

Conviviality as diasporic knowledge

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Abstract

Based on my time with im/mobile West Africans in Senegal and Spain since 2007, I propose conviviality to conceptualise the complexity of my interlocutors' local and diasporic tactics and views of living with difference. Simple everyday encounters such as greeting and dwelling in urban spaces serve to disentangle their various levels of reflection, habitual expectations and tactical action. They had local to global reference frameworks at their disposal. Not pretending to represent their knowledge, I discuss the inspirations I received from trying to understand what they shared with me non/verbally regarding living with difference. To start from this decentred set of premises challenges established Western/Northern politics of living with difference. Through conviviality, I show a distinct way of engaging multiple and overlapping ways of differentiating and homogenising practices and raise awareness for the importance and feasibility of minimal socialities in diasporic configurations, transnational migrations and the respective local urban contexts.

Introduction

Conviviality has been discussed for some time now, with a strong increase in recent years (Nowicka and Vertovec 2014; Wise and Noble 2016). However, there are divergent ways of understanding it and distinctive uses of its possible meanings. In one of the earliest texts, Ivan Illich (1973) has tried to define a normative art of conviviality as a critique of modern society, a line of argument most prominently taken up recently by a group of French intellectuals in their convivial manifest (Alphandéry et al. 2013, cf. Caillé 2011). More frequently, however, the growing literature refers to Paul Gilroy (2006: 23–24), who uses conviviality rather unsystematically to refer to a somewhat optimistic idea of getting along with difference in postcolonial, increasingly diverse contexts characterized by multiculturalism. While this revives the warning of a ‘worrying romanticisation’ (Valentine 2008: 325), others have even sought the productive communalities between conviviality and community (Neal et al. 2017; 2018). An altogether different line of argument, which can be productively explored (Heil 2019), emerges from Mbembe’s work who uses conviviality to describe a relation of power, inequality and hierarchy in post/colonial situations (Mbembe 1992; 2001). In this article, I compliment these arguments and develop conviviality from my engagement with diasporic practices and ideas of how to live together under conditions of diversification and maintained difference. These ideas and practices, which I have accompanied since 2007, stem from my interlocutors from Senegal with whom I worked in Casamance and Dakar, in Spain and also – since 2014 – in Brazil. Through conviviality, I show a distinct way of engaging multiple and overlapping ways of differentiating and homogenising practices and raise awareness for the importance and feasibility of minimal socialities in diasporic configurations, transnational migrations and the respective local urban contexts.

Against the backdrop of renewed discussions of integration that continue to follow a Parsionan logic of seeking the integration of societal groups through the sharing of values and a (singular) identity (Blommaert et al. 2018: 248, cf. Wiewiorka 2014), conviviality as diasporic knowledge starts from a decentred set of premises which challenges established Western/Northern politics of living with difference. It shows the relevance of minimal sociality and offers different insights into how the fragile glue of contemporary heterogeneous societies can be conceptually captured and communicated. The everyday of Casamance, the south of Senegal, and its increasing diasporic configuration have inspired this alternative conception. Since a first encounter in the summer of 2007 with people from the Senegambia region in Catalonia, their persistent reference to a different conception of living with difference than European ones was intriguing. Well aware that even the most remote world regions have been penetrated by hegemonic forces with whom they interacted on more or less unequal terms, significant non-hegemonic takes on global questions have remained, yet pass too

often under the radar or are readily dismissed. Pursuing such diasporic knowledges in their entanglements with global hegemonies is worthwhile, I hold, since they are inspiring and provide new angles and approaches to contemporary challenges with which we are stuck, everywhere. Living with difference is one such challenge, which I address in the following through thinking with conviviality.

More specifically, this article focuses on a set of local and diasporic tactics and views of engaging with the diversification of places and the encounters with changing configurations of difference.¹ Simple everyday encounters such as greeting and dwelling in urban spaces serve to disentangle the various levels of reflection, habitual expectations and tactical action. It is the views and tactics of people rooted in Casamance and Senegal who had local and global reference frameworks at their disposal, yet who from a northern perspective are reduced to migrants, an ambiguous term now more often than not leaning towards negative prejudice which subsequently fosters exclusion (Anderson and Hughes 2015). Not pretending to represent their knowledge, I discuss the inspirations I received from trying to understand what they shared with me non/verbally regarding living with difference. I ask how they compare between multiple urban diversities, in the places where they grew up, where they passed through and where they stayed when I encountered them. What are their tactics and views of engaging social situations that are imbued with difference, longstanding and new? And, how do various competing conceptions of diversity and difference combine in their everyday lived experience? Throughout, modulations of re/negotiations and re/translations of difference surfaced, conceptually turning them into key basic practices of conviviality.

