucial that Ousman was the one introducing me, and that they both had an idea of what it means to do fieldwork and research. Ibrahim's older brother was s journalist in Ghana and Ousman's younger brother studied social sciences at the university in Gambia. Many in the club

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[1] All names of the research participants are pseudonyms.

soon joined in and started sharing their stories about living on the streets and about the reception center.

The youngest amongst them, an 18-year-old man from Mali had already stayed in prison for 12 months. Another one, "Emmanuel", told me he just had gotten out of prison after 11 months, accused of selling illegal drugs on the streets of Sicily. Ibrahim told me that he had gotten to Europe by hiding inside a cargo-airplane. I will elaborate on these stories further in the two analytical chapters of this thesis. Although it was hard to hear everything because of the very loud reggae music, I kept thinking that what they all were telling me was incredible valuable data and that I wished I could record everything they said, in case I would forget anything. From then on, I decided to always bring my recorder. I stayed in the nightclub for a couple of hours until the early morning. When they closed the bar, I joined Ousman to the train station. He said there were other migrants and refugees there too whom I could talk to for my project. But the train station seemed to be empty of people at the moment. On the way back, he told me about his dangerous journey over the Mediterranean Sea and what had brought him to Sicily. I didn't want to ask him too many questions yet, in order to save some stories and information for when I could record what he was saying, in case I would forget the details. We agreed to meet again the following day, and at around 5:30 AM, I went to my Bed and Breakfast to get some sleep. This was my first encounter with the research participants whom I from this point on started following and documenting for the next four weeks.

The Reception Center

Italian authorities identify new sea arrivals with the support from the European border agency Frontex European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Europol and Eurojust (UNCHR 2017: 1- 6). After being rescued by the Italian coast guard or by one of the Frontex´ border control vessels, the migrants and refugees usually get registered and transferred to one of the reception centers in southern Italy, where they typically stay from two months until several years, with an average of 8 to 12 months (Brekke & Brochmann 2014: 148).

During my fieldwork, the majority of refugees and migrants, including the participants of this study, were sent to the largest state-funded hosting center for asylum seekers in Italy, called Cara di Mineo. This center is idyllically surrounded by acres of orange plantation located in a village on the eastern part of Sicily called Mineo, and shelters some thousand asylum seekers. Ironically, this camp which now inhabits asylum seekers largely arriving from Libya, used to serve as a US military base and housing complex during the military intervention in Libya. It has proven to be hard to find any official information or reports about this camp other than from the media. Apparently, it is Europe's largest migrant holding camp.

It reception center is enclosed by a wire fence with armed soldiers at the entry of the camp as well as at selected places around the center. Due to the limited certified information, my knowledge about this center is therefor based on journalistic reports, descriptions from the research participants, but mainly from my own field notes from when I was there. As I was not allowed to enter inside the reception center during my fieldwork, my analysis will be based on the participants descriptions and their experiences of living inside the camp, as well as my own observations and impressions from the outside.

When being introduced to the migrants and refugees inside the nightclub in the red-light district, who later would become the key participants of this study, they momentarily started engaging in a passionate discussion about the strict and harsh conditions inside the center. Some of them had already taken to the streets and left the center for good, while others still had the center as their main base for accommodation during the weekdays and typically came to the streets during the weekends for drug selling purposes. One of the first things they told me on this very first evening, was about all the rules and policies inside the center. How they only got one hot meal a day, usually pasta with some red waterish sauce. "You cannot eat pasta every day for 11 months. No, you have to change. We from Africa, we like our African food." They described how they all were given a pack of Marlboro Light every day and how they used these cigarettes as currency to exchange into other goods in the center. Everything they were telling me about the center seemed to be in a sharp contrast to the place we were at; in a bar with loud music, cannabis joints, alcohol, and freedom to stay in the bar for as long as they desired with whom they wanted.

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Visiting the reception center: During my fieldwork, I joined some of the participants when they went to visit the reception center. While approaching the camp by car, one of the participants showed which house he had stayed in before he had taken to the streets.

The ones that were no longer staying in the center were no longer allowed to go back inside, since they had violated the directive of returning to the center within 72 hours. However, they had various ways of entering the center illegally and usually visited the center every second week or so to either visit friends inside or to get supply of cannabis. Arabic drivers offered transport services to the reception center and had made this to a popular business. 5 euros per person from the city to the center.

3 Methods and Data

Communication: It is after midnight when the research participants share a cannabis joint on their way from the abandoned apartment in the unofficially red-light district to the piazza in the city center for selling drugs to Sicilians and tourists. My aim was to get as close to their reality and everyday experiences as possible, to earn their trust and gain acceptance in order to get access and insights to their lives on the streets, what it means to live from the illegal drug economies and how it affected them.

In this chapter, I will explain the choices of methods used for collecting the data and describe how I approached the field and the participants of this study. Further, I will describe how the data have been coded and analyzed, and will subsequently elaborate on ethical considerations.

The data for this study was collected by the use of various qualitative methods to ensure richness of data. These included semi-structured in-depth interviews on Sicily and in Switzerland, semi-participant observation, frequent afterhours conversations in more informal settings, and documentary photography. The essential data material consists of field notes from a period of 28 days on Sicily and 1 day in Switzerland a couple of month later, transcriptions from 4 semi-structured in-depth interviews, 1 follow-up interview and 5 recorded group conversations during the evening hours, with the permission of the present respondents, in addition to roughly 1000 photographs. My sample consisted of somewhere between 10 to 15 Muslim men, aged 18 to 34, depending on who was in the city center at a given day or night. Throughout this chapter I will reflect on the many challenges I stumbled upon during my fieldwork and discuss ethical considerations and shortcomings in more detail at the end of this chapter.

The Research Participants

As mentioned in chapter 2, the participants in this study were selected after being introduced by the first respondent. In my case, the participant in a way rather chose me, which I believe was beneficial for the whole field work. Since one of my only sampling criterions was to find migrants who spoke more or less fluently English, this resulted in a relatively homogeneous group of English-speaking research participants with somewhat shared experiences in poor material living conditions on the streets and with similar cultural and religious backgrounds. They were also similar in terms of age, socioeconomic status and sub-Saharan origin. All were young heterosexual, Muslim men from west-Africa, who now were earning money in the illegal migrant driven drug economy. This made it perhaps easier to identify shared patterns amongst them and to detect disparities to the local Sicilians. At the same time, this thesis then only reflects a very narrow and homogeneous perspective and is not representative for migrants arriving on Sicily on a larger scale. Most of the migrants I ended up following, were from

Ghana, Gambia and Mali. All the participants of this study were recruited through my two key respondents Ousman and Ibrahim. And It turned out to be crucial for me to have at least one of the two around at any given time in the field, in order for me to get necessary access and to earn the trust amongst the other more peripheral participants.

Ethnographic Fieldwork

My motivation for choosing Mediterranean migration as the topic for this project, was to examine the human experiences of the people migrating to Europe and to analyze their stories and situations as seen from their own perspective. I wanted to analyze the personal experiences by using an open research design. Consequently, the fieldwork was based on an ethnographical approach. What typically characterizes ethnographical studies, is that the researcher interacts with the research participants in the situations they are in over a longer period of time, to get to know how they think, behave and interrelate. Qualitative methods in general is arguably the method within the social science, that allows for the closest access to people's everyday life experiences. Using an ethnographic approach, made it possible for me to gain insights into the condition the migrants and refugees were, in first handedly.

Grounded Theory

As already mentioned, I wanted the research design for this study to be as inductive and grounded in the empirical material as possible, in order to derive insights from the research participants´ experiences. Consequently, I have drawn inspiration from grounded theory when collecting the data in the field, as well as when analyzing the data. The ambition in the grounded theory-tradition is that the theoretical perspectives must be built upon inductive data. The idea is to start by collecting inductive data and continuously compare and match the data with the analysis based on them.
The use of a grounded theory-inspired approach opened up for unpredictable aspects during the fieldwork. For instance, that the drug dealing aspect would make up such an important part of the migrants and refugees daily life while awaiting their asylum application results, was something I could not had planned for. I started analyzing my

findings during the data collection in correspondence with principles found in grounded theory.

Semi-Participant Observation

By using semi-participant observation, I wanted to examine how being a migrant living on the streets of Sicily and dealing drugs shaped the identities of the participants of this study. What structures their way of life in their social setting? I wanted to follow the respondents in the environment they were in, in order to get direct access to their social interactions, and to some degree participate in it. An ideal in participating observation is to come close to the informants in order to earn their trust and to view things as an insider, the way the informants see and understand the world they live in. At the same time, one should not become too close and internalize the values and norms belonging to the informants and "go native" which means that one has lost the analytically distance which is required to analyze situations from the outside. Participant observation offers opportunities to study social interactions and the use of language in situations (Fangen 2004: 9 -12).

By using participant observation as a method, it was possible to get direct insights in situations, interactions and social mechanisms as firsthand experiences which otherwise would be difficult to acquire. By being in the field and spending time with the research participants over a longer period, I got access to social phenomena and could witness patterns, which the people involved probably were not as consciously aware of. My aim was to come as close to the participants everyday experiences as possible, even if I would never fully comprehend their experiences from their own perspective. Furthermore, their experiences and definitions varied amongst themselves as well. The reason I call it semi-participant observation, is that I did not take part in their illegal activities due to ethical considerations. I often was offered to smoke cannabis with the participants, and replied each time that I do not smoke. This seemed to gradually be accepted. When getting introduced to new participants on the streets, they sometimes responded surprised, when the key participants said: "No, he doesn't smoke, man. He doesn't even smoke cigarettes!" Another time Ousman asked me if I could keep his

money by me for him, to keep it safe. I took this as a sign of trust, but explained him that I could not get too involved due to ethical research principles, which he immediately understood. Drawing the line between participation and abstention could often be a challenging exercise while in the field, especially when the relationship to the research participants gradually appeared more like friendships. For that reason, drawing a clear and evident line was central.

Both during my semi-participant observation and my semi-structured in-depth interviews, I persistently made an effort of not being judgmental or disapproving in any way. At the same time, I found it essential to ask critical questions during the interviews and during the informal conversations whenever their actions did not match what they said or whenever their definitions did not equal my own definitions.

While being in the field, I was interested in studying their social interactions in different social situations and spatial contexts, as well as perceive the social identities and how these identities were being shaped. Moreover, I wanted to uncover collective structures and grasp the implications of their physical environments.

Field Notes and Sound Recordings

My field notes included brief notes from the field on my phone, as well as more detailed descriptions and theoretical reflections from my field notebook. Based on both of these types of notes, the photographs, recordings and my memory, I usually spent some hours when I got back to my room, and wrote a longer and more precise text for each day, usually within 24 hours, on my password protected computer.

While in the field, I usually wrote down brief notes and thoughts on my phone to help me remember important quotes or defining observations. I consciously choose my phone and not a notebook, to avoid appearing as some kind of reconnoitering or scrutinizing of their illegal behavior. Moreover, my rationale for taking notes on my phone instead of in a notebook, was that it would come across as more natural and less likely to interrupt the interaction. I continually tried to participate in their activities and in their conversations and tried to moderate the feeling of them being observed or watched by a researcher. At the same time, I tried to pay close attention to nonverbal details such as body language, behaviors, appearances, smell, sounds, light and

ambiance. Each time I was unaccompanied in a local café or restaurant somewhere, after spending time with the respondents in the field, I wrote down vivid descriptions and theoretical reflections in my field notebook.

Emerson et al recommend taking notes while in the field (Emerson et al. 2011: 25). In this fieldwork, I also regarded the photographs and the recorded informal conversations as part of field notes. The purpose of recording some of the unstructured group conversations, was due to my frustration for each time I couldn't exactly recall what had been said or who had said what, when I several hours later were to recite the conversations at the beginning of my fieldwork. Getting the quotes as accurate as possible, will in my opinion strengthen the validity of the research.

At the same time, I believe it was important that I did not record too much, due to the same reason as for not using a notebook in the field. This also applies for the use of photography, which I later in this chapter will elaborate further.

Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews

By using semi-structured in-depth interviews, I wanted to let the respondents reflect on their journey in the past, on their present situation and on how they see their future in Europe. Additionally, I wanted to ask them questions related to my observations. By including their own narratives, I also wanted to integrate their own interpretations and analysis on their conditions and circumstances. The face-to-face semi-structured interviews provided empirical narrative material and brought to light specific expressions, subsequently important for understanding how the research participants construct meanings in their distinctive situation. Whereas participant observation can give useful perceptions on how people relate to each other and act together, in-depth interviews can be helpful for providing knowledge on how individuals experience and view their own situation (Thagaard 2009: 12)

Originally, I thought the interviews were to become my most vital type of data and wanted to spend as much time with my respondents as possible in order to hopefully improve the quality of the interviews. This is in coherence with Tove Thagaard´s claim that the social distance between the researcher and the research participants can be

reduced when spending enough time in their milieu before conducting the interviews (Thagaard 2009: 104). My role as a researcher and my relationship to the research participants was already established when conducting the interviews, which I believe was an advantage. The idea was, that I had to earn the trust of the participants and build some kind of relationship based on impartiality in order to get more open and honest responses to my questions in the interviews. But during the course of the data collection, I found that the observations and the participation in their daily lives became at least as valuable as the interviews.

