

## Dealing with Diversity and Difference in Public: Traces of Casamançais Cohabitation in Catalonia?

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### Introduction

In Carrer Rosselló, a pedestrian street of a neighbourhood in Mataró, Catalonia, a couple of large seats half-heartedly invited people to rest, chat, or daydream. It was one of the few permanent installations inviting social gatherings on Carrer Rosselló. Most of the time when I passed by, a couple of people would be sitting there or a smaller group would stand around and chat. On a visit in 2011 however, one of the chairs was gone. As often before, I nevertheless found Souleymane Touré, a Balanta from the Casamance, sitting on the remaining chair. It was early in the morning and the alley was still quite empty. As the sun was rising quickly, at the far end of Carrer Rosselló a *hermandad*<sup>1</sup> prepared the march for the *Matinal de Saetas*, a performance of devotional flamenco songs which commonly inaugurate Holy Week. Souleymane explained that the chair had been taken away by the town authorities since a woman living in the house next to it had frequently complained about people gathering there and being noisy. When his flatmate came, they then squeezed together into the remaining chair. They continued to inhabit this space although it had caused tension. Public spaces like Carrer Rosselló were used in many ways and local residents held different opinions concerning their use. This needed to be negotiated, which in the case of Carrer Rosselló had seemingly resulted in a new consensus around maintaining the street as convivial space. Spontaneous gatherings continued to happen involving different constellations of local residents. For Souleymane this was part of the everyday and nothing spectacular.

Casamançais streets, in turn, placed hardly any limits on people gathering. *Jo, lako!*<sup>2</sup> – ‘Come, sit down!’ Leaving the yard of *Samboukunda*, the home of my first host Damé Sambou in Ziguinchor, I was often invited by acquaintances

and friends to join one of the groups chatting and preparing tea along the street, or at a street corner during my stay in 2009/2010. Turning left from my home, the Mandinka neighbours had pulled out small benches and chairs gathering around a tiny charcoal stove on which they prepared *attaaya*, a strong green tea with plenty of sugar. A lot of time was spent drinking tea since three rounds were usually served.<sup>3</sup> Yet people did come and go in the meantime, sharing only one or two of the rounds, and senior members or guests were included in the serving of tea even if they were not sitting with the group preparing it. This was a regular scene in the neighbourhood after lunch or dinner, and in the afternoons, often occurring in front of shops or workshops.

To the right of *Samboukunda* at the corner shop of a Fula (Pullo) was another regular meeting point for young men as well as young women selling fruit and vegetables. Sometimes the men prepared tea, at other times they joked with the women or chatted, commenting on the traffic on Boulevard de Lindiane, or their lives. While in front of the shop along the boulevard the men were in their twenties or thirties, further into the tiny streets of the neighbourhood a younger cohort of youths met at a shop after school to spend time, discuss, and frequently watch football on the shopkeeper’s TV. Many of these groups were mixed mirroring the diversity of the neighbourhood. In front of my house a varied group congregated. There were Fula, Mandinka and Jola, some of them Guineans, Muslims of different brotherhoods and Christians of varying denominations.

In this chapter I focus on the practices of inhabiting and temporarily appropriating public spaces and how this is negotiated. Public spaces ‘tell us a great deal about [the] most diffuse forms of social organization’ (Goffman, 1966, 4). Indeed, this is particularly salient in both Casamance and Catalonia since a wide variety of people have access to them.<sup>4</sup> However, I conceptualise a space of encounter as convivial space, which is socially constructed in a process of interacting, negotiating, and translating between changing practices and norms. It does not exist *a priori* as a given physical space, but can be understood as a capacity, ‘an instrument and dimension of people’s sociality’ (Corsín Jiménez, 2003, 140). Convivial space emerges from the fragile process of conviviality, living with difference involving both harmonious and conflictual encounters. Furthermore, in this chapter, I focus on how convivial space

<sup>1</sup> Spanish: fraternity. Here the *Hermandad Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza*.

<sup>2</sup> Jola; alternatively, people would address me in Mandinka (*naa naa, sí!*) or French. For Jola spelling I refer to Sapir’s dictionary (1993), for Mandinka to Drame’s grammar and dictionary (2003).

<sup>3</sup> On a detailed analysis of preparing *attaaya* among male youth in Dakar as a way of coping with unemployment and creating solidarity, see Ralph (2008, esp. 15).

<sup>4</sup> I am aware that there are transit spaces like Dakar, other West African capitals and West African, North African and European transit spaces that have an impact on interethnic and interreligious encounters. This however is beyond the scope of this chapter.

emerges in open spaces, which in principle are equally accessible to all. Public spaces such as a pedestrian zone in Catalonia, as well as a walled house yard in Casamance can be considered as open spaces.<sup>5</sup>

The French emic notion of *cohabitation*, often used by the Casamançais, was central in describing everyday encounters and coexistence with neighbours whether they were culturally or religiously different or not. It defined the interaction with both members of the household and people living in the same neighbourhood (hereafter referred to as neighbours or local residents). *Cohabitation* thus complemented experiences of intermarriage, joking relationships, cultural adaptation, and conversion which all cross ethnic and religious boundaries in Casamance.<sup>6</sup>

Casamançais migrants also face cultural and religious diversity in Catalonia. In this chapter I ask, how the use, sharing, and appropriation of public spaces feature in a Casamançais way of living with difference in both Casamance and Catalonia. Different dimensions of *cohabitation* emerge to varying degrees and are negotiated depending on the local context. In the following I deal with instances of convivial space as it emerges from both everyday life encounters and celebrations held in public. They support an understanding of *cohabitation* on the level of practice rather than discourse. I conclude by showing that the successful negotiation of inhabiting and temporarily appropriating open spaces for various and differing practices forms convivial space. It relies on the emergent minimal consensus that is crucial to understanding living with difference in a locality.