Conviviality as explored here, seemed to be part of the common sense of a regional population that was very heterogeneous given their different passports, ethnic origins and religious affiliations. Since 2007, long-term, multi-sited fieldwork with people from Casamance and Senegal with various cultural, religious, socio-economic and legal backgrounds in neighbourhoods of regional capitals in Casamance, Senegal, and Catalonia, Spain (cf. Heil 2013) has defied ethnic and national lenses (Glick Schiller et al. 2006, Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003). Family and friendship ties made of the two regions a connected social field with plenty of loose ends connecting to other corners of the world, some of which I have pursued in Rio de Janeiro. Casamançais and Senegalese socialities, are both a backdrop and recurrent reference point of migrants abroad. They remain, however, only one among many, and a polyvocal one in itself.

1 I use 'tactical' and 'tactics' with reference to de Certeau (1988). In opposition to 'strategies' of institutions and powerful actors, he defines ordinary people's 'tactics' as their creative ways to engage with institutionally prescribed cultural productions (1988: xvii–xviii).

In the following, I will engage this polyvocality of Casamance in the context of Senegal and the social configuration of the Upper Guinea Coast, as well as the life trajectories of my mobile interlocutors. Their various individual backgrounds, as well as the historically grown regional configurations of which they have become part, for longer or shorter stretches along the routes they have taken, constitute their distinct, multi-layered comparative frameworks. This explains how the diasporic knowledges are generated. They constitute their repertoire from which my interlocutors have picked selectively to make sense and live the new and changing situations they encounter. Discussing greeting and dwelling in public space as straightforward examples, I then empirically develop the analytical and social potential that lays in the process of conviviality as diasporic knowledge. Approached in this way, conviviality conceptually frames minimal sociality as a fragile and contested way of living with difference, for which interaction, re/negotiation and re/translation are crucial basic practices.

Constituting Diasporic Practices and Views

Let me first strike a fine balance between upholding the distinctiveness of my interlocutor's tactics and views and doing justice to the long history of global entanglements of which Casamance and Senegal are part.

During centuries, Casamance has seen people from other places come and settle. Today's main three ethnic groups of the region, Jola, Mandinka and Fula, all immigrated to the area (Roche 1985; Linares 1992: 84–90; Nugent 2008: 928). This was also how Islam arrived in the region, first peacefully (Dramé 2009) and then by force during the Mandinka jihads (Leary 1971). Christianity in turn came with early colonisation into the region (Baum 1990). The latter was anything but a single force. On a short stretch of the long West African coast, English, Portuguese and French all tried to access as many resources as possible, using the Gambia, Casamance and Cacheu rivers as welcome routes of extraction. At the location of Bainuk settlements, the first ones to settle the area, Ziguinchor was founded along the river by the Portuguese and Sédhiou upstream by the French. After Portuguese colonial rule, the French took over having struck a deal after the Berlin conference in 1886.

Having become regional capitals today, Ziguinchor and Sédhiou have grown in the process of urbanisation into crossroads of rural-urban and onward migration (Barbier-Wiesser 1994; Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD) 2005; 2009). They therefore constitute particularly complex social fields with the confluence of various generations of people of different cultural backgrounds and religious orientations. While crossings and mutual influences are plenty (cf. Linares 1992; de Jong 2007), a large diversity of cultural, linguistic and religious identifications have been maintained so far. More than Sédhiou, Ziguinchor has also seen the influx of 'northerners' from Dakar, especially as Wolof traders and administrators. This is often perceived as a continuation of French colonial rule, now exercised by the 'northerners'

(de Jong 2007: 99), against which the regional independence movement continues to fight since 1982. The overall number of Wolof in the region has remained small. However, Wolofisation as a cultural and sometimes national homogenisation process is taking hold, which challenges the local cultural heterogeneity as well as prior hegemonic tendencies of the Mandinka in the region. Beyond the national stage, the international borders of Casamance appear porous, broken up by the estuaries and crossed by people moving in all directions – daily and long-term, as family, traders or refugees. Herein lies the origin of the region's diasporic entanglements.