However, I believe the firsthand experiences from my fieldwork prior to the in-depth interviews was significant for the quality of the interviews, partially because I could ask questions regarding occurrences and incidences during my fieldwork and also ask about subject matters which the individual participants individually had shared with me in private. It was therefore of importance to conduct the in-depth interviews on a venue removed from the other participants. During the interviews, I was surprised to find that there were quite a few subjects that they did not share with each other, such as initial reasons for emigrating and that they never fully could trust each other with money or drugs. Initially, I wanted to make in-depth interviews with as many migrants as possible and had expected the interviews to last for roughly one or two hours. But they turned out to last much longer than that and that was one of the reasons for why I conducted much fewer in-depth interviews than originally planned. My first interview lasted in total more than nine hours, divided into two evenings. In the forgoing days,

I had been looking for a quiet place, which was a bit tricky to find, since there were noisy trafficked streets almost everywhere. But there was one larger park in the city center, where I – in agreement with the first participant, Ousman – arranged to conduct the interview. We met during lunchtime and I bought some food and drinks at a local coffee shop close to the park and we then spent the rest of the day, until they closed the park at nine in the evening conducting the interview. This park also turned out to be a place where some homosexual Sicilian men went to look for possibilities to buy sexual services, often from migrant men. During the first interview, one homosexual man interrupted the interview and wanted to get to know Ousman. In this way, this interview as well as the other interviews at the same time also turned out to become

interesting participants observation data. We continued and completed the interview the following day in the same park.

My interview guide consisted of questions related to their migration routes, their migration networks and their aspirations for their European future. The interview guide can be found attached as an appendix at the very end of this thesis. I wanted my questionnaire to be as open as possible to include the participants own definitions, experiences and narratives about migration decision-making processes. I often asked them to describe concrete experiences while migrating as follow-up questions to the key question "Can you please describe your whole migration route to Europe?" I started and ended the interviews with insensitive questions, but tried to avoid questions which could remind them of interviews with Italian authorities. Additionally, I also had bought a large world map and had cut out the African and the European continent. I used this map in all of the in-depth interviews, with the aim of visually structure their migration routes in an accurate order and that this graphic map imaginably could help the individual participant recall memories from the various places throughout their migration routes. The map turned out to be a useful tool for structuring their narratives and typically resulted in rich descriptions, but it also causing very long-lasting interviews. It appeared like they associated certain memories when exploring the map, which they possibly would not have done otherwise.

Before starting the interviews, I handed out the request for participation form and the consent form (these can also be found as appendixes), and informed them that they could change their minds and end the interview at any given time without having to give any explanation for doing so.

I repeated the same procedure with the second participant Ibrahim the next day. He came together with a friend from Afghanistan, when we met in the park. At first, he joined us in the park, until I kindly asked him to give us some privacy in order for us to start the interview. I explained the confidentiality of these interviews to make him understand. When he came back after four hours and we still were not finished, he seemed a bit upset and said, "Even the immigration did not take that long. They asked all the questions in 30 minutes." Ibrahim replied to his friend, "But if you want to make

a serious job, you have to do a serious interview. The people at the immigration are not serious."

This illustrates that he probably felt they were contributing to something important. That this research was of significance, which was helpful for my getting adequate access and trust.

The third interview was conducted on the rooftop of the forsaken former factory building where they all usually stayed overnight. After the third participant had shared dinner with other migrants and after praying, the two of us went on the rooftop for the next hours to conduct the same kind of semi-structured in-depth interview. The fourth interview with the fourth participant was conducted during the night in a green square in the city center, while the other participants were selling drugs close by. The two last interviews were a bit shorter than the first two ones. I believe that because I had gotten to know the research participants over the previous weeks, was one of the reasons for the interviews turning out that long. To me, it felt more like straightforward and sincere conversations. I also got the feeling that they wanted to help me with my project. During the in-depth interviews the participants also were not afraid to correct my definitions, explanations and my lack of understanding in my follow-up questions, though the very nature of such interviews typically indicate a disproportionate relationship.

At the end of each interview, I asked the individual participant if there was anything he would like to add to the interview, that we had not talked about or if they had any questions. I also encouraged them to contact me anytime later if they would have any questions.

After I finished my fieldwork on Sicily, I still kept in touch with these four participants and most frequently with the two key participants Ousman and Ibrahim. A couple of months later, Ousman wrote me that he had travelled to Switzerland and that he now was in a new reception center for asylum seekers, on the countryside outside a small Swiss city. I decided to meet him again in his new surroundings and to conduct a follow-up semi-structured in-depth interview, as well as observing and participating in one day in his day-to-day routines at the center. As he was free to move wherever he desired, we decided to conduct the interview in a restaurant in the city.

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As these in-depth interviews rely on the individuals' subjective hindsight and recollections, they should not be regarded as truth, but rather examined as subjective narratives which can tell us which elements the participants choose to highlight, which again is important for analyzing their interpretations.

Hideaway: After finishing the interview with the third research participant, "Lamin", on the rooftop of the former factory building, we went to meet the other participants in the city center where they were using, selling and dealing drugs. When we were leaving the former factory building, he wanted to show me where he was storing and hiding the drugs he was going to sell the following days. He turned a big heavy stone in the greeneries and told me that no one else knew this hideaway. I felt both appreciative to be trusted but also a bit concerned in case someone else might discover it, which then would make me a likely suspect. He held up packs of cannabis so that I should photograph it. Further, he told me that since there often were new and unfamiliar migrants staying over in the building, everyone had their individual hiding place for their own drugs, because no one could entirely trust each other.

Photography as Qualitative Data

By including documentary photography as one of the methods used in this thesis, I wanted to add a visual contribution to the study. More importantly, however, I wanted to use the photographs as qualitative data alongside written field notes and recorded informal conversations. By visually documenting the environments and interactions amongst the research participants, photographs can give us knowledge on habitual social patterns (Thagaard 2009: 12). My aim was to capture their social behavior visually and by doing so, offer a more transparent component to the analyses. Although anthropologists have an extensive tradition for using both photography and film as part of their methodically repertoire, these methods have not been as much recognized in sociological research. I will therefore here present my use of photography as a data collection tool and endorse this technique for similar studies. The interest and appeal for using photography in this research emerged from my work as a photojournalist outside of academia.

The camera I used, was a small mirrorless camera with high ISO values, so that I could take pictures in very dark conditions during the nights, without having to use flash or external lights, which also would affect and differentiate the photographs from the reality. I predominantly used a 28mm wide-angle lens, which allows for being close to the people and at the same time grasp a wide view much of the surroundings and context. I intentionally used a small and noiseless camera, for not drawing too much attention to the camera and the pictures. This seemed especially important in the settings of illegal use and dealing with drugs and other types of criminal behavior. Of course, this does not mean that I tried to conceal my techniques for collecting data, but it was rather a way of reducing the differences of our roles for each other. On the one hand, my role as a social researcher with the authority to define the meanings of their actions in my study, and the migrants on the other side, as someone being studied and evaluated. It was therefore important that I asked them for permission each time I started the recorder or before I took a picture. The people who are being photographed should always be aware and informed about this (Næss 2014: 95). In my thesis, I wanted the written field notes, the sound recordings and the photographs to

complement each other for combined to result in more accurate and explicable data material.

During the night and early morning hours of the first night of my fieldwork with the participants who I had met some hours earlier in the nightclub, I decided to meet Ousman again at a piazza close to the nightclub the following evening. When I arrived, only one of the guys from the nightclub was there. The 18-year old man from Mali who had recently been in prison for dealing drugs. He recognized me and escorted me to where the other ones were. This time I brought my camera and the recorder in my backpack. I thought it would be better to start early with taking pictures, so that they would get used to the camera from early on. On the second day of my fieldwork, Ibrahim had already seen some other pictures that I had taken online and said we have to take "many cool pictures together."

Prior to this study I had some positive experiences with using documentary photography in the field as a qualitative method in previous research projects that I had been involved in in Tanzania. My experience both times, was that the participants liked having their activities documented and in that way, I could also give something back by sending them some of the pictures when finishing the fieldwork. After ending the fieldwork, I gave each of my key participants a USB-stick with a selection of the pictures I had taken during the last weeks together, which they could use for personal use. Sometimes it also felt good doing something, instead of just standing there. But perhaps more importantly, the photographs contribute and offer something beyond the written notes. Traditional qualitative fieldwork has many similarities with documentary- and reportage photography in their similar principles of being close to the participants, spending much time with the them over long periods and the significance of earning their trust for adequate results.

One could perhaps argue that whereas written text from qualitative fieldwork often to a large degree is the result of the particular researcher´s descriptions and interpretations, documentary photography can offer a slightly more transparent portrayal by the accurate and accountable nature of its visual representations. The viewers can perhaps to a larger degree see for themselves and make up their own judgments about the

acceptance, trustworthiness and credibility achieved during the fieldwork. On the other hand, however, this requires a certain level of acquaintance with photography and how to "read" such images. Another challenge in documentary photography is that the visual esthetics can overshadow the sociological content. Further, the separate images deprived of the written image descriptions can in some cases be misleading or uncommunicative. Also, this is not to say that photography in any sense is more objective or unbiased than written text, since the photographs always will be the result of the researchers or the photographer's subjective selection of framing the reality in time and in composition. Hence, I would argue that when combining photographs and written field notes, this combination can be a compatible technique in collecting qualitative data and should in my opinion encouragingly be recognized in sociological research.

As a result of its capability to accurately register the material world, photography had by the end of the nineteenth century, become entrusted with a social accountability of representing a seemingly objective accurate image of the physical world (Kelsey & Stimson 2008: xi) Nevertheless, photography's promise as a mechanical method and medium of objectivity and neutrality gradually diminished as photography got more experimental, perhaps especially when digital photography surpassed conventional analogue photography. Now, photojournalism and documentary photography are the genres which probably seem closest to a scientific methodology in their stringent guidelines in postproduction and for strict ethical principles for not staging or falsifying photographs. Equivalent to the enduring debates and questioning of how reliant to verity qualitative research can be, given its seemingly adaptable and biased nature, photojournalism also has its ethical permanent debates concerning truth and integrity. Ethnographic photography has as a scientific photography. I have chosen to use the same policies for editing and postproduction (Photoshop), as is common in photojournalism, namely not to add or subtract any elements and keep the editing to an absolute minimum.

Hans Erik Næss (2014) describes how he used photography as extended memory, complementing his field notes in his qualitative research. In this sense, photographs can be a way of testing and probing the field notes and one's own memory (Næss 2014: 95).

I occasionally used my photography in a similar way, by adding details in the descriptions when testing the accuracy of my field notes to the photographs.

I have chosen to begin each chapter with a photograph accompanied with supplementary field notes. All other photographs used in this thesis should be regarded as illustrations supplementing the field notes and will be complemented with descriptions, field notes or quotes from the research participants (except the very last picture in this thesis, which serves as a more general illustration).

My own Role in The Field

At first, I assumed that the migrants and refugees I would meet on the streets would feel uncomfortable talking about matters concerning migration and their life on the streets with strangers, but luckily this turned out to not be an issue in most cases. I believe that not being Italian was an advantage, as Italians and Italy at large typically were labeled as the sources of their daily struggles. Most migrants and refugees I met during my fieldwork seemed to wish to share their stories and their challenging circumstances with me. I sometimes got the impression that the research participants saw me as someone who finally would listen to them for a lengthier time than brief fact-based interviews with Italian authorities. Almost like an opportunity for some to complain about how hard things were and how tough living on the streets actually is.

Already after the first days, the research participants started to send me text messages or call me to ask where I was whenever we were not together, sine I had asked them if I could spend as much time with them as possible. During some of the following evenings however, I sometimes needed short breaks from the field and spent some hours watching an undamaging and witty comedy to disengage in their troubles and persistent distresses, or to eat a meal by myself in a restaurant. This was also to prevent overly engagements in their lives and situations when spending the whole day with the participants, in order to retain an analytical observation capacity.

In qualitative research, the researchers use themselves as tools for collecting information (Thagaard 2009: 13). In my case, I believe my gender, my age and not being Italian, were important elements in order for me to get the access and trust amongst the migrants and refugees on the streets. And because of the similarities in terms of age and gender, I identified myself often with the participants and the ways they acted and reasoned. I also believe that my experiences from qualitative fieldwork with youth in the hip-hop scene in Tanzania was beneficial since I often was familiar with their references.

As the participants already had learned to speak some Italian, they recurrently assisted my and offered translations, in the many situations where the local Sicilians did not speak English and I unfortunately did not know any Italian. This was also true for the many other aspects of my fieldwork. They became my interpreters for helping me understand the codes of the streets and seemed eager to teach me how their lives and the surrounding social mechanisms were structured.

