

Interconnected Scenes: Towards a Critical Approach to Mobility, Territory, Agency and Ethnicity

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Abstract

Since the early 2000s, the social sciences have focused on the art and migration nexus, the artistic practices of migrants in settlement societies and the role of art in migrant integration. More recently, scholars have considered the creation of global art worlds where the circulation of practices and the mobility of actors are intertwined. In this paper, I critically approach four key issues raised by this research: the articulation between different forms of mobility (migration, tourism, professional travel and artistic tours) and subject positions (artist, migrant, tourist, etc.); the emergence of migrant transnationalism as an analytical framework opening up new perspectives and methodologies centering migrants' mobility and agency; the continued importance of territories and forms of the local as anchoring of interconnected practices and scenes; and the forging of concepts of identity and alterity developed by artists in relation to their migration experiences. In conclusion, I take these four avenues of research as representative of the ways empirical studies of artistic practices can contribute to scholarship on migration and ethnicity.

Keywords: mobility, transnationalism, translocalities, ethnic boundaries

Since the early 2000s, the study of the nexus between music-dance and migration has renewed the historiography of several disciplines and fields of research and, more broadly, had a great impact on migration studies (Baily and Collyer 2006). In France in 2009, *La Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* published a special issue titled 'Creations in migration.' The editors made two observations in the context of the contemporary transformation of creation linked to the mobility of people and cultural practices: 1) the way the spatiotemporal elements of artistic work are increasingly structured by actors' mobility; and 2) how the local organization of art worlds is becoming transnational, giving rise to configurations of actors and migratory paths that continuously defy borders (Martiniello et al. 2009).

Ten years later, in 2019, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* published a special issue called 'Music, Migration and the City' (Kasinitz and Martiniello 2019). Focusing on immigrant incorporation in North America and Europe, its contributors questioned the contrast between the growing racial divisions in national politics and the cosmopolitanism of everyday urban life, which is nowhere more evident than in the arts, and particularly in popular music. That same year, in a collection titled 'Migrant Musicians', the French journal *Ethnomusicologie* aimed to place music at the heart of contemporary debates on migration (Charles-Dominique and Laborde 2019). Finally, a special issue of *La Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* under the title 'Dance, Music and (Trans)nationalism' approached 'national' music and dance as products of complex historical con-



structs at the intersection of state policies, population migration and the intertwining of multiple identities (Aterianus-Owanga et al. 2019).

My research is situated in the field of migration studies. More specifically, I am interested in the role of cultural expressions in the construction of ethnicity in historical and contemporary migratory contexts. From a dynamic perspective of identities focused on the making of ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969), my work deals with the social positions occupied by minority populations with migration backgrounds, focusing on racism and the forms of resistance developed by those who are affected by it. In this respect, as Wade has shown, the anthropological study of music can be approached as a mode of understanding local or national identities and the racial, classist, regional and sexual ideologies associated with them (Wade 2000). This theoretical framework makes it possible to approach music as a key element in social identification, enabling us to see how the same musical expression can participate in the re-composition of different identity constructions. More broadly, it allows for a better understanding of the links between the circulation of cultural practices and the migration of people, or, in the case of migrant musicians, the articulation between artistic and migratory careers. Ethnomusicology situates 'popular' music at the heart of its work in order to study its history, evolutions and transformations (Constant Martin 2005: 22). In a complementary way, this approach focuses on the different scenes of social life and their local and (trans) national interconnections.

Here, I will proceed with a critical examination of four issues raised by this new research: the interrelation between different forms of mobility (migration, tourism, professional travel, artistic tours) and subject positions (artist, migrant, tourist, etc.); the emergence of migrant transnationalism as an analytical framework to understand and research mobility and migrant agency; a focus on territories and forms of the local anchoring of practices and interconnected scenes; and finally, the analysis of subjectivities

developed by artists through migratory experiences. To help illustrate the epistemological concepts raised by these questions (some of which are featured in this special issue), I will rely on both personal research conducted in recent years in Europe and Latin America and empirical contributions offered by other authors. I will conclude by examining the contributions of such empirical research on artistic practices to the study of migrations and ethnic boundaries.