Such are the influences on the everyday of my interlocutors from Casamance. Even those who do not actively recall the regional history sketched here maintain an everyday sense for the confluence of people in their region and towns. Particular zones, villages, neighbourhoods, wards, individual houses and different co-residents are always classified in ways reflecting the local complexity. In Dakar, my interlocutors explain the social landscape in similar ways. A fractured momentary representation of the capital's entanglements with the regions of Senegal and the neighbouring countries emerges. Dakar could either become a permanent place of residence triggering seasonal commutes to Casamance (cf. Lambert 2002; Linares 2003) or function as an early step in the longer migration endeavours to places abroad. Given the fractured landscape and mobilities therein, a sense ruled among the population to be ready for new places which were bound to be different from previous ones. Travels into the Wolof milieu in Dakar, as well as short-distance yet cross-border migration to Guinea Bissau or Gambia were cases in point. The most straightforward dimension of this readiness was language learning, yet by far not the only one.

One of my interlocutors in Spain, Alain, was born in Casamance in a mixed village one hour outside of Ziguinchor. Still a child, Alain went with his parents to live in Sédhiou, which was dominated by Muslims and Mandinka speakers, people with whom he neither shared religion nor mother tongue. As with most Casamançais, and certainly his fellow Jola, Alain adjusted readily to changing linguistic contexts, while sometimes feeling annoyed of the Mandinka imposing their language and sometimes mocking them for their limited language skills. As a Christian, he was additionally aware of the fragile balance between Muslims and Christians, which neighbourly disputes over free roaming livestock exemplified. Most of the time pigs owned by Christians were part and parcel of neighbourhood life, as were goats and sheep. Alain, however, repeatedly referred to situations in which stones were tossed at pigs, or they were beaten and sometimes poisoned. Others said this was in response to them destroying vegetable gardens and the same measures taken against goats and sheep. This state of affairs frequently led to open confrontations and feelings of disrespect on the side of Christians (Heil 2014: 11). Alongside such everyday tensions, Alain continuously engaged in multilingual greeting on a visit of his home neighbourhood in Sédhiou, also paying his respects visiting those

who expected it of him. He dedicated himself to respectful convivial relations between neighbours, people of various ethnic backgrounds and adhering to different beliefs. His behaviour grounded a widely shared concern of Casamançais throughout their migration experience (ibid.).

However, life in Dakar presents some caveats. Living as a late teenager with his brother in a *quartier populaire* Senegal's capital, Alain relied on Wolof as a means of communication, also not his mother tongue. Beyond this, he appreciated the urban life style, since it provided relieve from straining solidarity, of which he saw neighbourly relations to be part. In contrast, other people represented the peripheral neighbourhoods of Dakar as sites of quasi village social life, in which solidary relations, greeting and an interest in the other remained crucial. The experiences and the extent to which life in Dakar was represented as modern played into how Alain and his fellow migrants, who had passed through Dakar, later lived and interpreted their everyday encounters in Catalonia. The idea present in Dakar that a modern lifestyle would fundamentally change and challenge neighbourly relations had furthermore found its way into the Casamance towns where it manifested itself in intergenerational disputes.

Stepwise migration passing through West and North Africa further enriched my interlocutors' repertoire of experiences. Ansou, a Muslim, spent considerable periods in both Libya and Morocco. Alongside other Casamançais, he felt strongly about the experienced racism in North Africa which overshadowed all interaction (cf. Pliez 2004, Hamood 2006). Ansou had worked for several months in Libya to save the money for his onward migration. As a sub-Saharan black Muslim, he had lived in permanent fear since Libyans stopped him on his way to work to harass him for things he never did. Accusations that black Africans suffered often had to do with Libyan women, being blamed for looking at them, seducing or even raping them. They could arbitrarily beat him. As if to prove his point, the knowledge of slave markets in Libya and deathly abuses have become public again recently and are regularly reported via Whatsapp groups – also among Senegalese in Spain. Furthermore, Sub-Saharanans blamed North Africans for neither accepting them as Muslim brothers, nor acknowledging them to be Muslims at all. Narratives of a marginalised and cautious lifestyle full of fear and suffering on transit in North Africa were frequent. Eventually crossing over to the Canary Islands, Ansou became friends with a fellow Senegalese through whom he accessed strong family networks he himself was missing. His new friend was a fellow Jola from the same region of origin. Such generosity stood out against the hardship Ansou encountered in Northern Africa and crossing over to the Canary Islands. The crossings of Northern Africa, the Mediterranean or the Atlantic involved abuse, isolation, persecution, detention, uncertainty, hostility and domination, which often made arriving in Europe a traumatic experience (cf. Gaibazzi et al. 2017).