Authority: While I was joining the research participants, sitting on the stars to a church with overview over the piazza, suddenly a police car drove into the piazza with blue lights on and stopped right in front of us. One of the police officers pointed at one of the migrants from the car, upon which he started to run as fast as he could on a street, which was too narrow for the car to drive on. One of the police officers started chasing after him, but soon gave up. The migrant was waving and gesturing teasingly to the officer from a safe distance. In the meanwhile, one of his friends talked hostilely and insistently back at the other police officer who was waiting at the car and said told them they were racists who always only go after black people. The officer clearly got provoked and aggravated. First, he told him to leave the place, (the moment on the picture), but when he continued protesting, the two officers decided to arrest him and forced him inside the car. During this whole time, I was taking pictures and documenting the incident. It wasn't until the car left, and they discovered that I took pictures of their car leaving, that they stopped the car and one the officers got out and started yelling at me in Italian. He forcefully grabbed my camera out of my hands and told me to delete the pictures of their car in Italian. I explained that I was working on a research project, but this didn't seem to change anything. Ibrahim started talking to me in German, saying how reckless and discriminating the Italian police are. All the other research participants were witnessing how the police officer forcefully grabbed my camera and how aggressively he talked to me. After this experience, it seemed like I got even closer and more respected amongst the participants, imaginably because I now first handedly had experienced what they go through on a daily or nightly basis.

Coding and Analyzing the Data

The main objective in qualitative research is to examine social phenomena and the possibly trickiest part is how such phenomena are being interpreted and analyzed by the researcher (Thagaard 2009: 11).

I analyzed the interviews and field notes in resemblance with methods of grounded theory.

While being in the field, I started to think of possible ways of analyzing the data. I tried to constantly be aware of which subjects and terms that interested the research participants, and which definitions they drew on. During the in-depth interviews, I usually took notes on what I found particular interesting and wrote about the interviews more in detail when being by myself. After returning to Norway, I transcribed the interviews by the use of iTunes and Microsoft Word and chose to transcribe the recordings as verbatim as possible in order to secure the reliability of the data. In several cases however, I corrected grammatical inaccuracies and removed superfluous fill-in words. I have done so since oral communication tend to have an incoherent character, which can represent the dialogue or the research participant in unnecessary unconstructive manners (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Long pauses or laughter during the interviews was included in the transcripts and when referring to other research participants during the interviews, I anonymized these names by using pseudonyms.

As mentioned, I also recorded some of the group conversations in more informal settings, when sitting on the church starts at the piazza or inside the apartment in the red-light district or in the car from the reception center. Each time with permission of the research participants. I transcribed these in similar fashion to the interviews, but I use these transcriptions, similar to how I use the photographs in this thesis, namely to supplement my field notes.

After transcribing all the interviews, I coded them manually in several sequences by using relatively open descriptive categories representative for the content in the interviews. These codes were grounded in the terms used and found in the transcripts. However, I also used some theoretical concepts as background for coding. When

examining the transcripts, I constantly tested and probed my more or less theoretically informed categories to the empirical material and ended up with categorizations such as: Motives for migration, migrating, social networks, entering Europe, identity, masculinity, morals, social actors on the streets, drug dealing, drug use, place, time and aspirations for the future.

I used a similar approach with the same categories when coding the field notes.

I have analyzed all the data from the in-depth interviews and field notes inspired by methods of grounded theory.

I have based all my descriptions throughout this thesis on my field notes.

Even though I started the analytical process while being in the field, I believe it was crucial to get a certain distance to my fieldwork both in terms of time and place to attain the required distance in order to uncover the analytical occlusions.

Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitive nature of this study, the safety of the participants in this research has been the highest priority. In consultation with the Norwegian Centre for Research (NSD), there has been taken several measurements to protect the identity and the confidentiality of the participants. Moreover, the project was undertaken in correspondence with the ethical guidelines from The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH).

The ethical concerns turned out to be much more essential than I had first expected, given that the participants of this study were engaged in the illegal drug economy as well as travelling to other countries without the required legal documents, while waiting for their potential approval for asylum. Some of them had been imprisoned more than once. And as I was also using photography as a data collecting tool, this made the participants even more identifiable and thus vulnerable and exposed. I therefore decided to only select and use unidentifiable photographs, where the participants are not too recognizable. Even if the participants themselves allowed me to use their pictures uncensored. Further, I anonymized their real names by replacing them with the most common male names in their individual country of origin.

As part of the anonymization measurement, I have additionally chosen not to identify which Sicilian city I conducted the fieldwork in, or to reveal their exact individual ages. Because of the vulnerable situation and circumstances the participants were in during my fieldwork, both in terms of their criminal activities as well as when being intoxicated, I started anonymizing what had been said and done already from the initiation of my fieldwork.

Qualitative methods in general have traditionally been defined by close contact between the researcher and the respondents (Thagaard 2009: 11). The nature of these close relationships affects the empirical material and raises of course a variety of methodological and ethical challenges. So, in order to secure the credibility and reliability of qualitative research, it is particularly crucial to provide an extensive clarification on the methodological approaches for how the empirical material has been gathered and further how it has been analyzed (Thagaard 2009: 11).

Throughout this thesis I will offer insights in the choices I have made during my fieldwork as well as during the process of analysis of my data. For each interview, I have a written consent from the participant. For the rest of the research participants, I decided together with my supervisors that oral consent would be sufficient. It is a common practice in studies with highly sensitive subject to ask for informed consent, when not needing or wanting to have the participants' names in the writing (Grundetjern 2017: 48). For each new person I got introduced to, I informed them why I was there and about the purpose of my project. All the migrants and refugees mentioned in this study agreed to my semi-participation in the field, informed of the aim of my research and accepting me as a researcher. However, the level of acceptance varied amongst certain participants. Some did not want to be photographed, while others did not want to participate in the in-depth interviews, which I of course respected. At the beginning, some were a bit skeptical to my partaking and my motives, but these suspicions typically faded during the course of my fieldwork. I believe that the willingness for the two key research participants to involve and incorporate me in their daily lives, was vital for my acceptance amongst the more peripheral participants on the streets.

4 Theoretical Outline and Previous Research

Autonomy: On the rooftop of the forsaken former factory building, the research participants often gathered to smoke, listen to reggae music and to play soccer. Under that same roof, most of them found shelter during the nights. This was also where they prepared and shared traditional African meals together. The atmosphere could swiftly change from humorous and playful to serious and concerned.

Since the focus of this thesis is from an inductive and grounded approach, as already stated in chapter 3, the theoretical perspectives have evolved from my empirical material. In this chapter, I will present applicable previous research together with the theoretical framework in three main categories, which I will draw on and relate to my own findings in the three succeeding analytical chapters. Based on some of the fundamental patterns in the field notes, interview-transcripts and from my overall observations, I have chosen to narrow my focus down to a few theoretical categories, as I found these to be representative for my findings in general.

In the first category, I will present theories on push and pull factors in migration research as well as studies on migration networks. Additionally, I will elaborate on the significance of social media for maintaining and strengthening such networks.
In the second part of this chapter, I will introduce the theoretical framework "street capital" and "code of the street" as well as presenting the theoretical concepts street masculinity and neutralization.
Lastly, I will define three theoretical definitions of freedom as well as elaborating on the theoretical framework of citizenship and noncitizenship, in addition to concepts of integration.
In the following three chapters, I will illustrate, that when combining these concepts and frameworks, they can be helpful for understanding the behavior and decision-making processes amongst the participants of this research.

Push and Pull Factors

There is no and has never been one comprehensive overreaching theory in migration research. However, there have been numerous theories which aim at explaining factors that can help us to understand why, when and how people migrate (Brochmann 2006: 22). The so-called "push-pull" models are one of these contributions. For many years, this framework of understanding migration and why people migrate was dominant. The main idea of the "push-pull"-concept is that rational individuals typically compare and calculate the expulsion factors in the origin country with the attraction dynamics in the recipient country (Brochmann 2006: 22). Later, this theory has by many been labeled as

outdated and as too simplistic, and has been replaced by more complex sociological theories relating to migrant networks (Brochmann 2006: 23).

But despite the accusations of this theoretical framework being outmoded and ingenuous, I have found it to be useful for explaining some of the social mechanisms which have "pushed" and "pulled" the participants to emigrate from their countries of origin and immigrate to Europe, when combined it with network theories. Moreover, I believe the push-pull framework can be useful also for analyzing the decision-making possesses amongst the participants after reaching Europe and their preference for the streets rather than staying inside the reception center.

Migrant Networks

By shifting the focus from "push-pull" models to migrant networks, Migration networks typically evolve when there is a pattern of migration from one particular origin country to another destination country. These networks can make the migration process easier for those desiring to migrate as well as getting familiar and established in the new country (Brochmann 2006: 23). Such networks are crucial for sharing contacts as well as information about migrating routes and about the possibilities in the destination country (Brochmann 2006: 23).

As illustrated in the introduction to chapter 1, the networks amongst the participants was a means for resourcefulness. Through these networks, they could organize themselves, arrange appointments, business deals and plan for the future. It was a way of structuring their situation in otherwise disordered circumstances.

Social Media

One of my first observations when searching for potential research participants on the streets of Sicily, was the clean and trendy-looking clothes and shoes, and the many smartphones amongst the young migrants and refugees. These smartphones were significant tools for maintaining and establishing contacts with other migrants and

refugees with shared aspirations and living conditions, predominantly by the use of the social media applications on these phones. Social media providers such as Facebook and Skype were typically the favored means for communication, as they are free of charge as opposed to other telecommunication services. Internet and social media was a crucial tool for navigating on the streets.

By the using social media, we can connect with many more people than otherwise possible and it can expand our social capital (Aalen 2013: 47).

Dealing Cannabis

The plant cannabis sativa has in different ways been used by humans for more than 12 000 years (Sandberg & Pedersen 2010: 17). This plant contains substances which seem to moderate some negative psychological effects. Cannabis typically is used by smoking self-made cigarettes, usually referred to as "joints" (Sandberg & Pedersen 2010: 18). One joint normally contains 0,2 – 0,5 gram cannabis and the calming effect differs according to the amount of consumption (Sandberg & Pedersen 2010: 18). On a global scale, cannabis is the most used illegal drug with approximately seem 150 million users each year (Sandberg & Pedersen 2010: 18).

Martin Booth has shown how cannabis historically has been a vital indicator of an identity as opposition to the larger societal norms (Sandberg & Pedersen 2010: 30).

Scouting for customers:
Late on a Saturday night, one of the participants is sitting at a church wall, observing the young Sicilians outside a nightclub closely, scouting for potential consumers costumers. Apparently, this was one of the easiest places to sell large quantities of cannabis.

Street Capital

In 2011, the two Norwegian sociologists Sveinung Sanberg and Willy Pedersen introduced the theoretical framework "street capital". Building on and inspired by Pierre Bourdieu subdivisions of capital, "street capital" is used to grasp the "cultural capital" of a violent street culture amongst drug dealers in Oslo (Sandberg & Pedersen 2012: 33). Moreover, the concept of street capital is in their research is used to describe the drug dealers' skills and competence, as well as their practical rationality of the street culture (Sandberg & Pedersen 2012: 34-35). They found that the street marked offered an environment where the drug dealers typically could peruse status and respect, which they could not get otherwise on the mainstream society (Sandberg & Pedersen 2012: 35). Similar to Sandberg and Pedersen´s study, the participants of my research also were drug dealers at the bottom of mainstream society and embedded in a larger criminal network. Drug dealing and crime was for them strategic choices. Further resemblances are that they were struggling for legitimate power.

Whereas Sandberg and Pedersen to a large degree focus on violence in their study, I found the fierceness aspect in my research to be quite restrained and typically occurred only when the participants felt compelled to use violence in order to get money for buying food.

Sandberg and Pedersen's theoretical framework on street culture is however not a new conception. In 1999 Elijah Anderson introduced a book called "Code of the street", where he defines this code within a culture of limited public services, lack of jobs, drug use with a lack of faith in the judicial system and the police and with a lack of hope for the future (Sandberg & Pedersen 2012: 42).

Street Masculinity

Viewing gender as performing appearances, as something socially constructed and practices rather than instinctively given dichotomies, is an established view in gender studies and sociological literature. West and Zimmerman defined this approach as "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman 1987) They argued that gender is being continually and actively produced through individual actions and social interactions by implementing normative standards (West & Zimmerman 1987: 137).

When relating these gender perspectives to drug dealing and criminal behavior, we can define the use and sale of drugs as one way of doing gender. Fiona Mesham drew upon West and Zimmermanns perspectives and related them to use of drugs.

Positive and Negative Freedom

Based on concerns and aspirations expressed during discussions amongst the research participants and with me, freedom and liberty appeared to be essential values and ideals both for their current situation and for their aspired future in Europe. They all seemed to aspire for freedom under marginal prerequisites.

Gunnar C. Aakvaag considers freedom to be a lacking theme in sociological literature and calls for more sociological studies on the social aspects of freedom in the modern western world (Aakvaag 2013: 14). In philosophical literature, there is a long-lasting tradition for examining and defining freedom typically with a highly abstract approach. However, within the social sciences and the sociological discipline in particular, it seems more challenging to find any explicit definitions or discussions of the term freedom at all (Aakvaag 2013: 37). Perhaps, the notion of freedom as absence of external restrictions and constraints is the closest we get to a collective common understanding of the term (Aakvaag 2013: 54).

