

# Formalizing or Marginalizing the Immigrants' Shadow Economy: NGOs and Local Authorities as Intercultural Intermediaries Between Senegalese Tradesmen and Their Spanish Customers in Two Andalusian Towns<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract:

*The paper outlines the first results of a research project on NGOs and immigration in an urban southern Spanish context. Comparing two case studies carried out in the cities of Jerez de la Frontera and Granada, we analyze the different politics of toleration versus formalization implemented by the two municipal and police authorities on behalf of the "informal" and often "illegal" Senegalese tradesmen. The success and/or failure of these policies is contrasted with the attempts of two different kinds of NGOs to support the Senegalese tradesmen: on the one hand, philanthropically motivated NGOs formed by Spanish citizens engaged as volunteers and intermediaries between the tradesmen and the authorities, and, on the other hand, associations of Senegalese citizens legally residing in Spain acting as the spokesmen of their fellow countrymen. On the basis of these rather heterogeneous empirical data on strategies of "formalizing," "marginalizing," and abandoning the shadow economy, the processes of political and administrative intermediation are theoretically analyzed as an example of "intercultural translation" in conditions of extreme socioeconomic inequality.*

## Introduction

This paper provides a preliminary report of a research project we are engaged in at the University of Granada in Spain. This project attempts to analyze the emerging role that non-governmental social actors currently play as intermediaries in the often problematic relation between the "shadow economy" sustained mainly by non-EU immigrants and the Spanish local population.

As this project forms part of a larger study of the southern Spanish non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which serve non-European immigrants, a brief sketch of the project is provided. We then describe the main features of the economy which evolve around Senegalese street vendors in Jerez de la Frontera in the western part of Andalusia, and Granada, in the eastern part. After comparing and analyzing the different socioeconomic strategies used, we then contrast them with the politics of formalization and/or marginalization implemented by the respective municipal and police authorities. Finally, the intermediary tasks fulfilled by local NGOs are evaluated as attempts to "bridge" the gap between the immigrants' informal economy and the urban actors.

## NGOs as Intercultural Intermediaries

For several decades NGOs and associations of voluntary action have been considered as marginal

factors whose importance is merely subsidiary for the politics of social integration as well as development cooperation. Nevertheless, since the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, these social actors - defined as nonprofit and non-governmental entities which try to maintain an equidistance between the two "classical" socioeconomic and political actors: the State and the market (Korten 1991) - are obtaining an unprecedented protagonism.

The rise of the NGOs coincides with the so-called "crisis of the welfare state," so often proclaimed by the neo-liberal discourse. As the "lean" State retreats from certain domains of social policy, many an NGO currently feels tempted to take over new responsibilities in these domains (Cortés Ruiz 1994). In this context, the NGOs and their horizontal networks gain attraction for rather heterogeneous political and economic sectors:

On the one hand, several theorists as well as activists of the once mythicized "68" celebrate the extension of NGOs and their voluntary activities as a possible revival of the (not so) "new social movements" and as a sign of strength, autonomy, and vigor of an ever more transnationalized "civil society."<sup>3</sup>

But, on the other hand, representatives of the political and economic "establishment," and particularly the multilateral development agencies,

are discovering the NGOs as their future ally in their struggle for their projects of privatizing and "slimming" public management.<sup>4</sup>

The subsequent debate about the supposedly "transformationist" *versus* "structurally conservative" nature of the non-governmental activities, in our opinion, turns aseptic and academic as it frequently fails to analyze empirically the NGOs' daily practice. It is due to this ever more complex and hybrid practice that the non-governmental actors are becoming "strategic intermediaries" between the interests of the social groups they articulate and the changing external conditions imposed by their governmental counterparts.

In this global context, our research project, carried out by a team of anthropologists, sociologists, and pedagogues at the University of Granada, studies ethnographically the activities of solidarity, sensibilization, legal support, and social assistance that the Andalusian NGOs are realizing in non-EU immigration. Turning toward the mainly African immigrants as their beneficiaries, the NGOs are forced to overcome conventional limits and practices: the europeanization of the Spanish immigration policy expressed by the country's integration into the "Schengen territory." The transnationalization of the migratory spaces established by the immigrants themselves contributes decisively to "internationalize" the support and solidarity activities carried out by the local population through their NGOs (Izquierdo 1992).

