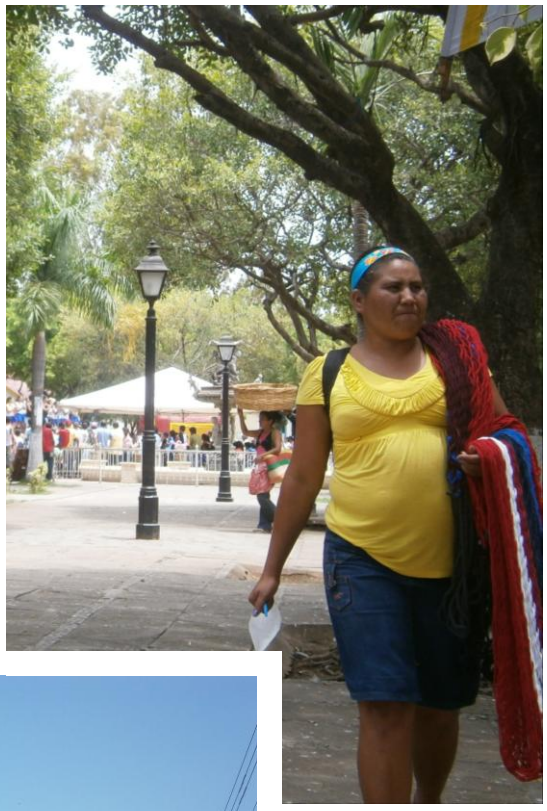
The influence of tourism on the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua



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Utrecht, August 2012

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Abstract

Tourism in Granada is growing and evermore present in the main streets of the Nicaraguan city. The street vending scene is inevitably affected in one way or another, as both tourism activities and street vending takes place in the same public space, but how? Therefore, the objective of this research is to gain insight into the way tourism influences the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua. To answer the research question *How does tourism influence the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua?* I used qualitative methods and a multi-sited ethnographic approach.

The context in which the study takes places is Granada, the most visited city in Nicaragua. Street vending in Granada is characterized by diversity. The respondents are categorized according to their degree of mobility, product sold and socio-economic background. These categories are commercial vendors with stands, artisans and ambulant street vendors who are further subdivided according to the product they sell. Besides the economic aspect, flexibility, accessibility and livelihood diversification are important in the decision to take part in street vending activities in Granada. The interviewed street vendors have an overall optimistic perspective on their livelihood. However, street vending is often not the preferred livelihood strategy on a permanent basis or for the next generation. Social capital in terms of support and solidarity among street vendors and relatives has proved to be essential to the livelihood of street vendors in Granada. Nonetheless, the increase of competition in the street vending scene causes tensions and difficulties. The extreme mobility and flexibility of the street vendors seem to be important tools to cope with such vulnerabilities.

The thin line between street vending to the local and tourism market makes it difficult to determine the influence of tourism on the livelihoods of street vendors. Moreover, each individual copes with opportunities and threats from tourism in a different way. The interviewed street vendors perceive the economic gain from tourism as an opportunity, although limited as they do not identify tourism as a tool to lift out of poverty. Many interviewed street vendors pursue a multi-local livelihood which allows the poor to diversify economic income strategies and localities to break free from marginalized areas and benefit from opportunities from globalization (Haan & Zoomers, 2003).

Besides an instable tourism flow, threats include increasing competition and market saturation, as well as future plans for a more restricted street vending environment in Granada. However, the way in which street vendors cope with these vulnerabilities and insecurities depends on their strategies and on structural factors that benefit or limit their actions.

Global processes, in this case tourism flows to and from Granada, impact a locality. However, it is the local context that largely determines how and what exactly are the impacts of tourism on the livelihood of street vendors. Therefore tourism impacts on street vendors' livelihoods should not be viewed isolated. The embeddedness of street vending in its local context is essential to understand the dynamics of the street vending scene in Granada. Although tourism is often a small part of a street vendor's livelihood, the influence of tourism on the livelihood of street vendors in Granada is considerable. However, unlike pro-poor tourism proponents argue, tourism in Granada is certainly not a development tool for the poor who engage in street vending.

List of abbreviations and terms

Centro Turistico:	Tourist Center set up at the lakeside of Granada, consisting of a line of bars, restaurants, facilities.
Compadrazgo:	Godfather relationship, in this case with the street vendor's baptized children and foreign tourists providing economic support
Fresco:	Widely sold juice and water-based drink in a small plastic bag
FSLN:	Sandinista National Liberation Front
Granadino:	Citizen of Granada
IDS:	Institute of Development Studies
ILO:	International Labour Organization
INTUR:	Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo
Lago Cocibolca:	Sweet Sea, other name for Lake Nicaragua
Machista:	Male chauvinist, a machist culture is dominated by men and their maleness
Mestizo:	Of mixed origin, Spanish and indigenous.
Movimiento:	Movement, motion or action. In this context, the word refers to a whole of flows of people and ongoing activities on the street, creating a certain degree of movement determining street life of Granada
Rosquillas:	Typical cookies from Somoto region in the north of Nicaragua
ST-EP:	UNWTOs Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty initiative
UNCSD:	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNEP:	United Nations Environment Program
UNWTO:	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC:	World Travel and Tourism Council

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Prologue

On my return to the Netherlands, after having spent over three months in Granada, Nicaragua, I have no answer to the often asked question 'how was it?' It was definitely special. Also wonderful, strange, shocking, annoying, even frustrating at times. And inspiring, eye-opening, instructive, fun, disillusioning. I still catch myself sometimes staring and dreaming of that different place, the people and all that my stay in Granada taught me. Yes, it was special and that is not really the word I was looking for to describe this experience. I will never forget the street vendors I have met and who all shared their stories with me. Their stories, ideas and opinions, shape this research and my view. I can only hope their stories are passed on, and the street vendors become known for their optimism and faith, as I know them now.

I am very grateful to all the people who have supported me throughout this research. Many thanks to my supervisor Joris, for endless feedback, support and inspiration. Your enthusiasm encouraged me and made me look at this research in a different way. Thank you Ernest, for your help especially in the beginning of the field research. It was very useful to discuss the research with an expert who is familiar with the context. I would like to thank all the street vendors with whom I had the opportunity to talk and interview. Your open attitude and perspectives inspired me. Special thanks to Eddy, who was so hospitable to welcome me in his hometown San Juan de Oriente. I hope you will manage to become a licensed tour guide in the future. Dario, who provided me with almost daily updates and talks on issues and his life as a street vendor, tour guide and what else, always accompanied with a *fresco*. I am very grateful to Erika and Hernan, who were always there for me in Granada and have shown me some of the most beautiful places of Nicaragua. Elle and Tessa, thanks for your support and advice. Your understanding and positive attitudes inspired me during the writing process. Thank you Atilla for always being there for me. Even distance could not keep you from showing your endless support. I hope one day we will have the opportunity to see this wonderful place I was living in those months together, so you will understand it even better.

Introduction

On the streets in the center of Granada, Nicaragua, one cannot fail to notice the dynamic street vending scene. Children, young adults, older women and men, people of all ages are engaged in street vending activities, selling products ranging from peanuts and cookies to bowls and hammocks. Many vendors walk around, others have a wooden stand or table. It is evident that the street vending scene in Granada is marked by its diversity in people, products and mobility. The street vending sector is growing – as is tourism. In this research, the link between tourism and street vending is central in order to grasp the influence of tourism on street vending in Granada.

During the past decades, tourism became one of the world's fastest growing industries. Tourism represents one of the main sources of income for many developing countries. Since tourism is seen as a key driver for socio-economic progress, the link to development is easily made (UNWTO, 2010). However, the contribution that tourism can make to livelihoods of the poor in developing countries is a much debated theme in which opportunities and the extent to which the poor can benefit from these are central.

Nicaragua is one of those developing countries in which tourism rapidly became one of the main sources of income. Tourism reached the top of the export list in 1997 in less than a decade after the 1980s that were marked by conflict. Despite the liberalization of tourism in the country, inequalities remain exceptionally high (Hunt, 2011). The extent to which tourism development can contribute to poverty alleviation is therefore questioned. Whether the poorest inhabitants of Nicaragua are able to benefit from the tourism boom depends on many factors. Nonetheless, it is evident that they are in some way or another affected by tourism activities since it encompasses a wide range of sectors and has various (in)direct economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts.

The informal sector in Nicaragua plays an important role in the connection between the poor and tourism development since many Nicaraguans are part of this unregulated sector of economic activities. Moreover, tourism impacts are widespread and either direct or indirect influence the large informal sector in Nicaragua. Within the informal sector, street vending is among the activities most affected by tourism due to its proximity to tourists and related tourism activities (Steel, 2011).

This research focuses on street vendors and tourism in Granada. More specifically, the influence of tourism on the livelihoods of street vendors in the city of Granada, Nicaragua has been investigated. Granada is a colonial city known for its charming and historic buildings and cited as the Nicaraguan city drawing the most international visitors annually (Babb, 2004). The relatively high number of visitors indicates that the – also substantial - informal sector in Granada is in one way or another influenced by tourism activities. Within the informal sector street vendors are likely to be affected by tourism, and therefore the way in which tourism influences the livelihoods of Nicaraguans who are active as street vendors in Granada has been investigated. To grasp the dynamics of the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada and the way they are affected by tourism, the following research question is developed:

How does tourism influence the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua?

The research question is answered by means of a range of sub questions, each of them analyzing a different aspect regarded important for this research. First, it is essential to comprehend the setting in which the research takes place, consisting of the tourism scene in Granada. Second, the street vending sector is described, after which the relation between the two is analyzed. Finally, the opportunities and threats and the way in which they are dealt with are discussed. Hence, the following order of sub questions is established:

1. What characterizes tourism in Granada?

2. What characterizes street vending in Granada?

3. How does street vending relate to tourism in Granada? Why this way?

4. What opportunities and threats does tourism entail and how do street vendors in Granada deal with these?

The themes related to each question are dealt with in different chapters. In chapter 1 a range of theories are outlined to be able to place this study into the development and tourism debate. These theories include the current debate on translocal development, the livelihood approach, informal economy theories, tourism development and pro-poor tourism approaches. Chapter 2 focuses on the methodological part of the research; it highlights the importance of qualitative research for this study, as well as the limitations and practical issues encountered during the field research phase. The third chapter deals with the regional framework. This includes a description of geographical, historical, political and economic aspects of Nicaragua on a national level, after which a move towards the local is made to contribute to a better understanding of the context of this study. With chapter 4 the empirical part of this study commences with a description of the tourism dynamics in Granada. An all-encompassing image of the tourism scene in Granada is drawn, including the history and dynamics of the city as a tourism destination. In chapter 5 the characterization of the street vendors in Granada is central. Their activities, socio-economic background, livelihood and their own perspective upon this is reflected and analyzed in this chapter. Chapter 6 focuses on the connectivity between street vendors and tourism in Granada. In chapter 7 the analysis of opportunities and threats related to tourism are central, and are carefully balanced. In the final chapter this thesis concludes with the most important findings that have been encountered during the research.

Chapter 1: Theoretical framework

Theories about tourism as well as the informal sector are numerous, however those combining the two themes are less so. To provide with a comprehensive yet compact presentation of the major theories and approaches related to the research topic, a selection of several different theories has been made: translocal development, livelihood approaches, informal economy and a range of facts and figures on global tourism and the relation with development. Altogether the theories, although not evidently related on first sight, create a solid theoretical basis for the research.

1.1 Translocal development

Globalization connects people and places that are distant in space but linked in such ways that what happens in one place directly affects the other (Zoomers & van Westen, 2011). Within today's globalized world, development should not be seen in a local perspective, but in a *translocal* perspective. This implies looking further than the local by focusing on interconnectedness. Nowadays, globalization processes cannot be neglected in development research. Development is increasingly played out in a matrix of links between different people and different localities, and therefore it should be approached with a translocal perspective (Zoomers & van Westen, 2011). This involves looking beyond the orderly scale of ladders that global connections are often portrayed as. Although a translocal perspective requires a focus beyond the local, it does not mean one should deny the importance of local forces. In this research, this implies a view that includes both the interconnectedness as well as the role of the local. An important realization is that it should not be viewed isolated but embedded in a locality which is connected in multiple ways.

Tourism is one of the processes contributing to the production of translocalities. Through the flow of foreign visitors and subsequent information and financial flows, places are interconnected which affects their meaning and potential for development. Therefore, an important notion to take into account in development research is the interconnectedness of certain localities (Zoomers & van Westen, 2011; Steel, 2011). In this research, the translocal perspective is a continuous aspect, in the first place in the other approaches and theories discussed in this chapter. This way, the theories and arguments become related in such way that a solid and holistic whole can provide with a basis for the field research. The translocal perspective then continues to be a focal point in the field as interconnectedness is crucial in understanding the phenomena encountered.

1.2 Livelihood approach

To analyze influences on livelihoods, it is important to maintain a translocal perspective in which there is attention for interconnectedness. This corresponds to the already holistic way in which the livelihood approach is positioned, with capitals that encompass an individual's life in many facets. The livelihood approach centers around the access to assets and capabilities required for a means of living, namely physical, natural, human, financial and social capital. These assets can be created and destroyed due to shocks or stress and the extent to which this happens depends on the degree of vulnerability an individual faces.

A sustainable livelihood can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide opportunities for the next generation. Moreover, a sustainable livelihood can contribute to other livelihoods at the local and global level in the short and long term (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

It is obvious that livelihood goes beyond the economic aspect of development. The combination of all capitals is the essence of the livelihood approach. Human capital, which includes skills, knowledge, the ability to work and good health is very important to sustain livelihood. Social capital, including social resources such as networks, membership of groups, and relationships, as well. Even so is natural capital, including natural resource stock from which resource services and flows useful for livelihoods are derived, for example land and trees but also intangible assets such as the atmosphere. Physical capital includes the basic infrastructure and producer goods that are required to enable people to meet their basic needs, including shelter, energy, water and sanitation. Then financial capital which includes the financial resources available to people to provide with different livelihood options, conclude the five capitals that together create livelihood (Potter, 2008 pg 485). However, a large part of people's livelihood status depends on the external environment called 'vulnerability context' in the Sustainable Livelihood Framework developed by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the United Kingdom. Changes can occur through natural shocks or trends that are more predictable than shocks. Seasonality also occurs, and involves prices, production, health and employment issues (Potter, 2008).

There are several institutions and organizations that adopted a certain livelihood approach, such as CARE, Oxfam and the UNDP. In essence, livelihood approaches attempt a people-centered, responsive and participatory, multi-level, dynamic and sustainable way of carrying out development interventions (UK Department for International Development and the Institute of Development Studies www.livelihoods.org). It should be noted though, that in this case the version of the IDS has been used because of its applicable and all-encompassing perspective on livelihood. However, De Haan and Zoomers' (2003) view on the multi-local aspect of livelihood should not be neglected either, in which the livelihood approach is seen as people centered, holistic in the sense that is not determined to sectors, and takes notion of the multidimensionality of daily life.

To direct the livelihood approach more towards the research, several aspects should be highlighted. For example, Griet Steel argues that for street vendors in Cusco livelihood diversification is considered important (Steel, 2011). Furthermore, it should be taken into account that tourism is often a tool for diversification for the poor, not a substitute for their core activities (Ashley, 2000). Within the spheres of a tourist destination, globalization processes are also becoming increasingly of importance for sustaining livelihoods. Hence, Griet Steel argues that livelihoods become more interdependent on their connections (Steel, 2011). Moreover, Zoomers also argues that livelihood opportunities are largely defined by translocal relations, development chains and corridors, and that they cannot be understood without considering the dynamics of networks in which people are participating (Zoomers, 2011).

1.3 Informal economy

The informal sector plays an important role in livelihood diversification, as its accessibility creates an appealing environment to marginalized people who often lack the opportunity to

work in the formal sector. The informal sector is characterized by the absence of regulations which enhances a degree of flexibility towards the worker to enter or exit the sector when desired. In the 1970s and 1980s, informal economic activities were defined as 'unregulated economic enterprises of activities' (Hart, 1973). However, the debate about an exact definition for all informal sector activities around the world continues. This indicates that the informal sector is all but homogenous.

Two main approaches dominate the discussion about what the informal economy actually entails; the dualistic approach and the petty commodity production approach (Teltscher, 1994). The dualistic approach, also adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), perceives informal activities as survival mechanisms for otherwise unemployed people (Steel, 2008). The petty commodity production approach views informal activities closely linked with formal activities, often subordinate and small-scale. However, in line with the unsuccessful attempts to reach consensus about a definition for the informal sector, Teltscher (1994) argues that both approaches neglect the heterogeneity within the informal sector. The informal sector is too often seen as a homogenous structure, which is evidently not the case with a wide range of different activities that people engage in for different reasons and during different periods of time. This shows that a translocal perspective is essential to understand the connections and dynamics of the street vendors who are part of the informal sector. Within the informal sector, street vending is often seen as in the dualistic approach; as a traditional, pre-modern survival strategy (Steel, 2008). Nonetheless, others stress the fact that street vending does not necessarily occur as part of a survival strategy. According to Bromley it can be anything from survival strategy to diversification of bigger businesses (Bromley, 2000). This indicates that new insights about people active in the informal sector are needed, in which livelihood strategies and interconnectedness are central to comprehend the dynamics of the informal sector.

1.4 Tourism and development

The dynamic nature of the informal sector also characterizes tourism. It encompasses many sectors indirectly, and as a consequence impacts many people. Furthermore, tourism enhances interconnectivity due to the flow of (foreign) tourists, investors, knowledge, skills, norms and values in both directions. Therefore, tourism dynamics cannot be viewed in an isolated way, a translocal perspective is essential.

Tourism[1] became one of the world's fastest growing industries in the past six decades, generating 9% of the world's GDP when taking its indirect contribution into account (WTTC, 2011). The end of the growth of the tourism sector has not yet been predicted, and growth expectations are positive, with an annual growth of average 4% between 2011 and 2021 (WTTC, 2011). Furthermore, the International Labour Organization predicts that employment in tourism will grow significantly in the coming decade (ILO, 2010).

It is obvious that the tourism sector is becoming of increasing significance around the globe. This also accounts for many developing countries, in which the tourism sector often represents one of the main sources of income. However, the tourism sector's economic benefits do not stand on their own; the environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism

[1] The definition of tourism that is used for this study is the most commonly accepted by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): 'tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes'.

are inevitable. This has been internationally recognized and in today's world in which awareness of the globe's not endless resources is rising, the term *sustainability* also entered tourism. *Sustainable tourism* is defined by UNWTO as 'tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impact while addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.' The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines sustainable tourism in a way that emphasis lies on the environment, however the essence of the definition is similar to that of UNWTO, and states that conservation and limitation of (negative) impacts is most important. This shows that the growing concern for degradation of global life-support systems also holds the tourism sector responsible, and the sector is being ever more included in global conferences like United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). Besides tourism being present in current climate change and sustainability debates, the sector is becoming more known for its role in development too.