For analyzing the decision-making processes amongst the research participants, I have found it helpful to use Isaiah Berlins distinction between negative and positive freedom. Berlin developed this definition of negative and positive freedom within political theory in the 1950s (Aakvaag 2013: 346). Negative freedom, means to be allowed to act unobstructed by others (Berlin 2002: 169). An individual is considered free if

individuals, governments or social institutions leaves him or her unhindered (Aakvaag 2013: 347). "The wider the area of non-interference the wider my freedom" (Berlin 2002: 170). Thus, freedom is a state of being capable of making decisions without external control and is a "from" something or someone. With this definition, a reception center with strict movement regulations, armed guards and with barbed wire fence would constitute such external restrictions and thus make the asylum seekers within it the opposite of free. On the other hand, when living outdoors, outside of formal social regulations of society with unrestricted prospects for physical movement in place and time, the same asylum seekers could be defined as being free.

Positive freedom on the other hand, focuses on things that need to be in place in order for us to be free (Aakvaag: 2013: 347). This concept of freedom "for" derives from one depend on oneself and not depending on external forces of any kind (Berlin 2002: 178). Freedom I this sense means being an active being guided by reason and conscious and bearing responsibility for one's choices and being able to explain them (Berlin 2002: 178). This is

In short, we can summarize negative freedom when not being prevented from choosing and acting by other people or other circumstances and positive freedom when being "one's own master" of such actions and choices (Berlin 2002: 178).

5 Entering Europe

Crossing boundaries: For the research participants, the view over the Mediterranean Sea from Sicilian shores was a constant reminder of what they had left behind. That they had made it safely to Europe, but also that they still were stuck at the entrance of this continent and still were just at the beginning of their prospective future.

The analytical segment of this study is divided into three chapters, correlating with the three research questions I wanted to explore. Based on my semi-structured in-depth interviews, I will in this chapter investigate the participants motives and motivations for emigrating from their countries or origin and immigrating to Europe. Their decision-making processes will be analyzed by the use of the push-pull framework as well as by the use of migrant network theories, as defined in chapter 4. The aim is to examine how influential the migrant networks were and are for the individual research participant´s ability and ambition to migrate.

Motives for Emigrating and Immigrating

The research participants all roughly knew what had brought each of them to Italy, but they typically did not share detailed or intimate information regarding their individual motives for emigrating from their home countries and immigrating to Italy. On one of the evenings, as I was joining seven of the research participants, sitting in the dark in the abandoned apartment in the red-light district, I asked them why they did not share these stories amongst each other. The answers I got was that talking about these matters would only remind them of undesirable situations and result in more stress. This meant that the experiences they shared with me relating to their migration routes, were stories they probably had not told too many others before. This also seemed evident, when Ibrahim, undoubtedly the toughest amongst the participants, asked for a break during the in-depth interview when he got emotional talking about his mother. The sharing of cannabis joints and listening to reggae music seemed to have a remedial and comforting purpose. Hence, these settings were apparently not appropriate for sharing stressful and traumatic experiences, when what they desired was the exact opposite.

I will in the following briefly summarize the different motives for emigrating country of origin and immigrating to Europe, based on one of my first questions in my semi-structured in-depth interviews; "why did you come to Europe?"

Ousman was twenty-seven years from Gambia and arrived in Italy in 2013.

P: Why I came to Europe? Because I have a problem in my family. My brother died and my family want me to… Before my brother died, he was married to a woman. My brother travelled and he died on his way from Morocco to Spain. Than the family want me to inherit the wife of my brother. Already they had a child. Like twenty-four days before the son got one year old. Now, after some months now, the family wants me to marry that woman, and me I don't want to.

I: *Who decided that you have to marry?*

P: That's my family, it's a culture thing. Its culture, you must do it. It's a cultural responsibility. I said to them, yeah this is not the one I love. I have my choice. That's the reason I left my country.
    They had a meeting, there was like family people, all the family. They said, either I must say yes or no. If I say yes, they do the marriage between me and the woman. I said to them no. From then, my mom was very aggressive. People were talking. Now, from there I tried to leave the village and I left the village. So, I decided to leave. There was a car there, whereby you can pay. If you have the money, you can pay up to Niger, where the Sahara starts, where the dessert starts.

I: *Ok.*

P: My uncle was in Libya, as I told you, so now I started the journey from Gambia to find that uncle.

- Ousman, interview transcript

When Ousman started working on his uncle's farm in Libya, he got kidnapped by rebels one day, on his way to the city and held as a prisoner for several months until they asked him if he wanted to travel to Italy by boat.

The paradox for Ousman's motive for emigrating from Gambia was the cultural responsibility and the expectations of his family to marry his deceased brother's wife, caused by his brother's tragic death while immigrating to Europe. However, as was the case for most of the research participants, his target country was Libya and not Italy. When analyzing Ousman's migration with the push-pull framework, it appears that Ousman was "pushed" out of his family and out of his village, and decided to use this occasion to work for his uncle in Libya. In other words, he first got "pushed" out of his village and then "pulled" to Libya. The reason for emigrating out of Gambia, in place of

moving to a different part of the country was his uncle. That social contacts within the migrant network determines where migrants tend to end up, is a typical pattern explained in migrant network theories. The fact that his saw the decision to not marrying the woman and not fulfill his familiar duty is something I will look more into in chapter 7. After being held in captivity in Libya, he was in a sense "pushed" out of the country, when giving the option by his captors without any contacts in Italy. This tendency of being involuntary "pushed" towards Europe, is a tendency which I have found missing in most migration research I have come across and is the main reason I still believe the push-pull framework can be useful despite of its simplistic and commonsensical reputation.

Ibrahim was a twenty-eighth year old Ghanaian and arrived in Italy in 2011.

I: *And why did you come to Europe?*

P: Because I had a problem in my country Ghana, you know? So, when I had the problem I couldn't stay, because I'm searched by the police and the government. So, I moved to Libya, because I was born there and I knew some people there.

I: *You were born in Libya?*

P: In Libya, yeah. I grew up there, so that's the only place I knew some people, you know. Because my mother, she studied in Libya, and my father was a worker there. After finishing studying, she went back to Ghana. So, I escaped to Libya. And when I was there, they began a war, you know. There were no ways of going back. And even if there were ways of going back, I still have problems there, I can't go. So, I decided to risk my life and see if I can have please here, you know. So, this is why I came to Italy here.

I: *What kind of problem did you have in Ghana?*

P: We destroyed a government car.

I: *Government car?*

P: Yeah. Like a minister, you know?

I: *Mhm.*

P: So, there was a convoy and its Sunday... I was very very drunk. So, with my friends, they were also driving motorbikes and sometimes we did speed driving. And a car was coming with a convoy. Without knowing, I hit the first car with speed. This is where I got all these accident injurie, you know.

I: *Ah, really?*

P: Yeah, I have plenty. I broke my leg there. So, these people were saying I have to go to prison for what I did. You understand?

I: *But who was inside the car?*

P: It was a minister coming and we were like 7 motorbikes, but I was the one in the lead, you know. It was a serious accident. I went to coma for 6 days.

I: Oh, wow.

P: Yeah. So, later, on like the 8th day, they put handcuffs on me to my bed. But I was seriously ill. So, the doctors and the people in charge, they felt sad for me. I was dying and still they were thinking of punishment for me, you know. So, my mother talked to one doctor, and he said if by night… because when they sometimes came to give me drugs, they took the handcuffs off for like two hours. So, this man made a plan with my mom. She was trying to help me to get out of the country, you know. He said, when they come to open the handcuffs, he will call all the people out. He will call them to his office. There is a window there, you know. My mother told the doctor that I would take the risk to escape through the window. So, when the people went out, I went out the window. I jumped down and the first taxi I was, I stopped it. I met my mom and she paid for the driver. She took me to her friend's house. I lived there for two days. Then they started announcing on the television and the radio that there is one patient who escaped from hospital and they showed my picture on the television.

I: Oh, really?

P: If someone would find me, they would pay them money. So that night my mother came to me. She said the situation is critical, she was crying. She asked me, "what can I do?" So, I had no other choice than to escape. She brought me money and told me to move. With this money, I traveled from Ghana to Niger. From Niger to Libya. I lived in Libya for 3 years until the war started. When the war started, I moved out.

- Ibrahim, interview transcript

When Ibrahim got to Libya, he soon started working at an airport as a baggage handler, loading and unloading baggage on the airplanes. When the war started, he decided to escape Libya and planned to hide inside one of the planes. One morning at work, he noticed the pilot being white, and therefore assumed that the airplane was heading to Europe. While he was loading the luggage, he made sure to save a small space for himself and hided amongst the baggage inside the airplane in a moment where no one was watching, without knowing the destination of the country. That was how he ended up on Lampedusa.

Similar to Ousman's case, Ibrahim was "pushed" out of his country of origin, but in a much more threatening and involuntary way, with few other choices for escaping punishment and sentence. Contrary to Ousman's case, Ibrahim's mother was the one

organizing facilitating his migration. For Ibrahim too, it was no coincidence for ending up in Libya, as this was the only country where he knew someone and when being forced and "pushed" to leave, he chose to be "pulled" to Libya.

Emmanuel was also a twenty-seven-year-old migrant from Ghana and arrived in Italy in 2011.

I: *Why did you come to Europe?*

P: Before I came to Europe, my mother brought me to Libya. My mother was a business woman, she sold food in Libya. Black people used to go there to buy food from my mother, like we go to the Senegal people here to get African food.

I: *Ok, I see.*

P: I was washing cars in Libya. Car washing. If you bring your car, you need to change the oil, I can change the oil for you. You need to wash your car? I will wash for you. I will do everything. That was my work for Libya.

I: *Ok. How old were you when you went to Libya?*

P: The time I entered Libya I was 3 years old. My mother brought me. My mother died in Libya, almost 3 years ago. Before she died, the man at my work told me "go back to your country". I said "no, I don't know my country. My mother brought my when I was 3 years old, when I was a small boy. I grew up in this country. I don't know my country", I told the Arab man. I worked for the Arab man for 3 years. He knew my mother well. After my mother died, I told him everything and he understood. I said, "No, I can't go back to my country. I don't know anybody in my country. I don't know the house my mother stayed at. I was 3 years old when we left." The man said, "ok, no problem" He had a friend, he was a soldier, a big soldier. My boss, went to his friend the soldier man and told about my story. The soldier man said "ok, no problem." My boss brought me to the soldier. We went there to see the man and talk to the man. He brought me food and we ate. After we had eaten, we slept. By one o'clock in the night, the soldier said, "wake up, wake up!" I woke up. He said, "Let's go!" I said, "where do we go?" He said he wanted to take me someplace. I followed him. After we went, the man said he wanted me to enter this boat. "You can go anywhere you like" I told the man "Me, I can't enter this boat, I fear it" I had never taken a boat. The man slapped me and said I was crazy. He said, "enter this boat!" I said "why? I can't! I fear it." The man asked me "do you wanna stay in this country and die like your mother?" I said "No" The man forced me. He and his friends they

forced me and pushed me inside the boat. I enter the boat. They beat me, man! They hit me! Sometimes I remember that. It's crazy, man.

- Emmanuel, interview transcript

This is another example of people being literally pushed to a country against their will without any migrant network in the receiving country. A reason for this, was the lack of Emmanuel's network in Ghana. When he and his mother had immigrated to Libya when Emmanuel was just a child, this was due to the many job opportunities in Libya at that time and was therefore mainly motivated by a "pull" factor. The second time Emmanuel migrated, the contrary was true with only "push" dynamics. In general, mothers seemed to be the most influential individual for the research participants migration.

Lamin was a 34-year-old Gambian and had arrive in Italy in 2012.

P: Me, I came here in 2007. But they deported me back to Africa.
I: *Oh, really?*
P: Yes. One of our Gambian made a problem inside the camp,
I: *I see.*
P: I came there in 2007, and then they deported me to Gambia. After that, I tried to come back.
I: *Why did you come to Europe?*
P: Ah, Europe. I had big problem in Africa. That problem is a small problem here, but sometimes it's a big problem in Africa. Because its family. My stepdads daughter is my girlfriend, you understand? She had never been with a man before, so her father said he wanted to fight me. So, since 2007 I run away and came here. Any place where I can survive is ok. I need to survive. My parents also, they had to leave the country because of that problem.
I: *What was the problem exactly?*
P: When you disvirgined someone, it's a big problem in our country, Gambia. So, that father got very angry. He said he wanted to go to court. So that's the first reason that I runaway. In my country, it's against the law. Maybe they can lock you inside. That means you have to go to jail. That's why I runaway.
I: *I understand.*
P: When they deported me back… You know, Italian people, when they deport you, they give each person 200 euros. That 200 euro I used to

come back again. I didn't want anybody to know that I was in Gambia. When I arrive at the airport, I went straight back to Europe. So, I followed the same rout. The first time I came be boat, the second time I came by boat. The first time I leaved with 4 people, we were 4 people together to come, but the second time it was only me.

- Lamin, interview transcript

Similar to Ousman, Lamin was "pushed" out of his country due to cultural and family-related reasons. The push-factor seemed stronger than the pull-factor as he was not too concerned about which country he would end up in. His motivation to emigrate was so strong that he was willing to risk the dangerous crossing over the Mediterranean Sea not only once, but twice.