Migration and mobilities: beyond migrant exceptionalism

A reading of recent works shows that scholarship has gone beyond research into the artistic practices of immigrants and their descendants in their societies of settlement. In other words, researchers are less inclined than they were in the 1990s to seek to understand how dance and music express identity, memory, trauma, joy or hope in groups and individuals in migratory situations (Stokes 1994), or to examine the role of such practices in the relocation of immigrant communities (Reyes Schramm 1990) and the reformulation of cultural meaning and musical forms (Monson 1990).

On the one hand, research focusing on 'immigrants' arts' in recent years emerged with issues inspired by Chicano studies and research on the Civil Rights movement in the United States (Reed 2019). These studies bear on immigrants and their use of cultural provocation in art to define themselves in relation to the dominant culture, which may be perceived as hegemonic, alien, or hostile (Prashizky 2021). On the other hand, new research orientations have emerged, which moved away from a focus on 'immigrant arts' and towards one on 'migrating through the arts' – the main theme of this special issue.

In this second orientation, which I am examining here, the action of 'migrating' as expressed in the formula 'migrating through the arts' acquires a broader meaning. Clearly, it concerns the mobility of persons who may have been under constraint (artists going into exile to escape repression in their homeland) or who were

forced to leave to take advantage of opportunities, invitations or residencies abroad. It also refers to the circulation of techniques, cultural, artistic and aesthetic practices, artefacts (instruments or accessories) and ways of working and defining practices, themes and content that may circulate worldwide through interconnected scenes. We can think of several examples, from how themes in Egyptian street art produced in 2011 were taken up by visual artists in Europe (Larzillière 2018), to the role played by transnational artists' networks in the circulation of the musical and choreographic 'Afro-Cuban' repertoire (Argyriadis 2009), to the assembling of sound references from different horizons in the compositions of artists in mobility (Puig 2017), to the dissemination and re-anchoring of a musical tradition originating in rural Mexico in different North American and European urban centres (Rinaudo 2018).

These new orientations reflect different trends in research. In the field of the sociology of migration, they borrow from the 'mobility turn' (Urry 2000) a focus on 'transnational social spaces' and 'transnational social fields' (Faist 2013). In anthropology, they examine the 'ordinary experiences' of cultural actors caught between mobility and immobility (Laborde 2020), examining the conditions for the circulation of artistic resources around the world and their transformations, whether by the multiplication of flows or through the emergence of 'practice circuits' (Condevaux and Leblon 2016) of varying amplitudes and degrees of complexity. These studies envisage circulatory modes in their different dimensions and historicities, highlighting the actors' stories (Le Menestrel 2012) and migratory careers (Martiniello and Réa 2011), and analysing the reconfiguration of networks of actors and the transformation of the power relations that arise from such artist mobilities (Juárez Huet and Rinaudo 2017).

From an epistemological standpoint, these approaches have led to a dialogue being opened between migration studies and mobility research. They introduce a 'mobility approach' to detect

movement in all social situations: multi-residentialities and the circulation of individuals, practices, artifacts and information. They assess the importance of 'ideals of mobility' (Ortar, et al. 2018). At the same time, these ways of addressing migratory issues from a broader perspective also helps avoid a very common analytical pitfall in research on transnationalism: that of 'migrant' exceptionalism.

The critical approach of 'migrant exceptionalism' has been developed in the field of mobility research to contest assumptions about the non-temporal relevance and extraordinary position of 'migrants' in migration studies. As Hui points out, the concept of 'migrant' needs to be paired with an understanding of 'migrant exceptionalism', the assumption that migrants are extraordinary mobile subjects, discrete from other (concurrent) subject positions, and central units within methodologies (Hui 2016: 10-11). Qualitative research based on analytical inputs other than the migrants' integration, their lifestyle and consumption behaviour, their 'soft skills', their subordinate position in the labour market, and the discrimination they experience as such allows us to focus on objects that embrace multiple mobility systems and subject positions, and to explore what Hui calls cases of 'sometimes-migrants.'