According to UNWTO research, tourism growth has been particularly fast in developing countries, where the percentage of international tourist arrivals received augmented with a steady pace from 31% in 1990 to 47% in 2010 (UNWTO, Tourism Highlights 2011 Edition, 2011). With such growth figures, tourism is now increasingly seen as a key driver for socio-economic progress (UNWTO, 2010). The first time tourism and development were linked was in the 1970s, a decade in which modernization was no longer seen as a simple trigger to development that functions in a similar way in all developing nations (Harrison, 2008). The 1970s were marked by critiques of the so-called third world that began to split up as it was recognized that there was no such thing as a collection of developing countries that need the same type of development to reach growth (Potter, 2008). Decades after this alternative view on development, the link between tourism and development made its return with the introduction of pro-poor tourism (Harrison, 2008). By the 2000s several initiatives related to tourism and development were created by international organizations such as World Bank, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). The UNWTO Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty initiative (ST-EP) is a clear example of the recognition of the role of tourism in development as it promotes poverty alleviation by providing assistance to sustainable development projects (UNWTO, Tourism and Poverty Alleviation, 2011). Furthermore, tourism is more and more included in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) by the IMF and World Bank for governments of developing countries to use. Altogether, this shows an emergence of tourism in the development debate.

In the past, tourism was not considered as a potential development activity, rather a commercial sector only (Mowforth, 2009). Ashley (2000), from the Overseas Development Institute, who introduced pro-poor tourism, argues that tourism has the ability to address the poor and improve their livelihoods. Pro-poor tourism is put forward as an overall approach, not aiming to expand the size of the sector but to unlock opportunities for the poor such as economic gain or other livelihood benefits (Ashley, 2000). The approach differs from other tourism types that claim to have developmental value, such as ecotourism, sustainable tourism, community-based tourism and other ethical-based tourisms, by its direct focus on the needs of the poor (Mowforth, 2009). Therefore the pro-poor tourism debate can be positioned besides sustainable livelihoods approaches and people-centred approaches. However, it is important to notice that tourism as such in the development debate is a competitive sector and thus pro-poor tourism should be seen as an economic activity that

competes effectively in the marketplace. Several fundamental factors in this cannot be overlooked, such as geography, including the desirability of the destination and accessibility, as well as knowledge and resources available and access to decisionmaking, which are all factors that are all of importance in the competitive tourism sector.

Mowforth and Munt (2009) identify two obstacles related to pro-poor tourism, namely power relations in tourism and the capacity of pro-poor tourism to reduce poverty. The power relations in tourism are quite often extremely inequal, and decision making is often done outside of the country by international investors. Foreign interests play an important role in the tourism sector, and Mowforth and Munt (2009) argue that tourism must be understood within an analysis of relationships of power, and that tourism must be considered as other economic sectors. The second problem, the capacity of pro-poor tourism to reduce poverty, is a highly debated issue as well. There seems to be no easy answer to the question if, and to what extent, the poor benefit from tourism in such a way that it reduces poverty. It is evident that the benefits from tourism do not compare with more direct development tools such as health or agricultural investments, but it can be a strategy for promoting broad-based growth which is also necessary for poverty elimination (Deloitte & Touche, 1999).

Besides critical notes on the impact of pro-poor tourism, there is another type of critique on the rise. Gascón (2011) argues that the pro-poor tourism approach is overlooking several important aspects. First of all, pro-poor tourism does not opt for equality when it comes to the benefits gained from tourism. The assumption is that some have to lose, and these are most likely to be the poorest due to least access and resources. Second, Gascón argues that pro-poor tourism is a tool to give the liberation of the tourism sector a human face, fitting perfectly with neoliberal ideas. Marginalization and social exclusion that have worsened due to tourism are not adressed by pro-poor tourism. Furthermore, Gascón argues that pro-poor tourism does not conceptualize poverty, and as such allows any tourism model that – on paper - is able to increase the income of the poor. Potential increase in socio-economic differences are not considered in the limited conceptualization of poverty (Gascón, 2012). As an alternative approach, Gascón opts for an alterglobalist view, not against globalization as such but opposing the negative effects of globalization processes. The focus lies on the fight against socioeconomic differences that are considered to be the causes of poverty (Gascón, 2011). Scheyvens (2009) also questions the capability of tourism to serve the needs of the poor, since the essence of tourism is commercial, with businesses trying to meet the interest of the market and not those of the poor, and where the elites capture most benefits. Hence, it remains questionable whether the tourism sector is really capable of benefiting the poor to a certain extent that poverty elimination occurs.

1.5 Conclusion: the relation between theories and research

It is essential to relate the theories with each other in such a way that it contributes to a solid theoretical basis of the research. First of all, the translocal perspective provides with a useful inside into how a researcher should look at a locality. Within today's globalized world interconnectedness plays an increasingly important role because the meaning and potential for development in a certain place is affected by its interconnectivity. For a tourist destination in a developing country, as is the case in this research, this encompasses the flow of foreign tourists, foreign investors, knowledge, skills, norms and values in both directions.

Second, a livelihood approach is people-centered and multi-level, the latter indicating an all-encompassing view similar to a translocal perspective. Livelihood comprises of not only financial capital but also human, social, natural and physical capital. It is evident that the theory behind livelihood approaches puts emphasis on the attention all of these categories should receive, as well as their sustainability – how vulnerable an individual is in the sense of capital deprivation. In this research, attention will be paid to livelihood in terms of its comprehensiveness, people and their capitals from a multi-local perspective.

The presentation of theories about the informal economy provide with a few concepts that exist among academics about the informal sector. A striking fact is that consensus about a definition for the informal sector has never been reached, which indicates the dynamic nature of the sector and the activities that it encompasses. The idea that informal economic activities are always a survival strategy for otherwise unemployed poor people is outdated and gives way to more heterogeneous approaches to the informal sector. However, the relation between the informal sector – and street vending activities within this sector – and poverty remains unclear and further research with eye for the interconnectivity and multi-locality should provide with new insights.

The last main theme outlined above about pro-poor tourism shows that there are different views on the extent to which tourism has potential to contribute to development. For this research, it is important to keep in mind that the relation between tourism and the local is very difficult to examine in such a way that a clear outcome is reached, due to the dynamic nature of both tourism and the informal sector. Although the opportunities that tourism can offer to street vendors in Granada are important, the vulnerabilities that the informal sector faces in relation to tourism should not be neglected. These vulnerabilities include the extent to which people are able to recover from shocks and stress. Within the tourism sector, this could range from seasonality with lower or higher tourism numbers depending on the seasons, to natural disasters due to environmental degradation as a result of the demanding and expanding tourism industry.

From all four major theories, several notions can be derived. First of all, it is important to note that development should not be perceived with a restricted view on the local only. This means that the other theories will also be viewed from a translocal perspective, including the perspective on livelihood. Second, similar to development as beyond the local, so are people's livelihoods not comprising of economic aspects only, but a whole range of capitals. Third, the heterogeneity of the dynamic informal sector should be taken into account. Fourth, tourism's potential to contribute to development should not be seen as the rise of opportunities for the poor only. It is essential to understand that tourism can lead to increasing inequalities and deprivation of socioeconomic and natural assets as well.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The methodology of this research is mainly built around a multi-sited approach. This approach considers the essence of spatial continuity, which includes connections, networks of people and places and relationships across space (Falzon, 2009). Multi-sitedness is central in the research as it provides with ample perspectives and a deeper understanding of issues and ongoing dynamics.

2.1 Research question and sub questions

The objective of this research is to analyze the impact of tourism on the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua. Moreover, *how* these impacts occur is an essential part of the research. Therefore, the question that is central to the research is as follows:

How does tourism influence the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua?

Four sub questions are designed to answer the research question. The following questions are each elaborated upon to outline their contribution to the research:

1. What characterizes tourism in Granada?
It is essential to first obtain understanding of the tourism scene in order to grasp how it could influence the street vendors and their livelihoods. Therefore, in chapter 4 the theme of this question, tourism in Granada, is extensively outlined.

2. What characterizes street vending in Granada?
After a thorough insight in the tourism sector of Granada, it is important to provide with an overview and analysis of the street vending scene in Granada, which is done in chapter 5. This way, the findings on street vendors can be put into the context.

3. How does street vending relate to tourism in Granada? Why this way?
Chapter 6 deals with the linkages between street vending and tourism, how the connectivity impacts their livelihood and how street vendors deal with this. The importance of linking the scenes is evident as it provides with analysis of the influences that tourism has on the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada.

4. What opportunities and threats does tourism entail and how do street vendors in Granada deal with these?
Chapter 7 focuses on the opportunities and threats that derive from tourism, and how street vendors react upon this. These are important to analyze due to the fact that they impose the influences of tourism and determine what the effect on the street vendors' livelihood is.

2.2 Approach

The multi-sited ethnography approach considers, unlike 'normal' ethnography, the importance of spatial continuity. Hence, this approach takes the global, local and

interconnectedness into account by not only including an isolated locality. This corresponds to a translocal perspective, in which the local is embedded in a global context and vice versa. Falzon (2009) argues that in such a globalized world, the spatially dispersed field should not be overlooked, which means that the researcher should follow people, connections, associations and relationships across space. As such, by following the respondents through their daily life spaces, a more holistic picture and life histories can be drawn about the respondents' lives. Within this research, this would mean that in cases in which the relations and connections with other people and localities seem important, they are analyzed as well.

In practice, it was rather problematic to use the multi-sited ethnographic approach on a large scale due to the many difficulties faced during the field research phase, such as the extreme mobility and subsequent irregularity of street vendors operating in Granada. In paragraph 2.4 these difficulties are further elaborated upon. Furthermore, practical limitations such as a fixed period of time in which the research took place and limited resources, did not allow for extensive multi-sitedness in terms of analyzing the tourism flows as well. Hence, the multi-sited aspect of the ethnographic approach in this research is translated into putting things into (a translocal) perspective and attempt to discover and follow connections and networks of street vendors in Granada, as well as the construction of life histories. The latter provide with insight into how tourism influences and has influenced street vending activities over the years. This is interesting since it reveals the dynamics of tourism in Granada, and the role tourism plays in the livelihoods of street vendors. Furthermore, it provides with more insight into how street vending activities for tourism and national customers overlap or connect, which leads to interesting insights about the livelihoods of the street vendors.

2.3 Methods and access to the field

The methods that have been used as part of the multi-sited approach are qualitative. The choice for qualitative methods is made as it fits perfectly with this research. The objective to gain a deeper understanding of the actors, issues and opinions at stake is fulfilled by using information gathered from observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Using this interview technique creates an advantage as the structure implies a certain form of interview schedule with themes in order to maintain control over the subjects to be dealt with. However, as it is not yet structured in a way that prevents from deviation, there is still scope for the respondents to develop their answers. This ensures that the areas considered important are covered, while providing the respondents with the opportunity to elaborate on their own thoughts and what they regard important in their lives (Desai & Potter, 2010).

The type of sample has been considered before entering the field research phase. The initial idea was to use snowball sampling techniques. This way, respondents could provide with information about other respondents and so it would be easier to find new respondents. However, to prevent the snowball sampling technique from failing due to unexpected situations or in case of a limited number of connections between potential respondents, it was essential to take another approach as well. Hence, a site-approach has been taken, in which different respondents at different sites are approached instead of using one network of respondents. This, because different sites are important among street vending activities related to tourism, as they are often concentrated around major tourism sites (Steel, 2008). Moreover, by completely relying on snowball sampling, other respondents who operate

outside a certain network could be overlooked and important findings would not be encountered.

The diversity among the street vendors in Granada is extremely high; hence in practice it proved useful to combine the two sampling techniques. The irregularity of street vendors being present in the field together with the differences in origins create a high number of networks and connections, which with only snowball sampling could not have been revealed easily.

It is essential to think carefully about the approach taken to gain access to the field of research due to time limitations and the potential of doing harm unintentionally which might cause complete inaccessibility. Beforehand, the best way considered to search for respondents was by gradually gaining confidence of the respondents. This would then enable to draw life histories and follow the respondents through their spaces. In order to be most successful in accessing the field without doing any harm to anyone, it was important to obtain knowledge about local issues beforehand which proved to be relatively easy.

The setting of this research is the central area of Granada, Nicaragua. After thorough observation in Granada's city center and surroundings, I decided that the central park and Calle La Calzada are the specific research areas in the search of respondents. This decision was made after the realization that Granada as a tourism destination comprises of mainly the central part of the city.

The main characteristics of the setting that created a need for a specific approach are the irregularity of street vendors operating in Granada and the diversity among the street vendors. This irregularity not only refers to the time of the day on which street vendors are present in Granada, but also to the days on which they are present. For some types of street vendors irregularity is not part of their characterization, however for others, often from outside Granada, irregularity can be seen as the structure in their life as a street vendor. The diversity among street vendors is enormous; it forms a characteristic of the street vending sector that creates an equally diverse range of networks. Although at first sight there seems to be a high degree of familiarity among the street vendors in the park, this appeared to count only for those rather permanent present on a fixed spot. The mobile street vendors however, either coming from faraway places or not, are not always part of these extensive networks. Some street vendors arrive in Granada with acquaintances or family members; others are alone without any further connections. Due to these specific characteristics of the setting in which street vending takes place, it is obvious that a snowball sampling technique could not have been the only approach used. The diverse and irregular character of street vending activities in Granada does not allow for snowballing to occur among the whole street vending sector. Therefore, the choice has been made to not only rely on networks from snowball sampling, hence multi-sited approach proved useful.

The combination of approaches led to various opportunities to speak with different street vendors. In total, 32 in-depth semi-structured interviews have been conducted with different street vendors, as well as various unstructured informal discussions with another 15 different street vendors. An overview of the characteristics of the interviewees can be found in appendix I. At least 8 out of 32 interviewees were approached once or twice more when encountered during field research, which always resulted in an interesting update on their situation. With three street vendors I met on a regular basis which provided me with a thorough insight in their lives and conditions. One of these street vendors who I met regularly cannot be categorized in any of the below mentioned groups since he engaged in

several street vending activities such as selling *fresco's*, juice and water-based drinks in plastic bags, post cards, bracelets and on an irregular basis he worked as a tour guide. Since he worked with so many different products and people, he turned out to become a key informant who introduced me to other street vendors and provided me with useful background information.

Besides the interviews and informal discussions with street vendors, structured interviews have been conducted with Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo Granada (INTUR), the planning and development department of INTURs head office in Managua, the municipality of Granada, the owner of a restaurant in the center of Granada and a historian of the Granada archive at Casa de los Tres Mundos. These interviews provide with detailed information about the tourism scene in Granada and street vending activities from different perspectives.

The number of interviews is based on a feeling of saturation as repetition increasingly occurred in the respondents' answers towards reaching a certain number of interviews. Moreover, at a certain point half way the field research period, I found out that to put effort in enhancing the contact with already interviewed street vendors proved to be more fruitful than trying to increase the number of respondents in general. This way, I could obtain much more in-depth information on backgrounds, perspectives and values which otherwise remain unknown. Much of the derived information other than descriptive facts and opinions on their work as a street vendor cannot be obtained by simply asking since many street vendors are not aware of their intrinsic values or do not put them in words as such. By observing them, talking with some of them on a more regular basis about other themes as well, these values and perspectives became much clearer to me.

2.4 Reflections on the field research

The initial fieldwork plan included a multi-sited ethnography approach in which participants would be followed through their daily life spaces to obtain a better view upon their livelihood in different locations. This approach proved to be one of the main difficulties encountered during the fieldwork stage. In the beginning, the degree of confidence and relation with the participants did not allow for this plan yet. Gradually, when more confidence was gained among the participants, it became easier to arrange meetings with several participants. This, although expected, was not the major difficulty encountered while trying to obtain insight into their living situation as such by meeting at their homes. The aspect that created a difficult environment to take a multi-sited ethnography approach was the mobility of the street vendors. Many of them were uncertain about their locality for the week or next day, and attempts to set up meetings failed due to their often changing locality. Hence, this extreme mobility of the street vendors created a difficult environment for arranging visits to participants' homes. By gradually discovering some of the networks of street vendors, it became easier to remain informed about various street vendors that I had interviewed before. On the daily walks around the center I would almost always encounter street vendors who could inform me about other street vendors. This way, I managed to keep or regain contact with street vendors that I interviewed before. The way in which my strategy towards meeting the street vendors on a regular basis changed can be read in textbox 1.

Textbox 1. Strategies in the field - In the beginning of the field research, I gave my local phone number to two of the respondents to keep in contact to meet up for a visit to their hometowns, or to meet up for another interview if they would be in Granada again. I learned my lesson quickly, as my phone was ringing constantly at any hour of the day and dozens of text messages arrived on a 24 hour basis, just asking how I was doing all the time. Soon after, I decided my new strategy to keep in contact with street vendors would definitely not include a mobile phone. I changed my strategy and decided to keep in contact by encountering street vendors on the street and gradually discovering the networks among them so I could always ask a street vendor about other respondents.

Eventually, a visit to one of the street vendors' family did occur – after many failed attempts – and gave new insights that apply to the street vendors selling ceramic from San Juan de Oriente. This experience and insights gained can be found in textbox 2.

Another difficulty during the field research phase involved the use of the site approach. In this approach, it is essential to undertake research in different sites. However, due to the limited number of sites adequate for this research, the approach taken was limited as well. However, visits to San Juan del Sur - in the Rivas department at the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, about 120 kilometers from Granada, and San Juan de Oriente in the department of Masaya, about 25 kilometers from Granada - provided with some insights into the street vendors relations interconnectedness.

Textbox 2. Visit to Eddy's family in San Juan de Oriente - On the 29th of April, after two failed attempts and many phone calls and texts, Eddy and I finally managed to meet up in his hometown San Juan de Oriente. Eddy, 22 years old, is honored to show me around and explain the process of the traditional production of ceramics, which his village is famous for. Like many others, Eddy sells ceramic bowls in Granada on an irregular basis to provide with some income for his family and pay for his studies.