Throughout the chapter I will mainly present a male perspective, since most of the 18 months of anthropological fieldwork in both Casamance and Catalonia was with men.<sup>7</sup> In Catalonia my informants were mostly Muslim migrants from the middle and lower Casamance region. In the Casamance I spent time in their neighbourhoods and villages of origin with their families and friends. Depending on age and education, my informants conceptualised the notion of *cohabitation* to varying extents. They also reflected on the existence of diversity and interaction quite differently. However, socio-economic background did not systemically change Casamançais practices or the general norms they adhered to. Therefore the main comparative perspective of this

5 The observation that open spaces cannot simply be equated with the public complements Lofland's (1998) analysis that in the public realm practices on the continuum between private, communal, and public take place.

6 See, for example Jong (2005, 2007), Dramé (2006), Linares (1992), and Smith (2006, 2010).

7 I am aware of the bias inherent to this limitation. To add a gendered perspective remains a future task.

chapter remains between the two sites, Catalonia and Casamance, concerning the use, sharing, and inhabiting of public spaces.

In Catalonia, this analysis focuses mainly on Cerdanyola, a peripheral neighbourhood of Mataró and its only pedestrian street Carrer Rosselló. Further Catalan sites are Sabadell and Granollers, two towns similar to Mataró, each at about 30 kilometres from Barcelona. In Casamance, most ethnographic examples stem from Ziguinchor, the regional capital of lower Casamance. In Ziguinchor, I primarily refer to the situation of the peripheral neighbourhood of Lindiane and its main thoroughfare Boulevard de Lindiane. Examples from Sédhiou, the regional capital of the middle Casamance, complement the Ziguinchor material.

Next, I will set the scene giving the backdrop of diversity in both Catalonia and Casamance. Subsequently I engage with everyday uses and ways of dwelling in public spaces. I first present everyday street scenes in Casamance and Catalonia. Secondly, I compare religious and ethnic celebrations in both locations. These events foster a better understanding of how convivial space emerges from sharing and negotiating the use of open spaces. In the conclusion I trace both the ways in which convivial space is part of Casamançais *cohabitation* and the impact of the different Catalan context on the minimal consensus of living *with* difference.

### Diversity in Catalonia and Casamance

Increased immigration from West Africa to Europe links Casamance and Catalonia. In general, Spain has been an immigration country for the last three decades, with the numbers of immigrants rising sharply since the early years of the new millennium and comprising over 14 per cent of the population in 2010.<sup>8</sup> Within Spain, Catalonia is a primary destination for immigrants with over 1.3 million foreigners living there (17.5 per cent of the population) of whom every third immigrant is a Muslim (Morera, 2008, 18) – nearly six per cent of the total population. Although the majority of migrants tend to come from North Africa and South America, the number of migrants from Senegal is also growing. Casamançais migrants are concentrated in certain areas of Catalonia, such as the Maresme and Mataró.<sup>9</sup>

8 Instituto Nacional de Estadística: Revisión del Padrón municipal 2010, [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es), accessed 11 May 2011.

9 Studies mostly subsume the Casamançais under the Senegambian category (Kaplan Marcusán, 1998, 2003, 2007; Sow, 2004, 2005). I suggest that many of the approximately 18,500

West African migration is not a recent phenomenon. Taking the Casamance region as an example, migration is at the heart of a variety of different forms of diversity: ethnic, linguistic, religious, and national.<sup>10</sup> Accounts go back to the 13th century when immigrants from the Mali Empire settled in the lands of the Casamance river, which was previously mainly inhabited by the Bainouk ethnic group (Roche, 1985, 53–56; Quinn, 1972, 482). Equally, the Jola of the lower Casamance were immigrants as well as the Fula of the upper Casamance (Roche, 1985, 28–32; Linares, 1992, 84–90; Quinn, 1971; Bâ, 1986, 60–65).<sup>11</sup> Later, Muslim marabouts came with their Mandinka followers to convert people to Islam (Leary, 1970, 1971). The independence movement of the Fula, previously under Mandinka domination, also sparked significant migrations (Bâ, 1986; N’Gaide, 1999; Quinn, 1971). This spatial mobility never really stopped. Traders always circulated, slaves were sold and shipped, migrant labourers went to harvest rubber and palm oil, and to cultivate the groundnut fields in both Senegal and the Gambia to earn their living (Foucher, 2002, 64; Mark, 1976, 1977; David, 1980). Later, migration to the urban centres of Bathurst (today’s Banjul) and Dakar complemented all other migration movements (Hamer, 1981; Linares, 2003; Lambert, 2002; Foucher, 2002; Reboussin, 1995). After labour migrants started to move to other West African countries, migration to Europe was just another step in a long migration history (St. Jacques, 2009).<sup>12</sup>

Today, Casamance is very internally diverse. Over one in five inhabitants is neither Jola, Mandinka, or Fula (the main three ethnic groups) but in the national census ascribes to another group (ANSD, s.a.). In the Ziguinchor and Sédhiou regions, Muslims account for around 90 per cent of all inhabitants north of the Casamance river, whereas south of the river in the departments

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of the 60,000 Senegalese in Catalonia are Casamançais (cf. Instituto Nacional de Estadística: Revisión del Padrón municipal 2010, [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es), accessed 11 May 2011).

10 A focus on everyday practices of residents in Casamance, as put forward in this chapter, offers an alternative perspective on this region, which is otherwise known for the longest, although low level violent conflict between the separatist movement MFDC and the army (cf. Marut, 1994, 1996, 2010; Foucher, 2002, 2009; Jong and Gasser, 2005; Evans, 2005; Faye, 1994; Benoist, 1991).

11 Since 2008, the natural region of Casamance is divided into three administrative regions: Ziguinchor, Sédhiou, and Kolda. They respond in common parlance to the lower, the middle and the upper Casamance respectively. In my study I only deal with people from the lower and the middle Casamance.