Our project analyzes the spheres of networking which are currently created between the immigrants and their associations, the Andalusian NGOs and the public institutions concerned with immigration issues. Here, we are particularly interested in the intercultural potentiality of these new spaces and networks: the voluntary associations and NGOs are challenged in their capacity to transform themselves into intercultural spaces of mutual contact, encounter, and/or conflict between different cultural traditions as well as between heterogeneous ethnic identities (Barth 1976, Eriksen 1993).

From an anthropological perspective, it is highly important to evaluate if these NGOs are merely acting as unidirectional agents of cultural assimilation or if they themselves evolve toward new and culturally "hybrid" entities (García Canclini 1989) which may in the near future act as "translators" between the local population and the immigrants. Only in the latter case,

the sphere of NGO activism could constitute a "laboratory" for a new kind of pluricultural citizenship, which is so often evoked as a necessity for the future European society.

Methodologically, our project combines qualitative ethnographic fieldwork with a participative and reflexive approach. Instead of just "studying the NGOs," we explore new intercultural phenomena "together with" the voluntary associations in order to stimulate processes of self-study and self-evaluation by and through the NGOs in Granada. The data collected by ethnographic interviews and participant observations have been analyzed, interpreted, and directly returned to the studied subjects through discussion groups, workshops, and seminars. This circular and applied approach is reflected in the composition of the research team. The project is being carried out with a group of students at the University of Granada who seek to combine their academic training in topics of interculturality and education as well as in empirical research methods with their interest in realizing voluntary activities in local NGOs. Through such a composition we hope to avoid the common but artificially biasing division between theory and practice. Thus, starting from the initial project phase, we establish and maintain a close link between research and training, between theorizing on interculturality and practicing it inside voluntary organizations.

### **Senegalese Informal Trade in Two Andalusian Cities**

According to these research interests and in the framework of this project, our ethnographic case studies which we are just starting to conduct into the immigrants' shadow economy in the cities of Jerez de la Frontera and Granada are not aimed at measuring the economic or political impact of the Senegalese tradesmen. Instead, we conceive the extreme socioeconomic conditions and the legal precarity in which the Senegalese immigrants live and work in Andalusia as a challenge for the governmental as well as non-governmental attitudes toward alterity and interculturality.<sup>5</sup>

Although Senegalese citizens have been migrating to Andalusia since the middle of the 1980s, the great majority of them statistically started to "exist" in 1990, in the context of a governmental campaign of "regularizing papers" of the until-then illegal immigrants (Junta de Andalucía 1994). The Senegalese who reached the Spanish shore through Morocco or the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in the

Maghreb are not the only ones who actively emerge in the course of this legalization campaign; even Senegalese immigrants living and working illegally in Italy traveled to Spain to take advantage of this campaign.

The Senegalese who remain in Andalusia after immigrating constitute a mainly young and male population. Most of the interviewed tradesmen are between twenty and forty years old, and even if they are married in their home country, they migrated without their family. The first Senegalese women appeared as street vendors in Granada only a few months ago, but they reflect the same demographic features as their male compatriots: they are young and traveled without children. In their country of origin, the majority of the Senegalese migrants come from rural areas, whereas only a minority is from the capital, Dakar. Their peasant origin is reflected in the migrants' occupational background: in their childhood and adolescence, most worked in agricultural and cattle raising activities often combined with helping their parents and relatives in craft production as well as in retail trade on local and regional peasant markets (Kaplan 1998).

The migrant trajectory of the Senegalese living in Andalusia is characterized by the provisionality of their stay in Granada or Jerez. Similarly to the Andalusian peasants who emigrated to northern and central Europe in the 1960s and 1970s (Gregory 1978), the young Senegalese leave their home villages and their families in order to accumulate some reinvestable capital before establishing or consolidating a family and a family business of their own (Kaplan 1998). Thus, the "European adventure" is supposed to be limited in time. With the help of already migrated brothers, other relatives or fellow villagers, the young Senegalese first reaches the Moroccan northern shore, from where he will enter Spain by boat, ferry or "on foot," crossing the neutral zones surrounding the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