On arrival, Eddy asks me a favor: 'could you act as if you don't speak Spanish, because you know I'm studying to become a tour guide and I want to show my family my English skills which they believe aren't good, now is my chance to show them with your visit as a real foreigner!' I agree because I feel how much Eddy was looking forward to this. After meeting with his family who start to give a demonstration of ceramic production, I could however not keep up to my promise. I want to ask the family many things, and unfortunately Eddy's translation skills are shortcoming. Fortunately Eddy is satisfied with the demonstration of his language skills to his family, so he agrees with me that it would be better if I 'suddenly' could speak Spanish. The family shares their story on how the tradition of ceramic production is passed from generation to generation, it is not a matter of choice to enroll in it, 'it is just what you do if you are from San Juan de Oriente'. Each family has at least one relative who dedicates his or her time to the production of ceramic pieces. It is the village's economy, and therefore rather vulnerable. The prices of the material vary and competition rises, Eddy's family faces these threats on an increasing scale. Besides the extensive networks between and among families in San Juan de Oriente, there is no real institute or cooperation to organize the village's ceramic production. I am surprised to find out that besides the local market and nearby Granada, there is another market served: that of Costa Rica. Eddy shows

me the majority of pieces his uncle makes has an inscription 'Costa Rica', and that every now and then a trader from the neighboring country comes to pick them up to resell them in Costa Rica, which receives more tourists. The other pieces are picked up by Eddy to be sold in the weekends when he is not helping his parents on the farm. When he sells, he pays his share to his uncle. If not, he returns the pieces. His uncle keeps Eddy from investment risks, as 'he is already having a tough life'.

We leave his uncle's house on a hill deep in the village. Tourists will not be able to find this place, and that is why the village shops from which ceramic pieces are sold are only present in the main street downhill. All other houses and shelters are scattered on hills and accessed by muddy paths and not noticed from San Juan de Oriente's main street, which hides a world full of ceramic. Suddenly I understand why so many street vendors from this village take their backpack filled with ceramic pieces to Granada and try their luck there.

Before initiating the field research phase, the expected limitations included the inability to approach sufficient participants or other barriers preventing from being able to interview street vendors. This fear turned out to be very unnecessary as the majority of street vendors were willing to participate in the research without hesitations. Their openness and friendly attitude were eye-opening and made the field research unforgettable.

Other limitations that did occur as expected were the limited time available for the research as well as limited resources. Especially in the starting phase of the field research, it was difficult to come in contact with institutions and the municipality of Granada. The process to gain access and plan an interview was time consuming and the intention of the research was often misunderstood since the municipality was carrying out questionnaires on street vending with other intentions. As the municipality wants to gain insight into street vending activities to create a base for implicating stricter rules, it was often assumed this research was related. The planning and clarifications caused delays in structuring the field research, however with a flexible and adaptive attitude I could largely overcome this.

It should be noted that in this ethnographic research there is always a certain degree of intersubjectivity. Although perhaps unconsciously and unwanted, it should be taken into account that complete objectivity in this qualitative study is impossible. The researcher's interpretation of the answers given by participants in the research is part of this. Moreover, subjectivity from respondents is caused by their attitude towards me; some intended to provoke compassion, others emphasized they do not want any compassion for their livelihood situation. As far as I am aware of, this only occurred a few times. Both are likely to have occurred due to the researcher – respondent relationship in which different socio-economic status, origin and cultural differences play a role.

A type of bias that occurred in this research is season bias. Since the research took place during Nicaraguan summer, which is the dry season and high season for tourism, it is probable that certain respondents were more positive about their livelihood and street vending than they would have been if the interviews were conducted in winter, the rainy low season for tourism. Obviously, this is only a suspicion, and no actual conclusions can be drawn based on this. However, it is important to note and keep the potential season bias in mind.

2.5 Conclusion

The research question *How does tourism influence the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua?* is central in this research. During the field research, a multi-sited ethnographic approach was fundamental. This approach takes the spatial continuity into consideration, which includes connections, networks of people and places and relationships across space to understand the dynamics that are important to the research better. Due to the fact that the setting is marked by irregularity, a snowball sample combined with multi-sited approach proved useful. For this qualitative research a total of 32 semi-structured in-depth interviews have been held together with another 15 informal talks. With several respondents multiple encounters provided with additional insights and it turned out to be useful to focus on a few already contacted street vendors instead of extending the number of respondents further. This way a deeper understanding of values and perspectives was gained. The difficulties faced during the field research are related to the irregular nature of the street vending activities which made it difficult to concretize meetings. A degree of intersubjectivity should be considered due to my own interpretations and that of the interviewees. Furthermore, the fact that the research took place in the high season for tourism could bias the outcomes of the research due to the chance that other answers are given and another image from observations is gained.

Chapter 3: Regional framework

The regional framework outlines the regions' characteristics and thereby contributes to obtaining a more comprehensive idea of the study and the geographies of the place. The chapter follows a structure in which first the focus is on the broader national level, after which a local perspective on the city of Granada is taken.

3.1 Nicaragua: a snapshot

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America, as well as the least densely populated with a population of 5.89 million in 2011 (INIDE, 2007; Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2012). The majority of Nicaraguans have *mestizo* or mixed origins, and a few indigenous communities still remain on the Atlantic coast, having their own culture and language. The country occupies an area of 130,370 km², with a large Atlantic coastal plain, towards central mountains and smaller volcanic Pacific coastal plain (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2012). A map of Nicaragua can be seen in figure 1.

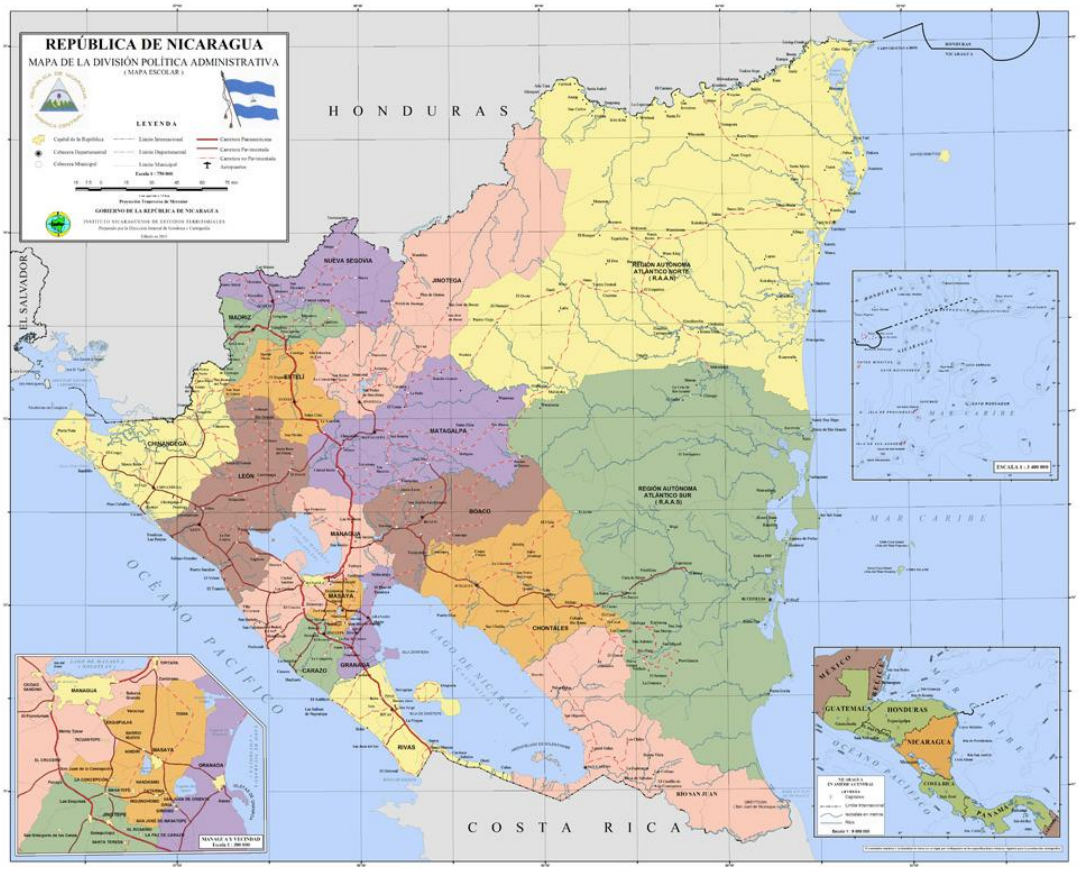

Figure 1: Map of Nicaragua. Source: INITER, 2012

The economy of Nicaragua is based on services (56,3%), industry (23,4%) and agriculture (20,3%), and export products include coffee, beef, gold, seafood, sugar and industrial goods (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2012). Coffee is the most important export product in Nicaragua, and employs over 100,000 people. The fluctuating price on the world market for coffee creates a situation of increasing vulnerabilty for many Nicaraguans (Channel, 2011).

Since 2005 the export from Nicaragua has improved due to the establishment of the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) which creates the second biggest free trade area in Latin America (Channel, 2011). For the average Nicaraguan, the annual income is US$2,430 (GNI per capita in PPP terms), which is fairly lower than other countries in the region. The population living below US$1.25 per day is 15.8%. After Haiti, Nicaragua is considered the poorest country of the Western hemisphere.

Besides the below average annual income for Nicaraguans, the Human Development Index for Nicaragua is 0.589, ranking the country 129 out of 187 in terms of human development (UNDP, International Human Development Indicators, 2011). The three elements taken into account are health, education and income, and together these also place Nicaragua below the regional average of 0.731. When considering the inequality-adjusted HDI, Nicaragua ranks even lower with a score of 0.427, indicating that inequality is high.

Many ascribe the economic situation to a history of violence and unstable political situations. Centuries ago rivalry already existed between liberal León and conservative Granada, two important cities of Nicaragua. Civil wars were not uncommon and in 1856 the American William Walker seized presidency. Liberals and conservatives united to force him out, and conservative power took over for three decades. However, in 1909 rivalries over the plan for a trans-isthmian canal by American investors again caused instability and American forces entered the country to support the conservative forces. Rebel forces led by Augusto Sandino were captured by American troops between 1927 and 1933, and when troops left National Guard Commander Somoza Garcia took over presidency in 1936 after ordering the assassination of Sandino (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2012). The Somoza dynasty came to an end in 1979 after the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) fought a guerrillawar against the corrupt regime since the 1960s. Daniel Ortega from the FSLN took over and established an authoritarian dictatorship, and the United States suspended aid to Nicaragua and supported the opposition. International pressure caused Ortega to agree upon new elections which he did not win. Chamorro, also from FSLN, took over and achieved democratic progress and a move towards a stabilized economy. After several other presidents and years marked by corrupcy and electoral fraud, Ortega became president again in 2007. The last elections of November 2011 were, due to fraude, won by Ortega again. The government is putting up further limitations such as limiting freedom of speech and the juridical system is largely ineffective. It can be concluded that, like two centuries ago, Nicaragua's political situation is still far from stable.

3.2 Tourism in Nicaragua

The country's institute for tourism Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo (INTUR) promotes Nicaragua as the ideal destination for those in search of something different. This 'different' is reflected in the country's variety of climates, two oceans, dozens of volcanoes, lakes and rivers, and not to forget its people and culture (INTUR, 2012). By promoting these aspects, the government attempts to reach a varied range of tourists to come and visit Nicaragua. As the main attractions are natural, eco-tourism and so-called responsible tourism in which the awareness of the tourists' footstep is central are put forward. Hence, these are the types of tourism that became popular in Nicaragua during the past two decades.

Recently tourist numbers grew from 800,000 in 2005 to 1,132,000 in 2009 (INTUR, Boletín de Estadísticas de Turismo Nicaragua, 2009). For the first five months of 2012, a

growth of 11.8% compared to 2011 took place and a continuous growth in tourism is expected (Alvarez Hidalgo, 2012). This growth took place after a turbulent past full of conflict, and tourism skyrocketed to the top of the country's export in less than a decade after the 1980s. The country knows an open-door policy for foreign investors in tourism to enhance the potential benefits to be derived from tourism activities. Yet, the wealth distribution in Nicaragua remains to be the second most unequal on the planet (Hunt, 2011). This indicates that, despite tourism having seen a considerable growth recently, benefits from the toursim sector may also be characterized by huge differences and inequalities. The extent to which tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation is therefore an often debated issue. In this debate, the role of the poor in tourism needs to be considered. Often, the role of the poor in the tourism sector in developing countries is within the informal sector, as the formal tourism sector is predominated by skilled laborers and foreign ownership (Brohman, 1996; Ashley, 2000).

3.3 The informal sector

As tourism encompasses a broad sector with multiple sectors indirectly involved, so is the informal sector. In Nicaragua the informal sector is characterized by several aspects. Despite the liberalization of the tourism commercial markets and privatization which brought along a huge increase in labour demand, the unemployment rate did not decrease to below 10% of the active population of Nicaragua (Sánchez-Ancochea, 2007). Meanwhile, the percentage of Nicaraguans active in the informal sector have increased between 1985 and 1999 from 52% to 71% (UNDP, 2000). Although data differ – the Economic Commision of Latin America and the Carribean (ECLAC, 2004) estimates the informal sector in Nicaragua to constitute of 58% of the active population in 2003 – a considerable growth in the informal sector has clearly been seen over the past decades.

Street vending is among the informal sector activities in which there is most interaction between tourists and street vendors (Steel, 2011). However, not much literature has been dedicated to the relation between tourism and street vending. As Griet Steel argues in her dissertation about street vendors in Cusco, Peru, most academics carry out research about policies against street vending practices (Steel, 2008). For the tourism sector street vending activities can be perceived as both positive or negative. On the one hand, street vendors are associated with poverty and chaos, and are thus often seen as a barrier to tourism development. On the other hand, they can be seen as representatives of the indigenous population, and so promote tourism (Steel, 2008).

3.4 Granada

Granada is the capital of the department of Granada and the fourth city of Nicaragua in terms of population size, with an estimated population of 168,168 (INIDE, 2007). Although not the biggest city, Granada receives annually by far the highest number of tourists in Nicaragua: in 2010 over 400,000 tourists visited the *centro turistico,* or tourist center, of the colonial city. Putting this in the context of the total number of international tourists to Nicaragua, nearly 1 million in 2010, makes Granada an important tourist destination in the country (INTUR, 2010).

As a colonial city located alongside Central America's biggest lake, *Lago Cocibolca* or Lake Nicaragua, it has a favorable and more peaceful location for tourists over the capital Managua. The city of Granada had a complete makeover, and the ongoing renovation of several historic buildings make it an attractive place for international visitors. A wide range of tourists visits Granada; including day trippers, tour groups, backpackers, luxury tourists, etcetera. Tourism services adapt to the varying wishes of the tourists, with both low key to upscale accommodation and restaurants available (Babb, 2004).

Figure 2: Indication of main tourist areas in Granada. Red numbers are major hotels, purple numbers sites of interest. Adapted from INTUR, 2000.

Tourism in Granada is geographically limited to the center of the city. The following areas are important parts of the tourism scene, to be seen in the map of figure 2 and photo figure 3:

- The central park, officially named Parque Colon. The park is a place for locals to gather and share the latest news or take a rest on one of the numerous benches. There are various tour agencies, hotels and restaurants based around the park, and in the park itself tourists can buy souvenirs and jewelry. Several food stands and occasional market stands make the park and the attached square in front of the cathedral the vivid center of Granada.
- Calle La Calzada, the street running from the park towards the lake, is partly traffic free and full of bars and restaurants that cater for tourists. During the day the street is quiet, until the evening starts and people walk, sit at one of the multiple terraces or go to bars and restaurants. Besides tourists and locals going out, the street fills up with musicians, street vendors and children begging for food or money.
- *Centro turistico*, or tourist center, refers to the strip at the lakeside that is lined with restaurants and facilities to spend a day at the lake. At the moment, it is not the popular place that it used to be, and many facilities are damaged. However, plans

from entrepreneurs to invest in new bars, in combination with the municipality's plan to clean up the Calle La Calzada, could mean a revival of the tourist center.

Figure 3: Cathedral and entrance to the park from Calle La Calzada, the main tourist street. Photograph taken by author on 4 May 2012.

3.5 Conclusion

Nicaragua is the largest and least densely populated country of Central America and after Haiti the poorest country of the Western hemisphere. Inequality is high, and the bad economic situation is ascribed to a history of violence and unstable political situations. The percentage of the active population engaged in the informal sector is estimated on 58% in 2003 (ECLAC, 2004), in which street vending plays a considerable role. Tourism is growing in Nicaragua in general and Granada in specific, which means tourism and street vending activities in Granada are inevitably related one way or another.

Chapter 4: Tourism in Granada

Granada is the most visited destination of Nicaragua (INTUR, Boletín de Estadísticas de Turismo Nicaragua, 2009). Tourism is a part of the city since decades, attracting visitors from all over the world and from Nicaragua and neighboring countries as well. However, as tourist numbers started to increase since the 2000s, the question arises whether the city will be part of tourism instead of the other way around.

4.1 Characteristics and perspectives

Walking down the streets of Granada, it is not difficult to imagine the city some centuries ago. The blocks of colonial houses with facades painted in bright colors and wooden balks hanging over creating shadow to keep away the heat, right on the small streets which are full of life, all together create a certain atmosphere. Many visitors feel attracted to this image of a city that claims to be the oldest colonial city of Central America. Comparing the city to Managua, the capital of Nicaragua, Granada is a peaceful town in which one can take an easy stroll, whereas in Managua one cannot imagine to walk anywhere at all and many sites of interest have been lost in earthquakes. Besides, for many visitors, both national and international, Granada's favorable position is due to the city's position at the side of the largest lake of Central America, Lago Cocibolca. These characteristics made the city an interesting spot for visitors since long ago. However, only since the 1980s a gradual increase in tourists is noticed due to the strong earthquake in 1972 destroying many parts of Managua and the regime of Somoza did not end until the starting of the 1980s (Olivares & Menero, 2005). And from 1999 on, Granada has developed at a more rapid pace as a tourism destination (Rosales-Montano, 2010).

Tourism in Granada is characterized by the fact that it is very limited to the center of the city. Figure 4 shows the main tourist area within the borders and the larger center in the circle. The majority of hotels and other tourist facilities are based in the central area of Granada, and so are the tourists visiting the city. The center is spread out around the central park, and the colonial style blocks of streets reach out north, south, east and west until lake Cocibolca. The city center is - something which is quite unique for Nicaragua - welcoming pedestrians with many small one-way roads and parts of Calle La Calzada closed down for motorized traffic.