We can perhaps recap the 4 shortened narratives by saying that their main motives and motivations for emigrating, was challenging social-, political- or family related circumstances in their countries of origin. In different way, they all felt "pushed" out of their countries which was their main motivation and motive for migrating. With the exception being Emmanuel moving to Libya as a child because of his mother's business. We have also seen how migrant networks within the African continent tended to be defining for which countries they were drawn or "pulled" to. However, when immigrating to Europe, these networks seemed to be less determining as Europe was not their primary destination target. But after reaching Europe, most of them aspired to settle in Germany and to get out of Italy as quickly as possible.

When examining their migration routes as well as their motives and aspirations for migrating, the four migration narratives presented above can be interpreted as continuous navigations between different kinds of push and pull factors.

Migrant Networks and Social Media

Usually, migration is a collective action with common societal motives for migrating (Castles et al. 2014). Interestingly, this was mostly not the case for most the research participants. As we have seen, they all had individual motives for their separate migration projects, and most of them had Libya and not Europe as their aspired

receiving country, before the escalation political instability in Libya. This pattern also correlates with the statistical trends presented in chapter 1.

As we have seen, my findings share similarities to other studies, which suggests that migrant networks are defining for where migrants and refugees end up, both before and after reaching Europe. Except when it came to Italy, a country where only very few had as their aspired receiving country. Due to the Dublin-convention, their asylum applications had to be processed in Italy since this was the first European country they were registered in, which again caused long periods in uncertainty, usually more than 12 months, deprived of personal freedom if they stayed inside the controlling reception center. While having to wait for their asylum applications, they were locked between the past and the future in a state of involuntary immobility. However, the contacts they made and the relationships they formed with each other inside the camp became important networks both within the illegal drug marked on the streets on Sicily, but also in other European countries as some of them gradually moved to other European countries further north.

When Ousman was planning to travel to Germany, he got many tips and useful information from the friends he had made inside the reception center, who had done this before him. As already mentioned in the chapter 4, these migrant networks and the information sharing within them, are perhaps more evident online than offline.

When I asked one of the research participants about his phone, he replied that his smartphone was more important for him than having a place to live. While awaiting their asylum application results, some of participants traveled to other countries, usually Germany. They did so by using an App called "BlaBlaCar", which is an online community where drivers and passengers can connect, travel together and share the costs. Similar to other online communities and social networks, members need to register and create a personal profile. According to Ibrahim, which was the most experienced traveler by using "BlaBlaCar", the drivers normally chose routes out of Italy with least possibilities for boarder control. I first found out about this when I asked Ibrahim how they were able to travel to other European countries without any legal documents, while still waiting for their asylum application results.

I: *But how will you get there without the documents?*

P: Yeah, there is a transport that goes… It doesn't go through the border controls.

I: *What kind of transport?*

P: We call it Blabla. It's called Blabla Car.

I: *That's the App, you talked about, right?*

P: Yeah.

I: *How does it work?*

P: You chat with the drivers on the Internet. I talked to a guy today, to take me from Rome to Germany.

I: *How much do you pay?*

P: He told me, he will check it. Then he will tell me.

I: *I see. And they know that they have to take another route because since you don't have any documents?*

P: Yeah, they know. I'm not the first person. That's their job. That's what they do. All those without documents, this is how they travel. And even those with documents, because its cheap. Instead of hundred, you pay seventy from Milano to Munich, for instance.

- Ibrahim, transcript from conversation in the field

They typically also used their smartphones for checking the updates on their application procedures and communicated with their lawyers for legal assistance and advise through Facebook. After the first days of my fieldwork, the research participants started sending me friend requests on Facebook. I accepted these to expand my communication with them, but perhaps more importantly, as a sign of mutual trust, to indicate that I did not want to hide anything from them.

6 Codes of the Streets

In the shadows of society: The research participants often expressed frustration over being on the outside of society, both legally and culturally, but also in the ways they were being stereotyped from the local Sicilians as criminal and dangerous outsiders. Most nights usually consisted of long walks, either to meet up with friends, to search for potential clients, to acquire supply from contacts within the drug economy or just walks out of boredom. On the streets, they were all usually recognizable by a scent of cigarettes, joints and sweat.

In this chapter, I will attempt to provide thorough insights to the second research questions of this study by exploring how and why the participants of this study ended up in the illegal drug economy on the streets after reaching Europe. I will offer conceivable answers to why the participants were willing to consciously risk potential sentences, penalization and other forms of risks, by engaging in the illegal drug economy in the city center, rather than remaining in the more predictable and safer facilities of the reception center on the countryside, where they initially were supposed to stay.

Through my fieldwork I wanted to examine the ways in which the research participants gave meaning to their involvement and participation in the drug economy as users and dealers. The primary ambition amongst the research participants and all the other migrants and refugees I talked to during my fieldwork was to get asylum and a work permit, in order for them to start a new future in Europe. Why then would some of them risk the prospect of receiving such legal permits for which they had risked their lives for by crossing the Mediterranean Sea?

Broadening the Definition of Street Capital

By favoring the streets in place of the reception center as a way of attaining personal freedom, this choice also had determining consequences in terms of adapting to the illegal and criminal environment on the streets as their only option for earning money. In other words, they voluntarily replanted the safe but authoritarian conditions inside the reception center with the hazardous but free environments on the streets.

I suggest that when using the term street capital on irregular migration, we could broaden and adjust the definition to encompass more than drug dealing and masculine behavior, and use it more in the meaning of "street-smart", encompassing real-world knowledge and competence when migrating as an irregular migrant on the streets of Europe. For instance, when Ibrahim told me about fingerprints and that the Italian authorities had made it a voluntary choice for migrants to register fingerprints in Italy or not, he said:

"You have to be smart, you know, when they ask you if you want to take fingerprints or not. If you are a refugee, you shouldn't make fingerprints in Italy. You will get asylum in any country anywhere anyway, you know. Just leave for Germany or Sweden. But if you are a migrant, you should make fingerprints here in Italy because here it's the easiest country to get asylum in Europe."

- Ibrahim, transcript from conversation in the field

This sort of information was a migrant competence or street capital which was shared amongst migrants and refugees both offline and online. If we were to understand street capital in this broader sense, perhaps we could include these information-sharing networks as skillful ways amongst irregular migrants for navigating within asylum procedures across the EU. In the following, I will present three facets which illustrate the various and nuanced ways the research participants skillfully had adapted to the codes of the streets and how they competently made use of their street capital. Firstly, by describing the places they lived when not engaging in criminal activities on the streets, secondly by illustrating how they approached the different social actors in their daily lives and lastly, by presenting the different ways they had found to earn money.

Place and Displacement

At the beginning of my fieldwork, Ousman had found an unlocked red car close to the unofficial red-light district where he stayed during the nights. Each night, before he fell asleep, he would set the alarm clock on his smartphone to 5:30 am, so that he would be out of the car before people in the neighborhood would see him. His few valuable belongings were stowed safely in the storeroom of a self-service laundry belonging to a female friend of his. However, as mentioned in chapter 1, the mail place for shelter amongst the participants during my fieldwork, was the forsaken factory building close to the railways. This building served as a collective place for homeless migrants and refugees to rest, meet friends, smoke, share traditional meals, play football, listening to reggae music, sleep, pray and to prepare the cannabis in small doses for customers.

Other research participants preferred to stay in a room in an abandoned apartment on the second floor in the unofficial red-light district, which they rented from the owner of

the nightclub. Each time I joined them there, we had to speak silently so that nobody from the outside could hear that there was somebody inside. And each time the police passed the apartment on horses, the participants turned off the music and the lights and nobody were allowed to talk or move. A stolen patio heater from a restaurant was used as a hotplate to prepare hot meals and a broken TV was used for lighting the room.

Navigating amongst Social Actors on the Streets

All the participants of this study were partaking in an existing migrant- based drug-marked in the city center, where they had only limited social exchanges with Italians or non-migrants, except for drug selling purposes. They often talked about feeling stigmatized by their physical appearance. But in some ways, this also seemed to be beneficial as clients and potential buyers approached them on the streets, assuming they were drug dealers and perhaps made the drug dealing more efficient.
Ousman told me, there were only three types of people that typically talked with them and interacted with them on a daily basis: the police, cannabis customers and homosexuals. In the following, I will present some of the most crucial social actors they interacted with on a regular basis and which meanings they were given by the migrants as well as how they navigated amongst them. As mentioned, I will use these examples to further illustrate how the participants adapted to the codes of the streets and how they made use of their street capital.

After reading and investigating much about the public European debates on migration, border control and on refugees coming to Europe prior to my fieldwork, it was interesting to notice that such stereotypies and clichés also were applied, when migrants and refugees talked about Europeans and especially Italians. They frequently criticized the Italians and accused them for being racists and bad people. Often, it seemed unclear if they were talking about the local Sicilians or the Italian government. However, they typically had an ambivalent approach to the Italian authorities, since they were the ones who had rescued them, but at the same time they blamed them for all their troubles and concerns on the streets. Ousman, for instance, was thankful to the Italians for rescuing him in the Mediterranean Sea, but at the same time expressed

frustration over the enduring bureaucratic asylum procedures and his poor living standard on the streets:

> Italians, they are the ones who saved my life from the sea. But the freedom… I didn't get. I still didn't get the document. So, I am suffering. I stayed 8 months, still to wait for the same document. I didn't get it. I am sleeping on the street. That is no life. It's very cold. If you get the document, you can get out. But if you do bad things, you must go to jail. They will tell you, "we are the ones who gave it to you and we are the ones to take it from you."

> - Ousman, interview transcript

Similarly, Emmanuel also expressed frustration over the Italian authorities, when accusing them for leading him into criminal behavior:

> P: They brought me to the Mineo Camp. I stayed at Mieno for 1 year, before they gave me my document. After they gave me document, they said "Go!" They don't give me money, they don't give me nothing.
> I: *They told you to go where?*
> P: They said "Go away, man! Go any place you like." I go steal, I go rob. Me, I don't know how to steal, I don't know how to rob. You understand me? They gave me a bad idea. You give me my document, but you don't give me house, you don't give me money. So now, what do you want me to do? When I see somebody, he has something, I take it. You understand me?
> I: *Mhm.*
> P: Yeah, this is not good.

> - Emmanuel, interview transcript

I would interpret this as a way of justifying his criminal behavior by blaming the Italian authorities.

Young Italians were also their largest customer unit and their main source of income. The participants had developed business techniques for finding potential customers. For instance, they would typically approach young Italians and asking them to borrow their lighter. If thy said yes, that meant that they probably also were smokers, so they would use this occasion to ask if they wanted to buy cannabis or other drugs.

The category amongst social actors they perhaps disgraced the most, seemed to be homosexual men. Both in terms of their, in the participants eyes "immoral sexual

behaviors" but also because they, according to the participants, exploited vulnerable migrants and refugees, desperate to earn money by offering them humiliating low amounts for sexual services. However, from my field observations, I witnessed how they actively approached homosexual men on the street asking them for cigarettes or cannabis joints because "they never say no to blacks", according to Ibrahim.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I was surprised by the many lawyers and other connoisseurs who volunteered to help asylum seekers with legal aid in their spare time. The research participants regularly kept in touch with their legal advisors through Facebook. The lawyer working on Ousman's case, sought to appeal the ruling, as he had been denied asylum. She also seemed to have some sort of moral function. On the one hand, Ousman seemed frustrated with her, because of the longlisting procedure and she usually was late in answering his messages. Many times he suspected the lawyer to have forgotten about him. But on the other hand, he expressed adoration for her for telling him not to sell drugs anymore and not to be "a bad boy" but to be patient and upright.

Ousman's first application for asylum was denied by the Italian authorities, so he asked one of the lawyers volunteering to help asylum seekers to apply for asylum for legal assistance to reapply.

P: Anyone in Gambia knows that you are going to jail for twenty years, or more than that if you are gay. That's why the lawyer said we should pretend that I am gay, so that Italy can give me documents. Because if they search it on the Internet, they will see it. Twenty years in jail if they catch you being a homosexual. Twenty. Or more. That's the rule there. Its forbidden.

I: *Your lawyer is trying to make it look like you are gay?*

P: Yeah. And that's why I don't wanna marry my brother's woman.

I: *Ok, I see.*

P: This is what she said to me.

I: *Do you think it will work?*

P: She says it will work. I don't know. If it doesn't work, then I kill myself. If Italy tells me "no more document for you here", its better I kill myself. Waiting for eleven months, they said no. If after waiting again, comes no, then it's better to die.

- Ousman, interview transcript

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Suspicious: When being approached by the police on the streets, they often took me for being a buyer. In this particular moment, Ousman and Ibrahim told me to take their picture so that it would look like I would be a normal tourist and not a costumer.

The second largest customer group for the irregular migrant drug dealers were tourists. However, they sometimes also tried to build more long-lasting relationships with them and thus integrate them in their migrant networks, which could potentially be even more beneficial for them in the long run. One illustrative example of this is when I asked Ousman to explaining how he got to Switzerland from Sicily, during my follow-up interview.