12 Publications dealing with Casamançais migrants in Spain refer more to the Gambian places of origin (cf. Kaplan Marcusán, 1993, 1998). But there are other accounts of the global reach of Casamançais migration, e.g. to Argentina (Traoré, 2009; Zubrzycki and Agnelli, 2009).

next to Ziguinchor, Christians and so-called traditional believers account for between a quarter and two thirds of the population (ANSD, s.a.). In Sédhiou, Mandinka is the first language for nearly every other person and spoken by nearly everybody else as a second one, while in Ziguinchor first languages vary a lot and Wolof is the second language for around half of the population.

The cultural and religious diversity of Catalonia has also multiple dimensions. In the 1950s and 1960s, Castilian labour migrants came from the south of Spain to Catalonia (Bover and Velilla, 2005; Silvestre Rodríguez, 2002). Entire new neighbourhoods, such as Cerdanyola, were built to accommodate them. The binary coexistence of Castilian and Catalan inhabitants more recently was complemented by the diversity of origins of international immigrants. In Cerdanyola, local statistics show that one in four inhabitants is born outside Spain, and every other person outside Catalonia. Of those born outside Spain, the majority are from Morocco (44.5%), and more than one in five is from Senegal or the Gambia. Chinese and Latin Americans also constitute large groups. At least every eighth person is Muslim in Cerdanyola (Ajuntament de Mataró, 2010).<sup>13</sup> These are the regional and local configurations in which the everyday lives of people are embedded. Next I explore how people inhabited, negotiated, and thus shared spaces.

### Casamançais Street Gatherings

Sitting in front of the Fula shop along Boulevard de Lindiane enjoying the company of changing constellations of various people while drinking *attaaya*, we were at one of the many invisible crossroads of Ziguinchor’s cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. Both Jola and Mandinka were strongly represented in the neighbourhood, but there were also members of many other ethnic groups resident in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, there was internal variation among members broadly sharing the same ethnicity having come from different areas including the neighbouring countries (Guineas, the Gambia). Lindiane was also a *cartier catholique* (a Catholic neighbourhood) since many Christians lived there sharing the same spaces with Muslims and followers of traditional religions. Residents of the neighbourhood also followed various occupations, had different sources of economic income and support, and lived in quite dissimilar housing within walking distance from one another. Every encounter combined a particular set of diverse people.

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13 I take the share of the Moroccan population as the best, although conservative proxy for Muslims.

This was most obvious in their language practices. Left to my house they would mainly speak Mandinka, while at the shop Jola and Wolof prevailed, sometimes interspersed with Fula.

Courtyards also classified as open spaces since during daytime people from different places congregated there attending to their various businesses. The day I arrived at *Samboukunda* I discarded any illusion of homogeneity or clear segregation. Damé's family were Jola Muslims, but only one actively claimed to belong to a brotherhood; he was Ibadou.<sup>14</sup> A teacher renting two rooms in the back of the courtyard was a Jola Catholic from Guinea Bissau who had fled during the independence wars at home. His cousin, staying with him, had not converted to Christianity. The corner shop of a Muslim Fula also belonged to the same courtyard, and thus his family and apprentice shared the same space. This internal diversity reflected the overall configuration of the neighbourhood and was multiplied outside in the streets, along footpaths, and other open spaces.

Most of the infrastructure everyone relied on was temporary, both at the shop and at the Mandinka neighbours. The benches and chairs were temporarily taken out, accommodating whoever joined in. Another neighbour, however, had brick benches along the wall of his yard leaving no doubt that gatherings were very much part of everyday life. Tree trunks randomly lying around could also be a site for recurrent gatherings. Yet, during the rest of the day they were meaningless. At other times, a carpet taken to the shade of a mango tree was enough to prepare tea, eat peanuts or mangos, or just spend time together.

*Attaqya* was only one, although widely observed form of gatherings among neighbours. According to Michael Ralph's informants, preparing tea had gained popularity among urban unemployed youths from the beginning of the economic crisis in Senegal (Ralph, 2008). However, the groups along Boulevard de Lindiane contained a mixture of people. Indeed, some of the regulars in the tea ceremonies were waiting for their economic opportunity, thus having plenty of spare time to spend at home, or rather outside of homes. Yet, nearly everywhere teachers, workers, or fishermen joined the gatherings at the end of their work day and shop keepers or local craftsmen could take a break to have tea with others. Furthermore, tea was shared with neighbours currently

14 A follower of a Senegalese reformist movement seeking to practise orthodox Islam. They derive their name from the Qur'anic term *Ibadu ar-Rahman* (Slaves of the Merciful) and are organised in the *Jamaatou Ibadou Rahmane* movement (Cantone, 2011; Loimeier, 2000; Villalón, 2004). While there are four large Muslim brotherhoods in Senegal, this hardly ever came up as a topic in Ziguinchor. The general idiom was that of unity: 'we are all Muslim' (no matter which brotherhood we belong to), or 'we are Muslims, *tout court*'.

working at a workshop or at home. Both the mechanic and the women doing the chores were regularly offered tea. Indeed, apart from being a way to kill time (Ralph, 2008), having tea among neighbours, family, and friends was a moment in which *cohabitation* could be appreciated. Spending time together was enjoyable and sharing tea, peanuts, or fruit often was a sign of respect when a guest, senior, or members of the adjacent households were served.<sup>15</sup>

Gatherings seemingly without another purpose than to be sociable were common in Ziguinchor. In villages they tended to be more formalised and the *bentang*,<sup>16</sup> the palaver platform, often marked their space in the physical environment. In Sakar and Koussi, families and friends gathered on the *bentang* of their courtyard or along the street during midday and in the evening. Men also met on a platform at the *banta-báa*, the public place opposite to the mosque, in the evening and after Friday prayers in particular. While at the *banta-báa*, men would discuss village affairs, the gatherings elsewhere had various qualities often bringing family or groups of friends together. The co-presence of women and men was mainly confined to the *bentang* in the yards, which during daytime and in evening qualified as open spaces accessible to everyone. Women would nevertheless fade in and out of other encounters, for example at a bus stop or a corner shop, exchanging news, greeting in passing, or being served a glass of tea.