To understand the attractiveness of Granada better, it is important to put the city as a tourism destination in perspective. First, Granada is positioned within Nicaragua as a tourism destination. Second, the perspective on Granada within the whole of Central America is focused upon. Granada's selling point is the architecture, colonial heritage and the atmosphere this brings along throughout the whole city. Compared to other places in Nicaragua, Granada is comfortable and pedestrian friendly, relatively safe and all types of facilities are present to cater for various demands of tourists. Other cities that possess over various attractions such as Léon, have this to a lesser degree. Several other places of interest to tourists have limited Western-orientated facilities, and therefore attract only certain types of tourists, such as backpackers. Granada on the other hand, with its range in facilities, from budget to luxury, attracts all types of tourists. In many cases, Granada serves as the comfortable basis from which to explore other sights and activities in the surroundings.

The existence of an extending tourism sector in Granada causes the city to grow rapidly and agglomerate with neighboring villages. Many people from the outskirts of Granada come to the city center to buy daily supplies, and trading is also a central affair. The combination of tourists and tourism facilities with the ongoing daily trade and market activities make the center of Granada a dynamic and busy area.

Within the whole of Central America, Granada is often compared with other colonial cities, mainly Antigua in Guatemala (Propín Frejomil & Sánchez Crispín, 2010; Cañada, 2010). Both cities 'breathe' the same style and offer a variety of attractions and facilities to all types of tourists. However, the context is entirely different, as Guatemalan and Nicaraguan culture and traditions differ, as well as the surrounding attractions.

Central American governments recognized tourism as a potentially beneficial sector in the early 1990s. Political instability and violence in Nicaragua and other parts of Central America caused a slower take-off of tourism than for example Southern Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama. Tourism development in Central America is now marked by enormous differences in each country (Cañada, 2010). To illustrate, Nicaragua's neighbor Costa Rica has positioned itself as a tourism destination since decades and is now well-known. Costa Rica already reached a different stage of tourism development, in which many decisions, constructions and directions have been made. Nicaragua on the other hand is a relatively young destination, with its directions towards tourism development still in a starting phase and decisions still to be concretized.

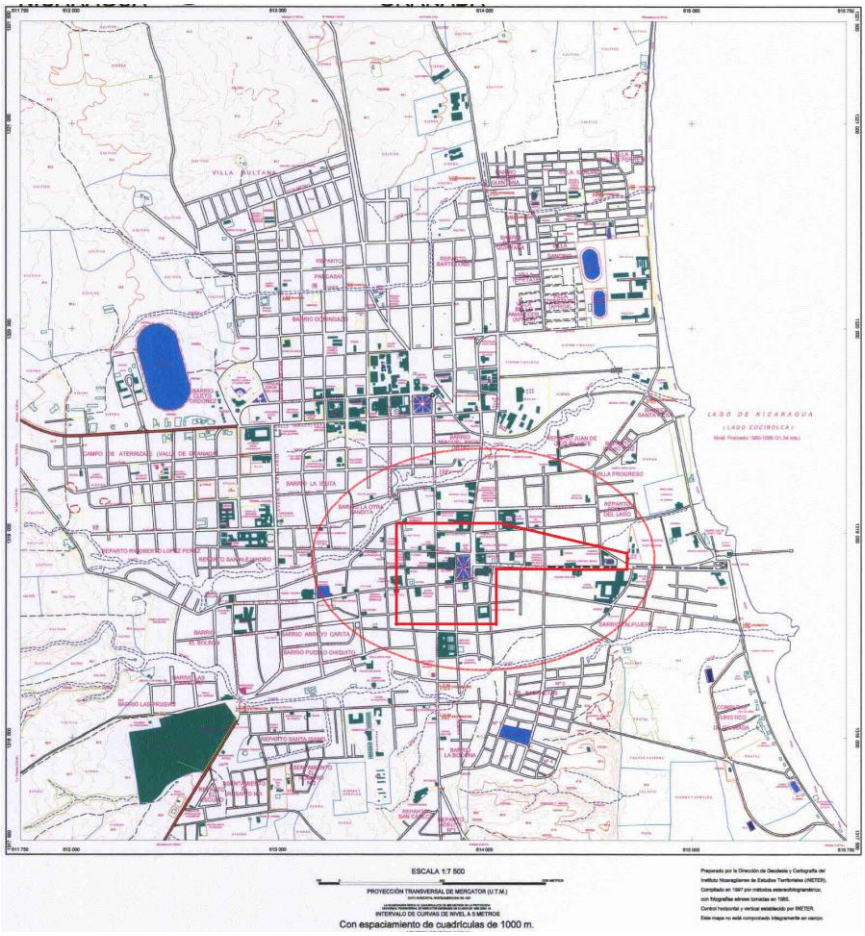

Figure 4: main tourist facilities in the inner borders, center of Granada in the circle. Source: INTUR

4.3 Tourism facilities and attractions

The tourist map in figure 5 shows a close-up of the city center with an indication of the main attractions and hotels. Most hotels are located a few blocks from the central park or on the Calle La Calzada (stretching from the park east towards the lake). The interesting sights for tourists are also close to the central park.

In Granada, tourism facilities range from basic and low-scale to luxurious and up-scale in terms of accommodation and restaurants. There are currently over 70 different accommodations in Granada (INTUR, Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo, 2012). Although the well-known international hotel brands are absent, a variety of hotels offer a high level of service to a wide range of visitors. Many accommodations are situated in colonial buildings, and despite the fact that there are a few very large colonial houses, the hotels in Granada are still considered small and family-like.

Besides accommodation and a huge variety in (western) restaurants and bars catering for tourists, there are dozens of shops, beauty salons and spa's for tourists to visit. However, since most of the facilities for tourists are located in the very center of Granada, authentic Nicaragua style bars and restaurants can still be encountered a few blocks from the park.

Figure 5: Tourist map of Granada. Indication of hotels (red) and sites of interest (purple). Source: INTUR, 2000.

According to INTUR Granada and several entrepreneurs in the city center of Granada, the supply of accommodation is now characterized by more variation than in the past. A few decades ago, tourism to Granada was limited to higher-class visitors and a few pioneer-backpackers, and the accommodation and restaurant facilities catered to them. Nowadays the tourism facilities, alike the tourism scene, consists of a wide range of facilities. The most basic to the most luxurious can be encountered in present-day Granada, which indicates a varied tourism scene.

For many tourists the whole of Granada with its typical colonial architecture and atmosphere is the main aspect that draws them to the city, rather than one specific sight or

activity. Naturally, there are several attractions that most visitors would not want to miss while paying a visit to Granada. However, the combination of the atmosphere, colorful and vivid daily life on the streets, the comfortable way of being able to explore the city and a cathedral, a variety of churches and colonial heritage makes the city to a desired tourism destination in Nicaragua.

The city's attractions are accessible for all types of tourists since they can chose from organized or individual walking or biking tours, or horse carriage tours. Over 20 different tour operators offer tourist information and organized tours and are all located in the city center around the central park and Calle La Calzada. Four museums, five colonial churches, and several other historic buildings create a center full of sights for visitors. Other sights and activities around Granada include a visit to a cigar factory, a butterfly reserve, Laguna de Apoyo (a crater-lake reserve), San Pablo fortress, volcano Mombacho and a boat tour around the hundreds of tiny islands at the lakeside of Granada. Since Granada's position in Nicaragua is rather central, day trips to Masaya, a market and handicraft town about 20 kilometers away, and volcano Masaya can easily be made. Furthermore, the capital of Nicaragua, Managua is 40 kilometers away which provides easy access to international visitors arriving at the international airport Augusto C. Sandino.

4.4 Tourists

The tourists who visit Granada are essential in shaping the city as a tourism destination. Tourism flows and their demands create Granada's tourism scene. The flows of people, money, knowledge and skills that tourism brings along connects Granada to other localities around the globe. This interconnectedness occurs in both directions, hence Nicaraguan culture or typical aspects flow towards other localities through tourism as well.

The field research took place during Nicaraguan summer, which is considered the high season for tourism. However, the number of tourists seemed lower and of less constant nature than expected beforehand. This could be ascribed to many factors including the tourists' behavior, which is analyzed in the following paragraphs.

Tourists' nationalities visiting Nicaragua range from visitors from Central America (33.3%), United States and Canada (30.7%), to European countries (21.1%) such as the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Spain. According to INTUR the large majority of 98.6% of the tourists visit Nicaragua on their own account instead of organized (INTUR, Boletín de Estadísticas de Turismo Nicaragua, 2009). A percentage of 81.0% of the visitors have tourism purposes. The average length of stay in Granada is 2 to 3 nights (INTUR).

A few types of tourists are outlined into detail to understand their behavior and effect within the tourism scene. The division between organized and independent tourists is important, as in many cases the latter group has a much longer average length of stay than the organized tourist who spends little time in each destination. Although independent tourists, such as backpackers, spend less money on a daily basis and are thus considered of less importance by the governments of many developing countries, their length of stay and multiplier effect of the often local services they use compensates for this (van Egmond, 2007).

In Granada, the presence of both organized as well as independent tourists is evident. Independent tourists in Granada vary from young low-budget backpackers to (retired) couples or people visiting friends or relatives. The organized tourists often combine a trip to

several places in Nicaragua with a part of Costa Rica. Therefore, their stay in Granada is often limited to a few days. However, their expenditures are most likely to be higher than average. Another type of organized tourists consists of the cruise ship excursionists who come to Granada during half a day. After seeing the highlights of Granada, these groups leave for another destination and spend little time and money in Granada. These cruise ship tourists visit Granada with hundreds at the same time. This causes peaks in the tourism flow; however the influence of these visitors is different from other tourists since in most occasions no overnight stay is included. Generally, cruise ship tourists arrive in the morning from San Juan del Sur by coach, after which a city tour is part of the excursion. As there are hundreds of tourists arriving at once, Granada's city center is exceptionally full with street vendors. From observations it is noted that on the days on which cruise ships arrive and a part of the tourists on board undertake an excursion to the mainland, it is on average twice to three times as crowded with street vendors as on normal week days. Textbox 3 describes a day on which a cruise ship arrives.

Textbox 3. An invasion of tourists in Granada – On the 19th of March three buses arrive in front of the San Francisco Convent. Big groups of about 30-40 people each are walking around the city, watching a dance show set up for them in the park, surrounded by at least 10 street vendors: mainly ceramics (pots, vases and flutes) cashews and peanuts, heads and caps, hammocks, necklaces. Apparently a cruise ship arrived in San Juan del Sur, and the passengers go on a one-day bus trip to Granada and Masaya. On this day it is impossible for me to interview a street vendor, as they are way too busy trying to sell their goods to big groups of one-day visitors. I would think these groups are a huge gain for the street vendors, because their visit is short so they might like to buy a lot of souvenirs at once, and likely for a higher price due to their lack of knowledge about local prices. However, many street vendors tell me that it is the opposite of a huge opportunity for them: after Granada, the cruise ship tourists visit Masaya, the city famous for its tourist market. Furthermore they state that tourist guides keep the tourists from buying things from street vendors. *'When I approach them with my pitos (hand-made ceramic flutes) they immediately tell me 'one dollar', but if I would sell them for one dollar I loose! How can they ask for such a thing'.* (Lidia, 36 years, selling ceramic products, San Juan de Oriente)

Another type of tourist that cannot be categorized as one of the former discussed is the residential tourists that are present in Granada. Many of them are North American and European retirees or entrepreneurs who started a business in Granada, mainly in the tourism sector. They differ from other tourists in the length of stay and make use of long-term rental or purchase a house, however they often do not become a Nicaraguan citizen, and as foreigners with other cultural values and attitude they are considered part of the tourism scene.

Figure 6: Tourists on excursion from a cruise-ship that arrived in San Juan del Sur watch a dance performance staged especially for them in Granada's central park. On the left, street vendors with ceramics and cashew-nuts wait for their opportunity to sell. Photograph taken by author on 19 March 2012.

4.5 Stakeholders

For many entrepreneurs, the growing tourism scene in Granada is perceived as an opportunity to start a business. Restaurants, bars, accommodation or tour agencies are all present in Granada. As usual in the tourism sector, the majority of these businesses are small and medium enterprises (Kamp, 2012). Besides the formal tourism scene in Granada there is an uncontrolled and unorganized growth of entrepreneurship in the informal sector directly related to tourism. For example, in the tourist areas there are several unofficial tour guides and trip organizers who operate from public spaces and approach potential clients. Street vendors sell souvenirs and other products that tourists are likely to be interested in. Formal entrepreneurship related to the tourism scene in Granada is largely dominated by foreign owners, as most Nicaraguans are unable to make such investments (Mayorgo Rocha, 2005). Especially the more luxurious hotels and Western-orientated bars and restaurants are characterized by foreign ownership. Several North-Americans and Europeans engage in tourism businesses in Granada due to relatively low real estate prices compared to their country of origin. Moreover, little restrictions are put on foreign ownership and as Costa Rican property prices skyrocketed, Nicaragua is becoming more popular among foreign entrepreneurs. According to anthropologist Babb who is the author of the article 'From revolution to resorts in the New Nicaragua', Granada is fast becoming 'Americanized' (Babb, 2004). As a result of the increasing foreign ownership in recent years the real estate prices increased rapidly, creating a difficult environment for local entrepreneurs to operate in, as they often lack resources to initiate a business.

4.6 General tourism impacts

It should be noted that the economic benefits derived from the tourism sector are largely bypassing the local population (Hunt, 2011; Cañada, 2010). In some cases foreign ownership causes tension among the local and foreign residential population due to the unequal opportunities and feelings from local people of only receiving the negative impacts of tourism. These include the rise in property prices which creates difficulties for local people to purchase real estate (Mayorgo Rocha, 2005). Tourism is definitely part of the city, however a situation in which the city is part of tourism seems not very far away, since the municipality attempts to shape everything in such a way that tourism is attracted more. Moreover, the municipality encourages foreign ownership of the colonial buildings in Granada. This, because old colonial buildings which were once divided into several smaller houses are being brought into the old state, which municipality encourages for preserving the heritage. Other projects the municipality is currently focusing on include cleaning-up Calle La Calzada to maintain it as the main tourism street and there are plans to construct a souvenir market outside the city center to create sub centers[2].

The increase of tourism in Granada inevitably has wider impacts. Besides the impact on property prices, there are several environmental impacts from tourism[3]. It is well-known that tourists generally consume more water and power than the average inhabitant of a place, especially in upscale hotels where swimming pools and air-conditioning systems require constant power and water supply. Both water and power supplies are not always reliable in Granada, and since upscale hotels insist on providing their customers with these, costly, noisy and polluting alternatives by means of old generators are literally put on the streets on a regular basis. Evidently, besides the generators to foresee the customers' desires, the burden that tourism puts on water supply and power systems is very demanding.

Another environmental impact related to tourism in Granada is the pollution of Lake Nicaragua (or Cocibolca), the biggest lake of Central America. Due to the growing urban region of Granada and other towns at the lake side combined with environmental unawareness and insufficient and inadequate waste infrastructure, the lake is heavily polluted. Where twenty, thirty years ago Granadinos went for a swim in the lake just down Calle La Calzada to escape the heat, nowadays not many people dare to enter the polluted water. The exception to this is Semana Santa, the Eastern week in which many national tourists make a daytrip from several villages around Granada to the lakeside, and the lake fills quickly with people going for a swim. In the past however, the lakeside in Granada, where the *centro turistico* or tourist center is also based, consisting of a strip full of restaurants, bars, playgrounds and sanitary facilities, used to be much more popular among locals and other national tourists because it was clean and not yet that polluted (interview historian, Casa Tres Mundos). The share tourism has in the pollution of Lake Nicaragua is not known, however it is likely that an increase in tourism will gradually lead to more awareness for preserving the lake since it is one of Granada's assets. Several bar- and restaurant owners see potential in investing in an establishment at the Centro Turistico on the lakeside, which could stimulate tourism and this way encourage preservation of the lake.

[2] Interview with D. Membreño, responsible of the municipality's technical department of management of the historic center of Granada, 18 April 2012.

[3] Interview with D. Membreño, responsible of the municipality's technical department of management of the historic center of Granada, 18 April 2012.

Tourism affects the local population in a way that involves social and cultural aspects of society. Tourism activities generally bring along problems related to loss of cultural identity, increasing crime rates and prostitution (Babb, 2004). Moreover, the inequalities in wealth and opportunities between the local population and international tourists or foreigners who reside in Granada can cause tensions and problems within society.

An increase in (child) prostitution is a big but largely hidden impact of tourism in Granada (Cerda, 2006; interview municipality). Due to a lack of basic necessities of many families in and around Granada, various children and young adults are engaged in prostitution. There are known cases in which mothers sue the tourist for having sexual relations with minors, after which the tourist offers a certain amount of money big enough to leave the presecution behind[4]. It is also known that minors who engage in prostitution often use the informal sector as a cover, such as selling chewing gum or washing cars at traffic lights. During the field research there was no clear relation identified between street vendors in the informal sector and prostitution. It should be noted however, that this does not mean that none of the participants is engaged in prostitution, rather that it could have remained unrevealed due to issues of fear or shame.

4.7 Conclusion

Granada is the most visited destination in Nicaragua. Tourism is a part of the city since decades, attracting visitors from all over the world and from Nicaragua and neighboring countries as well. Compared to the rest of Nicaragua, Granada is a relatively safe and comfortable tourism destination. Nicaragua as a destination within a regional context of Central America is characterized by diversity as each country faces different tourism developments. Tourism in Granada is limited to the center of the city, in which many different facilities for all types of tourists can be found. There are many independent tourists who visit the city, however also quite some cruise ship excursionist which causes sudden peaks in the tourism flows as they visit Granada with hundreds of tourists at the same time. Then there is the group of retired Northern Americans who can be categorized as residential tourists. Tourism connects places and people as tourism flows direct to and from Granada. Money, knowledge and skills connect different localities. Since the tourism sector in Granada is largely dominated by foreign ownership, economic benefits from tourism largely bypass the local population. Besides economic impacts tourism enhances (child) prostitution and crime. The pollution of Lake Nicaragua can partly be ascribed to tourism development, however tourism can also encourage awareness and prevent further pollution since the sector is dependent on visual aspects such as the lake.

[4] In 2006, a case of a tourist paying a thirteen year old girl selling chewing gum to have sexual relations became known after the mother had declared it to the police. However, the case never reached court as the tourist paid her a certain amount of cash. It is assumed there are many more such cases that are never revealed due to the economic necessities of many families in Nicaragua (Cerda, 2006).