One example is the complexity of the practices and social roles of *son jarocho* musicians. Originally from Veracruz, this rural folk music is now performed throughout Mexico, the United States, and major European cities. As early as the 1940s, musicians from Veracruz settled in Mexico City and Los Angeles to meet the demands of the booming cultural industry (radio, cinema, music hall, folk dance companies, etc.). Later, young Chicanos from California, of Mexican descent but with no family ties to the Veracruz culture, adopted this practice as an act of political activism to fight Anglo-American cultural hegemony. At the same time, a vast transnational network developed around this musical genre, mixing local musicians from different countries, guest artists from all around the world, tourism practices, study tours, and long-term settlement in

Mexico, Europe, and the United States. The analysis of son jarocho musicians thus shows how someone from Mexico City, who had lived in Paris for ten years, though spending one month a year in Veracruz, and participating in the organization of a European *son jarocho* festival, cannot be reduced to the sole quality of ‘migrant’. This case features a complex interweaving of tourism, migration, and professional and everyday travel on multiple scales (Cardona and Rinaudo 2017; Rinaudo 2018).

Another example of ‘sometimes-migrants’ can be found in Claire Clouet’s doctoral research on the uses of music in a Parisian migrant workers’ centre. Based on an ethnographic research linking France and West Africa, she found that individuals always move on the boundaries of several worlds and that their practices do not necessarily correspond to a single common denominator such as accommodation — in this case, room #107 in the Foyer Argonne, in the 19th *arrondissement* in Paris. Thus, when Clouet follows Sidy Kone Cissokho’s career between the Île-de-France and West Africa, she reveals the interconnection between the categories of migrant, artist and tourist. She writes: ‘It is through his work as a migrant that Sidy funds his life as an artist and his holidays. It is thanks to the artistic activities Sidy organises in the Parisian region that migrant workers’ associations can fund projects in West Africa. When Sidy went “on holiday” in 2017, it was to prepare his 2018 artistic tour’ (Clouet 2018, 190).

This body of research, then, problematizes the link between the migration of people and the circulation of cultural practices. It shifts from analyses focusing on actors’ ability to maintain, transmit, develop and reinvent elements of ‘their culture’ in a migratory situation to the study of the circulation of cultural practices through which new modes of expression of otherness can exist and be diffused. Here, it is no longer a matter of how practices circulate among immigrants but, rather, of understanding how people, ideas, technologies, goods, and cultural practices are implicated in spatial mobility across the world.

Thinking more specifically about the experiences of those involved in this practice calls for the construction of an analytical framework to overcome migrant exceptionalism in migration and mobility studies.

Towards a Critical Approach to Migrant Transnationalism

The second question is less cross-cutting and less present in the academic literature bearing on migration through the arts. It must nonetheless be underscored. Referring to interconnected scenes of dancers and musicians circulating from one stage to another contributes to giving artists a very ‘entrepreneurial’ image. In fact, this kind of representation often camouflages the cruel differences that depend on status. This is what a critical analysis of migrant transnationalism can explicitly reveal.

In the critical terms of Wimmer and Glick Schiller, ‘methodological nationalism’ is ‘the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world’ (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 302). In their analysis, the continuing relevance and persistence of nations as a central frame is tied to academic practices and research processes. National political agendas and research funding, for instance, encourage and constrain researchers, supporting studies that focus on the nation state while making projects based in other countries or spanning across borders more difficult.

Wimmer and Glick Schiller acknowledge the discontinuities and changing national stances towards immigration, but argue that methodological nationalism has become a pervasive characteristic of migration research. In this context, ‘the value of studying transnational communities and migration is not to discover “something new” — though this represents a highly rewarding strategy of research in our contemporary intellectual environment — but to have contributed to this shift of perspective away from methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 302). Thus, since the early

1990s, going beyond methodological nationalism in the study of migration has appeared to be a necessity, until transnationalism entered 'the lexicon of migration scholars' (Kivisto 2001: 549) and transnational migration studies reframed the 'sociological imagination' (Lazar 2011). But what precisely is migrant transnationalism? And how does this concept help us overcome the pitfall of methodological nationalism in migration studies?