The Senegalese's destination also depends on contacts already established beforehand with emigrated relatives. In Granada as well as in Jerez, the recently arrived immigrants are accommodated in cheap flats rented by fellow citizens - mainly in the two cities' low-income urban quarters. The principal difference between the immigration patterns analyzed in both cities consists in the length of their residence. For the interviewed Senegalese, Jerez de la Frontera is a typical transit place. Located near the Atlantic industrial and

harbor city of Cadiz as well as between the main ferry port of Algeciras and the capital Sevilla, Jerez provides the first shelter for newly arrived Senegalese. Nevertheless, the city, which comprises a population of circa 180,000 inhabitants and is famous for its *sherry* production and its surrounding horse and bull raising estates, does not offer any special commercial or agrarian employment opportunities for the Senegalese immigrants.

Consequently, the few Senegalese who more or less stay in the city have to rely solely on income from retail trade. They start as street vendors selling mainly Moroccan crafts and textiles as well as a great variety of cheap and easily portable cosmetic, garment and even electronic products. Due to the formalization pressures exercised by the municipality of Jerez, which will be discussed in the next section, the Senegalese tradesmen are forced to restrict their pitches to the authorized zones which are also used by the Spanish tradesmen in the city center. As the range of products is very similar between Senegalese, Moroccan and Spanish street vendors, there is a high degree of competition among them in order to ensure the control over the best places as well as the fidelity of their steady customers. Thus newcomers, for example recently immigrated Senegalese, have difficulties in joining the business. They prefer to move on, whereas the established Senegalese tradesmen are transforming their pitches into small retail stores.

In contrast to Jerez and its surroundings in western Andalusia, since the beginning of the 1990s the eastern Andalusian city of Granada, with approximately 300,000 permanent inhabitants, is becoming one of the main attraction places for Senegalese immigrants. The advantages of Granada derive first from its character as a University city. The flat market is adapted to the majority of the nearly 60,000 students' demand for cheap rental, from which the Senegalese also profit. Accordingly, their main residence area is not - as in Jerez - confined to the marginal low-income quarters; the majority of the Senegalese share flats with their relatives in the students' principal residential quarter, situated not in the outskirts, but nearby the city center.

Several of the interviewed immigrants have emphasized the importance of their student neighbors, perceived by them as a starting point for establishing social relations with the local population. As one Senegalese tradesman pointed out, "they are as alone as we are, so far away from their families and their villages. That's why they understand our sorrow!" The

students' night life is another occasion of establishing social relations. Since the international success of Yossou N'dour and other African musicians, the first African dance nights at the local discothèques are emerging as new meeting points between Senegalese and Spanish young people living in Granada.

Nonetheless, the reasons for choosing this city remain economic. Besides its academic nucleus, Granada is the principal commercial city in eastern Andalusia, which articulates market relations both to the northern province of Jaén, dominated by olive monoculture, and to the eastern province of Almería, which, through the last decade, is becoming one of Spain's most vigorous agricultural export regions. Since the first Senegalese arrived in Granada at the end of the 1980s, a complex economic pattern of urban informal trade in the city combined with seasonal migration on occasion of the olive harvest in the north as well as to the tomato plantations in Almería has been rising.

The proximity and infrastructural integration between the city and both agricultural provinces allow the Senegalese immigrants to diversify their occupational strategies. As the Spanish permission for work is easier to obtain for an employed agricultural laborer than for a self-employed tradesman, all interviewed immigrants prefer to work in the vegetable plantations intensively cultivated under plastic greenhouses in Almería, than to sell crafts or textiles in the streets of Granada. Until the 1980s, the unskilled seasonal work demanded in these plantations had been realized by the poor peasant population of the bordering Alpujarra region, but due to the rising standard of living in this region, the emergence of agricultural trade unionism among the rural laborers and their corresponding tendency to demand higher wages, the plantation owners now prefer to employ legally precarious immigrants (Remmers 1998). In spite of the often inhuman treatment suffered by the Senegalese in these plantations, they view the seasonal work as a rather stable and foreseeable source of income. Furthermore, if they succeed in obtaining a full-time employment in the agroindustrial complex of which the plantations form a part, many interviewed Senegalese hope to permanently legalize their residence through a long-term permission for work.