Chapter 5: Street vendors in Granada

This chapter aims to gain insight into street vending as a diverse sector. There are various differences among the street vendors in terms of age, gender, origin, products, and their perspective upon street vending. After presenting an overview with the main characteristics of street vendors in Granada, it is important to provide with an analysis of the factors involved in the process of enrolling in street vending activities and Granada as a setting for street vending. The street vendors' perspective on their livelihood and work is considered an essential part of the analysis of the street vending sector in Granada, and therefore included as well.

5.1 Main characteristics of street vendors in Granada

The types of street vendors are categorized on the basis of three indicators that are essential for understanding the diversity of street vending activities: mobility, product they sell and socio-economic status. The groups identified among the interviewed street vendors are, in order of increasing degree of mobility, commercial vendors with stands (5), artisans (6), and ambulant street vendors (21). The last group is subdivided into those with food (5), ceramics (8), hammocks (4) and other souvenirs (4). The differences between these last subgroups are only based on products and socio-economic status since the degree of mobility is equally high among ambulant street vendors.

5.1.1 Commercial vendors with stands

During the research I interviewed five commercial vendors with stands. These vendors distinguish themselves from other street vendors by their colorful green market stands on wheels. They were provided by the municipality of Granada in cooperation with the European Union in 2011 in an attempt to keep the park tidy and prevent the street vendors from occupying too much space (European Union, 2011). The stands, with fixed locations, are placed at the north side of the park, and at the end of the day the stand owners, living in Granada or nearby towns, take them with them to return the next day. The rules imposed by the municipality allow commercial vendors to sell seven days a week until dawn, at 6 pm. The stand gives them the opportunity to sell a wide variety of products targeted at tourists, such as bags, ceramics, t-shirts, dresses, jewelry and accessories. They are buy these products from other street vendors or on the main markets in Masaya or Managua. Most interviewees categorized as commercial vendors work as a couple or with other family members, running the business together. The main reasons to engage with street vending are out of necessity and because of perceived opportunities from tourism. The age and gender of the commercial vendors is diverse due to the fact that there are often many family members involved, hence ages range from 15 to 60, with the actual owners of the stand aged between 26 and 52, the majority with children. For all interviewed commercial street vendors, their work is their main occupation.

5.1.2 Artisans

The artisans are a group of street vendors making their own products by hand, mostly jewelry or accessories. The majority of artisans have a table where they expose their products, and

put this table on a fixed spot in the park or in Calle La Calzada. The table is made of light weight wood and designed to fold and take it anywhere relatively easy which increases their mobility. They use their mobility in case of heavy rainfall or at the end of the day when the *movimiento*[5] shifts from the park towards the Calle La Calzada, and some artisans follow this.

Most of the artisans who are permanently based in the park live in Granada or nearby villages, whereas some temporary artisans come from other Latin American countries. In the majority of cases, street vending is their main occupation. The age of the six interviewed artisans varies between 20 and 34 and all are male. Some have a partner and children, others do not and in most cases live with their (grand) parents.

5.1.3 Ambulant street vendors

Ambulant street vendors are characterized by a high degree of mobility; the ambulant street vendor sells products on the streets while walking from one place to another, not bound to any locality. Among the ambulant street vendors in Granada there are several groups to be identified. These different types of ambulant street vendors are based on the product they sell, although it is not the only aspect in which differences can be encountered. The following types of ambulant street vendors are identified in Granada:

- *Ambulant street vendors with food or other consumer goods:*

Street vendors selling food or other consumer goods in Granada are extremely mobile street vendors. The products they are selling are, among others, peanuts, cashew nuts, *rosquillas* (a typical Nicaraguan cookie), ice creams, bread and candy[6]. The food and other consumer goods category described here, includes those street vendors in the central area of Granada who walk around selling small snacks. The goods they sell are generally supplied by others living nearby, some do however prepare the end product themselves, such as seasoning peanuts or other snacks. The main reason for them to engage in street vending is the necessity to earn money to sustain their lives and that of their families.

The five interviewed ambulant street vendors selling food and other consumer goods are aged between 19 and 70, however informal talks with many others suggest an age range between 8 and 70. Both women and men are involved in selling food and other consumer goods, mostly as their main occupation however sometimes as additional earnings besides agricultural labor. Furthermore, the origin of this type of street vendor differs a lot. In textbox 4 a street vendor selling a local specialty from the north of Nicaragua is highlighted. Overall, it is important to note the variety within this group of ambulant street vendors, which indicates an extremely diverse scene which is difficult to categorize.

[5] Movimiento is a Spanish word that can be translated into English as movement, motion or action. In this context, the word refers to a whole of flows of people and ongoing activities on the street, creating a certain degree of movement determining street life of Granada.

[6] This category within the ambulant street vendor is the one with the largest variety in products; on the streets of Granada one can encounter all types of consumer goods for sale from a street vendor. However, as the research in an early phase focuses on the central park and main street area, many street vendors who are operating mainly around the market streets have been excluded. The reason for this is the fact that this is yet another – incredibly large – category of street vendors catering for the local market, and more towards market sales. Goods that are sold include copies of dvd's and cd's, as well as mattresses, remote controls, phone chargers, construction tools etcetera.

Textbox 4. Rosquillas from Somoto - Among the street vendors selling food there is a different subgroup selling the typical cookie *rosquilla*. Several street vendors from Somoto, a town in the north of the country, come to Granada to sell their town's pride. They appear to generate a higher income than those selling other snacks, due to the fact that it is a specialty from another town not that often sold and therefore highly wanted. However, for the rosquilla vendor a day in Granada is different than for a local peanut vendor who returns home after a hard day work. The rosquilla vendor stays in Granada until having sold all his produce and then returns. Often this urges them to sell from early in the morning until late evening, sleeping in an acquaintance house or on a bench in the park.

- *Ambulant street vendors with ceramics:*

Without any exception all eight interviewed street vendors selling ceramics encountered on the streets of Granada are from a nearby town called San Juan de Oriente. This village is also known as *pueblo blanco* or 'white village', referring to its tradition in producing ceramics. The skills and knowledge on producing ceramic vases, pots, bowls and other decorations are passed on from generation to generation. Hence, the street vendor is not only occupied with selling but with producing as well. Street vendors selling ceramic goods are generally presenting their products with pride due to the fact that it is a handmade art craft which is part of Nicaraguan culture. The majority of the street vendors do sell the ceramic pieces out of economic necessity; however their motivation to start to produce ceramics derives from a different source as the skills were passed on from other generations. Hence, for them it is not a matter of decision to start selling or producing a certain product, it is rather an inevitably occurring tradition.

The age of the interviewed street vendors selling ceramics ranges between 12 and 40, with both female and male street vendors present in Granada. Many teenagers are involved in selling ceramics and for them it is a side job next to studies or other labor. For the adult street vendors it is often their main occupation.

- *Ambulant street vendors with hammocks:*

All four interviewed hammock vendors come from places scattered in the north of Nicaragua, where for many inhabitants a worsening socio-economic situation stimulates people to search for alternatives elsewhere. These street vendors come to Granada and stay until having sold all hammocks they have made at home together with family members. They stay with friends or in the open air for three to four days on average before returning home, and often work from early morning until late evening. The main reason engaging in street vending activities is the need for (additional) income next to agricultural activities. Therefore their visits to Granada to sell depend on the amount of work that needs to be done at a certain moment on the farm. For this reason, the flexibility of street vending serves them well as they can enter and withdraw any time they want. There are several children selling hammocks in Granada, as well as both female and male adults. The interviewed hammock street vendors were all aged between 14 and 55. Figure 7 on page 32 shows the origins of the street vendors.

- *Ambulant street vendors with other souvenirs:*

This group of street vendors comprises of those selling several souvenir type of products such as heads and caps, key rings or small notebooks and paintings, with 'Nicaragua' or a

typical picture on it. These street vendors can be identified as a different group of ambulant street vendors due to the fact they sell obvious products targeted at tourists. Hence, their main target group exists of tourists, both national and international. This group of street vendors acknowledges the reason for engaging in street vending activities is tourism and that they are therefore highly dependent on tourism flows.

The four interviewed souvenir vendors are aged between 21 and 35 years old, both male and female street vendors participated in the research. All interviewees come from Granada or surroundings and buy their products on markets or from the producers themselves. For some interviewees street vending is their main occupation, for others the tourism season determines their engagement in street vending activities.

Figure 7: map with origins of street vendors indicated. Source: adapted from INITER, 2012.

5.2 The road that leads to street vending

Ismael, 24, artisan, Granada – 'Well I came here (as a street vendor) because my brother was already working here. It was because my family had a hard time, in the beginning. We are poor now, but in the past we were poorer. The house we were living in was very… you don't want to know, it was like a house made of boards mixed with plastic. So it was a very critical situation. My father needed 2 years to recover from an accident in which he lost his memory. And then my mother started to sell fruits and all that, we didn't have much resources to eat well and have what we wanted. Then my brother, he was the oldest, he had a little bit of conscience that this couldn't go on like this. He told my mother that he wanted to work, first he started in the market carrying stuff from other people, he worked a year helping around in

the market. And he made money. So sometimes it went well, he sometimes earned 50 Cordoba's a day, after that he sold tomatoes. So my brother told me let's go and I went as well, carrying stuff from people and selling tomatoes. I was 8 years old. And it went well. After that I was doing different things, like selling chewing gum, shoe shining, because my life was like that, work, work'.

For Ismael, the difficult socio-economic situation of his family led to his involvement in street vending, something which is illustrative for many respondents. The livelihood situation of street vendors in Granada largely determines their motivation to engage with street vending activities. The interviewed street vendors emphasize that a combination of a difficult socio-economic situation, a lack of alternatives to make a living and the accessibility of the street vending sector led to their involvement in street vending. However, several factors play a role in the decision to engage in street vending beyond economic reasons. The easy access to street vending combined with the flexibility and freedom makes the sector an attractive choice for many. As many respondents outlined, alternatives in the formal sector often require a certain level of education, licenses, paperwork and are most likely less flexible. Street vending can be combined with other labor due to its flexible nature that the street vendor him- or herself decides upon. Out of the interviews it can be concluded that social factors such as difficult family situations or a desire for independence contribute to the decision to enroll in street vending as well. Many of the interviewed street vendors indicate that their choice of enrolling in street vending activities and the product they sell is a combination of these aspects.

Before working as a street vendor in Granada, about half of the interviewees were studying. Some finished elementary or high school, while others quit school at the age of 8 to start working as a street vendor or helper. The majority of the artisans quit their studies during or after high school and started to explore their hobby, making jewelry and accessories, as their job. Other street vendors, such as the commercial vendors and ambulant street vendors, were often engaged in agriculture, studying or in the case of women working in and around the house to take care of the family. It is not surprising that the street vendor scene is dominated by people with a level of education below average, hence it becomes more difficult to enter the formal sector as many jobs often require a certain level of education. The informal sector is extremely accessible compared to formal employment.

Several respondents have always been street vending in their working life and in many cases they are engaged in the sector from a very young age. The interviewees work, on average, since 7.5 years as a street vendor. However, the fact that I spoke with interviewees whose second day as a street vendor just started as well as those working as a street vendor for over 17 years now, indicates a huge variety in the starting phase. The main reason to enter the street vending sector is for most interviewees the necessity of money to be able to improve and sustain their livelihood. It should be noted that in the current economic situation in Nicaragua there is no abundance in employment opportunities or other alternatives to earn an income, which evidently plays an important role in the reasoning of the street vendors, as Francisco illustrates:

Francisco, 37, selling hammocks, Estelí – 'The economic situation plays a role in my decision (to start as a street vendor) because there are many necessities and little money in this country so many more people will start street vending. And there are no jobs at all. You need

lots of papers and formalities, and for that there is no reason to search for a job. We have to sell what we can. Just to be able to eat'.

For some younger street vendors, mostly those selling ceramics, an additional reason to engage in street vending activities is to save money specifically for study purposes. For many of the interviewed adult street vendors with children, earning money for the study purposes of their children is part of their main reason that is to improve their livelihood. The interviewed artisans mentioned other reasons next to having the necessities, which is being an artisan in itself since it is their passion.

For several respondents street vending serves as livelihood diversification, in which seasonality in agriculture plays an important role. Since agricultural activities are low in certain times of the year coinciding with the high season of tourism, street vendors chose to diversify their income this way. Many other interviewees mentioned their work in and around the house and helping the family in agriculture or around the house and family businesses. It can be concluded that a choice for street vending, although at first sight based on economic necessities, is also based on many reasons beyond the economic aspect.

5.3 Granada and the street vending sector

Maria Elena, 21, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'Before, we had more freedom to walk around selling, here in the park they (the municipality) did not tell us anything, now there are more... There weren't these cars (commercial vendors with stands), there weren't many street vendors, we were selling more, because there weren't many street vendors and now there are many. Quite some competition'.

The setting in which many street vendors operate in Granada comprises of the central area of the city, mainly the park, the attached square next to the cathedral and the Calle La Calzada, also besides the park. As Maria Elena and other interviewees emphasize, there is an increasing competition among the street vendors.

The interviewed street vendors who are not from Granada chose for the city as their work field because of the opportunities for selling. They stress that the number of tourists and the busy center of Granada in general are reasons for them to choose for Granada out of other options. Those who live in or near to the city chose for Granada for the same reasons combined with the level of comfort and accessibility that goes with it since they live nearby. Besides Granada however, there are several other places that street vendors visit on a more or less regular basis; mainly San Juan del Sur and Leon because of the cruise ship terminals in or near these places that cause sudden peeks in the tourism flows.

Wismar, 25 years, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente - 'The times that I go to San Juan del Sur is when there are big ships coming in, with gringos. Around 300 persons, or more. That is when I decide to go there. And then when they do not walk with the guide anymore, that's when there is the advantage. Because the guide damages street vending a lot, he tells that it is cheaper in another place, this is very expensive. And to be honest among each other we feel very offended, because we work too. And they say that for one piece (of ceramic) that I sell for ten dollars, they say five dollars. But that's very little considering all the processes that the product has to go through'.

Other respondents mention the increasing competition in Granada and the decreasing tourism flows as reasons to opt for a different place to sell their goods together with the ability to ask for higher prices in some places. The mobility of ambulant street vendors creates an environment in which they operate that is multi-faceted due to their frequently changing and unstructured work fields that are adapted to their ideas about opportunities. In Granada, this creates an ever-changing dynamic street vending environment marked by irregularity.

In contrast with Steel's research area in Cusco, a city in Peru with a considerably large tourism sector, Granada's local government does not intent to act rigorous against street vendors. Besides the attempts of the municipality to regulate and restrict street vending activities, there is no intention to completely prohibit street vending because of the enormous size of the informal sector in general. Granada's central streets around the market are lined with small informal businesses and to prohibit street vending would also mean these activities should be abandoned. Plans for a bigger market that should give space to more vendors could mean a more regulated environment for the street vending sector in general. For the artisans, the arrival of a permission system in 2008 seems to have changed their way of working. During the 6 interviews I had with artisans it appeared that the artisans have a rather relaxed lifestyle, in which future plans are often flexible and open. Unplanned travels and parties are part of their daily life, and in between they find a way to make a living, as if it were a subordinate aspect. However, with the arrival of the permission system this has changed, as the municipality forces artisans to pay for permission for the space they occupy, and currently no new permissions are handed out. The municipality wants to create a park with less street vendors, so whenever an artisan with permission leaves, no one can opt for that permission anymore. This means that those artisans left in the park are becoming more and more 'serious' about their work and lifestyle. There are several artisans that occupy space in the park and in the Calle La Calzada illegally, without paying for permission. Those are mainly the less stabilized artisans, coming and going, with different nationalities such as Panamans and Mexicans. Even though they are considered to have an illegal status in terms of occupying a fixed spot without permission, the municipality so far does not take measures against this illegality[7].

Apart from the vendors occupying a fixed spot at the sides of the park, among which are several artisans and commercial vendors, rules and restrictions specific for street vendors are nonexistent. This tolerance allows street vendors to relate to tourists without any barriers in the public spaces of Granada. In several hotels, cafeterias and other tourist facilities street vendors are welcome to offer their products to clients. Hence, an overall tolerating society creates a seemingly easy environment in which the street vendors operate. In comparison to the situation in Cusco or Honduras (Steel 2011; Hasemann, 2009), this degree of tolerance is exceptional, and might be related to the fact that tourism in Granada is in an earlier stage with less tourism development and fewer street vendors specifically selling to tourists.

[7] Interview with D. Membreño, responsible of the municipality's technical department of management of the historic center of Granada, 18 April 2012.

5.4 From the street vendors' eyes: perspective on street vending, livelihood and tourism

5.4.1 Ideas about street vending

Dinoshka, 24, selling ceramics and other souvenirs, San Juan de Oriente – '….Selling, well, right now it's not going that well. Because there is a lot of competition, some street vendors lower their prices, and the paint for our products is expensive and difficult to find, even the price of clay is increasing. And besides the work I don't get the price that I should get. For us sometimes it is better to sell it even though the price is too low, we can't keep the products and earn nothing. But it's nice. I like it when I'm walking around, well because you get to know more people, you exchange ideas, you will get new ideas, like that. You go around getting to know things, to know people. So, it's nice, I like it'.

The optimism that can be derived from Dinoshka's perspective at street vending is representative for many other interviewees. Despite several negative aspects, including the increase in competition, subsequent lower earnings and hard work, there is still space to view the positive side of working as a street vendor. Other interviewed street vendors mention the flexibility, independence and feeling proud when selling their own produce as positive aspects of street vending. The most common answered positive side of street vending is to get to know people, sometimes specifically tourists, and the agency, independence and flexibility a street vendor has to structure their own time. Negative aspects of street vending include an instable income with days without any earnings, having to cope with the high temperatures and harsh sun during summer, heavy rains during winter and walking around all day with heavy bags. Nonetheless, the numerous negative sides of street vending do not withhold or discourage street vendors from thinking positively about what their life as a street vendor entails.

Despite the relatively optimistic perspective on street vending, most interviewees with children emphasize their desire that their children will not have to work as a street vendor in the future. Several children help their parents with street vending during the weekends and go to school during the weekdays. All parents stress the importance of good education for their children in order for them not having to work on the streets. Marisela, mother of 12-year old Fabiola, both selling ceramic products from San Juan de Oriente, outlines her perspective on the importance of education and not to enter marriage at a young age:

Marisela, 30, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'I think it is better to continue studying and not depend on a man at a young age. Because I'm a single mother and it's very hard, it's better to study and work, and then marry at an older age like the tourists do, at the age of 30, 28. But here the majority of girls marry young, and then they (the husbands) leave us with the responsibilities. And we have to work to keep going, for the children to be able to study, to make sure they don't lack food and clothes'.