Once in Spain and settling in the Catalonia region, my interlocutors read Catalonia through the categories they had encountered and embraced in the various places of socialisation and transit. The particular histories and cultural distinctiveness of both Casamance and Catalonia entered surprisingly easy into conversation. My interlocutors pointed out how both regions struggled for autonomy and/or independence within a nation state that was felt to work against the regions' development and prosperity. In both regions, languages were spoken and cultures practised that were different from the national ones (i.e. Wolof in Senegal and Castilian in Spain).

At the same time, such communalities did not prevent several Casamançais to dismiss "the Spanish" (oftentimes an umbrella term including the Catalans) or "the Catalans" as provincial and backward, as not "international" enough. Their crude reading of global hegemonies supposedly revealed the limited influence of Spanish in today's world. The small number of local Spanish and Catalans who had travelled extensively, and the vulgar and insulting language repertoire of their Spanish work colleagues in the low-pay sector in a way proved their wider point. The Spanish fared badly in comparison to the Casamançais who had travelled many countries and therefore invented themselves as truly cosmopolitan polyglots beyond having undergone a strict upbringing, an important part of the Senegalese pride. On another level, countries like France, Canada, to a lesser degree the United States, and since the 2010s Argentina and Brazil emerged as idealised reference points that had not yet been disenchanted and to which hopes for a better life remained attached. The possibility for onward migration remained omnipresent and hopeful imaginaries and the stories of friends and families from elsewhere featured prominently in the diasporic way of knowledge production.

Against this backdrop of a diasporic configuration, I now address how various conceptions of living with difference were handled in the migrants' everyday lived experience and how particular knowledges and practices from specific places in West Africa have travelled afield. Apart from trying to understand how these various conceptions interact and how migrants' directly or indirectly compare between their various experiences, I hold that migrants passing through and living in local social fields during their transnational migrations are prone to develop tactics and views of how living in diversity and with difference can be achieved peacefully, even though conflict is lurking around the corner.

Giving Impulses, Thinking About Conviviality

I draw on both *greeting* and *dwelling* in urban spaces as two examples of recurrent, simple everyday encounters that offer insights into the Casamançais' various levels of reflections, habitual expectations and tactical actions. The following ethnographic vignettes raise awareness for the importance and feasibility of minimal socialities – or conviviality – in diasporic configurations, transnational migrations and the respective local urban contexts.

Greeting

Apart from the complex linguistic choices that were made in diverse urban spaces (cf. Dreyfus and Juillard 2005; Heil 2015), Casamançais described variations of street scenes ranging from not directly interacting with people in the space they passed through to situations in which they inhabited open spaces in prolonged encounters. These situations mattered since greeting expressed respect and was part of maintaining cooperative relationships within the neighbourhood (cf. Heil 2013). Since cooperative relations depended on spaces and people, the actual greeting practices inevitably resulted from conceptual translation and on-going negotiation processes. This attitude towards greeting and neighbourly relations had its roots in Casamance, while the numerous diasporic spaces and places of transit provided a polyvocal reference framework.

On the sandy streets and paths of a normal day in the Soucoupapaye neighbourhood, Ziguinchor, people who did not know each other normally exchanged a short *Salaamaléékum – maléékum salaam*. Knowing his neighbourhood well, however, Madou Konaté, a Mandinka, greeted in Jola when appropriate. Knowing nothing more than that Jola was the mother tongue of someone he encountered, he said he consciously switched languages to foster good neighbourly relations. He easily achieved a positive outcome by pleasing the Jola neighbours who otherwise mainly experienced the Mandinka as unwilling to speak anything but their own language. In areas where no general agreement on a dominant language had been reached like Soucoupapaye, the multilingual practices of greeting became a quasi-universal narrative in my conversations, regularly reflected in everyday practice. Truncated multilingual repertoires mattered in Ziguinchor neighbourhoods since no single language was dominant, while in Sédhiou Mandinka acted as *lingua franca*. In migration, learning a new language like Catalan was equated with speaking Mandinka in Sédhiou, learning Wolof in Dakar, Creole in Guinea Bissau, or Arabic in North Africa. This polylinguaging (Jørgensen et al. 2011) rarely consisted of an advanced command of the standard varieties, but, truncated as the language practice could be, it was successful in securing everyday communication (cf. Blommaert et al. 2005: 199–200).