I: *How did you get to Switzerland?*
P: As I told you, I met an Australian couple on Sicily, Italy.
I: *Mhm.*
P: When they left back to Australia, they were the ones who sent me 150 Euros.
I: *How did you meet them.*
P: They met me at the Bahnhof.
I: *Did they talk to you, or did you talk to them?*
P: Yeah, I talked to them, because I saw them with a map. So... since I saw them, I knew they were newcomers, they didn't know the city. So, I said to a friend, "I will talk to these people and see". He said to me "don't talk to them, these people they will not talk to you." I said "No, I will". So, I talked to them. "Hello, hello!" I started to talk to them, they were looking for a hotel and I knew the place. So, I took them to the hotel. As we were going there, we started to chat. They asked me how... Where I come from, how am I living in Italy. This and this.
I: *Mhm.*
P: Yeah. So, I told them about the place I sleep and that I was dismissed from the camp since March.
I: *And so...*
P: They sent me the money on the first of February.
I: *But happened? Did you ask for money, or did they...*
P: No, I didn't.
I: *So, what happened?*
P: They told me that when they went back to Australia, they wrote to me that "can we do something good for you? Money is not a real problem" I told them "Yeah, I really need help, because I want to go to Switzerland. I do get money, but the money I get I have to survive from the money. And it's cold now, I can't sleep no more in the car." They said, "that's true." Now, they told me before "we will send you 100 Euros" But when I talked with them on Skype they really felt it again and said "we gonna send more."
I: *Mhm.*
P: They added 50 Euros.
I: *You talked to them on Skype?*
P: Yeah, Skype, yeah. I have their Skype name too.
I: *Mhm.*

P: Yes, I was chatting with the woman, I told her like… She asked me whether I have Skype. I said yeah. I gave my skype name to her, she accepted me straight away. Then we chatted and talked on Skype.

I: *Mhm.*

P: Instead of 100, they made it 150.

I: *You said, they were staying with the map? How did it go from there?*

P: They told me, we are looking for a hotel.

Pause.

P: They said ok, you can take us to the hotel and we need some parts, because we smoke. We gonna give you some money. I said, "Ok, let's go." I said to them "do you have Facebook, so that we can contact each other?" They said yes. "Write your Facebook and your number." I wrote it to them. I gave it to them. And then we went to that park. As we were there, we chatted more. When I gave the parts, the man started to smoke. It was one and a half. They gave me 50. 50 Euros. I said "Wow!".

I: *For how much?*

p: It was one and a half.

I: *One and a half? And much do you usually get?*

p: 5 or 10. I told them 10. But they said, "Ok, we will give you 50, then at one o'clock we can meet here again and you bring some more." I said "Yeah."

- Ousman, interview transcript

This illustrates how Ousman used his Street Capital, in the broader definition of the term, when approaching the Australian tourist couple, even when being encouraged not to by his fried. Establishing a relationship with them both as a drug dealer, but also as a friend and as someone they wanted to support financially. By connecting with them through social media, Ousman managed to form a network-like relationship with them, which resulted in them subsidizing his trip to Switzerland. In this way, street capital in terms of recognizing potential opportunities on the streets and drug dealing, as well as social media as a mean for maintaining and strengthen relationships actively used to realize his plans to travel to Switzerland.

It seems like he approached them similar to the way he approached me, when I was searching for potential participants for my study. Maybe he at that time saw me as a potential contact for his network, and that this contact could be beneficial in the long run.

This interview transcript, as well as the other examples mentioned above, exemplifies that the distinct and distinctive theoretical segments presented in chapter 4 should be

understood as intertwined and overlapping, and illustrates the many different and nuanced ways they made use of street capital.

Making a Living

There are only were few options of earning money without work permits for irregular migrants. During the walks in the night, the participants sometimes helped drivers to park their cars securely by gesturing and signaling how much space there was left on each side of the car. Typically, they got one or two euros of the drivers for this service. This illustrates how they creatively used every opportunity to earn some money and that they in competent ways had found possibilities by analyzing and coding the possibilities on the streets.

One day during my fieldwork, Ousman showed up with a new cap and asked me if I liked it. He had started selling those to tourists together with a small collection of bracelets.

The drawback of living in freedom on the streets, was that the participants had to engage in criminal activities, even if they didn't see themselves as criminals. In my interview with Emmanuel, he explained how he justified the illegal criminal behavior for himself.

> P: I don't have any document, so, I only work. I will not lie to you, I will tell you the truth, man. If I think too much… If I don't have something to eat and I see somebody, I give them a knockout.
> I: *You do that?*
> P: Yeah, I do that. I give them a knockout and collect something.
> I: *Mhm.*
> P: But only the persons who go fuck men. You know Italy? They want to fuck black men.
> I: *Mhm?*
> P: Yah, If I see you go fuck men, I see you, I beat you up and I collect your money by force.
> I: *I see.*
> P: I don't have nothing. Yeah, that's how I can eat, small small.
> I: *Ok, I see. When was the last time you were robing somebody?*
> P: If I want to knockout people, I'm looking at the area. If the area is no good, I can't do it.
> I: *Ok.*

P: If I see one man, he fucks men, if I see he goes to fuck a man, I see him, I will knock him out.

I: *And then you take his stuff?*

P: I take like 20 Euro, or 30 euro or 50 euro. Its robbing, but it's the government. If the government gives me a house for sleeping, the give me work to do, "can you do this?" I can do it.

I: *Mhm. And when was the last time you did it?*

P: Last week I did it.

I: *Last week? Ok. And what did you take last time?*

P: Like 30 euro. A person gave me 30 euro.

I: *Ah, ok.*

P: I saw a person, I want to give him a knockout, he can't do nothing. He begged me, he said "please, take this" He gave me 30 euro. I said thank you.

I: *On the street?*

P: In the corner.

I: *Ok.*

P: In the corner. He came to fuck a man. He fucked a man, I saw it, after he finished, I catch him. I catch the man. I told him, "you are no good, man. Me, I need something to eat, you have money, you go fuck men, it's not good" I said, "give me something, man" I was angry.

I: *Mhm.*

P: The man saw that I was angry, too much. The man said, "take this." I open, I look, 30 euro. I said, "Ok, finish. Go away!"

I: *Do you sometimes take other stuff?*

P: No.

I: *Only money?*

P: Only money. Me, I need money.

        -     Emmanuel, interview transcript

However, the predominately way of earning money and what structured their daily activities was selling and dealing cannabis.

Finding shelter in the red-light district:

One late night, towards the end of my fieldwork, I decided to leave and get some sleep after spending the whole evening and night with the participants inside the abandoned apartment. The other nights Ousman and Ibrahim had escorted me out of the red-light district, but since they both were high and tired, I told them I would manage to find my way to my apartment. After turning a corner after one block, suddenly all the street lights went off and everything went dark. Except the small lights from some smartphones belonging to a small group of migrants and refugees. They surrounded me and told me not to be afraid, when I suddenly heard the 18-year-old Malian say "Its Ousman's friend! What are you doing here? Are you looking for Ousman?"

This- and similar incidents could possibly have become more precarious without the trust and acceptance by the participants.

Performing Street Masculinity

Identity is a process and something formed by social interactions. The migrant driven drug economy was characterized by gender inequality and had strict gendered rules in the way they it was male-dominated market, structured by masculine attitudes.

Gendered stigma applied to migrant women on the streets.

> We are waiting for a car to take us to the reception center. A young woman is getting out of the car. Samuel is talking harshly to her. I ask what the problem is. He translates and says the streets are no place for women. Thy only come her to be prostitutes.
>
> From the field Notes

Amongst the migrants, there were primarily young men out on the streets and on the piazzas during the evenings and nights. When I asked where all the women were, they replied that they were all in the camp and that the only women, who went out the camp and to the city, were considered prostitutes. According to my respondents, the women who stayed outside the camp were predictably from Nigeria. Ousman said: "Women from Gambia don't do stuff like that". According to Ousman, sex-work was the only option for earning money on the streets for women as they did not have access to the illegal drug economy.

Contrasting to Sandberg and Pedersen's study, the participants of my research could often verbally express what they meant for each other and how much they appreciated each other as friends. Their friendships were very important to them. Close and intimate social ties.

Using and Dealing Drugs

To my knowledge, there are only few other ethnographic studies on migration which stress the significance of using and dealing drugs amongst irregular migrants or refugees. My fieldworks suggest that cannabis had a vital role in the research participants everyday lives, both in terms of offering opportunities for earning money when dealing cannabis but also for collective leisure and social bounding when using it. It was a way of purposely losing control and disengage from distresses and uncertainties. All the migrants and refugees I met during my fieldwork on the streets were either using or selling cannabis, and in most cases, both. In this sense cannabis had primarily a practical function amongst the participants. For earning money when dealing cannabis and for the relaxing effect when using it. However, it also seemed to have a social function for social bounding and collective relaxation and recreation. It also seemed to be a part of their identity as Rastafarians and the reggae culture.

The money they earned by selling drugs, gave them power and control in their lives, in an otherwise very uncontrolled and powerless situation. In this way, the illegal drug economy could be a way of getting agency and freedom. However, sometimes it was difficult to tell if cannabis was a way of getting money and thus some degree of freedom and agency, or if they were getting addicted and victims by their extensive use of the drug.

> "If I still don't get the document by the end of this year, I have to change my life or I'm going to be a big junkie in the future. I will get money or... Get rich, or die trying, like 50 cents says. Your money is your mother and your father. If you lose your money, you are dead. "
>
> - Ousman, interview transcript

Dealing drugs became an opportunity for getting agency and empowerment. Empowerment within the drug economy, but in some cases also drug addiction which again leads to disempowerment, even if they claimed they were in control of their own consumption.

Dealing drugs seemed like the opposite of restricted rules in the reception center: Thrill, adventure and excitement. At the same time, dealing drugs offered continuity while they were waiting for their asylum applications.

Backstage: The research participants are preparing the cannabis they fetched in the reception center in small plastic dosages, with plastic from a Chinese store and sealed them by melting the plastic with the lighter.

Victims or Criminals?

As already described in the previous chapter, the research participants could often switch between a victim narrative to describing themselves as skilled drugdealers. This however shouldn't nessesary be understood as a contradiction or as mueutally exclusive categories. I would argue that the research participants could be understood as victims for ending up in the drug economies due to the absence of better opportunities. Nonetheless, once ended up in their posission, given their circumstances, they became experienced and skilled at selling and dealing drugs. On several occasions, the research participants expressed a wish to rather earn money by legal manual work, such as harvesting organges at the orange plantations on the countryside of Sicily. But, since the owners of these plantations get penalized for hiring migrants deprived of work permits, selling drugs illegaly is the last real alternative for earning money.

The migrants participation in the cannabis economy can be understood and expalined as lack of other oportunities. They adapted to the circumstances and became experts on codes of the streets. The distinction between representations of themselves as victims as opposed to criminals was very blurry and could change precipitately. On the one hand, they had chosen to leave the reception center and move to the streets to escape the external formal restrictions and physical constraints. This was an intentional and calculated choice. On the other hand, they could feel compelled to be involved in criminal activities as their only way of earning money.

Moral Boundaries

The notion that earning money through illegal and criminal activities was merely going to be a temporarily necessity, was crucial for most of the research participants in order for them to accept these living conditions and immoralities. They could spontaneously decide where to sleep, when to sleep, where to go next, when to eat, what to do, whom to talk to, whom to be with without being controlled and limited within a high wire fences, as they used to be inside the center. But living on the streets also encompassed concealed regulating structures, typically controlled by the police, but also within the drug dealing community. Even though having the perhaps lowest socioeconomic status

in the Sicilian society, they participants typically placed themselves in a higher moral position than for instance homosexual Sicilian males.

The drawback of living in freedom on the streets, was that the participants had to engage in criminal activities, even if they didn't see themselves as criminals. In my interview with Emmanuel, he explained how he justified the illegal criminal behavior for himself.

P: I don't have any document, so, I only work. I will not lie to you, I will tell you the truth, man. If I think too much… If I don't have something to eat and I see somebody, I give them a knockout.

I: *You do that?*

P: Yeah, I do that. I give them a knockout and collect something.

I: *Mhm.*

P: But only the persons who go fuck men. You know Italy? They want to fuck black men.

I: *Mhm?*

P: Yah, If I see you go fuck men, I see you, I beat you up and I collect your money by force.

I: *I see.*

P: I don't have nothing. Yeah, that's how I can eat, small small.

I: *Ok, I see. When was the last time you were robing somebody?*

P: If I want to knockout people, I'm looking at the area. If the area is no good, I can't do it.

I: *Ok.*

P: If I see one man, he fucks men, if I see he goes to fuck a man, I see him, I will knock him out.

I: *And then you take his stuff?*

P: I take like 20 Euro, or 30 euro or 50 euro. Its robbing, but it's the government. If the government gives me a house for sleeping, the give me work to do, "can you do this?" I can do it.

I: *Mhm. And when was the last time you did it?*

P: Last week I did it.

I: *Last week? Ok. And what did you take last time?*

P: Like 30 euro. A person gave me 30 euro.