In Sakar where all but two families were Mandinka, everybody was at least acquainted and going somewhere villagers frequently slowed down to catch up with individuals and groups of people along the way and in courtyards. The gatherings were thus reference points attracting flows of people. They hereby linked the otherwise seemingly static clusters of groups. Koussi, a very heterogeneous village, was little different in this respect. While there were disputes in the village between Mandinka and Fula about leadership, greeting and meeting in open spaces remained an essential part of the everyday.

The presented spontaneous meetings and regular gatherings were integral part of everyday village life and certainly also of the routine of large segments of the population of regional towns like Ziguinchor and Sédhiou. The spaces were shared and inhabited by various local residents. In towns, more often

15 Ralph agrees that tea ceremonies were a form to live Senegalese *teranga*, an encompassing form of hospitality (Sylla, 1980, 89–91). He suggests that 'when folks have idle time, a family member or neighbour might make tea for all to enjoy. The custom is to serve guests first' (Ralph, 2008, 3), and he states that 'informal tea ceremonies provide the occasion to discern moral values' (Ralph, 2008, 17).

16 There are many versions of the same word that all have to do with *banta-báa* or *bantango*, the palaver tree (Drame, 2003, 103–104; Quinn, 1972, xvi, note 4).

than not, the groups of people inhabiting open spaces did so more spontaneously, taking out as many benches and chairs as there were people. To spend time outside and to live differences as part of the everyday was widely taken for granted.

Although preparing tea or just being outside often happened in fixed constellations and remained gender and age differentiated, they were also very inclusive. At times it could involve people of various religious and ethnic groups, at others women and men, or people of different age, although less frequently, would sit together. Serving tea to someone working close by, or someone joining in for one round of tea were only looser forms of weaving the social fabric of *cohabitation*. People dealt with many differences in switching languages, offering stools to sit on to elders and guests, and adhering to diverse origins and religions. During gatherings, the social practices of local residents resulted in the emergence of convivial space. It could often be transient as people joined and left social situations frequently, at times only greeting in passing. Most situations conveyed a seamless fluidity evident in both communication and movement. While internally diverse gatherings were a site of living *with* difference and at times developed a specific taste of locality,<sup>17</sup> differences between gatherings added to the diversity in the neighbourhood. The co-presence of several gatherings in relative proximity to one another and to other activities also hinted at the wider consensus of conviviality which granted everyone the right to temporarily dwell in open neighbourhood spaces.

### Carrer Rosselló – A Casamançais Street Scene in Catalonia

In Catalonia, open spaces were scarcer than in the Casamance and confined to squares, parks, an odd pedestrian zone, or a pavement during certain times of the day. One afternoon in October I set off with Famara Badio, a Mandinka from a mixed Casamançais village and a friend from Sakar who lived with Sierra-Leoneans. Turning into Carrer Rosselló, the latter met a white Rastafarian acquaintance and decided to stay and chat. On the short stretch to the next intersection, passing the two seats, we continuously met people. After greeting someone from Sakar, we met a Gambian Mandinka woman with Gambian and Senegalese, Mandinka and Jola friends. Afterwards we greeted someone else from Sakar and when we returned twenty minutes to half an hour later, we

17 I see locality 'as a dimension of value' rather than the 'actually existing social form', a difference that Appadurai establishes between locality and neighbourhood (2005 [1995], 178–179).

found the same and more people chatting on the spot. Souleymane Touré was among them as were other Casamançais approximately his age.

Carrer Rosselló was a busy social space for Casamançais immigrants and bore some similarities to the everyday situations I encountered in the Casamance. On workdays people started gathering on the alley after the siesta. News was being exchanged, along with colloquial joking and pleasantries. Not far from the two chairs people, among whom there were many Casamançais, met in front of the *locutori* (a place offering cheap international phone calls). It was close to their homes, central, and spacious enough since it was the start of the only pedestrian street of the neighbourhood. Typically, Casamançais passed through Carrer Rosselló to run errands or call home. Little shops covering the daily needs of all inhabitants of the neighbourhood lined Carrer Rosselló. Apart from the *locutori* and the launderette, there was a South-Asian-run supermarket *Hadja Supermercat – Casa d'Africa* selling vegetables, a Moroccan bakery, a brand new pharmacy advertising homeopathy, a couple of places selling specialities from Extremadura like *jamón* (cured ham), clothing stores, *tabacs* (kiosks), a Chinese hairdresser and supermarket, and many more Catalan, Castilian and immigrant businesses. All needs could be satisfied around Carrer Rosselló and people were constantly in flux. Temporary gatherings regularly resulted from this continuous flow.

In comparison with Casamance, gatherings in Catalonia to a large extent were equally repetitive, spontaneous, and diverse. Although in Carrer Rosselló the situation was dominated by black migrants, people of different immigration statuses, education backgrounds, rural and urban origins, and ethnic and religious backgrounds at times were part of the gatherings. Various languages prevailed in interaction of both men and women from various origins and religions. Not all the Casamançais involved in the scene knew each other. Some definitely knew their fellow Mandinka or Jola better than people speaking other mother tongues. Recreating a scene that resembled gatherings in urban spaces in the Casamance Casamançais and other local residents temporarily produced locality, which at the same time emerged as a convivial space incorporating a great number of different people. While many of the practices of living with difference seemed to have migrated with them and were maintained, the biggest difference was that neither tea was prepared nor chairs and benches brought out. While a trunk of a tree or a bench incorporated in the wall permanently marked the physical space of gatherings in Ziguinchor, they were not engrained in the physical landscape of Cerdanyola. Nevertheless social gatherings were sustained and happened regularly.