Beyond a lived and normalised multilingualism, greeting in Catalonia revealed how my interlocutors conceptually translated; they established correspondences between unlike practices. While in Casamance people took much time to greet and visit, Idrissa in Catalonia mused: ‘with the neighbours – we will not visit. But anyway, if we meet on the stairs, we greet each other, we chat, sometimes we take two minutes to chat and all that.’ (Granollers, 11/2010). Idrissa had grown up in Casamance but had also passed considerable amounts of time in Dakar. He had studied at the university, was politically active and well aware of social and cultural dynamics around him. In Catalonia, he lived in a typical neighbourhood, which was built at the time of southern European

immigration and had a relatively high proportion of international migrants. He was not in the least disturbed to see these changes. Instead, he recognised that the cooperative and accommodating aspects remained similar even if the greeting practices were reduced and sometimes abandoned.

However, there were limits to such smooth encounter. Creating a link between his bad experiences in Northern Africa, Ansou refused to greet his Moroccan neighbours.

I have already been to the Arab countries: Mauritania, Algeria, Libya, Morocco. And we meet here. Almost wherever we work, we work together... Integrity, for me, they lack it a lot. But I see this is something we cannot change in them. Either you accept it or [not]... It is not all of them. There are very good ones, very good ones... In our block there are very good ones... [But] I tell you, most people I've known are not reliable. (Ansou Diédhiou, 11/2010, emphasis added)

He did not like to rub shoulders with North Africans since they were not just different, but they lacked personal integrity and did not show minimal respect. Others confirmed that negotiating shared understandings frequently failed when people were not prepared to translate or generously equate differing social practices. Ansou's various experiences during migration were evoked when he and others met people in Spain with whom they had encountered elsewhere. Accounting for this multi-layered framework facilitates a differentiated understanding of how migrants evaluate and qualify the various categories of difference, as well as concurrent practices and values.

Under the circumstances of continuously facing new configurations, Fode Sadio Faty's reasoned in the following way:

You cannot force this [the relationship between local residents]. Maybe I can force it with my compatriot; I can come to see him without notifying him... Like in Africa. But the one who is next to me, the European, I cannot do it the way I did it there. I observed. There is a bit of reticence, a bit of individualism here... Because first of all, he has not opened the door for it to be possible to approach him... I got used to that. If we meet in the stairs: "Salut" – "Salut", "Hola" – "Hola". This is all. Sometimes there is not even a "Hola". (Granollers, 11/2010).

No spontaneous visits, individualism, reticence, superficial relations, minimal greeting and keeping problems to themselves were the essence of Fode Sadio's observation of what made relations with neighbours change in Catalonia. Continuing to aim for good neighbourly relations, he saw how things were done differently here. To him, this difference did not matter, since he saw that the common goal to maintain peaceful neighbourliness had remained. The ability to recognise this in a short "hola" derived from his continuous translation between contexts and people.

In contrast to their own awareness of difference and engagement with it, many Casamançais clearly perceived of fundamental challenges. Some had already experienced the breakdown of even minimal sociality in North African countries, others eventually came to terms with the absence of greeting in many situations in Catalonia. Reasoning that they stopped to greet since their efforts remained too often unreturned, they attributed such (non-)encounters to European individualism (cf. Riccio 2005: 110f, Cruise O'Brien 1972: 260–264). Others perceived it as their counterparts' inability to engage with difference. While some embraced non-engagement as the local norm, others could not follow since they perceived a lack of basic education and respect for the other when interaction was boycotted. Such "European individualism", also prominent among younger generations in Senegal as a longing to be modern, clearly posed a challenge even to minimal forms of living with difference. But before declaring failure, Casamançais went along with even substantial changes in locally specific forms of neighbourliness, taking the track record of actual interactions and the perception of people and categories involved into account.

As a result, Casamançais greeted at least someone along the way, but not everyone alike. Greeting ranged on a spectrum from a simple statement on the occasion of a random, unintentional fleeting encounter, to an active engagement with a newly arrived neighbour. As a baseline clearly cultivated in Casamance, they showed respect to the ones encountered mainly through taking the right amount of time to attend to the other. The ability to observe and increasingly pre-empt situational prerequisites, such as the appropriate allocation of time, showed the readiness of Casamançais to translate between various previously experienced practices and ruling local forms of conviviality. Adjusting to various situations and people was something they had been accustomed to in Casamance and had actively experienced in various transit spaces.