This indicates - despite the positive approach towards street vending - a possible resign to the current economic situation and the interviewees' own hope to no longer work as a street vendor one day.

The perspective the interviewees have on their livelihood and within this their work as a street vendor, corresponds to the other characteristics they have in common, since it is also

marked by diversity. On one hand, several interviewed street vendors comment with a saying when they are asked about their thoughts about their work and life, one of them Ricardo (21 years old, selling small postcards, Granada): *'I prefer to go around selling than to go around robbing'*. This indicates that for various interviewees, street vending is a sort of 'last resort', an option to generate income that is not their preferred one. Lack of other alternatives make this the best option considering the contextual factors like level of education, connections in the work field, the current bad economic situation with an unemployment percentage of 7.3% in 2011 and 46.5% of *under*employment in 2008 (World Factbook Nicaragua, 2012). On the other hand, there are some artisan street vendors whose view upon their work is rather different:

Carlos, 34 , artisan, Granada – 'Handicrafts, artisans, these are very important to make things. As we are now in an industrialized time, with many machines, everything goes fast, sometimes people forget about how important it is to make something by hand. Now you can say that this, artisan work, is conserving it. The artisan way of making things, and that the people can value that aspect, the local people as well as the foreigners. Not all the local people, very little value this, but I know we are not that industrialized here. The foreigners appreciate the handmade works a lot, of course, because in Europe, United States, many things are made by machines. So they like something like this. It makes us happy, and it makes us happy when the local people start to realize the value as well. We like it when Nicaraguans buy, when they like it. So… artisan work, to me, is very important'.

The fact that, like Carlos, several other artisans express feelings of pride and importance related to their work as an artisan indicates a perspective that differs from other street vendors. Artisans see themselves as a distinct group of street vendors, and prefer to be seen as artists rather than commercial vendors. They are proud of their work and many mention the responsibility they carry to sustain the Nicaraguan culture by making jewelry out of (mostly) natural pieces. Moreover, many interviewed artisan street vendors do not mention the street vending aspect, making it a subsequent aspect of their work. Almost all interviewed artisans view their work as something that started as a hobby, then evolved into their passion and now they generate income with it. They value the fact that they can survive with their passion and keep learning new techniques from other artisans. Their view upon their own work situation as a street vendor is not only dissimilar from others; also the way they perceive other types of street vendors seems different:

Ismael, 24, artisan, Granada – 'I don't want to be in the streets selling, I don't want people to see me like an adult who only sells chewing gum, no. So I thought, I'm going to start as an artisan, and I'm going to be here at this spot selling, but not walking from there to there anymore'.

5.4.2 Tourism: a reason to sell?

Carlos, 34, artisan, Granada – 'Tourists are important for our income. We can say we live from tourism, to nationals we don't sell that much. So for us (artisans) the tourists are important for our income… We depend on them, it definitely affects'.

Carlos, one of the interviewed artisans, literally states the important role of tourism in his work as a street vendor. Several other interviewed artisans, commercial vendors and ambulant street vendors selling souvenirs and ceramics indicate to be dependent on tourism to a higher or lower degree. However, this does not mean that all respondents who indicate this also engaged in street vending activities for that reason in the first place. Only a few ambulant street vendors selling souvenirs, together with commercial vendors with stands, mention that the opportunity that derives from tourism in Granada was a reason to engage with street vending and to sell a specific product. Since this does not coincide with the acknowledgement of the role of tourism in street vending, this might indicate that many street vendors are not fully aware of the opportunities that tourism can have for their livelihoods.

5.4.3 Opinions about livelihood

The way in which the interviewed street vendors in Granada view their livelihood ranges from those being desperate to earn money for paying the transport back to their home town, to others who consider themselves to be among the lucky few to have reached what they have reached. To illustrate, there are respondents who were unfortunate to not sell anything during a day or a couple of days in a row, which created situations in which they have to sleep on a bench in the park since they are unable to pay for the transport back home. On the other hand, there are interviewees who consider their life as a street vendor rather positive and are improving their livelihood over time. The aspect that makes it difficult to judge the livelihood and the improvement of livelihood of a street vendor is the uncertain and inconstant generation of income. When the interviewees view their livelihood over time, taking into consideration both bad times in which sales are very low as well as better times in which sales generated relatively good income at once, they are generally able to sustain their own and their families livelihood. Diversification strategies play an important role in this and they are used by many street vendors to cope with their vulnerable livelihoods.

The artisan street vendors who participated in this research stated not to have huge problems to maintain themselves with their work as a street vendor. However, almost all artisan street vendors commented that, from time to time, they face difficulties in terms of earning sufficient to foresee in basic needs. Some of the artisans who have been part of the informal sector quite some time – up to 11 years – have learned to cope with an insecure and highly fluctuating income:

Pedro, 31, artisan, Granada - 'Yes.. Thank god we have learned, well it has been eleven years since I started (as an artisan) but I was already with my wife and it was... We were two mouths then since four years, well let's say I was with this business, but since four years the job gained much stability, with my wife, the administration... And the production, the ideas that we have about what the client will like, then find good prices for the clients... And yes you can say it gives enough to pay the rent'.

Other artisans also confirm their work - and subsequently their livelihood - has gained some stability due to the introduction of the permission system and the possibility to lose the space to put their table when not taking their job seriously. Before, big earnings were more likely to be spent on partying or luxury expenses, while some artisans act upon an uncertain future nowadays by trying to save a little if possible. In this sense, there is quite some

difference between the artisans who are traveling around with a day-to-day perspective and often come and go to and from other (Central) American countries, and the more stabilized street vendors with their permanent spot in the park.

The interviewed ambulant street vendors and the commercial vendors seem to have more difficulties in maintaining themselves and their family with street vending than the artisans. In general, the interviewees mention that they are able to earn a sufficient amount to make a living for themselves and their families. It should be noted though that many street vendors are supported by family members, husbands or wives, with additional incomes from fixed jobs or agriculture. Those supported add that without the additional support it would be a different matter, probably too difficult. Several younger street vendors without their own family that they have to take care of, mentioned that it would be difficult to maintain a whole family with their job, and that insecurity would become a major issue.

Wilmer, 20, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'It is a little difficult, I once passed four days without selling anything. And among friends, well, we help each other too. A day like that or something alike, it's like 'take this, I lend you this much', and when they sell they pay back. And to be honest there are moments in which it gets tough. You have to stand the sun, walking thirsty, hungry, it's hard. But there are good times too, when you sell, and you feel comfortable'.

This quote from an interview with Wilmer illustrates the experience of many respondents, who face harsh circumstances and remain positive. Essential to the perception on livelihood and how street vendors cope with certain aspects of a (from time to time more) vulnerable livelihood are factors such as religion and faith. In Nicaragua, Christianity is the dominant religion and many people feel strengthened by their believe in God. Rather than a religion only, it brings people together and empowers them to cope with vulnerabilities. A large majority of the respondents mentions their faith in God and the way in which they feel supported by religion in the interviews, which indicates the importance of religion among the interviewed street vendors. Marisela, one of the street vendors selling ceramic products, illustrates the thoughts of various other interviewees:

Marisela, 30, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'I always manage to survive. Also because I always ask God to help me. And he always helps me, one way or another. There are days that I sell nothing, nothing at all. And it doesn't bother me as long as I come back home safely I'm good. Because tomorrow is another day and it will be better for sure'.

5.5 Conclusion

Street vending in Granada is characterized by the diverse nature of the street vendors' mobility, products to be sold and socio-economic background. Hence, theories such as the dualistic approach in which the informal sector is seen as a traditional survival mechanism, and the petty commodity production approach in which the informal is closely linked to the formal as a small-scale subsequence, are both not applicable in the case of Granada's street vending scene. As Teltscher (1994) argues the informal sector is too heterogeneous to belong to either one of the approaches. Instead of linked to formal labor or merely a survival mechanism, the street vending sector in Granada is characterized by diversity and multi-

locality. The interviewed street vendors have been divided into categories based on degree of mobility; commercial vendors with stand, artisans, ambulant street vendors who are further subdivided according to the product they sell. The setting for street vending, the center of Granada, is marked by tolerance. The current degree of tolerance towards street vendors seems exceptional compared to other countries such as Peru or Honduras (Steel, 2011; Hasemann, 2009). Tourism is for some respondents a reason to engage in street vending activities, however for many the potential opportunities from tourism were not among the main reasons to start selling. The optimistic perception of their livelihood is one of the most important insights gained. Social capital in terms of support and solidarity among street vendors and relatives in a multi-local perspective are vital factors in the determination of this optimism. Although most respondents state to be able to foresee in their necessities and those of their family, many need the support from relatives in terms of additional income of husbands or wives. For the interviewees with children, all agree that they do not want them to become a street vendor in the future. It can be concluded that although most street vending activities are not temporary and most interviewees are quite positive about their work, it is – with the exception of artisans - not the preferred livelihood strategy on a permanent basis.

Chapter 6: On the streets: where street vending and tourism meet

The relation between street vending and tourism in Granada is all but easy to grasp since the street vending sector is characterized by heterogeneity. The diversity of the street vending sector in Granada causes multiple ways in which the relation between street vending and tourism plays a role. On one hand, there are ambulant street vendors selling souvenirs specifically targeted at tourists, along with tourism growth. On the other hand, there are street vendors who sell a variety of products not necessarily tailored for tourists, of which both locals and tourists are buyers. Hence, the relation between street vending and tourism in Granada is not one-sided, in terms of influence of tourism as well as degrees of connectivity. Tourism connects the local with the global environment when tourists - from nearby or faraway places – visit a locality. The flow of tourists to Granada connects the city and its inhabitants to other localities by means of the visitors. Yet not only tourists who come to Granada connect the city with other places, people and cultures. Also the street vendors who come from Granada, nearby villages and cities in the north of Nicaragua all contribute to this connectivity. Hence, the connectivity of street vending and tourism in Granada plays a role on different scales.

6.1 Tourism market and local market

Granada's street vending sector is characterized by its varied market, which consists of both locals and tourists. In many cases, respondents indicated that their (potential) buyers are both locals and tourists, and in some cases they emphasized they do not perceive *Granadinos* and (foreign) tourists as different markets. Hence, the main difference between tourists and the local market blurs as soon as products to be sold are targeted at both markets. The interviewees who sell food and other consumer goods mention that the majority of their customers are local people, however it is not uncommon for tourists to buy from them as well. The artisans comment in their interviews that a mixture of national and international customers are interested in their products, however the international is more likely to value the hand-made aspect of the products more than the national. The commercial vendors with stands and ambulant souvenir vendors mention in their interviews that their main target group consists of tourists, both international and national, however during low season they are dependent on the local market as well.

Only a part of the respondents, among which several artisans, commercial vendors and ambulant street vendors selling specific souvenirs, indicated the differences between the local and tourist market. Some interviewees attempt to sell products at higher prices to foreign tourists after having learned that foreigners often have other perceptions about pricing and are generally able to pay higher sums of money. Others show their way of distinguishing the local and tourism market in the act of approaching more tourists rather than local people. However, the distinction between street vending for the local and tourism market is very blurred and the thin line is by most interviewed street vendors not perceived as such. For many respondents, the line does not exist at all and they try their luck based on occasions. The following comments from interviewees emphasize this:

Lidia, 36, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'I'm approaching the poor and the rich, to everyone I offer my products because I don't go just to certain persons, maybe I go to a person who isn't interested at all while I had the illusion that he was going to buy me. That's why I offer to everyone. To Granadinos and people from outside, everyone'.

Osman, 21, selling rosquillas, Somoto – 'I sell to all types of people. Without any exception, I even approach other street vendors because there are some who love rosquillas and they buy from me. If I meet people from Granada, or people from other places or foreigners, I approach them all in the same way. Some buy, others don't buy, it's like that. The only difference between foreigners and Nicaraguans for me is that Nicaraguans are more likely to know the product and then buy it because it's very famous this cookie, it almost sells itself. If they don't know it, it's harder to sell'.

The above mentioned quotes from respondents illustrate that the line between the local and tourism market is not clearly set. For Osman the difference between the markets depends on the awareness potential customers have about his product, and for Lidia and many other respondents the line is vague and she approaches both markets to try her chances. However, this image that the respondents provided me with does not completely coincide with the occurrences I perceived during numerous observations. For example, in a couple of cases when hundreds of cruise-ship tourists arrived in Granada at once, the majority of the street vendors flock around the group that walks around the city. Furthermore, many street vendors frequent the city's hotels and tourist-oriented restaurants which indicates that opportunities derived from tourism do not remain unrecognized. Hence, the line between the local and tourism market for street vendors does exist, however it is extremely flexible, based on what occurs at a certain moment in the street vending environment.

6.2 Connectivity between tourists and street vendors

In the physical environment street vendors and tourists are connected since both their activities take place in the center of Granada. Both street vendors and tourists are not passive actors in the setting which consists of the central streets of Granada. It is impossible for tourists as well as for street vendors not to come across each other, even if it is not the street vendor's intention to sell his product to tourists. However, in the cases the vendor is intentionally looking for tourists as potential buyers, the connectivity goes further. The ambulant street vendors approach the tourists and the interaction starts to continue verbally in Spanish, English or a mixture of signs and words. As Steel (Local encounters with globetrotters, 2011) argues in the case of Cusco, Peru and as I recognized from the interviews, despite the fact that these interactions are often of short-term nature, cross-cultural interactions contribute to social capital of the street vendors. Better understanding of tourists and their behavior, social skills acquirement and improving English vocabulary are examples of these. The interaction and connectivity between tourists and street vendors is however likely to end the moment the tourists leave Granada. Figure 8 shows an often encountered scene in central Granada.

In essence, contacts that street vendors maintain with tourists differ a lot from the relations street vendors maintain with their direct social networks (Steel, 2011). Since tourists and street vendors have different socio-economic backgrounds the contacts are vertical

affairs, whereas the social interactions with other street vendors are likely to be horizontal. Steel (Local encounters with globetrotters, 2011) recognized relationships in Cusco between street vendors and tourists who were staying for a longer period of time, such as volunteers or tourists studying Spanish. She identified long-term relationships such as a *compadrazgo* or godfather relationship with the street vendor's baptized children and a foreign tourist providing with economic support. Other cases of foreign support have led to improved socio-economic situation of some street vendors. In Granada, this seems much less so the case as none of the interviewees has any ties with foreign *compadrazgo* or receives economic support from abroad. Some street vendors receive support from residential tourists or by means of tips or food from other tourists; however this is not consistent economic support on a regular basis, as Steel (2011) encountered in Cusco. The support is often limited to the time a tourist is physically in Granada and thus of a short-term nature. Hence, the vertical social interactions that have potential to develop into a more horizontal relationship as Steel (2011) recognized, are less so the case in Granada since both the tourists' temporary stay and the street vendors' irregularity in their choice of work field inhibit this.

Figure 8: Street vendor offering products to two tourists in the central park of Granada. Photograph taken by author on 19 March 2012.

6.3: Strategies of street vendors

The strategies of a street vendor consist of a wide range of aspects which differ for each individual. For example, for several women with children, a way in which they combine generating income by working as a street vendor with taking care of their children is an

essential part of their strategy. For others, the strategies include the way in which they approach people with their products, the hours and days they work or the choice of the product itself. The latter is often based on the friends or family members who were engaged in street vending before, and certain products that are traded or produced in the street vendor's surroundings traditionally. An example of this is the production and sales of ceramics from San Juan de Oriente. Some interviewees do however claim that the presence of tourists has influence on the choice of products, or look at other street vendors and their businesses to determine a strategy:

Pedro, 34, selling heads and caps, Masaya – 'Well I sell these caps because no-one else sells them, just the stands over there. But I sell it cheaper, and I walk around, they don't. So there is very little competition in this, only sometimes just one person for one day or so. When there are big groups they buy a lot from me to take home with them. I sell mostly to North Americans and Costa Ricans, apparently they like these caps a lot'.

Pedro deliberately made a choice for a specific product to face less competition and because tourists are interested in it. This indicates a certain awareness of the opportunities that tourism can imply on street vendors in Granada.

The daily realities for a street vendor involve a working week of often six to seven days, from early morning to the evening and for some street vendors late at night being out on the street trying to make a living by selling their products. The respondents who produce their goods by themselves are often doing this during the evenings, whereas those coming from faraway places stay in Granada for several days in a row until having sold all their brought goods. Therefore they are often out on the street from early morning to midnight in order to sell their goods in a short time period. This is a considerable difference in the access to physical capital - such as housing and sanitation - between the ones who commute daily to their hometown and those who stay in Granada overnight. These quotes from respondents illustrate the difference:

Sancho, 18, selling hammocks, Estelí – 'I sell from the morning until all the people go home from the bars, around midnight, one or two at night. Then I sleep in the gas station or on a bench in the park or the Calle Calzada. Three, four nights, it depends. Until I have sold all the hammocks I brought, then I go back home'.

Carlos, 34, artisan, Granada – 'I work six days a week, from Monday to Saturday. Sunday is a day to rest with my family. Sometimes, when there is a special event going on we come on Sunday to. But Monday to Saturday is fixed, stable. From eight in the morning to six in the afternoon'.

The first quote indicates irregularity and uncertainty, whereas the second is of a more structured nature. The majority of the respondents stand somewhere in between the two examples given, although most of the street vendors from faraway places face the same irregularity and uncertainty as Sancho. Other street vendors who travel home on a daily basis as they live in or nearby Granada have a somewhat more structured way of working. However, irregularity still dominates their working life due to other tasks and labor they often carry out as well.

Most interviewees walk around in the city center of Granada unaccompanied to spread their chance of sales opportunities. Nevertheless, in the case of street vendors traveling to and from Granada, staying over in the city, or during the breaks they take, they often gather with fellow street vendors. The interviewed street vendors from Granada have many connections, whereas those from other places of the country or those who recently started street vending, are often familiar with a smaller group of fellow street vendors or no-one at all. This is a remarkable difference between the street vendors and divides them into two groups. For Pedro for example, his network is an important part of his strategies:

Pedro, 34, selling heads and caps, Masaya – 'We (street vendors) gather as friends, for example sit together to eat something. I could say we are all friends, we have mobile phones, so when there is a big group of tourists in a hotel over there at the lake, which is far away so I cannot see it from here, they call me and say 'there are people over there', and then I go over there'.