I: *Ah, ok.*

P: I saw a person, I want to give him a knockout, he can't do nothing. He begged me, he said "please, take this" He gave me 30 euro. I said thank you.

I: *On the street?*

P: In the corner.

I: *Ok.*

P: In the corner. He came to fuck a man. He fucked a man, I saw it, after he finished, I catch him. I catch the man. I told him, "you are no good, man. Me, I need something to eat, you have money, you go fuck men, it's not good" I said, "give me something, man" I was angry.

I: *Mhm.*

P: The man saw that I was angry, too much. The man said, "take this." I open, I look, 30 euro. I said, "Ok, finish. Go away!"

I: Do you sometimes take other stuff?

P: No.

I: Only money?

P: Only money. Me, I need money.

-   Emmanuel, interview transcript

7 Freedom and Integration
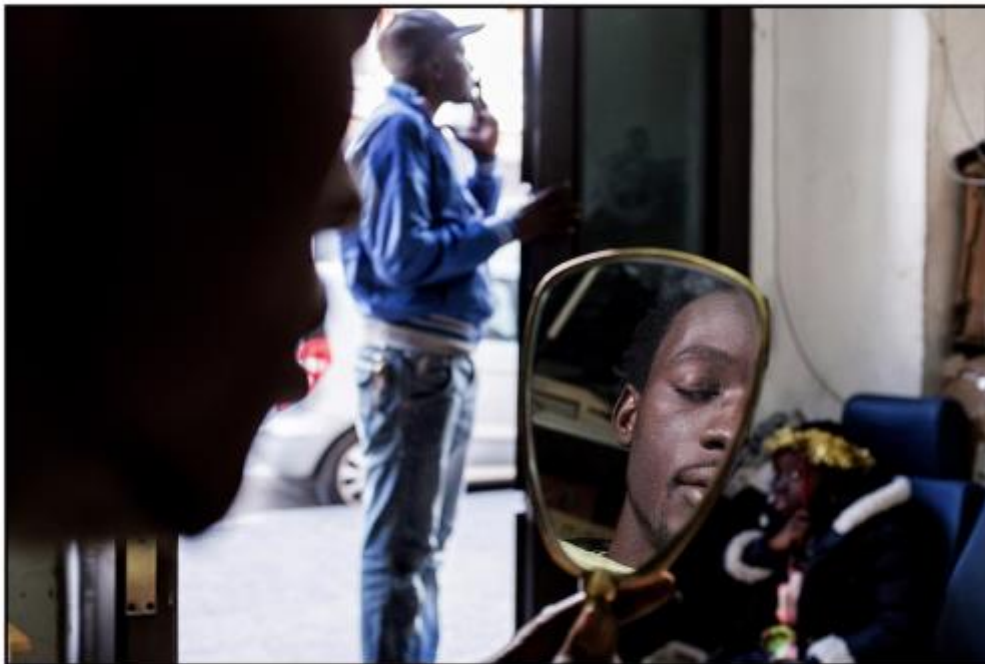
Time to leave: One of the participants asked a friend of him to cut his hair and to shave his beard so that the border control would not recognize him, when he would travel to Germany without any legal documents on new-year's eve.

Freedom has been a key focus through this thesis, as it was a central aim and ambition amongst the participants. In this last analytical chapter, I will examine the participants aspirations for individual freedom and social integration.

I will draw on Isaiah Berlins distinctions between negative and positive freedom as presented in chapter 4 and relate those to the participants actions and quotes. Further, I will analyze and interpret their main aspiration for their future and for freedom as a being a legally integrated citizen in a European society.

Anomie and Autonomy

As already mentioned in chapter 2, the very first conversation with the research participants, was about how they characteristically portrayed the camp as a controlling and a regulated habitation, as opposed to the autonomy and liberties a life on the streets could offer.

Power, regulations and control had been shifted from external authorities to the individual asylum seeker. But this also meant that dealing with risks and threats had become an integrated part of their everyday life on the streets and contributed shaping their identity as capable and resilient social actors.

In the following, I will use Ousman's reflections about freedom to illustrate how freedom and integration for the research participants should be regarded as intertwined.

> If you get the document, you can get out. But if you do bad things, you must go to jail. They will tell you, we are the ones who gave it to you and we are the ones who take it from you.
>
> - Ousman, interview transcript

According to all the excerpts above, it is my understanding that when being able to choose between two alternative tiring lifestyles, the research participants typically preferred the lifestyle which could offer a greater degree of personal freedom and possibilities for mobility. Also, by earning and saving money within the illegal drug

economy, they were to a certain degree able to liberate themselves for a period of time, even though this meant risking potential asylum if caught by the police.

My follow-up interview in Switzerland showed, that Ousman still preferred the streets and not the reception center, even though the two reception centers could not have been more different. This indicates that it was nothing unique with CARA Mineo, but rather the nature and structures of such institutions and the detention and deprivation of freedom.

> "Freedom is everything. I don't have freedom at home or in Libya or in Italy. I am fighting. I'm looking for freedom. I didn't have my freedom yet, and I don't know when or where I shall have my freedom. If my life has to be like this, it's better to die."
>
> - Ousman, interview transcript

As we have seen, it all started when Ousman's brother drowned when trying to reach Spain. According to local customs and traditions, he was supposed to take over his brother's wife and kids. But since he refused to do so, he became an outcast in his village and decided consequently to migrate to his uncle in Libya and start working for him. Ever since he left his family and village in Gambia, his migrating project had been a search and a fight for freedom. And he was still struggling. For Ousman, true freedom would be freedom from waiting in uncertainty inside reception centers, but also freedom from having to sell drugs or having to steal from strangers.

> "I like Europe. It's a very, very different situation. For instance, security number one, and health care and the laws. Yeah? How they obey the laws. It's different from Africa. Yeah, because Africans use power, not paperwork. European believes in paper. They do what they sign. Africans can sign these things you know, and they say, "no, you didn't say it." That's why too much of troubles. I would like to be in Europe."
>
> - Ousman, interview transcript

Eventual freedom in Europe could only be achieved by receiving the required legal documents, which again would enable him to become integrated in basic social

institution. To be included and integrated in the larger European society in a legal way was a principle he several times said he was willing to die for. Valid opportunities and actual prospects in Europe were his objectives. And all other options were in his opinion no alternatives and not worth living for.

Lamin shared similar thought on migration and liberty:

> Because they have some small work there. So, you can work and get your food. You can get some money and put it in your account. Because I think that is the life. If you have no account, it's not easy. When you are traveling, you are traveling to get something.
> To get yourself like liberty. Yes, I think so. Everybody is traveling like that. You travel, you get something. To learn.

> - Lamin, interview transcript

Aspirations for Freedom

On the second day of my fieldwork, I met most of the migrants I had gotten to know the night before. This time I brought both my audio recorder and my camera, mostly because of my frustration of not being able to remember all the valuable quotations from the previous night. When Ousman and I were waiting for Ibrahim at the train station I asked him if I could record our conversation. He agreed and I asked him some questions about the reception center.

> "Every second day you have to be inside. Soldiers, Carabinieri, Police... they are all there. When you enter, it's like you are in a prison. Like big criminals."

> - Ousman, conversation transcript

When comparing the reception center to a prison, Ousman is associating the camp to a restricted institution for prisoners with deprivation of liberty as a principal punishment. But what is perhaps more noteworthy in this quote, is how Ousman expresses that being inside the camp would give him a feeling of being a "big criminal", as opposed to being outside the camp, where he actually participates in illegal and criminal activities by selling drugs to Italians and tourists and by occasionally rob them.

In other words, the structure and nature of this institution made him feel more banned and criminal than being outside of it, even though the contrary was true. However, this is not to say that dealing drugs or robbing random strangers was experienced as an act of freedom by the migrants. On the contrary, these activities have rather also to be understood as a lack of other alternatives and a lack of freedom. When I some months later met Ousman in Switzerland, I asked him about his definition of freedom:

> I: *What's your definition of freedom?*
> P: My own definition is a place whereby I can sit and free my mind without thinking of selling drugs and stuffs in my life. Yeah. That's freedom. Because selling drugs is not a freedom. It means, anytime… even in your house they can come for you. So, people… That day… You remember we were on that place and I said to you *"today I must steal"?*
> I: *Mhm?*
> P: Yes. Things like that. There was no other way. Europe is hard now. It's very hard for me.
>
> - Ousman, transcript from follow-up interview in Switzerland

In this quote, Ousman articulates that being engaged in illegal and criminal activities is something he has to do in lack of better alternatives. Without a legal work permit, the options for earning money are few. Many migrants and refugees I talked to seemed to accept drug dealing and robbery as temporarily methods for earning and saving money since this only was a provisional period in their lives and a state of emergency. Being involved in criminal activities, seemed like a price the research participants were willing to pay in order to live in freedom of the reception centers restrictions. When I met Ousman in Switzerland, he lived in another reception center for asylum seekers. This was very different from the reception center Cara di Mineo on Sicily in the way that it was a big house on the country side, with no armed guards, dogs or barbed wire fence. The center had more liberal policies and regulations as well as opportunities for doing sports and social activities. However, Ousman described the daily routines in the center as repetitive and mind-numbing, and he planned to go back to the streets on Sicily where he at least could feel freer and earn some money, while waiting for his asylum application result. The life inside the Swiss reception center was similar to the one on Sicily in the way that every day felt the same, consisting of sleep, eating breakfast, sleeping siesta, doing some workout in the gym, eat dinner and go to bed for the night.

P: I'm thinking to leave. To go back to Italy. So that they can give me some money to go back. But I'm still thinking.

I: Why do you wanna go back to Italy?

P: Because, as I told you; to stay here like this… It is nothing for me. It is better to go back to Italy. Because, from here to the city, its far.

I: Mhm.

P: Yeah, you cannot do nothing here.

I: But you weren't happy on Sicily either, right?

P: I wasn't happy, but it's my economical case… And I was thinking that, after the final court, it will be very fast. Like in the following week I will get the result. That's also why I was thinking of going back to Italy, you know. But now, I don't know yet. And the layer she also said that she didn't know yet. To stay here, will be hard. No one will give you money here. Unless, if you go to the city and do something.

I: To do what?

P: Selling.

Pause.

P: Many people here have left for Germany.

I: Do you wanna go to Germany?

P: I dint wanna go to Germany also, because when I go to Germany I have to stay on month in the camp. So, it all about going back to Italy. I don't know when it's gonna be. So… when I'm in a situation that… I'm in an asylum possess, I don't wanna stop it. Because in Switzerland I have no hope.

- Ousman, transcript from follow-up interview in Switzerland

Here, Ousman was considering going back to the streets of Sicily to start selling drugs on the streets again instead of just having to wait all day long every day for an indefinite time for his lengthy asylum process.

When defining freedom as absence of external restrictions and constraints, as mentioned in the theoretical chapter, this could perhaps explain the participants choice to leave the reception center with its strict movement regulations, armed guards and with its barbed wire fence. This institution constitutes such external restrictions and thus make the asylum seekers within deprived of freedom. On the other hand, when living outdoors, outside of formal social regulations of the Sicilian society, with unrestricted prospects for physical movement in place and time, the same asylum seekers could be defined as being free.

Still Dreaming of Europe: Similar studies have also found that Italy was not defined as part of Europe and that therefore, when arriving in Italy, this was regarded as a step closer to Europe, but not the aspired final destination. Here, Ousman was on the train in Switzerland, on his way back to the new reception center on the country side.

8 Discussion and Closing Remarks

Escape: There were two ways of getting inside the former factory building. One of them was to cross the railways (as displayed in the pictures above) and climb over a tall fence. Some months prior to my fieldwork, many of the participants had been living inside an abandoned train wagon close by, until the police one day set fire to it and burned it down. When they moved to the abandoned building close by, the police raided the place there several times as well. Each time, the police took out all the matrasses, couches and sleeping pads the participants had used to sleep on. As the police could return any time again, they could never feel entirely safe and were always prepared to escape at any time.

The focus of this thesis has been to examine the human experiences of people migrating from sub-Saharan Africa to the southern borders of Europe and to investigate migration decision-making processes, both throughout their migration routes, but mostly after reaching European shores. In the last two chapters, I have sought to provide conceivable answers to my two key research questions for this study based on my findings from my fieldwork as well as well as drawing from established theoretical perspectives. In this last chapter, I will discuss my key findings, elaborate on the various shortcomings of this study, propose prospects for further research and end with some closing remarks.

In the first analytical chapter, I suggested that theories on push and pull factors to some degree can help us understand the participants motivations to emigrate or immigrate. And in the second analytical chapter, I argued that their decision-making processes could be explained by a broader definition of the street capital framework and that navigating on the streets possibly could be regarded as navigating between negative and positive freedom. Moreover, perhaps the push-pull framework could be combined with the division of negative and positive freedom. That pull-factors could be defined as freedom from and pull-factors could be understood as freedom to. If accepting this interpretation of freedom and for migration, we could perhaps also view freedom as a freedom from involuntary immobility.