Although this prospect is not present in the olive harvest employments in the province of Jaén, many Senegalese, who habitually live in Granada, attend the harvest, which is one of the few possibilities of accumulating some money in a very short range of

time. Furthermore, starting with their seasonal work in the olive plantations, some Senegalese have been able to enter the informal networks of harvest laborer recruitment which conforms an important number of migrant laborers - not only immigrants, but also many poor Spanish gypsies - who are sent from one kind of harvest to the next and from one agricultural region to the other through rural Spain.

Nevertheless, the majority of Senegalese citizens living in Granada seasonally combine these agricultural activities with the informal trade in the city's main streets and places. The relatives who adopt the newly arrived immigrants in their flats also provide them with the contacts necessary for joining the shadow economy. The same variety of products in Jerez de la Frontera is also offered in Granada. The main difference between both cities consists in the amount and nature of the informal street trade. Due to the different approach carried out by the local governments, the vast majority of Senegalese tradesmen working in Granada are illegal in the sense that they lack permission for employed or self-employed work. Obligated to constantly escape from the frequent *razzias* carried out by the municipal police, their pitches are much more "mobile" and portable than in Jerez. The necessity of warning each other about the police has stimulated a network of mutual help among all those Senegalese who sell their products in the same street or zone. These networks offer newcomers the advantage of being quickly integrated into the business through different functions, first watching out for the police, then helping a relative or a fellow villager to attend the pitch, and at last establishing his own pitch.

The illegality of the Senegalese tradesmen's enterprise promotes another side effect: there is hardly any competition with the Spanish street vendors, who possess municipal authorization for selling juices, sweets, and tourist souvenirs in the main streets and places of the city center. The spatial segregation of the market follows ethnic divisions: whereas the legally established non-gypsy Spanish street vendors are allowed to sell their goods in the city center, the also illegalized female gypsy street vendors have been specializing in flower selling and fortune-telling particularly for foreign tourists, which is only tolerated by the authorities in the immediate surroundings of the main tourism attractions of the city. As informal tradesmen pursued by the authorities and roving through the city center, the Senegalese only share public spaces with a small group of Spanish craftsmen and with a recently arrived group of Asian tradesmen

who specialize in selling cheap imitations of branded textile articles like Lacoste™ shirts.

Thus, the Senegalese only compete among themselves, and this internal rivalry is limited by the existing kin relations, the common need of mutual help, and their sharing of the same wholesalers. Currently, most Senegalese street vendors seem to obtain their products from already legally established compatriots who have succeeded in substituting their informal pitches with retail stores. As storekeepers they are able to import the products directly from intermediaries in Morocco or Italy and resell them to their fellow tradesmen working in the streets. The few Senegalese who, in the last year, have opened such a store offer nearly the same range of products as the street vendors.

Both types of Senegalese merchants -- the store retailer and the street tradesman, have adopted a model of merchandising developed by their Spanish counterparts during the last years: the so-called *tienda todo a cien*, a small, family-owned store where nearly "everything" is sold for one hundred *pesetas*. The difference between the Senegalese shop and the street vendor consists in the proximity to the customer and the respective competition with Spanish tradesmen:

- C The Senegalese who own such a formally constituted *tienda* in a residential quarter of Granada suffer severely from direct rivalry with the Spanish stores; competing with them, they have two important disadvantages: first, the basically xenophobic "uneasiness" expressed by many *granadino* customers when buying something from a "black" inside his store and not in the street; second, the often-felt lack of the Senegalese store keeper of a family to count on for help in the store.
- C In contrast to these, legally privileged Senegalese store keepers, their fellow informal tradesmen offer the same range of products, but they move directly to their customers, establishing their mobile pitches along the main promenades in the city center. It is particularly this capacity of approaching the middle-class urban population of Granada during their daily evening habits of attending mass, shopping, or simply walking around the center places and streets which makes the informal trade so attractive for the interviewed Senegalese. Although several of them complain that especially the elder *granadinos* just bargain with them out of a feeling of "exoticism" and curiosity, the informality of the street situation is

much better suited for selling the same goods which are offered in the Spanish or Senegalese "one-hundred-*pesetas*-store."