Those who have an extensive network in the street vending scene can always count on support if urgently needed, whereas those without this network face more vulnerability in their daily life as a street vendor. Often, the latter come from outside Granada, and are determined to stay in the city for several days. The difficulties faced when sales are not going well are therefore more extensive than for those living nearby, as these street vendors have no means of shelter, sanitation, and food whatsoever. It can be concluded that social capital is a vital part of the strategies of a street vendor in Granada. Moreover, social capital can reduce vulnerabilities faced in other capitals such as financial or physical capital when income is instable or in case of a lack of housing in Granada.

6.4 Connectivity between street vendors: competition and solidarity

The street vendors who are not citizens of Granada create and enhance interconnectivity as they come from various parts of the country. Flows of money, skills and social networks become interconnected since relatives back home are also involved in many ways, such as by providing with the (often hand-made) products and receiving parts of the earnings. At first sight, this connection with Granada and other places in Nicaragua has no relation with tourism. However, tourism is in many cases the essence of the connection; the number of visitors is the reason for street vendors to choose for Granada in the first place. Various street vendors might not explicitly opt for Granada as they perceive tourism as an opportunity for them to sell to tourists specifically, rather the general business and ongoing activity in the all-but-sleepy center of Granada encourages them. In the end, the degree of activities and *movimiento* is part of Granada due to its tourism sector.

According to the interviewees who have been active in the street vending sector in Granada for several years, the growth of tourism has been accompanied with an increase in the number of street vendors. Francisco, an ambulant street vendor from the north of the country who has been engaged in street vending activities for 15 years, comments:

Francisco, 37, selling hammocks, Estelí – 'There is more competition now, it used to be less. We were very few street vendors, and now wherever you will go you will see them. Now there

are more street vendors than clients. That's why this business almost doesn't give, before you could sell much more. Because there are many street vendors now'.

Francisco ascribes the increase in the number of street vendors and the subsequent growing competition to the critical socio-economic situation in Nicaragua. This creates more necessities among the population; hence more people take part in street vending activities. Together with the growing tourism sector the socio-economic situation is the main reason for increasing competition according to the respondents. Therefore, the relation between street vending and tourism based on growth of the latter seems evident. However, not all growth of the street vending sector can be ascribed to an increase of the tourism sector but to other factors like a deteriorating general economic situation as well.

The interviews and observations showed that there is generally a high level of respect among the street vendors in Granada. There are norms based on the moral perspective such as not to 'steal' another street vendor's client, and to stay away from a street vendor selling the same product for both street vendors' sake. Two respondents comment on these norms:

Frederico, 27, selling peanuts, Granada – 'The competition is hard for me but I don't think about selling another product. And something else, because the place where everyone walks is small (center of Granada), you cannot just stay in the same spot. You have to walk around, because if people buy from him, they don't buy from her (two street vendors with the same product), and if they buy from her, he cannot sell. So we try to give each other some space and walk around'.

Isamara, 20, selling cashew nuts, Granada – 'We all walk here but no-one disturbs anyone. For example if I see that another street vendor selling cashewnuts is trying to sell to someone, I'm not going to mess with his sales. Everyone is separate. There are no problems'.

However, with the street vending scene in Granada currently becoming increasingly competitive, this moral perspective sometimes reaches an imbalance. Several respondents emphasize the importance of respect since they realize 'we are all in the same thing, we all have necessities'. Nonetheless, some cases have been mentioned showing otherwise. Lidia, a 36-year old street vendor selling ceramic pieces, argues that new street vendors entering the scene damage the market by lowering their prices:

Lidia, 36, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'There's a lot of competition. For example, I would be here with you offering the products, negotiating quite some time, then there comes another street vendor and he offers you cheaper you will buy that one. So it's a competition nowadays, maybe even with envy. I don't like it, if I see a colleague selling I respect that because it takes some time to make the customer buy'.

It can be argued that Lidia and several other street vendors are bothered by the disrespect some other street vendors show against each other. They regard respect a very important aspect of street vending, however it is likely to change if imbalance continues to occur and other street vendors take advantage of this level of respect. Lidia and other street vendors' anger towards disrespectful colleagues could convert into a less solidary and more competitive and sharp street vending environment. However, the mobility and flexibility of

street vendors and the way in which these can be used to overcome such vulnerabilities could prove useful. In San Juan del Sur I have met five street vendors from San Juan de Oriente who commute to the coast on a daily basis instead of going to nearby Granada. They use their mobility of which street vendors possess to avoid the increasing competition in Granada and the consequences of a changing street vending environment in that city.

The interviewed street vendors highlighted the importance of support from others. Hence, street vendors regard aspects beyond the economic, such as social capital important to their livelihood. The social capital includes taking care of a street vendor's child, providing with a place to stay during the night for those from other parts of the country, lending money to pay for transport or a meal – all are among the interviewees' ways in which they receive support. Among the street vendors themselves, lending money, products or giving food or drinks is the most common way of helping each other out during difficult days. Wilmer's comment is illustrative for many street vendors with extensive networks:

Wilmer, 20, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'Well for example if you're my friend and you didn't sell anything, I would give you this, borrow you that. We help each other out'.

The interviewed artisans mention a network of artisans in which almost everyone is helpful and watch each other's products when necessary. Those artisans that have been there more or less permanently form a group of friends, whereas sometimes other artisans cause tension and fights have not been unheard of.

The aspects of solidarity and support are all part of social capital that street vendors possess; both in their locality as well as in the places they visit for street vending purposes. Steel (2011) concludes that street vendors' livelihood opportunities are not necessarily rooted in one place. Moreover, she argues that bonding social capital is not necessarily place bounded. Both can be confirmed by the observations and interviews with street vendors in Granada. Furthermore, Steel (2008) and Zoomers (2011) both argue that connections become more important for livelihoods in a globalized world. This is seen in the way the interviewed street vendors make use of their networks in different localities.

6.4 Conclusion

Granada's street vending sector is characterized by its varied market, which consists of both locals and tourists and the line between the two markets is often vague. Although flexible, the line between the local and tourism market does exist and is based on a momentary occurrence and not to be determined beforehand. The relation between street vending and tourism in Granada is not one-sided, in terms of influence of tourism as well as degrees of connectivity. The flow of tourists and the flow of street vendors from different places enhance interconnectedness and a translocal perspective is thus essential. Most contacts between street vendors and tourists are of a short-term nature, and *compadrazgo* relationships as Steel (2011) recognizes in Cusco, Peru, or other long-term support from tourists abroad are not familiar among the respondents in Granada. The strategies of the interviewed street vendors differ a lot; some are marked by irregularity whereas others created a structured work schedule. Moreover, access to physical capital such as housing and sanitation is for those street vendors living in far-away places not evident, whereas street vendors living nearby go home on a daily basis. To improve sales, some street vendors sell a

specific product, whereas others try to avoid the currently increasing competition by making use of their mobility and chose other places to sell. The interviewed street vendors generally stress a moral perspective of not stealing clients from fellow street vendors since everyone is in the same situation and deserves the right to engage in street vending. Social capital in terms of networks and solidarity are extremely important among the street vendors. In case of urgent need of money or food, these networks of street vendors become a safety net.

Chapter 7: Opportunities and threats from tourism

Tourism has been part of the development debate since the rise of pro-poor tourism approaches in the early 2000s. According to proponents, pro-poor tourism has the ability to address the poor and improve livelihoods by unlocking opportunities (Ashley, 2000). In this study the effect of tourism on livelihoods is central, and therefore it is essential to determine the so-called unlocking opportunities as well as potential threats. Since the street vending sector in Granada is extremely diverse, the opportunities and threats from tourism do not impact each street vendor equally. For some of the interviewed street vendors tourists are their most important buyers, whereas for others a decrease in the number of tourists would not have such big impacts. This should be taken into account when analyzing the opportunities and threats.

7.1 Opportunities

Granada's street vending scene is characterized by a thin and flexible line between street vending activities directed at the local or tourism market. Therefore it is extremely difficult to determine the opportunities derived from tourism for the street vending sector in Granada in general. Hence, various opportunities should be viewed within a context that is shaped by tourism, however with a note to street vending opportunities in general.

The most evident opportunity that tourism can imply for street vendors in Granada is economic gain. The extent to which economic benefits are derived from tourism remains unknown due to the issue of the mix between local and tourist markets. Nonetheless, various interviewees shared their experiences and those who sell goods to tourists are in the majority of cases positive about the economic benefits derived from tourism. Several interviewed artisans and commercial vendors are for the majority of their income dependent on tourism, hence for these groups it can be argued that tourism in Granada has economic benefits. However, the interviewed street vendors in Granada, unlike the street vendors in Cusco, do not generally recognize tourism as a tool that can help them to lift out of poverty (Steel, 2008). A reason for this could be the fact that tourism flows are bigger and of a more constant nature in Cusco than in Granada. Moreover, the line between local and tourist markets seems more established and separated in Cusco where a larger part of the street vendors specifically target tourists only.

Diversification strategies are important for many interviewed street vendors, except for artisans and most commercial street vendors. Tourism is for many respondents a tool to diversify their livelihood strategies by means of becoming engaged in street vending activities besides other labor activities. This coincides with pro-poor tourism approaches, which emphasize that tourism should not become a substitute for core activities but a diversification strategy (Ashley, 2000). Steel (2011) recognizes this, and Haan and Zoomers (2003) discuss the importance of multi-local livelihoods in which the poor diversify economic income strategies and localities to break free from marginalized areas and benefit from opportunities from globalization. According to Ellis (2000) diversification is pervasive and enduring as it is a phenomenon that occurs everywhere and does not seem to be temporary. In this case, the interviews with respondents confirm that diversification is all but temporary:

Nataneal, 29, selling rosquillas, Somoto – 'I sell rosquillas and shoes. Right now I have rosquillas with me, but I sell both. The shoes we sell are from Granada or Honduras, we go there and pick them up. My father works in it too, so I come here to sell rosquillas that my aunt makes or shoes that we buy in Honduras and we sell it here in Nicaragua. It's very different, because the shoes I sell at high schools, people's houses, like that. The rosquillas I sell here in the park'.

Francisco, 37, selling hammocks, Estelí – 'I work in agriculture, on my own terrain. I still have it and I work on it too. But we only work in agriculture in winter. In summer we go and sell. In winter we stay home working on the fields. Year after year it's like that'.

Haan and Zoomers note that diversification does not mean having an additional earning besides a main income, but that it means multiple income sources (Haan & Zoomers, 2003). Taking this definition of diversification into account, in most cases the respondents can be considered to diversify their income sources instead of merely having an additional earning from street vending activities. For some respondents who study and take part in street vending in the weekends to sustain their studies or gain additional earnings for their family it cannot be considered diversification. Other respondents who engage in agriculture and street vending and for whom both are important sources of income rather than additional do make use of diversification strategies.

De Haan and Zoomers (2003) argue that globalization boosts the range of livelihood opportunities in remote areas of the globe and that especially the poor try out as many of these opportunities as possible. Globalization enhances mobility and thus interconnectivity (De Haan & Zoomers, 2003). Since tourism is regarded a process of - and at the same time a contribution to - globalization, it can be argued that tourism enhances livelihood opportunities in remote areas of Nicaragua. Furthermore, De Haan and Zoomers (2003) argue that since most poor people are located in the most marginalized areas, the only way to benefit from opportunities from globalization, and tourism in this specific case, is to pursue a multi-local livelihood in which diversification of economic activities in different places is central. A clear example in this case is the many poor people who come to Granada from distant places in rural Nicaragua to engage in street vending, like several hammock vendors. Zoomers (2011) argues that livelihood opportunities cannot be understood without considering the dynamics of networks in which people are participating. Livelihood opportunities are largely defined by translocal relations, development chains and corridors. In this research I have observed that the dynamics of networks in which street vendors participate are of the utmost importance to the extent to which they are able to benefit from opportunities. The support and solidarity among groups of street vendors and relatives plays an essential role.

A sharp difference with Steel's (2008) encounters in Cusco, Peru, is the way in which street vendors make use of diversification strategies. She observed many cases in which tourism replaced the street vendor's alternative livelihood activities completely. For the interviewees in Granada this is much less so the case. Many respondents remain working in agriculture besides selling. It can even be argued that street vendors from San Juan de Oriente, specialized in the production of ceramics, are more dedicated to their town's traditions than ever due to their selling activities. The artisans are an exception to the other

interviewed street vendors, since they dedicate to street vending and have weak links with other economic sectors.

The opportunities the respondents perceive from being a street vendor in Granada are not limited to economic gain. If putting the fact that tourism is a reason to become engaged in street vending in Granada forward, several indirect opportunities from street vending itself can be identified. The freedom and flexibility of street vending gives the respondents the opportunity to combine different work and (family) tasks. Due to the complete flexibility the street vendors enjoy, they are able to structure their day according to other needs or demands from their family members. Moreover, Steel recognized a liberating effect on women who engage in street vending to become independent of their husbands in Cusco (Steel, 2008). Similar processes have been encountered in Granada, like 20-year old Isamara from Granada who combines her work as a street vendor selling cashew- and peanuts with the care of her two children. Marisela, another parent taking part in street vending in Granada, who is a single mother of two children, comments:

Marisela, 30, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'It is changing bit by bit. The women go out to work, before we used to depend on the men, I don't like to depend on a man, before I did but now I don't. Having to ask for money, for everything, it's not nice, I don't like it'.

Furthermore, she refers to her female friends of whom many have the desire to become independent of their (often ex-)husbands' income. Marisela recognizes a trend in which Nicaraguan women are becoming more independent and stand up for themselves in an environment dominated by men:

'Men here are machistas, it's the culture. It's because of their education, just because they are men they have to go to a bar to get drunk and when they come home they tell 'where's my dinner, did you wash my clothes, did you cook?' and it is machismo. Here in Nicaragua the majority of men are machista, they don't help us with cleaning the house, taking care of the children, they leave it all to their wife who gets the responsibility, they think it's stuff for women. Also when they come back drunk there is the possibility that they will beat you, there are many who beat their women too. For me it's better to be alone, even though it is hard to be a single mother, but all better than that. And my friends more and more start to realize it too'.

Hence, the liberating effect on women is clearly visible in Granada's street vending scene, whether through the ability to combine daily tasks with work or the desire to become independent and stand up in a male environment.

7.2 Threats

Tourism does not only provide with opportunities for street vendors in Granada. There is a variety of impacts from tourism that can jeopardize the livelihood of street vendors, of which some can impose high risks depending on the degree to which a street vendor relies on tourism. Naturally, the more a street vendor's income depends on tourism, the more he or she is exposed to risks in terms of seasonality and other external factors that could affect tourism flows to Granada. Besides seasonality in tourism, a sudden or gradually occurring

event elsewhere in the world can result into a decrease in tourism in Nicaragua. Such events range from an unstable political situation, economic crises, natural disasters, to the way in which the international media projects this. Global competition that Nicaragua as a tourism destination faces is another important factor impacting the flow of tourists. Evidently, these are all external factors that street vendors are far from able to control or foresee, and are part of the vulnerability context that influence a person's livelihood. Therefore, tourism is likely to reinforce the vulnerable and insecure aspects which are already characteristics of street vending (Steel, 2008). According to Steel (2008), the extent to which street vendors can benefit from opportunities and cope with threats depends largely on the resilience of the street vendor, since opportunities from tourism can at the same time enhance vulnerability.

To understand the way threats imposed by tourism affect street vendors in Granada, it is essential to put 'tourism in Granada' into a different perspective, the past versus present. The majority of interviewed street vendors in Granada perceived an increase in tourism in the years they have been working in the sector, which enhances both opportunities as well as threats. Some noticed however a very recent decrease in tourism, due to governmental policies that are less appealing to investors. The current image of Central America, with high levels of corruption and violence is another factor of a recent decrease in tourism, according to some respondents. One interviewee who has been working as a street vendor for almost 30 years, comments:

Lidia, 36, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – 'Before, with Arnoldo (Aleman, former president of Nicaragua from 1997 to 2002) I used to sell everything fast, and rice and beans were cheaper. At the moment well nothing, when I earn, for example 500 Cordoba's, I buy the food we need and there is nothing left, and I just buy rice, beans, oil, sugar and soap. And it's not enough. I have to think about how I can make it with less of each thing'.

Obviously, Lidia's opinion is that both the opportunities for selling and her ability to sustain her livelihood with her earnings have worsened compared to ten years ago. However, this fragment of the interview does not indicate the reason for this. She and several other respondents mention that although tourist numbers have increased over the past years, competition rose faster. This, combined with an increase in the *canasta basica*, or the cost of basic nutritional needs, is what Lidia outlines in her interview. Hence, this indicates that whether or not tourism grows, other factors play an important role in the determination of opportunities and threats. As Lidia further along in the interview mentions:

Lidia, 36, selling ceramics, San Juan de Oriente – '(In the past) it was very different, we were few street vendors. We were just four or so, four with ceramics, it was a real gain because there was just us and no shops or no-one else selling this. After that for example there was another woman who said 'in Granada you sell, no-one is selling in Granada' and everyone came here. Well, I don't like to be envious, it is only luck, anyone can be lucky'.

It can be argued that aspects that threaten the livelihood of street vendors in Granada should not be seen as isolated impacts from tourism. The totality of tourism and the current socio-economic situation in the country lead to higher numbers of street vendors and more difficulties in sustaining livelihood.

The degree to which seasonality can jeopardize the street vendors' livelihood should not be underestimated. A less constant tourism flow in the low season - which starts around May and lasts until November - means for some street vendors that there are simply fewer opportunities to sell their products. Other interviewees indicate that not the number of tourists in the low season is the problem, but the fact that rainy days sometimes disturb their sales as products should not get wet and fewer people are around on the streets. Several street vendors selling products directly targeted at tourists, such as Pedro who sells heads and caps with the national bird of Nicaragua on them, search for alternatives when the high season in tourism is over. '*By the end of May, it could be that I will sell a different product, or I will try to work in Costa Rica',* Pedro mentions. Other respondents, involved in agriculture, are not planning to come to Granada to sell their products as the work on the field demands more labor during the rainy low season, and heavy rainfall often blocks roads which makes transport from the north of the country a difficult and long journey. Hence, diversification seems essential in the interviewed street vendors' lives to overcome or bypass such threats to sustain their livelihood.