In the 1990s, the concept of migrant transnationalism was introduced to reflect a new historical context and new forms of migration (Faist 2000; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Portes et al. 1999). The criticism of methodological nationalism has proposed analytical attention be paid to 'transmigrants' (Glick Schiller 1999), 'nomadic migrants' (Tarrius 2002) and actors of 'globalization from below' (Portes 1997), thus opening the way to the methodological paradigm of mobility. As a counterpoint to methodological nationalism, transnationalism invites us to celebrate 'cosmopolitan sociability' (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) or the 'new cosmopolitanism' (Tarrius 2000), or to 'rethink Europe in cosmopolitan terms' (Beck 2007). Thus, in contrast to Sayad's pessimistic vision, in which the immigrant was seen as a doubly dominated person for whom no agency is recognized and whose marginal position in both societies is experienced as constraining (Sayad 1999), migrant transnationalism has adopted a more positive tone focused on celebrating migrants' capacity to free themselves from social and political determinism.

Though immensely influential, the transnational perspective has also generated great controversy (Green and Waldinger 2016). In recent years, scholars have tried to revisit the transnational approach in migration studies (Bocagni 2012) and proposed both a form of critical transnationalism and a criticism of transnationalism. In particular, they suggest going 'beyond the simplistic dichotomy of assimilation versus transnationalism, as these are not theories but rather social processes, inextricably intertwined' (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004: 1193). More-

over, they question the normative optimism of migrant transnationalism and pave the way for a renewal of critical approaches in international migration studies.

For example, Swanie Potot (2018) emphasizes the de-politicization process underlying the transnational approach in the field of migration studies. She highlights how the figure of the immigrant described by some of this scholarship – that is, an individual empowered to implement strategies to mislead institutional regulations and thus partially escape economic exploitation and circumvent discrimination in Western countries — represents only a small proportion of all economic migrants. It is, however, this prism of migration, which is approached only in terms of individual capabilities, skills and benefits produced by the back-and-forth between two or more countries, that has been predominant since the 2000s. As Potot points out (2018, 13), such approach 'evacuat[es] the reference to the working class and relations of production,' simply treating transnational immigration as an aspect of neoliberal globalization. 'There is no more questioning of relations of domination and the question of power is circumscribed to relations of allegiance to states and avoidance strategies.' Thus, concludes Potot 'the transnational paradigm depoliticizes immigration research' (Potot 2018, 13).

Counter to this de-politicization and erasure of inequalities, Claire Clouet's research (2018), cited above, clearly shows that migrant musicians and dancers face various obstacles when trying to take advantage and act upon transnational links. One of the dancers featured in her study, Sidy's uncle Moulaye, for instance, used to be able to take advantage of twinning arrangements with various towns in France to be able to go on tour with his Senegalese dance troupe in the 1980s. 'This is no longer possible today,' explains Sidy, as traveling has become much more difficult (Clouet 2018, 195). At the time of Clouet's research, Sidy lived in a migrant workers' hostel in France to limit his expenses, taught in addition to his salaried job, and had been saving

for five years to be able to fund 'holidays' in his Senegalese hometown and show his artistic work in West Africa

These are the day-to-day complications ethnographic studies can reveal when it comes to rethinking mobilities and immobilities through the prism of the unequal worlds of dance and music. For example, this is what Cécile Navarro found in her doctoral research based on long-term multi-sited fieldwork on the Senegalese rap scene, defined as a 'translocal music scene.' On the basis of an approach that focuses on mobilities, she examines how artists' different mobilities and the symbolic frontiers between artists from different localities and nationalities challenge the delimitation of this music scene, which is expanding because of the different modalities of (im)mobilities (Navarro 2019).

Furthermore, in today's context, where Europe is setting up borders which increasingly hinder the free circulation of individuals, critical analysis articulating the idea of the transnational circulation of cultural practices with the hurdles and obstacles to travel is a stimulating introduction to the issue of careers for transnational artists. This is also the case for those who, unable to travel, develop creative imaginaries where elsewhere, alterity and how to find one's place in the world are questioned (Andrieu 2012; Andrieu and Olivier 2017; Fouquet 2007; Neveu Kringelbach and Plancke 2019).