Another advantage the street vendors have over the storekeepers is the adaptability of the informal trade to the plurioccupational structure of their economic strategies. Without fixed rent or staff to pay, the street vendor may disappear for some weeks or even months if he wants to work in the olive or tomato harvest in the neighboring provinces, leaving some relative in charge of his products. He easily adapts his informal trade not only to the agricultural cycles, but also to the important events in the local *fiesta* cycle: in the city of Granada as well as in the surrounding villages lots of patron saint *fiestas* are celebrated, which nearly always provides the occasion for simultaneously establishing a more or less informal *mercadillo*: a small market of pitches which reflect the same variety of products also offered daily in the streets of Granada. Although the Senegalese are only seldomly invited to participate formally in these markets, they always show up and usually are tolerated under the protection of the prevailing festive mood.

#### **The Local Authorities: Formalization versus Marginalization**

The local authorities in charge of authorizing trade licences in their municipal jurisdictions are the main opponents of the Senegalese tradesmen. In order to obtain such a licence, the Senegalese immigrant has to fulfill a wide range of formal requirements imposed by the authorities of Granada as well as Jerez, by the Andalusian regional government and, finally, by the Spanish labor and migration laws. He will need a permission of residence, which is closely tied to a permission of work as an employed laborer or as a self-employed businessman; in the latter case, an official registration in the Andalusian regional delegation of the Ministry of Commerce, a registration as enterprise taxpayer in the Ministry of Finance and a - very expensive - social security registration as an autonomous worker is required to be formally recognized as street vendor or as store owner (Diputación Provincial 1990).

In spite of these restrictions, valid in both cities since Senegalese immigration to Andalusia began, the municipal authorities have been experimenting with different strategies for informal trade. As mentioned above, the city council of Jerez de la Frontera is implementing a policy of forced regulation combined with a "zero-tolerance" approach toward illegal trade.

The populist mayor of Jerez, a famous Andalusian regionalist politician backed by the powerful *sherry* business complex, aims at making his city an example of tidy, modern, "European" economic development.

As both gypsy and Senegalese tradesmen disturb this idyllic picture, the authorities are trying to divide informal trade into two separate phenomena:

- C The few long-established vendors are forced as well as supported to regulate their business.
- C The newcomers are completely isolated from their possible customers in the city center, so that their economic strategies turn unfeasible.

The authorities hope to maintain and promote the Senegalese immigrants' tendency to see Jerez only as a first transit point in their long wandering throughout Spain and Europe.

But those few Senegalese who succeed in formalizing their businesses are permitted to establish their pitches and/or stores even in the center of Jerez. The process of market integration is fostered by the municipality, as now the Senegalese store keeper will share spaces, customers, and similar interests with his Spanish colleagues. Nevertheless, the success of this integrationist approach is indirectly supported by the selection of the few beneficiaries of the regulation process: due to the mentioned requirements, only those Senegalese who legally reside and work for several years in Spain will obtain a trade licence; so, *de facto* they remain restricted to immigrants married to Spanish spouses, as the marriage link provides a less difficult access to the legalization procedure. In fact, several of the stores run by Senegalese-Spanish couples are registered through the name of the Spanish wife.

In Granada, in contrast, the local authorities - the social democrats first, and the conservatives now - have adopted the opposite strategy. Due to the overwhelming influence of the local Chamber of Commerce, whose dominant families constitute the political elite of the city, formally registered street vendors - neither immigrants nor Spaniards - are not allowed in any central street or place in Granada. Very few exceptions are admitted for those tradesmen who are able to prove a consuetudinary tradition of selling juices and sweets in the center.

As this municipal policy of exclusion severely limits the long-term economic sustainability of street trade,

most of the informal tradesmen never even try to legalize their business. In spite of these restrictions, however, the city council has always pursued a *laissez-faire* approach to traditional street vendors (Ayuntamiento de Granada 1998). For years, the gypsy fortune-tellers have been presented by the local tourism board as part of the city's "folklore" and "magic." The Senegalese immigrants have been very skillful in integrating their informal trade into these pre-existing traditional structures of the local shadow economy without ever defying the gypsies by competing with them for customers: the fortune-tellers, *flamenco* street singers and souvenir sellers are respected in their specialization toward the tourist customer, whereas the Senegalese struggle to reach the ordinary *granadino*.