Furthermore, on Carrer Rosselló the Casamançais lived their internal differentiation and conviviality embedded in the surrounding diversity of

contemporary Catalonia, which the variety of shops displayed. Casamançais knew the Moroccan owner of the *locutori* as well as some other local residents and employees in the shops. Similar to Casamance, all kinds of people passed the Casamançais early evening gatherings greeting those they were acquainted to. Yet, when the groups had grown large, it was harder for non-Casamançais to fade in and out.

As the example of the seat that had disappeared given in the introduction exemplified, gatherings in Carrer Rosselló had seen moments of conflict arising from differing interests in open spaces. Several Casamançais recalled that the constant meeting, standing and talking loudly had caused some local tension. The woman complaining and thereby causing the removal of the seat by the town authorities was only the most recent sign of the necessary negotiation of convivial space.

While Souleymane Touré and his flatmate continued to come together in Carrer Rosselló, others had changed their attitude trying to pass through open spaces quickly, not wanting to dwell outside on the street, neither alone nor with friends. Famara Badio was one of them and after passing through Carrer Rosselló recalled that in the past flyers were distributed on several occasions on the lower stretches of Carrer Rosselló, which accused the black population of polluting the neighbourhood and demanded their rights to public spaces to be restricted.<sup>18</sup> Though it was an act of open racism, Famara in part agreed with the points raised in the flyers and reasoned that they – the immigrants like him – indeed were already too numerous in the neighbourhood and that people dwelling outside wasted too much of their time gossiping and backbiting. Others joined his perspective stating *c'est saturé*<sup>19</sup> about the presence of the sub-Saharanans in Cerdanyola. Many argued that what was possible in Casamance was not a part of the consensus of living together in Europe.

Spontaneous but sustained gatherings in Carrer Rosselló nevertheless expressed a continuity of Casamançais practices in Catalonia that to an extent matched the practices of other local residents. However they were constantly negotiated and contested both among Casamançais and within the given local context. Both in Catalonia and Casamance, the fact that social everyday life happened in part outdoors remained unquestioned. More than anything else, *how* open spaces could be inhabited or even appropriated was at stake. Casamançais took it for granted that perspectives on the use of open spaces

18 The expert of the 'new citizen department' of Mataró recalled the flyers as a difficult, yet singular incident. She stated that when they became aware of these unlawful actions, the town authorities quickly traced the troublemaker and put a stop to his activities.

19 French: 'It is saturated'.

differed between various local residents and thus needed to be negotiated. Many showed a willingness to translate their own practices to a newly emerging local consensus. It was part of their understanding of *cohabitation*. Living together necessarily was an ongoing process dependent on the changing social configurations of the neighbourhood at large. The remaining chair symbolically reinforced this interpretation. Gatherings in open spaces were possible in Catalonia also, although in a somewhat altered form which depended on the locally achieved consensus of conviviality. To what extent negotiation was a major factor in it became even more apparent during large manifestations of the kind that took place on Boulevard de Lindiane in Ziguinchor.

### Negotiated Equality: Tabaski and Holy Friday in Casamance

Leaving Carrer Rosselló behind and returning to Boulevard de Lindiane in Ziguinchor, religious celebrations were one of the many ways of appropriating open spaces. On the occasion of such events, it became apparent what the consensus of *cohabitation* was based upon. Having equal access to public spaces was officially manifested and visible as a lived experience of local residents.

The day of *Tabaski* (Id al-Adha) believers gathered in the open air on Boulevard de Lindiane next to a small mosque. The Tabaski prayer took place in full length, an occasion for which the whole street was barred by praying Muslims. Taxis, mini buses, and cars had to find their way around the huge crowd through the dirt. The appropriating of the space was taken for granted by everybody. Few months later, during Holy Week and the Holy Friday procession, the boulevard was again claimed by believers. Starting at a remote point along the boulevard, the Catholic procession slowly but steadily approached the neighbourhood church with several stops, prayers, and songs on the way. Due to the heat, the procession did not stay neatly together. Instead believers tried to profit from the little patches of shade offered by houses and trees. Nevertheless, the procession continued relentlessly. Some neighbours stopped and watched the Catholics proceed. Others neither showed incomprehension, nor particular interest.

A common explanation for letting everyone proceed was the perceived equality between Catholicism and Islam, and the importance of religious practice. People in Lindiane referred to examples during which the political and religious leadership of both communities and the Senegalese state embodied this equal respect (cf. Smith, 2013). Common references were made to Senghor who as a Catholic was the first president of Senegal, a majority Muslim state,

and to the mutual delegations of religious leaders on the occasion of religious festivities to both Muslim and Christian pilgrimage cities. On the occasion of festivities as well as in everyday life Casamançais stressed the equality or even the commonalities of Christians and Muslims which resonated with survey findings from Dakar in which the common religiosity of all was foregrounded (cf. Smith, 2013).<sup>20</sup> Local residents took it for granted that everyone should be allowed to practise their religion, including the appropriation of open spaces.

During the religious ceremonies the everyday life of those not involved continued regardless, and was seemingly unaffected. Different to the shorter Tabaski prayer, the Holy Friday procession stayed confined to one side of the street and on the other side everyday traffic passed with the usual noise of screaming men and old engines. Similarly, the workshops and shops continued their sometimes quite noisy business. Both traffic and general neglect of the religious procession annoyed some participants yet without immediate consequences. Discussing the difference between Tabaski and the Holy Friday procession in retrospect, the length of the procession was negotiated against the shorter duration of the Tabaski prayer. Restricting the procession to one side of the street was the then practised consensus. This left the impression that everybody had access to open spaces to practise their religion, but not exclusively.