The research participants were not simply victims of their surroundings, but rather active and competent social actors which made decisions based on rational calculations in their everyday life and for their individual futures. The great paradox of the use of street capital which amongst the research participants, is that, while it has enabled them temporary freedom on the streets, it also had brought several amongst them to prison – an even more authoritarian institution than the one they escaped from in the first place. In this sense, street capital was also a threat and obstacle to what would eventually set them free – being integrated as legal citizens in the larger society. They navigate within conflicting aspirations. On the one hand, they aspire for personal freedom and on the other hand they aspire for social integration and affiliation. But freedom was for them not just a distant goal that they aspired to, but also a means and ideal by which they actively lived, no matter how difficult the circumstances. That's why

they chose to live at the streets, until they could reach the goal of freedom from migration and distress and integration as enabling and empowering freedom.

Limitations of the Study

This thesis includes obviously a variety of shortcomings. The sample of this study in general was very homogeneous. This thesis therefore provides little focus on the variations and distinctions within the illegal migrant driven drug economy. The structure of this economy is significantly more complex than I have examined here. Altogether, this may represent a one-sided view of migrants arriving on European shores and ending up in the drug economy.

Even though the theoretical perspectives are built on the empirical material, some of these typologies may not necessarily match with research participants' own definitions.

Another crucial limitation of this study is the few semi-structured in-depth interviews, which perhaps specifically is most evident when analyzing the research participants migration routes in the first analytical chapter, since this segment of the thesis predominantly is based on the in-depth interviews. Had I conducted and analyzed further similar migration narratives, could this imaginably had an impact on my findings in this chapter. The reason however for the limited number of in-depth interviews, is to some degree due to lack of time in the field, but mostly due to my prioritizing of the semi-participant observation as well as my prioritizing of few extended comprehensive in-depth interviews, which in most cases lasted more than one day, rather than conducting further but more shallow interviews, which again could have had an unfavorable impact on my findings. But generally, the lack of variations of migrant experiences in the in-depth interviews could be a weakness in this study.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, my key criteria when searching and selecting research participants on the streets, was that they were English speaking migrants. Mostly because I wanted to conduct the fieldwork without a translator. This of course excluded many other diverse migrant clusters with perhaps a different approach, behaviors and possibly divergent social structures, since such migrant groups typically

were alienated by languages. By conducting the fieldwork with more than just the English-speaking migrants and refugees, this study would perhaps represent more social variations and cultural nuances.

A more general concern in qualitative research, is the reliance on personal suitability and the effect the researcher has on the research participants during the fieldwork, as well as which observations that selectively are being highlighted by the researcher. All these obstacles are also relevant and applicable concerns for this study. I have therefore made an effort of providing insights and transparency in my reasoning for the methodological choices I have made.

Prospects for Further and Future Reseach

In this thesis, I have only looked into a few tendencies of my data and there are many other diverse aspects one could analyze further such as the significance of ethnicity, race, age, the meaning of multiculturalism. I will consequently here offer four recommendations for further research.

First, I my opinion, it would be interesting to conduct a follow-up study in order to document the next chapter(s) of the participants journey. What happened to them? Where did they end up? Are they still stuck on the streets of Sicily or have they been integrated in society? Have they settled in a different country? Or are they back in their countries of origin? Has their perception of their future changed? Have they changed? By answering these questions, further research could provide even more thorough comprehensions and insights about migration decision-making processes.

Secondly, one of the many problematic components in this study, similar to many comparable studies, is the one-sided gender dimension. What was evident in my fieldwork, was how the migrant driven drug economy was dominated by men and masculine attitudes and how women typically were excluded from the drug marked. Thus, further research with a clear focus on women and on women's perspectives is needed, in addition to studies on the gender discrepancies within this context.

Thirdly, it could be interesting to conduct similar fieldwork with a focus on the drug economies and street capital in other nations at the southern external borders of Europe, such as Greece, to analyze if the findings of this research are unique for Sicily and Italy, and perhaps unique to the research participants of this study, or if there are shared patterns in countries with comparable migration challenges.

Lastly, since there seem to be a shortage of other and better real alternatives for earning money for asylum seekers deprived of work permits, for many the illegal drug economy becomes their only choice. Consequently, more applied research is needed on what social programs or alternatives for legal manual work that could be realistically could be established for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers in order for them to earn money, in place of depending on the illegal drug economy. As this thesis suggests that their situation to a large degree is shaped by lack of governmental services, further research should additionally investigate the welfare programs (or the lack of them) for migrants living on the streets of Sicily, in order to reduce migrants to be forced into illegal activities as their last and only opportunity for survival.

Closing Remarks

With this thesis, I have hopefully offered nuanced and new insights into ways of perceiving migration decision-making processes, both throughout their migration routes and mainly within the drug marked after reaching European shores. The aim has been to outline a correspondence between explicit documentation of the lives and conditions of the research participants, understood and interpreted through qualitative research methods, and between a more theoretically testimony of the human condition and the human experiences of people migrating, drawing on established theoretical concepts.

By favoring the streets in place of the reception center as a way of attaining personal freedom, this choice also had determining consequences in terms of adapting to the illegal and criminal environment on the streets as their only option for earning money. In other words, they voluntarily replanted the safe but authoritarian condition inside the reception center with the hazardous but free settings on the streets.

The key argument I have tried to make in this study, has been that being legally integrated in social institutions would enable prospects for a free and validated future, according to the research participants view of the future. My research suggests that when personal autonomy is being threatened, aspirations for personal freedom can lead individuals to abandon safety and security to pursue calculated risk-taking intentions. I have argued that the very nature and structures of the reception center led the participants of this study to feel as someone forcefully removed from society and self-governance. By escaping the physical camp on the country side with all its restraints, the research participants also escaped the sentiments of being mentally controlled. Freedom and agency were principles, which the participants were willing to exchange for refuge and predictability, as provided by the reception center. Even if that meant becoming a dealer in the drug marked. In other words, they gave up safety and shelter to purchase liberty and freedom. And they did so with a resilient, opportunistic, creative and a determined conviction. I have made the case that migrants decision-making processes can be interpreted as considerations between positive and negative freedom. However, while navigating between severe restrictions in the reception center and exciting independence on the streets, their shared ambition was to become free and legal citizens in a European nation with all its privileges and opportunities. For them, being legally integrated in social institutions, would mean being able to realize the prospects for a free and validated future. In this sense, freedom exists within social institutions and social integration.

This, however, only becomes true for the very few and privileged ones amongst the asylum seekers. The participants of this study, thus shared a sense of wasting their time if they would not actively have endeavored to change their situation by themselves, as opposed to simply expecting the circumstances to improve on their own. However, deprived of legal work permits or legal citizenships, chances for reaching the aspired legal integration for ensuring personal freedom are slight. The forthright reality for numerous irregular migrants with rejected asylum applications on the streets of southern Europe, is likely to become a perpetual state of involuntary immobility, lost in migration.

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All references and sources used in this thesis have been referenced above.

All photographs used in this thesis are taken and edited by the author of this thesis.

Word count: 27 936 words.

Appendix 1

UiO : **Department of Sociology and Human Geography**
University of Oslo

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT

I am interviewing migrants aged 18-35 years old to be part of the research project titled '*Entering Europe – A qualitative case study on Mediterranean migration networks*' within the Department of Sociology and Human Geography at the University of Oslo (UiO), Norway. The focus of this study is to examine the social aspects and sociological elements of the individuals behind the big figures and statistics in order to get a better understanding of who the migrants coming to Sicily are and what kind of motivations and aspirations that generates their migration.

The information gathered here will exclusively be used to write a master thesis on the key findings, and possibly also be submitted to a scientific journal, and will not be used for other purposes other than this research. Your participation in this study will not affect the aid or support you get from any organization in any way. And this study is not in any way attached or connected to any political authorities.

The participation in this study is completely voluntary and the participant may end the interview at any time. All information collected in the course of this study will remain confidential and anonymous. You may end your participation in this project at any time without having to give any reason for doing so and without having any consequences for you. All information about you will still always remain confidential and anonymous. In the final written thesis and scientific journal, sensitive information, which can identify you (such as your name, age or where specifically you come from), will be changed in order to protect your anonymity. This means that you will appear anonymous in all the published documents. All sensitive and personal information about you will be completely anonymized by the end of this study in the summer of 2015 or ultimately summer of 2016. During the fieldwork, I will also use photography as a tool for collecting data. However, I will only take pictures if you allow it at a given time and situation, and I will only publish the photographs you have approved or the ones where you are not recognizable in the pictures.

In case you have any questions, concerns or comments related to this study, please feel free to contact the following people who will provide you with the necessary assistance.

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Appendix 2

UiO **: Department of Sociology and Human Geography**
University of Oslo

CONSENT FORM

I am interviewing migrants aged 16-30 years to be part of the research project titled '*Entering Europe – A qualitative case study on Mediterranean migration networks*' within the Department of Sociology and Human Geography of the University of Oslo (UiO), Norway. The focus of the study is to examine the social aspects and sociological elements of the individuals behind the big figures and statistics in order to get a better understanding of who the migrants are and what kind of motivations and aspirations that generates their migration.

The information gathered here will be used to write a master thesis on key findings, and possibly also be submitted to a scientific journal.

The participation in this study is completely voluntary and the participant may end the interview at any time. All information collected in the course of the study will remain confidential.

In case you have any questions, concerns or comments related to this study, please feel free to contact the following people who will provide you with the necessary assistance.

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I agree participating in an interview conducted within the framework of the research project titled '*Entering Europe – A qualitative case study on Mediterranean migration networks*', carried out within the Department of Sociology and Human Geography of the University of Oslo (UiO), Norway.

Signature of participant or his/her legal representative as proof of consent for the interviews:

………………………………………………………….………….
(Name)

………………………………………………………….………….
(Phone/ Email)

………………………………………………………….………….
(Signature)

Date: ……………………….…   Place: ………………………………………….

Appendix 3

Interview Guide for In-Depth Interviews with Migrants

Information for the participant before the interview

- o   Introduction of myself.

- o   Short outline of the study and the reason for the interview.

- o   Inform about anonymity and confidentiality.

- o   Inform about the interview being audiotaped.

- o   Do you have any questions relating to the project or to the interview?

- o   Ask respondent to sign the written consent form.

Interview Guide

General information about the participant

- o   Thank you so much for taking the time and for participating in this interview.
- o   How old are you?
- o   Where are you from?
- o   When did you arrive in Italy?

Descriptive

- o   Why did you come to Europe?
- o   What did you do before you left your country?
- o   Did you plan your route to Europe together with someone? Who? Why?
- o   How did you, at that time, imagine your life to be when you would get to Europe? Has this changed since then in any way? How?
- o   Could you please describe your entire journey to Europe from the very beginning?

- How did it feel to leave your country, friends and family?

- Did you know someone in Europe before you left your home country? What did they tell you about Europe? Did you learn anything from them that has been helpful or beneficial to you in any way?

- Is there anything that you wish you knew before coming to Europe? What?

- How did you finance your trip?

- What/ who do you miss most about home?

- If you could travel back in time and give yourself some advice before you left your country, what would that be? Would you have done anything differently?

- Would you do the same trip over again?

- What is your best memory from your journey so far?

- What is your worst memory from your journey so far?

- How was your confrontation/ meeting with Italy? What were your first thoughts when you arrived here?

- Where- and how do you live at the moment?

- Who do you stay together with?

- How do you see your future in Europe?

- What are you looking/ hoping for?

- What do you know about the policies and the rules concerning migrants in Europe? Where do you know this from?

- How is your financial situation at the moment?

- How do you think you will be accepted in the European country you end up in?

- What profession would you like to participate in if you get a work permit? Why?

Network, family and friends

- You seem to know a lot of people here. How important are your friends and your friendships here in Italy at the moment?

- Who are your friends? How would you describe your friends?

- What do you tell your family and your friends at home about your trip?

- Do you stay in touch with them? How often do you communicate with them? What do you tell them about Italy and about yourself?

- What kinds of expectations or dreams do you think they have for you? Why do you think they have these expectations?
- Do you know others who are planning to come to Europe? Have you given them any advice? What kind of advice would you give them?
- Do you see any differences between male and female migrants here in Italy?
- Do you have any financial responsibilities or duties to your family, relatives or friends in your home country? What exactly are they?
- How did you imagine your life to be when you were a child? Why?
- Do you think your journey to Europe has changed you in any way? How? Why?
- Do you think you will stay in Europe forever, or do you want to move back to your country of origin someday?
- Is there anything you would like to add to this interview that we haven't talked about?
- Thank you so much for your participation!

Appendix 4

<u>Interview Guide for follow-up In-Depth Interview</u>

- o When did you come to Switzerland?

- o How did you get here? Could you please describe your journey to Switzerland?

- o Did you travel together with someone? Who?

- o Why did you come to Switzerland?

- o How long will you be staying here?

- o Can you please describe the moment when you first arrived?

- o How- and where do you live at the moment?

- o Do you know someone in Switzerland?

- o How is it to live here compared to Sicily?

- o How do you see your future?

- o Do you keep in touch with your friends on Sicily? How are they? What do they do?

- o Do you have any friends here in Switzerland?

- o How is your daily life here?

- o What do you do on a typical day?

- o Do you still sell drugs?

- o What does freedom mean to you? Is there anything you would like to add to this interview that we haven't talked about?

- o Thank you so much for your participation!