Interconnection Territories: A Symbolic Economy of Places

Recent studies of music, dance and migration confirm what empirical research on transnationalism has shown for two decades, namely, that the development of transnational connections is not linked to the deterritorialization of social spaces. Rather, it contributes to reconfiguring territories and forms of territorial footing along with new equilibria and tensions between centres and peripheries on different scales. 'Global cities', 'hotspots', 'cultural centralities' and '*beyond places*' — to borrow M. Agier's formula for refugee camps (Agier 2014) — are all

attempts to describe these phenomena through the vocabulary of the social sciences.

Thus, the apparent deterritorialization of cultural networks and fluxes leads us to question locality's persistence and the ensuing dynamics of translocalities (Sieveking 2017). New approaches to studying music and dance practices clearly show the value of highlighting these practices' symbolic dimensions, in line with work on the globalization of the symbolic economy of culture (Koutsari and Demertzi 2020; Zukin 1995) and, more recently, on 'cultural heritage in mobility' (Condevaux and Leblon 2016).

Marion Fournier's research on Wuppertal (in this issue) fits this analytical framework perfectly. It shows how Pina Bausch's renown performances circulated all over the world. Fournier observed a process of reterritorialization around her birthplace of Wuppertal, where she chose to work and produce her works. A similar process is described in many analyses of the transnational circulation of cultural practices: the more a practice is deterritorialized, the more its promoters feel the need — and exploit the economic opportunity — to create a discourse and a market centred on the initial anchoring of a particular place as a cradle for transnationalized artistic practice. Thus, Wuppertal became a hotspot of dance, and a symbolic economy of the city is currently emerging through the urban project for the creation of a Pina Bausch Centre as a 'venue for archiving and training, with strong cultural appeal' (Fournier 2021, 35).

Other studies have shown what is involved in the symbolic economy of what Anaïs Vaillant (2013) called 'a return to the sources of practice' in her doctoral research. Focusing on the specific case of the cultural globalization and circulation of *batucada* music and celebrations between Brazil and Europe, Vaillant describes the motivations, experiences and goals set by amateur and professional European groups travelling to Brazil in what is considered to be a return to the Brazilian sources of *batucada* music and dance. The people involved in these travels are seeking to have a better understanding of Brazilian music

while at the same time gaining greater legitimacy for their activity once they return to Europe. During their stay, they are often concerned with being accepted into samba schools to parade in carnivals and to distinguish themselves from mainstream tourists.

Thus, Salvador, Rio and Recife are to *batucadas* what Santiago de Cuba represents for Cuban sound or Buenos Aires for tango (Stepputat 2017). In my own work (Rinaudo 2019), I was able to analyse the structuring of diasporic connections around *Son Jarocho* and the *fabrique* of the little colonial village of Tlacotalpan as the 'cradle' of this practice. This village, which became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998, was founded as a river port on the Papaloapan River in the mid-16th century. It enjoyed considerable growth in the late 1970s with the organization of the yearly 'Meetings of Jaraneros', a week of festivities which gathers all the country's traditional *Son Jarocho* groups. Over time, these meetings contributed greatly to making Tlacotalpan the centre of the revival of *Son Jarocho* in Mexico (García Díaz 2016). From the 1940s to the 2000s, Tlacotalpan went from being one of many towns featuring *Son Jarocho* to being the recognized cradle of this practice and a must for all those wishing to be part of this trend. The village has therefore become a 'Mecca' of this musical style (Pérez Montfort 2002: 5), where aficionados can go to breathe in the atmosphere, make contacts and achieve legitimacy by organizing local events and connecting with this transnational movement (Rinaudo 2019).

In a study of the city of Miami's central position in the inter-American production, promotion, and circulation of *Latino* content since the late 1970s, Alix Bénistant discloses another aspect of this phenomenon. He especially focuses on the construction of the *Latino* music market in the 'World City' of Miami. His analysis shows how a *Latino* music scene gradually emerged in and around Miami, and how musical creations that originated there ended up being integrated into a locally emerging industry that produced and disseminated this music across different scales

(Bénistant 2019). This time, this territory is not viewed as the 'cradle' of a specific practice which has become transnationalized, but as the place for an industrial concentration of different musical repertoires originally from Cuba and other Latin American countries under the label '*Latino* music' or '*Latino* sound'. This is not intended to be a 'label of authenticity' (Warnier and Rosselin 1996) comparable to Santiago de Cuba's for the sound, but is rather a 'mainstreaming label', part of the public image of the city of Miami being capable of harnessing economic, touristic, media, cultural and even migratory flows.