The sharing of food affirmed the sharing of public spaces. After the Tabaski prayer Muslims prepared extended lunches and engaged in a day long feasting to which neighbours, friends and family were invited. At Damé Sambou's house, the meat of the mutton was shared between the Muslims and Christians alike. At the house of Mamadou Bodian, the sub delegate of the neighbourhood, at times more Christians came to celebrate than Muslims. Celebrating Tabaski together was actively equated with Christians distributing *ngalax* at Easter, a sweet dish which they prepared to share with their neighbours, family, and friends to break the fasting together. Apart from a few Muslims who rejected anything prepared by Christians, everybody else accepted this Christian gift. The sharing of food was taken for granted both during Easter and the Tabaski religious celebrations. Once more the majority of people I encountered stressed the communality of practice rather than pointing out the differences.

The large religious celebrations in open spaces clarified a general attitude towards *cohabitation* that I also observed in everyday life. A notion of convivial

20 For some, the sameness of Christians and Muslims additionally relied upon having relatives adhering to both religions (cf. Smith, 2013). However, even Mandinka in Lindiane, who hardly had Christian family members, had appropriated the justifications outlined here.

space emerged that relied on the negotiated and lived experience of equal access resulting in an openness to share, use, and appropriate open spaces. Although there were differences in detail between Christian and Muslim celebrations, the equality was more strongly perceived and thus influenced everyday practices more than that the differences in power relations hampered them.<sup>21</sup> The same principles applied not only to religious diversity, but also to ethnic and linguistic ones. Groups of people temporarily appropriated open spaces and dwelled therein speaking different languages, practising different religions, or celebrating private events. Convivial space relied on shared experiences, mutual respect, and flexibility, which importantly resulted from ongoing negotiation.

### Discrepancies: Holy Week and Tabaski in Catalonia

The experience of the Tabaski celebrations in Catalonia was very different to the public prayer in Lindiane. Many Muslims in Cerdanyola dressed formally, often in West African *boubous*, a flowing long or half-length damask gown and matching trousers. Yet, in public spaces in the Cerdanyola neighbourhood all that could be noted were the numerous immigrants who left early in the morning for the industrial park, and returned after a while briefly continuing their conversations before going indoors. The southernmost part of Carrer Rosselló was one of the gateways through which a constant flow of Africans left the neighbourhood in the morning of Tabaski and every Friday around 2 PM. Two mosques, one with a Moroccan and the other with a Mandinka and Jola imam, housed the Tabaski prayers.<sup>22</sup> They were former plants converted into places of worship. The Tabaski prayer happened at the urban periphery, all in contrast to the central space it had appropriated along Boulevard de Lindiane.

It provoked discussions that mosques were absent from the lived neighbourhood spaces. Fakeba Badji, a well-informed Casamançais, alluded to the strong resistance to mosques to explain why Muslims in Mataró had established themselves at the urban periphery. A Soninké association had a venue

21 In this respect, everyday experience of Smith's observation of *de jure* equality between religions and ethnic groups has a larger impact than the Senegalese state practice of proportional equidistance (Smith, 2013). This is plausible since we had seen that in Casamance the shares are more balanced than on the national level.

22 While many chose the mosque in which an Imam of their origin prayed, there was quite substantial mixing on the day of Tabaski as well as the other days. The Casamançais explained that this was for practical reasons of proximity.

some ten meters from the *locutori* in Carrer Rosselló which they had sometimes used as a place of worship. But other residents objected and even feared the large gatherings of sub-Saharanans. As a result, it was closed down by the town authorities and re-opened with its initial purpose of only teaching Muslim girls the Qur'an. Still worse, a Moroccan place used as a mosque in Cerdanyola found its entrance barred with dung of farm animals a number of times. The Moroccans finally gave up and retreated to the industrial park. While there was a Catalan movement supporting a central location for a mosque, the Casamançais preferred to avoid conflict and to negotiate equal access to public spaces slowly.

Contrary to the experience of relative equality in Lindiane, in Catalonia the treatment of Christians and Muslims was very unequal. The Holy Week celebrations exemplified this very bluntly. Apart from the large manifestations in the city centre, Cerdanyola as a hub of Castilian immigration hosted a *Matinal de Saetas* in the central neighbourhood park at the beginning of Holy Week. The morning performance of devotional flamenco songs was audible far beyond the park. Two further processions followed on Wednesday and Thursday criss-crossing parts of the neighbourhood. Despite a popular move towards secularism in Spain, Holy Week was ostentatiously celebrated while the Tabaski celebration in Mataró was kept at the periphery.

In the town of Sabadell, however, the Tabaski prayer of the same year took a different shape both in comparison to previous years and to the events in Mataró. While years earlier it was already held open air on a large field at the periphery of Sabadell, in 2010 the town authorities had agreed to move it to a more central open space in town. In retrospect Ousmane Diédhiou told the story of a success: they received the relatively central location from the town hall which facilitated the communal praying of 500–600 Muslims, as in Casamance. To be fully satisfied, he saw the last remaining obstacle in people having to work. He assumed that on a weekend or public holiday at a later hour there would have been even more Muslims present to celebrate together. Some Muslim Casamançais however were less moderate, complaining that Tabaski could not be celebrated in Europe like at home. Only the public Tabaski prayer in Sabadell and having large mosques albeit at the periphery appeared in a different, more positive light. For a majority, the religious *cohabitation* in Catalonia was only possible in the form of a relative retreat of the Casamançais from shared open spaces to the periphery.

To my surprise, this did not result in rejecting the Christian Holy Week celebrations. While a few sub-Saharanans watched the events throughout the week, they more often just went on with their own activities, for example sitting pensively in the morning sun in parts of the park not taken over by the *Matinal*.