As a result of the combination of restricting regulation and tolerating informal trade, the Senegalese have successfully established flexible networks throughout the most attractive zones of the city center and its main residential quarters. In spite of their momentary visual impact, the *razzias* frequently carried out by the municipal police do not impact the informal economy. Instead of arresting the illegal Senegalese tradesmen, they temporarily expell them from the city center. Moreover, the national police guard, responsible for fighting illegal immigration but not illegal commerce, does not support the actions of the local police. According to the officials, the "centers of reception" run by the Ministry of the Interior to intern illegal immigrants before repatriating them are completely overcrowded, as repatriation to Senegal is an expensive and diplomatically complicated task.

In the last months the political pressure exercised by the local Chamber of Commerce against informal trade - Senegalese as well as Spanish - has been increasing: especially against the Senegalese who sell "rubbish" in front of the city's largest department store, *El Corte Inglés*. The gypsy women who "harass" the "poor" tourists are also targets of the economic elite's critique. The municipal authorities in Granada have reacted to this pressure by presenting a "pilote-project" aimed at relocating and concentrating the whole Senegalese trade in one single place in the city center (Ayuntamiento de Granada 1998). This so-called "Market of Solidarity," explicitly elaborated by the mayor as an aftermath of the *European Year Against Racism*, is characterized by one striking feature: it would not be totally controlled by the city authorities, but by the local NGOs engaged in activities directed toward immigrants.

## The NGOs: Assimilation versus Hybridization

Although many Andalusian non-governmental organizations active in the sphere of non-EU immigration have been discussing for years their attitude toward the official Spanish politics of immigration restriction and illegalization, in the last two years they feel increasingly exposed to the local and national government's desire of integrating them into the official politics. In this sense, the Granada "Market of Solidarity" is only one symptom of the tendency to instrumentalize the citizens' voluntary action for governmental purposes.<sup>6</sup> The largest group of NGOs supporting immigrants, the *Andalucía Acoge* (literally "Andalusia receives or welcomes") network of Christian-inspired local NGOs, is undergoing a fierce internal debate originated by its participation in taking over from the national police guard fixed contingents of non-repatriable, illegal African immigrants detained in refugee camps in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, in order to temporarily introduce them into Spanish mainland territory without guaranteeing them any permanent residence. As the Spanish government declares itself incapable of dealing with these immigrants, the NGO network is currently obtaining public funds to house, maintain, and control them. Although the great majority of volunteers working in these NGOs feel deep unease in performing basic police and social work tasks in charge of the government, at the same time they justify their collaboration with their religious obligation of helping the otherwise unsheltered refugees.

The latest proposal of the Granada authorities to also hand over the control of the informal trade to the NGOs has definitively broken up the unwritten consensus of the local activists. Due to the centrality of the city authorities, the NGOs in Jerez are not exposed to this kind of temptation, but the Granada-based NGOs are torn between two extremes:

- Ⓒ The possibility of actively influencing or even shaping the municipal politics of trade license concession;
- Ⓒ The danger of merely substituting governmental with non-governmental control functions.

The original project conceives of an intimate cooperation between the municipal trade commissioner, who fixes the number of licenses to be issued for the Senegalese tradesmen, and the local NGOs, who not only decide which of the many Senegalese to include in the project, but also are responsible for ensuring that all participating immigrants possess legalized "papers."

Although all NGOs have criticized these details, the project's attraction derives from its potential capacity of integrating the informal tradesmen into the NGOs' beneficiaries. Nearly all NGO representatives interviewed complain about the impossibility of reaching the actors of the immigrants' shadow economy. The ordinary Senegalese only shows up at the NGO if he needs precise information on how to obtain a specific residence or labor allowance. In contrast to those - mostly Moroccan - immigrants who come to Granada to study at the University and who actively participate in NGOs or student associations, the Senegalese tradesmen are "unreachable" not only by the NGOs, but also by the trade unions' sections for immigrants.

Consequently, the prevailing attitude of the activists remains "assistentialist" because the desired intercultural encounters hardly take place at all. The young Spanish volunteers regard their organizational setting as ideal for promoting these encounters, whereas the Senegalese prefer to establish relations with the local population in their residential quarters or business environment in the streets of Granada. This implicit refusal of many Senegalese to see an NGO structure as an intercultural meeting point reflects a fundamental distrust of any kind of associative setting - Spanish or not - which resembles the all-too-often feared official institutions.