Dwelling in Public

Beyond the negotiation of fleeting encounters, access to and the dwelling in public space also caught my attention. In Casamance, as well as in Senegal in general (cf. Ralph 2008), groups drinking tea at street corners in front of a shop or the entrance to a house was a recurrent scene. If possible, people provided sufficient stools and benches to accommodate whoever wanted to join in, regardless of how long. Serving tea to someone working close by or joining in for one round of tea only were looser forms of weaving the social fabric. The gatherings remained often gender and age differentiated, yet they frequently bridged differences. At times people of various religious and ethnic groups were involved, at others, women and men would sit together, or people of different ages, although this occurred less frequently. People dealt with differences by switching languages, offering stools to elders and guests, and quietly acknowledging diverse origins and religions. Most situations conveyed a seamless fluidity evident in both communication and movement. Casamançais and other local residents temporarily

produced locality (Appadurai 2005 [1996]: 183–184), which emerged as a convivial space incorporating a great number of different people.

In Catalonia, no chairs were taken into the public and tea was not prepared outdoors, but local residents – including Casamançais – still gathered in pedestrian zones, in front of kiosks and internet cafes, on public squares and in parks. Whereas in Casamance open public spaces also served as the stage for everything from weddings, baptisms, over football rallies to initiation dances and religious festivals, in Catalonia public activities were more selective and those of certain groups greatly restricted. Judging from the current conjuncture in Europe, especially the possible visibility of confident and rights-claiming migrants and Muslims unjustifiably causes generalised concern. How, then, did Casamançais keep up with their practice, or not?

In Carrer Rosselló in Mataró, Catalonia, my interlocutors were among those who regularly gathered at a crossroads in front of a Moroccan-run *locutori*, a cybercafé with several phone cabins for cheap international calls. They exchanged news and joked, discussed loudly, welcoming late arrivals and seeing off others, everybody seemingly at ease. Such gatherings were repetitive, spontaneous and diverse, not unlike in Casamance. While at a first glance one could suspect homogeneity since they were all black, with time I learned that they had different ethnic and religious backgrounds, had grown up in the countryside or towns, had received more or less formal education and certainly had quite distinct migration histories and statuses. Various languages prevailed in interactions of both men and women who did not necessarily knew each other. Some definitely knew their fellow Mandinka or Jola better than people speaking other languages. On the other hand, the employees of shops and people passing the early evening gatherings, such as work colleagues and other neighbours, became part of the scene.

The sustained presence of groups of local residents in open spaces in both Casamance and Catalonia was part of an ongoing negotiation process including moments of disagreement and tension. Inhabiting public spaces embodied the negotiation of a locally specific, acceptable way of living with difference. However, the limits of negotiation which contributed to the fragility and uncertainty of convivial situations (cf. Arnaut et al. 2016: 7) could be experienced in multiple ways. In the past, Carrer Rosselló had seen moments of conflict arising from differing interests in open spaces. A couple of large seats were one of the few permanent installations inviting social gatherings to Carrer Rosselló, yet by 2011, one of the seats was gone. Souleymane, who continued to sit there, explained that the seat had been taken away by the town authorities to appease a woman living in the house next to it who had frequently complained about the noisy gatherings of people. Even other Casamançais, like Alain who had lived in Dakar, felt that the space was overcrowded. Beyond that, he pointed out how such gatherings were a waste of time and only fostered unnecessary gossip-mongering. For

Souleymane it was normal that open spaces like Carrer Rosselló were used in many ways and that this would sometimes lead to differences in opinion and conflicts. What was acceptable and what was conflictual, however, was locally specific. For Souleymane, the contestations and negotiations of the case of Carrer Rosselló had eventually resulted in a new local consensus around maintaining it as an open space, respecting more the comfort zone of certain neighbours while still allowing social gatherings of various people. The built environment undergoing some transformations mirrored this process.