Casamançais just let it happen the way the Holy Friday procession also just happened in Ziguinchor. Furthermore, neither food at Tabaski nor *ngalax* during Easter were shared with people other than those already familiar with the practice. No Casamançais I knew, however, saw a problem in limiting these practices central to religious celebrations in Casamance to the sub-Saharan neighbours and friends in Catalonia.

For most Casamançais relating to religious practices in Catalonia was difficult. Noticing the decline of Catholicism in Catalonia and the stigmatisation of Islam, it was a common reaction, at least temporarily, to accept a marginal position and stay out of trouble investing in a stepwise process of gaining recognition. At the outset, Casamançais went a long way to accommodate local norms. Their Casamançais experience of having equal access to local open spaces had been reduced to passively sharing the space with Christians celebrating while their own religious practice mostly remained confined to the periphery. This was a fragile consensus, but one that Casamançais perceived to be in flux. Apart from dealing with the unequal power relations between the Christian and Muslim faith as best they could, Casamançais nevertheless upheld their own notion that all religious practices should be given equal opportunity and space to being practised. Thus as Muslims they did not object to Christian celebrations and aspired to further negotiate their own position towards equal access to open spaces.

### Staging Culture

The defensive position in religious terms in Mataró was in stark contrast to the vivid presence of Casamançais at the second *Mostra d'Entitats de Cerdanyola*, the presentation of neighbourhood associations registered in Cerdanyola, held on a sunny Sunday in late October 2010. 37 different associations presented themselves and their work at the *Plaça de l'Onze de Setembre*. Catalan, Andalusian, North African, sub-Saharan African, and other associations portrayed their activities in two rows of white pavilions placed on the square. At least five associations had Casamançais members, some were ethnic associations, one was Senegalese, and one Senegambian.

The turnout of the Casamançais was high, including nearly everyone I knew – a diverse sample of people. The majority of African men who were not responsible for any association in particular mostly kept to themselves and gathered in the background to the left. In contrast, the dressed-up African women mingled more with the crowd. Children of diverse origins brought movement into the rather static scene of adults standing and chatting. In

contrast to the experience of Casamançais Muslims leaving the neighbourhood to pray, at the *Mostra* they were present and confidently appropriated a space in the event. Similarly to the gatherings on Carrer Rosselló they created locality, this time in the cultural landscape of Cerdanyola. The day of the *Mostra* Casamançais had reacted to an invitation by the town hall and neighbourhood association to partake.<sup>23</sup> On this occasion cultural diversity was marketed as an asset. At the same time the programme staged communicated various forms of hybridisation.

The programme of the day involved many performances on the stage, and there were rumours of a prize for the best performance. Both Fula and Jola were on the programme to present something specific to them. The preparations of the Fula were going on weeks before, while the recently established Jola dance group performed yet again. Including performances of the different cultural groups resident in the neighbourhood was an expression of the official Catalan policy of maintaining cultural diversity (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009). While religious diversity was pushed to the periphery, manifesting distinct cultures offered an opportunity to live differences openly. Both the Fula and Jola used the full scope to which this was possible.

While development projects in Senegal were the Fula association's stated focus, they performed the 'play' of a 'traditional Senegalese wedding' – actually a Muslim arranged marriage. Under the label of a cultural performance, a daughter was married off to a relative of the family. Even more astonishing was the fact that a Spanish woman performed this role, which was barely mitigated by the fact that she was married to a Fula active in the association. Her make-up and dress were identical to all others, which as Casamançais bystanders remarked clearly marked them as Fula. Their whole presentation was a complete product of mixing: speaking in Castilian, their dress marking their ethnic identity, and claiming a Muslim wedding to be traditionally Senegalese. Although the performance was cut short by the organisers, the Fula had clearly been the focus of attention of the spectators, not least given the large number of people put on stage. Quite literally, they had translated (cf. Hall, 1992, 310) between the various identities that were at their disposal. They presented a Muslim marriage locally as a 'play' which cohered with the common consensus of presenting religious questions in a cultural idiom. In consequence, this allowed them to temporarily claim a central location in the shared open spaces of the neighbourhood.

More than the Fula, the Jola performance also achieved an embodied living of difference and wider appropriation of the space. The men were dressed in

23 On the relationship between the town hall and migrant associations for both co-development and local incorporation cf. Østergaard-Nielsen (2009).

colourful West African print batik; the women wore a *pagne*, a piece of cloth wrapped around the hips, and t-shirts of the *Oudiodial* association. The group approached the stage from behind circling parts of the square already singing and dancing. They sang in Jola, women accompanying them rhythmically with wooden clappers. The climax was the dance of the *Kumpo*, a mask the Jola association had brought directly from Casamance.<sup>24</sup> The performance of the three-meter-tall *Kumpo* extended beyond the stage into the square itself. The spectacle was noisy, colourful, and self-confident. It was not like the performances that de Jong (2007, 155–171) describes in Casamance made either for tourists or a disengaged audience at a cultural festival. Instead, mainly West Africans in the audience were involved in dancing, joking, photographing, and filming. West African women not belonging to the dance group came to dance with the *Kumpo*, children were all over the place, something only possible with a tamed *Kumpo* which in Casamance villages had authority to scare and admonish children and youth. Engaging actively with the performance and the action extending into the square created a space in which difference was embodied (cf. Erickson, 2008). A Mandinka next to me acknowledged this as an achievement stating that the Jola are *forts* – they are strong at doing such performances.<sup>25</sup>

Openly staging and dealing with difference was the aim of the overarching *Associació de Veïns de Cerdanyola* (Association of Neighbours of Cerdanyola) which included members of all other associations based in the neighbourhood. Some of my informants interpreted this event as an effort to integrate the new residents of the neighbourhood. They felt their turnout and participation satisfied a demand put forward by the first-comers, i.e. the Catalans and Spanish. Casamançais felt to have achieved in this respect. The active involvement and confident presence of Casamançais facilitated the reinterpretation of the *Plaça* as a convivial space. However, in retrospect many of my informants inquired why there had been few Europeans present. Indeed, the presence of sub-Saharanans had been quite overwhelming and they at times had largely appropriated the space. Nevertheless a number of Catalan groups also performed, and the *Diables Atabalats* performing fireworks temporarily appropriated the square not unlike the *Kumpo*.