This is the main problem that not only the NGOs, but also a Senegalese cultural initiative, currently faces in Granada. A group of longer-established Senegalese immigrants, many of them living with Spanish spouses, has created *M'bolo Moy Dole* (which in *wolof* means "Unity is Our Force"), an association of Senegalese immigrants in Granada, which maintains contacts with other Senegalese immigrant organizations in other Spanish cities.<sup>7</sup> Although they have been fairly successful in organizing music events and cultural festivities, the participation of the street vendors remains very sporadic. Many of the interviewed Senegalese suspect that the association may be hiding the missionary efforts of some religious "sect" or Muslim brotherhood like the influential *Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba* fraternity; others criticized that the founders of the association were all urban Senegalese whom they did not altogether trust as they did not belong to their own kin group or their home village.

In spite of these membership restrictions, *M'bolo Moy Dole* is actively engaged in promoting horizontal networking relations to other Granada-based NGOs and

associations. Whereas the linkage to NGOs working on behalf of immigrants remains rather "paternal," the Senegalese cultural association is deepening relations and co-organizing a series of events with *Romí*, an NGO formed by gypsy women from Granada.

As the Senegalese and gypsy promoters of both NGOs represent a tiny minority of more or less integrated and well-off members of their respective clientele, both associative types also face the same challenge: they have to bridge a gap between their respective addressees, the Senegalese tradesmen as well as the impoverished gypsy street vendors and the majority of the local population. Both minority protagonists emerge as "cultural translators" between two separate worlds: the marginalized domain of the shadow economy and the mainstream public opinion. The controversy raised by the "Market of Solidarity" project has tested the capacity of this new organizational type to maintain its fidelity to its principal, although sporadic, beneficiary: the informal street vendors, who would not be able to profit from a regulated but limited market located in the city center, frequented by some tourists but completely isolated from the daily promenades of the Senegalese' local customers.

Thus rejecting the official project, which currently seems abandoned even by local politicians, the emerging organizations of immigrants as well as NGOs have increased their bargaining power in relation to the municipal authorities. The strategic intermediation actively sought by the NGOs in the absence of a reliable and accountable State agent presupposes an intimate knowledge of the often scarcely articulated interests of their informal beneficiaries. Many of the interviewed Spanish NGO volunteers describe their increasing compromise as a painful process of reconceptualizing their basic notions of legality and illegality as well as of formal and informal economic activities. In their view, instead of assimilating the Senegalese and gypsy street vendors to the dominant formal economic model, in these times of growing intracultural differentiation as well as intercultural complexity a hybrid coexistence of diverse socioeconomic strategies, occupations, and forms of market integration will have to be tolerated by the State and promoted by society's protagonists.

In view of their disappointing experiences with official Spanish practices of persecution, over-regulation and/or marginalization, the willingness of the Senegalese to "surrender" to the dominant modes of

the Spanish economy and society is rather limited. An interviewed Senegalese, who was formerly engaged in the informal market and who now presides over the Senegalese cultural association in Granada, expressed this: "We use to say in my home country, even if a piece of wood remains floating in the water for ten years, it will never become a crocodile."

## Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper has been presented at the conference "Urban Quarters, the Shadow Economy and Stages of Immigration," held by the European Research Forum on Migration and Ethnic Relations (EUROFOR), in Sonderborg, Denmark, July 1998.
2. Laboratorio de Estudios Interculturales (LdEI), Universidad de Granada, Facultad de Educación, E-18071 Granada, Spain; the presented project has been supported by the Miquel Terribas Research Award, granted by Fundación "la Caixa," Barcelona, Spain.
3. Cf. Touraine (1988), Melucci (1989), and Riechmann & Fernández Buey (1994).
4. Cf. Cernea (1988), Breuer & Osorio Molinski (1992), and NGLS (1996).
5. The following empirical data are based on qualitative interviews and participant observations conducted in both Andalusian cities since 1996 with Senegalese immigrants.
6. In this section empirical data are based on qualitative interviews conducted with Granada- and Jerez-based NGO representatives in 1997 and 1998 as well as on discussion groups and evaluatory workshops organized together with several NGOs in Granada in 1998.
7. The following data stem from several qualitative interviews conducted since 1996 with members and ex-members of the association of Senegalese immigrants and of a gypsy association.

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