Regarding spontaneous but sustained gatherings, many Casamançais in Catalonia remembered the normality of living in urban diversity in Casamance – sometimes nostalgically. The sociality of Carrer Rosselló on the one hand expressed a continuity of Casamançais practices in Catalonia, which in part matched the practices of other local residents. On the other hand, such gatherings were constantly negotiated and contested both among Casamançais and within the given local context. The experiences of interactions in public spaces which Casamançais had collected during the migration process also played into that, such as in the case of Ansou with interim stays of variable length in several transit countries. In Libya, it had not been wise to dwell in public; instead, people would just go to work, to return to the residence directly thereafter. It was a pattern I recognise from my interlocutors in Rio de Janeiro, where public space was largely perceived to be dangerous and best to be avoided. In contrast, in Catalonia and Casamance, the fact that everyday sociality would happen in generally shared spaces remained unquestioned. More than anything else, *how* open spaces could be inhabited was at stake. Casamançais took it for granted that perspectives on the use of open spaces differed between various local residents and thus needed to be negotiated. Many showed willingness to do so while others had tactical reasons to translate their own practices into an emerging local consensus. Both attitudes were part of their understanding of conviviality. Living together was necessarily an on-going process dependent on the changing social configurations of the neighbourhood. It was fragile as well, but Casamançais worked towards maintaining it. One seat remained in Carrer Rosselló, symbolically reinforcing this interpretation. As with practices of greeting, gatherings in open spaces were possible, although in a somewhat altered form that depended on the locally valid consensus of conviviality. In order to see this clearly and in an affirmative light, I had to turn away from northern hegemonic visions which try to dictate how societies should stick together.

In Conclusion

Language is conducive but also deceitful, especially when employing the simplest relational terms, such as for geographical direction on maps. Global South and North, or up and down, are not neutral. They reflect hierarchies materialised in the most common of global geographical projection, spearheaded by the misleading-but-normalised one of

Mercator. The discussion of conviviality has destabilised this hegemonic grid in starting south and following its diasporic entanglements. Some of it might first produce a feeling of a world upside down due to the estrangement caused when a taken for granted epistemology is challenged. However, engaging with diasporic practices and knowledges of everyday ways of living with difference was not meant to just cause estrangement. I rather think of the inspiration I received as empowering for those on the move (such as my interlocutors), and conducive for all to better understand the heterogeneous places we inhabit. While my African interlocutors are very much positioned in some of the cruellest global configurations of inequality and exclusion, they have given me insights into the minimal sociality that might hold diversified and unequal societies together for the time to come. As such, conviviality can challenge some of the very foundations of the current conceptions of the terms under which we try to live together.

Put differently, this is the innovative force that lies in this diasporic knowledge I encountered. Taking the rich background of my interlocutors as an inspiration to inquire the ways of living with difference in diasporic post-migration situations, my comparative work on conviviality has offered new input for theoretical discussions of the (minimal) sociality in diversifying human agglomerations. Situated in the global Senegalese diasporic grid, the ethnographic case of Casamançais in Catalonia and Casamance embraces people who identified in multiple ways and drew from a wide range of categories to situate and name their own practices and those of others. This multiplicity in itself is already provocative. It was impossible to systematically explore all of the possible comparative dimensions that emerged from the complex trajectories of some of my interlocutors. Nevertheless, I have at least shown an awareness for the migrants' socialisation in the places of origin and transit and discussed their resultant takes on greeting and dwelling in public. Apart from the actual practices on the ground, they made me acknowledge rich, more generalizable tactics: a readiness to *translate* between ones' own ways and new circumstances involving places and people, and to continuously *negotiate* temporary and shared, if fragile consensuses.

As a result of tracing the origins and motivations for such refreshing insights, I have been able to offer a reading of my interlocutors' urban engagements as conviviality. As diasporic knowledge, conviviality describes a process in which maintained differences are negotiated and translated in fleeting encounters and everyday interactions. Both, re/translation and re/negotiation were central tactics of the Casamançais when dwelling in public and/or greeting others. The reasons given to justify these tactics were manifold: a felt need to show respect, to dedicate time, to engage with the differences encountered and to accommodate various conflicting perspectives. In diversified contexts, taking account of the diasporic practices and views, routed outside the global north but since long entangled with it, has initiated a discussion of conviviality as an alternative form of sociality that is minimal and malleable, constantly changing and

fragile, yet enough of a basis for living together. Addressing urban engagements together with interlocutors who have a lot of experience of living with difference across different times and spaces raises crucial awareness for a different knowledge production regarding living with difference, a process that is ongoing, hard to generalise and evasive. It becomes particularly meaningful at times when other people are instead made to fear that the societies they live in are disintegrating and in decline, and who therefore ingenuously turn to racist and xenophobic ideologies.

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