In all cases, the main focus is on culture and the role it plays in shaping territories (Fincher and Jacobs 1998). Culture is a means by which territories are transformed in the post-industrial context, a tool used by local authorities to change their public image. As Sharon Zukin wrote in her analysis of the transformation of New York City, with the disappearance of local manufacturing industries and recurring financial and political crises, culture has increasingly become what makes for cities' economies, the basis of their tourist appeal and economic assets (Zukin 1995). In the context of the 2000s-2010s and the explosion of the transnational circulation of musical and dance practices, 'returning to the sources' in the 'hotspot' of a practice or the localised *fabrique* of a globalised cultural industry like '*Latino* music' in Miami are indeed phenomena that must be considered in the analysis of new forms of ties between culture, territory, and migration.

Artists, Migration, and the Construction of Ethnicity

The fourth point refers to the issue of identity constructions being developed by artists in connection with migratory experiences. Current research has shown the influence of national and international mobility on the ways ethnicity is performed through the arts. Julien Mallet (2019) uncovers tensions and contradictions in the norms, aesthetics, and economic models of different musician groups in Madagascar: Malagasy musicians, and European, regional and

local producers. Types of music that had previously remained exclusively regional have in recent years circulated on a national scale. One notable change lies in the passage from identity-markers linked to regional and/or ethnic identity to markers assigned by media in the capital city, associated with a more globalizing trend: *mozika mafana* (hot music). Artists labelled in this way migrate to the capital city and created new musical forms combining the regional or ethnic repertoire with modern international forms. They then turn to defining themselves and claiming a 'Black' identity by borrowing from African and modern North American musical genres (Mallet 2019).

This phenomenon evokes multiple imaginaries and ways of composing with different identity markers in the production and establishment of ethnic boundaries (Fouquet 2014). This is also what Jérémie Voirol (2016) observed based on what he called 'assemblages of autochthony'. In the case he studied in the Ecuadorian Otavalo region and other Andean areas, 'traditional' music groups produce a notion of place through their audio and visual performance (scenic layout, video clips), evoking a rural setting, remoteness, long-gone times and non-modernity. Conversely, 'fusion music' artists from Otavalo offer yet another image of autochthony, which, though it has meaning for local audiences, is harder to grasp for those who are not. These fusion artists express a contemporary vision open to their ethnicity, in consonance with their daily lives shaped by the experience of mobility (Cerbino et al. 2019; Voirol 2016).

These two examples are particularly interesting in relation to the construction of ethnicity. Indeed, they clearly show how, depending on the audience, and 'identity' they wish to assert, musicians perform their ethnicity in different ways, corresponding to two approaches that, for decades, have been seen as mutually opposing in academic discussion: a 'Herderian' approach, according to which ethnic groups carry with them an ethnic 'culture' which defines them; and a 'Barthian' approach, according to which

the strong sense of belonging to a group does not necessarily coincide with the strong cultural homogeneity of the in-group in the face of the out-group. The work of Andreas Wimmer (2009) has demonstrated that the degree of coincidence between ethnic boundaries and cultural differences may vary from case to case and can be viewed as a continuous variable. A high degree of coincidence produces a social world that fits the Herderian vision of identities, which is empirically observable in cases where the two processes reinforce each other mutually. On the one hand, cultural differentiation contributes to revealing a boundary that seems obvious and virtually natural, while on the other hand, the social barrier that follows an ethnic line reinforces the difference through the invention of new cultural traits. Conversely, a limited degree of coincidence can produce a social world which complies with the position of ethnic groups defended by Fredrik Barth. This is what Wimmer observed in Switzerland, where a strong feeling of national identity does not coincide with the strong cultural homogeneity of the in-group, which is characterized by multilingualism and a multiconfessional system, in the face of the out-group (Wimmer 2009).