The way street vendors cope with vulnerabilities and insecurities depends on their strategies and on structural factors that benefit or limit their actions. In the case of street vendors in Granada, those coming from other places are sometimes limited in their mobility as heavy rain regularly cuts routes and this makes it impossible to travel to Granada. One interviewed street vendor selling hammocks commented that in those cases, he stays home with the family taking advantage of the time by making additional hammocks to sell in the future. However, the lack of material he often faces as he can only purchase small amounts of material due to a lack of economic resources is a factor that then again limits him and his potential. Other respondents consider vulnerabilities in terms of a lack of security. Frederico, a street vendor selling peanuts, comments:

Frederico, 27, selling peanuts, Granada – 'Sometimes we just want a different opportunity, well, to get another job. To be insured. Because as the time passes and you're getting older, you will need some sort of security, right…'

The concern Frederico stresses in his interview is not typical for the respondents. Many interviewed street vendors, although mentioning a desire for a job in the formal sector, do not regard the insecurity that they face on the long term as the most important aspect of the vulnerabilities that come along with working in the informal sector. This could be due to the fact that many respondents are used to the insecurity that characterizes the informal sector, for example since they traditionally work in agriculture which is not at all assured either. A certain structure is created by the presence of rules established within the sector, based on norms and values. The way in which many of the interviewed street vendors perceive the issue of vulnerability and income instability is relatively rational and down-to-earth. Among the interviewees, acceptance is often created when realizing the lack of opportunities in the formal sector together with alternatives such as complete dedication to agriculture. The importance of other aspects in life, beyond income and vulnerability, such as social capital consisting of support and solidarity is considered valuable. This explains the attitude in which concern about vulnerability seems almost non-existent. The interviewed street vendors recognize the importance of human, social, natural and physical besides financial capital.

Since the opportunities created by tourism are limited, market saturation can become a threat to street vendors. At a certain point the tourism market is saturated in terms of their demand for products sold by street vendors. A simple rule of thumb learns that the more street vendors, the smaller the share of tourists and potential buyers for the street vendors. Hence, increasing competition can become a serious threat to street vendors to sustain their livelihoods. In Granada, several interviewees mentioned to perceive an increase in competition. However, it largely depends on specific products, catered for tourists, locals or a combination, how saturated the market exactly is. Pedro, a 34 year old ambulant street vendor selling heads and caps specifically for tourists, mentioned that the market for his product is far from saturated. He based his street vending strategy on the fact that no-one is selling this product yet. In contrast, Isamara, a 20 year old cashew and peanut vendor commented that there are too many street vendors selling the same product, as well as several street vendors selling ceramic products emphasized. This again illustrates that there are certain factors that can jeopardize or benefit street vendors, but that it largely depends on the street vendor's own strategy and resilience to vulnerabilities *how* it exactly impacts.

It is obvious that the extent to which both opportunities as well as threats from tourism affect the street vendors in different ways, depending on a variety of structural factors and aspects on the individual level of the street vendor. Various academics (Scheyvens, Gascón) remain skeptic about tourism's opportunities to the poor, and their thoughts as opponents of pro-poor tourism are not unfounded. Scheyvens (2009) argues that tourism cannot serve as a way to improve livelihoods of the poor and as such as a development tool, because the essence of tourism is to meet the needs of a market, not the needs of the poor. In the case of Granada, this becomes visible in the plans of the local government to create a certain image of the city in which street vendors might not be included. The fact that the plans are developed with the tourists in mind shows that tourism development and subsequent plans are indeed not directed to the needs of the poor, but to the tourism market only. If the plans or tourism dynamics then prove beneficial to the poor too it could be perceived as a matter of luck, as it is not part of the plans. However, in an interview with the head of the management of the historic center of Granada, eventually the needs of the poor came to discussion too[8]. The desired image of Granada includes clean and safe streets, which are currently frequented by beggars and homeless children. To achieve the objective of safe and clean streets for tourists, the local government has to deal with the socio-economic problems of the local poor. In the interview it was recognized that it is not simply a matter of cleaning the streets or enforcing strict regulations against begging practices, but a solution that is beyond the actual problem of those activities should be encountered. The municipal head of the management of the historic center of Granada comments:

'We are trying to work with other institutions to deal with the impacts of tourism such as children working on the streets, street vending itself, prostitution. We are still trying to create a program to work on those things which is not easy. It is that complex because we should realize that it is not only taking the children from the streets, it is the education of those

[8] Interview with D. Membreño, responsible of the municipality's technical department of management of the historic center of Granada, 18 April 2012.

children, the families of the children. And there in the theme of children some programs are developing that are growing and growing now'.

It can be argued that tourism creates an environment in which opportunities and threats are closely related. Tourism encourages to find a solution for the problems since the tourism image depends on it. However, it is still evident that the main preoccupation of tourism plans and visions is the image of the destination for the tourist himself, the poor are subsequent. This priority on the tourism image is a threat to street vendors whose well-being is secondary.

Gascón (2011) and Mowforth and Munt (2009) argue that the power relations in tourism are quite often extremely inequal, and decision making is been done outside of the country by international investors. In Granada, it is true that many tourism establishments are owned and run by foreign investors who subsequently have power in the tourism sector (Babb, 2004). However, the fact that power relations in tourism are marked by inequality does not necessarily mean that the poor are completely unable to benefit from opportunities. Currently in Granada for example, anyone who wants to engage in street vending is free to do so, as long as he or she does not occupy a fixed space. Nevertheless, the moment the municipality or other government bodies – with or without pressure from key players in the tourism sector of Granada - will decide upon a new set of regulations for street vending and other informal sector activities, the unequal power relations will affect the powerless street vendors immediately. This shows again that the priority goes to the demands of the tourism market, not the needs of the poor. Steel (2008) cites various studies which indicate that street vendors are often in conflict with local government about the use of public space because street vendors do not fit in the image that places want to show to visitors. Although Granada's street vending scene is not yet marked by conflict with the local government, with tourism developments increasing and tourism policies further being shaped, it is expected that at a certain point in time conflicts will start to occur.

7.3 Conclusion

Opportunities and threats do not impact each individual in the same way and to the same extent due to the diversity among the street vendors and their strategies and ability to cope with certain aspects. Moreover, the thin and flexible line between the local and tourism market in terms of street vending activities makes it extremely difficult to determine the opportunities specifically derived from tourism.

The extent to which economic benefits are derived from tourism is different for each street vendor, yet those selling to tourists generally perceive the economic benefits from tourism as an opportunity. However, the interviewed street vendors in Granada, unlike the street vendors in Cusco, do not recognize tourism as a tool that can help them lift out of poverty (Steel, 2008). Hence, the opportunities from tourism in terms of economic gain are not without limits. The ability to diversify livelihood strategies enables the poor to benefit from multiple income sources is another opportunity from tourism. In Granada, many street vendors who come from distant places in rural Nicaragua pursue a multi-local livelihood in which diversification of economic activities in different places is central. The dynamics of networks in which street vendors participate are of the utmost importance for the extent to which they are able to benefit from opportunities. The support and solidarity among groups

of street vendors and relatives plays an essential role in this. Unlike Steel's (2008) observations in Cusco, Peru, the interviewed street vendors in Granada are not likely to completely replace an alternative livelihood for street vending, except for artisans and commercial vendors. The freedom and flexibility of street vending provides the respondents with the opportunity to combine different work and (family) tasks. Furthermore, street vending has a liberating effect on women.

Naturally, the more a street vendor's income depends on tourism, the more vulnerable his or her livelihood becomes. Tourism flows are affected by factors one cannot control and the way in which street vendors cope with these vulnerabilities and insecurities depends on their strategies and on structural factors that benefit or limit their actions. Skepticism among various opponents to pro-poor tourism approaches remains, and not without reason. Dependency on tourism enhances vulnerability of the livelihood of a street vendor, as the tourism sector itself is all but stable and not directed to serve the poor. The future plans to improve Granada's image show this too, since plans are designed to meet the demands of the tourist, not the necessities of the poor. Currently there is an increase in competition among the street vendors and the market is likely to be saturated soon, if not already for some products. This, together with future plans for a more restricted environment in which street vendors operate could lead to further limits on the degree to which a street vendor can benefit from tourism.

It can be argued that the balance of opportunities and threats from tourism enhances an environment for street vendors in which their livelihoods are definitely affected by tourism. However, tourism consists of a small part of the livelihood of a street vendor only. Therefore it can be concluded that, unlike pro-poor tourism proponents often argue, tourism should not be seen as a development tool - at least not for street vendors in Granada.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

Tourism in Granada is growing and affects the street vending sector in one way or another since both tourism and street vending take place in the center of the city. Hence, the objective of this research is to gain insight into the way tourism influences the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua. To do so, a translocal perspective, the notion that livelihood goes beyond the economic aspect and the heterogeneity of the informal sector have been central throughout the research. To answer the research question *How does tourism influence the livelihoods of street vendors in Granada, Nicaragua?* I have used qualitative methods and a multi-sited ethnographic approach. A total of 32 semi-structured in-depth interviews have been held with street vendors in Granada, together with 15 informal talks and several interviews with other informants.

Granada is a colonial city in Nicaragua and the most visited destination of the country. Tourism in Granada is limited to the center of the city, in which many different facilities for all types of tourists can be found. Tourism connects places and people as tourism flows direct to and from Granada.

The street vending scene in Granada is characterized by diversity. The heterogeneity of the street vending sector in Granada is seen in the differences in terms of mobility, products, socio-economic backgrounds of street vendors, perceptions on street vending itself and reasoning. Despite what theories on informal sector suggest, street vending in Granada is not generally linked to formal labor or merely a survival mechanism, but marked by heterogeneity and multi-locality (Teltscher, 1994). Besides the economic aspect, flexibility, accessibility and livelihood diversification are important in the decision to take part in street vending activities in Granada. Hence, for some respondents street vending is indeed a survival strategy, but in line with Bromley (2000), who argues that it can be anything from a survival strategy to diversification of bigger businesses, it is not always the case. The interviewed artisans show that street vending is not only a matter of a survival strategy.

The interviewed street vendors had an overall optimistic perspective on their livelihood and regard social capital in terms of support and solidarity among street vendors and relatives important factors in that. Support from relatives or multiple income sources are often needed to foresee in the necessities of their families. Although there is generally an optimism view on street vending among most respondents, all street vendors with children emphasize the importance of education in order to prevent a future in street vending for the next generation, as it is not a preferred livelihood strategy on a permanent basis.

The municipality of Granada does not act rigorous against street vending activities, and compared to other studies in several countries, this seems an exceptional tolerant environment for street vendors. The interviewed street vendors often sell to both locals and tourists, which creates a vague line between the two markets. Although flexible, the line between the local and tourism market does exist and is individually based on a momentary occurrence and not to be determined beforehand. The relation between street vending and tourism in Granada is multi-faceted in terms of influence of tourism as well as degrees of connectivity. The tourism flow and the flow of street vendors from different places enhances interconnectedness and a translocal perspective is thus essential.

The importance of social capital in terms of support and solidarity among street vendors and relatives in a multi-local perspective is one of the most important insights

encountered. In case street vendors face income instabilities, their often extensive networks help out and provide with necessities such as food or small loans. Solidarity and competition stand close to each other and cause tensions due to the increase of competition in the street vending scene. However, the extreme mobility and flexibility of the street vendors prove to be important tools to cope with such vulnerabilities.

Since the line between the local and tourism market is often vague and flexible, opportunities and threats do not impact each individual in the same way and to the same extent. Moreover, each individual copes differently with imposed opportunities and threats. The interviewed street vendors who sell to tourists generally perceive the economic benefits from tourism as an opportunity, although not without limits as they do not see tourism as a tool to lift out of poverty like Griet Steel (2008) discovered in Cusco, Peru. Moreover, with the exception of most artisans and commercial vendors, a multi-local livelihood is pursued. This way, the poor diversify economic income strategies and localities to break free from marginalized areas and benefit from opportunities from globalization (Haan & Zoomers, 2003). For some street vendors the tourism scene in Granada is the reason to choose for the city to sell, which explicitly indicates that tourism imposes opportunities for street vendors, and that these opportunities are used as part of their livelihood strategy. The freedom and flexibility of street vending provides the respondents with the opportunity to combine different work and (family) tasks. Furthermore, street vending has a liberating effect on women. The dynamics of networks in which street vendors participate, thus social capital, is of the utmost importance for the extent to which they are able to benefit from opportunities. The support and solidarity among groups of street vendors and relatives plays an essential role in this. Furthermore, it is extremely important to note that it depends on the product and strategy of the individual street vendor to what extent tourism influences his or her livelihood specifically. Unlike Steel's (2008) observations in Cusco, Peru, the interviewed street vendors in Granada are not likely to replace an alternative livelihood for street vending completely, except for artisans and commercial vendors.

The threats imposed on street vendors in Granada due to tourism can enhance vulnerabilities the more a street vendor's livelihood depends on tourism. External factors influence tourism flows and subsequently a street vendor's livelihood status. However, the way in which street vendors cope with these vulnerabilities and insecurities depends on their strategies and on structural factors that benefit or limit their actions. Besides the instable tourism flow, other threats include increasing competition and market saturation, as well as future plans for a more restricted street vending environment in Granada.

In this research a translocal perspective plays an important role. It has shown that global processes, in this case tourism flows, impact a locality. However, the local context largely determines how and what exactly are the impacts of tourism on the livelihood of street vendors. Hence, it is important to note that tourism impacts on street vendors' livelihoods should not be viewed isolated. The embeddedness of street vending in its local context is essential to understand the dynamics of street vending in Granada.

Altogether, it can be argued that the influence of tourism on the livelihood of street vendors in Granada is considerable. However, at the same time for many interviewed street vendors tourism is only a small part of their livelihoods. Although pro-poor tourism proponents believe in the development potential of tourism, in Granada tourism should not be seen as a development tool for street vendors.

End note: plans and hopes for the future

Many of the interviewed street vendors in Granada have plans, hopes and dreams for their own and their family's future. With the exception of artisans, most of these plans do not include street vending activities. A range of plans such as studying a practical career, working in construction or security, or any job in the formal sector are mentioned. Darwin, a 17-year old street vendor selling ceramic products from San Juan de Oriente wants to become a lawyer, whereas Eddy who is 22 years old and from the same village, studies to become a tour guide. Both see their work as a street vendor as a temporary activity to support their family and to finance their studies. Other respondents who have been engaged in street vending activities over a longer time, would also prefer to have a job, however their expectations of the future are lower as their disbelief in an improvement of the current economic situation dominates. While dreaming and hoping for change, street vending remains an important part of their life.

Figure 9: Woman with ceramics following a group of cruise ship tourists. Photograph taken by author on 19 March 2012.

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Appendix I: overview respondents

Table with information about interviewed street vendors:

- 5 commercial vendors
- 6 artisans
- 21 Ambulant street vendors:
    - 4 ambulant souvenirs
    - 4 ambulant hammocks
    - 8 ambulant ceramics San Juan de Oriente (abbreviated as S.J.D.Oriente)
    - 5 ambulant food and other consumer goods

Average age of respondents: 26.7 years
Male/female ratio: 24/10 (2 couples)

Name	**Age**	**Gender**	**Origin**	**Product**	**Producer**	**Main occupation?**	**Education (highest finished)**	**Living situation**
Dina, with husband and sister	29	Female	Granada	Commercial vendor, many souvenirs	No	Yes	High school	With husband and children
Wilma	52	Female	Granada	Commercial vendor, many souvenirs	No	Yes	High school	With husband
?	55	Male	Granada	T-shirts	No	No, also managing restaurant	High school	With wife
Couple	25	Male & Female	Granada	Commercial vendor, many souvenirs	No	Yes	High school	With children
Couple	30	Male & Female	Granada	Commercial vendor, many souvenirs	No	Yes	Elementary school	With children
Pedro	28	Male	Granada	Jewelry, artisan	Yes	Yes	High school	Alone
Carlos	31	Male	Granada	Jewelry, artisan	Yes	Yes	High school	With wife and children

Frederico	22	Male	Granada	Jewelry, artisan	Yes	Yes	High school, quit university	With brothers and sisters
Winston	23	Male	Granada	Jewelry, artisan	Yes	Yes	High school, quit university	Sometimes with brother, sometimes with aunt
Julio	28	Male	Granada	Jewelry, artisan	Yes	Yes	High school	With wife and children
Ismael	24	Male	Granada	Jewelry, artisan	Yes	Yes	Currently in high school	With child, brothers, sisters and parents
Pedro	34	Male	Masaya	Heads and caps	No	Yes, for the tourist season: other half year different jobs	Elementary school	With wife and children
Ricardo	21	Male	Granada	Cards	No	Yes	Currently in high school	In support group for addicts
Marcos	19	Male	Granada	Key chains	No	Yes	Elementary school	Support group
Dinoshka	24	Female	S.J.D.Oriente	Small wooden souvenirs	Yes, and family members	Yes	High school	With parents
Osman	21	Male	Somoto	Rosquillas (cookies)	No	No, 'holiday' occupation, main occupation in his family's cafeteria	High school	With parents
Nataneal	29	Male	Somoto	Rosquillas (cookies)	No	No, normally sells shoes	High school	With wife and children
Isamara	20	Female	Granada	Cashew- and peanuts	No	Yes	Elementary school	With husband and children
Frederico	27	Male	Granada	Peanuts	Yes	Yes	High school	With wife, children, parents
Dario	23	Male	Granada	Fresco's	No	No, also helping artisans and tour guide activities when possible	High school	With brother or aunt or friends, changing
Diego	14	Male	Ciudad Darío	Hammocks	Yes, with family members	No, also going to school	Elementary school	With parents

Francisco	37	Male	Estelí	Hammocks	Yes, with family members	Yes, in high season for tourism. In winter agriculture	Elementary school	With wife and children
Sancho	18	Male	Estelí	Hammocks	Yes, with family members	Yes, in high season for tourism. In winter agriculture	High school	With parents
Helena	35	Female	Matagalpa	Hammocks	Yes, with family members	Yes	Elementary school	With husband and children
Wilmer	20	Male	S.J.D.Oriente	Ceramics	No	Yes	High school	With parents
Wismar	25	Male	S.J.D.Oriente	Ceramics	Yes, and family members	No, also agriculture	High school	With parents
Jaire	28	Female	S.J.D.Oriente	Ceramics	Yes, and family members	Yes	High school	Alone
Lidia	36	Female	S.J.D.Oriente	Ceramics	Yes	Yes	Elementary school	With children
Luis	23	Male	S.J.D.Oriente	Ceramics	Yes, and family members	Yes	Elementary school	With parents
Darwin	17	Male	S.J.D.Oriente	Ceramics	Yes, and family members	No, studying during week days	High school	With parents
Fabiola and Marisela (mother and daughter)	12 and 30	Female	S.J.D.Oriente	Ceramics	Yes	Yes, daughter studies during week days	Elementary school	Together
Eddy	22	Male	S.J.D.Oriente	Ceramics	No, his family	No, studying during week days	Currently in university of Masaya	With parents