Being present and actively engaging with the invitation to participate in the performances, both the Jola and Fula groups had temporarily appropriated a

24 Concerning the role and history of the *Kumpo* in the sub-region cf. e.g. Jong (2007) and Girard (1965).

25 Mandinka staged the *Kankurang* mask on a similar occasion in Granollers. It was part of the performance of the initiation ritual in the pedestrian zone of downtown Granollers.

shared space. Phrased in terms of a diversity of cultures, everyone contributed to living with difference. Yet, the performances communicated on different levels. On the one hand contextualising the performances as cultures and including Spanish/Catalan explications of both the wedding and the dance of the *Kumpo*, the Jola and Fula groups spoke to the wider audience, translating their performances to the local contexts thus building towards a local consensus on living with difference. Often due to the bad quality of the microphones this was more of a gesture, which however was sufficient. On the other hand, the *Kumpo* in particular also created a space in which Casamançais practised something specific to them, hereby appropriating open space. Thus, while adhering to a local consensus by accepting the frame of the organisers, difference was maintained, and openly enjoyed. The *Mostra* exemplified a consensus of living with difference which facilitated the emergence of a convivial space.

### Conclusions

In both Casamance and Catalonia practices of local residents to varying degrees resulted in convivial space depending on a locally negotiated consensus of living *with* difference. Cultural and religious diversity in both locations had resulted from historic and more recent migration movements. The international migration of Casamançais was also the link between Casamance and Catalonia which inspired this comparison.

Tracing aspects of Casamançais *cohabitation*, I focused on practices of using, inhabiting, and appropriating open spaces which manifested negotiation processes of a local consensus of living *with* difference. In the ethnography I compared Casamançais practices in both Casamance and Catalonia trying to understand how these practices contribute to an understanding of Casamançais *cohabitation* and how far practices of accessing and appropriating spaces are negotiated anew in Catalonia. Various examples from everyday life and public celebrations led me to a number of conclusions concerning the living *with* difference in convivial space, the negotiation of locally specific consensuses, and the impact of the local Catalan context.

The ethnography presented here showed that in everyday life public spaces were similarly used and appropriated by Casamançais in both locations. Spontaneous and regular gatherings of people transformed them into convivial space embracing diversity and difference in various ways. First, the groups that got together were internally diverse, particularly in urban spaces. Secondly, various mobile practices led to a blurring of boundaries of seemingly separate social

situations: people faded in and out of get-togethers, they were included in a round of tea or briefly stopped to exchange greetings. Finally, various gatherings happened simultaneously, next to each other within the same open space relying on a shared consensus of conviviality. All of this showed how gatherings and their negotiation embody convivial space in which differences are accommodated and which remains fragile and continuously in the making.

While some physical objects marked spaces of encounter, such as the missing seat or the trunk of a tree, the socially constructed convivial space always remained in the making which was characterised by temporariness, re-definitions, and contradictions. Both everyday encounters and festive occasions clearly showed this dynamic process by way of the multiple practices which took place simultaneously. Gatherings developed their own dynamic as the religious celebrations, the *Kumpo* performance, and partially the Casamançais street scene in Carrer Rosselló demonstrated. Such temporary manifestations of locality in open spaces relied on the consensus which entailed that other practices could exist alongside them in the same open spaces. This was part of the lived local consensus of *cohabitation* in both Catalonia and Casamance. Everyday life continuing alongside the Holy Friday procession in Casamance or the unaffected dwelling in the park during the *Matinal de Saetas* in Catalonia showed this clearly.

This consensus often was minimal and fragile. The use and appropriation of spaces was continuously negotiated as the example of Carrer Rosselló showed most clearly. Many Casamançais reassessed their presence in public spaces in Catalonia sometimes reckoning that to socialise outdoors was not an option or had changed. To be ready to negotiate the use and appropriation of neighbourhood spaces was largely part of the Casamançais understanding of *cohabitation*. This clearly showed in the discussions comparing the Tabaski prayer with the Holy Friday procession and multilingual practices. Souleymane Touré's ease in dealing with the contestations of public spaces also clearly indicated such an attitude. He felt himself to be on an equal footing with others, as one local resident among many.

This equality was challenged by the example of Muslim practices being confined to the urban periphery in Catalonia. While under the label of culture the *Mostra d'Entitats* constituted convivial space, Muslim practices in Cerdanyola met a high level of resistance. In this respect, there was no common lived experience of convivial space, nor was there an institutional framework like the one dating to the Senghorian legacy in Senegal supporting equal respect and thus equal access to open spaces. Instead of being overwhelmed by their structural marginalisation, most Casamançais in Catalonia, even under such circumstances, believed in a slow process of increasingly negotiating equal recognition.

The Catalan context provoked a number of changes in the way open spaces were shared as convivial space. This was visible on the many occasions on which negotiations became salient – particularly in the (temporary self-) marginalisation of Muslims. The comparison between both contexts thus shifted the focus from static descriptions of a notion of *cohabitation* to understanding living *with* difference as a process involving the negotiation of practices with the aim of consensus. The ethnography of this process of conviviality has shown that the successful negotiation of inhabiting and temporarily appropriating open spaces for various practices was part of a minimal consensus that was crucial to understanding living *with* difference in a locality from a Casamançais point of view.

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