In the case of the musicians observed by Jérémie Voirol in Otavalo, those living in a 'traditional music' environment emphasize in their practice those elements that, in their opinion, best represent their 'culture,' namely, the 'authentic' indigenous culture of the region of Otavalo, viewed as credible, consistent and consumable from the outside. Conversely, those steeped in the 'fusion music' environment highlight the borrowing of cultural elements rather than a specific culture that is thought to be unique to — and borne by — the 'indigenous' population.

These few examples provide food for thought regarding what theoreticians of pragmatic sociology and ethnomethodology have identified so well by choosing to take the practical reasoning of social actors seriously (Schubert 2006). Caught up in rationales of action and definitions of the situation that lead them to define themselves and categorize their practice as being of a certain

type in a world marked by the transnational circulation of cultural markers and the experience of mobilities and constraints, artists tap into different social theories to create their ethnic identity.

Conclusion: The Contributions of Arts-Centred Research to *Ethnic and Migration Studies*

In 2006, when John Baily and Michael Collyer introduced a special issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* titled 'Music and Migration', it was above all the references to cultural anthropology that were mobilized (Baily and Collyer 2006). Specifically focused on ethnomusicology, defined as 'the study of music in culture', the article was grounded in Melville Herskovits' anthropological heritage on African American music. It aimed to retrace this intellectual filiation through Alan Merriam, a student of Herskovits who, in his book *The Anthropology of Music* (1964), emphasized the importance of migration in the evolution of musical forms and practices based on the analysis of processes of acculturation and culture change.

In this article, a critical examination of issues raised by recent research has suggested the need to distance ourselves from approaches centred on migrant communities' culture and to question what is too often taken for granted: migrant exceptionalism, methodological transnationalism, the deterritorialized nature of globalized cultural practices, the disjunction between social actors' culturalist theories of ethnic groups as culture bearers and relational approaches to ethnicity. These relational approaches have been introduced by social scientists to suggest that it is the actors themselves who configure ethnic boundaries by emphasising certain traits distinguishing in-groups from out-groups (Barth 1969).

Following this analysis, we can ask what empirical research on artistic practices can contribute to the study of migrations and ethnic boundaries. First, it opens the way to considering social actors who, because they are not easily categorized ('migrant,' 'refugee,' 'exile,' 'tourist,' 'traveller,' 'artist on tour,' 'student'), help us decon-

struct such naturalizing categories that scholars sometimes take for granted. More broadly, their practices incite us, along with Janine Dahinden, to 'de-migrantise migration research', that is, 'to move away from treating migrant populations as units of analysis and investigation and, instead, direct the focus on the whole population, which obviously includes migrants' (Dahinden 2016) or 'sometimes-migrants' (Hui 2016).

Finally, this view of migration studies from the standpoint of the world of music and dance contributes to questioning the concept of mobility. While national borders have ceaselessly been reinforced in recent years despite, or because of globalization, artists are often perceived as those who best embody freedom of movement, agency, reflexivity, detachment, autonomy and connectivity in an invitation to rethink Europe and the world in cosmopolitan terms. In fact, while providing a critical view of the paradigm of mobility, the attention given to artists' migratory experiences reveals even more bluntly yet another reality: that of territorial assignment, alterization and discrimination, precariousness, situations of confinement or encampment (Agier 2014), being in long-term transit (Timera 2012) and caught up in the bureaucracies of border regimes. Thus, the study of these artistic and cultural worlds invites us to take migratory research beyond any given paradigm, situated as it is *between* mobility and motility (Stokes 2020), freedom and constraint, autonomy and heteronomy, agency and the dispossession of capacity. Migrants-cum-artists in the Jungle of Calais, young Chicanos in East Los Angeles reappropriating traditional music from the rural south of the Mexican State of Veracruz to emancipate themselves from identity labels and the rationales of urban ghettoization (Rinaudo 2016), Burkinabe dancers worshipped on the international scene but whose profession is not recognized in their own country (Andrieu 2012) – they all represent situations that invite us to problematize the links between culture, art and migration.

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